

Orations

Jacobus Arminius

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Dedication, by the Nine Orphan Children of Arminius

TO THE MOST NOBLE THEIR LORDSHIPS THE CURATORS OF THE UNIVERSITY, AND THE HONOURABLE THE MAGISTRATES OF THE CITY OF LEIDEN.

Most Noble and Honourable Sirs,

As it ought undoubtedly to be the wish of as many of us as have minds averse to contention and strife, to entertain the same sentiments among ourselves concerning every thing with which any truth has to maintain a contest, (for truth being always at unity with itself, is most simple in its nature), so, more particularly, is this unanimity desirable in religion and sacred theology; and, in whatever other pursuit or science this concord may be neglected, in these it ought to be an object of constant solicitude and unwearied prosecution. This is an observation self-evident to all, except to those who are quite ignorant of the nature of religion, or of the immense evil introduced into it by means of dissensions, and how greatly they tend to hinder its progress and to wound its interests.

When those who treat on Divinity dispute with each other, they evince far more fierceness and asperity, than is manifested in quarrels among the professors of other arts and sciences. What a lamentable example, when, however the rest of mankind may angrily contend together, this course is pursued, in a manner much more unbecoming, by those whose whole duty, or nearly the whole of it, consists in preaching glad tidings of peace, in personally cherishing a quiet disposition, instilling the same into others, and inculcating on all men, on peril of their eternal salvation, the cultivation of a peaceable spirit, — as well befits the sons of peace in subordination to Him who is the God of peace! But if a Divine, and a Professor of one of the Arts and Sciences, were each to institute within himself a fuller and more accurate examination of the method pursued by the different bodies to which they belong when they disagree among themselves, — he would perceive, that there is scarcely any place in which the Professors of Arts and Sciences perfectly accord in sentiment; and that, notwithstanding, they plot nothing of an atrocious character one against another, nor plan its execution. But (most Gracious God!) of what outrages are not some of us guilty, against others who profess the same Christian religion, and who yet differ from us in some of their sentiments! We fight together with quills whose offensive properties are far more noxious than those of weapons made of steel; and our controversies do not confine themselves within the bounds of dissension, hatred or eternal enmity. We drive away each other from the celebration of the just observances of our holy religion, and we sentence those who oppose us to the loss of salvation. Nay, we frequently carry our base antipathies so far as to employ halters and other barbarous instruments of extreme punishment, our magistrates at the same time through a blind zeal giving countenance to the perpetration of these enormities. The recollection of them is yet much too recent, to require any recapitulation to make it stronger. How often indeed, through the show of

a pious ardour for Christ, have we poured out the blood of those men who had entirely dedicated themselves to the interests of Christ, had bent all their attention to piety and salvation, had passed their lives in the greatest innocence, and who had not done the least injury to any person living! Yet these cruelties have been practised by some persons, for whom Christ had shed his blood, to prevent them from shedding the blood of others. — But it has sometimes occurred to us as a matter of great wonder, what profit or utility there can be in all this, since truth alone is in every place alike and at unity with itself, and falsehood always becomes an object of the greatest detestation. If we look also at the conduct of proficients in other Arts and Sciences towards those amongst themselves who, they are fully persuaded in their own minds, have been guilty of palpable errors, and who have asserted and propagated what is known to be false, they do not revile the offenders with more acrimony, nor evince greater hostility against them, than, according their own opinion at least, the demerits of such persons may demand; — although in such an instance falsehood can be the less easily endured, because it consists of something near us, which it is possible for us to know, and which is not out of the reach of our apprehensions and capacities. If these be just statements, there seems to be good reason why we, who are devoted to religion, should cherish less of a contentious spirit, concerning that with which it is our endeavour to obtain some acquaintance; and this consideration ought to have the greater weight when we find it written, that ‘*our knowledge is but in part*’ (1 Cor. xiii. 9) and that God, in the distribution of his gifts, does not place us all on an equality (1 Cor. xii. 4).

But it is always customary to drag in this suggestion, ‘in the matter of religion very great danger lurks under the garb of error, and, on this account we ought to grant in such a case scarcely any indulgence, or, rather, none at all, to each other.’ We will here say nothing about the manner in which it becomes us to conduct ourselves towards those who attack the very spirit and life of religion: Gracious God, forbid that we should hold any thing in common with such men, except that we are human beings and have a right to exist! But in reference to those who have founded their religious superstructure on the same principles as ours, and who have with us rejected the insane worship of Popish idols, they do not desire to exercise a mutual tyranny over each other, the secular sword readily offering its aid, and they differ among themselves only in the minute examination of certain abstruse points, and (in one expression to sum up all), they stand in close proximity to our religion, while they are at an immense distance from that of the Roman Catholics. Does it not then appear very proper to make this a subject of discussion, What is the nature of that opinion beneath which error may be suspected to lurk? And to what extent may such an opinion be entertained by any man, without subjecting him to the loss of salvation? especially when none of those who are thus suspected clears himself by penitence from the charge before God; but, without the least obstinacy, malice, or remorse of conscience, he seems in his own eyes to hold sentiments equally correct with ours and with an equal degree of firmness; and with the same confidence of mind, in the integrity of his heart, and in reliance on the word of God alone, he adheres with delight to his opinions to the very close of his life, — and all this amidst as great a show of magnanimity as the bravest of us could display on any occasion. And as a proof that every opinion which appears heretical to us, is not damning in its tendency, we are daily affirming against many anathemas of the Fathers and Councils.

Does it not seem proper that whatsoever is precisely necessary to be believed, hoped, and performed, (not only in reference to its being true, but also in reference to its being thus necessary), ought to be proved out of the scriptures? This should be done with such clearness, that all men, even the uninstructed part of the people, and as many as by the preaching of the law and their own consciences are convinced of their misery and have begun to be greatly athirst for their individual salvation, may instantly understand and apprehend it, and may be able in some measure *'to handle it with their hands.'* This was the practice of Jesus Christ, whose words, when uttered, were devoid of all obscurity. But ought any contention to be raised concerning an opinion, the necessity of which to salvation cannot be clearly, perspicuously, and unanswerably proved among Christians themselves? Or should even a conference of the mildest character be held upon it, without a breach of that peace by which the whole church is held together? Because neither of the two parties, through tenderness of conscience, would dare to advance their sentiments any further, being certain that the more danger is to be apprehended the greater the distance they recede from the shore. Those doctrines which are really of this description, should never have been called in question by any Christian Council, or they ought first to have been decided, since their certainty is far superior to all Councils, — nay, they ought to have taken precedence of every Council that has yet been held. If this mode of composing differences had been long since adopted, we should have had notice fewer periods on account of the schisms which occurred in them, and another course would have been pursued in hindering the propagation of opinions, or in determining them.

Besides, is it not proper to enquire, Is that practice a correct one which has nearly proved fatal to Theology, and by which that sacred science is most reluctantly forced to become scholastic and contentious, through the accurate and laboured disputations of the Professors of Divinity in Universities and Schools? for in such exercises no limits are placed to the eager desire implanted in all men to know every thing. In this way, Theology is made to embrace an immense number of most perplexing conclusions arising from each other, and placed in a regular concatenation of mutual dependence. In what state then must practical religion necessarily be, which ought to be common to the condition of all those whom by means of it the ever-blessed and Almighty God has been pleased to save, and to take them to himself for a holy inheritance without spot or wrinkle? When divines, therefore, of the most chastened judgment and acute intellect are sometimes not able to agree among themselves concerning the decision of a question which may have been debated, and to the determining of which they could with difficulty be induced to admit one thing in a thousand that may have been advanced, or rather one in many thousands, — but when, on the contrary, they are discovered one after another to break off the discussion and to separate themselves from the rest, ought the Churches, which are collected together by Christ Jesus, instantly to follow these their masters and foremost guides, each of them sending a bill or divorcement to the rest, and denying one to another the rights of brotherhood? And yet, through Jesus Christ alone, they invoke the same Father with those whom they would proscribe, and being washed with the same baptism, they diligently employ themselves, by the grace of God, as much as possible in walking under the same hope and in the same obedience or faith. These churches chiefly consist of persons of the more simple sort, not a few of whom, through the multiplicity and weight of their daily occupations, are unable to turn the acumen and sagacity of their minds to those abstruse disquisitions; and yet not one of all these men incurs any risk in the matter

of his salvation, provided he apply himself to it with the least willingness.

Does it not also seem right to ask this question, How far may a person be permitted to penetrate into the deepest and most hidden meanings of holy writ, to form aphorisms in religion? And ought we not occasionally to meditate on this expression by the Apostle? — *‘I say to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly.’* Must we not also at some point or other prescribe limits to ourselves? chiefly because the matters contained in the scriptures are divine, while we are but human beings; it is *‘the glory of God to conceal each of his matters;’* (Prov. xxv. 2) simplicity frequently extricates itself from difficulties from which subtlety cannot be disengaged; *‘charity edifieth,’* as the Apostle says, while *‘knowledge puffeth up;’* (Rom. viii. 1) and because at this day we may engage in controversies of a description that will admit of no termination, unless God from heaven become himself the interpreter of his own words, as of old by means of the URIM and THUMMIM. Yet if even this should be done, we might, not long afterwards, have one thing after another to urge as fresh objections. But it would be wonderful if there were not in Divinity, as well as in other sciences, many things on which, when we are consulted, it may often be proper in us to deliver our opinion, without any prejudice to a more correct judgment, every one being left in possession of his own liberty of prophesying according to the scriptures; and if any man dissent from that opinion, we must bear with him and forbear. But it is no less expedient, that, without contention, we refer all the discoveries which we make, by constantly reading and examining the sacred scriptures, to the promotion of our individual holiness, and, as much as possible, the piety of many others. We believe, if we be led by the same Spirit, we shall easily think the same things, and be animated in the same manner. (Matt. xii. 50). *‘The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him.’* (Psalm xxv. 14). The mysteries of the kingdom of heaven are revealed unto babes; and the best knowledge of God, and the whole duty of man, are comprised in the fear of God and obedience to his commandments (Eccles. xii. 13). Whatever delight others may find in contention, let it be our part only to contend, one against another, which of us can be the most pious.

The mind of our beloved father was strangely exercised with many thoughts of this kind, which often drew tears from his eyes, and excited sensations painful beyond any thing that he ever experienced. For by his incredible sagacity he could discern how the dissensions of friends, while they operated as losses to themselves, were advantageous to their enemies. The whole of these considerations he has most accurately expressed in his elaborate oration on this subject. With this view, under the divine favour, he most diligently and mildly applied the power of his mind to effect a complete union of the Churches, at least or those which differed very little from each other; and in this way endeavoured according to his ability to remove sects from the Reformed Portion of Christendom, a measure most offensive to them, and to destroy the kingdom of Anti-christ, — always stipulating for the inviolability of that truth by which we either stand or fall, and having a due regard to the preservation. of their own names to all those to whom such an object was of consequence. He was desirous to point out in a sparing manner the method by which this design might be accomplished, through a lure to others; by which means he studied to procure commendation for them, rather than seem himself to seek his own honour by prescribing a method to his governors and fellow ministers, to all of whom he paid a most willing homage. But against this plan, he thought, party feelings would be excited, chiefly perhaps through too great zeal on the part of some persons. At length (alas!) it so

happened, in the Divine administration of human affairs, that the last day of his life closed (by a doleful calamity!) on the University, of which you, honourable and noble sirs, are the patrons and governors; on the churches, which were seriously occupied in accomplishing that pacific object which, had engaged so much of his attention; and, privately, on us also his nine children. What a loss the University and those churches to which we allude, have sustained in the death of our revered and ever-honoured parent, may be appreciated by the sentiments of some persons of eminence, which have not been concealed from us, but the repetition of which we modestly omit. Through a regard to propriety we the more readily indulge in this becoming silence, because we should otherwise seem to be giving testimony in our own cause, when we ought to acquiesce, which we do with the greatest willingness, in the very favourable judgment entertained by your honours, and which you have proved in a lucid manner by many arguments.

But in reference privately to ourselves, what calamity could have befallen us of a more deplorable nature? That parent we have lost who was at once the ornament and the support of our family. We were deprived of him, too, at an age when he was still vigorous, and when his years had not been so far spent as to have prevented him, if it had so pleased God, from employing usefully a longer period of it, if we may judge by the length of life to which men usually attain. Many of us though there be, no child has yet exceeded eighteen years of age, and not one of us is capable by himself of managing the concerns of the family. Then again, of all things which we could ardently desire, what was there wanting? For this, all the praise is due to God alone. It we needed tuition, he incessantly favoured us with his instructions, he imbued our minds with the fear of God and all piety, and he formed our manners. If we departed from our duty, he recalled us into the right path; and if we wanted comfort, he administered it to us in every form. And had we by God's grace been favoured with his presence a little longer, under him who was our domestic preceptor, into what flourishing trees, by the blessing of God, should we have grown? But he being now suddenly removed from us, all our hopes have fallen with him, and we afford another instance of the instability of the condition of man. However happy we are in being descended from such a parent, the recollection of whom through our future days cannot fail of acting upon us as an incitement to increase in piety, we should still be the most miserable of mortals if it had not seemed to our most merciful and gracious God, to raise up your honours in our fathers place as our DEFENDERS and PATRONS, and to incline you to take us under your protection. We promise your honours to be grateful to you, under these endearing titles, through the whole of our future lives. And that our professions of thankfulness may not be confined to mere words, behold we at present offer to you some proof of our grateful sense of your favours in certain of our revered father's lucubrations, which he composed under your honourable auspices in the University; — some of them when he was about to take up his degree of *Doctor of Divinity*, after a severe disputation both in the forenoon and in the afternoon, and when he began to execute the duties of his Professorship; — and others of them on his resigning the office of *Rector Magnificus* in the University, an employment in which he had acquitted himself with honour. But we principally dedicate to you that DECLARATION in which he professed, in a most luminous manner, before the illustrious the States General, his sentiments concerning Predestination and other articles of that description, in the interval of his public labours as Professor. This Declaration has with all possible fidelity been translated into Latin.

Dedication, by the Nine Orphan Children of Arminius

May God grant unto us, that, as with minds most devoted we now present these treatises to you, with all the excellences or imperfections which they may possess, so you may favourably accept of them. In the mean time, we pray the God of all might and goodness, that he will be pleased to defend and protect your honours from all evils on every side; and that he will long continue to bless you in every affair which you undertake in the name of their Lordships the States General, and in all your private concerns.

So pray those who are most attached to your honours,

THE NINE ORPHAN CHILDREN OF JAMES ARMINIUS
OF OUDEWATER.

1 The Object of Theology

This oration and the two others next in order and connected with it in subject, were delivered by Arminius as introductory discourses to his Divinity Lectures, when he first occupied the Professor's Chair in the University of Leiden, at the close of the year 1603. They were then received with the tokens of the highest approbation; and, from the first day of their publication, they have been greatly admired by the learned for the taste and elegance displayed in their composition, and by the divines for the spirit of evangelical piety which is apparent in every sentence. In the construction of all the three orations the author has aimed at one object — to prove to his students that the noble science of Theology is superior to all other subjects of human research, and in every respect worthy of their deepest attention.

To ALMIGHTY GOD alone belong the inherent and absolute right, will, and power of determining concerning us. Since, therefore, it has pleased him to call me, his unworthy servant, from the ecclesiastical functions which I have for some years discharged in the Church of his Son in the populous city of Amsterdam, and to give me the appointment of the Theological Professorship in this most celebrated University, I accounted it my duty, not to manifest too much reluctance to this vocation, although I was well acquainted with my incapacity for such an office, which with the greatest willingness and sincerity I then confessed and must still acknowledge. Indeed, the consciousness of my own insufficiency operated as a persuasive to me not to listen to this vocation; of which fact I can cite as a witness that God who is both the Inspector and the Judge of my conscience. Of this consciousness of my own insufficiency, several persons of great probity and learning are also witnesses; for they were the cause of my engaging in this office, provided it were offered to me in a legitimate order and manner. But as they suggested, and as experience itself had frequently taught me, that it is a dangerous thing to adhere to one's own judgment with pertinacity and to pay too much regard to the opinion which we entertain of ourselves, because almost all of us have little discernment in those matters which concern ourselves, I suffered myself to be induced by the authority of their judgment to enter upon this difficult and burdensome province, which may God enable me to commence with tokens of his Divine approbation and under his propitious auspices.

Although I am beyond measure cast down and almost shudder with fear, solely at the anticipation of this office and its duties, yet I can scarcely indulge in a doubt of Divine approval and support when my mind attentively considers, what are the causes on account of which this vocation was appointed, the manner in which it is committed to execution, and the means and plans by which it is brought to a conclusion. From all these considerations, I feel a persuasion that it has been Divinely instituted and brought to perfection.

For this cause I entertain an assured hope of the perpetual presence of Divine assistance; and, with due humility of mind, I venture in God's holy name to take this charge upon

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me and to enter upon its duties. I most earnestly beseech all and each of you, and if the benevolence which to the present time you have expressed towards me by many and most signal tokens will allow such a liberty, I implore, nay, (so pressing is my present necessity), I solemnly conjure you, to unite with me in ardent wishes and fervent intercessions before God, the Father of lights, that, ready as I am out of pure affection to contribute to your profit, he may be pleased graciously to supply his servant with the gifts which are necessary to the proper discharge of these functions, and to bestow upon me his benevolent favour, guidance and protection, through the whole course of this vocation.

But it appears to me, that I shall be acting to some good purpose, if, at the commencement of my office, I offer some general remarks on SACRED THEOLOGY, by way of preface, and enter into an explanation of its extent, dignity and excellence. This discourse will serve yet more and more to incite the mind, of students, who profess themselves dedicated to the service of this Divine wisdom, fearlessly to proceed in the career upon which they have entered, diligently to urge on their progress and to keep up an unceasing contest till they arrive at its termination. Thus may they hereafter become the instruments of God unto salvation in the Church of his Saints, qualified and fitted for the sanctification of his divine name, and formed '*for the edifying of the body of Christ,*' in the Spirit. When I have effected this design, I shall think, with Socrates, that in such an entrance on my duties I have discharged no inconsiderable part of them to some good effect. For that wisest of the Gentiles was accustomed to say, that he had properly accomplished his duty of teaching, when he had once communicated an impulse to the minds of his hearers and had inspired them with an ardent desire of learning. Nor did he make this remark without reason. For, to a willing man, nothing is difficult, especially when God has promised the clearest revelation of his secrets to those '*who shall meditate on his law day and night*' (Psalm i. 2). In such a manner does this promise of God act, that, on those matters which far surpass the capacity of the human mind, we may adopt the expression of Isocrates, 'If thou be desirous of receiving instruction, thou shalt learn many things.'

This explanation will be of no small service to myself. For in the very earnest recommendation of this study which I give to others, I prescribe to myself a law and rule by which I ought to walk in its profession; and an additional necessity is thus imposed on me of conducting myself in my new office with holiness and modesty, and in all good conscience; that, in case I should afterwards turn aside from the right path, (which may our gracious God prevent), such a solemn recommendation of this study may be cast in my face to my shame.

In the discussion of this subject, I do not think it necessary to utter any protestation before professors most learned in Jurisprudence, most skillful in Medicine, most subtle in Philosophy, and most erudite in the languages. Before such learned persons I have no need to enter into any protestation, for the purpose of removing from myself a suspicion of wishing to bring into neglect or contempt that particular study which each of them cultivates. For to every kind of study in the most noble theater of the sciences, I assign, as it becomes me, its due place, and that an honourable one; and each being content with its subordinate station, all of them with the greatest willingness concede *the president's throne* to THAT SCIENCE OF WHICH I AM NOW TREATING.

I shall adopt that plain and simple species of oratory which, according to Euripides, belongs peculiarly to truth. I am not ignorant that some resemblance and relation ought

to exist between an oration and the subjects that are discussed in it; and therefore, that a certain divine method of speech is required when we attempt to speak on divine things according to their dignity. But I choose plainness and simplicity, because Theology needs no ornament, but is content to be taught, and because it is out of my power to make an effort towards acquiring a style that may be in any degree worthy of such a subject.

In discussing the dignity and excellence of sacred Theology, I shall briefly confine it within four titles. In imitation of the method which obtains in human sciences, that are estimated according to the excellence of their OBJECT, their AUTHOR, and their END, and of the IMPORTANCE of the reasons by which each of them is supported — I shall follow the same plan, speaking, *first*, of The OBJECT of Theology, *then* of its AUTHOR, *afterwards* of its END, and *lastly*, of its CERTAINTY.

I pray God, that the grace of his Holy Spirit may be present with me while I am speaking; and that he would be pleased to direct my mind, mouth and tongue, in such a manner as to enable me to advance those truths which are holy, worthy of our God, and salutary to you his creatures, to the glory of his name and for the edification of his Church.

I intreat you also, my most illustrious and polite hearers, kindly to grant me your attention for a short time while I endeavour to explain matters of the greatest importance; and while your observation is directed to the subject in which I shall exercise myself, you will have the goodness to regard IT, rather than any presumed SKILL in my manner of treating it.

The nature of his great subject requires us, at this hour especially, to direct our attention, in the first instance, to the OBJECT of Theology. For the objects of sciences are so intimately related, and so essential to them, as to give them their appellations.

But God is himself the OBJECT of Theology. The very term indicates as much: for THEOLOGY signifies *a discourse or reasoning concerning God*. This is likewise indicated by the definition which the Apostle gives of this science, when he describes it as *‘the truth which is after godliness’* (Tit. i. 1). The Greek word here used for *godliness*, is ευσεβεια signifying *a worship due to God alone*, which the Apostle shews in a manner of greater clearness, when he calls this piety by the more exact term θεοσεβεια.¹ All other sciences have their objects, noble indeed, and worthy to engage the notice of the human mind, and in the contemplation of which much time, leisure and diligence may be profitably occupied. In

- *General Metaphysics*, the object of study is, ‘BEING in reference to its being;’
- *Particular Metaphysics* have for their objects ‘intelligences and minds separated and removed from moral contagion.’
- *Physics* are applied to ‘bodies as having motion in themselves.’
- *The Mathematics* have relation to quantities.
- *Medicine* exercises itself with ‘the human body, in relation to its health and soundness.’
- *Jurisprudence* has reference to ‘justice and human society,’
- *Ethics*, to the ‘virtues,’

¹1 Tim. ii 10, ‘*professing to render religious adoration to God*’

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- *Economics*, to ‘the government of the family’
- and *Politics*, to ‘state-affairs.’

But all these sciences are appointed in subordination to God; from him also they derive their origin. They are dependent on him alone; and, in return, they move back again, and unto him is their natural re-action. This science is the only one which occupies itself about the BEING of beings and the CAUSE of causes, the principle of nature, and that of grace existing in nature, and by which nature is assisted and surrounded. This object therefore is the most worthy and dignified of all, and full of adorable majesty. It far excels all the rest; because it is not lawful for any one, however well and accurately he may be instructed in the knowledge of all the sciences, to glory in the least on this account; and because everyone that has obtained a knowledge of science only, may on solid grounds and in reality glory in it. For God has forbidden the former species of boasting, while he commands the latter. His words by the Prophet Jeremiah are, ‘*Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me*’ (ii. 23, 24).

But let us consider the conditions that are generally employed to commend the object of any science. That OBJECT is most excellent

1. which is in itself *the best, and the greatest, and immutable*;
2. which, in relation to the mind, is *most lucid and clear*, and most easily proposed and unfolded to the view of the mental powers; and
3. which is likewise able, by its action on the mind, *completely to fill it, and to satisfy its infinite desires*.

These three conditions are in the highest degree discovered in God, and in him alone, who is the subject of theological study.

1.
 - *He is the Best Being*; he is the first and chief good, and goodness itself; he alone is good, as good as goodness itself; as ready to communicate, as it is possible for him to be communicated: his liberality is only equaled by the boundless treasures which he possesses, both of which are infinite and restricted only by the capacity of the recipient, which he appoints as a limit and measure to the goodness of his nature and to the communication of himself.
 - *He is the Greatest Being*, and the only great One; for he is able to subdue to his sway even nothing itself, that it may become capable of divine good by the communication of himself. ‘*He calleth those THINGS WHICH BE NOT, as though they were*’ (Rom. iv. 17), and in that manner, by his word, he places them in the number of beings, although it is out of darkness that they have received his commands to emerge and to come into existence. ‘*ALL NATIONS before him are as NOTHING, the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers, and the princes NOTHING*’ (Isa. xl. 17, 22, 23). The whole of this system of heaven and earth appears scarcely equal to a point ‘before him, whose center is every where, but whose circumference is no where.’

- *He is immutable*, always the same, and endureth forever; ‘*his years have no end*’ (Psalm cii). Nothing can be added to him, and nothing can be taken from him; with him ‘*is no variableness, neither shadow of turning*’ (James i. 17). Whatsoever obtains stability for a single moment, borrows it from him, and receives it of mere grace. Pleasant, therefore, and most delightful is it to contemplate him, on account of his goodness; it is glorious in consideration of his greatness; and it is sure, in reference to his immutability.
2. *He is most resplendent and bright*; he is light itself, and becomes an object of most obvious perception to the mind, according to this expression of the apostle, ‘*that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find Him, though he be not far from every one of us; for in him we live, and move, and have our being; for we are also his offspring*’ (Acts xvii. 27, 28). And according to another passage, ‘*God left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness*’ (Acts xiv. 17). Being supported by these true sayings, I venture to assert, that nothing can be seen or truly known in any object, except in it we have previously seen and known God himself.

In the *first* place he is called ‘Being itself,’ because he offers himself to the understanding as an object of knowledge. But all beings, both visible and invisible, corporeal and incorporeal, proclaim aloud that they have derived the beginning of their essence and condition from some other than themselves, and that they have not their own proper existence till they have it from another. All of them utter speech, according to the saying of the Royal Prophet: ‘*The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handy-work*’ (Psalm xix. 1). That is, the firmament sounds aloud as with a trumpet, and proclaims, that it is ‘*the work of the right hand of the Most High.*’ Among created objects, you may discover many tokens indicating ‘that they derive from some other source whatever they themselves possess,’ mere strongly than ‘that they have an existence in the number and scale of beings.’ Nor is this matter of wonder, since they are always nearer to nothing than to their Creator, from whom they are removed to a distance that is infinite, and separated by infinite space: while, by properties that are only finite, they are distinguished from nothing, the primeval womb from whence they sprung, and into which they may fall back again; but they can never be raised to a divine equality with God their maker. Therefore, it was rightly spoken by the ancient heathens,

‘Of Jove all things are full.’

3. *He alone can completely fill the mind, and satisfy its (otherwise) insatiable desires.* For he is infinite in his essence, — his wisdom, power, and goodness. He is the first and chief verity, and truth itself in the abstract. But the human mind is finite in nature, — the substance of which it is formed; and only in this view is it a partaker of infinity — because it apprehends Infinite Being and the Chief Truth, although it is incapable of comprehending them. David, therefore, in an exclamation of joyful self-gratulation, openly confesses, that he was content with the possession of God alone, who by means of knowledge and love is possessed by his creatures. These are his words: ‘*Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee*’ (Psalm lxxiii. 25).

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If thou be acquainted with all other things, and yet remain in a state of ignorance with regard to him alone, thou art always wandering beyond the proper point, and thy restless love of knowledge increases in the proportion in which knowledge itself is increased. The man who knows only God, and who is ignorant of all things else, remains in peace and tranquillity, and, (like one that has found ‘*a pearl of great price*,’ although in the purchase of it he may have expended the whole of his substance), he congratulates himself and greatly triumphs. This luster or brightness of the object is the cause why an investigation into it, or an inquiry after it, is never instituted without obtaining it; and, (such is its fullness), when it has once been found, the discovery of it is always attended with abundant profit.

But we must consider this object more strictly; for we treat of it in reference to its being the object of our theology, according to which we have a knowledge of God in this life. We must therefore clothe it in a certain mode, and invest it in a formal manner, as the logical phrase is; and thus place it as a foundation to our knowledge.

THREE CONSIDERATIONS of this matter offer themselves to our notice:

- The FIRST is, that we cannot receive this object in the infinity of its nature; our necessity, therefore, requires it to be proposed in a manner that is accommodated to our capacity.
- The SECOND is, that it is not proper, in the first moment of revelation, for such a large measure to be disclosed and manifested by the light of grace, as may be received into the human mind when it is illuminated by the light of glory, and, (by that process), enlarged to a greater capacity: for by a right use of the knowledge of grace, we must proceed upwards, (by the rule of divine righteousness), to the more sublime knowledge of glory, according to that saying, ‘*To him that hath shall be given.*’
- The THIRD is, that this object is not laid before our theology merely to be known, but, when known, to be worshipped. For the THEOLOGY which belongs to this world, is PRACTICAL *and through Faith*: THEORETICAL THEOLOGY belongs to *the other world*, and consists of pure and unclouded vision, according to the expression of the apostle, ‘*We walk by faith, and not by sight*’ (2 Cor. v. 7), and that of another apostle, ‘*Then shall we be like him, for we shall see him as he is*’ (1 John iii. 2). For this reason, we must clothe the object of our theology in such a manner as may enable it to incline us to worship God, and fully to persuade and win us over to that practice.

This last design is the line and rule of this formal relation according to which God becomes the subject of our Theology.

But that man may be induced, by a willing obedience and humble submission of the mind, to worship God, it is necessary for him to believe, from a certain persuasion of the heart:

1. That it is the will of God to be worshipped, and that worship is due to him.
2. That the worship of him will not be in vain, but will be recompensed with an exceedingly great reward.
3. That a mode of worship must be instituted according to his command.

To these three particulars ought to be added, a knowledge of the mode prescribed.

Our Theology, then, delivers three things concerning this object, as necessary and sufficient to be known in relation to the preceding subjects of belief.

- The FIRST is concerning the nature of God.
 - The SECOND concerning his actions.
 - And the THIRD concerning his will.
1. *Concerning his nature*; that it is worthy to receive adoration, on account of its justice; that it is qualified to form a right judgment of that worship, on account of its wisdom; and that it is prompt and able to bestow rewards, on account of its goodness and the perfection of its own blessedness.
 2. *Two actions* have been ascribed to God for the same purpose; they are CREATION and PROVIDENCE.
 - a) *The Creation of all things*, and especially of man after God's own image; upon which is founded his sovereign authority over man, and from which is deduced the right of requiring worship from man and enjoining obedience upon him, according to that very just complaint of God by Malachi, '*If then I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear*' (i. 6).
 - b) That *Providence* is to be ascribed to God *by which he governs all things*, and according to which he exercises a holy, just, and wise care and oversight over man himself and those things which relate to him, but chiefly over the worship and obedience which he is bound to render to his God.
 3. *Lastly*, it treats of *the will of God* expressed in a certain covenant into which he has entered with man, and which consists of two parts:
 - a) *The one*, by which he declares it to be his pleasure to receive adoration from man, and at the same time prescribes the mode of performing that worship; for it is his will to be worshipped from obedience, and not at the option or discretion of man.
 - b) *The other*, by which God promises that he will abundantly compensate man for the worship which he performs; requiring not only adoration for the benefits already conferred upon man, as a trial of his gratitude; but likewise that HE may communicate to man infinitely greater things to the consummation of his felicity.

For as he occupied the first place in conferring blessings and doing good, because that high station was his due, since man was about to be called into existence among the number of creatures; so likewise it is his desire that the last place in doing good be reserved for him, according to the infinite perfection of his goodness and blessedness, who is the fountain of good and the extreme boundary of happiness, the Creator and at the same time the Glorifier of his worshippers. It is according to this last action of his, that he is called by some persons 'the Object of Theology,' and that not improperly, because in this last are included all the preceding.

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In the way which has been thus compendiously pointed out, the infinite disputes of the schoolmen, concerning *the formal relation* by which God is the OBJECT OF THEOLOGY, may, in my opinion, be adjusted and decided. But as I think it a culpable deed to abuse your patience, I shall decline to say any more on this part of the subject.

