

A detailed portrait of John Calvin, showing his face with a long, full beard and a cap, looking slightly to the right. The background is dark and textured.

“God hath never left
himself without witnesses”

Institutes of the Christian Religion

by **John Calvin**

Protestant Reformer

1509 - 1564

A 19th Century Edition

Volume I

A  **Hail & Fire** REPRINT
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“Institutes of the Christian Religion” by John Calvin, Volumes 1 of 2, 1840 Edition in 2 Volumes, is here reprinted by Hail & Fire, 2009.

Category: Religion, Protestant, Apologetic

John Calvin

French Protestant Reformer, 1509-1564.

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PREFACE

to the Protestant Reprint of

“Institutes of the Christian Religion” by John Calvin

by Hail & Fire

PROTESTANT APOLOGETICA

These works have been placed online so that those of a Protestant and Gospel faith might have these rare and historic resources readily available, and that those of a Catholic faith may have access to the same, that some might, by comparing and contrasting the traditions and dogmas of the Church to the Word originally preached, come thereby to choose the witness of Jesus Christ over all these. In the words of John Frith (Protestant Martyr, 1533), “I thought it expedient therein to write my mind, trusting, by that means, to bring again the blind hearts of many unto the right way, and I doubt not but that the elect and chosen of God that know their Shepherd’s voice, and have the spirit to judge all things, shall easily perceive whether this be conformable to their master’s voice, and shall hereby be admonished to leave their wandering in the dark and loathsome ways which lead unto death, and to walk without stumbling in the comfortable light.”

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F. C. Strahan
42943

INSTITUTES
OF THE
CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

BY
JOHN CALVIN.

TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL LATIN, AND COLLATED WITH
THE AUTHOR'S LAST EDITION IN FRENCH,

BY JOHN ALLEN.

Non tamen omnino potuit mors invida totum
Tollere Calvinum terris; æterna manebunt
Ingenii monumenta tui: et livoris iniqui
Languida paulatim cum flamma resederit, omnes
Religio qua pura nitet se fundet in oras
Fama tui.....BUCHANAN

FIFTH AMERICAN EDITION, REVISED AND CORRECTED.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

PHILADELPHIA:
PRESBYTERIAN BOARD OF PUBLICATION

Handwritten scribble

42943

INSTITUTES

CHRISTIAN RELIGION

JOHN CALVIN

TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL LATIN AND COMPARED WITH THE AUTHORITY OF THE GREEK AND HEBREW

BY JOHN ALLEN

THE SECOND EDITION, CORRECTED AND ENLARGED BY THE AUTHOR

WITH AN AMERICAN EDITION BY JOHN CALVIN

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I.

PHILADELPHIA

THE BOARD OF PUBLICATION

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Presbyterian Board of Publication, in introducing to the public a new edition of the inimitable "Institutes of the Christian Religion," do not wish to be regarded as adopting all the sentiments and forms of expression of the venerated writer; although they agree with him in his general views, and admire the skill and learning with which he has pointed out the relative positions and bearings of the great doctrines of revelation. Calvin was better qualified than any of his contemporaries, to present revealed truth in a connected and systematic form. His great natural abilities, his profound erudition, his well balanced and discriminating judgment, and his habits of diligent investigation, eminently fitted him to prepare such a work as the "Institutes," in which the doctrines of the gospel are so clearly developed and harmonized, that the system has been closely associated with his name, from the period of its publication until the present time.

The honour of Calvin consisted, not in suggesting ingenious theories and speculations, but in his general accuracy in interpreting the Holy Scriptures, and in detecting and pointing out the connection of Scripture doctrines, which, instead of being insulated, were shown to occupy their respective places in forming a complete and perfect system of Divine truth. The doctrines embraced in the formularies of the Presbyterian Church are termed Calvinistic, from their general accordance with Calvin's interpretation of scriptural truth; but the admission of this term, as explanatory of their general character, is not understood as by any means implying an entire coincidence in the views of Calvin, or a submission to his authority as an umpire in theological controversies. Although a learned and pious, he was a fallible man; and his opinions, although deserving of profound respect, are not to be blindly followed.

While admitting that the "Institutes," considering the times and circumstances in which they were written, form an invaluable body of divinity, still it must be acknowledged, that some of the doctrines therein maintained have been more luminously set forth in modern times. We would especially mention as an instance the doctrine of justification through the

imputed righteousness of Christ. Some of the expressions of Calvin on the subject of reprobation may be regarded as too unqualified, and we can no further endorse them than as they are incorporated in the Presbyterian Confession of Faith. The most decidedly objectionable feature in the "Christian Institutes," is to be found in the explanation of the Fourth Commandment, where the author asserts the abrogation of the Sabbath. In Calvin's view, this ordinance was a mere type of better blessings, and, with the types and ceremonies of the old dispensation, was done away by the introduction of a new and better dispensation. In this opinion there can be no doubt that he greatly erred; and so universal is the conviction of the Church on the perpetual obligation of the Sabbath as a moral institution, that no danger is to be apprehended from a contrary view, even under the sanction of so great a name as that of Calvin. In justice to his opinion on this subject, however, it should be stated, that he distinctly recognized not only the propriety but the necessity of a consecration of stated days for public religious services, without which regulation, he declares that "it is so far from being possible to preserve order and decorum, that if it were abolished, the Church would be in imminent danger of immediate convulsion and ruin." It is much to be lamented that so great a mind should have been led astray on so important a point by attempting to avoid an opposite extreme.

The Board of Publication have been induced to undertake this edition, by the very generous offer of the First and Second Presbyterian Churches in Baltimore, of which the Rev. John Backus and the Rev. Dr. R. J. Breckinridge are respectively Pastors, to defray the expense of stereotyping the work. Under the direction of the Executive Committee of the Board, the translation has been diligently compared throughout with the original Latin and French, and various corrections have been made to convey the meaning of the author more distinctly and accurately. This laborious duty has been performed by a member of the Publishing Committee. The intrinsic excellence of the work, taken in connection with the attractive style, and comparative cheapness, of the present edition, induces the Committee to hope, that it may be widely circulated and carefully studied, both by the clergy and laymen of the Presbyterian Church.

In behalf of the Executive Committee,

WILLIAM M. ENGLER, EDITOR.

THE

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

THE English Reader is here presented with a translation of one of the principal theological productions of the sixteenth century. Few persons, into whose hands this translation is likely to fall, will require to be informed that the Author of the original work was one of an illustrious triumvirate, who acted a most conspicuous part in what has been generally and justly denominated **THE REFORMATION**. Of that important revolution in ecclesiastical affairs, so necessary to the interests of true religion, and productive of such immense advantages even to civil society, **LUTHER**, **ZUINGLE**, and **CALVIN**, were honoured, by the providence of God, to be the most highly distinguished instruments. It is no degradation to the memory of the many other ornaments of that age, to consider them as brilliant satellites in the firmament of the Church, revolving round these primary luminaries, to whom they were indebted for much of that lustre which they diffused over the earth; while they were all together revolving around one and the same common centre, though, it must be confessed, with considerable varieties of approximation, velocity, and obliquity in their courses; yet all deriving more or less copious communications of light from the great Sun of the moral system, **THE TRUE LIGHT OF THE WORLD**.

Differing in the powers of their minds, as well as in the temperament of their bodily constitutions, placed in different circumstances, and called to act in different scenes, these leading Reformers, though engaged in the same common cause, displayed their characteristic and peculiar ex-

cellences; which, it is no disparagement of that cause to admit, were likewise accompanied by peculiar failings. It is not the design of this preface to portray and discriminate their respective characters. They alike devoted their lives and labours to rescue Christianity from the absurdities, superstitions, and vices by which it had been so deplorably deformed, mutilated, and obscured, and to recall the attention of mankind from the doubtful traditions of men to the unerring word of God. But while they were all distinguished Reformers, Calvin has been generally acknowledged to have been the most eminent theologian of the three.

Such was the superiority of the talents and attainments of Calvin to those of most other great men, that the strictest truth is in danger of being taken for exaggeration. It is impossible for any candid and intelligent person to have even a slight acquaintance with his writings, without admiring his various knowledge, extensive learning, profound penetration, solid judgment, acute reasoning, pure morality, and fervent piety.

His COMMENTARIES on the Scriptures have been celebrated for a juster method of exposition than had been exhibited by any preceding writer. Above a hundred years after his death, Poole, the author of the Synopsis, in the preface to that valuable work, says, "Calvin's Commentaries abound in solid discussions of theological subjects, and practical improvements of them. Subsequent writers have borrowed most of their materials from Calvin, and his interpretations adorn the books even of those who repay the obligation by reproaching their master." And nothing can more satisfactorily evince the high estimation to which they are still entitled from the biblical student, than the following testimony, given, after the lapse of another century, by the late learned Bishop Horsley: "I hold the memory of Calvin in high veneration: his works have a place in my library; and in the study of the Holy Scriptures, he is one of the commentators whom I frequently consult."

But perhaps, of all the writings of Calvin, none has excited so much attention as his *INSTITUTES OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION*.

His original design in commencing this work is stated by himself, in the beginning of his dedication, to have been to supply his countrymen, the French, with an elementary compendium for their instruction in the principles of true religion. But we learn from Beza that, by the time of its completion, existing circumstances furnished the Author with an additional motive for sending it into the world, during his residence at Basil, whither he had retired to avoid the persecution which was then raging in France against all the dissentients from the Church of Rome. Francis the First, king of France, courted the friendship of the Protestant princes of Germany; and knowing their detestation of the cruelties which he employed against his subjects of the reformed religion, he endeavoured to excuse his conduct by alleging that he caused none to be put to death except some few fanatics; who, so far from taking the word of God as the rule of their faith, gave themselves up to the impulses of their disordered imaginations, and even openly avowed a contempt of magistrates and sovereign princes. Unable to bear such foul aspersions of his brethren, Calvin determined on the immediate publication of this treatise, which he thought would serve as an answer to the calumnies circulated by the enemies of the truth, and as an apology for his pious and persecuted countrymen.

The Dedication to Francis is one of the most masterly compositions of modern times. The purity, elegance, and energy of style; the bold, yet respectful, freedom of address; the firm attachment to the Divine word; the Christian fortitude in the midst of persecution; the triumphant refutation of the calumnies of detractors; with other qualities which distinguish this celebrated remonstrance, will surely permit no reader of taste or piety to withhold

his concurrence from the general admiration which it has received.

The Author composed this treatise in Latin and French; and though, at its first appearance, it was little more than an outline of what it afterwards became, it was received with uncommon approbation, and a second edition of it was soon required. How many editions it passed through during his life, it is difficult, if not impossible, now to ascertain; but it obtained a very extensive circulation, and was reprinted several times, and every time was further improved and enlarged by him, till, in the year 1559, twenty-three years after the first impression, he put the finishing hand to his work, and published it in Latin and French, with his last corrections and additions.

The circulation which it enjoyed was not confined to persons capable of reading it in the languages in which it was written. It was translated into High Dutch, Low Dutch, Italian, and Spanish.

Soon after the publication of the Author's last edition, it was translated from the Latin into English. In this language it appears to have reached six editions in the life of the Translator. A reflection on the small number of persons who may be supposed to have had inclination and ability to read such a book at that period, compared with the number of readers in the present age, may excite some wonder that there should have been a demand for so many editions. But no surprise at this circumstance will be felt by any person acquainted with the high estimation in which the works of the Author were held by the venerable Reformers of the Church of England, and their immediate successors, as well as by the great majority of religious people in this country. This is not a question of opinion, but an undeniable fact. Dr. Heylin, the admirer and biographer of Archbishop Laud, speaking of the early part of the seventeenth century, says, that Calvin's "Book of Institutes was, for the most part, the foundation on which

the young divines of those times did build their studies." The great Dr. Saunderson, who was chaplain to King Charles I., and, after the restoration of Charles II., was created Bishop of Lincoln, says, "When I began to set myself to the study of divinity as my proper business, Calvin's Institutions were recommended to me, as they were generally to all young scholars in those times, as the best and perfectest system of divinity, and the fittest to be laid as a ground-work in the study of this profession. And, indeed, my expectation was not at all deceived in the reading of those Institutions." *

The great changes which have taken place in our language render it difficult to form a correct opinion of the merits of Mr. Norton's translation, which was first published about two hundred and fifty years ago. It must give rather a favourable idea of its execution, that it was carefully revised by the Rev. David Whitehead, a man of learning and piety, who, in the reign of Henry VIII., was nominated by Archbishop Cranmer to a bishopric in Ireland, and, soon after the accession of Queen Elizabeth, was solicited by that Princess to fill the metropolitan see of Canterbury, but declined the preferment. But, whatever were the merits or defects of that translation at its first appearance, it has long been too antiquated, uncouth, and obscure, to convey any just idea of the original work, and abounds with passages which, to the modern English reader, cannot but be altogether unintelligible.

The intrinsic excellence of the book, its importance in the history of theological controversy, the celebrity of the

* It is not uncommon, among persons of a certain class, to represent the leading principles of Calvin as unfavourable to practical religion, and to that kind of preaching which is adapted to affect the hearts and consciences of the hearers. A reference to the most able and intelligent theologians and preachers who have held those principles, and upon whom they may reasonably be concluded to have exerted their genuine and fullest influence, will amply evince the inaccuracy of this representation. Of the excellent divine quoted above, King Charles I. was wont to say, that "he carried his ears to hear other preachers, but his conscience to hear Mr. Saunderson."

Author, the application of his name to designate the leading principles of the system he maintained, and the frequent collision of sentiment respecting various parts of that system, combine with other considerations to render it a matter of wonder, that it has not long ago been given to the English public in a new dress. The importance of it has also been much increased by the recent controversy respecting Calvinism, commenced by Dr. Tomline, the present Bishop of Lincoln, in which such direct and copious reference has been made to the writings of this Reformer, and especially to his CHRISTIAN INSTITUTES. These circumstances and considerations have led to the present translation and publication, which, from the very respectable encouragement it has received, the Translator trusts will be regarded as an acceptable service to the religious public.

Among the different methods of translation which have been recommended, he has adopted that which appeared to him best fitted to the present undertaking. A servile adherence to the letter of the original, the style of which is so very remote from the English idiom, he thought would convey a very inadequate representation of the work; such extreme fidelity, to use an expression of Cowper's, being seldom successful, even in a faithful transmission of the precise sentiments of the author to the mind of the reader. A mere attention to the ideas and sentiments of the original, to the neglect of its style and manner, would expose the Translator of a treatise of this nature to no small danger of misrepresenting the meaning of the Author, by too frequent and unnecessary deviations from his language. He has, therefore, aimed at a medium between servility and looseness, and endeavoured to follow the style of the original as far as the respective idioms of the Latin and English would admit.

After the greater part of the work had been translated, he had the happiness to meet with an edition in French,

of which he has availed himself in translating the remainder, and in the revision of what he had translated before. Every person, who understands any two languages, will be aware that the ambiguity of one will sometimes be explained by the precision of another; and, notwithstanding the acknowledged superiority of the Latin to the French in most of the qualities which constitute the excellence of a language, the case of the article is not the only one in which Calvin's French elucidates his Latin.

The scriptural quotations which occur in the work, the Translator has given, generally, in the words of our common English version; sometimes according to the readings in the margin of that version; and, in a few instances, he has literally translated the version adopted by the Author, where the context required his peculiar reading to be preserved. Almost all the writers of that age, writing chiefly in a dead language, were accustomed to speak of their adversaries in language which the polished manners of the modern times have discarded, and which would now be deemed illiberal and scurrilous. Where these cases occur, the Translator has not thought himself bound to a literal rendering of every word, or at liberty to refine them entirely away, but has adopted such expressions as he apprehends will give a faithful representation of the spirit of the Author to modern readers.

Intending this work as a complete system of theology, the Author has made it the repository of his sentiments on all points of faith and practice. The whole being distributed into four parts, in conformity to the Apostles' Creed, and this plan being very different from that of most other bodies of divinity, the Translator has borrowed from the Latin edition of Amsterdam a very perspicuous general syllabus, which will give the reader a clear view of the original design and plan of the treatise.

He would not be understood to represent these Institutes as a perfect summary of Christian doctrines and morals, or

to profess an unqualified approbation of all the sentiments they contain. This is a homage to which no uninspired writings can ever be entitled. But the simplicity of the method; the freedom from the barbarous terms, captious questions, minute distinctions, and intricate subtilities of many other Divines; the clearness and closeness of argument; the complete refutation of the advocates of the Romish Church, sometimes by obvious conclusions from their professed principles, sometimes by clear proofs of the absurdities they involve; the intimate knowledge of ecclesiastical history; the intimate acquaintance with former theological controversies; the perspicuity of scriptural interpretation; and the uniform spirit of genuine piety, which pervade the book, cannot escape the observation of any judicious reader.

It has been advised by some persons that the translation should be accompanied by a few notes, to elucidate and enforce some passages, and to correct others; but, on all the consideration which the Translator has been able to give to this subject, he has thought it would be best to content himself with the humble office of placing the sentiments of Calvin before the reader, with all the fidelity in his power, without any addition or limitation. He hopes that the present publication will serve the cause of true religion, and that the reputation of the work itself will sustain no diminution from the form in which it now appears.

LONDON, *May* 12, 1813.

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THE
AUTHOR'S PREFACE

TO
AN EDITION PUBLISHED IN THE YEAR 1559,

WITH HIS
LAST CORRECTIONS AND ADDITIONS.

IN the first edition of this work, not expecting that success which the Lord, in his infinite goodness, hath given, I handled the subject for the most part in a superficial manner, as is usual in small treatises. But when I understood that it had obtained from almost all pious persons such a favourable acceptance as I never could have presumed to wish, much less to hope; while I was conscious of receiving far more attention than I had deserved, I thought it would evince great ingratitude, if I did not endeavour at least, according to my humble ability, to make some suitable return for the attentions paid to me — attentions of themselves calculated to stimulate my industry. Nor did I attempt this only in the second edition; but in every succeeding one the work has been improved by some further enlargements. But though I repented not the labour then devoted to it, yet I never satisfied myself, till it was arranged in the order in which it is now published; and I trust I have here presented to my readers what their judgments will unite in approving. Of my diligent application to the accomplishment of this service for the Church of God, I can produce abundant proof. For, last winter, when I thought that a quartan ague would speedily terminate in my death, the more my disorder increased, the less I spared myself, till I had finished this book, to leave it behind me, as some grateful re-

DEDICATION.

*To His Most Christian Majesty, FRANCIS, King of the French,
and his Sovereign, John Calvin wisheth peace and salvation
in Christ.*

WHEN I began this work, Sire, nothing was further from my thoughts than writing a book which would afterwards be presented to your Majesty. My intention was only to lay down some elementary principles, by which inquirers on the subject of religion might be instructed in the nature of true piety. And this labour I undertook chiefly for my countrymen, the French, of whom I apprehended multitudes to be hungering and thirsting after Christ, but saw very few possessing any real knowledge of him. That this was my design, the book itself proves by its simple method and unadorned composition. But when I perceived that the fury of certain wicked men in your kingdom had grown to such a height, as to leave no room in the land for sound doctrine, I thought I should be usefully employed, if in the same work I delivered my instructions to them, and exhibited my confession to you, that you may know the nature of that doctrine, which is the object of such unbounded rage to those madmen who are now disturbing the country with fire and sword. For I shall not be afraid to acknowledge, that this treatise contains a summary of that very doctrine, which, according to their clamours, deserves to be punished with imprisonment, banishment, proscription, and flames, and to be exterminated from the face of the earth. I well know with what atrocious insinuations your ears have been filled by them, in order to render our cause most odious in your esteem; but your clemency should lead you to consider that, if accusation be accounted a sufficient evidence of guilt, there will be an end of all innocence in words and actions. If any one, indeed, with a view to bring an odium upon the doctrine which I am endeavouring to defend, should

allege that it has long ago been condemned by the general consent, and suppressed by many judicial decisions, this will be only equivalent to saying, that it has been sometimes violently rejected through the influence and power of its adversaries, and sometimes insidiously and fraudulently oppressed by falsehoods, artifices, and calumnies. Violence is displayed, when sanguinary sentences are passed against it without the cause being heard; and fraud, when it is unjustly accused of sedition and mischief. Lest any one should suppose that these our complaints are unfounded, you yourself, Sire, can bear witness of the false calumnies with which you hear it daily traduced; that its only tendency is to wrest the sceptres of kings out of their hands, to overturn all the tribunals and judicial proceedings, to subvert all order and governments, to disturb the peace and tranquillity of the people, to abrogate all laws, to scatter all properties and possessions, and, in a word, to involve every thing in total confusion. And yet you hear the smallest portion of what is alleged against it; for such horrible things are circulated amongst the vulgar, that, if they were true, the whole world would justly pronounce it and its abettors worthy of a thousand fires and gibbets. Who, then, will wonder at its becoming the object of public odium, where credit is given to such most iniquitous accusations? This is the cause of the general consent and conspiracy to condemn us and our doctrine. Hurried away with this impulse, those who sit in judgment pronounce for sentences the prejudices they brought from home with them; and think their duty fully discharged if they condemn none to be punished but such as are convicted by their own confession, or by sufficient proofs. Convicted of what crime? Of this condemned doctrine, they say. But with what justice is it condemned? Now, the ground of defence was not to abjure the doctrine itself, but to maintain its truth. On this subject, however, not a word is allowed to be uttered.

Wherefore I beseech you, Sire, — and surely it is not an unreasonable request, — to take upon yourself the entire cognizance of this cause, which has hitherto been confusedly and carelessly agitated, without any order of law, and with outrageous passion rather than judicial gravity. Think not that I am

now meditating my own individual defence, in order to effect a safe return to my native country; for, though I feel the affection which every man ought to feel for it, yet, under the existing circumstances, I regret not my removal from it. But I plead the cause of all the godly, and consequently of Christ himself, which, having been in these times persecuted and trampled on in all ways in your kingdom, now lies in a most deplorable state; and this indeed rather through the tyranny of certain Pharisees, than with your knowledge. How this comes to pass is foreign to my present purpose to say; but it certainly lies in a most afflicted state. For the ungodly have gone to such lengths, that the truth of Christ, if not vanquished, dissipated, and entirely destroyed, is buried, as it were, in ignoble obscurity, while the poor, despised church is either destroyed by cruel massacres, or driven away into banishment, or menaced and terrified into total silence. And still they continue their wonted madness and ferocity, pushing violently against the wall already bent, and finishing the ruin they have begun. In the mean time, no one comes forward to plead the cause against such furies. If there be any persons desirous of appearing most favourable to the truth, they only venture an opinion, that forgiveness should be extended to the error and imprudence of ignorant people. For this is the language of these moderate men, calling *that* error and imprudence which they know to be the certain truth of God, and *those* ignorant people, whose understanding they perceive not to have been so despicable to Christ, but that he has favoured them with the mysteries of his heavenly wisdom. Thus all are ashamed of the Gospel. But it shall be yours, Sire, not to turn away your ears or thoughts from so just a defence, especially in a cause of such importance as the maintenance of God's glory unimpaired in the world, the preservation of the honour of divine truth, and the continuance of the kingdom of Christ uninjured among us. This is a cause worthy of your attention, worthy of your cognizance, worthy of your throne. This consideration constitutes true royalty, to acknowledge yourself in the government of your kingdom to be the minister of God. For where the glory of God is not made the end of the government, it is not a legitimate sovereignty, but a

usurpation. And he is deceived who expects lasting prosperity in that kingdom which is not ruled by the sceptre of God, that is, his holy word; for that heavenly oracle cannot fail, which declares that "where there is no vision, the people perish." (a) Nor should you be seduced from this pursuit by a contempt of our meanness. We are fully conscious to ourselves how very mean and abject we are, being miserable sinners before God, and accounted most despicable by men; being (if you please) the refuse of the world, deserving of the vilest appellations that can be found; so that nothing remains for us to glory in before God, but his mercy alone, by which, without any merit of ours, we have been admitted to the hope of eternal salvation, and before men nothing but our weakness, the slightest confession of which is esteemed by them as the greatest disgrace. But our doctrine must stand, exalted above all the glory, and invincible by all the power of the world; because it is not ours, but the doctrine of the living God, and of his Christ, whom the Father hath constituted King, that he may have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth, and that he may rule in such a manner, that the whole earth, with its strength of iron and with its splendour of gold and silver, smitten by the rod of his mouth, may be broken to pieces like a potter's vessel; (b) for thus do the prophets foretell the magnificence of his kingdom.

Our adversaries reply, that our pleading the word of God is a false pretence, and that we are nefarious corrupters of it. But that this is not only a malicious calumny, but egregious impudence, by reading our confession, you will, in your wisdom, be able to judge. Yet something further is necessary to be said, to excite your attention, or at least to prepare your mind for this perusal. Paul's direction, that every prophecy be framed "according to the analogy of faith," (c) has fixed an invariable standard by which all interpretation of Scripture ought to be tried. If our principles be examined by this rule of faith, the victory is ours. For what is more consistent with faith than to acknowledge ourselves naked of all virtue, that we may be clothed by God; empty of all good, that we may

(a) Prov. xxix. 18.

(b) Dan. ii. 34. Isaiah xi. 4. Psalm ii. 9.

(c) Rom. xii. 6.

be filled by him; slaves to sin, that we may be liberated by him; blind, that we may be enlightened by him; lame, that we may be guided; weak, that we may be supported by him; to divest ourselves of all ground of glorying, that he alone may be eminently glorious, and that we may glory in him? When we advance these and similar sentiments, they interrupt us with complaints that this is the way to overturn, I know not what blind light of nature, pretended preparations, free will, and works meritorious of eternal salvation, together with all their supererogations; because they cannot bear that the praise and glory of all goodness, strength, righteousness, and wisdom, should remain entirely with God. But we read of none being reproved for having drawn too freely from the fountain of living waters; on the contrary, they are severely upbraided who have "hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water." (d) Again, what is more consistent with faith, than to assure ourselves of God being a propitious Father, where Christ is acknowledged as a brother and Mediator? than securely to expect all prosperity and happiness from Him, whose unspeakable love towards us went so far, that "he spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us?" (e) than to rest in the certain expectation of salvation and eternal life, when we reflect upon the Father's gift of Christ, in whom such treasures are hidden? Here they oppose us, and complain that this certainty of confidence is chargeable with arrogance and presumption. - But as we ought to presume nothing of ourselves, so we should presume every thing of God; nor are we divested of vain glory for any other reason than that we may learn to glory in the Lord. What shall I say more? Review, Sire, all the parts of our cause, and consider us worse than the most abandoned of mankind, unless you clearly discover that we thus "both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God," (f) because we believe that "this is life eternal, to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent." (g) For this hope some of us are bound in chains, others are lashed with scourges, others are carried about as laughing-stocks, others are outlawed, others are cruelly

(d) Jer. ii. 13.

(e) Rom. viii. 32.

(f) 1 Tim. iv. 10.

(g) John xvii. 3.

tortured, others escape by flight; but we are all reduced to extreme perplexities, execrated with dreadful curses, cruelly slandered, and treated with the greatest indignities. Now, look at our adversaries, (I speak of the order of priests, at whose will and directions others carry on these hostilities against us,) and consider a little with me by what principles they are actuated. The true religion, which is taught in the Scriptures, and ought to be universally maintained, they readily permit both themselves and others to be ignorant of, and to treat with neglect and contempt. They think it unimportant what any one holds or denies concerning God and Christ, provided he submits his mind with an implicit faith (as they call it) to the judgment of the Church. Nor are they much affected, if the glory of God happens to be violated with open blasphemies, provided no one lift a finger against the primacy of the Apostolic See, and the authority of their holy Mother Church. Why, therefore, do they contend with such extreme bitterness and cruelty for the mass, purgatory, pilgrimages, and similar trifles, and deny that any piety can be maintained without a most explicit faith, so to speak, in these things; whereas they prove none of them from the Word of God? Why, but because their belly is their god, their kitchen is their religion; deprived of which they consider themselves no longer as Christians, or even as men. For though some feast themselves in splendour, and others subsist on slender fare, yet all live on the same pot, which, without this fuel, would not only cool, but completely freeze. Every one of them, therefore, who is most solicitous for his belly, is found to be a most strenuous champion for their faith. Indeed, they universally exert themselves for the preservation of their kingdom, and the repletion of their bellies; but not one of them discovers the least indication of sincere zeal.

Nor do their attacks on our doctrine cease here; they urge every topic of accusation and abuse to render it an object of hatred or suspicion. They call it novel, and of recent origin, — they cavil at it as doubtful and uncertain, — they inquire by what miracles it is confirmed, — they ask whether it is right for it to be received contrary to the consent of so many holy fathers, and the custom of the highest antiquity, — they

urge us to confess that it is schismatical in stirring up opposition against the Church, or that the Church was wholly extinct for many ages, during which no such thing was known. — Lastly, they say all arguments are unnecessary; for that its nature may be determined by its fruits, since it has produced such a multitude of sects, so many factious tumults, and such great licentiousness of vices. It is indeed very easy for them to insult a deserted cause with the credulous and ignorant multitude; but, if we had also the liberty of speaking in our turn, this acrimony, which they now discover in violently foaming against us with equal licentiousness and impunity, would presently cool.

In the first place, their calling it novel is highly injurious to God, whose holy word deserves not to be accused of novelty. I have no doubt of its being new to them, to whom Jesus Christ and the Gospel are equally new. But those who know the antiquity of this preaching of Paul, “that Jesus Christ died for our sins, and rose again for our justification,” (*h*) will find no novelty among us. That it has long been concealed, buried, and unknown, is the crime of human impiety. Now that the goodness of God has restored it to us, it ought at least to be allowed its just claim of antiquity.

From the same source of ignorance springs the notion of its being doubtful and uncertain. This is the very thing which the Lord complains of by his prophet; that “the ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master’s crib,” (*i*) but that his people know not him. But however they may laugh at its uncertainty, if they were called to seal their own doctrine with their blood and lives, it would appear how much they value it. Very different is our confidence, which dreads neither the terrors of death, nor even the tribunal of God.

Their requiring miracles of us is altogether unreasonable; for we forge no new Gospel, but retain the very same whose truth was confirmed by all the miracles ever wrought by Christ and the apostles. But they have this peculiar advantage above us, that they can confirm their faith by continual miracles even to this day. But the truth is, they allege miracles which are calculated to unsettle a mind otherwise well established, they

(*h*) Rom. iv. 25. 1 Cor. xv. 3, 17.

(*i*) Isaiah i. 3.

are so frivolous and ridiculous, or vain and false. Nor, if they were ever so preternatural, ought they to have any weight in opposition to the truth of God, since the name of God ought to be sanctified in all places and at all times, whether by miraculous events, or by the common order of nature. This fallacy might perhaps be more specious, if the Scripture did not apprise us of the legitimate end and use of miracles. For Mark informs us, that the miracles which followed the preaching of the apostles were wrought in confirmation (*k*) of it, and Luke tells us, that (*l*) "the Lord gave testimony to the word of his grace," when "signs and wonders" were "done by the hands" of the apostles. Very similar to which is the assertion of the apostle, that "salvation was confirmed" by the preaching of the Gospel, "God also bearing witness with signs, and wonders, and divers miracles." (*m*) But those things which we are told were seals of the Gospel, shall we pervert to undermine the faith of the Gospel? Those things which were designed to be testimonials of the truth, shall we accommodate to the confirmation of falsehood? It is right, therefore, that the doctrine, which, according to the evangelist, claims the first attention, be examined and tried in the first place; and if it be approved, then it ought to derive confirmation from miracles. But it is the characteristic of sound doctrine, given by Christ, that it tends to promote, not the glory of men, but the glory of God. (*n*) Christ having laid down this proof of a doctrine, it is wrong to esteem those as miracles which are directed to any other end than the glorification of the name of God alone. And we should remember that Satan has his wonders, which, though they are juggling tricks rather than real miracles, are such as to delude the ignorant and inexperienced. Magicians and enchanters have always been famous for miracles; idolatry has been supported by astonishing miracles; and yet we admit them not as proofs of the superstition of magicians or idolaters. With this engine also the simplicity of the vulgar was anciently assailed by the Donatists, who abounded in miracles. We therefore give the same answer now to our adversaries as Augustine (*o*) gave to the Donatists, that our Lord hath cautioned us against these miracle-mongers by his prediction, that there

(*k*) Mark xvi. 20. (*l*) Acts xiv. 3. (*m*) Heb. ii. 3, 4.

(*n*) John vii. 18. viii. 50. (*o*) In Joan. tract. 13.

should arise false prophets, who, by various signs and lying wonders, "should deceive (if possible) the very elect." (*p*) And Paul has told us, that the kingdom of Antichrist would be "with all power, and signs, and lying wonders." (*q*) But these miracles (they say) are wrought, not by idols, or sorcerers, or false prophets, but by saints; as if we were ignorant, that it is a stratagem of Satan to "transform" himself "into an angel of light." (*r*) At the tomb of Jeremiah, (*s*) who was buried in Egypt, the Egyptians formerly offered sacrifices and other divine honours. Was not this abusing God's holy prophet to the purposes of idolatry? Yet they supposed this veneration of his sepulchre to be rewarded with a cure for the bite of serpents. What shall we say, but that it has been, and ever will be, the most righteous vengeance of God to "send those who receive not the love of the truth strong delusions, that they should believe a lie"? (*t*) We are by no means without miracles, and such as are certain, and not liable to cavils. But those under which they shelter themselves are mere illusions of Satan, seducing the people from the true worship of God to vanity.

Another calumny is their charging us with opposition to the fathers, — I mean the writers of the earlier and purer ages, — as if those writers were abettors of their impiety; whereas, if the contest were to be terminated by this authority, the victory in most parts of the controversy — to speak in the most modest terms — would be on our side. But though the writings of those fathers contain many wise and excellent things, yet in some respects they have suffered the common fate of mankind; these very dutiful children reverence only their errors and mistakes, but their excellences they either overlook, or conceal, or corrupt; so that it may be truly said to be their only study to collect dross from the midst of gold. Then they overwhelm us with senseless clamours, as despisers and enemies of the fathers. But we do not hold them in such contempt, but that, if it were consistent with my present design, I could easily support by their suffrages most of the sentiments that we now maintain. But while we make use of their writings, we always remember that "all things are ours," to serve us, not to have

(*p*) Matt. xxiv. 24.

(*q*) 2 Thess. ii. 9.

(*r*) 2 Cor. xi. 14.

(*s*) Hierôm. in præf. Jerem.

(*t*) 2 Thess. ii. 10, 11.

dominion over us, and that "we are Christ's" (*v*) alone, and owe him universal obedience. He who neglects this distinction will have nothing decided in religion; since those holy men were ignorant of many things, frequently at variance with each other, and sometimes even inconsistent with themselves. There is great reason, they say, for the admonition of Solomon, "not to transgress or remove the ancient landmarks, which our fathers have set." (*w*) But the same rule is not applicable to the bounding of fields, and to the obedience of faith, which ought to be ready to "forget her own people and her father's house." (*x*) But if they are so fond of allegorizing, why do they not explain the apostles, rather than any others, to be those fathers, whose appointed landmarks it is so unlawful to remove? For this is the interpretation of Jerome, whose works they have received into their canons. But if they insist on preserving the landmarks of those whom they understand to be intended, why do they at pleasure so freely transgress them themselves? There were two fathers, (*y*) of whom one said, that our God neither eats nor drinks, and therefore needs neither cups nor dishes; the other, that sacred things require no gold, and that gold is no recommendation of that which is not purchased with gold. This landmark therefore is transgressed by those who in sacred things are so much delighted with gold, silver, ivory, marble, jewels, and silks, and suppose that God is not rightly worshipped, unless all things abound in exquisite splendour, or rather extravagant profusion. There was a father (*z*) who said he freely partook of flesh on a day when others abstained from it, because he was a Christian. They transgress the landmarks therefore when they curse the soul that tastes flesh in Lent. There were two fathers, (*a*) of whom one said, that a monk who labours not with his hands is on a level with a cheat or a robber; and the other, that it is unlawful for monks to live on what is not their own, notwithstanding their assiduity in contemplations, studies, and prayers; and they have transgressed this landmark by placing the idle and distended carcasses of monks in cells and brothels, to be pam-

(*v*) 1 Cor. iii. 21, 23.

(*w*) Prov. xxii. 28.

(*x*) Psalm xlv. 10.

(*y*) Acat. in lib. 11. cap. 16. Trip. Hist. Amb. lib. 2. de Off. c. 28.

(*z*) Spiridion. Trip. Hist. lib. 1. c. 10.

(*a*) Trip. Hist. lib. 8. c. 1. August. de Opere Mon. c. 17.

pered on the substance of others. There was a father (*b*) who said, that to see a painted image of Christ, or of any saint, in the temples of Christians, is a dreadful abomination. Nor was this merely the sentence of an individual; it was also decreed by an ecclesiastical council, that the object of worship should not be painted on the walls. They are far from confining themselves within these landmarks, for every corner is filled with images. Another father (*c*) has advised that, after having discharged the office of humanity towards the dead by the rites of sepulture, we should leave them to their repose. They break through these landmarks by inculcating a constant solicitude for the dead. There was one of the fathers (*d*) who asserted that the substance of bread and wine in the eucharist ceases not, but remains, just as the substance of the human nature remains in the Lord Christ united with the divine. They transgress this landmark therefore by pretending that, on the words of the Lord being recited, the substance of bread and wine ceases, and is transubstantiated into his body and blood. There were fathers (*e*) who, while they exhibited to the universal Church only one eucharist, and forbade all scandalous and immoral persons to approach it, at the same time severely censured all who, when present, did not partake of it. How far have they removed these landmarks, when they fill not only the churches, but even private houses, with their masses, admit all who choose to be spectators of them, and every one the more readily in proportion to the magnitude of his contribution, however chargeable with impurity and wickedness! They invite none to faith in Christ and a faithful participation of the sacraments; but rather for purposes of gain bring forward their own work instead of the grace and merit of Christ. There were two fathers, (*f*) of whom one contended that the use of Christ's sacred supper should be wholly forbidden to those who, content with partaking of one kind, abstained from the other; the other strenuously maintained that Christian people ought not to be refused the blood of their Lord, for the confession of whom they are required to shed their own. These landmarks also

(*b*) Epiph. Epist. ab. Hier. vers. Con. Eliber. c. 36. (*c*) Amb. de Abra. lib. 1. c. 7.

(*d*) Gelas. Pap. in Conc. Rom.

(*e*) Chrys. in 1 Cap. Ephes. Calix. Papa de Cons. dist. 2.

(*f*) Gelas. can. Comperimus de Cons. dist. 2. Cypr. Epist. 2. lib. 1, de Laps.

they have removed, in appointing, by an inviolable law, that very thing which the former punished with excommunication, and the latter gave a powerful reason for disapproving. There was a father (*g*) who asserted the temerity of deciding on either side of an obscure subject, without clear and evident testimonies of Scripture. This landmark they forgot when they made so many constitutions, canons, and judicial determinations, without any authority from the word of God. There was a father (*h*) who upbraided Montanus with having, among other heresies, been the first imposer of laws for the observance of fasts. They have gone far beyond this landmark also, in establishing fasts by the strictest laws. There was a father (*i*) who denied that marriage ought to be forbidden to the ministers of the Church, and pronounced cohabitation with a wife to be real chastity; and there were fathers who assented to his judgment. They have transgressed these landmarks by enjoining on their priests the strictest celibacy. There was a father who thought that attention should be paid to Christ only, of whom it is said, "Hear ye him," and that no regard should be had to what others before us have either said or done, only to what has been commanded by Christ, who is preëminent over all. This landmark they neither prescribe to themselves, nor permit to be observed by others, when they set up over themselves and others any masters rather than Christ. There was a father (*k*) who contended that the Church ought not to take the precedence of Christ, because his judgment is always according to truth; but ecclesiastical judges, like other men, may generally be deceived. Breaking down this landmark also, they scruple not to assert, that all the authority of the Scripture depends on the decision of the Church. All the fathers, with one heart and voice, have declared it execrable and detestable for the holy word of God to be contaminated with the subtleties of sophists, and perplexed by the wrangles of logicians. Do they confine themselves within these landmarks, when the whole business of their lives is to involve the simplicity of the Scripture in endless controversies, and worse

(*g*) August. lib. 2. de Pec. Mer. cap. ult.

(*h*) Apollon. de quo Eccl. Hist. lib. 5. cap. 11, 12.

(*i*) Paphnut. Trip. Hist. lib. 2. c. 14. Cypr. Epist. 2. lib. 2.

(*k*) Aug. cap. 2. contr. Cresc. Grammatic.

than sophistical wrangles? so that if the fathers were now restored to life, and heard this art of wrangling, which they call speculative divinity, they would not suspect the dispute to have the least reference to God. But if I would enumerate all the instances in which the authority of the fathers is insolently rejected by those who would be thought their dutiful children, my address would exceed all reasonable bounds. Months and years would be insufficient for me. And yet such is their consummate and incorrigible impudence, they dare to censure us for presuming to transgress the ancient landmarks.

Nor can they gain any advantage against us by their argument from custom; for, if we were compelled to submit to custom, we should have to complain of the greatest injustice. Indeed, if the judgments of men were correct, custom should be sought among the good. But the fact is often very different. What appears to be practised by many soon obtains the force of a custom. And human affairs have scarcely ever been in so good a state as for the majority to be pleased with things of real excellence. From the private vices of multitudes, therefore, has arisen public error, or rather a common agreement of vices, which these good men would now have to be received as law. It is evident to all who can see, that the world is inundated with more than an ocean of evils, that it is overrun with numerous destructive pests, that every thing is fast verging to ruin, so that we must altogether despair of human affairs, or vigorously and even violently oppose such immense evils. And the remedy is rejected for no other reason, but because we have been accustomed to the evils so long. But let public error be tolerated in human society; in the kingdom of God nothing but his eternal truth should be heard and regarded, which no succession of years, no custom, no confederacy, can circumscribe. Thus Isaiah once taught the chosen people of God: "Say ye not, A confederacy, to all to whom this people shall say, A confederacy;" that is, that they should not unite in the wicked consent of the people; "nor fear their fear, nor be afraid," but rather "sanctify the Lord of hosts," that he might "be their fear and their dread." (1) Now, therefore, let them, if they please, object against us past ages and present examples; if we "sanctify the Lord of hosts,"

(1) Isaiah viii. 12, 13.

we shall not be much afraid. For, whether many ages agree in similar impiety, he is mighty to take vengeance on the third and fourth generation; or whether the whole world combine in the same iniquity, he has given an example of the fatal end of those who sin with a multitude, by destroying all men with a deluge, and preserving Noah and his small family, in order that his individual faith might condemn the whole world. Lastly, a corrupt custom is nothing but an epidemical pestilence, which is equally fatal to its objects, though they fall with a multitude. Besides, they ought to consider a remark, somewhere made by Cyprian, (*m*) that persons who sin through ignorance, though they cannot be wholly exculpated, may yet be considered in some degree excusable; but those who obstinately reject the truth offered by the Divine goodness, are without any excuse at all.

Nor are we so embarrassed by their dilemma as to be obliged to confess, either that the Church was for some time extinct, or that we have now a controversy with the Church. The Church of Christ has lived, and will continue to live, as long as Christ shall reign at the right hand of the Father, by whose hand she is sustained, by whose protection she is defended, by whose power she is preserved in safety. For he will undoubtedly perform what he once promised, to be with his people "even to the end of the world." (*n*) We have no quarrel against the Church, for with one consent we unite with all the company of the faithful in worshipping and adoring the one God and Christ the Lord, as he has been adored by all the pious in all ages. But our opponents deviate widely from the truth when they acknowledge no Church but what is visible to the corporeal eye, and endeavour to circumscribe it by those limits within which it is far from being included. Our controversy turns on the two following points:—first, they contend that the form of the Church is always apparent and visible; secondly, they place that form in the see of the Roman Church and her order of prelates. We assert, on the contrary, first, that the Church may exist without any visible form; secondly, that its form is not contained in that external splendour which they fool-

(*m*) Epist. 3. lib. 2. et in Epist. ad Julian. de Hæret. baptiz.

(*n*) Matt xxviii. 20.

ishly admire, but is distinguished by a very different criterion, *viz.* the pure preaching of God's word, and the legitimate administration of the sacraments. They are not satisfied unless the Church can always be pointed out with the finger. But how often among the Jewish people was it so disorganized, as to have no visible form left? What splendid form do we suppose could be seen, when Elias deplored his being left alone? (*o*) How long, after the coming of Christ, did it remain without any external form? How often, since that time, have wars, seditions, and heresies, oppressed and totally obscured it? If they had lived at that period, would they have believed that any Church existed? Yet Elias was informed that there were "left seven thousand" who had "not bowed the knee to Baal." Nor should we entertain any doubt of Christ's having always reigned on earth ever since his ascension to heaven. But if the pious at such periods had sought for any form evident to their senses, must not their hearts have been quite discouraged? Indeed it was already considered by Hilary in his day as a grievous error, that people were absorbed in foolish admiration of the episcopal dignity, and did not perceive the dreadful mischiefs concealed under that disguise. For this is his language: (*p*) "One thing I advise you—beware of Antichrist, for you have an improper attachment to walls; your veneration for the Church of God is misplaced on houses and buildings; you wrongly introduce under them the name of peace. Is there any doubt that they will be seats of Antichrist? I think mountains, woods, and lakes, prisons and whirlpools, less dangerous; for these were the scenes of retirement or banishment in which the prophets prophesied." But what excites the veneration of the multitude in the present day for their horned bishops, but the supposition that those are the holy prelates of religion whom they see presiding over great cities? Away, then, with such stupid admiration. Let us rather leave it to the Lord, since he alone "knoweth them that are his," (*q*) sometimes to remove from human observation all external knowledge of his Church. I admit this to be a dreadful judgment of God on the earth; but if it be deserved by the impiety of men, why do we attempt to resist the righteous vengeance of God? Thus the Lord punished the ingrati-

(*o*) 1 Kings xix. 14, 18.(*p*) Contr. Auxent.(*q*) 2 Tim. ii. 19.

tude of men in former ages ; for, in consequence of their resistance to his truth, and extinction of the light he had given them, he permitted them to be blinded by sense, deluded by absurd falsehoods, and immersed in profound darkness, so that there was no appearance of the true Church left ; yet, at the same time, in the midst of darkness and errors, he preserved his scattered and concealed people from total destruction. Nor is this to be wondered at ; for he knew how to save in all the confusion of Babylon, and the flame of the fiery furnace. But how dangerous it is to estimate the form of the Church by I know not what vain pomp, which they contend for ; I shall rather briefly suggest than state at large, lest I should protract this discourse to an excessive length. The Pope, they say, who holds the Apostolic see, and the bishops anointed and consecrated by him, provided they are equipped with mitres and crosiers, represent the Church, and ought to be considered as the Church. Therefore they cannot err. How is this?—Because they are pastors of the Church, and consecrated to the Lord. And did not the pastoral character belong to Aaron, and the other rulers of Israel ? Yet Aaron and his sons, after their designation to the priesthood, fell into error when they made the golden calf. (*r*) According to this mode of reasoning, why should not the four hundred prophets, who lied to Ahab, have represented the Church ? (*s*) But the Church remained on the side of Micaiah, solitary and despised as he was, and out of his mouth proceeded the truth. Did not those prophets exhibit both the name and appearance of the Church, who with united violence rose up against Jeremiah, and threatened and boasted, “the law shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet” ? (*t*) Jeremiah is sent singly against the whole multitude of prophets, with a denunciation from the Lord, that the “law shall perish from the priest, counsel from the wise, and the word from the prophet.” (*v*) And was there not the like external respectability in the council convened by the chief priests, scribes, and Pharisees, to consult about putting Christ to death ? (*w*) Now, let them go and adhere to the external appearance, and thereby make Christ and all the prophets schismatics, and, on the other

(*r*) Exod. xxxii. 4. (*s*) 1 Kings xxii. 6, 11—23. (*t*) Jer. xviii. 18.
 (*v*) Jer. iv. 9. (*w*) Matt. xxvi. 3, 4.

hand, make the ministers of Satan instruments of the Holy Spirit. But if they speak their real sentiments, let them answer me sincerely, what nation or place they consider as the seat of the Church, from the time when, by a decree of the council of Basil, Eugenius was deposed and degraded from the pontificate, and Amadeus substituted in his place. They cannot deny that the council, as far as relates to external forms, was a lawful one, and summoned not only by one pope, but by two. There Eugenius was pronounced guilty of schism, rebellion, and obstinacy, together with all the host of cardinals and bishops who had joined him in attempting a dissolution of the council. Yet afterwards, assisted by the favour of princes, he regained the quiet possession of his former dignity. That election of Amadeus, though formally made by the authority of a general and holy synod, vanished into smoke; and he was appeased with a cardinal's hat, like a barking dog with a morsel. From the bosom of those heretics and rebels have proceeded all the popes, cardinals, bishops, abbots, and priests, ever since. Here they must stop. For to which party will they give the title of the Church? Will they deny that this was a general council, which wanted nothing to complete its external majesty, being solemnly convened by two papal bulls, consecrated by a presiding legate of the Roman see, and well regulated in every point of order, and invariably preserving the same dignity to the last? Will they acknowledge Eugenius to be a schismatic, with all his adherents, by whom they have all been consecrated? Either, therefore, let them give a different definition of the form of the Church, or, whatever be their number, we shall account them all schismatics, as having been knowingly and voluntarily ordained by heretics. But if it had never been ascertained before, that the Church is not confined to external pomps, they would themselves afford us abundant proof of it, who have so long superciliously exhibited themselves to the world under the title of the Church, though they were at the same time the deadly plagues of it. I speak not of their morals, and those tragical exploits with which all their lives abound, since they profess themselves to be Pharisees, who are to be heard and not imitated. I refer to the very doctrine itself, on which they found their claim to be considered as the Church. If you devote a portion of your leisure, Sire,

to the perusal of our writings, you will clearly discover that doctrine to be a fatal pestilence of souls, the firebrand, ruin, and destruction of the Church.

Finally, they betray great want of candour, by invidiously repeating what great commotions, tumults, and contentions, have attended the preaching of our doctrine, and what effects it produces in many persons. For it is unfair to charge it with those evils which ought to be attributed to the malice of Satan. It is the native property of the Divine word, never to make its appearance without disturbing Satan, and rousing his opposition. This is the most certain and unequivocal criterion by which it is distinguished from false doctrines, which are easily broached when they are heard with general attention, and received with applauses by the world. Thus, in some ages, when all things were immersed in profound darkness, the prince of this world amused and diverted himself with the generality of mankind, and, like another Sardanapalus, gave himself up to his ease and pleasures in perfect peace; for what would he do but amuse and divert himself, in the quiet and undisturbed possession of his kingdom? But when the light shining from above dissipated a portion of his darkness — when that Mighty One alarmed and assaulted his kingdom — then he began to shake off his wonted torpor, and to hurry on his armour. First, indeed, he stirred up the power of men to suppress the truth by violence at its first appearance; and when this proved ineffectual, he had recourse to subtlety. He made the Catabaptists, and other infamous characters, the instruments of exciting dissensions and doctrinal controversies, with a view to obscure and finally to extinguish it. And now he continues to attack it in both ways; for he endeavours to root up this genuine seed by means of human force, and at the same time tries every effort to choke it with his tares, that it may not grow and produce fruit. But all his attempts will be vain, if we attend to the admonitions of the Lord, who hath long ago made us acquainted with his devices, that we might not be caught by him unawares, and has armed us with sufficient means of defence against all his assaults. But to charge the word of God with the odium of seditions, excited against it by wicked and rebellious men, or of sects raised by impostors, — is not this extreme malignity? Yet it is not without example in

former times. Elias was asked whether it was not he "that troubled Israel." (*x*) Christ was represented by the Jews as guilty of sedition. (*y*) The apostles were accused of stirring up popular commotions. (*z*) Wherein does this differ from the conduct of those who, at the present day, impute to us all the disturbances, tumults, and contentions, that break out against us? But the proper answer to such accusations has been taught us by Elias, that the dissemination of errors and the raising of tumults is not chargeable on us, but on those who are resisting the power of God. But as this one reply is sufficient to repress their temerity, so, on the other hand, we must meet the weakness of some persons, who are frequently disturbed with such offences, and become unsettled and wavering in their minds. Now, that they may not stumble and fall amidst this agitation and perplexity, let them know that the apostles in their day experienced the same things that now befall us. There were "unlearned and unstable" men, Peter says, who "wrested" the inspired writings of Paul "to their own destruction." (*a*) There were despisers of God, who, when they heard that "where sin abounded grace did much more abound," immediately concluded, Let us "continue in sin, that grace may abound." When they heard that the faithful were "not under the law," they immediately croaked, "We will sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace." (*b*) There were some who accused him as an encourager of sin. Many false apostles crept in, to destroy the churches he had raised. "Some preached" the gospel "of envy and strife, not in sincerity," maliciously "supposing to add affliction to his bonds." (*c*) In some places the Gospel was attended with little benefit. "All were seeking their own, not the things of Jesus Christ." (*d*) Others returned "like dogs to their vomit, and like swine to their wallowing in the mire." (*e*) Many perverted the liberty of the spirit into the licentiousness of the flesh. Many insinuated themselves as brethren, who afterwards brought the pious into dangers. Various contentions were excited among the brethren themselves. What was to be done by the apostles in such circumstances? Should they not have dissembled for a time, or

(*x*) 1 Kings xviii. 17. (*y*) Luke xxiii. 2, 5. (*z*) Acts xvii. 6. xxiv. 5.
 (*a*) 2 Pet. iii. 16. (*b*) Rom. v. 20. vi. 1, 14, 15. (*c*) Phil. i. 15, 16.
 (*d*) Phil. ii. 21. (*e*) 2 Pet. ii. 22.

rather have rejected and deserted that Gospel which appeared to be the nursery of so many disputes, the cause of so many dangers, the occasion of so many offences? But in such difficulties as these, their minds were relieved by this reflection, that Christ is the "stone of stumbling and rock of offence," (*f*) "set for the fall and rising again of many, and for a sign which shall be spoken against;" (*g*) and armed with this confidence, they proceeded boldly through all the dangers of tumults and offences. The same consideration should support us, since Paul declares it to be the perpetual character of the Gospel, that it is "a savour of death unto death in them that perish," (*h*) although it was rather given us to be the "savour of life unto life," and "the power of God to" the "salvation" of the faithful; (*i*) which we also should certainly experience it to be, if we did not corrupt this eminent gift of God by our ingratitude, and pervert to our destruction what ought to be a principal instrument of our salvation.

But I return to you, Sire. Let not your Majesty be at all moved by those groundless accusations with which our adversaries endeavour to terrify you; as that the sole tendency and design of this new Gospel — for so they call it — is to furnish a pretext for seditions, and to gain impunity for all crimes. "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace;" (*k*) nor is "the Son of God," who came to "destroy the works of the devil, the minister of sin." (*l*) And it is unjust to charge us with such motives and designs, of which we have never given cause for the least suspicion. Is it probable that we are meditating the subversion of kingdoms? — we, who were never heard to utter a factious word, whose lives were ever known to be peaceable and honest while we lived under your government, and who, even now in our exile, cease not to pray for all prosperity to attend yourself and your kingdom! Is it probable that we are seeking an unlimited license to commit crimes with impunity? in whose conduct, though many things may be blamed, yet there is nothing worthy of such severe reproach! Nor have we, by Divine Grace, profited so little in the Gospel, but that our life may be an example to our detractors of chastity, liberality, mercy, temperance, patience,

(*f*) 1 Pet. ii. 8.(*h*) 2 Cor. ii. 15, 16.(*k*) 1 Cor. xiv. 33.(*g*) Luke ii. 34.(*i*) Rom. i. 16.(*l*) 1 John iii. 8. Gal. ii. 17.

modesty, and every other virtue. It is an undeniable fact, that we sincerely fear and worship God, whose name we desire to be sanctified both by our life and by our death; and envy itself is constrained to bear testimony to the innocence and civil integrity of some of us, who have suffered the punishment of death for that very thing which ought to be accounted their highest praise. But if the Gospel be made a pretext for tumults, which has not yet happened in your kingdom; if any persons make the liberty of divine grace an excuse for the licentiousness of their vices, of whom I have known many, — there are laws and legal penalties, by which they may be punished according to their deserts; only let not the Gospel of God be reproached for the crimes of wicked men. You have now, Sire, the virulent iniquity of our calumniators laid before you in a sufficient number of instances, that you may not receive their accusations with too credulous an ear. — I fear I have gone too much into the detail, as this preface already approaches the size of a full apology; whereas I intended it not to contain our defence, but only to prepare your mind to attend to the pleading of our cause; for, though you are now averse and alienated from us, and even inflamed against us, we despair not of regaining your favour, if you will only once read with calmness and composure this our confession, which we intend as our defence before your Majesty. But, on the contrary, if your ears are so preoccupied with the whispers of the malevolent, as to leave no opportunity for the accused to speak for themselves, and if those outrageous furies, with your connivance, continue to persecute with imprisonments, scourges, tortures, confiscations, and flames, we shall indeed, like sheep destined to the slaughter, be reduced to the greatest extremities. Yet shall we in patience possess our souls, and wait for the mighty hand of the Lord, which undoubtedly will in time appear, and show itself armed for the deliverance of the poor from their affliction, and for the punishment of their despisers, who now exult in such perfect security. May the Lord, the King of kings, establish your throne with righteousness, and your kingdom with equity.

BASIL, 1st August, 1536.

GENERAL SYLLABUS.

THE design of the Author in these Christian Institutes is twofold, relating, First, to the knowledge of God, as the way to attain a blessed immortality; and, in connection with and subservience to this, Secondly, to the knowledge of ourselves.

In the prosecution of this design, he strictly follows the method of the Apostles' Creed, as being most familiar to all Christians. For as the Creed consists of four parts, the first relating to God the Father, the second to the Son, the third to the Holy Spirit, the fourth to the Church; so the Author distributes the whole of this work into Four Books, corresponding respectively to the four parts of the Creed; as will clearly appear from the following detail:—

I. The first article of the Creed relates to God the Father, and to the creation, conservation, and government of all things, which are included in his omnipotence.

So the first book is on the knowledge of God, considered as the Creator, Preserver, and Governor of the universe at large, and of every thing contained in it. It shows both the nature and tendency of the true knowledge of the Creator— that this is not learned in the schools, but that every man from his birth is self-taught it— Yet that the depravity of men is so great as to corrupt and extinguish this knowledge, partly by ignorance, partly by wickedness; so that it neither leads him to glorify God as he ought, nor conducts him to the attainment of happiness— And though this internal knowledge is assisted by all the creatures around, which serve as a mirror to display the Divine perfections, yet that man does not profit by it— Therefore, that to those, whom it is God's will to bring to an intimate and saving knowledge of himself, he gives his written word; which introduces observations on the sacred Scripture— That he has therein revealed himself; that not the Father only, but the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, uni-

ted, is the Creator of heaven and earth; whom neither the knowledge innate by nature, nor the very beautiful mirror displayed to us in the world, can, in consequence of our depravity, teach us to know so as to glorify him. This gives occasion for treating of the revelation of God in the Scripture, of the unity of the Divine Essence, and the trinity of Persons. — To prevent man from attributing to God the blame of his own voluntary blindness, the Author shows the state of man at his creation, and treats of the image of God, free-will, and the primitive integrity of nature. — Having finished the subject of creation, he proceeds to the conservation and government of all things, concluding the first book with a full discussion of the doctrine of divine providence.

II. But since man is fallen by sin from the state in which he was created, it is necessary to come to Christ. Therefore it follows in the Creed, “And in Jesus Christ, his only Son our Lord,” &c.

So in the second book of the Institutes our Author treats of the knowledge of God as the Redeemer in Christ; and having shown the fall of man, leads him to Christ the Mediator. Here he states the doctrine of original sin—that man possesses no inherent strength to enable him to deliver himself from sin and the impending curse, but that, on the contrary, nothing can proceed from him, antecedently to reconciliation and renovation, but what is deserving of condemnation—Therefore, that, man being utterly lost in himself, and incapable of conceiving even a good thought by which he may restore himself, or perform actions acceptable to God, he must seek redemption out of himself, in Christ—That the Law was given for this purpose, not to confine its observers to itself, but to conduct them to Christ; which gives occasion to introduce an exposition of the Moral Law—That he was known, as the Author of salvation, to the Jews under the Law, but more fully under the Gospel, in which he is manifested to the world.—Hence follows the doctrine of the similarity and difference of the Old and New Testament, of the Law and Gospel.—It is next stated, that, in order to the complete accomplishment of salvation, it was necessary for the eternal Son of God to become man, and that he actually assumed a real human nature:—it is also shown how these two natures constitute one per-

son — That the office of Christ, appointed for the acquisition and application of complete salvation by his merit and efficacy, is sacerdotal, regal, and prophetic. — Next follows the manner in which Christ executed his office, or actually performed the part of a Mediator, being an exposition of the Articles respecting his death, resurrection, and ascension to heaven. — Lastly, the Author shows the truth and propriety of affirming that Christ merited the grace of God and salvation for us.

III. As long as Christ is separate from us, he profits us nothing. Hence the necessity of our being ingrafted into him, as branches into a vine. Therefore the doctrine concerning Christ is followed, in the third part of the Creed, by this clause, "I believe in the Holy Spirit," as being the bond of union between us and Christ.

So in the third book our Author treats of the Holy Spirit, who unites us to Christ — and consequently of faith, by which we embrace Christ, with his twofold benefit, free righteousness, which he imputes to us, and regeneration, which he commences within us, by bestowing repentance upon us. — And to show that we have not the least room to glory in such faith as is unconnected with the pursuit of repentance, before proceeding to the full discussion of justification, he treats at large of repentance and the continual exercise of it, which Christ, apprehended by faith, produces in us by his Spirit. — He next fully discusses the first and chief benefit of Christ when united to us by the Holy Spirit, that is, justification — and then treats of prayer, which resembles the hand that actually receives those blessings to be enjoyed, which faith knows, from the word of promise, to be laid up with God for our use. — But as all men are not united to Christ, the sole Author of salvation, by the Holy Spirit, who creates and preserves faith in us, he treats of God's eternal election; which is the cause that we, in whom he foresaw no good but what he intended freely to bestow, have been favoured with the gift of Christ, and united to God by the effectual call of the Gospel. — Lastly, he treats of complete regeneration, and the fruition of happiness; that is, the final resurrection, towards which our eyes must be directed, since in this world the felicity of the pious, in respect of enjoyment, is only begun.

IV. But as the Holy Spirit does not unite all men to Christ,

or make them partakers of faith, and on those to whom he imparts it he does not ordinarily bestow it without means, but employs for this purpose the preaching of the Gospel and the use of the sacraments, with the administration of all discipline, therefore it follows in the Creed, "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church," whom, though involved in eternal death, yet, in pursuance of the gratuitous election, God has freely reconciled to himself in Christ, and made partakers of the Holy Spirit, that, being ingrafted into Christ, they may have communion with him as their head, whence flows a perpetual remission of sins, and a full restoration to eternal life.

So in the fourth book our Author treats of the Church — then of the means used by the Holy Spirit in effectually calling from spiritual death, and preserving the church — the word and sacraments — baptism and the Lord's supper — which are as it were Christ's regal sceptre, by which he commences his spiritual reign in the Church by the energy of his Spirit, and carries it forwards from day to day during the present life, after the close of which he perfects it without those means.

And as political institutions are the asylums of the Church in this life, though civil government is distinct from the spiritual kingdom of Christ, our Author instructs us respecting it as a signal blessing of God, which the Church ought to acknowledge with gratitude of heart, till we are called out of this transitory state to the heavenly inheritance, where God will be all in all.

This is the plan of the Institutes, which may be comprised in the following brief summary: —

Man, created originally upright, being afterwards ruined, not partially, but totally, finds salvation out of himself, wholly in Christ; to whom being united by the Holy Spirit, freely bestowed, without any regard of future works, he enjoys in him a twofold benefit, the perfect imputation of righteousness, which attends him to the grave, and the commencement of sanctification, which he daily increases, till at length he completes it at the day of regeneration or resurrection of the body, so that in eternal life and the heavenly inheritance his praises are celebrated for such stupendous mercy.

INSTITUTES
OF THE
CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

BOOK I.

ON THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD THE CREATOR.

ARGUMENT.

THE first book treats of the knowledge of God the Creator; but, this being chiefly manifested in the creation of man, man also is made the subject of discussion. Thus the principal topics of the whole treatise are two—the knowledge of God, and the knowledge of man. In the first chapter, they are considered together; in the following chapters, separately; yet some things are introduced, which may be referred to either or both. What respects the Scripture and images may belong to the knowledge of God; what respects the formation of the world, the holy angels, and the devils, to the knowledge of man; and what respects the manner in which God governs the world, to both.

On the first of these topics, the knowledge of God, this book shows,

First, What kind of knowledge God himself requires—Chap. II.

Secondly, Where it must be sought—Chap. III.—IX., as follows:

1. Not in man; because, though the human mind is naturally endued with it, yet it is extinguished, partly by ignorance, partly by wickedness—Chap. III. IV.
2. Nor in the structure of the world; because, though it shines there with the brightest evidence, testimonies of that kind, however plain, are, through our stupidity, wholly useless to us—Chap. V.
3. But in the Scripture—Chap. VI.—IX.

Thirdly, What kind of a being God is—Chap. X.

Fourthly, The impiety of ascribing to God a visible form, with observations on the adoration and origin of images—Chap. XI.

Fifthly, The reasonableness that God alone should be supremely worshipped—Chap. XII.

Lastly, The unity of the Divine Essence, and the distinction of three Persons—Chap. XIII.

On the other of these topics, the knowledge of man, it contains,

First, A dissertation on the creation of the world, and on the good and evil angels, all which relate to man—Chap. XIV.

Secondly, Proceeding to man himself, an examination of his nature and powers—Chap. XV.

But, in order to a clearer illustration of the knowledge of God and man, the three remaining chapters treat of the government of all human actions and of the whole world, in opposition to fortune and fate, stating the pure doctrine, and showing its use; and conclude with proving that, though God uses the agency of the wicked, he is pure from all pollution, and chargeable with no blame.

CHAPTER I.

THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD AND THE KNOWLEDGE OF OURSELVES.

TRUE and substantial wisdom principally consists of two parts, the knowledge of God, and the knowledge of ourselves. But, while these two branches of knowledge are so intimately connected, which of them precedes and produces the other, is not easy to discover. For, in the first place, no man can take a survey of himself but he must immediately turn to the contemplation of God, in whom he "lives and moves;" (a) since it is evident that the talents which we possess are not from ourselves, and that our very existence is nothing but a subsistence in God alone. These bounties, distilling to us by drops from heaven, form, as it were, so many streams conducting us to the fountain-head. Our poverty conduces to a clearer display of the infinite fulness of God. Especially, the miserable ruin, into which we have been plunged by the defection of the first man, compels us to raise our eyes towards heaven, not only as hungry and famished, to seek thence a supply for our wants,

(a) Acts xvii. 2.

but, aroused with fear, to learn humility. For, since man is subject to a world of miseries, and has been spoiled of his divine array, this melancholy exposure discovers an immense mass of deformity: every one, therefore, must be so impressed with a consciousness of his own infelicity, as to arrive at some knowledge of God. Thus a sense of our ignorance, vanity, poverty, infirmity, depravity, and corruption, leads us to perceive and acknowledge that in the Lord alone are to be found true wisdom, solid strength, perfect goodness, and unspotted righteousness; and so, by our imperfections, we are excited to a consideration of the perfections of God. Nor can we really aspire toward him, till we have begun to be displeased with ourselves. For who would not gladly rest satisfied with himself? where is the man not actually absorbed in self-complacency, while he remains unacquainted with his true situation, or content with his own endowments, and ignorant or forgetful of his own misery? The knowledge of ourselves, therefore, is not only an incitement to seek after God, but likewise a considerable assistance towards finding him.

II. On the other hand, it is plain that no man can arrive at the true knowledge of himself, without having first contemplated the divine character, and then descended to the consideration of his own. For, such is the native pride of us all, we invariably esteem ourselves righteous, innocent, wise, and holy, till we are convinced, by clear proofs, of our unrighteousness, turpitude, folly, and impurity. But we are never thus convinced, while we confine our attention to ourselves, and regard not the Lord, who is the only standard by which this judgment ought to be formed. Because, from our natural proneness to hypocrisy, any vain appearance of righteousness abundantly contents us instead of the reality; and, every thing within and around us being exceedingly defiled, we are delighted with what is least so, as extremely pure, while we confine our reflections within the limits of human corruption. So the eye, accustomed to see nothing but black, judges that to be very white, which is but whitish, or perhaps brown. Indeed, the senses of our bodies may assist us in discovering how grossly we err in estimating the powers of the soul. For if at noon-day we look either on the ground, or at any surrounding objects, we conclude our vision to be very strong and piercing; but when we raise our eyes and steadily look at the sun, they are at once dazzled and confounded with such a blaze of brightness, and we are constrained to confess, that our sight, so piercing in viewing terrestrial things, when directed to the sun, is dimness itself. Thus also it happens in the consideration of our spiritual endowments. For as long as our views are bounded by the earth, perfectly content with our own

righteousness, wisdom, and strength, we fondly flatter ourselves, and fancy we are little less than demigods. But, if we once elevate our thoughts to God, and consider his nature, and the consummate perfection of his righteousness, wisdom, and strength, to which we ought to be conformed, — what before charmed us in ourselves under the false pretext of righteousness, will soon be loathed as the greatest iniquity; what strangely deceived us under the title of wisdom, will be despised as extreme folly; and what wore the appearance of strength, will be proved to be most wretched impotence. So very remote from the divine purity is what seems in us the highest perfection.

III. Hence that horror and amazement with which the Scripture always represents the saints to have been impressed and disturbed, on every discovery of the presence of God. For when we see those, who before his appearance stood secure and firm, so astonished and affrighted at the manifestation of his glory, as to faint and almost expire through fear, — we must infer that man is never sufficiently affected with a knowledge of his own meanness, till he has compared himself with the Divine Majesty. Of this consternation we have frequent examples in the Judges and Prophets; so that it was a common expression among the Lord's people — “We shall die, because we have seen God.” (*b*) Therefore the history of Job, to humble men with a consciousness of their pollution, impotence, and folly, derives its principal argument from a description of the Divine purity, power, and wisdom. And not without reason. For we see how Abraham, the nearer he approached to behold the glory of the Lord, the more fully acknowledged himself to be but “dust and ashes;” (*c*) and how Elias (*d*) could not bear his approach without covering his face, his appearance is so formidable. And what can man do, all vile and corrupt, when fear constrains even the cherubim themselves to veil their faces? This is what the prophet Isaiah speaks of — “the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of hosts shall reign:” (*e*) that is, when he shall make a fuller and nearer exhibition of his splendour, it shall eclipse the splendour of the brightest object besides. But, though the knowledge of God and the knowledge of ourselves be intimately connected, the proper order of instruction requires us first to treat of the former, and then to proceed to the discussion of the latter.

(*b*) Judg. xiii. 22.

(*c*) Gen. xviii. 27.

(*d*) 1 Kings xix. 13.

(*e*) Isaiah vi. 2; xxiv. 23.

CHAPTER II.

THE NATURE AND TENDENCY OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD.

By the knowledge of God, I intend not merely a notion that there is such a Being, but also an acquaintance with whatever we ought to know concerning Him, conducing to his glory and our benefit. For we cannot with propriety say, there is any knowledge of God where there is no religion or piety. I have no reference here to that species of knowledge by which men, lost and condemned in themselves, apprehend God the Redeemer in Christ the Mediator; but only to that first and simple knowledge, to which the genuine order of nature would lead us, if Adam had retained his innocence. For though, in the present ruined state of human nature, no man will ever perceive God to be a Father, or the Author of salvation, or in any respect propitious, but as pacified by the mediation of Christ; yet it is one thing to understand, that God our Maker supports us by his power, governs us by his providence, nourishes us by his goodness, and follows us with blessings of every kind, and another to embrace the grace of reconciliation proposed to us in Christ. Therefore, since God is first manifested, both in the structure of the world and in the general tenor of Scripture, simply as the Creator, and afterwards reveals himself in the person of Christ as a Redeemer, hence arises a two-fold knowledge of him; of which the former is first to be considered, and the other will follow in its proper place. For though our mind cannot conceive of God, without ascribing some worship to him, it will not be sufficient merely to apprehend that he is the only proper object of universal worship and adoration, unless we are also persuaded that he is the fountain of all good, and seek for none but in him. This I maintain, not only because he sustains the universe, as he once made it, by his infinite power, governs it by his wisdom, preserves it by his goodness, and especially reigns over the human race in righteousness and judgment, exercising a merciful forbearance, and defending them by his protection; but because there cannot be found the least particle of wisdom, light, righteousness, power, rectitude, or sincere truth which does not proceed from him, and claim him for its author: we should therefore learn to expect and supplicate all these things from him, and thankfully to acknowledge what he gives us. For this sense of the divine perfections is calculated to teach us piety, which produces religion. By piety, I mean a reverence and love of God,

arising from a knowledge of his benefits. For, till men are sensible that they owe every thing to God, that they are supported by his paternal care, that he is the Author of all the blessings they enjoy, and that nothing should be sought independently of him, they will never voluntarily submit to his authority; they will never truly and cordially devote themselves to his service, unless they rely upon him alone for true felicity.

II. Cold and frivolous, then, are the speculations of those who employ themselves in disquisitions on the essence of God, when it would be more interesting to us to become acquainted with his character, and to know what is agreeable to his nature. For what end is answered by professing, with Epicurus, that there is a God, who, discarding all concern about the world, indulges himself in perpetual inactivity? What benefit arises from the knowledge of a God with whom we have no concern? Our knowledge of God should rather tend, first, to teach us fear and reverence; and, secondly, to instruct us to implore all good at his hand, and to render him the praise of all that we receive. For how can you entertain a thought of God without immediately reflecting, that, being a creature of his formation, you must, by right of creation, be subject to his authority? that you are indebted to him for your life, and that all your actions should be done with reference to him? If this be true, it certainly follows that your life is miserably corrupt, unless it be regulated by a desire of obeying him, since his will ought to be the rule of our conduct. Nor can you have a clear view of him without discovering him to be the fountain and origin of all good. This would produce a desire of union to him, and confidence in him, if the human mind were not seduced by its own depravity from the right path of investigation. For, even at the first, the pious mind dreams not of any imaginary deity, but contemplates only the one true God; and, concerning him, indulges not the fictions of fancy, but, content with believing him to be such as he reveals himself, uses the most diligent and unremitting caution, lest it should fall into error by a rash and presumptuous transgression of his will. He who thus knows him, sensible that all things are subject to his control, confides in him as his Guardian and Protector, and unreservedly commits himself to his care. Assured that he is the author of all blessings, in distress or want he immediately flies to his protection, and expects his aid. Persuaded of his goodness and mercy, he relies on him with unlimited confidence, nor doubts of finding in his clemency a remedy provided for all his evils. Knowing him to be his Lord and Father, he concludes that he ought to mark his government in all things, revere his majesty, endeavour to promote

his glory, and obey his commands. Perceiving him to be a just Judge, armed with severity for the punishment of crimes, he keeps his tribunal always in view, and is restrained by fear from provoking his wrath. Yet he is not so terrified at the apprehension of his justice, as to wish to evade it, even if escape were possible; but loves him as much in punishing the wicked as in blessing the pious, because he believes it as necessary to his glory to punish the impious and abandoned, as to reward the righteous with eternal life. Besides, he restrains himself from sin, not merely from a dread of vengeance, but because he loves and reveres God as his Father, honours and worships him as his Lord, and, even though there were no hell, would shudder at the thought of offending him. See, then, the nature of pure and genuine religion. It consists in faith, united with a serious fear of God, comprehending a voluntary reverence, and producing legitimate worship agreeable to the injunctions of the law. And this requires to be the more carefully remarked, because men in general render to God a formal worship, but very few truly reverence him; while great ostentation in ceremonies is universally displayed, but sincerity of heart is rarely to be found.

