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REDEMPTION REDEEMED.

[The following is the entire title of this truly great and learned work. In the original edition it occupies nearly the whole of a folio page. It was too long to be prefixed to the present octavo edition; and is inserted here, that the reader may have, without mutilation, one of the most original and argumentative treatises in the English language.]

REDEMPTION REDEEMED.

Wherein the Most Glorious Work of the

REDEMPTION

Of the World by *Jesus Christ*, is by Expressness of Scripture, clearness of Argument, countenance of the best Authority, as well Ancient as Modern, Vindicated and Asserted in the Just Latitude and Extent of it, according to the Counsel and most Gracious Intentions of God, against the incroachments of later times made upon it, whereby the unsearchable Riches and Glory of the Grace of God therein, have been, and yet are, much obscured, and hid from the eyes of many.

Together with a sober, plain, and through Discussion of the great Questions relating hereunto, as viz. concerning

ELECTION AND REPROBATION,

The Sufficiency, and Efficacy of the Means vouchsafed unto Men by God, to Repent and Believe; concerning the Perseverance of the Saints, and those who do Believe; concerning the Nature of God, his manner of Acting, his Intentions, Purposes, Decrees, &c. the Dependency of all Creatures or second Causes upon Him, as well in their Operations, as simple Existencies, or Beings, &c.

The Decision of all these Questions founded upon the good Word of God, interpreted according to the generally received Doctrine, concerning the Nature and Attributes of God, the manifest Exigency of the Words, Phrases, coherencies, in the respective passages hereof relating to the said Questions, as also (for the most part) according to the Judgment and Sense of the best Expositors, as well Modern, as Ancient.

With three Tables annexed for the Readers accommodation.

By JOHN GOODWIN, A servant of God in the Gospel of his dear Son.

The Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and thy two Friends: for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath. *Job* xlii. 7.

Ægrotat humanum genus, non morbis corporis, sed peccatis. Jacet toto orbe terrarum ab Oriente usque ad occidentem Grandis ægrotus. Ad sanandum grandem ægrotum descendit Omnipotens Medicus, &c. *Aug. de verbis. Domini. Serm. 59.*

Διὰ γὰρ τὴν ἀλήθειαν δεῖ καὶ οἰκεία ἐναιρεῖν. i. e. It becomes a man to sacrifice even his own opinions and sayings upon the service of the Truth. *Arist.*

L O N D O N,

Printed by John Maccok, for Lodowick Lloyd and Henry Cripps, and are to be sold at their shop in Popes head Alley, near Lumbard street. M.DC.LI.

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TO THE
REV. DR. BENJAMIN WHICHCOTE,

PROVOST OF KING'S COLLEGE, AND VICE-CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE:

TOGETHER WITH THE REST OF THE

HEADS OF COLLEGES AND STUDENTS IN DIVINITY
IN THAT FAMOUS UNIVERSITY.

REVEREND and right worthy Gentlemen, Friends, and Brethren in Christ, how either yourselves or others will interpret this Dedication, I am, I confess, no such seer as to be able to foresee; and were the foresight hereof to be bought, I should strain myself very little to make the purchase. I have the witness within me, whose prerogative it is to laugh all jealousies and suggestions of men to scorn, which rise up in opposition to his testimony, clearly assuring me that the oracles consulted by me about this Dedication were neither any undervaluing of you, nor overvaluing of myself, or of the piece here presented unto you, nor any desire of drawing respects from you, either to my person or any thing that is mine; much less any malignity of desire to cause you to drink of my cup, or to bring you under the same cloud of disparagement with me, which the world hath spread round about me. Praise unto his grace, who hath taught me some weak rudiments of his heavenly art of drawing light out of darkness, for mine own use, I have not been for so many years together trampled upon to so little purpose, as to remain yet either ignorant or insensible of mine own vileness, and what element I am nearest allied unto; or so tender and querulous as either to complain of the weight of those who still "go over me as the stones in the street," or to project the sufferings of others in order to my own solace and relief. My long deprivation and want of respects from men is now turned to an athletic habit, somewhat after the manner of those who by long fasting lose their appetites, and withal, either contract or find an ability or contentedness of nature to live with little or no meat afterwards. I can,

(ἐν τῷ ἐνδυναμοῦντί με Χριστῷ,* Philip. iv. 13,) from the dunghill whereon I sit, with much contentment and sufficient enjoyment of myself, behold my brethren on thrones round about me.

The prize, then, that I run for in my dedicatory applications unto you is, by the opportunity and advantage hereof, to excite, provoke, and engage, and this, if it may be, beyond and above all reasonableness of pretence to decline the service, those whom I judged the most able, and not the least willing among their brethren, to bless the world, labouring and turmoiling itself under its own vanity and folly, by bringing forth the glorious Creator and ever-blessed Redeemer of it out of their pavilions of darkness into a clear and perfect light, to be beheld, revered, and adored in all their glory; to be possessed, enjoyed, delighted in, in all their beauty, sweetness, and desirableness, by the inhabitants of the earth. I know you have no need to be taught; but possibly you may have some need to consider that your gifts, parts, learning, knowledge, wisdom, books, studies, opportunities, pleasant mansions, will all suddenly make company for that which is not, and never turn to any account of true greatness unto you, nor of any interest worthy the lightest thoughts of truly prudent and considering men, unless they shall, by a serious and solemn act of consecration, be consigned over unto, and interested in, that great service of God and men whereby that blessed union between them shall be promoted and advanced, the foundations whereof have been by so high an hand of grace laid in the blood of Jesus Christ. You know the saying of the great Prophet of the world,—“He that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad,” Matt. xii. 30. Whatsoever shall not suffer, yea, and offer itself to be taken and carried along by and with Jesus Christ, in that grand and sublime motion wherein he moveth daily, according to the counsel of his Father, in a straight course for the saving of the world, will most certainly be dissipated and shattered all to nothing, by the irresistible dint and force thereof; how much more that which shall stand in his way, obstruct, and oppose him in this his motion! Especially gifts, parts, reason, understanding in men, improved and raised, or under means and opportunities of being improved and raised by study, learning, knowledge, if these do not make one shoulder with Jesus Christ in lifting up the world from the gates of death; much more in case they shall disadvantage and indispose the world to a receiving

* Non est arrogantia, sed fides, prædicare ea quæ accepisti.—Aug.

of those impressions from Christ by which it should or might otherwise be thus lifted up by him, will undoubtedly, above the rate of all other things, abound to the shame, judgment, confusion, and condemnation of men. When men of rich endowments, and worthy abilities of learning and knowledge, shall give their strength in this kind to other studies, contemplations, and inquiries, suffering, in the mean time, the minds and consciences of men to corrupt, putrify, and perish in their sad pollutions through that ignorance, or, which is worse, those disloyal and profane notions and conceptions of God and of Christ which reign, or rather indeed rage, in the midst of them, without taking any compassion on them, by searching out and discovering unto them those most excellent and worthy things of God and Christ, the knowledge whereof would be unto them as a resurrection from death unto life; they do but write their names in the dust, and buy vanity with that worthy price which was put into their hand for a far more honourable purchase. And yet, of the two, they are sons of the greater folly, and prevaricate far more sadly with the dearest and deepest interest, both of themselves and other men, who, by suffering their reasons and judgments to be abused either by sloth and supine oscitancy, or else by sinister and carnal respects otherwise (for there is a far different consideration of those who miscarry at this point, through a mere nescience or human infirmity) bring forth a strange God and a strange Christ unto the world, such as neither the Scriptures, nor reason unbewitched, know or own, and this under the name of the true God indeed, and of the true Christ; yea, and most importunately and imperiously burden and charge the consciences of men with the dread of Divine displeasure and the vengeance of hell-fire, if they refuse to fall down, and bow the knee of their judgments before those images and representations which they set up, as if in all their lineaments and parts they exhibited the true God and the true Christ, according to the truth.

The apostle Paul relates a sad story of a great fire of indignation kindled in the breast of God, and breaking out, in a very formidable manner, upon the heathen, who, as he saith, "knew God," Rom. i. 21, (*i. e.* had means sufficient to bring them to the knowledge of God,*) and withal "professed themselves wise

* Men under means and opportunities of knowledge are still estimated, and this justly, in their delinquencies, as having knowledge, whether they be actually knowing or no. Compare Matt. xxv. 44, 45, with Luke xii. 47, 48, &c.

men," Rom. i. 22. Whether by such men he means the philosophers in particular, and learned men amongst them, (which is the more probable, and the more received sense of interpreters,) or whether the generality of them, (as Calvin rather supposeth,) varieth not the story in any point of difference much material to my purpose. The misery which these men brought upon themselves through the just displeasure of God, is first, in general, drawn up by the apostle in these words, that "professing themselves wise, they became fools,"* (or rather were infatuated, or made fools, as Calvin well expoundeth,) *i. e.* whilst they assumed unto themselves the honour and repute of much wisdom and understanding, God, as it were, insensibly, and by degrees, withdrew that lively presence of his Spirit from them, by which they had been formerly raised and enlarged, as well to conceive and apprehend, as to act and do, like wise and prudent men: but now the wonted presence of this Spirit of God failing them, the savour and vigour of their wisdom and understandings proportionably abated and declined, as Samson's strength upon the cutting of his hair, sank and fell to the line of the weakness of other men. Secondly, The misery which these men drew upon their own head, by breaking, as they did, with God, is termed by the apostle "a delivering up" or giving over "to a reprobate mind," Rom. i. 28; which seems to import somewhat more sad and deeply penal than a simple infatuation, or at least the height and consummation hereof. "A reprobate" or injudicious "mind,"† implies such a constitution or condition of that sovereign and supreme faculty in man, his understanding, whose proper office and work it is to order, umpire, and command in chief all his motions, and actions, as well internal as outward, that light and darkness, things comely and things uncomely, actions and ways pregnantly comporting with, and actions and ways palpably destructive unto, the dear interest of his eternal peace, shall, especially upon a practical account, be of one and the same consideration to him; neither shall he be capable of any difference of impression from things that differ in the highest. The "delivering up" of a man by God to such "a reprobate mind" as this, clearly supposeth the frame and constitution of the mind and understanding of man to be naturally reprobate; I mean, considered as the sin of Adam hath defaced and distempered it, and as it would

* Ἐμωράνησαν. Justā Dei ultione fuerunt infatuati.

† Ἀδόκιμος νοῦς.

have been in all men in case the great Advocate and Mediator of mankind had not interposed to procure the gracious conjunction of the illuminating Spirit of God with it; yea, and as it will be, whensoever this Spirit of God shall be so far offended and provoked by a man as wholly to depart and desert it. So that this judiciary act of God, in "giving" men "over to a reprobate mind," imports nothing but the total withdrawing of all communion and converse by his Spirit with them, hereby leaving them in the hand, and under the inspection, of such a mind or understanding which is naturally, properly, and entirely their own. In which case the mind and understanding of a man suffers after some such manner as a quantity of good, wholesome, and spiritfui wine would do, in case it should be bereft of all the subtile and spirituous parts of it by a chemical extraction made by fire; that which should remain after such a separation, would be but as water, without strength or taste.

Now the cause of this fire of displeasure kindled in the breast of God against the persons mentioned, burning so near to the bottom of hell, as we heard, our apostle recordeth, first in these words, "Because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful," Rom. i. 21; afterwards in these, "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge," &c., ver. 28, or, (as the original, I humbly conceive, would rather bear,) "as they did not make trial," *i. e.* put themselves to it, engage their abilities, "to have God in acknowledgment,"* *i. e.* so to discover him to the world, that he might be acknowledged in his sovereign greatness and transcendent excellences by men. From which passages laid together, it clearly appears, 1. That for men that "know God," or have means and opportunities of knowing him, not to "glorify him" like himself, and "as God," is a sin of a very high provocation, and which directly, and with a swift course, tends to an utter dissolution of all communion and friendly converse between God and men. 2. That for men of knowledge, parts, and abilities, to neglect the manifestation and making known of God, in and to the world, to the intent that he may be "acknowledged," revered, loved, delighted in by his creature, is a strain of the worst resentment with God of that unthankfulness, which he interprets a "non-glorifying him as God," or like himself.

* Καὶ καθὼς οὐκ ἔδοκίμασαν τὸν θεὸν ἔχειν ἐν ἐπιγνώσει, &c.

Knowing the terror of the Lord in the way of the premises, brethren honoured and beloved in the Lord, according to the measure of the light of the knowledge of himself which he hath been graciously pleased to shine in my heart, *ἰδοκίμασα αὐτὸν ἔχειν ἐν ἐπιγνώσει*, I have in the ensuing discourse lifted up my heart and soul, and all that is within me, to the discovery and manifestation of him in the world, in the truth of his nature, attributes, counsels, decrees, ways, and dispensations; and that with a single eye, with clearness and simplicity of intention, to disencumber the minds, judgments, and consciences of men of such thoughts and apprehensions concerning him which are evil mediators between him and his creature, feeding and fomenting that distance and enmity between them, which have been occasioned by sinful and unworthy deportment on the creature's side. I confess that in some particulars managed and asserted in the discourse, I have been led (I trust by the Spirit of truth and of God) out of the way more generally occupied by those who of later times have travelled the same regions of inquiry with me. But deeply pondering what Augustin somewhere saith, that "as nothing can be found out more beneficial unto the world than somewhat further of God than is at present known, so nothing is attempted or sought after with more danger,"* I have steered my course in the subsequent debates with all tenderness and circumspection, arguing nothing, concluding nothing but either from the grammatical sense or best known signification of words and phrases in the Scripture, and this, for the most part, if not constantly, in conjunction both with the scope of places, the express consent and agreement of contexts, together with the analogy of the Scriptures themselves in other places, or else from the most unquestionable and universally received principles and maxims either in religion or sound reason, and more particularly from such notions concerning the nature of God, and his attributes and perfections, which I find generally subscribed with the names and pens of all that are called orthodox amongst us, and have written of such things. Nor have I any where receded from the more general sense of interpreters in the explication of any text or passage of Scripture, but only where either the express signification of words, or the vergency (or rather, indeed, urgency) of the context, or some repugnancy to the expressness of Scripture elsewhere, or else some pregnant inconsistency with some clear principle either of religion,

* *Nihil periculosius quæritur, nihil fructuosius invenitur.*

or sound reason, necessitated me unto it. Yea, I seldom upon any of these accounts leave the common road of interpreters, but I find that some or other, one or more, of the most intelligent of them have trodden the same path before me. And for the most part Chrysostom, among the ancient expositors, and Calvin himself among the modern, are my companions in the paths of my greatest solitariness. Concerning the main doctrine avouched in the discourse, wherein the redemption of mankind by Jesus Christ, no particular person or member hereof excepted, is held forth and asserted, I demonstrate by many testimonies from the best records of antiquity that this was the œcumenical sense of the Christian world in her primitive and purest times. Nor am I conscious to myself (I speak as in the presence of God) of any the least mistake, either in word or meaning, of any author or testimony cited by me throughout the whole discourse, nor yet of any omission in point of diligence or care for the prevention of all mistakes in either kind.

The discourse, such as it is, with all respects of honour and love, I present unto you; not requiring any thing from you by way of countenance or approbation, otherwise than upon those equitable terms on which Augustus recommended his children unto the care and favour of the Senate, "Si meruerit."* Only as a friend and lover of the truth, name, and glory of God and Jesus Christ, and of the peace, joy, and salvation of the world, with you, I shall take leave to pour out my heart and soul in this request unto you, that either you will confirm, by setting to the royal signet of your approbation and authority, the great doctrine here maintained, if you judge it to be a truth; or else vouchsafe to deliver me, and many others, from the snare thereof, by taking away, with a hand of light and potency of demonstration, those weapons, whether texts of Scripture or grounds in reason, wherein you will find by the discourse itself that we put our trust. Your contestation upon these terms will be of a resentment with me more precious and accepted than your attestation, in case of your comport in judgment with me, though I shall ingenuously confess and profess that, for the truth's sake, even in this also I shall greatly rejoice. Notwithstanding, I judge it much more, of the two, richly conducing to the dear interest of my peace and safety, to be delivered from

* Sueton. in vitâ Augusti.

my errors, than to receive countenance and approbation from men in what I hold or teach according to the truth.

. If nothing which is here pleaded, whether from the Scriptures or otherwise, shall be able to overrule your judgments into an acknowledgment of truth in the main doctrine contended for, in which case you will, I trust, though not with respect to my request in that behalf, yet for the truth's sake, and for your own interest's sake, as well in the things of this world as of that which is to come, declare yourselves in some worthy and satisfactory answer to the particulars here propounded; I shall not need, I presume, to desire you, that in your answer you will not rise up in your might against the weaker, looser, or less considered passages or expressions, (of which kind you may very possibly meet with many more than enough,) but that you will rather bend the strength of your reply against the strength of what you shall oppose, at least if there be any thing herein worthy such a title. You well know that a field may be won, though many soldiers of the conquering side should fall or be wounded in the battle; and that a tree may flourish, and retain both its beauty and firmness of standing in the earth, though many of the smaller twigs or lesser branches should prove dry and sere, and so be easily broken off. So may a mountain remain unmoved, yea, and unmoveable, though many handfuls of the lighter and looser earth about the sides of it, should be taken up and scattered into the air like dust. In like manner, the main body of a discourse may stand entire in its solidity, weight, and strength, though many particular expressions, sayings, and reasonings therein, that are more circumferential, and remote from the centre, should be detected either of inconsiderateness, weakness, or untruth. Yea, in some cases, one argument or plea may be so triumphantly pregnant and commanding that, though many others of the same engagement should be defeated, yet the cause protected by it may, upon a very sober and justifiable account, laugh all opposition of contrary arguings to scorn. I acknowledge there are some expressions and passages in the ensuing discourse, as in Chap. i. p. 48, and elsewhere, which, upon the review, I myself apprehend obnoxious enough to exception, yea, and which, had my second thoughts been born in due time, should have been somewhat better secured. But I trust that ancient law of indulgence in such cases as mine (which very probably may be some of your

own also) is of authority sufficient in your commonwealth to relieve me :

Opere in longo fas est obrepere somnum : i. e.

On him that sits long at work, sleep
Without disparagement may creep.

Neither need I suspect or fear any of that unmanlike learning amongst you, which teacheth men to confute opinions by vulgar votes and exclamations. "We know that this sect" or heresy "is every where spoken against,"* Acts xxviii. 22, had no influence upon Paul to turn him out of the way of his "heresy." And for those mormolukes or vizors of Arminianism, Socinianism, Popery, Pelagianism, with the like, which serve to affright children in understanding out of the love and liking of many most worthy and important truths, I am not under any jealousy concerning you, that you should suffer any such impressions from them. You know that that great enemy of the peace and salvation of men, who of old taught the enemies of God to put his saints into bears' skins and wolves' skins, so preparing them to be torn in pieces and devoured by dogs, hath in these latter times secretly insinuated and prevailed with many of the children of God themselves to put many of his truths, such as they like not or comprehend not, into names of ignominy and reproach, to draw others into the same hatred and defamation of them with themselves. I have somewhere observed, that this method of confuting and suppressing opinions, against which men have had no competent grounds of eviction otherwise, was at first invented by the subtle sons of the synagogue of Rome ;† and elsewhere shown, by several instances, that it is familiarly practised by them.

The truth is, that you have no such temptation upon you, as particular and private men have, to flee to any such polluted sanctuary as that mentioned, to save your names and reputations from the hand of any opinion or doctrine whatsoever. For you so far, I presume, understand your interest and prerogative, that for matters of opinion and doctrine, you are invested with an autocratorical majesty, like that which was sometimes given unto Nebuchadnezzar over men : "whom he would, he slew ; and whom he would, he

* *Περὶ μὲν γὰρ τῆς αἰρέσεως ταύτης, &c.*

† *Divine Authority of the Scriptures, pp. 202, 203.*

kept alive: whom he would, he set up; and whom he would, he put down," Dan. v. 19. By the joint suffrage of your authority, your interest of esteem amongst men being so predominant, you may slay what doctrines, what opinions you please; and what you please you may keep alive; of what tenets you please, you may make the faces to shine; and of what you please, you may lay the honour in the dust. If you will justify, who are they that will not be afraid to condemn? if you condemn, who will justify? Only God's eldest daughter, Truth, hath one mightier than you on her side, who will justify her in due time, though you should condemn her; and will raise her up from the dead the third day, in case you shall slay her. However, if the doctrine commended in the discourse now presented unto you, shall commend itself in your eyes also for a truth, far be it from you to hide your faces from it, because at present it labours and suffers reproach in the world, considering that you may very suddenly take away the reproach, and partake yourselves of that honour which you shall cast upon it. Should such an university as you fear the reproach of standing by a truth? Jesus Christ is not ashamed of the bodies of his saints, living or dead, though in both conditions vile and contemptible in the eyes of men, knowing that he hath power in his hand to clothe them with glory and immortality when he pleaseth, and that this glory, when vested in them, will be a high augmentation of his own.

Brethren, unto you I may truly say, with Paul to his Philippians, that "I have you in my heart," Philip. i. 7. I can look upon you with an eye of good hope, as a generation of men anointed by God with a spirit of wisdom, knowledge, zeal, and faithfulness, to bring on the new heavens and the new earth, wherein righteousness shall dwell; and this by repairing the breaches and decayed places in the body of the doctrine of Christian religion, which, since the first raising and completing of it by Christ and his apostles, partly through the ignorance and insufficiency, partly through the oscitancy and remissness of those to whom the guardianship and custody thereof have been committed by God, in their successive generations, hath been lamentably dismantled, misfigured; and defaced, and this well nigh in all the integral and principal parts of it, more or less; insomuch that a man who truly and clearly apprehends what this doctrine was, and yet is, in her purity and native frame, and shall compare it with the system or body of divinity which, under this notion, is commonly taught and held forth amongst us, will hardly

be able to say, This is the doctrine of Christ. For whosoever shall engage himself with that diligence, thoroughness, and impartialness of inquiry which become those who run for so high a prize as an incorruptible crown of glory, to consider what is ordinarily delivered and more generally received amongst us, not only in and about those great points of election, reprobation, redemption, the efficacy and extent of the grace of God, and perseverance of the saints; but also about many other heads of Christian doctrine, as about faith, justification, the sufferings of Christ, the intercession of Christ, repentance, good works, baptism, the state and condition of the dead until the resurrection, with sundry more, and shall, with like diligence, consider what the Scriptures teach concerning these particulars respectively, will clearly and distinctly see, that though Christ be not so ill formed amongst us in some of these doctrines as he is in others, yet he is represented very unlike, and much beneath himself, in them all. So that as Joshua, though he performed the part of a valiant captain, and made a worthy progress in the conquest of the land of Canaan before his death, yet left a very considerable portion of the work to be achieved by others after him, Judges i. 1—9, &c.; in like manner Luther, Calvin, Melancthon, with others, who laboured with much honour and success in the work of reformation, and reduced the body of Christian religion to a far better complexion and constitution than that wherein they found it, yet left it under so much craziness and unsoundness that other physicians also, and those of best value, have large opportunities before them for enriching the world, and themselves also, by perfecting the cure. I look upon you as men the likeliest I know to wear this crown. As for those who of late attempted the building of a fence-wall of discipline, under the name of a Reformation, about that vineyard of Christ amongst us of which I now speak, and to this day seem to lie under much regret of spirit, both against God and men, for hindering them in their building, the truth is, in such an attempt, the unreformedness and unsoundness of the doctrine commonly received amongst us and taught by themselves considered, they ran a like course of inconsiderateness which a husbandman would do, that should go about to make a strong and tight hedge about his field, whilst his neighbour's cattle are feeding and spoiling the corn in the midst of it.

Brethren, my pen hath transgressed the line and law of my intentions. These confined me to a much narrower compass in my epis-

tle, and prohibited me the troubling of you to any such degree as now I have done. The truth is, my affections to you interposed, and occasioned the transgression. Love is bountiful; and, I trust, will as naturally produce pardon on your side as it hath brought forth such a transgression on mine. In all this address I have desired nothing of you, little or much, upon mine own account, save only so far as your ingenuous and worthy deportment in the particulars offered, together with the unspeakable benefit and blessing which you shall bring upon the world thereby, will be matter of joy and high contentment unto me. Envy me not my "rejoicing with the truth," though herein I should be found equal to the greatest of you,—it is the best of my portion in the world. I shall discharge you from any further sufferings from my pen at present, only with my soul poured out before the great God and Father of lights, in prayer for you, that he will make his face to shine upon you, in quickening your apprehensions, enlarging your understandings, balancing your judgments, strengthening your memories, in giving you ableness of body, willingness of mind, to labour in those rich mines of truth, the Scriptures, in breaking up before you the fountains of those great depths of spiritual light and heavenly understanding, in assisting you mightily by his Spirit in the course of your studies, in lifting you up in the spirit of your minds above the faces, fears, respects of men, in drawing out your hearts and souls to relieve the spiritual necessities and extremities of the world round about you, in making you so many burning and shining lights in his house and temple, the joy, glory, and delight of your nation, in vouchsafing unto you as much of all that is desirable in the things of this world as your spiritual interest will bear, and the reward of prophets respectively in the glory and great things of the world to come.

Your poor brother in Christ,

Always ready in love to serve the meanest of you;

JOHN GOODWIN.

P R E F A C E.

GOOD READER,

THE account of my application unto thee in this epistle, is this. Not loving, with Job, to eat my morsels alone, I desire thy company at my table, in the ensuing discourse. If thy intellectual taste be the same with mine, (which I question not, if thou hast not eaten somewhat already, which disordereth and corrupteth it,) and thy spiritual constitution the same also, (from which, if thou beest healthful and sound, it cannot much differ,) I doubt not, but in case thou pleasest to accept of the invitation, and eat of the bread here set before thee, thou wilt find it both pleasant in thy mouth, and strengthening to thy soul. I confess that till some few years last past, I was myself accustomed to another diet, and fed upon that bread which was commonly prepared by my brethren in the ministry for the people of the land, and children of God amongst them. But the truth is, I found it ever and anon gravelish in my mouth, and corroding and fretting in my bowels. Notwithstanding, the reverend and high esteem I had of many of those who prepared it, and fed upon it themselves, in conjunction with those harder thoughts which I was occasioned by some undue carriages in many of those who lived upon bread of another moulding, to take up against them, together with a raw and ill-digested conceit I had, that there was no better or less-offensive bread to be had from any hand whatsoever, prevailed upon me to content myself therewith for a long time, though not without some regret of discontentment also with it.