Our sacred Theology, therefore, is chiefly occupied in ascribing to the One True God, to whom alone they really belong, those attributes of which we have already spoken, his *nature, actions, and will*. For it is not sufficient to know, that there is some kind of a NATURE, simple, infinite, wise, good, just, omnipotent, happy in itself, the Maker and Governor of all things, that is worthy to receive adoration, whose will it is to be worshipped, and that is able to make its worshippers happy. To this general kind of knowledge there ought to be added, a sure and settled conception, fixed on that Deity, and strictly bound to the single object of religious worship² to which alone those qualities appertain. The necessity of entertaining fixed and determinate ideas on this subject, is very frequently inculcated in the sacred page: '*I am the Lord thy God*' (Exod. xx. 2). '*I am the Lord and there is none else*' (Isa. xlv. 5). Elijah also says, '*If the Lord be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him*' (1 Kings xviii. 21). This duty is the more sedulously inculcated in scripture, as man is more inclined to depart from the true idea of Deity. For whatever clear and proper conception of the Divine Being the minds the Heathens had formed, the first stumbling-block over which they fell appears to have been this, they did not attribute that just conception to him to whom it ought to have been given; but they ascribed it either,

1. to some vague and uncertain individual, as in the expression of the Roman poet, 'O Jupiter, whether thou be heaven, or air, or earth!' Or,
2. some imaginary and fabulous Deity, whether it be among created things, or a mere idol of the brain, neither partaking of the Divine nature nor any other, which the Apostle Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans and to the Corinthians, produces as a matter of reproach to the Gentiles. (Rom. i and 1 Corinthians 8). Or
3. *lastly*, they ascribed it to THE UNKNOWN GOD; the title of UNKNOWN being given to their Deity by the very persons who were his worshippers. The Apostle relates this crime as one of which the Athenians were guilty: But it is equally true when applied to all those who err and wander from the true object of adoration, and yet worship a Deity of some description. To such persons that sentence justly belongs which Christ uttered in conversation with the woman of Samaria: '*Ye worship YE KNOW NOT WHAT*' (John iv. 22).

Although those persons are guilty of a grievous error who transgress in this point, so as to be deservedly termed ATHEISTS, in Scripture $\alpha\theta\epsilon\omicron\iota$ [or 'men without God']; yet they are by far more intolerably insane, who, having passed the extreme line of impiety, are not restrained by the consciousness of any Deity. The ancient heathens considered such men as peculiarly worthy of being called ATHEISTS. On the other hand, those who have a consciousness of their own ignorance occupy the step that is nearest to sanity. For it is necessary to be careful only about one thing; and that is, when we communicate information to them, we must teach them to discard the falsehood which they had imbibed, and must instruct them in the truth alone. When this truth is pointed out to them, they

²'*I passed by and beheld the objects of your devotions*' Acts xvii. 22. See also 2 Thess. ii. 4

will seize it with the greater avidity, in proportion to the deeper sorrow which they feel at the thought that they have been surrounded for a long series of years by a most pernicious error.

But Theology, as it appears to me, principally effects four things in fixing our conceptions, which we have just mentioned, on that Deity who is true, and in drawing them away from the invention and formation of false Deities.

- FIRST. It explains, in an elegant and copious manner, the relation in which the Deity stands, lest we should ascribe to his nature any thing that is foreign to it, or should take away from it any one of its properties. In reference to this, it is said, '*Ye heard the voice, but saw no similitude; take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves, lest you make you a graven image*' (Deut. iv. 15, 16).
- SECONDLY. It describes both the universal and the particular actions of the only true God, that by them it may distinguish the true Deity from those which are fabulous. On this account it is said, '*The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, shall perish from the earth, and under these heavens*' (Jer. x. 11). Jonah also said, '*I fear the Lord, the God of heaven, who hath made the sea and the dry land*' (i. 9). And the Apostle declares, '*Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and by man's device*' (Acts xvii. 29). In another passage it is recorded, '*I am the Lord thy God which brought thee out of the land of Egypt*' (Deut. v. 6). '*I am the God that appeared to thee in Bethel*' (Gen. xxvi. 13). And, '*Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that they shall no more say, The Lord liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt, but, The Lord liveth which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the North Country,*' etc. (Jer. xxiii. 7, 8).
- THIRDLY. It makes frequent mention of the covenant into which the true Deity has entered with his worshippers, that by the recollection of it the mind of man may be stayed upon that God with whom the covenant was concluded. In reference to this it is said, '*Thus shalt thou say unto the Children of Israel, the Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is. my memorial unto all generations*' (Exod. iii. 15). Thus Jacob, when about to conclude a compact with Laban his father-in-law, swears '*by the fear of his father Isaac*' (Gen. xxxi. 53). And when Abraham's servant was seeking a wife for his master's son, he thus invoked God, '*O Lord God of my master Abraham!*' (Gen. xxiv. 12).
- FOURTHLY. It distinguishes and points out the true Deity, even by a most appropriate, particular, and individual mark, when it introduces the mention of the persons who are partakers of the same Divinity; thus it gives a right direction to the mind of the worshipper, and fixes it upon that God who is THE FATHER OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST. This was manifested with some degree of obscurity in the Old Testament, but with the utmost clearness in the New. Hence the Apostle says, '*I bow my knee unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*' (Ephes. iii. 14).

All these remarks are comprehended and summed up by Divines, in this brief sentence, 'That God must be invoked who has manifested himself in his own word.'

1 The Object of Theology

But the preceding observations concerning the OBJECT of Theology, properly respect LEGAL THEOLOGY, which was accommodated to man's primeval state. For when man in his original integrity acted under the protecting favour and benevolence of a good and just God,

- he was able to render to God that worship which had been prescribed according to the law of legal righteousness, that says, '*This do, and thou shalt live*'
- he was able to '*love with all his heart and soul*' that Good and Just Being;
- he was able, from a consciousness of his integrity, to repose confidence in that Good and Just One; and
- he was able to evince towards him, as such, a filial fear, and to pay him the honour which was pleasing and due to him, as from a servant to his Lord.

God also, on his part, without the least injury to his justice, was able to act towards man, while in that state, according to the proscript of legal righteousness, to reward his worship according to justice, and, through the terms of the legal covenant, and consequently '*of debt,*' to confer life upon him. This God could do, consistency with his goodness, which required the fulfillment of the promise. There was no call for any other property of his nature, which might contribute by its agency to accomplish this purpose: No further progress of Divine goodness was necessary than that which might repay good for good, the good of perfect felicity, for the good of entire obedience: No other action was required, except that of creation, (which had then been performed), and that of a preserving and governing providence, in conformity with the condition with which man was placed: No other volition of God was needed, than that by which he might both require the perfect obedience of the law and might repay that obedience with life eternal. In that state of human affairs, therefore, the knowledge of the nature described in those properties, the knowledge of those actions, and of that will, to which may be added the knowledge of the Deity to whom they really pertained, was necessary for the performance of worship to God, and was of itself amply sufficient.

But when man had fallen from his primeval integrity through disobedience to the law, and had rendered himself '*a child of wrath*' and had become devoted to condemnations, this goodness mingled with legal justice could not be sufficient for the salvation of man. Neither could this act of creation and providence, nor this will suffice; and therefore this legal Theology was itself insufficient. For sin was to be condemned if men were absolved; and, as the Apostle says, (in the eighth chapter of his Epistle to the Romans), '*it could not be condemned by the law.*' Man was to be justified: but he could not be justified by the law, which, while it is the strength of sin, makes discovery of it to us, and is the procurer of wrath.

This Theology, therefore, could serve for no salutary purpose, at that time: such was its dreadful efficacy in convincing man of sin and consigning him to certain death. This unhappy change, this unfavourable vicissitude of affairs was introduced by the fault and the infection of sin; which was likewise the cause why '*the law which was ordained to life and honour*' (Rom. vii. 10), became fatal and destructive to our race, and the procurer of eternal ignominy.

1. Other properties, therefore, of the Divine Nature were to be called into action; every one of God's benefits was to be unfolded and explained; mercy, long suffering,

gentleness, patience, and clemency were to be brought forth out of the repository of his primitive goodness, and their services were to be engaged, if it was proper for offending man to be reconciled to God and reinstated in his favour.

2. Other actions were to be exhibited: 'A new creation' was to be effected; 'a new providence,' accommodated in every respect to this new creation, was to be instituted and put in force; 'the work of redemption' was to be performed; 'remission of sins' was to be obtained; 'the loss of righteousness' was to be repaired; 'the Spirit of grace' was to be asked and obtained; and a 'lost salvation' restored.
3. Another decree was likewise to be framed concerning the salvation of man; and '*another covenant, a new one,*' was to be made with him, '*not according to that former one, because those*' who were parties on one side '*had not continued in that covenant*' (Heb. viii. 11), but, by another and a gracious will, they '*were to be sanctified*' who might be '*consecrated to enter into the Holiest by a new and living way*' (Heb. x. 20). All these things were to be prepared and laid down as foundations to the new manifestation.

Another revelation, therefore, and a different species of Theology, were necessary to make known those *properties* of the Divine Nature, which we have described, and which were most wisely employed in repairing our salvation; to proclaim the actions which were exhibited; and to occupy themselves in explaining that decree and new covenant which we have mentioned.

But since God, the punisher and most righteous avenger of sinners, was either unwilling, or, (through the opposition made by the justice and truth which had been originally manifested in the law), was unable to unfold those properties of his nature, to produce those actions, or to make that decree, except by the intervention of a Mediator, in whom, without the least injury to his justice and truth, he might unfold those properties, perform those actions, might through them produce those necessary benefits, and might conclude that most gracious decree; on this account a MEDIATOR was to be ordained, who, by his blood, might atone for sinners, by his death might expiate the sin of mankind, might reconcile the wicked to God, and might save them from his impending anger; who might set forth and display the mercy, long suffering and patience of God, might provide eternal redemption, obtain remission of sin, bring in an everlasting righteousness, procure the Spirit of grace, confirm the decree of gracious mercy, ratify the new covenant by his blood, recover eternal salvation, and who might bring to God those that were to be ultimately saved.

A just and merciful God, therefore, did appoint as Mediator, *his beloved Son, Jesus Christ*. He obediently undertook that office which was imposed on him by the Father, and courageously executed it; nay, he is even now engaged in executing it. He was, therefore, ordained by God as the Redeemer, the saviour, the King, and, (under God), the Head of the heirs of salvation. It would have been neither just nor reasonable, that he who had undergone such vast labours, and endured such great sorrows, who had performed so many miracles, and who had obtained through his merits so many benefits for us, should ingloriously remain among us in meanness and obscurity, and should be dismissed by us without honour. It was most equitable, that he should in return be acknowledged, worshipped, and invoked, and that he should receive those grateful thanks which are due to him for his benefits.

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But how shall we be able to adore, worship and invoke him, unless ‘*we believe on him? How can we believe in him, unless we hear of him? And how can we hear concerning him,*’ except he be revealed to us by the word? (Rom. x. 14). From this cause, then, arose the necessity of making a revelation concerning Jesus Christ; and on this account TWO OBJECTS, (that is, GOD and his CHRIST), are to be placed as a foundation to that Theology which will sufficiently contribute towards the salvation of sinners, according to the saying of our saviour Christ: ‘*And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent*’ (John xvii. 3). Indeed, these two objects are not of such a nature as that the one may be separated from the other, or that the one may be collaterally joined to the other; but the latter of them is, in a proper and suitable manner, subordinate to the former. Here then we have a THEOLOGY, which, from CHRIST, its object, is most rightfully and deservedly termed CHRISTIAN, which is manifested not by THE LAW, but in the earliest ages by promise, and in these latter days by the Gospel, which is called that ‘*of Jesus Christ,*’ although the words (CHRISTIAN and LEGAL) are sometimes confounded. But let us consider the union and the subordination of both these objects.

I. Since we have God and his Christ for the object of our CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY, the manner in which LEGAL THEOLOGY explains God unto us, is undoubtedly much amplified by this addition, and our Theology is thus infinitely ennobled above that which is legal.

For God has unfolded in Christ all his own goodness. ‘*For it pleased the Father, that in him should all fullness dwell*’ (Col. i. 19); and that the ‘*fullness of the Godhead should dwell in him,*’ not by adumbration or according to the shadow, but ‘*bodily.*’ For this reason he is called ‘*the image of the invisible God*’ (Col. i. 15); ‘*the brightness of his Father’s glory, and the express image of his person*’ (Heb. i. 3), in whom the Father condescends to afford to us his infinite majesty, his immeasurable goodness, mercy and philanthropy, to be contemplated, beheld, and to be touched and felt; even as Christ himself says to Philip, ‘*He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father*’ (John xiv. 9). For those things which lay hidden and indiscernible within the Father, like the fine and deep traces in an engraved seal, stand out, become prominent, and may be most clearly and distinctly seen in Christ, as in an exact and protuberant impression, formed by the application of a deeply engraved seal on the substance to be impressed.

1. In this Theology God truly appears, in the highest degree, the best and the greatest of Beings:

a) THE BEST, cause he is not only willing, as in the former Theology, to communicate himself (for the happiness of men), to those who correctly discharge their duty, but to receive into his favour and to reconcile to himself those who are sinners, wicked, unfruitful, and declared enemies, and to bestow eternal life on them when they repent.

b) THE GREATEST,

- because he has not only produced all THINGS from *nothing*, through the annihilation of the *latter*, and the creation of the *FORMER*,
- but because he has also effected a triumph over sin, (which is far more

noxious than nothing, and conquered with greater difficulty), by graciously pardoning it, and powerfully ‘*putting it away;*’

- and because he has ‘*brought in everlasting righteousness,*’ by means of a second creation, and a regeneration which far exceeded the capacity of ‘*the law that acted as schoolmaster*’ (Gal. iii. 24).

For this cause Christ is called ‘*the wisdom and the power of God*’ (1 Cor. i. 24), far more illustrious than the wisdom and the power which were originally displayed in the creation of the universe.

- c) In this Theology, God is described to us as in every respect immutable, not only in regard to his nature but also to his will, which, as it has been manifested in the gospel, is peremptory and conclusive, and, being the last of all, is not to be corrected by another will. For ‘*Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, today, and forever*’ (Heb. xiii. 8); ‘*by whom God hath in these last days spoken unto us*’ (Heb. i. 2). Under the law, the state of this matter was very different, and that greatly to our ultimate advantage. For if the will of God unfolded in the law had been fatal to us, as well as the last expression of it, we, of all men most miserable, should have been banished forever from God himself on account of that declaration of his will; and our doom would have been in a state of exile from our salvation. I would not seem in this argument to ascribe any mutability to the will of God. I only place such a termination and boundary to his will, or rather to something willed by him, as was by himself before affixed to it and predetermined by an eternal and peremptory decree, that thus a vacancy might be made for a ‘*better covenant established on better promises*’ (Heb. vii. 22; viii. 6).
2. This Theology offers God in Christ as an object of our sight and knowledge, with such clearness, splendour and plainness, that ‘*we with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord*’ (1 Cor. iii. 18). In comparison with this brightness and glory, which was so pre-eminent and surpassing, the law itself is said not to have been either bright or glorious: For it ‘*had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth*’ (2 Cor. iii. 8). This was indeed ‘*the wisdom of God which was kept secret since the world began*’ (1 Cor. ii. 7; Rom. xvi. 25). *Great and inscrutable is this mystery;* yet it is exhibited in Christ Jesus, and ‘*made manifest*’ with such luminous clearness, that *God* is said to have been ‘*manifest in the flesh*’ (1 Tim. iii. 16), in no other sense than as though it would never have been possible for him to be manifested without the flesh; for the express purpose ‘*that the eternal life which was with the Father, AND THE WORD OF LIFE which was from the beginning with God, might be heard with our ears, seen with our eyes, and handled with our hands*’ (1 John i. 1, 2).
3. The Object of our Theology being clothed in this manner, so abundantly fills the mind and satisfies the desire, that the apostle openly declares, he was determined ‘*to know nothing among the Corinthians save Jesus Christ, and him crucified*’ (1 Cor. ii. 2). To the Phillipians he says, that he ‘*counted all things but lost for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus; for whom he had suffered the loss of all things, and he counted them but dung that he might know Christ, and the power*

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of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings' (Phil. iii. 8, 10). Nay, in the knowledge of the object of our theology, modified in this manner, all true glorying and just boasting consist, as the passage which we before quoted from Jeremiah, and the purpose to which St Paul has accommodated it, most plainly evince. This is the manner in which it is expressed: '*Let him. that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise lovingkindness, judgment and righteousness in the earth*' (Jer. ix. 24). When you hear any mention of mercy, your thoughts ought necessarily to revert to Christ, out of whom '*God is a consuming fire*' to destroy the sinners of the earth (Deut. iv. 24; Heb. xii. 29). The way in which St Paul has accommodated it, is this: '*Christ Jesus is made unto us by God, wisdom, righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption; that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord!*' (1 Cor. i. 30, 31). Nor is it wonderful, that the mind should desire to '*know nothing save Jesus Christ,*' or that its otherwise insatiable desire of knowledge should repose itself in him, since in him and in his gospel '*are hidden all the treasures of wisdom, and knowledge*' (Col. ii. 3, 9).

II. Having finished that part of our subject which related to this UNION, let us now proceed to the SUBORDINATION which subsists between these two objects. We will FIRST inspect *the nature* of this subordination, and THEN *its necessity*:

FIRST. Its NATURE consists in this, that every saving communication which God has with us, or which we have with God, is performed by means of the intervention of Christ.

1. The communication which God holds with us is
 - a) either in his benevolent affection towards us, or,
 - b) in his gracious decree concerning us, or,
 - c) in his saving efficacy in us.

In all these particulars, Christ comes in as a middle man between the parties. For

- a) when God is willing to communicate to us the affection of his goodness and mercy, he looks upon his ANOINTED ONE, in whom, as '*his beloved, he makes us accepted, to the praise of the glory of his grace*' (Ephes. i. 6).
- b) When he is pleased to make some gracious decree of his goodness and mercy, he interposes Christ between the purpose and the accomplishment, to announce his pleasure; for '*by Jesus Christ he predestinates us to the adoption of children*' (Ephes. i. 5).
- c) When he is willing out of this abundant affection to impart to us some blessing, according to his gracious decree, it is through the intervention of the same Divine person.

For in Christ as our Head, the Father has laid up all these treasures and blessings; and they do not descend to us, except through him, or rather by him, as the Father's substitute, who administers them with authority, and distributes them according to his own pleasure.

2. But the communication which we have with God, is also made by the intervention of Christ. It consists of three degrees — access to God, cleaving to him, and the enjoyment of him. These three particulars become the objects of our present consideration, as it is possible for them to be brought into action in this state of human existence, and as they may execute their functions by means of faith, hope, and that charity which is the offspring of faith.

- a) Three things are necessary to this access;
- i. that God be in a place to which we may approach;
 - ii. that the path by which we may come to him be a high-way and a safe one; and
 - iii. that liberty be granted to us and boldness of access.

All these facilities have been procured for us by the mediation of Christ.

- i. For the Father dwelleth in light inaccessible, and sits at a distance beyond Christ on a throne of rigid justice, which is an object much too formidable in appearance for the gaze of sinners; yet he hath appointed Christ to be '*a propitiatory through faith in his blood*' (Rom. iii. 25), by whom the covering of the ark, and the accusing, convincing, and condemning power of the law which was contained in that ark, are taken away and removed as a kind of veil from before the eyes of the Divine Majesty; and a throne of grace has been established, on which God is seated, '*with whom in Christ we have to do.*' Thus has the Father in the Son been made *ευπροσιτος* 'easy of access to us.'
- ii. It is the same Lord Jesus Christ who '*hath not only through his flesh consecrated for us a new and living way,*' by which we may go to the Father (Heb. x. 20), but who is likewise '*himself the way*' which leads in a direct and unerring manner to the Father (John xiv. 6).
- iii. '*By the blood of Jesus*' we have liberty of access, nay we are permitted '*to enter into the holiest,*' and even '*within the veil whither Christ, as a High Priest presiding over the house of God and our fore runner, is entered for us*' (Heb. v. 20), that '*we may draw near with a true heart, in the sacred and full assurance of faith*' (x. 22), and may with great confidence of mind '*come boldly unto the throne of grace*' (iv. 16).
 - Have we therefore prayers to offer to God? Christ is the High Priest who displays them before the Father. He is also the altar from which, after being placed on it, they will ascend as incense of a grateful odour to God our Father.
 - Are sacrifices of thanksgiving to be offered to God? They must be offered through Christ, otherwise '*God will not accept them at our hands*' (Mal. i. 10).
 - Are good works to be performed? We must do them through the Spirit of Christ, that they may obtain the recommendation of him as their author; and they must be sprinkled with his blood, that they may not be rejected by the Father on account of their deficiency.

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- b) But it is not sufficient for us only to approach to God; it is likewise good for us *to cleave to him*. To confirm this act of cleaving and to give it perpetuity, it ought to depend upon a communion of nature. But with God we have no such communion. Christ, however, possesses it, and we are made possessors of it with Christ, *'who partook of our flesh and blood'* (Heb. ii. 14). Being constituted our head, he imparts unto us of his Spirit, that we, (being constituted his members, and cleaving to him as *'flesh of his flesh and bone of his bones,'*) may be one with him, and through him with the Father, and with both may become *'one Spirit.'*
- c) *The enjoyment* remains to be considered. It is a true, solid and durable taste of the Divine goodness and sweetness in this life, not only perceived by the mind and understanding, but likewise by the heart, which is the seat of all the affections. Neither does this become ours, except in Christ, by whose Spirit dwelling in us that most divine testimony is pronounced in our hearts, that *'we are the children of God, and heirs of eternal life'* (Rom. viii. 16). On hearing this internal testimony, we conceive joy ineffable, *'possess our souls in hope and patience,'* and in all our straits and difficulties we call upon God and cry, ABBA FATHER, with an earnest expectation of our final access to God, of the consummation of our abiding in him and our cleaving to him, (by which we shall have *'all in all,'*) and of the most blessed fruition, which will consist of the clear and unclouded vision of God himself. But the third division of our present subject,³ will be the proper place to treat more fully on these topics.

SECONDLY. Having seen the subordination of both the objects of Christian Theology, let us in a few words advert to its NECESSITY. This derives its origin from the comparison of our contagion and vicious depravity, with the sanctity of God that is incapable of defilement, and with the inflexible rigor of his justice, which completely separates us from him by a gulf so great as to render it impossible for us to be united together while at such a vast distance, or for a passage to be made from us to him — unless Christ had trodden the wine press of the wrath of God, and by the streams of his most precious blood, plentifully flowing from the pressed, broken, and disparted veins of his body, had filled up that otherwise impassable gulf, *'and had purged our consciences, sprinkled with his own blood, from all dead works'* (Heb. ix. 14, 22), that, being thus sanctified, we might approach to *'the living God and might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life'* (Luke i. 75).

But such is the great NECESSITY of this subordination, that, unless our faith be in Christ, it cannot be in God: The Apostle Peter says, *'By him we believe in God, that raised him from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God'* (1 Pet. i. 21). On this account the faith also which we have in God, was prescribed, not by the law, but by the gospel of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is properly *'the word of faith'* and *'the word of promise.'*

The consideration of this necessity is of infinite utility,

1. both in producing confidence in the consciences of believers, trembling at the sight of their sins, as appears most evidently from our preceding observations;

³See the third Oration

2. and in establishing the necessity of the Christian Religion.

I account it necessary to make a few remarks on this latter topic, because they are required by the nature of our present purpose and of the Christian Religion itself.

I observe, therefore, that not only is the intervention of Christ necessary to obtain salvation from God, and to impart it unto men, but the faith of Christ is also necessary to qualify men for receiving this salvation at his hands; not that faith in Christ by which he may be apprehended under the general notion of the wisdom, power, goodness and mercy of God, but that faith which was announced by the Apostles and recorded in their writings, and in such a saviour as was preached by those primitive heralds of salvation.

I am not in the least influenced by the argument by which some persons profess themselves induced to adopt the opinion, 'that a faith in Christ thus particular and restricted, which is required from all that become the subjects of salvation, agrees neither with the amplitude of God's mercy, nor with the conditions of his justice, since many thousands of men depart out of this life, before even the sound of the Gospel of Christ has reached their ears.' For the reasons and terms of Divine Justice and Mercy are not to be determined by the limited and shallow measure of our capacities or feelings; but we must leave with God the free administration and just defense of these his own attributes. The result, however, will invariably prove to be the same, in what manner soever he may be pleased to administer those divine properties — for, *'he will always overcome when he is judged'* (Rom. iii. 4). Out of his word we must acquire our wisdom and information. In primary, and certain secondary matters this word describes — the NECESSITY of faith in Christ, according to the appointment of the just mercy and the merciful justice of God. *'He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him'* (John iii. 36). This is not an account of the first kindling of the wrath of God against this willful unbeliever; for he had then deserved the most severe expressions of that wrath by the sins which he had previously committed against the law; and this wrath *'abides upon him,'* on account of his continued unbelief, because he had been favoured with the opportunity as well as the power of being delivered from it, through faith in the Son of God. Again: *'If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins'* (John viii. 24). And, in another passage, Christ declares, *'This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent'* (John xvii. 3). The Apostle says, *'It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.'* That preaching thus described is the doctrine of the cross, *'to the Jews a stumbling block and unto the Greeks foolishness: but unto them which are called both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God'* (1 Cor. i. 21, 23, 24). This wisdom and this power are not those attributes which God employed when he formed the world, for Christ is here plainly distinguished from them; but they are the wisdom and the power revealed in that gospel which is eminently *'the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth'* (Rom. i. 16). Not only, therefore, is the cross of Christ necessary to solicit and procure redemption, but the faith of the cross is also necessary in order to obtain possession of it.

The necessity of faith in the cross does not arise from the circumstance of the doctrine of the cross being preached and propounded to men; but, since faith in Christ is necessary according to the decree of God, the doctrine of the cross is preached, that those who believe in it may be saved. Not only on account of the decree of God is faith in Christ necessary,

but it is also necessary on account of the promise made unto Christ by the Father, and according to the Covenant which was ratified between both of them. This is the word of that promise: *'Ask of me, and I will give thee the Heathen for thine inheritance'* (Psalm ii. 8). But the inheritance of Christ is the multitude of the faithful; *'the people, who, in the days of his power shall willingly come to him, in the beauties of holiness'* (Psalm cx. 3). *'In thee shall all nations be blessed; so then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham'* (Gal. iii. 8, 9). In Isaiah it is likewise declared, *'When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed. He shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hands. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by the knowledge of himself [which is faith in him] shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities'* (Isa. liii. 10, 11). Christ adduces the covenant which has been concluded with the Father, and finds a plea upon it when he says, *'Father glorify thy Son; that thy Son also may glorify thee: as thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal,'* etc., etc. (John xvii. 1–4).

Christ therefore by the decree, the promise and the covenant of the Father, has been constituted the saviour of all that believe on him, according to the declaration of the Apostle: *'And being made perfect he became the author of eternal salvation, to all them that obey him'* (Heb. v. 9). This is the reason why the Gentiles without Christ are said to be *'aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.'* Yet through faith *'those who some time were thus afar off and in darkness'* are said to be made nigh, and *'are now light in the Lord'* (Ephes. ii. 12, 13, and v. 8). It is requisite, therefore, earnestly to contend for the NECESSITY of the CHRISTIAN RELIGION, as for the altar and the anchor of our salvation, lest, after we have suffered the Son to be taken away from us and from our Faith, we should also be deprived of the Father: *'For whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father'* (1 John ii. 23). But if we in the slightest degree connive at the diminution or limitation of this NECESSITY, Christ himself will be brought into contempt among Christians, his own professing people; and will at length be totally denied and universally renounced. For it is not an affair of difficulty to take away the merit of salvation, and the power to save from Him to whom we are not compelled by any necessity to offer our oaths of allegiance. Who believes, that it is not necessary to return thanks to him who has conferred a benefit? Nay, who will not openly and confidently profess, that he is not the Author of salvation whom it is not necessary to acknowledge in that capacity. The union, therefore, of both the objects, GOD and CHRIST, must be strongly urged and enforced in our Christian Theology; nor is it to be endured that under any pretext they be totally detached and removed from each other, unless we wish Christ himself to be separated and withdrawn from us, and for us to be deprived at once of him and of our own salvation.

The present subject would require us briefly to present to your sight all and each of those parts of which the consideration of this object ought to consist, and the order in which they should be placed before our eyes; but I am unwilling to detain this most famous and crowded auditory by a more prolix oration.

Since, therefore, thus wonderfully great are the dignity, majesty, splendour and plenitude of Theology, and especially of our Christian Theology, by reason of its double object which is GOD and CHRIST, it is just and proper that all those who glory in the title of *'men formed in the image of God,'* or in the far more august title of *'Christians'* and *'men*

regenerated after the image of God and Christ, should most seriously and with ardent desire apply themselves to the knowledge of this Theology; and that they should think no object more worthy, pleasant, or useful than this, to engage their labourious attention or to awaken their energies. For what is more worthy of man, who is the image of God, than to be perpetually reflecting itself on its great archetype? What can be more pleasant, than to be continually irradiated and enlightened by the salutary beams of his Divine Pattern? What is more useful than, by such illumination, to be assimilated yet more and more to the heavenly Original? Indeed there is not any thing the knowledge of which can be more useful than this is, in the very search for it; or, when discovered, can be more profitable to the possessor. What employment is more becoming and honourable in a creature, a servant, and a son than to spend whole days and nights in obtaining a knowledge of God his Creator, his Lord, and his Father? What can be more decorous and comely in those who are redeemed by the blood of Christ, and who are sanctified by his Spirit, than diligently and constantly to meditate upon Christ, and always to carry him about in their minds, and hearts, and also on their tongues?

I am fully aware that this animal life requires the discharge of various functions; that the superintendence of them must be entrusted to those persons who will execute each of them to the common advantage of the republic; and that the knowledge necessary for the right management of all such duties, can only be acquired by continued study and much labour. But if the very persons to whom the management of these concerns has been officially committed, will acknowledge the important principle — that *in preference to all others, those things should be sought which appertain to the kingdom of God and his righteousness* (Matt. vi. 33), they will confess that their ease and leisure, their meditations and cares, should yield the precedence to this momentous study. Though David himself was the king of a numerous people, and entangled in various wars, yet he never ceased to cultivate and pursue this study in preference to all others. To the benefit which he had derived from such a judicious practice, he attributes the portion of wisdom which he had obtained, and which was *'greater than that of his enemies'* (Psalm cxix. 98), and by it also *'he had more understanding than all his teachers'* (99). The three most noble treatises which Solomon composed, are to the present day read by the Church with admiration and thanksgiving; and they testify the great advantage which the royal author obtained from a knowledge of Divine things, while he was the chief magistrate of the same people on the throne of his Father. But since, according to the opinion of a Roman Emperor, *'nothing is more difficult than to govern well'* what just cause will any one be able to offer for the neglect of a study, to which even kings could devote their time and attention. Nor is it wonderful that they acted thus; for they addicted themselves to this profitable and pleasant study by the command of God; and the same Divine command has been imposed upon all and each of us, and is equally binding. It is one of Plato's observations, that *'commonwealths would at length enjoy happiness and prosperity, either when their princes and ministers of state become philosophers, or when philosophers were chosen as ministers of state and conducted the affairs of government.'* We may transfer this sentiment with far greater justice to Theology, which is the true and only wisdom in relation to things Divine.

But these our admonitions more particularly concern you, most excellent and learned youths, who, by the wish of your parents or patrons, and at your own express desire, have been devoted, set apart, and consecrated to this study; not to cultivate it merely with diligence, for the sake of promoting your own salvation, but that you may at some future

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period be qualified to engage in the eligible occupation, (which is most pleasing to God), of teaching, instructing, and edifying the Church of the saints — *‘which is the body of Christ, and the fullness of him that filleth all in all’* (Ephes. i. 23). Let the extent and the majesty of the object, which by a deserved right engages all our powers, be constantly placed before your eyes; and suffer nothing to be accounted more glorious than to spend whole days and nights in acquiring a knowledge of God and his Christ, since true and allowable glories consists in this Divine knowledge. Reflect what great concerns those must be into which ANGELS desire to look. Consider, likewise, that you are now forming an entrance for yourselves into a communion, at least of name⁴, with these heavenly beings, and that God will in a little time call you to the employment for which you are preparing, which is one great object of my hopes and wishes concerning you.

Propose to yourselves for imitation that chosen instrument of Christ, the Apostle Paul, whom you with the greater willingness acknowledge as your teacher, and who professes himself to be inflamed with such an intense desire of knowing Christ, that he not only held every worldly thing in small estimation when put in competition with this knowledge, but also *‘suffered the loss of all things, that he might win the knowledge of Christ’* (Phil. iii. 8). Look at Timothy, his disciple, whom he felicitates on this account — *‘that from a child he had known the holy scriptures’* (2 Tim. iii. 15). You have already attained to a share of the same blessedness; and you will make further advances in it, if you determine to receive the admonitions, and to execute the charge, which that great teacher of the Gentiles addresses to his Timothy.

But this study requires not only diligence, but holiness, and a sincere desire to please God. For the object which you handle, into which you are looking, and which you wish to know, is sacred — nay, it is the holy of holies. To pollute sacred things, is highly indecent; it is desirable that the persons by whom such things are administered, should communicate to them no taint of defilement. The ancient Gentiles when about to offer sacrifice were accustomed to exclaim,

‘Far, far from hence, let the profane depart!’