CHAPTER III.

THE HUMAN MIND NATURALLY ENDUED WITH THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD.

WE lay it down as a position not to be controverted, that the human mind, even by natural instinct, possesses some sense of a Deity. For that no man might shelter himself under the pretext of ignorance, God hath given to all some apprehension of his existence, (*f*) the memory of which he frequently and insensibly renews; so that, as men universally know that there is a God, and that he is their Maker, they must be condemned by their own testimony, for not having worshipped him and consecrated their lives to his service. If we seek for ignorance of a Deity, it is nowhere more likely to be found, than among tribes the most stupid and furthest from civilization. But, as the celebrated Cicero observes, there is no nation so barbarous, no race so savage, as not to be firmly persuaded of the being of a God. (*g*) Even those who in other respects appear to differ but little from brutes, always

(*f*) Rom. i. 20. (*g*) Cicer. de Natur. Deor. lib. i. Lactant. Inst. lib. iii. cap. 10

retain some sense of religion; so fully are the minds of men possessed with this common principle, which is closely interwoven with their original composition. Now, since there has never been a country or family, from the beginning of the world, totally destitute of religion, it is a tacit confession, that some sense of the Divinity is inscribed on every heart. Of this opinion, idolatry itself furnishes ample proof. For we know how reluctantly man would degrade himself to exalt other creatures above him. His preference of worshipping a piece of wood or stone, to being thought to have no god, evinces the impression of a Deity on the human mind to be very strong, the obliteration of which is more difficult than a total change of the natural disposition; and this is certainly changed, whenever man leaves his natural pride, and voluntarily descends to such meannesses under the notion of worshipping God.

II. It is most absurd, then, to pretend, as is asserted by some, that religion was the contrivance of a few subtle and designing men, a political machine to confine the simple multitude to their duty, while those who inculcated the worship of God on others, were themselves far from believing that any god existed. I confess, indeed, that artful men have introduced many inventions into religion, to fill the vulgar with reverence, and strike them with terror, in order to obtain the greater command over their minds. But this they never could have accomplished, if the minds of men had not previously been possessed of a firm persuasion of the existence of God, from which the propensity to religion proceeds. And that they who cunningly imposed on the illiterate, under the pretext of religion, were themselves wholly destitute of any knowledge of God, is quite incredible. For though there were some in ancient times, and many arise in the present age, who deny the existence of God, yet, in spite of their reluctance, they are continually receiving proofs of what they desire to disbelieve. We read of no one guilty of more audacious or unbridled contempt of the Deity than Caligula; yet no man ever trembled with greater distress at any instance of Divine wrath, so that he was constrained to dread the Divinity whom he professed to despise. This you may always see exemplified in persons of similar character. For the most audacious contemners of God are most alarmed, even at the noise of a falling leaf. Whence arises this, but from the vengeance of the Divine Majesty, smiting their consciences the more powerfully in proportion to their efforts to fly from it? They try every refuge to hide themselves from the Lord's presence, and to efface it from their minds; but their attempts to elude it are all in vain. Though it may seem to disappear

for a moment, it presently returns with increased violence; so that, if they have any remission of the anguish of conscience, it resembles the sleep of persons intoxicated, or subject to frenzy, who enjoy no placid rest while sleeping, being continually harassed with horrible and tremendous dreams. The impious themselves, therefore, exemplify the observation, that the idea of a God is never lost in the human mind.

III. It will always be evident to persons of correct judgment, that the idea of a Deity impressed on the mind of man is indelible. That all have by nature an innate persuasion of the Divine existence, a persuasion inseparable from their very constitution, we have abundant evidence in the contumacy of the wicked, whose furious struggles to extricate themselves from the fear of God are unavailing. Though Diagoras, and others like him, turn to ridicule what all ages have believed of religion; (*h*) though Dionysius scoff at the judgment of Heaven, — it is but a forced laughter, for the worm of a guilty conscience torments them within, worse than if they were seared with hot irons. I agree not with Cicero, that errors in process of time become obsolete, and that religion is increased and ameliorated daily. For the world, as will shortly be observed, uses its utmost endeavours to banish all knowledge of God, and tries every method of corrupting his worship. I only maintain, that while the stupid insensibility which the wicked wish to acquire, to promote their contempt of God, preys upon their minds, yet the sense of a Deity, which they ardently desire to extinguish, is still strong, and frequently discovers itself. Whence we infer, that this is a doctrine, not first to be learned in the schools, but which every man from his birth is self-taught, and which, though many strain every nerve to banish it from them, yet nature itself permits none to forget. Now, if the end for which all men are born and live, be to know God, — and unless the knowledge of God have reached this point, it is uncertain and vain, — it is evident, that all who direct not every thought and action of life to this end, are degenerated from the law of their creation. Of this the heathen philosophers themselves were not ignorant. This was Plato's meaning, when he taught that the chief good of the soul consists in similitude to God, when the soul, having a clear knowledge of him, is wholly transformed into his likeness. (*i*) The reasoning also of Gryllus, in Plutarch, is very accurate, when he affirms, that men entirely destitute of religion, not only do not excel the brutes, but are in many respects far more wretched, being obnoxious to evil under so many forms, and always dragging on a tumultuous

(*h*) Cicero, de Nat. Deor. lib. 1 & 3. Valer. Maxim. lib. 1, cap. 1.

(*i*) In Phæd. & Theæt.

and restless life. The worship of God is therefore the only thing which renders men superior to brutes, and makes them aspire to immortality.

CHAPTER IV.

THIS KNOWLEDGE EXTINGUISHED OR CORRUPTED, PARTLY BY IGNORANCE, PARTLY BY WICKEDNESS.

✓ WHILE experience testifies that the seeds of religion are sown by God in every heart, we scarcely find one man in a hundred who cherishes what he has received, and not one in whom they grow to maturity, much less bear fruit in due season. Some perhaps grow vain in their own superstitions, while others revolt from God with intentional wickedness; but all degenerate from the true knowledge of him. The fact is, that no genuine piety remains in the world. But, in saying that some fall into superstition through error, I would not insinuate that their ignorance excuses them from guilt; because their blindness is always connected with pride, vanity, and contumacy. Pride and vanity are discovered, when miserable men, in seeking after God, rise not, as they ought, above their own level, but judge of him according to their carnal stupidity, and leave the proper path of investigation in pursuit of speculations as vain as they are curious. Their conceptions of him are formed, not according to the representations he gives of himself, but by the inventions of their own presumptuous imaginations. This gulf being opened, whatever course they take, they must be rushing forwards to destruction. None of their subsequent attempts for the worship or service of God can be considered as rendered to him; because they worship not him, but a figment of their own brains in his stead. This depravity Paul expressly remarks: "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools." (*k*) He had before said, "they became vain in their imaginations." But lest any should exculpate them, he adds that they were deservedly blinded, because, not content within the bounds of sobriety, but arrogating to themselves more than was right, they wilfully darkened, and even infatuated themselves with pride, vanity, and perverseness. Whence it follows, that their folly is inexcusable, which originates not only in a vain curiosity, but in false confidence, and an immoderate desire to exceed the limits of human knowledge.

(*k*) Rom. i. 22.

II. David's assertion, that "the fool hath said in his heart, There is no God," (*l*) is primarily, as we shall soon see in another place, to be restricted to those who extinguish the light of nature, and wilfully stupefy themselves. For we see many, become hardened by bold and habitual transgressions, striving to banish all remembrance of God, which the instinct of nature is still suggesting to their minds. To render their madness more detestable, he introduces them as expressly denying the existence of God; not that they deprive him of his being, but because they rob him of his justice and providence, shutting him up as an idler in heaven. Now, as nothing would be more inconsistent with Deity, than to abandon the government of the world, leave it to fortune, and connive at the crimes of men, that they might wanton with impunity, — whoever extinguishes all fear of the heavenly judgment, and indulges himself in security, denies that there is any God. After the impious have wilfully shut their own eyes, it is the righteous vengeance of God upon them, to darken their understandings, so that, seeing, they may not perceive. (*m*) David is the best interpreter of his own meaning, in another place, where he says, "The wicked have no fear of God before their eyes;" (*n*) and again, that they encourage themselves in their iniquities with the flattering persuasion that God doth not see them. (*o*) Though they are constrained to acknowledge the existence of God, yet they rob him of his glory, by detracting from his power. For as God, according to the testimony of Paul, "cannot deny himself," (*p*) because he perpetually remains like himself, — those who feign him to be a vain and lifeless image, are truly said to deny God. It must also be remarked, that, though they strive against their own natural understanding, and desire not only to banish him thence, but even to annihilate him in heaven, their insensibility can never prevail, so as to prevent God from sometimes recalling them to his tribunal. But as no dread restrains them from violent opposition to the divine will, it is evident, as long as they are carried away with such a blind impetuosity, that they are governed by a brutish forgetfulness of God.

III. Thus is overthrown the vain excuse pleaded by many for their superstition; for they satisfy themselves with any attention to religion, however preposterous, not considering that the Divine Will is the perpetual rule to which true religion ought to be conformed; that God ever continues like himself; that he is no spectre or phantasm, to be metamorphosed according to the fancy of every individual. It is easy to see how superstition mocks God with hypocritical services, while it attempts

(*l*) Psalm xiv. 1.(*m*) Isaiah vi. 9.(*n*) Psalm xxxvi. 1.(*o*) Psalm x. 11.(*p*) 2 Tim. ii. 13.

to please him. For, embracing only those things which he declares he disregards, it either contemptuously practises, or even openly rejects, what he prescribes and declares to be pleasing in his sight. Persons who introduce newly-invented methods of worshipping God, really worship and adore the creature of their distempered imaginations; for they would never have dared to trifle in such a manner with God, if they had not first feigned a god conformable to their own false and foolish notions. Wherefore the apostle pronounces a vague and unsettled notion concerning the Deity to be ignorance of God. "When ye knew not God, (says he,) ye did service unto them which by nature were no gods." (g) And in another place he speaks of the Ephesians as having been "without God," (r) while they were strangers to a right knowledge of the only true God. Nor, in this respect, is it of much importance, whether you imagine to yourself one god or more; for in either case you depart and revolt from the true God, and, forsaking him, you have nothing left you but an execrable idol. We must therefore decide, with Lactantius, that there is no legitimate religion unconnected with truth.

IV. Another sin is, that they never think of God but against their inclinations, nor approach him till their reluctance is overcome by constraint; and then they are influenced, not by a voluntary fear, proceeding from reverence of the Divine Majesty, but by a servile and constrained fear, extorted by the divine judgment, which they dread because it is inevitable, at the same time that they hate it. Now, to impiety, and to this species of it alone, is applicable that assertion of Statius, that fear first made gods in the world. (s) They, whose minds are alienated from the righteousness of God, earnestly desire the subversion of that tribunal, which they know to be established for the punishment of transgressions against it. With this disposition, they wage war against the Lord, who cannot be deprived of his judgment; but when they apprehend his irresistible arm to be impending over their heads, unable to avert or evade it, they tremble with fear. That they may not seem altogether to despise him, whose majesty troubles them, they practise some form of religion; at the same time not ceasing to pollute themselves with vices of every kind, and to add one flagitious act to another, till they have violated every part of God's holy law, and dissipated all its righteousness. It is certain, at least, that they are not prevented by that pretended fear of God from enjoying pleasure and satisfaction in their sins, practising self-adulation, and preferring the indulgence of their own carnal intemperance to the salutary restraints of the

(g) Gal. iv. 8.

(r) Eph. ii. 12.

(s) Statii Thebaid. lib. 3.

Holy Spirit. But that being a false and vain shadow of religion, and scarcely worthy even to be called its shadow, — it is easy to infer the wide difference between such a confused notion of God, and the piety which is instilled only into the minds of the faithful, and is the source of religion. Yet hypocrites, who are flying from God, resort to the artifices of superstition, for the sake of appearing devoted to him. For whereas the whole tenor of their life ought to be a perpetual course of obedience to him, they make no scruple of rebelling against him in almost all their actions, only endeavouring to appease him with a few paltry sacrifices. Whereas he ought to be served with sanctity of life and integrity of heart, they invent frivolous trifles and worthless observances, to conciliate his favour. They abandon themselves to their impurities with the greater licentiousness, because they confide in being able to discharge all their duty to him by ridiculous expiations. In a word, whereas their confidence ought to be placed on him, they neglect him, and depend upon themselves or on other creatures. At length they involve themselves in such a vast accumulation of errors, that those sparks which enable them to discover the glory of God are smothered, and at last extinguished by the criminal darkness of iniquity. That seed, which it is impossible to eradicate, a sense of the existence of a Deity, yet remains ; but so corrupted as to produce only the worst of fruits. Yet this is a further proof of what I now contend for, that an idea of God is naturally engraved on the hearts of men, since necessity extorts a confession of it, even from reprobates themselves. In the moment of tranquillity, they facetiously mock the Divine Being, and with loquacious impertinence derogate from his power. But if any despair oppress them, it stimulates them to seek him, and dictates concise prayers, which prove that they are not altogether ignorant of God, but that what ought to have appeared before had been suppressed by obstinacy.

CHAPTER V.

THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD CONSPICUOUS IN THE FORMATION AND CONTINUAL GOVERNMENT OF THE WORLD.

As the perfection of a happy life consists in the knowledge of God, that no man might be precluded from attaining felicity, God hath not only sown in the minds of men the seed of re-

ligion, already mentioned, but hath manifested himself in the formation of every part of the world, and daily presents himself to public view, in such a manner, that they cannot open their eyes without being constrained to behold him. His essence indeed is incomprehensible, so that his Majesty is not to be perceived by the human senses; but on all his works he hath inscribed his glory in characters so clear, unequivocal, and striking, that the most illiterate and stupid cannot exculpate themselves by the plea of ignorance. The Psalmist therefore, with great propriety, exclaims, "He covereth himself with light as with a garment;" (*t*) as if he had said, that his first appearance in visible apparel was at the creation of the world, when he displayed those glories which are still conspicuous on every side. In the same place, the Psalmist compares the expanded heavens to a royal pavilion;—he says that "he layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters; maketh the clouds his chariot; walketh upon the wings of the wind;" and maketh the winds and the lightnings his swift messengers. And because the glory of his power and wisdom is more refulgently displayed above, heaven is generally called his palace. And, in the first place, whithersoever you turn your eyes, there is not an atom of the world in which you cannot behold some brilliant sparks at least of his glory. But you cannot at one view take a survey of this most ample and beautiful machine in all its vast extent, without being completely overwhelmed with its infinite splendour. Wherefore the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews elegantly represents the worlds as the manifestations of invisible things; (*v*) for the exact symmetry of the universe is a mirror, in which we may contemplate the otherwise invisible God. For which reason the Psalmist (*w*) attributes to the celestial bodies a language universally known; for they afford a testimony of the Deity too evident to escape the observation even of the most ignorant people in the world. But the Apostle more distinctly asserts this manifestation to men of what was useful to be known concerning God; "for the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and godhead." (*x*)

II. Of his wonderful wisdom, both heaven and earth contain innumerable proofs; not only those more abstruse things, which are the subjects of astronomy, medicine, and the whole science of physics, but those things which force themselves on the view of the most illiterate of mankind, so that they cannot open their eyes without being constrained to witness them. Adepts, indeed, in those liberal arts, or persons just

(*t*) Psalm civ. 2. (*v*) Heb. xi. 3. (*w*) Psalm xix. 1, 3. (*x*) Rom. i. 20.

initiated into them, are thereby enabled to proceed much further in investigating the secrets of Divine Wisdom. Yet ignorance of those sciences prevents no man from such a survey of the workmanship of God, as is more than sufficient to excite his admiration of the Divine Architect. In disquisitions concerning the motions of the stars, in fixing their situations, measuring their distances, and distinguishing their peculiar properties, there is need of skill, exactness, and industry; and the providence of God being more clearly revealed by these discoveries, the mind ought to rise to a sublimer elevation for the contemplation of his glory. But since the meanest and most illiterate of mankind, who are furnished with no other assistance than their own eyes, cannot be ignorant of the excellence of the Divine skill, exhibiting itself in that endless, yet regular variety of the innumerable celestial host, — it is evident, that the Lord abundantly manifests his wisdom to every individual on earth. Thus it belongs to a man of preëminent ingenuity to examine, with the critical exactness of Galen, the connection, the symmetry, the beauty, and the use of the various parts of the human body. But the composition of the human body is universally acknowledged to be so ingenious, as to render its Maker the object of deserved admiration.

III. And therefore some of the philosophers (*y*) of antiquity have justly called man a microcosm, or world in miniature; because he is an eminent specimen of the power, goodness, and wisdom of God, and contains in him wonders enough to occupy the attention of our minds, if we are not indisposed to such a study. For this reason, Paul, having remarked that the blind “might feel after God and find him,” immediately adds, that “he is not far from every one of us;” (*z*) because every man has undoubtedly an inward perception of the celestial goodness, by which he is quickened. But if, to attain some ideas of God, it be not necessary for us to go beyond ourselves, what an unpardonable indolence is it in those who will not descend into themselves that they may find him! For the same reason, David, having briefly celebrated the wonderful name and honour of God, which are universally conspicuous, immediately exclaims, “What is man, that thou art mindful of him?” (*a*) Again, “Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast ordained strength.” Thus declaring not only that the human race is a clear mirror of the works of God, but that even infants at the breast have tongues so eloquent for the publication of his glory, that there is no necessity for other orators; whence he hesitates not to produce them as fully

(*y*) Macrob. lib. 2. de Somn. Scip. c. 12. Boet. de Defin. Arist. lib. 1. de Hist. Animal.

(*z*) Acts xvii. 27.

(*a*) Psalm viii. 2, 4.

capable of confuting the madness of those whose diabolical pride would wish to extinguish the name of God. Hence also what Paul quotes from Aratus, that "we are the offspring of God;" (b) since his adorning us with such great excellence has proved him to be our Father. So, from the dictates of common sense and experience, the heathen poets called him the Father of men. Nor will any man freely devote himself to the service of God, unless he have been allured to love and reverence him, by first experiencing his paternal love.

IV. But herein appears the vile ingratitude of men — that, while they ought to be proclaiming the praises of God for the wonderful skill displayed in their formation, and the inestimable bounties he bestows on them, they are only inflated with the greater pride. They perceive how wonderfully God works within them, and experience teaches them what a variety of blessings they receive from his liberality. They are constrained to know, whether willingly or not, that these are proofs of his divinity: yet they suppress this knowledge in their hearts. Indeed, they need not go out of themselves, provided they do not, by arrogating to themselves what is given from heaven, smother the light which illuminates their minds to a clearer discovery of God. Even in the present day, there are many men of monstrous dispositions, who hesitate not to pervert all the seeds of divinity sown in the nature of man, in order to bury in oblivion the name of God. How detestable is this frenzy, that man, discovering in his body and soul a hundred vestiges of God, should make this very excellence a pretext for the denial of his being! They will not say that they are distinguished from the brutes by chance; but they ascribe it to nature, which they consider as the author of all things, and remove God out of sight. They perceive most exquisite workmanship in all their members, from the head to the feet. Here also they substitute nature in the place of God. But above all, the rapid motions of the soul, its noble faculties, and excellent talents, discover a Divinity not easily concealed; unless the Epicureans, like the Cyclops, from this eminence should audaciously wage war against God. Do all the treasures of heavenly wisdom concur in the government of a worm five feet in length? and shall the universe be destitute of this privilege? To state that there is in the soul a certain machinery corresponding to every part of the body, is so far from obscuring the divine glory, that it is rather an illustration of it. Let Epicurus answer; what concourse of atoms in the concoction of food and drink distributes part into excrements and part into blood, and causes the several members to perform

(b) Acts xvii. 28.

their different offices with as much diligence as if so many souls by common consent governed one body?

V. But my present concern is not with that sty of swines: I rather address those who, influenced by preposterous subtilties, would indirectly employ that frigid dogma of Aristotle to destroy the immortality of the soul, and deprive God of his rights. For, because the organs of the body are directed by the faculties of the soul, they pretend the soul to be so united to the body as to be incapable of subsisting without it; and by their eulogies of nature do all they can to suppress the name of God. But the powers of the soul are far from being limited to functions subservient to the body. For what concern has the body in measuring the heavens, counting the number of the stars, computing their several magnitudes, and acquiring a knowledge of their respective distances, of the celerity or tardiness of their courses, and of the degrees of their various declinations? I grant, indeed, the usefulness of astronomy, but only remark that, in these profound researches relating to the celestial orbs, there is no corporeal coöperation, but that the soul has its functions distinct from the body. I have proposed one example, whence inferences may readily be drawn by the readers. The manifold agility of the soul, which enables it to take a survey of heaven and earth; to join the past and the present; to retain the memory of things heard long ago; to conceive of whatever it chooses by the help of imagination; its ingenuity also in the invention of such admirable arts, — are certain proofs of the divinity in man. Besides, in sleep, it not only turns and moves itself round, but conceives many useful ideas, reasons on various subjects, and even divines future events. What shall we say, but that the vestiges of immortality impressed upon man are absolutely indelible? Now, what reason can be given, why man, who is of divine original, should not acknowledge his Creator? Shall we indeed, by the judgment with which we are endued, discern right from wrong, and shall there be no judge in heaven? Shall we, even in our sleep, have some remains of intelligence, and shall there be no God to govern the world? Shall we be esteemed the inventers of so many useful arts, that God may be defrauded of his praise? Whereas experience abundantly teaches, that all we have is variously distributed to us by some superior Being. The clamour of some, about a secret inspiration animating the whole world, is not only weak, but altogether profane. They are pleased with the celebrated passage of Virgil —

“ Know, first, a spirit, with an active flame,
 Fills, feeds, and animates this mighty frame;
 Runs through the watery worlds, the fields of air,
 The ponderous earth, the depths of heaven; and there
 Glows in the sun and moon, and burns in every star. } ”

Thus, mingling with the mass, the general soul
Lives in the parts, and agitates the whole.
From that celestial energy began
The low-browed brute, th' imperial race of man,
The painted birds who wing th' aerial plain,
And all the mighty monsters of the main ;
Their souls at first from high Olympus came," &c. (c)

Just as if the world, which is a theatre erected for displaying the glory of God, were its own creator ! For thus writes the same poet in another place, following the common opinion of the Greeks and Latins —

" Led by such wonders, sages have opined,
That bees have portions of a heavenly mind ;
That God pervades, and, like one common soul,
Fills, feeds, and animates the world's great whole ;
That flocks, herds, beasts, and men, from him receive
Their vital breath ; in him all move and live ;
That souls discerpt from him shall never die,
But back resolved to God and heaven shall fly, }
And live for ever in the starry sky." (d)

See the efficacy of that jejune speculation concerning a universal mind animating and actuating the world, in the production and encouragement of piety in the human heart. This more fully appears also from the profane expressions of the filthy Lucretius, which are deductions from the same principle. (e) Its true tendency is to set up a shadowy deity, and to banish all ideas of the true God, the proper object of fear and worship. I confess, indeed, that the expression, that nature is God, may be used in a pious sense by a pious mind ; but, as it is harsh and inconsistent with strict propriety of speech, nature being rather an order prescribed by God, it is dangerous in matters so momentous, and demanding peculiar caution, to confound the Deity with the inferior course of his works.

VI. Let us remember, then, in every consideration of our own nature, that there is one God, who governs all natures, and who expects us to regard him, to direct our faith to him, to worship and invoke him. For nothing is more preposterous than to enjoy such splendid advantages, which proclaim within us their divine origin, and to neglect the Author who bountifully bestows them. Now, what illustrious specimens of his power have we to arrest our attention ! unless it be possible for us not to know what strength is required to sustain with his word this immense fabric of heaven and earth ; now by his mere nod to shake the heaven with roaring peals of thunder, to consume whatever he choose with lightnings, and set the atmosphere on fire with the flame ; now to disturb it with

(c) *Æneid* vi. Pitt's Translation. (d) *Georg.* iv. Warton's Translation.
(e) *De Rerum Natur.* lib. 1.

tempests in various forms, and immediately, if he please, to compose all to instantaneous serenity; to restrain, suspended as it were in air, the sea, which, by its elevation, seems to threaten the earth with continual devastation; now raising it in a tremendous manner, by the tumultuous violence of the winds, and now appeasing the waves to render it calm. To this purpose are the numerous praises of the power of God, drawn from the testimonies of nature, particularly in the book of Job, and in the prophecies of Isaiah; which I now purposely omit, as they will be more suitably introduced; when I discuss the scriptural account of the creation of the world. Only I wished at present to hint, that this way of seeking God, by tracing the lineaments which, both above and below us, exhibit such a lively adumbration of him, is common to aliens, and to those who belong to his family. His power leads us to the consideration of his eternity; because he, from whom all things derive their origin, must necessarily be eternal and self-existent. But if we inquire the reason that induced him first to create all things, and now to preserve them, we shall find the sole cause to be his own goodness. But though this be the only cause, it should be more than sufficient to attract us to love him; since, according to the Psalmist, (*f*) there is no creature that does not participate in the effusions of his mercy.

VII. In the second species of his works, such as happen out of the ordinary course of nature, the proofs of his perfections are equally clear. For he so regulates his providence in the government of human society, that, while he exhibits, in innumerable ways, his benignity and beneficence to all, he likewise declares, by evident and daily indications, his clemency to the pious, and his severity to the wicked and ungodly. For no doubt can be entertained respecting his punishment of flagitious crimes; inasmuch as he clearly demonstrates himself to be the guardian and avenger of innocence, in prospering with his blessing the life of good men, in assisting their necessities, assuaging and comforting their sorrows, alleviating their calamities, and providing in all things for their safety. Nor should it perplex or eclipse his perpetual rule of righteousness, that he frequently permits the wicked and guilty for a time to exult in impunity; but suffers good men to be undeservedly harassed with much adversity, and even to be oppressed by the iniquitous malice of the ungodly. We ought rather to make a very different reflection; that, when he clearly manifests his wrath in the punishment of one sin, he hates all sins; and that, since he now passes by many sins unpunished, there will be a judgment hereafter, till which the punishment is de-

(f) Psalm cxlv. 9.

ferred. So, also, what ample occasion he supplies us for the consideration of his mercy, while, with unwearied benignity, he pursues the miserable, calling them back to himself with more than paternal indulgence, till his beneficence overcomes their depravity !

VIII. To this end the Psalmist, (*g*) mentioning that God, in desperate cases, suddenly and wonderfully succors, beyond all expectation, those who are miserable and ready to perish, either protecting from beasts of prey such as are wandering in deserts, and, at length, reconducting them into the right way, or supplying with food the needy and hungry, or delivering captives from dreary dungeons and iron chains, or bringing the shipwrecked safe into port, or healing the diseases of some who are almost dead, or scorching the earth with excessive heat and drought, or fertilizing it with the secret showers of his mercy, or elevating the meanest of the vulgar, or degrading nobles from their dignified stations, — the Psalmist, I say, having proposed such examples as these, infers from them that what are accounted fortuitous accidents, are so many proofs of his heavenly providence, especially of his paternal clemency ; and that hence the pious have cause to rejoice, while the mouths of the impious and reprobate are stopped. But, since the majority of men, immersed in their errors, are blind amidst the greatest opportunities of seeing, he accounts it a rare instance of singular wisdom discreetly to consider these works of God ; (*h*) from the sight of which, some, who, in other instances, discover the greatest acuteness, receive no benefit. And, notwithstanding all the displays of the glory of God, scarcely one man in a hundred is really a spectator of it. His power and wisdom are equally conspicuous. His power is illustriously manifested, when the ferocity of the impious, universally deemed insuperable, is quelled in an instant, their arrogance subdued, their strongest fortresses demolished, their weapons and armour broken in pieces, their strength diminished, their machinations confounded, and they fall by their own exertions ; when the audacity, which exalted itself above the heavens, is thrown down to the centre of the earth ; when, on the contrary, “ the poor are raised out of the dust, and the needy out of the dung-hill ;” (*i*) the oppressed and afflicted extricated from distressing extremities, and the desperate restored to a good hope ; when the unarmed are victorious over those who are armed, the few over the many, the weak over the strong. But his wisdom is eminently displayed in ordering every dispensation at the best possible time, confounding the greatest worldly sagacity, “ taking the wise in their own craftiness,” (*k*) and

(*g*) Psalm cvii.

(*h*) Psalm cvii. 43.

(*i*) Psalm cxiii. 7.

(*k*) 1 Cor. iii. 19.

finally disposing all things according to the dictates of the highest reason.

IX. We see that there is no need of any long or laborious argumentation, to obtain and produce testimonies for illustrating and asserting the Divine Majesty; since, from the few which we have selected and cursorily mentioned, it appears that they are every where so evident and obvious, as easily to be distinguished by the eyes, and pointed out with the fingers. And here it must again be observed, that we are invited to a knowledge of God; not such as, content with empty speculation, merely floats in the brain, but such as will be solid and fruitful, if rightly received and rooted in our hearts. For the Lord is manifested by his perfections; perceiving the influence and enjoying the benefits of which, we must necessarily be more acutely impressed with such a knowledge, than if we imagined a Deity of whose influence we had no perception. Whence we conclude this to be the right way, and the best method of seeking God; not with presumptuous curiosity to attempt an examination of his essence, which is rather to be adored than too curiously investigated; but to contemplate him in his works, in which he approaches and familiarizes, and, in some measure, communicates himself to us. To this the Apostle referred, when he said, that he is not to be sought far off, since, by his attribute of omnipresence, he dwells in every one of us. (*l*) Therefore David, having before confessed his greatness ineffable, after he descends to the mention of his works, adds, that he will "declare this greatness." (*m*) Wherefore it becomes us also to apply ourselves to such an investigation of God, as may fill our understanding with admiration, and powerfully interest our feelings. And, as Augustine somewhere teaches, being incapable of comprehending him, and fainting, as it were, under his immensity, we must take a view of his works, that we may be refreshed with his goodness. (*n*)

X. Now, such a knowledge ought not only to excite us to the worship of God, but likewise to awaken and arouse us to the hope of a future life. For when we consider, that the specimens given by the Lord, both of his clemency and of his severity, are only begun, and not completed, we certainly should esteem these as preludes to greater things, of which the manifestation and full exhibition are deferred to another life. When we see that pious men are loaded with afflictions by the impious, harassed with injuries, oppressed with calumnies, and vexed with contumelious and opprobrious treatment; that the wicked, on the contrary, flourish, prosper, obtain ease and dignity, and all with impunity, — we should immediately con-

(*l*) Acts xvii. 27.(*m*) Psalm cxlv. 6.(*n*) Aug. in Psal. cxliv.

clude, that there is another life, to which is reserved the vengeance due to iniquity, and the reward of righteousness. Moreover, when we observe the faithful frequently chastised by the Lord's rod, we may conclude, with great certainty, that the impious shall not always escape his vengeance. For that is a wise observation of Augustine — "If open punishment were now inflicted for every sin, it would be supposed that nothing would be reserved till the last judgment. Again, if God now did not openly punish any sin, it would be presumed that there was no divine providence." (o) It must therefore be confessed, that in each of the works of God, but more especially in the whole considered together, there is a bright exhibition of the divine perfections; by which the whole human race is invited and allured to the knowledge of God, and thence to true and complete felicity. But, though those perfections are most luminously portrayed around us, we only discover their principal tendency, their use, and the end of our contemplation of them, when we descend into our own selves, and consider by what means God displays in us his life, wisdom, and power, and exercises towards us his righteousness, goodness, and mercy. For, though David justly complains that unbelievers are fools, because they consider not the profound designs of God in the government of mankind, (p) yet there is much truth in what he says in another place — that the wonders of Divine Wisdom in this respect exceed in number the hairs of our head. (q) But as this argument must be treated more at large in due course, I at present omit it.

XI. But, notwithstanding the clear representations given by God in the mirror of his works, both of himself and of his everlasting dominion, such is our stupidity, that, always inattentive to these obvious testimonies, we derive no advantage from them. For, with regard to the structure and very beautiful organization of the world, how few of us are there, who, when lifting up their eyes to heaven, or looking round on the various regions of the earth, direct their minds to the remembrance of the Creator, and do not rather content themselves with a view of his works, to the total neglect of their Author! And with respect to those things that daily happen out of the ordinary course of nature, is it not the general opinion, that men are rolled and whirled about by the blind temerity of fortune, rather than governed by the providence of God? Or if, by the guidance and direction of these things, we are ever driven (as all men must sometimes be) to the consideration of a God, yet, when we have rashly conceived an idea of some deity, we soon slide into our own carnal dreams, or depraved

(o) De Civit. Dei. lib. 1, cap. 8. (p) Psalm xcii. 6. (q) Psalm xl. 12.

inventions, corrupting by our vanity the purity of divine truth. We differ from one another, in that each individual imbibes some peculiarity of error; but we perfectly agree in a universal departure from the one true God, to preposterous trifles. This disease affects, not only the vulgar and ignorant, but the most eminent, and those who, in other things, discover peculiar sagacity. How abundantly have all the philosophers, in this respect, betrayed their stupidity and folly! For, to spare others, chargeable with greater absurdities, Plato himself, the most religious and judicious of them all, loses himself in his round globe. (r) And what would not befall others, when their principal men, whose place it was to enlighten the rest, stumble upon such gross errors! So also, while the government of human actions proves a providence too plainly to admit of a denial, men derive no more advantage from it, than if they believed all things to be agitated forwards and backwards by the uncertain caprice of fortune; so great is our propensity to vanity and error! I speak exclusively of the excellent of mankind, not of the vulgar, whose madness in the profanation of divine truth has known no bounds.

XII. Hence that immense flood of errors, which has deluged the whole world. For every man's understanding is like a labyrinth to him; so that it is not to be wondered at, that the different nations were drawn aside into various inventions, and even that almost every individual had his own particular deity. For, amidst the union of temerity and wantonness with ignorance and darkness, scarcely a man could be found who did not frame to himself some idol or phantasm instead of God. Indeed, the immense multitude of gods proceeding from the mind of man, resembles the ebullition of waters from a vast and ample spring, while every one, with an extreme licentiousness of error, invents one thing or another concerning God himself. It is not necessary here to compose a catalogue of the superstitions which have perplexed the world; for it would be an endless task; and, without a word more being said, the horrible blindness of the human mind sufficiently appears from such a multiplicity of corruptions. I pass over the rude and unlearned vulgar. But among the philosophers, (s) who attempted with reason and learning to penetrate heaven, how shameful is the diversity! In proportion to the vigour of his natural genius, and the polish acquired by art and science, each of them seemed to give the more specious colouring to his own opinion; but, on a close inspection, you will find them all fading colours. The Stoics said, in their own opinion very

(r) Plut. de Philosoph. placitis, lib. 1. Plato in Timæo. Cic lib. 1, de Natur. Deor.

(s) Lactant. Institut. div.

shrewdly, that from all the parts of nature may be collected various names of God, but yet that the one God is not therefore divided; (*t*) as if we were not already too much inclined to vanity, without being further and more violently seduced into error, by the notion of such a various abundance of gods. The mystical theology of the Egyptians also shows that they all sedulously endeavoured to preserve the appearance of reason in the midst of their folly. (*v*) And any thing apparently probable might at first sight, perhaps, deceive the simple and incautious; but there never was any human invention by which religion was not basely corrupted. And this confused diversity imboldened the Epicureans, and other gross despisers of piety, to reject all idea of God. For, seeing the wisest of men contending with each other for contrary opinions, they hesitated not, from their dissensions, and from the frivolous and absurd doctrines maintained by the different parties, to infer, that it was vain and foolish for men to torment themselves with investigations concerning God, who does not exist. And this they thought they might do with impunity, supposing that a compendious denial of any God at all would be better than feigning uncertain gods, and thereby occasioning endless controversies. They reason very ignorantly, or rather endeavour to conceal their own impiety behind the ignorance of men, which not at all justifies any encroachment on God. But from the general confession, that there is no subject productive of so many dissensions among the learned as well as the unlearned, it is inferred, that the minds of men, which err so much in investigations concerning God, are extremely blind and stupid in celestial mysteries. Others commend the answer of Simonides, (*w*) who, being asked by Hiero the Tyrant what God was, requested a day to consider it. When the tyrant, the next day, repeated the inquiry, he begged to be allowed two days longer; and, having often doubled the number of days, at length answered, "The longer I consider the subject, the more obscure it appears to me." He prudently suspended his opinion on a subject so obscure to him; yet this shows that men, who are taught only by nature, have no certain, sound, or distinct knowledge, but are confined to confused principles; so that they worship an unknown God.

XIII. Now, it must also be maintained, that whoever adulterates the pure religion, (which must necessarily be the case of all who are influenced by their own imagination,) he is guilty of a departure from the one God. They will profess, indeed, a different intention; but what they intend, or what

(*t*) Seneca, lib. 4, de benef., &c.

(*v*) Plutarch. lib. 1, de Isid. & Osirid. Cic. lib. 1, de Nat. Deor.

(*w*) Cic. lib. de Nat. Deor.

they persuade themselves, is of little importance; since the Holy Spirit pronounces all to be apostates, who, in the darkness of their minds, substitute demons in the place of God. For this reason Paul declares the Ephesians to have been "without God" (*x*) — till they had learned from the gospel the worship of the true God. Nor should this be restricted to one nation only, since, in another place, he asserts of men in general, that they "became vain in their imaginations," (*y*) after the majesty of the Creator had been discovered to them in the structure of the world. And therefore the Scripture, to make room for the only true God, condemns, as false and lying, whatever was formerly worshipped as divine among the Gentiles, (*z*) and leaves no Deity but in Mount Sion, where flourished the peculiar knowledge of God. Indeed, among the Gentiles, the Samaritans, in the days of Christ, seemed to approach very nearly to true piety; yet we hear, from the mouth of Christ, that they "worshipped they knew not what;" (*a*) whence it follows, that they were under a vain and erroneous delusion. In fine, though they were not all the subjects of gross vices, or open idolaters, there was no pure and approved religion, their notions being founded only in common sense. For, though there were a few uninfected with the madness of the vulgar, this assertion of Paul remains unshaken, that "none of the princes of this world knew the wisdom of God." (*b*) But if the most exalted have been involved in the darkness of error, what must be said of the dregs of the people! Wherefore it is not surprising if the Holy Spirit reject, as spurious, every form of worship which is of human contrivance; because, in the mysteries of heaven, an opinion acquired by human means, though it may not always produce an immense mass of errors, yet always produces some. And though no worse consequence follow, it is no trivial fault to worship, at an uncertainty, an unknown god; of which, however, Christ pronounces all to be guilty who have not been taught by the law what god they ought to worship. And indeed the best legislators have proceeded no further than to declare religion to be founded upon common consent. And even Socrates, in Xenophon, (*c*) praises the answer of Apollo, which directed that every man should worship the gods according to the rites of his country, and the custom of his own city. But whence had mortals this right of determining, by their own authority, what far exceeds all the world? or who could so acquiesce in the decrees of the rulers or the ordinances of the people, as without hesitation to receive a god delivered

(*x*) Ephes. ii. 12.(*y*) Rom. i. 21.(*z*) Hab. ii. 18, 20.(*a*) John iv. 22.(*b*) 1 Cor. ii. 8.(*c*) Xenoph. de Dict. et Fact. Socrat. lib. 1. Cic. de Legib. lib. 2.

to him by the authority of man? Every man will rather abide by his own judgment, than be subject to the will of another. Since, then, the following of the custom of a city, or the consent of antiquity, in divine worship, is too weak and frail a bond of piety, it remains for God himself to give a revelation concerning himself from heaven.

XIV. Vain, therefore, is the light afforded us in the formation of the world to illustrate the glory of its Author; which, though its rays be diffused all around us, is insufficient to conduct us into the right way. Some sparks, indeed, are kindled, but smothered before they have emitted any great degree of light. Wherefore the Apostle, in the place before cited, says, "By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God;" (*d*) thus intimating, that the invisible Deity was represented by such visible objects, yet that we have no eyes to discern him, unless they be illuminated through faith by an internal revelation of God. Nor does Paul, where he observes, that "that which may be known of God is manifest" (*e*) in the creation of the world, design such a manifestation as human sagacity may comprehend; but rather shows, that its utmost extent is to render men inexcusable. The same writer also, though in one place (*f*) he denies that God is to be traced far off, seeing he dwells within us, yet teaches, in another place, (*g*) the consequences of such a proximity. God, says he, "in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways. Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness." (*h*) Though the Lord, then, is not destitute of a testimony concerning himself, while with various and most abundant benignity he sweetly allures mankind to a knowledge of him, yet they persist in following their own ways, their pernicious and fatal errors.

XV. But whatever deficiency of natural ability prevents us from attaining the pure and clear knowledge of God, yet, since that deficiency arises from our own fault, we are left without any excuse. Nor indeed can we set up any pretence of ignorance, that will prevent our own consciences from perpetually accusing us of indolence and ingratitude. Truly it would be a defence worthy to be admitted, if a man should plead that he wanted ears to hear the truth, for the publication of which even the mute creatures are supplied with most melodious voices; if he should allege that his eyes are not capable of seeing what is demonstrated by the creatures without the help

(*d*) Heb. xi. 3.

(*e*) Rom. i. 19.

(*f*) Rom. i. 20.

(*g*) Acts xvii. 27.

(*h*) Acts xiv. 16, 17.

of the eyes; if he should plead mental imbecility, while all the irrational creatures instruct us. Wherefore we are justly excluded from all excuse for our uncertain and extravagant deviations, since all things conspire to show us the right way. But, however men are chargeable with sinfully corrupting the seeds of divine knowledge, which, by the wonderful operation of nature, are sown in their hearts, so that they produce no good and fair crop, yet it is beyond a doubt, that the simple testimony magnificently borne by the creatures to the glory of God, is very insufficient for our instruction. For as soon as a survey of the world has just shown us a deity, neglecting the true God, we set up in his stead the dreams and phantasms of our own brains; and confer on them the praise of righteousness, wisdom, goodness, and power, due to him. We either obscure his daily acts, or pervert them by an erroneous estimate; thereby depriving the acts themselves of their glory, and their Author of his deserved praise.

CHAPTER VI.

THE GUIDANCE AND TEACHING OF THE SCRIPTURE NECESSARY TO LEAD TO THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD THE CREATOR.

THOUGH the light which presents itself to all eyes, both in heaven and in earth, is more than sufficient to deprive the ingratitude of men of every excuse, since God, in order to involve all mankind in the same guilt, sets before them all, without exception, an exhibition of his majesty, delineated in the creatures, — yet we need another and better assistance, properly to direct us to the Creator of the world. Therefore he hath not unnecessarily added the light of his word, to make himself known unto salvation, and hath honoured with this privilege those whom he intended to unite in a more close and familiar connection with himself. For, seeing the minds of all men to be agitated with unstable dispositions, when he had chosen the Jews as his peculiar flock, he enclosed them as in a fold, that they might not wander after the vanities of other nations. And it is not without cause that he preserves us in the pure knowledge of himself by the same means; for, otherwise, they who seem comparatively to stand firm, would soon fall. For, as persons who are old, or whose eyes are by any means become dim, if you show them the most beautiful book, though they perceive something written, but can scarcely read two

words together, yet, by the assistance of spectacles, will begin to read distinctly, — so the Scripture, collecting in our minds the otherwise confused notions of Deity, dispels the darkness, and gives us a clear view of the true God. This, then, is a singular favour, that, in the instruction of the Church, God not only uses mute teachers, but even opens his own sacred mouth; not only proclaims that some god ought to be worshipped, but at the same time pronounces himself to be the Being to whom this worship is due; and not only teaches the elect to raise their view to a Deity, but also exhibits himself as the object of their contemplation. This method he hath observed toward his Church from the beginning; beside those common lessons of instruction, to afford them also his word; which furnishes a more correct and certain criterion to distinguish him from all fictitious deities. And it was undoubtedly by this assistance that Adam, Noah, Abraham, and the rest of the patriarchs, attained to that familiar knowledge which distinguished them from unbelievers. I speak not yet of the peculiar doctrine of faith which illuminated them into the hope of eternal life. For, to pass from death to life, they must have known God, not only as the Creator, but also as the Redeemer; as they certainly obtained both from his word. For that species of knowledge, which related to him as the Creator and Governor of the world, in order, preceded the other. To this was afterwards added the other internal knowledge, which alone vivifies dead souls, and apprehends God, not only as the Creator of the world, and as the sole Author and Arbiter of all events, but also as the Redeemer in the person of the Mediator. But, being not yet come to the fall of man and the corruption of nature, I also forbear to treat of the remedy. Let the reader remember, therefore, that I am not yet treating of that covenant by which God adopted the children of Abraham, and of that point of doctrine by which believers have always been particularly separated from the profane nations, since that is founded on Christ; but am only showing how we ought to learn from the Scripture, that God, who created the world, may be certainly distinguished from the whole multitude of fictitious deities. The series of subjects will, in due time, lead us to redemption. But, though we shall adduce many testimonies from the New Testament, and some also from the Law and the Prophets, in which Christ is expressly mentioned, yet they will all tend to prove, that the Scripture discovers God to us as the Creator of the world, and declares what sentiments we should form of him, that we may not be seeking after a deity in a labyrinth of uncertainty.

II. But, whether God revealed himself to the patriarchs by oracles and visions, or suggested, by means of the ministry of

men, what should be handed down by tradition to their posterity, it is beyond a doubt that their minds were impressed with a firm assurance of the doctrine, so that they were persuaded and convinced that the information they had received came from God. For God always secured to his word an undoubted credit, superior to all human opinion. At length, that the truth might remain in the world in a continual course of instruction to all ages, he determined that the same oracles which he had deposited with the patriarchs should be committed to public records. With this design the Law was promulgated, to which the Prophets were afterwards annexed, as its interpreters. — For, though the uses of the law were many, as will be better seen in the proper place; and particularly the intention of Moses, and of all the prophets, was to teach the mode of reconciliation between God and man, (whence also Paul calls Christ “the end of the law,”) (i) — yet I repeat again, that, beside the peculiar doctrine of faith and repentance, which proposes Christ as the Mediator, the Scripture distinguishes the only true God by certain characters and titles, as the Creator and Governor of the world, that he may not be confounded with the multitude of false gods. Therefore, though every man should seriously apply himself to a consideration of the works of God, being placed in this very splendid theatre to be a spectator of them, yet he ought principally to attend to the word, that he may attain superior advantages. And, therefore, it is not surprising, that they who are born in darkness grow more and more hardened in their stupidity; since very few attend to the word of God with teachable dispositions, to restrain themselves within the limits which it prescribes, but rather exult in their own vanity. This, then, must be considered as a fixed principle; that, in order to enjoy the light of true religion, we ought to begin with the doctrine of heaven; and that no man can have the least knowledge of true and sound doctrine, without having been a disciple of the Scripture. Hence originates all true wisdom, when we embrace with reverence the testimony which God hath been pleased therein to deliver concerning himself. For obedience is the source, not only of an absolutely perfect and complete faith, but of all right knowledge of God. And truly in this instance God hath, in his providence, particularly consulted the true interests of mankind in all ages.

III. For, if we consider the mutability of the human mind, — how easy its lapse into forgetfulness of God; how great its propensity to errors of every kind; how violent its rage for the perpetual fabrication of new and false religions, — it will be easy

(i) Rom. x. 4.

to perceive the necessity of the heavenly doctrine being thus committed to writing, that it might not be lost in oblivion, or evaporate in error, or be corrupted by the presumption of men. Since it is evident, therefore, that God, foreseeing the inefficacy of his manifestation of himself in the exquisite structure of the world, hath afforded the assistance of his word to all those to whom he determined to make his instructions effectual, — if we seriously aspire to a sincere contemplation of God, it is necessary for us to pursue this right way. We must come, I say, to the word, which contains a just and lively description of God as he appears in his works, when those works are estimated, not according to our depraved judgment, but by the rule of eternal truth. If we deviate from it, as I have just observed, though we run with the utmost celerity, yet, being out of the course, we shall never reach the goal. For it must be concluded, that the light of the Divine countenance, which even the Apostle says “no man can approach unto,” (*j*) is like an inexplicable labyrinth to us, unless we are directed by the line of the word; so that it were better to halt in this way, than to run with the greatest rapidity out of it. Therefore David, inculcating the necessity of the removal of superstitions out of the world, that pure religion may flourish, frequently introduces God as “reigning;” (*k*) by the word “reigning,” intending, not the power which he possesses, and which he exercises in the universal government of nature, but the doctrine in which he asserts his legitimate sovereignty; because errors can never be eradicated from the human heart, till the true knowledge of God is implanted in it.

IV. Therefore the same Psalmist, having said, that “the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handy-work; day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge,” (*l*) afterwards proceeds to the mention of the word: “The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple: the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.” For, though he also comprehends other uses of the law, yet he suggests, in general, that, since God’s invitation of all nations to him by the view of heaven and earth is ineffectual, this is the peculiar school of the children of God. The same is adverted to in the twenty-ninth Psalm, where the Psalmist, having preached the terrors of the Divine voice, which in thunders, in winds, in showers, in whirlwinds, and in tempests, shakes the earth, makes the mountains tremble, and breaks the cedars, adds, at length, towards the close, “in

(*j*) 1 Tim. vi. 16.(*k*) Ps. xciii. xevi., &c.(*l*) Ps. xix. 1, &c.

his temple doth every one speak of his glory ;” because unbelievers are deaf to all the voices of God, which resound in the air. So, in another Psalm, after describing the terrible waves of the sea, he concludes thus : “ Thy testimonies are very sure : holiness becometh thine house, O Lord, for ever.” (*m*) Hence also proceeds the observation of Christ to the Samaritan woman, that her nation and all others worshipped they knew not what ; and that the Jews were the only worshippers of the true God. (*n*) For, since the human mind is unable, through its imbecility, to attain any knowledge of God without the assistance of his sacred word, all mankind, except the Jews, as they sought God without the word, must necessarily have been wandering in vanity and error.

CHAPTER VII.

THE TESTIMONY OF THE SPIRIT NECESSARY TO CONFIRM THE SCRIPTURE, IN ORDER TO THE COMPLETE ESTABLISHMENT OF ITS AUTHORITY. THE SUSPENSION OF ITS AUTHORITY ON THE JUDGMENT OF THE CHURCH, AN IMPIOUS FICTION.

BEFORE I proceed any further, it is proper to introduce some remarks on the authority of the Scripture, not only to prepare the mind to regard it with due reverence, but also to remove every doubt. For, when it is admitted to be a declaration of the word of God, no man can be so deplorably presumptuous, unless he be also destitute of common sense and of the common feelings of men, as to dare to derogate from the credit due to the speaker. But since we are not favoured with daily oracles from heaven, and since it is only in the Scriptures that the Lord hath been pleased to preserve his truth in perpetual remembrance, it obtains the same complete credit and authority with believers, when they are satisfied of its divine origin, as if they heard the very words pronounced by God himself. The subject, indeed, merits a diffuse discussion, and a most accurate examination. But the reader will pardon me, if I attend rather to what the design of this work admits, than to what the extensive nature of the present subject requires. But there has very generally prevailed a most pernicious error, that the Scriptures have only so much weight as is conceded to them by the suffrages of the Church ; as though the eternal

(*m*) Ps. xciii. 5.

(*n*) John iv. 22.

and inviolable truth of God depended on the arbitrary will of men. For thus, with great contempt of the Holy Spirit, they inquire, Who can assure us that God is the author of them? Who can with certainty affirm, that they have been preserved safe and uncorrupted to the present age? Who can persuade us that this book ought to be received with reverence, and that expunged from the sacred number, unless all these things were regulated by the decisions of the Church? It depends, therefore, (say they,) on the determination of the Church, to decide both what reverence is due to the Scripture, and what books are to be comprised in its canon. Thus sacrilegious men, while they wish to introduce an unlimited tyranny, under the name of the Church, are totally unconcerned with what absurdities they embarrass themselves and others, provided they can extort from the ignorant this one admission, that the Church can do every thing. But, if this be true, what will be the condition of those wretched consciences, which are seeking a solid assurance of eternal life, if all the promises extant concerning it rest only on the judgment of men? Will the reception of such an answer cause their fluctuations to subside, and their terrors to vanish? Again, how will the impious ridicule our faith, and all men call it in question, if it be understood to possess only a precarious authority depending on the favour of men!

II. But such cavillers are completely refuted even by one word of the Apostle. He testifies that the church is "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets." (o) If the doctrine of the prophets and apostles be the foundation of the Church, it must have been certain, antecedently to the existence of the Church. Nor is there any foundation for this cavil, that though the Church derive its origin from the Scriptures, yet it remains doubtful what writings are to be ascribed to the prophets and apostles, unless it be determined by the Church. For if the Christian Church has been from the beginning founded on the writings of the prophets and the preaching of the apostles, wherever that doctrine is found, the approbation of it has certainly preceded the formation of the Church; since without it the Church itself had never existed. It is a very false notion, therefore, that the power of judging of the Scripture belongs to the Church, so as to make the certainty of it dependent on the Church's will. Wherefore, when the Church receives it, and seals it with her suffrage, she does not authenticate a thing otherwise dubious or controvertible; but, knowing it to be the truth of her God, performs a duty of piety, by treating it with immediate veneration. But, with regard to the question, How shall we be persuaded of its divine

(o) Eph. ii. 20.

original, unless we have recourse to the decree of the Church? this is just as if any one should inquire, How shall we learn to distinguish light from darkness, white from black, sweet from bitter? For the Scripture exhibits as clear evidence of its truth, as white and black things do of their colour, or sweet and bitter things of their taste.

III. I know, indeed, that they commonly cite the opinion of Augustine, where he says, "that he would not believe the Gospel unless he were influenced by the authority of the Church." (*p*) But how falsely and unfairly this is cited in support of such a notion, it is easy to discover from the context. He was in that contending with the Manichees, who wished to be credited; without any controversy, when they affirmed the truth to be on their side, but never proved it. Now, as they made the authority of the Gospel a pretext in order to establish the credit of their Manichæus, he inquires what they would do if they met with a man who did not believe the Gospel; with what kind of persuasion they would convert him to their opinion. He afterwards adds, "Indeed, I would not give credit to the Gospel," &c., intending, that he himself, when an alien from the faith, could not be prevailed on to embrace the Gospel as the certain truth of God, till he was convinced by the authority of the Church. And is it surprising that any one, yet destitute of the knowledge of Christ, should pay a respect to men? Augustine, therefore, does not there maintain that the faith of the pious is founded on the authority of the Church, nor does he mean that the certainty of the Gospel depends on it; but simply, that unbelievers would have no assurance of the truth of the Gospel, that would win them to Christ, unless they were influenced by the consent of the Church. And a little before, he clearly confirms it in these words: "When I shall have commended my own creed, and derided yours, what judgment, think you, ought we to form, what conduct ought we to pursue, but to forsake those who invite us to acknowledge things that are certain, and afterwards command us to believe things that are uncertain; and to follow those who invite us first to believe what we cannot yet clearly see, that, being strengthened by faith, we may acquire an understanding of what we believe; our mind being now internally strengthened and illuminated, not by men, but by God himself?" These are the express words of Augustine; whence the inference is obvious to every one, that this holy man did not design to suspend our faith in the Scriptures on the arbitrary decision of the Church, but only to show (what we all confess to be true) that they who

(*p*) Contr. Epist. Fundam. cap. 5.

are yet unilluminated by the Spirit of God, are, by a reverence for the Church, brought to such a docility as to submit to learn the faith of Christ from the Gospel; and that thus the authority of the Church is an introduction to prepare us for the faith of the Gospel. For we see that he will have the certainty of the pious to rest on a very different foundation. Otherwise I do not deny his frequently urging on the Manichees the universal consent of the Church, with a view to prove the truth of the Scripture, which they rejected. Whence his rebuke of Faustus, "for not submitting to the truth of the Gospel, so founded, so established, so gloriously celebrated, and delivered through certain successions from the apostolic age." But he nowhere insinuates that the authority which we attribute to the Scripture depends on the definitions or decrees of men: he only produces the universal judgment of the Church, which was very useful to his argument, and gave him an advantage over his adversaries. If any one desire a fuller proof of this, let him read his treatise "Of the Advantage of Believing;" where he will find, that he recommends no other facility of believing, than such as may afford us an introduction, and be a proper beginning of inquiry, as he expresses himself; yet that we should not be satisfied with mere opinion, but rest upon certain and solid truth.

IV. It must be maintained, as I have before asserted, that we are not established in the belief of the doctrine till we are indubitably persuaded that God is its Author. The principal proof, therefore, of the Scriptures is every where derived from the character of the Divine Speaker. The prophets and apostles boast not of their own genius, or any of those talents which conciliate the faith of the hearers; nor do they insist on arguments from reason; but bring forward the sacred name of God, to compel the submission of the whole world. We must now see how it appears, not from probable supposition, but from clear demonstration, that this use of the divine name is neither rash nor fallacious. Now, if we wish to consult the true interest of our consciences; that they may not be unstable and wavering, the subjects of perpetual doubt; that they may not hesitate at the smallest scruples, — this persuasion must be sought from a higher source than human reasons, or judgments, or conjectures — even from the secret testimony of the Spirit. It is true that, if we were inclined to argue the point, many things might be adduced which certainly evince, if there be any God in heaven, that he is the Author of the Law, and the Prophecies, and the Gospel. Even though men of learning and deep judgment rise up in opposition, and exert and display all the powers of their minds in this dispute, yet, unless they are wholly lost to all sense of shame, this confession

will be extorted from them, that the Scripture exhibits the plainest evidences that it is God who speaks in it, which manifests its doctrine to be divine. And we shall soon see, that all the books of the sacred Scripture very far excel all other writings. If we read it with pure eyes and sound minds, we shall immediately perceive the majesty of God, which will subdue our audacious contradictions, and compel us to obey him. Yet it is acting a preposterous part, to endeavour to produce sound faith in the Scripture by disputations. Though, indeed, I am far from excelling in peculiar dexterity or eloquence, yet, if I were to contend with the most subtle despisers of God, who are ambitious to display their wit and their skill in weakening the authority of Scripture, I trust I should be able, without difficulty, to silence their obstreperous clamour. And, if it were of any use to attempt a refutation of their cavils, I would easily demolish the boasts which they mutter in secret corners. But though any one vindicates the sacred word of God from the aspersions of men, yet this will not fix in their hearts that assurance which is essential to true piety. Religion appearing, to profane men, to consist wholly in opinion, in order that they may not believe any thing on foolish or slight grounds, they wish and expect it to be proved by rational arguments, that Moses and the prophets spake by divine inspiration. But I reply, that the testimony of the Spirit is superior to all reason. For, as God alone is a sufficient witness of himself in his own word, so also the word will never gain credit in the hearts of men, till it be confirmed by the internal testimony of the Spirit. It is necessary, therefore, that the same Spirit, who spake by the mouths of the prophets, should penetrate into our hearts, to convince us that they faithfully delivered the oracles which were divinely intrusted to them. And this connection is very suitably expressed in these words: "My Spirit that is upon thee, and my word which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, for ever." (q) Some good men are troubled that they are not always prepared with clear proof to oppose the impious, when they murmur with impunity against the divine word; as though the Spirit were not therefore denominated a "seal," and "an earnest," for the confirmation of the faith of the pious; because, till he illuminate their minds, they are perpetually fluctuating amidst a multitude of doubts.

V. Let it be considered, then, as an undeniable truth, that they who have been inwardly taught by the Spirit, feel an

(q) Isaiah lix. 21.

entire acquiescence in the Scripture, and that it is self-authenticated, carrying with it its own evidence, and ought not to be made the subject of demonstration and arguments from reason; but it obtains the credit which it deserves with us by the testimony of the Spirit. For though it conciliate our reverence by its internal majesty, it never seriously affects us till it is confirmed by the Spirit in our hearts. Therefore, being illuminated by him, we now believe the divine original of the Scripture, not from our own judgment or that of others, but we esteem the certainty, that we have received it from God's own mouth by the ministry of men, to be superior to that of any human judgment, and equal to that of an intuitive perception of God himself in it. We seek not arguments or probabilities to support our judgment, but submit our judgments and understandings as to a thing concerning which it is impossible for us to judge; and that not like some persons, who are in the habit of hastily embracing what they do not understand, which displeases them as soon as they examine it, but because we feel the firmest conviction that we hold an invincible truth; nor like those unhappy men who surrender their minds captives to superstitions, but because we perceive in it the undoubted energies of the Divine power, by which we are attracted and inflamed to an understanding and voluntary obedience, but with a vigour and efficacy superior to the power of any human will or knowledge. With the greatest justice, therefore, God exclaims by Isaiah, (*r*) that the prophets and all the people were his witnesses; because, being taught by prophecies, they were certain that God had spoken without the least fallacy or ambiguity. It is such a persuasion, therefore, as requires no reasons; such a knowledge as is supported by the highest reason, in which, indeed, the mind rests with greater security and constancy than in any reasons; it is, finally, such a sentiment as cannot be produced but by a revelation from heaven. I speak of nothing but what every believer experiences in his heart, except that my language falls far short of a just explication of the subject. I pass over many things at present, because this subject will present itself for discussion again in another place. Only let it be known here, that that alone is true faith which the Spirit of God seals in our hearts. And with this one reason every reader of modesty and docility will be satisfied: Isaiah predicts that "all the children" of the renovated Church "shall be taught of God." (*s*) Herein God deigns to confer a singular privilege on his elect, whom he distinguishes from the rest of mankind. For what is the beginning of true learning but a prompt alac-

(*r*) Isaiah xliii. 10. (*s*) Isaiah liv. 13.

rity to hear the voice of God? By the mouth of Moses he demands our attention in these terms: "Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? or, Who shall descend into the deep? The word is even in thy mouth." (t) If God hath determined that this treasury of wisdom shall be reserved for his children, it is neither surprising nor absurd, that we see so much ignorance and stupidity among the vulgar herd of mankind. By this appellation I designate even those of the greatest talents and highest rank, till they are incorporated into the Church. Moreover, Isaiah, observing that the prophetic doctrine would be incredible, not only to aliens, but also to the Jews, who wished to be esteemed members of the family, adds, at the same time, the reason — Because the arm of the Lord will not be revealed to all. (v) Whenever, therefore, we are disturbed at the paucity of believers, let us, on the other hand, remember that none, but those to whom it was given, have any apprehension of the mysteries of God.

CHAPTER VIII.

RATIONAL PROOFS TO ESTABLISH THE BELIEF OF THE SCRIPTURE.

WITHOUT this certainty, better and stronger than any human judgment, in vain will the authority of the Scripture be either defended by arguments, or established by the consent of the Church, or confirmed by any other supports; since, unless the foundation be laid, it remains in perpetual suspense. Whilst, on the contrary, when, regarding it in a different point of view from common things, we have once religiously received it in a manner worthy of its excellence, we shall then derive great assistance from things which before were not sufficient to establish the certainty of it in our minds. For it is admirable to observe how much it conduces to our confirmation, attentively to study the order and disposition of the Divine Wisdom dispensed in it, the heavenly nature of its doctrine, which never savours of any thing terrestrial, the beautiful agreement of all the parts with each other, and other similar characters adapted to conciliate respect to any writings. But our hearts are more strongly confirmed, when we reflect that we are constrained to admire it more by the dignity of the subjects than by the beauties of the language. For even this did not happen without the particular providence of God, that the sublime mys-

(t) Deut. xxx. Rom. x. (v) Isaiah liii. 1.

teries of the kingdom of heaven should be communicated, for the most part, in a humble and contemptible style ; lest, if they had been illustrated with more of the splendour of eloquence, the impious might cavil that their triumph is only the triumph of eloquence. Now, since that uncultivated and almost rude simplicity procures itself more reverence than all the graces of rhetoric, what opinion can we form, but that the force of truth in the sacred Scripture is too powerful to need the assistance of verbal art? Justly, therefore, does the apostle argue that the faith of the Corinthians was founded, "not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God," because his preaching among them was, "not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." (x) For the truth is vindicated from every doubt, when, unassisted by foreign aid, it is sufficient for its own support. But that this is the peculiar property of the Scripture, appears from the insufficiency of any human compositions, however artificially polished, to make an equal impression on our minds. Read Demosthenes or Cicero ; read Plato, Aristotle, or any others of that class ; I grant that you will be attracted, delighted, moved, and enraptured by them in a surprising manner ; but if, after reading them, you turn to the perusal of the sacred volume, whether you are willing or unwilling, it will affect you so powerfully, it will so penetrate your heart, and impress itself so strongly on your mind, that, compared with its energetic influence, the beauties of rhetoricians and philosophers will almost entirely disappear ; so that it is easy to perceive something divine in the sacred Scriptures, which far surpasses the highest attainments and ornaments of human industry.

II. I grant, indeed, that the diction of some of the prophets is neat and elegant, and even splendid ; so that they are not inferior in eloquence to the heathen writers. And by such examples the Holy Spirit hath been pleased to show, that he was not deficient in eloquence, though elsewhere he hath used a rude and homely style. But whether we read David, Isaiah, and others that resemble them, who have a sweet and pleasant flow of words, or Amos the herdsman, Jeremiah, and Zechariah, whose rougher language savours of rusticity, — that majesty of the Spirit, which I have mentioned, is every where conspicuous. I am not ignorant that Satan in many things imitates God, in order that, by the fallacious resemblance, he may more easily insinuate himself into the minds of the simple ; and has therefore craftily disseminated, in unpolished and even barbarous language, the most impious errors, by which

(x) 1 Cor. ii. 4.

multitudes have been miserably deceived, and has often used obsolete forms of speech as a mask to conceal his impostures. But the vanity and fraud of such affectation are visible to all men of moderate understanding. With respect to the sacred Scripture, though presumptuous men try to cavil at various passages, yet it is evidently replete with sentences which are beyond the powers of human conception. Let all the prophets be examined; not one will be found, who has not far surpassed the ability of men; so that those to whom their doctrine is insipid must be accounted utterly destitute of all true taste.

III. This argument has been copiously treated by other writers; wherefore it may suffice at present merely to hint at a few things which chiefly relate to the subject in a general view. Beside what I have already treated on, the antiquity of the Scripture is of no small weight. For, notwithstanding the fabulous accounts of the Greek writers concerning the Egyptian theology, yet there remains no monument of any religion, but what is much lower than the age of Moses. Nor does Moses invent a new deity; he only makes a declaration of what the Israelites had, through a long series of years, received by tradition from their forefathers concerning the eternal God. For what does he aim at, but to recall them to the covenant made with Abraham? If he had advanced a thing till then unheard of, it would not have been received; but their liberation from the servitude in which they were detained must have been a thing well known to them all; so that the mention of it immediately excited universal attention. It is probable also that they had been informed of the number of four hundred years. Now, we must consider, if Moses (who himself preceded all other writers by such a long distance of time) derives the tradition of his doctrine from so remote a beginning, how much the sacred Scripture exceeds in antiquity all other books.

IV. Unless any would choose to credit the Egyptians, who extend their antiquity to six thousand years before the creation of the world. But since their garrulity has been ridiculed even by all the profane writers, I need not trouble myself with refuting it. Josephus, in his book against Appion, cites from the most ancient writers testimonies worthy of being remembered; whence we may gather, that the doctrine contained in the law has, according to the consent of all nations, been renowned from the remotest ages, although it was neither read nor truly understood. Now, that the malicious might have no room for suspicion, nor even the wicked any pretence for cavilling, God hath provided the most excellent remedies for both these dangers. When Moses relates what Jacob had, almost three hundred years before, by the spirit of inspiration

pronounced concerning his posterity, how does he disgrace his own tribe! He even brands it, in the person of Levi, with perpetual infamy. "Simeon," says he, "and Levi, instruments of cruelty are in their habitations. O my soul, come not thou into their secret: unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united." (*y*) He certainly might have been silent on that disgraceful circumstance, not only to spare his father, but also to avoid aspersing himself, as well as all his family, with part of the same ignominy. How can any suspicion be entertained of him, who, voluntarily publishing, from the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, that the first of the family from which he was descended was guilty of detestable conduct, neither consults his own personal honours, nor refuses to incur the resentment of his relations, to whom this must undoubtedly have given offence? When he mentions also the impious murmurings of Aaron, his brother, and Miriam, his sister, (*z*) shall we say that he spake according to the dictates of the flesh, or obeyed the command of the Holy Spirit? Besides, as he enjoyed the supreme authority, why did he not leave to his own sons, at least, the office of the high-priesthood, but place them in the lowest station? I only hint at a few things out of many. But in the law itself many arguments will every where occur, which challenge a full belief, that, without controversy, the legation of Moses was truly divine.

V. Moreover, the miracles which he relates, and which are so numerous and remarkable, are so many confirmations of the law which he delivered, and of the doctrine which he published. For that he was carried up into the mountain in a cloud; that he continued there forty days, deprived of all human intercourse; that, in the act of proclaiming the law, his face shone as with the rays of the sun; that lightnings flashed all around; that thunders and various noises were heard through the whole atmosphere; that a trumpet sounded, but a trumpet not blown by human breath; that the entrance of the tabernacle was concealed from the view of the people by an intervening cloud; that his authority was so miraculously vindicated by the horrible destruction of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and all their impious faction; that a rock smitten with a rod immediately emitted a river; that manna rained from heaven at his request; (*a*)—are not all these so many testimonies from heaven of his being a true prophet? If any one object that I assume, as granted, things which are the subjects of controversy, this cavil is easily answered. For, as Moses published all these things in an assembly of the people, what room was there for fiction among those who had been eye-

(*y*) Gen. xlix. 5.

(*z*) Num. xii. 1.

(*a*) Exod. xxiv. 18; xxxiv. 29; xix. 16; xl. 34. Num. xvi. 24, &c.; xx. 11; xi. 9.

witnesses of the events? Is it probable that he would make his appearance in public, and, accusing the people of infidelity, contumacy, ingratitude, and other crimes, boast that his doctrine had been confirmed in their sight by miracles which they had never seen?

VI. For this also is worthy of being remarked, that all his accounts of miracles are connected with such unpleasant circumstances, as were calculated to stimulate all the people, if there had been but the smallest occasion, to a public and positive contradiction; whence it appears, that they were induced to coincide with him only by the ample conviction of their own experience. But since the matter was too evident for profane writers to take the liberty of denying the performance of miracles by Moses, the father of lies has suggested the calumny of ascribing them to magical arts. But by what kind of conjecture can they pretend to charge him with having been a magician, who had so great an abhorrence of that superstition, as to command, that he who merely consulted magicians and soothsayers should be stoned? (*b*) Certainly no impostor practises such juggling tricks, who does not make it his study, for the sake of acquiring fame, to astonish the minds of the vulgar. But what is the practice of Moses? Openly avowing that himself and his brother Aaron are nothing, (*c*) but that they only execute the commands of God, he sufficiently clears his character from every unfavourable aspersion. Now, if the events themselves be considered, what incantation could cause manna to rain daily from heaven sufficient to support the people, and, if any one laid up more than the proper quantity, cause it to putrefy, as a punishment from God for his unbelief? Add also the many serious examinations which God permitted his servant to undergo, so that the clamour of the wicked can now be of no avail. For as often as this holy servant of God was in danger of being destroyed, at one time by proud and petulant insurrections of all the people, at another by the secret conspiracies of a few, — how was it possible for him to elude their inveterate rage by any arts of deception? And the event evidently proves, that by these circumstances his doctrine was confirmed to all succeeding ages.

VII. Moreover, who can deny that his assigning, in the person of the patriarch Jacob, the supreme power to the tribe of Judah, proceeded from a spirit of prophecy, (*d*) especially if we consider the eventual accomplishment of this prediction? Suppose Moses to have been the first author of it; yet after he committed it to writing, there elapsed four hundred years

(*b*) Lev. xx. 6.

(*c*) Exod. xvi. 7.

(*d*) Gen. xlix. 10.

in which we have no mention of the sceptre in the tribe of Judah. After the inauguration of Saul, the regal power seemed to be fixed in the tribe of Benjamin. When Samuel anointed David, what reason appeared for transferring it? Who would have expected a king to arise out of the plebeian family of a herdsman? And of seven brothers, who would have conjectured that such an honour was destined for the youngest? And by what means did he attain a hope of the kingdom? Who can assert that this unction was directed by human art, or industry, or prudence, and was not rather a completion of the prediction of heaven? And in like manner do not his predictions, although obscure, concerning the admission of the Gentiles into the covenant of God, which were accomplished almost two thousand years after, clearly prove him to have spoken under a divine inspiration? I omit other predictions, which so strongly savour of a divine inspiration, that all who have the use of their reason must perceive that it is God who speaks. In short, one song of his is a clear mirror in which God evidently appears. (e)

VIII. But in the other prophets this is yet far more conspicuous. I shall only select a few examples; for to collect all would be too laborious. When, in the time of Isaiah, the kingdom of Judah was in peace, and even when they thought themselves safe in the alliance of the Chaldeans, Isaiah publicly spake of the destruction of the city and the banishment of the people. (f) Now, even if to predict long before things which then seemed false, but have since appeared to be true, were not a sufficiently clear proof of a divine inspiration, to whom but God shall we ascribe the prophecies which he uttered concerning their deliverance? He mentions the name of Cyrus, by whom the Chaldeans were to be subdued, and the people restored to liberty. (g) More than a century elapsed after this prophecy before the birth of Cyrus; for he was not born till about the hundredth year after the prophet's death. No man could then divine, that there would be one Cyrus, who would engage in a war with the Babylonians, who would subjugate such a powerful monarchy, and release the people of Israel from exile. Does not this bare narration, without any ornaments of diction, plainly demonstrate that Isaiah delivered the undoubted oracles of God, and not the conjectures of men? Again, when Jeremiah, just before the people were carried away, limited the duration of their captivity to seventy years, and predicted their liberation and return, must not his tongue have been under the direction of the Spirit of God? (h) What impudence must it be to deny

(e) Deut. xxxii.

(f) Isaiah xxxix. 6.

(g) Isaiah xlv. 1.

(h) Jer. xxv. 11, 12.

that the authority of the prophets has been confirmed by such proofs, or that what they themselves assert, in order to vindicate the credit due to their declarations, has been actually fulfilled! "Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare: before they spring forth, I tell you of them." (*i*) I shall not speak of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, who, living in distant countries, but prophesying at the same time, so exactly accord in their declarations, as though they had mutually dictated the words to each other. What shall we say of Daniel? Has not he prophesied of the events of nearly six hundred years in such a connected series, as if he were composing a history of transactions already past and universally known? If pious men properly consider these things, they will be sufficiently prepared to curb the petulance of the wicked; for the demonstration is too clear to be liable to any cavils.