But to leave my parable; that which first turned to a sharp engagement upon me, to search more narrowly and thoroughly than formerly I had done, into the controversies agitated in the subsequent discourse, was a pamphlet published by a young man about five or six years since, under the title of "A Vindication of Free Grace," &c., which, though libellous enough, and full of broad untruths, yet the face of it being fiercely set against me and my doctrine, it was lifted up well nigh as near unto the heavens as Herod's oration, Acts xii. 22, by the applause of such persons in and about the city, whose ways in matter of discipline and thoughts in other more weighty points of Christian religion, my understanding would

never serve me to make mine. Being for a time under a conscientious resentment of a necessity lying upon me to publish some answer to the said pamphlet, as well the person as the doctrine therein stigmatized being innocent of all crimes there charged on them, I fell to work accordingly, and drew up a competent answer, as I supposed, thereunto, with the perusal whereof I was willing, upon request, to gratify some private friends, amongst whom it lay dormant for some time. In the interim, perceiving that the noise which the said pamphlet had made was but like the crackling of thorns under a pot, and that the heat of the tumultuary rejoicing occasioned by it had exhaled and spent itself, I began to consider that the answer which I had prepared, a good part of it being taken up in proving the pamphleteer tardy in several reports made by him of matters of fact, the knowledge whereof would be, I conceived, of slender edification, and of no great acceptance unto readers, and the detection of him in such unworthy practices might be offensive to some of his friends whom I well respected, might in these respects rather cumber than benefit the world, in case it were published. And considering further, that the matters of real weight and consequence insisted upon in the answer, being here handled only according to the exigency of the particulars of my charge, respectively, might more satisfactorily, and with more advantage to the peace and comfort of men, be discoursed in a just and entire treatise, I accordingly changed my intentions of publishing the said answer into a resolution of declaring and asserting my judgment about the doctrinal imputations specified and managed therein against me more at large. This resolution continuing with me, seconded and strengthened with further light shining into my heart daily from the Father of lights, about those important affairs which lay upon mine hand to manage, not only in order to my own vindication in such passages of doctrine wherein I was publicly traduced by the pamphleteer as a teacher of errors, but to the Christian information and consolation of others also, hath at last given the light of life to the ensuing treatise, the perusal whereof I desire to recommend upon such terms unto thee, that thou mayest resent it as worthy thy labour, and the best exercise and engagement of thy mind and thoughts.

This, I presume, I should do effectually, if I were able, in the first place, to possess thee thoroughly with a true notion of the danger of error and misapprehension in the things of God; secondly, with the deep and solemn necessity which lieth upon all persons of mankind without exception, who are endued with reason and understanding, to engage these worthy and noble faculties to their uttermost, about the things of God and matters of salvation; and lastly, with the innocency and inoffensiveness of the doctrines maintained in the present discourse, in respect of those vulgar imputations which, by way of prejudice, are laid to their charge. And these things I shall endeavour, within the narrowest compass of words, wherein it is lightly possible for matters of so great conse-

quence to be transacted to any purpose, in the remainder of this epistle.

For the first: truth, especially in things of a supernatural concernment, the knowledge whereof faceth eternity, and without which, in some competent degree, no person capable of it can, or will be judged by God, "meet to partake with the saints in the inheritance of light," being nothing else, interpretatively, but God himself, prepared of and by himself, for a beatifical union with the understanding, and from hence, with the heart and affections of men, error in things of this high and sacred import, can be nothing else but Satan, the great enemy of the peace and blessedness of men, contriving and distilling himself into a notion or impression apt and likely to be entertained and admitted by the understanding, under the appearance, and in the name of truth, into union with itself, and by means hereof, into union also with the heart and soul of men. Much in such a sense as that wherein the apostle affirmeth "Meats to be for the belly, and the belly again for meats," 1 Cor. vi. 13, is truth for the understanding, and the understanding for truth. And in such a sense as poisoned or unwholesome meats are not, nor ever were intended by God for the belly, nor the belly for them; it may truly be said, that error is not, nor was ever intended by God for the understanding, nor the understanding for error. Truth, or God issuing and streaming out his most excellent and incomprehensible nature and being, his infinite wisdom, knowledge, power, goodness, bounty, mercy, justice, &c. in certain positions, notions, and apprehensions, is of the most natural, kindly, and sovereign accommodation for the understandings of men, and dependently hereupon, for their hearts and affections also, that can be imagined. So that the belly is not, in the low way of nature appropriate unto it, better, or more naturally provided for and satisfied when filled with the best, and best nourishing meats; nor the body, or rest of the members, in a more ready, natural, and certain way of well-doing naturally, whilst the nourishment of these meats lasteth, and is regularly dispensed from the belly unto them, than the understanding of a man is, when invested, enriched, filled with supernatural and Divine truth; and whilst the knowledge and due consideration hereof there abideth, as far as the influence and sphere of the activeness of it extend, the heart, soul, and affections of men also are hereby enriched and filled with their appropriate treasures of righteousness, holiness, joy, and peace. Whereas error, and all mis-notions of God, his nature, attributes, counsels, or ways, though the mind and understanding of a man may rejoice over them for a season, yet do they all this while pollute, corrupt, and imbase them by their union and communion with them; as a person of a noble house and blood stains his honour and reputation, by coupling himself in marriage with a woman of base parentage and conditions. Yea, all error, of that kind whereof I now speak, being seated in the judgment and understanding, secretly and by degrees infuseth a proportionable malignity into the will and affections, and

occasioneth sinful distempers, unholy and unworthy dispositions, to put forth here. The truth is, that error is the great troubler of the world; it is that fountain of death that issueth and sendeth out all those bitter waters, and streams of sin and unrighteousness in every kind, which overflow the earth almost in every place and part of it, making it so extremely barren of comfort and peace, as it is, yea and as the shadow of death, to the inhabitants of it. Why do men so universally walk in ways of oppression, extortion, deceit, covetousness, unmercifulness, drunkenness, uncleanness, envy, hatred, pride, ambition, &c., but because they judge such ways as these, all circumstances considered, more commodious and desirable unto them than ways and practices of a contrary, that is, of an holy and truly honourable import? And what is this but a most stupendous and horrid error and mistake, being the natural result of those numberless, erroneous, and lying apprehensions and conceits concerning God, wherewith men willingly suffer their minds and consciences to be imbedded and corrupted, even to a spiritual rottenness and putrefaction? For when God shall please to heal the world of all the malignity that yet boils and works in the bowels of it, and breaks out upon all occasions to the great annoyance and discontent of men, the receipt which he will administer unto it in order hereunto, is only the knowledge of himself, *i. e.* of the truth of his nature, attributes, and transcendent excellency of being. This is the word of promise, which came long since from the mouth of God himself unto the world: "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, for the earth shall be *full of the knowledge of the Lord*, as the waters cover the sea," Isa. xi. 9; clearly implying, that when ignorance and all mispersuasions concerning God in the world shall be led captive by the light of the knowledge of the truth, and when there shall be a good understanding begotten between him and his creature, the hearts of men will serve them no longer to rebel against him, or to despise his laws. So that what is commonly said of knowledge, may truly be said of God; "non habet inimicum præter ignorantem;" he hath no enemy, but only those who know him not. The devil had no door to open effectual enough, by which to give sin an entrance into the world, but only the perverting of the straight thoughts and apprehensions of God, which God himself had planted in the mind and understanding of his creature, man. The woman had a right and sound persuasion of the just severity and truth of God in his threatenings, until Satan prevailed with her to change it for a lie, Gen. iii. 4, 5; into the spirit of which lie Adam himself also was presently baptized by her confidence under it. Neither could the devil have touched either the one or the other of them, but by the mediation of some erroneous notion or other concerning God. And as Satan brought sin into the world by the opportunity of a misrepresentation of God unto his creature; so when God shall please to reform the world, and make a perfect ejection of sin out of it, he will do it by repairing the breaches which Satan hath made upon

the judgments and understandings of men, with a clear light of the knowledge of himself. Well may the Holy Ghost call sin and wickedness in every kind the works of darkness, because they are never practised, but by the illegal warrant and blind direction of some false persuasion or other in the minds of men. Upon this account also it is, that the apostle interpreteth the building of "timber, hay, and stubble," *i. e.* unsound doctrines and opinions, upon the true foundation, Jesus Christ, to be a corrupting, or destroying, of the temple of God* (*i. e.* of his church and people, as he explaineth it.) For every error, or false apprehension, in the things of God, and matters of salvation, is not only of a defiling, but of a corrupting nature also; and according to the tenor and degree of malignity in it (for there is some degree of a spiritual malignity in every error) disposeth the soul which drinks it in, and converseth with it, to a spiritual death, being destructive to that communion with God, wherein principally the life, *i. e.* the strength, peace, joy, and happiness of the soul consisteth. For God, in whatsoever he revealeth, or speaketh in his Word, of any inconsistency with an error (and error there is none about spiritual things, in opposition whereunto God speaketh not more or less in his Word) must needs be as a barbarian, or one that speaketh with an unknown tongue, to him whose mind and understanding is distempered with it. When our Saviour told his disciples, (in words express and plain enough,) that "the Son of man should be delivered into the hands of men," Luke ix. 44, and xviii. 34, it is said, that "they," notwithstanding, "understood not the saying." The reason plainly was, because they were erroneously principled about the subject of which Christ spake, which was his estate of humiliation by suffering death; they supposing and taking it for granted, that he was to be a great potentate and monarch in the world, without passing through the valley of an ignominious death thereunto. In like manner when he said to Joseph and the virgin his mother, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" Luke ii. 49, the text saith, "they understood not the saying that he spake unto them." The reason of their non-understanding in this case was because they were under the command of such a supposition, which thwarted that principle, according to the exigency whereof he so spake. They supposed that he was under no engagement, in no due capacity, at least at those years, which at this time he had attained, to manage the great affairs of God and his kingdom in the world: whereas his sense was, that he was under the one, and in the other; and spake accordingly unto them. So also the reason why Festus supposed "Paul to be beside himself, and that much learning had made him mad," Acts xxvi. 24, (implying that he could make neither sap nor sense of what he had said,) was because the tenor and substance of Paul's discourse was diametrically opposite to his principles. After the same manner, when and whilst a

* Εἰ τις τοῦ θεοῦ τὸν ναὸν φθειρεῖ. 1 Cor. iii. 7.

man's judgment is perverted by any unsound opinion that hath taken fast hold on it, he is incapable of all that light of truth which God shineth in the Scriptures in opposition to that error, and must, of necessity, either relinquish this opinion, or else, either deprave and misunderstand the mind of God in all such passages, or profess dissatisfaction touching the true sense and meaning of them. In both cases he suffers a proportionable loss in his communion with God. "Can two walk together," saith the Scripture, "except they be agreed?" Civil communion cannot be maintained or held, under a dissent in principles relating to such communion, at least not in such things unto which such a dissent extendeth or relateth. Beasts are incapable of all friendly converse and intercourse of affairs with men, and so men with beasts. The reason is, because neither of them have any principles symbolical with the other: the thoughts of men are not the thoughts of beasts, neither are the thoughts or impressions of beasts the thoughts of men. And though men being sound in some sovereign principles of the gospel, and such which are, as it were, the lifeguard of the heart and vital parts of religion, may possibly live in communion with God upon terms consistent with salvation; yet may they very possibly also, in case they be entangled with error otherwise, by means hereof suffer loss to a very sad degree in the things of their present peace. When the sun is in the greatest eclipse that is lightly incident to it, there yet shineth so much light to the world which is sufficient to make it day, and whereby to perform ordinary works wont to be done in the day time: notwithstanding during such an eclipse as this, the world, through want of that fulness of light which that worthy creature, the sun, naturally affordeth, suffereth many degrees of the damp and sadness of the night. In like manner, though the light of God's countenance may shine in the face of the soul to such a degree as to make a day of grace and favourable acceptance with him, notwithstanding the interposition of a dark cloud of many errors: yet most certain it is that according to the compass and proportion of such a cloud, and during the interposition of it, the soul will be apt to suffer now and then many grudgings and sad impressions of a fear of being rejected by him. There is no ray or beam which naturally shineth from the face of God, but the interception, deprivation, and want of it must needs prove both *pœna damni*, yea, and *pœna sensus* too, upon occasion, unto the soul. Yea, the Scripture itself supposeth men that are ignorant in anything relating to their spiritual affairs (and much more such as are confidently, *i. e.* erroneously ignorant) to be in a deplorable and sad condition; and the proper objects of pity and compassion, in case their ignorance, or error, be not affectate, and such, from the entanglement and pollution whereof they had competent means to have delivered themselves.* The apostle maketh it a worthy character of an "High Priest taken from amongst men, to be able to have *compassion*

* Κακοπιστία χειρόν ἐστι τῆς ἀπιστίας. Epiphani.

on the ignorant, and such as are out of the way," Heb. v. 2. There are but two things that can make the condition of a creature miserable, sin and sufferings; and both these are the unquestionable fruits or productions of error. Lusts and sinful distempers can be nowhere engendered, but only in the dark regions of the soul: the shining of the light of the truth is as the shadow of death unto them. Nor can fear that hath torment, nor any afflicting or sad impression upon the spirits of men, climb up into the bed of the soul, to disturb the rest and sweet peace of it, but only in the night of ignorance, and by the opportunity of error lodging there. The light of the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus, is unto fears, agonies, and all perplexity of spirit, like unto Solomon's King sitting upon his throne of judgment, in reference to wicked men, whom he scattereth or chaseth away with his eyes, Prov. xx. 8. "The truth," saith Christ unto the Jews, meaning, when known by them, "shall make you free," John viii. 32. All bondage and servility, whether under sin or under sorrow, is dissolved by the clear shining of the light of the knowledge of God into the heart and soul: whereas the darkness of error strengtheneth the hand of the oppressors, and binds fast the iron yoke of servitude upon the necks of those that are in bondage.

The time would fail me to speak at large of all the sad retinue of evils and mischiefs that attend upon error. Take in brief the sum, as well of what I have said, as what I would willingly say yet further, upon this account.

First, It hath been said, that error defileth and imbaseth the person who coupleth his judgment with it.

Secondly, That it obstructeth communion with God, as far as the malignity of the influence of it extendeth.

Thirdly, That the proper and direct tendency of it, is unto death, to bring everlasting destruction upon the soul.

Fourthly, It hath been shown, that error is the proper element for jim and ojim, and doleful creatures; I mean, for fears, sad apprehensions, disconsolate thoughts, on the one hand, and so for wild satyrs, lusts, sensual, and sinful distempers on the other hand, to be engendered and bred, as also to live and subsist, to move, and act, and take their pastime in; the knowledge of the truth being mortal unto both. I now add,

Fifthly, That error disposeth the soul to apostasy from the gospel, and to a recidivation or falling back into the devouring sin of unbelief. This it doth not only by giving opportunity and encouragement unto lusts, and inordinate affections in the soul, the motions and actings of which are to the life of faith that which poison is to the natural life of a man; but also by representing the gospel unto the mind and conscience of a man, (at least in some of the ways and passages of it,) as weak, unworthy, dark, unpleasant, uncouth, or whatsoever error, when the soul by long acquaintance and converse with it shall discover the true nature or genius of it, and so grow into a dislike and contempt of it, shall

now appear unto them. For this is much to be considered, that a man, or woman, who have for many years professed the gospel, may in process of time come to discover vanity in some erroneous principle or tenet, wherewith their judgments had been leavened for some considerable space formerly, and so grow into a disapprobation or contempt of it, and yet may very possibly think and suppose, that the gospel favours or countenanceth it, and that otherwise they should never have owned or approved it. Now when a person shall be brought into the snare of such a conceit or imagination as this, that the gospel in some of the veins or carriages of it teacheth or asserteth things that are vain, or of no good consistency with reason or truth, he is in a ready posture to throw off from his soul all credence of the Divine authority of the gospel, and to esteem it no better than a fable devised by men. Nor will all that which he judgeth serious, and sound, and good in the doctrine of the gospel otherwise, relieve him in such a case. He that imagines that he smells but so much as one dead fly in the ointment of the gospel, will, as he should have sufficient cause to do, were his imagination in this case sufficiently grounded, conclude, that certainly it came not from God, but from men. No man's heart or conscience will serve him to reverence that, as coming from God, wherein he savours the least weakness, error, or untruth.

Sixthly, Though an error seems to be merely speculative, and in respect of the frame and constitution of it, to have no affinity or intermeddling at all with the moral principles, or practices of men, as that of anabaptism, amongst some others, yet doth it secretly, and in a collateral way, through the weakness and vanity of the heart, infuse malignity even into these; occasioning persons, otherwise grave, sober, peaceable, meek, loving, &c., to break out many times in strains of pride, self-conceitedness, contention, contempt of others, cavilling against pregnant and clear truths, with the like, for the maintenance and defence of it. For as he which hath a child, though it be never so hard-favoured or deformed, never so ill-behaved or conditioned, yet judgeth himself bound to provide maintenance and support for it: so he that embraceth an opinion about the things of God, and of the gospel, be it never so erroneous, uncouth, irrational, and weak, yet supposeth himself bound in conscience to plead the cause of it, and protect it, upon all occasions. Now it being impossible that any man, of what gifts, parts, or learning soever, should be able to maintain or make good the cause of a weak or erroneous opinion, especially against an adversary of equal abilities and insight into the cause with himself, by solidity, pregnancy, or clearness of argument, whether from the Scripture, or otherwise; hence it frequently cometh to pass, that when the patrons of such a cause fall short in their intellectuals, and sobriety of discourse, to keep the head of it above water, they supply that which is wanting in their judgments and understandings, with that which aboundeth (upon such a

temptation) in their wills and affections, I mean with passion and with unworthy and reproachful vilifications, either of the persons of their adversaries, for not concurring in judgment with them, or of their arguments, which they are not able in a rational, sober, or Christian way to answer.

Seventhly, (that which is of some affinity with the former particular,) Error in sensu composito, and whilst a man is resolved to stand by it, subjecteth him to this hard and miserable necessity, either to profess himself wilful in the holding of it, as not being able to give any reason or account unto others why he holdeth it; or else to rise up in his might to resist and oppose the mind and truth of God in all those passages of Scripture, (with arguments built thereon,) which shall be pertinently alleged and insisted upon to detect the vanity and falsehood of his opinion. Of what sad consequence, either the one or the other of these are like to prove, reader, it is referred to thy serious and Christian thoughts to consider.

Eighthly, He that is a servant in his judgment and conscience unto error, is, during this his servile condition, utterly incapable of that rich and sweet privilege of perfect and entire union with the saints, which the Lord Christ a little before his death so earnestly solicited his Father, that all that believe in him might be invested with and partake. "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word, that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us." And again, "That they may be one, even as we are one. I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one," &c. John xvii. 20, 21, &c. Suppose all the saints at this day alive upon the face of the earth, should accord and be one in judgment about any error, though otherwise their accord should be most entire, as well in affection as in all spiritual and Divine truth, yet this would not amount to that union, to that being made perfect in one, which the great Peacemaker of the world so earnestly desired of his Father on their behalf. Agreement in error, in whomsoever, is no union in Christ, but a conspiracy against him. Therefore in case any believer, or number of believers, shall lie under the pollution of any error, they become hereby, until their cleansing, incapable of having part or fellowship in that great and blessed business of perfect union in Christ with the saints. Yea, unless we shall suppose that there is an universal conspiracy amongst the saints against Christ, in that very error which cleaveth to our judgments under the name and appearance of truth, (which is a case of the highest unlikelihood that lightly can be supposed,) we are incapable, during the continuance of the said error in us, of a thorough and perfect accord with the saints, even in that wherein they are one, in and with Christ himself. Yea in case we shall seek union with the saints by soliciting and persuading them to come over unto us in our judgments, in case they be erroneous, we shall spread a snare of dark-

ness and of death in their way; and so shall be agents and factors for Satan and for hell, whilst we please ourselves with a conceit of agency for God and Jesus Christ. How many ministers of the gospel, and others, are there amongst us at this day, who are deep in this condemnation? My meaning all along this discourse hath not been, as if I supposed all errors to be alike dangerous, or all pernicious and destructive to the souls of men upon any such terms, that he that lives and dies in any of them must needs perish. No; as the apostle, speaking of the stars of heaven, saith, that "One star differeth from another star in glory," 1 Cor. xv. 41, so is it true amongst errors, one error differeth from another in shame and in danger. Nevertheless, as all distempers, sicknesses, and diseases in the body, are of one and the same inclination and tendency, the faces of them all are set towards the death and dissolution thereof, though many of them prove not mortal in the event, as some of them do, being either outgrown and overcome by the strength of nature, or else opposed in their course by exercise, physic, or the like, and the body by these means is delivered from the inconvenience and danger of them: in like manner all errors, without exception, have more or less of a spiritual malignancy in them, and are all contrary to the comfort, life, and peace of the precious souls of men, although it is true there are many that never come actually to destroy either the peace or life of these souls, being either timeously discovered by men, and so cut off from their judgments, or otherwise balanced and corrected by worthy and rich principles of evangelical truth, that the presence of them doth not much influence or annoy the soul.

Ninthly, another soul-calamity occasioned by error, is, there being such concatenations and mutual involutions of errors, one within another, a man cannot be engaged in his judgment unto any one, but hereby he makes himself a debtor to own and maintain, upon occasion, the whole tribe and family of errors, whereof this is a member, or else he must represent himself as a man inconsistent with himself, and prevaricating with his own principles. Which of the two to choose, will, I suppose, put a person truly ingenuous and considerate, almost into as great a strait as David was in, when he was necessitated by God to choose one of those three sore judgments mentioned 2 Sam. xxiv. 13. Scarce can there an error be named, which hath not a great train and retinue, some before and some behind, of the same house and family attending upon it, and linked in a rational confederacy with it; according to that common saying, let one absurdity be granted, and a thousand more will follow of course.* So that, as Paul told the Galatians, that if they were circumcised, they hereby became debtors to keep the whole law, meaning, if they meant to be uniform, and rationally consistent with themselves; in like manner, a man, by embracing one error, undertakes for all of the same cognation and

line, otherwise exposing himself to the disparagement and dishonour of a man of a distracted and broken judgment. As, for example, he that is entangled with the error of those who deny the lawfulness of infant baptism, stands obliged, through his engagement to this one error, to maintain and make good these, and many the like erroneous and anti-evangelical opinions; 1. That God was more gracious to infants under the law, than now he is under the gospel; or, which is every whit as hard a saying as this, that his vouchsafement of circumcision unto them, under the law, was no argument or sign at all of any grace or favour from him unto them. Yea, 2. That God more regarded, and made more liberal provision for the comfort and satisfaction of typical believers, though formal and express unbelievers, in and about the spiritual condition of their children, under the law, than he does for the truest, soundest, and greatest believers, under the gospel; or, which is of a like notorious import, that the ordinance of God for the circumcising of infants under the law, was of no accommodation or concernment for the comfort of the parents, touching the spiritual condition of their children. 3: That the children of true believers under the gospel, are more unworthy, more unmeet, less capable subjects of baptism, than the children of the Jews were of circumcision under the law; or, which is of like uncouth notion, that God accepted the persons of the children of the Jews, though unbelievers, and rejects the persons of the children of believers under the gospel, from the same or the like grace, these being under no greater guilt or demerit than those other. 4. That baptism succeedeth not in the place, office, or service of circumcision. 5. That when the initiatory sacrament was more grievous and burthensome, in the letter of it, God ordered the application of it unto children; but after he made a change of it for that which is more gracious, and much more accommodate to the tenderness and weakness of children, as baptism clearly is, in respect of circumcision, he hath wholly excluded children from it. 6. That it was better and more edifying unto men under the law, to receive the pledge of God's fatherly love and care over them, whilst they were yet children; and that now it is worse, or less edifying to men, to receive it at the same time, and better and more edifying unto them to receive it afterwards, as, viz. when they come to years of discretion. 7. That men are wiser, and more providential than God, as, viz. in debarring or keeping children from baptism for fear of such and such inconveniences, when as God by no law, or prohibition of his, interposeth against their baptizing, nor yet insisteth upon, or mentioneth, the least inconvenience any ways likely to come upon either the persons of the children themselves, nor upon the churches of Christ, hereby. 8. And, lastly, (to pass by many other tenets and opinions, every whit as exorbitant from the truth, and as untenable as these, which yet must be maintained by those who suffer their judgments to be encumbered with the error of antipædobaptism, unless they will say and unsay, deny in the consequent, what they affirm

and grant in the antecedent,) and that which is more than what hath been said yet; they must, upon the account of their enthrallment under the said error, maintain many uncouth, harsh, irrational, venturous, and daring interpretations and expositions of many texts and passages of Scripture, and particularly of these, Gen. xvii. 7; 1 Cor. vii. 14; Acts ii. 39, and xvi. 15; 1 Cor. i. 16; 1 Cor. x. 2; besides many others, which frequently upon occasion are argued in way of defence and proof of the lawfulness of infant baptism. Now as the Greek epigram maketh it the highway to beggary, to have many bodies to feed, and many houses to build,* so may it truly enough be said, that for a professor of Christianity to have many errors to maintain, and many rotten opinions to build up, is the next way to bring him to a morsel of bread, not only in his name and reputation amongst intelligent men, but also in the goodness of his heart and conscience towards God. Nor is it of much more desirable an interpretation, for such a man to appear distracted in his principles, or divided in himself.

Tenthly, and lastly, error is in this respect also of very sad portendance unto men, viz. because being once entered within the doors of a man's judgment, it commonly bewitcheth the person with such an adulterous affection towards itself, that his foot is very hardly recoverable out of the snare. There is no error but at one turn or other, either directly or indirectly, gratifieth the flesh, or that which remains of the old man in men. Now the flesh in all men is very loath to part with any of her benefactors; to be despoiled of any principle, which speaks to her heart in any matter of ease, pleasure, honour, profit, or the like. Upon this account it cometh to pass, that error is so readily, and sometimes even greedily, entertained, and with so much difficulty, and conflicting with the judgments and consciences of men, cast out.† "None," saith Solomon, speaking of the harlot, "that go unto her return again, neither take they hold of the paths of life," Prov. ii. 19. They are not many, who having once turned aside into error, return back again into the way of truth, when once they have forsaken it. Such persons commonly prove *ισχυρογνώμονες και ἐμμενετικοὶ τῇ δοξῇ*, as the philosopher speaks,‡ i. e. stout and stiff in their opinions, and men that will stand fast in their conceits. And, as another expresseth their genius,§ they will have that to be truth which they hold, but they will not hold that which is truth. Yea, a great part of those whose judgments and consciences are enthralled under error, and this of a very sad and dangerous import, are yet so superstitiously fearful to make use of those means which God hath expressly

* Σώματα πολλά τρέφειν, και δώματα πολλὰ ἀνεγείρειν,
 Ἄτραπὸς εἰς πενίην ἴστιν ἰστομοσάτη.