This caution should be re-iterated by you, for a more solid and lawful reason when you proceed to offer sacrifices to God Most High, and to his Christ, before whom also the holy choir of angels repeat aloud that thrice-hallowed song, *‘Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!’* While you are engaged in this study, do not suffer your minds to be enticed away by other pursuits and to different objects. Exercise yourselves, continue to exercise yourselves in this, with a mind intent upon what has been proposed to you according to the design of this discourse. If you do this, in the course of a short time you will not repent of your labour; but you will make such progress in the way of the knowledge of the Lord, as will render you useful to others. For *‘the secret of the Lord, is with them that fear him’* (Psalm xxv. 14). Nay, from the very circumstance of this unremitting attention, you will be enabled to declare, that you *‘have chosen the good part which alone shall not be taken away from you’* (Luke x. 42), but which will daily receive fresh increase. Your minds will be so expanded by the knowledge of God and of his Christ, that they will hereafter become a most ample habitation for God and Christ through the Spirit. I have finished.

⁴In reference to the word *angelus*, which refers to both *an angel* and *a messenger*.

2 The Author and the End of Theology

They who are conversant with the demonstrative species of oratory, and choose for themselves any subject of praise or blame, must generally be engaged in removing from themselves, what very readily assails the minds of their auditors, a suspicion that they are impelled to speak by some immoderate feeling of love or hatred; and in showing that they are influenced rather by an approved judgment of the mind; and that they have not followed the ardent flame of their will, but the clear light of their understanding, which accords with the nature of the subject which they are discussing. But to me such a course is not necessary. For that which I have chosen for the subject of my commendation, easily removes from me all ground for such a suspicion.

I do not deny, that here indeed I yield to the feeling of love; but it is on a matter which if any one does not love, he hates himself, and perfidiously prostitutes the life of his soul. Sacred Theology is the subject whose excellence and dignity I now celebrate in this brief and unadorned Oration; and which, I am convinced, is to all of you an object of the greatest regard. Nevertheless, I wish to raise it, if possible, still higher in your esteem. This, indeed, its own merit demands; this the nature of my office requires. Nor is it any part of my study to amplify its dignity by ornaments borrowed from other objects; for to the perfection of its beauty can be added nothing extraneous that would not tend to its degradation and loss of its comeliness. I only display such ornaments as are, of themselves, its best recommendation. These are, its OBJECT, its AUTHOR, its END and its CERTAINTY. Concerning the OBJECT, we have already declared whatever the Lord had imparted; and we will now speak of its AUTHOR and its END. God grant that I may follow the guidance of this Theology in all respects, and may advance nothing except what agrees with its nature, is worthy of God and useful to you, to the glory of his name, and to the uniting of all of us together in the Lord. I pray and beseech you also, my most excellent and courteous hearers, that you will listen to me, now when I am beginning to speak on the AUTHOR, and the END of Theology, with the same degree of kindness and attention as that which you evinced when you heard my preceding discourse on its OBJECT.

Being about to treat of the AUTHOR, I will not collect together the lengthened reports of his well merited praises, for with you this is unnecessary. I will only declare

1. *Who the Author is;*
2. *In what respect he is to be considered;*
3. *Which of his properties were employed by him in the revelation of Theology; and*
4. *In what manner he has made it know.*

I. We have considered the OBJECT of Theology in regard to two particulars. And that each part of our subject may properly and exactly answer to the other, we may also

consider its Author in a two-fold respect — that of LEGAL and of EVANGELICAL Theology. In both cases, the same person is the AUTHOR and the OBJECT, and the person who reveals the doctrine is likewise its matter and argument. This is a peculiarity that belongs to no other of the numerous sciences. For although all of them may boast of God, as their Author, because he a *God of knowledge*; yet, as we have seen, they have some other object than God, which something is indeed derived from him and of his production. But they do not partake of God as their efficient cause, in an equal manner with this doctrine, which, for a particular reason, and one entirely distinct from that of the other sciences, lays claim to God, its Author. God, therefore, is the author of *legal* Theology; God and his Christ, or God in and through Christ, is the Author of that which is *evangelical*. For to this the scripture bears witness, and thus the very nature of the object requires, both of which we will separately demonstrate.

1. Scripture describes to us the Author of *legal* Theology before the fall in these words: ‘And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it’ (Gen. ii. 16, 17). A threat was added in express words, in case the man should transgress, and a promise, in the type of the tree of life, if he complied with the command. But there are two things, which, as they preceded this act of legislation, should have been previously known by man:
 - a) The nature of God, which is wise, good, just, and powerful;
 - b) The authority by which he issues his commands, the right of which rests on the act of creation.

Of both these, man had a previous knowledge, from the manifestation of God, who familiarly conversed with him, and held communication with his own image through that Spirit by whose inspiration he said, ‘This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh’ (Gen. ii. 23). The apostle has attributed the knowledge of both these things to faith, and, therefore, to the manifestation of God. He speaks of the *former* in these words: ‘For he that cometh to God must have believed [so I read it,] that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him’ (Heb. xi. 6). If a rewarder, therefore, he is a wise, good, just, powerful, and provident guardian of human affairs. Of the *latter*, he speaks thus: ‘Through faith we understand that the world was framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear’ (Heb. xi. 3). And although that is not expressly and particularly stated of the moral law, in the primeval state of man; yet when it is affirmed of the typical and ceremonial law, it must be also understood in reference to the moral law. For the typical and ceremonial law was an experiment of obedience to the moral law, that was to be tried on man, and the acknowledgement of his obligation to obey the moral law. This appears still more evidently in the repetition of the moral law by Moses after the fall, which was specially made known to the people of Israel in these words: ‘And God spake all these words’ (Exod. xx. 1), and ‘What nation is there so great that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day’ (Deut. iv. 8). But Moses set it before them according to the manifestation of God to him, and in obedience to his command, as he says: ‘The secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words

of this law' (Deut. xxix. 29). And according to Paul, 'That which may be known of God, is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them' (Rom. i. 19).

2. The same thing is evinced by the nature of the object. For since God is the Author of the universe, (and that, not by a natural and internal operation, but by one that is voluntary and external, and that imparts to the work as much as he chooses of his own, and as much as the *nothing*, from which it is produced, will permit), his excellence and dignity must necessarily far exceed the capacity of the universe, and, for the same reason, that of man. On this account, he is said in scripture, 'to dwell in the light unto which no man can approach' (1 Tim. vi. 16), which strains even the most acute sight of any creature, by a brightness so great and dazzling, that the eye is blunted and overpowered, and would soon be blinded unless God, by some admirable process of attempering that blaze of light, should offer himself to the view of his creatures: This is the very manifestation before which darkness is said to have fixed its habitation.

Nor is he himself alone inaccessible, but, as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are his ways higher than our ways, and his thoughts than our thoughts' (Isa. lv. 9). The actions of God are called 'the ways of God,' and the creation especially is called 'the beginning of the way of God' (Prov. 8), by which God began, as it were, to arise and to go forth from the throne of his majesty. Those actions, therefore, could not have been made known and understood, in the manner in which it is allowable to know and understand them, except by the revelation of God. This was also indicated before, in the term '*faith*' which the apostle employed. But the thoughts of God, and his will, (both that will which he wishes to be done by us, and that which he has resolved to do concerning us), are of free disposition, which is determined by the divine power and liberty inherent in himself; and since he has, in all this, called in the aid of no counselor, those thoughts and that will are of necessity 'unsearchable and past finding out' (Rom. xi. 33). Of these, Legal Theology consists; and as they could not be known before the revelation of them proceeded from God, it is evidently proved that God is its Author.

To this truth all nations and people assent. What compelled Radamanthus and Minos, those most equitable kings of Crete, to enter the dark cave of Jupiter, and pretend that the laws which they had promulgated among their subjects, were brought from that cave, at the inspiration of Deity? It was because they knew those laws would not meet with general reception, unless they were believed to have been divinely communicated. Before Lycurgus began the work of legislation for his Lacedaemonians, imitating the example of those two kings, he went to Apollo at Delphos, that he might, on his return, confer on his laws the highest recommendation by means of the authority of the Delphic Oracle. To induce the ferocious minds of the Roman people to submit to religion, Numa Pompilius feigned that he had nocturnal conferences with the goddess Aegeria. These were positive and evident testimonies of a notion which had preoccupied the minds of men, 'that no religion except one of divine origin, and deriving its principles from heaven, deserved to be received.' Such a truth they considered this, 'that no one could know God, or any thing concerning God, except through God himself.'

II. Let us now look at EVANGELICAL THEOLOGY. We have made the Author of it to be Christ and God, at the command of the same scriptures as those which establish the

divine claims of Legal Theology, and because the nature of the object requires it with the greater justice, in proportion as that object is the more deeply hidden in the abyss of the divine wisdom, and as the human mind is the more closely surrounded and enveloped with the shades of ignorance.

1. Exceedingly numerous are the passages of scripture which serve to aid and strengthen us in this opinion. We will enumerate a few of them:

- *First*, those which ascribe the manifestation of this doctrine to GOD THE FATHER;
- *Then*, those which ascribe it to CHRIST.

‘But we’ says the apostle, ‘speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory. But God hath revealed it unto us by his Spirit’ (1 Cor. ii. 7, 10). The same apostle says, ‘The gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God’ (Rom. xvi. 25, 26). When Peter made a correct and just confession of Christ, it was said to him by the saviour, ‘Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven’ (Matt. xvi. 17). John the Baptist attributed the same to Christ, saying, ‘The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared God to us’ (John i. 18). Christ also ascribed this manifestation to himself in these words: ‘No man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him’ (Matt. xi. 17). And, in another place, ‘I have manifested thy name unto the men whom thou gavest me out of the world, and they have believed that thou didst send me’ (John xvii. 6, 8).

2. Let us consider the necessity of this manifestation from the nature of its Object.

This is indicated by Christ when speaking of Evangelical Theology, in these words: ‘No man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son’ (Matt. xi. 27). Therefore no man can reveal the Father or the Son, and yet in the knowledge of them are comprised the glad tidings of the gospel. The Baptist is an assertor of the necessity of this manifestation when he declares, that ‘No man hath seen God at any time’ (John i. 18). It is *the wisdom* belonging to this Theology, which is said by the Apostle to be ‘hidden in a mystery, which none of the princes of this world knew, and which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man’ (1 Cor. ii. 7, 8, 9). It does not come within the cognizance of the understanding, and is not mixed up, as it were, with the first notions or ideas impressed on the mind at the period of its creation; it is not acquired in conversation or reasoning; but it is made known ‘in the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth.’ To this Theology belongs ‘that manifold wisdom of God which must be made known by the Church unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places’ (Ephes. iii. 10), otherwise it would remain unknown even to the angels themselves. What! Are the deep things of God ‘which no man knoweth but the Spirit of God which is in himself,’ explained by this doctrine? Does it also unfold ‘the length and breadth, and depth and height’ of the wisdom of God? As the Apostle speaks in another passage, in a tone of the most impassioned admiration, and almost at a loss what

words to employ in expressing the fullness of this Theology, in which are proposed, as objects of discovery, ‘the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, and the peace of God which passeth all understanding’ (Ephes. iii. 18). From these passages it most evidently appears, that the Object of Evangelical Theology must have been revealed by God and Christ, or it must otherwise have remained hidden and surrounded by perpetual darkness; or, (which is the same thing), that Evangelical Theology would not have come within the range of our knowledge, and, on that account, as a necessary consequence, there could have been none at all.

If it be an agreeable occupation to any person, (and such it must always prove), to look more methodically and distinctly through each part, let him cast the eyes of his mind on those *properties* of the Divine Nature which this Theology displays, clothed in their own appropriate mode; let him consider those action of God which this doctrine brings to light, and that will of God which he has revealed in his gospel: When he has done this, (and of much more than this the subject is worthy), he will more distinctly understand the necessity of the Divine manifestation.

If any one would adopt a compendious method, let him only contemplate Christ; and when he has diligently observed that admirable union of the WORD and FLESH, his investiture into office and the manner in which its duties were executed; when he has at the same time reflected, that the whole of these arrangements and proceedings are in consequence of the voluntary economy, regulation, and free dispensation of God; he cannot avoid professing openly, that the knowledge of all these things could not have been obtained except by means of the revelation of God and Christ.

But lest any one should take occasion, from the remarks which we have now made, to entertain an unjust suspicion or error, as though God the Father alone, to the exclusion of the Son, were the Author of the legal doctrine, and the Father through the Son were the Author of the Evangelical doctrine — a few observations shall be added, that may serve to solve this difficulty, and further to illustrate the matter of our discourse. As God by his WORD, (which is his own Son), and by his SPIRIT, created all things, and man according to the image of himself, so it is likewise certain, that no intercourse can take place between him and man, without the agency of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. How is this possible, since the *ad extra* works of the Deity are indivisible, and when the order of operation *ad extra* is the same as the order of procession *ad intra*? We do not, therefore, by any means exclude the Son as the Word of the Father, and the Holy Ghost who is ‘the Spirit of Prophecy,’ from efficiency in this revelation.

But there is another consideration in the manifestation of the gospel, not indeed with respect to the persons testifying, but in regard to the manner in which they come to be considered. For the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, have not only a natural relation among themselves, but another likewise which derives its origin from the will; yet the latter entirely agrees with the natural relation that subsists among them. There is an internal procession in the persons; and there is an external one, which is called in the scriptures and in the writings of the Father, by the name of ‘Mission’ or ‘sending.’ To the latter mode of procession, special regard must be had in this revelation. For the Father manifests the Gospel through his Son and Spirit.

1. He manifests it through the Son,

- as to his being, sent for the purpose of performing the office of Mediator between God and sinful men;
 - as to his being the Word made flesh, and God manifest in the flesh; and
 - as to his having died, and to his being raised again to life, whether that was done in reality, or only in the decree and foreknowledge of God.
2. He also manifests it through his Spirit, as to his being the Spirit of Christ, whom he asked of his Father by his passion and his death, and whom he obtained when he was raised from the dead, and placed at the right hand of the Father.

I think you will understand the distinction which I imagine to be here employed: I will afford you an opportunity to examine and prove it, by adducing the clearest passages of scripture to aid us in confirming it.

1. ‘All things,’ said Christ, ‘are delivered to me of my Father; and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son’ (Matt. xi. 27). They were *delivered* by the Father, to him as the Mediator, ‘in whom it was his pleasure that all fullness should dwell’ (Col. i. 19. See also ii. 9). In the same sense must be understood what Christ says in John: ‘I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me;’ for it is subjoined, ‘and they have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me’ (xvii. 8). From hence it appears, that the Father had given those words to him as the Mediator: on which account he says, in another place, ‘He whom God hath sent, speaketh the words of God’ (John iii. 34). With this the saying of the Baptist agrees, ‘The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ’ (John i. 17). But in reference to his being opposed to Moses, who accuses and condemns sinners, Christ is considered as the Mediator between God and sinners. The following passage tends to the same point: ‘No man hath seen God at any time: the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father,’ [that is, ‘admitted,’ in his capacity of Mediator, to the intimate and confidential view and knowledge of his Father’s secrets,] ‘he hath declared him’ (John i. 18). ‘For the Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand’ (John iii. 35); and among the things thus given, was the doctrine of the gospel, which he was to expound and declare to others, by the command of God the Father. And in every revelation which has been made to us through Christ, that expression which occurs in the beginning of the Apocalypse of St John holds good and is of the greatest validity: ‘The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants.’ God has therefore manifested Evangelical Theology through his Son, in reference to his being sent forth by the Father, to execute among men, and in his name, the office of Mediator.
2. OF THE HOLY SPIRIT the same scripture testifies, that, as the Spirit of Christ the Mediator, who is the head of his church, he has revealed the Gospel. ‘Christ, by the Spirit,’ says Peter, ‘went and preached to the spirits in prison’ (1 Pet. iii. 19). And what did he preach? Repentance. This therefore, was done through his Spirit, in his capacity of Mediator, For, in this respect alone, the Spirit of God exhorts to repentance. This appears more clearly from the Same Apostle: ‘Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that

should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.' And this was the Spirit of Christ in his character of Mediator and head of the Church, which the very object of the testimony foretold by him sufficiently evinces. A succeeding passage excludes all doubt; for the gospel is said in it, to be preached by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven' (1 Pet. i. 12). For he was *sent down* by Christ when he was elevated at the right hand of God, as it is mentioned in the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles; which passage also makes for our purpose, and on that account deserves to have its just meaning here appreciated. This is its phraseology, 'Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear' (Acts ii. 33). For it was by the Spirit that the Apostles prophesied and spoke in divers languages. These passages might suffice; but I cannot omit that most noble sentence spoken by Christ to console the minds of his disciples, who were grieving on account of his departure, 'If I go not away the Comforter [or rather, the Advocate, who shall, in my place, discharge the vicarious office,' as Tertullian expresses himself;] If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come he will reprove the world, etc. (John xvi. 7, 8). He shall glorify me: For he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.' Christ, therefore, as Mediator, 'will send him,' and he 'will receive of that which belongs to Christ the Mediator. He shall glorify Christ,' as constituted by God the Mediator and the Head of the Church; and he shall glorify him with that glory, which, according to the seventeenth chapter of St John's Gospel, Christ thought it necessary to ask of his Father. That passage brings another to my recollection, which may be called its parallel in merit: John says, 'The Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified' (vii. 39). This remark was not to be understood of the person of the Spirit, but of his gifts, and especially that of prophecy. But Christ was glorified in quality of Mediator: and in that glorified capacity he sends the Holy Ghost; therefore, the Holy Spirit was sent by Christ as the Mediator. On this account also, the Spirit of Christ the Mediator is the Author of Evangelical Prophecy. But the Holy Ghost was sent, even before the glorification of Christ, to reveal the Gospel. The existing state of the Church required it at that period, and the Holy Spirit was sent to meet that necessity. 'Christ is likewise the same yesterday, today and forever' (Heb. xiii. 8). He was also 'slain from the foundation of the world' (Rev. xiii. 8); and was, therefore, at that same time raised again and glorified; but this was all in the decree and fore-knowledge of God. To make it evident, however, that God has never sent the Holy Spirit to the Church, except through the agency of Christ the Mediator, and in regard to him, God deferred that plentiful and exuberant effusion of his most copious gifts, until Christ, after his exaltation to heaven, should send them down in a communication of the greatest abundance. Thus he testified by a clear and evident proof, that he had formerly poured out the gifts of the Spirit upon the Church, by the same person, as he by whom, (when through his ascension the dense and overcharged cloud of water above the heavens had been disparted), he poured down the most plentiful showers of his graces, inundating and over spreading the whole body of the Church.

III. But the revelation of Evangelical Theology is attributed to Christ in regard to his Mediatorship, and to the Holy Ghost in regard to his being the appointed substitute and Advocate of Christ the Mediator. This is done most consistently and for a very just reason, both because Christ, as Mediator, is placed for the ground-work of this doctrine, and because in the duty of mediation those actions were to be performed, those sufferings endured, and those blessings asked and obtained, which complete a goodly portion of the matters that are disclosed in the gospel of Christ. No wonder, therefore, that Christ in this respect, (in which he is himself the object of the gospel), should likewise be the revealer of it, and the person who asks and procures all evangelical graces, and who is at once the Lord of them and the communicator. And since the Spirit of Christ, our Mediator and our head, is the bond of our union with Christ, from which we also obtain communion with Christ, and a participation in all his blessings — it is just and reasonable, that, in the respect which we have just mentioned, Christ should reveal to our minds, and seal upon our hearts, the evangelical charter and evidence of *that faith by which he dwelleth in our hearts*. The consideration of this matter exhibits to us

1. the cause why it is possible for God to restrain himself with such great forbearance, patience, and long suffering, until the gospel is obeyed by those to whom it is preached; and
2. it affords great consolation to our ignorance and infirmities.

I think, my hearers, you perceive that this single view adds no small degree of dignity to our Evangelical Theology, beside that which it possesses from the common consideration of its Author. If we may be allowed further to consider what *wisdom, goodness* and *power* God expended when he instituted and revealed this Theology, it will give great importance to our proposition. Indeed, all kinds of sciences have their origin in the wisdom of God, and are communicated to men by his goodness and power. But, if it be his right, (as it undoubtedly is), to appoint gradations in the external exercise of his divine properties, we shall say, that all other sciences except this, have arisen from an *inferior wisdom of God*, and have been revealed by *a less degree of goodness and power*. It is proper to estimate this matter according to the excellence of its object. As the *wisdom* of God, by which he knows himself, is greater than that by which he knows other things; so the wisdom employed by him in the manifestation of himself is greater than that employed in the manifestation of other things. The *goodness* by which he permits himself to be known and acknowledged by man as his Chief Good, is greater than that by which he imparts the knowledge of other things. The power also, by which nature is raised to the knowledge of supernatural things, is greater than that by which it is brought to investigate things that are of the same species and origin with itself. Therefore, although all the sciences may boast of God as their author, yet in these particulars, Theology, soaring above the whole, leaves them at an immense distance.

But as this consideration raises the dignity of Theology, on the whole far above all other sciences, so it likewise demonstrates that *Evangelical* far surpasses *Legal* Theology; on which point we may be allowed, with your good leave, to dwell a little. The wisdom, goodness and power, by which God made man, after his own image, to consist of a rational soul and a body, are great, and constitute the claims to precedence on the part of Legal Theology. But the wisdom, goodness and power, by which ‘the Word was made flesh’ (John i. 14), and God was manifest in the flesh’ (1 Tim. iii. 16), and by which he

‘who was in the form of God took upon himself the form of a servant’ (Phil. ii. 7), are still greater, and they are the claims by which Evangelical Theology asserts its right to precedence. The wisdom and goodness, by the operation of which the power of God has been revealed to salvation, are great; but that by which is revealed ‘the power of God to salvation to every one that believeth’ (Rom. ii. 16), far exceeds it. Great indeed are the wisdom and goodness by which the righteousness of God by the law is made manifest,’ and by which the justification of the law was ascribed of debt to perfect obedience; but they are infinitely surpassed by the wisdom and goodness through which the righteousness of God by faith is manifested, and through which it is determined that the man is justified ‘that worketh not, but [being a sinner,] believeth on him who justifieth the ungodly,’ according to the most glorious riches of his grace. Conspicuous and excellent were the wisdom and goodness which appointed the manner of union with God in legal righteousness, performed out of conformity to the image of God, after which man was created. But a solemn and substantial triumph is achieved through faith in Christ’s blood by the wisdom and goodness, which, having devised and executed the wonderful method of qualifying justice and mercy, appoint the manner of union in Christ., and in his righteousness, ‘who is the brightness of his Father’s glory and the express image of his person’ (Heb. i. 3). Lastly, it is the wisdom, goodness and power, which, out of the thickest darkness of ignorance brought forth the marvelous light of the gospel; which, from an infinite multitude of sins, brought in everlasting righteousness; and which, from death and the depths of hell, ‘brought life and immortality to light.’ The wisdom, goodness and power which have produced these effects, exceed those in which the light that is added to light, the righteousness that is rewarded by a due recompense, and the animal life that is regulated according to godliness by the command of the law, are each of them swallowed up and consummated in that which is spiritual and eternal.

A deeper consideration of this matter almost compels me to adopt a more confident daring, and to give to the wisdom, goodness and power of God, which are unfolded in Legal Theology, the title of ‘NATURAL,’ and as in some sense the beginning of the going forth of God towards his image, which is man, and a commencement of Divine intercourse with him. The others, which are manifested in the gospel, I fearlessly call ‘SUPERNATURAL wisdom, power and goodness,’ and ‘the extreme point and the perfect completion of all revelation;’ because in the manifestation of the latter, God appears to have excelled himself, and to have unfolded every one of his blessings. Admirable was the kindness of God, and most stupendous his condescension in admitting man to the most intimate communion with himself — a privilege full of grace and mercy, after his sins had rendered him unworthy of having the establishment of such an intercourse. But this was required by the unhappy and miserable condition of man, who through his greater unworthiness had become the more indigent, through his deeper blindness required illumination by a stronger light, through his more grievous wickedness demanded reformation by means of a more extensive goodness, and who, the weaker he had become, needed a stronger exertion of power for his restoration and establishment. It is also a happy circumstance, that no aberration of ours can be so great, as to prevent God from recalling us into the good way; no fall so deep, as to disable him from raising us up and causing us to stand erect; and no evil of ours can be of such magnitude, as to prove a difficult conquest to his goodness, provided it be his pleasure to put the whole of it in motion; and this he will actually do, provided we suffer our ignorance and infirmities to be corrected by his light and power,

2 The Author and the End of Theology

and our wickedness to be subdued by his goodness.

IV. We have seen that,

1. *God is the Author of Legal Theology; and God and his Christ, that of Evangelical Theology.*

We have seen at the same time

2. *in what respect God and Christ are to be viewed in making known this revelation, and*
3. *according to what properties of the Divine Nature of both of them it has been perfected.*

We will now just glance at the MANNER. The manner of the Divine manifestation appears to be *threefold*, according to the three instruments or organs of our capacity.

1. THE EXTERNAL SENSES,
2. THE INWARD FANCY OR IMAGINATION, AND
3. THE MIND OR UNDERSTANDING.

God sometimes reveals himself and his will by an image or representation offered to the external sight, or through an audible speech or discourse addressed to the ear. Sometimes he introduces himself by the same method to the imagination; and sometimes he addresses the mind in a manner ineffable, which is called INSPIRATION. Of all these modes scripture most clearly supplies us with luminous examples. But time will not permit me to be detained in enumerating them, lest I should appear to be yet more tedious to this most accomplished assembly.

THE END OF THEOLOGY

I. We have been engaged in viewing the AUTHOR; let us now advert to the END. This is the more eminent and divine according to the greater excellence of that matter of which it is the end. In that light, therefore, this science is far more illustrious and transcendent than all others; because it alone has a relation to the life that is spiritual and supernatural, and has an END beyond the boundaries of the present life: while all other sciences have respect to this animal life, and each has an END proposed to itself, extending from the center of this earthly life and included within its circumference. Of this science, then, that may be truly said which the poet declared concerning his wise friend, ‘For those things alone he feels any relish, the rest like shadows fly.’ I repeat it, ‘they fly away,’ unless they be referred to this science, and firmly fix their foot upon it and be at rest. But the same person who is the AUTHOR and OBJECT, is also the END of Theology. The very proportion and analogy of these things make such a connection requisite. For since the Author is the First and the Chief Being, it is of necessity that he be the First and Chief Good. He is, therefore, the extreme End of all things. And since He, the Chief Being and the Chief Good, subjects, lowers and spreads himself out, as an object to some power or faculty of a rational creature, that by its action or motion it may be employed and occupied concerning him, nay, that it may in a sense be united with him;

it cannot possibly be, that the creature, after having performed its part respecting that object, should fly beyond it and extend itself further for the sake of acquiring a greater good. It is, therefore, of necessity that it restrain itself within him, not only as within a boundary beyond which it is impossible for it to pass on account of the infinitude of the object and on account of its own importance, but also as within its END and its GOOD, beyond which, because they are both the CHIEF in degree, it neither wishes nor is capable of desiring anything; provided this object be united with it as far as the capacity of the creature will admit. God is, therefore, the End of our Theology, proposed by God himself, in the acts prescribed in it; intended by man in the performance of those actions, and to be bestowed by God, after man shall have piously and religiously performed his duty. But because the chief good was not placed in the promise of it, nor in the desire of obtaining it, but in actually receiving it, the end of Theology may with the utmost propriety be called THE UNION OF GOD WITH MAN.

But it is not an ESSENTIAL union, as if two essences, (for instance that of God and man), were compacted together or joined into one, or as that by which man might himself be absorbed into God. The former of these modes of union is prohibited by the very nature of the things so united, and the latter is rejected by the nature of the union. Neither is it a *formal* union, as if God by that union might be made in the form of man, like a Spirit united to a body imparting to it life and motion, and acting upon it at pleasure, although, by dwelling in the body, it should confer on man the gift of life eternal. But it is an *objective union* by which God, through the agency of his pre-eminent and most faithful faculties and actions, (all of which he wholly occupies and completely fills), gives such convincing proofs of himself to man, that God may then be said to be 'all in all' (1 Cor. xv. 21). This union is *immediate*, and without any bond that is different to the limits themselves. For God unites himself to the understanding and to the will of his creature, by means of himself alone, and without the intervention of image, species or appearance. This is what the nature of this last and supreme union requires, as being that in which consists the Chief Good of a rational creature, which cannot find rest except in the greatest union of itself with God. But by this union, the understanding beholds in the clearest vision, and as if 'face to face,' God himself, and all his goodness and incomparable beauty. And because a good of such magnitude and known by the clearest vision cannot fail of being loved on its own account; from this very consideration the will embraces it with a more intense love, in proportion to the greater degree of knowledge of it which the mind has obtained.

But here a double difficulty presents itself, which must first be removed, in order that our feet may afterwards without stumbling run along a path that will then appear smooth and to have been for some time well trodden.

1. The one is, 'How can it be that the eye of the human understanding does not become dim and beclouded when an object of such transcendent light is presented to it?'
2. The other is, 'How can the understanding, although its eye may not be dim and blinded, receive and contain that object in such great measure and proportion?'

The cause of the first is, that the light exhibits itself to the understanding not in the infinity of its own nature, but in a form that is qualified and attempered. And to what is it thus accommodated? Is it not to the understanding? Undoubtedly, to the understanding; but not according to the capacity which it possessed before the union: otherwise it could

not receive and contain as much as would suffice to fill it and make it happy. But it is attempered according to the measure of its extension and enlargement, to admit of which the understanding is exquisitely formed, if it be enlightened and irradiated by the gracious and glorious shining of the light accommodated to that expansion. If it be thus enlightened, the eye of the understanding will not be overpowered and become dim, and it will receive that object in such a vast proportion as will most abundantly suffice to make man completely happy. This is a solution for both these difficulties. But an extension of the understanding will be followed by an enlargement of the will, either from a proper and adequate object offered to it, and accommodated to the same rule; or, (which I prefer), from the native agreement of the will and understanding, and the analogy implanted in both of them, according to which the understanding extends itself to acts of volition, in the very proportion of its understanding and knowledge. In this act of the mind and will in seeing a present God, in loving him, and therefore in the enjoyment of him, the salvation of man and his perfect happiness consist. To which is added, conformation of our body itself to this glorious state of soul, which, whether it be effected by the immediate action of God on the body, or by means of an agency resulting from the action of the soul on the body, it is neither necessary for us here to inquire, nor at this time to discover. From hence also arises and shines forth illustriously the chief and infinite glory of God, far surpassing all other glory, that he has displayed in every preceding function which he administered. For since that action is truly great and glorious which is good, and since goodness alone obtains the title of 'greatness,' according to that elegant saying, *το εὖ μέγα*,¹ then indeed the best action of God is the greatest and the most glorious. But that is the best action by which he unites himself immediately to the creature and affords himself to be seen, loved and enjoyed in such an abundant measure as agrees with the creature dilated and expanded to that degree which we have mentioned. This is, therefore, the most glorious of God's actions. Wherefore the end of Theology is *the union of God with man*, to the salvation of the one and the glory of the other; and to the glory which he declares by his act, not that glory which man ascribes to God when he is united to him. Yet it cannot be otherwise, than that man should be incited to sing forever the high praises of God, when he beholds and enjoys such large and overpowering goodness.

But the observations we have hitherto made on the END of Theology, were accommodated to the manner of that which is *legal*. We must now consider the END as it is proposed to Evangelical Theology. The END of this is

1. God and Christ,
2. the union of man with both of them, and
3. the sight and fruition of both, to the glory of both Christ and God.

On each of these particulars we have some remarks to make from the scriptures, and which most appropriately agree with, and are peculiar to, the Evangelical doctrine.

But before we enter upon these remarks, we must shew that the salvation of man, to the glory of Christ himself, consists also in the love, the sight, and the fruition of Christ. There is a passage in the fifteenth chapter of the first Epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Corinthians, which imposes this necessity upon us, because it appears to exclude Christ from this consideration. For in that place the apostle says, 'When Christ shall have

¹'That which is good is great'

delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father, then the Son also himself shall be subject unto him, that God may be all in all' (1 Cor. xv. 24). From this passage three difficulties are raised, which must be removed by an appropriate explanation. They are these:

1. 'If Christ shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father,' he will no longer reign himself in person.'
2. 'If he shall be subject to the Father,' he will no more preside over his Church:' and
3. 'If God shall be all in all,' then our salvation is not placed in the union, sight and fruition of him.'

I will proceed to give a separate answer to each of these objections. The kingdom of Christ embraces two objects: The Mediatorial function of the regal office, and the Regal glory: The royal *function*, will be laid aside, because there will then be no necessity or use for it, but the royal *glory* will remain because it was obtained by the acts of the Mediator, and was conferred on him by the Father according to covenant. The same thing is declared by the expression 'shall be subject,' which here signifies nothing more than the laying aside of the super-eminent power which Christ had received from the Father, and which he had, as the Father's Vicegerent, administered at the pleasure of his own will: And yet, when he has laid down this power, he will remain, as we shall see, the head and the husband of his Church. That sentence has a similar tendency in which it is said, 'God shall be ALL IN ALL.' For it takes away even the intermediate and deputed administration of the creatures which God is accustomed to use in the communication of his benefits; and it indicates that God will likewise immediately from himself communicate his own good, even himself to his creatures. Therefore, on the authority of this passage, nothing is taken away from Christ which we have been wishful to attribute to him in this discourse according to the scriptures.