IX. I know what is objected by some clamorous men, who would ostentatiously display the force of their understanding in opposing divine truth. For they inquire, Who has assured us that Moses and the prophets actually wrote those books which bear their names? They even dare to question whether such a man as Moses ever existed. But if any man should call in question the existence of Plato, or Aristotle, or Cicero, who would deny that such madness ought to receive corporal punishment? The law of Moses has been wonderfully preserved, rather by the providence of heaven than by the endeavours of men. And though, through the negligence of the priests, it lay for a short time concealed, since it was found by the pious king Josiah, it has continued in the hands of men through every succeeding age. (*k*) Nor, indeed, did Josiah produce it as a thing unknown or new, but as what had always been public, and the memory of which was then famous. The protograph had been appointed to be kept in the temple, and a transcript of it to be deposited in the royal archives; (*l*) only the priests had discontinued their ancient custom of publishing the law, and the people themselves had neglected their wonted reading of it: yet there scarcely passed an age in which its sanction was not confirmed and renewed. Were they, who had the writings of David, ignorant of Moses? But, to speak of all at once, it is certain, that their writings descended to posterity only from hand to hand, (so to speak,) through a long series of years transmitted from the fathers, who partly had heard them speak, and partly learned from others who heard them, while it was fresh in their memory, that they had thus spoken.

X. With regard to what they object from the history of the

(*i*) Isaiah xliii. 9.

(*k*) 2 Kings xxii. 8.

(*l*) Deut. xvii. 18.

Maccabees, to diminish the credit of the Scripture, nothing could be conceived more adapted to establish it. But first let us divest it of their artificial colouring, and then retort upon them the weapon which they direct against us. When Antiochus, say they, commanded all the books to be burned, whence proceeded the copies which we now have? I, on the contrary, inquire, where they could so speedily be fabricated. For it is evident, that, as soon as the persecution subsided, they immediately appeared, and were, without controversy, acknowledged as the same by all pious men; who, having been educated in their doctrine, had been familiarly acquainted with them. Nay, even when all the impious, as if by a general conspiracy, so wantonly insulted the Jews, no man ever dared to charge them with forging their books. For, whatever be their opinion of the Jewish religion, yet they confess that Moses was the author of it. What, then, do these clamorous objectors, but betray their own consummate impudence, when they slander, as supposititious, books whose sacred antiquity is confirmed by the consent of all histories? But, to waste no more useless labour in refuting such stale calumnies, let us rather consider how carefully the Lord preserved his own word, when, beyond all hope, he rescued it from the fury of the most cruel of tyrants, as from a devouring fire;—that he endued the pious priests and others with so much constancy, that they hesitated not to redeem this treasure, if necessary, with their lives, to transmit it to posterity; and that he frustrated the most diligent inquisition of so many governors and soldiers. Who is there but must acknowledge it to have been an eminent and wonderful work of God, that those sacred monuments, which the impious had flattered themselves were utterly destroyed, were soon public again, as it were, fully restored to mankind, and, indeed, with far greater honour? For soon after followed the Greek Translation, which published them throughout the world. Nor was God's preserving the tables of his covenant from the sanguinary edicts of Antiochus, the only instance of his wonderful operation, but that, amidst such various miseries, with which the Jewish nation was diminished and laid waste, and at last nearly exterminated, these records still remained entire. The Hebrew language lay not only despised, but almost unknown; and surely, had not God consulted the interest of religion, it had been totally lost. For how much the Jews, after their return from captivity, departed from the genuine use of their native language, appears from the prophets of that age; which it is therefore useful to observe, because this comparison more clearly evinces the antiquity of the law and the prophets. And by whom hath God preserved to us the doctrine of salvation contained in the law and the

prophets, that Christ might be manifested in due time? By his most inveterate enemies, the Jews; whom Augustine therefore justly denominates the librarians of the Christian Church, because they have furnished us with a book of which themselves make no use.

XI. If we proceed to the New Testament, by what solid foundations is its truth supported? Three Evangelists recite their history in a low and mean style. Many proud men are disgusted with that simplicity, because they attend not to the principal points of doctrine; whence it were easy to infer, that they treat of heavenly mysteries which are above human capacity. They who have a spark of ingenuous modesty will certainly be ashamed, if they peruse the first chapter of Luke. Now, the discourses of Christ, a concise summary of which is comprised in these three Evangelists, easily exempt their writings from contempt. But John, thundering from his sublimity, more powerfully than any thunderbolt, levels to the dust the obstinacy of those whom he does not compel to the obedience of faith. Let all those censorious critics whose supreme pleasure consists in banishing all reverence for the Scripture out of their own hearts and the hearts of others, come forth to public view. Let them read the Gospel of John: whether they wish it or not, they will there find numerous passages, which, at least, arouse their indolence; and which will even imprint a horrible brand on their consciences to restrain their ridicule. Similar is the method of Paul and of Peter, in whose writings, though the greater part be blind, yet their heavenly majesty attracts universal attention. But this one circumstance raises their doctrine sufficiently above the world, that Matthew, who had before been confined to the profit of his table, and Peter and John, who had been employed in fishing-boats, — all plain, unlettered men, — had learned nothing in any human school which they could communicate to others. And Paul, from not only a professed, but a cruel and sanguinary enemy, being converted to a new man, proves, by his sudden and unhopd for change, that he was constrained, by a command from heaven, to vindicate that doctrine which he had before opposed. Let these men deny that the Holy Spirit descended on the Apostles; or, at least, let them dispute the credibility of the history; yet the fact itself loudly proclaims, that they were taught by the Spirit, who, though before despised as some of the meanest of the people, suddenly began to discourse in such a magnificent manner on the mysteries of heaven.

XII. Besides, there are also other very substantial reasons why the consent of the Church should have its weight. For it is not an unimportant consideration, that, since the publication of the Scripture, so many generations of men should have

agreed in voluntarily obeying it; and that however Satan, together with the whole world, has endeavoured by strange methods to suppress or destroy it, or utterly to erase and obliterate it from the memory of man, yet it has always, like a palm-tree, risen superior to all opposition, and remained invincible. Indeed, there has scarcely ever been a sophist or orator of more than common abilities, who has not tried his strength in opposing it; yet they have all availed nothing. All the powers of the earth have armed themselves for its destruction; but their attempts have all evaporated into smoke. How could it have so firmly resisted attacks on every quarter, if it had been supported only by human power? Indeed, an additional proof of its Divine origin arises from this very circumstance, that, notwithstanding all the strenuous resistance of men, it has, by its own power, risen superior to every danger. Moreover, not one city, or one nation, only, has conspired to receive and embrace it; but, as far as the world extends, it has obtained its authority by the holy consent of various nations, who agreed in nothing besides. And as such an agreement of minds, so widely distant in place, and so completely dissimilar in manners and opinions, ought to have great influence with us, since it is plain that it was effected only by the power of heaven, so it acquires no small weight from a consideration of the piety of those who unite in this agreement; not indeed of all, but of those, who, it hath pleased the Lord, should shine as luminaries in his Church.

XIII. Now, with what unlimited confidence should we submit to that doctrine, which we see confirmed and witnessed by the blood of so many saints! Having once received it, they hesitated not, with intrepid boldness, and even with great alacrity, to die in its defence: transmitted to us with such a pledge, how should we not receive it with a firm and unshaken conviction? Is it therefore no small confirmation of the Scripture, that it has been sealed with the blood of so many martyrs? especially when we consider that they died to bear testimony to their faith, not through intemperate fanaticism, as is sometimes the case with men of erroneous minds, but through a firm and constant, yet sober zeal for God. There are other reasons, and those neither few nor weak, by which the native dignity and authority of the Scripture are not only maintained in the minds of the pious, but also completely vindicated against the subtleties of calumniators; but such as alone are not sufficient to produce firm faith in it, till the heavenly Father, discovering his own power therein, places its authority beyond all controversy. Wherefore the Scripture will then only be effectual to produce the saving knowledge of God, when the certainty of it shall be founded on the internal persuasion of the Holy Spirit. Thus

those human testimonies, which contribute to its confirmation, will not be useless, if they follow that first and principal proof, as secondary aids to our imbecility. But those persons betray great folly, who wish it to be demonstrated to infidels that the Scripture is the word of God, which cannot be known without faith. Augustine therefore justly observes, (*m*) that piety and peace of mind ought to precede, in order that a man may understand somewhat of such great subjects.

CHAPTER IX.

THE FANATICISM WHICH DISCARDS THE SCRIPTURE, UNDER THE PRETENCE OF RESORTING TO IMMEDIATE REVELATIONS, SUBVERSIVE OF EVERY PRINCIPLE OF PIETY.

PERSONS who, abandoning the Scripture, imagine to themselves some other way of approaching to God, must be considered as not so much misled by error as actuated by frenzy. For there have lately arisen some unsteady men, who, haughtily pretending to be taught by the Spirit, reject all reading themselves, and deride the simplicity of those who still attend to (what they style) the dead and killing letter. But I would ask them, what spirit that is, by whose inspiration they are elevated to such a sublimity, as to dare to despise the doctrine of the Scripture, as puerile and mean. For, if they answer that it is the Spirit of Christ, how ridiculous is such an assurance! for that the apostles of Christ, and other believers in the primitive Church, were illuminated by no other Spirit, I think they will concede. But not one of them learned, from his teaching, to contemn the Divine word; they were rather filled with higher reverence for it, as their writings abundantly testify. This had been predicted by the mouth of Isaiah. For where he says, "My Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, for ever," (*n*) he does not confine people under the old dispensation to the external letter, as though they were children learning to read, but declares, that it will be the true and complete felicity of the new Church, under the reign of Christ, to be governed by the word of God, as well as by his Spirit.

(*m*) Lib. de Util. Credend.

(*n*) Isaiah lix. 21.

Whence we infer, that these persons are guilty of detestable sacrilege, in disjoining these two things, which the prophet has connected in an inviolable union. Again; Paul, after he had been caught up into the third heaven, did not cease to study the doctrine of the law and the prophets; as he also exhorted Timothy, a teacher of more than common excellence, to "give attendance to reading." (*o*) And worthy of remembrance is his eulogium on the Scripture, that it "is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect." (*p*) How diabolical, then, is that madness which pretends that the use of the Scripture is only transient and temporary, which guides the sons of God to the highest point of perfection! I would also ask them another question — whether they have imbibed a different spirit from that which the Lord promised to his disciples? Great as their infatuation is, I do not think them fanatical enough to hazard such an avowal. But what kind of Spirit did he promise? One, truly, who should "not speak of himself," (*q*) but suggest and instil into their minds those things which he had orally delivered. The office of the Spirit, then, which is promised to us, is not to feign new and unheard of revelations, or to coin a new system of doctrine, which would seduce us from the received doctrine of the Gospel, but to seal to our minds the same doctrine which the Gospel delivers.

II. Hence we readily understand that it is incumbent on us diligently to read and attend to the Scripture, if we would receive any advantage or satisfaction from the Spirit of God; (thus also Peter (*r*) commends those who studiously attended to the doctrine of the prophets, which yet might be supposed to have retired after the light of the Gospel was risen;) but, on the contrary, that if any spirit, neglecting the wisdom of the word of God, obtrude on us another doctrine, he ought justly to be suspected of vanity and falsehood. For, as Satan transforms himself into an angel of light, what authority will the Spirit have with us, unless we can distinguish him by the most certain criterion? We find him clearly designated, indeed, in the word of the Lord; but these unhappy men are fondly bent on delusion, even to their own destruction, seeking a spirit rather from themselves than from him. But they plead, that it is unworthy of the Spirit of God, to whom all things ought to be subject, to be made subject to the Scripture; as though it were ignominious to the Holy Spirit to be every where equal and uniform, in all things invariably consistent with himself. If he were to be conformed to the rules of

(*o*) 1 Tim. iv. 13.

(*p*) 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.

(*q*) John xvi. 13.

(*r*) 2 Pet. i. 19.

men, or of angels, or of any other beings, I grant he might then be considered as degraded, or even reduced to a state of servitude; but while he is compared with himself, and considered in himself, who will assert that he is thereby injured? This is bringing him to the test of examination. I confess it is. But it is the way which he has chosen for the confirmation of his majesty among us. We ought to be satisfied, as soon as he communicates himself to us. But, lest the spirit of Satan should insinuate himself under his name, he chooses to be recognized by us from his image, which he hath impressed in the Scriptures. He is the author of the Scriptures: he cannot be mutable and inconsistent with himself. He must therefore perpetually remain such as he has there discovered himself to be. This is not disgraceful to him; unless we esteem it honourable for him to alter and degenerate from himself.

III. But their cavilling objection, that we depend on "the letter that killeth," shows, that they have not escaped the punishment due to the despisers of the Scripture. For it is sufficiently evident, that Paul is there contending against the false apostles, (*s*) who, recommending the law to the exclusion of Christ, were seducing the people from the blessings of the New Covenant, in which the Lord engages to engrave his law in the minds of believers, and to inscribe it on their hearts. The letter therefore is dead, and the law of the Lord slays the readers of it, where it is separated from the grace of Christ, and only sounds in the ears, without affecting the heart. But if it be efficaciously impressed on our hearts by the Spirit, — if it exhibit Christ, — it is the word of life, "converting the soul, making wise the simple," &c. (*t*) But in the same place the Apostle also calls his preaching "the ministration of the Spirit;" (*v*) doubtless intending, that the Holy Spirit so adheres to his own truth, which he hath expressed in the Scriptures, that he only displays and exerts his power where the word is received with due reverence and honour. Nor is this repugnant to what I before asserted, that the word itself has not much certainty with us, unless when confirmed by the testimony of the Spirit. For the Lord hath established a kind of mutual connection between the certainty of his word and of his Spirit; so that our minds are filled with a solid reverence for the word, when by the light of the Spirit we are enabled therein to behold the Divine countenance; and, on the other hand, without the least fear of mistake, we gladly receive the Spirit, when we recognize him in his image, that is, in the word. This is the true state of the case. God did

(*s*) 2 Cor. iii. 6. (*t*) Psalm xix. 7. (*v*) 2 Cor. iii. 8.

not publish his word to mankind for the sake of momentary ostentation, with a design to destroy or annul it immediately on the advent of the Spirit; but he afterwards sent the same Spirit, by whose agency he had dispensed his word, to complete his work by an efficacious confirmation of that word. In this manner Christ opened the understanding of his two disciples; (*w*) not that, rejecting the Scriptures, they might be wise enough of themselves, but that they might understand the Scriptures. So when Paul exhorts the Thessalonians to "quench not the Spirit," (*x*) he does not lead them to empty speculations independent of the word; for he immediately adds, "despise not prophesyings;" clearly intimating, that the light of the Spirit is extinguished when prophecies fall into contempt. What answer can be given to these things, by those proud fanatics, who think themselves possessed of the only valuable illumination, when, securely neglecting and forsaking the Divine word, they, with equal confidence and temerity, greedily embrace every reverie which their distempered imaginations may have conceived? A very different sobriety becomes the children of God; who, while they are sensible that, exclusively of the Spirit of God, they are utterly destitute of the light of truth, yet are not ignorant that the word is the instrument, by which the Lord dispenses to believers the illumination of his Spirit. For they know no other Spirit than that who dwelt in and spake by the apostles; by whose oracles they are continually called to the hearing of the word.

CHAPTER X.

ALL IDOLATROUS WORSHIP DISCOURAGED IN THE SCRIPTURE,
BY ITS EXCLUSIVE OPPOSITION OF THE TRUE GOD TO ALL THE
FICTITIOUS DEITIES OF THE HEATHEN.

BUT, since we have shown that the knowledge of God, which is otherwise exhibited without obscurity in the structure of the world, and in all the creatures, is yet more familiarly and clearly unfolded in the word, it will be useful to examine, whether the representation, which the Lord gives us of himself in the Scripture, agrees with the portraiture which he had before been pleased to delineate in his works. This is indeed an extensive subject, if we intended to dwell on a particular

(*w*) Luke xxiv. 27, &c. (*x*) 1 Thess. v. 19.

discussion of it. But I shall content myself with suggesting some hints, by which the minds of the pious may learn what ought to be their principal objects of investigation in Scripture concerning God, and may be directed to a certain end in that inquiry. I do not yet allude to the peculiar covenant which distinguished the descendants of Abraham from the rest of the nations. For in receiving, by gratuitous adoption, those who were his enemies into the number of his children, God even then manifested himself as a Redeemer; but we are still treating of that knowledge which relates to the creation of the world, without ascending to Christ the Mediator. But though it will be useful soon to cite some passages from the New Testament, (since that also demonstrates the power of God in the creation, and his providence in the conservation of the world,) yet I wish the reader to be apprized of the point now intended to be discussed, that he may not pass the limits which the subject prescribes. At present, then, let it suffice to understand how God, the former of heaven and earth, governs the world which he hath made. Both his paternal goodness, and the beneficent inclinations of his will, are every where celebrated; and examples are given of his severity, which discover him to be the righteous punisher of iniquities, especially where his forbearance produces no salutary effects upon the obstinate.

II. In some places, indeed, we are favoured with more explicit descriptions, which exhibit to our view an exact representation of his genuine countenance. For Moses, in the description which he gives of it, certainly appears to have intended a brief comprehension of all that it was possible for men to know concerning him — “The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children’s children.” (y) Where we may observe, first, the assertion of his eternity and self-existence, in that magnificent name, which is twice repeated; and secondly, the celebration of his attributes, giving us a description, not of what he is in himself, but of what he is to us, that our knowledge of him may consist rather in a lively perception, than in vain and airy speculation. Here we find an enumeration of the same perfections which, as we have remarked, are illustriously displayed both in heaven and on earth — clemency, goodness, mercy, justice, judgment, and truth. For power is comprised in the word Elohim, God. The prophets distin-

(y) Exod. xxxiv. 6.

guish him by the same epithets, when they intend a complete exhibition of his holy name. But, to avoid the necessity of quoting many passages, let us content ourselves at present with referring to one Psalm; (z) which contains such an accurate summary of all his perfections, that nothing seems to be omitted. And yet it contains nothing but what may be known from a contemplation of the creatures. Thus, by the teaching of experience, we perceive God to be just what he declares himself in his word. In Jeremiah, where he announces in what characters he will be known by us, he gives a description, not so full, but to the same effect — “Let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord, which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth.” (a) These three things it is certainly of the highest importance for us to know — mercy, in which alone consists all our salvation; judgment, which is executed on the wicked every day, and awaits them in a still heavier degree to eternal destruction; righteousness, by which the faithful are preserved, and most graciously supported. When you understand these things, the prophecy declares that you have abundant reason for glorying in God. Nor is this representation chargeable with an omission of his truth, or his power, or his holiness, or his goodness. For how could we have that knowledge, which is here required, of his righteousness, mercy, and judgment, unless it were supported by his inflexible veracity? And how could we believe that he governed the world in judgment and justice, if we were ignorant of his power? And whence proceeds his mercy, but from his goodness? If all his ways, then, are mercy, judgment, and righteousness, holiness also must be conspicuously displayed in them. Moreover, the knowledge of God, which is afforded us in the Scriptures, is designed for the same end as that which we derive from the creatures: it invites us first to the fear of God, and then to confidence in him; that we may learn to honour him with perfect innocence of life, and sincere obedience to his will, and to place all our dependence on his goodness.

III. But here I intend to comprise a summary of the general doctrine. And, first, let the reader observe, that the Scripture, in order to direct us to the true God, expressly excludes and rejects all the gods of the heathen; because, in almost all ages, religion has been generally corrupted. It is true, indeed, that the name of one supreme God has been universally known and celebrated. For those who used to worship a multitude of deities, whenever they spake according

(z) Psalm cxlv.

(a) Jer. ix. 24.

to the genuine sense of nature, used simply the name of God, in the singular number, as though they were contented with one God. And this was wisely remarked by Justin Martyr, who for this purpose wrote a book *On the Monarchy of God*, in which he demonstrates, from numerous testimonies, that the unity of God was a principle universally impressed on the hearts of men. Tertullian also proves the same point from the common phraseology. (b) But since all men, without exception, have by their own vanity been drawn into erroneous notions, and so their understandings have become vain, all their natural perception of the Divine unity has only served to render them inexcusable. For even the wisest of them evidently betray the vagrant uncertainty of their minds, when they wish for some god to assist them, and in their vows call upon unknown and fabulous deities. Besides, in imagining the existence of many natures in God, though they did not entertain such absurd notions as the ignorant vulgar concerning Jupiter, Mercury, Venus, Minerva, and the rest, they were themselves by no means exempt from the delusions of Satan; and, as we have already remarked, whatever subtrefuges their ingenuity has invented, none of the philosophers can exculpate themselves from the crime of revolting from God by the corruption of his truth. For this reason Habakkuk, after condemning all idols, bids us to seek "the Lord in his holy temple," (c) that the faithful might acknowledge no other God than Jehovah, who had revealed himself in his word.

CHAPTER XI.

UNLAWFULNESS OF ASCRIBING TO GOD A VISIBLE FORM. ALL IDOLATRY A DEFECTION FROM THE TRUE GOD.

Now, as the Scripture, in consideration of the ignorance and dulness of the human understanding, generally speaks in the plainest manner, — where it intends to discriminate between the true God and all false gods, it principally contrasts him with idols; not that it may sanction the more ingenious and plausible systems of the philosophers, but that it may better detect the folly and even madness of the world in researches concerning God, as long as every one adheres to his own speculations. That exclusive definition, therefore, which

(b) Lib. de Idolol. Vid. Aug. Epist. 43 et 44.

(c) Hab. ii. 20.

every where occurs, reduces to nothing whatever notions of the Deity men may form in their own imaginations; since God alone is a sufficient witness concerning himself. In the mean time, since the whole world has been seized with such brutal stupidity, as to be desirous of visible representations of the Deity, and thus to fabricate gods of wood, stone, gold, silver, and other inanimate and corruptible materials, we ought to hold this as a certain principle, that, whenever any image is made as a representation of God, the Divine glory is corrupted by an impious falsehood. Therefore God, in the law, after having asserted the glory of Deity to belong exclusively to himself, when he intends to show what worship he approves or rejects, immediately adds, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness." In these words he forbids us to attempt a representation of him in any visible figure; and briefly enumerates all the forms by which superstition had already begun to change his truth into a lie. For the Persians, we know, worshipped the sun; and the foolish heathen made for themselves as many gods as they saw stars in the heavens. There was scarcely an animal, indeed, which the Egyptians did not consider as an image of God. The Greeks appeared wiser than the rest, because they worshipped the Deity under the human form. (*d*) But God compares not idols with each other, as though one were better or worse than another; but rejects, without a single exception, all statues, pictures, and other figures, in which idolaters imagined that he would be near them.

II. This it is easy to infer from the reasons which he annexes to the prohibition. First, in the writings of Moses: "Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves; for ye saw no manner of similitude, on the day that the Lord spake unto you in Horeb, out of the midst of the fire: ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude; lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure;" &c. (*e*) We see how expressly God opposes his "voice" to every "manner of similitude," to show, that whoever desires visible representations of him, is guilty of departing from him. It will be sufficient to refer to one of the Prophets, Isaiah, (*f*) who insists more than all the others on this argument, that the Divine Majesty is dishonoured by mean and absurd fiction, when he that is incorporeal is likened to a corporeal form; he that is invisible, to a visible image; he that is a spirit, to inanimate matter; and he that fills immensity, to a log of wood, a small stone, or a lump of gold. Paul also reasons in the same manner: "Forasmuch, then, as we are the offspring of God, we

(*d*) Maximus Tyrius, Plat. Serm. 38.

(*e*) Deut. iv. 15.

(*f*) Isaiah xl. 18; xli. 7, 29; xlii. 5, &c.

ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device." (*g*) Whence it follows, that whatever statues are erected, or images painted, to represent God, they are only displeasing to him, as being so many insults to the Divine Majesty. And why should we wonder at the Holy Spirit thundering forth such oracles from heaven, since he compels the blind and wretched idolaters to make a similar confession on earth? Well known is the complaint of Seneca, which is cited by Augustine: "They dedicate (says he) the vilest and meanest materials to represent the sacred, immortal, and inviolable gods; and give them some a human form, and some a brutal one, and some a double sex, and different bodies; and they confer the name of gods upon images which, if animated, would be accounted monsters." Hence it further appears that the pretence set up by the advocates for idols, that they were forbidden to the Jews because they were prone to superstition, is only a frivolous cavil, to evade the force of the argument. As if truly that were peculiarly applicable to one nation, which God deduces from his eternal existence, and the invariable order of nature! Besides, Paul was not addressing the Jews, but the Athenians, when he refuted the error of making any similitude of God.

III. Sometimes indeed God hath discovered his presence by certain signs, so that he was said to be seen "face to face;" (*h*) but all the signs which he ever adopted, were well calculated for the instruction of men, and afforded clear intimations of his incomprehensible essence. For "the cloud, and the smoke, and the flame," (*i*) though they were symbols of celestial glory, nevertheless operated as a restraint on the minds of all, to prevent their attempting to penetrate any further. Wherefore even Moses (to whom he manifested himself more familiarly than to any other) obtained not by his prayers a sight of the face of God, but received this answer: "Thou canst not see my face; for there shall no man see my face and live." (*k*) The Holy Spirit once appeared in the form of a dove; (*l*) but, as he presently disappeared again, who does not perceive that by this momentary symbol the faithful are taught that they should believe the Spirit to be invisible? that, being content with his power and grace, they might make no external representation of him. The appearances of God in the human form were preludes to his future manifestation in Christ. Therefore the Jews were not permitted to make this a pretext for erecting a symbol of Deity in the figure of a man. "The mercy seat" (*m*) also, from which, under the law, God displayed the presence of his power, was so constructed, as to suggest that the best contemplation of the

(*g*) Acts xvii. 29.(*i*) Deut. iv. 11.(*l*) Matt. iii. 16.(*h*) Exod. xxxiii. 11.(*k*) Exod. xxxiii. 20.(*m*) Exod. xxv. 17, 18, &c.

Divine Being is when the mind is transported beyond itself with admiration. For "the cherubim" covered it with their extended wings; the veil was spread before it; and the place itself was sufficiently concealed by its secluded situation. It is manifestly unreasonable therefore to endeavour to defend images of God and of the saints, by the example of those cherubim. For, pray, what was signified by those little images but that images are not calculated to represent the Divine mysteries? since they were formed in such a manner as, by veiling the mercy seat with their wings, to prevent not only the eyes, but all the human senses, from prying into God, and so to restrain all temerity. Moreover, the Prophet describes the seraphim whom he saw in a vision, as having "their faces covered;" (n) to signify, that the splendour of the Divine glory is so great, that even the angels themselves cannot steadfastly behold it; and the faint sparks of it, which shine in the angels, are concealed from our view. The cherubim, however, of which we are now speaking, are acknowledged by all persons of sound judgment to have been peculiar to the old state of tutelage under the legal dispensation. To adduce them, therefore, as examples for the imitation of the present age, is quite absurd. For that puerile period, as I may call it, for which such rudiments were appointed, is now past. And, indeed, it is a shameful consideration, that heathen writers are more expert interpreters of the Divine law than the papists. Juvenal reproaches and ridicules the Jews for worshipping the white clouds and Deity of heaven. This language, indeed, is perverse and impious; but in denying that there was any image of God among them, he speaks with more truth than the papists, who idly pretend that there was some visible figure of him. But as that nation frequently broke out into idolatry, with great and sudden impetuosity, resembling the violent ebullition of water from a large spring, hence let us learn the strong propensity of the human mind to idolatry, lest, imputing to the Jews a crime common to all, we should be fascinated by the allurements of sin, and sleep the sleep of death.

IV. To the same purpose is that passage, "The idols of the heathen are silver and gold, the work of men's hands;" (o) for the Prophet concludes, from the very materials, that they are no gods, whose images are made of gold or of silver; and takes it for granted, that every conception we form of the Deity, merely from our own understandings, is a foolish imagination. He mentions gold and silver rather than clay or stone, that the splendour or the value of the materials may procure no reverence for the idols. But he concludes in general, that nothing is more improbable, than that gods should be manufactured

(n) Isaiah vi. 2.

(o) Psalm cxxxv. 15.

from any inanimate matter. At the same time he insists equally on another point — that it is presumption and madness in mortal men, who are every moment in danger of losing the fleeting breath which they draw, to dare to confer upon idols the honour due to God. Man is constrained to confess that he is a creature of a day, and yet he will have a piece of metal to be worshipped as a god, of the deity of which he is the author; for whence did idols originate, but in the will of men? There is much propriety in that sarcasm of a heathen poet, who represents one of their idols as saying, “Formerly, I was the trunk of a wild fig-tree, a useless log; when the artificer, after hesitating whether he would make me a stool or a deity, at length determined that I should be a god.” (*p*)

A poor mortal, forsooth, who is, as it were, expiring almost every moment, will, by his workmanship, transfer to a dead stock the name and honour of God. But as that Epicurean, in his satirical effusions, has paid no respect to any religion, — leaving this sarcasm, and others of the same kind, we should be stung and penetrated by the rebuke which the Prophet (*q*) has given to the extreme stupidity of those, who, with the same wood, make a fire to warm themselves, heat an oven for baking bread, roast or boil their meat, and fabricate a god, before which they prostrate themselves, to address their humble supplications. In another place, therefore, he not only pronounces them transgressors of the law, but reproaches them for not having learned from the foundations of the earth; (*r*) since, in reality, there is nothing more unreasonable than the thought of contracting the infinite and incomprehensible God within the compass of five feet. And yet this monstrous abomination, which is manifestly repugnant to the order of nature, experience demonstrates to be natural to man. It must be further observed, that idols are frequently stigmatized as being the works of men’s hands, unsanctioned by Divine authority; in order to establish this principle, that all modes of worship which are merely of human invention, are detestable. The Psalmist aggravates this madness, forasmuch as men implore the aid of dead and insensible things, who are imbued with understanding to know that all things are directed solely by the power of God. But since the corruption of nature carries all nations in general, and each individual in particular, to such an excess of frenzy, the Spirit at length thunders out this direful imprecation: “Let those that make them be like unto them and every one that trusteth in them.” (*s*) Let it be observed, that all similitudes are equally as much forbidden as graven images; which refutes the foolish subterfuge of the Greeks; for they think themselves quite safe, if they

(*p*) Hor. Sat. lib. 1, 8.

(*q*) Isaiah xlv. 9—20.

(*r*) Isaiah xl. 21.

(*s*) Psalm cxv. 8.

make no sculpture of Deity, while in pictures they indulge greater liberty than any other nations. But the Lord prohibits every representation of him, whether made by the statuary, or by any other artificer, because all similitudes are criminal and insulting to the Divine Majesty.

V. I know that it is a very common observation, that images are the books of the illiterate. Gregory said so; but very different is the decision of the Spirit of God, in whose school had Gregory been taught, he would never have made such an assertion. For, since Jeremiah pronounces that "the stock is a doctrine of vanities," (*t*) since Habakkuk represents "a molten image" as "a teacher of lies," (*v*)—certainly the general doctrine to be gathered from these passages is, that whatever men learn respecting God from images is equally frivolous and false. If any one object, that the Prophets only reprehended those who abuse images to the impious purposes of superstition,—that indeed I grant; but affirm also, what is evident to every one, that they utterly condemn what is assumed by the papists as an indubitable axiom, that images are substitutes for books. For they contrast images with the true God, as contraries, which can never agree. This comparison, I say, is laid down in those passages which I have just cited; that, since there is only one true God, whom the Jews worshipped, there can be no visible figures made, to serve as representations of the Divine Being, without falsehood and criminality; and all who seek the knowledge of God from such figures are under a miserable delusion. Were it not true, that all knowledge of God, sought from images, is corrupt and fallacious, it would not be so uniformly condemned by the Prophets. This at least must be granted to us, that, when we maintain the vanity and fallaciousness of the attempts of men to make visible representations of God, we do no other than recite the express declarations of the Prophets.

VI. Read likewise what has been written on this subject by Lactantius and Eusebius, who hesitate not to assume as a certainty, that all those whose images are to be seen, were mortal men. Augustine also confidently asserts the unlawfulness, not only of worshipping images, but even of erecting any with reference to God. Nor does he advance any thing different from what had, many years before, been decreed by the Elibertine council, the thirty-sixth chapter of which is as follows: "It hath been decreed, that no pictures be had in the churches, and that what is worshipped or adored be not painted on the walls." But most remarkable is what Augustine elsewhere cites from Varro, and to the truth of which he

(*t*) Jer. x. 8.

(*v*) Hab. ii. 18.

subscribes—“That they who first introduced images of the gods, removed fear and added error.” If this had been a mere assertion of Varro alone, it might have perhaps but little authority; yet it should justly fill us with shame, that a heathen, groping as it were in the dark, attained so much light as to perceive that corporeal representations were unworthy of the Divine Majesty, being calculated to diminish the fear of God, and to increase error among mankind. The fact itself demonstrates this to have been spoken with equal truth and wisdom; but Augustine, having borrowed it from Varro, advances it as his own opinion. And first he observes that the most ancient errors concerning God, in which men were involved, did not originate from images, but were increased by them, as by the superaddition of new materials. He next explains that the fear of God is thereby diminished, and even destroyed; since the foolish, ridiculous, and absurd fabrication of idols would easily bring his Divinity into contempt. Of the truth of this second remark, I sincerely wish that we had not such proofs in our own experience. Whoever, therefore, desires to be rightly instructed, he must learn from some other quarter than from images, what is to be known concerning God.

VII. If the papists have any shame, let them no longer use this subterfuge, that images are the books of the illiterate; which is so clearly refuted by numerous testimonies from Scripture. Yet, though I should concede this point to them, it would avail them but little in defence of their idols. What monsters they obtrude in the place of Deity is well known. But what they call the pictures or statues of their saints—what are they but examples of the most abandoned luxury and obscenity? which if any one were desirous of imitating, he would deserve corporal punishment. Even prostitutes in brothels are to be seen in more chaste and modest attire, than those images in their temples, which they wish to be accounted images of virgins. Nor do they clothe the martyrs in habits at all more becoming. Let them adorn their idols, then, with some small degree of modesty, that the pretence of their being books of some holiness, if not less false, may be less impudent. But even then, we will reply, that this is not the method to be adopted in sacred places for the instruction of the faithful, whom God will have taught a very different doctrine from any that can be learned from such insignificant trifles. He hath commanded one common doctrine to be there proposed to all, in the preaching of his word, and in his sacred mysteries; to which they betray great inattention of mind, who are carried about by their eyes to the contemplation of idols. Whom, then, do the papists call illiterate, whose ig-

norance will suffer them to be taught only by images? Those, truly, whom the Lord acknowledges as his disciples; whom he honours with the revelation of his heavenly philosophy; whom he will have instructed in the healthful mysteries of his kingdom. I confess, indeed, as things are now circumstanced, that there are at present not a few who cannot bear to be deprived of such books. But whence arises this stupidity, but from being defrauded of that teaching which alone is adapted to their instruction? In fact, those who presided over the churches, resigned to idols the office of teaching, for no other reason but because they were themselves dumb. Paul testifies, that in the true preaching of this gospel, Christ is "evidently set forth," and, as it were, "crucified before our eyes." (*w*) To what purpose, then, was the erection of so many crosses of wood and stone, silver and gold, every where in the temples, if it had been fully and faithfully inculcated, that Christ died that he might bear our curse on the cross, expiate our sins by the sacrifice of his body, cleanse us by his blood, and, in a word, reconcile us to God the Father? From this simple declaration they might learn more than from a thousand crosses of wood or stone; for perhaps the avaricious fix their minds and their eyes more tenaciously on the gold and silver crosses, than on any part of the Divine word.

VIII. Respecting the origin of idols, the generally received opinion agrees with what is asserted in the book of Wisdom; (*x*) namely, that the first authors of them were persons who paid this honour to the dead, from a superstitious reverence for their memory. I grant that this perverse custom was very ancient, and deny not that it greatly contributed to increase the rage of mankind after idolatry; nevertheless, I cannot concede that it was the first cause of that evil. For it appears from Moses, that idols were in use long before the introduction of that ostentatious consecration of the images of the dead, which is frequently mentioned by profane writers. When he relates that Rachel stole her father's idols, (*y*) he speaks as of a common corruption. Whence we may infer, that the mind of man is, if I may be allowed the expression, a perpetual manufactory of idols. After the deluge, there was, as it were, a regeneration of the world; but not many years elapsed before men fabricated gods according to their own fancy. And it is probable, that while the holy patriarch was yet alive, his posterity were addicted to idolatry, so that, with the bitterest grief, he might, with his own eyes, behold the earth which God had lately purged from its corruptions by such a dreadful judgment,

(*w*) Gal. iii. 1.(*x*) Wisdom xiv. 15.(*y*) Gen. xxxi. 19.

again polluted with idols. For Terah and Nachor, before the birth of Abraham, were worshippers of false gods, as is asserted by Joshua. (z) Since the posterity of Shem so speedily degenerated, what opinion must we entertain of the descendants of Ham, who had already been cursed in their father? The true state of the case is, that the mind of man, being full of pride and temerity, dares to conceive of God according to its own standard; and, being sunk in stupidity, and immersed in profound ignorance, imagines a vain and ridiculous phantom instead of God. These evils are followed by another; men attempt to express in the work of their hands such a deity as they have imagined in their minds. The mind then begets the idol, and the hand brings it forth. The example of the Israelites proves this to have been the origin of idolatry, namely, that men believe not God to be among them, unless he exhibit some external signs of his presence. "As for this Moses," they said, "we wot not what is become of him; make us gods which shall go before us." (a) They knew, indeed, that there was a God, whose power they had experienced in so many miracles; but they had no confidence in his being present with them, unless they could see some corporeal symbol of his countenance, as a testimony of their Divine Guide. They wished, therefore, to understand, from the image going before them, that God was the leader of their march. Daily experience teaches, that the flesh is never satisfied, till it has obtained some image, resembling itself, in which it may be foolishly gratified, as an image of God. In almost all ages, from the creation of the world, in obedience to this stupid propensity, men have erected visible representations, in which they believed God to be presented to their carnal eyes.

IX. Such an invention is immediately attended with adoration; for when men supposed that they saw God in images, they also worshipped him in them. At length, both their eyes and their minds being wholly confined to them, they began to grow more stupid, and to admire them, as though they possessed some inherent divinity. Now, it is plain that men did not rush into the worship of images, till they had imbibed some very gross opinion respecting them; not, indeed, that they believed them to be gods, but they imagined that something of Divinity resided in them. When you prostrate yourself, therefore, in adoration of an image, whether you suppose it to represent God or a creature, you are already fascinated with superstition. For this reason the Lord hath prohibited, not only the erection of statues made as representations of him, but also the consecration of any inscriptions or monuments to

(z) Joshua xxiv. 2.

(a) Exod. xxxii. 1.

stand as objects of worship. For the same reason, also, another point is annexed to the precept in the law concerning adoration. For as soon as men have made a visible figure of God, they attach Divine power to it. Such is the stupidity of men, that they confine God to any image which they make to represent him, and therefore cannot but worship it. Nor is it of any importance, whether they worship simply the idol, or God in the idol; it is always idolatry, when Divine honours are paid to an idol, under any pretence whatsoever. And as God will not be worshipped in a superstitious or idolatrous manner, whatever is conferred on idols is taken from him. Let this be considered by those who seek such miserable pretexts for the defence of that execrable idolatry, with which, for many ages, true religion has been overwhelmed and subverted. The images, they say, are not considered as gods. Neither were the Jews so thoughtless as not to remember, that it was God by whose hand they had been conducted out of Egypt, before they made the calf. But when Aaron said that those were the gods by whom they had been liberated from Egypt, they boldly assented; (*b*) signifying, doubtless, that they would keep in remembrance, that God himself was their deliverer, while they could see him going before them in the calf. Nor can we believe the heathen to have been so stupid, as to conceive that God was no other than wood and stone. For they changed the images at pleasure, but always retained in their minds the same gods; and there were many images for one god; nor did they imagine to themselves gods in proportion to the multitude of images: besides, they daily consecrated new images, but without supposing that they made new gods. Read the excuses, which, Augustine says, (*c*) were alleged by the idolaters of the age in which he lived. When they were charged with idolatry, the vulgar replied, that they worshipped, not the visible figure, but the Divinity that invisibly dwelt in it. But they, whose religion was, as he expresses himself, more refined, said, that they worshipped neither the image, nor the spirit represented by it; but that in the corporeal figure they beheld a sign of that which they ought to worship. What is to be inferred from this, but that all idolaters, whether Jewish or Gentile, have been guided by the notion which I have mentioned? Not content with a spiritual knowledge of God, they thought that they should receive more clear and familiar impressions of him by means of images. After they had once pleased themselves with such a preposterous representation of God, they ceased not from being deluded with new fallacies, till they imagined that God

(*b*) Exod. xxxii. 4—6.

(*c*) In Psalm cxiii.

displayed his power in images. Nevertheless, the Jews were persuaded that, under such images, they worshipped the eternal God, the one true Lord of heaven and earth; and the heathen, that they worshipped their false gods, whom they pretended to be inhabitants of heaven.

X. Those who deny that this has been done in time past, and even within our own remembrance, assert an impudent falsehood. For why do they prostrate themselves before images? And when about to pray, why do they turn themselves towards them, as towards the ears of God? For it is true, as Augustine says, (d) "That no man prays or worships thus, looking on an image, who is not impressed with an opinion that he shall be heard by it, and a hope that it will do for him as he desires." Why is there so great a difference between images of the same god, that one is passed by with little or no respect, and another is honoured in the most solemn manner? Why do they fatigue themselves with votive pilgrimages, in going to see images resembling those which they have at home? Why do they at this day fight, even to slaughter and destruction, in defence of them, as of their country and religion, so that they could part with the only true God more easily than with their idols? Yet I am not here enumerating the gross errors of the vulgar, which are almost infinite, and occupy nearly the hearts of all; I only relate what they themselves allege, when they are most anxious to exculpate themselves from idolatry. "We never," say they, "call them our gods." Nor did the Jews or heathen in ancient times call them their gods; and yet the Prophets, in all their writings, were constantly accusing them of fornication with wood and stone, only on account of such things as are daily practised by those who wish to be thought Christians; that is, for worshipping God, by corporeal adoration before figures of wood or stone.

XI. I am neither ignorant, nor desirous of concealing, that they evade the charge by a more subtle distinction, which will soon be noticed more at large. They pretend that the reverence which they pay to images is *ειδωλοδουλεια*, (service of images,) but deny that it is *ειδωλολατρευσια* (worship of images.) For in this manner they express themselves, when they maintain, that the reverence which they call *dulia*, may be given to statues or pictures, without injury to God. They consider themselves, therefore, liable to no blame, while they are only the servants of their idols, and not worshippers of them; as though worship were not rather inferior to service. And yet, while they seek to shelter themselves under a Greek term, they contradict themselves in the most childish manner. For

(d) In Psalm cxiii.

since the Greek word λατρευειν signifies nothing else but to worship, what they say is equivalent to a confession that they adore their images, but without adoration. Nor can they justly object, that I am trying to insnare them with words: they betray their own ignorance in their endeavours to raise a mist before the eyes of the simple. But, however eloquent they may be, they will never be able, by their rhetoric, to prove one and the same thing to be two different things. Let them point out, I say, a difference in fact, that they may be accounted different from ancient idolaters. For as an adulterer, or homicide, will not escape the imputation of guilt, by giving his crime a new and arbitrary name, so it is absurd that these persons should be exculpated by the subtle invention of a name, if they really differ in no respect from those idolaters whom they themselves are constrained to condemn. But their case is so far from being different from that of former idolaters, that the source of all the evil is a preposterous emulation, with which they have rivalled them by exercising their minds in contriving, and their hands in forming, visible symbols of the Deity.

XII. Nevertheless, I am not so scrupulous as to think that no images ought ever to be permitted. But since sculpture and painting are gifts of God, I wish for a pure and legitimate use of both; lest those things, which the Lord hath conferred on us for his glory and our benefit, be not only corrupted by preposterous abuse, but even perverted to our ruin. We think it unlawful to make any visible figure as a representation of God, because he hath himself forbidden it, and it cannot be done without detracting, in some measure, from his glory. Let it not be supposed that we are singular in this opinion; for that all sound writers have uniformly reprobated the practice, must be evident to persons conversant with their works. If, then, it be not lawful to make any corporeal representation of God, much less will it be lawful to worship it for God, or to worship God in it. We conclude, therefore, that nothing should be painted and engraved but objects visible to our eyes: the Divine Majesty, which is far above the reach of human sight, ought not to be corrupted by unseemly figures. The subjects of those arts consist partly of histories and transactions, partly of images and corporeal forms, without reference to any transactions. The former are of some use in information or recollection; the latter, as far as I see, can furnish nothing but amusement. And yet it is evident, that almost all the images, which have hitherto been set up in the churches, have been of this latter description. Hence it may be seen, that they were placed there, not with judgment and discrimination, but from a foolish and inconsiderate passion for them. I say nothing here of the

impropriety and indecency conspicuous in most of them, and the wanton licentiousness displayed in them by the painters and statuary, at which I have before hinted: I only assert, that even if they were intrinsically faultless, still they would be altogether unavailing for the purposes of instruction.

XIII. But, passing over that difference also, let us consider, as we proceed, whether it be expedient to have any images at all in Christian temples, either descriptive of historical events, or representative of human forms. In the first place, if the authority of the ancient Church have any influence with us, let us remember, that for about five hundred years, while religion continued in a more prosperous state, and purer doctrine prevailed, the Christian churches were generally without images. They were then first introduced, therefore, to ornament the churches, when the purity of the ministry had begun to degenerate. I will not dispute what was the reason which influenced the first authors of them; but if you compare one age with another, you will see that they were much declined from the integrity of those who had no images. Who can suppose, that those holy fathers would have permitted the Church to remain so long destitute of what they judged useful and salutary for it? The fact was, that, instead of omitting them through ignorance or negligence, they perceived them to be of little or no use, but, on the contrary, pregnant with much danger; and, therefore, intentionally and wisely rejected them. This is asserted in express terms by Augustine: "When they are fixed," says he, "in those places in an honourable elevation, to attract the attention of those who are praying and sacrificing, though they are destitute of sense and life, yet, by the very similitude of living members and senses, they affect weak minds, so that they appear to them to live and breathe," &c. (e) And in another place: "For that representation of members leads, and, as it were, constrains, the mind, which animates a body, to suppose that body to be endued with perception, which it sees to be very similar to its own," &c. And a little after: "Idols have more influence to bow down an unhappy soul, because they have a mouth, eyes, ears, and feet, than to correct it, because they neither speak, nor see, nor hear, nor walk." This indeed appears to be the reason of John's exhortation to "keep ourselves," not only from the worship of idols, but "from idols" themselves. And we have found it too true, that, through the horrible frenzy, which, almost to the total destruction of piety, hath heretofore possessed the world, as soon as images are set up in churches, there is, as it were, a standard of idol-

(e) Epist. 49. De Civ. Dei. lib. iv. cap. 31.

atry erected; for the folly of mankind cannot refrain from immediately falling into idolatrous worship. But, even if the danger were less, yet, when I consider the use for which temples were designed, it appears to me extremely unworthy of their sanctity, to receive any other images, than those natural and expressive ones, which the Lord hath consecrated in his word; I mean Baptism, and the Supper of the Lord, and the other ceremonies, with which our eyes ought to be more attentively engaged, and more sensibly affected, than to require any others formed by human ingenuity. Behold the incomparable advantages of images! the loss of which, if you believe the papists, nothing can compensate.

XIV. The remarks already made on this subject, I think, would be sufficient, if it were not necessary to take some notice of the Council of Nice; not that very celebrated one, which was convened by Constantine the Great, but that which was held about eight hundred years ago, by the command, and under the auspices, of the Empress Irene. For that Council decreed, not only that images should be had in churches, but also that they should be worshipped. And, notwithstanding what I have advanced, the authority of the Council would raise a strong prejudice on the contrary side. Though, to confess the truth, I am not much concerned at this, as I am to show the reader their extreme madness, whose fondness for images exceeded any thing that was becoming in Christians. But let us despatch this point first: the present advocates for the use of images, allege the authority of that Nicene Council in their defence. There is a book extant, written in refutation of this practice, under the name of Charlemagne; which, from the diction, we may conclude was composed at the same time. In this work are recited the opinions of the bishops who attended the Council, and the arguments they used in the controversy. John, the delegate of the Eastern churches, said, "God created man in his own image;" and hence he inferred that we ought to have images. The same prelate thought that images were recommended to us by this sentence: "Show me thy face, for it is glorious." Another, to prove that they ought to be placed on the altars, cited this testimony: "No man lighteth a candle, and putteth it under a bushel." Another, to show the contemplation of these to be useful to us, adduced a verse from a Psalm: "The light of thy countenance, O Lord, is sealed upon us." Another pressed this comparison into his service: "As the patriarchs used the sacrifices of the heathen, so Christians ought to have the images of saints, instead of the idols of the heathen." In the same manner they tortured that expression, "Lord, I have loved the beauty of thy house." But the most ingenious

of all was their interpretation of this passage: "As we have heard, so have we seen;" that therefore God is known, not only by the hearing of his word, but by the contemplation of images. Similar is the subtlety of Bishop Theodore: "God is glorious in his saints." And in another place it is said, "In the saints that are in the earth:" therefore this ought to be referred to images. But their impertinencies and absurdities are so disgusting, that I am quite ashamed to repeat them.

XV. When they dispute concerning adoration, they bring forward Jacob's worshipping of Pharaoh, and of the staff of Joseph, and of the inscription erected by himself; although, in this last instance, they not only corrupt the sense of the Scripture, but allege what is nowhere to be found. These passages also, "Worship his footstool;" "Worship in his holy hill;" and, "All the rich of the people shall supplicate thy face;" they consider as apposite and conclusive proofs. If any one wished to represent the advocates for images in a ridiculous point of view, could he possibly ascribe to them greater and grosser instances of folly? But, that no doubt of this might remain, Theodosius, bishop of Mira, defends the propriety of worshipping images from the dreams of his arch-deacon, as seriously as if he had an immediate revelation from heaven. Now, let the advocates of images go and urge upon us the decree of that Council; as though those venerable fathers had not entirely destroyed all their credit by such puerile treatment of the sacred Scriptures, or such impious and shameful mutilation of them.

XVI. I come now to those prodigies of impiety, which it is wonderful that they ever ventured to broach; and more wonderful still, that they have not been opposed with universal detestation. It is right to expose this flagitious madness, that the worship of images may at least be deprived of the pretence of antiquity, which the papists falsely urge in its favour. Theodosius, bishop of Amorum, denounces an anathema against all who are averse to the worship of images. Another imputes all the calamities of Greece and the East to the crime of not having worshipped them. What punishments, then, did the Prophets, Apostles, and Martyrs deserve, in whose time images were unknown? They add further, If the image of the emperor be met by processions with perfumes and incense, much more is this honour due to the images of the saints. Constantius, bishop of Constance, in Cyprus, professes his reverence for images, and avows that he will pay them the same worship and honour as is due to the Trinity, the source of all life; and whoever refuses to do the same, he anathematizes and dismisses with the Manichees and Marcionites. And, lest you should suppose this to be the private opinion of an

individual, they all declare their assent to it. John, the delegate of the Eastern churches, carried by the fervour of his zeal to still greater lengths, asserts it to be better to admit all the brothels of the world into one city, than to reject the worship of images. At length it was unanimously decreed, that the Samaritans were worse than all heretics, and that the adversaries of images were worse than the Samaritans. But, that the farce might not want its usual plaudit, they add this clause: "Let them rejoice and exult, who have the image of Christ, and offer sacrifice to it." Where is now the distinction of *latria* and *dulia*, with which they attempt to deceive both God and men? For the Council gives the same honour, without any exception, to images and to the living God.

CHAPTER XII.

GOD CONTRADISTINGUISHED FROM IDOLS, THAT HE MAY BE SOLELY AND SUPREMEPLY WORSHIPPED.

WE said, at the beginning, that the knowledge of God consists not in frigid speculation, but is accompanied by the worship of him. We also cursorily touched on the right method of worshipping him, which will be more fully explained in other places. I now only repeat, in few words, that whenever the Scripture asserts that there is but one God, it contends not for the bare name, but also teaches, that whatever belongs to the Deity, should not be transferred to another. This shows how pure religion differs from idolatry. The Greek word *εὐσεβεία* certainly signifies right worship, since even blind mortals, groping in the dark, have always perceived the necessity of some certain rule, that the worship of God may not be involved in disorder and confusion. Although Cicero ingeniously and correctly derives the word *religion* from a verb signifying "to read over again," or "to gather again;" yet the reason he assigns for it, that good worshippers often recollect, and diligently reconsider what is true, is forced and far-fetched. I rather think the word is opposed to a liberty of wandering without restraint; because the greater part of the world rashly embrace whatever they meet with, and also ramble from one thing to another; but piety, in order to walk with a steady step, collects itself within its proper limits. The word *superstition* also appears to me to import a discontent with the method and order prescribed, and an accumulation of a super-

fluous mass of vain things. But to leave the consideration of words, it has been generally admitted, in all ages, that religion is corrupted and perverted by errors and falsehoods; whence we infer, that when we allow ourselves any thing from inconsiderate zeal, the pretext alleged by the superstitious is altogether frivolous. Although this confession is in the mouths of all, they betray, at the same time, a shameful ignorance, neither adhering to the one true God, nor observing any discrimination in his worship, as we have before shown. But God, to assert his own right, proclaims that he is "jealous," and will be a severe avenger, if men confound him with any fictitious deity; and then, to retain mankind in obedience, he defines his legitimate worship. He comprises both in his law, where he first binds the faithful to himself, as their sole legislator; and then prescribes a rule for the right worship of him according to his will. Now, of the law, since the uses and ends of it are various, I shall treat in its proper place: at present, I only remark, that it sets up a barrier to prevent men turning aside to corrupt modes of worship. Let us remember, what I have already stated, that, unless every thing belonging to Divinity remain in God alone, he is spoiled of his honour, and his worship is violated. And here it is necessary to animadvert more particularly on the subtle fallacies of superstition. For it revolts not to strange gods, in such a manner as to appear to desert the supreme God, or to degrade him to a level with others; but, allowing him the highest place, it surrounds him with a multitude of inferior deities, among whom it distributes his honours; and thus, in a cunning and hypocritical manner, the glory of Divinity is divided among many, instead of remaining wholly in one. Thus the ancient idolaters, Jews as well as Gentiles, imagined one God, the Father and Governor of all, and subordinate to him a vast multitude of other deities; to whom, in common with the supreme God, they attributed the government of heaven and earth. Thus the saints, who departed out of this life some ages ago, are exalted to the society of God, to be worshipped, and invoked, and celebrated like him. We suppose, indeed, the glory of God not to be sullied with this abomination; whereas it is, in a great measure, suppressed and extinguished, except that we retain some faint notion of his supreme power; but, at the same time, deceived with such impostures, we are seduced to the worship of various deities.

II. On this account was invented the distinction of *latria* and *dulia*, as they express themselves, by which they conceived they might safely ascribe divine honours to angels and deceased men. For it is evident, that the worship which papists pay to the saints, differs not in reality from the worship

of God; for they adore God and them promiscuously; but when they are accused of it, they evade the charge with this subterfuge, that they preserve inviolate to God what belongs to him, because they leave him λατρεία. But since the question relates to a thing, not to a word, who can bear their careless trifling on the most important of all subjects? But, to pass this also, they will gain nothing at last by their distinction, but that they render worship to God alone, and service to the saints. For λατρεία, in Greek, signifies the same as *cultus* in Latin, [and *worship* in English;] but δουλεία properly signifies *servitus*, [*service* ;] and yet, in the Scriptures, this distinction is sometimes disregarded. But, suppose it to be a constant distinction, it remains to be inquired, what is the meaning of each term. Λατρεία is *worship* ; δουλεία is *service*. Now, no one doubts, that to serve is more than to worship or honour. For it would be irksome to serve many persons, whom you would not refuse to honour. So unjust is the distribution, to assign the greater to the saints, and leave to God that which is less. But many of the ancients, it is urged, have used this distinction. What is that to the purpose, if every one perceives it to be not only improper, but altogether frivolous?

III. Leaving these subtleties, let us consider the subject itself. Paul, when he reminds the Galatians what they had been before they were illuminated in the knowledge of God, says, that they "did service to them which by nature were no gods." (*f*) Though he mentions not λατρεία, (worship,) is their idolatry therefore excusable? He certainly condemns that perverse superstition, which he denominates δουλεία, (service,) equally as much as if he had used the word λατρεία, (worship.) And when Christ repels the assault of Satan with this shield, "It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God," (*g*) the word λατρεία came not into the question; for Satan required nothing but προσκυνησις, (prostration, or adoration.) So, when John is reprehended by an angel, for having fallen on his knees before him, (*h*) we must not understand that John was so stupid as to intend to transfer to an angel the honour due exclusively to God. But since all worship, that is connected with religion, cannot but savour of Divine, he could not (προσκυνειν) prostrate himself before the angel, without detracting from the glory of God. We read, indeed, frequently, of men having been worshipped; but that was civil honour, so to speak; religion has a different design; and no sooner is religion connected with worship, or homage, than it produces a profanation of the Divine honour. We may see the same in Cornelius, who had not made such a small progress in piety, as not to ascribe supreme worship to God alone. When

(*f*) Gal. iv. 8.(*g*) Matt. iv. 10.(*h*) Rev. xix. 10; xxii. 8, 9.

he "fell down" before Peter, therefore, it certainly was not with an intention of worshipping him instead of God: (*i*) yet Peter positively forbade him to do it. And why was this, but because men never so particularly distinguish between the worship or homage of God, and that of the creatures, as to avoid transferring to a creature what belongs exclusively to God? Wherefore, if we desire to have but one God, let us remember, that his glory ought not, in the least, to be diminished; but that he must retain all that belongs to him. Therefore Zechariah, when speaking of the restoration of the Church, expressly declares, not only that "there shall be one Lord," but also "that his name shall be one;" (*k*) signifying, without doubt, that he will have nothing in common with idols. Now, what kind of worship God requires, will be seen, in due course, in another place. For he hath been pleased, in his law, to prescribe to mankind what is lawful and right; and so to confine them to a certain rule, that every individual might not take the liberty of inventing a mode of worship according to his own fancy. But, since it is not proper to burden the reader, by confounding many subjects together, I shall not enter on that point yet; let it suffice to know, that no religious services can be transferred to any other than God alone, without committing sacrilege. At first, indeed, superstition ascribed Divine honours either to the sun, or to the other stars, or to idols. Afterwards followed ambition, which, adorning men with the spoils of God, dared to profane every thing that was sacred. And although there remained a persuasion, that they ought to worship a supreme God, yet it became customary to offer sacrifices promiscuously to genii, and inferior deities, and deceased heroes. So steep is the descent to this vice, to communicate to a vast multitude that which God particularly challenges to himself alone!

CHAPTER XIII.

ONE DIVINE ESSENCE, CONTAINING THREE PERSONS, TAUGHT IN THE SCRIPTURES FROM THE BEGINNING.

WHAT is taught in the Scriptures concerning the immensity and spirituality of the essence of God, should serve not only to overthrow the foolish notions of the vulgar, but also to refute the subtleties of profane philosophy. One of the ancients, (*l*)

(*i*) Acts x. 25. (*k*) Zech. xiv. 9. (*l*) Seneca, Præf. lib. 1. Quæst. Nat.

in his own conception very shrewdly, said, that whatever we see, and whatever we do not see, is God. But he imagined that the Deity was diffused through every part of the world. But, although God, to keep us within the bounds of sobriety, speaks but rarely of his essence, yet, by those two attributes, which I have mentioned, he supersedes all gross imaginations, and represses the presumption of the human mind. For, surely, his immensity ought to inspire us with awe, that we may not attempt to measure him with our senses; and the spirituality of his nature prohibits us from entertaining any earthly or carnal speculations concerning him. For the same reason, he represents his residence to be "in heaven;" for though, as he is incomprehensible, he fills the earth also; yet, seeing that our minds, from their dulness, are continually dwelling on the earth, in order to shake off our sloth and inactivity, he properly raises us above the world. And here is demolished the error of the Manichees, who, by maintaining the existence of two original principles, made the devil, as it were, equal to God. This certainly was both dividing the unity of God, and limiting his immensity. For their daring to abuse certain testimonies of Scripture betrayed a shameful ignorance; as the error itself evidenced an execrable madness. The Anthropomorphites also, who imagined God to be corporeal, because the Scripture frequently ascribes to him a mouth, ears, eyes, hands, and feet, are easily refuted. For who, even of the meanest capacity, understands not, that God lisps, as it were, with us, just as nurses are accustomed to speak to infants? Wherefore, such forms of expression do not clearly explain the nature of God, but accommodate the knowledge of him to our narrow capacity; to accomplish which, the Scripture must necessarily descend far below the height of his majesty.

II. But he also designates himself by another peculiar character, by which he may be yet more clearly distinguished; for, while he declares himself to be but One, he proposes himself to be distinctly considered in Three Persons, without apprehending which, we have only a bare and empty name of God floating in our brains, without any idea of the true God. Now, that no one may vainly dream of three gods, or suppose that the simple essence of God is divided among the three Persons, we must seek for a short and easy definition, which will preserve us from all error. But since some violently object to the word Person, as of human invention, we must first examine the reasonableness of this objection. When the Apostle denominates the Son the express image of the hypostasis of the Father, he undoubtedly ascribes to the Father some subsistence, in which he differs from the Son. For to understand this word as synonymous with Essence, (as some interpreters have done, as

though Christ, like wax impressed with a seal, represented in himself the substance of the Father,) were not only harsh, but also absurd. For the essence of God being simple and indivisible, he who contains all in himself, not in part, or by derivation, but in complete perfection, could not, without impropriety, and even absurdity, be called the express image of it. But since the Father, although distinguished by his own peculiar property, hath expressed himself entirely in his Son, it is with the greatest reason asserted that he hath made his hypostasis conspicuous in him; with which the other appellation, given him in the same passage, of "the brightness of his glory," exactly corresponds. From the words of the Apostle, we certainly conclude, that there is in the Father a proper hypostasis, which is conspicuous in the Son. And thence also we easily infer the hypostasis of the Son, which distinguishes him from the Father. The same reasoning is applicable to the Holy Spirit; for we shall soon prove him also to be God; and yet he must, of necessity, be considered as distinct from the Father. But this is not a distinction of the essence, which it is unlawful to represent as any other than simple and undivided. It follows, therefore, if the testimony of the Apostle be credited, that there are in God three *hypostases*. And, as the Latins have expressed the same thing by the word *person*, it is too fastidious and obstinate to contend about so clear a matter. If we wish to translate word for word, we may call it *subsistence*. Many, in the same sense, have called it *substance*. Nor has the word *person* been used by the Latins only; but the Greeks also, for the sake of testifying their consent to this doctrine, taught the existence of three *πρόσωπα* (persons) in God. But both Greeks and Latins, notwithstanding any verbal difference, are in perfect harmony respecting the doctrine itself.

III. Now, though heretics rail at the word *person*, or some morose and obstinate men clamorously refuse to admit a name of human invention; since they cannot make us assert that there are three, each of whom is entirely God, nor yet that there are more gods than one, how very unreasonable is it to reprobate words which express nothing but what is testified and recorded in the Scriptures! It were better, say they, to restrain not only our thoughts, but our expressions also, within the limits of the Scripture, than to introduce exotic words, which may generate future dissensions and disputes; for thus we weary ourselves with verbal controversies; thus the truth is lost in altercation; thus charity expires in odious contention. If they call every word exotic, which cannot be found in the Scriptures in so many syllables, they impose on us a law which is very unreasonable, and which condemns all interpretation, but what is composed of detached texts of Scripture connected

together. But if by exotic they mean that which is curiously contrived, and superstitiously defended, which tends to contention more than to edification, the use of which is either unseasonable or unprofitable, which offends pious ears with its harshness, and seduces persons from the simplicity of the Divine word, I most cordially embrace their modest opinion. For I think that we ought to speak of God with the same religious caution, which should govern our thoughts of him; since all the thoughts that we entertain concerning him merely from ourselves, are foolish, and all our expressions absurd. But there is a proper medium to be observed: we should seek in the Scriptures a certain rule, both for thinking and for speaking; by which we may regulate all the thoughts of our minds, and all the words of our mouths. But what forbids our expressing, in plainer words, those things which, in the Scriptures, are, to our understanding, intricate and obscure, provided our expressions religiously and faithfully convey the true sense of the Scripture, and are used with modest caution, and not without sufficient occasion? Of this, examples sufficiently numerous are not wanting. But, when it shall have been proved, that the Church was absolutely necessitated to use the terms Trinity and Persons, if any one then censures the novelty of the words, may he not be justly considered as offended at the light of the truth? as having no other cause of censure, but that the truth is explained and elucidated?

IV. But such verbal novelty (if it must have this appellation) is principally used, when the truth is to be asserted in opposition to malicious cavillers, who elude it by crafty evasions; of which we have too much experience in the present day, who find great difficulty in refuting the enemies of pure and sound doctrine: possessed of serpentine lubricity, they escape by the most artful expedients, unless they are vigorously pursued, and held fast when once caught. Thus the ancients, pestered with various controversies against erroneous dogmas, were constrained to express their sentiments with the utmost perspicuity, that they might leave no subterfuges to the impious, who availed themselves of obscure expressions, for the concealment of their errors. Unable to resist the clear testimonies of the Scriptures, Arius confessed Christ to be God, and the Son of God; and, as though this were all that was necessary, he pretended to agree with the Church at large. But, at the same time, he continued to maintain that Christ was created, and had a beginning like other creatures. To draw the versatile subtlety of this man from its concealment, the ancient Fathers proceeded further, and declared Christ to be the eternal Son of the Father, and consubstantial with the Father. Here impiety openly discovered itself, when the Arians

began inveterately to hate and execrate the name *ὁμοούσιος*, (consubstantial.) But if, in the first instance, they had sincerely and cordially confessed Christ to be God, they would not have denied him to be consubstantial with the Father. Who can dare to censure those good men, as quarrelsome and contentious, for having kindled such a flame of controversy, and disturbed the peace of the Church on account of one little word? That little word distinguished Christians, who held the pure faith, from sacrilegious Arians. Afterwards arose Sabellius, who considered the names of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as little more than empty sounds; arguing, that they were not used on account of any real distinction, but were different attributes of God, whose attributes of this kind are numerous. If the point came to be controverted, he confessed, that he believed the Father to be God, the Son God, and the Holy Spirit God; but he would readily evade all the force of this confession, by adding, that he had said no other than if he had called God potent, and just, and wise. And thus he came to another conclusion, that the Father is the Son, and that the Holy Spirit is the Father, without any order or distinction. The good doctors of that age, who had the interest of religion at heart, in order to counteract the wickedness of this man, maintained, on the contrary, that they ought really to acknowledge three peculiar properties in one God. And, to defend themselves against his intricate subtleties, by the plain and simple truth, they affirmed, that they truly subsisted in the one God; or, what is the same, that in the unity of God there subsisted a trinity of Persons.

V. If, then, the words have not been rashly invented, we should beware lest we be convicted of fastidious temerity in rejecting them. I could wish them, indeed, to be buried in oblivion, provided this faith were universally received, that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, are the one God; and that nevertheless the Son is not the Father, nor the Spirit the Son, but that they are distinguished from each other by some peculiar property. I am not so rigidly precise as to be fond of contending for mere words. For I observe that the ancients, who otherwise speak on these subjects with great piety, are not consistent with each other, nor, in all cases, with themselves. For what forms of expression, adopted by councils, does Hilary excuse! To what extremes does Augustine sometimes proceed! How different are the Greeks from the Latins! But of this variation, let one example suffice: when the Latins would translate the word *ὁμοούσιος*, they called it *consubstantial*, signifying the *substance* of the Father and the Son to be one, and thus using *substance* for *essence*. Whence also Jerome, writing to Damasus, pronounces it to be sacrilege

to say that there are three *substances* in God. Yet, that there are three *substances* in God, you will find asserted in Hilary more than a hundred times. But how perplexed is Jerome on the word *hypostasis*! For he suspects some latent poison in the assertion, that there are three *hypostases* in God. And if any one uses this word in a pious sense, he refrains not from calling it an improper expression; if, indeed, he was sincere in this declaration, and did not rather knowingly and wilfully endeavour to asperse, with a groundless calumny, the bishops of the East, whom he hated. He certainly discovers not much ingenuousness in affirming that, in all the profane schools, *οὐσία* (essence) is the same as *ὑποστάσις*, (hypostasis,) which the trite and common use of the words universally contradicts. More modesty and liberality are discovered by Augustine, who, though he asserts that the word *hypostasis*, in this sense, is new to Latin ears, yet leaves the Greeks their usual phraseology, and even peaceably tolerates the Latins, who had imitated their language; and the account of Socrates, in the sixth book of his Tripartite History, seems to imply, that it was by ignorant men that it had first been improperly applied to this subject. The same Hilary accuses the heretics of a great crime, in constraining him, by their wickedness, to expose to the danger of human language those things which ought to be confined within the religion of the mind; plainly avowing that this is to do things unlawful, to express things inexpressible, to assume things not conceded. A little after, he largely excuses himself for his boldness in bringing forward new terms; for, when he has used the names of nature, Father, Son, and Spirit, he immediately adds, that whatever is sought further, is beyond the signification of language, beyond the reach of our senses, beyond the conception of our understanding. And, in another place, he pronounces that happy were the bishops of Gaul, who had neither composed, nor received, nor even known, any other confession but that ancient and very simple one, which had been received in all the churches from the days of the Apostles. Very similar is the excuse of Augustine, that this word was extorted by necessity, on account of the poverty of human language on so great a subject, not for the sake of expressing what God is, but to avoid passing it over in total silence, that the Father, Son, and Spirit are three. This moderation of those holy men should teach us, not to pass such severe censures on those who are unwilling to subscribe to expressions adopted by us, provided they are not actuated by pride, perverseness, or disingenuous subtlety. But let them also, on the other hand, consider the great necessity which constrains us to use such language, that, by degrees, they may at length be accustomed to a useful phraseology.

Let them also learn to beware, since we have to oppose the Arians on one side, and the Sabellians on the other, lest, while they take offence at both these parties being deprived of all opportunity of evasion, they cause some suspicion that they are themselves the disciples either of Arius or of Sabellius. Arius confesses, "that Christ is God;" but maintains also, "that he was created, and had a beginning." He acknowledges that Christ is "one with the Father;" but secretly whispers in the ears of his disciples, that he is "united to him," like the rest of the faithful, though by a singular privilege. Say that he is *consubstantial*, you tear off the mask from the hypocrite, and yet you add nothing to the Scriptures. Sabellius asserts, "that the names Father, Son, and Spirit, are expressive of no distinction in the Godhead." Say that they are three, and he will exclaim, that you are talking of "three gods." Say, "that in the one essence of God there is a trinity of Persons," and you will at once express what the Scriptures declare, and will restrain such frivolous loquacity. Now, if any persons are prevented, by such excessive scrupulousness, from admitting these terms, yet not one of them can deny, that, when the Scripture speaks of one God, it should be understood of a unity of substance; and that, when it speaks of three in one essence, it denotes the Persons in this trinity. When this is honestly confessed, we have no further concern about words. But I have found, by long and frequent experience, that those who pertinaciously contend about words, cherish some latent poison; so that it were better designedly to provoke their resentment, than to use obscure language for the sake of obtaining their favour.

VI. But, leaving the dispute about terms, I shall now enter on the discussion of the subject itself. What I denominate a Person, is a subsistence in the Divine essence, which is related to the others, and yet distinguished from them by an incommunicable property. By the word *subsistence* we mean something different from the word *essence*. For, if the *Word* were simply God, and had no peculiar property, John had been guilty of impropriety in saying that he was always *with God*. (1) When he immediately adds, that *the Word* also was *God*, he reminds us of the unity of the essence. But because he could not be *with God*, without subsisting in the Father, hence arises that subsistence, which, although inseparably connected with the essence, has a peculiar mark, by which it is distinguished from it. Now, I say that each of the three subsistences has a relation to the others, but is distinguished from them by a peculiar property. We particularly use the word

relation, (or comparison,) here, because, when mention is made simply and indefinitely of God, this name pertains no less to the Son and Spirit, than to the Father. But whenever the Father is compared with the Son, the property peculiar to each distinguishes him from the other. Thirdly, whatever is proper to each of them, I assert to be incommunicable, because whatever is ascribed to the Father as a character of distinction, cannot be applied or transferred to the Son. Nor, indeed, do I disapprove of the definition of Tertullian, if rightly understood: "That there is in God a certain distribution or economy, which makes no change in the unity of the essence."

VII. But before I proceed any further, I must prove the Deity of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; after which we shall see how they differ from each other. When the Scripture speaks of *the Word of God*, it certainly were very absurd to imagine it to be only a transient and momentary sound, emitted into the air, and coming forth from God himself; of which nature were the oracles, given to the fathers, and all the prophecies. It is rather to be understood of the eternal wisdom residing in God, whence the oracles, and all the prophecies, proceeded. For, according to the testimony of Peter, (*m*) the ancient Prophets spake by the Spirit of Christ no less than the Apostles and all the succeeding ministers of the heavenly doctrine. But, as Christ had not yet been manifested, we must necessarily understand that the Word was begotten of the Father before the world began. And if the Spirit that inspired the Prophets was the Spirit of the Word, we conclude, beyond all doubt, that the Word was truly God. And this is taught by Moses, with sufficient perspicuity, in the creation of the world, in which he represents the Word as acting such a conspicuous part. For why does he relate that God, in the creation of each of his works, said, Let this or that be done, but that the unsearchable glory of God may resplendently appear in his image? Captious and loquacious men would readily evade this argument, by saying, that the *Word* imports an order or command; but the Apostles are better interpreters, who declare, that the worlds were created by the Son, and that he "upholds all things by the word of his power." (*n*) For here we see that the *Word* intends the nod or mandate of the Son, who is himself the eternal and essential Son of the Father. Nor, to the wise and sober, is there any obscurity in that passage of Solomon, where he introduces Wisdom as begotten of the Father before time began, and presiding at the creation of the world, and over all the works of God. For, to pretend that this denotes some temporary ex-

(*m*) 1 Pet. i. 11.

(*n*) Heb. i. 2, 3.

pression of the will of God, were foolish and frivolous ; whereas God then intended to discover his fixed and eternal counsel, and even something more secret. To the same purpose also is that assertion of Christ, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." (o) For, by affirming that, from the beginning of the world, he had continually coöperated with the Father, he makes a more explicit declaration of what had been briefly glanced at by Moses. We conclude, therefore, that God spake thus at the creation, that the Word might have his part in the work, and so that operation be common to both. But John speaks more clearly than all others, when he represents *the Word*, who from the beginning *was God with God*, as in union with the Father, the original cause of all things. For to the Word he both attributes a real and permanent essence, and assigns some peculiar property ; and plainly shows how God, by speaking, created the world. Therefore, as all Divine revelations are justly entitled *the word of God*, so we ought chiefly to esteem that substantial Word the source of all revelations, who is liable to no variation, who remains with God perpetually one and the same, and who is God himself.