† Nauseabit ad antidotum, qui hiavit ad venenum.

‡ Arist. Ethic. l. vii. c. 9.

§ Multi veritatem ita amant, ut velint esse vera, quæcunque amant; vid. de quodam Judæo, qui noluit Deum orare, ut illuminaret eor ejus, quia hoc esset dubitare de lege sua, etc. apud. *Th. Brudward.* l. i. c. 1. Corol. part 32. Sic amatur veritas, ut quicunque aliud amant, hoc quod amatur, velint esse veritatem: et quia falli nollent, nolunt convinci, quod falsi sunt. *Aug. Confess.* l. 10. c. 23.

prescribed and enjoined for their deliverance, that they make it matter of conscience to refrain from hearing such teachers, and so from reading such books, and admitting such discourses, whereby their judgments might be healed, and themselves made sound in the faith. Error in this case is so full of a pestilential malignity to the soul, that whereas God hath commanded men to try all things, that so they may be in a capacity to hold fast that which is good, they, on the contrary, resolve to hold fast at peradventure that which they have, and to make no trial at all, whether it be good or no.

The premises concerning the fierce and bloody war, wherein error fights against the soul, considered, it cannot seem strange unto us, that the great lover of the peace and prosperity of souls, Jesus Christ, blessed for ever, should pour out his heart and soul unto men so abundantly, as he hath done in the gospel, in cautions, admonitions, directions, threatenings, promises, almost without end, that so, by one means or other, they might be effectually prevailed with, to use all diligence to keep themselves unspotted of such errors, which he knew the great enemy of their peace would be industriously diligent to spread and scatter up and down the world in all ages. "Believe not every spirit; but try the spirits, whether they be of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world," 1 John iv. 1. So, again, Try, or "prove, all things," *i. e.* all doctrines and sayings of men, "hold fast that which is good," 1 Thess. v. 21. Again, "Ye, therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware, lest ye also being led away with *the error* of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness," &c. 2 Pet. iii. 17. Of like notion whereunto is that of another apostle: "Take heed, brethren, lest there be an evil heart of unbelief, to depart from the living God," Heb. iii. 12. An evil heart of unbelief is never contracted, but by suffering erroneous conceits, and false persuasions concerning God, to grow upon our judgments, and corrupt them. The same apostle again: "Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines," Heb. xiii. 9. Elsewhere: "That we henceforth be no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive," Ephes. iv. 14. Again: "Let no man deceive you with vain words," Ephes. v. 6. So, "Be not deceived," 1 Cor. vi. 9. "Beware, lest any man spoil you through philosophy, and vain deceit," &c. Coloss. ii. 8. "These things," saith John, "I have written unto you concerning those that deceive you," 1 John ii. 26, or seduce you, *i. e.* that endeavour to seduce or deceive you. The Lord Christ himself cautioneth his disciples, and in them others, *ex abundantia*, against false Christs and false prophets, who, as he saith, "should show great signs and wonders, insomuch that if it were possible, they should deceive the very elect," Matt. xxiv. 24. This operous and abundant interposure of the Holy Ghost, for ten times more of like consideration might be added, in all variety of applications

unto men, which are any ways conducing to the preserving of men's judgments free, and their minds pure from error, doth with a great pregnancy of conviction argue and suppose, that errors and false conceptions in matters of religion, are of a most formidable and dangerous consequence to the precious souls of men. Far be it from any man to imagine, that the Holy Ghost should, according to the proverb, thus labour about the lifting of a feather, or be solicitous at that high rate, which hath been expressed, to prevent the lighting of a grasshopper upon the earth, where it can do little or no harm.

The second thing, good reader, wherewith I desire to possess and fill thee, judgment and conscience, heart and soul, and all that is within thee, to strengthen thy hand to a diligent perusal of the treatise ensuing, is the high necessity that lieth upon thee, as it doth upon all the world besides respectively, to awake, raise, and engage all those worthy faculties and endowments which God hath vested in thee, reason, judgment, memory, understanding, about the things of thine eternal peace; and because this iron, I fear, hath been of late much blunted with the earthly conceits and suggestions of many, I am desirous to put so much the more strength to it. But to me it is the first-born of wonder and astonishment, that, amongst men professing the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the wisdom of God, yea, amongst the teachers themselves of this wisdom, men should be found who think they do God and men very good service in persuading men wholly to lay aside their reasons, judgments, understandings in matters of religion, and not to make use of or engage any of these in their inquiries after matters of a spiritual or supernatural concernment. Doubtless, Satan is a debtor to those persons who have seasoned the world with the unsavoury salt of such a principle as this, for all the religious respects and high entertainments that have of late been given by many amongst us,—to all those wicked, senseless, sapless, hideous, and blasphemous doctrines and opinions which, like the dead frogs of Egypt, *Exod. viii. 14*, make the land to stink. For, if men may not interpose with their reasons and judgments to distinguish between spirit and spirit, opinion and opinion, why should not one spirit be believed as well as another, and one opinion received as well as another? Or, if the difference be not to be made by the interposure and exercise of reason in a man, I demand by what other principle or means ought it to be made? If it be said, Partly by the word of God, and partly by the Spirit of God, I answer,

1. Concerning the word of God, it is acknowledged that this is to be in a special manner interested in all our dijudications between doctrine and doctrine, opinion and opinion, in matters of religion, and that this is the fire which must try every man's work, of what sort it is, *1 Cor. iii. 13*, and that must separate the vile from the precious. But as the plummet and rule do not measure the work of the architect, or discover whether it be true and square or otherwise, of or by themselves, but as they are regularly applied hereunto either

by the workman himself or some other capable of making such an application, for however true the work may be, a sufficient test or proof of the work cannot be made without the use of the plummet and rule about it; in like manner, though the word of God be of sovereign use and necessity for the measuring of opinions and doctrines, and for the discovery of what is straight and what crooked in them, yet he that desires to reap the spiritual benefit and advantage of the usefulness of it in this kind, must, first, rightly understand the sense and mind of God in it, and, secondly, be dexterous and expert in making a due application of it, being rightly understood, to the doctrines or opinions the soundness or unsoundness whereof he desires to understand by it; for it is not the letter or form of words, as separated or considered apart from the spirit, notion, or sense of them, that is the touchstone or rule of trial for doctrines: yea, the letter and words are only servants to the sense and notion which they contain and exhibit, and were principally, if not only, delivered by the Holy Ghost unto men for this end, that by them the sense, mind, and counsel of God, in all the particularities of them which are held forth in the Scripture, might be communicated and conveyed to the reasons and understandings of men. So that in case a man had the sense and mind of God upon the same terms of certainty and knowledge, without the letter, on which he hath it or may have it by means of the letter, he should be as richly, as completely qualified hereby to discern between doctrines as he now can be by the opportunity and advantage of the letter. Now, if the Scriptures themselves be upon no other terms, nor in any other case, serviceable or useful unto men for the trial of doctrines and opinions, but only as and when they are truly understood by them, it clearly follows that whatsoever is requisite and necessary to bring men to a true understanding of the Scriptures, is of equal necessity for the distinguishing of doctrines, and to interpose or be made use of in all affairs and concernments in religion. If, then, the reasons, judgments, and understandings of men must of necessity interpose, act, argue, debate, and consider before the true sense and mind of God in any Scripture can be duly apprehended, understood, and believed by men, it is a plain case that these are to be used, and to be interested in whatsoever is of any religious consequence or concernment to us. That the mind of God in the Scriptures cannot be duly apprehended, received, or believed by men, but by the acting and working of their reasons, minds, and understandings, in order hereunto, is evident from hence, viz., because the mind of God cannot be thus apprehended or believed by men but by means of an intellectual or rational difference tasted or resented by them between this mind of his and all other minds, meanings, or senses whatsoever that may be supposed to lie or reside in the words. For example: if there be another sense to be given of such or such a passage of Scripture, either contrary to or differing from that which I conceive to be the mind of God here, which hath the same

rational or intellectual savour and taste with this, that is, which as well suits with the words, agrees with the context, falls in with the scope and subject-matter in hand, is as accordable with Scripture assertion elsewhere, comports as clearly with the unquestionable principles of reason, and the like, how is it possible for me in this case to conceive or believe, especially with the certainty of faith, that my sense is the mind of God, and consequently the true sense of that place, rather than that other which hath all the same characters, symptoms, and arguments of being the mind of God which mine hath? Therefore it must needs be by the exercise and acting of my reason and understanding, and by the report which they make of their discoveries in their inquiries, that I come regularly to conclude and to be satisfied that this is the mind of God in such or such a scripture, and none other.

If it be here objected and demanded, But is it meet or tolerable that the reason of man should judge in the things of God? or that the understandings of men should umpire and determine in his affairs? I answer,

1. If God pleaseth to impart his mind and counsels in words and writing unto men, with an injunction and charge that they receive and own them as from him, and that they take heed that they do not mistake him, or embrace either their own conceits or the minds of others instead of his, in this case for men to put a difference, by way of judging and discerning between the mind of God and that which is not his mind, is so far from being an act of authority, presumption, or unseemly usurpation in men, that it is a fruit of their deep loyalty, submission, and obedience unto God. When Christ enjoined the disciples of the Pharisees and the Herodians to "render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things which are God's," Matt. xxii. 21, he did not only give them a warrant and commission to judge and determine what and which were the things of God, as well as which were the things of Cæsar, but laid a charge upon them also to put this warrant in execution, and this not only by judging actually which were the things of God, but by practising and acting also upon and according to this judgment.

2. To judge of God and of the things of God in the sense we now speak, is but to acknowledge, own, and reverence God and the things of God in their transcendent excellency, goodness, and truth, and as differenced in their perfections respectively from all other beings and things. The poorest and meanest subject that is may lawfully and without any just offence judge his prince, yea, or him that is made a lawful judge over him, to be wise, just, bountiful, &c., at least when there is sufficient ground for it.

If it be yet further demanded, But is the reason or understanding of a man competent to judge of the things of God, as, for example, to determine and conclude what is the mind of God in such or such a passage of Scripture, or in such and such a case? Doth not the Scripture, speaking of men in their natural condition, call

them darkness, Ephes. v. 8, affirming likewise that "the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not," John i. 5; and elsewhere doth it not inform us that "the natural man perceiveth" or receiveth "not the things of the Spirit of God, because they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned?" 1 Cor. ii. 14. And how many heathen philosophers, heretics and others, undertaking to judge of the things of God in the Gospel by the light and strength of their own reasons and understandings, have miscarried, to the everlasting perdition of their own souls, and, as is much to be feared, of many others also? To all this I answer by degrees.

First. It is a thing as unquestionable as that the sun is up at noon-day, that reason and understanding in men are competent to judge of the things of God, at least of some, yea, of many of them, or rather, indeed, of all that are contained in the Scriptures, according to the degree of their discovery and manifestation there; for, doth not God himself own them in this capacity when he appeals and refers himself unto them in several of his great and important affairs, authorizing them to judge in the case between him and his adversaries? "And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, *judge*, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard. What could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it?" Isa. v. 3, 4. So again, "Hear now, O house of Israel, is not my way equal? are not your ways unequal?" Ezek. xviii. 25, 29. Yet again, in the same chapter, "O house of Israel, are not my ways equal? are not your ways unequal?" In these and such like appeals, he supposeth the persons appealed unto to be as capable, or, however, as well capable, of the equity and righteousness of his ways, and consequently to be in a regular capacity of justifying him, as of the unworthiness and unrighteousness of their ways, against whom he standeth in the contest. So our Saviour to the chief priests and elders, in his parable: "When the Lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he" (or rather, what shall he) "do unto those husbandmen? They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, who shall render him the fruits in their season," Matt. xxi. 40, 41. We see these priests and elders, though men of great unworthiness otherwise, and far from believing in Christ, were yet able to award a righteous judgment, and such as our Saviour himself approved, yea and put in execution not long after, between him and his husbandmen. So in another place to the hypocritical Jews: "Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky, and of the earth? but how is it that ye do not discern this time? Yea and why even of" (or from) "yourselves judge ye not what is right?" Luke xii. 56, 57. In which passage, among other things, he clearly implieth these two: 1. That had they set their minds upon things that most concerned them, they were in a sufficient capacity, by the direction and help of those characters and signs which their own prophets had long before delivered, clearly

to have discerned, that the days and times in which they now lived were indeed the days of their Messiah. 2. That ἀφ' ἑαυτῶν, from themselves, *i. e.* out of natural and inbred principles, whereby they were enabled to judge of things commodious and expedient for them in like cases, they were in a capacity to have come to this issue and conclusion; that it was now high time to compromise that great and weighty controversy, which of a long time had been depending between God and them by repentance. The apostle Paul willeth the Corinthians, in one place, to judge of what he saith, 1 Cor. x. 15; in another, he directeth that in their church meetings the prophets should speak two or three, and that the rest should *judge*, 1 Cor. xiv. 29. In both which places he clearly supposeth in them a competency of judicature or discerning about spiritual things. And when in his defence before Agrippa, he demands of him, and the rest that were present, "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?" Acts xxvi. 8, he clearly supposeth that the resurrection itself of the dead, which yet is one of the great and deep mysteries of the gospel, was nothing but what they, consulting with the light of reason and understanding in themselves (for they were not supernaturally enlightened) might judge probable enough, and no ways unlike to be effected. When God commands, and calls upon "all men everywhere to repent," Acts xvii. 30, and so to believe, 1 John iii. 23, he must either suppose them in a capacity to distinguish and discern between the things whereof he would have them repent, and the things of which he would not have them repent, and so between what he would have them to believe, and what not; or else speak unto them as no otherwise capable of such his commands, than the stones on the earth, or beasts of the field. And how then is "the commandment holy, and just, and good?" Therefore certainly those noble faculties and endowments of reason and understanding in men, as they are sustained, supported, and assisted by the Spirit of God in the generality of men, are in a capacity of apprehending, discerning, understanding the things of God in the gospel. Yea and evident it is from the Scriptures, that men act beneath themselves, are remiss and slothful in awakening those principles of light and understanding that are vested in their natures, or else willingly choke, suppress, and smother them, if they remain in the snare of unbelief. "Pray for us," saith Paul to the Thessalonians, "that we may be delivered from unreasonable and evil men: for all men have not faith," 2 Thess. iii. 2. By unreasonable (or, as the word signifieth, absurd) and evil men he plainly meaneth, not men who naturally, or in actu primo were unreasonable (such as these were not like to endanger him, or to obstruct the course of the gospel) but such as were unreasonable in actu secundo, *i. e.* persons who acted contrary to the light and principles of reason, and hereby became *πονηροί*, industriously evil or wicked. That there were such persons as these abroad in the world, he gives this account, "for all men have not faith;" which clearly implieth that men who act and quit them-

selves according to the true principles of that reason, which God hath planted in them, cannot but believe, and be partakers in the precious faith of the gospel. To this purpose that passage in Chrysostom is memorably worthy: "As to believe (the gospel) is the part of a raised and nobly ingenuous soul; so, on the contrary, not to believe, is the property of a soul most unreasonable, and unworthy, and depressed, or bowed down, to the sottishness of brute beasts."* Therefore,

Secondly, Whereas it was objected that men in their natural estates are by the Scriptures termed darkness, and in this respect presented as unable to comprehend the light of the gospel, I answer, There is in the controversies about the extent and efficacy of the grace of God vouchsafed unto men, as great an abuse of the word natural, (and so of the word supernatural, a term not found in the scriptures, either formally or virtually,) as there is of the word orthodox in this and many others. The Scripture knoweth not the word natural in any such sense or signification, wherein it should express or distinguish the unregenerate estate of a man from the regenerate. Our translators indeed render *ψυχικός άνθρωπος* (in the scripture adjoining, of which a touch presently) the natural man; but quo jure, nondum liquet. And however, the whole carriage of the context round about maketh it as clear as the light (as I have elsewhere argued and proved at large†) that it is not the unregenerate man, but the weak Christian, that is there spoken of and termed *ψυχικός*, as a little after, in the same contexture of discourse, he is termed *σαρκικός*, carnal, and *νηπίος ἐν Χριστῷ*, a babe or youngling in Christ. If therefore by the natural estate of men the objection meaneth the unregenerate estate of men according to the whole compass and extent of it, and under all the differences which it admitteth, I absolutely deny that the Scripture any where termeth natural men darkness. Those Ephesians, of whom the apostle saith, they were sometime darkness, had been not only or simply unregenerate, but had walked in sins and trespasses, according to the course of this world, and after the prince that ruleth in the air, the spirit that worketh effectually in the children of disobedience, by whom their understandings had been darkened, and they possessed with many false, wicked, and blasphemous conceits concerning God and the gospel, &c. All which imply an unregenerate estate most dangerously encumbered, and from whence it argued the high and signal grace and favour of God that ever they should be delivered. The Jews also (John i. 5) are termed darkness upon a like account, viz., because they were strongly and desperately prejudiced and prepossessed with erroneous notions and conceits against Christ, and about the estate of their Messiah at his first coming unto them; whom they expecting in the form of a great monarch, rejected and

* "Ὅσπερ τὸ πιστεῖν ἐψηλῆς καὶ μεγαλοφυοῦς ψυχῆς· οὕτω καὶ τὸ ἀπιστεῖν ἀλογωτάτης καὶ ἀτελοῦς, καὶ πρὸς τὴν τῶν κτηνῶν ἄνοιαν κατεννηγεμένης. Chrysost. in Rom. Hom. 8.

† Novice Presbyter, page 86, 87.

crucified in the form of a servant. It was this darkness which they had through an oscitant, loose, and sensual converse with their own Scriptures, voluntarily suffered to grow and spread itself upon the face of their minds and understandings, that was a snare upon them, and occasioned the sad event here mentioned, viz., that when the light shone unto them (*i. e.* when sufficient and pregnant means were vouchsafed unto them to have brought them to the acknowledgment of their Messiah,) they comprehended it not, *i. e.* did not by the means of it come to see and understand that, for the sight and knowledge whereof it was given them. For that, by the way, is to be observed, that the evangelist doth not say, that the darkness in which the light shined could not, or was not able, to comprehend it, but only that it did not comprehend it. Now it is a known principle in reason, that “*à negatione actus, ad negationem potentiae, non valet argumentum.*” There may be a defect in action, or performance, where there is no defect of power for action. And the very observation and report which the evangelist maketh of the non-comprehension of the light by the darkness in which it shone, plainly enough imports, that the defectiveness of this darkness in not comprehending the light did not consist in, or proceed from, any natural or invincible want of power to comprehend it, but from a blindness voluntarily contracted, and willingly, if not wilfully, persisted in. For how can it be reasonably supposed that this evangelist, who flyeth an higher pitch than his fellows, in drawing up his evangelical tidings for the use and benefit of the world, should, in the very entrance of his gospel, and whilst he was thundering out on high (as one of the fathers speaks) the divinity of Christ, insert the relation of a thing that had nothing strange, nothing more than of common and ordinary observation in it? Or is it any thing more than ordinary, or what is most obvious, that men do not fly in the air like birds, or that fishes do not speak on the earth like men? Or is it a thing of any whit a more savoury consideration than these, that men void of all capacity, destitute of all power, to comprehend the light, should not comprehend it? But that there should be a generation of men whom it so infinitely concerned to comprehend the light, to acknowledge and own their Messiah being now come unto them, and who withal had a rich sufficiency of means to have done the one and the other, should notwithstanding be so stupid and unlike men as not to comprehend this light, not to acknowledge or own this their Messiah, is a matter of high admiration and astonishment, and the mention of it very commodious and proper for that subject of discourse, which the Holy Ghost had now in hand, as might be showed more at large, but that I fear the reader hath already more than his burden of an epistle.

Thirdly, Concerning that scripture, 1 Cor. ii. 14, “But the natural man perceiveth not,” &c., if, reader, thou conceivest there is any thing in it spoken with any intent to disable reason or understanding in man, so far as to divest them of all capacity or power for the appre-

hending, conceiving, or believing any of the things of God, yea, or particularly of such of the things of God the discerning and believing whereof is of absolute necessity for salvation, thou mayest, if thou pleasest, deliver thy judgment from the mistake by the perusal of a few pages in a discourse formerly published,* where thou wilt find this passage of Scripture opened at large, and driven home to its issue. Here I clearly demonstrate these three things: 1. That the place speaketh not of the natural, *i. e.*, of the unregenerate man, but of the weak Christian, the babe in Christ. 2. That the things of God here spoken of are not such things the knowledge or discerning whereof is of absolute necessity to salvation, but the high or deep things of God, of the true and worthy discerning of which only the spiritual man, *i. e.*, the strong and well-grown Christian, is de præsentî and immediately capable. 3. And lastly, that the incapacity of these things of God, which is here asserted to be in the natural man or weak Christian, is not an utter or absolute incapacity, or such which, by a diligent use of means, he may not very possibly, and according to the ordinary course of Providence, outgrow, but only a present or actual incapacity or indisposition, which is regularly, and, as it were, of course, curable. These things I there evince from the express tenor and carriage of the context.

Fourthly and lastly, to the objection concerning heathen philosophers, heretics, and others of great parts and natural endowments of reason, wit, understanding, &c., who either rejected the gospel as a fable, as the philosophers, or else perverted and wrested the truth thereof in many things to their own destruction, and, possibly, to the destruction of others as heretics; I answer, When I affirm and teach that reason, or the intellectual part of a man, is competent to apprehend, discern, subscribe unto, the things of God and of the gospel, my meaning is not to affirm withal that therefore men of these endowments, though ever so excellently enriched with them, must of necessity apprehend, discern, or subscribe unto these things. Reason and understanding, even of the greatest advance in men, will serve men for other ends and purposes besides the apprehension and discerning of the things of God in the gospel, and may accordingly be improved and employed by them; yea, they may be employed against the gospel, and made to war and fight against the truth of it. It is a saying of known truth concerning all things that have not an essential connexion with a man's sovereign good,

Nil prodest, quod non lædere possit idem : i. e.

Nothing there is so profitable,
But to do mischief is as able.

Because some men suffer themselves to be bewitched with a corrupt desire of "drawing away disciples after them," and for the fulfilling of such a lust, "speak perverse things," Acts xx. 30, as the

* Novice Presbyter, p. 86, 87, 89, &c.

apostle speaketh; it doth not follow from hence that therefore they were in no capacity or in no possibility of speaking the truth and refraining from the teaching of perverse things. Aristotle, speaking of riches, saith that "it is impossible that he should have them who takes no care to have them."* So are we to conceive of the knowledge and true discerning of the things of God in the gospel: in what capacity soever men are, either for abilities, or means otherwise for obtaining them, it is impossible that ever they should actually attain them unless they be careful, and shall bend the strength of their minds and understandings in order to the attainment of them. Now, the heathen philosophers, more generally, became vain in their imaginations, Rom. i. 21, as the apostle speaketh; *i. e.*, they spent themselves, the strength of their parts, time, and opportunities upon matters of a low or secondary concernment, and which they apprehended to have a more ready and certain connexion with their own honour and esteem amongst men; and did not charge themselves, their gifts, or parts with that worthy and blessed design which the apostle calls the having of God in acknowledgment.† Upon this their unnatural unthankfulness towards God uttering itself in their addiction of themselves to studies, speculations, and inquiries of a self-concernment, with the neglect of Him, *ἰσχοσιόθη ἡ ἀσύνετος αὐτῶν καρδιά*, their foolish heart was darkened. Concerning heretics, it is a common notion amongst us that these, from time to time, were turned aside from the way of truth by some unclean spirit or other, as of pride, ambition, envy, voluptuousness, or the like. If these spirits once enter into a man, they will soon call in and take unto themselves other spirits worse than themselves, I mean, spirits of error and delusion, to advocate for them and plead their cause. As for the mistakes and miscarriages in judgment of good men, upright in the main with God and the gospel, about some particular points, they are to be resolved into several causes, of which we shall not now speak particularly: only this I shall say, whatsoever any man's error or mistake in judgment is about the things of the gospel, it is not to be imputed to any deficiency on God's part in the vouchsafement of means unto him, competent and sufficient, as well for the guiding into as for the keeping of his judgment in the way of truth; but into some deficiency, neglect, or incogitancy of his own, which he might very possibly have prevented or overcome. But,

Secondly, Concerning the Spirit of God, by which alone, and in opposition unto reason, many affirm and teach that the things of God and matters of religion are to be apprehended, discerned, and known, I answer, that such an opinion as this is a conceit as uncouth, as palpably weak, and incoherent with itself, as lightly can be; for if only the Spirit of God within me apprehends the things of God, and I myself apprehend them not, (and apprehend them I cannot but by my reason or understanding, having no other faculty

* Ἀδύνατον ἔχειν τὸν πλοῦτον, μὴ ἐπιμελοῦντα ἔχειν. Arist. Ethic.

† See the Epistle Dedicatory.

wherewith to apprehend or conceive,) such an apprehension of them relateth not at all unto me: nor can I any whit more be said to apprehend them because the Spirit of God apprehends them in me, than I may or might in case the same Spirit should apprehend them in another man. That which another man meditates or indites in my house without imparting it unto me, no whit more concerns me than in case he should have meditated or indited the same things in the house of another man. Besides, the Spirit of God being but one and the same infinite indivisible Spirit in all men, he cannot, with any tolerable propriety of speech, nor with truth, be said to apprehend, discern, or conceive that in one man which he doth not after the same manner apprehend, discern, and conceive in another, yea, in every man. Therefore, if there be any thing more apprehended or discerned of the things of God in one man than in another, the difference ariseth not from the different apprehensions of the Spirit in these men, but from the different apprehensions of these men themselves, and this by their own reasons and understandings, they having, as hath been said, no other faculties, principles, or abilities wherewith to apprehend but these.