This we will now shew by some plain and apposite passages. Christ promises an union with himself in these words, 'If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him' (John xiv. 23). Here is a promise of good: therefore the good of the Church is likewise placed in union with Christ; and an *abode* is promised, not admitting of termination by the bounds of this life, but which will continue for ever, and shall at length, when this short life is ended, be consummated in heaven. In reference to this, the Apostle says, 'I desire to depart and to be with Christ;' and Christ himself says, 'I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am' (John xvii. 24). John says, that the end of his gospel is, 'that our fellowship may be with the Father and the Son' (1 John i. 3); in which fellowship eternal life must necessarily consist, since in another place he explains the same end in these words, 'But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ: and that, believing, ye might have life through his name' (John xx. 31). But from the meaning of the same Apostle, it appears, that this fellowship has an union antecedent to itself. These are his words, 'If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father' (1 John ii. 24). What! Shall the union between Christ and his Church cease at a period when he shall place before his glorious sight his spouse sanctified to himself by his own blood? Far be the idea from us! For the union, which had commenced here on earth, will then at length be consummated and perfected.

If any one entertain doubts concerning the vision of Christ, let him listen to Christ in this declaration: 'He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father; and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him' (John xiv. 21). Will he thus disclose himself in this world only? Let us again hear Christ when he intercedes with the Father for the faithful: 'Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world' (John xvii. 34) Christ, therefore, promises to his followers the sight of his glory, as something salutary to them; and his Father is intreated to grant this favour. The same truth is confirmed by John when he says, 'Then we shall see him as he is' (1 John iii. 2). This passage may without any impropriety be understood of Christ, and yet not to the exclusion of God the Father. But what do we more distinctly desire than that Christ may become, what it is said he will be, 'the light' that shall enlighten the celestial city, and in whose light 'the nations shall walk?' (Rev. xxi. 23, 24).

Although the fruition of Christ is sufficiently established by the same passages as those by which the sight of him is confirmed, yet we will ratify it by two or three others. Since eternal felicity is called by the name of 'the supper of the lamb,' and is emphatically described by this term, 'the marriage of the Lamb,' I think it is taught with adequate clearness in these expressions, that happiness consists in the fruition or enjoyment of the Lamb. But the apostle, in his apocalypse, has ascribed both these epithets to Christ, by saying, 'Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him, for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready' (Rev. xix. 7), and a little afterwards, he says, 'Blessed are they which are called to the marriage-supper of the Lamb' (verse 9). It remains for us to treat on the glory of Christ, which is inculcated in these numerous passages of Scripture in which it is stated that 'he sits with the Father on his throne,' and is adored and glorified both by angels and by men in heaven.

Having finished the proof of those expressions, the truth of which we engaged to demonstrate, we will now proceed to fulfill our promise of explanation, and to show that all and each of these benefits descend to us in a peculiar and more excellent manner, from *Evangelical Theology*, than they could have done from that which is *Legal*, if by it we could really have been made alive.

II. And, that we may, in the first place, dispatch the subject of UNION, let the brief remarks respecting marriage which we have just made, be brought again to our remembrance. For that word more appropriately honours this union, and adorns it with a double and remarkable privilege; one part of which consists of a deeper combination, the other of a more glorious title. The Scripture speaks thus of the deeper combination; 'And the two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church!' (Ephes. v. 31, 32). It will therefore be a connubial tie that will unite Christ with the church. The espousals of the church on earth are contracted by the agency of the bridesmen of Christ, who are the prophets, the apostles, and their successors, and particularly the Holy Ghost, who is in this affair a mediator and arbitrator. The consummation will then follow, when Christ will introduce his spouse into his bride-chamber. From such an union as this, there arises, not only a communion of blessings, but a previous communion of the persons themselves; from which the possession of blessings is likewise assigned, by a more glorious title, to her who is united in the bonds of marriage. The church comes

into a participation not only of the blessings of Christ, but also of his title. For, being the wife of the King, she enjoys it as a right due to her to be called QUEEN; which dignified appellation the scripture does not withhold from her. 'Upon thy right hand stands the Queen in gold of Ophir' (Psalm xlv. 9). 'There are three-score queens, and four-score concubines, and virgins without number. 'My dove, my undefiled, is but one; she is the only one of her mother, she is the choice one of her that bare her. The daughter saw her, and blessed her; yea, the queens and the concubines; and they praised her' (Song of Sol. vi. 8, 9). The church could not have been eligible to the high honour of such an union, unless Christ has been made her beloved, her brother, sucking the breasts of the same mother' (Cant. 8). But there would have been no necessity for this union, 'if righteousness and salvation had come to us by the law.' That was, therefore, a happy necessity, which, out of compassion to the emergency of our wretched condition, the divine condescension improved to our benefit, and filled with such a plenitude of dignity! But the manner of this our union with Christ is no small addition to that union which is about to take place between us and God the Father. This will be evident to any one who considers what and how great is the bond of mutual union between Christ and the Father.

III. If we turn our attention to *sight* or *vision*, we shall meet with two remarkable characters which are peculiar to Evangelical Theology.

1. In the first place, the glory of God, as if accumulated and concentrated together into one body, will be presented to our view in Christ Jesus; which glory would otherwise have been dispersed throughout the most spacious courts of a 'heaven immense;' much in the same manner as the light, which had been created on the first day, and equally spread through the whole hemisphere, was on the fourth day collected, united and compacted together into one body, and offered to the eyes as a most conspicuous and shining object. In reference to this, it is said in the Apocalypse, that the heavenly Jerusalem 'had no need of the sun, neither of the moon; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb will be the future light thereof' (Rev. xxi. 23), as a vehicle by which this most delightful glory may diffuse itself into immensity.
2. We shall then not only contemplate, in God himself, the most excellent properties of his nature, but shall also perceive that all of them have been employed in and devoted to the procuring of this good for us, which we now possess in hope, but which we shall in reality then possess by means of this union and open vision.

The excellence, therefore, of this vision far exceeds that which could have been by the law; and from this source arises a fruition of greater abundance and more delicious sweetness. For, as the light in the sun is brighter than that in the stars, so is the sight of the sun, when the human eye is capable of bearing it, more grateful and acceptable, and the enjoyment of it is far more pleasant. From such a view of the Divine attributes, the most delicious sweetness of fruition will seem to be doubled. For the *first* delight will arise from the contemplation of properties so excellent; *the other* from the consideration of that immeasurable condescension by which it has pleased God to unfold all those his properties, and the whole of those blessings which he possesses in the exhaustless and immeasurable treasury of his riches, and to give this explanation, that he may procure salvation for man and may impart it to his most miserable creature. This will then be seen

in as strong a light, as if the whole of that which is essentially God appeared to exist for the sake of man alone, and for his solo benefit. There is also the addition of this peculiarity concerning it: 'Jesus Christ shall change our vile body, [the body of our humiliation,] that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body (Phil. iii. 21); and as we have borne the image of the earthy [Adam], we shall also bear the image of the heavenly' (1 Cor. xv. 49). Hence it is, that all things are said to be made new in Christ Jesus (2 Cor. v. 17); and we are described in the scriptures as 'looking, according to his promise, for new heavens and a new earth (2 Pet. iii. 13), and a new name written on a white stone (Rev. ii. 17), the new name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is the new Jerusalem (Rev. iii. 12), and they shall sing a new song to God and his Christ forever' (Rev. v. 9).

Who does not now see, how greatly the felicity prepared for us by Christ, and offered to us through Evangelical Theology excels that which would have come to us by 'the righteousness of the law,' if indeed it had been possible for us to fulfill it? We should in that case have been similar to the elect angels; but now we shall be their superiors, if I be permitted to make such a declaration, to the praise of Christ and our God, in this celebrated Hall, and before an assembly among whom we have some of those most blessed spirits themselves as spectators. They now enjoy union with God and Christ, and will probably be more closely united to both of them at the time of the 'restitution of all things.' But there will be nothing between the two parties similar to that CONJUGAL BOND which unites us, and in which we may be permitted to glory. They will behold God himself 'face to face,' and will contemplate the most eminent properties of his nature; but they will see some among those properties devoted to the purpose of man's salvation, which God has not unfolded for their benefit, because that was not necessary; and which he would not have unfolded, even if it had been necessary. These things they will see, but they will not be moved by envy; it will rather be a subject of admiration and wonder to them, that God, the Creator of both orders, conferred on man, (who was inferior to them in nature), that dignity which he had of old denied to the spirits that partook with themselves of the same nature. They will behold Christ, that most brilliant and shining light of the city of the living God, of which they also are inhabitants: and, from this very circumstance their happiness will be rendered more illustrious through Christ. Christ 'took not on him the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham' (Heb. ii. 16); to whom also, in that assumed nature, they will present adoration and honour, at the command of God, when he introduces his First begotten into the world to come. Of that future world, and of its blessings, they also will be partakers: but 'it is not put in subjection to them' (Heb. ii. 5), but to CHRIST and his BRETHREN, who are partakers of the same nature, and are sanctified by himself. A malignant spirit, yet of the same order as the angels, had hurled against God the crimes of *falsehood* and *envy*. But we see how signally God in Christ and in the salvation procured by him, has repelled both these accusations from himself. The *falsehood* intimated an unwillingness on the part of God that man should be reconciled to him, except by the intervention of the death of his Son. His *envy* was excited, because God had raised man, not only to the angelical happiness, (to which even that impure one would have attained had 'he kept his first estate'), but to a state of blessedness far superior to that of angels.

That I may not be yet more prolix, I leave it as a subject of reflection to the devoted piety of your private meditations, most accomplished auditors, to estimate the vast and amazing greatness of the glory of God which has here manifested itself, and to calculate

the glory due from us to him for such transcendent goodness.

In the mean time, let all of us, however great our number, consider with a devout and attentive mind, what duty is required of us by this doctrine, which having received its manifestation from God and Christ, plainly and fully announces to us such a great salvation, and to the participation of which we are most graciously invited. It requires to be received, understood, believed, and fulfilled, in deed and in reality. *It is worthy of all acceptance*, on account of its AUTHOR; and necessary to be received on account of its END.

1. Being delivered by so great an AUTHOR, it is worthy to be received with a humble and submissive mind; to have much diligence and care bestowed on a knowledge and perception of it; and not to be laid aside from the hand, the mind, or the heart, until we shall have ‘obtained the END of it — THE SALVATION OF OUR SOULS.’ Why should this be done? Shall the Holy God open his mouth, and our ears remain stopped? Shall our Heavenly Master be willing to communicate instruction, and we refuse to learn? Shall he desire to inspire our hearts with the knowledge of his Divine truth, and we, by closing the entrance to our hearts, exclude the most evident and mild breathings of his Spirit? Does Christ, who is the Father’s WISDOM, announce to us that gospel which he has brought from the bosom of the Father, and shall we disdain to hide it in the inmost recesses of our heart? And shall we act thus, especially when we have received this binding command of the Father, which says, ‘Hear ye him!’ (Matt. xvii. 5), to which he has added a threat, that ‘if we hear him not, our souls shall be destroyed from among the people (Acts iii. 23); that is, from the commonwealth of Israel? Let none of us fall into the commission of such a heinous offense! ‘For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him’ (Heb. ii. 2, 3).
2. To all the preceding considerations, let the END of this doctrine be added, and it will be of the greatest utility in enforcing this the work of persuasion on minds that are not prodigal of their own proper and Chief Good — an employment in which its potency and excellence are most apparent. Let us reflect, for what cause God has brought us out of darkness into this marvelous light; has furnished us with a mind, understanding, and reason; and has adorned us with his image. Let this question be revolved in our minds, ‘For what purpose or END has God restored the fallen to their pristine state of integrity, reconciled sinners to himself, and received enemies into favour,’ and we shall plainly discover all this to have been done, that we might be made partakers of eternal salvation, and might sing praises to him forever. But we shall not be able to aspire after this END, much less to attain it, except in the way which is pointed out by that Theological Doctrine which has been the topic of our discourse. If we wander from this END, our wanderings from it extend, not only beyond the whole earth and sea, but beyond heaven itself — that city of which nevertheless it is essentially necessary for us to be made free men, and to have our names enrolled among the living. This doctrine is ‘the gate of heaven,’ and the door of paradise; the ladder of Jacob, by which Christ descends to us, and we shall in turn ascend to him; and the golden chain, which connects heaven with earth. Let us enter into this gate; let us ascend this ladder; and let us cling to this chain. Ample

2 *The Author and the End of Theology*

and wide is the opening of the gate, and it will easily admit believers; the position of the ladder is movable, and will not suffer those who ascend it to be shaken or moved; the joining which unites one link of the chain with another is indissoluble, and will not permit those to fall down who cling to it, until we come to 'him that liveth forever and ever,' and are raised to the throne of the Most High; till we be united to the living God, and Jesus Christ our Lord, 'the Son of the Highest.'

But on you, O chosen youths, this care is a duty peculiarly incumbent; for God has destined you to become 'workers together with him,' in the manifestation of the gospel, and instruments to administer to the salvation of others. Let the Majesty of the Holy AUTHOR of your studies, and the necessity of the END, be always placed before your eyes.

1. On attentively viewing the Author, let the words of the Prophet Amos recur to your remembrance and rest on your mind: 'The lion hath roared, who will not fear? The Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophesy?' (Amos ii. 8). But you cannot prophesy, unless you be instructed by the SPIRIT OF PROPHECY. In our days he addresses no one in that manner, except in the Scriptures; he inspires no one, except by means of the Scriptures, which are divinely inspired.
2. In contemplating the END, you will discover, that it is not possible to confer on any one, in his intercourse with mankind, an office of greater dignity and utility, or an office that is more salutary in its consequences, than this, by which he may conduct them from error into the way of truth, from wickedness to righteousness, from the deepest misery to the highest felicity; and by which he may contribute much towards their everlasting salvation.

But this truth is taught by Theology alone; there is nothing except this heavenly science that prescribes the true righteousness; and by it alone is this felicity disclosed, and our salvation made known and revealed. Let the sacred Scriptures therefore be your copies: make these divine

‘————— models your delight!

Night and day read them, read them day and night.’

COLMAN.

If you thus peruse them, 'they will make you that you shall not be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Pet. i. 8); but you will become good ministers of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine (1 Tim. iv. 6); and ready to every good work (Tit. iii. 1); workmen who need not to be ashamed' (2 Tim. ii. 15); sowing the gospel with diligence and patience; and returning to your Lord with rejoicing, bringing with you an ample harvest, through the blessing of God and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ: to whom be praise and glory from this time, even forever more! Amen!

3 The Certainty of Sacred Theology

Although the observations which I have already offered in explanation of the OBJECT, the AUTHOR and the END of sacred Theology, and other remarks which might have been made, if they had fallen into the hands of a competent interpreter, although all of them contain admirable commendations of this Theology, and convince us that it is altogether divine, since it is occupied concerning God, is derived from God, and leads to God; yet they will not be able to excite within the mind of any person a sincere desire of entering upon such a study, unless he be at the same time encouraged by the bright rays of an assured hope of arriving at a knowledge of the desirable OBJECT, and of obtaining the blessed END. For since the perfection of motion is rest, vain and useless will that motion be which is not able to attain rest, the limit of its perfection. But no prudent person will desire to subject himself to vain and useless labour. All our hope, then, of attaining to this knowledge is placed in Divine revelation. For the anticipation of this very just conception has engaged the minds of men, ‘that God cannot be known except through himself, to whom also there can be no approach but through himself.’ On this account it becomes necessary to make it evident to man, that a revelation has been made by God; that the revelation which has been given is fortified and defended by such sure and approved arguments, as will cause it to be considered and acknowledged as divine; and that there is a method, by which a man may understand the meanings declared in the word, and may apprehend them by a firm and assured faith. To the elucidation of the last proposition, this third part of our labour must be devoted. God grant that I may in this discourse again follow the guidance of his word as it is revealed in the scriptures, and may bring forth and offer to your notice such things as may contribute to establish our faith, and to promote the glory of God, to the uniting together of all of us in the Lord. I pray and beseech you also, my very famous and most accomplished hearers, not to disdain to favour me with a benevolent and patient hearing, while I deliver this feeble oration in your presence.

As we are now entering upon a consideration of the CERTAINTY of Sacred Theology, it is not necessary that we should contemplate it under the aspect of *Legal* and *Evangelical*; for in both of them there is the same measure of the truth, and therefore, the same measure of knowledge, and that is certainty. We will treat on this subject, then, in a general manner, without any particular reference or application.

But that our oration may proceed in an orderly course, it will be requisite in the first place briefly to describe CERTAINTY in general; and then to treat at greater length on the CERTAINTY OF THEOLOGY.

I. CERTAINTY, then, is a property of the mind or understanding, and a mode of knowledge according to which the mind knows an object as it is, and is certain that it knows that object as it is. It is distinct from Opinion; because it is possible for opinion to know

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a matter as it is, but its knowledge is accompanied by a suspicion of the opposite falsity. Two things, therefore, are required, to constitute certainty.

1. The truth of the thing itself, and
2. such an apprehension of it in our minds as we have just described.

This very apprehension, considered as being formed from the truth of the thing itself, and fashioned according to such truth, is also called Truth on account of the similitude; even as the thing itself is certain, on account of the action of the mind which apprehends it in that manner. Thus do those two things, (certainty and truth), because of their admirable union, make a mutual transfer of their names, the one to the other.

But truth may in reality be viewed in two aspects — one *simple*, and the other *compound*.

1. The former, in relation to a thing as being in the number of entities;
2. the latter, in reference to something inhering in a thing, being present with it or one of its circumstantials — or in reference to a thing as producing something else, or as being produced by some other — and if there be any other affections and relations of things among themselves.

The process of truth in the mind is after the same manner. Its action is of two kinds.

1. On a simple being or entity which is called ‘a simple apprehension;’ and
2. on a complex being, which is termed composition.’

The mode of truth is likewise, in reality, two-fold — *necessary* and *contingent*; according to which, a thing, whether it be simple or complex, is called ‘necessary’ or ‘contingent.’ The necessity of a simple thing is the necessary existence of the thing itself, whether it obtain the place of a subject or that of an attribute. The necessity of a complex thing is the unavoidable and essential disposition and habitude that subsists between the subject and the attribute.

That *necessity* which, as we have just stated, is to be considered in *simple things*, exists in nothing except in God and in those things which, although they agree with him in their nature, are yet distinguished from him by our mode of considering them. All other things, whatever may be their qualities, are contingent, from the circumstance of their being brought into action by power; neither are they contingent only by reason of their beginning, but also of their continued duration. Thus the existence of God, is a matter of necessity; his life, wisdom, goodness, justice, mercy, will and power, likewise have a necessary existence. But the existence and preservation of the creatures are not of necessity. Thus also creation, preservation, government, and whatever other acts are attributed to God in respect of his creatures, are not of necessity. The foundation of necessity is the nature of God; the principle of contingency is the free will of the Deity. The more durable it has pleased God to create anything, the nearer is its approach to necessity, and the farther it recedes from contingency; although it never pass beyond the boundaries of contingency, and never reach the inaccessible abode of necessity.

Complex necessity exists not only in God, but also in the things of his creation. It exists in God, partly on account of the foundation of his nature, and partly on account of the principle of his free-will. But its existence in the creatures is only from the free will of God, who at once resolved that this should be the relation and habitude between two

created objects. Thus 'God lives, understands, and loves,' is a necessary truth from his very nature as God. 'God is the Creator,' 'Jesus Christ is the saviour,' 'An angel is a created spirit endowed with intelligence and will,' and 'A man is a rational creature,' are all necessary truths from the free will of God.

From this statement it appears, that degrees may be constituted in the necessity of a complex truth; that the highest may be attributed to that truth which rests upon the nature of God as its foundation; that the rest, which proceed from the will of God, may be excelled by that which (by means of a greater affection of his will), God has willed to invest with such right of precedence; and that it may be followed by that which God has willed by a less affection of his will. The motion of the sun is necessary from the very nature of that luminary; but it is more necessary that the children of Israel be preserved and avenged on their enemies; the sun is therefore commanded to stand still in the midst of the heavens (Josh. x. 13). It is necessary that the sun be borne along from the east to the west, by the diurnal motion of the heavens. But it is more necessary that Hezekiah receive, by a sure sign, a confirmation of the prolongation of his life; the sun, therefore, when commanded, returns ten degrees backward (Isa. xxxviii. 8); and thus it is proper, that the less necessity should yield to the greater, and that from the free will of God, which has imposed a law on both of them. As this kind of necessity actually exists in things, the mind, by observing the same gradations, apprehends and knows it, if such a mode of cognition can truly deserve the name of 'knowledge.'

But the *causes* of this CERTAINTY are three. For it is produced on the mind, either by the senses, by reasoning and discourse, or by revelation. The first is called the certainty of *experience*; the second, that of *knowledge*; and the last, that of *faith*. The first is the certainty of particular objects which come within the range and under the observation of the senses; the second is that of general conclusions deduced from known principles; and the last is that of things remote from the cognizance both of the senses and reason.

II. Let these observations now be applied to our present purpose.

1. The Object of our Theology is God, and Christ in reference to his being *God* and *Man*. God is a true Being, and the only necessary one, on account of the necessity of his and he is also a necessary Being, because he will endure to all eternity. The things which are attributed to God in our Theology: partly belong to his nature, and partly agree with it by his own free-will. By his *nature*, life, wisdom, goodness, justice, mercy, will and power belong to him, by a natural and absolute necessity. By his *free-will*, all his volitions and actions concerning the creatures agree with his nature, and that immutably; because he willed at the same time, that they should not be retracted or repealed. All those things which are attributed to Christ, belong to him by the *free-will of God*, but on this condition, that 'Christ be the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever' (Heb. xiii. 8), entirely exempt from any future change, whether it be that of a subject or its attributes, or of the affection which exists between the two. All other things, which are found in the whole superior and inferior nature of things, (whether they be considered simply in themselves, or as they are mutually affected among themselves), do not extend to any degree of this necessity. The truth and necessity of our Theology, therefore, far exceed the necessity of all other sciences, in as much as both these [the truth and necessity,] are situated in the

things themselves. The certainty of the mind, while it is engaged in the act of apprehending and knowing things, cannot exceed the TRUTH and NECESSITY of the thing's themselves; on the contrary, it very often may not reach them, [the truth and necessity,] through some defect in its capacity. For the eyes of our mind are in the same condition with respect to the pure truth of things, as are the eyes of owls with respect to the light of the sun. On this account, therefore, it is of necessity, that the object of no science can be known with greater certainty than that of Theology; but it follows rather, that a knowledge of this object may be obtained with the greatest degree of certainty, if it be presented in a qualified and proper manner to the inspection of the understanding according to its capacity. For this object is not of such a nature and condition as to be presented to the external senses; nor can its attributes, properties, affections, actions and passions be known by means of the observation and experience of the external senses. It is too sublime for them; and the attributes, properties, affections, actions and passions, which agree with it, are so high that the mind, even when assisted by reason and discourse, can neither know it, investigate its attributes, nor demonstrate that they agree with the subject, whatever the principles may be which it has applied, and to whatever causes it may have had recourse, whether they be such as arise from the object itself, from its attributes, or from the agreement which subsists between them. The Object is known to itself alone; and the whole *truth* and *necessity* are properly and immediately known to HIM to whom they belong; to God in the first place and in an adequate degree; to Christ, in the second place, through the communication of God. To itself, in an adequate manner, in reference to the knowledge which it has of itself; in an inferior degree to God, in reference to his knowledge of him, [Christ.] Revelation is therefore necessary by which God may exhibit himself and his Christ as an object of sight and knowledge to our understanding; and this exhibition to be made in such a manner as to unfold at once all their attributes, properties, affections, actions and passions, as far as it is permitted for them to be known, concerning God and his Christ, to our salvation and to their glory; and that God may thus disclose all and every portion of those theorems in which both the subjects themselves and all their attending attributes are comprehended. Revelation is necessary, if it be true that God and his Christ ought to be known, and both of them be worthy to receive Divine honours and worship. But both of them ought to be known and worshipped; the revelation, therefore, of both of them is necessary; and because it is thus necessary, it has been made by God. For if nature, as a partaker and communicator of a good that is only partial, is not deficient in the things that are necessary; how much less ought we even to suspect such a deficiency in God, the Author and Artificer of nature, who is also the Chief Good?

But to inspect this subject a little more deeply and particularly, will amply repay our trouble; for it is similar to the foundation on which must rest the weight of the structure — the other doctrines which follow. For unless it should appear certain and evident, that *a revelation* has been made, it will be in vain to inquire and dispute about the word in which that revelation has been made and is contained. *In the first place*, then, the very nature of God most clearly evinces that a revelation has been made of himself and Christ. His nature is good, beneficent, and communicative of his blessedness, whether it be that which proceeds from it by creation, or that which

is God himself. But there is no communication made of Divine good, unless God be made known to the understanding, and be desired by the affections and the will. But he cannot become an object of knowledge except by revelation. A revelation, therefore, is made, as a necessary instrument of communication.

2. The necessity of this revelation may in various ways be inferred and taught from the nature and condition of man.
 - *First.* By nature, man possesses a mind and understanding. But it is just that the mind and understanding should be turned towards their Creator; this, however, cannot be done without a knowledge of the Creator, and such knowledge cannot be obtained except by revelation; a revelation has, therefore, been made.
 - *Secondly.* God himself formed the nature of man capable of Divine Good. But in vain would it have had such a capacity, if it might not at some time partake of this Divine Good; but of this the nature of man cannot be made a partaker except by the knowledge of it; the knowledge of this Divine Good has therefore been manifested.
 - *Thirdly.* It is not possible, that the desire which God has implanted within man should be vain and fruitless. That desire is for the enjoyment of an Infinite Good, which is God; but that Infinite Good cannot be enjoyed, except it be known; a revelation, therefore, has been made, by which it may be known.
3. Let that relation be brought forward which subsists between God and man, and the revelation that has been made will immediately become manifest. God, the Creator of man, has deserved it as his due, to receive worship and honour from the workmanship of his hands, on account of the benefit which he conferred by the act of creation. Religion and piety are due to God, from man his creature; and this obligation is coeval with the very birth of man, as the bond which contains this requisition was given on the very day in which he was created. But religion could not be a human invention. For it is the will of God to receive worship according to the rule and appointment of his own will. A revelation was therefore made, which exacts from man the religion due to God, and prescribes that worship which is in accordance with his pleasure and his honour.
4. If we turn our attention towards Christ, it is amazing how great the necessity of a manifestation appears, and how many arguments immediately present themselves in behalf of a revelation being communicated. Wisdom wishes to be acknowledged as the deviser of the wonderful attempering and qualifying of justice and mercy. Goodness and gracious mercy, as the administrators of such an immense benefit sought to be worshipped and honoured. And power, as the hand-maid of such stupendous wisdom and goodness, and as the executrix of the decree made by both of them, deserved to receive adoration. But the different acts of service which were due to each of them, could not be rendered to them without revelation. The wisdom, mercy and power of God, have, therefore, been revealed and displayed most copiously in Christ Jesus. He performed a multitude of most wonderful works, by which we might obtain the salvation that we had lost; he endured most horrid torments and inexpressible distress, which, when pleaded in our favour, served to

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obtain this salvation for us; and by the gift of the Father he was possessed of an abundance of graces, and, at the Divine command, he became the distributor of them. Having, therefore, sustained all these offices for us, it is his pleasure to receive those acknowledgments, and those acts of Divine honour and worship, which are due to him on account of his extraordinary merits. But in vain will he expect the performance of these acts from man, unless he be himself revealed. A revelation of Christ has, therefore, been made. Consult actual experience, and that will supply you with numberless instances of this manifestation. The devil himself, who is the rival of Christ, has imitated these instances of gracious manifestation, has held converse with men under the name and semblance of the true God, has demanded acts of devotion from them, and prescribed to them a mode of religious worship.

We have, therefore, the *truth* and the *necessity* of our Theology agreeing together in the highest degree; we have an adequate notion of it in the mind of God and Christ, according to the word which is called ἐμφυτος ‘*engrafted*’ (James i. 21). We have a revelation of this Theology made to men by the word preached; which revelation agrees both with the things themselves and with the notion which we have mentioned, but in a way that is attempered and suited to the human capacity. And as all these are preliminaries to the certainty which we entertain concerning this Theology, it was necessary to notice them in these introductory remarks.

Let us now consider this CERTAINTY itself. But since a revelation has been made in the word which has been published, and since the whole of it is contained in that word, (so that THIS WORD is itself our THEOLOGY), we can determine nothing concerning the certainty of Theology in any other way than by offering some explanation concerning our certain apprehension of that word. We will assume it as a fact which is allowed and confirmed, that this word is to be found in no other place than in the sacred books of the Old and New Testament; and we shall on this account confine this certain apprehension of our mind to that word. But in fulfilling this design, three things demand our attentive consideration:

- *First.* The CERTAINTY, and the kind of certainty which God requires from us, and by which it is his pleasure that this word should be received and apprehended by us as the Chief Certainty.
- *Secondly.* The reasons and arguments by which the truth of that word, which is its divinity, may be proved.
- *Thirdly.* How a persuasion of that divinity may be wrought in our minds, and this certainty may be impressed on our hearts.

I. The CERTAINTY ‘with which God wishes this word to be received, is that of faith; and it therefore depends on the veracity of him who utters it.’ By this Certainty ‘it is received,’ not only as true, but as divine; and it is not of that involved and mixed kind ‘of faith’ by which any one, without understanding the meanings expressed by the word as by a sign, believes that those books which are contained in the Bible, are divine: for not only is a doubtful opinion opposed to faith, but an obscure and perplexed conception is equally inimical. Neither is it that species ‘of historical faith’ which believes the word to be divine that it comprehends only by a theoretical understanding. But God demands that faith to

be given to his word, by which the meanings expressed in this word may be understood, as far as it is necessary for the salvation of men and the glory of God; and may be so assuredly known to be divine, that they may be believed to embrace not only the CHIEF TRUTH, but also the CHIEF GOOD of man. This faith not only believes that God and Christ exist, it not only gives credence to them when they make declarations of any kind, but it believes in God and Christ when they affirm such things concerning themselves, as, being apprehended by faith, create a belief in God as our Father, and in Christ as our saviour. This we consider to be the office of an understanding that is not merely theoretical, but of one that is practical. For this cause not only is *ασφαλεια* (certainty), attributed in the Scriptures to true and living faith, but to it are likewise ascribed both *πληροφορια* (a full assurance, Heb. vi. 2), and *πεποιθησις* (trust or confidence, 2 Cor. iii. 4), and it is God who requires and demands such a species of certainty and of faith.

II. We may now be permitted to proceed by degrees from this point, to a consideration of those arguments which prove to us the divinity of the word; and to the manner in which the required certainty and faith are produced in our minds. To constitute natural vision we know that, (beside an object capable of being seen), not only is an external light necessary to shine upon it and to render it visible, but an internal strength of eye is also required, which may receive within itself the form and appearance of the object which has been illuminated by the external light, and may thus be enabled actually to behold it. The same accompaniments are necessary to constitute spiritual vision; for, beside this external light of arguments and reasoning, an internal light of the mind and soul is necessary to perfect this vision of faith. But infinite is the number of arguments on which this world builds and establishes its divinity. We will select and briefly notice a few of those which are more usual, lest by too great a prolixity we become too troublesome and disagreeable to our auditory.

1. THE DIVINITY OF SCRIPTURE

Let scripture itself come forward, and perform the chief part in asserting its own Divinity. Let us inspect its substance and its matter.

- a) It is all concerning God and his Christ, and is occupied in declaring the nature of both of them, in further explaining the love, the benevolence, and the benefits which have been conferred by both of them on the human race, or which have yet to be conferred; and prescribing, in return, the duties of men towards their Divine Benefactors. The scripture, therefore, is divine in its object.
- b) But how is it occupied in treating on these subjects?
 - It explains the *nature of God* in such a way as to attribute nothing extraneous to it, and nothing that does not perfectly agree with it.
 - It describes the *person of Christ* in such a manner, that the human mind, on beholding the description, ought to acknowledge, that ‘such a person could not have been invented or devised by any created intellect,’ and that it is described with such aptitude, suitableness and sublimity, as far to exceed the largest capacity of a created understanding.
 - In the same manner the scripture is employed in relating the *love of God and Christ* towards us, and in giving an account of *the benefits which we*

receive. Thus the Apostle Paul, when he wrote to the Ephesians on these subjects, says, that from his former writings, the extent of 'his knowledge of the mystery of Christ' might be manifest to them (Ephes. iii. 4). that is, it was divine, and derived solely from the revelation of God.