VIII. Here we are interrupted by some clamorous objectors, who, since they cannot openly rob him of his divinity, secretly steal from him his eternity. For they say, that the Word only began to exist, when God opened his sacred mouth in the creation of the world. But they are too inconsiderate in imagining something new in the substance of God. For, as those names of God, which relate to his external works, began to be ascribed to him after the existence of those works, as when he is called the Creator of heaven and earth, so piety neither acknowledges nor admits any name, signifying that God has found any thing new to happen to himself. For, could any thing, from any quarter, effect a change in him, it would contradict the assertion of James, that "every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness or shadow of turning." (p) Nothing, then, is more intolerable, than to suppose a beginning of that Word, which was always God, and afterwards the Creator of the world. But they argue, in their own apprehension most acutely, that Moses, by representing God as having then spoken for the first time, implies also, that there was no Word in him before ; than which nothing is more absurd. For it is not to be concluded, because any thing begins to be manifested at a certain time, that it had no prior existence. I form a very different conclusion ; that, since, in the very instant when God said, "Let there be light," (q) the power of the Word

(o) John v. 17.

(p) James i. 17.

(q) Gen. i. 3.

was clearly manifested, the Word must have existed long before. But if any one inquires, how long, he will find no beginning. For he limits no certain period of time, when he himself says, "O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." (r) Nor is this omitted by John; for, before he descends to the creation of the world, he declares that the Word "was in the beginning with God." (s) We therefore conclude again, that the Word, conceived of God before time began, perpetually remained with him, which proves his eternity, his true essence, and his divinity.

IX. Though I advert not yet to the person of the Mediator, but defer it to that part of the work which will relate to redemption, yet, since it ought, without controversy, to be believed by all, that Christ is the very same Word clothed in flesh, any testimonies which assert the Deity of Christ, will be very properly introduced here. When it is said, in the forty-fifth Psalm, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever," the Jews endeavour to evade its force, by pleading that the name Elohim is applicable also to angels, and to men of dignity and power. But there cannot be found in the Scripture a similar passage, which erects an eternal throne for a creature; for he is not merely called God, but is also declared to possess an eternal dominion. Besides, this title is never given to a creature, without some addition, as when it is said that Moses should be "a god to Pharaoh." (t) Some read it in the genitive case, "Thy throne is of God," which is extremely insipid. I confess, indeed, that what is eminently and singularly excellent, is frequently called Divine; but it sufficiently appears from the context, that such a meaning would be uncouth and forced, and totally inapplicable here. But, if their perverseness refuse to yield this point, there certainly is no obscurity in Isaiah, where he introduces Christ as God, and as crowned with supreme power, which is the prerogative of God alone. "His name," says he, "shall be called the Mighty God, the Father of eternity," &c. (v) Here also the Jews object, and invert the reading of the passage in this manner: "This is the name by which the mighty God, the Father of eternity, shall call him," &c.; so that they would leave the Son only the title of Prince of peace. But to what purpose would so many epithets be accumulated in this passage on God the Father, when the design of the prophet is to distinguish Christ by such eminent characters as may establish our faith in him? Wherefore, there can be no doubt that he is there denominated the Mighty God, just as, a little before, he is called Immanuel. But nothing can be required plainer than a passage in Jeremiah, that this should be the name

(r) John xvii. 5. (s) John i. 2. (t) Exod. vii. 1. (v) Isaiah ix. 6.

whereby the Branch of David shall be called "Jehovah our righteousness." (*w*) For since the Jews themselves teach, that all other names of God are mere epithets, but that this alone, which they call ineffable, is a proper name expressive of his Essence, we conclude, that the Son is the one eternal God, who declares, in another place, that he "will not give his glory to another." (*x*) This also they endeavour to evade, because Moses imposed this name on an altar which he built, and Ezekiel on the city of the new Jerusalem. But who does not perceive, that the altar was erected as a monument of Moses having been exalted by God, and that Jerusalem is honoured with the name of God, only as a testimony of the Divine presence? For thus speaks the prophet: "The name of the city shall be, Jehovah is there." (*y*) But Moses expresses himself thus: He "built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovah-nissi," (my exaltation.) (*z*) But there is more contention about another passage of Jeremiah, where the same title is given to Jerusalem in these words: "This is the name wherewith she shall be called, Jehovah our righteousness." (*a*) But this testimony is so far from opposing the truth which we are defending, that it rather confirms it. For, having before testified that Christ is the true Jehovah, from whom righteousness proceeds, he now pronounces that the church will have such a clear apprehension of it, as to be able to glory in the same name. In the former place, then, is shown the original cause of righteousness, in the latter the effect.

X. Now, if these things do not satisfy the Jews, I see not by what cavils they can evade the accounts of Jehovah having so frequently appeared in the character of an angel. An angel is said to have appeared to the holy fathers. He claims for himself the name of the eternal God. If it be objected, that this is spoken with regard to the character which he sustains, this by no means removes the difficulty. For a servant would never rob God of his honour, by permitting sacrifice to be offered to himself. But the angel, refusing to eat bread, commands a sacrifice to be offered to Jehovah. He afterwards demonstrates that he is really Jehovah himself. Therefore Manoah and his wife conclude, from this evidence, that they have seen, not a mere angel, but God himself. Hence he says, "We shall surely die, because we have seen God." When his wife replies, "If the Lord were pleased to kill us, he would not have received" a sacrifice "at our hands," (*b*) she clearly acknowledges him to be God, who before is called an angel. Moreover, the reply of the angel himself removes every doubt: "Why askest thou after my name, seeing it is wonderful?" So much the more detes-

(*w*) Jer. xxiii. 6.(*y*) Ezek. xlviii. 35.(*a*) Jer. xxxiii. 16.(*z*) Isaiah xlii. 3.(*z*) Exod. xvii. 15.(*b*) Judges xiii. 22, 23.

table is the impiety of Servetus, in asserting that God never appeared to Abraham and the other patriarchs, but that they worshipped an angel in his stead. But the orthodox doctors of the church have truly and wisely understood and taught, that the same chief angel was the Word of God, who even then began to perform some services introductory to his execution of the office of Mediator. For though he was not yet incarnate, he descended, as it were, in a mediatorial capacity, that he might approach the faithful with greater familiarity. His familiar intercourse with men gave him the name of an angel; yet he still retained what properly belonged to him, and continued the ineffably glorious God. The same truth is attested by Hosea, who, after relating the wrestling of Jacob with an angel, says, "The Lord (Jehovah) God of hosts; Jehovah is his memorial." (c) Servetus again cavils, that God employed the person of an angel; as though the prophet did not confirm what had been delivered by Moses, — "Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name?" And the confession of the holy patriarch, when he says, "I have seen God face to face," (d) sufficiently declares, that he was not a created angel, but one in whom resided the fulness of Deity. Hence, also, the representation of Paul, that Christ was the conductor of the people in the wilderness; because, though the time of his humiliation was not yet arrived, the eternal Word then exhibited a type of the office to which he was appointed. Now, if the second chapter of Zechariah be strictly and coolly examined, the angel who sends another angel is immediately pronounced the God of hosts, and supreme power is ascribed to him. I omit testimonies innumerable on which our faith safely rests, although they have little influence on the Jews. For when it is said in Isaiah, "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us; this is Jehovah;" (e) all who have eyes may perceive that this is God, who arises for the salvation of his people. And the emphatical repetition of these pointed expressions forbids an application of this passage to any other than to Christ. But still more plain and decisive is a passage of Malachi, where he prophesies, that "the Lord, who was then sought, should come into his temple." (f) The temple was exclusively consecrated to the one Most High God; yet the prophet claims it as belonging to Christ. Whence it follows, that he is the same God that was always worshipped among the Jews.

XI. The New Testament abounds with innumerable testimonies. We must, therefore, endeavour briefly to select a few, rather than to collect them all. Though the Apostles spake of him after he had appeared in flesh as the Mediator,

(c) Hosea xii. 5.

(d) Gen. xxxii. 29, 30.

(e) Isaiah xxv. 9.

(f) Mal. iii. 1.

yet all that I shall adduce will be adapted to prove his eternal Deity. In the first place, it is worthy of particular observation, that the apostle represents those things which were predicted concerning the eternal God, as either already exhibited in Christ, or to be accomplished in him at some future period. The prediction of Isaiah, that the Lord of Hosts would be "for a stone of stumbling, and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel," (*g*) Paul asserts to have been fulfilled in Christ. (*h*) Therefore he declares, that Christ is the Lord of Hosts. There is a similar instance in another place: "We shall all stand," says he, "before the judgment-seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God." (*i*) Since God, in Isaiah, (*k*) declares this concerning himself, and Christ actually exhibits it in his own person, it follows, that he is that very God, whose glory cannot be transferred to another. The apostle's quotation from the Psalms also, in his Epistle to the Ephesians, is evidently applicable to none but God: "When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive:" (*l*) understanding that ascension to have been prefigured by the exertions of the Divine power in the signal victories of David over the heathen nations, he signifies, that the text was more fully accomplished in Christ. Thus John attests that it was the glory of the Son which was revealed in a vision to Isaiah; whereas the prophet himself records that he saw the majesty of God. (*m*) And those praises which the Apostle, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, ascribes to the Son, beyond all doubt most evidently belong to God: "Thou, Lord, in the beginning, hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands," &c. Again, "Let all the angels of God worship him." (*n*) Nor is it any misapplication of them, when he refers them to Christ; since all that is predicted in those Psalms has been accomplished only by him. For it was He who arose and had mercy upon Zion; it was He who claimed as his own the dominion over all nations and islands. And why should John, after having affirmed, at the commencement of his Gospel, (*o*) that the Word was always God, have hesitated to attribute to Christ the majesty of God? And why should Paul have been afraid to place Christ on the tribunal of God, (*p*) after having so publicly preached his Divinity, when he called him "God blessed for ever?" (*q*) And, to show how consistent he is with himself on this subject, he says, also, that "God was manifest in the flesh." (*r*)

(*g*) Isaiah viii. 14.(*h*) Rom. ix. 33.(*i*) Rom. xiv. 10, 11.(*k*) Isaiah xlv. 23.(*l*) Eph. iv. 8. Psalm lxxviii. 18.(*m*) John xii. 41. Isaiah vi. 1.(*n*) Heb. i. 6, 10.(*o*) John i. 1, 14.(*p*) 2 Cor. v. 10.(*q*) Rom. ix. 5.(*r*) 1 Tim. iii. 16.

If he is "God blessed for ever," he is the same to whom this apostle, in another place, affirms all glory and honour to be due. And he conceals not, but openly proclaims, that, "being in the form of God," he "thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation." (*s*) And, lest the impious might object, that he is a sort of artificial God, John goes further, and affirms, that "This is the true God, and eternal life;" (*t*) although we ought to be fully satisfied by his being called God, especially by a witness who expressly avers that there are no more gods than one; I mean Paul, who says, "though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth; to us there is but one God, of whom are all things." (*v*) When we hear, from the same mouth, that "God was manifested in the flesh," that "God hath purchased the Church with his own blood," — why do we imagine a second God, whom he by no means acknowledges? And there is no doubt that all the pious were of the same opinion. Thomas, likewise, by publicly confessing him to be "his Lord and God," declares him to be the same true God whom he had always worshipped. (*w*)

XII. If we judge of his Divinity from the works which the Scriptures attribute to him, it will thence appear with increasing evidence. For when he said, that he had, from the beginning, continually coöperated with the Father, the Jews, stupid as they were about his other declarations, yet perceived, that he assumed to himself Divine power; and, therefore, as John informs us, they "sought the more to kill him; because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God." (*x*) How great, then, must be our stupidity, if we perceive not this passage to be a plain assertion of his Divinity! To preside over the world by his almighty providence, and to govern all things by the nod of his own power, (which the Apostle attributes to him,) (*y*) belongs exclusively to the Creator. And he participates with the Father, not only in the government of the world, but also in all other offices, which cannot be communicated to creatures. The Lord proclaims, by the prophet, "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions, for mine own sake." (*z*) According to this declaration, when the Jews thought that Christ committed an injury against God, by undertaking to forgive sins, (*a*) he not only asserted in express terms, that this power belonged to him, but proved it by a miracle. We see, therefore, that he hath not the ministry, but the power of remission of sins, which the Lord de-

(*s*) Philip. ii. 6.(*t*) 1 John v. 20.(*v*) 1 Cor. viii. 5, 6.(*w*) John xx. 28.(*x*) John v. 18.(*y*) Heb. i. 3.(*z*) Isaiah xliiii. 25.(*a*) Matt. ix. 6.

clares shall never be transferred from himself to another. Is it not the prerogative of God alone to examine and penetrate the secret thoughts of the heart? Yet Christ possessed that power; which is a proof of his Divinity.

XIII. But with what perspicuity of evidence does it appear in his miracles! Though I grant that the Prophets and Apostles performed miracles similar and equal to his, yet there is a considerable difference in this respect, that they, in their ministry, dispensed the favours of God, whereas his miracles were performed by his exertions of his own power. He sometimes, indeed, used prayer, that he might glorify the Father; but, in most instances, we perceive the manifest displays of his own power. And how should not he be the true author of miracles, who, by his own authority, committed the dispensation of them to others? For the Evangelists relate, that he gave his Apostles power to raise the dead, to heal the leprous, to cast out devils, &c. (b) And they performed that ministry in such a manner, as plainly to discover, that the power proceeded solely from Christ. "In the name of Jesus Christ," says Peter, "arise and walk." (c) It is no wonder, therefore, that Christ should bring forward his miracles, (d) to convince the incredulity of the Jews, since, being performed by his own power, they afforded most ample evidence of his Divinity. Besides, if out of God there be no salvation, no righteousness, no life, but Christ contains all these things in himself, it certainly demonstrates him to be God. Let it not be objected, that life and salvation are infused into him by God; for he is not said to have received salvation, but to be himself salvation. And if no one be good but God alone, (e) how can *he* be a mere man who is, I will not say good and righteous, but goodness and righteousness itself? Even from the beginning of the creation, according to the testimony of an Evangelist, "in him was life; and the life" then existed as "the light of men." Supported by such proofs, therefore, we venture to repose our faith and hope on him; whereas we know that it is impious and sacrilegious for any man to place his confidence in creatures. He says, "Ye believe in God, believe also in me." (f) And in this sense Paul interprets two passages of Isaiah — "Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed." Again, "There shall be a root of Jesse, that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust." (g) And why should we search for more testimonies from Scripture, when this declaration occurs so frequently, "He that believeth on me hath everlasting life" ? (h)

(b) Matt. x. 8. Mark iii. 15.

(c) Acts iii. 6.

(d) John v. 36; x. 37.

(e) Matt. xix. 17.

(f) John xiv. 1.

(g) Isaiah xxviii. 16; xi. 10.

Rom. x. 11; xv. 12.

(h) John vi. 47.

The invocation, arising from faith, is also directed to him; which, nevertheless, peculiarly belongs, if any thing peculiarly belongs, to the Divine majesty. For a prophet says, "Who-soever shall call on the name of the Lord (Jehovah) shall be delivered." (*i*) And Solomon, "The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe." (*k*) But the name of Christ is invoked for salvation: it follows, therefore, that he is Jehovah. Moreover, we have an example of such invocation in Stephen, when he says, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." (*l*) And afterwards in the whole Church, as Ananias testifies in the same book: "Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints — that call on thy name." (*m*) And to make it more clearly understood, that "all the fulness of the Godhead dwelleth bodily in Christ," the Apostle confesses that he had introduced among the Corinthians no other doctrine than the knowledge of him, and that this had been the only subject of his preaching. (*n*) What a remarkable and important consideration is it, that the name of the Son only is preached to us, whereas God commands us to glory in the knowledge of himself alone! (*o*) Who can dare to assert that *he* is a mere creature, the knowledge of whom is our only glory? It must also be remarked, that the salutations prefixed to the epistles of Paul implore the same blessings from the Son as from the Father; whence we learn, not only that those things, which our heavenly Father bestows, are obtained for us by his intercession, but that the Son, by a communion of power, is himself the author of them. This practical knowledge is unquestionably more certain and solid than any idle speculation. For then the pious mind has the nearest view of the Divine presence, and almost touches it, when it experiences itself to be quickened, illuminated, saved, justified, and sanctified.

XIV. Wherefore the proof of the Deity of the Spirit must be derived principally from the same sources. There is no obscurity in the testimony of Moses, in the history of the creation, that the Spirit of God was expanded on the abyss or chaos; (*p*) for it signifies, not only that the beautiful state of the world which we now behold owes its preservation to the power of the Spirit, but that, previously to its being thus adorned, the Spirit was engaged in brooding over the confused mass. The declaration of Isaiah bids defiance to all cavils: "And now the Lord God, and his Spirit, hath sent me." (*q*) For the Holy Spirit is united in the exercise of supreme

(*i*) Joel ii. 32.

(*k*) Prov. xviii. 10.

(*l*) Acts vii. 59.

(*m*) Acts ix. 13, 14.

(*n*) 1 Cor. ii. 2.

(*o*) Jer. ix. 24.

(*p*) Gen. i. 2.

(*q*) Isaiah xlvi. 16.

power in the mission of Prophets, which is a proof of his Divine majesty. But the best confirmation, as I have remarked, we shall derive from familiar experience. For what the Scriptures ascribe to him, and what we ourselves learn by the certain experience of piety, is not at all applicable to any creature. For it is he who, being universally diffused, sustains and animates all things in heaven and in earth. And this very thing excludes him from the number of creatures, that he is circumscribed by no limits, but transfuses through all his own vigorous influence, to inspire them with being, life, and motion: this is clearly a work of Deity. Again, if regeneration to an incorruptible life be more important and excellent than any present life, what must we think of him from whose power it proceeds? But the Scripture teaches, in various places, that he is the author of regeneration by a power not derived, but properly his own; and not of regeneration only, but likewise of the future immortality. Finally, to him, as well as to the Son, are applied all those offices which are peculiar to Deity. For he "searcheth even the deep things of God," (*r*) who admits no creature to a share in his councils. He bestows wisdom and the faculty of speech; (*s*) whereas the Lord declares to Moses, that this can only be done by himself. (*t*) So through him we attain to a participation of God, to feel his vivifying energy upon us. Our justification is his work. From him proceed power, sanctification, truth, grace, and every other blessing we can conceive; since there is but one Spirit, from whom every kind of gifts descends. For this passage of Paul is worthy of particular attention: "There are diversities of gifts, and there are differences of administrations, but the same Spirit;" (*u*) because it represents him, not only as the principle and source of them, but also as the author; which is yet more clearly expressed a little after in these words: "All these worketh that only and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will." For if he were not a subsistence in the Deity, judgment and voluntary determination would never be ascribed to him. Paul, therefore, very clearly attributes to the Spirit Divine power, and thereby demonstrates him to be an hypostasis or subsistence in God.

XV. Nor does the Scripture, when it speaks of him, refrain from giving him the appellation of God. For Paul concludes that we are the temple of God, because his Spirit dwelleth in us. (*v*) This must not be passed over without particular notice; for the frequent promises of God, that he will choose us for a temple for himself, receive no other accomplishment, than by

(*r*) 1 Cor. ii. 10, 16. (*s*) 1 Cor. xii. 8. (*t*) Exod. iv. 11.
 (*u*) 1 Cor. xii. 4, &c. (*v*) 1 Cor. iii. 16; vi. 19. 2 Cor. vi. 16.

the inhabitation of his Spirit in us. Certainly, as Augustine excellently observes, "If we were commanded to erect to the Spirit a temple of wood and stone, forasmuch as God is the sole object of worship, it would be a clear proof of his Divinity; how much clearer, then, is the proof, now that we are commanded, not to erect one, but to be ourselves his temples!" And the Apostle calls us sometimes the temple of God, and sometimes the temple of the Holy Spirit, both in the same signification. Peter, reprehending Ananias for having "lied to the Holy Ghost," told him that he had "not lied unto men, but unto God." (*w*) And where Isaiah (*x*) introduces the Lord of hosts as the speaker, Paul (*y*) informs us that it is the Holy Spirit who speaks. Indeed, while the Prophets invariably declare, that the words which they utter are those of the Lord of hosts, Christ and the Apostles refer them to the Holy Spirit; whence it follows, that he is the true Jehovah, who is the primary author of the prophecies. Again, God complains that his anger was provoked by the perverseness of the people; Isaiah, in reference to the same conduct, says, that "they vexed his Holy Spirit." (*z*) Lastly, if blasphemy against the Spirit be not forgiven, either in this world or in that which is to come, (*a*) whilst a man may obtain pardon who has been guilty of blasphemy against the Son, this is an open declaration of his Divine majesty, to defame or degrade which is an inexpressible crime. I intentionally pass over many testimonies which were used by the fathers. To them there appeared much plausibility in citing this passage from David, "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth;" (*b*) to prove that the creation of the world was the work of the Holy Spirit, as well as of the Son. But since a repetition of the same thing twice is common in the Psalms, and in Isaiah "the spirit of his mouth" means the same as "his word," this is but a weak argument. Therefore I have determined to confine myself to a sober statement of those evidences on which pious minds may satisfactorily rest.

XVI. As God afforded a clearer manifestation of himself at the advent of Christ, the three Persons also then became better known. Among many testimonies, let us be satisfied with this one: Paul connects together these three, Lord, Faith, and Baptism, (*c*) in such a manner as to reason from one to another. Since there is but one faith, hence he proves that there is but one Lord; since there is but one baptism, he shows that there is also but one faith. Therefore, if we are initiated by baptism into the faith and religion of one God, we must necessarily suppose

(*w*) Acts v. 3, 4. (*x*) Isaiah vi. 9. (*y*) Acts xxviii. 25.
 (*z*) Isaiah lxiii. 10. (*a*) Matt. xii. 31. Mark iii. 29. Luke xii. 10.
 (*b*) Psalm xxxiii. 6. (*c*) Ephes. iv. 5.

him to be the true God, into whose name we are baptized. Nor can it be doubted but that in this solemn commission, "Baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," Christ intended to testify, that the perfect light of faith was now exhibited. For this is equivalent to being baptized into the name of the one God, who hath clearly manifested himself in the Father, Son, and Spirit; whence it evidently appears, that in the Divine Essence there exist three Persons, in whom is known the one God. And truly, since faith ought not to be looking about hither and thither, or to be wandering through the varieties of inconstancy, but to direct its views towards the one God, to be fixed on him, and to adhere to him, — it may easily be proved from these premises, that, if there be various kinds of faith, there must also be a plurality of gods. Baptism, being a sacrament of faith, confirms to us the unity of God, because it is but one. Hence, also, we conclude, that it is not lawful to be baptized, except into the name of the one God; because we embrace the faith of him, into whose name we are baptized. What, then, was intended by Christ, when he commanded baptism to be administered in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, but that one faith ought to be exercised in the Father, Son, and Spirit? and what is that but a clear testimony, that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, are the one God? Therefore, since it is an undeniable truth, that there is one God, and only one, we conclude the Word and Spirit to be no other than the very Essence of the Deity. The greatest degree of folly was betrayed by the Arians, who confessed the Divinity of the Son, but denied him to possess the substance of God. Nor were the Macedonians free from a similar delusion, who would explain the term "Spirit" to mean only the gifts of grace conferred upon man. For as wisdom, understanding, prudence, fortitude, and the fear of the Lord, proceed from him, so he alone is the Spirit of wisdom, prudence, fortitude, and piety. Nor is he himself divided according to the distribution of his graces; but, as the Apostle declares, how variously soever they are divided, he always remains one and the same. (*d*)

XVII. On the other hand, also, we find in the Scriptures a distinction between the Father and the Word, between the Word and the Spirit; in the discussion of which the magnitude of the mystery reminds us that we ought to proceed with the utmost reverence and sobriety. I am exceedingly pleased with this observation of Gregory Nazianzen: "I cannot think of the *one*, but I am immediately surrounded with the splendour of the *three*; nor can I clearly discover the *three*, but I

(*d*) 1 Cor. xii. 11.

am suddenly carried back to the *one*." Wherefore let us not imagine such a trinity of Persons, as includes an idea of separation, or does not immediately recall us to the unity. The names of Father, Son, and Spirit, certainly imply a real distinction; let no one suppose them to be mere epithets, by which God is variously designated from his works; but it is a distinction, not a division. The passages already cited show, that the Son has a property, by which he is distinguished from the Father; because the Word had not been with God, or had his glory with the Father, unless he had been distinct from him. He likewise distinguishes the Father from himself, when he says, "that there is another that beareth witness of him." (e) And to the same effect is what is declared in another place, that the Father created all things by the Word; which he could not have done, unless he had been in some sense distinct from him. Besides, the Father descended not to the earth, but he who came forth from the Father. The Father neither died nor rose again, but he who was sent by the Father. Nor did this distinction commence at the incarnation, but it is evident, that, before that period, he was the only begotten in the bosom of the Father. (f) For who can undertake to assert, that the Son first entered into the bosom of the Father, when he descended from heaven to assume a human nature? He, therefore, was in the bosom of the Father before, and possessed his glory with the Father. The distinction between the Holy Spirit and the Father is announced by Christ, when he says, that he "proceedeth from the Father." (g) But how often does he represent him as another, distinct from himself! as when he promises that "another Comforter" (h) should be sent, and in many other places.

XVIII. I doubt the propriety of borrowing similitudes from human things, to express the force of this distinction. The fathers sometimes practise this method; but they likewise confess the great disproportion of all the similitudes which they introduce. Wherefore I greatly dread, in this instance, every degree of presumption; lest the introduction of any thing unseasonable should afford an occasion of calumny to the malicious, or of error to the ignorant. Yet it is not right to be silent on the distinction which we find expressed in the Scriptures; which is this — that to the Father is attributed the principle of action, the fountain and source of all things; to the Son, wisdom, counsel, and the arrangement of all operations; and the power and efficacy of the action is assigned to the Spirit. Moreover, though eternity belongs to the Father,

(e) John v. 32; viii. 16, 18.
(f) John i. 18.

(g) John xv. 26.
(h) John xiv. 16.

and to the Son and Spirit also, since God can never have been destitute of his wisdom or his power, and in eternity we must not inquire after any thing prior or posterior, — yet the observation of order is not vain or superfluous, while the Father is mentioned as first ; in the next place the Son, as from him ; and then the Spirit, as from both. For the mind of every man naturally inclines to the consideration, first, of God ; secondly, of the wisdom emanating from him ; and lastly, of the power by which he executes the decrees of his wisdom. For this reason the Son is said to be from the Father, and the Spirit from both the Father and the Son ; and that in various places, but nowhere more clearly than in the eighth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, where the same Spirit is indifferently denominated “the Spirit of Christ,” and “the Spirit of him that raised up Christ from the dead,” and that without any impropriety. For Peter also testifies that it was the Spirit of Christ by whom the prophets prophesied ; (i) whereas the Scripture so frequently declares that it was the Spirit of God the Father.

XIX. This distinction is so far from opposing the most absolute simplicity and unity of the Divine Being, that it affords a proof that the Son is one God with the Father, because he has the same Spirit with him ; and that the Spirit is not a different substance from the Father and the Son, because he is the Spirit of the Father and of the Son. For the whole nature is in each hypostasis, and each has something peculiar to himself. The Father is entirely in the Son, and the Son entirely in the Father, according to his own declaration, “I am in the Father, and the Father in me ;” (k) nor do ecclesiastical writers allow that one is divided from the other by any difference of essence. “These distinctive appellations,” says Augustine, “denote their reciprocal relations to each other, and not the substance itself, which is but one.” This explanation may serve to reconcile the opinions of the fathers, which would otherwise appear totally repugnant to each other. For sometimes they state that the Son originates from the Father, and at other times assert that he has essential Divinity from himself, and so is, together with the Father, the one first cause of all. Augustine, in another place, admirably and perspicuously explains the cause of this diversity, in the following manner : “Christ, considered in himself, is called God ; but with relation to the Father, he is called the Son.” And again, “The Father, considered in himself, is called God ; but with relation to the Son, he is called the Father. He who, with relation to the Son, is called the Father, is not the Son ;

(i) 1 Pet. i. 11.

(k) John xiv. 10, 11.

he who, with relation to the Father, is called the Son, is not the Father; they who are severally called the Father and the Son, are the same God." Therefore, when we speak simply of the Son, without reference to the Father, we truly and properly assert him to be self-existent, and therefore call him the sole first cause; but, when we distinctly treat of the relation between him and the Father, we justly represent him as originating from the Father. The first book of Augustine on the Trinity is entirely occupied with the explication of this subject; and it is far more safe to rest satisfied with that relation which he states, than by curiously penetrating into the sublime mystery, to wander through a multitude of vain speculations.

XX. Therefore, let such as love sobriety, and will be contented with the measure of faith, briefly attend to what is useful to be known; which is, that, when we profess to believe in one God, the word *God* denotes a single and simple essence, in which we comprehend three Persons, or hypostases; and that, therefore, whenever the word *God* is used indefinitely, the Son and Spirit are intended as much as the Father; but when the Son is associated with the Father, that introduces the reciprocal relation of one to the other; and thus we distinguish between the Persons. But, since the peculiar properties of the Persons produce a certain order, so that the original cause is in the Father, whenever the Father and the Son or Spirit are mentioned together, the name of God is peculiarly ascribed to the Father: by this method the unity of the essence is preserved, and the order is retained; which, however, derogates nothing from the Deity of the Son and Spirit. And indeed, as we have already seen that the Apostles assert him to be the Son of God, whom Moses and the Prophets have represented as Jehovah, it is always necessary to recur to the unity of the essence. Wherefore it would be a detestable sacrilege for us to call the Son another God different from the Father; because the simple name of God admits of no relation; nor can God, with respect to himself, be denominated either the one or the other. Now, that the name "Jehovah," in an indefinite sense, is applicable to Christ, appears even from the words of Paul: "for this thing I besought the Lord thrice;" (*l*) because, after relating the answer of Christ, "My grace is sufficient for thee," he immediately subjoins, "That the power of Christ may rest upon me." For it is certain that the word "Lord" is there used for "Jehovah;" and to restrict it to the person of the Mediator, would be frivolous and puerile, since it is an absolute declaration, containing

(l) viz. *idol* (*l*) 2 Cor. xii. 8, 9.

no comparison between the Son and the Father. And we know that the Apostles, following the custom of the Greek translators, invariably use the word *Kyrios*, (Lord,) instead of Jehovah. And, not to seek far for an example of this, Paul prayed to the Lord in no other sense than is intended in a passage of Joel, cited by Peter: "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." (*m*) But for the peculiar ascription of this name to the Son, another reason will be given in its proper place; suffice it at present to observe that, when Paul had prayed to God absolutely, he immediately subjoins the name of Christ. Thus also the whole Deity is by Christ himself denominated "a Spirit." For nothing opposes the spirituality of the whole Divine essence, in which are comprehended the Father, the Son, and the Spirit; which is plain from the Scripture. For as we there find God denominated a Spirit, so we find also the Holy Spirit, forasmuch as he is an hypostasis of the whole essence, represented both as the Spirit of God, and as proceeding from God.

XXI. But since Satan, in order to subvert the very foundations of our faith, has always been exciting great contentions concerning the Divine essence of the Son and Spirit, and the distinction of the Persons; and in almost all ages has instigated impious spirits to vex the orthodox teachers on this account; and is also endeavouring, in the present day, with the old embers, to kindle a new flame; it becomes necessary here to refute the perverse and fanciful notions which some persons have imbibed. Hitherto it has been our principal design to instruct the docile, and not to combat the obstinate and contentious; but now, having calmly explained and proved the truth, we must vindicate it from all the cavils of the wicked; although I shall make it my principal study, that those who readily and implicitly attend to the Divine word, may have stable ground on which they may confidently rest. On this, indeed, if on any of the secret mysteries of the Scripture, we ought to philosophize with great sobriety and moderation; and also with extreme caution, lest either our ideas or our language should proceed beyond the limits of the Divine word. For how can the infinite essence of God be defined by the narrow capacity of the human mind, which could never yet certainly determine the nature of the body of the sun, though the object of our daily contemplation? How can the human mind, by its own efforts, penetrate into an examination of the essence of God, when it is totally ignorant of its own? Wherefore let us freely leave to God the knowledge of himself. For "he alone," as Hilary says, "is a competent witness for him-

(*m*) Joel ii. 28—32. Acts ii, 16—21.

self, being only known by himself." And we shall certainly leave it to him, if our conceptions of him correspond to the manifestations which he has given us of himself, and our inquiries concerning him are confined to his word. There are extant on this argument five homilies of Chrysostom against the Anomœi; which, however, were not sufficient to restrain the presumptuous garrulity of those sophists. For they discovered no greater modesty in this instance than in every other. The very unhappy consequences of this temerity should warn us to study this question with more docility than subtlety, and not allow ourselves to investigate God any where but in his sacred word, or to form any ideas of him but such as are agreeable to his word, or to speak any thing concerning him but what is derived from the same word. But if the distinction of Father, Son, and Spirit, in the one Deity, as it is not easy to be comprehended, occasions some understandings more labour and trouble than is desirable, let them remember that the mind of man, when it indulges its curiosity, enters into a labyrinth; and let them submit to be guided by the heavenly oracles, however they may not comprehend the height of this mystery.

XXII. To compose a catalogue of the errors, by which the purity of the faith has been attacked on this point of doctrine, would be too prolix and tedious, without being profitable; and most of the heretics so strenuously exerted themselves to effect the total extinction of the Divine glory by their gross reveries, that they thought it sufficient to unsettle and disturb the inexperienced. From a few men there soon arose numerous sects, of whom some would divide the Divine essence, and others would confound the distinction which subsists between the Persons. But if we maintain, what has already been sufficiently demonstrated from the Scripture, that the essence of the one God, which pertains to the Father, to the Son, and to the Spirit, is simple and undivided, and, on the other hand, that the Father is, by some property, distinguished from the Son, and likewise the Son from the Spirit, the gate will be shut, not only against Arius and Sabellius, but also against all the other ancient heresiarchs. But since our own times have witnessed some madmen, as Servetus and his followers, who have involved every thing in new subtleties, a brief exposure of their fallacies will not be unuseful. The word *Trinity* was so odious and even detestable to Servetus, that he asserted all Trinitarians, as he called them, to be Atheists. I omit his impertinent and scurrilous language, but this was the substance of his speculations: That it is representing God as consisting of three parts, when three Persons are said to subsist in his essence, and that this triad is merely imaginary, being repugnant to the Divine unity.

At the same time, he maintained the Persons to be certain external ideas, which have no real subsistence in the Divine essence, but give us a figurative representation of God, under this or the other form; and that in the beginning there was no distinction in God, because the Word was once the same as the Spirit; but that, after Christ appeared God of God, there emanated from him another God, even the Spirit. Though he sometimes glosses over his impertinencies with allegories, as when he says, that the eternal Word of God was the Spirit of Christ with God, and the reflection of his image, and that the Spirit was a shadow of the Deity, yet he afterwards destroys the Deity of both, asserting that, according to the mode of dispensation, there is a part of God in both the Son and the Spirit; just as the same Spirit, substantially diffused in us, and even in wood and stones, is a portion of the Deity. What he broached concerning the Person of the Mediator, we shall examine in the proper place. But this monstrous fiction, that a Divine Person is nothing but a visible appearance of the glory of God, will not need a prolix refutation. For when John pronounces that the Word (*Λόγος*) was God before the creation of the world, he sufficiently discriminates him from an ideal form. But if then also, and from the remotest eternity, that Word (*Λόγος*) who was God, was with the Father, and possessed his own glory with the Father, he certainly could not be an external or figurative splendour; but it necessarily follows, that he was a real hypostasis, subsisting in God himself. But although no mention is made of the Spirit, but in the history of the creation of the world, yet he is there introduced, not as a shadow, but as the essential power of God, since Moses relates that the chaotic mass was supported by him. (n). It then appeared, therefore, that the eternal Spirit had always existed in the Deity, since he cherished and sustained the confused matter of the heaven and earth, till it attained a state of beauty and order. He certainly could not then be an image or representation of God, according to the dreams of Servetus. But in other places he is constrained to make a fuller disclosure of his impiety, saying that God, in his eternal reason, decreeing for himself a visible Son, has visibly exhibited himself in this manner; for if this be true, there is no other Divinity left to Christ, than as he has been appointed a Son by an eternal decree of God. Besides, he so transforms those phantasms, which he substitutes instead of the hypostases, that he hesitates not to imagine new accidents or properties in God. But the most execrable blasphemy of all is, his promiscuous confusion of the Son of God and the Spirit with all the creatures. For he asserts that in the Divine essence there are parts and divisions, every por-

(n) Gen. i. 2.

tion of which is God; and especially that the souls of the faithful are coëternal and consubstantial with God; though in another place he assigns substantial Deity, not only to the human soul, but to all created things.

XXIII. From the same corrupt source has proceeded another heresy, equally monstrous. For some worthless men, to escape the odium and disgrace which attended the impious tenets of Servetus, have confessed, indeed, that there are three Persons, but with this explanation, that the Father, who alone is truly and properly God, hath created the Son and Spirit, and transfused his Deity into them. Nor do they refrain from this dreadful manner of expressing themselves, that the Father is distinguished from the Son and Spirit, as being the sole possessor of the Divine essence. Their first plea in support of this notion is, that Christ is commonly called the Son of God; whence they conclude that no other is properly God but the Father. But they observe not, that although the name of God is common also to the Son, yet that it is sometimes ascribed to the Father (*κατ' ἐξοχην*) by way of eminence, because he is the fountain and original of the Deity; and this in order to denote the simple unity of the essence. They object, that if he is truly the Son of God, it is absurd to account him the Son of a Person. I reply, that both are true; that he is the Son of God, because he is the Word begotten of the Father before time began, for we are not yet speaking of the Person of the Mediator; and to be explicit, we must notice the Person, that the name of God may not be understood absolutely, but for the Father; for if we acknowledge no other to be God than the Father, it will be a manifest degradation of the dignity of the Son. Whenever mention is made of the Deity, therefore, there must no opposition be admitted between the Father and the Son, as though the name of the true God belonged exclusively to the Father. For surely the God who appeared to Isaiah, was the only true God; (*o*) whom, nevertheless, John affirms to have been Christ. (*p*) He likewise, who by the mouth of Isaiah declared that he was to be a rock of offence to the Jews, was the only true God; (*q*) whom Paul pronounces to have been Christ. (*r*) He who proclaims by Isaiah, "As I live, every knee shall bow to me," (*s*) is the only true God; but Paul applies the same to Christ. (*t*) To the same purpose are the testimonies recited by the Apostle — "Thou, Lord, hast laid the foundation of the earth and the heavens;" and "Let all the angels of God worship him." (*v*) These ascriptions belong only to the one true God; whereas

(*o*) Isaiah vi. 1.

(*q*) Isaiah viii. 14.

(*s*) Isaiah xlv. 23.

(*p*) John xii. 41.

(*r*) Rom. ix. 33.

(*t*) Rom. xiv. 11.

(*v*) Heb. i. 6, 10. Psalm cii. 25; xcvi. 7.

he contends that they are properly applied to Christ. Nor is there any force in that cavil, that what is proper to God is transferred to Christ, because he is the brightness of his glory. For, since the name Jehovah is used in each of these passages, it follows that in respect of his Deity he is self-existent. For, if he is Jehovah, he cannot be denied to be the same God, who in another place proclaims by Isaiah, "I am the first and I am the last; and beside me there is no God." (w) That passage in Jeremiah also deserves our attention — "The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens;" (x) whilst, on the contrary, it must be acknowledged, that the Deity of the Son of God is frequently proved by Isaiah from the creation of the world. But how shall the Creator, who gives existence to all, not be self-existent, but derive his essence from another? For whoever asserts that the Son owes his essence to the Father, denies him to be self-existent. But this is contradicted by the Holy Spirit, who gives him the name of Jehovah. Now, if we admit the whole essence to be solely in the Father, either it will be divisible, or it will be taken away from the Son; and so, being despoiled of his essence, he will be only a titular god. The Divine essence, according to these triflers, belongs solely to the Father, inasmuch as he alone possesses it, and is the author of the essence of the Son. Thus the Divinity of the Son will be a kind of emanation from the essence of God, or a derivation of a part from the whole. Now, they must of necessity concede, from their own premises, that the Spirit is the Spirit of the Father only; because if he be a derivation from the original essence, which belongs exclusively to the Father, he cannot be accounted the Spirit of the Son; which is refuted by the testimony of Paul, where he makes him common to Christ and the Father. Besides, if the Person of the Father be expunged from the Trinity, wherein will he differ from the Son and Spirit, but in being himself the sole Deity? They confess that Christ is God, and yet differs from the Father. Some distinctive character is necessary, also, to discriminate the Father from the Son. They who place this in the essence, manifestly destroy the true Deity of Christ, which cannot exist independently of the essence, that is, of the entire essence. The Father certainly cannot differ from the Son, unless he have something peculiar to himself, which is not common to the Son. What will they find, by which to distinguish him? If the difference be in the essence, let them tell us whether he has communicated the same to the Son. But this could not

(w) Isaiah xliiv. 6.

(x) Jer. x. 11.

be done partially; for it would be an abomination to fabricate a demigod. Besides, this would miserably dismember the Divine essence. The necessary conclusion then is, that it is entirely and perfectly common to the Father and the Son. And if this be true, there cannot, in respect of the essence, be any difference between them. If it be objected that the Father, notwithstanding this communication of his essence, remains the only God with whom the essence continues, then Christ must be a figurative god, a god in appearance and name only, not in reality; because nothing is more proper to God than *TO BE*, according to that declaration, "I AM hath sent me unto you." (y)

XXIV. We might readily prove from many passages the falsehood of their assumption, that, whenever the name of God is mentioned absolutely in the Scripture, it means only the Father. And in those places which they cite in their own defence, they shamefully betray their ignorance, since the Son is there added; from which it appears, that the name of God is used in a relative sense, and therefore is particularly restricted to the Person of the Father. Their objection, that, unless the Father alone were the true God, he would himself be his own Father, is answered in a word. For there is no absurdity in the name of God, for the sake of dignity and order, being peculiarly given to him, who not only hath begotten of himself his own wisdom, but is also the God of the Mediator, of which I shall treat more at large in its proper place. For since Christ was manifested in the flesh, he is called the Son of God, not only as he was the eternal Word begotten of the Father before time began, but because he assumed the person and office of a Mediator, to unite us to God. And since they so presumptuously exclude the Son from Divine honours, I would wish to be informed, when he declares that there is none good but the one God, (z) whether he deprives himself of all goodness. I speak not of his human nature, lest they should object, that, whatever goodness it had, it was gratuitously conferred on it. I demand whether the eternal Word of God be good or not. If they answer in the negative, they are sufficiently convicted of impiety; and if in the affirmative, they cut the throat of their own system. But though, at the first glance, Christ seems to deny himself the appellation of good, he furnishes, notwithstanding, a further confirmation of our opinion. For, as that is a title which peculiarly belongs to the one God, forasmuch as he had been saluted as good, merely according to a common custom, by his rejection of false honour, he suggested that the goodness

(y) Exod. iii. 14.

(z) Matt. xix. 17.

which he possessed was Divine. I demand, also, when Paul affirms that God alone is immortal, wise, and true, (a) whether he thereby degrades Christ to the rank of those who are mortal, unwise, and false. Shall not he then be immortal who from the beginning was life itself, and the giver of immortality to angels? Shall not he be wise who is the eternal Wisdom of God? Shall not he be true who is truth itself? I demand further, whether they think that Christ ought to be worshipped. For, if he justly claims this as his right, that every knee should bow before him, (b) it follows that he is that God, who, in the law, prohibited the worship of any one but himself. If they will have this passage in Isaiah, "I am, and there is no God besides me," to be understood solely of the Father, I retort this testimony on themselves; since we see that whatever belongs to God is attributed to Christ. Nor is there any room for their cavil, that Christ was exalted in the humanity in which he had been abased; and that, with regard to his humanity, all power was given to him in heaven and in earth; because, although the regal and judicial majesty extends to the whole Person of the Mediator, yet, had he not been God manifested in the flesh, he could not have been exalted to such an eminence, without God being in opposition to himself. And Paul excellently determines this controversy, by informing us that he was equal with God, before he abased himself under the form of a servant. (c) Now, how could this equality subsist, unless he had been that God whose name is *JAH* and *JEHOVAH*, who rides on the cherubim, whose kingdom is universal and everlasting? No clamour of theirs can deprive Christ of another declaration of Isaiah: "Lo, this is our God, we have waited for him;" (d) since in these words he describes the advent of God the Redeemer, not only for the deliverance of the people from exile in Babylon, but also for the complete restoration of the church. Nor do they gain any thing by another cavil, that Christ was God in his Father. For although we confess, in point of order and degree, that the Father is the fountain of the Deity, yet we pronounce it a detestable figment, that the essence belongs exclusively to the Father, as though he were the author of the Deity of the Son; because, on this supposition, either the essence would be divided, or Christ would be only a titular and imaginary god. If they admit that the Son is God, but inferior to the Father, then in him the essence must be begotten and created, which in the Father is unbegotten and uncreated. I know that some scorners ridicule our concluding a distinction of Persons from the words of Moses, where he introduces God thus speak-

(a) 1 Tim. i. 17. (b) Phil. ii. 10. (c) Phil. ii. 6, 7. (d) Isaiah xxv. 9

ing: "Let us make man in our image." (e) Yet pious readers perceive how frigidly and foolishly Moses would have introduced this conference, if in one God there had not subsisted a plurality of Persons. Now, it is certain that they whom the Father addressed, were uncreated; but there is nothing uncreated, except the one God himself. Now, therefore, unless they grant that the power to create, and the authority to command, were common to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, it will follow, that God did not speak thus within himself, but directed his conversation to some exterior agents. Lastly, one place will easily remove their two objections at once. For when Christ himself declares, that God is a Spirit, it would be unreasonable to restrict this solely to the Father, as though the Word were not also of a spiritual nature. But if the name of Spirit is equally as applicable to the Son as to the Father, I conclude that the Son is comprehended under the indefinite name of God. Yet he immediately subjoins, that none are approved worshippers of the Father, but those who worship him in spirit and in truth. (f) Whence follows another consequence, that, because Christ performs the office of a Teacher, in a station of inferiority, he ascribes the name of God to the Father, not to destroy his own Deity, but by degrees to raise us to the knowledge of it.

XXV. But they deceive themselves in dreaming of three separate individuals, each of them possessing a part of the Divine essence. We teach, according to the Scriptures, that there is essentially but one God; and, therefore, that the essence of both the Son and the Spirit is unbegotten. But since the Father is first in order, and hath of himself begotten his wisdom, therefore, as has before been observed, he is justly esteemed the original and fountain of the whole Divinity. Thus God, indefinitely, is unbegotten; and the Father also is unbegotten with regard to his Person. They even foolishly suppose, that our opinion implies a quaternity; whereas they are guilty of falsehood and calumny, in ascribing to us a figment of their own; as though we pretended that the three Persons are as so many streams proceeding from one essence, when it is evident, from our writings, that we separate not the Persons from the essence, but, though they subsist in it, make a distinction between them. If the persons were separated from the essence, there would perhaps be some probability in their argument; but then there would be a trinity of Gods, not a trinity of persons contained in one God. This solves their frivolous question, whether the essence concurs to the formation of the Trinity; as though we imagined three Gods to descend from it. Their objection,

(e) Gen. i. 26. (f) John iv. 24.

that then the Trinity would be without God, is equally impertinent. Because, though it concurs not to the distinction as a part or member, yet the Persons are not independent of it, nor separate from it; for the Father, unless he were God, could not be the Father; and the Son is the Son only as he is God. Therefore we say, that the Deity is absolutely self-existent; whence we confess, also, that the Son, as God, independently of the consideration of Person, is self-existent; but as the Son, we say, that he is of the Father. Thus his essence is unoriginated; but the origin of his Person is God himself. And, indeed, the orthodox writers, who have written on the Trinity, have referred this name only to the Persons; since to comprehend the essence in that distinction, were not only an absurd error, but a most gross impiety. For it is evident that those who maintain that the Trinity consists in a union of the Essence, the Son, and the Spirit, annihilate the essence of the Son and of the Spirit; otherwise the parts would be destroyed by being confounded together; which is a fault in every distinction. Finally, if the words *Father* and *God* were synonymous — if the Father were the author of the Deity — nothing would be left in the Son but a mere shadow; nor would the Trinity be any other than a conjunction of the one God with two created things.

XXVI. Their objection, that Christ, if he be properly God, is not rightly called the Son of God, has already been answered; for when a comparison is made between one Person and another, the word *God* is not used indefinitely, but is restricted to the Father, as being the fountain of the Deity, not with regard to the essence, as fanatics falsely pretend, but in respect of order. This is the sense in which we ought to understand that declaration of Christ to his Father: "This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." (*g*) For, speaking in the capacity of Mediator, he holds an intermediate station between God and men; yet without any diminution of his majesty. For, although he abased himself, yet he lost not his glory with the Father, which was hidden from the world. Thus the Apostle to the Hebrews, (*h*) though he acknowledges that Christ was made for a short time inferior to the angels, yet, nevertheless, hesitates not to assert, that he is the eternal God, who laid the foundation of the earth. We must remember, therefore, that whenever Christ, in the capacity of Mediator, addresses the Father, he comprehends, under the name of God, the Divinity which belongs also to himself. Thus, when he said to his

(*g*) John xvii. 3.(*h*) Heb. i. 10; ii. 9.

Apostles, "I go unto the Father, for my Father is greater than I," (i) he attributes not to himself a secondary Divinity, as if he were inferior to the Father with respect to the eternal essence, but because, having obtained the glory of heaven, he gathers together the faithful to a participation of it with him; he represents the Father to be in a station superior to himself, just as the illustrious perfection of the splendour which appears in heaven excels that degree of glory which was visible in him during his incarnate state. For the same reason, Paul says, in another place, that Christ "shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father, that God may be all in all." (k) Nothing would be more absurd than to deny perpetual duration to the Deity of Christ. Now, if he will never cease to be the Son of God, but will remain for ever the same as he has been from the beginning, it follows, that by the name *Father* is intended the one sole Divine essence, which is common to them both. And it is certain that Christ descended to us, in order that, exalting us to the Father, he might at the same time exalt us to himself*also, as being one with the Father. It is therefore neither lawful nor right to restrict the name of God exclusively to the Father, and to deny it to the Son. For even on this very account John asserts him to be the true God, (l) that no one might suppose, that he possessed only a secondary degree of Deity, inferior to the Father. And I wonder what can be the meaning of these fabricators of new gods, when, after confessing that Christ is the true God, they immediately exclude him from the Deity of the Father; as though there could be any true God but one alone, or as though a transfused Divinity were any thing but a novel fiction.

XXVII. Their accumulation of numerous passages from Irenæus, where he asserts the Father of Christ to be the only and eternal God of Israel, is a proof either of shameful ignorance, or of consummate wickedness. For they ought to have considered, that that holy man was then engaged in a controversy with some madmen, who denied that the Father of Christ was the same God that has spoken by Moses and the Prophets, but maintained that he was I know not what sort of phantasm, produced from the corruption of the world. His only object, therefore, is to show that no other God is revealed in the Scripture than the Father of Christ, and that it is impious to imagine any other; and therefore we need not wonder at his frequently concluding, that there never was any other God of Israel than he who was preached by Christ and his Apostles. So, now, on the other hand, when a different error is to be opposed, we

(i) John xiv. 28. (k) 1 Cor. xv. 24. (l) 1 John v. 20.

shall truly assert, that the God who appeared formerly to the patriarchs, was no other than Christ. If it be objected that it was the Father, we are prepared to reply, that, while we contend for the Divinity of the Son, we by no means reject that of the Father. If the reader attends to this design of Irenæus, all contention will cease. Moreover, the whole controversy is easily decided by the sixth chapter of the third book, where the good man insists on this one point : That he who is absolutely and indefinitely called God in the Scripture, is the only true God ; but that the name of God is given absolutely to Christ. Let us remember that the point at issue, as appears from the whole treatise, and particularly from the forty-sixth chapter of the second book, was this : That the appellation of Father is not given in an enigmatical and parabolical sense to one who is not truly God. Besides, in another place he contends, that the Son is called God, as well as the Father, by the Prophets and Apostles. He afterwards states how Christ, who is Lord, and King, and God, and Judge of all, received power from him who is God of all ; and that is with relation to the subjection in which he was humbled even to the death of the cross. And a little after he affirms, that the Son is the Creator of heaven and earth, who gave the law by the hand of Moses, and appeared to the patriarchs. Now, if any one pretends that Irenæus acknowledges the Father alone as the God of Israel, I shall reply, as is clearly maintained by the same writer, that Christ is one and the same ; as also he applies to him the prophecy of Habakkuk : " God shall come from the south." To the same purpose is what we find in the ninth chapter of the fourth book : " Therefore Christ himself is, with the Father, the God of the living." And in the twelfth chapter of the same book he states, that Abraham believed in God, inasmuch as Christ is the Creator of heaven and earth, and the only God.

XXVIII. Their pretensions to the sanction of Tertullian are equally unfounded, for, notwithstanding the occasional harshness and obscurity of his mode of expression, yet he unequivocally teaches the substance of the doctrine which we are defending ; that is, that whereas there is one God, yet by dispensation or economy there is his Word ; that there is but one God in the unity of the substance, but that the unity, by a mysterious dispensation, is disposed into a trinity ; that there are three, not in condition, but in degree ; not in substance, but in form ; not in power, but in order. He says, indeed, that he maintains the Son to be second to the Father ; but he applies this only to the distinction of the Persons. He says somewhere, that the Son is visible ; but after having stated arguments on both sides, he concludes that, as the Word, he is

invisible. Lastly, his assertion that the Father is designated by his Person, proves him to be at the greatest distance from the notion which we are refuting. And though he acknowledges no other God than the Father, yet the explanations which he gives in the immediate context show that he speaks not to the exclusion of the Son, when he denies the existence of any other God than the Father; and that therefore the unity of Divine government is not violated by the distinction of persons. And from the nature and design of his argument it is easy to gather the meaning of his words. For he contends, in opposition to Praxeas, that although God is distinguished into three Persons, yet neither is there a plurality of gods, nor is the unity divided. And because, according to the erroneous notion of Praxeas, Christ could not be God, without being the Father, therefore Tertullian bestows so much labour upon the distinction. His calling the Word and Spirit a portion of the whole, though a harsh expression, yet is excusable; since it has no reference to the substance, but only denotes the disposition and economy, which belongs solely to the Persons, according to the testimony of Tertullian himself. Hence also that question, "How many Persons suppose you that there are, O most perverse Praxeas, but as many as there are names?" So, a little after, "that they may believe the Father and the Son, both in their names and Persons." These arguments, I conceive, will suffice to refute the impudence of those who make use of the authority of Tertullian in order to deceive the minds of the simple.

XXIX. And certainly, whoever will diligently compare the writings of the fathers, will find in Irenæus nothing different from what was advanced by others who succeeded him. Justin Martyr is one of the most ancient; and he agrees with us in every point. They may object that the Father of Christ is denominated the one God by him as well as by the rest. The same is asserted also by Hilary, and even in harsher terms: he says, that eternity is in the Father; but does this imply a denial of the Divine essence to the Son? On the contrary, he had no other design than to maintain the same faith which we hold. Nevertheless, they are not ashamed to cull out mutilated passages, in order to induce a belief that he patronized their error. If they wish any authority to be attached to their quotation of Ignatius, let them prove that the Apostles delivered any law concerning Lent, and similar corruptions; for nothing can be more absurd than the impertinencies which have been published under the name of Ignatius. Wherefore their impudence is more intolerable, who disguise themselves under such false colours for the purpose of decep-

tion. Moreover, the consent of antiquity manifestly appears from this circumstance, that in the Nicene Council, Arius never dared to defend himself by the authority of any approved writer; and not one of the Greek or Latin fathers, who were there united against him, excused himself as at all dissenting from his predecessors. With regard to Augustine, who experienced great hostility from these disturbers, his diligent examination of all the writings of the earlier fathers, and his respectful attention to them, need not be mentioned. If he differs from them in the smallest particulars, he assigns the reasons which oblige him to dissent from them. On this argument also, if he finds any thing ambiguous or obscure in others, he never conceals it. Yet he takes it for granted, that the doctrine which those men oppose has been received without controversy from the remotest antiquity; and yet that he was not uninformed of what others had taught before him, appears even from one word in the first book of his Treatise on the Christian Doctrine, where he says, that unity is in the Father. Will they pretend that he had then forgotten himself? But he elsewhere vindicates himself from this calumny, where he calls the Father the fountain of the whole Deity, because he is from no other; wisely considering that the name of God is especially ascribed to the Father, because, unless the original be from him, it is impossible to conceive of the simple unity of the Deity. These observations, I hope, will be approved by the pious reader, as sufficient to refute all the calumnies, with which Satan has hitherto laboured to pervert or obscure the purity of this doctrine. Finally, I trust that the whole substance of this doctrine has been faithfully stated and explained, provided my readers set bounds to their curiosity, and are not unreasonably fond of tedious and intricate controversies. For I have not the least expectation of giving satisfaction to those who are pleased with an intemperance of speculation. I am sure I have used no artifice in the omission of any thing, from a supposition that it would make against me. But, studying the edification of the Church, I have thought it better not to touch upon many things, which would be unnecessarily burdensome to the reader, without yielding him any profit. For to what purpose is it to dispute, whether the Father be always begetting? For it is foolish to imagine a continual act of generation, since it is evident that three Persons have subsisted in God from all eternity.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE TRUE GOD CLEARLY DISTINGUISHED IN THE SCRIPTURE
FROM ALL FICTITIOUS ONES BY THE CREATION OF THE WORLD.

ALTHOUGH Isaiah (*m*) brings a just accusation of stupidity against the worshippers of fictitious deities, for not having learned, from the foundations of the earth, and the circuit of the heavens, who was the true God, yet such is the slowness and dulness of our minds, as to induce a necessity for a more express exhibition of the true God, lest the faithful should decline to the fictions of the heathen. For, since the most tolerable description given by the philosophers, that God is the soul of the world, is utterly vain and worthless, we require a more familiar knowledge of him, to prevent us from wavering in perpetual uncertainty. Therefore he hath been pleased to give us a history of the creation, on which the faith of the Church might rest, without seeking after any other God than him whom Moses has represented as the former and builder of the world. The first thing specified in this history is the time, that by a continued series of years the faithful might arrive at the first original of the human race, and of all things. This knowledge is eminently useful, not only to contradict the monstrous fables formerly received in Egypt and other countries, but also to give us clearer views of the eternity of God, and to fill us with greater admiration of it. Nor ought we to be moved with that profane sneer, that it is marvellous that God did not form the design of creating heaven and earth at an earlier period, but suffered an immeasurable duration to pass away unemployed, since he could have made them many thousands of ages before; whereas the continuance of the world, now advancing to its last end, has not yet reached six thousand years. For the reason why God deferred it so long, it would be neither lawful nor expedient to inquire; because, if the human mind strive to penetrate it, it will fail a hundred times in the attempt; nor, indeed, could there be any utility in the knowledge of that which God himself, in order to prove the modesty of our faith, has purposely concealed. Great shrewdness was discovered by a certain pious old man, who, when some scoffer ludicrously inquired what God had been doing before the creation of the world, replied that he had been making hell for over curious men. This admonition, no less

(*m*) Isaiah xl. 21.

grave than severe, should repress the wantonness which stimulates many, and impels them to perverse and injurious speculations. Lastly, let us remember that God, who is invisible, and whose wisdom, power, and justice, are incomprehensible, has placed before us the history of Moses, as a mirror which exhibits his lively image. For as eyes, either dim through age, or dull through any disease, see nothing distinctly without the assistance of spectacles, so, in our inquiries after God, such is our imbecility, without the guidance of the Scripture we immediately lose our way. But those who indulge their presumption, since they are now admonished in vain, will perceive too late, by their horrible destruction, how much better it would have been to look up to the secret counsels of God with reverential awe, than to disgorge their blasphemies to darken the heaven. Augustine justly complains, that it is an offence against God, to inquire for any cause of things, higher than his will. He elsewhere prudently cautions us, that it is as absurd to dispute concerning an infinite duration of time, as concerning an infinite extent of place. However extensive the circuit of the heavens, yet certainly it has some dimensions. Now, if any one should expostulate with God, that the vacuity of space is a hundred times larger, would not such arrogance be detested by all pious persons? The same madness is chargeable on those who censure the inaction of God, for not having, according to their wishes, created the world innumerable ages before. To gratify their inordinate curiosity, they desire to pass beyond the limits of the world; as though, in the very ample circumference of heaven and earth, we were not surrounded by numerous objects capable of absorbing all our senses in their inestimable splendour; as though, in the course of six thousand years, God had not given us lessons sufficient to exercise our minds in assiduous meditation on them. Then let us cheerfully remain within these barriers with which God has been pleased to circumscribe us, and as it were to confine our minds, that they might not be wandering in the boundless regions of uncertain conjecture.

II. To the same purpose is the narration of Moses, that the work of God was completed, not in one moment, but in six days. For by this circumstance also we are called away from all false deities to the only true God, who distributed his work into six days, that it might not be tedious to us to occupy the whole of life in the consideration of it. For though, whithersoever we turn our eyes, they are constrained to behold the works of God, yet we see how transient our attention is, and, if we are touched with any pious reflections, how soon they leave us again. Here, also, human reason murmurs, as though such progressive works were inconsistent with the power of

Deity; till, subdued to the obedience of faith, it learns to observe that rest, to which the sanctification of the seventh day invites us. Now, in the order of those things, we must diligently consider the paternal love of God towards the human race, in not creating Adam before he had enriched the earth with an abundant supply of every thing conducive to his happiness. For had he placed him in the earth while it remained barren and vacant, had he given him life before there was any light, he would have appeared not very attentive to his benefit. Now, when he has regulated the motions of the sun and the stars for the service of man, replenished the earth, the air, and the waters, with living creatures, and caused the earth to produce an abundance of all kinds of fruits sufficient for sustenance, he acts the part of a provident and sedulous father of a family, and displays his wonderful goodness towards us. If the reader will more attentively consider with himself these things, which I only hint at as I proceed, he will be convinced that Moses was an authentic witness and herald of the one God, the Creator of the world. I pass over what I have already stated, that he not only speaks of the mere essence of God, but also exhibits to us his eternal Wisdom and his Spirit, in order that we may not dream of any other God except him who will be known in that express image.

III. But before I begin to enlarge on the nature of man, something must be said concerning angels. Because, though Moses, in the history of the creation, accommodating himself to the ignorance of the common people, mentions no other works of God than such as are visible to our eyes, yet, when he afterwards introduces angels as ministers of God, we may easily conclude, that he is their Creator, whom they obey, and in whose service they are employed. Though Moses, therefore, speaking in a popular manner, does not, in the beginning of his writings, immediately enumerate the angels among the creatures of God, yet nothing forbids our here making a plain and explicit statement of those things which the Scripture teaches in other places; because, if we desire to know God from his works, such an excellent and noble specimen should by no means be omitted. Besides, this point of doctrine is very necessary for the confutation of many errors. The excellence of the angelic nature has so dazzled the minds of many, that they have supposed them to be injured, if they were treated as mere creatures, subject to the government of one God. Hence they were falsely pretended to possess a kind of divinity. Manichæus has also arisen, with the sect which he founded, who imagined to himself two original principles, God and the devil; and attributed to God the origin of all good things, but referred evil natures to the production of

the devil. If our minds were bewildered in this wild and incoherent system, we should not leave God in full possession of his glory in the creation of the world. For, since nothing is more peculiar to God than eternity and self-existence, does not the ascription of this to the devil dignify him with a title of Divinity? Now, where is the omnipotence of God, if such an empire be conceded to the devil, as that he can execute whatever he pleases, notwithstanding the aversion of the Divine will, or opposition of the Divine power? But the only foundation of the system of Manichæus, that it is unlawful to ascribe to a good God the creation of any evil thing, in no respect affects the orthodox faith, which admits not that any thing in the universe is evil in its nature; since neither the depravity and wickedness of men and devils, nor the sins which proceed from that source, are from mere nature, but from a corruption of nature; nor from the beginning has any thing existed, in which God has not given a specimen both of his wisdom and of his justice. To oppose these perverse notions, it is necessary to raise our minds higher than our eyes can reach. And it is very probable that it was with this design, when, in the Nicene creed, God is called the Creator of all things, that particular mention is made of things invisible. Yet it shall be my study to observe the limit which the rule of piety prescribes, lest, by indulging an unprofitable degree of speculation, I should lead the reader astray from the simplicity of the faith. And certainly, since the Spirit invariably teaches us in a profitable manner, but, with regard to things of little importance to edification, either is wholly silent, or but lightly and cursorily touches on them, — it is also our duty cheerfully to remain in ignorance of what it is not for our advantage to know.

IV. Since angels are ministers of God appointed to execute his commands, (*n*) that they are also his creatures, ought to be admitted without controversy. And does it not betray obstinacy rather than diligence, to raise any contention concerning the time or the order in which they were created? Moses narrates, that “the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them:” (*o*) to what purpose is it anxiously to inquire, on what day, besides the stars and the planets, the other more concealed hosts of heaven began to exist? Not to be too prolix, let us remember on this point (as on the whole doctrine of religion) to observe one rule of modesty and sobriety; which is, not to speak, or think, or even desire to know, concerning obscure subjects, any thing beyond the information given us in the Divine word. Another rule to be

(*n*) Psalm ciii. 20.(*o*) Gen. ii. 1.

followed is, in reading the Scripture, continually to direct our attention to investigate and meditate upon things conducive to edification; not to indulge curiosity or the study of things unprofitable. And, since the Lord has been pleased to instruct us, not in frivolous questions, but in solid piety, the fear of his name, true confidence, and the duties of holiness, let us content ourselves with that knowledge. Wherefore, if we wish to be truly wise, we must forsake the vain imaginations propagated by triflers concerning the nature, orders, and multitude of angels. I know that these things are embraced by many persons with greater avidity, and dwelt upon with more pleasure, than such things as are in daily use. But, if it be not irksome to be the disciples of Christ, it should not be irksome to follow that method which he has prescribed. Then the consequence will be, that, content with his discipline, we shall not only leave, but also abhor, those unprofitable speculations from which he calls us away. No man can deny that great subtlety and acuteness is discovered by Dionysius, whoever he was, in many parts of his treatise on the Celestial Hierarchy; but, if any one enters into a critical examination of it, he will find the greatest part of it to be mere babbling. But the duty of a theologian is, not to please the ear with empty sounds, but to confirm the conscience by teaching things which are true, certain, and profitable. A reader of that book would suppose that the author was a man descended from heaven, giving an account of things that he had not learned from the information of others, but had seen with his own eyes. But Paul, who was "caught up to the third heaven," (*p*) not only has told us no such things, but has even declared, that it is not lawful for men to utter the secret things which he had seen. Taking our leave, therefore, of this nugatory wisdom, let us consider, from the simple doctrine of the Scripture, what the Lord has been pleased for us to know concerning his angels.

V. We are frequently informed in the Scripture, that angels are celestial spirits, whose ministry and service God uses for the execution of whatever he has decreed; and hence this name is given to them, because God employs them as messengers to manifest himself to men. Other appellations also, by which they are distinguished, are derived from a similar cause. They are called Hosts, because, as life-guards, they surround their prince, aggrandizing his majesty, and rendering it conspicuous; and, like soldiers, are ever attentive to the signal of their leader; and are so prepared for the performance of his commands, that he has no sooner signified his will than

(*p*) 2 Cor. xiii. 1, &c.

they are ready for the work, or rather are actually engaged in it. Such a representation of the throne of God is exhibited in the magnificent descriptions of the Prophets, but particularly of Daniel; where he says, when God had ascended the judgment-seat, that "thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him." (*q*) Since by their means the Lord wonderfully exerts and declares the power and strength of his hand, thence they are denominated Powers. (*r*) Because by them he exercises and administers his government in the world, therefore they are called sometimes Principalities, sometimes Powers, sometimes Dominions. Lastly, because the glory of God in some measure resides in them, they have also, for this reason, the appellation of Thrones; (*s*) although on this last name I would affirm nothing, because a different interpretation is equally or even more suitable. But, omitting this name, the Holy Spirit often uses the former ones, to magnify the dignity of the angelic ministry. Nor, indeed, is it right that no honour should be paid to those instruments, by whom God particularly exhibits the presence of his power. Moreover, they are more than once called gods; because in their ministry, as in a mirror, they give us an imperfect representation of Divinity. Though I am pleased with the interpretation of the old writers, on those passages where the Scripture records the appearance of an angel of God to Abraham, Jacob, Moses, and others, (*t*) that Christ was that angel, yet frequently, where mention is made of angels in general, this name is given to them. Nor should this surprise us; for, if that honour be given to princes and governors, because, in the performance of their functions, they are vicegerents of God, the supreme King and Judge, (*v*) there is far greater reason for its being paid to angels, in whom the splendour of the Divine glory is far more abundantly displayed.

VI. But the Scripture principally insists on what might conduce most to our consolation, and the confirmation of our faith -- that the angels are the dispensers and administrators of the Divine beneficence towards us; and therefore it informs us, that they guard our safety, undertake our defence, direct our ways, and exercise a constant solicitude that no evil befall us. The declarations are universal, belonging primarily to Christ the head of the Church, and then to all the faithful: "He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone." (*w*) Again, "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and de-

(*q*) Daniel vii. 10. (*r*) Ephes. i. 21. (*s*) Col. i. 16.
 (*t*) Gen. xviii. 2; xxxii. 1, 25. Josh. v. 13. Judges vi. 11; xiii. 3, 22.
 (*v*) Psalm lxxxii. 6. (*w*) Psalm xci. 11, 12.

livereth them." (*x*) In these passages God shows that he delegates to his angels the protection of those whom he has undertaken to preserve. Accordingly, the angel of the Lord consoles the fugitive Hagar, and commands her to be reconciled to her mistress. (*y*) Abraham promises his servant that an angel should be the guide of his journey. (*z*) Jacob, in his benediction of Ephraim and Manasseh, prays that the angel of the Lord, by whom he had been redeemed from all evil, would cause them to prosper. (*a*) Thus an angel was appointed to protect the camp of the Israelites; (*b*) and whenever it pleased God to deliver them from the hands of their enemies, he raised up avengers by the ministry of angels. (*c*) And finally, to supersede the necessity of adducing more examples, angels ministered to Christ and attended him in all his difficulties; they announced his resurrection to the women, and his glorious advent to the disciples. (*d*) And thus, in the discharge of their office as our protectors, they contend against the devil and all our enemies, and execute the vengeance of God on those who molest us; as we read that an angel of God, to deliver Jerusalem from a siege, slew a hundred and eighty-five thousand men in the camp of the king of Assyria in one night. (*e*)

VII. But whether each of the faithful has a particular angel assigned him for his defence, I cannot venture certainly to affirm. When Daniel introduces the angel of the Persians and the angel of the Greeks, (*f*) he clearly signifies that certain angels are appointed to preside over kingdoms and provinces. Christ also, when he says that the angels of children always behold the face of the Father, (*g*) suggests, that there are certain angels who are charged with their safety. But I know not whether this justifies the conclusion, that every one of them has his particular guardian angel. Of this, indeed, we may be certain, that not one angel only has the care of every one of us, but that they all with one consent watch for our salvation. For it is said of all the angels together, that they rejoice more over one sinner turned to repentance, than over ninety and nine just persons who have persevered in their righteousness. (*h*) Of more than one angel it is said, that they carried the soul of Lazarus into the bosom of Abraham. (*i*) Nor is it in vain that Elisha shows his servant so many fiery chariots, which were peculiarly assigned to him for his protection. (*k*) There is one place which seems clearer than the rest in confirmation of this

(*x*) Psalm xxxiv. 7. (*y*) Gen. xvi. 9. (*z*) Gen. xxiv. 7.
 (*a*) Gen. xlviii. 16. (*b*) Exod. xiv. 19; xxiii. 20. (*c*) Judges ii. 1; vi. 11; xiii. 3, &c.
 (*d*) Matt. iv. 11. Luke xxii. 43. Matt. xxviii. 5. Luke xxiv. 4, 5. Acts i. 10.
 (*e*) 2 Kings xix. 35. Isaiah xxxvii. 36. (*f*) Daniel x. 13, 20; xii. 1.
 (*g*) Matt. xviii. 10. (*h*) Luke xv. 7. (*i*) Luke xvi. 22. (*k*) 2 Kings vi. 17

point. For when Peter, on his liberation from prison, knocked at the door of the house in which the brethren were assembled, as they could not suppose it to be Peter himself, they said it was his angel. (*l*) This conclusion seems to have arisen in their minds from the common opinion that each of the faithful has his guardian angel assigned him. But here it may also be replied, that nothing prevents this being understood of any one of the angels, to whom the Lord might have committed the care of Peter on that occasion, and who yet might not be his perpetual guardian; as it is vulgarly imagined that every person has two angels, a good one and a bad one, according to the heathen notion of different genii. But it is not worth while anxiously to investigate what it little concerns us to know. For if any one be not satisfied with this, that all the orders of the celestial army watch for his safety, I see not what advantage he can derive from knowing that he has one particular angel given him for his guardian. But those who restrict to one angel the care which God exercises over every one of us, do a great injury to themselves, and to all the members of the Church; as though those auxiliaries had been promised in vain, who, by surrounding and defending us on all sides, contribute to increase our courage in the conflict.

VIII. Let those, who venture to determine concerning the multitude and orders of the angels, examine on what foundation their opinions rest. Michael, I confess, is called in Daniel "the great prince," and in Jude "the archangel." (*m*) And Paul informs us that it will be an archangel, who, with the sound of a trumpet, shall summon men to judgment. (*n*) But who, from these passages, can determine the degrees of honour among the angels, distinguish the individuals by their respective titles, and assign to every one his place and station? For the two names which are found in the Scripture, Michael and Gabriel, and the third, if you wish to add it from the history of Tobias, (*o*) may appear, from their significations, to be given to angels on account of our infirmity; though I would rather leave this undetermined. With respect to their numbers, we hear, from the mouth of Christ, of many legions; (*p*) from Daniel, of many myriads: (*q*) the servant of Elisha saw many chariots; and their being said to encamp round about them that fear God, (*r*) is expressive of a great multitude. It is certain that spirits have no form; and yet the Scripture, on account of the slender capacity of our minds, under the names of cherubim and seraphim, represents angels to us as having wings, to prevent our doubting that they will always attend, with

(*l*) Acts xii. 15. (*m*) Daniel xii. 1. Jude, ver. 9. (*n*) 1 Thess. iv. 16.

(*o*) Daniel x. 13, 21; viii. 16; ix. 21. Luke i. 19, 26. Tob. iii. 17; v. 5.

(*p*) Matt. xxvi. 53. (*q*) Daniel vii. 10. (*r*) Psalm xxxiv. 7.

incredible celerity, to afford us assistance as soon as our cases require it; as though the lightning darted from heaven were to fly to us with its accustomed velocity. All further inquiries on both these points, we should consider as belonging to that class of mysteries, the full revelation of which is deferred to the last day. Wherefore let us remember that we ought to avoid too much curiosity of research, and presumption of language.