If it be demanded, But is any man able, without the presence and assistance of the Spirit of God, to discern the things of God, or to judge aright in matters of religion? I answer,

1. Plainly and directly to the heart, I suppose, of those who make this demand, No. The Spirit of God hath such a great interest in, and glorious superintendency over, the minds, and spirits, reasons, and understandings of men, that they cannot act or move regularly, or perform any of those operations or functions that are most natural and proper to them upon any worthy or comely terms, especially in matters of a spiritual concernment, but by the gracious and loving interposure and help of this Spirit. For, questionless, the intellectual frame of the heart and soul of man, was, by the sin and fall of Adam, wholly dissolved, shattered, brought to an absolute chaos and confusion of ignorance and darkness, to a condition of as great an impotency to do him the least service in order to his comfort or peace in any kind, as can be imagined. So that if the reasons and understandings of men quit themselves in their actings or workings with honour, or in any due proportion to their benefit, comfort, or peace, it must needs be by means of that gracious conjunction of the Spirit of God with them, which is a vouchsafement unto the children of men, procured by him who raised up the tabernacle of Adam when it was fallen, Jesus Christ blessed for ever; in respect of which vouchsafement purchased by him, and given unto men for his sake, he is said to enlighten every man coming into the world, John i. 9. So that what light soever of truth, what clear and sound principle or impression of reason, or understanding soever, is, since the fall, to be found in any man, is an express fruit of the grace that is given unto the world upon the account of Jesus Christ, and is re-invested

in the soul by the appropriate interposure of the Spirit of God, the gift whereof, upon this account, is so frequently and highly magnified in the Scriptures. Yea, not only the habitual residency of all principles of light and truth in the soul is to be attributed unto the Spirit of God as supporting and preserving them from defacement, but also all the actings and movings of the rational powers of the soul according to the true exigency, ducture, and import of them, as in all right apprehensions of things, in all legitimate and sound reasonings and debates, whether for the confirmation of any truth or the confutation of any error, or the like. But,

2. Though the Spirit of God contributes by his assistance after that high manner which hath been declared, towards the right apprehending, understanding, discerning the things of God by men, yet this no ways proveth, but that they are the reasons and understandings of men themselves, that must apprehend, discern, and understand these things: and consequently must be provoked, raised, engaged, employed, and improved by men, that they may thus apprehend, and discern, notwithstanding all that assistance which is administered by the Spirit, otherwise nothing will be apprehended or discerned by them. Nor will the assistance of the Spirit we speak of, turn to any account of benefit or comfort, but of loss and condemnation unto men, in case their reasons and understandings shall not advance, and quit themselves according to their interest thereupon.

3. In case the Spirit of God shall at any time reveal (I mean, offer and propose) any of the things of God, or any spiritual truth, unto men, these must be apprehended, discerned, judged of, yea, and concluded to be the things of God, by the reasons and understandings of men, before they can, or ought to receive or believe them to be the things of God, yea, before such a revelation can any ways accommodate, benefit, and bless their soul. When our Saviour, speaking of the Spirit to his disciples, saith, "And he will show you things to come;" and again, "He shall receive of mine, and shall show them unto you," John xvi. 13, 14, he supposeth that they (viz. with their own reasons and understandings) were to apprehend and judge of the things that should be thus shown unto them, to have been shown unto them by the Spirit of God, and not to have proceeded from any other author. Yea, in case men shall receive the things of God themselves *for* the things of God, or of the Spirit of God, before their reason and understanding have upon rational grounds and principles judged them to be the things of God, yet can they not receive them upon these terms, *as* the things of God; I mean, as the things of God ought in duty, and by command from himself, to be received by men, or so as to benefit or enrich the soul by their being received. For as God requires of men to be "praised with understanding," Psalm xlvi. 7, (*i. e.* out of a rational apprehension, and due consideration of his infinite worth and excellency,) so doth he require to be believed also. And they that believe him otherwise, believe they

know not what, nor whom; and so are brethren in vanity with those that "worship they know not what," John iv. 22, and build "altars to an unknown God," Acts xvii. 23. To trust, or believe in God upon such terms as these, is, being interpreted, but as the devotion of a man to an idol; yea, the apostle himself arraigns the Athenians of that high crime and misdemeanour of idolatry, upon the account of their sacrificing to "an unknown God," Acts xvii. 29.

4, and lastly, The interposure and actings of reason and understanding in men, are of that sovereign and most transcendant use, yea, necessity, in and about matters of religion, that all the agency of the Spirit notwithstanding, a man can perform nothing, no manner of service unto God with acceptation, nothing in a way of true edification to himself, without their engagement and service. First, I stand charged by God, not to believe every spirit, but to try the spirits whether they be of God, 1 John iv. 1. I demand, by what rule or touchstone shall I try any spirit? When, or upon what account, shall I reject one as a spirit of error, falsehood, and delusion, and do homage with my judgment and conscience to another as the Spirit of God? If it be said, I ought to try the spirits by the Scriptures, or word of God; I demand, again, but how shall I try my touchstone, to be sure that that principle, notion, or ground, which I call the word of God, and by which I go about to try the spirits, is indeed the word of God? There is scarcely any spirit of error that is abroad in the Christian world, but freely offers itself to be tried by the word of God, as well as the true Spirit of God himself, *i. e.* by such meanings, senses, or conclusions, as itself confidently asserts to be the word of God, *i. e.* the mind of God in the Scriptures. So that I am in no capacity to try such a spirit, which upon such an account as this pretends his coming forth from God, unless I be able to prove that those senses, meanings, and conclusions, by which he offers to be tried, are not indeed the word of God. Now it is impossible that I should prove this merely and only by the Scriptures themselves, because unto what place, or places soever, I shall have recourse for my proof or trial in this case, this spirit will reject my sense and interpretation, in case it maketh against him, and will substitute another that shall not oppose him. Nor can I reasonably or regularly reject his sense in this case, at least as an untruth, unless I apprehend some relish or taste therein which is irrational, or some notion which jarreth with or grateth upon some clear principle or other of reason within me. For as on the one hand, what doctrine or notion soever clearly accordeth, and is commensurable, with any solid and undoubted principle or ground of reason within me, is hereby demonstrably evinced to be a truth, and from God: so, on the other hand, what doctrine or saying soever bears hard, or falls foul, upon any such principle, must of necessity be an error, and somewhat that proceeds from Satan, or from men, and not from God. The reason hereof is clearly asserted by the apostle in these words, "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace," 1 Cor.

xiv. 33. From whence it appears that God is not divided in himself, or contradictory to himself, so as to write or assert that in one book, as in that of the Scriptures, which he denieth or opposeth in another, as viz. in that of nature, or of the fleshly tables of the heart of man; but whatsoever he writeth or speaketh in the one, he writeth or speaketh nothing in the other but what is fairly and fully consistent with it. Upon this account it is a grave and worthy advertisement of Mr. Perkins, in his epistle before his treatise of predestination: "It is," saith he, "also requisite that this doctrine (he speaks of predestination, election, and reprobation) agree with the grounds of common reason, and of that knowledge of God which may be obtained by the light of nature." In this saying of his he clearly supposeth, that whatsoever should be taught by any man in the mysterious and high point of predestination, otherwise than according to the Scriptures and the truth, may be clearly disproved by this, viz. the disagreement of it with the grounds of common reason, and of that knowledge of God which the light of nature shineth into the hearts of men. If himself had kept close to this principle of his own, in drawing up his judgment in the point of predestination, the world had received a far differing and better account from his pen of this subject than now it hath. But if his sense were, that the heights and depths of religion (for so we may well call the doctrines of election and reprobation, &c.) have nothing in them but what agreeth with the grounds and principles of common reason, and with the dictates of nature in men, and consequently may be measured, discerned, and judged of by these, he did not conceive that matters of a more facile and ordinary consideration were above the capacity and apprehension of reason. It was the saying of Augustin, that "God hath bowed down the Scriptures to the capacity even of babes and sucklings."* Tertullian hath much upon this account to excellent purpose. In one place, speaking of the soul being yet simple, rude, and unfurnished with any acquired knowledge, either from the Scripture or other institution, he demands why it should be strange, that being given by God it should speak out or sing the same things, the knowledge whereof God giveth unto his children. Not long after he admonisheth the Gentiles, that neither God nor nature lies; and thereupon, that they may believe both God and nature, willeth them to believe their own souls. A little after he saith, that the soul he speaks of hath the words (and therefore the inward senses and impressions) of Christians, whom notwithstanding it wisheth that it might never hear or see. Elsewhere, having mentioned some expressions of affinity with the Scriptures as oft coming out of the mouths of heathens, he triumphs, as it were, over them with this acclamation, "O, the testimony of a soul naturally Christian!"† Nor doth Calvin him-

* *Inclinavit Deus Scripturas ad infantium et lactentium capacitatem.*—*Aug. in Psal. viii.*

† Tertul. *De testimonio Animæ adversus Gentes*, c. 1. *Mirum, si a Deo data homini, novit divinare? Sic mirum, si a Deo data, eadem canit, quæ Deus suis dedit nosse.* *Ibid.* c. 5.

self say any whit less than all this, when he saith, that "God hath implanted," (or inwardly put) "the seed of religion in the mind of men."* Doubtless the seed sympathizeth richly with that body which springs and grows from it. But these things by the way. All impressions, all principles of light and truth, which are found written in the hearts and consciences of men, are here written by the finger of God himself. Therefore what spirit or doctrine soever symbolizeth in notion and import, with these or any of them, must of necessity be of the same parentage and descent with them, there being no original parent or father of light and truth, but God only. And on the contrary, what doctrine or spirit soever putteth any of these principles to sorrow or shame, and doth not lovingly comport with them, hereby declare themselves to be of a spurious and ignoble race, as Christ reasoned with the Jews, "If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth, and came from God," John viii. 42. But because they hated him, he concluded them to be the children of the devil.

Concerning the mystery of the Trinity, the incarnation of God, or the Son of God, the conception of a virgin, with some other points of like consideration, commonly pretended to be against, or at least above, and out of the reach and apprehension of reason, I clearly answer: 1. That they are every whit as much, yea, upon the same terms, out of the reach of faith, as of reason. For how can I believe, at least upon good grounds, and as it becometh a Christian to believe, whatsoever he believeth, that which I have no reason, nor am capable of apprehending any reason, nay, for which there is no reason, why I should believe it? If it be said I am bound to believe the doctrines specified, because they are revealed by God; I answer, that this is a rational ground, whereof my reason and understanding are thoroughly capable, why I should believe them. The light of nature clearly informeth me, that what God revealeth or speaketh must needs be true, and consequently worthy and meet to be believed. If it be further said, but reason is not able to apprehend or conceive how three should be really and essentially one, and the same: how a virgin should conceive, and bring forth a son, &c., I answer that no faith or belief in such things as these is required of me, nor would be accepted with God in case it were in me, above what I am able by my reason to apprehend and understand. As I am not able to apprehend by my reason the particular and distinct manner how the three persons subsist in one and the same Divine nature and essence, so neither am I bound to believe it. That which I am bound to believe in this point is only this, that there are three who do thus subsist, I

Si de tuis literis dubitas, neque Deus, neque natura mentitur; ut et Deo, et naturæ credas, crede animæ, etc. *Ibid.* cap. 6. Cur verba habet Christianorum, quos ne auditos visosque vult? *Ibid.* O testimonium animæ naturaliter Christianæ! *Tertul. Apologet.*

* Ne cui præclusus esset ad felicitatem aditus, non solum hominum mentibus indidit illud quod diximus religionis semen, etc. *Calvin. Instil.* l. i. c. 5. sect. 1.

mean in the same Divine essence, and for this my reason is apprehensive enough why I should believe it, viz., because God himself hath revealed it, as hath been said. If I should confidently believe any thing more or further concerning the trinity of persons, commonly so called, and there is the same reason of the other points mentioned, than what I know upon the clear account of my reason and understanding, it would be presumption in me, and not faith; and I should contract the guilt of those whom the apostle chargeth with intruding or advancing themselves into the things, which they have not seen,* *i. e.* rationally apprehended and understood. But,

2. If it be yet demanded, but is it not contrary to the grounds of nature, and so to principles of reason, that a virgin should conceive a child? And if so, how can such a doctrine, according to what you have asserted, be received as from God, or as a truth? I answer, it is no ways contrary to reason, nor to any principle thereof, that God should be able to make a virgin to conceive, but very consonant hereunto; as the apostle Paul supposed it credible enough, as we lately heard, even in the eye of reason, that God should make the earth bring forth her dead alive, Acts xxvi. 8. Indeed that a virgin should conceive in a natural way, or according to the course of ordinary Providence, is contrary unto reason; but this religion requireth not of any man to believe. Nor doth it bear hard at all upon any principle of reason, that God should be willing to do every whit as great and strange a thing as that (I mean as to cause a virgin to conceive) for the accomplishment of so great and glorious a design, as the saving of a lost world. Nor is it contrary to reason, or any principle thereof, that God, or the first Being, being infinite, should have a manner of subsisting or being far different from the manner of subsistence which is appropriate to all created and finite beings; or that this manner of subsisting, which is proper unto him, should be unto men incomprehensible. But most consonant it is to principles of reason, when God himself hath pleased so far to reveal that appropriate and incomprehensible manner of his subsisting, as to declare and say, that he subsisteth in three, that men should accordingly believe it so to be. So that most certain it is that there is nothing in Christian religion, so far as it concerneth men to know and believe, but what fairly and friendly comports with that reason and understanding which God hath given unto man, and what by a diligent and conscientious use of these noble faculties, he may come to know and believe, at least so far as to salve his great interest of salvation.

Look with how many precepts, exhortations, admonitions, I stand charged by God to submit unto, and practise; I am under so many charges and engagements from him likewise to exercise my reason and understanding, 1. To apprehend aright the mind of God in every of these respectively, lest when he enjoineth me one

* *Ἄ μὴ ἑώρακεν κρείττερον.* Col. ii. 18. Vide Sam. Petit, Var. Lect. J. i. c. 9.

thing, I, through mistake, should do another: 2. To consider how, when, and in what cases I am commanded by him to do this or that: 3, and lastly, to pass by other particulars, To gather together and call up upon my soul all such motives and considerations which I am able, whereby to provoke, stir up, and strengthen myself to the execution and performance of all things accordingly. When God commandeth me to strive to enter in at the strait gate, to seek his kingdom, and the righteousness thereof in the first place, to labour for the meat which endureth to everlasting life, to be a man in understanding, (to omit other precepts of like nature, without number,) he commandeth me consequentially, and with a direct, clear, and necessary implication, to rise up in the might of my reason and understanding in order to the performance of these things: nor am I capable of performing the least of these great and most important commands, in any due manner, but by interesting my reason, judgment, understanding, and this thoroughly and effectually, in and about the performance. The truth is, I stand bound in duty and conscience towards God, and in faithfulness to mine own soul, neither to believe any thing at all, as coming from God, which I have not, or may have, a very substantial ground in reason to believe cometh indeed from him: nor yet to do any thing at all, as commanded by him, unless there be a like ground in reason to persuade me that it is indeed his command.

I confess, good reader, I have presumed at somewhat an unreasonable rate upon thy patience, in detaining thee so long with the argument yet in hand. But the sense of that unconceivable mischief and misery, which I most certainly know have been brought upon the Christian world, at least in our quarters of it, and which lie sore upon it at this day, by means of the reigning of this notion or doctrine amongst us, that men ought not to use, but lay aside their reason in matters of religion, lieth so intolerably sad and heavy upon my spirit, that I could not relieve myself to any competent degree, with saying less than what hath been said, to relieve the world, by hewing in sunder such a snare of death cast upon it. Most assuredly, all the ataxies, disorders, confusions, seditions, insurrections, all the errors, blasphemous opinions, apostasies from the truth and ways of holiness, all trouble of mind, and sad workings of conscience in me, all unrighteousness and injustice, all bribery and oppression, all unmanlike self-seeking and prevaricating with public interests and trusts, all covetousness and deceit, and whatsoever can be named in this world, obstructive, destructive, to the present comfort and peace, to the future blessedness and glory, of the sons and daughters of men, proceed and spring from this one root of bitterness and of death; they neglect to advance and engage home their reasons, judgments, understandings, in matters of religion, to employ and improve them according to their proper interests and capacities in these most important affairs.

O reader, my mouth is open unto thee, my heart is enlarged. Now for a recompense in the same, I speak unto thee as a dear

brother in Christ, be thou also enlarged. Say unto the world round about thee, "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." Doubtless the world would soon find itself in another manner of posture than now it is, and see the whole hemisphere of it filled with the glorious light of the knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ, if the inhabitants thereof, every man from his quarters, would be persuaded to rise up in the might of those abilities, those heavenly endowments of reason, judgment, understanding, wherewith God, by Jesus Christ, hath re-invested them, to seek after him, by inquiring diligently into, by weighing narrowly all those things as works of creation, works of providence, inscriptions upon the soul, and especially the sacred word of extraordinary revelation, wherein and whereby God hath drawn near unto men, and, as it were, prepared, postured, and fitted himself on purpose to be found and known, and this as well in the excellency of his grace, as of his glory, by all those who upon these terms seek after him. The time was, when the Spirit was not given, because Christ was not glorified in heaven, John vii. 39; the time now is wherein the Spirit is not given unto the world according to the preparations of the royal bounty and magnificence of heaven, because he is not glorified on earth by the worthy employment of the means, abilities, opportunities vouchsafed unto men. The word of God makes it one argument of the wickedness and sensual ways of men, that they have not the Spirit, Jude 18, 19: yea, the apostle Paul by charging the Ephesians to be filled with the Spirit, Eph. v. 18, clearly supposeth it to be a sinful strain of a voluntary unworthiness in men, if they have not a very rich and plentiful anointing of the Spirit. He that lives up to those principles of light which God hath vested in him, is under the beatifical influence of that most rich promise of Christ, "to him that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundantly," Matt. xxv. 29. By him that hath, in this promise, is meant, as clearly appears from the tenor of the parable immediately preceding, such a person who useth, employeth, improveth that which he hath, hereby declaring that he hath what he hath. Nor is that which he is here said to have, any thing of a spiritual or supernatural import. This likewise is evident from the said parable. For here one of the three, who all had received talents, one or more, all which talents must needs, by the course of the parable, be supposed to be of one and the same kind, nor is there the least intimation of any difference, especially of any specifical difference, between them, is said to be an evil and slothful servant, notwithstanding his talent; and because of his slothfulness, to have been cast into utter darkness. These are no characters, especially in the judgment of those with whom we are to conflict in the ensuing discourse, of persons that had received any thing saving or supernatural. But by that which is here promised to be given, and that in abundance, to him that hath, must of necessity be meant somewhat that is of a spiritual and saving nature. This also is evident, from the carriage of the

same parable, where the servants, who had received the talents, and employed them faithfully, by whom are typified our Saviour's *οἱ ἔχοντες*, those that have, as was lately said, are graciously invited by their master into his joy: "Enter thou into thy master's joy:" so to the other; "Enter thou into thy master's joy." Now if either God, or Christ, be signified and meant by the master of those servants, as I suppose no man questions but that either the one or the other are typified hereby, by entering into their joy, cannot be meant a receiving of a greater measure of natural gifts or endowments, nor of receiving any reward which belongs to persons qualified only with such endowments as these, but salvation, or eternal blessedness and glory. If so, it roundly follows, that by what Christ promiseth shall be given to him that hath, in the sense declared, is meant somewhat of a saving consequence, as regenerating grace, the sanctifying Spirit of God, faith, and the like. And promising, not only, or simply, that to him that hath shall be given, but further, that he shall have abundantly, he clearly signifieth, that in case men will provoke, stir up, and lay out themselves accordingly in the improvements of such abilities and gifts, which shall from time to time be vouchsafed unto them, they may, by virtue of the bounty and gracious decree of God in that behalf, attain and receive from God what proportion or measure of the Spirit of grace and of God they can desire. Therefore, they that teach men to be merely passive in matters of religion, and forbid them the use of their reasons and understandings, as unlawful or dangerous, in these affairs, how prudently soever they may consult their own carnal ease, honour, or worldly accommodations by such a doctrine, yet herein they say unto man, in effect, Be not excellent: let it never be said that the God of heaven hath made you rich or great.

Good reader, I have no apology for my prolixity in the argument in hand, but only the high and sovereign importance of it, together with mine own abounding in the sense of that most sad calamity, under which the world groaneth by means of the importune and tyrannical regency of that notion or doctrine unto the deposal whereof I have lift up my heart and hand in all that I have said herein. I shall only add this one word more, upon this account, at the present: whereas thou, I fear, art ready to complain of a long harvest already, the truth is, that all I have said in the business hitherto, is but a first-fruit of that abundance, which yet remaineth in my spirit and soul, ready to utter itself upon any other like occasion, for the eradication and utter extirpation, if it be possible, of that most pestilential and pernicious notion and conceit out of the minds of men. In the meantime I shall make thee some part of amends for thy patient bearing of my burden in this point, by as much brevity as thou canst reasonably desire in the third and last particular yet remaining. The tenor hereof was, to remove some stumbling stones, which it is like have been thrown in thy way, to alienate thy mind from the perusal of the discourse ensuing.

For Satan and men have together devised and hammered out a variety of arguments, or pretences, to alienate the minds of weak and inconsiderate persons, not only from the doctrines themselves here asserted, but even from acquainting themselves with books or discourses, of like argument and plea with the discourse before thee.

One vizer very hideous and affrighting, which they put upon the face of such discourses as this, to scare children in understanding from them, is, that they teach the uncomfortable, sad, and dismal doctrine of the possibility of saints and true believers falling away, and this both totally and finally. But how far this doctrine is from being either uncomfortable, sad, or dismal, I shall not here stand to demonstrate; but refer thee to the ninth chapter of the discourse itself, with several other passages afterwards, where I evidently prove, the two opposite doctrines being duly and impartially compared together, that that which denieth this possibility, is every whit as great, yea, a far greater enemy to the peace and comfort of the saints, than that which affirmeth it.

2. Some labour to work a distaste of such discourses as we speak of in the minds of men, by possessing them with a conceit, that they are derogatory and injurious to the grace, or freeness of the grace of God, in the salvation of men; and that they exalt nature, and the abilities hereof, as free will and the like, to the dishonour and prejudice of this grace. To this I answer, 1. That I am no ways responsible for all that may possibly be taught or said, in every treatise or discourse, that buildeth up one or more of the doctrines here asserted, but only for such things wherein their sense and mine greet each other. 2. I answer to the charge, in reference to myself, and my doctrine and judgment touching the grace of God, that it is of a like consideration and relation between my accusers and me, as the accusation of an unchaste deportment brought against Joseph by his mistress, was between them. For as the accuser here, and not the accused, was guilty of the crime objected in the accusation, so the truth is, that the sense and opinion of those who sentence my doctrine as injurious to the grace, or freeness of the grace of God, are themselves deep in the condemnation, my doctrine being as innocent as the manifest truth itself is from such a crime: nor doth it exalt nature any whit more, if not much less, than they. For, concerning the grace of God, and the freeness hereof, I hold and teach nothing but what fairly and fully accords with these positions. 1. That the original, or first spring of the salvation of the world, and so of every particular person, that comes to be saved, was in and from the grace, the free grace, and good pleasure of God. 2. That the whole method, or system of counsels by which, and according unto which, God effecteth and bringeth to pass the salvation of all that are saved, did proceed wholly and entirely from the same grace and good pleasure. 3. And more particularly, that the gift of Jesus Christ for a mediator and saviour unto the world; and so, the grant or

promise of justification and salvation unto men, by or upon believing, issued solely and wholly from the same grace. 4. That men by nature, and of themselves, *i. e.* considered in and under such a condition as they were brought unto by Adam, and wherein they should have subsisted, in case they had ever been born and lived in the world, had not the free grace of God in Christ interposed to relieve them, and better their condition, have no strength or power, not the least inclination or propension of will, to do any thing, little or much, acceptable unto God, or of a saving import. 5. That notwithstanding this restoration or healing of the natural condition of man by the free grace of God, yet there is not one of a thousand, possibly not one throughout the whole world, but so far corrupts himself with the lusts of the flesh, and ways of the world, that without a second relief from the free grace of God, as, *viz.* in his patience and longsuffering towards him, ever comes to repent or believe, or to persevere believing, and so to be saved. 6. That it is from the free and undeserved grace of God, that any person of mankind is so much as put into a capacity of believing, or hath power and means vouchsafed unto him, sufficient to enable him to believe. 7. That a man is put into this capacity of believing by an irresistible acting or working of the free grace of God. 8. That when any man, by virtue of the power and means vouchsafed unto him by the free grace of God, comes actually to believe, the exercise and acting of this power proceeds also from the free grace and good pleasure of God: so that no man ever believeth, without a present and actual assistance from the free grace of God in order to this his believing, over and above his ability or power to believe. 9. And lastly, that the act of believing, whensoever it is performed by any man, is so inconsiderably, and at so low a rate of efficiency from a man's self, that, to help apprehension a little in the case, suppose the act of believing could be divided into a thousand parts, or degrees, nine hundred and ninety-nine of them are to be ascribed unto the free grace of God, and only the one remaining unto man. Yea, this one degree of the action is no otherwise neither to be ascribed unto man, than as graciously supported, strengthened, and assisted by the free grace of God. The reader will find none of these positions contradicted by any thing affirmed or denied in the discourse. I attribute as much as possibly can be attributed to the free grace of God, in and about the act of believing, saving the attributableness of the action unto man himself, in the lowest and most diminutive sense that can well be conceived. For certain it is, that it is the creature man, not God, or the Spirit of God, that believeth: and therefore of necessity there must so much, or such a degree of efficiency about it be left unto man, which may with truth give it the denomination of being his. And they that go about to interest the free grace of God, in or about the act of believing, upon any other terms, or so that the act itself cannot truly be called the act of the creature, or of man, are injurious in the highest manner to the grace of God at this main turn, ren-

dering it altogether unprofitable to the poor creature, who, by **the** verdict of such a notion, should be left in his sins, and never come to be justified. For the law of justification is expressly this: "**He** that believeth shall be justified." Therefore, if it be not man himself who believeth, it is impossible that he should be justified. **He** that shall ingenuously and impartially compare the doctrine of our adversaries touching the grace of God, with that the substance whereof hath been expressed in the nine positions lately exhibited, will clearly find, that this grace is by many degrees more highly, and with another manner of an heavenly magnificence, advanced by the tenor and import of this doctrine, than of the other; yea, and that nature is far more depressed and abased, in the latter than in the former. But,

3. Some pretend that the doctrines and opinions maintained in such discourses as this, are only old rotten errors, rejected and thrown out of the church by orthodox men in all ages: But they who hedge up the way of men with such thorns as these, to keep them from reading such books as we speak of, cannot but scratch, yea, rend and tear, their consciences with them. Concerning the two doctrines more largely handled in the following discourse, I prove, upon a most pregnant account, in the fifteenth chapter for the one, and in the nineteenth for the other, besides many other places in the body of the discourse, that they were never rejected or cast out of the church by any council or synod reputed orthodox, at least until the late Synod of Dort, but were constantly taught by all orthodox antiquity, are at this day more generally taught by the Lutheran party of the reformed churches, yea, and have many full and clear testimonies of their truth from the pen of Calvin himself, and many others that are counted pillars on his side.