Let us contemplate the law in which is comprehended the duty of men towards God. What shall we find, in all the laws of every nation, that is at all similar to this, or (omitting all mention of 'equality,') that may be placed in comparison with those ten short sentences? Yet even those commandments, most brief and comprehensive as they are, have been still further reduced to two chief heads — the love of God, and the love of our neighbour. This law appears in reality to have been sketched and written by the right hand of God. That this was actually the case, Moses shews in these words, What nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day? (Deut. iv. 8). Moses likewise says, that so great and manifest is the divinity which is inherent in this law, that it compelled the heathen nations, after they had heard it, to declare in ecstatic admiration of it. 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people?' (Deut. iv. 6). The scripture, therefore, is completely divine, from the manner in which it treats on those matters which are its subjects.

- c) If we consider the END, it will as clearly point out to us the divinity of this doctrine. That End is entirely divine, being nothing less than the glory of God and man's eternal salvation. What can be more equitable than that all things should be referred to him from whom they have derived their origin? What can be more consonant to the wisdom, goodness, and power of God, than that he should restore, to his original integrity, man who had been created by him, but who had by his own fault destroyed himself; and that he should make him a partaker of his own Divine blessedness? If by means of any word God had wished to manifest himself to man, what end of manifestation ought he to have proposed that would have been more honourable to himself and more salutary to man? That the word, therefore, was divinely revealed, could not be discerned by any mark which was better or more legible, than that of its showing to man the way of salvation, taking him as by the hand and leading him into that way, and not ceasing to accompany him until it introduced him to the full enjoyment of salvation: In such a consummation as this, the glory of God most abundantly shines forth and displays itself. He who may wish to contemplate what we are declaring concerning this End, in a small but noble part of this word, should place 'the Lord's Prayer' before the eyes of his mind; he should look most intently upon it; and, as far as that is possible for human eyes, he should thoroughly investigate all its parts and beauties. After he has done this, unless he confess, that in it this double end is proposed in a manner that is at once so nervous, brief, and accurate, as to be above the strength and capacity of every created intelligence, and unless he acknowledge, that this form of prayer is purely divine, he must of necessity have a mind surrounded and enclosed by more than Egyptian darkness.

2. THE AGREEMENT OF THIS DOCTRINE IN ITS PARTS

Let us compare the parts of this doctrine together, and we shall discover in all of them an agreement and harmony, even in points the most minute, that it is so great and evident as to cause us to believe that it could not be manifested by men, but ought to have implicit credence placed in it as having certainly proceeded from God.

Let the PREDICTIONS alone, that have been promulgated concerning CHRIST in different ages, be compared together. For the consolation of the first parents of our race, God said to the serpent, 'The seed of the woman shall bruise thy head' (Gen. iii. 15). The same promise was repeated by God, and was specially made to Abraham: 'In thy seed shall all the nations be blessed' (Gen. xxii. 18). The patriarch Jacob, when at the point of death, foretold that this seed should come forth from the lineage and family of Judah, in these words: 'The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be' (Gen. xlix. 10). Let the alien prophet also be brought forward, and to these predictions he will add that oracular declaration which he pronounced by the inspiration and at the command of the God of Israel, in these words: Balaam said, 'There shall come a star out of Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth' (Num. xxiv. 17). This blessed seed was afterwards promised to David, by Nathan, in these words: 'I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom' (2 Sam. vii. 12). On this account Isaiah says, 'There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots' (xi. 1). And, by way of intimating that a virgin would be his mother, the same prophet says, 'Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name IMMANUEL!' (Isa. vii. 14). It would be tedious to repeat every declaration that occurs in the psalms and in the other Prophets, and that agrees most appropriately with this subject. When these prophecies are compared with those occurrences that have been described in the New Testament concerning their fulfillment, it will be evident from the complete harmony of the whole, that they were all spoken and written by the impulse of one Divine Spirit. If some things in those sacred books seem to be contradictions, they are easily reconciled by means of a right interpretation. I add, that not only do all the parts of this doctrine agree among themselves, but they also harmonize with that Universal Truth which has been spread through the whole of Philosophy; so that nothing can be discovered in Philosophy, which does not correspond with this doctrine. If any thing appear not to possess such an exact correspondence, it may be clearly confuted by means of true Philosophy and right reason.

Let the STYLE and CHARACTER of the scriptures be produced, and, in that instant, a most brilliant and refulgent mirror of the majesty which is luminously reflected in it, will display itself to our view in a manner the most divine. It relates things that are placed at a great distance beyond the range of the human imagination — things which far surpass the capacities of men. And it simply relates these things without employing any mode of argumentation, or the usual apparatus of persuasion: yet its obvious wish is to be understood and believed. But what confidence or reason has it for expecting to obtain the realization of this its desire? It possesses none at all, except that it depends purely upon its own unmixed authority, which is divine. It

publishes its commands and its interdicts, its enactments and its prohibitions to all persons alike; to kings and subjects, to nobles and plebians, to the learned and the ignorant, to those that 'require a sign' and those that 'seek after wisdom,' to the old and the young; over all these, the rule which it bears, and the power which it exercises, are equal. It places its sole reliance, therefore, on its own potency, which is able in a manner the most efficacious to restrain and compel all those who are refractory, and to reward those who are obedient.

Let the REWARDS and PUNISHMENTS be examined, by which the precepts are sanctioned, and there are seen both a promise of life eternal and a denunciation of eternal punishments. He who makes such a commencement as this, may calculate upon his becoming an object of ridicule, except he possess an inward consciousness both of his own right and power; and except he know, that, to subdue the wills of mortals, is a matter equally easy of accomplishment with him, as to execute his menaces and to fulfill his premises. To the scriptures themselves let him have recourse who may be desirous to prove with the greatest certainty its majesty, from the kind of diction which it adopts: Let him read the charming swan-like SONG OF MOSES described in the concluding chapters of the Book of Deuteronomy: Let him with his mental eyes diligently survey the beginning of Isaiah's prophecy: Let him in a devout spirit consider the hundred and fourth Psalm. Then, with these, let him compare whatever choice specimens of poetry and eloquence the Greeks and the Romans can produce in the most eminent manner from their archives; and he will be convinced by the most demonstrative evidence, that the latter are productions of the human spirit, and that the former could proceed from none other than the Divine Spirit. Let a man of the greatest genius, and, in erudition, experience, and eloquence, the most accomplished of his race — let such a well instructed mortal enter the lists and attempt to finish a composition at all similar to these writings, and he will find himself at a loss and utterly disconcerted, and his attempt will terminate in discomfiture. That man will then confess, that what St Paul declared concerning his own manner of speech, and that of his fellow-labourers, may be truly applied to the whole scripture: 'Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual' (1 Cor. ii. 13).

3. THE PROPHECIES

Let us next inspect the prophecies scattered through the whole body of the doctrine; some of which belong to the substance of the doctrine, and others contribute towards procuring authority to the doctrine and to its instruments. It should be particularly observed, with what eloquence and distinctness they foretell the greatest and most important matters, which are far removed from the scrutinizing research of every human and angelical mind, and which could not possibly be performed except by power Divine: Let it be noticed at the same time with what precision the predictions are answered by the periods that intervene between them, and by all their concomitant circumstances; and the whole world will be compelled to confess, that such things could not have been foreseen and foretold, except by an omniscient Deity. I need not here adduce examples; for they are obvious to any one that opens the Divine volume. I will produce one or two passages, only, in which this precise agreement of the prediction and its fulfillment is described. When speaking of the

children of Israel under the Egyptian bondage, and their deliverance from it according to the prediction which God had communicated to Abraham in a dream, Moses says, 'And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the self-same day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt' (Exod. xii. 41). Ezra speaks thus concerning the liberation from the Babylonish captivity, which event, Jeremiah foretold, should occur within seventy years: 'Now in the first year of Cyrus, king of Persia, that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, king of Persia,' etc. (Ezra i. 1). But God himself declares by Isaiah, that the divinity of the scripture may be proved, and ought to be concluded, from this kind of prophecies. These are his words: 'Shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are Gods' (Isa. xli. 23).

4. MIRACLES

An illustrious evidence of the same divinity is afforded in the miracles, which God has performed by the stewards of his word, his prophets and apostles, and by Christ himself, for the confirmation of *his* doctrine and for the establishment of *their* authority. For these miracles are of such a description as infinitely to exceed the united powers of all the creatures and all the powers of nature itself, when their energies are combined. But the God of truth, burning with zeal for his own glory, could never have afforded such strong testimonies as these to false prophets and their false doctrine: nor could he have borne such witness to any doctrine even when it was true, provided it was not his, that is, provided it was not divine. Christ, therefore, said, 'If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not; but if I do, though you believe not me, believe the works' (John x. 37, 38). It was the same cause also, which induced the widow of Sarepta to say, on receiving from the hands of Elijah her son, who, after his death, had been raised to life by the prophet: 'Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth' (1 Kings xvii. 24). That expression of Nicodemus has the same bearing: 'Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him' (John iii. 2). And it was for a similar reason that the apostle said, 'The signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds' (2 Cor. xii. 12). There are indeed miracles on record that were wrought among the gentiles, and under the auspices of the gods whom they invoked: It is also predicted, concerning False Prophets, and Antichrist himself, that they will exhibit many signs and wonders (Rev. xix. 20). But neither in number, nor in magnitude, are they equal to those which the true God has wrought before all Israel, and in the view of the whole world. Neither were those feats of their real miracles, but only astonishing operations performed by the agency and power of Satan and his instruments, by means of natural causes, which are concealed from the human understanding, and escape the cognizance of men. But to deny the existence of those great and admirable miracles which are related to have really happened, when they have also the testimony of both Jews and gentiles, who were the enemies of the true doctrine — is an evident token of bare-faced impudence and execrable stupidity.

5. THE ANTIQUITY OF THE DOCTRINE

Let the antiquity, the propagation, the preservation, and the truly admirable defense of this doctrine be added — and they will afford a bright and perspicuous testimony of its divinity. If that which is of the highest antiquity possesses the greatest portion of truth,' as Tertullian most wisely and justly observes, then this doctrine is one of the greatest truth, because it can trace its origin to the highest antiquity. It is likewise Divine, because it was manifested at a time when it could not have been devised by any other mind; for it had its commencement at the very period when man was brought into existence. An apostate angel would not then have proposed any of his doctrines to man, unless God had previously revealed himself to the intelligent creature whom he had recently formed: That is, God hindered the fallen angel, and there was then no cause in existence by which he might be impelled to engage in such an enterprise. For God would not suffer man, who had been created after his own image, to be tempted by his enemy by means of false doctrine, until, after being abundantly instructed in that which was true, he was enabled to know that which was false and to reject it. Neither could any odious feeling of envy against man have tormented Satan, except God had considered him worthy of the communication of his word, and had deigned, through that communication, to make him a partaker of eternal felicity, from which Satan had at that period unhappily fallen.

The PROPAGATION, PRESERVATION, and DEFENSE of this doctrine, most admirable when separately considered, will all be found divine, if, *in the first place*, we attentively fix our eyes upon those men among whom it is propagated; *then* on the foes and adversaries of this doctrine; and, *lastly*, on the manner in which its propagation, preservation and defense have hitherto been and still are conducted.

- a) If we consider those men among whom this sacred doctrine flourishes, we shall discover that their nature, on account of its corruption, rejects this doctrine for a two-fold reason;
 - i. The *first* is, because in one of its parts it is so entirely contrary to human and worldly wisdom, as to subject itself to the accusation of FOLLY from men of corrupt minds.
 - ii. The *second* reason is, because in another of its parts it is decidedly hostile and inimical to worldly lusts and carnal desires.

It is, therefore, rejected by the human understanding and refused by the will, which are the two chief faculties in man; for it is according to their orders and commands that the other faculties are either put in motion or remain at rest. Yet, notwithstanding all this natural repugnance, it has been received and believed. The human mind, therefore, has been conquered, and the subdued will has been gained, by Him who is the author of both.

- b) This doctrine has some most powerful and bitter enemies: Satan, the prince of this world, with all his angels, and the world his ally: These are foes with whom there can be no reconciliation. If the subtlety, the power, the malice, the audacity, the impudence, the perseverance, and the diligence of these enemies, be placed in opposition to the simplicity, the inexperience, the weakness, the

fear, the inconstancy, and the slothfulness of the greater part of those who give their assent to this heavenly doctrine; then will the greatest wonder be excited, how this doctrine, when attacked by so many enemies, and defended by such sorry champions, can stand and remain safe and unmoved. If this wonder and admiration be succeeded by a supernatural and divine investigation of its cause, then will God himself be discovered as the propagator, preserver, and defender of this doctrine.

- c) The manner also in which its propagation, preservation and defense are conducted, indicates divinity by many irrefragible tokens. This doctrine is carried into effect, without bow or sword — without horses chariots, or horsemen; yet it proceeds prosperously along, stands in an erect posture, and remains unconquered, in the name of the LORD OF HOSTS: While its adversaries, though supported by such apparently able auxiliaries and relying on such powerful aid, are overthrown, fall down together, and perish. It is accomplished, not by holding out alluring promises of riches, glory, and earthly pleasures, but by a previous statement of the dreaded cross, and by the prescription of such patience and forbearance as far exceed all human strength and ability. ‘He is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel; for I will shew him HOW GREAT THINGS he must suffer for my name’s sake’ (Acts ix. 15, 16). ‘Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves’ (Matt. x. 16).

Its completion is not effected by the counsels of men, but in opposition to all human counsels — whether they be those of the professors of this doctrine, or those of its adversaries. For it often happens, that the counsels and machinations which have been devised for the destruction of this doctrine, contribute greatly towards its propagation, while the princes of darkness fret and vex themselves in vain, and are astonished and confounded, at an issue so contrary to the expectations which they had formed from their most crafty and subtle counsels.

St Luke says, ‘Saul made havoc of the church, entering into every house, and, haling men and women, committed them to prison. Therefore they that were scattered abroad, went every where preaching the word’ (Acts vii. 3, 4). And by this means Samaria received the word of God. In reference to this subject St Paul also says, ‘But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel; so that my bonds are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places’ (Phil. i. 12, 13). For the same cause that common observation has acquired all its just celebrity: ‘The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church.’ What shall we say to these things? ‘The stone which the builders refused, is become the head stone of the corner: This is the Lord’s doing; it is marvelous in our eyes’ (Psalm cxviii. 22, 23).

Subjoin to these the tremendous judgments of God on the persecutors of this doctrine, and the miserable death of the tyrants. One of these, at the very moment when he was breathing out his polluted and unhappy spirit, was inwardly constrained publicly to proclaim, though in a frantic and outrageous tone, the divinity of this doctrine in these remarkable words: ‘THOU HAST CONQUERED, O GALILEAN!’

Who is there, now, that, with eyes freed from all prejudice, will look upon such

clear proofs of the divinity of Scripture, and that will not instantly confess: the Apostle Paul had the best reasons for exclaiming, 'If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not; lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them' (2 Cor. iv. 3, 4) As if he had said, 'This is not human darkness; neither is it drawn as a thick veil over the mind by man himself; but it is diabolical darkness, and spread by the devil, the prince of darkness, upon the mind of man, over whom, by the just judgment of God, he exercises at his pleasure the most absolute tyranny. If this were not the case, it would be impossible for this darkness to remain; but, how great soever its density might be, it would be dispersed by this light which shines with such overpowering brilliancy.'

6. THE SANCTITY OF THOSE BY WHOM IT HAS BEEN ADMINISTERED

The sanctity of those by whom the word was first announced to men and by whom it was committed to writing, conduces to the same purpose — to prove its Divinity. For since it appears that those who were entrusted with the discharge of this duty, had divested themselves of the wisdom of the world, and of the feelings and affections of the flesh, entirely putting off the old man — and that they were completely eaten up and consumed by their zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of men — it is manifest that such great sanctity as this had been inspired and infused into them, by Him alone who is the Holiest of the holy.

Let Moses be the first that is introduced: He was treated in a very injurious manner by a most ungrateful people, and was frequently marked out for destruction; yet was he prepared to purchase their salvation by his own banishment. He said, when pleading with God, 'Yet now, if thou wilt, forgive their sin; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written' (Exod. xxxii. 32). Behold his zeal for the salvation of the people entrusted to his charge — a zeal for the glory of God! Would you see another reason for this wish to be devoted to destruction? Read what he had previously said: 'Wherefore should the Egyptians speak and say? For mischief did the Lord bring them out to slay them in the mountains' (Exod. xxxii. 12), 'because he was not able to bring them out unto the land which he swear unto their Fathers' (Num. xiv. 16). We observe the same zeal in Paul, when he wishes that himself 'were accursed from Christ for his brethren the Jews, his kinsmen according to the flesh' (Rom. 9), from whom he had suffered many and great indignities.

David was not ashamed publicly to confess his heavy and enormous crimes, and to commit them to writing as an eternal memorial to posterity. Samuel did not shrink from marking in the records of perpetuity the detestable conduct of his sons; and Moses did not hesitate to bear a public testimony against the iniquity and the madness of his ancestors. If even the least desire of a little glory had possessed their minds, they might certainly have been able to indulge in taciturnity, and to conceal in silence these circumstances of disgrace. Those of them who were engaged in describing the deeds and achievements of other people, were unacquainted with the art of offering adulation to great men and nobles, and of wrongfully attributing to their enemies any unworthy deed or motive. With a regard to truth alone, in promoting the glory of God, they placed all persons on an equality; and made no

other distinction between them than that which God himself has commanded to be made between piety and wickedness. On receiving from the hand of God their appointment to this office, they at once and altogether bade farewell to all the world, and to all the desires which are in it. 'Each of them said unto his father and to his mother, I have not seen him; neither did he acknowledge his brethren; for they observed the word of God, and kept his covenant' (Deut. xxxiii. 9).

7. The CONSTANCY OF ITS PROFESSORS AND MARTYRS

But what shall we say respecting the constancy of the professors and martyrs, which they displayed in the torments that they endured for the truth of this doctrine? Indeed, if we subject this constancy to the view of the most inflexible enemies of the doctrine, we shall extort from unwilling judges a confession of its Divinity. But, that the strength of this argument may be placed in a clearer light, the mind must be directed to four particulars: the *multitude* of the martyrs, and their *condition*; the *torments* which their enemies inflicted on them, and the *patience* which they evinced in enduring them.

- a) If we direct our inquiries to the *multitude* of them, it is innumerable, far exceeding thousands of thousands; on this account it is out of the power of any one to say, that, because it was the choice of but a few persons, it ought to be imputed to frenzy or to weariness of a life that was full of trouble.
- b) If we inquire into their *condition*, we shall find nobles and peasants, those in authority and their subjects, the learned and the unlearned, the rich and the poor, the old and the young; persons of both sexes, men and women, the married and the unmarried, men of a hardy constitution and inured to dangers, and girls of tender habits who had been delicately educated, and whose feet had scarcely ever before stumbled against the smallest pebble that arose above the surface of their smooth and level path. Many of the early martyrs were honourable persons of this description, that no one might think them to be inflamed by a desire of glory, or endeavouring to gain applause by the perseverance and magnanimity that they had evinced in the maintenance of the sentiments which they had embraced.
- c) Some of the *torments* inflicted on such a multitude of persons and of such various circumstances in life, were of a common sort, and others unusual, some of them quick in their operation and others of them slow. Part of the unoffending victims were nailed to crosses and part of them were decapitated; some were drowned in rivers, whilst others were roasted before a slow fire. Several were ground to powder by the teeth of wild beasts, or were torn in pieces by their fangs; many were sawn asunder, while others were stoned; and not a few of them were subjected to punishments which cannot be expressed, but which are accounted most disgraceful and infamous, on account of their extreme turpitude and indelicacy. No species of savage cruelty was omitted which either the ingenuity of human malignity could invent, which rage the most conspicuous and furious could excite, or which even the infernal laboratory of the court of hell could supply.
- d) And yet, that we may come at once to the *patience* of these holy confessors, they bore all these tortures with constancy and equanimity; nay, they endured

them with such a glad heart and cheerful countenance, as to fatigue even the restless fury of their persecutors, which has often been compelled, when wearied out, to yield to the unconquerable strength of their patience, and to confess itself completely vanquished. And what was the cause of all this endurance? It consisted in their unwillingness to recede in the least point from that religion, the denial of which was the only circumstance that might enable them to escape danger, and, in many instances, to acquire glory. What then was the reason of the great patience which they shewed under their acute sufferings? It was because they believed, that when this short life was ended, and after the pains and distresses which they were called to endure on earth, they would obtain a blessed immortality. In this particular the combat which God has maintained with Satan, appears to have resembled a duel; and the result of it has been, that the Divinity of God's word has been raised as a superstructure out of the infamy and ruin of Satan.

8. THE TESTIMONY OF THE CHURCH

The divine Omnipotence and Wisdom have principally employed these arguments, to prove the Divinity of this blessed word. But, that the Church might not defile herself by that basest vice, ingratitude of heart, and that she might perform a supplementary service in aid of God her Author and of Christ her Head, she also by her testimony adds to the Divinity of this word. But it is only an addition; she does not impart Divinity to it; her province is merely an indication of the Divine nature of this word, but she does not communicate to it the impress of Divinity. For unless this word had been Divine when there was no Church in existence, it would not have been possible for her members 'to be born of this word, as of incorruptible seed' (1 Pet. i. 23), to become the sons of God, and, through faith in this word, 'to be made partakers of the Divine Nature' (2 Pet. i. 4). The very name of 'authority' takes away from the Church the power of conferring Divinity on this doctrine. For AUTHORITY is derived from an AUTHOR: But the Church is not the AUTHOR, she is only the nurse of this word, being posterior to it in cause, origin, and time. We do not listen to those who raise this objection: 'The Church is of greater antiquity than the scripture, because at the time when that word had not been consigned to writing, the Church had even then an existence.' To trifle in a serious matter with such cavils as this, is highly unbecoming in Christians, unless they have changed their former godly manners and are transformed into Jesuits. The Church is not more ancient than this saying: 'The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head' (Gen. iii. 15); although she had an existence before this sentence was recorded by Moses in Scripture. For it was by the faith which they exercised on this saying, that Adam and Eve became the Church of God; since, prior to that, they were traitors, deserters and the kingdom of Satan — that grand deserter and apostate. The Church is indeed the pillar of the truth (1 Tim. iii. 15), but it is built upon that truth as upon a foundation, and thus directs to the truth, and brings it forward into the sight of men. In this way the Church performs the part of a director and a witness to this truth, and its guardian, herald, and interpreter. But in her acts of interpretation, the Church is confined to the sense of the word itself, and is tied down to the expressions of Scripture: for, according to the prohibition of St Paul, it neither becomes her to be wise above that which is written' (1 Cor. iv. 6); nor is

it possible for her to be so, since she is hindered both by her own imbecility, and the depth of things divine.

But it will reward our labour, if in a few words we examine the efficacy of this testimony, since such is the pleasure of the Papists, who constitute 'the authority of the Church' the commencement and the termination of our certainty, when she bears witness to the scripture that it is the word of God. In the first place, the efficacy of the testimony does not exceed the veracity of the witness. The veracity of the Church is the veracity of men. But the veracity of men is imperfect and inconstant, and is always such as to give occasion to this the remark of truth, 'All men are liars.' Neither is the veracity of him that speaks, sufficient to obtain credit to his testimony, unless the veracity of him who bears witness concerning the truth appear plain and evident to him to whom he makes the declaration. But in what manner will it be possible to make the veracity of the Church plain and evident? This must be done, either by a notion conceived, long time before, or by an impression recently made on the minds of the hearers. But men possess no such innate notion of the veracity of the Church as is tantamount to that which declares, 'God is true and cannot lie' (Tit. i. 2). It is necessary, therefore, that it be impressed by some recent action; such impression being made either from within or from without. But the Church is not able to make any inward impression, for she bears her testimony by external instruments alone, and does not extend to the inmost parts of the soul. The impression, therefore, will be external; which can be no other than a display and indication of her knowledge and probity, as well as testimony, often truly so called. But all these things can produce nothing more than an opinion in the minds of those to whom they are offered. Opinion, therefore, and not knowledge, is the supreme effect of this efficacy.

But the Papists retort, 'that Christ himself established the authority of his Church by this saying, 'He that heareth you, heareth me' (Luke x. 16). When these unhappy reasoners speak thus, they seem not to be aware that they are establishing the authority of Scripture before that of the Church. For it is necessary that credence should be given to that expression as it was pronounced by Christ, before any authority can, on its account, be conceded to the Church. But the same reason will be as tenable in respect to the whole Scripture as to this expression. Let the Church then be content with that honour which Christ conferred on her when he made her the guardian of his word, and appointed her to be the director and witness to it, the herald and the interpreter.

III.

Yet since the arguments arising from all those observations which we have hitherto adduced, and from any others which are calculated to prove the Divinity of the scriptures, can neither disclose to us a right understanding of the scriptures, nor seal on our minds those meanings which we have understood, (although the certainty of faith which God demands from us, and requires us to exercise in his word, consists of these meanings), it is a necessary consequence, that to all these things ought to be added something else, by the efficacy of which that certainty may be produced in our minds. And this is the very subject on which we are not prepared to treat in this the third part of our discourse.

9. THE INTERNAL WITNESS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

We declare, therefore, and we continue to repeat the declaration, till the gates of hell re-echo the sound, ‘that the Holy Spirit, by whose inspiration holy men of God have spoken this word, and by whose impulse and guidance they have, as his amanuenses, consigned it to writing; that this Holy Spirit is the author of that light by the aid of which we obtain a perception and an understanding of the divine meanings of the word, and is the Effector of that Certainty by which we believe those meaning to be truly divine; and that He is *the necessary Author, the all sufficient Effector.*’

- a) Scripture demonstrates that He is the necessary Author, when it says, ‘The things of God knoweth no man but the Spirit of God (1 Cor. ii. 11). No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost’ (1 Cor. xii. 3).
- b) But the Scripture introduced him as the sufficient and the more than sufficient Effector, when it declares, ‘The wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory, he hath revealed unto us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God’ (1 Cor. ii. 7, 10).

The sufficiency, therefore, of the Spirit proceeds from the plenitude of his knowledge of the secrets of God, and from the very efficacious revelation which he makes of them. This sufficiency of the Spirit cannot be more highly extolled than it is in a subsequent passage, in which the same apostle most amply commends it, by declaring, ‘he that is spiritual [a partaker of this revelation,] judgeth all things’ (verse 15), as having the mind of Christ through his Spirit, which he has received. Of the same sufficiency the Apostle St John is the most illustrious herald. In his general Epistle he writes these words: ‘But the anointing which ye have received of Him, abideth in you; and ye need not that any man teach you; but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him’ (1 John ii. 27). ‘He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself’ (1 John v. 10). To the Thessalonians another apostle writes thus: ‘Our Gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance’ (1 Thess. i. 3). In this passage he openly attributes to the power of the Holy Ghost the Certainty by which the faithful receive the word of the gospel. The Papists reply, ‘Many persons boast of the revelation of the Spirit, who, nevertheless, are destitute of such a revelation. It is impossible, therefore, for the faithful safely to rest in it.’ Are these fair words? Away with such blasphemy! If the Jews glory in their Talmud and their Cabala, and the Mahometans in their Alcoran, and if both of these boast themselves that they are Churches, cannot credence therefore be given with sufficient safety to the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, when they affirm their Divine Origin? Will the true Church be any less a Church because the sons of the stranger arrogate that title to themselves? This is the distinction between opinion and knowledge. It is their opinion, that they know that of which they are really ignorant. But they who do know it, have an assured perception of their knowledge. ‘It is the Spirit that beareth witness that the Spirit is truth’ (1 John v. 8), that is, the doctrine and the meanings comprehended in that doctrine, are truth.

‘But that attesting witness of the Spirit which is revealed in us, cannot convince others of the truth of the Divine word.’ What then? It will convince them when it

has also breathed on them: it will breathe its Divine *afflatus* on them, if they be the sons of the church, all of whom 'shall be (θεοδιδακτοι) taught of God: every man of them will hear and learn of the Father, and will come unto Christ' (John vi. 45). Neither can the testimony of any Church convince all men of the truth and divinity of the sacred writings. The Papists, who arrogate to themselves exclusively the title of 'the Church,' experience the small degree of credit which is given to their testimonies, by those who have not received an *afflatus* from the spirit of the Roman See.

'But it is necessary that there should be a testimony in the Church of such a high character as to render it imperative on all men to pay it due deference.' True. It was the incumbent duty of the Jews to pay deference to the testimony of Christ when he was speaking to them; the Pharisees ought not to have contradicted Stephen in the midst of his discourse; and Jews and Gentiles, without any exception, were bound to yield credence to the preaching of the apostles, confirmed as it was by so many and such astonishing miracles. But the duties here recited, were disregarded by all these parties. What was the reason of this their neglect? The voluntary hardening of their hearts, and that blindness of their minds, which was introduced by the Devil.

If the Papists still contend, that 'such a testimony as this ought to exist in the Church, against which no one shall actually offer any contradiction,' we deny the assertion. And experience testifies, that a testimony of this kind never yet had an existence, that it does not now exist, and (if we may form our judgment from the scriptures), we certainly think that it never will exist.

'But perhaps the Holy Ghost, who is the Author and Effector of this testimony, has entered into an engagement with the Church, not to inspire and seal on the minds of men this certainty, except through her, and by the intervention of her authority.' The Holy Ghost does, undoubtedly, according to the good pleasure of his own will, make use of some organ or instrument in performing these his offices. But this instrument is the word of God, which is comprehended in the sacred books of scripture; an instrument produced and brought forward by Himself, and instructed in his truth. The Apostle to the Hebrews in a most excellent manner describes the efficacy which is impressed on this instrument by the Holy Spirit, in these words: 'For the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart' (Heb. iv. 10). Its effect is called 'Faith,' by the Apostle. 'Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God' (Rom. x. 7). If any act of the Church occurs in this place, it is that by which she is occupied in the sincere preaching of this word, and by which she sedulously exercises herself in promoting its publication. But even this is not so properly the occupation of the Church, as of 'the Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers,' whom Christ has constituted his labourers 'for the edifying of his body, which is the Church' (Ephes. iv. 11). But we must in this place deduce an observation from the very nature of things in general, as well as of this thing in particular; it is, that the First Cause can extend much farther by its own action, than it is possible for an instrumental cause to do; and that the Holy Ghost gives to the word all that force which he afterwards employs, such being the great efficacy with which it is endued and applied, that whomsoever he only counsels by his word he himself persuades by

3 *The Certainty of Sacred Theology*

imparting Divine meanings to the word, by enlightening the mind as with a lamp, and by inspiring and sealing it by his own immediate action. The Papists pretend, that certain acts are necessary to the production of true faith; and they say that those acts cannot be performed except by the judgment and testimony of the Church — such as to believe that any book is the production of Matthew or Luke — to discern between a Canonical and an Apocryphal verse, and to distinguish between this or that reading, according to the variation in different copies. But, since there is a controversy concerning the weight and necessity of those acts, and since the dispute is no less than *how far they may be performed by the Church* — lest I should fatigue my most illustrious auditory by two great prolixity, I will omit at present any further mention of these topics; and will by Divine assistance explain them at some future opportunity.

My most illustrious and accomplished hearers, we have already perceived, that both the pages of our sacred Theology are full of GOD and CHRIST, and of the SPIRIT of both of them. If any inquiry be made for the OBJECT, *God and Christ by the SPIRIT* are pointed out to us. If we search for the AUTHOR, *God and Christ by the operation of the SPIRIT* spontaneously occur. If we consider the END proposed, *our union with God and Christ* offers itself — an end not to be obtained except through the communication of the SPIRIT. If we inquire concerning the TRUTH and CERTAINTY of the doctrine; *God in Christ*, by means of the efficacy of the HOLY GHOST, most clearly convinces our minds of the TRUTH, and in a very powerful manner seals the CERTAINTY on our hearts.

All the glory, therefore, of this revelation is deservedly due to God and Christ in the Holy Spirit: and most deservedly are thanks due from us to them, and must be given to them, through the Holy Ghost, for such an august and necessary benefit as this which they have conferred on us. But we can present to our God and Christ in the Holy Spirit no gratitude more grateful, and can ascribe no glory more glorious, than this, the application of our minds to an assiduous contemplation and a devout meditation on the knowledge of such a noble object. But in our meditations upon it, (to prevent us from straying into the paths of error), let us betake ourselves to the revelation which has been made of this doctrine. From the word of this revelation alone, let us learn the wisdom of endeavouring, by an ardent desire and in an unwearied course, to attain unto that ultimate design which ought to be our constant aim — that most blessed end of our union with God and Christ. Let us never indulge in any doubts concerning the truth of this revelation; but, ‘the full assurance of faith being impressed upon our minds and hearts by the inspiration and sealing of the Holy Spirit, let us adhere to this word, ‘till[at length] we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ’ (Ephes. iv. 13). I most humbly supplicate and intreat God our merciful Father, that he would be pleased to grant this great blessing to us, through the Son of his love, and by the communication of his Holy Spirit. And to him be ascribed all praise, and honour, and glory, forever and ever. Amen.