IX. But this, which is called in question by some restless men, must be received as a certain truth, that angels are ministering spirits, whose service God uses for the protection of his people, and by whom he dispenses his benefits among mankind, and executes his other works. It was the opinion of the ancient Sadducees, indeed, that the term *angels* signified nothing but the motions which God inspires into men, or those specimens which he gives of his power. But this foolish notion is repugnant to so many testimonies of Scripture, that it is surprising how such gross ignorance could have been tolerated among that people. For, to omit the places before cited, where mention is made of thousands and legions of angels; where joy is attributed to them; where they are said to sustain the faithful in their hands, to carry their souls into rest, to behold the face of the Father, (s) and the like, — there are others which most clearly evince, that they are spirits possessing an actual existence and their own peculiar nature. For the declarations of Stephen and Paul, — that the law was given by the hand of angels, (t) and of Christ, that the elect, after the resurrection, shall be like angels; that the day of judgment is not known even to the angels; that he then will come with his holy angels, (v) — however tortured, must necessarily be thus understood. Likewise, when Paul charges Timothy, before Christ and the elect angels, to keep his precepts, (w) he intends, not unsubstantial qualities or inspirations, but real spirits. Nor otherwise is there any meaning in what we read in the Epistle to the Hebrews, that Christ is made more excellent than the angels, that the world is not subject to them, that Christ assumed not their nature, but the nature of man, (x) unless we understand that there are happy spirits, to whom these comparisons may apply. And the author of the same epistle explains himself, where he places angels and the souls of the faithful together in the kingdom of God. (y) Besides, we have already quoted, that the angels of children always behold the face of God; that we are always defended by their protection; that they rejoice for our safety; that they

(s) Luke xv. 10; iv. 10; xvi. 22. Psalm xci. 12. Matt. iv. 6; xviii. 10.

(t) Acts vii. 53. Gal. iii. 19.

(v) Matt. xxii. 30; xxiv. 36; xxv. 31. Luke ix. 26. (w) 1 Tim. v. 21.

(x) Heb. i. 4; ii. 16.

(y) Heb. xii. 22, 23.

admire the manifold grace of God in the church; (*z*) and are subject to Christ as their head. (*a*) The same truth is proved by their having so often appeared to the patriarchs in the form of men, conversed with them, and been entertained by them. And Christ himself, on account of the preëminence which he obtains in the capacity of Mediator, is called an angel. (*b*) I have thought proper cursorily to touch on this point, in order to fortify the simple against those foolish and absurd notions, which were disseminated by Satan many ages ago, and are frequently springing up afresh.

X. It remains for us to encounter the superstition, which generally insinuates itself into men's minds when angels are said to be the ministers and dispensers of all our blessings. For human reason soon falls into an opinion, that there is no honour that ought not to be paid to them. Thus it happens that what belongs solely to God and Christ, is transferred to them. Thus we see, that for some ages past the glory of Christ has in many ways been obscured; while angels have been loaded with extravagant honours without the authority of the word of God. And among the errors which we combat in the present day, there is scarcely one more ancient than this. For even Paul appears to have had a great controversy with some, who exalted angels in such a manner as almost to degrade Christ to an inferior station. Hence the solicitude with which he maintains, in the Epistle to the Colossians, not only that Christ is to be esteemed above angels, but also that he is the author of all blessings to them, (*c*) in order that we may not forsake him and turn to them, who are not even sufficient for themselves, but draw from the same fountain as we do. Since the splendour of the Divine majesty, therefore, is eminently displayed in them, there is nothing more natural than for us to fall down with astonishment in adoration of them, and to attribute every thing to them which exclusively belongs to God. Even John, in the Revelation, confesses this to have happened to himself; but adds at the same time, that he was thus answered: "See thou do it not: I am thy fellow-servant: worship God." (*d*)

XI. But this danger we shall happily avoid, if we consider why God is accustomed to provide for the safety of the faithful, and to communicate the gifts of his beneficence by means of angels, rather than by himself to manifest his own power without their intervention. He certainly does this not from necessity, as though he were unable to do without them; for whenever he pleases he passes them by, and performs his work with a mere nod of his power; so far is he from being indebt-

(*z*) 1 Peter i. 12.

(*c*) Col. i. 16, 20.

(*a*) Heb. i. 6.

(*d*) Rev. xix. 10; xxii. 8, 9.

(*b*) Mal. iii. 1.

ed to their assistance for relieving him in any difficulty. This, therefore, conduces to the consolation of our imbecility, that we may want nothing that can either raise our minds to a good hope, or confirm them in security. This one thing, indeed, ought to be more than sufficient for us, that the Lord declares himself to be our Protector. But while we see ourselves encompassed with so many dangers, so many annoyances, such various kinds of enemies,—such is our weakness and frailty, that we may sometimes be filled with terror, or fall into despair, unless the Lord enables us, according to our capacity, to discover the presence of his grace. For this reason he promises, not only that he will take care of us himself, but also that we shall have innumerable life-guards, to whom he has committed the charge of our safety; and that, as long as we are surrounded by their superintendence and protection, whatever danger may threaten, we are placed beyond the utmost reach of evil. I confess, indeed, that it is wrong for us, after that simple promise of the protection of God alone, still to be looking around to see from what quarter our aid may come. But since the Lord, from his infinite clemency and goodness, is pleased to assist this our weakness, there is no reason why we should neglect this great favour which he shows us. We have an example of this in the servant of Elisha, who, when he saw that the mountain was besieged by an army of Syrians, (e) and that no way of escape was left, was filled with consternation, as though himself and his master had been ruined. Then Elisha prayed that God would open his eyes, and he immediately saw the mountain full of horses and chariots of fire; that is, of a multitude of angels who were to guard him and the Prophet. Encouraged by this vision, he came to himself again, and was able to look down with intrepidity on the enemies, the sight of whom before had almost deprived him of life.

XII. Therefore, whatever is said concerning the ministry of angels, let us direct it to this end, that, overcoming all diffidence, our hope in God may be more firmly established. For the Lord has provided these guards for us, that we may not be terrified by a multitude of enemies, as though they could prevail in opposition to his assistance, but may have recourse to the sentiment expressed by Elisha, “There are more for us than against us.” How preposterous is it, then, that we should be alienated from God by angels, who are appointed for this very purpose, to testify that his aid is more especially present with us! But they do alienate us from him, unless they lead us directly to him, to regard him, call on him, and celebrate him as our only helper; unless they are considered by us as

(e) 2 Kings vi. 15, 16, 17.

his hands, which apply themselves to do nothing without his direction; unless they attach us to Christ, the only Mediator, to depend entirely on him, to lean upon him, to aspire to him, and to rest satisfied in him. For what is described in the vision of Jacob (*f*) ought to be firmly fixed in our minds, that the angels descend to the earth to men, and ascend from earth to heaven, by a ladder above which stands the Lord of hosts. This implies, that it is only through the intercession of Christ, that we are favoured with the ministry of angels, as he himself affirms: "Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels descending upon the Son of man." (*g*) Therefore the servant of Abraham, having been commended to the care of an angel, (*h*) does not therefore invoke him for his aid, but, trusting to that committal, pours out his prayers before the Lord, and entreats him to display his mercy towards Abraham. For as God does not make them the ministers of his power and goodness, in order to divide his glory with them, so neither does he promise his assistance in their ministry, that we may divide our confidence between them and him. Let us take our leave, therefore, of that Platonic philosophy, which seeks access to God by means of angels, and worships them in order to render him more propitious to us; which superstitious and curious men have endeavoured from the beginning, and even to this day persevere in attempting, to introduce into our religion.

XIII. The design of almost every thing that the Scripture teaches concerning devils, is that we may be careful to guard against their insidious machinations, and may provide ourselves with such weapons as are sufficiently firm and strong to repel the most powerful enemies. For when Satan is called the god and prince of this world, (*i*) the strong man armed, (*k*) the prince of the power of the air, (*l*) a roaring lion, (*m*) these descriptions only tend to make us more cautious and vigilant, and better prepared to encounter him. This is sometimes signified in express words. For Peter, after having said that "the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour," immediately subjoins an exhortation to "resist him, steadfast in the faith." And Paul, having suggested that "we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness," (*n*) immediately commands us to put on suitable armour for so great and so perilous a conflict. Wherefore, having been previously warned that we are perpetually threatened by an enemy, and an enemy desperately bold

(*f*) Gen. xxviii. 12.(*g*) John i. 51.(*h*) Gen. xxiv. 7, 12, 27, 52.(*i*) 2 Cor. iv. 4. John xii. 31.(*k*) Matt. xii. 29. Luke xi. 21.(*l*) Ephes. ii. 2.(*m*) 1 Peter v. 8, 9.(*n*) Ephes. vi. 12, &c.

and extremely strong, skilled in every artifice, indefatigable in diligence and celerity, abundantly provided with all kinds of weapons, and most expert in the science of war, let us make it the grand object of our attention, that we suffer not ourselves to be oppressed with slothfulness and inactivity, but, on the contrary, arousing and collecting all our courage, be ready for a vigorous resistance; and as this warfare is terminated only by death, let us encourage ourselves to perseverance. But, above all, conscious of weakness and ignorance, let us implore the assistance of God, nor attempt any thing but in reliance on him; since he alone can supply us with wisdom, and strength, and courage, and armour.

XIV. But, the more to excite and urge us to such conduct, the Scripture announces that there are not one, or two, or a few enemies, but great armies who wage war against us. For even Mary Magdalene is said to have been delivered from seven demons, by whom she was possessed; (*o*) and Christ declares it to be a common case, that, if you leave the place open for the re-entrance of a demon who has once been ejected, he associates with himself seven spirits more wicked still, and returns to his vacant possession. (*p*) Indeed, one man is said to have been possessed by a whole legion. (*q*) By these passages, therefore, we are taught, that we have to contend with an infinite multitude of enemies; lest, despising their paucity, we should be more remiss to encounter them, or, expecting sometimes an intermission of hostility, should indulge ourselves in idleness. But when one Satan or devil is frequently mentioned in the singular number, it denotes that principality of wickedness which opposes the kingdom of righteousness. For as the Church and society of saints have Christ as their head, so the faction of the impious, and impiety itself, are represented to us with their prince, who exercises the supreme power among them; which is the meaning of that sentence, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." (*r*)

XV. It also ought to stimulate us to a perpetual war with the devil, that he is every where called God's adversary and ours. For, if we feel the concern which we ought to feel for the glory of God, we shall exert all our power against him who attempts the extinction of it. If we are animated by a becoming zeal for defending the kingdom of Christ, we must necessarily have an irreconcilable war with him who conspires its ruin. On the other hand, if we are solicitous for our salvation, we ought to make neither peace nor truce with him who assiduously plots its destruction. Now, such is the description given of him in the third chapter of Genesis, where

(*o*) Mark xvi. 9.

(*p*) Matt. xii. 43—45.

(*q*) Luke viii. 30.

(*r*) Matt. xxv. 41.

he seduces man from the obedience owed by him to God, so that he at once robs God of his just honour, and precipitates man into ruin. Such, also, is he described in the Evangelists, where he is called an enemy, and said to sow tares in order to corrupt the seed of eternal life. (*s*) In short, the testimony of Christ concerning him, that he was a murderer and a liar from the beginning, (*t*) we find verified in all his actions. For he opposes Divine truth with lies; obscures the light with shades of darkness; involves the minds of men in errors; stirs up animosities, and kindles contentions and wars; — and all for the purpose of subverting the kingdom of God, and plunging mankind with himself into eternal destruction. Whence it is evident, that he is naturally depraved, vicious, malignant, and mischievous. For there must be extreme depravity in that mind which is bent on opposing the glory of God and the salvation of men. And this is suggested by John in his Epistle, when he says, that “he sinneth from the beginning.” For he intends, that he is the author, conductor, and principal contriver of all wickedness and iniquity.

XVI. But since the devil was created by God, we must remark, that this wickedness which we attribute to his nature is not from creation, but from corruption. For whatever evil quality he has, he has acquired by his defection and fall. And of this the Scripture apprizes us; lest, believing him to have come from God, just as he now is, we should ascribe to God himself that which is in direct opposition to him. For this reason Christ declares, that Satan, “when he speaketh a lie, speaketh of his own;” (*v*) and adds the reason — “because he abode not in the truth.” When he says that he abode not in the truth, he certainly implies that he had once been in it; and when he calls him the father of a lie, he precludes his imputing to God the depravity of his nature, which originated wholly from himself. Though these things are delivered in a brief and rather obscure manner, yet they are abundantly sufficient to vindicate the majesty of God from every calumny. And what does it concern us to know, respecting devils, either more particulars, or for any other purpose? Some persons are displeased that the Scripture does not give us, in various places, a distinct and detailed account of their fall, with its cause, manner, time, and nature. But, these things being nothing to us, it was better for them, if not to be passed over in total silence, yet certainly to be touched on but lightly; because it would ill comport with the dignity of the Holy Spirit to feed curiosity with vain and unprofitable histories; and we perceive it to have been the design of the Lord, to deliver nothing in his sacred

(*s*) Matt. xiii. 25, 28.(*t*) John viii. 44.(*v*) John viii. 44.

oracles, which we might not learn to our edification. That we ourselves, therefore, may not dwell upon unprofitable subjects, let us be content with this concise information respecting the nature of devils; that at their creation they were originally angels of God, but by degenerating have ruined themselves, and become the instruments of perdition to others. This being useful to be known, it is clearly stated by Peter and Jude. "God," say they, "spared not the angels that sinned, and kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation." (*x*) And Paul, mentioning the elect angels, (*y*) without doubt tacitly implies that there are reprobate ones.

XVII. The discord and contention, which we say Satan maintains against God, ought to be understood in a manner consistent with a firm persuasion, that he can do nothing without God's will and consent. For we read in the history of Job, that he presented himself before God to receive his commands, and dared not to undertake any enterprise without having obtained his permission. (*z*) Thus, also, when Ahab was to be deceived, he undertook to be a lying spirit in the mouth of all the prophets; and, being commissioned by God, he performed it. (*a*) For this reason he is also called the "evil spirit from the Lord," who tormented Saul, (*b*) because he was employed as a scourge to punish the sins of that impious monarch. And elsewhere it is recorded, that the plagues were inflicted on the Egyptians by the "evil angels." (*c*) According to these particular examples, Paul declares generally, that the blinding of unbelievers is the work of God, (*d*) whereas he had before called it the operation of Satan. It appears, then, that Satan is subject to the power of God, and so governed by his control, that he is compelled to render obedience to him. Now, when we say that Satan resists God, and that his works are contrary to the works of God, we at the same time assert that this repugnance and contention depend on the Divine permission. I speak now, not of the will or the endeavour, but only of the effect. For the devil, being naturally wicked, has not the least inclination towards obedience to the Divine will, but is wholly bent on insolence and rebellion. It therefore arises from himself and his wickedness, that he opposes God with all his desires and purposes. This depravity stimulates him to attempt those things which he thinks the most opposed to God. But since God holds him tied and bound with the bridle of his power, he executes only those things which are divinely permitted; and thus, whether he

(*x*) 2 Peter ii. 4. Jude, ver. 6.

(*y*) 1 Tim. v. 21.

(*z*) Job i. 6; ii. 1.

(*a*) 1 Kings xxii. 20, &c.

(*b*) 1 Sam. xvi. 14; xviii. 10.

(*c*) Psalm lxxviii. 49.

(*d*) 2 Thess. ii. 9, 11.

will or not, he obeys his Creator, being constrained to fulfil any service to which he impels him.

XVIII. While God directs the courses of unclean spirits hither and thither at his pleasure, he regulates this government in such a manner, that they exercise the faithful with fighting, attack them in ambuscades, harass them with incursions, push them in battles, and frequently fatigue them, throw them into confusion, terrify them, and sometimes wound them, yet never conquer or overwhelm them; but subdue and lead captive the impious, tyrannize over their souls and bodies, and abuse them like slaves by employing them in the perpetration of every enormity. The faithful, in consequence of being harassed by such enemies, are addressed with the following, and other similar exhortations: "Give not place to the devil." (*e*) "Your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour; whom resist, steadfast in the faith." (*f*) Paul confesses that he himself was not free from this kind of warfare, when he declares that, as a remedy to subdue pride, "the messenger of Satan was given to him to buffet him." (*g*) This exercise, then, is common to all the children of God. But, as the promise respecting the breaking of the head of Satan (*h*) belongs to Christ and all his members in common, I therefore deny that the faithful can ever be conquered or overwhelmed by him. They are frequently filled with consternation, but recover themselves again; they fall by the violence of his blows, but are raised up again; they are wounded, but not mortally; finally, they labour through their whole lives in such a manner, as at last to obtain the victory. This, however, is not to be restricted to each single action. For we know that, by the righteous vengeance of God, David was for a time delivered to Satan, that by his instigation he might number the people; (*i*) nor is it without reason that Paul admits a hope of pardon even for those who may have been entangled in the snares of the devil. (*k*) Therefore the same Apostle shows, in another place, that the promise before cited is begun in this life, where we must engage in the conflict; and that after the termination of the conflict it will be completed. "And the God of peace," he says, "shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." (*l*) In our Head this victory, indeed, has always been complete, because the prince of this world had nothing in him: (*m*) in us, who are his members, it yet appears only in part, but will be completed when we shall have put off our flesh, which makes us still subject to infirm-

(*e*) Ephes. iv. 27.

(*f*) 1 Pet. v. 8.

(*g*) 2 Cor. xii. 7.

(*h*) Gen. iii. 15.

(*i*) 2 Sam. xxiv. 1. 1 Chron. xxi. 1.

(*k*) 2 Tim. ii. 26.

(*l*) Rom. xvi. 20.

(*m*) John xiv. 30.

ities, and shall be full of the power of the Holy Spirit. In this manner, when the kingdom of Christ is erected, Satan and his power must fall; as the Lord himself says, "I beheld Satan as lightning falling from heaven." (*n*) For by this answer he confirms what the Apostles had reported concerning the power of his preaching. Again: "When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace; but when a stronger than he shall come upon him and overcome him," &c. (*o*) And to this end Christ by his death overcame Satan, who had the power of death, and triumphed over all his forces, that they might not be able to hurt the Church; for otherwise it would be in hourly danger of destruction. For such is our imbecility, and such the strength of his fury, how could we stand even for a moment against his various and unceasing attacks, without being supported by the victory of our Captain? Therefore God permits not Satan to exercise any power over the souls of the faithful, but abandons to his government only the impious and unbelieving, whom he designs not to number among his own flock. For he is said to have the undisturbed possession of this world, till he is expelled by Christ. (*p*) He is said also to blind all who believe not the Gospel, (*q*) and to work in the children of disobedience; (*r*) and this justly, for all the impious are vessels of wrath. (*s*) To whom, therefore, should they be subjected, but to the minister of the Divine vengeance? Finally, they are said to be of their father the devil; (*t*) because, as the faithful are known to be the children of God from their bearing his image, (*v*) so the impious, from the image of Satan into which they have degenerated, are properly considered as his children.

XIX. But as we have already confuted that nugatory philosophy concerning the holy angels, which teaches that they are nothing but inspirations, or good motions, excited by God in the minds of men, so in this place we must refute those who pretend that devils are nothing but evil affections or perturbations, which our flesh obtrudes on our minds. But this may be easily done, and that because the testimonies of Scripture on this subject are numerous and clear. First, when they are called unclean spirits and apostate angels, (*w*) who have degenerated from their original condition, the very names sufficiently express, not mental emotions or affections, but rather in reality what are called minds, or spirits endued with perception and intelligence. Likewise, when the children of God are compared with the children of the devil, both by Christ and by John, (*x*) would not the comparison be absurd, if noth-

(*n*) Luke x. 18.(*p*) John xii. 31.(*r*) Eph. ii. 2.(*t*) John viii. 44.(*o*) Luke xi. 21.(*q*) 2 Cor. iv. 4.(*s*) Rom. ix. 22.(*v*) 1 John iii. 10.(*w*) Matt. xii. 43. Jude 6.(*x*) John viii. 44. 1 John iii. 10.

ing were intended by the word *devil* but evil inspirations? And John adds something still plainer, that the devil sins from the beginning. Likewise, when Jude introduces Michael the archangel contending with the devil, (*y*) he certainly opposes to the good angel an evil and rebellious one; to which agrees what is recorded in the history of Job, that Satan appeared with the holy angels before God. (*z*) But the clearest of all are those passages, which mention the punishment which they begin to feel from the judgment of God, and are to feel much more at the resurrection: "Thou Son of God, art thou come hither to torment us before the time?" (*a*) Also, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." (*b*) Again, "If God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment," &c. (*c*) How unmeaning were these expressions, that the devils are appointed to eternal judgment; that fire is prepared for them; that they are now tormented and vexed by the glory of Christ, if there were no devils at all! But since this point is not a subject of dispute with those who give credit to the word of the Lord, but with those vain speculators who are pleased with nothing but novelty, little good can be effected by testimonies of Scripture. I consider myself as having done what I intended, which was to fortify the pious mind against such a species of errors, with which restless men disturb themselves and others that are more simple. But it was requisite to touch on it, lest any persons involved in that error, under a supposition that they have no adversary, should become more slothful and incautious to resist him.

XX. Yet let us not disdain to receive a pious delight from the works of God, which every where present themselves to view in this very beautiful theatre of the world. For this, as I have elsewhere observed, though not the principal, is yet, in the order of nature, the first lesson of faith, to remember that, whithersoever we turn our eyes, all the things which we behold are the works of God; and at the same time to consider, with pious meditation, for what end God created them. Therefore to apprehend, by a true faith, what it is for our benefit to know concerning God, we must first of all understand the history of the creation of the world, as it is briefly related by Moses, and afterwards more copiously illustrated by holy men, particularly by Basil and Ambrose. Thence we shall learn that God, by the power of his Word and Spirit, created out of nothing the heaven and the earth; that from them he produced all things, animate and inanimate; distinguished by an admirable

(*y*) Jude 9.(*z*) Job i. 6; ii. 1.(*a*) Matt. viii. 29.(*b*) Matt. xxv. 41.(*c*) 2 Peter ii. 4.

gradation the innumerable variety of things; to every species gave its proper nature, assigned its offices, and appointed its places and stations; and since all things are subject to corruption, has, nevertheless, provided for the preservation of every species till the last day; that he therefore nourishes some by methods concealed from us, from time to time infusing, as it were, new vigour into them; that on some he has conferred the power of propagation, in order that the whole species may not be extinct at their death; that he has thus wonderfully adorned heaven and earth with the utmost possible abundance, variety, and beauty, like a large and splendid mansion, most exquisitely and copiously furnished; lastly, that, by creating man, and distinguishing him with such splendid beauty, and with such numerous and great privileges, he has exhibited in him a most excellent specimen of all his works. But since it is not my design to treat at large of the creation of the world, let it suffice to have again dropped these few hints by the way. For it is better, as I have just advised the reader, to seek for fuller information on this subject from Moses, and others who have faithfully and diligently recorded the history of the world.

XXI. It is useless to enter into a prolix disputation respecting the right tendency and legitimate design of a consideration of the works of God, since this question has been, in a great measure, determined in another place, and, as much as concerns our present purpose, may be despatched in few words. Indeed, if we wished to explain how the inestimable wisdom, power, justice, and goodness, of God are manifested in the formation of the world, no splendour or ornament of diction will equal the magnitude of so great a subject. And it is undoubtedly the will of the Lord, that we should be continually employed in this holy meditation; that, while we contemplate in all the creatures, as in so many mirrors, the infinite riches of his wisdom, justice, goodness, and power, we might not only take a transient and cursory view of them, but might long dwell on the idea, seriously and faithfully revolve it in our minds, and frequently recall it to our memory. But, this being a didactic treatise, we must omit those topics which require long declamations. To be brief, therefore, let the readers know, that they have then truly apprehended by faith what is meant by God being the Creator of heaven and earth, if they, in the first place, follow this universal rule, not to pass over, with ungrateful inattention or oblivion, those glorious perfections which God manifests in his creatures; and, secondly, learn to make such an application to themselves as thoroughly to affect their hearts. The first point is exemplified, when we consider how great must have been the Artist who disposed that multitude of stars, which adorn the heaven, in such a regular order, that it is im-

possible to imagine any thing more beautiful to behold ; who fixed some in their stations, so that they cannot be moved ; who granted to others a freer course, but so that they never travel beyond their appointed limits ; who so regulates the motions of all, that they measure days and nights, months, years, and seasons of the year ; and also reduces the inequality of days, which we constantly witness, to such a medium that it occasions no confusion. So, also, when we observe his power in sustaining so great a mass, in governing the rapid revolutions of the celestial machine, and the like. For these few examples sufficiently declare, what it is to recognize the perfections of God in the creation of the world. Otherwise, were I desirous of pursuing the subject to its full extent, there would be no end ; since there are as many miracles of Divine power, as many monuments of Divine goodness, as many proofs of Divine wisdom, as there are species of things in the world, and even as there are individual things, either great or small.

XXII. There remains the other point, which approaches more nearly to faith ; that, while we observe how God has appointed all things for our benefit and safety, and at the same time perceive his power and grace in ourselves, and the great benefits which he has conferred on us, we may thence excite ourselves to confide in him, to invoke him, to praise him, and to love him. Now, as I have just before suggested, God himself has demonstrated, by the very order of creation, that he made all things for the sake of man. For it was not without reason that he distributed the making of the world into six days ; though it would have been no more difficult for him to complete the whole work, in all its parts, at once, in a single moment, than to arrive at its completion by such progressive advances. But in this he has been pleased to display his providence and paternal solicitude towards us, since, before he would make man, he prepared every thing which he foresaw would be useful or beneficial to him. How great would be, now, the ingratitude to doubt whether we are regarded by this best of fathers, whom we perceive to have been solicitous on our account before we existed ! How impious would it be to tremble with diffidence, lest at any time his benignity should desert us in our necessities, which we see was displayed in the greatest affluence of all blessings provided for us while we were yet unborn ! Besides, we are told by Moses, (*d*) that his liberality has subjected to us all that is contained in the whole world. He certainly has not made this declaration in order to tantalize us with the empty name of such a donation. Therefore we never shall be destitute of any thing which will conduce to

(*d*) Gen. i. 28 ; ix. 2.

our welfare. Finally, to conclude, whenever we call God the Creator of heaven and earth, let us at the same time reflect, that the dispensation of all those things which he has made is in his own power, and that we are his children, whom he has received into his charge and custody, to be supported and educated; so that we may expect every blessing from him alone, and cherish a certain hope that he will never suffer us to want those things which are necessary to our well-being, that our hope may depend on no other; that, whatever we need or desire, our prayers may be directed to him, and that, from whatever quarter we receive any advantage, we may acknowledge it to be his benefit, and confess it with thanksgiving; that, being allured with such great sweetness of goodness and beneficence, we may study to love and worship him with all our hearts.

CHAPTER XV.

THE STATE OF MAN AT HIS CREATION, THE FACULTIES OF THE SOUL, THE DIVINE IMAGE, FREE WILL, AND THE ORIGINAL PURITY OF HIS NATURE.

WE must now treat of the creation of man, not only because he exhibits the most noble and remarkable specimen of the Divine justice, wisdom, and goodness, among all the works of God, but because, as we observed in the beginning, we cannot attain to a clear and solid knowledge of God, without a mutual acquaintance with ourselves. But though this is twofold, — the knowledge of the condition in which we were originally created, and of that into which we entered after the fall of Adam, (for indeed we should derive but little advantage from a knowledge of our creation, unless in the lamentable ruin which has befallen us we discovered the corruption and deformity of our nature,) — yet we shall content ourselves at present with a description of human nature in its primitive integrity. And, indeed, before we proceed to the miserable condition in which man is now involved, it is necessary to understand the state in which he was first created. For we must beware lest, in precisely pointing out the natural evils of man, we seem to refer them to the Author of nature; since impious men suppose that this pretext affords them a sufficient defence, if they can plead that whatever defect or fault they have, proceeds in some measure from God; nor do they hesitate, if reproved, to litigate with God himself, and transfer to him the crime of which they

are justly accused. And those who would be thought to speak with more reverence concerning the Deity, yet readily endeavour to excuse their depravity from nature, not considering that they also, though in a more obscure manner, are guilty of defaming the character of God; to whose dishonour it would redound, if nature could be proved to have had any innate depravity at its formation. Since we see the flesh, therefore, eagerly catching at every subterfuge, by which it supposes that the blame of its evils may by any means be transferred from itself to any other, we must diligently oppose this perverseness. The calamity of mankind must be treated in such a manner as to preclude all tergiversation, and to vindicate the Divine justice from every accusation. We shall afterwards, in the proper place, see how far men are fallen from that purity which was bestowed upon Adam. And first let it be understood, that, by his being made of earth and clay, a restraint was laid upon pride; since nothing is more absurd than for creatures to glory in their excellence, who not only inhabit a cottage of clay, but who are themselves composed partly of dust and ashes. (e) But as God not only deigned to animate the earthen vessel, but chose to make it the residence of an immortal spirit, Adam might justly glory in so great an instance of the liberality of his Maker.

II. That man consists of soul and body, ought not to be controverted. By the "soul" I understand an immortal, yet created essence, which is the nobler part of him. Sometimes it is called a "spirit;" for though, when these names are connected, they have a different signification, yet when "spirit" is used separately, it means the same as "soul;" as when Solomon, speaking of death, says that "then the spirit shall return unto God, who gave it." (f) And Christ commending his spirit to the Father, (g) and Stephen his to Christ, (h) intend no other than that, when the soul is liberated from the prison of the flesh, God is its perpetual keeper. Those who imagine that the soul is called a spirit, because it is a breath or faculty divinely infused into the body, but destitute of any essence, are proved to be in a gross error by the thing itself, and by the whole tenor of Scripture. It is true, indeed, that, while men are immoderately attached to the earth, they become stupid, and, being alienated from the Father of lights, are immersed in darkness, so that they consider not that they shall survive after death; yet in the mean time, the light is not so entirely extinguished by the darkness, but that they are affected with some sense of their immortality. Surely the conscience, which, discerning between good and evil, answers to the judgment of

(e) Gen. ii. 7; iii. 19, 23.

(f) Eccles. xii. 7.

(g) Luke xxiii. 46.

(h) Acts vii. 59.

God, is an indubitable proof of an immortal spirit. For how could an affection or emotion, without any essence, penetrate to the tribunal of God, and inspire itself with terror on account of its guilt? For the body is not affected by a fear of spiritual punishment; that falls only on the soul; whence it follows, that it is possessed of an essence. Now, the very knowledge of God sufficiently proves the immortality of the soul, which rises above the world, since an evanescent breath or inspiration could not arrive at the fountain of life. Lastly, the many noble faculties with which the human mind is adorned, and which loudly proclaim that something Divine is inscribed on it, are so many testimonies of its immortal essence. For the sense which the brutes have, extends not beyond the body, or at most not beyond the objects near it. But the agility of the human mind, looking through heaven and earth, and the secrets of nature, and comprehending in its intellect and memory all ages, digesting every thing in proper order, and concluding future events from those which are past, clearly demonstrates that there is concealed within man something distinct from the body. In our minds we form conceptions of the invisible God and of angels, to which the body is not at all competent. We apprehend what is right, just, and honest, which is concealed from the corporeal senses. The spirit, therefore, must be the seat of this intelligence. Even sleep itself, which, stupefying man, seems to divest him even of life, is no obscure proof of immortality; since it not only suggests to us ideas of things which never happened, but also presages of future events. I briefly touch those things which even profane writers magnificently extol in a more splendid and ornamented diction; but with the pious reader the simple mention of them will be sufficient. Now, unless the soul were something essentially distinct from the body, the Scripture would not inform us that we dwell in houses of clay, (*i*) and at death quit the tabernacle of the flesh; (*k*) that we put off the corruptible, (*l*) to receive a reward at the last day, according to the respective conduct of each individual in the body. (*m*) For certainly these and similar passages, which often occur, not only manifestly distinguish the soul from the body, but, by transferring to it the name of "man," indicate that it is the principal part of our nature. When Paul exhorts the faithful to cleanse themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit, (*n*) he points out two parts in which the defilement of sin resides. Peter also, when he called Christ the Shepherd and Bishop of souls, (*o*) would have spoken improperly, if there were no souls over whom he could exercise that office. Nor would there be any

(*i*) Job iv. 19.(*l*) 2 Peter i. 13, 14.(*n*) 2 Cor. vii. 1.(*k*) 2 Cor. v. 4.(*m*) 2 Cor. v. 10.(*o*) 1 Peter ii. 25.

consistency in what he says concerning the eternal salvation of souls, or in his injunction to purify the souls, or in his assertion that fleshly lusts war against the soul, (*p*) or in what the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews says, that pastors watch to give an account of our souls, (*q*) unless souls had a proper essence. To the same purpose is the place where Paul "calls God for a record upon his soul," (*r*) because it could not be amenable to God, if it were not capable of punishment; which is also more clearly expressed in the words of Christ, where he commands us to fear him, who, after having killed the body, is able to cast the soul into hell. (*s*) Where the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews distinguishes between the fathers of our flesh, and God, who is the only Father of spirits, (*t*) he could not assert the essence or existence of the soul in more express terms. Besides, unless the soul survived after its liberation from the prison of the body, it was absurd for Christ to represent the soul of Lazarus as enjoying happiness in the bosom of Abraham, and the soul of the rich man as condemned to dreadful torments. (*u*) Paul confirms the same point, by informing us that we are absent from God as long as we dwell in the body, but that when absent from the body we are present with the Lord. (*v*) Not to be too prolix on a subject of so little obscurity, I shall only add this from Luke, that it is reckoned among the errors of the Sadducees, that they believed not the existence of angels or of spirits. (*w*)

III. A solid proof of this point may also be gathered from man being said to be created in the image of God. (*x*) For though the glory of God is displayed in his external form, yet there is no doubt that the proper seat of his image is in the soul. I admit that external form, as it distinguishes us from brutes, also exalts us more nearly to God; nor will I too vehemently contend with any one who would understand, by the image of God, that

"—— while the mute creation downward bend
Their sight, and to their earthly mother tend,
Man looks aloft, and with erected eyes
Beholds his own hereditary skies." (*y*)

Only let it be decided that the image of God, which appears or sparkles in these external characters, is spiritual. For Osiander, whose perverse ingenuity in futile notions is proved by his writings, extending the image of God promiscuously to the body as well as to the soul, confounds heaven and earth together. He says, that the Father, and Son, and Holy Spirit, fixed their

(*p*) 1 Peter i. 9, 22; ii. 11. (*s*) Matt. x. 28. Luke xii. 4, 5. (*v*) 2 Cor. v. 6, 8.
 (*q*) Heb. xiii. 17. (*t*) Heb. xii. 9. (*w*) Acts xxiii: 8.
 (*r*) 2 Cor. i. 23. (*u*) Luke xvi. 22. (*x*) Gen. i. 27.
 (*y*) Ovid's Metam. lib. 1. Dryden's Translation.

image in man, because, even if Adam had remained in his integrity, Christ would, nevertheless, have become man. Thus, according to him, the body which had been destined for Christ was the exemplar and type of that corporeal figure which was then formed. But where will he find that Christ is the image of the Spirit? I grant, indeed, that the glory of the whole Deity shines in the person of the Mediator; but how shall the eternal Word be called the image of the Spirit, whom he precedes in order? Lastly, it subverts the distinction between the Son and Spirit, if the former be denominated the image of the latter. Besides, I could wish to be informed by him, how Christ, in the body which he has assumed, resembles the Spirit, and by what characters or lineaments his similitude is expressed. And since that speech, "Let us make man in our own image," (z) belongs also to the person of the Son, it follows that he is the image of himself; which is altogether repugnant to reason. Moreover, if the notion of Osiander be received, man was formed only to the type or exemplar of the humanity of Christ; and the idea from which Adam was taken was Christ, as about to be clothed in flesh; whereas the Scripture teaches, in a very different sense, that man was "created in the image of God." There is more plausibility in the subtlety of those who maintain that Adam was created in the image of God, because he was conformed to Christ, who is the only image of God. But this also is destitute of solidity. There is no small controversy concerning "image" and "likeness" among expositors who seek for a difference, whereas in reality there is none, between the two words; "likeness" being only added by way of explanation. In the first place, we know that it is the custom of the Hebrews to use repetitions, in which they express one thing twice. In the next place, as to the thing itself, there is no doubt but man is called the image of God, on account of his likeness to God. Hence it appears that those persons make themselves ridiculous who display more subtlety in criticising on these terms, whether they confine *zelem*, that is, "image," to the substance of the soul, and *demuth*, that is, "likeness," to its qualities, or whether they bring forward any different interpretation. Because, when God determined to create man in his own image, that expression being rather obscure, he repeats the same idea in this explanatory phrase, "after our likeness;" as though he had said that he was about to make man, in whom, as in an image, he would give a representation of himself by the characters of resemblance which he would impress upon him. Therefore Moses, a little after, reciting the same thing, introduces the image of God, but makes no mention of his likeness. The objection of Osiander is quite frivolous, that it is not a

(z) Gen. i. 26.

part of man, or the soul with its faculties, that is called the image of God, but the whole Adam, who received his name from the earth whence he was taken; it will be deemed frivolous, I say, by every rational reader. For when the whole man is called mortal, the soul is not therefore made subject to death; nor, on the other hand, when man is called a rational animal, does reason or intelligence therefore belong to the body. Though the soul, therefore, is not the whole man, yet there is no absurdity in calling him the image of God with relation to the soul; although I retain the principle which I have just laid down, that the image of God includes all the excellence in which the nature of man surpasses all the other species of animals. This term, therefore, denotes the integrity which Adam possessed, when he was endued with a right understanding, when he had affections regulated by reason, and all his senses governed in proper order, and when, in the excellency of his nature, he truly resembled the excellence of his Creator. And though the principal seat of the Divine image was in the mind and heart, or in the soul and its faculties, yet there was no part of man, not even the body, which was not adorned with some rays of its glory. It is certain that the lineaments of the Divine glory are conspicuous in every part of the world; whence it may be concluded, that where the image of God is said to be in man, there is implied a tacit antithesis, which exalts man above all the other creatures, and as it were separates him from the vulgar herd. It is not to be denied that angels were created in the similitude of God, since our highest perfection will consist, according to the declaration of Christ, in being like them. (a) But it is not in vain that Moses celebrates the favour of God towards us by this peculiar title; especially as he compares man only to visible creatures.

IV. No complete definition of this image, however, appears yet to be given, unless it be more clearly specified in what faculties man excels, and in what respects he ought to be accounted a mirror of the Divine glory. But that cannot be better known from any thing, than from the reparation of his corrupted nature. There is no doubt that Adam, when he fell from his dignity, was by this defection alienated from God. Wherefore, although we allow that the Divine image was not utterly annihilated and effaced in him, yet it was so corrupted that whatever remains is but horrible deformity. And therefore the beginning of our recovery and salvation is the restoration which we obtain through Christ, who on this account is called the second Adam; because he restores us to true and perfect integrity. For although Paul, opposing the quickening Spirit received by the faithful from Christ, to the living soul in

(a) Matt. xxii. 30.

which Adam was created, (*b*) celebrates the degree of grace displayed in regeneration as superior to that manifested in creation, yet he contradicts not that other capital point, that this is the end of regeneration, that Christ may form us anew in the image of God. Therefore he elsewhere informs us, that "the new man is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him." (*c*) With which corresponds the following exhortation — "Put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." (*d*) Now, we may see what Paul comprehends in this renovation. In the first place, he mentions knowledge, and in the next place, sincere righteousness and holiness; whence we infer, that in the beginning the image of God was conspicuous in the light of the mind, in the rectitude of the heart, and in the soundness of all the parts of our nature. For though I grant that the forms of expression are synecdochical, signifying the whole by a part, yet this is an axiom which cannot be overturned, that what holds the principal place in the renovation of the Divine image, must also have held the same place in the creation of it at first. To the same purpose is another passage of the Apostle, that "we, with open face beholding the glory of Christ, are changed into the same image." (*e*) We see, now, how Christ is the most perfect image of God, to which being conformed, we are so restored that we bear the Divine image in true piety, righteousness, purity, and understanding. This position being established, the imagination of Osiander, about the figure of the body, immediately vanishes of itself. The passage where Paul calls the man "the image and glory of God," (*f*) to the exclusion of the woman from that degree of honour, appears from the context to be confined to political subordination. But that the image which has been mentioned comprehended whatever relates to spiritual and eternal life, has now, I think, been sufficiently proved. John confirms the same in other words, by asserting that "the life" which was from the beginning in the eternal Word of God, "was the light of men." (*g*) For as he intended to praise the singular favour of God which exalts man above all the other animals; to separate him from the common number, because he has attained no vulgar life, but a life connected with the light of intelligence and reason, — he at the same time shows how he was made after the image of God. Therefore, since the image of God is the uncorrupted excellence of human nature, which shone in Adam before his defection, but was afterwards so corrupted, and almost obliterated, that nothing remains from the ruin but what is confused, mutilated, and defiled, — it is now

(*b*) 1 Cor. xv. 45.
(*c*) Col. iii. 10.

(*d*) Eph. iv. 24.
(*e*) 2 Cor. iii. 18.

(*f*) 1 Cor. xi. 7.
(*g*) John i. 4.

partly visible in the elect, inasmuch as they are regenerated by the Spirit, but it will obtain its full glory in heaven. But that we may know the parts of which it consists, it is necessary to treat of the faculties of the soul. For that speculation of Augustine is far from being solid, that the soul is a mirror of the Trinity, because it contains understanding, will, and memory. Nor is there any probability in the opinion which places the similitude of God in the dominion committed to man; as though he resembled God only in this character, that he was constituted heir and possessor of all things, whereas it must properly be sought *in* him, not *without* him; it is an internal excellence of the soul.

V. But, before I proceed any further, it is necessary to combat the Manichæan error, which Servetus has attempted to revive and propagate in the present age. Because God is said to have breathed into man the breath of life, (*h*) they supposed that the soul was an emanation from the substance of God; as though some portion of the infinite Deity had been conveyed into man. But it may be easily and briefly shown how many shameful and gross absurdities are the necessary consequences of this diabolical error. For if the soul of man be an emanation from the essence of God, it will follow that the Divine nature is not only mutable and subject to passions, but also to ignorance, desires, and vices of every kind. Nothing is more inconstant than man, because his soul is agitated and variously distracted by contrary motions; he frequently mistakes through ignorance; he is vanquished by some of the smallest temptations; we know that the soul is the receptacle of every kind of impurity;—all which we must ascribe to the Divine nature, if we believe the soul to be part of the essence of God, or a secret influx of the Deity. Who would not dread such a monstrous tenet? It is a certain truth, quoted by Paul from Aratus, that “we are the offspring of God,” but in quality, not in substance; forasmuch as he has adorned us with Divine endowments. (*i*) But to divide the essence of the Creator, that every creature may possess a part of it, indicates extreme madness. It must therefore be concluded beyond all doubt, notwithstanding the Divine image is impressed on the souls of men, that they were no less created than the angels. And creation is not a transfusion, but an origination of existence from nothing. Nor, because the spirit is given by God, and returns to him on its departure from the body, is it immediately to be asserted, that it was plucked off like a branch from his essence. And on this point also Osiander, while he is elated with his own illusions, has involved himself in an impious error, not ac-

(*h*) Gen. ii. 7.(*i*) Acts xvii. 23.

knowledging the image of God in man without his essential righteousness, as though God could not, by the inconceivable power of his Spirit, render us conformable to himself, unless Christ were to transfuse himself substantially into us. However some persons may attempt to gloss over these delusions, they will never so far blind the eyes of sensible readers, as to prevent their perceiving that they savour of the error of the Manichæans. And where Paul treats of the restoration of this image, we may readily conclude from his words, that man was conformed to God not by an influx of his substance, but by the grace and power of his Spirit. For he says that, by beholding the glory of Christ, we are transformed into the same image as by the Spirit of the Lord; (*k*) who certainly operates in us not in such a manner as to render us consubstantial with God.

VI. It would be folly to seek for a definition of the soul from the heathen philosophers, of whom Plato is almost the only one who has plainly asserted it to be an immortal substance. Others indeed, the disciples of Socrates, hint at it, but with great doubts; no one clearly teaches that of which he was not persuaded himself. The sentiment of Plato, therefore, is more correct, because he considers the image of God as being in the soul. The other sects so confine its powers and faculties to the present life, that they leave it nothing beyond the body. But we have before stated from the Scripture, that it is an incorporeal substance; now we shall add, that although it is not properly contained in any place, yet, being put into the body, it inhabits it as its dwelling, not only to animate all its parts, and render the organs fit and useful for their respective operations, but also to hold the supremacy in the government of human life; and that not only in the concerns of the terrestrial life, but likewise to excite to the worship of God. Though this last point is not so evident in the state of corruption, yet there remain some relics of it impressed even on our very vices. For whence proceeds the great concern of men about their reputation, but from shame? but whence proceeds shame, unless from a respect for virtue? The principle and cause of which is, that they understand themselves to have been born for the cultivation of righteousness; and in which are included the seeds of religion. But as, without controversy, man was created to aspire to a heavenly life, so it is certain that the knowledge of it was impressed on his soul. And, indeed, man would be deprived of the principal use of his understanding, if he were ignorant of his felicity, the perfection of which consists in being united to God. Thus the chief opera-

(k) 2 Cor. iii. 18.

tion of the soul is to aspire after it ; and, therefore, the more a man studies to approach to God, the more he proves himself a rational creature. Some maintain that in man there are more souls than one, a sensitive and a rational one ; but notwithstanding some appearance of probability in what they adduce, yet, as there is nothing solid in their arguments, we must reject them, unless we are fond of tormenting ourselves with frivolous and useless things. They say that there is a great repugnancy between the organic motions and the rational part of the soul ; as though reason were not also at variance with itself, and some of its counsels were not in opposition to others, like hostile armies. But as this confusion proceeds from the depravity of nature, it affords no ground for concluding that there are two souls, because the faculties are not sufficiently harmonious with each other. But all curious discussion respecting the faculties themselves I leave to the philosophers ; a simple definition will suffice us for the edification of piety. I confess, indeed, that the things which they teach are true, and not only entertaining to be known, but useful and well digested by them ; nor do I prohibit those who are desirous of learning from the study of them. I admit, then, in the first place, that there are five senses, which Plato would rather call organs, by which all objects are conveyed into a common sensory, as into a general repository ; that next follows the fancy or imagination, which discerns the objects apprehended by the common sensory ; next reason, to which belongs universal judgment ; lastly, the understanding, which steadily and quietly contemplates the objects revolved and considered by reason. And thus to the understanding, reason, and imagination, the three intellectual faculties of the soul, correspond also the three appetitive ones — the will, whose place it is to choose those things which the understanding and reason propose to it ; the irascible faculty, which embraces the things offered to it by reason and imagination ; and the concupiscible faculty, which apprehends the objects presented by the imagination and sensation. Though these things are true, or at least probable, yet, since I fear that they will involve us in their obscurity rather than assist us, I think they ought to be omitted. If any one chooses to make a different distribution of the powers of the soul, so as to call one appetitive, which, though void of reason in itself, obeys reason, if it be under the guidance of any other faculty ; and to call another intellective, which is itself a partaker of reason ; I shall not much oppose it. Nor have I any wish to combat the sentiment of Aristotle, that there are three principles of action — sense, intellect, and appetite. But let us rather choose a division placed within the comprehension of all, and which certainly cannot be sought in the philosophers.

For when they wish to speak with the greatest simplicity, they divide the soul into appetite and intellect, and make both these twofold. The latter, they say, is sometimes contemplative, being content merely with knowledge, and having no tendency to action, — which Cicero thinks is designated by the word *ingenium*, — and sometimes practical, variously influencing the will with the apprehension of good or evil. This division comprehends the science of living in a just and virtuous manner. The latter, that is, appetite, they divide into will and concupiscence; they call it “will,” whenever appetite obeys reason; but when, shaking off the yoke of reason, it runs into intemperance, they give it the name of “concupiscence.” Thus they imagine that man is always possessed of reason sufficient for the proper government of himself.

VII. We are constrained to depart a little from this mode of instruction, because the philosophers, being ignorant of the corruption of nature proceeding from the punishment of the fall, improperly confound two very different states of mankind. Let us, therefore, submit the following division — that the human soul has two faculties which relate to our present design, the understanding and the will. Now, let it be the office of the understanding to discriminate between objects, as they shall respectively appear deserving of approbation or disapprobation; but of the will, to choose and follow what the understanding shall have pronounced to be good; to abhor and avoid what it shall have condemned. Here let us not stay to discuss those subtleties of Aristotle, that the mind has no motion of itself, but that it is moved by the choice, which he also calls the appetitive intellect. Without perplexing ourselves with unnecessary questions, it should be sufficient for us to know that the understanding is, as it were, the guide and governor of the soul; that the will always respects its authority, and waits for its judgment in its desires. For which reason Aristotle himself truly observed, that avoidance and pursuit in the appetite, bear a resemblance to affirmation and negation in the mind. How certain the government of the understanding is in the direction of the will, we shall see in another part of this work. Here we only intend to show that no power can be found in the soul, which may not properly be referred to one or the other of those two members. But in this manner we comprehend the sense in the understanding, which some distinguish thus: sense, they say, inclines to pleasure, whereas the understanding follows what is good; that thence it happens that the appetite of sense becomes concupiscence and lust, and the affection of the understanding becomes will. But instead of the word “appetite,” which they prefer, I use the word “will,” which is more common.

VIII. God has furnished the soul of man, therefore, with a mind capable of discerning good from evil, and just from unjust; and of discovering, by the light of reason, what ought to be pursued or avoided; whence the philosophers called this directing faculty το ἡγεμονικόν, the principal or governing part. To this he has annexed the will, on which depends the choice. The primitive condition of man was ennobled with those eminent faculties; he possessed reason, understanding, prudence, and judgment, not only for the government of his life on earth, but to enable him to ascend even to God and eternal felicity. To these was added choice, to direct the appetites, and regulate all the organic motions; so that the will should be entirely conformed to the government of reason. In this integrity man was endued with free will, by which, if he had chosen, he might have obtained eternal life. For here it would be unreasonable to introduce the question respecting the secret predestination of God, because we are not discussing what might possibly have happened or not, but what was the real nature of man. Adam, therefore, could have stood if he would, since he fell merely by his own will; but because his will was flexible to either side, and he was not endued with constancy to persevere, therefore he so easily fell. Yet his choice of good and evil was free; and not only so, but his mind and will were possessed of consummate rectitude, and all his organic parts were rightly disposed to obedience, till, destroying himself, he corrupted all his excellencies. Hence proceeded the darkness which overspread the minds of the philosophers, because they sought for a complete edifice among ruins, and for beautiful order in the midst of confusion. They held this principle, that man would not be a rational animal, unless he were endued with a free choice of good or evil; they conceived also that otherwise all difference between virtue and vice would be destroyed, unless man regulated his life according to his own inclination. Thus far it had been well, if there had been no change in man, of which as they were ignorant, it is not to be wondered at if they confound heaven and earth together. But those who profess themselves to be disciples of Christ, and yet seek for free will in man, now lost and overwhelmed in spiritual ruin, in striking out a middle path between the opinions of the philosophers and the doctrine of heaven, are evidently deceived, so that they touch neither heaven nor earth. But these things will be better introduced in the proper place. At present be it only remembered, that man, at his first creation, was very different from all his posterity, who, deriving their original from him in his corrupted state, have contracted an hereditary defilement. For all the parts of his soul were formed with the utmost rectitude; he enjoyed soundness of mind, and a will free to the

choice of good. If any object, that he was placed in a dangerous situation on account of the imbecility of this faculty, I reply, that the station in which he was placed was sufficient to deprive him of all excuse. For it would have been unreasonable that God should be confined to this condition, to make man so as to be altogether incapable either of choosing or of committing any sin. It is true that such a nature would have been more excellent; but to expostulate with God as though he had been under any obligation to bestow this upon man, were unreasonable and unjust in the extreme; since it was at his choice to bestow as little as he pleased. But why he did not sustain him with the power of perseverance, remains concealed in his mind; but it is our duty to restrain our investigations within the limits of sobriety. He had received the power, indeed, if he chose to exert it; but he had not the will to use that power; for the consequence of this will would have been perseverance. Yet there is no excuse for him; he received so much, that he was the voluntary procurer of his own destruction; but God was under no necessity to give him any other than an indifferent and mutable will, that from his fall he might educe matter for his own glory.

CHAPTER XVI.

GOD'S PRESERVATION AND SUPPORT OF THE WORLD BY HIS POWER,
AND HIS GOVERNMENT OF EVERY PART OF IT BY HIS PROVIDENCE.

To represent God as a Creator only for a moment, who entirely finished all his work at once, were frigid and jejune; and in this it behoves us especially to differ from the heathen, that the presence of the Divine power may appear to us no less in the perpetual state of the world than in its first origin. For although the minds even of impious men, by the mere contemplation of earth and heaven, are constrained to rise to the Creator, yet faith has a way peculiar to itself to assign to God the whole praise of creation. To which purpose is that assertion of an Apostle before cited, that it is only "through faith that we understand the worlds were framed by the word of God;" (1) because, unless we proceed to his providence, we have no correct conception of the meaning of this article, "that

(1) Hebrews xi. 3.

God is the Creator ;” however we may appear to comprehend it in our minds, and to confess it with our tongues. The carnal sense, when it has once viewed the power of God in the creation, stops there ; and when it proceeds the furthest, it only examines and considers the wisdom, and power, and goodness, of the Author in producing such a work, which spontaneously present themselves to the view even of those who are unwilling to observe them. In the next place, it conceives of some general operation of God in preserving and governing it, on which the power of motion depends. Lastly, it supposes that the vigour originally infused by God into all things is sufficient for their sustentation. But faith ought to penetrate further. When it has learned that he is the Creator of all things, it should immediately conclude that he is also their perpetual governor and preserver ; and that not by a certain universal motion, actuating the whole machine of the world, and all its respective parts, but by a particular providence sustaining, nourishing, and providing for every thing which he has made. (*m*) Thus David, having briefly premised that the world was made by God, immediately descends to the continual course of his providence : “By the word of the Lord were the heavens made ; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.” (*n*) He afterwards adds, “The Lord beholdeth all the sons of men ;” (*o*) and subjoins more to the same purpose. For though all men argue not so skilfully, yet, since it would not be credible that God was concerned about human affairs, if he were not the Maker of the world, and no one seriously believes that the world was made by God, who is not persuaded that he takes care of his own works, it is not without reason that David conducts us by a most excellent series from one to the other. In general, indeed, both philosophers teach, and the minds of men conceive, that all the parts of the world are quickened by the secret inspiration of God. But they go not so far as David, who is followed by all the pious, when he says, “These all wait upon thee ; that thou mayest give them their meat in due season. That thou givest them, they gather ; thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good. Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled ; thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust. Thou sendest forth thy Spirit, they are created ; and thou renewest the face of the earth.” (*p*) Though they subscribe to the assertion of Paul, that in God “we live, and move, and have our being,” (*q*) yet they are very far from a serious sense of his favour, celebrated by the Apostle ; because they have no apprehension

(*m*) Matt. vi. 26 ; x. 29.(*n*) Psalm xxxiii. 6.(*o*) Psalm xxxiii. 13.(*p*) Psalm civ. 27—30.(*q*) Acts xvii. 28.

of the special care of God, from which alone his paternal favour is known.

II. For the clearer manifestation of this difference, it must be observed that the providence of God, as it is taught in Scripture, is opposed to fortune and fortuitous accidents. Now, since it has been the common persuasion in all ages, and is also in the present day almost the universal opinion, that all things happen fortuitously, it is certain that every correct sentiment concerning providence is not only obscured, but almost buried in oblivion by this erroneous notion. If any one falls into the hands of robbers, or meets with wild beasts; if by a sudden storm he is shipwrecked on the ocean; if he is killed by the fall of a house or a tree; if another, wandering through deserts, finds relief for his penury, or, after having been tossed about by the waves, reaches the port, and escapes, as it were, but a hair's-breadth from death, — carnal reason will ascribe all these occurrences, both prosperous and adverse, to fortune. But whoever has been taught from the mouth of Christ, that the hairs of his head are all numbered, (r) will seek further for a cause, and conclude that all events are governed by the secret counsel of God. And respecting things inanimate, it must be admitted, that, though they are all naturally endued with their peculiar properties, yet they exert not their power, any further than as they are directed by the present hand of God. They are, therefore, no other than instruments into which God infuses as much efficacy as he pleases, bending and turning them to any actions, according to his will. There is no power among all the creatures more wonderful or illustrious, than that of the sun. For, besides his illumination of the whole world by his splendour, how astonishing it is that he cherishes and enlivens all animals with his heat; with his rays inspires fecundity into the earth; from the seeds, genially warmed in her bosom, produces a green herbage, which, being supported by fresh nourishment, he increases and strengthens till it rises into stalks; feeds them with perpetual exhalations, till they grow into blossoms, and from blossoms to fruit, which he then by his influences brings to maturity; that trees, likewise, and vines, by his genial warmth, first put forth leaves, then blossoms, and from the blossoms produce their fruit! But the Lord, to reserve the praise of all these things entirely to himself, was pleased that the light should exist, and the earth abound in every kind of herbs and fruits, before he created the sun. A pious man, therefore, will not make the sun either a principal or necessary cause of those things which existed before the creation of the sun, but only an instrument which God

(r) Matt. x. 30.

uses, because it is his pleasure so to do ; whereas he would find no more difficulty in acting by himself without that luminary. Lastly, as we read that the sun remained in one situation for two days at the prayer of Joshua, (s) and that his shadow made a retrograde motion of ten degrees for the sake of king Hezekiah, (t) God has declared by these few miracles, that the daily rising and setting of the sun is not from a blind instinct of nature, but that he himself governs his course, to renew the memory of his paternal favour towards us. Nothing is more natural than the succession of spring to winter, of summer to spring, and of autumn to summer. But there is so great a diversity and inequality discovered in this series, that it is obvious that every year, month, and day, is governed by a new and particular providence of God.

III. And, indeed, God asserts his possession of omnipotence, and claims our acknowledgment of this attribute ; not such as is imagined by sophists, vain, idle, and almost asleep, but vigilant, efficacious, operative, and engaged in continual action ; not a mere general principle of confused motion, as if he should command a river to flow through the channels once made for it, but a power constantly exerted on every distinct and particular movement. For he is accounted omnipotent, not because he is able to act, yet sits down in idleness, or continues by a general instinct the order of nature originally appointed by him ; but because he governs heaven and earth by his providence, and regulates all things in such a manner that nothing happens but according to his counsel. For when it is said in the Psalms, that he does whatsoever he pleases, (v) it denotes his certain and deliberate will. For it would be quite insipid to expound the words of the Prophet in the philosophical manner, that God is the prime agent, because he is the principle and cause of all motion ; whereas the faithful should rather encourage themselves in adversity with this consolation, that they suffer no affliction, but by the ordination and command of God, because they are under his hand. But if the government of God be thus extended to all his works, it is a puerile cavil to limit it to the influence and course of nature. And they not only defraud God of his glory, but themselves of a very useful doctrine, who confine the Divine providence within such narrow bounds, as though he permitted all things to proceed in an uncontrolled course, according to a perpetual law of nature ; for nothing would exceed the misery of man, if he were exposed to all the motions of the heaven, air, earth, and waters. Besides, this notion would shamefully diminish the singular goodness of God towards every individual. David exclaims, that infants yet

(s) Joshua x. 13.

(t) 2 Kings xx. 11.

(v) Psalm cxv. 3.

hanging on the breasts of their mothers are sufficiently eloquent to celebrate the glory of God; (*w*) because, as soon as they are born, they find aliment prepared for them by his heavenly care. This, indeed, is generally true; yet it cannot escape the observation of our eyes and senses, being evidently proved by experience, that some mothers have breasts full and copious, but others almost dry; as it pleases God to provide more liberally for one, but more sparingly for another. But they who ascribe just praise to the Divine omnipotence, receive from this a double advantage. In the first place, he must have ample ability to bless them, who possesses heaven and earth, and whose will all the creatures regard so as to devote themselves to his service. And, secondly, they may securely repose in his protection, to whose will are subject all those evils which can be feared from any quarter; by whose power Satan is restrained, with all his furies, and all his machinations; on whose will depends all that is inimical to our safety; nor is there any thing else by which those immoderate and superstitious fears, which we frequently feel on the sight of dangers, can be corrected or appeased. We are superstitiously timid, I say, if, whenever creatures menace or terrify us, we are frightened, as though they had of themselves the power to hurt us, or could fortuitously injure us; or as if against their injuries God were unable to afford us sufficient aid. For example, the Prophet forbids the children of God to fear the stars and signs of heaven, (*x*) as is the custom of unbelievers. He certainly condemns not every kind of fear. But when infidels transfer the government of the world from God to the stars, pretending that their happiness or misery depends on the decrees and presages of the stars, and not on the will of God, the consequence is, that their fear is withdrawn from him, whom alone they ought to regard, and is placed on stars and comets. Whoever, then, desires to avoid this infidelity, let him constantly remember, that in the creatures there is no erratic power, or action, or motion; but that they are so governed by the secret counsel of God, that nothing can happen but what is subject to his knowledge, and decreed by his will.

IV. First, then, let the readers know that what is called providence describes God, not as idly beholding from heaven the transactions which happen in the world, but as holding the helm of the universe, and regulating all events. Thus it belongs no less to his hands than to his eyes. When Abraham said to his son, "God will provide," (*y*) he intended not only to assert his prescience of a future event, but to leave the care of a thing unknown to the will of him who frequently puts an end to circumstances of perplexity and confusion. Whence it fol-

(*w*) Psalm viii. 2.

(*x*) Jer. x. 2.

(*y*) Gen. xxii. 8.

lows, that providence consists in action ; for it is ignorant trifling to talk of mere prescience. Not quite so gross is the error of those who attribute to God a government, as I have observed, of a confused and promiscuous kind ; acknowledging that God revolves and impels the machine of the world, with all its parts, by a general motion, without peculiarly directing the action of each individual creature. Yet even this error is not to be tolerated. For they maintain that this providence, which they call universal, is no impediment either to all the creatures being actuated contingently, or to man turning himself hither or thither at the free choice of his own will. And they make the following partition between God and man ; that God by his power inspires him with motions, enabling him to act according to the tendency of the nature with which he is endued ; but that man governs his actions by his own voluntary choice. In short, they conceive, that the world, human affairs, and men themselves, are governed by the power of God, but not by his appointment. I speak not of the Epicureans, who have always infested the world, who dream of a god absorbed in sloth and inactivity ; and of others no less erroneous, who formerly pretended that the dominion of God extended over the middle region of the air, but that he left inferior things to fortune ; since the mute creatures themselves sufficiently exclaim against such evident stupidity. My present design is to refute that opinion, which has almost generally prevailed, which, conceding to God a sort of blind and uncertain motion, deprives him of the principal thing, which is his directing and disposing, by his incomprehensible wisdom, all things to their proper end ; and thus, robbing God of the government of the world, it makes him the ruler of it in name only, and not in reality. For, pray, what is governing, but presiding in such a manner, as to rule, by fixed decrees, those over whom you preside ? Yet I reject not altogether what they assert concerning universal providence, provided they, on their part admit that God governs the world, not merely because he preserves the order of nature fixed by himself, but because he exercises a peculiar care over every one of his works. It is true that all things are actuated by a secret instinct of nature, as though they obeyed the eternal command of God, and that what God has once appointed, appears to proceed from voluntary inclination in the creatures. And to this may be referred the declaration of Christ, that his Father and himself had always been working, even from the beginning ; (z) and the assertion of Paul, that “in him we live, and move, and have our being ;” (a) and also what is observed by the author of the

(z) John v. 17.

(a) Acts xvii. 28.

Epistle to the Hebrews, with a design to prove the Divinity of Christ, that all things are sustained by the word of his power. (*b*) But they act very improperly in concealing and obscuring, by this pretext, the doctrine of a particular providence, which is asserted in such plain and clear testimonies of Scripture, that it is surprising how any one could entertain a doubt concerning it. And, certainly, they who conceal it with this veil which I have mentioned, are obliged to correct themselves by adding, that many things happen through the peculiar care of God; but this they erroneously restrict to some particular acts. Wherefore we have to prove, that God attends to the government of particular events, and that they all proceed from his determinate counsel, in such a manner that there can be no such thing as fortuitous contingency.

V. If we grant that the principle of motion originates from God, but that all things are spontaneously or accidentally carried whither the bias of nature impels them, the mutual vicissitudes of day and night, of winter and summer, will be the work of God, inasmuch as he has distributed to each its respective parts, and prescribed to them a certain law; that is, this would be the case if with even tenor they always observed the same measure, days succeeding to nights, months to months, and years to years. But sometimes excessive heats and drought parch and burn the fruits of the earth; sometimes unseasonable rains injure the crops of corn, and sudden calamities are occasioned by showers of hail and storms: this will not be the work of God; unless, perhaps, as either clouds or serene weather, or cold or heat, derive their origin from the opposition of the stars and other natural causes. But this representation leaves no room for God to display or exercise his paternal favour, or his judgments. If they say that God is sufficiently beneficent to man, because he infuses into heaven and earth an ordinary power, by which they supply him with food, it is a very flimsy and profane notion; as though the fecundity of one year were not the singular benediction of God, and as though penury and famine were not his malediction and vengeance. But as it would be tedious to collect all the reasons for rejecting this error, let us be content with the authority of God himself. In the law and in the prophets he frequently declares, that whenever he moistens the earth with dew or with rain, he affords a testimony of his favour; and that, on the contrary, when, at his command, heaven becomes hard as iron, when the crops of corn are blasted and otherwise destroyed, and when showers of hail and storms molest the fields, he gives a proof of his certain and special vengeance. If we believe these things, it is certain that not a drop of rain falls but at the ex-

(*b*) Heb. i. 3.

press command of God. David indeed praises the general providence of God, because "he giveth food to the young ravens which cry;" (c) but when God himself threatens animals with famine, does he not plainly declare, that he feeds all living creatures, sometimes with a smaller allowance, sometimes with a larger, as he pleases? It is puerile, as I have already observed, to restrain this to particular acts; whereas Christ says, without any exception, that not a sparrow of the least value falls to the ground without the will of the Father. (d) Certainly, if the flight of birds be directed by the unerring counsel of God, we must be constrained to confess with the Prophet, that, though "he dwelleth on high," yet "he humbleth himself to behold the things which are in heaven and in the earth." (e)

VI. But as we know that the world was made chiefly for the sake of mankind, we must also observe this end in the government of it. The Prophet Jeremiah exclaims, "I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." (f) And Solomon: "Man's goings are of the Lord: how can a man then understand his own way?" (g) Now, let them say that man is actuated by God according to the bias of his nature, but that he directs that influence according to his own pleasure. If this could be asserted with truth, man would have the free choice of his own ways. That, perhaps, they will deny, because he can do nothing independently of the power of God. But since it is evident that both the Prophet and Solomon ascribe to God choice and appointment, as well as power, this by no means extricates them from the difficulty. But Solomon, in another place, beautifully reproves this temerity of men, who predetermine on an end for themselves, without regard to God, as though they were not led by his hand: "The preparation of the heart in man," says he, "and the answer of the tongue, is from the Lord." (h) It is, indeed, a ridiculous madness for miserable men to resolve on undertaking any work independently of God; whilst they cannot even speak a word but what he chooses. Moreover, the Scripture, more fully to express that nothing is transacted in the world but according to his destination, shows that those things are subject to him which appear most fortuitous. For what would you be more ready to attribute to chance, than when a limb broken off from a tree kills a passing traveller? But very different is the decision of the Lord, who acknowledges that he has delivered him into the hand of the slayer. (i) Who, likewise, does not leave lots to the blindness of fortune? Yet the Lord leaves

(c) Psalm cxlvii. 9
(d) Matt. x. 29.

(e) Psalm cxliii. 5, 6.
(f) Jer. x. 23.

(g) Prov. xx. 24.
(h) Prov. xvi. 1.

(i) Exod. xxi. 13.

them not, but claims the disposal of them himself. He teaches us that it is not by any power of their own that lots are cast into the lap (*k*) and drawn out; but the only thing which could be ascribed to chance, he declares to belong to himself. To the same purpose is another passage from Solomon: "The poor and the deceitful man meet together: the Lord enlighteneth the eyes of them both." (*l*) For although the poor and the rich are blended together in the world, yet, as their respective conditions are assigned to them by Divine appointment, he suggests that God, who enlightens all, is not blind, and thus exhorts the poor to patience; because those who are discontented with their lot, are endeavouring to shake off the burden imposed on them by God. Thus also another Prophet rebukes profane persons, who attribute it to human industry, or to fortune, that some men remain in obscurity, and others rise to honours: "Promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the Judge; he putteth down one, and setteth up another." (*m*) Since God cannot divest himself of the office of a judge, hence he reasons, that it is from the secret counsel of God, that some rise to promotion, and others remain in contempt.

VII. Moreover, particular events are in general proofs of the special providence of God. God raised in the desert a south wind, to convey to the people a large flock of birds. (*n*) When he would have Jonah thrown into the sea, he sent forth a wind to raise a tempest. (*o*) It will be said by them who suppose God not to hold the helm of the world, that this was a deviation from the common course of things. But the conclusion which I deduce from it is, that no wind ever rises or blows but by the special command of God. For otherwise it would not be true that he makes the winds his messengers, and a flame of fire his ministers, that he makes the clouds his chariot, and rides on the wings of the wind, (*p*) unless he directed at his pleasure the course both of the clouds and of the winds, and displayed in them the singular presence of his power. Thus also we are elsewhere taught, that, whenever the sea is blown into a tempest by the winds, those commotions prove the special presence of God. "He commandeth and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves" of the sea. "Then he maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still;" (*q*) as in another place he proclaims, that he scourged the people with parching winds. (*r*) Thus, whilst men are naturally endued with a power of generation, yet God will have it acknowledged as the effect of his special

(*k*) Prov. xvi. 33.(*n*) Exod. xvi. 13. Num. xi. 31.(*o*) Psalm cvii. 25, 29.(*l*) Prov. xxix. 13.(*o*) Jonah i. 4.(*r*) Amos iv. 9. Hag-(*m*) Psalm lxxv. 6, 7.(*p*) Psalm civ. 3, 4.

gai i. 6—11.

favour, that he leaves some without any posterity, and bestows children on others; for "the fruit of the womb is his reward." (s) Therefore Jacob said to his wife, "Am I in God's stead, who hath withheld from thee the fruit of the womb?" (t) But to conclude; there is nothing more common in nature, than for us to be nourished with bread. But the Spirit declares, not only that the produce of the earth is the special gift of God, but that men do not live by bread alone; (v) because they are supported not by the abundance of their food, but by the secret benediction of God; as, on the contrary, he threatens that he will break "the stay of bread." (w) Nor, indeed, could we otherwise seriously offer a prayer for daily bread, if God did not supply us with food from his fatherly hand. The Prophet, therefore, to convince the faithful that in feeding them God acts the part of an excellent father of a family, informs us, that he "giveth food to all flesh." (x) Lastly, when we hear, on the one hand, that "the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry," and, on the other, that "the face of the Lord is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth," (y) we may be assured that all creatures, above and below, are ready for his service, that he may apply them to any use that he pleases. Hence we conclude, not only that there is a general providence of God over the creatures, to continue the order of nature, but that, by his wonderful counsel, they are all directed to some specific and proper end.

VIII. Those who wish to bring an odium on this doctrine, calumniate it as the same with the opinion of the Stoics concerning fate, with which Augustine also was formerly reproached. Though we are averse to all contentions about words, yet we admit not the term *fate*; both because it is of that novel and profane kind which Paul teaches us to avoid, and because they endeavour to load the truth of God with the odium attached to it. But that dogma is falsely and maliciously charged upon us. For we do not, with the Stoics, imagine a necessity arising from a perpetual concatenation and intricate series of causes, contained in nature; but we make God the Arbiter and Governor of all things, who, in his own wisdom, has, from the remotest eternity, decreed what he would do, and now, by his own power, executes what he has decreed. Whence we assert, that not only the heaven and the earth, and inanimate creatures, but also the deliberations and volitions of men, are so governed by his providence, as to be directed to the end appointed by it. What then? you will say; does

(s) Psalm cxxvii. 3.

(r) Deut. viii. 3.

(x) Psalm cxxxvi. 25.

(t) Gen. xxx. 2.

(w) Isaiah iii. 1.

(y) Psalm xxxiv. 15, 16.

nothing happen fortuitously or contingently? I answer, that it was truly observed by Basil the Great, that *fortune* and *chance* are words of the heathen, with the signification of which the minds of the pious ought not to be occupied. For if all success be the benediction of God, and calamity and adversity his malediction, there is no room left in human affairs for fortune or chance. And we should attend to this declaration of Augustine: "I am not pleased with myself," says he, "for having, in my treatises against the Academics, so frequently mentioned *fortune*, although I have not intended by that word any goddess, but a fortuitous occurrence of external things, either good or evil. Hence also such words, the use of which no religion prohibits, as *perhaps*, *perchance*, *peradventure*, which, nevertheless, must be entirely referred to the Divine providence. And on this I have not been silent, remarking that perhaps what is commonly termed *fortune* is regulated by a secret order, and that what we call *chance* is only that, with the reason and cause of which we are not acquainted. Thus, indeed, I have expressed myself; but I repent of having mentioned *fortune* in this manner, since I see that men are habituated to a very sinful custom: when they ought to say, 'This was the will of God,' they say, 'This was the will of Fortune.'" Finally, he every where maintains, that if any thing be left to fortune, the world revolves at random. And though he elsewhere decides, that all things are conducted partly by the free will of man, partly by the providence of God, yet he just after shows that men are subject to it and governed by it, assuming as a principle that nothing could be more absurd, than for any thing to happen independently of the ordination of God; because it would happen at random. By this reasoning he excludes also any contingency dependent on the human will; and immediately after more expressly asserts that we ought not to inquire for any cause of the will of God. But in what sense *permission* ought to be understood, whenever it is mentioned by him, will appear from one passage; where he proves that the will of God is the supreme and first cause of all things, because nothing happens but by his command or permission. He certainly does not suppose God to remain an idle spectator, determining to permit any thing; there is an intervention of actual volition, if I may be allowed the expression, which otherwise could never be considered as a cause.