4. Some are brought out of love with such discourses as this, by being informed that they are full of nice, subtle, and curious speculations, and that the secrets of God are too narrowly and presumptuously pried into by the authors of them. To this I answer, 1. If any man, whether in the handling of the doctrines we now speak of, or of any other, advanceth himself into the things which he hath not seen, or above the proportion of his faith, let him suffer as a transgressor of the law of sobriety: I shall not be his advocate. For the discussions managed in the treatise ensuing, I go no further than I feel the ground firm under me; or if at any time I come to a place that is soft and tender, I tread light, and charge no great matter of weight upon it. Yet, 2. Not to go up to the mount when God calleth and offereth the kisses of his mouth unto us there, under a pretence of danger in climbing, is to reject the bounty of heaven, and to betray our richest opportunities for the making of ourselves excellent and great in the sight of God, and angels, and men. 3. Things revealed in the Scriptures, as well those of the most spiritual and sublime consideration, which our Saviour calls "heavenly," John iii. 12, and the apostle Paul sometimes "the deep things of God," 1 Cor. ii. 10, sometimes "strong meat," Heb. v. 14, as well as things of a more obvious and facile

import, belong unto us and our children; *i. e.*, are our spiritual patrimony, which God our Father hath given us to maintain ourselves honourably, as viz., in faith and holiness in the world. Every inch of such an inheritance is worth the standing upon and contending for. 4. Aristotle, in his moral discourses, somewhere observes, that persons who are vicious or tardy in either of the extremes frequently censure him that is truly virtuous and steers a middle course between them, as if he were an offender in that extreme which is opposite to the other extreme, wherein themselves are delinquent. So it is to be feared that many who complain of curiosity in speculation, and of prying into the secrets of God, are themselves dull of hearing, of remiss and unengaged spirits in the things of God, and therefore call the most substantial and solid discourses, if they be of any considerable elevation and worthy of those who are spiritual and men of understanding, by the unworthy name of nice and curious speculations. 5. And lastly for this, I confess that the doctrine of election and reprobation, and so of the extent of the efficacy of the death of Christ and of the interest of the Spirit of God in the work of conversion, might have been managed and carried with far less appearance of curiosity, had not the controverters of the one side forsaken the solid grounds and principles of reason in their expositions of the Scriptures, and obtruded upon the world such notions and conceits under a pretence of scripture authority, because of an appearance of some words and phrases comporting with them, the vanity and unsoundness whereof could not be sufficiently detected but by the light of some such strains of reason which the minds and thoughts of men being not accustomed unto may at first very probably censure as more curious than safe, more subtle than sound. But the saying of Basil is worthy consideration on this point: "Truth," saith he, "is hard to be taken by hunting, and must be found out by a narrow observing of her footsteps on every side;"* and more especially the discovery of the truth in the controversies we speak of, mainly depending upon the knowledge of the nature of God and of the manner of his actings, which are matters of a very spiritual and abstruse contemplation, it cannot reasonably be expected but that the disputes themselves should sometimes soar high, so that the ordinary apprehensions of men may possibly lose the sight of them for a time.

5. Some plead a non-necessity of bestowing our time in looking into books that shall now or hereafter be written about the argument or subject-matter of the present discourse, upon a pretence that nothing more can be said therein than hath been said already, and that all scriptures and arguments that can be levied for the defence of the doctrines maintained herein have been already answered. Such a pretence as this is proper for men who hope to make a great purchase with a little money, to produce the honour

† Δυσθήρατος ἡ ἀλήθεια, καὶ πανταχόθεν ἐξιχνευτέα.

and reputation of much knowledge and learning by uttering a few assuming and daring words: for, upon what sober and rational account can such a saying proceed from any man? or who can say unto the Almighty, with due reverence to the unsearchable riches either of his wisdom or of his grace and bounty, Hitherto indeed thou hast advanced thyself in giving wisdom and understanding unto men, but further thou canst not go, thy treasures are exhausted? It becometh not me to say, unless I were invested with Paul's privilege of speaking without offence like a fool, 2 Cor. xi. 16, 23, that there are several considerations and grounds traversed in the present discourse, and these intimosly relating to the controversies there handled, which I believe the masters of the pretence last specified have not observed in all their travels through those many regions of books and authors which they would be supposed to have read and studied for the information of themselves and others with the truth in those great controversies. And whereas the pretext in hand glorieth that all that hath been said in defence of the opinions avouched in our discourse hath been already answered, unless he take sanctuary at some very unproper signification of the word *answer*, his glorying in this behalf will be found to his shame; yea, such a sanctuary as this will not much relieve him. Indeed, as Tacitus saith of the ancient Britons of this nation in relation to the Romans, "Eos potius triumphatos, quam victos fuisse," that the Romans rather triumphed over them than overcame them; so have the adversaries of the opinions and doctrines we speak of been at the charge of erecting many trophies, one after another, as if they had by the sword of the Spirit and dint of argument vanquished and subdued them, and trodden down their strength; whereas, upon a true and impartial account, the main grounds and pillars upon which the said doctrines stand will be found to remain undemolished and unshaken to this day, yea, and to have too much evidence and clearness of truth in them ever to be shaken.

Some pretend that the opinions contended for in this discourse have been from time to time taken up and held, for the most part, by a looser and less religious generation of men, and the contrary by persons of a better name for holiness and worthiness of conversation. This notion is accessory to some men's stumblings at the said opinions, yea, and at all those, whether men or books, that give the right hand of fellowship unto them. But what near communion this notion hath with darkness and untruth is abundantly proved in the ninth, fifteenth, and nineteenth chapters of the discourse, besides other places. Although the truth is, that, were there truth in it, yet would there be little weight in it to mediate a resolved enmity between men's judgments and these opinions. The devil held that Jesus Christ was the Holy One of God, Mark i. 24, and professed it, while Paul persecuted him and thought verily that he was bound to do many things against his name, Acts xxvi. 9. But to this point I speak more in the said fifteenth chapter.

The noise of Arminianism, Pelagianism, Socinianism, is very terrible in the ears of some, and make the said opinions the dread and abhorring of their souls, and all books and men that own them as the shadow of death unto them. To this I answer, 1. That it is a saying of Luther, that "God sometimes puts on the vizor of the devil, and the devil the vizor of God; but God would be known" by men "under the vizor of the devil, and would have the devil rejected under the vizor of God."* Odious names and imputations are but the devil's vizors, which, though they be by men put upon the face of truth, will not excuse us in our rejections of the truth. But, 2. Concerning the charge of Pelagianism, I demonstrate, in several passages in the discourse, that the opinions there pleaded have an express diametrical antipathy against the errors of Pelagius, and that the sense of our adversaries, in opposition to us, is truly Pelagian. 3. Concerning Arminianism, I confess I do not well understand what men mean by it. I suppose they mean the owning of such doctrines or opinions in opposition to the truth, so voted and called by men, which were held and taught by Arminius. If so, the formality or essence of Arminianism doth not stand in holding any thing simply in opposition to the truth, but in opposition unto men, as supposed by themselves and others to be truth. The Jewish doctors, who love to be called Rabbi, have a saying, that the law is on earth, not in heaven; the import of which saying Musculus interprets to be this, that the law (meaning of God) is subject to their power † or authority. If this be the sense of those that are teachers amongst us, that their authority is competent to overrule the Scriptures, or to make truth and error of what they please, they who dissent from them must, for ought I know, compose themselves as well as they can to bear the burthen of their imputations. If the opinions commended by me for truth in the work in hand be Arminian, certain I am that the ancient fathers and writers of the Christian Church were generally Arminian: yea, and that Calvin himself had many sore fits and pangs of Arminianism, at times, upon him; yea, and that the Synod of Dort itself was not free from the infection; nor scarce any writer of name and note in these latter times. These things are brought into a clear and unquestionable light by the discourse ensuing. Concerning Socinianism; if the opinions themselves charged herewith know no more than I do of the truth of the charge, they may justly take up David's complaint, and say, "They lay to our charge things that we know not," Psal. xxxv. 11. But if such doctrines or tenets, which now suffer the ignominy and reproach of Arminianism, Socinianism, Pelagianism, &c., shall be found to be the truths of the ever-living God, sorrow and shame, and confusion of face will be a portion, at least, of the portion of

* Deus larvam diaboli, diabolus Dei induit, et Deus sub larva diaboli cognosci, et diabolium sub larva Dei reprobari vult.—*Luth. in Gal. v.*

† Magistri Synagoge dicebant, Lex est in terra, non est in celis; significantes illam sue potestati esse subjectam.—*Mus. 1 Cor. xi.*

those who have crowned them with the honour of such martyrdom. "The day will declare it, because it shall be revealed as by fire."

Some pretend that all disputes in matters of religion, wherein the received doctrines or tenets generally held in those places where such disputes are commenced, are opposed, tend to the unsettling and disquieting the minds and consciences of men: and minister occasion unto many to abandon all care and thoughts of religion, as containing little in it but matter of uncertainty, and doubtfulness of disputation; and upon this account, very passable, as they suppose, are professed enemies to such disputes. But to this we briefly answer, 1. That it is much better that men's judgments and consciences should be for a time disturbed, than that they should always remain settled upon the lees and dregs of any rotten and unsound opinion. We lately showed how perilous error is to the precious souls of men. God never dealt more graciously by the earth than when he shook the heavens, by sending the Messiah of the world to turn the state of religion, as it were, upside down in the midst of it. David acknowledged unto God that it was good for him that he had been afflicted; that so he might learn his statutes, Psal. cxix. 71. And so many, I believe, have, and happy were it had more the like cause to say it: it is good for us that we were sometimes shaken in our judgments and consciences, that we might learn the truth. 2. They who are offended, that there should be arguings and disputes to and fro about the things of God, and matters of religion, seem to be either discontented that the things and counsels of God should be so spiritual, or remote from the common or first apprehensions of men, that all men should not at once understand them; or else loathe, that they who are in the gall of any bitterness, by being entangled with error, should be delivered. We read that Paul frequented the synagogue for the space of three months together, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God, Acts xix. 8. And afterwards, that for two years together he disputed daily, about matters of the same nature and import, in the house of one Tyrannus, ver. 9, 10. 3, and lastly. Had it not been for disputes in matters of religion, the pillars of antichrist's throne had not been shaken to this day. Upon occasion of those frequent disputes in Germany about matters of religion in Luther's days, a magistrate and judge of the popish party said: "If it comes to matter of dispute our whole mystery will be confounded."* And as wisdom saith, "All they that hate me love death," Prov. viii. 36; so may sober and thorough examinations and discussions of the mysteries of our faith, say, All they that hate us love darkness, love error, love danger, yea, and death also.

As for the allegation of those who pretend all controversies and disputes about matters of religion to be malignant to the civil peace, and therefore judge it a high point of state policy to dis-

* Si disputatur, totum nostrum mysterium destruetur.—*Scullet. Annal. Decad. 2, p. 384.*

charge their coasts of them, as the Gadarenes did of Christ, it is not worthy an answer; inasmuch as it savours more of Atheism and profaneness than of reason or Christian policy. For it is an express order from heaven, directed unto all Christians, to "contend," and that "earnestly, for the faith which was once delivered to the saints," Jude 3. Now to restrain the members or subjects of a state from doing that which God, upon whom the peace, safety, and prosperity of all states so entirely depend, hath so expressly enjoined them to do is, without all peradventure, to consult, not the joy or peace, but the sorrow, trouble, ruin of this state.

Other pretences of a lighter and looser notion it is like there are, by which some are made such affectionate and effeminate proselytes to the opinions rejected in this treatise, that they cannot bear the gentlest or softest air that breathes cool upon them. But I am already beyond the line of an epistle: and therefore shall not pursue the chase of such enemies any further. I crave leave only to add a few words concerning the change of my judgment in the great controversy about the death of Christ, with the rest depending hereon, by way of answer unto those who labour to represent my present judgment in the said points, as little valuable or considerable, because it sometimes stood a contrary way. Though I know nothing in the allegation subservient in the least degree to the end and purpose therein mentioned, but rather much against it; yet let me say, 1. That however sin and an evil conversation are just matter of shame and disparagement unto a man, yet repentance and amendment of life are truly honourable. Nor do I know why it should be of any more disparaging an interpretation against any man to reform his judgment, than his life, neither of which can be done without a change in either. Nor, 2, can I resent any such conformity with my never-sufficiently admired, adored Saviour, which consists in an increase of wisdom, (for herein he is reported to have increased in the days of his flesh, Luke ii. 52,) any matter of prejudice or disparagement either to myself or any other man. Though he indeed was never prevented with error, yet was he post-enriched with the truth in many things. A man can hardly, if possibly, "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ our Lord," 2 Pet. iii. 18, without outgrowing himself in judgment and understanding from time to time, without rectifying and making straight many things in his mind and thoughts which were crooked before. 3. That chosen vessel Paul never quitted himself like a man, never consulted peace and glory to himself, until he built up that faith which sometimes he had destroyed. Nor was his authority or esteem in the gospel, and in the things of Jesus Christ, ever a whit the lighter upon the balance because he had sometimes been a Pharisee. 4. I desire to ask the men that make the change of my judgment a spot of weakness or vileness in it, whether themselves were always in the same mind touching all things with themselves at present. If so, it plainly argues that their thoughts and apprehensions, now they are men, are but such, which are incident

unto children. And if, since their coming to riper years, they have always stood, and are resolved always to stand, by their first thoughts and apprehensions in all things, it a sign that their judgments reside more in their wills, than their wills in their judgments; and that they are much more like to judge according to appearance than to judge righteous judgment. But this whole nation knoweth, to its sorrow and sad sufferings, that many of the persons we speak of have shifted their judgments, and that in matters of a far more ready and easy cognizance than the questions about predestination, into a troublesome corner. Yea, there are very few of those amongst them who call themselves ministers of the gospel, but many times, when they preach, within the compass of an hour, either change their judgments or deny them, their doctrine being frequently Samaritan, when their application is a Jew. 5. If to dig broken cisterns, with the forsaking of the fountain of living water, be the committing of a double evil, Jer. ii. 13, how shall not a recouring to the fountain of living waters in conjunction with a forsaking of broken cisterns, be the practising of a double duty? And if so, shall it not be of so much the higher acceptation with God? And if it be thus, ought it not to be of higher acceptation with men also? To forsake an error is one duty, and to embrace truth is another: whereas to persist in one and the same mind, suppose it be sound and good, is but a single duty. Our Saviour informeth us, that "there will be joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, that need no repentance," Luke xv. 7. That which is an occasion of a multiplied rejoicing in heaven, why should it be made matter of complaint, charge, or imputation upon earth? 6. He is in the most likely and best capacity to give a right judgment between two countries or lands, as which is the more fruitful, the more healthful, the more pleasant of situation, &c., who hath been an inhabitant in both, and acquainted himself with the respective conditions of both in such particulars. In like manner, it is so far from being a reason, why a man's present judgment should be rejected, that he hath been of a contrary judgment formerly, that it rendereth it the more considerable and competent to discern aright between those opinions, with which it hath been thoroughly, and upon a conscientious engagement, acquainted. It is a true saying of the heathen philosopher, "ἕκαστος κρίνει καλῶς ἂν γινώσκει" *i. e.* Every man is able to judge well of those things which he knoweth. But when a man, having a long time known and professed such an opinion, by and under the profession whereof he enjoyed peace, credit, wealth, love and respect from men of all sorts, and was in a fair and probable way to have lift up his head yet higher in the world, by his continuance in the profession of the same, shall notwithstanding relent in his judgment, and quit the profession of this opinion, and profess that

* Arist. Ethic. l. i. c. 3.

which is opposite to it, wherein he could not but in all reason judge and conclude beforehand, that he should with Paul, πάντα ζημιόσθαι, suffer loss of all things, lose credit, lose friends, lose all hopes of preferment from the world; when a man, I say, shall change his judgment upon such terms as these, it is a strong argument that he well and thoroughly understands the spiritual danger and inconvenience of the opinion which he forsakes, as likewise the worth, truth, and goodness of that which he embraceth and professeth in the place of it. Therefore, 7, and lastly, as David replied to Michal, when she upbraided him with such a deportment, by which, as she apprehended, he had made himself contemptible and vile, "I," saith he, "will yet be more vile than thus," 2 Sam. vi. 22. So, the grace of God assisting me, if the changing of my judgment upon such terms, as God knoweth, and men also know in part I have done in the controversies oft mentioned, rendereth either me or my judgment contemptible, I am resolved, upon the like occasion, to make both it and myself more contemptible yet, by cutting off from my soul error after error, as fast as they shall be discovered unto me, and by changing my judgment as oft as I shall thoroughly understand that my spiritual interest doth require it. Yea, it shall be one of my chief exercises, quotidie de erroribus meis demere, to diminish daily the number of my errors, by making a diligent and frequent survey of the state and condition of my judgment, and by separating the vile from the precious here, until no misprision at all of God, or of any of his things shall, if it be possible, be found with me.

Reader, I trust, though I have wearied thee with a long epistle, and so have made thee incapable of reading farther at present, yet I have withal begotten in thee a serious desire and resolution to possess thy heart, soul, judgment, conscience, with the substance of the ensuing discourse, and this with as much expedition as thy opportunities of reading will permit. "Let them that have wives, be as if they had none: and they that weep as though they wept not: and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not: and they that buy, as if they possessed not," 1 Cor. vii. 29, 30: but let him that runneth for the great prize of a blessed eternity, for an incorruptible crown of glory, be as a man wholly taken up, and transported with the glory of his engagement, let him so run as if he had nothing else to do but to run this race. Give me leave to mind thee of an admonition recommended unto men by an heathen philosopher: "It becometh not him that is a man, to mind the things of men," (*i. e.* such things as men commonly mind,) "nor him that is mortal, mortal things. But as far as is possible to immortalise it, and so to quit himself in all things, as to live according to that which is most excellent in him,"* (meaning his mind and

* Οὐ χρὴ ἀνθρώπινα φρονεῖν, ἀνθρώπων ὄντα, οὐδὲ θνητὰ, τὸν θνητόν· ἀλλ' ἐφ' ὅσον ἐνδέχεται, ἀπαθανατίζειν, καὶ ἅπαντα ποιεῖν πρὸς τὸ ζῆν κατὰ τὸ κράτιστον τῶν ἐν αὐτῷ.—Arist. *Ethic.* x. c. 7.

understanding.) Now thy God, and my God, of his rich grace give thee a large heart to understand and consider the great things of thy peace; recompense the labour and travel of thy soul in reading the discourse here presented unto thee, with the precious returns of light and life and peace into thy bosom, that when thou shalt have read thou mayest say, I have been in the mount with God, and mayest return with thine heart rejoicing and with thy face shining unto men. This, good reader, is the unfeigned desire and fervent prayer of,

Thy brother in Christ,

Greatly devoted to the peace of thy soul,

JOHN GOODWIN.

*From my study in Coleman-street, London,
Feb. 12, 1650.*

REDEMPTION REDEEMED.

CHAPTER I.

There is no created being, or second cause whatsoever, but dependeth upon the first and supreme Cause or Being, which is God: and this as well in the second as in the first act; I mean as well in the motions and operations issuing from, or performed by, every of them, as in their simple existence or being itself.

WE shall not need, I presume, to levy a dispute for the gathering or getting in that tribute due to the crown and sovereignty of being, from all beings besides, which consists in an acknowledgment of his free bounty, in calling them out of the abyss of vanity and nothing by the word of his power, hereby taking them into part and fellowship with himself in his prerogative of being, according to what was resolved by "the counsel of his will," as meet to be dispensed unto every of them, respectively, in this kind. Trees that are thoroughly and deeply rooted in the earth, will grow and flourish, though the dew or rain from heaven should seldom or never fall upon them: but grass, and herbs, and tender plants, whose roots have but a slender and thin protection of their element against the scorching violence of the sun, will soon wither and die away if the clouds of heaven should not ever and anon drop verdure upon them, and relieve them. In like manner, such notions and impressions in the soul, into which nature is deeply baptized and mightily possessed with their truth, are like to live and to maintain their interest and authority in men, though not seconded or relieved by argument or dispute; but those, which have only taken a fainter and looser hold of the judgments and consciences of men, are in danger of miscarrying, and proving like "the corn upon the house top, which," as David observeth, "withereth before it be grown up," Psal. cxxix. 6, unless they be timely, yea and frequently encouraged, backed, and strengthened by discourse. That there is a Being, which looks upon this universe, with all the host of it, as the workmanship of his own hands; and that every creature, or finite being, is lineally descended from him as their great and first progenitor, are, I conceive, such principles of light and truth, written in so fair and full a character in the tables of all men's hearts, that even whilst they run they may read them, yea, and cannot lightly depose or suffer the loss of them, though they be not bound upon their judgments and consciences with any other bands of argument or demonstration, than those of their own evidence and conviction. Therefore

what God hath made manifest and clear in men, we shall not cast any suspicion of darkness or obscurity upon by making it matter of disputation.

And though the dependence of things in actual and complete being upon God for sustentation and support, as well of their simple existences and beings themselves, as of their operations (respectively, which is the sense and substance of the thesis propounded) be not altogether of so pregnant an inspiration as dependence upon him for their production, and first bringing into being; yet conceiving it not to be of any difficult or remote speculation, nor finding it so much as controverted or questioned by any considering man, especially of latter times, we shall in these respects content ourselves with a brief and light inquiry upon it.

The Holy Ghost indeed judged the assertion of this truth, and that by one of his greatest instruments, worthy of him; yet not so much, I suppose, to commend it simply as a truth, or to secure the judgments and consciences of men of the veracity of it, as to enforce the practical consequences thereof upon them; upon which ground, doubtless, it is that we find so many common and ordinary truths, not only delivered, but some of them oft repeated and inculcated in the Scriptures. Principles and assertions that are very obvious and low for matter of truth and apprehension, may be transcendently weighty and high in those things, whether relating unto practice or opinion, which are enfolded and contained in them, and deducible from them. Mary was but a carpenter's wife, yet did she bring forth the Great Messiah and Saviour of the world. But this only occasionally. The truth held forth in the thesis is the clear doctrine of the apostle Paul, and that preached at Athens, amongst philosophers, for learning and knowledge, the princes of the world. "For in him," saith he, speaking of God, "we live, and move, and are, or subsist," (as the original *τομὲν*, importeth,) *ἐν αὐτῷ*, "in him," *i. e.* through him, or by means of him, (as the preposition *ἐν* frequently signifieth, Acts xvii. 28. We are not said to live, move, and have our beings in God in a way of permission only, as, *viz.*, because he refrains the exercise of that power in him, by which he is as able to take away all our beings as he was at first to give them; or because he forbears to annihilate us: in such a sense as this, we might as well be said to live in every man, who having power and opportunity to kill us, yet suffereth us in the possession of our lives. But we are said to receive or have these accommodations in or through God in a positive way, *viz.*, by means of a glorious supporting influence, which issuing from his power by the mediation of his goodness or will, is to the great body of the creation, and to the respective parts and members hereof, as the soul is to the natural body of a man, with the members thereof, which remaining in union with it, preserveth it from dissolution and putrefaction; or as the presence of the sun is to the light in the air, which retains its being, whilst the sun shines upon it, but vanisheth presently, and becomes that which is not as soon

as the fountain of light withdraweth his shining. The Holy Ghost himself expresseth the dependence of creatures upon God in a borrowed resemblance of very near affinity with this: "Thou hidest thy face," saith David unto God, "they," *i. e.* the creatures, "are troubled; thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust." That great act of God, in itself so wonderful and inexpressibly glorious, the sustentation and upholding of the universe, with all the parts thereof, in being, is ascribed only to the setting or turning of his face towards it, to show, I conceive, that it is an act of special dignation and favour in him to preserve it, and yet withal an act of easy performance, and which costs him not the least labour or toil. A gracious look from him will do it effectually, as the contrary is enough to affright all things out of their beings, and (which is equivalent hereunto, and in some cases more,) out of all that is desirable in their beings.

The Lord Christ is said *φέρειν τὰ πάντα*, Heb. i. 3, *i. e.* to sustain, or bear up all things by the word of his power; which implies, 1. An utter impotency and weakness in the creature to stand alone, or to keep itself by its own strength from a recidivation, or relapse into its first vanity or nothing: for that which is able to preserve itself from falling needs no support, or bearing up by another. 2. That Christ feels no weight, or burden of the universe, whilst he supporteth it. The speaking of a word, especially within himself, and in his mind only, engageth no man's strength, nor putteth him to the least pain. This great act of bearing up the universe, is therefore, I conceive, appropriated unto Christ, though common to the other persons with him, because in his mediatory humiliation he laid a foundation of equity and reason, why God, notwithstanding that great provocation given by the sin of man, to dissolve it, should yet consent to the standing and supportation of it. Such executions which depend upon his mediation, and for which there had been no place otherwise, are elsewhere in Scripture peculiarly asserted to him in respect thereof: see John v. 27. Though in respect of the Divine nature, power, and will, being one and the same in all the three persons, there is a necessity of their joint concurrence in all actings, *ad extra*, as the schoolmen call them, yet such of these actings, for which way hath been made by any personal achievement or transaction of any of the three, may, with a good savour of reason, be in a more special and remarkable manner attributed to that person, who hath more peculiarly interposed for the procurement of them.