4 The Priesthood of Christ

This charming Oration was delivered by Arminius on the eleventh of July 1603 — the day on which the dignity of Doctor of Divinity was publicly conferred on him, and immediately prior to the act of creation. At the close of the Oration will be found a beautiful form of prayer and thanksgiving which Arminius addressed to God, after receiving at the hands of Dr Francis Gomarus the requisite literary honours: He also briefly returned thanks to Gomarus and to the various orders of spectators, who were exceedingly numerous on that interesting occasion, not only on account of the just celebrity of the Professor elect, but because his was the first Doctor's degree which had been granted by the new Dutch University.

As a preparatory exercise, he had on the preceding day maintained a public disputation on THE NATURE OF GOD. The substance of his profound and elaborate Theses on that subject was afterwards published, and stands in a subsequent part of this Work as the fourth of his Public Lectures. His opponents were Bertius, Hommius, Crucius and Grevinchevius, all of them celebrated for their great skill in scholastic learning. According to the duty which devolves on all opponents in the Schools, these learned men produced in a formal manner every objection to the positions of Arminius which they could devise; but he with the utmost skill and ingenuity answered the whole of their arguments, and, to the unbounded gratification of his auditory, proved a complete master of the art of reasoning and eminently qualified to engage in the instruction of others. On inspecting the fourth Lecture, those who are acquainted with the forms of scholastic disputation will perceive the arduous nature of such an undertaking, before an assembly of the greatest and most learned men in Holland. Some adequate conception of the difficulty of the task will likewise be formed, by those who are not personally familiar with the usages of the Schools, when they are informed, that all replies to objections must be IMPROMPTU and managed syllogisticall; that the Respondent knows nothing of the objections of his opponents till they are actually propounded in public, when the tact of his talent discovers itself in furnishing a ready and appropriate answer to each of them as they arise; and that this disputation occupied several hours both in the morning and in the afternoon: At the conclusion, Arminius received the applauses of his enlightened audience, for the consummate ability which he had displayed. — A few weeks afterwards, Arminius entered on the duties of his Professorship, in the execution of which he fully realized those high expectations that had been excited by the auspicious specimen which he then gave of his scholastic attainments.

On the Nineteenth of June, three weeks prior to this public ceremony, Arminius had gone from Amsterdam to Leyden, and had subjected himself to a private examination: it being usual for all those who laid claim to a Doctor's degree, or any other literary distinction, to demonstrate to accredited persons in private that they possess the requisite qualifications, before they are permitted to tender similar unequivocal demonstrations in public. In a letter which he addressed to his bosom-friend Uitenbogardt, two days afterwards, Arminius gives

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the following account of this preparatory examination: 'On Tuesday last I was examined by Gomarus, in the presence of the honourable Grotius and Merula. He performed his duty with great diligence and fairness: I returned as good extempore answers to his questions as I was able. I gave complete satisfaction to him as well as to the two gentlemen who were present. His interrogatories consisted of those particulars which have a reference to the substance of Theology: and he conducted himself through the whole in such a manner as was highly becoming in him, and as well as I could possibly have desired.' Such was the creditable and frank testimony which this good man bore to the conduct of a divine, who had very recently opposed his call to the Professorship, and had united with others in an attempt to rob him of his good name and his character.

The Noble the Lord Rector — the Very Famous, Reverend, Skillful, Intelligent, and Learned Men, who are the Fathers of this Most Celebrated University — the Rest of You, Most Worthy Strangers of Every Degree — and You, Most Noble and Studious Young Men, who are the Nursery of the Republic and the Church, and who are Increasing Every Day in Bloom and vigour:

If there be any order of men in whom it is utterly unbecoming to aspire after the honours of this world, especially after those honours which are accompanied by pomp and applause, that, without doubt, is the order ecclesiastical — a body of men who ought to be entirely occupied with a zeal for God, and for the attainment of that glory which is at his disposal. Yet, since, according to the laudable institutions of our ancestors, the usage has obtained in all well regulated Universities, to admit no man to the office of instructor in them, who has not previously signalized himself by some public and solemn testimony of probity and scientific ability — this sacred order of men have not refused a compliance with such public modes of decision, provided they be conducted in a way that is holy, decorous, and according to godliness. So far, indeed, are those who have been set apart to the pastoral office from being averse to public proceedings of this kind, that they exceedingly covet and desire them alone, because they conceive them to be of the first necessity to the Church of Christ. For they are mindful of this apostolical charge, 'Lay hands suddenly on no man' (1 Tim. v. 29); and of the other, which directs that a Bishop and a Teacher of the Church be 'apt to teach, holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers' (Tit. i. 9). I do not, therefore, suppose one person, in this numerous assembly, can be so ignorant of the public ceremonies of this University, or can hold them in such little estimation, as either to evince surprise at the undertaking in which we are now engaged, or wish to give it an unfavourable interpretation. But since it has always been a part of the custom of our ancestors, in academic festivities of this description, to choose some subject of discourse, the investigation of which in the fear of the Lord might promote the Divine glory and the profit of the hearers, and might excite them to pious and importunate supplication, I also can perceive no cause why I ought not conscientiously to comply with this custom. And although at the sight of this very respectable, numerous and learned assembly, I feel strongly affected with a sense of my defective eloquence and tremble not a little, yet I have selected a certain theme for my discourse which agrees well with my profession, and is full of grandeur, sublimity and adorable majesty. In making choice of it, I have not been overawed by the edict of Horace, which says,

Summite materiam vestris qui scribitis aequam, etc.

Select, all ye who write, a subject fit,
A subject not too mighty for your wit!
And ere you lay your shoulders to the wheel,
Weigh well their strength, and all their wetness feel!

For this declaration is not applicable in the least to theological subjects, all of which by their dignity and importance exceed the capacity and mental energy of every human being, and of angels themselves. A view of them so affected the Apostle Paul, (who, rapt up into the third heaven, had heard words ineffable), that they compelled him to break forth into this exclamation: 'Who is sufficient for these things' (2 Cor. ii. 16). If, therefore, I be not permitted to disregard the provisions of this Horatian statute, I must either transgress the boundaries of my profession, or be content to remain silent. But I am permitted to disregard the terms of this statute; and to do so, is perfectly lawful.

For whatever things tend to the glory of God and to the salvation of men, ought to be celebrated in a devout spirit in the congregations of the saints, and to be proclaimed with a grateful voice. I therefore propose to speak on THE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST: Not because I have persuaded myself of my capability to declare anything concerning it, which is demanded either by the dignity of my subject, or by the respectability of this numerous assembly; for it will be quite sufficient, and I shall consider that I have abundantly discharged my duty, if according to the necessity of the case I shall utter something that will contribute to the general edification: But I choose this theme that I may obtain, in behalf of my oration, such grace and favour from the excellence of its subject, as I cannot possibly confer on it by any eloquence in the mode of my address. Since, however, it is impossible for us either to form in our minds just and holy conceptions about such a sublime mystery, or to give utterance to them with our lips, unless the power of God influence our mental faculties and our tongues, let us by prayer and supplication implore his present aid, in the name of Jesus Christ our great High Priest.

Do thou, therefore, O holy and merciful God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Fountain of all grace and truth, vouchsafe to grant thy favourable presence to us who are a great congregation assembled together in thy holy name. Sprinkle thou our spirits, souls, and bodies, with the most gracious dew of thy immeasurable holiness, that the converse of thy saints with each other may be pleasing to thee. Assist us by the grace of thy Holy Spirit, who may yet more and more illuminate our minds — imbued with the true knowledge of Thyself and thy Son; may He also inflame our hearts with a sincere zeal for thy glory; may He open my mouth and guide my tongue, that I may be enabled to declare concerning the Priesthood of thy Son those things which are true and just and holy, to the glory of thy name and to the gathering of all of us together in the Lord. Amen.

Having now in an appropriate manner offered up those vows which well become the commencement of our undertaking, we will, by the help of God, proceed to the subject posed, after I have intreated all of you, who have been pleased to grace this solemn act of ours with your noble, learned and most gratifying presence, to give me that undivided attention which the subject deserves, while I speak on a matter of the most serious importance, and, according to your accustomed kindness, to shew me that favour and benevolence which are to me of the greatest necessity. That I may not abuse your patience, I engage

to consult brevity as much as our theme will allow. But we must begin with the very first principles of PRIESTHOOD, that from thence the discourse may appropriately be brought down to the PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST, on which we profess to treat.

FIRST. The first of those relations which subsist between God and men, has respect to something given and something received. The latter requires another relation supplementary to itself — a relation which taking its commencement from men, may terminate in God; and that is, an acknowledgment of a benefit received, to the honour of the munificent Donor. It is also a debt, due on account of a benefit already conferred, but which is not to be paid except on the demand and according to the regulation of the Giver; whose intention it has always been, that the will of a creature should not be the measure of his honour. His benignity likewise is so immense, that he never requires from those who are under obligations to him, the grateful acknowledgment of the benefit communicated in the first instance, except when he has bound them to himself by the larger, and far superior benefit, of a mutual covenant. But the extreme trait in that goodness, is, that he has bound himself to bestow on the same persons favours of yet greater excellence by infinite degrees. This is the order which he adopts; he wishes himself first to be engaged to them, before they are considered to be engaged to Him. For every covenant; that is concluded between God and men, consists of two parts:

1. The preceding promise of God, by which he obliges himself to some duty and to acts correspondent with that duty: and
2. The subsequent definition and appointment of the duty, which, it is stipulated, shall in return be required of men, and according to which a mutual correspondence subsists between men and God.

He promises, that he will be to them a king and a God, and that he will discharge towards them all the offices of a good King; while he stipulates, as a counter obligation, that they become his people, that in this relation they live according to his commands and that they ask and expect all blessings from his goodness. These two acts — a life according to his commands, and an expectation of all blessings from his goodness — comprise the duty of men towards God, according to the covenant into which he first entered with them.

On the whole, therefore, the duties of two functions are to be performed between God and men who have entered into covenant with him: FIRST, *a regal one*, which is of supreme authority: SECONDLY, *a religious one*, of devoted submission.

1. The use of the former is in the communication of every needful good, and in the imposing of laws or the act of legislation. Under it we likewise comprehend the gift of prophecy, which is nothing more than the annunciation of the royal pleasure, whether it be communicated by God himself, or by some one of his deputies or ambassadors as a kind of internuncio to the covenant. That no one may think the prophetic office, of which the scriptures make such frequent mention, is a matter of little solicitude to us, we assign it the place of a substitute under the Chief Architect.
2. But the further consideration of the *regal duty* being at present omitted, we shall proceed to a nearer inspection of that which is *religious*. We have already deduced its origin from the act of covenanting; we have propounded it, in the exercise of the regal office, as something that is due; and we place its proper action in thanksgiving and intreaty. This action is required to be religiously performed, according to their

common vocation, by every one of the great body of those who are in covenant; and to this end they have been sanctified by the word of the covenant, and have all been constituted priests to God, that they might offer gifts and prayers to The Most High. But since God loves order, he who is himself the only instance of order in its perfection, willed that, out of the number of those who were sanctified, some one should in a peculiar manner be separated to him; that he who was thus set apart should, by a special and extraordinary vocation, be qualified for the office of the priesthood; and that, approaching more intimately and with greater freedom to the throne of God, he should, in the place of his associates in the same covenant and religion, take the charge and management of whatever affairs were to be transacted before God on their account.

From this circumstance is to be traced the existence of the office of the priesthood, the duties of which were to be discharged before God in behalf of others — an office undoubtedly of vast dignity and of special honour among mankind. Although the priest must be taken from among men, and must be appointed in their behalf, yet it does not appertain to men themselves, to designate whom they will to sustain that office; neither does it belong to any one to arrogate that honour to himself. But as the office itself is an act of the divine pleasure, so likewise the choice of the person who must discharge its duties, rests with God himself: and it was his will, that the office should be fulfilled by him who for some just reason held precedence among his kindred by consanguinity. This was the father and master of the family, and his successor was the first born. We have examples of this in the holy patriarchs, both before and after the deluge. We behold this expressly in Noah, Abraham, and Job. There are also those, (not occupying the lowest seats in judgment), who say that Cain and Abel brought their sacrifices to Adam their father, that he might offer them to the Lord; and they derive this opinion from the word a(leph) y(odh) k(aph) h(e) used in the same passage. Though these examples are selected from the description of that period when sin had made its entrance into the world, yet a confirmation of their truth is obtained in this primitive institution of the human race, of which we are now treating. For it is peculiar to that period, that all the duties of the priesthood were confined within the act of offering only an eucharistic sacrifice and supplications. Having therefore in due form executed these functions, the priest, in the name of his compeers, was by the appeased Deity admitted to a familiar intercourse with Him, and obtained from Him a charge to execute among his kindred, in the name of God himself, and as ‘the messenger, or angel, of the Lord of Hosts.’ For the Lord revealed to him the Divine will and pleasure; that, on returning from his intercourse with God, he might declare it to the people. This will of God consisted of two parts:

1. That which he required to be performed by his covenant people; and
2. That which it was his wish to perform for their benefit.

In this charge, which was committed to the priest, to be executed by him, the administration of prophecy was also included; on which account it is said, ‘They should seek the LAW at the mouth of the priest, for he is the messenger of the Lord of Hosts’ (Mal. ii. 7). And since that second part of the Divine will was to be proclaimed from an assured trust and confidence in the truth of the Divine promises, and with a holy and affectionate feeling toward his own species — in that view, he was invested with a commission to dispense benedictions. In this manner, discharging the duties of a double embassy, (that of men to

God, and that of God to men), he acted, on both sides, the part of a Mediator of the covenant into which the parties had mutually entered. Nevertheless, not content with having conferred this honour on him whom he had sanctified, our God, all-bountiful, elevated him likewise to the delegated or vicarious dignity of the regal office, that he, bearing the image of God among his brethren, might then be able to administer justice to them in His Name, and might manage, for their common benefit, those affairs with which he was entrusted.

From this source arose what may be considered the native union of the PRIESTLY and the KINGLY offices, which also obtained among the holy patriarchs after the entrance of sin, and of which express mention is made in the person of Melchizedec. This was signified in a general manner by the patriarch Jacob, when he declared Reuben, his first born son, to be 'the excellency of dignity and the excellency of power,' which were his due on account of the right of primogeniture. For certain reasons, however, the kingly functions were afterwards separated from the priestly, by the will of God, who, dividing them into two parts among his people the children of Israel, transferred the kingly office to Judah and the priestly to Levi.

But it was proper, that this approach to God, through the oblation of an eucharistic sacrifice and prayers, should be made with a pure mind, holy affections, and with hands, as well as the other members of the body, free from defilement. This was required, even before the first transgression. 'Sanctify yourselves, and be ye holy; for I the Lord your God am holy' (Lev. xix. 2, etc). 'God heareth not sinners' (John ix. 31). 'Bring no more vain oblations, for your hands are full of blood' (Isa. i. 15). The will of God respecting this is constant and perpetual. But Adam, who was the first man and the first priest, did not long administer his office in a becoming manner; for, refusing to obey God, he tasted the fruit of the forbidden tree; and, by that foul crime of disobedience and revolt, he at once defiled his soul which had been sanctified to God, and his body. By this wicked deed he both lost all right to the priesthood, and was in reality deprived of it by the Divine sentence, which was clearly signified by his expulsion from Paradise, where he had appeared before God in that which was a type of His own dwelling-place. This was in accordance with the invariable rule of Divine Justice: 'Be it far from me, [that thou shouldst any longer discharge before me the duties of the priesthood:] for them that honour me, I will honour; and they that despise me, shall be lightly esteemed' (1 Sam. ii. 30). But he did not fall alone: All whose persons he at that time represented and whose cause he pleaded, (although they had not then come into existence), were with him cast down from the elevated summit of such a high dignity. Neither did they fall from the priesthood only, but likewise from the covenant, of which the priest was both the Mediator and the Internuncio; and God ceased to be the King and God of men, and men were no longer recognized as his people. The existence of the priesthood itself was at an end; for there was no one capable of fulfilling its duties according to the design of that covenant. The eucharistic sacrifice, the invocation of the name of God, and the gracious communication between God and men, all ceased together.

Most miserable, and deserving of the deepest commiseration, was the condition of mankind in that state of their affairs, if this declaration be a true one, 'Happy is the people whose God is the Lord!' (Psalm cxliv. 15). And this inevitable misery would have rested upon Adam and his race for ever, had not Jehovah, full of mercy and commiseration, deigned to receive them into favour, and resolved to enter into another covenant with the same

parties; not according to that which they had transgressed, and which was then become obsolete and had been abolished; but into a new covenant of grace. But the Divine justice and truth could not permit this to be done, except through the agency of an umpire and surety, who might undertake the part of a Mediator between the offended God and sinners. Such a Mediator could not then approach to God with an *eucharistic sacrifice* for benefits conferred upon the human race, or with prayers which might intreat only for a continuance and an increase of them: But he had to approach into the Divine presence to offer sacrifice for the act of hostility which they had committed against God by transgressing his commandment, and to offer prayers for obtaining the remission of their transgressions. Hence arose the necessity of an EXPIATORY SACRIFICE; and, on that account, a new priesthood was to be instituted, by the operation of which the sin that had been committed might be expiated, and access to the throne of God's grace might be granted to man through a sinner: this is the priesthood which belongs to our Christ, the Anointed One, alone.

But God, who is the Supremely Wise Disposer of times and seasons, would not permit the discharge of the functions appertaining to this priesthood to commence immediately after the formation of the world, and the introduction of sin. It was his pleasure, that the necessity of it should be first correctly understood and appreciated, by a conviction on men's consciences of the multitude, heinousness and aggravated nature of their sins. It was also his will, that the minds of men should be affected with a serious and earnest desire for it, yet so that they might in the mean time be supported against despair, arising from a consciousness of their sins, which could not be removed except by means of that Divine priesthood, the future commencement of which inspired them with hope and confidence. All these purposes God effected by the temporary institution of that typical priesthood, the duties of which infirm and sinful men 'after the law of a carnal commandment' could perform, by the immolation of beasts sanctified for that service; which priesthood was at first established in different parts of the world, and afterwards among the Israelites, who were specially elected to be a sacerdotal nation. When the blood of beasts was shed, in which was their life (Lev. xvii. 14), the people contemplated, in the death of the animals, their own demerits, for the beasts had not sinned that they by death should be punished as victims for transgression. After investigating this subject with greater diligence, and deliberately weighing it in the equal balances of their judgment, they plainly perceived and understood that their sins could not possibly be expiated by those sacrifices, which were of a species different from their own, and more despicable and mean than human beings. From these premises they must of necessity have concluded, that, notwithstanding they offered those animals, they in such an act delivered to God nothing less than their own bond, sealing it in his presence with an acknowledgment of their personal sins, and confessing the debt which they had incurred. Yet, because these sacrifices were of Divine Institution, and because God received them at the hands of men as incense whose odour was fragrant and agreeable, from these circumstances the offenders conceived the hope of obtaining favour and pardon, reasoning thus within themselves, as did Sampson's mother: 'If the Lord were pleased to kill us, he would not have received burnt-offering and a meat-offering at our hands' (Judges xiii. 23). With such a hope they strengthened their spirits that were ready to faint, and, confiding in the Divine promise, they expected in all the ardour of desire the dispensation of a priesthood which was prefigured under the typical one; 'searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ which was in them did

4 The Priesthood of Christ

signify, when it testified beforehand the SUFFERINGS of Christ, and the GLORY that should follow' (1 Pet. i. 11). But, since the mind pants after the very delightful consideration of this priesthood, our oration hastens towards it; and, having some regard to the lateness of the hour, and wishing not to encroach on your comfort, we shall omit any further allusion to that branch of the priesthood which has hitherto occupied our attention.

SECONDLY. In discoursing on the PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST, we will confine our observations to three points; and, on condition that you receive the succeeding part of my oration with that kindness and attention which you have hitherto manifested, and which I still hope and desire to receive, we will describe:

- *First.* THE IMPOSING OF THE OFFICE.
- *Secondly.* ITS EXECUTION AND ADMINISTRATION. And
- *Thirdly.* THE FRUITS OF THE OFFICE THUS ADMINISTERED, AND THE UTILITY WHICH WE DERIVE FROM IT.

I. In respect to the IMPOSING OF THE OFFICE, the subject itself presents us with three topics to be discussed in order.

1. *The person who imposes it.*
2. *The person on whom it is imposed, or to whom it is entrusted.* And
3. *The manner of his appointment, and of his undertaking this charge.*

1. *The person imposing it* is GOD, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Since this act of imposing belongs to the economy and dispensation of our salvation, the persons who are comprised under this one Divine Monarchy are to be distinctly considered according to the rule of the scriptures, which ought to have the precedence in this inquiry, and according to the rules and guidance of the orthodox Fathers that agree with those scriptures. It is JEHOVAH who imposes this office, and who, while the princes of darkness fret themselves and rage in vain, says to his MESSIAH, 'Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the Heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession' (Psalm ii. 8). He it is who, when he commanded Messiah to sit at his right hand, repeated his holy and revered word with an oath, saying, 'Thou art a Priest forever after the order of Melchizedec' (Psalm cx. 4). This is HE who imposes the office, and that by a right the most just and deserved. For 'with him we have to do, who, dwelling in the light unto which no man can approach,' remains continually in the seat of his Majesty. He preserves his own authority safe and unimpaired to himself, 'without any abasement or lessening of his person,' as the voice of antiquity expresses it; and retains entire, within himself, the right of demanding satisfaction from the sinner for the injuries which He has sustained. From this right he has not thought fit to recede, or to resign any part of it, on account of the rigid inflexibility of his justice, according to which he hates iniquity and does not permit a wicked person to dwell in his presence. This, therefore, is the Divine Person in whose hands rest both the *right* and the *power* of imposition; the fact of his having also the *will*, is decided by the very act of imposition.

But an inquiry must be made into the CAUSE of this imposition which we shall not find, except, *first*, in the conflict between justice and gracious mercy; and, *Afterwards*, in their amicable agreement, or rather their junction by means of wisdom's conciliating assistance.

- a) JUSTICE demanded, on her part, the punishment due to her from a sinful creature; and this demand she the more rigidly enforced, by the greater equity with which she had threatened it, and the greater truth with which it had been openly foretold and declared.

Gracious MERCY, like a pious mother, moving with bowels of commiseration, desired to avert that punishment in which was placed the extreme misery of the creature. For she thought that, though the remission of that punishment was not due to the cause of it, yet such a favour ought to be granted to her by a right of the greatest equity; because it is one of her chief properties to 'rejoice against judgment' (James ii. 13).

JUSTICE, tenacious of her purpose, rejoined, that the throne of grace, she must confess, was sublimely elevated above the tribunal of justice: but she could not bear with patient indifference that no regard should be paid to her, and her suit not to be admitted, while the authority of managing the whole affair was to be transferred to mercy. Since, however, it was a part of the oath administered to justice when she entered into office, 'that she should render to every one his own,' she would yield entirely to mercy, provided a method could be devised by which her own inflexibility could be declared, as well as the excess of her hatred to sin.

- b) But to find out that method, was not the province of MERCY. It was necessary, therefore, to call in the aid of WISDOM to adjust the mighty difference, and to reconcile by an amicable union those two combatants that were, in God, the supreme protectresses of all equity and goodness. Being called upon, she came, and at once discovered a method, and affirmed that it was possible to render to each of them that which belonged to her; for if the punishment due to sin appeared desirable to Justice and odious to Mercy, it might be transmuted into an expiatory sacrifice, the oblation of which, on account of the voluntary suffering of death, (which is the punishment adjudged to sin), might appease Justice, and open such a way for Mercy as she had desired. Both of them instantly assented to this proposal, and made a decree according to the terms of agreement settled by Wisdom, their common arbitrator.
2. But, that we may come to the SECOND POINT, a *priest* was next to be sought, to offer the *sacrifice*: For that was a function of the priesthood. A sacrifice was likewise to be sought; and with this condition annexed to it, that the same person should be both priest and sacrifice. This was required by the plan of the true priesthood and sacrifice, from which the typical and symbolical greatly differs. But in the different orders of creatures neither sacrifice nor priest could be found.

It was not possible for an angel to become a priest; because 'he was to be taken from among men and to be ordained from men in things pertaining to God' (Heb. v. 1). Neither could an angel be a sacrifice; because it was not just that the death of an

angel should be an expiation for a crime which a man had perpetrated: And if this had even been most proper, yet man could never have been induced to believe that an angelical sacrifice had been offered by an angel for him, or, if it had been so offered, that it was of the least avail. Application was then to be made to men themselves. But, among them, not one could be found in whom it would have been a becoming act to execute the office of the priesthood, and who had either ability or inclination for the undertaking. For all men were sinners; all were terrified with a consciousness of their delinquency; and all were detained captive under the tyranny of sin and Satan. It was not lawful for a sinner to approach to God, who is pure Light, for the purpose of offering sacrifice; because, being affrighted by his own internal perception of his crime, he could not support a sight of the countenance of an incensed God, before whom it was still necessary that he should appear. Being placed under the dominion of sin and Satan, he was neither willing, nor had he the power to will, to execute an office, the duties of which were to be discharged for the benefit of others, out of love to them. The same consideration likewise tends to the rejection of every human sacrifice. Yet the priest was to be taken from among men, and the oblation to God was to consist of a human victim.

In this state of affairs, the assistance of WISDOM was again required in the Divine Council. She declared that a man must be born from among men, who might have a nature in common with the rest of his brethren, that, being in all things tempted as they were, he might be able to sympathize with others in their sufferings; and yet, that he should neither be reckoned in the order of the rest, nor should be made man according to the law of the primitive creation and benediction; that he should not be under dominion of sin; that he should be one in whom Satan could find nothing worthy of condemnation, who should not be tormented by a consciousness of sin, and who should not even know sin, that is, one who should be 'born in the likeness of sinful flesh, and yet without sin. For such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners' (Heb. vii. 26). But, that he might have a community of nature with men, he ought to be born of a human being; and, that he might have no participation in crime with them, but might be holy, he ought to be conceived by the Holy Ghost, because sanctification is his proper work. By the Holy Spirit, the nativity which was above and yet according to nature, might through the virtue of the mystery, restore nature, as it surpassed her in the transcendent excellence of the miracle. But the dignity of this priesthood was greater, and its functions more weighty and important, than man even in his pure state was competent to sustain or discharge. The benefits also to be obtained by it, infinitely exceeded the value of man when in his greatest state of purity. Therefore, the Word of God, who from the beginning was with God, and by whom the worlds, and all things visible and invisible, were created, ought himself to be made flesh, to undertake the office of the priesthood, and to offer his own flesh to God as a sacrifice for the life of the world.

We now have the person who was entrusted with the priesthood, and to whom the province was assigned of atoning for the common offense: It is Jesus Christ, the Son of God and of man, a high priest of such great excellence, that the transgression whose demerits have obtained this mighty Redeemer, might almost seem to have been a happy circumstance.

3. Let us proceed to *the mode of its being imposed or undertaken*. This mode is according to covenant, which, on God's part, received an oath for its confirmation. As it is according to covenant, it becomes a solemnity appointed by God, with whom rests the appointment to the priesthood. For the Levitical priesthood was conferred on Levi *according to covenant*, as the Lord declares by the prophet Malachi: 'My covenant was with him of life and peace' (ii. 5). It is, however, peculiar to this priesthood of Christ, that the covenant on which it is founded, was *confirmed by an oath*. Let us briefly consider each of them.

The covenant into which God entered with our High Priest, Jesus Christ, consisted, on the part of God, of the *demand* of an action to be performed, and of the *promise* of an immense remuneration. On the part of Christ, our High Priest, it consisted of an *accepting* of the PROMISE, and a *voluntary engagement* to PERFORM THE ACTION.

- *First*, God *required* of him, that he should lay down his soul as a victim in sacrifice for sin (Isa. liii. 11), that he should give his flesh for the light of the world (John vi. 51), and that he should pay the price of redemption for the sins and the captivity of the human race. God 'promised' that, if he performed all this, 'he should see a seed whose days should be prolonged' (Isa. liii. 11), and that he should be himself 'an everlasting Priest after the order of Melchizedec' (cx. 4), that is, he should, by the discharge of his *priestly* functions, be elevated to the *regal* dignity.
- *Secondly*, Christ, our High Priest, accepted of these conditions, and permitted the province to be assigned to him of atoning for our transgressions, exclaiming 'Lo, I come that I may do thy will, O my God' (Psalm xl. 8). But he accepted them under a stipulation, that, on completing his great undertaking, he should forever enjoy the honour of a priesthood similar to that of Melchizedec, and that, being placed on his royal throne, he might, as KING OF RIGHTEOUSNESS and PRINCE OF PEACE, rule in righteousness the people subject to his sway, and might dispense peace to his people. He, therefore, 'for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame' (Heb. xii. 2), that, 'being anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows' (Psalm xlv. 7), he might sit forever in the throne of equity at the right hand of the throne of God.

Great, indeed, was the condescension of the all-powerful God in being willing to treat with our High Priest rather in the way of covenant, than by a display of his authority. And strong were the pious affections of our High Priest, who did not refuse to take upon himself, on our account, the discharge of those difficult and arduous duties which were full of pain, trouble, and misery. Most glorious act, performed by thee, O Christ, who art infinite in goodness! Thou great High Priest, accept of the honours due to thy pious affection, and continue in that way to proceed to glory, to the complete consecration of our salvation! For it was the will of God, that the duties of the office should be administered from a voluntary and disinterested zeal and affection for his glory and the salvation of sinners; and it was a deed worthy of his abundant benignity, to recompense with a large reward the voluntary promptitude which Christ exhibited.

God added an oath to the covenant, both for the purpose of confirming it, and as a demonstration of the dignity and unchangeable nature of that priesthood. Though

the constant and unvarying veracity of God's nature might very properly set aside the necessity of an oath, yet as he had conformed to the customs of men in their method of solemnizing agreements, it was his pleasure by an oath to confirm his covenant; that our High Priest, relying in assured hope on the two-fold and immovable anchor of the *promise* and of the *oath*, 'might despise the shame and endure the cross.' The immutability and perpetuity of this priesthood have been pointed out by the oath which was added to the covenant. For whatever that be which God confirms by an oath, it is something eternal and immutable.

But it may be asked, 'Are not all the words which God speaks, all the promises which he makes, and all the covenants into which he enters, of the same nature, even when they are unaccompanied by the sanctity of an oath,' Let me be permitted to describe the difference between the two cases here stated, and to prove it by an important example. There are two methods or plans by which it might be possible for man to arrive at a state of righteousness before God, and to obtain life from him. The one is according to righteousness through the law, by works and 'of debt;' the other is according to mercy through the gospel, 'by grace, and through faith:' These two methods are so constituted as not to allow both of them to be in a course of operation at the same time; but they proceed on the principle, that when the first of them is made void, a vacancy may be created for the second. In the beginning, therefore, it was the will of God to prescribe to man the first of these methods; which arrangement was required by his righteousness and the primitive institution of mankind. But it was not his pleasure to deal strictly with man according to the process of that legal covenant, and peremptorily to pronounce a destructive sentence against him in conformity with the rigor of the law. Wherefore, he did not subjoin an oath to that covenant, lest such an addition should have served to point out its immutability, a quality which God would not permit it to possess. The necessary consequence of this was, that when the first covenant was made void through sin, a vacancy was created by the good pleasure of God for another and a better covenant, in the manifestation of which he employed an oath, because it was to be the last and peremptory one respecting the method of obtaining righteousness and life. 'By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, that in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed' (Gen. xxii. 18). 'As I live, saith the Lord, have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die, and not that he should return from his ways and live' (Ezek. xviii. 23). 'So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest. And to whom swear he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief' (Heb. iii. 11, 18). For the same reason, it is said, 'The wrath of God, [from which it is possible for sinners to be liberated by faith in Christ,] abides on those who are unbelievers' (John iii. 36). A similar process is observed in relation to the priesthood. For he did not confirm with an oath the Levitical priesthood, which had been imposed until the time of reformation' (Heb. ix. 10). But because it was his will that the priesthood of Christ should be everlasting, he ratified it by an oath. The apostle to the Hebrews demonstrates the whole of this subject in the most nervous style, by quotations from the 110th Psalm. Blessed are we in whose behalf God was willing to swear! but most miserable shall we be, if we do not believe on him who swears. The greatest dignity is likewise obtained to this priesthood, and imparted to it, by the addition of an oath, which elevates it far above the honour to which that of Levi attained. 'For the law of a carnal commandment maketh men priests who have infirmities, and are sinners,

to offer both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him perfect who did the service, as pertaining to the conscience' (Heb. ix. 9); neither could they abolish sin, or procure heavenly blessings. But the words of the oath, which was since the law, constituteth the Son a High Priest consecrated forevermore, who, after the power of an endless life and through the Eternal Spirit, offers himself without spot to God, and by that one offering, he perfects forever them that are sanctified, their consciences being purified to serve the living God: by how much also it was a more excellent covenant, by so much the more ought it to be confirmed, since it was established upon better promises (Heb. 7–10); and that which God hath deigned to honour with the sanctity of an oath, should be viewed as an object of the most momentous importance.