IX. Yet, since the dulness of our minds is very much below the sublimity of the Divine providence, let us endeavour to assist them by a distinction. I say, then, that, notwithstanding the ordination of all things by the certain purpose and direction of God, yet to us they are fortuitous: not that we suppose

fortune holds any dominion over the world and mankind, and whirls about all things at random, for such folly ought to be far from the breast of a Christian; but because the order, reason, end, and necessity of events are chiefly concealed in the purpose of God, and not comprehended by the mind of man, those things are in some measure fortuitous, which must certainly happen according to the Divine will. For they present no other appearance, whether they are considered in their own nature, or are estimated according to our knowledge and judgment. Let us suppose, for example, that a merchant, having entered a wood in the company of honest men, imprudently wanders from his companions, and, pursuing a wrong course, falls into the hands of robbers, and is murdered. His death was not only foreseen by God, but also decreed by him. For it is said, not that he has foreseen to what limits the life of every man would extend, but that he "hath appointed bounds which he cannot pass." (z) Yet, as far as our minds are capable of comprehending, all these circumstances appear fortuitous. What opinion shall a Christian form on this case? He will consider all the circumstances of such a death as in their nature fortuitous; yet he will not doubt that the providence of God presided, and directed fortune to that end. The same reasoning will apply to future contingencies. All future things being uncertain to us, we hold them in suspense, as though they might happen either one way or another. Yet this remains a fixed principle in our hearts, that there will be no event which God has not ordained. In this sense the word *chance* is frequently repeated in the book of Ecclesiastes; because, on the first view, men penetrate not to the first cause, which lies deeply concealed. And yet the doctrine of the Scripture respecting the secret providence of God, has never been so far obliterated from the hearts of men, but that some sparks of it always shone in the darkness. Thus the Philistine sorcerers, though they fluctuated in uncertainty, ascribed adverse accidents partly to God, partly to fortune. "If the ark," say they, "goeth up by that way, we shall know that God hath done us this great evil; but if not, it was a chance that happened to us." (a) They betrayed great folly, indeed, after having been deceived by divination, to have recourse to fortune; yet at the same time, we see them restrained, so that they cannot dare to suppose the affliction which had befallen them was fortuitous. But how God, by the reins of his providence, directs all events according to his own pleasure, will appear by an eminent example. At the very same instant of time when David had been overtaken in the wilderness of Maon, behold, the Philis-

(z) Job xiv. 5.

(a) 1 Sam. vi. 9.

tines made an irruption into the land, and Saul was compelled to depart. If God, consulting the safety of his servant, laid this impediment in the way of Saul, then, surely, though the Philistines might have taken up arms suddenly, and contrary to human expectation, yet we will not say that this happened by chance; but what to us seems a contingency, faith will acknowledge to have been a secret impulse of God. It is not always, indeed, that there appears a similar reason; but it should be considered as indubitably certain, that all the revolutions visible in the world proceed from the secret exertion of the Divine power. What God decrees, must necessarily come to pass; yet it is not by absolute or natural necessity. We find a familiar example in respect to the bones of Christ. Since he possessed a body like ours, no reasonable man will deny that his bones were capable of being broken; yet that they should be broken was impossible. Hence, again, we perceive that the distinctions of relative and absolute necessity, as well as necessity of consequent and of consequence, were not without reason invented in the schools; since God made the bones of his Son capable of being broken, which, however, he had exempted from being actually broken, and thus prevented, by the necessity of his purpose, what might naturally have come to pass.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE PROPER APPLICATION OF THIS DOCTRINE TO RENDER IT USEFUL TO US.

As the minds of men are prone to vain subtleties, there is the greatest danger that those who know not the right use of this doctrine will embarrass themselves with intricate perplexities. It will therefore be necessary to touch in a brief manner on the end and design of the Scripture doctrine of the Divine ordination of all things. And here let it be remarked, in the first place, that the providence of God is to be considered as well in regard to futurity, as in reference to that which is past; secondly, that it governs all things in such a manner as to operate sometimes by the intervention of means, sometimes without means, and sometimes in opposition to all means; lastly, that it tends to show the care of God for the whole human race, and especially his vigilance in the government of the Church, which he favours with more particular attention. It must also be observed, that, although the paternal favour and beneficence of God, or the severity of his justice, is frequently

conspicuous in the whole course of his providence, yet sometimes the causes of events are concealed, so that a suspicion intrudes itself, that the revolutions of human affairs are conducted by the blind impetuosity of fortune; or the flesh solicits us to murmur, as though God amused himself with tossing men about like tennis-balls. It is true, indeed, if we were ready to learn with quiet and sober minds, that the final issue sufficiently proves the counsels of God to be directed by the best of reasons; that he designs either to teach his people the exercise of patience, or to correct their corrupt affections and subdue the licentiousness of their appetites, or to constrain them to the practice of self-denial, or to arouse them from their indolence; and, on the other hand, to abase the proud, to disappoint the cunning of the wicked, and to confound their machinations. Yet, however the causes may be concealed from us, or escape our observation, we must admit it as a certain truth, that they are hidden with him; and must therefore exclaim with David, "Many, O Lord my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered." (b) For, though our miseries ought always to remind us of our sins, that the punishment itself may urge us to repentance, yet we see that Christ ascribes more sovereignty to the secret purpose of the Father in afflicting men, than to require him to punish every individual according to his demerits. For concerning him who was born blind, he says, "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents; but that the works of God should be made manifest in him." (c) For here sense murmurs, when calamity precedes the very birth, as though it were a detraction from the Divine clemency thus to afflict the innocent. But Christ declares that the glory of his Father is manifested in this instance, provided our eyes are clear to behold it. But we must proceed with modesty, cautious that we call not God to an account at our tribunal; but that we entertain such reverence for his secret judgments, as to esteem his will the most righteous cause of every thing that he does. When thick clouds obscure the heavens, and a violent tempest arises, because a gloomy mist is before our eyes, and thunder strikes our ears, and terror stupefies all our faculties, all things seem to us to be blended in confusion; yet during the whole time the heavens remain in the same quiet serenity. So it must be concluded, that while the turbulent state of the world deprives us of our judgment, God, by the pure light of his own righteousness and wisdom, regulates all those commotions in the most exact order, and directs them to their proper end. And

(b) Psalm xl. 5. (c) John ix. 3.

certainly the madness of many in this respect is monstrous, who dare to arraign the works of God, to scrutinize his secret counsels, and even to pass a precipitate sentence on things unknown, with greater freedom than on the actions of mortal men. For what is more preposterous than towards our equals to observe such modesty, as rather to suspend our judgment than to incur the imputation of temerity, but impudently to insult the mysterious judgments of God, which we ought to hold in admiration and reverence?

II. None, therefore, will attain just and profitable views of the providence of God, but he who considers that he has to do with his Maker and the Creator of the world, and submits himself to fear and reverence with all becoming humility. Hence it happens that so many worthless characters in the present day virulently oppose this doctrine, because they will admit nothing to be lawful for God, but what agrees with the dictates of their own reason. They revile us with the utmost possible impudence, because, not content with the precepts of the law, which comprehend the will of God, we say that the world is governed also by his secret counsels; as though, indeed, what we assert were only an invention of our own brain, and the Holy Spirit did not every where plainly announce the same, and repeat it in innumerable forms of expression. But as they are restrained by some degree of shame from daring to discharge their blasphemies against heaven, in order to indulge their extravagance with greater freedom, they pretend that they are contending with us. But unless they admit, that whatever comes to pass in the world is governed by the incomprehensible counsel of God, let them answer, to what purpose is it said in the Scripture that his "judgments are a great deep"? (d) For since Moses proclaims, that the will of God is not to be sought far off, in the clouds or in the deep, (e) because it is familiarly explained in the law, it follows that there is another secret will, which is compared to a profound abyss; concerning which Paul also says, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God; how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counsellor?" (f) It is true, that the law and the Gospel contain mysteries which far transcend our capacities; but since God illuminates the minds of his people with the spirit of understanding, to apprehend these mysteries which he has condescended to reveal in his word, there we have now no abyss, but a way in which we may safely walk, and a lamp for the direction of our feet, the light of life, and the school of certain and evident truth. But his admirable method of governing

(d) Psalm xxxvi. 6.

(e) Deut. xxx. 12—14. Rom. x. 6, 7.

(f) Rom. xi. 33, 34.

the world is justly called a "great deep," because, while it is concealed from our view, it ought to be the object of our profound adoration. Moses has beautifully expressed both in a few words. "The secret things," says he, "belong unto the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children." (*g*) We see how he enjoins us, not only to devote our attention to meditations on the law of God, but to look up with reverence to his mysterious providence. This sublime doctrine is declared in the book of Job, for the purpose of humbling our minds. For the author concludes a general view of the machine of the world, and a magnificent dissertation on the works of God, in these words: "Lo, these are parts of his ways; but how little a portion is heard of him!" (*h*) For which reason, in another place he distinguishes between the wisdom which resides in God, and the method of attaining wisdom which he has prescribed to men. For, after discoursing concerning the secrets of nature, he says, that wisdom is known only to God, and "is hid from the eyes of all living." But a little after he subjoins, that it is published in order to be investigated, because it is said to men, "Behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom." (*i*) To the same purpose is this observation of Augustine: "Because we know not all that God does concerning us by an excellent order, we act according to the law in a good will only, but in other respects are actuated according to it; because his providence is an immutable law." Therefore, since God claims a power unknown to us of governing the world, let this be to us the law of sobriety and modesty, to acquiesce in his supreme dominion, to account his will the only rule of righteousness, and most righteous cause of all things. Not, indeed, that absolute will which is the subject of the declamation of sophists, impiously and profanely separating his justice from his power, but that providence which governs all things, from which originates nothing but what is right, although the reasons of it may be concealed from us.

III. Those who have learned this modesty, will neither murmur against God on account of past adversities, nor charge him with the guilt of their crimes, like Agamemnon, in Homer, who says, "The blame belongs not to me, but to Jupiter and Fate." Nor will they, as if hurried away by the Fates, under the influence of despair, put an end to their own lives, like the young man whom Plautus introduces as saying, "The condition of our affairs is inconstant; men are governed by the caprice of the Fates; I will betake myself to a precipice, and there destroy my life and every thing at once." Nor will they

(*g*) Deut. xxix. 29.(*h*) Job xxvi. 14.(*i*) Job xxviii. 21, 28.

excuse their flagitious actions by ascribing them to God, after the example of another young man introduced by the same poet, who says, "God was the cause: I believe it was the Divine will. For had it not been so, I know it would not have happened." But they will rather search the Scripture, to learn what is pleasing to God, that by the guidance of the Spirit they may strive to attain it; and at the same time, being prepared to follow God whithersoever he calls them, they will exhibit proofs in their conduct that nothing is more useful than a knowledge of this doctrine. Some profane men foolishly raise such a tumult with their absurdities, as almost, according to a common expression, to confound heaven and earth together. They argue in this manner: If God has fixed the moment of our death, we cannot avoid it; therefore all caution against it will be but lost labour. One man dares not venture himself in a way which he hears is dangerous, lest he should be assassinated by robbers; another sends for physicians, and wears himself with medicines, to preserve his life; another abstains from the grosser kinds of food, lest he should injure his valetudinary constitution; another dreads to inhabit a ruinous house; and men in general exert all their faculties in devising and executing methods by which they may attain the object of their desires. Now, either all these things are vain remedies employed to correct the will of God, or life and death, health and disease, peace and war, and other things which, according to their desires or aversions, men industriously study to obtain or to avoid, are not determined by his certain decree. Moreover they conclude, that the prayers of the faithful are not only superfluous, but perverse, which contain petitions that the Lord will provide for those things which he has already decreed from eternity. In short, they supersede all deliberations respecting futurity, as opposed to the providence of God, who, without consulting men, has decreed whatever he pleased. And what has already happened they impute to the Divine providence in such a manner as to overlook the person, who is known to have committed any particular act. Has an assassin murdered a worthy citizen? they say he has executed the counsel of God. Has any one been guilty of theft or fornication? because he has done what was foreseen and ordained by the Lord, he is the minister of his providence. Has a son, neglecting all remedies, carelessly waited the death of his father? it was impossible for him to resist God, who had decreed this event from eternity. Thus by these persons all crimes are denominated virtues, because they are subservient to the ordination of God.

IV. But in reference to future things, Solomon easily reconciles the deliberations of men with the providence of God.

For as he ridicules the folly of those who presumptuously undertake any thing without the Lord, as though they were not subject to his government, so in another place he says, "A man's heart deviseth his way; but the Lord directeth his steps; (*k*) signifying that the eternal decrees of God form no impediment to our providing for ourselves, and disposing all our concerns in subservience to his will. The reason of this is manifest. For he who has fixed the limits of our life, has also entrusted us with the care of it; has furnished us with means and supplies for its preservation; has also made us provident of dangers; and, that they may not oppress us unawares, has furnished us with cautions and remedies. Now, it is evident what is our duty. If God has committed to us the preservation of our life, we should preserve it; if he offers supplies, we should use them; if he forewarns us of dangers, we should not rashly run into them; if he furnishes remedies, we ought not to neglect them. But it will be objected, no danger can hurt, unless it has been ordained that it shall hurt us, and then no remedies can avert it. But what if dangers are therefore not fatal, because God has assigned you remedies to repulse and overcome them? Examine whether your reasoning agrees with the order of the Divine providence. You conclude that it is unnecessary to guard against danger, because, if it be not fatal, we shall escape it without caution; but, on the contrary, the Lord enjoins you to use caution, because he intends it not to be fatal to you. These madmen overlook what is obvious to every observer — that the arts of deliberation and caution in men proceed from the inspiration of God, and that they subserve the designs of his providence in the preservation of their own lives; as, on the contrary, by neglect and slothfulness, they procure to themselves the evils which he has appointed for them. For how does it happen, that a prudent man, consulting his own welfare, averts from himself impending evils, and a fool is ruined by his inconsiderate temerity, unless folly and prudence are in both cases instruments of the Divine dispensation? Therefore it has pleased God to conceal from us all future events, that we may meet them as doubtful contingencies, and not cease to oppose to them the remedies with which we are provided, till they shall have been surmounted, or shall have overcome all our diligence. Therefore I have before suggested, that the providence of God ought not always to be contemplated abstractedly by itself, but in connection with the means which he employs.

V. The same persons inconsiderately and erroneously ascribe all past events to the absolute providence of God. For since all things which come to pass are dependent upon it, therefore,

(*k*) Prov. xvi. 9.

say they, neither thefts, nor adulteries, nor homicides, are perpetrated without the intervention of the Divine will. Why, therefore, they ask, shall a thief be punished for having pilaged him whom it has pleased the Lord to chastise with poverty? Why shall a homicide be punished for having slain him whose life the Lord had terminated? If all such characters are subservient to the Divine will, why shall they be punished? But I deny that they serve the will of God. For we cannot say, that he who is influenced by a wicked heart, acts in obedience to the commands of God, while he is only gratifying his own malignant passions. That man obeys God, who, being instructed in his will, hastens whither God calls him. Where can we learn his will, but in his word? Therefore in our actions we ought to regard the will of God, which is declared in his word. God only requires of us conformity to his precepts. If we do any thing contrary to them, it is not obedience, but contumacy and transgression. But it is said, if he would not permit it, we should not do it. This I grant. But do we perform evil actions with the design of pleasing him? He gives us no such command. We precipitate ourselves into them, not considering what is his will, but inflamed with the violence of our passions, so that we deliberately strive to oppose him. In this manner even by criminal actions we subserve his righteous ordination; because, in the infinite greatness of his wisdom, he well knows how to use evil instruments for the accomplishment of good purposes. Now, observe the absurdity of their reasoning: they wish the authors of crimes to escape with impunity, because crimes are not perpetrated but by the ordination of God. I admit more than this; even that thieves, and homicides, and other malefactors, are instruments of Divine providence, whom the Lord uses for the execution of the judgments which he has appointed. But I deny that this ought to afford any excuse for their crimes. For will they either implicate God in the same iniquity with themselves, or cover their depravity with his righteousness? They can do neither. They are prevented from exculpating themselves, by the reproofs of their own consciences; and they can lay no blame upon God, for they find in themselves nothing but evil, and in him only a legitimate use of their wickedness. But it is alleged that he operates by their means. And whence, I ask, proceeds the fetid smell of a carcass, which has been putrefied and disclosed by the heat of the sun? It is visible to all that it is excited by the solar rays; yet no person on this account attributes to those rays an offensive smell. So, when the matter and guilt of evil resides in a bad man, why should God be supposed to contract any defilement, if he uses his service according to his own pleasure? Let us dismiss this

petulance, therefore, which may rail against the justice of God from a distance, but can never reach that Divine attribute.

VI. But these cavils, or rather extravagancies of frenzy, will easily be dispelled by the pious and holy contemplation of providence, which the rule of piety dictates to us, so that we may derive from it the greatest pleasure and advantage. The mind of a Christian, therefore, when it is certainly persuaded that all things happen by the ordination of God, and that there is nothing fortuitously contingent, will always direct its views to him as the supreme cause of all things, and will also consider inferior causes in their proper order. He will not doubt that the particular providence of God is watchful for his preservation, never permitting any event which it will not overrule for his advantage and safety. But, since he is concerned in the first place with men, and in the next place with the other creatures, he will assure himself, as to both, that the providence of God reigns over all. With respect to men, whether good or evil, he will acknowledge that their deliberations, wills, endeavours, and powers, are under his control, so that it is at his option to direct them whithersoever he pleases, and to restrain them as often as he pleases. The vigilance of the particular providence of God for the safety of the faithful is attested by numerous and very remarkable promises: "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved. (*l*) He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. (*m*) He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of his eye. We have a strong city: salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks. (*n*) Though a woman forget her sucking child, yet will I not forget thee." (*o*) Moreover, this is the principal scope of the Biblical histories, to teach us that the Lord so sedulously defends the ways of the saints, that they may not even "dash their foot against a stone." (*p*) Therefore, as we have a little before justly exploded the opinion of those who hold a universal providence of God, which descends not to the care of every creature in particular, so it is principally necessary and useful to contemplate this special care towards ourselves. For this reason, Christ, after having asserted that not the meanest sparrow falls to the ground without the will of the Father, (*q*) immediately makes the following application — that the more we exceed the value of sparrows, the greater care we should consider God as exercising over us; and he carries this to such an extent, that we may be confident that the hairs of our head are numbered. What more can we

(*l*) Psalm lv. 22. 1 Peter v. 7. (*n*) Zech. ii. 8. (*p*) Psalm xci. 12.
 (*m*) Psalm xci. 1. (*o*) Isaiah xxvi. 1; xlix. 15. (*q*) Matt. x. 29, 30.

desire for ourselves, if not a single hair can fall from our head, but according to his will? I speak not exclusively of the human race; but since God has chosen the Church for his habitation, there is no doubt but he particularly displays his paternal care in the government of it.

VII. The servant of God, encouraged by these promises and examples, will add the testimonies, which inform us that all men are subject to his power, either to conciliate their minds in our favour, or to restrain their malice from being injurious. For it is the Lord who gives us favour, not only with our friends, but also in the eyes of the Egyptians; (*r*) and he knows how to subdue, by various methods, the fury of our enemies. Sometimes he deprives them of understanding, so that they can form no sober or prudent plans; as he sent Satan to fill the mouths of all the prophets with falsehood, in order to deceive Ahab: (*s*) he infatuated Rehoboam by the counsel of the young men, that through his own folly he might be spoiled of his kingdom. (*t*) Sometimes, when he grants them understanding, he so terrifies and dispirits them, that they can neither determine nor undertake what they have conceived. Sometimes, also, when he has permitted them to attempt what their rage and passion prompted, he opportunely breaks their impetuosity, not suffering them to proceed to the accomplishment of their designs. Thus he prematurely defeated the counsel of Ahithophel, which would have been fatal to David. (*u*) Thus, also, he takes care to govern all creatures for the benefit and safety of his people, even the devil himself, who, we see, dared not to attempt any thing against Job, without his permission and command. (*v*) The necessary consequences of this knowledge are, gratitude in prosperity, patience in adversity, and a wonderful security respecting the future. Every prosperous and pleasing event, therefore, the pious man will ascribe entirely to God, whether his beneficence be received through the ministry of men, or by the assistance of inanimate creatures. For this will be the reflection of his mind: "It is certainly the Lord that has inclined their hearts to favour me, that has united them to me to be the instruments of his benignity towards me." In an abundance of the fruits of the earth, he will consider, that it is the Lord who regards the heaven, that the heaven may regard the earth, that the earth, also, may regard its own productions: in other things he will not doubt that it is the Divine benediction alone which is the cause of all prosperity; nor will he bear to be ungrateful after so many admonitions.

VIII. If any adversity befall him, in this case, also, he will

(*r*) Exod. iii. 21.

(*s*) 1 Kings xxii. 22.

(*t*) 1 Kings xii. 10—15.

(*u*) 2 Sam. xvii. 7, 14.

(*v*) Job i. 12.

immediately lift up his heart to God, whose hand is most capable of impressing us with patience and placid moderation of mind. If Joseph had dwelt on a review of the perfidy of his brethren, he never could have recovered his fraternal affection for them. But as he turned his mind to the Lord, he forgot their injuries, and was so inclined to mildness and clemency, as even voluntarily to administer consolation to them, saying, "It was not you that sent me hither, but God did send me before you to save your lives. Ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good." (*w*) If Job had regarded the Chaldeans, by whom he was molested, he had been inflamed to revenge; but recognizing the event at the same time as the work of the Lord, he consoled himself with this very beautiful observation: "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." (*x*) Thus David, when assailed by Shimei with reproachful language and with stones, if he had confined his views to man, would have animated his soldiers to retaliate the injury; but understanding that it was not done without the instigation of the Lord, he rather appeases them: "Let him curse," says he, "because the Lord hath said unto him, Curse David." (*y*) In another place he imposes the same restraint on the intemperance of his grief: "I was dumb," says he, "I opened not my mouth; because thou didst it." (*z*) If there be no more efficacious remedy for anger and impatience, surely that man has made no small proficiency, who has learned in this case to meditate on the Divine providence, that he may be able at all times to recall his mind to this consideration: "It is the will of the Lord, therefore it must be endured; not only because resistance is unlawful and vain, but because he wills nothing but what is both just and expedient.,," The conclusion of the whole is this — that, when we suffer injuries from men, forgetting their malice, which would only exasperate our grief and instigate our minds to revenge, we should remember to ascend to God, and learn to account it a certain truth, that whatever our enemies have criminally committed against us, has been permitted and directed by his righteous dispensation. To restrain us from retaliating injuries, Paul prudently admonishes us that our contention is not with flesh and blood, but with a spiritual enemy, the devil, (*a*) in order that we may prepare ourselves for the contest. But this admonition is the most useful in appeasing all the sallies of resentment, that God arms for the conflict both the devil and all wicked men, and sits himself as the arbiter of the combat, to exercise our patience.

(*w*) Gen. xlv. 7, 8; 1. 20. (*x*) Job i. 21. (*y*) 2 Sam. xvi. 10.
 (*z*) Psalm xxxix. 9. (*a*) Eph. vi. 12.

But if the calamities and miseries which oppress us happen without the interposition of men, let us recollect the doctrine of the law, that every prosperous event proceeds from the benediction of God, but that all adverse ones are his maledictions; (b) and let us tremble at that awful denunciation, "If ye will walk contrary unto me, then will I also walk contrary unto you;" (c) language which reproves our stupidity, while, according to the common apprehensions of the flesh, esteeming every event, both prosperous and adverse, to be fortuitous, we are neither animated to the worship of God by his benefits, nor stimulated to repentance by his corrections. This is the reason of the sharp expostulations of Jeremiah and of Amos, (d) because the Jews supposed that both good and evil events came to pass without any appointment of God. To the same purpose is this passage of Isaiah: "I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things." (e)

IX. Yet at the same time a pious man will not overlook inferior causes. Nor, because he accounts those from whom he has received any benefit, the ministers of the Divine goodness, will he therefore pass them by unnoticed, as though they deserved no thanks for their kindness; but will feel, and readily acknowledge, his obligation to them, and study to return it as ability and opportunity may permit. Finally, he will reverence and praise God as the principal Author of benefits received, but will honour men as his ministers; and will understand, what, indeed, is the fact, that the will of God has laid him under obligations to those persons by whose means the Lord has been pleased to communicate his benefits. If he suffer any loss either through negligence or through imprudence, he will conclude that it happened according to the Divine will, but will also impute the blame of it to himself. If any one be removed by disease, whom, while it was his duty to take care of him, he has treated with neglect, — though he cannot be ignorant that that person had reached those limits which it was impossible for him to pass, yet he will not make this a plea to extenuate his guilt; but, because he has not faithfully performed his duty towards him, will consider him as having perished through his criminal negligence. Much less, when fraud and preconceived malice appear in the perpetration either of murder or of theft, will he excuse those enormities under the pretext of the Divine providence: in the same crime he will distinctly contemplate the righteousness of God and the iniquity of man, as they respectively discover themselves.

(b) Deut. xxviii. 1, &c.

(c) Lev. xxvi. 23. 24.

(d) Lam. iii. 37, 38. Amos iii. 6.

(e) Isaiah xlv. 7.

But it is principally in regard to things future that he will direct his attention to inferior causes of this kind. For he will rank it among the blessings of the Lord, not to be destitute of human aids which he may use for his own safety; he will neither be remiss, therefore, in taking the advice, nor negligent in imploring the help, of those whom he perceives to be capable of affording him assistance; but, considering all the creatures, that can in any respect be serviceable to him, as so many gifts from the Lord, he will use them as the legitimate instruments of the Divine providence. And as he is uncertain respecting the issue of his undertakings, except that he knows that the Lord will in all things provide for his good, he studiously aims at what, according to the best judgment he can form, will be for his advantage. Nor, in conducting his deliberations, will he be carried away by his own opinion, but will recommend and resign himself to the wisdom of God, that he may be directed by its guidance to the right end. But he will not place his confidence in external helps to such a degree as, if possessed of them, securely to rely on them, or, if destitute of them, to tremble with despair. For his mind will always be fixed solely on the Divine providence, nor will he suffer himself to be seduced from a steady contemplation of it, by any consideration of present things. Thus Joab, though he acknowledges the event of battle to depend on the will and the power of God, yet surrenders not himself to inactivity, but sedulously executes all the duties of his office, and leaves the event to the Divine decision. "Let us play the men," says he, "for our people, and for the cities of our God; and the Lord do that which seemeth him good." (f) This knowledge will divest us of temerity and false confidence, and excite us to continual invocations of God; it will also support our minds with a good hope, that without hesitation we may securely and magnanimously despise all the dangers which surround us.

X. Herein is discovered the inestimable felicity of the pious mind. Human life is beset by innumerable evils, and threatened with a thousand deaths. Not to go beyond ourselves, — since our body is the receptacle of a thousand diseases, and even contains and fosters the causes of diseases, a man must unavoidably carry about with him destruction in unnumbered forms, and protract a life which is, as it were, involved in death. For what else can you say of it, when neither cold nor heat in any considerable degree can be endured without danger? Now, whithersoever you turn, all the objects around you are not only unworthy of your confidence, but almost openly menace you, and seem to threaten immediate death. Embark in a ship; there is but a single step between you and death.

(f) 2 Sam. x. 12.

Mount a horse ; the slipping of one foot endangers your life. Walk through the streets of a city ; you are liable to as many dangers as there are tiles on the roofs. If there be a sharp weapon in your hand, or that of your friend, the mischief is manifest. All the ferocious animals you see are armed for your destruction. If you endeavour to shut yourself in a garden surrounded with a good fence, and exhibiting nothing but what is delightful, even there sometimes lurks a serpent. Your house, perpetually liable to fire, menaces you by day with poverty, and by night with falling on your head. Your land, exposed to hail, frost, drought, and various tempests, threatens you with sterility, and with its attendant, famine. I omit poison, treachery, robbery, and open violence, which partly beset us at home, and partly pursue us abroad. Amidst these difficulties, must not man be most miserable, who is half dead while he lives, and is dispirited and alarmed as though he had a sword perpetually applied to his neck ? You will say that these things happen seldom, or certainly not always, nor to every man, but never all at once. I grant it ; but as we are admonished by the examples of others, that it is possible for them to happen also to us, and that we have no more claim to exemption from them than others, we must unavoidably dread them as events that we may expect. What can you imagine more calamitous than such a dread ? Besides, it is an insult to God to say that he has exposed man, the noblest of his creatures, to the blindness and temerity of fortune. But here I intend to speak only of the misery which man must feel, if he be subject to the dominion of fortune.

XI. On the contrary, when this light of Divine providence has once shined on a pious man, he is relieved and delivered not only from the extreme anxiety and dread with which he was previously oppressed, but also from all care. For, as he justly dreads fortune, so he ventures securely to commit himself to God. This, I say, is his consolation, to apprehend that his heavenly Father restrains all things by his power, governs all things by his will, and regulates all things by his wisdom, in such a manner, that nothing can happen but by his appointment ; moreover, that God has taken him under his protection, and committed him to the care of angels, so that he can sustain no injury from water, or fire, or sword, any further than the Divine Governor may be pleased to permit. For thus sings the Psalmist : " Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust : his truth shall be thy shield and buckler. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night ; nor for the arrow that flieth by day ; nor for the pestilence that walketh

in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noon-day." (*g*) Hence also proceeds that confidence of glorying in the saints: "The Lord is on my side; I will not fear what man can do unto me. The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? Though a host should encamp against me—though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil." (*h*) How is it that their security remains unshaken, while the world appears to be revolving at random, but because they know that the Lord is universally operative, and confide in his operations as beneficial to them? Now, when their safety is attacked, either by the devil or by wicked men, if they were not supported by the recollection and contemplation of providence, they must necessarily and immediately faint. But when they recollect, that the devil and the whole army of the wicked are in every respect so restrained by the Divine power, that they can neither conceive of any hostility against us, nor, after having conceived it, form a plan for its accomplishment, nor even move a finger towards the execution of such plan, any further than he has permitted, and even commanded them; and that they are not only bound by his chains, but also compelled to do him service,—they have an abundant source of consolation. For as it belongs to the Lord to arm their fury, and to direct it to whatever objects he pleases, so it also belongs to him to fix its limits, that they may not enjoy an unbounded triumph according to their own wills. Established in this persuasion, Paul determined his journey in one place by the permission of God, which in another he had declared was prevented by Satan. (*i*) If he had only said that Satan was the obstacle, he would have appeared to attribute too much power to him, as though he were able to subvert the purposes of God; but when he states God to be the arbiter, on whose permission all journeys depend, he at the same time shows, that Satan, with all his machinations, can effect nothing but by his permission. For the same reason, David, on account of the various and constant vicissitudes of life, betakes himself to this asylum: "My times are in thy hand." (*j*) He might have mentioned either the course of life, or *time*, in the singular number; but by the word *times* he intended to express, that, however unstable the condition of men may be, all the vicissitudes which take place are under the government of God. For which reason Rezin and the king of Israel, when, after the junction of their forces for the destruction of Judah, they resembled firebrands kindled to consume and ruin the land, are called by the Prophet

(*g*) Psalm xci. 3—6.

(*h*) Psalm cxviii. 6; xxvii. 1, 3; xxiii. 4.

(*i*) 1 Cor. xvi. 7. 1 Thes. ii. 18.

(*j*) Psalm xxxi. 15.

“smoking firebrands,” (*k*) which can do nothing but emit a little smoke. Thus Pharaoh, when his riches, his strength, and the multitude of his forces, rendered him formidable to all, is himself compared to a sea-monster, and his forces to fishes. (*l*) Therefore God denounces that he will take both the captain and his army with his hook, and draw them whither he pleases. Finally, to dwell no longer on this part of the subject, you will easily perceive, on examination, that ignorance of providence is the greatest of miseries, but that the knowledge of it is attended with the highest felicity.

XII. On the doctrine of Divine providence, as far as it may conduce to the solid instruction and consolation of the faithful, (for to satisfy a vain curiosity is neither possible nor desirable,) enough would now have been said, were it not for a difficulty arising from a few passages, which apparently imply, in opposition to what has been stated, that the counsel of God is not firm and stable, but liable to change according to the situation of sublunary affairs. In the first place, there are several instances in which repentance is attributed to God; as, that he repented of having created man, (*m*) and of having exalted Saul to the kingdom; (*n*) and that he will repent of the evil which he had determined to inflict on his people, as soon as he shall have perceived their conversion. (*o*) In the next place, we read of the abrogation of some of his decrees. By Jonah he declared to the Ninevites, (*p*) that, after the lapse of forty days, Nineveh should be destroyed; but their penitence afterwards obtained from him a more merciful sentence. By the mouth of Isaiah he denounced death to Hezekiah; (*q*) which the prayers and tears of that monarch moved him to defer. (*r*) Hence many persons argue, that God has not fixed the affairs of men by an eternal decree; but that every year, day, and hour, he decrees one thing or another, according to the respective merits of each individual, or to his own ideas of equity and justice. With regard to repentance, we must not admit that it can happen to God, any more than ignorance, or error, or impotence. For if no man knowingly and willingly lays himself under the necessity of repentance, we cannot attribute repentance to God, without saying either that he is ignorant of the future, or that he cannot avoid it, or that he precipitately and inconsiderately adopts a resolution, of which he immediately repents. But that is so far from the meaning of the Holy Spirit, that in the very mention of repentance, he denies that it can belong to God, because “he is not a man, that he should repent.” (*s*) And it must be remarked, that

(*k*) Isaiah vii. 4.(*n*) 1 Sam. xv. 11.(*q*) Isaiah xxxviii. 1, 5.(*l*) Ezek. xxix. 3, 4.(*o*) Jer. xviii. 8.(*r*) 2 Kings xx. 1, 5.(*m*) Gen. vi. 6.(*p*) Jonah iii. 4, 10.(*s*) 1 Sam. xv. 29.

both these points are so connected in the same chapter, that a comparison fully reconciles the apparent inconsistency. Where it is said that God repented of having created Saul king, the change declared to have taken place is figurative. It is almost immediately added, that "The strength of Israel will not lie nor repent; for he is not a man, that he should repent;" (*t*) in which, without any figure, his immutability is plainly asserted. It is certain, therefore, that the ordination of God in the administration of human affairs, is perpetual, and superior to all repentance. And to place his constancy beyond all doubt, even his adversaries have been constrained to attest it. For Balaam, notwithstanding his reluctance, was obliged to break out into the following exclamation: "God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" (*u*)

XIII. How, then, it will be inquired, is the term *repentance* to be understood, when attributed to God? I reply, in the same manner as all the other forms of expression, which describe God to us after the manner of men. For, since our infirmity cannot reach his sublimity, the description of him which is given to us, in order that we may understand it, must be lowered to the level of our capacity. His method of lowering it, is to represent himself to us, not as he is in himself, but according to our perception of him. Though he is free from all perturbation of mind, he declares that he is angry with sinners. (*v*) As, therefore, when we hear that God is angry, we ought not to imagine any commotion in him, but rather to consider this expression as borrowed from our perception, because God carries the appearance of one who is very angry, whenever he executes judgment, — so neither by the term *repentance* ought we to understand any thing but a change of actions; because men are accustomed to express their dissatisfaction with themselves by changing their actions. Since every change among men, therefore, is a correction of that which displeases them, and correction proceeds from repentance, therefore the term *repentance* is used to signify that God makes a change in his works. Yet, at the same time, there is no alteration in his counsel or his will, nor any change in his affections; but how sudden soever the variation may appear to the eyes of men, he perpetually and regularly prosecutes what he has foreseen, approved, and decreed from eternity.

XIV. Nor does the Sacred History, when it records the remission of the destruction which had just been denounced against the Ninevites, and the prolongation of the life of Hezekiah

(*t*) 1 Sam. xv. 29.(*u*) Numb. xxiii. 19.(*v*) Psalm vii. 11.

after he had been threatened with death, prove that there was any abrogation of the Divine decrees. Persons who thus understand it, are deceived in their ideas of the threatenings; which, though expressed in the form of simple declarations, yet, as the event shows, contain in them a tacit condition. For why did God send Jonah to the Ninevites, to predict the ruin of their city? Why did he, by the mouth of Isaiah, warn Hezekiah of death? He could have destroyed both them and him, without previously announcing their end. He had some other object in view, therefore, than to forewarn them of their death, and to give them a distant prospect of its approach. And that was not to destroy them, but to reform them, that they might not be destroyed. Therefore the prediction of Jonah, that after forty days Nineveh should fall, was uttered to prevent its fall. Hezekiah was deprived of the hope of a longer life, in order that he might obtain a prolongation of it in answer to his prayers. Now, who does not see, that the Lord, by such denunciations as these, intended to arouse to repentance the persons whom he thus alarmed, that they might escape the judgment which their sins had deserved? If this be admitted, the nature of the circumstances leads to the conclusion, that we must understand a tacit condition implied in the simple denunciation. This is also confirmed by similar examples. The Lord, reprehending king Abimelech for having deprived Abraham of his wife, uses these words: — “Behold, thou art but a dead man, for the woman which thou hast taken; for she is a man’s wife.” But after Abimelech has excused himself, the Lord speaks in this manner: “Restore the man his wife; for he is a prophet, and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live; and if thou restore her not, know thou that thou shalt surely die, thou, and all that are thine.” (w) You see how, by the first declaration, God terrifies his mind, to dispose him to make satisfaction; but in the next, he makes an explicit declaration of his will. Since other passages are to be explained in a similar manner, you must not infer that there is any abrogation of a prior purpose of the Lord, because he may have annulled some former declarations. For God rather prepares the way for his eternal ordination, when, by a denunciation of punishment, he calls to repentance those whom he designs to spare, than makes any variation in his will, or even in his declarations, except that he does not syllabically express what, nevertheless, is easily understood. For that assertion of Isaiah must remain true: “The Lord of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? and his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?” (x)

(w) Gen. xx. 3, 7.

(x) Isaiah xiv. 27.

CHAPTER XVIII.

GOD USES THE AGENCY OF THE IMPIOUS, AND INCLINES THEIR MINDS TO EXECUTE HIS JUDGMENTS, YET WITHOUT THE LEAST STAIN OF HIS PERFECT PURITY.

A QUESTION of greater difficulty arises from other passages, where God is said to incline or draw, according to his own pleasure, Satan himself and all the reprobate. For the carnal understanding scarcely comprehends how he, acting by their means, contracts no defilement from their criminality, and, even in operations common to himself and them, is free from every fault, and yet righteously condemns those whose ministry he uses. Hence was invented the distinction between *doing* and *permitting*; because to many persons this has appeared an inexplicable difficulty, that Satan and all the impious are subject to the power and government of God, so that he directs their malice to whatever end he pleases, and uses their crimes for the execution of his judgments. The modesty of those who are alarmed at the appearance of absurdity, might perhaps be excusable, if they did not attempt to vindicate the Divine justice from all accusation by a pretence utterly destitute of any foundation in truth. They consider it absurd that a man should be blinded by the will and command of God, and afterwards be punished for his blindness. They therefore evade the difficulty, by alleging that it happens only by the permission, and not by the will of God; but God himself, by the most unequivocal declarations, rejects this subterfuge. That men, however, can effect nothing but by the secret will of God, and can deliberate on nothing but what he has previously decreed, and determines by his secret direction, is proved by express and innumerable testimonies. What we have before cited from the Psalmist, that "God hath done whatsoever he hath pleased," (y) undoubtedly pertains to all the actions of men. If God be the certain arbiter of war and peace, as is there affirmed, and that without any exception, who will venture to assert, that he remains ignorant and unconcerned respecting men, while they are actuated by the blind influence of chance? But this subject will be better elucidated by particular examples. From the first chapter of Job we know that Satan presents himself before God to receive his commands, as well as the angels, who yield a spontaneous obedience. It is, indeed,

(y) Psalm cxv. 3.

in a different manner, and for a different end; yet he cannot attempt any thing but by the Divine will. Although he seems to obtain only a bare permission to afflict that holy man, yet, since this sentence is true, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away," (*z*) we conclude that God was the author of that trial, of which Satan and mischievous robbers and assassins were the immediate agents. Satan endeavours to drive him by desperation into madness. The Sabeans, in a predatory incursion, cruelly and wickedly seize upon property not their own. Job acknowledges that he was stripped of all his wealth, and reduced to poverty, because such was the will of God. Therefore, whatever is attempted by men, or by Satan himself, God still holds the helm, to direct all their attempts to the execution of his judgments. God intends the deception of that perfidious king Ahab; the devil offers his service for that purpose; he is sent with a positive commission to be a lying spirit in the mouth of all the prophets. (*a*) If the blinding and infatuation of Ahab be a Divine judgment, the pretence of bare permission disappears. For it would be ridiculous for a judge merely to permit, without decreeing what should be done, and commanding his officers to execute it. The Jews designed to destroy Christ; Pilate and his soldiers complied with their outrageous violence; yet the disciples, in a solemn prayer, confess that all the impious did nothing but what "the hand and the counsel of God determined before to be done;" (*b*) agreeably to what Peter had already preached, that he was "delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God," that he might be "crucified and slain." (*c*) As though he had said that God, who saw every thing from the beginning, with a clear knowledge and determined will, appointed what the Jews executed; as he mentions in another place: "Those things which God before had showed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled." (*d*) Absalom, defiling his father's bed with incest, perpetrated a detestable crime; yet God pronounces that this was his work; for his words are, "Thou didst it secretly; but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun." (*e*) Whatever cruelty the Chaldeans exercised in Judea, Jeremiah pronounces to be the work of God; (*f*) for which reason Nebuchadnezzar is called the servant of God. God frequently proclaims, that the impious are excited to war by his hissing, by the sound of his trumpet, by his influence, and by his command: he calls the Assyrian the rod of his anger, and the staff which he moves with his hand. The destruction

(*z*) Job i. 21. (*a*) 1 Kings xxii. 20—23. (*b*) Acts iv. 23. (*c*) Acts ii. 23
 (*d*) Acts iii. 18. (*e*) 2 Sam. xii. 12; xvi. 22. (*f*) Jer. i. 25.

of the holy city and the ruin of the temple he calls his own work. (*g*) David, not murmuring against God, but acknowledging him to be a righteous Judge, confesses the maledictions of Shimei to proceed from his command. "The Lord," says he, "hath said unto him, Curse." (*h*) It often occurs in the Sacred History, that whatever comes to pass proceeds from the Lord; as the defection of the ten tribes, (*i*) the death of the sons of Eli, (*j*) and many events of a similar kind. Those who are but moderately acquainted with the Scriptures will perceive that, for the sake of brevity, out of a great number of testimonies, I have produced only a few; which, nevertheless, abundantly evince how nugatory and insipid it is, instead of the providence of God, to substitute a bare permission; as though God were sitting in a watchtower, expecting fortuitous events, and so his decisions were dependent on the will of men.

II. With respect to his secret influences, the declaration of Solomon concerning the heart of a king, that it is inclined hither or thither according to the Divine will, (*k*) certainly extends to the whole human race, and is as much as though he had said, that whatever conceptions we form in our minds, they are directed by the secret inspiration of God. And certainly, if he did not operate internally on the human mind, there would be no propriety in asserting, that he causes "the wisdom of the wise to perish, and the understanding of the prudent to be hid; that he poureth contempt upon princes, and causeth them to wander in the wilderness, where there is no way." (*l*) And to this alludes, what we frequently read, that men are timorous, as their hearts are possessed with his fear. (*m*) Thus David departed from the camp of Saul, without the knowledge of any one; "because a deep sleep from the Lord was fallen upon them all." (*n*) But nothing can be desired more explicit than his frequent declarations, that he blinds the minds of men, strikes them with giddiness, inebriates them with the spirit of slumber, fills them with infatuation, and hardens their hearts. (*o*) These passages also many persons refer to permission, as though, in abandoning the reprobate, God permitted them to be blinded by Satan. But that solution is too frivolous, since the Holy Spirit expressly declares that their blindness and infatuation are inflicted by the righteous judgment of God. He is said to have caused the obduracy of Pharaoh's heart, and also to have aggravated and confirmed it. Some elude the force of these expressions with

(*g*) Isaiah v. 26; x. 5; xix. 25. (*h*) 2 Sam. xvi. 10. (*i*) 1 Kings xi. 31.

(*j*) 1 Sam. ii. 34. (*k*) Prov. xxi. 1.

(*l*) Isaiah xxix. 14. Psalm cvii. 40. Ezek. vii. 26. (*m*) Lev. xxvi. 36.

(*n*) 1 Sam. xxvi. 12. (*o*) Rom. i. 28; xi. 8. Exod. viii. 15.

a foolish cavil — that, since Pharaoh himself is elsewhere said to have hardened his own heart, his own will is stated as the cause of his obduracy; as though these two things were at all incompatible with each other, that man should be actuated by God, and yet at the same time be active himself. But I retort on them their own objection; for if *hardening* denotes a bare permission, Pharaoh cannot properly be charged with being the cause of his own obstinacy. Now, how weak and insipid would be such an interpretation, as though Pharaoh only permitted himself to be hardened! Besides, the Scripture cuts off all occasion for such cavils. God says, “I will harden his heart.” (*p*) So, also, Moses says, concerning the inhabitants of Canaan, that they marched forth to battle, because the Lord had hardened their hearts; (*q*) which is likewise repeated by another Prophet — “He turned their hearts to hate his people.” (*r*) Thus, also, in Isaiah, he declares he will “send the Assyrian against a hypocritical nation, and will give him a charge to take the spoil, and to take the prey;” (*s*) not that he meant to teach impious and refractory men a voluntary obedience, but because he would incline them to execute his judgments, just as if they had his commands engraven on their minds. Hence it appears that they were impelled by the positive appointment of God. I grant, indeed, that God often actuates the reprobate by the interposition of Satan; but in such a manner that Satan himself acts his part by the Divine impulse, and proceeds to the extent of the Divine appointment. Saul was disturbed by an evil spirit; but it is said to be “from the Lord;” (*t*) to teach us that Saul’s madness proceeded from the righteous vengeance of God. Satan is also said to blind “the minds of them which believe not;” (*u*) but the strength of the delusion proceeds from God himself, “that they should believe a lie, who believe not the truth.” (*v*) According to one view of the subject, it is said, “If the prophet be deceived when he hath spoken a thing, I the Lord have deceived that prophet.” (*w*) But, according to another, God is said himself to “give men over to a reprobate mind,” (*x*) and to the vilest lusts; because he is the principal author of his own righteous vengeance, and Satan is only the dispenser of it. But as we must discuss this subject again in the second book, where we shall treat of the freedom or slavery of the human will, I think I have now said, in a brief manner, as much as the occasion required. The whole may be summed up thus; that, as the will of God is said to be the cause of all things, his providence is established as the governor in all the counsels and works of

(*p*) Exod. iv. 21.(*q*) Deut. ii. 30. Joshua xi. 20.(*r*) Psalm cv. 25.(*s*) Isaiah x. 6.(*t*) 1 Sam. xvi. 14.(*u*) 2 Cor. iv. 4.(*v*) 2 Thess. ii. 10—12.(*w*) Ezek. xiv. 9.(*x*) Rom. i. 28.

men, so that it not only exerts its power in the elect, who are influenced by the Holy Spirit, but also compels the compliance of the reprobate.

III. But, as I have hitherto only recited such things as are delivered without any obscurity or ambiguity in the Scriptures, let persons who hesitate not to brand with ignominy those oracles of heaven, beware what kind of opposition they make. For, if they pretend ignorance, with a desire to be commended for their modesty, what greater instance of pride can be conceived, than to oppose one little word to the authority of God! as, "It appears otherwise to me," or, "I would rather not meddle with this subject." But if they openly censure, what will they gain by their puny attempts against heaven? Their petulance, indeed, is no novelty; for in all ages there have been impious and profane men, who have virulently opposed this doctrine. But they shall feel the truth of what the Spirit long ago declared by the mouth of David, that God "is clear when he judgeth." (*y*) David obliquely hints at the madness of men who display such excessive presumption amidst their insignificance, as not only to dispute against God, but to arrogate to themselves the power of condemning him. In the mean time, he briefly suggests, that God is unaffected by all the blasphemies which they discharge against heaven, but that he dissipates the mists of calumny, and illustriously displays his righteousness; our faith, also, being founded on the Divine word, (*z*) and therefore, superior to all the world, from its exaltation looks down with contempt upon those mists. For their first objection, that, if nothing happens but by the will of God, he has in him two contrary wills, because he decrees in his secret counsel what he has publicly prohibited in his law, is easily refuted. But before I reply, I wish the reader again to be apprized, that this cavil is directed, not against me, but against the Holy Spirit, who dictated to the pious Job this confession, that what had befallen him had happened according to the Divine will: when he had been plundered by banditti, he acknowledged in their injuries the righteous scourge of God. (*a*) What says the Scripture in another case? "They," the sons of Eli, "hearkened not unto the voice of their father, because the Lord would slay them." (*b*) The Psalmist also exclaims, that "God," who "is in the heavens, hath done whatsoever he hath pleased." (*c*) And now I have sufficiently proved, that God is called the author of all those things, which, according to the system of these censors, happen only by his uninfluential permission. He declares that he

(*y*) Psalm li. 4.(*z*) 1 John v. 4.(*a*) Job i. 21.(*b*) 1 Sam. ii. 25.(*c*) Psalm cxv. 3.

creates light and darkness, that he forms good and evil, (*d*) and that no evil occurs, which he has not performed. Let them say, then, whether he exercises his judgments voluntarily or involuntarily. But as Moses suggests, that he who is killed by the fortuitous fall of an axe, is delivered by God to the stroke, (*e*) so in the Acts, the whole church asserts that Herod and Pilate conspired to do what the hand and the counsel of God had predetermined. (*f*) And indeed, unless the crucifixion of Christ was according to the will of God, what becomes of our redemption? Yet the will of God is neither repugnant to itself, nor subject to change, nor chargeable with pretending to dislike what it approves; but whilst in him it is uniform and simple, it wears to us the appearance of variety; because the weakness of our understanding comprehends not how the same thing may be in different respects both agreeable to his will, and contrary to it. Paul, after having said that the vocation of the Gentiles was a hidden mystery, adds, that it contained a manifestation of the manifold wisdom of God. (*g*) Now, because, through the dulness of our capacity, the Divine wisdom appears to us manifold, (or multiform, as it has been translated by an ancient interpreter,) shall we therefore dream of any vanity in God himself, as though his counsels were mutable, or his thoughts contradictory to each other? Rather, while we comprehend not how God intends that to be done, the doing of which he forbids, let us remember our imbecility, and at the same time consider, that the light which he inhabits, is justly called inaccessible, (*h*) because it is overspread with impenetrable darkness. Therefore all pious and modest men will easily acquiesce in this opinion of Augustine: "That a man may sometimes choose, with a good intention, that which is not agreeable to the will of God; as, if a good son wishes his father to live, whilst God determines that he shall die. It is also possible for a man to will with a bad design, what God wills with a good one; as, if a bad son wishes his father to die, which is also the will of God. Now, the former wishes what is not agreeable, the latter what is agreeable to the Divine will. And yet the filial affection of the former is more consonant to the righteous will of God, than the want of natural affection in the latter, though it accords with his secret design. So great is the difference between what belongs to the human will, and what to the Divine, and between the ends to which the will of every one is to be referred, for approbation or censure. For God fulfils his righteous will by the wicked wills of wicked men." This writer had just before said, that the apostate angels, and all

(*d*) Isaiah xlv. 7. Amos iii. 6.

(*g*) Ephes. iii. 9, 10.

(*e*) Deut. xix. 5.

(*f*) Acts iv. 28.

(*h*) 1 Tim. vi. 16.

the reprobate, in their defection, acted, as far as respected themselves, in direct opposition to the Divine will; but that this was not possible with respect to the Divine omnipotence; because, while they are opposing the will of God, his will is accomplished concerning them. Whence he exclaims, "The works of the Lord are great, prepared according to all his determinations;" (*i*) so that, in a wonderful and ineffable manner, that is not done without his will which yet is contrary to his will; because it would not be done if he did not permit it; and this permission is not involuntary, but voluntary; nor would his goodness permit the perpetration of any evil, unless his omnipotence were able even from that evil to educe good."

IV. In the same manner we answer, or rather annihilate, another objection — that, if God not only uses the agency of the impious, but governs their designs and affections, he is the author of all crimes; and therefore men are undeservedly condemned, if they execute what God has decreed, because they obey his will. For his will is improperly confounded with his precept, between which innumerable examples evince the difference to be very great. For although, when Absalom defiled the wives of his father, it was the will of God by this disgrace to punish the adultery of David, (*k*) he did not therefore command that abandoned son to commit incest, unless perhaps with respect to David, as he speaks of the reproaches of Shimei. (*l*) For when he confesses Shimei's maledictions to proceed from the Divine command, he by no means commends his obedience, as though that impudent and worthless man were fulfilling a Divine precept; but acknowledging his tongue as the scourge of God, he patiently submits to the chastisement. Let it be remembered, that whilst God by means of the impious fulfils his secret decrees, they are not excusable, as though they were obedient to his precepts, which they wantonly and intentionally violate. The direction of the perverse actions of men, by the secret providence of God, is illustriously exemplified in the election of Jeroboam to the regal dignity. (*m*) The temerity and infatuation of the people in this proceeding are severely condemned, (*n*) because they perverted the order established by God, and perfidiously revolted from the family of David; and yet we know that this event was agreeable to the Divine will. Whence there is an appearance of contradiction also in the language of Hosea; for in one place God complains that the erection of that kingdom was without his knowledge and against his will; but in another declares that he gave Jeroboam to be a king in his anger. (*o*) How can these things be reconciled, that Jeroboam

(*i*) Psalm cxi. 2.(*l*) 2 Sam. xvi. 10.(*n*) Hosea viii. 4.(*k*) 2 Sam. xvi. 22.(*m*) 1 Kings xii. 20.(*o*) Hosea xiii. 11.

did not reign by the will of God, and yet that God appointed him to be king? Why, thus: because neither could the people revolt from the family of David, without shaking off the yoke which God had imposed upon them; nor yet was God deprived of the liberty of thus punishing the ingratitude of Solomon. We see, then, how God, while he hates perfidy, yet righteously and with a different design decrees the defection; whence also Jeroboam is, beyond all expectation, constrained by the holy unction to assume the regal office. In the same manner, the Sacred History relates, that God raised up an enemy, to deprive the son of Solomon of part of the kingdom. (*p*) Let the reader diligently consider both these things: because it had pleased God that the people should be under the government of one king, their division into two parts was contrary to his will; and yet from his will the schism first originated. For certainly since a Prophet, both by a prediction and by the ceremony of unction, excited a hope of succeeding to the kingdom, in the mind of Jeroboam, who before entertained not a thought of such an event, this could not be done, either without the knowledge, or against the will, of God, who commanded it to be done; and yet the rebellion of the people is justly condemned, because, in opposition to the Divine will, they revolted from the posterity of David. Thus, also, it is afterwards subjoined, that "the cause" of the haughty contempt of the people manifested by Rehoboam "was of God, that the Lord might perform his word, which he spake by the hand of Ahijah" his servant. (*q*) See how the sacred union is divided, in opposition to the will of God, and yet by his will the ten tribes are alienated from the son of Solomon. Let us add another similar example, where, with the consent, and even by the assistance of the people, the sons of Ahab are massacred, and all his posterity exterminated. (*r*) Jehu, indeed, truly observed that "there had fallen unto the earth nothing of the word of the Lord," but that he had "done that which he spake by his servant Elijah." And yet he justly reprehends the citizens of Samaria for having lent their assistance. "Are ye righteous?" says he; "behold, I conspired against my master, and slew him; but who slew all these?" If I am not deceived, I have now clearly explained how the same act displays the criminality of men and the justice of God. And to modest minds this answer of Augustine will always be sufficient: "Since God delivered Christ, and Christ delivered his own body, and Judas delivered the Lord, why, in this delivery, is God righteous and man guilty? Because in the same act, they acted not from

(*p*) 1 Kings xi. 23.(*q*) 1 Kings xii. 15. 2 Chron. x. 15.(*r*) 2 Kings x. 7, 8, 9, 10.

the same cause." But if any persons find greater difficulty in what we now assert, that there is no consent between God and man, in cases where man by his righteous influence commits unlawful actions, let them remember what is advanced by Augustine in another place: "Who can but tremble at those judgments, when God does even in the hearts of the wicked whatsoever he pleases, and yet renders to them according to their demerits?" And certainly it would no more be right to attribute to God the blame of the perfidy of Judas, because he decreed the delivery of his Son, and actually delivered him to death, than to transfer to Judas the praise of redemption. Therefore the same writer elsewhere informs us, that in this scrutiny God inquires, not what men could have done, nor what they have done, but what they intended to do, that he may take cognizance of their design and their will. Let those to whom there appears any harshness in this procedure, consider a little how far their obstinacy is tolerable, while they reject a truth which is attested by plain testimonies of Scripture, because it exceeds their comprehension, and condemn the publication of those things which God, unless he had known that the knowledge of them would be useful, would never have commanded to be taught by his Prophets and Apostles. For our wisdom ought to consist in embracing with gentle docility, and without any exception, all that is delivered in the sacred Scriptures. But those who oppose this doctrine with less modesty and greater violence, since it is evident that their opposition is against God, are unworthy of a longer refutation.

the same cause, but if any persons find greater difficulty in what we now assert, that there is no consent between God and man in cases where man by his righteous influence, conveys his influence to the wicked, what is advanced by us appears in our view to be more reasonable and just. Judgment, when God does even in the hearts of the wicked, whatsoever he pleases, and yet renders to them according to their demands. And what would no man be right to attribute to God the Father of the Father of Jesus, because he

CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

BOOK II.

ON THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD THE REDEEMER IN CHRIST,
WHICH WAS REVEALED FIRST TO THE FATHERS UNDER
THE LAW, AND SINCE TO US IN THE GOSPEL.

ARGUMENT.

THE discussion of the first part of the Apostolic Creed, on the knowledge of God the Creator, being finished, is followed by another, on the knowledge of God the Redeemer in Christ, which is the subject of this Second Book.

It treats, first, of the occasion of redemption, that is, the fall of Adam; secondly, of the redemption itself. The former of these subjects occupies the first five chapters; the remaining ones are assigned to the latter.

On the occasion of redemption, it treats, not only of the fall in general, but also of its effects in particular; that is, of original sin, the slavery of the will, the universal corruption of human nature, the operation of God in the hearts of men—Chap. I.—IV., to which is subjoined a refutation of the objections commonly adduced in defence of free will—Chap. V.

The discourse on redemption may be divided into five principal parts.

It shows,

1. In whom salvation must be sought by lost man, that is, in Christ—Chap. VI.
2. How Christ has been manifested to the world; which has been in

- two ways; first, under the law (which introduces an explanation of the Decalogue, and a discussion of some other things relative to the Law)—Chap. VII. VIII.; secondly, under the Gospel, which leads to a statement of the similarity and difference of the two Testaments—Chap. IX.—XI.
3. What kind of a being it was necessary for Christ to be, in order to his fulfilment of the office of a Mediator; that is, God and man in one person—Chap. XII.—XIV.
 4. The end of his mission from the Father into the world—Chap. XV., which explains his prophetic, regal, and sacerdotal offices.
 5. The methods or steps by which he fulfilled the part of a Redeemer, to procure our salvation—Chap. XVI.; which discusses the articles relating to his crucifixion, death, burial, descent into hell, resurrection, ascension to heaven, session at the right hand of the Father, and the benefits arising from this doctrine. Then follows Chap. XVII., a solution of the question, Whether Christ merited for us the grace of God and salvation.

CHAPTER I.

THE FALL AND DEFECTION OF ADAM THE CAUSE OF THE CURSE
 INFLICTED ON ALL MANKIND, AND OF THEIR DEGENERACY
 FROM THEIR PRIMITIVE CONDITION. THE DOCTRINE OF
 ORIGINAL SIN.

THERE is much reason in the old adage, which so strongly recommends to man the knowledge of himself. For if it be thought disgraceful to be ignorant of whatever relates to the conduct of human life, ignorance of ourselves is much more shameful, which causes us, in deliberating on subjects of importance, to grope our way in miserable obscurity, or even in total darkness. But in proportion to the utility of this precept ought to be our caution not to make a preposterous use of it; as we see some philosophers have done. For while they exhort man to the knowledge of himself, the end they propose is, that he may not remain ignorant of his own dignity and excellence: nor do they wish him to contemplate in himself any thing but what may swell him with vain confidence, and inflate him with pride. But the knowledge of ourselves consists, first, in considering what was bestowed on us at our creation, and the favours we continually receive from the Divine benign-

nity, that we may know how great the excellence of our nature would have been, if it had retained its integrity; yet, at the same time, recollecting that we have nothing properly our own, may feel our precarious tenure of all that God has conferred on us, so as always to place our dependence upon him. Secondly, we should contemplate our miserable condition since the fall of Adam, the sense of which tends to destroy all boasting and confidence, to overwhelm us with shame, and to fill us with real humility. For as God, at the beginning, formed us after his own image, that he might elevate our minds both to the practice of virtue, and to the contemplation of eternal life, so, to prevent the great excellence of our species, which distinguishes us from the brutes, from being buried in sottish indolence, it is worthy of observation, that the design of our being endued with reason and intelligence is, that, leading a holy and virtuous life, we may aspire to the mark set before us of a blessed immortality. But we cannot think upon that primeval dignity, without having our attention immediately called to the melancholy spectacle of our disgrace and ignominy, since in the person of the first man we are fallen from our original condition. Hence arise disapprobation and abhorrence of ourselves, and real humility; and we are inflamed with fresh ardour to seek after God, to recover in him those excellences of which we find ourselves utterly destitute.

II. This is what the truth of God directs us to seek in the examination of ourselves: it requires a knowledge that will abstract us from all confidence in our own ability, deprive us of every cause of boasting, and reduce us to submission. We must observe this rule, if we wish to reach the proper point of knowledge and action. I am aware of the superior plausibility of that opinion, which invites us rather to a consideration of our goodness, than to a view of our miserable poverty and ignominy, which ought to overwhelm us with shame. For there is nothing more desired by the human mind than soothing flatteries; and therefore, it listens with extreme credulity, to hear its excellences magnified. Wherefore it is the less wonderful that the majority of mankind have fallen into such a pernicious error. For, an immoderate self-love being innate in all men, they readily persuade themselves that there is nothing in them which justly deserves to be an object of aversion. Thus, without any extraneous support, this very false opinion, that man has in himself sufficient ability to insure his own virtue and happiness, generally prevails. But if some prefer more modest sentiments, though they concede something to God, in order to avoid the appearance of arrogating every thing to themselves, yet

they make such a distribution, that the principal cause of boasting and confidence always remains with them. If they hear any discourse that flatters the pride already operating spontaneously in their hearts, nothing can gratify them more. Therefore every one who in his preaching has kindly extolled the excellence of human nature, has received great applause from almost all ages. But such a commendation of human excellence as teaches man to be satisfied with himself, only enamours him of his own amiableness, and thus produces an illusion which involves those who assent to it in most dreadful perdition. For to what purpose is it for us, relying on every vain confidence, to deliberate, to determine, and to attempt things which we think tend to our advantage, and in our first efforts, to find ourselves destitute of sound understanding and true virtue, yet securely to proceed, till we fall into destruction? But this must be the fate of all who confide in the efficacy of their own virtue. Whosoever, therefore, attends to such teachers as amuse us with a mere exhibition of our virtues, will make no progress in the knowledge of himself, but will be absorbed in the most pernicious ignorance.

III. Therefore, whilst the truth of God agrees in this point with the common consent of all mankind, that the second branch of wisdom consists in the knowledge of ourselves, yet with respect to the knowledge itself there is no small disagreement. For, according to carnal apprehension, a man is thought to be well acquainted with himself, when, confiding in his own understanding and integrity, he assumes a presumptuous boldness, incites himself to the duties of virtue, and, declaring war against vice, uses his most strenuous endeavours to adhere to what is fair and honourable. But he, who inspects and examines himself by the rule of the Divine judgment, finds nothing that can raise his mind to a genuine confidence; and the more fully he has examined himself, the greater is his dejection; till, entirely discarding all confidence, he leaves himself no ability for the proper conduct of his life. Yet it is not the will of God that we should forget the primitive dignity conferred by him on our father Adam, which ought justly to awaken us to the pursuit of righteousness and goodness. For we cannot reflect on our original condition, and on the end of our creation, without being excited to meditate on immortality, and to aspire after the kingdom of God. But this reflection is so far from elating us with pride, that it rather produces humility. For what is that original condition? That from which we are fallen. What is that end of our creation? That from which we are wholly departed; so that we should lament the miseries of our present state, and in the midst of our lamentation, aspire after the dignity which we have lost.

Now, when we say that man should behold or himself nothing that might elate him with pride, we mean that there is nothing in him in the confidence of which he ought to be proud. Wherefore we may divide the knowledge man ought to have of himself into these two parts. First, he should consider the end of his being created and endued with such estimable gifts; a reflection which may excite him to the consideration of Divine worship, and of a future life. Secondly, he should examine his own ability, or rather his want of ability, the view of which may confound and almost annihilate him. The former consideration is adapted to acquaint him with his duty, the latter with his power to perform it. We shall treat of them both in regular order.

IV. But, since it could not have been a trivial offence, but must have been a detestable crime, that was so severely punished by God, we must consider the nature of Adam's sin, which kindled the dreadful flame of Divine wrath against the whole human race. The vulgar opinion concerning the intemperance of gluttony is quite puerile; as though the sum and substance of all virtues consisted in an abstinence from one particular kind of fruit, when there were diffused on every side all the delights which could possibly be desired, and the happy fecundity of the earth afforded an abundance and variety of dainties. We must therefore look further, because the prohibition of the tree of knowledge of good and evil was a test of obedience, that Adam might prove his willing submission to the Divine government. And the name itself shows that the precept was given for no other purpose than that he might be contented with his condition, and not aim with criminal cupidity at any higher. But the promise which authorized him to expect eternal life, as long as he should eat of the tree of life, and, on the other hand, the dreadful denunciation of death, as soon as he should taste of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, were calculated for the probation and exercise of his faith. Hence it is easy to infer by what means Adam provoked the wrath of God against him. Augustine, indeed, properly observes, that pride was the first of all evils; because, if ambition had not elated man beyond what was lawful and right, he might have continued in his honourable situation. But we may obtain a more complete definition from the nature of the temptation as described by Moses. For as the woman, by the subtlety of the serpent, was seduced to discredit the word of God, it is evident that the fall commenced in disobedience. This is also confirmed by Paul, who states that all men were ruined by the disobedience of one. (s) But it is also to be observed, that when the first man rebelled against the government of God, he

(s) Rom. v. 19.

not only was ensnared by the allurements of Satan, but despised the truth, and turned aside to falsehood. And there certainly can be no reverence of God left, where his word is contemned; for we preserve a sense of his majesty and the purity of his worship, no longer than we implicitly attend to his voice. Infidelity, therefore, was the root of that defection. But hence sprang ambition, pride, and ingratitude, since Adam, by coveting more than was granted, offered an indignity to the Divine goodness, which had so greatly enriched him. Now, it was monstrous impiety, that a son of the earth should not be satisfied with being made after the similitude of God, unless he could also be equal to him. If apostasy, which consists in revolting from the government of the Creator, and petulantly rejecting his authority, be a base and execrable crime, it is a vain attempt to extenuate the sin of Adam. Though the transgression of our first parents was not simple apostasy; they were also guilty of vile reproaches against God, in consenting to the calumnies of Satan, who accused God of falsehood, envy, and malignity. Finally, infidelity opened the gate to ambition, and ambition produced obstinacy, so that they cast off the fear of God, and precipitated themselves whithersoever they were led by their lawless desires. With propriety, therefore, Bernard teaches that the gate of salvation is opened to us, when in the present day we receive the Gospel with our ears, as death was once admitted at the same doors when they lay open to Satan. For Adam had never dared to resist the authority of God, if he had not discredited his word. This was certainly the best check for a due regulation of all the affections, that the chief good consists in the practice of righteousness, in obedience to the commands of God; and that the ultimate end of a happy life is to be beloved by him. Being seduced, therefore, by the blasphemies of the devil, he did all that was in his power towards a total annihilation of the glory of God.

V. As the spiritual life of Adam consisted in a union to his Maker, so an alienation from him was the death of his soul. Nor is it surprising that he ruined his posterity by his defection, which has perverted the whole order of nature in heaven and earth. "The creatures groan," says Paul, "being made subject to vanity, not willingly." (t) If the cause be inquired, it is undoubtedly that they sustain part of the punishment due to the demerits of man, for whose use they were created. And his guilt being the origin of that curse which extends to every part of the world, it is reasonable to conclude its propagation to all his offspring. Therefore, when the Divine image in him was obliterated, and he was punished with the loss of wisdom, strength, sanctity, truth, and

(t) Rom. viii. 20, 22.

righteousness, with which he had been adorned, but which were succeeded by the dreadful pests of ignorance, impotence, impurity, vanity, and iniquity, he suffered not alone, but involved all his posterity with him, and plunged them into the same miseries. This is that hereditary corruption which the fathers called *original sin*; meaning by sin, the depravation of a nature previously good and pure; on which subject they had much contention, nothing being more remote from natural reason, than that all should be criminated on account of the guilt of one, and thus his sin become common; which seems to have been the reason why the most ancient doctors of the Church did but obscurely glance at this point, or at least explained it with less perspicuity than it required. Yet this timidity could not prevent Pelagius from arising, who profanely pretended, that the sin of Adam only ruined himself, and did not injure his descendants. By concealing the disease with this delusion, Satan attempted to render it incurable. But when it was evinced by the plain testimony of the Scripture, that sin was communicated from the first man to all his posterity, he sophistically urged that it was communicated by imitation, not by propagation. Therefore good men, and beyond all others Augustine, have laboured to demonstrate that we are not corrupted by any adventitious means, but that we derive an innate depravity from our very birth. The denial of this was an instance of consummate impudence. But the temerity of the Pelagians and Celestians will not appear surprising to him who perceives from the writings of Augustine, what a want of modesty they discover in every thing else. There is certainly no ambiguity in the confession of David, that he was shapen in iniquity, and in sin his mother conceived him. (v) He is not there exposing the sins of his mother or of his father; but to enhance his commendations of the Divine goodness towards him, he commences the confession of his depravity from the time of his conception. As it is evident that this was not peculiar to David, it is fairly concluded, that his case exemplifies the common condition of mankind. Every descendant, therefore, from the impure source, is born infected with the contagion of sin; and even before we behold the light of life, we are in the sight of God defiled and polluted. For "who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" The book of Job tells us, "Not one." (w)

VI. We have heard that the impurity of the parents is so transmitted to the children, that all, without a single exception, are polluted as soon as they exist. But we shall not find the origin of this pollution, unless we ascend to the first parent of us all, as to the fountain which sends forth all the streams.

(v) Psalm li. 5. (w) Job xiv. 4.

Thus it is certain that Adam was not only the progenitor, but as it were the root of mankind, and therefore that all the race were necessarily vitiated in his corruption. The Apostle explains this by a comparison between him and Christ: "As," says he, "by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned," (x) so, by the grace of Christ, righteousness and life have been restored to us. What cavil will the Pelagians raise here? That the sin of Adam was propagated by imitation? Do we then receive no other advantage from the righteousness of Christ than the proposal of an example for our imitation? Who can bear such blasphemy? But if it cannot be controverted that the righteousness of Christ is ours by communication, and life as its consequence, it is equally evident that both were lost in Adam, in the same manner in which they were recovered in Christ, and that sin and death were introduced by Adam, in the same manner in which they are abolished by Christ. There is no obscurity in the declaration that many are made righteous by the obedience of Christ, (y) as they had been made sinners by the disobedience of Adam. And, therefore, between these two persons there is this relation, that the one ruined us by involving us in his destruction, the other by his grace has restored us to salvation. Any more prolix or tedious proof of a truth supported by such clear evidence must, I think, be unnecessary. Thus also in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, with a view to confirm the pious in a confidence of the resurrection, he shows, that the life which had been lost in Adam, was recovered in Christ. (z) He, who pronounces that we were all dead in Adam, does also at the same time plainly declare, that we were implicated in the guilt of his sin. For no condemnation could reach those who were perfectly clear from all charge of iniquity. But his meaning cannot be better understood than from the relation of the other member of the sentence, where he informs us that the hope of life is restored in Christ. But that is well known to be accomplished, only when Christ, by a wonderful communication, transfuses into us the virtue of his righteousness; as it is elsewhere said, "The Spirit is life, because of righteousness." (a) No other explanation therefore can be given of our being said to be dead in Adam, than that his transgression not only procured misery and ruin for himself, but also precipitated our nature into similar destruction. And that not by his personal guilt as an individual, which pertains not to us, but because he infected all his descendants with the corruption into which he had fallen. Otherwise there would be no truth in the assertion of Paul, that all are by nature children of wrath, (b)

(x) Rom. v. 12.

(y) Rom. v. 19.

(z) 1 Cor. xv. 22.

(a) Rom. viii. 10.

(b) Ephes. ii. 3.

if they had not been already under the curse even before their birth. Now, it is easily inferred that our nature is there characterized, not as it was created by God, but as it was vitiated in Adam; because it would be unreasonable to make God the author of death. Adam, therefore, corrupted himself in such a manner, that the contagion has been communicated from him to all his offspring. And Christ himself, the heavenly Judge, declares, in the most unequivocal terms, that all are born in a state of pravity and corruption, when he teaches, that "whatsoever is born of the flesh is flesh," (c) and that, therefore, the gate of life is closed against all who have not been regenerated.

VII. Nor, to enable us to understand this subject, have we any need to enter on that tedious dispute, with which the fathers were not a little perplexed, whether the soul of a son proceeds by derivation or transmission from the soul of the father, because the soul is the principal seat of the pollution. We ought to be satisfied with this, that the Lord deposited with Adam the endowments he chose to confer on the human nature; and therefore that when he lost the favours he had received, he lost them not only for himself, but for us all. Who will be solicitous about a transmission of the soul, when he hears that Adam received the ornaments that he lost, no less for us than for himself? that they were given, not to one man only, but to the whole human nature? There is nothing absurd therefore, if, in consequence of his being spoiled of his dignities, that nature be destitute and poor; if, in consequence of his being polluted with sin, the whole nature be infected with the contagion. From a putrefied root, therefore, have sprung putrid branches, which have transmitted their putrescence to remoter ramifications. For the children were so vitiated in their parent, that they became contagious to their descendants: there was in Adam such a spring of corruption, that it is transfused from parents to children in a perpetual stream. But the cause of the contagion is not in the substance of the body or of the soul; but because it was ordained by God, that the gifts which he conferred on the first man should by him be preserved or lost both for himself and for all his posterity. But the cavil of the Pelagians, that it is improbable that children should derive corruption from pious parents, whereas they ought rather to be sanctified by their purity, is easily refuted. For they descend from their carnal generation, not from their spiritual generation. Therefore, as Augustine says, "Neither the guilty unbeliever, nor the justified believer, generates innocent, but guilty children, because the generation of both is from corrupted nature." If they in some measure participate of the sanctity of their parents, that is the peculiar benediction of the people of God, which su-

(c) John iii. 5, 6.

persedes not the first and universal curse previously denounced on the human nature. For their guilt is from nature, but their sanctification from supernatural grace.