When the apostle affirmeth that we live and move in God, in the sense declared, as well as have our essence or being in him, his meaning seems to be, that it is through God, and his voluntary closing with us, that we have and do enjoy all manner of accommodations of being, as well the greater and lesser, as essence or being itself. To live, oftentimes in Scripture, signifies the enjoyment of an happy and contentful condition, which signification is no ways inconvenient for this place. Or if the apostle be conceived to speak of the life natural, which is not improbable, he must be sup-

posed to include all those noble and desirable faculties and endowments, as of reason, memory, judgment, understanding, speech, &c. which are appropriate to the life of man: so that when he saith we live in God, his meaning is, not only or simply that that spring or fountain of vital actions or motions in men, which in a district sense is termed life, is possessed, enjoyed, and held by means of a gracious and loving comportment of God with them for such a purpose; but that all that honourable retinue likewise of those excellent powers and faculties named, which attend upon the principle of life in man, is maintained in being by the same compliance also.

Whereas, he adds, that in him, also, *κινούμεθα*, we move, or are moved, as the word rather importeth, he implieth, not only that all our vital actions and motions are exercised and performed by the gracious concurrence and compliance of God with us, as well as our lives themselves, and principles of action preserved; but, further, that there is a further and appropriate concurrence of God required, and by him accordingly exhibited, to enable men to act those very principles of action and motion that are in them, distinct from that by which their lives, and principles of action in every kind are preserved: insomuch, that though men be never so well appointed or provided for action in one kind or other, in respect of suitable, proper, and sufficiently disposed principles thereunto; yet, upon a suspension of that particular influence or concurrence by God, which is appropriate and necessary, both for the leading forth unto, and for the supporting of these principles, in and under their proper actions, there is none of them will go forth into action, nor is able to maintain or support itself in acting. But whether such a concurrence of God supposed, and actually granted, as is sufficient both for the leading forth unto, and for the support of the principles we speak of, in their proper actings, these principles notwithstanding, at least such of them, whose actions lie under the command of the will, may not refuse or forbear to act, is another question, wherein more may be said hereafter.

In the meantime, that God may at any time separate between principles and their actings, even those that are most proper and connatural to them, only by withholding that compliance of his with them, which is appropriate and necessary for their conducting unto action, is evident from several passages in the Scriptures. Doubtless, the heat of the fire in Nebuchadnezzar's furnace, being heated seven times hotter than ordinary, was as proper, as likely a means to have consumed Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, being cast into the midst of this furnace, as those who were employed by the king only to cast them into it. Nor can it reasonably be said, that God separated the heat or burning property from the fire, or annihilated it, all the time that these three men were in the furnace. For, 1. Unless we shall suppose the subject itself, I mean, the fire, to have been destroyed or annihilated, we cannot suppose that heat, or a burning property, being a property inseparable from such a subject, should be taken from it. 2. It appears by the story, that

those who cast the three servants of God mentioned into the furnace, were consumed by the fire of it, whilst the servants of God remained in the furnace. Therefore, certainly, there was true fire and true heat in the furnace, whilst the three men continued in it. 3. And, lastly, the story saith, that "the princes, governors, and captains, &c. being gathered together, saw these men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power," Dan. iii. 27. So that there is not the least question, but that there was real fire and real heat, and that in abundance in the furnace; which notwithstanding had no power, no, not so much as over the hair of their heads, or the garments they wore. What now was the reason why this fire and this heat prevailed not over those that were cast into the midst of them, as they did over those who cast them in? Was it any other than this? the Lord of hosts' withdrawing the wonted conjunction of himself from the heat of the fire, and refusing to comply with it in that expedition or attempt, which it naturally inclined to make upon these men, as well as upon any others, to destroy them; whereas he kept his natural and accustomed union with this heat, in that attempt which it made upon those other men, who cast these into the furnace; by means whereof it suddenly prevailed upon them and consumed them. There was the same reason why the bush, which Moses saw burning with fire, was not consumed by it. The reason likewise, in all likelihood, why the men of Sodom could not find the door of Lot's house, was, because God withdrew his usual concurrence from their visive faculty, in order to the discerning of that object: for that other things were all this while visible enough to them, appears from their continued endeavours, even unto weariness, in seeking this door. If they had been wholly blind, so that they could have seen nothing at all, it is no ways credible but that they would have desisted their enterprise at the very first. This withdrawing or suspension of the wonted presence of God with the seeing faculty of men, is called "the holding of their eyes," Luke xxiv. 16. "But their eyes were holden, that they could not know him:" *Ἐκρατοῦντο*, they were mightily or powerfully held: they could not act, or perform that which otherwise was most natural and proper for them to do, in receiving and representing to the *sensus communis*, or adjudging faculty of the soul, the true species and shape of a person standing visibly before them, and near to them, through the want of that accustomed co-operative presence of God with them in order to this act, which until now, it is like, had never failed them upon the like occasion. Other instances we have in Scripture of such like impotencies and deficiencies as these, in natural faculties, through the suspension of that sovereign presence with them, upon which all their motions and actions depend. See John xx. 14, 15; 2 Kings vi. 17, 18, &c.

When God threatened his people of old, "That the wisdom of their wise men should perish, and the understanding of their prudent men be hid," Isa. xxix. 14, he doth not, I suppose, threaten an utter annihilation of those principles or habits of wisdom and

understanding in these men, but only an intercession or failing of such interposals and actings from, and by these principles, in order to the safety and preservation both of themselves and their state, which might reasonably, and according to the common course of second causes be expected from them; which wonder, as he calls it, was I conceive to be effected only by the hiding of his face from them, without the beholding whereof no second cause whatsoever is able to move, no, not in those ways of acting which are most appropriate to them. This manner of execution of the judgment here threatened, seems to be implied in those latter words, "And the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid," *i. e.* shall not be conspicuous or discernible in any fruits or effects worthy of it; not that the principle itself should be absolutely destroyed, or divested of being. This liberty, or great interest of God, which we speak of, I mean, to suspend the proper and most accustomed effects of second causes, by refusing to join in action with them, causeth that time and chance, as the wise man calleth them, which happen now and then in those occurrences of human affairs, as, *viz.* when "the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong," &c. Eccles. ix. 11.

If it be here demanded, inasmuch as second causes and created principles, especially in men, act, notwithstanding such a subtraction of the Divine presence from them, as hath been declared, though not according to the perfection of their natures, but in a troubled and miscarrying manner;—the eyes of the two disciples we spake of, though they were so held, that they knew not Christ, *viz.* to be the person which he was, yet they represented him unto them as a man, &c.;—whether do such actings as these proceed from their principles without any such presence of the First Cause with them, as that, which we have asserted to be simply necessary for and with second causes, whensoever they go forth into action; or what manner of presence of this first cause, or how differing from that which is constant, and more agreeable to their natures, shall we suppose they have with them when they act irregularly or deficiently?

To this I answer:

1. Whensoever second causes move into action, whether they act congruously to their respective natures and kinds, or whether defectively, they still have, and must have, a presence of the first cause with them, as hath been already argued. But,

2. When they fail or falter in their motions or actings, if their motions be such which are not moral, or commanded by the will, (of which kind the misrepresentation of the person of Christ by the eyes, or visive faculty of the two apostles was,) I conceive that the presence or concurrence of the first cause with them, is attuned and proportioned in order to the deficiency of the action; I mean as well to the degree as kind of this deficiency, and is not the same with itself in the ordinary and proper actings of these faculties. The reason hereof is, because faculties merely natural act determinately and uniformly after one and the same manner,

unless they be troubled and put out of their way by a superior power. But in moral actions, and such whose deficiency proceedeth from the wills of men, or other creatures endued with the same faculty, the presence and concurrence of the first cause with the principles producing them, is not, at least ordinarily, different from that which is natural and proper to them, and by virtue whereof at other times they act regularly, or at least may. The reason hereof is, because the nature and intrinsical frame and constitution of the will, importeth a liberty or freedom of choosing its own motions, or acts; this being the essential and characteristic property of it, whereby it is distinguished from causes merely natural. Now then if this faculty, when it moves or acts inordinately, should be so influenced by the first cause, as hereby to be determined, or necessitated to the inordinacy of its actings: 1. That distinguishing property we speak of should be dissolved or destroyed, and the will itself hereby reduced to the order and laws of causes merely natural. 2. The inordinateness or sinfulness of the motions and actings of it, could not be resolved into itself, or its own corruption, but into that overruling and necessitating influence of the first cause upon it, which it was not able to withstand, nor to act besides, or contrary unto the determinating exigency thereof. And thus God shall be made the author of sin, which is the first-born of abominations, even in the eye of reason and nature itself. But of these things more hereafter.

Though all the motions and actings of the creature, and created principles or faculties are absolutely suspended upon the association of the first cause with them in their actings, yet do they very seldom suffer any detriment, or actual suspension of their motions, or actings hereby; God never denying, suspending, or withdrawing that concurrence or conjunction of himself with them, without which they cannot act, but only upon some special design, as, for example, now and then to be a remembrancer unto the world, that nature and second causes are not autocratorical, *i. e.* do not perform, what ordinarily they do perform, independently, and of themselves, but that he is the sovereign Lord of them, and hath all the strength and operations of them in his hand. The battle commonly is to the strong, and the race ordinarily to the swift, and bread most frequently to men of understanding, &c. But more of this also in the following chapter.

The apostle affirming, That in God we live and move, in the sense declared, passeth the sentence of condemnation against two opinions, which yet condemn one the other also, being two extremes, leaving the truth between them in the middle. The former denies all co-operation of the first cause with the second, affirming, That God only communicateth that operating virtue unto them, which they respectively exert and put forth, and preserveth it, but doth not at all co-operate with it. The latter affirmeth, That it is God only who acteth or worketh at the presence of second causes, and that these do nothing but stand by, act not at all. The former of

these opinions was held by Durandus, the schoolman, and by some others, far more ancient than he; against whom Augustin disputeth, Lib. v. de Gen. ad lit. c. 20. The latter, by Gabriel Biel, a schoolman also, and some others of that learning. The apostle's assertion, That we move in God in the sense asserted, is visibly attended with these two consequential truths: 1. That God doth associate himself and communicate with second causes and all created principles, in their respective motions and operations; and consequently contributes more towards their motions and operations, than only by a collation and conservation of a sufficient strength or virtue in their respective causes to produce them. 2. That the ordinary effects, acts, and operations produced in these sublunary parts are not so, or upon any such terms attributable unto God, but that they have their second causes also respectively producing them, whereunto they may as truly, and perhaps more properly, be ascribed as unto God.

CHAPTER II.

Though there be as absolute and essential a dependence of second causes upon the first, in point of motion, action, and operation, as of simple existence or being; yet are not the motions, actions, or operations of second causes, at least ordinarily, so immediately or precisely determined by that dependence which they have upon the first cause as their respective beings are.

THE simple existences or beings of things may be said to be determined by God, the first cause, three ways. 1. In respect of their natures, or constituting principles of their respective beings. 2. In respect of their production into being. 3, and lastly, In respect of their permanency or continuance in and with these natures and beings. In the first consideration they are absolutely, and in every respect determined by God; neither themselves nor any other contributing any thing at all towards their natures or beings, in that sense, nor being in any capacity to withstand or make any resistance against that hand of pleasure and power which made them so or so, and imparted such and such a nature or frame determinately unto them. But secondly, in respect of their respective actual productions into being, they are not, at least a great part of them are not, so determined by God as in the former consideration. Men may sow more or less grain or corn in their fields as they please; and so likewise herbs in their gardens. Yea, the ordinary course and assistance of Providence only supposed, they have power to multiply individuals in some species of animal creatures; and however, to restrain such a multiplication. Yea, doubtless many persons, both of men and women, have been propagated and born into the world, whose parents were not determined or necessitated to their generation. In the third and last consideration, though

things cannot, at least all things cannot, be said to be absolutely, positively, or irresistibly determined by God as in the first, yet doth his will and pleasure, for the most part, interpose effectually, though by the mediation of causes, either natural or moral, or both, for a determination in this kind also. The continuance of herbs, plants, and trees in their vegetative lives or beings, in respect of their species or kinds respectively, is determined by God, but by the intervention of their several natures, temperatures, constitutions, or the like. So that those herbs, plants, or trees more generally, and in respect of their kinds, are longer lived whose tempers and complexions are more healthful and strong, and so better provided to resist and defend themselves against such inconveniences, which endanger and are destructive unto the lives and beings of such creatures as they. The continuance of individuals, or particulars in each kind of these vegetative creatures, in their respective natures or beings, is not so determined by God but that they are obnoxious, at least many of them, to the hand and will of man, who may at pleasure serve himself of which and of how many of them he pleaseth, being within the reach of his arm and under his power. A man may cut down, and suffer still to grow, which and how many of the trees growing in his own ground he pleaseth. Thus may he do also by the herbs in his garden. There is the same consideration in all respects of sensitive creatures also. The lives of many of these are subjected to the wills and pleasures of men.

Concerning the natural lives and beings of men in the world, neither is the continuance of these so absolutely or peremptorily fixed or determined by God, but that either themselves or others may either abbreviate and contract them, or else enlarge and protract them to a longer period by means proportionable unto either. By excess in sinning, and so by defect in caution, and use of means for their preservation, men may draw the evil day of death nearer to them; as by righteousness, and a prudent circumspection to prevent dangers and things destructive unto life, they may put it farther from them. "But thou, O God," saith David, "shalt bring them down into the pit of destruction: bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days," Psa. lv. 23; *i. e.* the half of those days, which according to the course of nature, and providence, and will of God otherwise, they might have done. To like purpose, Eliphaz in Job, speaking of a wicked man who stretcheth out his hand against God, and strengtheneth himself against the Almighty; *i. e.* who sinneth at more than an ordinary rate of provocation; "His branch," saith he, "shall not be green, but shall be cut off before his day. God shall destroy him as the vine his sour grape, and shall cast him off as the olive doth his flower," Job xv. 32, 33. And again afterwards, "Hast thou marked the old way which wicked men have trodden? who were cut down out of time, whose foundation was overflown with a flood," Job xxii. 15, 16. It is probable he here speaks of the old world, who because of that redundancy of wickedness which was

amongst them, were destroyed by a deluge of waters, which otherwise they might have escaped; according to what our Saviour speaketh to Capernaum concerning Sodom, "If the mighty works which have been done in thee had been done in Sodom, it would have remained unto this day," Matt. xi. 23. And whereas God threateneth Ephraim, meaning the ten tribes, that "within three-score and five years Ephraim should be broken, that he be not a people," Isa. vii. 8; this judgment according to Musculus's computation, was put in execution within twenty years after this prophecy, and that "propter enormitatem malitiæ," as he saith, *i. e.* for the enormous heinousness of their wickedness. So then, as God hath by no decree determined that men shall be wicked, especially not outrageously wicked, which we shall further demonstrate afterwards, so neither hath he determined that abbreviation of the lives of particular men, which their voluntary excess in wickedness brings upon them. He hath indeed determined indefinitely and in the general that bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days; but if we speak of any particular persons, who, being bloody and deceitful, came thereby to an untimely end, neither their sin nor their suffering by an untimely end was determined by God.

Again, That men, by a prudential and providential care in preventing dangers, sicknesses, and such inconveniences which are of a known malignity to the life of man, may advance their days to a greater number than under a contrary neglect, especially as the neglect for degree might have been, they would or could in reason have amounted unto, is evident. God himself informed David that if he staid in Keilah till Saul should come thither to demand him, which he was now ready to do, the lords of this city would deliver him up unto him, 1 Sam. xxiii. 12, in which case he had been but a dead man: therefore David, by departing from Keilah before Saul's coming down to demand him, added many days unto his life above what their number would have been had he neglected the Divine oracle, and, by staying in Keilah, fallen into the hands of Saul. The men that were with Paul in the ship, by hearkening unto his counsel for causing the mariners to abide in the ship, got enlargement of quarter for their lives, which, upon their leaving of the ship, had certainly been denied unto them; for Paul said unto the centurion and the soldiers, "Except these abide in the ship ye cannot be saved," Acts xxvii. 31; whereas, upon their staying in the ship, "it so came to pass that they came all safe to land," ver. 44. The Lord Christ himself, by the care and faithfulness of Joseph in conveying him, being yet an infant, into Egypt, according to the charge of the angel which appeared unto him, came to see many more days in the flesh than he was like to have done in case he had been found in Bethlehem, or near to it, when Herod's bloody inquisition came forth against him. For this is the reason which the angel gave unto Joseph why he was enjoined by God to remove the child Jesus into a place of safety: "Herod," saith he, "will seek the

young child to destroy him," which supposeth not only a possibility, but a probability at least, if not a certainty, that, if the child had remained in or about Bethlehem, Herod both would have found him out and also destroyed him. So, afterwards we read, Luke iv., and elsewhere, that Christ, by declining the present rage and bloody intentions of the Jews from time to time, drew out the days of his mortal pilgrimage to that just period and hour wherein, according to his ever-blessed good pleasure, he had appointed that happy meeting between his own death and the life and salvation of the world.

True it is the days of human subsistence and continuance on earth are in the general but finite, yea, and few; yet, if we speak of particulars, they are not properly determinate or set down as so many, and no more, by any decree of God. It is, indeed, appointed by God unto men once to die, Heb. ix. 27; yea, as Job calculateth, within a short time: "Man," saith he, "that is born of a woman is of few days," Job xiv. 1; but I do not find it said of all particular persons that it is appointed unto them to die at such or such a time, day or year of their lives, or that they shall neither die sooner nor live longer. I deny not but that there are some few examples in Scripture of persons the precise number of whose days seemeth to have been fixed by God. His gracious message to king Hezekiah, being now sick unto death, was that he would add unto his days fifteen years, 2 Kings xx. 6; yet this expression doth not necessarily imply that they should be adequately and precisely so many, and no more. Nor when Job, in passion, reasoneth thus with God, (as our last translation rendereth his words,) "Seeing his days are determined, and the number of his months are with thee: thou hast appointed his bounds, that he cannot pass: turn from him that he may rest," &c., Job xiv. 6, 7, doth he suppose that the bounds and limits of all men's lives are so rigidly or immoveably pitched by any decree of God, that they must of necessity live home to them, and cannot possibly live beyond them; but only this, that if God will at any time interpose by his power to cut off the life of any man, he may determine and put a period to it without being resisted or hindered by any. According to the exigency of this sense, both Tremellius and Beza translate that clause "And the number of his months are with thee," out of the original, thus, "Numerus mensium ejus penes te est;" *i. e.*, "the number of his months is in thy power," meaning, that thou mayest make them fewer or more, if, and as thou pleasest. Doubtless, if either David or Hezekiah had conceived the date and period of their lives to have been irreversibly concluded by any precedaneous decree of God, they would not have interceded with that affectionate importunity which is found in their prayers for a prorogation of them. "I said," saith David, "O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days," Psal. cii. 24; and again, "O spare me, that I may recover my strength before I go hence and be no more," Psal. xxxix. 23. These expressions clearly imply that David ap-

prehended as well a liberty in God as an executive power, either presently to take away or else to continue his life and being in the world for a longer time: for who will solicit a man to do that for him which he apprehends him in no capacity or possibility to do? or for that which he conceives him whom he requesteth absolutely engaged and necessitated to do for him whether he requesteth it or no? Now, such a liberty in God as we speak of, and as David supposeth, was wholly inconsistent with such a peremptory and irreversible decree concerning the punctual extent and duration of his life which some imagine. So, when he fasted and wept for the life of his child, being sick, he neither supposed God bound by any unchangeable decree either to continue or presently to take away the life of it, but at liberty to do either. In the prayer of Hezekiah, though there be no express petition found for the enlargement of his life, yet there are grounds laid down which are proper to enforce such a petition upon, and by the tender whereof unto God it is evident that he did solicit for a reprieve, which is yet more apparent from that gracious return which God made unto him of this his prayer by the prophet Isaiah: "Go," saith God unto him, "and say unto Hezekiah, Thus saith the Lord God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, and seen thy tears; behold I will add unto thy days fifteen years," Isa. xxxviii. 5. Therefore, doubtless, when Job saith, as we heard, that the days of man are determined, or, *præcisi, i. e.*, cut short, as Junius and Tremellius render it, and that God hath appointed his bounds that he cannot pass, he doth not speak of any determinate number of days or years set out by any decree of his unto particular persons for life, which by no interveniency of means or occasions, on either hand, can either be diminished or protracted, but of that general counsel, purpose, or decree of his by which he hath reduced and contracted the mortal pilgrimage of man on earth to a very short and inconsiderable space of time.

Nor doth it follow from any of the premises but that God doth frequently interpose, and that after a very special and remarkable manner, sometimes for the preservation, otherwhile for the abbreviation and cutting off the lives of particular men. When God will undertake, and resolvedly engage to stand by the life of man, as now and then he doth, at least for a time, a thousand shall fall at his side, and ten thousand at his right hand, and the danger not come nigh him; *i. e.*, he shall remain as safe and as free from evil as if all danger of evil were far from him. "He shall not be afraid," *i. e.*, such a man needeth not to 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," Psal. xci. 5—7. But daily experience showeth that God doth not engage himself upon such terms as these for the protection of the lives of all that are godly, many of these falling by the hand of death even whilst the lives of thousands and tens of thousands round about them are not touched therewith: nor have any per-

sons, though never so godly, any sufficient ground from the passages mentioned, or the like, to expect, absolutely and with confidence, protection of life in the midst of all such dangers which are there specified, but only conditionally, viz., if God will vouchsafe to undertake for their preservation and peace. Such scriptures hold forth the constant power, not the uniform will or pleasure of God. On the other hand, when God "taketh no pleasure," as the Scripture phrase is, in the life of a man, the little finger of death is enough to crush it; my meaning is, a very slender and inconsiderable occasion will serve his providence for the dissolution of it. But neither of these dispensations amounts to any demonstration of any such decree in God, wherein he hath punctually and indispensably assigned to all persons whatsoever a set number of years, months, days, hours, and moments for their allowance of life, which neither himself nor themselves, nor any other creature, hath the least liberty or power either to augment or diminish upon any occasion or by any means whatsoever. It is indeed commonly reported to be a great article in the Turkish creed, that the lives of all men, at least of all Turks, are so absolutely disposed of in the counsel and decree of God, that it is a thing simply impossible for men, either by running upon the mouths of cannons, or by casting themselves into the sea, or by rushing naked into the midst of a host of armed enemies, or by adventuring upon any danger, upon any death whatsoever, to anticipate the date of such a disposal; and so on the contrary, by any care, prudence, or circumspectness whatsoever, to prevent the fatality thereof. But such notions and decrees as these are fitter to make Alcoran divinity than Christian. I freely acknowledge all the decrees of God to be absolute and unchangeable upon any occasion or by any means whatsoever, and none of them in a true and proper sense conditional; but I am far from making the decrees of God commensurable with his prescience or foreknowledge. But of this hereafter.

In order to a full and thorough explication of the subject last in hand, if this had been any material part of our present design, many particularities, besides those insisted upon, should have been added. But the consideration of the dependence of the motions and actings of the creature upon God, in respect of their determination, is more intimos to the heart and spirit of our grand intendment, than of their simple existences or beings. Therefore, (to pass on to the explication of this,) we have laid down for the argument of this chapter, this conclusion, (either in words or substance,) that the motions, actions, or operations of second causes, though they do as absolutely depend upon the first, as their existences or beings, (as was argued in the former chapter,) yet are they not by this dependence, at least ordinarily, so immediately or precisely determined as their beings. Notwithstanding how their beings, in respect of their natures, their productions, their subsistings, or durations in being, are determined or not determined by God, hath been the inquiry and decision of the preceding part of

this chapter. We come now to inquire how far, and after what manner, the motions and actions of second causes are determined or necessitated to be both when, and where, and what they are, by that essential dependence which they have upon God.

All second causes whatsoever are reducible to one of these three heads or kinds: they are, either, 1. Such which act and move without any knowledge or apprehension at all, (as being capable of neither,) either of the end, for the obtaining whereof they act or move, or of their motions or actings in order to this end. Or, 2. Such which are capable of some kind of knowledge or apprehension, both of their ends, and of their actings and movings towards these ends, but very imperfect and weak, viz., such which extend not to the reason or relation of these ends, nor to any deliberation about them, nor yet to the proportion or aptness of those their actings and movings for the obtaining of their ends. Or, 3. and lastly, they are such which know and apprehend, (or at least are capable of both,) not simply of those ends in order whereunto they act and move, but of the nature, reason, and further tendency of these ends also, as likewise of the proportion of likelihood of their engagements in any kind, for the obtaining of their ends. The first kind of these causes are called natural, or merely natural; the second, animal, or spontaneous; the third, rational, voluntary, or free-working. Of the first sort are, 1. all inanimate and lifeless creatures, as fire, water, air, earth, stones, minerals, and such like; 2. all creatures which are endued with a principle of vegetation, but not of sense. Of the second, are all animal or sensitive creatures, not partakers of any principle or endowment, above those of outward sensation, and a certain estimative faculty or phantasy, by which they first apprehend what is naturally good or evil for them, (at least in some particulars,) and, second, are acted and moved accordingly; as either to or from them, but without any deliberation or consideration had, either about the one or the other. Of this kind are beasts of the field, birds of the air, fishes of the sea, and generally whatsoever hath breath and life, excepting men. These are said to act or move spontaneously, because they act out of some knowledge of their end, without any compulsion or necessitation from without. Of the third and last sort are only men and angels, whether good or bad, in either kind; who are therefore called rational, voluntary, or free-working causes, because they are capable not only of an apprehension or knowledge of such ends, for and towards the obtaining of which they act and move, but also of the nature, quality, and import of them, and of deliberation likewise, or consultation about the means and ways of their procurement.

Now though all these several causes have such a dependence upon God, that, as hath been said, none of them can move into action without a suitable concurrence from him, yet are not their actions or motions thereby determined ordinarily, or necessitated unto or upon them. The reason why fire burns, or heats, and doth

not moisten, cool, or the like, is not because God concurrerth with it when it acteth; for then air or water should burn and heat likewise, with a like concurrence. Therefore the particular and determinate actions of the fire are not caused by, do not flow from that concurrence of God with it when it acteth, but from that intrinsical form, or those natural properties which he hath vested in it by the law of creation. There is the same reason of other causes of this kind in their respective actions or effects. Nor are the motions or actings of the second kind of causes mentioned, as of birds, beasts, &c., any whit more determined than of the former, by the presence of God with them in their actions; but partly by their natural abilities for action or motion, partly by the natural proportions and disproportions between their respective estimatives or phantasies, and such and such creatures or objects, whose natures are either proportioned or disproportioned unto them. As for example, the reason why a lamb runneth to the dam, and fleeth from the wolf, is partly the natural sympathy between the phantasy of the lamb and the dam, and the antipathy between the said phantasy and the wolf; partly also that ability or nimbleness of motion which God hath given unto this creature for the conveyance of itself this way or that, according as the phantasy of it is affected. The concurrence of God with it when it runneth to the dam, and when it fleeth from the wolf, is, doubtless, one and the same; so that the difference of these two motions in this creature doth not arise from any diversity therein, but from one of the causes now mentioned.