II. We have spoken to the act of IMPOSING the priesthood, as long as our circumscribed time will allow us. Let us contemplate its EXECUTION, in which we have to consider *the duties to be performed*, and in them *the feeling and condition of who performs them*. The functions to be executed were two:

1. The OBLATION of an expiatory sacrifice, and
2. PRAYER.

1. The OBLATION was preceded by a preparation through the deepest privation and abasement, the most devoted obedience, vehement supplications, and the most exquisitely painful experience of human infirmities, on each of which it is not now necessary to speak. The oblation consists of two parts succeeding each other: The FIRST is the immolation or sacrifice of the body of Christ, by the shedding of his blood on the altar of the cross, which was succeeded by death — thus paying the price of redemption for sins by suffering the punishment due to them. The OTHER PART consists of the offering of his body re-animated and sprinkled with the blood which he shed — a symbol of the price which he has paid, and of the redemption which he has obtained. The FIRST PART of this oblation was to be performed without the Holy of Holies, that is, on earth, because no effusion of blood can take place in heaven, since it is necessarily succeeded by death. For death has no more sway in heaven, in the presence and sight of the majesty of the true God, than sin itself has, which contains within it the deserts of death, and as death contains within itself the punishment of sin. For thus says the scriptures, 'The Son of man came, not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many' (Matt. xx. 28). 'For this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins' (Matt. xxvi. 28). 'Christ Jesus gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time' (1 Tim. ii. 6). But the SECOND PART of this offering was to be accomplished in heaven, in the Holy of Holies. For that body which had suffered the punishment of death and had been recalled to life, was entitled to appear before the Divine Majesty besprinkled with its own blood, that, remaining thus before God as a continual memorial, it might also be a perpetual expiation for transgressions. On this subject, the Apostle says: 'Into the second tabernacle went the High Priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people. But Christ being come a High Priest of good things to come, not by the blood of goat, and calves, but by his own

blood he entered in once into the Holy Place, having obtained eternal redemption for us' (Heb. ix. 11); that is, by his own blood already poured out and sprinkled upon him, that he might appear with it in the presence of God. That act, being once performed, was never repeated; 'for in that he died, he died unto sin once.' But this is a perpetual act; 'for in that he liveth, he liveth unto God' (Rom. vi. 10). 'This man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood' (Heb. vii. 24). The former was the act of the Lamb to be slain, the latter, that of the Lamb already slain and raised again from death to life. The one was completed in a state of the deepest humiliation, the other in a state of glory; and both of them out of a consummate affection for the glory of God and the salvation of sinners. Sanctified by the anointing of the Spirit, he completed the former act; and the latter was likewise his work, when he had been further consecrated by his sufferings and sprinkled with his own blood. By the former, therefore, he sanctified himself, and made a kind of preparation on earth that he might be qualified to discharge the functions of the latter in heaven.

2. The SECOND of the two functions to be discharged, was the act of *prayer* and *intercession*, the latter of which depends upon the former. Prayer is that which Christ offers for himself, and intercession is what he offers for believers; each of which is most luminously described to us by John, in the seventeenth chapter of his Gospel, which contains a perpetual rule and exact canon of the prayers and intercessions which Christ offers in heaven to his Father. For although that prayer was recited by Christ while he remained upon earth, yet it properly belongs to his sublime state of exaltation in heaven: and it was his will that it should be described in his word, that we on earth, might derive from it perpetual consolation. Christ offers up a prayer to the Father for himself, according to the Father's command and promise combined, 'Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance' (Psalm ii. 8). Christ had regard to this promise, when he said, 'Father, glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee, as thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.' This sort of intreaty must be distinguished from those 'supplications which Christ, in the days of his flesh, offered up to the Father, with strong cries and tears' (Heb. v. 7); for by them he intreated to be delivered from anguish, while by the other he asks, 'to see his seed whose days should be prolonged, and to behold the pleasure of the Lord which should prosper in his hands' (Isa. liii. 10). But, for the faithful, intercession is made, of which the apostle thus speaks, 'Who is he that condemneth, It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also MAKETH INTERCESSION FOR US' (Rom. viii. 34). And, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, he says, 'Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing HE EVER LIVETH TO MAKE INTERCESSION FOR THEM' (vii. 25). But Christ is said to intercede for believers, to the exclusion of the world, because, after he had offered a sacrifice sufficient to take away the sins of all mankind, he was consecrated a great 'High Priest to preside over the house of God' (Heb. x. 21), 'which house those are who hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end' (iii. 6). Christ discharges the whole of this part of his function in heaven, before the face of the Divine Majesty; for there, also, is the royal seat and the throne of God, to which, when we are about to pray, we are commanded

to lift up our eyes and our minds. But he executes this part of his office, not in anguish of spirit, or in a posture of humble genuflection, as though fallen down before the knees of the Father, but in the confidence of the shedding of his own blood, which, sprinkled as it is on his sacred body, he continually presents, as an object of sight before his Father, always turning it towards his sacred countenance. The entire efficacy of this function depends on the dignity and value of the blood effused and sprinkled over the body; for, by his blood-shedding, he opened a passage for himself 'into the holiest, within the veil.' From which circumstance we may with the greatest certainty conclude, that his prayers will never be rejected, and that whatever we shall ask in his name, will, in virtue of that intercession, be both heard and answered.

The sacerdotal functions being thus executed, God, the Father, mindful of his covenant and sacred oath, not only continued the priesthood with Christ forever, but elevated him likewise to the regal dignity, 'all power being given unto him in heaven and in earth (Matt. xxviii. 18), also power over all flesh (John xvii. 2); a name being conferred on him which is far above all principality, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come (Ephes. i. 21), angels, and authorities, and powers being made subject unto him' (1 Pet. iii. 22), that he might be the Christ and the Lord of his whole Israel, KING of Kings and LORD of Lords. By this admirable covenant, therefore, God hath united those two supreme functions in one, even in Christ Jesus, and has thus performed his promise, by which he had sworn that this Priest should be forever after the order of Melchizedec, 'who was at once a King and a Priest; and is to the present time without beginning of days or end of life,' because his genealogy is not described in the Scriptures, which in this case are subservient to the figure. This conjunction of the sacerdotal and regal functions is the highest point and the extreme limit of all the divine work, a never ending token of the justice and the mercy of God attempered together for the economy of our salvation, a very luminous and clear evidence of the most excellent glory of God, and an immovable foundation for the certainty of obtaining salvation through this royal Priest. If man is properly styled 'the extreme Colophon of the creation,' 'a microcosm,' on account of the union of his body and soul, 'an epitome of the whole world,' and 'the marriage of the Universe,' what judgment shall we form of this conjunction, which consists of a most intimate and inseparable union of the whole church of believers and of God himself, 'who dwells in the light unto which no man can approach,' and by what amplitude of title shall we point out its divinity. This union hath a name above every name that can be named. It is ineffable, inconceivable, and incomprehensible. If, chiefly in respect to this I shall say, that Christ is styled 'the brightness of the Father's glory,' 'the express image of his person' and 'the image of the invisible God,' I shall have expressed its excellency as fully as it is possible to do.

What can be a more illustrious instance of the admixture of justice with mercy than that even the Son of God, when he had 'made himself of no reputation and assumed the form of a servant,' could not be constituted a King except through a discharge of the sacerdotal functions; and that all those blessings which he had to bestow as a King on his subjects, could not be asked except through the priesthood, and which, when obtained from God, could not, (except through the intervention of this royal Mediator), be communicated by his vicarious distribution under God? What can be a stronger and a better proof of the certainty of obtaining salvation through Christ, than that he has, by the discharge of his

sacerdotal functions in behalf of men, asked and procured it for men, and that, being constituted a King through the priesthood, he has received salvation from the Father to be dispensed to them? In these particulars consists the perfection of the divine glory.

III. But this consideration, I perceive, introduces us, almost imperceptibly, to the THIRD and last portion of our subject, in which we have engaged to treat on THE FRUITS OF THE SACERDOTAL OFFICE in its administration by Christ. We will reduce all these fruits, though they are innumerable, to four chief particulars; and, since we hasten to the end of this discourse, we bind ourselves down to extreme brevity. These benefits are,

1. The concluding and the confirmation of a New Covenant;
2. The asking, obtaining, and application of all the blessings necessary for the salvation of the human race;
3. The institution of a new priesthood, both eucharistic and royal; and
4. lastly, The extreme and final bringing to God of all his covenant people.

1. The FIRST UTILITY is *the contracting and the confirmation of a New Covenant*, in which is the direct way to solid felicity.

We rejoice and glory, that this has been obtained by the priesthood of Christ. For since the first covenant had been made weak through sin and the flesh, and was not capable of bringing righteousness and life, it was necessary, either to enter into another, or that we should be forever expelled from God's presence. Such a covenant could not be contracted between a just God and sinful men, except in consequence of a reconciliation, which it pleased God, the offended party, should be perfected by the blood of our High Priest, to be poured out on the altar of the cross. He who was at once the officiating priest and the Lamb for sacrifice, poured out his sacred blood, and thus asked and obtained for us a reconciliation with God. When this great offering was completed, it was possible for the reconciled parties to enter into an agreement. Hence, it pleased God, that the same High Priest who had acted as Mediator and Umpire in this reconciliation, should, with the very blood by which he had effected their union, go between the two parties, as a middle-man, or, in the capacity of an ambassador, and as a herald to bear tidings of war or peace, with the same blood as that by which the consciences of those who were included in the provisions of the covenant, being sprinkled, might be purged from dead works and sanctified; with the very blood, which, sprinkled upon himself, might always appear in the sight of God; and with the same blood as that by which all things in the heavens might be sprinkled and purified. Through the intervention, therefore, of this blood, another covenant was contracted, not one of works, but of faith, not of the law, but of grace, not an old, but a new one — and new, not because it was later than the first, but because it was never to be abrogated or repealed; and because its force and vigour should perpetually endure. 'For that which decayeth and waxeth old, is ready to vanish away' (Heb. viii. 13). If such a covenant as is described in this quotation should be again contracted, in the several ages which succeed each other, changes ought frequently to occur in it; and, all former covenants being rendered

obsolete, others more recent ought to succeed. But it was necessary, at length, that a pause should occur in one of them, and that such a covenant should at once be made as might endure forever. It was also to be ratified with blood. But how was it possible to be confirmed with blood of greater value than that of the High Priest, who was the Son, both of God and man. But the covenant of which we are now treating, was ratified with that blood; it was, therefore, a new one, and never to be annulled. For the perpetual presence and sight of such a great High Priest, sprinkled with his own blood, will not suffer the mind of his Father to be regardless of the covenant ratified by it, or his sacred breast to be moved with repentance. With what other blood will it be possible for the consciences of those in covenant to be cleansed and sanctified to God, if, after having become parties to the covenant of grace, they pollute themselves with any crime, 'There remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, if any man have trodden under foot this High Priest, and counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing' (Heb. x. 29). The covenant, therefore, which has been concluded by the intervention of this blood and this. High Priest, is a new one, and will endure forever.

2. The SECOND FRUIT is *the asking, obtaining, and application, of all the blessings necessary to those who are in covenant for the salvation both of soul and body*. For, since every covenant must be confirmed by certain promises, it was necessary that this also should have its blessings, by which it might be sanctioned, and those in covenant rendered happy.

a) Among those blessings, *the remission of sins* first offers itself; according to the tenor of the New Covenant, 'I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more' (Heb. viii. 12). But the scripture testifies, that Christ has asked this blessing by his blood, when it says, 'This is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many, for the remission of sins' (Matt. xxvi. 28). The scripture also proves his having obtained such a blessing by the discharge of the same office, in these words: 'By his own blood Christ entered in once into the holy place, HAVING OBTAINED eternal redemption for us' (Heb. ix. 12). It adds its testimony to the application, saying, 'In Christ WE HAVE REDEMPTION through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace' (Ephes. i. 7).

b) This necessary blessing is succeeded by *adoption into sons* and by *a right to the heavenly inheritance*: And we owe it to the Priesthood of Christ, that this blessing was asked and obtained for us, as well as communicated to us. For he being the proper and only begotten Son of the Father, and the sole heir of all his Father's blessings, was unwilling to enjoy such transcendent benefits alone, and desired to have co-heirs and partners, whom he might anoint with the oil of his gladness, and might receive into a participation of that inheritance. He made an offering, therefore, of his soul for sin, that, the travail of his soul being finished, he might see his seed prolonged in their days — the seed of God which might come into a participation with him both of name and inheritance. 'He was made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive THE ADOPTION OF SONS' (Gal. iv. 5). According to the command of the Father, he asked, that the Heathen might be given

to him for an inheritance. By these acts, therefore, which are peculiar to his priesthood, he asked for this right of adoption in behalf of his believing people, and obtained it for the purpose of its being communicated to them, nay, in fact, he himself became the donor. 'For to as many as believed on his name Christ gave power to become the sons of God' (John i. 12). Through him and in regard to him, God has adopted us for sons, who are beloved in him the Son of his love. He, therefore, is the sole heir, by whose death the inheritance comes to others; which circumstance was predicted by the perfidious husbandmen (Mark xii. 7), who, being Scribes and Pharisees, uttered at that time a remarkable truth, although they were ignorant of such a great mystery.

- c) But because it is impossible to obtain benefits of this magnitude except in union with the High Priest himself, it was expected of him that he should ask and obtain *the gift of the HOLY SPIRIT*, the bond of that union, and should pour it out on his own people. But since the spirit of grace is the token as well as the testimony of the love of God towards us, and the earnest of our inheritance, Christ could not ask this great gift till a reconciliation had taken place, and to effect this was the duty of the priest. When, therefore, this reconciliation was effected, he asked of his Father another Comforter for his people, and his request was granted. Being elevated to the right hand of God, he obtained this Paraclete promised in the terms of the sacerdotal covenant; and, when he had procured this Spirit, he poured it out in a most copious manner on his followers, as the scripture says, 'Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear' (Acts ii. 33).

That the asking, the obtaining, and the communication of all these blessings, have flowed from the functions of the priesthood, God has testified by a certain seal of the greatest sanctity, when he constituted Christ the Testator of these very blessings, which office embraces conjointly both the full possession of the good things devised as legacies in the Will, and absolute authority over their distribution.

3. The THIRD FRUIT of Christ's administration is *the institution of a new priesthood both eucharistic and regal*, and our sanctification for the purpose of performing its duties; for when a New Covenant was concluded, it was needful to institute a new eucharistic priesthood, (because the old one had fallen into disuse), and to sanctify priests to fulfill its duties.

- a) Christ, by his own priesthood, completed such an institution; and he sanctified us by a discharge of its functions. This was the order in which he instituted it: FIRST, he constituted us his debtors, and as bound to thanksgiving on account of the immense benefits procured for us and bestowed upon us by his priesthood. THEN he instructed us how to offer sacrifices to God, our souls and bodies being sanctified and consecrated by the sprinkling of his blood and by the unction of the Holy Spirit, that, if they were offered as sacrifices to God, they might meet with acceptance. It was also his care to have an altar erected in heaven before the throne of grace, which being sprinkled with his own blood he consecrated to God, that the sacrifices of his faithful people, being placed upon it, might continually appear before the face of the Majesty of heaven

and in presence of his throne. LASTLY, he placed on that altar an eternal and never-ceasing fire — the immeasurable favour of God, with which the sacrifices on that altar might be kindled and reduced to ashes.

b) But it was also necessary that priests should be consecrated: the act of consecration, therefore, was performed by Christ, as the Great High Priest, by his own blood. St John says, in the Apocalypse, ‘He hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father’ (i. 6). ‘Thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests’ (v. 10). Not content to have us joint-heirs in the participation of his inheritance, he willed that we should likewise partake of the same dignity as that which he enjoyed. But he made us partners with him of that dignity in such a manner, as in the mean time always to retain within himself the first place, ‘as Head of his body the Church, the first-born among many brethren and the Great High Priest who presides over the whole of the House of God.’ To Him, we, who are ‘born again,’ ought to deliver our sacrifices, that by him they may be further offered to God, sprinkled and perfumed with the grateful odour of his own expiatory sacrifice, and may thus through him be rendered acceptable to the Father. For this cause, the Apostle says, ‘By him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name’ (Heb. xiii. 15). We are indeed, by his favour ‘a holy priesthood,’ to offer up spiritual sacrifices; but those sacrifices are rendered ‘acceptable to God, only by Jesus Christ’ (1 Pet. ii. 5). Not only was it his pleasure that we should be partakers of this sacerdotal dignity, but likewise of the eternity attached to it, that we also might execute the office of the priesthood after the order of Melchizedec, which by a sacred oath was consecrated to immortality. For though, at the close of these ages of time, Christ will not any longer perform the expiatory part of the priesthood, yet he will forever discharge its eucharistic duties in our favour. These eucharistic duties we shall also execute in him and through him, unless, in the midst of the enjoyment of the benefits received by us from him, we should desire our memories no longer to retain the recollection, that through him we obtained those blessings, and through him we have been created priests to render due thanksgiving to God the chief Donor of all. But, since we are not able to offer to God, so long as we remain in this mortal body, the sacrifices due to him, except by the strenuous resistance which we offer to Satan, the world, sin, and our own flesh, and through the victory which we obtain over them, (both of which are royal acts), and since, after this life, we shall execute the sacerdotal office, being elevated with him on the throne of his Father, and having all our enemies subdued under us, he hath therefore made us both kings and priests, yea ‘a royal priesthood’ to our God, that nothing might be found in the typical priesthood of Melchizedec, in the enjoyment of which we should not equally participate.

4. The FOURTH, and last FRUIT of the Priesthood of Christ, proposed to be noticed by us, is *the act of bringing to God all the church of the faithful*; which is the end and completion of the three preceding effects. For with this intent the covenant was

contracted between God and men; with this intent the remission of sins, the adoption of sons, and the Spirit of grace were conferred on the church; for this purpose the new eucharistic and royal priesthood was instituted; that, being made priests and kings, all the covenant people might be brought to their God. In most expressive language the Apostle Peter ascribes this effect to the priesthood of Christ, in these words: 'For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, THAT HE MIGHT BRING US TO GOD' (1 Pet. iii. 18). The following are also the words of an Apostle concerning the same act of bringing them to God: 'Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father' (1 Cor. xv. 24). In Isaiah's prophecy it is said, 'Behold I and the children whom the Lord hath given me!' Let these words be considered as proceeding out of the mouth of Christ, when he is bringing his children and addressing the Father; not that they may be for signs and for wonders' to the people, but 'a peculiar treasure to the Lord.'

Christ will therefore bring all his CHURCH, whom he hath redeemed to himself by his own blood, that they may receive, from the hands of the Father of infinite benignity, the heavenly inheritance which has been procured by his death, promised in his word, and sealed by the Holy Spirit, and may enjoy it forever. He will bring his PRIESTS, whom sprinkled with his blood, he hath sanctified unto God, that they may serve him forever. He will bring his KINGS, that they may with God possess the kingdom forever and ever: for in them, by the virtue of his Holy Spirit, he has subdued and overcome Satan the Chief, and his auxiliaries, the world, sin, and their own flesh, yea, and 'death itself, the last enemy that shall be destroyed.'

Christ will bring, and God even the Father will receive. He will receive the CHURCH of Christ, and will command her as 'the bride, the Lamb's wife,' on her introduction into the celestial bride-chamber, to celebrate a perpetual feast with the Lamb, that she may enjoy the most complete fruition of pleasure, in the presence of the throne of his glory. He will receive the PRIESTS, and will clothe them with the comely and beautiful garments of perfect holiness, that they may forever and ever sing to God a new song of thanksgiving. And then he will receive the KINGS, and place them on the throne of his Majesty, that they may with God and the Lamb obtain the kingdom and may rule and reign forever.

These are the fruits and benefits which Christ, by the administration of his priesthood, hath asked and obtained for us, and communicated to us. Their dignity is undoubtedly great, and their utility immense. For what could occur of a more agreeable nature to those who are 'alienated from the life of God, and strangers to the covenants of promise' (Ephes. ii. 12), than to be received by God into the covenant of grace, and to be reckoned among his people? What could afford greater pleasure to the consciences which were oppressed with the intolerable burden of their sins, and fainting under the weight of the wrath of God, than the remission and pardon of all their transgressions? What could prove more acceptable to men, sons of the accursed earth, and to those who are devoted to hell, than to receive from God the adoption of sons, and to be written in heaven? What greater pleasure could those enjoy who he under the dominion of Satan and the tyranny of sin, than a freedom from such a state of most horrid and miserable servitude, and a restoration to true liberty? What more glorious than to be admitted into a participation of the Priesthood and of the Monarchy, to be consecrated priests and kings to God, even

royal priests and priestly kings? And, lastly, what could be more desirable than to be brought to God, the Chief Good and the Fountain of all happiness, that, in a beautiful and glorious state, we may spend with him a whole eternity?

This priesthood was imposed by God himself, 'with whom we have to do,' on Christ Jesus — the Son of God and the Son of man, our first-born brother, formerly encompassed about with infirmities, tempted in all things, merciful, holy, faithful, undefiled, and separate from sinners; and its imposition was accompanied by a sacred oath, which it is not lawful to revoke. Let us, therefore, rely with assured faith on this priesthood of Christ, entertaining no doubt that God hath ratified and confirmed, is now ratifying and confirming, and will forever ratify and confirm all those things which have been accomplished, are now accomplishing, and will continue even to the consummation of this dispensation to be accomplished, on our account, by a High Priest taken from among ourselves and placed in the Divine presence, having received in our behalf an appointment from God, who himself chose him to that office.

Since the same Christ hath by the administration of his own priesthood obtained a perpetual expiation and purgation of our sins, and eternal redemption, and hath erected a throne of grace for us in heaven, 'let us draw near [to this throne of grace] with a true heart and in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience' (Heb. x. 22), 'and our conscience purged from dead works,' (ix. 14), assuredly concluding 'that we shall obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need' (iv. 16).

LASTLY. Since, by the administration of this priesthood, so many and such excellent benefits have been obtained and prepared for us of which we have already received a part as 'the first-fruits,' and since we expect to reap in heaven the choicest part of these benefits, and the whole of them in the mass, and that most complete — what shall we render to our God for such a transcendent dignity? What thanks shall we offer to Christ who is both our High Priest and the Lamb? 'We will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord.' We will offer to God 'the calves of our lips,' and will 'present to him our bodies, souls, and spirits, a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable' (Rom. xii. 1). Even while remaining in these lower regions, we will sing, with the four and twenty elders that stand around the throne, this heavenly song to the God and Father of all: 'Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power. For thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created' (Rev. iv. 11). To Christ our High Priest and the Lamb, we will, with the same elders, chant the new song, saying, 'Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth' (v. 10). Unto both of them together we will unite with every creature in singing, 'BLESSING, AND HONOUR, AND GLORY, AND MIGHT BE TO HIM WHO SITTETH UPON THE THRONE, AND UNTO THE LAMB FOREVER AND EVER.' — I have finished.

After the Academic Act of his promotion to a Doctor's degree was completed, Arminius, according to the custom at Leyden, which still obtains in many Universities, briefly addressed the same audience in the following manner:

Since the countenance necessary for the commencement of every prosperous action proceeds from God, it is proper that in him also every one of our actions should terminate. Since, therefore, his Divine clemency and benignity have hitherto regarded us in a favour-

able light, and have granted to this our act the desired success, let us render thanks to Him for such a great display of His benevolence, and utter praise to His holy name.

O thou Omnipotent and Merciful God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, we give thanks to thee for thine infinite benefits conferred upon us miserable sinners. But we would first praise thee for having willed that thy Son Jesus Christ should be the victim and the price of redemption for our sins; that thou hast out of the whole human race collected for thyself a church by thy word and Holy Spirit; that thou hast snatched us also from the kingdom of darkness and of Satan, and hast translated us into the kingdom of light and of thy Son; that thou hast called Holland, our pleasant and delightful country, to know and confess thy Son and to enjoy communion with him; that thou hast hitherto preserved this our native land in safety against the machinations and assaults of a very powerful adversary; that thou hast instituted, in our renowned city, this university as a seminary of true wisdom, piety and righteousness; and that thou hast to this hour accompanied these scholastic exercises with thy favour. We intreat thee, O holy and indulgent God, that thou wouldst forever continue to us these benefits; and do not suffer us, by our ingratitude, to deserve at thy hands, to be deprived of them. But be pleased rather to increase them, and to confirm the work which thou hast begun. Cause us always to reflect with retentive minds on these things, and to utter eternal praises to thy most holy name on account of them, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

I thank you, Doctor Francis Gomarus, and am grateful to you, most illustrious man and very learned promoter, for this great privilege with which you have invested one who is undeserving of it. I promise at all times to acknowledge with a grateful mind this favour, and to strive that you may never have just cause to repent of having conferred this honour upon me.

To you also, most noble Lord Rector, and to the very honourable the Senate of the University, (unless I should desire to defile myself with the crime of an ungrateful spirit), I owe greater thanks than I am able to express, for the honourable judgment which you have formed concerning me, and for your liberal testimony, which by no deed of mine have I ever deserved. But I promise and bind myself to exert my powers to the utmost, that I may not at any time be found to be entirely unworthy of it. If I thus exert myself, I know that you will accept it as a payment in full of all the debt of gratitude which you have a right to demand.

I now address you, most noble, honourable and famous men, to all and to each of whom I confess myself to be greatly indebted for your continued and liberal benevolence towards me, which you have abundantly demonstrated by your wish to honour this our act with your most noble, honourable, famous and worthy presence. I would promise to make you a requital at some future period, did not the feebleness of my powers shrink from the magnitude of the undertaking implied in that expression, and did not the eminence of your stations repress the attempt.

In the duty of returning thanks which I am now discharging, I must not omit you, most noble and studious youths: For I owe this acknowledgment to your partial and kind inclination to me, of which you have given a sufficiently exuberant declaration in your honourable appearance and modest demeanor while you have been present at this our

act. I give my promise and solemn undertaking, that if an occasion hereafter offer itself in which I can render myself serviceable to you, I will endeavour in every capacity to compensate you for this your kind partiality. The occurrence of such an opportunity is at once the object of my hopes and my wishes.

5 On Reconciling Religious Dissensions among Christians

This very judicious oration was pronounced on the 8th of February 1606, in the Hall of the University, when Arminius resigned the honourable annual office of Rector Magnificus, which, at Leyden, answers in some respects to that of the head of one of our Colleges, and in others to that of Vice-Chancellor in an English University. — In this most admirable and spirited production, our author not only exhibits an accurate and profound acquaintance with the human heart, and of the motives which bias it, but develops those sound principles of religious liberty which were espoused by his successors, and on account of which the Dutch Remonstrants acquired the best portion of their just celebrity. Indeed, whatever was subsequently written by them on this interesting subject, is little more than an expansion of the sentiments here propounded in the nervous language of Arminius.

At that period the great body of the Calvinistic Clergy in Holland were desirous of obtaining leave from the States General to hold a National Synod: They pressed the adoption of this measure the more earnestly, because, knowing themselves to be the stronger party, they hoped to obtain, in an assembly composed almost exclusively of Calvinists, a condemnation of the tenets of their opponents. Several of them suspected that Arminius and Uytenbogardt secretly endeavoured to prevent the convening of the Synod. But their suspicions were groundless: for both these good men were decidedly in favour of that object, on the condition that the Confession and Catechism were subjected to Synodical revision. In a Public Document, the States of Holland testify, that the most aged ministers who had appeared in the former national Synod, freely owned, that ‘it was usual at the beginning of such a Synod, to examine, first of all, in the fear of the Lord, the aforesaid Confession and Catechism, and to receive the remarks or objections of the brethren, and, after having weighed them, to proceed as the members determined.’ These however were terms which did not at all accord with the views of the Calvinists, many of whom were either as blinded by passion or prejudice, or cherished such low conceptions of the authority of the Word of God, as to assert, that those two formularies, the composition of erring mortals, were the only rules by which the scriptures of Eternal Truth ought to be interpreted. — Such being the state of public affairs at that period, Arminius with great modesty, clearness, and eloquence, delivers his opinion about the holding of Synod and the principal objects which ought to engage the attention of its members. But (alas!) what a woeful difference is discernable between the Synod which was ultimately convened at Dort, and the heavenly Council which, in these pages, is depicted by the hand of a master. The difference will appear still more distinctly, by the copious notes appended to that part of the Oration.

In a letter which Arminius wrote to his young friend Narsius four days afterwards, he thus expresses himself: ‘According to the custom usually observed in this University, I resigned my office of Rector on the eighth instant. My successor is Pavius. The oration which I pronounced was on RELIGIOUS DISSENSION; and I explained its nature and effects,

its causes and remedies, with the freedom which the subject itself, and the state of the Church, require. Many people highly approve of what was said, while it is a copious source of blame and grief to others. I hope to be able to afford you a sight of this oration, the next time you come to Leyden; when you will confess, that it is not the production of a timid orator. For I perceive that the suspicions and calumnies of these men have the effect of imparting fresh courage to me, which is much strengthened by the Synod which is soon to be convened. If any one has any thing to allege against me or my sentiments, I challenge him to bring forward his allegations at the approaching Synod.' *Such was the manner in which one of the most modest men wrote to an intimate friend! The injurious treatment of his adversaries had transformed his diffidence into courage, and had compelled him to speak plain things, to shew those persons their transgression, and all intolerant Professors of Christianity their sins.*

NEVER since the first entrance of sin into the world, have there been any ages so happy as not to be disturbed by the occurrence of some evil or other; and, on the contrary, there has been no age so embittered with calamities, as not to have had a sweet admixture of some good, by the presence of the divine benevolence renewed towards mankind. The experience of all ages bears witness to the truth of this observation; and it is taught by the individual history of every nation. If, from a diligent consideration of these different histories and a comparison between them, any person should think fit to draw a parallel of the blessings and of the calamities which have either occurred at one and the same period, or which have succeeded each other, he would in reality be enabled to contemplate, as in a mirror of the greatest clearness and brilliancy, how the BENIGNITY of God has at all times contended with his JUST SEVERITY, and what a conflict the GOODNESS OF THE DEITY has always maintained with the PERVERSITY OF MEN. Of this a fair specimen is afforded to us in the passing events of our own age, within that part of Christendom with which we are more immediately acquainted. To demonstrate this, I do not deem it necessary to recount all the EVILS which have rushed, like an overwhelming inundation, upon the century which has been just completed: for their infinity would render such an attempt difficult and almost impossible. Neither do I think it necessary, to enumerate, in a particular manner, the BLESSINGS which those evils have been somewhat mitigated.

To confirm this truth, it will be abundantly sufficient to mention one very remarkable BLESSING, and one EVIL of great magnitude and directly opposed to that blessing. This BLESSING is, that the Divine clemency irradiates our part of the world by the illustrious light of his sacred truth, and enlightens it with the knowledge of true religion, or Christianity. The EVIL opposed to it is, that either human ignorance or human perversity deteriorates and corrupts the clear light of this Divine truth, by aspersing and beclouding it with the blackest errors; creates separation and division among those who have devoted themselves exclusively to the service of religion; and severs them into parties, and even into shreds of parties, in direct contradiction to the nature and genius of Christianity, whose Author is called the 'Prince of peace,' its doctrine 'the Gospel of peace,' and its professors 'the Sons of peace.' The very foundation of it is an act of pacification concluded between God and men, and ratified by the blood of the Prince of peace. The precepts inculcated in each of its pages, are concerning peace and concord; its fruits are 'righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost;' and its end is peace and eternal tranquillity. But although the light from this torch of truth, which is diffused through the Christian world,

affords no small refreshment to my mind; and although a view of that clearer light which shines among the Churches that profess to have been REFORMED FROM POPERY, is most exhilarating; yet I cannot dissemble the intense grief which I feel at my heart on account of that religious discord which has been festering like a gangrene, and pervading the whole of Christianity: Unhappily, its devastations have not terminated. In this unfeigned feeling of deep regret, I think, all those who love Christ and his Church, will partake with me; unless they possess hearts of greater hardness than Parian marble, and bowels secured from compassionate attacks by a rigidity stronger than that of the oak, and by defenses more impregnable than those of triple brass.