VIII. To remove all uncertainty and misunderstanding on this subject, let us define original sin. It is not my intention to discuss all the definitions given by writers; I shall only produce one, which I think perfectly consistent with the truth. Original sin, therefore, appears to be an hereditary pravity and corruption of our nature, diffused through all the parts of the soul, rendering us obnoxious to the Divine wrath, and producing in us those works which the Scripture calls "works of the flesh." (*d*) And this is indeed what Paul frequently denominates *sin*. The works which proceed thence, such as adulteries, fornications, thefts, hatreds, murders, revellings, he calls in the same manner "fruits of sin;" although they are also called "sins" in many passages of Scripture, and even by himself. These two things therefore should be distinctly observed: first, that our nature being so totally vitiated and depraved, we are, on account of this very corruption, considered as convicted and justly condemned in the sight of God, to whom nothing is acceptable but righteousness, innocence, and purity. And this liableness to punishment arises not from the delinquency of another; for when it is said that the sin of Adam renders us obnoxious to the Divine judgment, it is not to be understood as if we, though innocent, were undeservedly loaded with the guilt of his sin; but, because we are all subject to a curse, in consequence of his transgression, he is therefore said to have involved us in guilt. Nevertheless we derive from him, not only the punishment, but also the pollution to which the punishment is justly due. Wherefore Augustine, though he frequently calls it the sin of another, the more clearly to indicate its transmission to us by propagation, yet, at the same time, also asserts it properly to belong to every individual. And the Apostle himself expressly declares, that "death has therefore passed upon all men, for that all have sinned;" (*e*) that is, have been involved in original sin, and defiled with its blemishes. And therefore infants themselves, as they bring their condemnation into the world with them, are rendered obnoxious to punishment by their own sinfulness, not by the sinfulness of another. For though they have not yet produced the fruits of their iniquity, yet they have the seed of it within them; even their whole nature is as it were a seed of sin, and therefore cannot but be odious and abominable to God. Whence it follows, that it is properly accounted sin in the sight of God, because there could be no guilt without crime. The other thing

(*d*) Gal. v. 19.

(*e*) Rom. v. 12.

to be remarked is, that this depravity never ceases in us, but is perpetually producing new fruits, those works of the flesh, which we have before described, like the emission of flame and sparks from a heated furnace, or like the streams of water from a never failing spring. Wherefore those who have defined original sin as a privation of the original righteousness, which we ought to possess, though they comprise the whole of the subject, yet have not used language sufficiently expressive of its operation and influence. For our nature is not only destitute of all good, but is so fertile in all evils that it cannot remain inactive. Those who have called it *concupiscence* have used an expression not improper, if it were only added, which is far from being conceded by most persons, that every thing in man, the understanding and will, the soul and body, is polluted and engrossed by this concupiscence; or, to express it more briefly, that man is of himself nothing else but concupiscence.

IX. Wherefore I have asserted that sin has possessed all the powers of the soul, since Adam departed from the fountain of righteousness. For man has not only been ensnared by the inferior appetites, but abominable impiety has seized the very citadel of his mind, and pride has penetrated into the inmost recesses of his heart; so that it is weak and foolish to restrict the corruption which has proceeded thence, to what are called the sensual affections, or to call it an incentive which allures, excites, and attracts to sin, only what they style the sensual part. In this the grossest ignorance has been discovered by Peter Lombard, who, when investigating the seat of it, says that it is in the flesh, according to the testimony of Paul, (*f*) not indeed exclusively, but because it principally appears in the flesh; as though Paul designated only a part of the soul, and not the whole of our nature, which is opposed to supernatural grace. Now, Paul removes every doubt by informing us that the corruption resides not in one part only, but that there is nothing pure and uncontaminated by its mortal infection. For, when arguing respecting corrupt nature, he not only condemns the inordinate motions of the appetites, but principally insists on the blindness of the mind, and the depravity of the heart; (*g*) and the third chapter of his Epistle to the Romans is nothing but a description of original sin. This appears more evident from our renovation. For "the Spirit," which is opposed to "the old man" and "the flesh," not only denotes the grace, which corrects the inferior or sensual part of the soul, but comprehends a complete reformation of all its powers. And therefore Paul not only enjoins us to mortify our sensual appetites, but exhorts us to be renewed in the spirit of our mind; (*h*) and in

(*f*) Rom. vii. 18.(*g*) Ephes. iv. 17, 18.(*h*) Ephes. iv. 23.

another place he directs us to be transformed by the renewing of our mind. (*i*) Whence it follows, that that part, which principally displays the excellence and dignity of the soul, is not only wounded, but so corrupted, that it requires not merely to be healed, but to receive a new nature. How far sin occupies both the mind and the heart, we shall presently see. My intention here was only to hint, in a brief way, that man is so totally overwhelmed, as with a deluge, that no part is free from sin; and therefore that whatever proceeds from him is accounted sin; as Paul says that all the affections or thoughts of the flesh are enmity against God, and therefore death. (*k*)

X. Now, let us dismiss those who dare to charge God with their corruptions, because we say that men are naturally corrupt. They err in seeking for the work of God in their own pollution, whereas they should rather seek it in the nature of Adam while yet innocent and uncorrupted. Our perdition therefore proceeds from the sinfulness of our flesh, not from God; it being only a consequence of our degenerating from our primitive condition. And let no one murmur that God might have made a better provision for our safety, by preventing the fall of Adam. For such an objection ought to be abominated, as too presumptuously curious, by all pious minds; and it also belongs to the mystery of predestination, which shall afterwards be treated in its proper place. Wherefore let us remember, that our ruin must be imputed to the corruption of our nature, that we may not bring an accusation against God himself, the author of nature. That this fatal wound is inherent in our nature, is indeed a truth; but it is an important question, whether it was in it originally, or was derived from any extraneous cause. But it is evident that it was occasioned by sin. We have therefore no reason to complain, but of ourselves; which in the Scripture is distinctly remarked. For the Preacher says, "This only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions." (*l*) It is clear that the misery of man must be ascribed solely to himself, since he was favoured with rectitude by the Divine goodness, but has lapsed into vanity through his own folly.

XI. We say, therefore, that man is corrupted by a natural depravity, but which did not originate from nature. We deny that it proceeded from nature, to signify that it is rather an adventitious quality or accident, than a substantial property originally innate. Yet we call it natural, that no one may suppose it to be contracted by every individual from corrupt habit, whereas it prevails over all by hereditary right. Nor is this representation of ours without authority. For the same reason the

(*i*) Rom. xii. 2.(*k*) Rom. viii. 6, 7.(*l*) Eccles. vii. 29.

Apostle says, that we are all by nature the children of wrath. (*m*) How could God, who is pleased with all his meanest works, be angry with the noblest of all his creatures? But he is angry rather with the corruption of his work, than with his work itself. Therefore, if, on account of the corruption of human nature, man be justly said to be naturally abominable to God, he may also be truly said to be naturally depraved and corrupt; as Augustine, in consequence of the corruption of nature, hesitates not to call those sins natural, which necessarily predominate in our flesh, where they are not prevented by the grace of God. Thus vanishes the foolish and nugatory system of the Manichæans, who, having imagined in man a substantial wickedness, presumed to invent for him a new creator, that they might not appear to assign the cause and origin of evil to a righteous God.

CHAPTER II.

MAN, IN HIS PRESENT STATE, DESPOILED OF FREEDOM OF WILL, AND SUBJECTED TO A MISERABLE SLAVERY.

SINCE we have seen that the domination of sin, from the time of its subjugation of the first man, not only extends over the whole race, but also exclusively possesses every soul, it now remains to be more closely investigated, whether we are despoiled of all freedom, and, if any particle of it yet remain, how far its power extends. But, that we may the more easily discover the truth of this question, I will first set up by the way a mark, by which our whole course must be regulated. The best method of guarding against error is to consider the dangers which threaten us on every side. For when man is declared to be destitute of all rectitude, he immediately makes it an occasion of slothfulness; and because he is said to have no power of himself for the pursuit of righteousness, he totally neglects it, as though it did not at all concern him. On the other hand, he cannot arrogate any thing to himself, be it ever so little, without God being robbed of his honour, and himself being endangered by presumptuous temerity. Therefore, to avoid striking on either of these rocks, this will be the course to be pursued — that man, being taught that he has nothing good left in his possession, and being surrounded on every side with the most

(*m*) Ephes. ii. 3.

miserable necessity, should, nevertheless, be instructed to aspire to the good of which he is destitute, and to the liberty of which he is deprived; and should be roused from indolence with more earnestness, than if he were supposed to be possessed of the greatest strength. The necessity of the latter is obvious to every one. The former, I perceive, is doubted by more than it ought to be. For this being placed beyond all controversy, that man must not be deprived of any thing that properly belongs to him, it ought also to be manifest how important it is that he should be prevented from false boasting. For if he was not even then permitted to glory in himself, when by the Divine beneficence he was decorated with the noblest ornaments, how much ought he now to be humbled, when, on account of his ingratitude, he has been hurled from the summit of glory to the abyss of ignominy! At that time, I say, when he was exalted to the most honourable eminence, the Scripture attributes nothing to him, but that he was created after the image of God; which certainly implies that his happiness consisted not in any goodness of his own, but in a participation of God. What, then, remains for him now, deprived of all glory, but that he acknowledge God, to whose beneficence he could not be thankful, when he abounded in the riches of his favour? and that he now, at least, by a confession of his poverty, glorify him, whom he glorified not by an acknowledgment of his blessings? It is also no less conducive to our interests than to the Divine glory, that all the praise of wisdom and strength be taken away from us; so that they join sacrilege to our fall, who ascribe to us any thing more than truly belongs to us. For what else is the consequence, when we are taught to contend in our own strength, but that we are lifted into the air on a reed, which being soon broken, we fall to the ground. Though our strength is placed in too favourable a point of view, when it is compared to a reed. For it is nothing but smoke, whatever vain men have imagined and pretend concerning it. Wherefore it is not without reason, that that remarkable sentence is so frequently repeated by Augustine, that free will is rather overthrown than established even by its own advocates. It was necessary to premise these things for the sake of some, who, when they hear that human power is completely subverted in order that the power of God may be established in man, inveterately hate this whole argument, as dangerous and unprofitable; which yet appears to be highly useful to us, and essential to true religion.

II. As we have just before said that the faculties of the soul consist in the mind and the heart, let us now consider the ability of each. The philosophers, indeed, with general consent, pretend, that in the mind presides Reason, which like a lamp illuminates with its counsels, and like a queen governs

the will; for that it is so irradiated with Divine light as to be able to give the best counsels, and endued with such vigour as to be qualified to govern in the most excellent manner; that Sense, on the contrary, is torpid and afflicted with weakness of sight, so that it always creeps on the ground, and is absorbed in the grossest objects, nor ever elevates itself to a view of the truth; that Appetite, if it can submit to the obedience of reason, and resist the attractions of sense, is inclined to the practice of virtues, travels the path of rectitude, and is formed into will; but that, if it be devoted to the servitude of sense, it is thereby so corrupted and depraved as to degenerate into lust. And as, according to their opinion, there reside in the soul those faculties which I have before mentioned, understanding, sense, and appetite, or will, — which appellation is now more commonly used, — they assert that the understanding is endued with reason, that most excellent guide to a good and a happy life, provided it only maintains itself in its own excellence, and exerts its innate power; but that the inferior affection of the soul, which is called *sense*, and by which it is seduced into error, is of such a nature that it may be tamed and gradually conquered by the rod of reason. They place the will in the middle station between reason and sense, as perfectly at liberty, whether it chooses to obey reason, or to submit to the violence of sense.

III. Sometimes, indeed, being convinced by the testimony of experience, they admit how extremely difficult it is for a man to establish within him the kingdom of reason; while he is exposed at one time to the solicitations of alluring pleasures, at another to the delusions of pretended blessings, and at others to the violent agitations of immoderate passions, compared by Plato to so many cords dragging him in various directions. For which reason Cicero says that the sparks kindled by nature are soon extinguished by corrupt opinions and evil manners. But when such maladies have once taken possession of the human mind, they acknowledge their progress to be too violent to be easily restrained; nor do they hesitate to compare them to fierce horses, who, having rejected reason, like horses that have thrown off the charioteer, indulge themselves in every extravagance, without the least restraint. But they consider it as beyond all controversy, that virtue and vice are in our own power; for if it be at our election, they say, to do this or that, therefore it must also be, to abstain from doing it. And, on the other hand, if we are free to abstain from it, we must also be free to do it. But we appear freely and voluntarily to do those things which we do, and to abstain from those things from which we abstain; therefore, if we do any good action, when we please we may omit it; if we perpetrate any evil, that also we may avoid. Moreover, some of them have advanced to such

a degree of presumption, as to boast, that we are indebted to the gods for our life, but for a virtuous and religious one to ourselves; whence also that assertion of Cicero, in the person of Cotta, that, since every man acquires virtue for himself, none of the wise men have ever thanked God for it. "For," says he, "we are praised for virtue, and in virtue we glory; which would not be the case, if it were a gift of God, and did not originate from ourselves." And a little after: "This is the judgment of all men, that fortune must be asked of God, but that wisdom must be derived from ourselves." This, then, is the substance of the opinion of all the philosophers, that the reason of the human understanding is sufficient for its proper government; that the will, being subject to it, is indeed solicited by sense to evil objects, but, as it has a free choice, there can be no impediment to its following reason as its guide in all things.

IV. Among the ecclesiastical writers, though there has not been one who would not acknowledge both that human reason is grievously wounded by sin, and that the will is very much embarrassed by corrupt affections, yet many of them have followed the philosophers far beyond what is right. The early fathers appear to me to have thus extolled human power from a fear lest, if they openly confessed its impotence, they might, in the first place, incur the derision of the philosophers, with whom they were then contending; and, in the next place, might administer to the flesh, of itself naturally too torpid to all that is good, a fresh occasion of slothfulness. To avoid delivering any principle deemed absurd in the common opinion of mankind, they made it their study, therefore, to compromise between the doctrine of the Scripture and the dogmas of the philosophers. Yet it appears from their language, that they principally regarded the latter consideration, that they might leave no room for slothfulness. Chrysostom says, "Since God has placed good and evil things in our power, he has given us freedom of choice; and he constrains not the unwilling, but embraces the willing." Again: "Oftentimes a bad man, if he will, is changed into a good one; and a good one falls into inactivity, and becomes bad; because God has given us naturally a free will, and imposes no necessity upon us, but, having provided suitable remedies, permits the event to depend entirely on the mind of the patient." Again: "As without the assistance of Divine grace we can never do any thing aright, so unless we bring what is our own, we shall never be able to gain the favour of heaven." He had before said, "That it may not be entirely of the Divine assistance, it behoves us also to bring something." And this is an expression very familiar with him: "Let us bring what is ours; God will sup-

ply the rest." Agreeably to which Jerome says, 'That it belongs to us to begin, and to God to complete; that it is ours to offer what we can, but his to supply our deficiencies.'" In these sentences you see they certainly attributed to man more than could justly be attributed to him towards the pursuit of virtue; because they supposed it impossible to awaken our innate torpor, otherwise than by arguing that this alone constitutes our guilt; but with what great dexterity they did it, we shall see in the course of our work. That the passages which we have recited are exceedingly erroneous, will be shortly proved. Although the Greeks, beyond all others, and among them particularly Chrysostom, have exceeded all bounds in extolling the ability of the human will, yet such are the variations, fluctuations, or obscurities of all the fathers, except Augustine, on this subject, that scarcely any thing certain can be concluded from their writings. Therefore we shall not scrupulously enumerate the particular opinions of them all, but shall at times select from one and another so much as the explication of the argument shall appear to require. Succeeding writers, being every one for himself ambitious of the praise of subtlety in the defence of human nature, gradually and successively fell into opinions more and more erroneous; till at length man was commonly supposed to be corrupted only in his sensual part, but to have his will in a great measure, and his reason entirely, unimpaired. In the mean time, it was proclaimed by every tongue, that the natural talents in men were corrupted, but the supernatural taken away — an expression of Augustine, of the import of which scarcely one man in a hundred had the slightest idea. For myself, if I meant clearly to state wherein the corruption of nature consists, I could easily content myself with this language. But it is of great importance to examine with attention what ability is retained by man in his present state, corrupted in all the parts of his nature, and deprived of supernatural gifts. This subject, therefore, has been treated in too philosophical a manner by those who gloried in being the disciples of Christ. For the Latins have always retained the term *free will*, as though man still remained in his primitive integrity. And the Greeks have not been ashamed to use an expression much more arrogant; for they called it *αυτεξουσιον*, denoting that man possesses sovereign power over himself. Since all men, therefore, even the vulgar, are tinctured with this principle, that man is endued with free will, and some of those who would be thought intelligent know not how far this freedom extends, — let us first examine the meaning of the term, and then let us describe, according to the simplicity of the Scripture, the power which man naturally possesses to do either good or evil. What *free will* is, though the expression

frequently occurs in all writers, few have defined. Yet Origen appears to have advanced a position to which they all assented, when he calls it a power of *reason* to discern good and evil, of *will* to choose either. Nor does Augustine differ from him, when he teaches that it is a power of reason and will, by which good is chosen when grace assists; and evil, when grace is wanting. Bernard, while he affects greater subtlety, has expressed himself with more obscurity: he says, it is a consent on account of the liberty of will, which cannot be lost, and the judgment of reason, which cannot be avoided. The definition of Anselm is not sufficiently plain, who states it to be a power of preserving rectitude for its own sake. Therefore Peter Lombard and the schoolmen have rather adopted the definition of Augustine, because it was more explicit, and did not exclude the grace of God, without which they perceived that the will had no power of itself. But they also make such additions of their own, as they conceived to be either better, or conducive to further explication. First, they agree that the word *arbitrium*, *will* or *choice*, should rather be referred to reason, whose office it is to discern between good and evil; and that the epithet *free* belongs properly to the faculty of the will, which is capable of being inclined to either. Wherefore, since liberty belongs properly to the will, Thomas Aquinas says, that it would be a very good definition, if free will were called *an elective power*, which, being composed of understanding and appetite, inclines rather to appetite. We see where they represent the power of free will to be placed; that is, in the reason and will. It now remains briefly to inquire how much they attribute respectively to each.

V. Common and external things, which do not pertain to the kingdom of God, they generally consider as subject to the free determination of man; but true righteousness they refer to the special grace of God and spiritual regeneration. With a view to support this notion, the author of the treatise "On the Vocation of the Gentiles" enumerates three kinds of will — the first a sensitive, the second an animal, and the third a spiritual one; the two former of which he states to be freely exercised by us, and the last to be the work of the Holy Spirit in us. The truth or falsehood of this shall be discussed in the proper place; for my design at present is briefly to recite the opinions of others, not to refute them. Hence, when writers treat of free will, their first inquiry respects not its ability in civil or external actions, but its power to obey the Divine law. Though I confess the latter to be the principal question, yet I think the other ought not to be wholly neglected; and for this opinion I hope to give a very good reason. But a distinction has prevailed in the schools, which enumerates three kinds of

liberty — the first, freedom from necessity, the second, freedom from sin, the third, freedom from misery; of which the first is naturally inherent in man, so that nothing can ever deprive him of it: the other two are lost by sin. This distinction I readily admit, except that it improperly confounds necessity with coercion. And the wide difference between these things, with the necessity of its being considered, will appear in another place.

VI. This being admitted will place it beyond all doubt, that man is not possessed of free will for good works, unless he be assisted by grace, and that special grace which is bestowed on the elect alone in regeneration. For I stop not to notice those fanatics, who pretend that grace is offered equally and promiscuously to all. But it does not yet appear, whether he is altogether deprived of power to do good, or whether he yet possesses some power, though small and feeble; which of itself can do nothing, but by the assistance of grace does also perform its part. Lombard, in order to establish this notion, informs us that two sorts of grace are necessary to qualify us for the performance of good works. One he calls operative, by which we efficaciously will what is good; the other coöperative, which attends as auxiliary to a good will. This division I dislike, because, while he attributes an efficacious desire of what is good to the grace of God, he insinuates that man has of his own nature antecedent, though ineffectual, desires after what is good; as Bernard asserts that a good will is the work of God, but yet allows that man is self-impelled to desire such a good will. But this is very remote from the meaning of Augustine, from whom, however, Lombard would be thought to have borrowed this division. The second part of it offends me by its ambiguity, which has produced a very erroneous interpretation. For they have supposed that we coöperate with the second sort of Divine grace, because we have it in our power either to frustrate the first sort by rejecting it, or to confirm it by our obedience to it. The author of the treatise "On the Vocation of the Gentiles" expresses it thus — that those who have the use of reason and judgment are at liberty to depart from grace, that they may be rewarded for not having departed, and that what is impossible without the coöperation of the Spirit, may be imputed to their merits, by whose will it might have been prevented. These two things I have thought proper to notice as I proceed, that the reader may perceive how much I dissent from the sounder schoolmen. For I differ considerably more from the later sophists, as they have departed much further from the judgment of antiquity. However, we understand from this division, in what sense they have ascribed free will to man. For Lombard at length pronounces, that we are not therefore pos-

sessed of free will, because we have an equal power to do or to think either good or evil, but only because we are free from constraint. And this liberty is not diminished, although we are corrupt, and the slaves of sin, and capable of doing nothing but sin.

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

VIII. But if we regard the authority of the fathers—though they have the term continually in their mouths, they at the same time declare with what extent of signification they use it. First of all, Augustine, who hesitates not to call the will a slave. He expresses his displeasure in one place against those who deny free will; but he declares the principal reason for it, when he says, “Only let no man dare so to deny the freedom of the will, as to desire to excuse sin.” Elsewhere he plainly confesses, that the human will is not free without the Spirit, since it is subject to its lusts, by which it is conquered and bound. Again: that when the will was overcome by the sin into which it fell, nature began to be destitute of liberty. Again: that man, having made a wrong use of his free will, lost both it and himself. Again: that free will is in a state of captivity, so that it can do nothing towards righteousness. Again: that the will cannot be free, which has not been liberated by Divine grace. Again: that the Divine justice is not fulfilled,

while the law commands, and man acts from his own strength ; but when the Spirit assists, and the human will obeys, not as being free, but as liberated by God. And he briefly assigns the cause of all this, when, in another place, he tells us, that man at his creation received great strength of free will, but lost it by sin. Therefore, having shown that free will is the result of grace, he sharply inveighs against those who arrogate it to themselves without grace. "How, then," says he, "do miserable men dare to be proud of free will, before they are liberated, or of their own strength, if they have been liberated ?" Nor do they consider that the term *free will* signifies liberty. But "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." (n) If, therefore, they are the slaves of sin, why do they boast of free will? "For of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage." (o) But if they have been liberated, why do they boast as of their own work? Are they so much at liberty as to refuse to be the servants of him who says, "Without me ye can do nothing"? (p) Besides, in another place, also, he seems to discountenance the use of that expression, when he says that the will is free, but not liberated ; free from righteousness, enslaved to sin. This sentiment he also repeats and applies in another place, where he maintains that man is not free from righteousness, but by the choice of his will, and that he is not made free from sin, but by the grace of the Saviour. He who declares that human liberty is nothing but an emancipation or manumission from righteousness, evidently exposes it to ridicule as an unmeaning term. Therefore, if any man allows himself the use of this term without any erroneous signification, he will not be troubled by me on that account : but because I think that it cannot be retained without great danger, and that, on the contrary, its abolition would be very beneficial to the Church, I would neither use it myself, nor wish it to be used by others who may consult my opinion.

IX. Perhaps I may be thought to have raised a great prejudice against myself, by confessing that all the ecclesiastical writers, except Augustine, have treated this subject with such ambiguities or variations, that nothing certain can be learned from their writings. For some will interpret this, as though I intended to deprive them of the right of giving their suffrages, because their opinions are all adverse to mine. But I have had no other object in view than simply and faithfully to consult the benefit of pious minds, who, if they wait to discover the sentiments of the fathers on this subject, will fluctuate in perpetual uncertainty. At one time they teach man, despoiled

(n) 2 Cor. iii. 17.

(o) 2 Peter ii. 19.

(p) John xv. 5.

of all strength of free will, to have recourse to grace alone; at another, they either furnish, or appear to furnish, him with armour naturally his own. Yet that, amidst all this ambiguity of expression, esteeming the strength of man as little or nothing, they have ascribed the praise of every thing that is good entirely to the Holy Spirit, is not difficult to prove, if I introduce some passages from them, in which this sentiment is clearly maintained. For what is the meaning of that assertion of Cyprian, so frequently celebrated by Augustine, "That we ought to glory in nothing, because we have nothing of our own;" but that man, completely impoverished in himself, should learn to depend entirely on God? What is the meaning of that observation of Augustine and Eucherius, when they represent Christ as the tree of life, to whom whosoever shall have stretched forth his hand shall live; and free will as the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and say that whosoever forsakes the grace of God and tastes of it shall die? What is the meaning of that assertion of Chrysostom, that every man by nature is not only a sinner, but altogether sin? If we have not one good quality, if from his head to his feet man be entirely sin, if it be wrong even to try how far the power of the will extends, — how, then, can it be right to divide the praise of a good work between God and man? I could introduce many such passages from other fathers; but lest any one should cavil, that I select only those things which favour my own cause, but artfully omit those which oppose it, I refrain from such a recital. I venture to affirm, however, that though they sometimes too highly extol free will, yet their design was to teach man to discard all reliance on his own power, and to consider all his strength as residing in God alone. I now proceed to a simple explication of the truth in considering the nature of man.

X. But I am obliged to repeat here, what I premised in the beginning of this chapter — that he who feels the most consternation, from a consciousness of his own calamity, poverty, nakedness, and ignominy, has made the greatest proficiency in the knowledge of himself. For there is no danger that man will divest himself of too much, provided he learns that what is wanting in him may be recovered in God. But he cannot assume to himself even the least particle beyond his just right, without ruining himself with vain confidence, and incurring the guilt of enormous sacrilege, by transferring to himself the honour which belongs to God. And whenever our minds are pestered with this cupidity, to desire to have something of our own, which may reside in ourselves rather than in God, we may know that this idea is suggested by the same counsellor, who excited in our first parents the desire of

resembling "gods, knowing good and evil." (*q*) If that term be diabolical, which exalts man in his own opinion, let us not admit it, unless we wish to take the counsel of an enemy. It is pleasant, indeed, to have so much innate strength as to confide in and be satisfied with ourselves. But from being allured into this vain confidence, let us be deterred by the many awful sentences which severely humble us to the dust; such as "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm." (*r*) Again: "God delighteth not in the strength of the horse; he taketh not pleasure in the legs of a man. The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy." (*s*) Again: "He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall; but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength." (*t*) The tendency of all which is to prevent us from depending, in the smallest degree, on our own strength, if we wish God to be propitious to us, who "resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble." (*v*) Then let us remember these promises; "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground:" (*w*) again; "Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters:" (*x*) which declare, that none are admitted to a participation of the blessings of God, but those who are pining away with a sense of their own poverty. Nor should such promises as this of Isaiah be overlooked: "The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee; but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light." (*y*) The Lord certainly does not deprive his servants of the splendour of the sun or of the moon; but because he will appear exclusively glorious in them, he calls off their confidence to a great distance, even from those things which in their opinion are the most excellent.

XI. I have always, indeed, been exceedingly pleased with this observation of Chrysostom, that humility is the foundation of our philosophy; but still more with this of Augustine: "As a rhetorician," says he, "on being interrogated what was the first thing in the rules of eloquence, replied, 'Pronunciation;' and on being separately interrogated what was the second, and what was the third, gave the same reply; so, should any one interrogate me concerning the rules of the Christian religion, the first, second, and third, I would always reply, Humility." Now, he does not consider it as humility, when a man, conscious to himself of some little power, abstains

(*q*) Gen. iii. 5.

(*r*) Jer. xvii. 5.

(*s*) Psalm cxlvii. 10

(*t*) Isaiah xl. 29—31.

(*v*) James iv. 6.

(*w*) Isaiah xlv. 3.

(*x*) Isaiah lv. 1.

(*y*) Isaiah lx. 16.

from pride and haughtiness ; but when he truly feels his condition to be such that he has no refuge but in humility, as he elsewhere declares. "Let no man," says he, "flatter himself: of himself he is a devil: every blessing he enjoys is only from God. For what have you that is your own, but sin? Take to yourself sin, which is your own; for righteousness belongs to God." Again: "Why do men so presume on the ability of nature? It is wounded, maimed, distressed, and ruined. It needs a true confession, not a false defence." Again: "When every one knows, that in himself he is nothing, and that he cannot assist himself, the arms are broken within him, and the contentions are subsided." But it is necessary that all the weapons of impiety should be broken in pieces and consumed, that you may remain unarmed, and have no help in yourself. The greater your weakness is in yourself, so much the more the Lord assists you. So in the seventieth Psalm he forbids us to remember our own righteousness, that we may know the righteousness of God; and shows that God so recommends his grace to us, that we may know that we are nothing, and are solely dependent on the Divine mercy, being of ourselves altogether evil. Here, then, let us not contend with God concerning our right, as though what is attributed to him were deducted from our welfare. For as our humility is his exaltation, so the confession of our humility has an immediate remedy in his commiseration. Now, I do not expect that a man unconvinced should voluntarily submit, and, if he has any strength, withdraw his attention from it to be reduced to true humility; but I require, that, discarding the malady of self-love and love of strife, which blinds him, and leads him to entertain too high an opinion of himself, he should seriously contemplate himself in the faithful mirror of the Scripture.

XII. And, indeed, I much approve of that common observation which has been borrowed from Augustine, that the natural talents in man have been corrupted by sin, but that of the supernatural ones he has been wholly deprived. For by the latter are intended, both the light of faith and righteousness, which would be sufficient for the attainment of a heavenly life and eternal felicity. Therefore, when he revolted from the Divine government, he was at the same time deprived of those supernatural endowments, which had been given him for the hope of eternal salvation. Hence it follows, that he is exiled from the kingdom of God, in such a manner, that all the affections relating to the happy life of the soul, are also extinguished in him, till he recovers them by the grace of regeneration. Such are faith, love to God, charity towards our neighbours, and an attachment to holiness and righteousness. All these things, being restored by Christ, are esteemed ad-

ventitious and preternatural ; and therefore we conclude that they had been lost. Again, soundness of mind and rectitude of heart were also destroyed ; and this is the corruption of the natural talents. For although we retain some portion of understanding and judgment together with the will, yet we cannot say that our mind is perfect and sound, which is oppressed with debility and immersed in profound darkness ; and the depravity of our will is sufficiently known. Reason, therefore, by which man distinguishes between good and evil, by which he understands and judges, being a natural talent, could not be totally destroyed, but is partly debilitated, partly vitiated, so that it exhibits nothing but deformity and ruin. In this sense John says, that "the light" still "shineth in darkness," but that "the darkness comprehendeth it not." (z) In this passage both these ideas are clearly expressed — that some sparks continue to shine in the nature of man, even in its corrupt and degenerate state, which prove him to be a rational creature, and different from the brutes, because he is endued with understanding ; and yet that this light is smothered by so much ignorance, that it cannot act with any degree of efficacy. So the will, being inseparable from the nature of man, is not annihilated ; but it is fettered by depraved and inordinate desires, so that it cannot aspire after any thing that is good. This, indeed, is a complete definition, but requires more diffuse explication. Therefore, that the order of our discourse may proceed according to the distinction we have stated, in which we divided the soul into understanding and will, let us first examine the power of the understanding. To condemn it to perpetual blindness, so as to leave it no intelligence in any thing, is repugnant, not only to the Divine word, but also to the experience of common sense. For we perceive in the mind of man some desire of investigating truth, towards which he would have no inclination, but from some relish of it previously possessed. It therefore indicates some perspicuity in the human understanding, that it is attracted with a love of truth ; the neglect of which in the brutes argues gross sense without reason ; although this desire, small as it is, faints even before its entrance on its course, because it immediately terminates in vanity. For the dulness of the human mind renders it incapable of pursuing the right way of investigating the truth ; it wanders through a variety of errors, and groping, as it were, in the shades of darkness, often stumbles, till at length it is lost in its wanderings ; thus, in its search after truth, it betrays its incapacity to seek and find it. It also labours under another grievous malady, frequently not discerning what those things are, the true knowledge of which it would be proper to attain,

(z) John i. 5.

and therefore torments itself with a ridiculous curiosity in fruitless and unimportant inquiries. To things most necessary to be known it either never adverts, or contemptuously and rarely digresses; but scarcely ever studies them with serious application. This depravity being a common subject of complaint with heathen writers, all men are clearly proved to have been implicated in it. Wherefore Solomon, in his Ecclesiastes, after having enumerated those pursuits in which men consider themselves as displaying superior wisdom, concludes with pronouncing them to be vain and frivolous.

XIII. Yet its attempts are not always so fruitless, but that it makes some discoveries, particularly when it applies itself to inferior things. Nor is it so stupid, as to be without some slender notion also of superior ones, however negligently it attends to the investigation of them; but it possesses not an equal ability for both. For it is when it goes beyond the limits of the present life, that it is chiefly convinced of its own imbecility. Wherefore, that we may better perceive how far it proceeds in every case according to the degrees of its ability, it will be useful for us to propose the following distinction; that there is one understanding for terrestrial things, and another for celestial ones. I call those things terrestrial which do not pertain to God and his kingdom, to true righteousness, or to the blessedness of a future life; but which relate entirely to the present life, and are in some sense confined within the limits of it. Celestial things are the pure knowledge of God, the method of true righteousness, and the mysteries of the heavenly kingdom. In the first class are included civil polity, domestic economy, all the mechanical arts and liberal sciences; in the second, the knowledge of God and of the Divine will, and the rule for conformity to it in our lives. Now, in regard to the first class, it must be confessed, that as man is naturally a creature inclined to society, he has also by nature an instinctive propensity to cherish and preserve that society; and therefore we perceive in the minds of all men general impressions of civil probity and order. Hence it is that not a person can be found who does not understand, that all associations of men ought to be governed by laws, or who does not conceive in his mind the principles of those laws. Hence that perpetual consent of all nations, as well as all individuals, to the laws, because the seeds of them are innate in all mankind, without any instructor or legislator. I regard not the dissensions and contests which afterwards arise, while some desire to invert all justice and propriety, to break down the barriers of the laws, and to substitute mere cupidity in the room of justice, as is the case with thieves and robbers. Others — which is a fault more common — think that unjust which legislators have sanc-

tioned as just; and, on the contrary, pronounce that to be laudable which they have forbidden. For the former of these hate not the laws from an ignorance that they are good and sacred; but, inflamed with the violence of their passions, manifestly contend against reason, and under the influence of their lawless desires, execrate that which their judgments approve. The controversy of the latter of these is by no means repugnant to that original idea of equity which we have mentioned; for when men dispute with each other on the comparative merits of different laws, it implies their consent to some general rule of equity. This clearly argues the debility of the human mind, which halts and staggers even when it appears to follow the right way. Yet it is certainly true, that some seeds of political order are sown in the minds of all. And this is a powerful argument, that in the constitution of this life no man is destitute of the light of reason.

XIV. Next follow the arts, both liberal and manual; for learning which, as there is in all of us a certain aptitude, they also discover the strength of human ingenuity. But though all men are not capable of learning every art, yet it is a very sufficient proof of the common energy, that scarcely an individual can be found, whose sagacity does not exert itself in some particular art. Nor have they an energy and facility only in learning, but also in inventing something new in every art, or in amplifying and improving what they have learned from their predecessors. Though this excited Plato erroneously to assert that such an apprehension is only a recollection of what the soul knew in its preëxistent state, before it came into the body, it constrains us, by the most cogent reasons, to acknowledge that the principle of it is innate in the human mind. These instances, therefore, plainly prove, that men are endued with a general apprehension of reason and understanding. Yet it is such a universal blessing, that every one for himself ought to acknowledge it as the peculiar favour of God. To this gratitude the Author of nature himself abundantly excites us, by his creation of idiots, in whom he represents the state of the human soul without his illumination, which, though natural to all, is nevertheless a gratuitous gift of his beneficence towards every individual. But the invention and methodical teaching of these arts, and the more intimate and excellent knowledge of them, which is peculiar to a few, are no solid argument of general perspicacity; yet, belonging to both the pious and the impious, they are justly numbered among the natural talents.

XV. Whenever, therefore, we meet with heathen writers, let us learn from that light of truth which is admirably displayed in their works, that the human mind, fallen as it is, and cor-

rupted from its integrity, is yet invested and adorned by God with excellent talents. If we believe that the Spirit of God is the only fountain of truth, we shall neither reject nor despise the truth itself, wherever it shall appear, unless we wish to insult the Spirit of God; for the gifts of the Spirit cannot be undervalued without offering contempt and reproach to the Spirit himself. Now, shall we deny the light of truth to the ancient lawyers, who have delivered such just principles of civil order and polity? Shall we say that the philosophers were blind in their exquisite contemplation and in their scientific description of nature? Shall we say that those, who by the art of logic have taught us to speak in a manner consistent with reason, were destitute of understanding themselves? Shall we accuse those of insanity, who by the study of medicine have been exercising their industry for our advantage? What shall we say of all the mathematics? Shall we esteem them the delirious ravings of madmen? On the contrary, we shall not be able even to read the writings of the ancients on these subjects without great admiration; we shall admire them, because we shall be constrained to acknowledge them to be truly excellent. And shall we esteem any thing laudable or excellent, which we do not recognize as proceeding from God? Let us, then, be ashamed of such great ingratitude, which was not to be charged on the heathen poets, who confessed that philosophy, and legislation, and useful arts, were the inventions of their gods. Therefore, since it appears that those whom the Scripture styles "natural men," *ψυχικούς*, have discovered such acuteness and perspicacity in the investigation of sublunary things, let us learn from such examples, how many good qualities the Lord has left to the nature of man, since it has been despoiled of what is truly good.

XVI. Yet let us not forget that these are most excellent gifts of the Divine Spirit, which for the common benefit of mankind he dispenses to whomsoever he pleases. For if it was necessary that the Spirit of God should infuse into Bezaleel and Aholiab the understanding and skill requisite for the construction of the tabernacle, (a) we need not wonder if the knowledge of those things, which are most excellent in human life, is said to be communicated to us by the Spirit of God. Nor is there any reason for inquiring, what intercourse with the Spirit is enjoyed by the impious who are entirely alienated from God. For when the Spirit of God is said to dwell only in the faithful, that is to be understood of the Spirit of sanctification, by whom we are consecrated as temples to God himself. Yet it is equally by the energy of the same Spirit, that

(a) Exod. xxxi. 2—11; xxxv. 30—35.

God replenishes, actuates, and quickens all creatures, and that, according to the property of each species which he has given it by the law of creation. Now, if it has pleased the Lord that we should be assisted in physics, logic, mathematics, and other arts and sciences, by the labour and ministry of the impious, let us make use of them; lest, if we neglect to use the blessings therein freely offered to us by God, we suffer the just punishment of our negligence. But, lest any one should suppose a man to be truly happy, when he is admitted to possess such powerful energies for the discovery of truth relating to the elements of this world, it must likewise be added, that all that faculty of understanding, and the understanding which is the consequence of it, is, in the sight of God, a fleeting and transitory thing, where there is not a solid foundation of truth. For the sentiment of Augustine, with whom, as we have observed, the Master of the Sentences and the Schoolmen have been constrained to coincide, is strictly true — that as the gratuitous or supernatural gifts were taken away from man after the fall, so these natural ones which remained have been corrupted; not that they can be defiled in themselves as proceeding from God, but because they have ceased to be pure to polluted man, so that he can obtain no praise from them.

XVII. Let us conclude, therefore, that it is evident in all mankind, that reason is a peculiar property of our nature, which distinguishes us from the brute animals, as sense constitutes the difference between them and things inanimate. For whereas some are born fools and idiots, that defect obscures not the general goodness of God. Such a spectacle should rather teach us that what we retain ought justly to be ascribed to his indulgence; because, had it not been for his mercy to us, our defection would have been followed by the total destruction of our nature. But whereas some excel in penetration, others possess superior judgment, and others have a greater aptitude to learn this or that art, in this variety God displays his goodness to us, that no one may arrogate to himself as his own what proceeds merely from the Divine liberality. For whence is it that one is more excellent than another, unless it be to exalt in our common nature the special goodness of God, which in the preterition of many, proclaims that it is under an obligation to none? Moreover, God inspires particular motions according to the vocation of each individual; of which many examples occur in the book of the Judges, where the Spirit of the Lord is said to “come upon” those whom he called to govern the people. (*b*) Finally, in all important actions there is a special instinct; for which reason it is said that Saul was followed

(*b*) Judges vi. 34; xv. 14.

by valiant men, "whose hearts God had touched." (c) And Samuel, when he predicts his inauguration into the kingdom, thus expresses himself: "The Spirit of the Lord will come upon thee, and thou shalt be turned into another man." (d) And this is extended to the whole course of his government; as it is afterwards narrated concerning David, that "the Spirit of the Lord came upon him from that day forward." (e) But the same expression is used in other places in reference to particular impulses. Even in Homer, men are said to excel in abilities, not only as Jupiter has distributed to every one, but according as he guides him from day to day. And experience clearly shows, since the most ingenious and sagacious of mankind frequently stand still in profound astonishment, that the minds of men are subject to the power and will of God to govern them every moment; for which reason it is said, that "he taketh away the heart of the chief people of the earth, and causeth them to wander in a wilderness where there is no way." (f) Yet in this diversity we perceive some remaining marks of the Divine image, which distinguish the human race in general from all the other creatures.

XVIII. We now proceed to show what human reason can discover, when it comes to the kingdom of God, and to that spiritual wisdom, which consists chiefly in three things—to know God, his paternal favour towards us, on which depends our salvation, and the method of regulating our lives according to the rule of the law. In the two first points, but especially in the second, the most sagacious of mankind are blinder than moles. I do not deny that some judicious and apposite observations concerning God may be found scattered in the writings of the philosophers; but they always betray a confused imagination. The Lord afforded them, as we have before observed, some slight sense of his Divinity, that they might not be able to plead ignorance as an excuse for impiety, and sometimes impelled them to utter things, by the confession of which they might themselves be convinced. But they saw the objects presented to their view in such a manner, that by the sight they were not even directed to the truth, much less did they arrive at it; just as a man, who is travelling by night across a field, sees the coruscations of lightning extending for a moment far and wide, but with such an evanescent view, that so far from being assisted by them in proceeding on his journey, he is re-absorbed in the darkness of the night before he can advance a single step. Besides, those few truths, with which they, as it were, fortuitously besprinkle their books, with what numerous and monstrous falsehoods are they defiled! Lastly,

(c) 1 Sam. x. 26.

(d) 1 Sam. x. 6.

(e) 1 Sam. xvi. 13.

(f) Job xii. 24. Psalm cvii. 40.

they never had the smallest idea of that certainty of the Divine benevolence towards us, without which the human understanding must necessarily be full of immense confusion. Human reason, then, neither approaches, nor tends, nor directs its views towards this truth, to understand who is the true God, or in what character he will manifest himself to us.

XIX. But because, from our being intoxicated with a false opinion of our own perspicacity, we do not without great difficulty suffer ourselves to be persuaded, that in Divine things our reason is totally blind and stupid, it will be better, I think, to confirm it by testimonies of Scripture, than to support it by arguments. This is beautifully taught by John, in that passage which I lately cited, where he says that, from the beginning, "in God was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not." (*g*) He indicates, indeed, that the soul of man is irradiated with a beam of Divine light, so that it is never wholly destitute either of some little flame, or at least of a spark of it; but he likewise suggests that it cannot comprehend God by that illumination. And this because all his sagacity, as far as respects the knowledge of God, is mere blindness. For when the Spirit calls men "darkness," he at once totally despoils them of the faculty of spiritual understanding. Wherefore he asserts that believers, who receive Christ, are "born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God;" (*h*) as though he had said that the flesh is not capable of such sublime wisdom as to conceive of God and Divine things, without being illuminated by the Spirit of God; as Christ testified that his being known by Peter was owing to a special revelation of the Father. (*i*)

XX. If we were firmly persuaded of what, indeed, ought not to be questioned, that our nature is destitute of all those things which our heavenly Father confers on his elect through the Spirit of regeneration, here would be no cause of hesitation. For this is the language of the faithful by the mouth of the Prophet: "With thee is the fountain of life; in thy light we shall see light." (*k*) The Apostle confirms the same, when he says that "no man can say that Jesus is Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." (*l*) And John the Baptist, perceiving the stupidity of his disciples, exclaims, that "a man can receive nothing except it be given him from above." (*m*) That by "gift" he intends a special illumination, not a common faculty of nature, is evident from the complaint which he makes of the inefficacy of the many discourses in which he had recommended Christ to his disciples. "I see that words are unavailing to instruct the

(*g*) John i. 4.(*i*) Matt. xvi. 17.(*l*) 1 Cor. xii. 3.(*h*) John i. 13.(*k*) Psalm xxxvi. 9.(*m*) John iii. 27.

minds of men in Divine things, unless God give them understanding by his Spirit." And Moses also, when he reproaches the people for their forgetfulness, yet at the same time remarks, that they cannot be wise in the mysteries of God but by the Divine favour. He says, "Thine eyes have seen the signs and those great miracles; yet the Lord hath not given you a heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear." (*n*) What more would he express, if he had called them blockheads, destitute of all understanding in the consideration of the works of God? Whence the Lord, by the Prophet, promises, as an instance of peculiar grace, that he will give the Israelites "a heart to know" him; (*o*) plainly suggesting that the mind of man has no spiritual wisdom any further than as it is enlightened by him. Christ also has clearly confirmed this by his own declaration, that no man can come to him, except the Father draw him. (*p*) What! is he not himself the lively image of the Father, representing to us all "the brightness of his glory"? (*q*) Therefore, he could not better manifest the extent of our capacity for the knowledge of God, than when he affirms that we have no eyes to behold his image where it is so plainly exhibited. What! did he not descend to the earth in order to discover to men the will of the Father? And did he not faithfully fulfil the object of his mission? He certainly did; but his preaching is not at all efficacious, unless the way to the heart be laid open by the internal teaching of the Spirit. Therefore, none come to him but they who have heard and learned of the Father. What is the nature of this hearing and learning? It is when the Spirit, by a wonderful and peculiar power, forms the ears to hear and the mind to understand. And lest this should appear strange, he cites the prophecy of Isaiah, where, predicting the restoration of the Church, he says, that all those who shall be saved "shall be taught of the Lord." If God there predicts something peculiar concerning his elect, it is evident that he speaks not of that kind of instruction which is common also to the impious and profane. It must be concluded, therefore, that there is no admission into the kingdom of God, but for him whose mind has been renewed by the illumination of the Holy Spirit. But Paul expresses himself more clearly than all the others. Having professedly entered upon this argument, after he has condemned all human wisdom as folly and vanity, and even reduced it to nothing, he comes to this conclusion: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." (*r*) Whom does he call the natural man?

(*n*) Deut. xxix. 3, 4.(*o*) Jer. xxiv. 7.(*p*) John vi. 44.(*q*) Heb. i. 3.(*r*) 1 Cor. ii. 14.

him who depends on the light of nature. He, I say, has no apprehension of the mysteries of God. Why so? because through slothfulness he neglects them? Nay, even his utmost endeavours can avail nothing, "because they are spiritually discerned." This implies, that being entirely concealed from human perspicacity, they are discovered only by the revelation of the Spirit; so that where the illumination of the Spirit is not enjoyed, they are deemed foolishness itself. He had before extolled "the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (s) above the capacity of our eyes, our ears, and our minds; he had even asserted that human wisdom was a kind of veil, by which the mind is prevented from a discovery of God. What do we want more? The Apostle pronounces that "God hath made foolish the wisdom of this world;" (t) and shall we ascribe to it such a degree of sagacity, as would enable it to penetrate to God, and to the most secret recesses of the heavenly kingdom? Far be from us such extreme stupidity.

XXI. That which he here detracts from men, he in another place ascribes exclusively to God. Praying for the Ephesians, he says, "May God, the Father of glory, give unto you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation." (v) You hear now that all wisdom and revelation is the gift of God. What follows? "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened." If they need a new revelation, they are certainly blind of themselves. It follows, "that ye may know what is the hope of your calling," &c. He confesses, then, that the minds of men are not naturally capable of so great knowledge, as to know their own calling. Nor let any Pelagian here object, that God assists this stupidity or ignorance, when, by the teaching of his word, he directs the human understanding to that which, without a guide, it never could have attained. For David had the law, in which all desirable wisdom was comprised: yet, not content with this, he requested that his eyes might be opened to consider the mysteries of that law. (w) By this expression he clearly signifies, that the sun arises on the earth, where the word of God shines on mankind; but that they derive little advantage from it, till he himself either gives them eyes or opens them, who is therefore called "the Father of lights;" (x) because wherever he shines not by his Spirit, every thing is covered with darkness. Thus also the Apostles were rightly and abundantly taught by the best of all teachers: yet, if they had not needed the Spirit of truth (y) to instruct their minds in that very doctrine which they had previously heard, they would not have been commanded to expect him. If, in imploring any favour of God, we confess our need,

(s) 1 Cor. ii. 9.

(t) 1 Cor. i. 20.

(v) Eph. i. 17.

(w) Psalm cxix. 18.

(x) James i. 17.

(y) John xvi. 14.

and if his promising it argues our poverty, let no man hesitate to acknowledge, that he is incapable of understanding the mysteries of God, any further than he has been illuminated by Divine grace. He who attributes to himself more understanding, is so much the blinder, because he does not perceive and acknowledge his blindness.

XXII. It remains for us to notice the third branch of knowledge, relating to the rule for the proper regulation of our life, which we truly denominate the knowledge of works of righteousness; in which the human mind discovers somewhat more acuteness than in the two former particulars. For the Apostle declares, that "when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves; which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another." (z) If the Gentiles have naturally the righteousness of the law engraven on their minds, we certainly cannot say that they are altogether ignorant how they ought to live. And no sentiment is more commonly admitted, than that man is sufficiently instructed in a right rule of life by that natural law of which the Apostle there speaks. But let us examine for what purpose this knowledge of the law was given to men; and then it will appear how far it can conduct them towards the mark of reason and truth. This is evident also from the words of Paul, if we observe the connection of the passage. He had just before said, "As many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law, shall be judged by the law." Because it might appear absurd that the Gentiles should perish without any previous knowledge, he immediately subjoins that their conscience supplies the place of a law to them, and is therefore sufficient for their just condemnation. The end of the law of nature, therefore, is, that man may be rendered inexcusable. Nor will it be improperly defined in this manner — That it is a sentiment of the conscience sufficiently discerning between good and evil, to deprive men of the pretext of ignorance, while they are convicted even by their own testimony. Such is the indulgence of man to himself, that in the perpetration of evil actions he always gladly diverts his mind as much as he possibly can from all sense of sin; which seems to have induced Plato to suppose, that no sin is committed but through ignorance. This remark of his would be correct, if the hypocrisy of men could go so far in the concealment of their vices, as that the mind would have no consciousness of its guilt

(z) Rom. ii. 14, 15.

before God. But since the sinner, though he endeavours to evade the knowledge of good and evil imprinted on his mind, is frequently brought back to it, and so is not permitted to shut his eyes, but compelled, whether he will or not, sometimes to open them, there is no truth in the assertion, that he sins only through ignorance.

XXIII. Themistius, another philosopher, with more truth, teaches that the human understanding is very rarely deceived in the universal definition, or in the essence of a thing; but that it falls into error, when it proceeds further, and descends to the consideration of particular cases. There is no man, who, if he be interrogated in a general way, will not affirm homicide to be criminal; but he who conspires the death of his enemy, deliberates on it as a good action. The adulterer will condemn adultery in general; but will privately flatter himself in his own. Here lies the ignorance — when a man, proceeding to a particular case, forgets the rule which he had just fixed as a general position. This subject is very excellently treated by Augustine, in his exposition of the first verse of the fifty-seventh Psalm. The observation of Themistius, however, is not applicable to all cases; for sometimes the turpitude of the crime so oppresses the conscience of the sinner, that, no longer imposing on himself under the false image of virtue, he rushes into evil with the knowledge of his mind and the consent of his will. This state of mind produced these expressions, which we find in a heathen poet: "I see the better path, and approve it; I pursue the worse." Wherefore the distinction of Aristotle between incontinence and intemperance appears to me to be highly judicious. Where incontinence predominates, he says, that by the perturbation of the affections or passions, the mind is deprived of particular knowledge, so that in its own evil actions it observes not that criminality which it generally discovers in similar actions committed by other persons; and that when the perturbation has subsided, penitence immediately succeeds; that intemperance is not extinguished or broken by a sense of sin, but, on the contrary, obstinately persists in the choice of evil which it has made.

XXIV. Now, when you hear of a universal judgment in man to discriminate between good and evil, you must not imagine that it is every where sound and perfect. For if the hearts of men be furnished with a capacity of discriminating what is just and unjust, only that they may not excuse themselves with the plea of ignorance, it is not at all necessary for them to discover the truth in every point; it is quite sufficient if they understand so much that they can avail themselves of no subterfuge, but being convicted by the testimony of their own conscience, even now begin to tremble at the tribunal of

God. And if we will examine our reason by the Divine law, which is the rule of perfect righteousness, we shall find in how many respects it is blind. It certainly is far from reaching the principal points in the first table; such as relate to trust in God, ascribing to him the praise of goodness and righteousness, the invocation of his name, and the true observation of the Sabbath. What mind, relying on its natural powers, ever imagined that the legitimate worship of God consisted in these and similar things? For when profane men intend to worship God, though they are recalled a hundred times from their vain and nugatory fancies, yet they are always relapsing into them again. They deny that sacrifices are pleasing to God, unaccompanied with sincerity of heart; thereby testifying that they have some ideas concerning the spiritual worship of God, which, nevertheless, they immediately corrupt by their false inventions. For it is impossible ever to persuade them that every thing is true which the law prescribes concerning it. Shall I say that the mind of man excels in discernment, which can neither understand of itself, nor hearken to good instructions? Of the precepts of the second table it has a little clearer understanding, since they are more intimately connected with the preservation of civil society among men. Though even here it is sometimes found to be deficient; for to every noble mind it appears very absurd to submit to an unjust and imperious despotism, if it be possible by any means to resist it. A uniform decision of human reason is, that it is the mark of a servile and abject disposition patiently to bear it, and of an honest and ingenuous mind to shake it off. Nor is the revenging of injuries esteemed a vice among the philosophers. But the Lord, condemning such excessive haughtiness of mind, prescribes to his people that patience which is deemed dishonourable among men. But in the universal observation of the law, the censure of concupiscence wholly escapes our notice. For the natural man cannot be brought to acknowledge the disorders of his inward affections. The light of nature is smothered, before it approaches the first entrance of this abyss. For when the philosophers represent the inordinate affections of the mind as vices, they intend those which appear and manifest themselves in the grosser external actions; but those corrupt desires which more secretly stimulate the mind, they consider as nothing.

XXV. Wherefore, as Plato has before been deservedly censured for imputing all sins to ignorance, so also we must reject the opinion of those who maintain that all sins proceed from deliberate malice and pravity. For we too much experience how frequently we fall into error even when our intention is good. Our reason is overwhelmed with deceptions in so many forms,

is obnoxious to so many errors, stumbles at so many impediments, and is embarrassed in so many difficulties, that it is very far from being a certain guide. Paul shows its deficiency in the sight of the Lord in every part of our life, when he denies "that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves." (a) He does not speak of the will or of the affections, but he also divests us of every good thought, that we may not suppose it possible for our minds to conceive how any action may be rightly performed. Are all our industry, perspicacity, understanding, and care so depraved, that we cannot conceive or meditate any thing that is right in the sight of God? To us, who do not contentedly submit to be stripped of the acuteness of our reason, which we esteem our most valuable endowment, this appears too harsh; but in the estimation of the Holy Spirit, who knows that all the thoughts of the wisest of men are vain, (b) and who plainly pronounces every imagination of the human heart to be only evil, (c) such a representation is consistent with the strictest truth. If whatever our mind conceives, agitates, undertakes, and performs, be invariably evil, how can we entertain a thought of undertaking any thing acceptable to God, by whom nothing is accepted but holiness and righteousness? Thus it is evident that the reason of our mind, whithersoever it turns, is unhappily obnoxious to vanity. David was conscious to himself of this imbecility, when he prayed that understanding might be given him, to enable him rightly to learn the commandments of the Lord. (d) For his desire to obtain a new understanding implies the total insufficiency of his own. And this he does not once, but almost ten times in one Psalm he repeats the same petition—a repetition indicating the greatness of the necessity which urges him thus to pray. What David requests for himself alone, Paul frequently supplicates for the churches at large. "We do not cease to pray for you," says he, "and to desire, that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing." (e) Whenever he represents that as a blessing of God, we should remember that he thereby testifies it to be placed beyond the ability of man. Augustine so far acknowledges this defect of reason in understanding the things of God, that he thinks the grace of illumination no less necessary to our minds than the light of the sun to our eyes. And not content with this, he subjoins the following correction—that we ourselves open our eyes to behold the light, but that the eyes of our minds remain shut, unless they are opened

(a) 2 Cor. iii. 5.

(b) Psalm xciv. 11.

(c) Gen. vi. 5; viii. 21.

(d) Psalm cxix. 34.

(e) Col. i. 9. Phil. i. 4.

by the Lord. Nor does the Scripture teach us that our minds are illuminated only on one day, so as to enable them to see afterwards without further assistance; for the passage just quoted from Paul (*f*) relates to continual advances and improvements. And this is clearly expressed by David in these words: "With my whole heart have I sought thee; O let me not wander from thy commandments." For after having been regenerated, and made a more than common progress in true piety, he still confesses his need of perpetual direction every moment, lest he should decline from that knowledge which he possessed. Therefore, in another place, he prays for the renewal of a right spirit, which he had lost by his sin; (*g*) because it belongs to the same God to restore that which he originally bestowed, but of which we have been for a time deprived.

XXVI. We must now proceed to the examination of the will, to which principally belongs the liberty of choice; for we have before seen that election belongs rather to the will than to the understanding. In the first place, that the opinion advanced by philosophers, and received by general consent, that all things, by a natural instinct, desire what is good, may not be supposed to prove the rectitude of the human will, let us observe, that the power of free choice is not to be contemplated in that kind of appetite, which proceeds rather from the inclination of the nature than from the deliberation of the mind. For even the schoolmen confess that there is no action of free choice, but when reason sees and considers the rival objects presented to it; meaning that the object of appetite must be such as is the subject of choice, and that deliberation precedes and introduces choice. And in fact, if you examine the desire of good which is natural to man, you will find that he has it in common with the brutes. For they also desire to be happy, and pursue every agreeable appearance which attracts their senses. But man neither rationally chooses as the object of his pursuit that which is truly good for him, according to the excellency of his immortal nature, nor takes the advice of reason, nor duly exerts his understanding; but without reason, without reflection, follows his natural inclination, like the herds of the field. It is therefore no argument for the liberty of the will, that man is led by natural instinct to desire that which is good; but it is necessary that he discern what is good according to right reason; that as soon as he knows it, he choose it; and as soon as he has chosen it, he pursue it. To remove every difficulty, we must advert to two instances of false argumentation. For the desire here intended is not a

proper motion of the will, but a natural inclination; and the good in question relates not to virtue or righteousness, but to condition; as when we say a man is well or in good health. Lastly, though man has the strongest desire after what is good, yet he does not pursue it. There is no man to whom eternal felicity is unwelcome, yet no man aspires to it without the influence of the Spirit. Since, therefore, the desire of happiness natural to man furnishes no argument for the liberty of the will, any more than a tendency in metals and stones towards the perfection of their nature argues liberty in them, let us consider, in some other particulars, whether the will be in every part so entirely vitiated and depraved that it can produce nothing but what is evil; or whether it retain any small part uninjured which may be the source of good desires.

XXVII. Those who attribute it to the first grace of God, that we are able to will effectually, seem, on the contrary, to imply that the soul has a faculty of spontaneously aspiring to what is good, but that it is too weak to rise into a solid affection, or to excite any endeavour. And there is no doubt that the schoolmen have in general embraced this opinion, which was borrowed from Origen and some of the fathers, since they frequently consider man in things purely natural, as they express themselves, according to the description given by the Apostle in these words: "The good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do. To will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good, I find not." (*h*) But this is a miserable and complete perversion of the argument which Paul is pursuing in that passage. For he is treating of the Christian conflict, which he more briefly hints at to the Galatians; the conflict which the faithful perpetually experience within themselves in the contention between the flesh and the spirit. Now, the spirit is not from nature, but from regeneration. But that the Apostle speaks concerning the regenerate, is evident from his assertion, that in himself dwelt nothing good, being immediately followed by an explanation that he meant it of his flesh. And therefore he affirms that it is not he that does evil, but sin that dwells in him. What is the meaning of this correction, "in me, that is, in my flesh?" It is as if he had expressed himself in the following manner: No good resides in me originating from myself, for in my flesh can be found nothing that is good. Hence follows that form of exculpation: "I do no evil, but sin that dwelleth in me;" (*i*) which is inapplicable to any but the regenerate, who, with the prevailing bias

(*h*) Rom. vii. 18, 19.

(*i*) Rom. vii. 20.

of their souls, aim at what is good. Now, the conclusion which is subjoined places all this in a clear point of view : " I delight," says he, " in the law of God after the inward man ; but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind." (*k*) Who has such a dissension in himself, but he who, being regenerated by the Divine Spirit, carries about with him the relics of his flesh ? Therefore Augustine, though he had at one time supposed that discourse to relate to the natural state of man, retracted his interpretation, as false and inconsistent. And, indeed, if we allow that men destitute of grace have some motions towards true goodness, though ever so feeble, what answer shall we give to the Apostle, who denies that we are sufficient of ourselves to entertain even a good thought ? (*l*) What reply shall we make to the Lord, who pronounces, by the mouth of Moses, that every imagination of the human heart is only evil ? (*m*) Since they have stumbled on a false interpretation of one passage, therefore, there is no reason why we should dwell on their opinion. Rather let us receive this declaration of Christ, " Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin." (*n*) We are all sinners by nature ; therefore we are all held under the yoke of sin. Now, if the whole man be subject to the dominion of sin, the will, which is the principal seat of it, must necessarily be bound with the firmest bonds. Nor would there otherwise be any consistency in the assertion of Paul, " that it is God that worketh in us to will," (*o*) if any will preceded the grace of the Spirit. Farewell, then, all the idle observations of many writers concerning preparation ; for although the faithful sometimes petition that their hearts may be conformed to the Divine law, as David does in many places, (*p*) yet it should be remarked that even this desire of praying originates from God. This we may gather from the language of David ; for when he wishes a clean heart to be created within him, (*q*) he certainly does not arrogate to himself the beginning of such a creation. Let us rather, therefore, attend to this advice of Augustine : " God will prevent you in all things : do you also sometimes prevent his wrath." How ? " Confess that you have all those things from God ; that whatever good you have, it is from him ; but whatever evil, from yourself." And a little after, " Nothing is ours, but sin."

(*k*) Rom. vii. 22, 23. (*l*) 2 Cor. iii. 5. (*m*) Gen. viii. 21. (*n*) John viii. 34.
 (*o*) Phil. ii. 13. (*p*) Psalm cxix. (*q*) Psalm li. 10.

CHAPTER III.

EVERY THING THAT PROCEEDS FROM THE CORRUPT NATURE OF
MAN WORTHY OF CONDEMNATION.

But man cannot be better known in either faculty of his soul, than when he is represented in those characters by which the Scripture has distinguished him. If he be completely described in these words of Christ, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh," (*r*) as it is easy to prove, it is evident that he is a very miserable creature. For, according to the testimony of the Apostle, "to be carnally minded is death, because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." (*s*) Is the flesh so perverse, that, with all its affections, it entertains a secret hatred against God? that it cannot consent to the righteousness of the Divine law? in a word, that it can produce nothing but what tends to death? Now, grant, that in the nature of man there is nothing but flesh, and elicit any good from it, if you can. But the name of flesh, it will be said, pertains only to the sensual, and not to the superior faculties of the soul. This is abundantly refuted by the words of Christ and of the Apostle. For the argument of our Lord is, that man must be born again, because he is flesh. He does not teach a new birth in regard to the body. Now, a new birth of the soul requires not a correction of some portion of it, but an entire renovation. And this is confirmed by the antithesis in both places; for there is such a comparison between the flesh and the spirit, that there is no medium left. Therefore, every thing in man that is not spiritual, is, according to this mode of reasoning, denominated carnal. But we have nothing of the spirit, except by regeneration. Whatever, therefore, we have from nature is carnal. But if on that point there could otherwise be any doubt, we have it removed by Paul, when, after a description of the old man, which he had asserted to be "corrupt according to the deceitful lusts," (*t*) he directs us to "be renewed in the spirit of our mind." You see that he places unlawful and corrupt affections not only in the sensitive part, but also in the mind itself, and, therefore, requires a renovation of it. And, indeed, he had just before drawn such a picture of human nature, as showed us to be in every part corrupted and depraved. For his description of all the Gentiles, as "walking in the vanity

(*r*) John iii. 6.(*s*) Rom. viii. 6, 7.(*t*) Eph. iv. 22, 23.

of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart," (*v*) is undoubtedly applicable to all those whom the Lord has not yet renewed to the rectitude of his wisdom and righteousness. This is still more evident from the comparison soon after introduced, where he reminds the faithful, that they "have not so learned Christ." For from these words we conclude, that the grace of Christ is the only remedy, by which we can be liberated from that blindness, and from the evils consequent upon it. And this is what Isaiah had prophesied concerning the kingdom of Christ, when he predicted that the Lord would be "an everlasting light" to his Church, whilst at the same time "darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people." (*w*) When he declares, that the light of God will only arise upon the Church, beyond the limits of the Church he certainly leaves nothing but darkness and blindness. I will not particularly recite all the passages which are to be found, especially in the Psalms and in the Prophets, concerning the vanity of man. It is a striking observation of David, that "to be laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity." (*x*) It is a severe condemnation of his understanding, when all the thoughts which proceed from it are derided as foolish, frivolous, mad, and perverse.

II. Equally severe is the condemnation of the heart, when it is called "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." (*y*) But as I study brevity, I shall be content with citing a single passage, which, however, will resemble a very lucid mirror, in which we may behold at full length the image of our nature. For the Apostle, when he wishes to demolish the arrogance of mankind, does it by these testimonies: "There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips; whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness; their feet are swift to shed blood; destruction and misery are in their ways; there is no fear of God before their eyes." (*z*) In this terrible manner he inveighs, not against particular individuals, but against all the posterity of Adam. He does not declaim against the depraved manners of one or another age, but accuses the perpetual corruption of our nature. For his design in that passage is not simply to rebuke men, in

(*v*) Ephes. iv. 17, 18.(*w*) Isaiah lx. 1, &c.(*x*) Psalm lxii. 9.(*y*) Jer. xvii. 9.(*z*) Rom. iii. 10—18.

order that they may repent, but rather to teach us that all men are overwhelmed with an inevitable calamity, from which they can never emerge unless they are extricated by the mercy of God. As this could not be proved unless it were evinced by the ruin and destruction of our nature, he has adduced these testimonies, which demonstrate our nature to be totally ruined. Let this, then, be admitted, that men are such as they are here described, not only by corrupt habits, but also by a depravity of nature; for otherwise the reasoning of the Apostle could not be supported, "that there is no salvation for man but from the mercy of God; since in himself he is in a ruined and desperate condition." Here I shall not attempt to establish the application of the testimonies, to preclude the appearance of their being improperly introduced. I shall treat them just as if they had been originally uttered by Paul, and not quoted from the Prophets. He divests man first of righteousness, that is, integrity and purity, and then of understanding. Defect of understanding is proved by apostasy from God, the seeking of whom is the first step in the path of wisdom; but this loss must necessarily befall those who have revolted from God. He adds, that all have gone out of the way, and are become altogether corrupt, that there is not one that does good. Then he subjoins the flagitious crimes, with which they, who are once abandoned to iniquity, contaminate all the members of their bodies. Lastly, he declares them to be destitute of the fear of God, the rule by which all our steps ought to be directed. If these are the hereditary characters of mankind, in vain do we seek in our nature for any thing that is good. I grant, indeed, that all these crimes are not exhibited in every individual; yet it cannot be denied that this monster lurks in the hearts of all. For as the body, which already contains within itself the cause and matter of a disease, although it has yet no sensation of pain, cannot be said to enjoy good health, neither can the soul be esteemed healthy, while it is full of such moral maladies; although this similitude will not correspond in every particular; for in the body, however diseased, there remains the vigour of life; but the soul, immersed in this gulf of iniquity, is not only the subject of vices, but totally destitute of every thing that is good.

III. A question, nearly the same as we have already answered, here presents itself to us again. For in all ages there have been some persons, who, from the mere dictates of nature, have devoted their whole lives to the pursuit of virtue. And though many errors might perhaps be discovered in their conduct, yet by their pursuit of virtue they afforded a proof, that there was some degree of purity in their nature. The value attached to virtues of such a description before God, we shall

more fully discuss when we come to treat of the merits of works; yet it must be stated also in this place, so far as is necessary for the elucidation of the present subject. These examples, then, seem to teach us that we should not consider human nature to be totally corrupted; since, from its instinctive bias, some men have not only been eminent for noble actions, but have uniformly conducted themselves in a most virtuous manner through the whole course of their lives. But here we ought to remember, that amidst this corruption of nature there is some room for Divine grace, not to purify it, but internally to restrain its operations. For should the Lord permit the minds of all men to give up the reins to every lawless passion, there certainly would not be an individual in the world, whose actions would not evince all the crimes, for which Paul condemns human nature in general, to be most truly applicable to him. For can you except yourself from the number of those whose feet are swift to shed blood, whose hands are polluted with rapine and murder, whose throats are like open sepulchres, whose tongues are deceitful, whose lips are envenomed, whose works are useless, iniquitous, corrupt, and deadly, whose souls are estranged from God, the inmost recesses of whose hearts are full of pravity, whose eyes are insidiously employed, whose minds are elated with insolence — in a word, all whose powers are prepared for the commission of atrocious and innumerable crimes? If every soul be subject to all these monstrous vices, as the Apostle fearlessly pronounces, we clearly see what would be the consequence, if the Lord should suffer the human passions to go all the lengths to which they are inclined. There is no furious beast, that would be agitated with such ungovernable rage; there is no river, though ever so rapid and violent, that would overflow its boundaries with such impetuosity. In his elect, the Lord heals these maladies by a method which we shall hereafter describe. In others, he restrains them, only to prevent their ebullitions so far as he sees to be necessary for the preservation of the universe. Hence some by shame, and some by fear of the laws, are prevented from running into many kinds of pollutions, though they cannot in any great degree dissemble their impurity; others, because they think that a virtuous course of life is advantageous, entertain some languid desires after it; others go further, and display more than common excellence, that by their majesty they may confine the vulgar to their duty. Thus God by his providence restrains the perverseness of our nature from breaking out into external acts, but does not purify it within.

IV. But it may be said, the difficulty is not yet removed. For either we must esteem Camillus to be exactly similar to

Catiline, or in Camillus we shall have an example that nature, if it be studiously cultivated, is not altogether destitute of goodness. I grant, indeed, that the virtues displayed in Camillus were gifts of God, and if considered in themselves, appear justly worthy of commendation: but how will they be proofs of any natural goodness in him? To establish this, must we not recur to the heart, and argue, that if a natural man was eminent for such integrity of manners, human nature is not destitute of ability for the pursuit of virtue? But what if his heart was depraved and perverted, and followed any thing rather than the path of rectitude? And that it was such, if you concede that he was a natural man, is beyond all doubt. What ability, then, will you attribute to human nature for the pursuit of virtue, if, with the greatest appearance of integrity, it is discovered to be always tending to corruption? Therefore, as you will not commend a man for virtue, whose vices have only counterfeited the external form of virtue, so you must not attribute to the human will a power of desiring what is right, as long as it continues fixed in its perverseness. The most certain and easy solution of this question, however, is, that those virtues are not the common properties of nature, but the peculiar graces of God, which he dispenses in great variety, and in a certain degree to men that are otherwise profane. For which reason we hesitate not, in common speech, to call the nature of one man good, and of another depraved. Yet we still include both in the universal state of human depravity; but we signify what peculiar grace God has conferred on the one, with which he has not deigned to favour the other. When he determined to exalt Saul to the kingdom, he made him, as it were, a new man; and this is the reason why Plato, alluding to the fable of Homer, says, that the sons of kings are formed with some distinguishing singularity of character; because God, consulting the benefit of mankind, frequently furnishes with an heroic nature those whom he destines to hold the reins of empire; and from this source have proceeded all the exploits of great heroes which are celebrated in history. The same judgment must be formed concerning those also who are in a private station. But because every one who has risen to great eminence has been impelled by his ambition, which defiles all virtues, and deprives them of all excellence in the Divine view, whatever may be apparently laudable in ungodly men, ought not to be esteemed at all meritorious. Besides, the chief branch of rectitude is wanting, where there is no concern to display the glory of God: of this principle all are destitute whom he has not regenerated by his Spirit. Nor is it in vain that Isaiah says, that "the spirit of the fear of the Lord shall rest upon" Christ; (a) which teaches us, that all

(a) Isaiah xi. 2.

who are alienated from Christ are destitute of that "fear of the Lord" which is "the beginning of wisdom." (b) The virtues which deceive us by their vain and specious appearance, will be applauded in civil courts, and in the common estimation of mankind; but before the celestial tribunal they will possess no value to merit the reward of righteousness.

V. The will, therefore, is so bound by the slavery of sin, that it cannot excite itself, much less devote itself to any thing good; for such a disposition is the beginning of a conversion to God, which in the Scriptures is attributed solely to Divine grace. Thus Jeremiah prays to the Lord to convert or turn him, if he would have him to be turned. (c) Whence the Prophet, in the same chapter, describing the spiritual redemption of the faithful, says, "The Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and ransomed him from the hand of him that was stronger than he;" (d) alluding to the strong fetters with which the sinner is bound as long as he is deserted by the Lord, and continues under the yoke of the devil. Nevertheless there still remains the faculty of will, which with the strongest propensity is inclined to and rushes into sin; for when man subjected himself to this necessity, he was not deprived of his will, but of soundness of will. Bernard properly observes, that we all have a power to will; but that to will what is good, is an advantage; to will what is evil, a defect. Therefore simply to will belongs to man; to will what is evil, to corrupt nature; to will what is good, to grace. Now, when I assert that the will, being deprived of its liberty, is necessarily drawn or led into evil, I should wonder, if any one considered it as a harsh expression, since it has nothing in it absurd, nor is it unsanctioned by the custom of good men. It offends those who know not how to distinguish between necessity and compulsion. But if any one should ask them, whether God is not necessarily good, and whether the devil is not necessarily evil, — what answer will they make? For there is such a close connection between the goodness of God and his Deity, that his being God is not more necessary than his being good. But the devil is by his fall so alienated from communion with all that is good, that he can do nothing but what is evil. But if any one should sacrilegiously object, that little praise is due to God for his goodness, which he is constrained to preserve, — shall we not readily reply, that his inability to do evil arises from his infinite goodness, and not from the impulse of violence? Therefore, if a necessity of doing well impairs not the liberty of the Divine will in doing well; if the devil, who cannot but do evil, nevertheless sins voluntarily; who then will assert

(b) Psalm cxi. 10.

(c) Jer. xxxi. 18.