In like manner, the actions and motions of the third and last kind of causes, which we termed rational and voluntary, are not determined, *i. e.* made rational and voluntary (much less, are they necessitated) by the conjunction or presence of God with them, when they act or move, but by their own proper and free election of what they act, or move unto. "Whilst it remained," saith Peter to Ananias, speaking of his possession, whilst it was yet unsold, and remained with him in specie; "was it not thine own?" Acts v. 4; *i. e.* wert thou not at full liberty to have retained, and kept it for thine own private use, there being no law of God imposing it as a duty upon thee, to sell it? "And when it was sold was it not in thy power?" viz., whether thou wouldst part with the money which thou receivedst for it, or no? The word *ἐξουσία*, translated power, doth not only signify a power of right, but of liberty also, or a freedom of will to dispose of it, as he pleased; otherwise, a power of right had been of no accommodation unto him, nor any competent matter of the aggravation of his sin. "Why hast thou put this thing into thy heart?" viz., to dissemble and lie; pretending and professing to bring the whole money which thou receivedst for the possession, when as thou bringest a part of it only? God concurred with the motion of Ananias's will, when he resolved to bring his money to the apostles for public dis-

tribution: and so likewise, when he brought it, otherwise he could not have resolved or willed to do it. Yet this concurrence of God with him in his act of willing or resolving, did not make it necessary for him so to will or resolve, because he had a power, this notwithstanding, to have willed or resolved the contrary; I mean, either the keeping of the possession to himself, being yet unsold; or the not bringing the money received for it to the apostles. Otherwise, both the act of selling it, and also of bringing the money to the apostles, must be looked upon, not as the acts of Ananias, but of God himself. For whatsoever a man is necessitated to do, especially by a principle of force, or power out of himself, is the act of the necessitator, not his. Yea, the apostle Paul counteth it no flattery either of himself, or any other man, to acquit both himself and them, of all such irregular acts, whereunto they are necessitated, though by an inward and inherent principle. "Now," saith he, "if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me," Rom. vii. 20. It is true, the act of Ananias's will, both for the selling of his possession, and bringing the money to the apostles, in the very instance of the elicitation or production of it, was necessary in this respect, viz., because now it could not be unproduced, according to the common maxim; every thing that is, when it is, must of necessity be;* but it was not the concurrence of God with his will, that imposed any necessity upon him to produce it, because then it had not been in his own power; neither had it been properly his own act, when produced.

But it may be here objected and said, that though the specifical actions or motions of all the causes mentioned be determined, (as hath been proved,) by the specifical natures or properties of every of them respectively, and not by any concurrence of God with them, yet their individual and particular actions and motions are determined by some kind of concurrence, or providential interposal of God. As for example, that fire, in the general, burneth that which is combustible being put to it, is, from the nature of it, not from any-concurrence of God with it; but that it burneth such or such a man's house, goods, or the like, this is not simply from the nature of it, without some special disposal of Divine Providence. So, again, that wicked and ungodly men should, in the general, do wickedly, as, for instance, plot, contrive, accomplish the death of such as are godly, proceedeth from themselves, and from the corruption of their wills, not from any concurrence of God with them, nor from any special interposal of his in such actings. But that such and such wicked men by name, should plot, and effect the deaths of such and such godly men by name, and not the death of others, godly also, proceedeth not so much from the wickedness of such men, as from some special decree of God, together with a suitable interposal of his providence and power, for the effecting of it. That which Herod, and Pontius Pilate, and the Gentiles, and the

* Unumquodque quod est, quando est, necesse est esse.

Jews, did, in and about the crucifying of Christ, Peter saith, that "the hand and counsel of God had determined before to be done," Acts iv. 28. To this I answer,

1. That this particular and signal attribution of some special actions or events unto God, or to the determination of his hand and counsel, (other instances whereof are to be seen, 1 Kings xii. 15; 2 Sam. xvii. 14; Jos. xi. 20; Deut. ii. 30, &c.,) clearly argueth, that ordinarily actions are performed by men, and events come to pass upon other terms; I mean, without any such particular or extraordinary interposition by God, either by way of decree, or of providential efficiency, or contribution towards them. Emphatical and remarkable appropriations are unsavoury and impertinent, where all particulars are of one and the same consideration.

2. It is no where said, that the hand or counsel of God determineth before that such or such evil actions shall be done by such or such particular men, or that such or such men shall do these and these evil actions; but only that such and such things shall be done. It is not said, that the hand or counsel of God had determined before that Herod, Pontius Pilate, such and such of the Gentiles and of the Jews, should have their hand in the crucifying of Christ; but only that these were gathered together, and levied their joint endeavours to do whatsoever the hand and counsel of God had determined before to be done, or come to pass. Notwithstanding the determination of God beforehand concerning the crucifying of Christ, yet were Herod, Pontius Pilate, and the rest, at as much liberty to have declined all manner of compliance with the action, as they could have been in case no such predetermination had passed in the counsel of God. For it is not here said, that God gathered Herod, or Pilate, or any of the rest together, to act in this business; but, (as our former translation read it,) that they gathered themselves together. Thus Calvin also translateth it, "Convenerunt enim," &c., *i. e.*, They came or met together, &c. Nor doth the passive reading of the word, were gathered together, imply any acting, much less any compulsive acting on God's part, in uniting or drawing them together about such a work. For such actions, which proceed from men themselves, or from their own wills, are frequently in Scripture (and may with propriety of speech enough be) attributed unto them in terms of a passive signification. "But every man," saith James, "is tempted when he is *drawn away* of his own lust, and *enticed*," James i. 14; so also Paul, "For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women, *laden* with sins, *led away* with divers lusts," 2 Tim. iii. 6; and again, "For some are already *turned aside* after Satan," 1 Tim. v. 15, besides many others. And if God, who hath so severely prohibited the shedding of blood, or the taking away of any man's life unjustly, should any ways incline or dispose, or especially compel, men to the perpetration of such things, should he not be divided in, or against himself? and then, according to the process of our

Saviour's argument, how should his kingdom stand? Matt. xii. 26. Therefore,

3. Some interpreters, as Chrysostom, Œcumenius, Prosper, and others, do not refer the decree spoken of (Acts iv. 28,) to the sin of those who crucified Christ, but to the effects and fruits of his suffering in this kind. According to this interpretation, the sense of the place will rise thus, "Herod, Pontius Pilate, the Gentiles, &c., met together to do whatsoever the hand and counsel of God had determined before to be done;" *i. e.* whereas God had before determined to redeem and save the world by the delivering up of his Son unto death, *i. e.* by leaving of him to the wills and pleasures, and in the hands of such men whom he infallibly foreknew would put him to death, Herod, Pontius Pilate, &c., did now accordingly rise up, and though knowing nothing of the determinate counsel of God concerning that which should follow upon their wicked act, yet did that in crucifying Christ which effected it. Notwithstanding, to speak properly, the redemption and salvation of the world were not the effects of their act in crucifying Christ, but partly of the determinate counsel of God in leaving him in their hands for such a special purpose; partly of the obediential humility, and voluntary subjection of Christ himself to his Father's will and pleasure in that kind. So that that which the hand and counsel of God determined, was not the act of Herod, Pontius Pilate, &c., in putting him to death, but his own providential act, or permission, in leaving him in their hands for such a purpose. God need not determine that before to be done, which he knew would be done without any determination of his in that behalf. See verse 18 of the second, and verse 23 of the third chapter of the Acts. But,

4, and lastly, for the true and genuine sense and purport of the passage in hand, it is to be considered: 1. What the main intent and scope of it is. 2. How the words and phrases in the passage may and must be understood in order hereunto.

For the first, evident it is that the young converts or Christians, who are said to have uttered these words with one accord, intended hereby the magnifying of God (together with the strengthening of their own faith) for his most gracious and wonderful dispensation, in and about the death and sufferings of Christ; as viz. that in order to the redemption and salvation of the world, he should so far dispense with the counsels and methods of his ordinary providence in protecting the innocent and righteous, as to expose or leave his holy Child (or Son) Jesus, the most innocent and righteous person of all others, to the rage, malice, and cruelty of wicked men, yea, so far as to suffer death itself from them. There is no consideration able to reconcile the providence or permission of God in leaving a person of such infinite worth, holiness and greatness, as the Lord Christ was, in the hands of wicked men, with principles of reason, equity, or prudence, and so to render it

worthy faith, but only some great and signal design to be accomplished and effected by it. Hence it is, that in their mention of what Herod and Pilate, the Gentiles and the Jews had done unto Christ in crucifying of him, they cast and fix their eye upon the hand and determinate counsel of God; *i. e.* upon the special counsel and decree of God not to interpose by any power or providence of his, to prevent or divert the malice and rage, either of these, or of any other wicked men, that should have attempted the same thing, from crucifying the Lord of life, though so innocent and holy a person as he was. Here is not the least intimation of any counsel or determination by God, that any of the persons here mentioned, or any others, should have acted in, towards, or about the death of Christ; but only that those things should be done, *i. e.* be permitted, or suffered by God to be done, as we shall show further presently, which these men met together to effect and perpetrate. Nor was it any ways necessary that God, in order to the salvation of the world by Christ, should determine or decree, that such and such men by name should crucify or put him to death; no, nor yet that Christ should be actually crucified by any man or men whatsoever: for the effecting of this great and blessed design it was sufficient for God to determine and decree, that in case any man, or number of men, should attempt his death, he would not restrain or hinder them from effecting it.

If it be objected, but did not the redemption and salvation of the world depend upon the actual death, or crucifying of Christ? and if so, should not God have left this great and gracious design of his in suspense, and at uncertainty for matter of execution, in case he had not absolutely and positively decreed the death of Christ by one means or other, as either by those who now did effect it, or by some other men? To this I answer,

No: the salvation of the world, doubtless, did not depend upon the actual or literal dying, or crucifying of Christ, but partly upon the counsel and good pleasure of God, to deliver him up unto death in order to this end; *i. e.* to leave him freely unto men to crucify him if they would, partly upon the readiness and perfect submission of will in Christ to suffer death, in case any man or men should be found that would inflict it upon him. My grounds and reasons for this opinion are:

1. If the salvation of the world depends wholly and entirely upon the merit and satisfaction of Christ, in conjunction with the will and good pleasure of God the Father to accept of this satisfaction in order thereunto, then did it, doth it, no ways depend upon any thing done by other men, especially wicked men, least of all upon any thing done wickedly and provokingly in the sight of God by them; and, consequently, the actual or literal crucifiers of Christ contributed nothing at all simply necessary towards the salvation of the world. *Sed verum prius: ergo et posterius.*

2. If the merit of Christ received no addition, was no ways perfected by the actings of those who crucified him, or by the things

which he suffered from them, then did not the salvation of the world depend upon his being actually crucified, or upon his crucifying by men, but only upon that crucifying, wherewith he had crucified himself before men came to lay hands upon him. Sed verum prius: ergo et posterius. That the merit of Christ was no ways perfected or augmented by the things which he suffered from men is evident, because he acted or did nothing herein, or under these sufferings, more than what he had done before in the inward transactions of his soul; yea, and would have done still, or again, whether men had crucified him or no.

3. If the acceptation of the sacrifice of Christ depended only upon, 1. The nature, quality, and legitimacy of the sacrifice. 2. Upon the legitimacy and dignity of the priest offering. 3, and lastly. Upon the legitimacy of the manner observed in the offering, then was not the act of those who crucified Christ any ways contributing towards the acceptation of this sacrifice; and if so, the acceptation hereof with God had been the same, and consequently the salvation of the world, purchased and procured by it, whether men had interposed to crucify Christ or no. Evident it is, that they who crucified Christ neither gave legitimacy to the sacrifice; nor were any legitimate priests, upon whose actings about the sacrifice the acceptation of the offering any ways depended; nor, 3. Did they in what they did about the crucifying of Christ, observe any legitimacy of order or manner which should render the oblation acceptable with God. Therefore the acceptance of that great sacrifice we spake of with God, depended wholly upon Christ himself; who, 1. In respect of his person, was a legitimate sacrifice to make that great atonement for the world that was made by him. 2. In respect of his office, was a legitimate high priest, anointed by God to offer that great sacrifice of himself. 3, and lastly. By virtue of his holiness, love, zeal, and all other heavenly endowments requisite for his office of priesthood, performed the oblation with a perfect observation of all the requirements appertaining to the law or manner of such an offering. In none of all these had he the least dependence upon those who put him to death; nor stood he in need of their wickedness in crucifying him, to make him either sacrifice, priest, or oblation of highest acceptance with God.

4. The apostle expressly affirmeth concerning men, that "if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted" (meaning with God) "according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not," 2 Cor. viii. 12. His meaning clearly is, that where there is a clear, perfect, and upright desire of soul in any man to perform any service pleasing unto God, but wants opportunity or means for the actual or complete performance of it, and shall go in or towards the performance as far as he hath opportunity or means to carry him, such a man finds the same acceptance with God under these deficiencies which he should find under an actual and complete performance. This is that which divines commonly express in saying,

that God accepts the will for the deed. Now there is no reason to conceive or think but that God should deal in a way of as much equity and grace with Christ as he doth with other men. Therefore supposing that there was a clear, perfect, and entire willingness or readiness of mind in Christ to lay down his life for the world, but he had wanted an opportunity actually to have done it, (as suppose no man should have appeared to take away his life from him,) there is no sufficient reason to think but that he had been accepted with God upon the same terms under, or in respect of such his willingness or desire, on which he is now accepted under his actual death.

5, and lastly, If it was the deep humility and perfect subjection to the Father's will and pleasure, together with those other inward and gracious deportments of soul in Christ, in and under his sufferings, which gave the whole and entire worth of merit and satisfaction unto them, then were his bare external sufferings considered apart from these no ways meritorious; and consequently of no absolute necessity for, or towards the redemption of the world. *Sed verum prius: ergo et posterius.* The former consequence in this argument is evident, because nothing, whether action or passion, can be meritorious without something in it or relating to it, which should give it the weight or worth of merit. The latter consequence is no less evident neither. For whatever, whether doings or sufferings, are wholly void of merit, though they may some ways contribute towards the work of redemption, yet can they be no ways essential or of absolute necessity thereunto. For the minor; neither is this much questionable; the Scriptures themselves from place to place, placing the value, merit, or expiatory worth of the death and sufferings of Christ, over and besides the dignity of his person, in his innocency, meekness, humility, perfect subjection to his Father's will, &c. Let these passages be considered. Heb. ix. 14; 1 Pet. i. 19; 2 Cor. v. 21; Heb. vii. 26—28, with many others of like import. Now certain it is, 1. That the excellency and dignity of the person of Christ was and would have been the same. 2. That the innocency, humility, love, patience, obedience of Christ were, and would have been the same also, whether he had actually and corporally suffered or no. Therefore whatsoever was properly, formally, or essentially meritorious in Christ, was in him before his sufferings of a natural death, and would have been in him whether he had suffered such a death or no; and consequently the work of redemption might have prospered in his hand, whether he had thus suffered or not.

If it be demanded; but doth not this doctrine suppose or make Christ to have died in vain? yea, and contradict all those scriptures which ascribe the redemption and salvation of men to his blood, death, cross, and suffering? I answer, neither; it is most free from both these erroneous impieties. From the former, because the death of Christ is sovereignly necessary upon several other accounts; as firstly, If he should not have actually yielded up himself unto death, there being found those that would, and did, attempt

it, it must needs have been conceived and concluded by men, that he was not truly, inwardly, and really willing and free to have laid down his life for the world; and consequently there had been no ground or footing for any man to believe either that he was the Son of God, or that he was meritoriously qualified for the redemption of the world. Secondly, Had he always declined actual dying, under those frequent attempts made by men to take away his life, it could not have been known (and so not upon any sufficient ground believed) that God the Father delivered him up to death; and consequently his will and good pleasure concerning the salvation of the world by his Son could not upon any competent terms have been believed. Thirdly, The prophecies in the Old Testament concerning the actual sufferings of Christ could not have been fulfilled. Fourthly, Upon the said supposition as, viz., that he had an opportunity through the blood-thirsty malice of men to lay down his life actually, if he should not have done it, that great example of his humility, patience, self-denial, love of the brethren even unto blood, &c. had been wanting in the churches. Fifthly, and lastly, Upon the supposition mentioned, the actual dying of Christ was altogether necessary in respect of the inward frame and disposition of his soul, which rendered him freely willing to lay down his life, in case it should be required of him, at or after such a time as his Father judged it meet to permit the execution. Now such a frame and disposition of heart and soul as this, was, as was formerly argued, absolutely necessary to be found in Christ, to qualify him for a Redeemer: and being found in him, it could not possibly but produce his actual death, when men should attempt it, and God no ways interpose to prevent it. Thus then you see clearly how the doctrine which denieth an absolute necessity of Christ's actual and external death, in order to the salvation of the world, no ways rendereth or supposeth this death of his to be in vain.

Nor doth the doctrine we now speak of contradict any of those scriptures which attribute the redemption and salvation of the world to his blood, death, sufferings, &c. For when we are said to be healed by his stripes, 1 Pet. ii. 24; to be "justified by his blood," Rom. v. 9; to "have redemption through his blood," Eph. i. 7, &c., it no ways supposeth or implies, that the literal or material shedding of his blood by men, was simply and absolutely necessary, either to the justification, or redemption of men, but only that a shedding of it, by himself, spiritually, in that great act of resignation of it to be shed by men, which passed, and was transacted inwardly in his soul, whether it had been externally shed by men, or no, was simply and absolutely necessary thereunto. There is scarce any phrase or idiom of speech more frequent in Scripture, than to mention and speak of an act simply, and indefinitely, as performed and done, when the doing of it hath been fully resolved, concluded, or consented unto in the heart and soul, whether ever it be actually and externally done, or no. Thus, Abraham, in the same verse, is twice said to have offered up his son Isaac, Heb. xi.

17, only because he was inwardly, really, and fully willing to have offered him up literally, which yet we know he did not. So a man is said to "forsake all he hath," Luke xiv. 33, when he is inwardly and unfeignedly willing and resolved to forsake all, literally and actually, when he shall be called to it, whether he be ever so called or no. In this phrase of speech, God is said to have given the land of Canaan unto the Israelites, Josh. i. 3, when as he had only purposed, or resolved to give it unto them, as appears verse 6. So to have saved us, 2 Tim. i. 9, only because of his full purpose to save us, upon our believing. So again, to have rejected Saul from being king, 1 Sam. xv. 23, only because he was fully purposed to reject him, upon his impenitence in his rebellious course; for evident it is, that Saul was permitted to enjoy his kingdom a considerable space of time after it was said that God had rejected him from being king. In like manner he is said, chap. xiii. 13, to have established, (for so Arias Montanus translates out of the original, viz, "stabilierat," and our former English translators, "had established,") the kingdom of Saul upon Israel for ever, only because he was purposed to do it, and that conditionally too, viz. upon the good behaviour of himself and his posterity in the throne. It were easy to multiply instances in this kind, even unto weariness. In like construction of speech, Christ may be said to have given his flesh, laid down his life, shed his blood, for the redemption of the world, justification of men, &c., and consequently, the world be said to be redeemed, and men justified by his blood, death, cross, &c., only because he was freely willing, unfeignedly ready and prepared to do all these actually, when the providence of God, and the wickedness of men should afford him an opportunity to do them. Nor can it be said, that, in such a sense, he should ever the less have given his flesh, laid down his life, shed his blood for the salvation of the world, than now he hath done, in case the providence of God, and wickedness of men, should never have conspired or agreed about the taking away his life from him. It was his blood, as shed by himself, not by men; it was his life, as laid down by himself, not as taken from him by men; it was his flesh, as given or offered by himself, not as sacrificed by wicked men, which produced those glorious and blessed effects, the redemption, justification, and salvation of the world. Now Christ, to shed his blood, in such a sense as he shed it; to lay down his life, in such a manner, as he by any act or consent of his, concurred and acted towards the laying of it down; and so to give his flesh, as he gave it, needed not the malice, violence, or bloody injustice of men, but did all this, performed all these acts within his own sphere, yea, and had performed them, before the least drop of his blood was spilt by men; and consequently the redemption and salvation of the world were provided for by him in all things essential, and simply necessary thereunto, before either Herod or Pilate, the Gentiles or the Jews interposed with any of their counsels or engagements for the crucifying of him.

Thus, then, we see what the Christians mean, in saying that "Herod, and Pilate, with the Gentiles and people of Israel, gathered together to do whatsoever the hand and counsel of God had determined before to be done;" viz. to act towards, in and about the death and crucifying of Christ to the uttermost (*ὅσα, quæcunque*) of what God had before upon a special account and design, determined, or decreed to permit them to do, or rather, to permit to be done, notwithstanding his hand or power to have prevented them. For, to touch the second thing propounded, the word *γενέσθαι*, translated, to be done, doth not import any eventual certainty, or indispensable necessity of the coming to pass of those things, which Herod, Pilate, &c. gathered themselves together to do, and accordingly did, about the crucifying of Christ; but only the possibility, or, if we will, the probability of their coming to pass upon the determined permission of God in that behalf. For that the permissive decree of God, doth not import the certainty or necessity of event in things so decreed, is afterwards proved in this chapter. It is a form of speech frequent in the Scriptures, to speak of things probable, or likely to come to pass, as if they should or would simply and certainly come to pass; and so again to use the infinitive mood in a potential sense, or signification. An instance of the former we have, Deut. xiii. 11, "And all Israel shall hear, and fear, and shall do no more any such wickedness as this is among you." The meaning is not, that it shall certainly and infallibly thus come to pass, viz. that no Israelite, hearing of the judgment executed upon the idolatrous seducer, would ever commit the like wickedness afterwards, but that the hearing of such a severe course taken with such an offender, should be a probable and likely means to preserve others from the like wickedness. Another passage of like expression and import, you have, Deut. xvii. 13, and again, Deut. xix. 20; see also Gen. xxi. 6; Num. xiv. 13, 14; John xi. 48, to omit other the like without number. An instance of the latter we have, Rom. i. 20, *Εἰς τὸ εἶναι αὐτὲς ἀναπολογήτες, i. e.* That they might be, or that they may be, as our last translators render it in their margin, or, that they should be, as our former translators had it, without excuse, viz. in case they glorify not God as God.* See also Rom. iv. 11, where the infinitive mood is twice used in such a potential sense as we speak of. So when Christ saith unto Simon and Andrew, Mark i. 17, "Follow me," *καὶ ποιήσω ὑμᾶς γενέσθαι ἀλιεῖς ἀνθρώπων,* "and I will make" or cause "you to be" or, to become "fishers of men," his meaning is not, that upon condition they would follow him, he would compel, or force them to be "fishers of men," he might have done this as well without persuading them to follow him, but that he would furnish them with such wisdom and knowledge, with such a heavenly art and skill, that if their hearts would serve them for the employment, they might, and should, be excellently accomplished and fitted by him, for the drawing of men out of the world unto God. See also Mark x. 44; Luke viii. 35; xxiii. 24.

* See Franciscus Vigerus, De præcipuis Græcæ dictionis idiotismis, p. 99.

And, to cite no more places upon this account, which readily might be done to a far greater number, in the next verse save one to the words in hand, the same speakers express themselves thus: *καὶ σημεῖα, καὶ τέρατα γίνεσθαι διὰ τοῦ ὀνόματος, &c. i. e.* "And that signs and wonders *may be done* by the name," &c. So that whereas in the scripture in debate, we have the original, *γίνεσθαι*, translated, to be done, as if the meaning were, that the hand and counsel of God had positively and conclusively determined, that all those things should be done, which now were done by Herod, Pilate, &c., about the crucifying of Christ; it might, as properly, with as much consonancy to the Scripture dialect and phrase elsewhere, and, questionless, with far better agreement with the truth, be rendered *might be done*. And then the sense of the whole passage imports no more but this, that Herod, Pilate, &c., were gathered together to do the uttermost of what God had long before, even from eternity, graciously and sapientially determined to permit and suffer them to do, in and about the death and crucifying of Christ. So then here is nothing in this Scripture to prove, that God peremptorily decreed or determined beforehand the crucifying of Christ by Herod, Pilate, the Gentiles, or the Jews, or by any other persons; but only that in order to his great and blessed design of saving the world, he thus decreed, that either these, or any other, in case these had not done it, should be at liberty to perpetrate this great wickedness, and that he would not by his hand or power interpose to hinder them, in case they should attempt it, which he from eternity foresaw, and certainly knew that they would.

This sense of the place is fully confirmed from all these and such like expressions in Scripture: "Who was *delivered up*" (meaning by God) "for our offences," Rom. iv. 25. So again, "He that spared not his own Son, *delivered him up* for us all," &c., Rom. viii. 32. And again, "Him being *delivered*" (*ἐκδοτός*, given out, viz., out of the protecting or rescuing hand of God,) "by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified," &c. Acts ii. 23. Such passages as these evidently show that God went no further in any of his determinations or decrees about the actual crucifying of Christ, but only to a delivering of him up, *i. e.* to a leaving of him unguarded, unprotected, for wicked men to do with him, thus far, even what they list; not to any necessitating of any person or persons whatsoever to lay violent hands upon him.