(d) Jer. xxxi. 11.

that man sins less voluntarily, because he is under a necessity of sinning? This necessity Augustine every where maintains; and even when he was pressed with the cavils of Celestius, who tried to throw an odium on this doctrine, he confidently expressed himself in these terms: "By means of liberty it came to pass that man fell into sin; but now the penal depravity consequent on it, instead of liberty, has introduced necessity." And whenever the mention of this subject occurs, he hesitates not to speak in this manner of the necessary servitude of sin. We must therefore observe this grand point of distinction, that man, having been corrupted by his fall, sins voluntarily, not with reluctance or constraint; with the strongest propensity of disposition, not with violent coercion; with the bias of his own passions, and not with external compulsion: yet such is the pravity of his nature, that he cannot be excited and biassed to any thing but what is evil. If this be true, there is no impropriety in affirming, that he is under a necessity of sinning. Bernard, subscribing to what is said by Augustine, thus expresses himself: "Among all the animals, man alone is free; and yet, by the intervention of sin, he also suffers a species of violence; but from the will, not from nature, so that he is not thereby deprived of his innate liberty." For what is voluntary is also free. And a little after: "The will being, by I know not what corrupt and surprising means, changed for the worse, is itself the author of the necessity to which it is subject; so that neither necessity, being voluntary, can excuse the will, nor the will, being fascinated, can exclude necessity." For this necessity is in some measure voluntary. Afterwards he says, that we are oppressed with a yoke, but no other than that of a voluntary servitude; that therefore our servitude renders us miserable, and our will renders us inexcusable; because the will, when it was free, made itself the slave of sin. At length he concludes, "Thus the soul, in a certain strange and evil manner, under this kind of voluntary and free yet pernicious necessity, is both enslaved and free; enslaved by necessity, free by its will; and, what is more wonderful and more miserable, it is guilty, because free; and enslaved wherein it is guilty; and so therein enslaved wherein it is free." From these passages the reader clearly perceives that I am teaching no novel doctrine, but what was long ago advanced by Augustine, with the universal consent of pious men, and which for nearly a thousand years after was confined to the cloisters of monks. But Lombard, for want of knowing how to distinguish necessity from coercion, gave rise to a pernicious error.

VI. It is necessary, on the other hand, to consider the remedy of Divine grace, by which the depravity of nature is corrected

and healed. For since the Lord, in the assistance which he affords us, bestows on us that which we need, an exhibition of the nature of his work in us will immediately discover the nature of our necessity. When the Apostle tells the Philippians, that he is "confident that he which hath begun a good work in them will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ;" (e) by the beginning of a good work he undoubtedly designs the commencement of conversion, which takes place in the will. Therefore God begins the good work in us by exciting in our hearts a love, desire, and ardent pursuit of righteousness; or, to speak more properly, by bending, forming, and directing our hearts towards righteousness; but he completes it, by confirming us to perseverance. That no one may cavil, that the good work is begun by the Lord, inasmuch as the will, which is weak of itself, is assisted by him, the Spirit declares in another place how far the ability of the will reaches, when left to itself. "A new heart also," says he, "will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes." (f) Who will assert that the infirmity of the human will is only strengthened by assistance, to enable it efficaciously to aspire to the choice of that which is good, when it actually needs a total transformation and renovation? If there be in a stone any softness, which, by some application, being made more tender, would be flexible in every direction, then I will not deny the flexibility of the human heart to the obedience of rectitude, provided its imperfections are supplied by the grace of God. But if, by this similitude, the Lord intended to show that no good will ever be extracted from our hearts, unless they are entirely renewed, let us not divide between him and us, what he claims exclusively to himself. If, therefore, when God converts us to the pursuit of rectitude, this change is like the transformation of a stone into flesh, it follows, that whatever belongs to our own will is removed, and what succeeds to it is entirely from God. The will, I say, is removed, not considered as the will; because, in the conversion of man, the properties of our original nature remain entire. I assert also, that it is created anew, not that the will then begins to exist, but that it is then converted from an evil into a good one. This I affirm to be done entirely by God, because, according to the testimony of the same Apostle, "we are not sufficient" even "to think." (g) Therefore he elsewhere declares, not merely that God assists the infirmity of our will, or corrects its depravity, but that he "worketh in us to will." (h) Whence

(e) Phil. i. 6. (f) Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27. (g) 2 Cor. iii. 5. (h) Phil. ii. 13.

it is easy to infer what I have already remarked, that whatever good is in the human will, is the work of pure grace. In the same sense he elsewhere pronounces that it is "God which worketh all in all." (*i*) For in that place he is not discussing the government of the universe, but asserting that the praise of all the excellences found in the faithful belongs to God alone. And by using the word "all," he certainly makes God the author of spiritual life from its commencement even to its termination. This is the same as he had before taught in other words, declaring that the faithful are "of God in Christ;" (*k*) where he evidently intends the new creation, by which what belonged to our common nature is abolished. For we must here understand an implied contrast between Adam and Christ, which he states more plainly in another place, where he teaches that "we are the workmanship of God, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." (*l*) For by this argument he designs to prove that our salvation is gratuitous, because the beginning of all good is from the second creation, which we obtain in Christ. Now, if we possessed any ability, though ever so small, we should also have some portion of merit. But to annihilate all our pretensions, he argues that we have merited nothing, because "we are created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained;" in which expressions he again signifies that all the parts of good works, even from the first inclination of the mind, are entirely from God. For this reason the Psalmist, after having said that "he (God) hath made us," that there may be no division of the work, immediately subjoins, "and not we ourselves." (*m*) That he speaks of regeneration, which is the commencement of the spiritual life, is evident from the context, where it follows immediately after, that "we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture." We see, then, that not content with having simply attributed to God the praise of our salvation, he expressly excludes us from all fellowship with him; as though he would say, that man has not even the smallest particle remaining in which he can glory, because all is of God.

VII. But there may be some, who will concede that the will, being, of its own spontaneous inclination, averse to what is good, is converted solely by the power of the Lord; yet in such a manner, that being previously prepared, it has also its own share in the work; that grace, as Augustine teaches, precedes every good work, the will following grace, not leading it, being its companion, not its guide. This unobjectionable observation of that holy man, Peter Lombard preposterously

(*i*) 1 Cor. xii. 6. (*k*) 1 Cor. i. 30. (*l*) Eph. ii. 10. (*m*) Psalm c. 3.

wrests to an erroneous meaning. Now, I contend that both in the words of the Prophet which I have cited, and in other passages, these two things are clearly signified, that the Lord corrects our depraved will, or rather removes it, and of himself introduces a good one in its place. As it is preceded by grace, I allow you to style it an attendant; but since its reformation is the work of the Lord, it is wrong to attribute to man a voluntary obedience in following the guidance of grace. Therefore it is not a proper expression of Chrysostom, that grace is able to effect nothing without the will, nor the will without grace; as if grace did not produce the will itself, as we have just seen from Paul. Nor was it the intention of Augustine, when he called the human will the companion of grace, to assign to it any secondary office next to grace in the good work; but with a view to refute the nefarious dogma broached by Pelagius, who made the prime cause of salvation to consist in human merit, he contends, what was sufficient for his present argument, that grace is prior to all merit; omitting, at this time, the other question concerning the perpetual efficiency of grace, which is admirably treated by him on other occasions. For when he frequently says, that the Lord precedes the unwilling that he may will, and follows the willing that he may not will in vain, he makes him the sole author of the good work. His language on this subject is too explicit to require much argument. "Men labour," says he, "to discover in our will something that is our own, and not derived from God; and how any such discovery can be made, I know not." In his first book against Pelagius and Celestius, where he explains that declaration of Christ, "Every man that hath heard of the Father cometh unto me," (n) he says, that "the will is assisted so as to enable it not only to know its duty, but what it knows, also to do." And thus when God teaches not by the letter of the law, but by the grace of the Spirit, he teaches in such a manner, that whatever each one has learned, he not only sees in knowing it, but desires in willing, and performs in doing.

VIII. And as we are now engaged on the principal point of the argument, let us give the reader a summary of the doctrine, and prove it by a few very clear testimonies of Scripture; and then, that no one may accuse us of perverting the Scripture, let us also show that the truth which we assert to be deduced from the Scripture is not destitute of the support of this holy man; I mean Augustine. For I conceive it is unnecessary to recite in regular order all the passages which might be adduced from the Scriptures in confirmation of our opinion; provided

(n) John vi. 45.

that the selection, which shall be made, prepares a way to the understanding of all the rest, which are frequently to be found. Nor do I think that there will be any impropriety in evincing my agreement with that man, to whose authority the consent of the pious pays a great and merited deference. The origin of all good clearly appears, from a plain and certain reason, to be from no other than from God alone; for no propensity of the will to any thing good can be found but in the elect. But the cause of election must not be sought in men. Whence we may conclude, that man has not a good will from himself, but that it proceeds from the same decree by which we were elected before the creation of the world. There is also another reason, not dissimilar. For since good volitions and good actions both arise from faith, we must see whence faith itself originates. Now, since the Scripture uniformly proclaims it to be the gratuitous gift of God, it follows that it is the effect of mere grace, when we, who are naturally and completely prone to evil, begin to will any thing that is good. Therefore the Lord, when he mentions these two things in the conversion of his people, that he takes away from them their stony heart, and gives them a heart of flesh, plainly declares, that what originates from ourselves must be removed, that we may be converted to righteousness; and that whatever succeeds in its place proceeds from himself. Nor is it only in one passage that he announces this; for he says in Jeremiah, "I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me for ever." (o) And a little after, "I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me." Again in Ezekiel, "I will give them one heart, and will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them a heart of flesh." (p) He could not more evidently claim to himself and take from us all that is good and upright in our will, than when he declares our conversion to be the creation of a new spirit and of a new heart. For it always follows, that nothing good proceeds from our will till it be renovated; and that after its renovation, as far as it is good, it is from God, and not from ourselves.

IX. And we find the saints have made this the subject of their prayers. Solomon prayed, "May the Lord incline our hearts unto him to keep his commandments." (q) He shows the stubbornness of our heart, which, unless a new bias be given to it, naturally indulges itself in rebellion against the Divine law. The same petition is offered by the Psalmist: "Incline my heart unto thy testimonies." (r) For we should always remark the opposition between the perverse bias of the

(o) Jer. xxxii. 39.

(p) Ezek. xi. 19.

(q) 1 Kings viii. 56.

(r) Psalm cxix. 36.

heart, which inclines it to rebellion, and this correction, which constrains it to obedience. But when David, perceiving himself to be for a time deprived of the direction of grace, prays that God would "create in" him "a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within" him, (s) does he not acknowledge that all the parts of his heart are full of impurity, and his spirit warped by a depraved obliquity? and by calling the purity which he earnestly implores, the creation of God, does he not ascribe it entirely to him? If any one object, that the petition itself is a proof of a pious and holy affection, the answer is easy, that although David had already partly repented, yet he compares his former state with that melancholy fall, which he had experienced. Assuming the character, therefore, of a man alienated from God, he properly requests for himself all those things which God confers on his elect in regeneration. Resembling a dead man, therefore, he prays to be created anew, that, instead of being the slave of Satan, he may become the instrument of the Holy Spirit. Truly wonderful and monstrous is the extravagance of our pride. God requires of us nothing more severe than that we most religiously observe his sabbath, by resting from our own works; but there is nothing which we find more difficult, or to which we are more reluctant, than to bid farewell to our own works, in order to give the works of God their proper place. If there were no obstacle arising from our folly, Christ has given a testimony to his graces, sufficiently clear to prevent them from being wickedly suppressed. "I am the vine," says he, "ye are the branches. My Father is the husbandman. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me. For without me ye can do nothing." (t) If we cannot bear fruit of ourselves, any more than a branch can bud after it is torn up from the ground, and deprived of moisture, we must no longer seek for any aptitude in our nature to that which is good. There is no ambiguity in this conclusion, "Without me ye can do nothing." He does not say that we are too weak to be sufficient for ourselves, but reducing us to nothing, excludes every idea of ability, however diminutive. If, being engrafted into Christ, we bear fruit like a vine, which derives the energy of vegetation from the moisture of the earth, from the dew of heaven, and from the benign influences of the sun, I see nothing of our own remaining in any good work, if we preserve entire to God the honour which belongs to him. It is in vain to urge that frivolous subtlety, that the branch already possesses sap, and a fructifying power, and that therefore it does not derive all from the earth, or from the original root,

(s) Psalm li. 10.

(t) John xv. 1, 4, 5.

because it contributes something of its own. For the meaning of Christ is clearly that we are as a dry and worthless log, when separated from him; because, independently of him, we have no ability to do good, as he says also in another place: "Every plant, which my heavenly Father has not planted, shall be rooted up." (*v*) Wherefore the Apostle ascribes all the praise to him in the place already cited. "It is God," says he, "which worketh in you both to will and to do." (*w*) The first part of a good work is volition, the next an effectual endeavour to perform it; God is the author of both. Therefore we rob the Lord, if we arrogate any thing to ourselves either in volition or in execution. If God were said to assist the infirmity of our will, then there would be something left to us; but since he is said to produce the will, all the good that is in it, is placed without us. And because the good will is still oppressed by the burden of our flesh, so that it cannot extricate itself, he has added, that in struggling with the difficulties of that conflict, we are supplied with constancy of exertion to carry our volitions into effect. For otherwise there would be no truth in what he elsewhere teaches, that "it is the same God which worketh all in all," (*x*) which we have before shown comprehends the whole course of the spiritual life. For which reason David, after having prayed that the way of God may be discovered to him, that he may walk in his truth, immediately adds, "Unite my heart to fear thy name." (*y*) In these words he intimates, that even good men are subject to so many distractions of mind, that they soon wander and fall, unless they are strengthened to persevere. For the same reason, in another passage, having prayed that his steps might be ordered in the word of the Lord, he likewise implores strength for a warfare: "Let not any iniquity have dominion over me." (*z*) In this manner, therefore, the Lord both begins and completes the good work in us; that it may be owing to him, that the will conceives a love for what is right, that it is inclined to desire it, and is excited and impelled to endeavour to attain it; and then that the choice, desire, and endeavour do not fail, but proceed even to the completion of the desired effect; lastly, that a man proceeds with constancy in them, and perseveres even to the end.

X. And he moves the will, not according to the system maintained and believed for many ages, in such a manner that it would afterwards be at our option either to obey the impulse or to resist it, but by an efficacious influence. The observation, therefore, so frequently repeated by Chrysostom, that "Whom God draws, he draws willing," we are obliged to

(*v*) Matt. xv. 13.(*w*) Phil. ii. 13.(*x*) 1 Cor. xii. 6.(*y*) Psalm lxxxvi. 11.(*z*) Psalm cxix. 133.

reject, being an insinuation that God only waits for us with his hand extended, if we choose to accept his assistance. We grant that such was the primitive condition of man during his state of integrity, that he could incline to the one side or the other; but since Adam has taught us by his own example how miserable free will is, unless God give us both will and power, what will become of us if he impart his grace to us in that small proportion? Nay, we obscure and diminish his grace by our ingratitude. For the Apostle does not teach that the grace of a good will is offered to us for our acceptance, but that he "worketh in us to will;" which is equivalent to saying, that the Lord, by his Spirit, directs, inclines, and governs our heart, and reigns in it as in his own possession. Nor does he promise by Ezekiel that he will give to the elect a new spirit, only that they may be able to walk, but that they may actually walk, in his precepts. (a) Nor can the declaration of Christ, "Every man that hath heard of the Father cometh unto me," (b) be understood in any other sense than as a proof of the positive efficacy of Divine grace; as Augustine also contends. This grace the Lord deigns not to give to any person promiscuously, according to the observation commonly attributed, if I mistake not, to Occam, that it is denied to no man who does what he can. Men are to be taught, indeed, that the Divine benignity is free to all who seek it, without any exception; but since none begin to seek it, but those who have been inspired by heavenly grace, not even this diminutive portion ought to be taken from his praise. This is the privilege of the elect, that, being regenerated by the Spirit of God, they are led and governed by his direction. Wherefore Augustine as justly ridicules those who arrogate to themselves any part of a good volition, as he reprehends others, who suppose that to be given promiscuously to all, which is the special evidence of gratuitous election. "Nature," says he, "is common to all men, but not grace." He calls it "a transparent subtlety, which shines merely with vanity, when that is extended generally to all, which God confers on whom he chooses." But elsewhere, "How have you come? by believing. Be afraid, lest while you arrogate to yourself the discovery of the way of righteousness, you perish from the way of righteousness. I am come, you say, by free will; I am come through my own choice. Why are you inflated with pride? Will you know that this also is given to you? Hear him proclaiming, 'No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.'" (c) And it incontrovertibly follows, from the words of John, that the hearts of the pious are divinely governed with such effect, that they follow with an af-

(a) Ezek. xi. 19, 20; xxxvi. 27.

(b) John vi. 45.

(c) John vi. 44.

fection which nothing can alter. "Whosoever is born of God," he says, "cannot sin; for his seed remaineth in him." (*d*) For we see that the neutral, inefficacious impulse imagined by the sophists, which every one would be at liberty to obey or resist, is evidently excluded, where it is asserted that God gives a constancy that is effectual to perseverance.

XI. Concerning perseverance there would have been no doubt that it ought to be esteemed the gratuitous gift of God, had it not been for the prevalence of a pestilent error, that it is dispensed according to the merit of men, in proportion to the gratitude which each person has discovered for the grace bestowed on him. But as that opinion arose from the supposition that it was at our own option to reject or accept the offered grace of God, this notion being exploded, the other falls of course. Though here is a double error; for beside teaching that our gratitude for the grace first bestowed on us, and our legitimate use of that grace, are remunerated by subsequent blessings, they add also, that now grace does not operate alone in us, but only coöperates with us. On the first point, we must admit that the Lord, while he daily enriches and loads his servants with new communications of his grace, perceiving the work which he has begun in them grateful and acceptable, discovers something in them which he blesses with still greater degrees of grace. And this is implied in the following declarations: "Unto every one that hath, shall be given." And, "Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things." (*e*) But here two errors must be avoided; the legitimate use of the grace first bestowed must not be said to be rewarded with subsequent degrees of grace, as though man, by his own industry, rendered the grace of God efficacious; nor must it be accounted a remuneration in such a sense as to cease to be esteemed the free favour of God. I grant, then, that this Divine benediction is to be expected by the faithful, that the better they have used the former measures of grace, they shall afterwards be enriched with proportionably greater degrees of it. But I assert that this use also is from the Lord, and that this remuneration proceeds from his gratuitous benevolence. They are equally awkward and unhappy in their use of the trite distinction of operating and coöperating grace. Augustine has used it indeed, but softens it by a suitable definition; that God in coöperating completes what in operating he begins, and that it is the same grace, but derives its name from the different mode of its efficiency. Whence it follows, that he makes no partition of the work between God and us, as though there

(*d*) 1 John iii. 9.

(*e*) Matt. xxv. 23, 29. Luke xix. 17, 26.

were a mutual concurrence from the respective exertions of each ; but that he only designates the multiplication of grace. To the same purpose is what he elsewhere asserts, that the good will of man precedes many of the gifts of God, but is itself one of their number. Whence it follows, that he leaves nothing for it to arrogate to itself. This is also particularly expressed by Paul. For having said that "it is God which worketh in us both to will and to do," (*f*) he immediately adds, that he does both "of his own good pleasure," signifying by this expression that these are acts of gratuitous benignity. Now, to their wonted assertion, that after we have admitted the first grace, our own endeavours coöperate with the grace which follows, I reply, if they mean that, after having been once subdued by the Divine power to the obedience of righteousness, we voluntarily advance, and are disposed to follow the guidance of grace, I make no objection. For it is very certain, that where the grace of God reigns, there is such a promptitude of obedience. But whence does this arise but from the Spirit of God, who, uniformly consistent with himself, cherishes and strengthens to a constancy of perseverance that disposition of obedience which he first originated? But if they mean that man derives from himself an ability to coöperate with the grace of God, they are involved in a most pestilent error.

XII. And to this purpose they falsely and ignorantly pervert that observation of the Apostle, "I laboured more abundantly than they all ; yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." (*g*) For they understand it in this manner ; that because his preference of himself to all others might appear rather too arrogant, he corrects it by referring the praise to the grace of God ; but yet so as to denominate himself a coöperator with grace. It is surprising that so many men, not otherwise erroneous, have stumbled at this imaginary difficulty. For the Apostle does not say that the grace of God laboured with him, to make himself a partner in the labour ; but rather by that correction ascribes the whole praise of the labour to grace alone. "It is not I," says he, "that have laboured, but the grace of God which was with me." They have been deceived by an ambiguity of expression ; but still more by a preposterous translation, in which the force of the Greek article is omitted. For if you translate it literally, he says, not that grace was coöperative with him, but that the grace which was with him was the author of all. And the same is maintained by Augustine, though briefly, yet without obscurity, when he thus expresses himself : "The good will of man precedes many of the gifts of God, but not all. But of those which it

(*f*) Phil. ii. 13. (*g*) 1 Cor. xv. 10.

precedes it is itself one." Then follows this reason; because it is written, "The God of my mercy shall prevent me." (*h*) And, "Mercy shall follow me." (*i*) It prevents the unwilling, that he may will; it follows the willing, that he may not will in vain." With this agrees Bernard, who introduces the Church, saying, "Draw me unwilling, to make me willing; draw me inactive, to make me run."

XIII. Now, let us hear Augustine speak in his own words, lest the sophists of the Sorbonne, those Pelagians of the present age, according to their usual custom, accuse us of opposing the whole current of antiquity. In this they imitate their father Pelagius, by whom Augustine was formerly obliged to enter into the same field of controversy. In his treatise *De Corr. et Grat.*, addressed to Valentine, he treats very much at large what I shall recite briefly, but in his own words: "That to Adam was given the grace of persevering in good if he chose; that grace is given to us to will, and by willing to overcome concupiscence. That Adam therefore had the power if he had the will, but not the will that he might have the power; but that it is given to us to have both the will and the power. That the primitive liberty was a power to abstain from sin, but that ours is much greater, being an inability to commit sin." And lest he should be supposed to speak of the perfection to be enjoyed after the attainment of a state of immortality, as Lombard misinterprets his meaning, he presently removes this difficulty. For he says, "the will of the saints is so inflamed by the Holy Spirit, that they therefore have an ability, because they have such a will; and that their having such a will proceeds from the operations of God." For if, amidst such great weakness, which still requires "strength" to be "made perfect" (*k*) for the repressing of pride, they were left to their own will, so as to have ability, through the Divine assistance, if they were willing, and God did not operate in them to produce that will; among so many temptations and infirmities their will would fail, and therefore they could not possibly persevere. The infirmity of the human will, then, is succoured, that it may be invariably and inseparably actuated by Divine grace, and so, notwithstanding all its weakness, may not fail. He afterwards discusses more at large how our hearts necessarily follow the impulse of God; and he asserts that the Lord draws men with their own wills, but that those wills are such as he himself has formed. Now, we have a testimony from the mouth of Augustine to the point which we are principally endeavouring to establish; that grace is not merely offered by the Lord to be either received or rejected, according to the free

(*h*) Psalm lix. 10.

(*i*) Psalm xxiii. 6.

(*k*) 2 Cor. xii. 9.

choice of each individual, but that it is grace which produces both the choice and the will in the heart; so that every subsequent good work is the fruit and effect of it, and that it is obeyed by no other will but that which it has produced. For this is his language also in another place — that it is grace alone which performs every good work in us.

XIV. When he observes that the will is not taken away by grace, but only changed from a bad one into a good one, and when it is good, assisted; he only intends that man is not drawn in such a manner as to be carried away by an external impulse, without any inclination of his mind; but that he is internally so disposed as to obey from his very heart. That grace is specially and gratuitously given to the elect, he maintains in an epistle to Boniface, in the following language: "We know that the grace of God is not given to all men; and that to them to whom it is given, it is given neither according to the merits of works, nor according to the merits of will, but by gratuitous favour; and to those to whom it is not given, we know that it is not given by the righteous judgment of God." And in the same epistle, he strenuously combats that opinion, which supposes that subsequent grace is given to the merits of men, because by not rejecting the first grace they showed themselves worthy of it. For he wishes Pelagius to allow that grace is necessary to us for every one of our actions, and is not a retribution of our works, that it may be acknowledged to be pure grace. But the subject cannot be comprised in a more concise summary than in the eighth chapter of his treatise addressed to Valentine; where he teaches, that the human will obtains, not grace by liberty, but liberty by grace; that being impressed by the same grace with a disposition of delight, it is formed for perpetuity; that it is strengthened with invincible fortitude; that while grace reigns, it never falls, but, deserted by grace, falls immediately; that by the gratuitous mercy of the Lord, it is converted to what is good, and, being converted, perseveres in it; that the first direction of the human will to that which is good, and its subsequent constancy, depend solely on the will of God, and not on any merit of man. Thus there is left to man such a free will, if we choose to give it that appellation, as he describes in another place, that he can neither be converted to God nor continue in God but by grace; and that all the ability which he has is derived from grace.

CHAPTER IV.

THE OPERATION OF GOD IN THE HEARTS OF MEN.

It has now, I apprehend, been sufficiently proved, that man is so enslaved by sin, as to be of his own nature incapable of an effort, or even an aspiration, towards that which is good. We have also laid down a distinction between coercion and necessity, from which it appears that while he sins necessarily, he nevertheless sins voluntarily. But since, while he is devoted to the servitude of the devil, he seems to be actuated by his will, rather than by his own, it remains for us to explain the nature of both kinds of influence. There is also this question to be resolved, whether any thing is to be attributed to God in evil actions, in which the Scripture intimates that some influence of his is concerned. Augustine somewhere compares the human will to a horse, obedient to the direction of his rider; and God and the devil he compares to riders. "If God rides it, he, like a sober and skilful rider, manages it in a graceful manner; stimulates its tardiness; restrains its immoderate celerity; represses its wantonness and wildness; tames its perverseness, and conducts it into the right way. But if the devil has taken possession of it, he, like a foolish and wanton rider, forces it through pathless places, hurries it into ditches, drives it down over precipices, and excites it to obstinacy and ferocity." With this similitude, as no better occurs, we will at present be content. When the will of a natural man is said to be subject to the power of the devil, so as to be directed by it, the meaning is, not that it resists and is compelled to a reluctant submission, as masters compel slaves to an unwilling performance of their commands, but that, being fascinated by the fallacies of Satan, it necessarily submits itself to all his directions. For those whom the Lord does not favour with the government of his Spirit, he abandons, in righteous judgment, to the influence of Satan. Wherefore the Apostle says, that "the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not," who are destined to destruction, "lest the light of the gospel should shine unto them." (l) And in another place, that he "worketh in the children of disobedience." (m) The blinding of the wicked, and all those enormities which attend it, are called the works of Satan; the cause of which must nevertheless be sought

(l) 2 Cor. iv. 4.

(m) Eph. ii. 2.

only in the human will, from which proceeds the root of evil, and in which rests the foundation of the kingdom of Satan, that is, sin.

II. Very different, in such instances, is the method of the Divine operation. And that we may have a clearer view of it, let us take as an example the calamity which holy Job suffered from the Chaldeans. (*n*) The Chaldeans massacred his shepherds, and committed hostile depredations on his flock. Now, the wickedness of their procedure is evident; yet in these transactions Satan was not unconcerned; for with him the history states the whole affair to have originated. But Job himself recognizes in it the work of the Lord, whom he asserts to have taken from him those things of which he had been plundered by the Chaldeans. How can we refer the same action to God, to Satan, and to man, as being each the author of it, without either excusing Satan by associating him with God, or making God the author of evil? Very easily, if we examine, first, the end for which the action was designed, and secondly, the manner in which it was effected. The design of the Lord is to exercise the patience of his servant by adversity; Satan endeavours to drive him to despair: the Chaldeans, in defiance of law and justice, desire to enrich themselves by the property of another. So great a diversity of design makes a great distinction in the action. There is no less difference in the manner. The Lord permits his servant to be afflicted by Satan: the Chaldeans, whom he commissions to execute his purpose, he permits and resigns to be impelled by Satan: Satan, with his envenomed stings, instigates the minds of the Chaldeans, otherwise very depraved, to perpetrate the crime: they furiously rush into the act of injustice, and overwhelm themselves in criminality. Satan therefore is properly said to work in the reprobate, in whom he exercises his dominion; that is, the kingdom of iniquity. God also is said to work in a way proper to himself, because Satan, being the instrument of his wrath, turns himself hither and thither at his appointment and command, to execute his righteous judgments. Here I allude not to the universal influence of God, by which all creatures are sustained, and from which they derive an ability to perform whatever they do. I speak only of that special influence which appears in every particular act. We see, then, that the same action is without absurdity ascribed to God, to Satan, and to man; but the variety in the end and in the manner, causes the righteousness of God to shine without the least blemish, and the iniquity of Satan and of man to betray itself to its own disgrace.

(*n*) Job i.

III. The fathers are sometimes too scrupulous on this subject, and afraid of a simple confession of the truth, lest they should afford an occasion to impiety to speak irreverently and reproachfully of the works of God. Though I highly approve this sobriety, yet I think we are in no danger, if we simply maintain what the Scripture delivers. Even Augustine at one time was not free from this scrupulosity; as when he says that hardening and blinding belong not to the operation, but to the prescience of God. But these subtleties are inconsistent with numerous expressions of the Scripture, which evidently import some intervention of God beyond mere foreknowledge. And Augustine himself, in his fifth book against Julian, contends very largely, that sins proceed not only from the permission or the prescience, but from the power of God, in order that former sins may thereby be punished. So also what they advance concerning permission is too weak to be supported. God is very frequently said to blind and harden the reprobate, and to turn, incline, and influence their hearts, as I have elsewhere more fully stated. But it affords no explication of the nature of this influence to resort to prescience or permission. We answer, therefore, that it operates in two ways. For, since, when his light is removed, nothing remains but darkness and blindness; since, when his Spirit is withdrawn, our hearts harden into stones; since, when his direction ceases, they are warped into obliquity; he is properly said to blind, harden, and incline those whom he deprives of the power of seeing, obeying, and acting aright. The second way, which is much more consistent with strict propriety of language, is, when, for the execution of his judgments, he, by means of Satan, the minister of his wrath, directs their counsels to what he pleases, and excites their wills and strengthens their efforts. Thus, when Moses relates that Sihon the king would not grant a free passage to the people, because God had "hardened his spirit, and made his heart obstinate," he immediately subjoins the end of God's design: "That he might deliver him into thy hand." (o) Since God willed his destruction, the obduration of his heart, therefore, was the Divine preparation for his ruin.

IV. The following expressions seem to relate to the former method: "He removeth away the speech of the trusty, and taketh away the understanding of the aged. He taketh away the heart of the chief people of the earth, and causeth them to wander in a wilderness where there is no way." (p) Again: "O Lord, why hast thou made us to err from thy ways, and hardened our heart from thy fear?" (q) For these passages rather indicate what God makes men by deserting them, than show

(o) Deut. ii. 30.

(p) Job xii. 20, 24.

(q) Isaiah lxiii. 17.

how he performs his operations within them. But there are other testimonies, which go further; as those which relate to the hardening of Pharaoh: "I will harden his (Pharaoh's) heart, that he shall not let the people go." (*r*) Afterwards the Lord says, "I have hardened his heart." (*s*) Did he harden it by not mollifying it? That is true; but he did somewhat more, for he delivered his heart to Satan to be confirmed in obstinacy; whence he had before said, "I will harden his heart." The people march out of Egypt; the inhabitants of the country meet them in a hostile manner: by whom were they excited? Moses expressly declared to the people, that it was the Lord who had hardened their hearts. (*t*) The Psalmist, reciting the same history, says, "He turned their heart to hate his people." (*v*) Now, it cannot be said that they fell in consequence of being deprived of the counsel of God. For if they are "hardened" and "turned," they are positively inclined to that point. Besides, whenever it has pleased him to punish the transgressions of his people, how has he executed his work by means of the reprobate? In such a manner that any one may see, that the efficacy of the action proceeded from him, and that they were only the ministers of his will. Wherefore he threatened sometimes that he would call them forth by hissing, (*w*) sometimes that he would use them as a net (*x*) to entangle, sometimes as a hammer (*y*) to strike the people of Israel. But he particularly declared himself to be operative in them, when he called Sennacherib an axe, (*z*) which was both directed and driven by his hand. Augustine somewhere makes the following correct distinction: "that they sin, proceeds from themselves; that in sinning they perform this or that particular action, is from the power of God, who divides the darkness according to his pleasure."

V. Now that the ministry of Satan is concerned in instigating the reprobate, whenever the Lord directs them hither or thither by his providence, may be sufficiently proved even from one passage. For it is frequently asserted in Samuel that an evil spirit of the Lord, and an evil spirit from the Lord, either agitated or quitted Saul. (*a*) To refer this to the Holy Spirit were impious. An impure spirit, therefore, is called a spirit of God, because it acts according to his command and by his power, being rather an instrument in the performance of the action, than itself the author of it. We must add, also, what is advanced by Paul, that "God shall send strong delusion, that they who believed not the truth should believe a lie." (*b*) Yet

(*r*) Exod. iv. 21.(*s*) Exod. vii. 3.(*t*) Deut. ii. 30.(*v*) Psalm cv. 25.(*w*) Isaiah v. 26; vii. 18.(*x*) Ezek. xii. 13; xvii. 20.(*y*) Jer. i. 23.(*z*) Isaiah x. 15.(*a*) 1 Sam. xvi. 14; xviii. 19; xix. 19.(*b*) 2 Thess. ii. 11, 12.

there is always a wide difference, even in the same work, between the operation of God and the attempts of Satan and wicked men. He makes the evil instruments, which he has in his hand, and can turn as he pleases, to be subservient to his justice. They, as they are evil, produce the iniquity which the depravity of their nature has conceived. The other arguments, which tend to vindicate the majesty of God from every calumny, and to obviate the cavils of the impious, have already been advanced in the chapter concerning Providence. For, at present, I only intend briefly to show how Satan reigns in the reprobate man, and how the Lord operates in them both.

VI. But what liberty man possesses in those actions which in themselves are neither righteous nor wicked, and pertain rather to the corporeal than to the spiritual life, although we have before hinted, has not yet been explicitly stated. Some have admitted him in such things to possess a free choice; rather, as I suppose, from a reluctance to dispute on a subject of no importance, than from an intention of positively asserting that which they concede. Now, though I grant that they who believe themselves to be possessed of no power to justify themselves, believe what is principally necessary to be known in order to salvation, yet I think that this point also should not be neglected, that we may know it to be owing to the special favour of God, whenever our mind is disposed to choose that which is advantageous for us; whenever our will inclines to it; and, on the other hand, whenever our mind and understanding avoid what would otherwise hurt us. And the power of the providence of God extends so far, as not only to cause those events to succeed which he foresees will be best, but also to incline the wills of men to the same objects. Indeed, if we view the administration of external things with our own reason, we shall not doubt their subjection to the human will; but if we listen to the numerous testimonies, which proclaim that in these things also the hearts of men are governed by the Lord, they will constrain us to submit the will itself to the special influence of God. Who conciliated the minds of the Egyptians towards the Israelites, (c) so as to induce them to lend them the most valuable of their furniture? They would never have been induced to do this of their own accord. It follows, therefore, that their hearts were guided by the Lord rather than by an inclination of their own. And Jacob, if he had not been persuaded that God infuses various dispositions into men according to his pleasure, would not have said concerning his son Joseph, whom he thought to be some profane Egyptian, "God Almighty give you mercy before the man." (d)

(c) Exod. xi. 3.

(d) Gen. xliii. 14.

As the whole Church confesses in the Psalms, that, when God chose to compassionate her, he softened the hearts of the cruel nations into clemency. (*e*) Again, when Saul was so inflamed with rage, as to prepare himself for war, it is expressly mentioned as the cause, that he was impelled by the Spirit of God. (*f*) Who diverted the mind of Absalom from adopting the counsel of Ahithophel, which used to be esteemed as an oracle? (*g*) Who inclined Rehoboam to be persuaded by the counsel of the young men? (*h*) Who caused the nations, that before were very valiant, to feel terror at the approach of the Israelites? Rahab the harlot confessed that this was the work of God. Who, on the other hand, dejected the minds of the Israelites with fear and terror, but he who had threatened in the law that he would "send a faintness into their hearts?" (*i*)

VII. Some one will object, that these are peculiar examples, to the rule of which, things ought by no means universally to be reduced. But I maintain, that they are sufficient to prove that for which I contend; that God, whenever he designs to prepare the way for his providence, inclines and moves the wills of men even in external things, and that their choice is not so free, but that its liberty is subject to the will of God. That your mind depends more on the influence of God, than on the liberty of your own choice, you must be constrained to conclude, whether you are willing or not, from this daily experience, that in affairs of no perplexity your judgment and understanding frequently fail; that in undertakings not arduous your spirits languish; on the other hand, in things the most obscure, suitable advice is immediately offered; in things great and perilous, your mind proves superior to every difficulty. And thus I explain the observation of Solomon, "The hearing ear, and the seeing eye, the Lord hath made even both of them." (*k*) For he appears to me to speak, not of their creation, but of the peculiar favour of God displayed in their performing their functions. When he says, that "the king's heart is in the hand of the Lord; as the rivers of water, he turneth it whithersoever he will;" (*l*) under one species he clearly comprehends the whole genus. For if the will of any man be free from all subjection, that privilege belongs eminently to the will of a king, which exercises a government in some measure over the wills of others; but if the will of the king be subject to the power of God, ours cannot be exempted from the same authority. Augustine has a remarkable passage on this subject: "The Scripture, if it be diligently examined, shows, not only that the good wills of men, which he turns from evil into good, and directs to good actions and to eternal

(*e*) Psalm cvi. 46. (*f*) 1 Sam. xi. 6. (*g*) 2 Sam. xvii. 14. (*h*) 1 Kings xii. 10
 (*i*) Lev. xxvi. 36. (*k*) Prov. xx. 12. (*l*) Prov. xxi. 1.

life, but also that those wills which relate to the present life, are subject to the power of God, so that he, by a most secret, but yet a most righteous judgment, causes them to be inclined whither he pleases, and when he pleases, either for the communication of benefits, or for the infliction of punishments.”

VIII. Here let the reader remember, that the ability of the human will is not to be estimated from the event of things, as some ignorant men are preposterously accustomed to do. For they conceive themselves fully and ingeniously to establish the servitude of the human will, because even the most exalted monarchs have not all their desires fulfilled. But this ability, of which we speak, is to be considered within man, and not to be measured by external success. For in the dispute concerning free will, the question is not, whether a man, notwithstanding external impediments, can perform and execute whatever he may have resolved in his mind, but whether in every case his judgment exerts freedom of choice, and his will freedom of inclination. If men possess both these, then Attilius Regulus, when confined to the small extent of a cask stuck round with nails, will possess as much free will as Augustus Cæsar, when governing a great part of the world with his nod.

CHAPTER V.

A REFUTATION OF THE OBJECTIONS COMMONLY URGED IN SUPPORT OF FREE WILL.

ENOUGH might appear to have been already said on the servitude of the human will, did not they, who endeavour to overthrow it with a false notion of liberty, allege, on the contrary, certain reasons in opposition to our sentiments. First, they collect together some absurdities, in order to render it odious, as if it were abhorrent to common sense; and then they attack it with testimonies of Scripture. Both these weapons we will repel in order. If sin, say they, be necessary, then it ceases to be sin; if it be voluntary, then it may be avoided. These were also the weapons used by Pelagius in his attacks on Augustine; with whose authority, however, we wish not to urge them, till we shall have given some satisfaction on the subject itself. I deny, then, that sin is the less criminal, because it is necessary; I deny also the other consequence, which they infer, that it is avoidable because it is voluntary. For, if any one wish to dispute with God, and to escape his judgment

by the pretext of having been incapable of acting otherwise, he is prepared with an answer, which we have elsewhere advanced, that it arises not from creation, but from the corruption of nature, that men, being enslaved by sin, can will nothing but what is evil. For whence proceeded that impotence, of which the ungodly would gladly avail themselves, but from Adam voluntarily devoting himself to the tyranny of the devil? Hence, therefore, the corruption with which we are firmly bound. It originated in the revolt of the first man from his Maker. If all men are justly accounted guilty of this rebellion, let them not suppose themselves excused by necessity, in which very thing they have a most evident cause of their condemnation. And this I have before clearly explained, and have given an example in the devil himself, which shows, that he who sins necessarily, sins no less voluntarily; and also in the elect angels, whose will, though it cannot swerve from what is good, ceases not to be a will. Bernard also judiciously inculcates the same doctrine, that we are, therefore, the more miserable because our necessity is voluntary; which yet constrains us to be so devoted to it, that we are, as we have already observed, the slaves of sin. The second branch of their argument is erroneous; because it makes an improper transition from what is voluntary to what is free; but we have before evinced, that a thing may be done voluntarily, which yet is not the subject of free choice.

II. They add, that unless both virtues and vices proceed from the free choice of the will, it is not reasonable either that punishments should be inflicted, or that rewards should be conferred on man. This argument, though first advanced by Aristotle, yet I grant is used on some occasions by Chrysostom and Jerome. That it was familiar to the Pelagians, however, Jerome himself does not dissemble, but even relates their own words: "If the grace of God operates in us, then the crown will be given to grace, not to us who labour." In regard to punishments, I reply, that they are justly inflicted on us, from whom the guilt of sin proceeds. For of what importance is it, whether sin be committed with a judgment free or enslaved, so it be committed with the voluntary bias of the passions; especially as man is proved to be a sinner, because he is subject to the servitude of sin? With respect to rewards of righteousness, where is the great absurdity, if we confess that they depend rather on the Divine benignity than on our own merits? How often does this recur in Augustine, "that God crowns not our merits, but his own gifts; and that they are called rewards, not as though they were due to our merits, but because they are retributions to the graces already conferred on us!" They discover great acuteness in this observation, that

there remains no room for merits, if they originate not from free will; but in their opinion of the erroneousness of our sentiment they are greatly mistaken. For Augustine hesitates not on all occasions to inculcate as certain, what they think it impious to acknowledge; as where he says, "What are the merits of any man? When he comes not with a merited reward, but with free grace, he alone being free and a deliverer from sins, finds all men sinners." Again: "If you receive what is your due, you must be punished. What then is done? God has given you not merited punishment, but unmerited grace. If you wish to be excluded from grace, boast your merits." Again: "You are nothing of yourself; sins are yours, merits belong to God; you deserve punishment; and when you come to be rewarded, he will crown his own gifts, not your merits." In the same sense he elsewhere teaches that grace proceeds not from merit, but merit from grace. And a little after he concludes, that God with his gifts precedes all merits, that thence he may elicit his other merits, and gives altogether freely, because he discovers nothing as a cause of salvation. But what necessity is there for further quotations, when his writings are full of such passages? But the Apostle will even better deliver them from this error, if they will hear from what origin he deduces the glory of the saints. "Whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified." (m) Why, then, according to the Apostle, are the faithful crowned? Because by the mercy of the Lord, and not by their own industry, they are elected, and called, and justified. Farewell, then, this vain fear, that there will be an end of all merits if free will be overturned. For it is a proof of extreme folly, to be terrified and to fly from that to which the Scripture calls us. "If," says he; "thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" (n) You see that he divests free will of every thing, with the express design of leaving no room for merits. But yet, the beneficence and liberality of God being inexhaustible and various, those graces which he confers on us, because he makes them ours, he rewards, just as if they were our own virtues.

III. They further allege what may appear to be borrowed from Chrysostom, that if our will has not this ability to choose good or evil, the partakers of the same nature must be either all evil or all good. And not very far from this is the writer, whoever he was, of the treatise *On the Calling of the Gentiles*, which is circulated under the name of Ambrose, when he argues, that no man would ever recede from the faith, unless

(m) Rom. viii. 29.

(n) 1 Cor. iv. 7.

the grace of God left us the condition of mutability. In which it is surprising that such great men were so inconsistent with themselves. For how did it not occur to Chrysostom, that it is the election of God, which makes this difference between men? We are not afraid to allow, what Paul very strenuously asserts, that all, without exception, are depraved and addicted to wickedness; but with him we add, that the mercy of God does not permit all to remain in depravity. Therefore, since we all naturally labour under the same disease, they alone recover to whom the Lord has been pleased to apply his healing hand. The rest, whom he passes by in righteous judgment, putrefy in their corruption till they are entirely consumed. And it is from the same cause, that some persevere to the end, and others decline and fall in the midst of their course. For perseverance itself also is a gift of God, which he bestows not on all men promiscuously, but imparts to whom he pleases. If we inquire the cause of the difference, why some persevere with constancy, and others fail through instability, no other can be found, but that God sustains the former by his power, that they perish not, and does not communicate the same strength to the latter, that they may be examples of inconstancy.

IV. They urge further, that exhortations are given in vain, that the use of admonitions is superfluous, and that reproofs are ridiculous, if it be not in the power of the sinner to obey. When similar objections were formerly made to Augustine, he was obliged to write his treatise *On Correction and Grace*; in which, though he copiously refutes them, he calls his adversaries to this conclusion: "O man, in the commandment learn what is your duty: in correction learn, that through your own fault you have it not: in prayer learn whence you may receive what you wish to enjoy." There is nearly the same argument in the treatise *On the Spirit and Letter*, in which he maintains that God does not regulate the precepts of his law by the ability of men, but when he has commanded what is right, freely gives to his elect ability to perform it. This is not a subject that requires a prolix discussion. First, we are not alone in this cause, but have the support of Christ and all the Apostles. Let our opponents consider how they can obtain the superiority in a contest with such antagonists. Does Christ, who declares that without him we can do nothing, (o) on that account the less reprehend and punish those who without him do what is evil? Does he therefore relax in his exhortations to every man to practise good works? How severely does Paul censure the Corinthians for their neglect of charity! (p) Yet he earnestly prays that charity may be given them by the Lord. In his

(o) John xv. 5.

(p) 1 Cor. iii. 3.

Epistle to the Romans he declares that "it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy:" (q) yet afterwards he refrains not from the use of admonition, exhortation, and reproof. Why do they not, therefore, remonstrate with the Lord, not to lose his labour in such a manner, by requiring of men those things which he alone can bestow, and punishing those things which are committed for want of his grace? Why do they not admonish Paul to spare those who are unable to will or run without the previous mercy of God, of which they are now destitute? As though truly the Lord has not the best reason for his doctrine, which readily presents itself to those who religiously seek it. Paul clearly shows how far doctrine, exhortation, and reproof, can of themselves avail towards producing a change of heart, when he says that "neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but" that the efficacy is solely from "God that giveth the increase." (r) Thus we see that Moses severely sanctions the precepts of the law, and the Prophets earnestly urge and threaten transgressors; whilst, nevertheless, they acknowledge, that men never begin to be wise till a heart is given them to understand; that it is the peculiar work of God to circumcise the heart, and instead of a stony heart to give a heart of flesh; to inscribe his law in men's minds; in a word, to render his doctrine effectual by a renovation of the soul.

V. What, then, it will be inquired, is the use of exhortations? I reply, If the impious despise them with obstinate hearts, they will serve for a testimony against them, when they shall come to the tribunal of the Lord; and even in the present state they wound their consciences; for however the most audacious person may deride them, he cannot disapprove of them in his heart. But it will be said, What can a miserable sinner do, if the softness of heart, which is necessary to obedience, be denied him? I ask, What excuse can he plead, seeing that he cannot impute the hardness of his heart to any one but himself? The impious, therefore, who are ready, if possible, to ridicule the Divine precepts and exhortations, are, in spite of their own inclinations, confounded by their power. But the principal utility should be considered in regard to the faithful, in whom as the Lord performs all things by his Spirit, so he neglects not the instrumentality of his word, but uses it with great efficacy. Let it be allowed, then, as it ought to be, that all the strength of the pious consists in the grace of God, according to this expression of the Prophet: "I will give them a new heart, that they may walk in my statutes." (s) But you will object, Why are they admonished of their duty, and not

(q) Rom. ix. 16.

(r) 1 Cor. iii. 7.

(s) Ezek. xi. 19, 20.

rather left to the direction of the Spirit? Why are they importuned with exhortations, when they cannot make more haste than is produced by the impulse of the Spirit? Why are they chastised, if they have ever deviated from the right way, seeing that they erred through the necessary infirmity of the flesh? I reply, Who art thou, O man, that wouldest impose laws upon God? If it be his will to prepare us by exhortation for the reception of this grace, by which obedience to the exhortation is produced, what have you to censure in this economy? If exhortations and reproofs were of no other advantage to the pious, than to convince them of sin, they ought not on that account to be esteemed wholly useless. Now, since, by the internal operation of the Spirit, they are most effectual to inflame the heart with a love of righteousness, to shake off sloth, to destroy the pleasure and poisonous sweetness of iniquity, and, on the contrary, to render it hateful and burdensome, who can dare to reject them as superfluous? If any one would desire a plainer answer, let him take it thus: The operations of God on his elect are twofold — internally, by his Spirit, externally, by his word. By his Spirit illuminating their minds and forming their hearts to the love and cultivation of righteousness, he makes them new creatures. By his word he excites them to desire, seek, and obtain the same renovation. In both he displays the efficacy of his power, according to the mode of his dispensation. When he addresses the same word to the reprobate, though it produces not their correction, yet he makes it effectual for another purpose, that they may be confounded by the testimony of their consciences now, and be rendered more inexcusable at the day of judgment. Thus Christ, though he pronounces that “no man can come to him, except the Father draw him,” and that the elect come when they have “heard and learned of the Father,” (t) yet himself neglects not the office of a teacher, but with his own mouth sedulously invites those who need the internal teachings of the Holy Spirit to enable them to derive any benefit from his instructions. With respect to the reprobate, Paul suggests that teaching is not useless, because it is to them “the savour of death unto death,” but “a sweet savour unto God.” (v)

VI. Our adversaries are very laborious in collecting testimonies of Scripture; and this with a view, since they cannot refute us with their weight, to overwhelm us with their number. But as in battles, when armies come to close combat, the weak multitude, whatever pomp and ostentation they may display, are soon defeated and routed, so it will be very easy for us to vanquish them, with all their multitude. For as all

(t) John vi. 44, 45.

(v) 2 Cor. ii. 16.

the passages, which they abuse in their opposition to us, when properly classed and distributed, centre in a very few topics, one answer will be sufficient for many of them; it will not be necessary to dwell on a particular explication of each. Their principal argument they derive from the precepts; which they suppose to be so proportioned to our ability, that whatever they can be proved to require, it necessarily follows we are capable of performing. They proceed, therefore, to a particular detail of them, and by them measure the extent of our strength. Either, say they, God mocks us, when he commands holiness, piety, obedience, chastity, love, and meekness, and when he forbids impurity, idolatry, unchastity, anger, robbery, pride, and the like; or he requires only such things as we have power to perform. Now, almost all the precepts which they collect, may be distributed into three classes. Some require the first conversion to God; others simply relate to the observation of the law; others enjoin perseverance in the grace of God already received. Let us first speak of them all in general, and then proceed to the particulars. To represent the ability of man as coëxtensive with the precepts of the Divine law, has indeed for a long time not been unusual, and has some appearance of plausibility; but it has proceeded from the grossest ignorance of the law. For those who think it an enormous crime to say that the observation of the law is impossible, insist on this very cogent argument, that otherwise the law was given in vain. For they argue just as if Paul had never said any thing concerning the law. But, pray, what is the meaning of these expressions — “The law was added because of transgressions;” “by the law is the knowledge of sin;” “the law worketh wrath;” “the law entered that the offence might abound?” (*w*) Do they imply a necessity of its being limited to our ability, that it might not be given in vain? Do they not rather show that it was placed far beyond our ability, in order to convince us of our impotence? According to the definition of the same Apostle, “the end of the commandment is charity.” (*x*) But when he wishes the minds of the Thesalonians to “abound in love,” (*y*) he plainly acknowledges that the law sounds in our ears in vain, unless God inspire the principles of it into our hearts.

VII. Indeed, if the Scripture taught only that the law is the rule of life, to which our conduct ought to be conformed, I would immediately accede to their opinion. But since it carefully and perspicuously states to us various uses of the law, it will be best to consider the operation of the law in man according to that exposition. As far as relates to the present argument,

(*w*) Gal. iii. 19. Rom. iii. 20; iv. 15; v. 20.
 (*x*) 1 Tim. i. 5. (*y*) 1 Thess. iii. 12.

when it has prescribed any thing to be performed by us, it teaches that the power of obedience proceeds from the goodness of God, and therefore invites us to pray that it may be given us. If there were only a commandment, and no promise, there would be a trial of the sufficiency of our strength to obey the commandment; but since the commands are connected with promises, which declare that we must derive not only subsidiary power, but our whole strength, from the assistance of Divine grace, they furnish abundant evidence that we are not only unequal to the observation of the law, but altogether incapable of it. Wherefore let them no more urge the proportion of our ability to the precepts of the law, as though the Lord had regulated the standard of righteousness, which he designed to give in the law, according to the measure of our imbecility. It should rather be concluded from the promises, how unprepared we are of ourselves, since we stand in such universal need of his grace. But will it, say they, be credited by any, that the Lord addressed his law to stocks and stones? I reply, that no one will attempt to inculcate such a notion. For neither are the impious stocks or stones, when they are taught by the law the contrariety of their dispositions to God, and are convicted of guilt by the testimony of their own minds; nor the pious, when, admonished of their own impotence, they have recourse to the grace of God. To this purpose are the following passages from Augustine: "God gives commands which we cannot perform, that we may know what we ought to request of him. The utility of the precepts is great, if only so much be given to free will, that the grace of God may receive the greater honour. Faith obtains what the law commands; and the law therefore commands, that faith may obtain that which is commanded by the law: moreover God requires faith itself of us, and finds not what he requires, unless he has given what he finds." Again: "Let God give what he enjoins, and let him enjoin what he pleases."

VIII. This will more clearly appear in an examination of the three kinds of precepts which we have already mentioned. The Lord, both in the law and in the prophets, frequently commands us to be converted to him; (*z*) but the Prophet, on the other hand, says, "Turn thou me, and I shall be turned." "After that I was turned, I repented," &c. (*a*) He commands us to circumcise our hearts; but he announces by Moses, that this circumcision is the work of his own hand. (*b*) He frequently requires newness of heart; but elsewhere declares that this is his own gift. (*c*) "What God promises," Augustine says, "we do not perform ourselves through free will or nature; but

(z) Joel ii. 12.

(a) Jer. xxxi. 18, 19.

(b) Deut. x. 16, and xxx. 6.

(c) Jer. iv. 4. Ezek. xxxvi. 26.

he does it himself by his grace." And this is the observation to which he himself assigns the fifth place in his enumeration of Ticonius's rules of Christian doctrine; that we should make a proper distinction between the law and the promises, or between the commandments and grace. This may suffice, in answer to those who from the precepts infer an ability in man to obey them, that they may destroy the grace of God, by which those very precepts are fulfilled. The precepts of the second class are simple, enjoining on us the worship of God, constant submission to his will, observance of his commands, and adherence to his doctrine. But there are innumerable passages, which prove that the highest degree of righteousness, sanctity, piety, and purity, capable of being attained, is his own gift. Of the third class is that exhortation of Paul and Barnabas to the faithful, mentioned by Luke, "to continue in the grace of God." (*d*) But whence the grace of perseverance should be sought, the same Apostle informs us, when he says, "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord." (*e*) In another place he cautions us to "grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby we are sealed unto the day of redemption." (*f*) But because what he there requires could not be performed by men, he prays for the Thessalonians, "that our God would count them worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power." (*g*) Thus, also, in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, treating of alms, he frequently commends their benevolent and pious disposition; (*h*) yet a little after he gives thanks to God for having inclined the heart of Titus to "accept" or undertake "the exhortation." If Titus could not even use his own tongue to exhort others without having been prompted by God, how should others have been inclined to act, unless God himself had directed their hearts?

IX. Our more subtle adversaries cavil at all these testimonies, because there is no impediment, they say, that prevents our exerting our own ability, and God assisting our weak efforts. They adduce also passages from the Prophets, where the accomplishment of our conversion seems to be divided equally between God and us. "Turn ye unto me, and I will turn unto you." (*i*) What assistance we receive from the Lord has already been shown, and needs not to be repeated here. I wish only this single point to be conceded to me, that it is in vain to infer our possession of ability to fulfil the law from God's command to us to obey it; since it is evident, that for the performance of all the Divine precepts, the grace of the

(*d*) Acts xiii. 43.(*f*) Eph. iv. 30.(*h*) 2 Cor. viii. 1, &c.(*e*) Eph. vi. 10.(*g*) 2 Thess. i. 11.(*i*) Zech. i. 3.

Legislator is both necessary for us, and promised to us; and hence it follows, that at least more is required of us than we are capable of performing. Nor is it possible for any cavils to explain away that passage of Jeremiah, which assures us, that the covenant of God, made with his ancient people, was frustrated because it was merely a literal one; (*k*) and that it can only be confirmed by the influence of the Spirit, who forms the heart to obedience. Nor does their error derive any support from this passage: "Turn ye unto me, and I will turn unto you." For this denotes, not that turning of God in which he renovates our hearts to repentance, but that in which he declares his benevolence and kindness by external prosperity; as by adversity he sometimes manifests his displeasure. When the people of Israel, therefore, after having been harassed with miseries and calamities under various forms, complained that God was departed from them, he replies that his benignity will not fail them if they return to rectitude of life, and to himself, who is the standard of righteousness. The passage, then, is miserably perverted, when it is made to represent the work of conversion as divided between God and men. We have observed the greater brevity on these points, because it will be a more suitable place for this argument when we treat of the Law.

X. The second description of arguments is nearly allied to the first. They allege the promises, in which God covenants with our will; such as, "Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live." "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land; but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." (*l*) Again: "If thou wilt put away thine abominations out of my sight, then shalt thou not remove." "If thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth;" (*m*) and other similar passages. They consider it an absurdity and mockery, that the benefits which the Lord offers in the promises are referred to our will, unless it be in our power either to confirm or to frustrate them. And truly it is very easy to amplify this subject with eloquent complaints, that we are cruelly mocked by the Lord, when he announces that his benignity depends on our will, if that will be not in our own power; that this would be egregious liberality in God, to present his benefits to us in such a manner, that we should have no power to enjoy them; and that there must be a strange certainty in his promises, if they depend on a thing impossible, so that they can never be fulfilled. Concerning

(*k*) Jer. xxxi. 32.(*l*) Amos v. 14. Isaiah i. 19, 20.(*m*) Jer. iv. 1. Deut. xxviii. 1.

promises of this kind, to which a condition is annexed, we shall speak in another place, and evince that there is no absurdity in the impossibility of their completion. With respect to the present question, I deny that God is cruel or insincere to us, when he invites us to merit his favours, though he knows us to be altogether incapable of doing this. For as the promises are offered equally to the faithful and to the impious, they have their use with them both. As by the precepts God disturbs the consciences of the impious, that they may not enjoy too much pleasure in sin without any recollection of his judgments, so in the promises he calls them to attest how unworthy they are of his kindness. For who can deny that it is most equitable and proper for the Lord to bless those who worship him, and severely to punish the despisers of his majesty? God acts, therefore, in a right and orderly manner, when, addressing the impious, who are bound with the fetters of sin, he adds to the promises this condition, that when they shall have departed from their wickedness, they shall then, and not till then, enjoy his favours; even for this sole reason, that they may know that they are deservedly excluded from those benefits which belong to the worshippers of the true God. On the other hand, since he designs by all means to stimulate the faithful to implore his grace, it will not be at all strange, if he tries in his promises also, what we have shown he does with considerable effect in his precepts. Being instructed by the precepts concerning the will of God, we are apprized of our misery, in having our hearts so completely averse to it; and are at the same time excited to invoke his Spirit, that we may be directed by him into the right way. But because our sluggishness is not sufficiently roused by the precepts, God adds his promises, to allure us by their sweetness to the love of his commands. Now, in proportion to our increased love of righteousness will be the increase of our fervour in seeking the grace of God. See how, in these addresses, "If ye be willing," "If ye be obedient," the Lord neither attributes to us an unlimited power to will and to obey, nor yet mocks us on account of our impotence.

XI. The third class of arguments also has a great affinity with the preceding. For they produce passages in which God reproaches an ungrateful people, that it was wholly owing to their own fault that they did not receive blessings of all kinds from his indulgent hand. Of this kind are the following passages: "The Amalekites and the Canaanites are there before you, and ye shall fall by the sword; because ye are turned away from the Lord." (n) "Because I called you, but ye answered not, therefore will I do unto this house as I have done

(n) Numb. xiv. 43.

to Shiloh." (o) Again: "This is a nation that obeyeth not the voice of the Lord their God, nor receiveth correction: the Lord hath rejected and forsaken the generation of his wrath." (p) Again: "They obeyed not thy voice, neither walked in thy law; they have done nothing of all that thou commandedst them to do: therefore thou hast caused all this evil to come upon them." (q) How, say they, could such reproaches be applicable to those who might immediately reply, It is true that we desired prosperity and dreaded adversity; but our not obeying the Lord, or hearkening to his voice, in order to obtain good and to avoid evil, has been owing to our want of liberty, and subjection to the dominion of sin. It is in vain, therefore, to reproach us with evils, which we had no power to avoid. In answer to this, leaving the pretext of necessity, which is but a weak and futile plea, I ask whether they can exculpate themselves from all guilt. For if they are convicted of any fault, the Lord justly reproaches them with their perverseness, as the cause of their not having experienced the advantage of his clemency. Let them answer, then, if they can deny that their own perverse will was the cause of their obstinacy. If they find the source of the evil within themselves, why do they so earnestly inquire after extraneous causes, that they may not appear to have been the authors of their own ruin? But if it be true that sinners are deprived of the favours of God, and chastised with his punishments, for their own sin, and only for their own, there is great reason why they should hear those reproaches from his mouth; that if they obstinately persist in their crimes, they may learn in their calamities rather to accuse and detest their iniquity, than to charge God with unrighteous cruelty; that if they have not cast off all docility, they may become weary of their sins, the demerits of which they see to be misery and ruin, and may return into the good way, acknowledging in a serious confession the very thing for which the Lord rebukes them. And that those reproofs, which are quoted from the Prophets, have produced this beneficial effect on the faithful, is evident from the solemn prayer of Daniel, given us in his ninth chapter. Of the former use of them we find an example in the Jews, to whom Jeremiah is commanded to declare the cause of their miseries; though nothing could befall them, otherwise than the Lord had foretold. "Thou shalt speak all these words unto them; but they will not hearken to thee: thou shalt also call unto them; but they will not answer thee." (r) For what purpose, then, it will be asked, did they speak to persons that were deaf? It was in order that, in spite of their disinclination and aversion, they might

(o) Jer. vii. 13, 14. (p) Jer. vii. 28, 29. (q) Jer. xxxii. 23. (r) Jer. vii. 27.

know what was declared to them to be true; that it was an abominable sacrilege to transfer to God the guilt of their crimes, which belonged solely to themselves. With these few solutions, we may very easily despatch the immense multitude of testimonies, which the enemies of the grace of God are accustomed to collect, both from the precepts of the law, and from the expostulations directed to transgressors of it, in order to establish the idol of free will. In one psalm the Jews are stigmatized as "a stubborn and rebellious generation, a generation that set not their heart aright." (s) In another, the Psalmist exhorts the men of his age to "harden not their hearts;" (t) which implies, that all the guilt of rebellion lies in the perverseness of men. But it is absurd to infer from this passage that the heart is equally flexible to either side; whereas "the preparation" of it is "from the Lord." (v) The Psalmist says, "I have inclined my heart to perform thy statutes;" (w) because he had devoted himself to the service of God without any reluctance, but with a cheerful readiness of mind. Yet he boasts not of being himself the author of this inclination, which in the same psalm he acknowledges to be the gift of God. (x) We should remember, therefore, the admonition of Paul, when he commands the faithful to "work out" their "own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God which worketh in" them "both to will and to do." (y) He assigns them a part to perform, that they may not indulge themselves in carnal negligence; but by inculcating "fear and trembling," he humbles them, and reminds them that this very thing, which they are commanded to do, is the peculiar work of God. In this he plainly suggests that the faithful act, if I may be allowed the expression, passively, inasmuch as they are furnished with strength from heaven, that they may arrogate nothing at all to themselves. Wherefore, when Peter exhorts us to "add to" our "faith, virtue," (z) he does not allot us an under part to be performed, as though we could do any thing separately, of ourselves; he only arouses the indolence of the flesh, by which faith itself is frequently extinguished. To the same purpose is the exhortation of Paul: "Quench not the Spirit;" (a) for slothfulness gradually prevails over the faithful, unless it be corrected. But if any one should infer from this, that it is at his own option to cherish the light offered him, his ignorance will easily be refuted; since this diligence which Paul requires, proceeds only from God. For we are also frequently commanded to "cleanse ourselves from all filthiness," (b) whilst the Spirit claims the office of sanctifying us exclusively to himself. In short, that

(s) Psalm lxxviii. 8.

(w) Psalm cxix. 112.

(z) 2 Peter i. 5.

(t) Psalm xc. 8.

(x) Psalm cxix. 33—40.

(a) 1 Thess. v. 19.

(v) Prov. xvi. 1.

(y) Phil. ii. 12.

(b) 2 Cor. vii. 1.

what properly belongs to God is, by concession, transferred to us, is plain from the words of John: "He that is begotten of God, keepeth himself." (c) The preachers of free will lay hold of this expression, as though we were saved partly by the Divine power, partly by our own; as though we did not receive from heaven this very preservation which the Apostle mentions. Wherefore also Christ prays that his Father would "keep" us "from evil;" (d) and we know that the pious, in their warfare against Satan, obtain the victory by no other arms than those which are furnished by God. Therefore Peter, having enjoined us to "purify" our "souls, in obeying the truth," immediately adds, as a correction, "through the Spirit." (e) Finally, the impotence of all human strength in the spiritual conflict is briefly demonstrated by John when he says, "Whosoever is born of God cannot sin; for his seed remaineth in him;" (f) and in another place he adds the reason, that "this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." (g)

XII. There is also a testimony cited from the law of Moses, which appears directly repugnant to our solution. For, after having published the law, he makes the following solemn declaration to the people: "This commandment, which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off: it is not in heaven: but the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it." (h) If these expressions be understood merely of the precepts, I grant that they have much weight in the present argument. For although we might easily elude their force, by saying that they treat of the facility and promptitude, not of observance, but of knowledge, yet still perhaps they might leave some doubt. But the Apostle, in whose expositions there is no ambiguity, removes all our doubts, by affirming that Moses here spake of the doctrine of the gospel. (i) But if any one should obstinately contend, that Paul has violently perverted the passage from its genuine meaning, by applying it to the gospel, although his presumption could not be acquitted of impiety, yet there is enough to refute him, independently of the authority of the Apostle. For, if Moses spoke only of the precepts, he was deceiving the people with the vainest confidence. For would they not have precipitated themselves into ruin, if they had attempted the observance of the law in their own strength, as a thing of no difficulty? What, then, becomes of the very obvious facility with which the law may be observed, when there appears no access to it but over a fatal precipice? Where-

(c) 1 John v. 18.

(f) 1 John iii. 9.

(h) Deut. xxx. 11—14.

(d) John xvii. 15.

(g) 1 John v. 4.

(i) Rom. x. 8.

(e) 1 Peter i. 22.

fore nothing is more certain, than that Moses in these words comprehended the covenant of mercy, which he had promulgated together with the precepts of the law. For in a preceding verse he had taught that our hearts must be circumcised by God, in order that we may love him. (*k*) Therefore he placed this facility, of which he afterwards speaks, not in the strength of man, but in the assistance and protection of the Holy Spirit, who powerfully accomplishes his work in our infirmity. However, the passage is not to be understood simply of the precepts, but rather of the promises of the gospel, which are so far from maintaining an ability in us to obtain righteousness, that they prove us to be utterly destitute of it. Paul, considering the same, proves by this testimony that salvation is proposed to us in the gospel, not under that hard, difficult, and impossible condition, prescribed to us in the law, which pronounces it attainable only by those who have fulfilled all the commandments, but under a condition easily and readily to be performed. Therefore this testimony contributes nothing to support the liberty of the human will.

XIII. Some other passages also are frequently objected, which show that God sometimes tries men by withdrawing the assistance of his grace, and waits to see what course they will pursue; as in Hosea: "I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face." (*l*) It would be ridiculous, they say, for the Lord to consider, whether Israel would seek his face, unless their minds were flexible, capable of inclining either way, according to their own pleasure; as if it were not very common for God, in the Prophets, to represent himself as despising and rejecting his people, till they should amend their lives. But what will our adversaries infer from such threats? If they maintain, that those who are deserted by God, are capable of converting themselves, they oppose the uniform declarations of Scripture. If they acknowledge that the grace of God is necessary to conversion, what is their controversy with us? But they will reply, that they concede its necessity in such a sense as to maintain that man still retains some power. How do they prove it? Certainly not from this or any similar passages. For it is one thing to depart from a man, to observe what he will do when forsaken and left to himself, and another to assist his little strength in proportion to his imbecility. What, then, it will be inquired, is implied in such forms of expression? I reply, that the import of them is just as if God had said, Since admonitions, exhortations, and reproofs, produce no good effect on this rebellious people, I will withdraw myself for a little while, and silently

(*k*) Deut. xxx. 6.(*l*) Hos. v. 15.

leave them to affliction. I will see whether, at some future period, after a series of calamities, they will remember me, and seek my face. The departure of the Lord signifies the removal of his word. His observing what men will do, signifies his concealing himself in silence, and exercising them for a season with various afflictions. He does both to humble us the more; for we should sooner be confounded than corrected with the scourges of adversity, unless he rendered us docile by his Spirit. Now, when the Lord, offended, and, as it were, wearied by our extreme obstinacy, leaves us for a time, by the removal of his word, in which he is accustomed to manifest his presence with us, and makes the experiment, what we shall do in his absence, — it is falsely inferred from this, that there is some power of free will, which he observes and proves; since he acts in this manner with no other design than to bring us to a sense and acknowledgment of our own nothingness.

XIV. They argue also from the manner of expression which is invariably observed, both in the Scripture and in the common conversation of mankind. For good actions are called our own, and we are said to perform what is holy and pleasing to the Lord, as well as to commit sins. But if sins be justly imputed to us, as proceeding from ourselves, certainly some share ought to be, for the same reason, assigned to us also in works of righteousness. For it would be absurd that we should be said to do those things, to the performance of which, being incapable of any exertion of our own, we were impelled by God, as so many stones. Wherefore, though we allow the grace of God the preëminence, yet these expressions indicate that our own endeavours hold at least the second place. If it were only alleged, that good works are called our own, I would reply, that the bread which we pray to God to give us, is called ours. What will they prove by this term, but that what otherwise by no means belongs to us, becomes ours through the benignity and gratuitous munificence of God? Therefore let them either ridicule the same absurdity in the Lord's prayer, or no longer esteem it ridiculous, that good works are denominated ours, in which we have no propriety but from the liberality of God. But there is rather more force in what follows; that the Scripture frequently affirms that we ourselves worship God, work righteousness, obey the law, and perform good works. These being the proper offices of the understanding and will, how could they justly be referred to the Spirit, and at the same time be attributed to us, if there were not some union of our exertions with the grace of God? We shall easily extricate ourselves from these objections, if we properly consider the manner in which the Spirit of the Lord operates in the saints. The similitude with which they try to

cast an odium on our sentiments, is quite foreign to the subject; for who is so senseless as to suppose that there is no difference between impelling a man, and throwing a stone? Nor does any such consequence follow from our doctrine. We rank among the natural powers of man, approving, rejecting; willing, nilling; attempting, resisting; that is, a power to approve vanity, and to reject true excellence; to will what is evil, to refuse what is good; to attempt iniquity, and to resist righteousness. What concern has the Lord in this? If it be his will to use this depravity as an instrument of his wrath, he directs and appoints it according to his pleasure, in order to execute his good work by means of a wicked hand. Shall we, then, compare a wicked man who is thus subservient to the Divine power, while he only studies to gratify his own corrupt inclination, to a stone which is hurled by an extrinsic impulse, and driven along without any motion, sense, or will of its own? We perceive what a vast difference there is. But how does the Lord operate in good men, to whom the question principally relates? When he erects his kingdom within them, he by his Spirit restrains their will, that it may not be hurried away by unsteady and violent passions, according to the propensity of nature; that it may be inclined to holiness and righteousness, he bends, composes, forms, and directs it according to the rule of his own righteousness; that it may not stagger or fall, he establishes and confirms it by the power of his Spirit. For which reason Augustine says, "You will reply to me, Then we are actuated; we do not act. Yes, you both act and are actuated; and you act well, when you are actuated by that which is good. The Spirit of God, who actuates you, assists those who act, and calls himself a helper, because you also perform something." In the first clause he inculcates that the agency of man is not destroyed by the influence of the Spirit; because the will, which is guided to aspire to what is good, belongs to his nature. But the inference which he immediately subjoins, from the term *help*, that we also perform something, we should not understand in such a sense, as though he attributed any thing to us independently; but in order to avoid encouraging us in indolence, he reconciles the Divine agency with ours in this way; that to will is from nature, to will what is good is from grace. Therefore he had just before said, "Without the assistance of God, we shall be not only unable to conquer, but even to contend."

XV. Hence it appears that the grace of God, in the sense in which this word is used when we treat of regeneration, is the rule of the Spirit for directing and governing the human will. He cannot govern it unless he correct, reform, and reno-

vate it ; whence we say that the commencement of regeneration is an abolition of what is from ourselves ; nor unless he also excite, actuate, impel, support, and restrain it ; whence we truly assert, that all the actions which proceed from this are entirely of the Spirit. At the same time, we fully admit the truth of what Augustine teaches, that the will is not destroyed by grace, but rather repaired ; for these two things are perfectly consistent — that the human will may be said to be repaired, when, by the correction of its depravity and perverseness, it is directed according to the true standard of righteousness ; and also that a new will may be said to be created in man, because the natural will is so vitiated and corrupted, that it needs to be formed entirely anew. Now, there is no reason why we may not justly be said to perform that which the Spirit of God performs in us, although our own will contributes nothing of itself, independently of his grace. And, therefore, we should remember what we have before cited from Augustine, that many persons labour in vain to find in the human will some good, properly its own. For whatever mixture men study to add from the power of free will to the grace of God, is only a corruption of it ; just as if any one should dilute good wine with dirty or bitter water. But although whatever good there is in the human will, proceeds wholly from the internal influence of the Spirit, yet because we have a natural faculty of willing, we are, not without reason, said to do those things, the praise of which God justly claims to himself ; first, because whatever God does in us, becomes ours by his benignity, provided we do not apprehend it to originate from ourselves ; secondly, because the understanding is ours, the will is ours, and the effort is ours, which are all directed by him to that which is good.

XVI. The other testimonies, which they rake together from every quarter, will not much embarrass even persons of moderate capacities, who have well digested the answers already given. They quote this passage from Genesis : “ Unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him ; ” (*m*) or, as they would translate the words, “ Subject to thee shall be its appetite, and thou shalt rule over it ; ” which they explain to relate to sin, as though the Lord promised Cain, that the power of sin should not obtain dominion over his mind, if he would labour to overcome it. But we say that it is more agreeable to the tenor of the context, to understand it to be spoken concerning Abel. For the design of God in it is to prove the iniquity of that envy, which Cain had conceived against his brother. This he does by two reasons : first, that

(*m*) Gen. iv. 7.

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