If it be objected, But how doth it stand with the wisdom of God to determine events beforehand; without determining means or instruments which shall infallibly produce, or give being unto them? or, doth he determine any thing, the effecting whereof he leaveth in the liberty and power of men, so that they may choose whether it shall be effected or no? I answer,

1. In the general, that God never determineth any thing but what he either provideth means himself, or else knoweth himself

sufficiently provided otherwise to bring to pass; viz., according to the tenor, manner, and form of his determination. But,

2. Whatsoever God determineth to do, or to be done, in case or upon such or such a supposition, though his determination itself be absolute and independent upon any condition whatsoever, yet the event, or the thing determined upon such terms, is suspended upon the condition included in the determination. As for example, it cannot be denied but that God had determined to destroy Nineveh within forty days after warning given hereof by the preaching of Jonah, Jonah iii. 4. For doubtless if he had not purposed or determined the thing, he would not have engaged his prophet to preach and assert it in his name. But because the tenor and form of this his determination was conditional, importing only a purpose in him to inflict the judgment determined, in case they humbled not themselves within so many days after the denunciation of this judgment as determined by him, their humiliation and repentance intervening within the time limited in the determination or decree, the judgment determined was not executed; nor did the tenor of the determination import any other, than the non-execution of the judgment determined in such a case. A like instance we have, 1 Sam. ii. 30, "Wherefore the Lord God of Israel saith, I said indeed" *i. e.* I purposed, or determined, "that thy house, and the house of thy father should walk before me," (*viz.*, in the office and dignity of the priesthood,) "for ever. But now the Lord saith, be it far from me: for them that honour me I will honour; and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed." The purpose or determination of God for vesting the priesthood for ever, *i. e.* during the use and continuance of it in the world, in Eli's house, was absolute, not alterable or changeable, by any intervention, one or more, of what nature or kind soever. But what, then, was the tenor or form of this determination or purpose? not categorical, or simply assertive, as, *viz.*, that the priesthood should remain in this house or family for ever, how much soever it should at any time degenerate from itself in sin and wickedness; but hypothetical and provisional, thus: the priesthood shall remain for ever in Eli's house, provided that his house remains faithful, and observant of the law of their God concerning this dignity. This purpose or determination of God I call absolute and unchangeable, because "neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature," by any interposition whatsoever, could, or should have hindered the said duration or continuance of the priesthood in Eli's house, in case it had remained faithful. The Scriptures abound with instances of like consideration with these. See 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10; Gal. v. 21, &c.

3. God may leave the execution or fulfilling of his determinations, such as they may be, at the free liberty and in the power of men, and yet have assurance and certainty enough that they will be executed and fulfilled. For being infinite in wisdom, and so

able to discern and comprehend the most secret, subtle, and tickle proportions and connexions between causes and effects,* such as are altogether undiscernible both unto men and angels, as between the will of a man, attended with such and such principles and notions of things in the understanding, for her guide in her elections, and again with such and such objects, circumstances, and occasions about her, and between all possible or imaginable elections or actions in such a case; God, I say, through the infiniteness of his wisdom, being able to penetrate, calculate, and compute all and all manner of relations and aspects, between all and all manner of causes and effects whatsoever, is able infallibly, without all possibility of error or mistake, to foresee not only all men's actions and ways, what they will be from the beginning of the world to the end thereof, being conscious to his own model, platform, and intentions for the government of the world, but likewise what they would have been, had himself been pleased to have carried the government of the world, I mean, in circumstances and occasions relating to it, otherwise. He did not only foresee that Saul would come down to Keilah, which he did; but also that the lords of Keilah would have delivered David into Saul's hand, in case he had staid there till Saul's coming and demanding of him, which they did not, because they were prevented of the opportunity by David's departure from them before, 1 Sam. xxiii. 11, 12. So that in this sense God may be said to determine what will or shall be done in the world by men; not by determining or decreeing to bow or bend their wills by any immediate or physical influx or acting of his power upon them, much less by necessitating or compelling them to their respective elections; but by determining or decreeing, either to suffer them to remain so and so affected or inclined, and under the power and guidance of such and such principles, which he certainly foreseeth that they will drink in; or else to put new principles of light into them, by the influence whereof he also clearly foreseeth that the tenor and frame of their wills and affections will freely alter and change; and withal to give being to such and such circumstances, providences, and occasions, which have such or such an aspect upon or reference unto them in such or such a posture. Upon these terms, the hand and counsel of God might and did absolutely determine the giving up of his Son Jesus Christ to suffer death upon the cross, and yet not determine either that Herod, Pontius Pilate, or any other person or persons by name should have acted in this his determination; knowing certainly, 1. That these men would act it freely and without being any ways determined, yea, or in the least degree excited by him hereunto.

* *Cognitio illa Dei sapientialis omnino certa est, et infallibilis; sed non infallibilitate scientiæ quæ sumitur ab objecto, sed ab intellectu Divino, perfectissime et infallibiliter judicante etiam de fallibilibus et contingentibus.—Arrib. Op. Conciliat. lib. i. ca. 9.*

Effectus causarum creaturarum videt quidem Deus in ipsis causis, multo melius quam nos.—Aqu. Sum. part i. Qu. 14. Art. vii. Quæcunque igitur possunt per creaturam fieri, vel cogitari vel dici; et etiam quæcunque ipse facere potest, omnia cognoscit Deus, etiamsi actu non sunt, Ibid. Art. 9. Divina essentia est ratio cognoscendi intuitive quodcunque intelligibile, etiamsi nullum existeret in se.—Rada. Contr. 30. Art. 3.

2. That in case these had not acted it, there were enough in the world besides that would. But,

4. Concerning those actions of men, with their consequences, productions, and events, which are so emphatically and signally, as hath been said, attributed unto God; the reason of this attribution, I conceive, is, partly because the conjunction of such principles in men, and providences about men, between which the actions we speak of are begotten and produced, is somewhat particular and rare; partly also, and chiefly, because the event and consequence of such actions, are some special design and intendment of God, as is clearly to be seen in the instances already pointed at. Deut. ii. 27, compared with ver. 30; Josh. xi. 20; 2 Sam. xvii. 14; 1 Kings xii. 15; and Acts iv. 28, compared with Rom. iv. 25, and viii. 32, &c. Therefore,

5. Concerning the ordinary and constant motions and actions of other creatures in the world, though the least of them cometh not to pass without the knowledge and foreknowledge of God (in such a sense as foreknowledge is attributable unto him), nor without his prudential disposal of them to their, or rather his, respective ends, yet can they not be said to be determined by him in any other sense, or consideration, than this, viz. as he was the Author of such and such determinate natures, properties, and beings in the creation, which, by his ordinary concurrence with them for support and action, are apt to move or to act after such or such a manner determinately. The regular and respective motions, shinings, influences of the sun, moon, and stars, the flowing of rivers from their fountains, together with the decurrency of their waters into the sea, with a thousand things besides of like consideration, are no otherwise determined by God than has been said.

6. Concerning the particular motions, actions, and exertions of such creatures, or causes, which though merely natural, do not move, act, or exert uniformly or without variation, but with a latitude and disproportion in their motions and effects, there is ground, I conceive, to judge that God doth, at least sometimes, though not so frequently as is commonly presumed, providentially interpose beyond his ordinary concurrence to occasion or bring to pass such a variation. As for example, that the same ground, with the same labour, cost, and skill of the husbandman bestowed on it, doth not yield a like proportion of increase one year which it doth another; so again, that the same fruit-bearing trees are barren one year, and well bearing another; that the seas are pacific and commodious for passage at one time, in such parts and places of them, as when such and such ships, with such and such persons in them, pass through them, where they are turbulent and dangerous at another time, when such and such other ships and persons in them pass the same way, with many more particulars of like consideration, the reason, doubtless, of the variety and diversity of occurrences or effects in this kind, is not always to be resolved, either divisim, or conjunctim, only into the native properties of the causes, whether me-

diately, or immediately producing them, or into the ordinary and standing concurrence of God, with these causes, for or in producing them; but there is somewhat a more particular hand of the great Ruler of the world, which forms and fashions them in such different shapes; and that in order to such and such ends, which though sometimes apprehensible enough, yet for the most part are very hard for men to call by their names. Only this remains true, that in such occurrences and events, as those now specified, notwithstanding that great diversity found between them, yet ordinarily all particular causes interested in the production of them, act in a regular and due conformity to their respective natures and properties, and are not forced or turned out of their way by any immediate power or interposal of God. And that which he doth in order to a diversification, when the difference is preternatural and signally from him, consists either in a multiplication of, or a subtraction from, the number of causes, which, according to the course of nature and ordinary providence, would have joined in raising the effect, or else in suspending either in whole or in part, or in augmenting the operating virtue of one cause or more present with those, which together raise and produce the effect; which suspension and augmentation, though in a sense they may be called miraculous, yet are they not direct or perfect miracles, partly because they are not so obvious to any of the outward senses, partly also because, though they be unusual and rare, compared with the course of ordinary providence, yet are they frequent in such kinds of dispensation, which are either signally penal or munificent.

7. Concerning such occurrences and casual events, wherein or whereby any creature suffers loss either of being or well-being, in what kind or degree soever, neither are these determined by God, though he takes special knowledge of them both before and when they come to pass, and contrives them accordingly to their most appropriate ends. When our Saviour teacheth his disciples that a sparrow shall not fall to the ground, *i. e.*, be taken, killed, or hurt, without his heavenly Father, his meaning is not to assert a particular decree or determination in God concerning the death or hurt of every sparrow that either dieth or receiveth harm, but to show that God is vigilant and careful in his rule and government of the world, and taketh exact notice how his creatures suffer or are diminished. It is more proper of the two, and nearer to the truth, to say and hold that God determineth the preservation or keeping alive of these sparrows which fall not to the ground, than that he determineth the falling to the ground of every one that so falleth. The reason is, because the object of God's determinations or decrees is only that which is good, whereas things indifferent and things that are evil are the object of his knowledge as well as that which is good. But of this more hereafter. So when any man's person, house, or goods are consumed or hurt by fire, there is no competent ground to say or think that any of these

were determined by God, or that they might not have been prevented; for certain it is that he decreed not either the negligence or carelessness, nor yet the malice, of those who through either the one or the other were the authors of such accidents.

If it be said, Yea, but the permission of such accidents as these is good, otherwise God would not permit them to be; and if so, then such a permission may be the object of God's determination and decree; and if God decreeth the permission of a thing, doth not this include or suppose a necessity that it shall, will, or must come to pass? If so, it is as much determined or necessitated by God's permissive decree as if it had been directly and peremptorily decreed by him. To this I answer,

It is indeed the judgment of some learned men,* that the purpose or intent of God to permit or suffer such or such a thing to be done, or such or such an accident to come to pass, supposeth a necessity, at least a syllogistical or consequential necessity, of the coming of it to pass. But that the truth lieth on the other side of the way appears by the light of this consideration. If whatsoever God hath decreed or intendeth to permit to come to pass in any case, upon any terms, or any supposition whatsoever, should by virtue of such an intention or decree necessarily come to pass, then all things possible to be, or at least ten thousand things more than ever shall be, must be, yea, and this necessarily; for, doubtless, God hath decreed, and intendeth, to leave natural causes generally to their natural and proper operations and productions; yea, and voluntary causes also, under a power and at liberty to act ten thousand things more than ever they will do or shall do. For example, God intendeth and hath decreed to permit that fire shall burn what combustible matter soever it shall take hold of, or that shall be cast into it; that one spark of it falling into a barrel of dried gunpowder should suddenly fire it, &c.; but it doth not follow from hence that therefore every thing that is combustible in the world shall be burnt with fire, or that every barrel of dry gunpowder shall be blown up with sparks of fire falling into them. So, in the instance formerly mentioned, God had decreed to permit the lords of Keilah to deliver up David into Saul's hand, in case he had staid in their city till Saul's coming to demand him: this is evident from the text, 1 Sam. xxiii. 12. But it did not follow from this permissive decree of God that therefore these lords must necessarily deliver up David into Saul's hand; for we know they did it not. So, likewise, God hath decreed to permit any man to destroy the life of another whom he meets with,† I mean, in respect of a natural power to do the execution; but it followeth not from hence that therefore every man must necessarily murder or destroy the life of his brother that cometh in his way. So that evident it is, that no decree of God whatsoever which is simply and purely permissive, doth import any necessity at all of the perpetration or coming to pass of the thing

* Dr. Twisse.

† Vitæ alienæ dominus est, quisquis contemptor est suæ.—*Sen.*

so decreed. God permitted Adam to eat of every tree in the garden of Eden, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil only excepted, Gen. ii. 16, 17, and therefore certainly had decreed or intended this permission; yet was not Adam any ways necessitated by any virtue or influence of this decree upon him to eat of every of these trees; nor is it in the least degree credible that ever he did eat of every of them, nor yet of any of them, but only that which was prohibited unto him, his ejection out of this garden following so suddenly after this patent or permission granted unto him. The reason why no decree of God, that is purely and barely permissive, either induceth or supposeth any necessity of the coming to pass of what is only so decreed, is this: First, because no such decree doth any ways interest God to any manner of interposal either by his wisdom, power, or providence, in what kind soever, towards the effecting or bringing to pass of what is so decreed. So that such events, which are no otherwise decreed by God than thus, are in the same posture of contingency, in the same possibility of being or not being, wherein they would have been had there been no such decree at all concerning them. Secondly, neither doth any such decree in God suppose a futurity of such a concurrence of causes simply requisite and necessary for the bringing of things so decreed to pass which will actually bring them to pass. Though God hath decreed that a spark or coal of fire falling, *i. e.* in case it shall fall, into a barrel of gunpowder, shall fire it, yet it doth not follow from hence that he hath decreed that any such spark or coal shall fall into it, without which, notwithstanding the effect decreed, *viz.* the firing of this powder, will not come to pass. Or, if it be said that God hath decreed that such a spark or coal shall fall into the said barrel of powder, now is not the decree barely permissive, but operative and assertive, and such which engageth the decreer to interpose effectually for the bringing of the thing decreed to pass. But such decrees as this, in matters of that nature, we deny to be in God.

If it be yet further objected, Yea, but all events, and whatsoever cometh to pass at any time, in any place, or with relation to any person whatsoever, are foreseen and foreknown by God; and if so, then is there an absolute and unavoidable necessity of their coming to pass, otherwise the foreknowledge of God shall be but conjectural, obnoxious to error and mistake, not certain or infallible. To this I answer,

1. By concession, *viz.*, that the knowledge of God (for foreknowledge, if we speak properly, is not compatible to him)* is all light, and there is no darkness in it at all: all possibility of error or mistake are ten thousand times farther from it than the heavens are from the earth. But,

2. I answer further, by way of exception, that notwithstanding

* Quia ea, quæ nobis futura sunt, videt, quæ tamen ipsi semper præsto sunt, præscius dicitur, quamvis nequaquam futurum prævideat, quod præsens videt.—*Greg. Mor.* l. ii. c. 23.

the certainty of the knowledge of God concerning things that daily and hourly come to pass, and that will come to pass hereafter, yet there is no more, no other necessity of their coming to pass, in respect of such his knowledge, than there would or should have been, in case no such knowledge were, or had been in him. For certain it is, that no knowledge, as such, hath any influence at all upon the object or thing known, to cause it to be, or not to be.*

If it be replied, Yea, but if God knows that such and such things will come to pass, is there not a necessity of their coming to pass; or otherwise, must not the knowledge of God prove abortive, and be accompanied with error.

I answer, no; if the events supposed to be known by God before their coming to pass, be contingent, or, at least, such in the production whereof the wills of men must some ways or other interpose, if ever they be produced, (of which kind of events only we now speak,) the certainty of the knowledge of God may be salved, and yet no absolute necessity of the coming to pass of such events be supposed. The reason is, because at the same time when God seeth or knoweth that they will come to pass, he seeth and knoweth also, that there is no necessity they should come to pass, but that they may well be prevented. In which respect, in case they should not come to pass, the knowledge of God should suffer no defeature or disparagement.†

If yet it be said, Yea, but when it is supposed that God knoweth that such or such an event will come to pass, if it should be supposed withal that he knoweth it may not come to pass, or that it may come to pass otherwise, than according to this knowledge, doth not this suppose or imply a consciousness in God of the weakness or deficiency of his knowledge?

I answer, no; but rather the contrary; viz., a consciousness in him of the strength and perfection of his knowledge. For he that knoweth not that contingent and free-working causes, which way soever they shall act in order to any particular event, might yet act otherwise, or suspend their actings, is certainly defective in knowledge. And if God did not as well know that there is a possibility of the non-futurity, or of the not coming to pass of such contingent events, which he knoweth will come to pass, as well as he certainly knoweth that they will come to pass, he should be defective in his knowledge concerning the nature and property of contingent and free-working causes, inasmuch as this is their nature and property, (as hath been said,) to be at liberty in reference to particular actings, to act one way as well as another, or else to suspend their action. Indeed, if it should be said or thought, that any event will

* Non ideo peccavit Adam, quia Deus hoc futurum noverat; sed præcivit Deus, quasi Deus, quod ille erat propria voluntate facturus.—*Hieronym.* Dial. 3. contra Pelag. Deus præscientia sua non cogit facienda, quæ futura sunt.—*Aug. de Lib. Arbit.* l. iii. c. 4.

† Futura contingentia, etiam ut subsunt divinæ scientiæ, non sunt simpliciter necessaria.—*Rada. Contr.* 30, Art. 5.

Scientia Dei non tollit contingentiam ab eo, quod est scitum.—*Ibid.*

not, or *shall* not, come to pass, which God knoweth beforehand will come to pass, this would import an obnoxiousness unto error in the knowledge or foreknowledge of God. But to say, or think, that such an event, whose future coming to pass God knoweth, *may*, notwithstanding this knowledge of his, not come to pass, reflects no dishonour or disparagement at all upon his knowledge,* but rather gives an honourable and high testimony of excellency and perfection unto it. For he that certainly knows what contingent and free-working causes will do, notwithstanding their freedom and liberty either to do, or not to do, or to do otherwise, must needs be excellent in knowledge indeed, and one who needeth not count it robbery to be equal with God.

Concerning the acts of the wills of men, which are called, I know not how properly, supernatural, I mean such which have an essential connexion with their eternal happiness and glory, how, or how far, they are determined by God, and how, and how far not, we shall be better fitted with an opportunity to demonstrate in the process of our discourse.

In the meantime, the reason why the great commander and Lord of nature leaveth his whole militia ordinarily to move and act according to their native properties and inclinations respectively, without countermanding them, or turning them out of their way, are these, with their fellows: First, nature with all her train and retinue of particular causes, together with all their furniture of principles for motion and action, being the workmanship of his own hand, if he should ordinarily or frequently interpose to change her laws, or innovate her course, he should seem to pull down that which himself hath built up, and to dislike that portraiture and resemblance of himself, which he hath drawn with admirable and unimitable art and skill in the regular and standing progress of nature and second causes. Secondly, being conscious to himself, with what excellency of wisdom, goodness, and power, the great body of nature with all the parts and members of it, was at first raised, built, framed, and tempered by himself, he knows there is no need for him either to add to, or to take from, or to alter any thing ordinarily in her course. He hath sufficient security that his handmaid left unto herself (only with his ordinary and regular concurrence, without which she can neither move nor be) will no ways misbehave herself in order to his ends, and those concernments of his glory wherewith she is intrusted. So that for him to check, or control her in her way, would be but a kind of condemning the innocent, which is, when practised amongst men, an abomination to him. Thirdly, and lastly, if he should customarily, and of course overrule nature or second causes in their regular proceedings, he should overlay his own market for miracles and works of wonder,

* Cum ista, Antichristus erit, stat hæc, Antichristus potest non fore.—*Rada. Contr.* 30, Art. 6. Et paulo post; non pugnat igitur quod Deus sciat, Petrum esse peccatum, et tamen quod ipse possit non peccare, vel possit non esse peccatum.

and bring down the price of the glory and esteem of them to a very low rate. In the days of Solomon, silver was but as stones, nothing esteemed, 1 Kings x. 21—27, by reason of the abundance and commonness of it. Miracles are the rarities of heaven, and the reserve of nature when her testimony concerning the glory and power of her Lord and Master is despised by men.

CHAPTER III.

Concerning the foreknowledge and knowledge of God; and the difference between these, and his desires, purposes, intentions, and decrees: and how these also are distinguished the one from the other.

IT is not to be denied, but that the Scriptures do attribute πρόγνωσις, or foreknowledge unto God in several places, as Acts ii. 23; Rom. viii. 29; xi. 2; 1 Pet. i. 2, &c. Though evident it is that in some, if not in all of these places, the word rather imports a pre-approbation than a simple prescience or foreknowledge, according to the known signification of the simple word γνώσις, which, though properly it signifieth knowledge, yet in Scripture language, according to that idiom of speech, wherein the consequent is put for the antecedent, not unusual in the Scriptures, frequently imports approbation, as Matt. vii. 23; Rom. xi. 2; 2 Tim. ii. 19. But as many other things are oft in Scripture attributed unto God, which, according to the proper and ordinary signification of the words, are no ways competible to him, as hands, eyes, ears, grief, repentance, &c.; so is prescience or foreknowledge also. Notwithstanding as there is a ground in reason, one or more, for all those other metaphorical and improper attributions, which are in any kind made unto God, so is there for this of prescience also; only care and caution must be taken that our table proves not a snare unto us; my meaning is, lest those things which are metaphorically spoken of God for the accommodation of our understandings, and to enrich us with such conceptions, apprehensions, and knowledge of him, as we are well capable of, according to the truth of his nature and being, be not so interpreted or understood by us, as to occasion any such fancies or imaginations in us, which are unworthy of him, and inconsistent with the truth of his being.

That prescience or foreknowledge are not formally or properly in God, is the constant assertion, both of ancient and modern divinity. The learned assertors of the protestant cause are at perfect agreement with their adversaries the schoolmen, and papists, in this. Nor is it any wonder at all that there should be peace, and a concurrence of judgment about such a point as this, even between those who have many irons of contention otherwise in the fire, considering how obvious and near at hand the truth herein is. For, Firstly,

If foreknowledge were properly and formally in God, then might predestination, election, reprobation, and many other things be, properly and formally in him also; inasmuch as these are, in the letter and propriety of them, as competible unto him as foreknowledge. Nor can there be any reason given for a difference. But impossible it is, that there should be any plurality of things whatsoever, in their distinct and proper natures and formalities, in God, the infinite simplicity of his nature and being, with open mouth gainsaying it. Secondly, If foreknowledge were properly or formally in God, there should be somewhat in him corruptible or changeable. For that which is supposed to be such a foreknowledge in him to-day, by the morrow, suppose the thing or event foreknown should in the interim actually come to pass, must needs cease and be changed; inasmuch as there can be no foreknowledge of things that are present, the adequate and appropriate object of this knowledge, in the propriety of it, being *res futura*, somewhat that is to come. Thirdly, and lastly, There is nothing in the creature univocally and formally the same with any thing which is in God. The reason is, because then there must either be somewhat finite in God, or somewhat infinite in the creature; both which are impossible. But if prescience or foreknowledge, being properly or formally in the creature, should be properly or formally also in God, there should be somewhat in the creature, univocally and formally the same with somewhat which is in God. Therefore certainly there is no foreknowledge, properly so called, in God.*

If it be objected, that this argument lieth as strong against the propriety of knowledge, as of foreknowledge, in God; inasmuch as knowledge is every whit as properly and formally in the creature as foreknowledge; I answer,

True it is, there is no knowledge neither in God, according to the precise and formal notion of knowledge, or in such a sense wherein it is found in men; and this the first and last of the three reasons mentioned do infallibly demonstrate. Knowledge in the creature is a principle or habit, really and essentially distinct from the subject or soul where it resideth: yea, and is capable of augmentation and diminution therein, and of separation from it. Whereas that which is called knowledge in God, neither differs really or essentially from his nature, or from himself, but is really one and the same thing with him (as will further appear in the following chapter), nor is it either capable of growth, or of decay, or of separation. Only in this respect, knowledge, of the two, is more properly attributable unto God than foreknowledge, viz. because foreknowledge, in the proper notion, or formal conception

* Quid est præscientia, nisi scientia futurorum? Quid autem futurum est Deo, qui omnia super graditur tempora? Si enim in scientia res ipsas habet, non sunt ei futuræ, sed præsentæ; ac per hoc, non jam præscientia, sed tantum scientia dici potest.—*Aug. l. ii. ad Simpl. vide plura. ib.*

Nec zelus, nec ira, nec pœnitentia, nec proprie misericordia, nec præscientia esse potest in Deo.—*Greg. Moral. l. ii. c. 23.*

of it, includes, or supposeth, a liableness to a change or expiration, viz. upon the coming to pass of the thing foreknown, which must of necessity come to pass in time; whereas knowledge imports nothing but what may be permanent and perpetual, and so is of the two more appropriable unto him who changeth not.

But though neither knowledge, nor foreknowledge, can in strictness and formality of notion be ascribed unto God, yet since both the one and the other are frequently in Scripture attributed unto him, necessary it is that we make inquiry into the grounds and reasons of such attributions. For it is no ways credible but that the Holy Ghost in all such expressions did intend to inform the world of somewhat, and that according to truth, concerning God. Now the method and way, in general, whereby to discover, upon what grounds or reasons the Holy Ghost attributeth such things unto God, which yet are not formally or properly competible to him, and consequently what it is in God, of which by such expressions he desireth to impart the knowledge unto us, is this, to consider the respective natures, the different manners of operation, the divers effects, or ordinary consequences of those things in the creature, whether they be actions, passions, habits, parts, or whatsoever, which are upon such terms attributed unto God. For still we shall find something or other proceeding from God, or done by him, which holds proportion and correspondeth with some or other, one or more, of the ordinary effects or consequents of those things in the creature which are so attributed unto him; and the intent of the Holy Ghost in ascribing such things unto God, which are proper only to the creature, is to make known to us that the Divine Essence, or God himself, hath that eminently, after a transcendent and most perfect manner in his nature or being, which always enableth him, and in respect of some particulars upon occasion rendereth him actually willing to express himself in such kind of actions or effects, wherein the creature is wont to express itself upon occasion, out of and by means of such principles or instruments of action, being in the propriety or formality of their respective natures in them, which are ascribed unto God. As for example, to give the world knowledge, that the Divine nature can, and upon just occasion will, yea, and doth many times, express itself after such a manner, and with such a kind of effect, as men use to express themselves out of anger, as, viz. by reproofing, expostulating, withdrawing themselves, striking, punishing, and the like, the Holy Ghost oft ascribeth the passion, or impression of anger, unto God. There is the same consideration of all those other creature affections, as of love, zeal, grief, sorrow, repentance, delight, mercy, compassion, &c. And so also of all those organical parts or members of a human body, as eyes, ears, hands, heart, &c., which are so frequently in the Scriptures attributed unto God. These respective attributions give the light of this knowledge of God unto the world, that the Divine nature, though most singly, simply, most undividedly and indivisibly one,