This is the cause which has incited me to offer a few remarks on religious dissensions in the Christian world; for, according to that common proverb, ‘Whenever a man feels any pain, his hand is almost spontaneously moved to the part affected.’ This, therefore, is the subject which I propose to introduce to the notice of the present celebrated assembly, in which the province has been awarded to me, of delivering an oration at this Academic Festival, according to an established and laudable custom. I shall confine myself to three particulars: In the first place, I will give a dissertation on THIS DISCORD ITSELF AND THE EVILS WHICH SPRING FROM IT. I will then show ITS CAUSES; and, lastly, ITS REMEDIES.

The *first* particular includes within itself the NECESSITY of removing such a great evil; and the last prescribes the MANNER in which it may be removed, to which the *middle* particular materially contributes. The union of the whole together explains and justifies the nature of the design which I have now undertaken.

I humbly pray and intreat the God of peace, that he will, by his Spirit of truth and peace, be present with me while engaged in speaking; and that he will govern my mind and direct my tongue, that I may utter such things as may be pleasing to him and salutary to the Church of Christ, for the glory of his name and our mutual instruction.

I likewise prefer a request to you, my very famous and accomplished hearers, that you will deign to grant me your favourable attention, while I glance at each of these particular, with much brevity, and discharge the office of a director to you rather than that of an orator, lest I trespass on your patience.

I. UNION is a great good: it is indeed the chief good and therefore the only one, whether we separately consider each thing of which it is composed, or more of them contained together by a certain social tie or relation between themselves. For all things together, and each thing separately, are what they are by that very thing by which they are one; and, by this union, they are preserved in what they really are. And, if they have need and are capable of further perfection, they are, by the same union, still more strengthened, increased, and perfected, until they attain to the utmost boundary prescribed to them by nature or by grace, or by God the Author of both grace and nature. Of such certainty is this truth, that even the blessedness of God consists in that union by which he is ONE and always present with himself, and having all things belonging to him present together with him. Nothing, therefore, can be more agreeable or desirable than UNION, whether viewed in reference to single things or to the whole together; nothing can be more noxious and detestable than DISSENSION, by which all things begin at first to decline from their own condition, are afterwards diminished by degrees, and, at length, perish. But as there are differences of GOOD, so are there likewise of UNION. More excellent than another is that

good which in its own nature obtains the pre-eminence above the other, on account of its being more general and durable, and on account of its approaching more nearly to the CHIEF GOOD. In like manner that union is also more excellent which consists of a thing of greater excellence, belongs to many, is more durable and unites itself most intimately with the Deity. The union of true religion is, therefore, one of the greatest excellence.

But as those evil things which are opposed to the good things of greatest excellence, are the very worst of their kind, so no discord is more shocking and hideous than that about religion. The truth of this remark is confirmed by the inward nature of this discord; and it is further manifested most clearly by the effects which proceed from it.

1. We shall see its NATURE

- a) in the *object* of discord,
- b) in the ready *inclination* for this object, which is evinced by the discordant partizans,
- c) in its extensive *range*, and
- d) its long *continuance*.

a) *The Christian Religion* is the OBJECT of this discord or dissension. When viewed with respect to its *form*, this religion contains the true knowledge of the true God and of Christ; and the right mode in which both of them may be worshipped. And when viewed with regard to its end, it is the only medium by which we can be bound and united to God and Christ, and by which on the other hand God and Christ can be bound and united to us. From this idea of connecting the parties together [RELIGATIO], the name of *religion* is derived, in the opinion of Lactantius. In the term 'RELIGION,' therefore, are contained true wisdom and true virtue, and the union of both with God as the Chief Good, in all of which is comprehended the supreme and the only happiness of this world and of that which is to come. And not only in *reality*, but *in the estimation* also of every one on whose mind a notion of religion has been impressed, (that is, on the whole of mankind), men are distinguished from other animals, not by *reason*, but by a genuine character much more appropriate and indeed peculiar to them, and that is RELIGION, according to the authority of the same Lactantius.

b) But if bounds be imposed on the desire towards any thing by such an opinion of its value as is preconceived in the mind, an inclination or propensity towards religion is deservedly entitled to the highest consideration, and holds the pre-eminence in the mind of a religious person. Nay, more than this, if, according to St Bernard and to truth itself, 'the measure to be observed in loving God, is to love him without measure,' a propensity or inclination towards religion, (of which the chief and choicest part consists of love to God and Christ), is itself without bounds: For it is at once illimitable and immeasurable. This is tantamount to the declaration of Christ, the AUTHOR of our religion, who said, 'If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be

my disciple' (Luke xiv. 26). This strong affection for religion answers equally to that immeasurable love by which any one desires the union of himself with God, that is, desires the greatest happiness, because he knows that Religion is the strongest bond and the most adhesive cement of this union. Most serious, therefore, is religious discord when it is engaged in disputes about the altar itself.

- c) Besides, it spreads and diffuses itself *most extensively*; for it involves within its vortex all the persons that have been initiated in the sacred rites of the Christian religion. No one is permitted to profess neutrality; nay, it is impossible for any man to remain neutral in the midst of religious dissension. For he who makes no advances towards the opposite sentiments of each of the dissidents, is induced thus to act from one of these four causes:
- i. He either cherishes a third opinion in the Christian Religion, far removed from both the others:
 - ii. He thinks some other religion better than Christianity.
 - iii. He places Christianity and other systems of religion on an equality: Or,
 - iv. He entertains an equal disregard for the Christian system and all other modes of religion.

The *first* of these characters is not neutral, but becomes a third party among the disputants. The *second* and the *third* dissent entirely from the Christian Religion, the axioms of which are, 'that it is true, and that it alone is true:' for it is not so accommodating as Paganism, it admits of no other system to be its associate. Besides, the *second* of these characters is an Atheist according to the Christian Religion, one of the statutes of which, is, that 'whosoever denieth Christ the Son, the same hath not God the Father' (1 John ii. 23). Against the *third* party this sentence is pronounced: 'He that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad' (Matt. xii. 30). The *fourth* is considered an Atheist by all mankind, and is deemed a second and adverse party in that most general kind of dissension which exists between true religion and its adversaries.

- d) Lastly. This discord is very *long in its continuance* and almost incapable of reconciliation. For these traits in it, two causes may, I think, be assigned, and both of them deducible from the very nature of religion.

The *first* is, that since religion is both in reality a matter that belongs to the Deity, and is so accounted by every one, being subject to his sole pleasure and management, and exempt from the jurisdiction of men; and since it has been bestowed, that it may exercise authority as a rule for the direction of life, and for prescribing some limits to liberty, and not that it may be slavishly subservient to the wills of men, like a *Lesbian rule*, which may be accommodated to every condition; since these are some of the properties of religion, man is not permitted to stipulate concerning it, and scarcely any one has had the audacity to arrogate to himself such an assumption of authority.

The *other cause* is, that the parties individually think, if they concede even the smallest particle of the matter of discord, such a concession is nearly connected

with the peril of their own salvation. But this is the genius of all separatists, not to enter into any treaties of concord with their adversaries, unless they be permitted to have life at least, and liberty, secured to them inviolate. But every one thinks, that his life, (that is, his spiritual life), and the liberty which is proper for that life, are included in religion and its exercise.

To these a *third* cause may be added, which consists of the opinion, that each party supposes life and eternal salvation to be denied to them by their opponents, from this circumstance, because those opponents disapprove of their religion, and when it is compared with their own, they treat it with the utmost contempt. This injury appears to be the most grievous and aggravating. But every act of pacification has its commencement in the oblivion of all injuries, and its foundation in the omission of those injuries which (to an eye that is jaundiced with such a prejudice as that which we have just stated), seem to be continued and perpetual grievances.

When the nature and tendency of this species of discord have become quite apparent to worldly-minded Rulers, they have often employed it, or at least the semblance of it, for the purpose of involving their subjects in enmities, dissensions and wars, in which they had themselves engaged for other reasons. Having in this manner frequently implicated the people committed to his charge, a prince has become at pleasure prodigal of their property and their persons. These were readily sacrificed by the people to the defense of the ancient religion; but they were perverted by their rulers, to obtain the fulfillment of their desires, which they would never have procured, had they been deprived of such popular assistance. The *magnitude* of the dissension induces the willing parties cheerfully to make contributions of their property to their prince; the *multitude* of the Dissidents ensures their ability to contribute as much as may be sufficient; and the *obstinate spirit* which is indigenous to dissension, causes the parties never to grow weary of giving, while they retain the ability.

We have now in some sort delineated the nature of this discord or dissension, and have shewn that it is most important in its bearings, most extensive in its range, and most durable in its continuance.

2. Let us further see what have been, and what still are, the EFFECTS of an evil of such a magnitude, in this part of the Christian world. We may, I think, refer the infinitude of these effects to two chief kinds. The *first kind* is derived from *the force of the dissension* on the MINDS of men; and the *second kind* has its commencement in *the operation of the same dissension* on their HEARTS and affections.

FIRST. From the force of this dissension on the MINDS of men, arises,

- a) *a degree of doubtful uncertainty respecting religion.* When the people perceive that there is scarcely any article of Christian doctrine concerning which there are not different and even contradictory opinions; that one party calls that 'horrid blasphemy' which another party has laid down as a 'complete summary of the truth;' that those points which some professors consider the perfection of piety, receive from others the contumelious appellation of 'cursed idolatry;' and that controversies of this description are objects of warm discussion between

men of learning, respectability, experience and great renown. When all these things are perceived by the people, and when they do not observe any discrepancy in the life and manners of the opposite disputants, sufficiently great to induce them to believe that God vouchsafes assistance by ‘the spirit of his truth,’ to one of these parties, in preference to the other, on account of any superior sanctity, they begin then to indulge in the imagination, that they may esteem the principles of religion alike obscure and uncertain.

- b) If an *intense desire to institute an inquiry into some subject* shall succeed this dubious uncertainty about religion, its warmth will abate and become cool, as soon as serious difficulties arise in the search, and an utter *despair of being able to discern the truth* will be the consequence. For what simple person can hope to discover the truth, when he understands that a dispute exists about its very principles — whether they be contained in the scriptures alone, or in traditions not committed to writing? What hope can he entertain when he sees that, question often arises concerning the translation of some passage of scripture, which can be solved only by a knowledge of the Hebrew and Greek languages? How can he hope to find out the truth, when he remarks, that the opinions of learned men, who have written on religious subjects, are not unfrequently quoted in the place of evidence — while he is ignorant of all languages except that of the country in which he was born, is destitute of all other books, and possesses only a copy of the scriptures translated into the vernacular language? How can such a person be prevented from forming an opinion, that nothing like certainty respecting the chief doctrines of religion can be evident to any one, except that man who is well skilled in the two sacred languages, has a perfect knowledge of all traditions, has perused with the closest attention the writings of all the great Doctors of the Church, and has thoroughly instructed himself in the sentiments which they held respecting each single principle of religion?
- c) But what follows this despair? Either *a most perverse opinion concerning all religion, an entire rejection of every species of it, or Atheism*: These produce Epicurism, a still more pestilent fruit of that ill-fated tree. For when the mind of man is in despair about discovering the truth, and yet is unable to throw aside at the first impulse all care concerning religion and personal salvation, it is compelled to devise a cunning charm for appeasing conscience:
- i. The human mind in such a state will either conclude, that it is not only unnecessary for common people to understand the axioms of religion, and to be well assured of what they believe; but that the attainment of these objects is a duty incumbent on the clergy alone, to the faith of whom, as of ‘them that must give account’ to God for the salvation of souls (Heb. xiii. 17), it is quite sufficient for the people to signify their assent by a blind concurrence in it. The clergy also themselves, with a view to their own advantage, not unfrequently discourage all attempts, on the part of the people, to gain such a knowledge of religion and such an assured belief.
 - ii. Or the mind in such circumstances will persuade itself, that all worship

paid to God, with the good intention of a devout mind, is pleasing to him; and therefore under every form of religion, (provided such good intention be conscientiously observed), a man may be saved, and all sects are to be considered as placed in a condition of equality. The men who have imbibed such notions as these, which point out an easy mode of pacifying the conscience, and one that in their opinion is neither troublesome nor dangerous — these men not only desert all study of divine things themselves, but lay folly to the charge of that person who institutes a labourious inquiry and search for that which they imagine can never be discovered, as though he purposely sought something on which his insanity might riot.

But not less steep and precipitous is the descent from this state of despair to absolute *Atheism*. For since these persons despair of offering to the Deity the adoration of true religion, they think they may abstain from all acts of worship to him without incurring any greater harm or punishment; because God considers no worship agreeable to him except that which he has prescribed, and he bestows a reward on no other. The efficacy of this despair is increased by *the irreligion* which seems to be interwoven with the natural dispositions of some men, and which, eagerly seizing on every excuse for sin, deceives itself, and veils its native profaneness and want of reverence for the Deity under the cloak of the grievous dissensions which have been introduced about religion. But other two reasons may be adduced why Religious differences are, in the Christian world, the fruitful causes of *Atheism*.

- i. *The first* is, that by this battering-ram of dissensions, the foundations of Divine Providence, which constitute the basis of all Religion, experience a violent concussion. When this thought enters the mind, that ‘it appears to be the first duty of providence, (if it actually have an existence), to place her dearest daughter, Religion, in such a luminous light, that she may stand manifest and apparent to the view of all who do not willingly drag their eyes out of their sockets.’
- ii. *The other* is, that when men are not favoured with Christian prophecy, which comprises religious instruction, and are destitute of the exercise of Divine worship, they first almost imperceptibly slide into ignorance and into the complete disuse of all worship, and afterwards prolapse into open impiety.

But it has not unfrequently been the case, that men have suffered themselves to be deprived of these blessings, sometimes by the prohibition of their own consciences, and sometimes by those of others.

- i. By the prohibition of their own consciences, when they do not think it lawful for them to be present at the public sermons and other religious ordinances of a party that is adverse to them.
- ii. By that of the consciences of others, when the prevailing party forbid their weaker opponents to assemble together as a congregation, to hear what they account most excellent truths, and to perform their devotions with such rites and ceremonies as are agreeable to themselves.

In this manner, therefore, even conscience, when resting on the foundation of religion, becomes the agent of impiety, where discord reigns in a religious community. From Atheism, as a root, Epicurism buds forth, which dissolves all the ties of morality, is ruinous to it, and causes it to degenerate into licentiousness. All this, Epicurism effects, by previously breaking down the barriers of the fear of God, which alone restrain men within the bounds of their duty.

SECONDLY. All these evils proceed from religious dissension when its operation is efficacious on the MIND. Most sincerely do I wish that it would remain there, content itself with displaying its insolence in the hall of the mind where discord has its proper abode, and would not attack the AFFECTIONS of the HEART. But, vain is my wish! For so extensively does it pervade the heart and subdue all its affections, that it abuses at pleasure the slaves that act as assistants.

- a) For since all *similarity* in manners, studies and opinions, possesses very great power in conciliating love and regard; and since any *want of resemblance* in these particulars is of great potency in engendering hatred, it often happens that from religious dissension arise ENMITIES more deadly than that hatred which Vatinius conceived against Cicero, and such exasperations of heart as are utterly irreconcilable. When religious discord makes its appearance, even amongst men the most illustrious in name and of the greatest celebrity, who had been previously bound together and united among themselves by a thousand tender ties of nature and affection, they instantly renounce, one against another, all tokens of friendship, and burst asunder the strictest bands of amity. This is signified by Christ, when he says, 'I came not to send peace on earth, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household' (Matt. x. 31–36). These words do not indicate the end and purpose of the coming of Christ, but an event which would succeed his coming; because he was then about to introduce into the world a religion which differed greatly from that which was publicly established, and concerning which many dissensions would afterwards arise, through the vicious corruption of mankind.

This dissimilarity was the origin of the rancor of the Jews against the Samaritans, which displayed itself in not allowing themselves to derive any benefit from the services of the Samaritans, even in matters that were necessary for their own convenience. It was the existence of this feeling which caused the woman of Samaria to wonder, concerning Jesus, 'how he, who was a Jew, could ask drink of her, a Samaritan woman' (John iv. 9). Indeed, it is the utmost stretch of hatred, to be unwilling to derive any advantage from another person that is an enemy.

- b) Enmities and dissensions of the heart and affections branch out and become SCHISMS, factions and secessions into different parties. For as love is an affection of union, so is hatred an affection of separation. Thus synagogues are erected, consecrated and thronged with people, in opposition to other synagogues, churches against churches, and alters against alters, when neither party wishes to have intercourse with the other. This also is the reason why we

frequently hear expressions, entirely similar to those which were clamorously echoed through the assembled multitude of the Children of Israel when they were separating into parties, 'To your tents, O Israel! for our adversaries have no portion in God, nor any inheritance in his Son Christ Jesus' (1 Kings xii. 16). For both factions equally appropriate to themselves the renowned name of 'the true Israel,' which they severally deny to their adversaries, in such a peremptory manner as might induce one to imagine each of them exclusively endowed with a plenary power of passing judgment upon the other, and as though it had been previously concluded, that the name of ISRAEL, by which God accosts in a most gracious manner *the whole of his Church*, cannot encircle within its embrace those who differ in any point from the rest of their brethren.

- c) But the irritation of inflamed hearts does not prescribe a boundary to itself in schism alone. For if it happen, that one party considers itself the more powerful, it will not be afraid of instituting PERSECUTIONS against the party opposed to it, and of attempting its entire extermination. In effecting this, it spares no injury, which either human ingenuity can devise, the most notable fury can dictate, or even the office of the infernal regions can supply. Rage is excited and cruelty exercised against the reputation, the property, and the persons of the living; against the ashes, the sepulchers, and the memory of the dead; and against the souls both of the living and the dead. Those who differ from the stronger party are attacked with all kinds of weapons; with cruel mockings, calumnies, execrations, curses, excommunications, anathemas, degrading and scandalous libels, prisons and instruments of torture. They are banished to distant or uninhabited islands, condemned to the mines, prohibited from having any communication with their fellow-creatures by land or sea, and excluded from a sight of either heaven or earth. They are tormented by water, fire and the sword, on crosses and stakes, on wheels of torture and gibbets, and by the claws of wild beasts, without any measure, bounds or end, until the party thus oppressed have been destroyed, or have submitted themselves to the pleasure of the more powerful, by rejecting with abjurations the sentiments which they formerly held, and by embracing with apparent devotion those of which they had previously disapproved; that is, by destroying themselves through the hypocritical profession which had been extolled from them by violence. Call to mind how the Heathens persecuted the Christians; and the persecuting conduct of the Aryans against the orthodox, of the worshippers of images against the destroyers of images, and vice versa. That we may wander to no great distance let us look at what has occurred within the period of our recollection and that of our fathers, in Spain, Portugal, France, England, and the Low Countries; and we shall confess with tears, that these remarks are lamentably too true.
- d) But if it happen that the contending parties are nearly equal in power, or that one of them has been long oppressed, wearied out by persecutions, and inflamed with a desire for liberty, after having had their patience converted into fury, (as it is called), or rather into just indignation, and if the pressed party assume courage, summon all its strength, and collect its forces, then most mighty wars arise, grievances are repeated, after a flourish of trumpets the

herald's hostile spear is sent forth in defiance, war is proclaimed, the opposing armies charge each other, and the struggle is conducted in a most bloody and barbarous manner. Both the belligerents observe a profound silence about entering into negotiations for peace, lest that party which first suggests such a course, should, from that very circumstance, create a prejudice against its own cause and make it appear the weaker of the two and the more unjust. Nay, the strife is carried on with such willful obstinacy, that he can scarcely be endured who for a moment suspends their mutual animosities by a mention of peace, unless he have placed a halter around his neck, and be prepared to be suspended by it on a gibbet, in case his discourse on this topic happens to displease. For such a lover of peace would be stigmatized as a deserter from the common cause, and considered guilty of heresy, a favourer of heretics, an apostate and a traitor.

Indeed, all these ENMITIES, SCHISMS, PERSECUTIONS and WARS, are commenced, carried on, and conducted with the greater animosity, on account of every one considering his adversary as the most infectious and pestilent fellow in the whole Christian world, a public incendiary, a murderer of souls, an enemy of God, and a servant of the devil — as a person who deserves to be suddenly smitten and consumed by fire descending from heaven — and as one, whom it is not only lawful to hate, to curse and to murder without incurring any guilt, but whom it is also highly proper to treat in that manner, and to be entitled to no slight commendation for such a service, because no other work appears in his eyes to be more acceptable to God, of greater utility in the salvation of man, more odious to Satan, or more pernicious to his kingdom. Such a sanguinary zealot professes to be invited, instigated and constrained to deeds like these, by a zeal for the house of God, for the salvation of men, and for the divine glory. This conduct of violent partizans is what was predicted by the Judge and the Master of our religion: 'When they shall persecute you and kill you for my sake, they will think that they do God service' (John xvi. 2). When the very conscience, therefore, arouses, assists and defends the affections, no obstacle can offer a successful resistance to their impetuosity. Thus we see, that religion itself, through the vicious corruption of men, has been made a cause of dissension, and has become the field in which they may perpetually exercise themselves in cruel and bloody contests.

If, in addition to these things, some individual arrogate to himself, and, with the consent of a great multitude, usurp authority to prescribe laws with respect to religion, to strike with the thunderbolt of excommunication whomsoever he pleases, to dethrone kings, to absolve subjects from their oaths of allegiance and fidelity, to arm them against their lawful rulers, to transfer the right over the dominions of one prince to others who are his sworn confederates, or to such as are prepared to seize upon them in the first instance, to pardon crimes however great their enormity may be, and whether already perpetrated or to be hereafter committed, and to canonize ruffians and assassins — the mere nod of such a man as is here described, must be instantly obeyed with blind submission, as if it were the command of God. Blessed God! what a quantity of most inflammable matter is thus thrown upon the fire of enmities, persecutions and wars. What an Iliad of disasters is thus introduced into the Christian world! It is, therefore, not without just reason that a man may

exclaim, 'Is it possible, that Religion can have persuaded men to introduce this great mass of evils?'

But all the ills which we have enumerated do not only proceed from *real dissensions*, in which some fundamental truth is the subject of discussion, but also from those which are imaginary, when things affect the mind not as they are in reality, but according to their appearances. I call these *imaginary dissensions*:

- a) Either, because they exist among parties that have only a *fabulous religion*, which is at as great a distance from the true one, as the heaven is distant from the earth, or as the followers of such a phantom are from God himself. Differences of this description are found among the Mahomedans, some parties of whom, (as the Turks), follow the interpretation of Omar; while others, (as the Persians), are proselytes to the commentaries of Ali.
- b) Or, because the discordant parties believe these imaginary differences to be in the substance of the true doctrine, when they have it in no existence whatever. Of such a difference Victor, the Bishop of Rome, afforded an instance, when he wished to excommunicate all the Eastern Churches, because they dissented from him in the proper time of celebrating the Christian festival of Easter.

But, to close this part of my discourse, the very summit and conclusion of all the evils which arise from religious discord, is, the destruction of that very religion about which all the controversy has been raised. Indeed, religion experiences almost the same fate, as the young lady mentioned by Plutarch, who was addressed by a number of suitors; and when each of them found that she could not become entirely his own, they divided her body into parts, and thus not one of them obtained possession of her whole person. This is the nature of discord, to disperse and destroy matters of the greatest consequence. Of this a very mournful example is exhibited to us in certain extensive dominions and large kingdoms, the inhabitants of which were formerly among the most flourishing professors of the Christian Religion; but the present inhabitants of those countries have unchristianized themselves by embracing Mahomedanism — a system which derived its origin, and had its chief means of increase, from the dissensions which arose between the *Jews* and the *Christians*, and from the disputes into which the Orthodox entered with the Sabellians, the Aryans, the Nestorians, the Eutychians, and with the Monothelites.

II. Let us proceed to contemplate the CAUSES OF THIS DISSENTION. Philosophers generally divide CAUSES, into those which directly and *of themselves* produce an effect, and into those which indirectly and *by accident* contribute to the same purpose. The consideration of each of these classes will facilitate our present inquiries.

1. The *accidental* cause of this dissension is

- a) the very *nature of the Christian religion*, which not only transcends the human mind and its affections or passions, but appears to be altogether contrary to both it and to them.
 - i. For the Christian Religion has its foundation in THE CROSS OF CHRIST; and it holds forth this humbling truth, 'JESUS THE CRUCIFIED, IS THE SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD,' as an axiom most worthy of all acceptance. For

this reason also, the word of which this religion is composed, is termed ‘the doctrine of the cross’ (1 Cor. i. 18). But what can appear to the mind more absurd or foolish, than for *a crucified and dead person* to be accounted the SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD, and for men to believe that *salvation centers in the cross*? On this account the Apostle declares in the same passage, that *the doctrine of the cross* [or, *the preaching of CHRIST CRUCIFIED*], *is unto the Jews a stumbling-block and unto the Greeks foolishness.*

- ii. What is more opposed to the human affections than ‘for a man to hate and deny himself, to despise the world and the things that are in the world, and to mortify the flesh with the affections and lusts?’ Yet this is another axiom of the Christian Religion, to which he who does not give a cheerful assent in mind, in will and in deed, is excluded from the discipleship of Christ Jesus. This indispensable requisite is the cause why he who is alienated in mind from the Christian Religion, does not yield a ready compliance with these its demands; and why he who has enrolled his name with Christ, and who is too weak and pusillanimous to inflict every species of violence on his nature, invents certain fictions, by which he attempts to soften and mitigate a sentence, the exact fulfillment of which fills him with horror. From these circumstances, after men have turned aside from purity of doctrine, dissensions are excited against religion and its firm and constant professors.
 - b) In the scriptures, as in the only authentic document, the Christian Religion is at present registered and sealed; yet even they are seized upon as an occasion of error and dissension, when, as the Apostle Peter says, ‘the unlearned and unstable wrest them unto their own destruction,’ because they contain ‘some things hard to be understood’ (2 Pet. iii. 16). The figurative expressions and ambiguous sentences, which occur in certain parts of the scriptures, are undesignedly forced to conduce to the adulteration of the truth among those persons, ‘who have not their senses exercised’ in them.
2. But omitting any further notice of these matters, let us take into our consideration the *proper causes of this dissension*:
- a) In the front of these, Satan appears, that most bitter enemy of truth and peace, and the most wily disseminator of falsehood and dissension, who acts as leader of the hostile band. Envyng the glory of God and the salvation of man, and attentively looking out on all occasions, he marks every movement; and whenever an opportunity occurs, during the Lord’s seed time, he sows the tares of heresies and schisms among the wheat. From such a malignant and surreptitious mode of sowing *while men are sleeping* (Matt. xiii. 23), he often obtains a most abundant harvest.
 - b) MAN himself follows next in this destructive train, and is easily induced to perform any service for Satan, however pernicious its operation may prove to his own destruction; and that most subtle enemy, the serpent, finds in man several instruments most appropriately fitted for the completion of his purposes.

FIRST. The *mind* of man is the first in subserviency to Satan, both with regard to its blindness and its vanity.

- First. *The BLINDNESS of the mind* is of two kinds, the one a *native blindness*, the other *accidental*. The *former* of these grows up with us even from the birth: our very origin is tainted with the infection of the primitive offense of *the Old Adam*, who turned away from God the Great Source of all his light. This blindness has so fascinated our eyes, as to make us appear like owls that become dim-sighted when the light of truth is seen. Yet this truth is not hidden in a deep well; but though it is placed in the heavens, we cannot perceive it, even when its beams are clearly shining upon us from above. The *latter* is an *accidental and acquired blindness*, which man has chosen for himself to obscure the few beams of light which remain him. ‘The God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not; lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ should shine unto them’ (2 Cor. iv. 4). God himself, the just punisher of those who hate the truth, has inflicted on them this blindness, by giving efficacy to error. This is the cause why the veil that remains upon the mind, operates as a preventive and obstructs the view of the gospel (2 Cor. 3); and why he on whom the truth has shone in vain, ‘believes a lie’ (2 Thess. ii. 11). But assent to a falsehood is a dissent and separation from those who are the assertors of truth.
- Secondly. *The vanity of the mind* succeeds its blindness, and is prone to turn aside from the path of true religion, in which no one can continue to walk except by a firm and invariable purpose of heart. This vanity is also inclined to invent to itself such a Deity as may be most agreeable to its own vain nature, and to fabricate a mode of worship that may be thought to please that fictitious Deity. Each of these ways constitutes a departure from the unity of true religion, on deserting which men rush heedlessly into dissensions.

SECONDLY. But the *affections* of the mind are, of all others, the most faithful and trusty in the assistance which they afford to Satan, and conduct themselves like abject slaves devoted to his service; although it must be acknowledged that they are frequently brought thus to act, under a false conception that they are by such deeds promoting their own welfare and rendering good service to God himself. LOVE and HATRED, the two chief affections, and the fruitful parents and instigators of all the rest, occupy the first, second, third, and indeed all the places, in this slavish employment. Each of them is of a *three-fold* character, that nothing might be wanting which could contribute to the perfection of their number.

The FORMER of them consists of the love of glory, of riches, and of pleasures, which the disciple whom Jesus loved, thus designates, ‘the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life’ (1 John ii. 16). The LATTER consists of hatred to the truth, to peace, and to the professors of the truth.

1.

- a) PRIDE, then, that most prolific mother of dissensions in religion, produces its

fetid offspring in three different ways: For,

- FIRST, either it 'exalteth itself against the knowledge of God' (2 Cor. x. 5), and does not suffer itself to be brought into captivity by the truth to obey God, being impatient of the yoke which is imposed by Christ, though it is both easy and light. Pride says in reality, 'Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us' (Psalm ii. 3). From this baneful source arose the sedition of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, who arrogantly claimed for themselves a share in the priesthood, which God had given exclusively to Aaron (Num. 16). Or,
- SECONDLY, *it loveth to have the pre-eminence* in the Church of God, and 'to have dominion over another's faith;' the very crime of which St John accuses Diotrephes, when he complains that 'neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the Church' (3 John 9, 10). Or,
- LASTLY, having usurped an impotent sovereignty over the *souls* of men by appointing and altering at its pleasure the laws concerning Religion, and over the bodies of men by employing menaces and force to bring into subjection to it the consciences of men, it compels those churches which cannot with a safe conscience bear this most iniquitous tyranny, to depart from the rest and to assume to themselves the management of their own affairs.

The Greek Church declared itself to be influenced by this cause, in refusing to hold communion with the Latin Church, because the Roman Pontiff had, in opposition to all right and law, and in defiance of the rule of Christ and of the decrees of the Fathers, 'arrogated to himself a plenitude of power.' From the same fountain has flowed that immense schism which in this age distracts and divides all Europe. This has been ably manifested to the whole world by the just complaints and allegations of Protestant States and Protestant Princes.

But envy, anger, and an eager desire to know all things, are other three darts, which PRIDE hurls against concord in religion. For,

- *First*, if any one excels his fellows in the knowledge of divine things, and in holiness of life, and if by these means he advances in favour and authority with the people, pride immediately injects *envy* into the minds of some persons, which contaminates all that is fair and lovely; asperses and defiles whatever is pure; obscures, by vile calumnies, either his course of life or the doctrines which he professes; puts a wrong construction, by means of a malevolent interpretation, on what was well intended and correctly expressed by him; commences disputes with him who is thus high in public estimation; and endeavours to lay the foundations of its own praise on the mass of ignominy which it heaps upon his name and reputation. If by such actions as these it cannot obtain for itself a situation equal to its desires, it then invents new dogmas and draws away the people after it; that it may enjoy such a dignity, among some individuals who have separated from the

rest of the body, which it was impossible for it to obtain from the whole while they lived together in concord and harmony.

- *Secondly*. Pride is also the parent of *anger*, which may stimulate any one to revenge, if he think himself injured even in the slightest degree by a professor of the truth. Such a person reckons scarcely any injury better suited to his purpose or more pernicious to the affairs of his adversary, than to speak contumeliously and in disparagement of his sentiments, and publicly to proclaim him a HERETIC — than which no term can be more opprobrious or an object of greater hatred among mortals. Because, as this crime does not consist of *deeds*, but of *sentiments*, the aspersions cast upon them cannot be so completely washed away as to leave no stains adhering to them, or as to create a possibility at least for the calumniator to remove from himself by some evasive subterfuge the infamy which attaches itself to him who is an utterer of slanders.
- *The Third weapon* which pride employs in this warfare, is a *passionate desire to explore and know all things*. This passion leaves no subject untouched, that its learning may be displayed to advantage; and, (not to lose the reward of its labour), it obtrusively palms upon others as things necessary to be known, those matters which, by means of great exertion, it seems to have drawn out from behind the darkness of ignorance, and accompanies all its remarks by great boldness of assertion. From such a disposition and conduct as this, offenses. and schisms must arise in the Church.

b) AVARICE, likewise, or, *the love of money*, which is termed by the Apostle, ‘the root of all evil’ (1 Tim. vi. 10), brings its hostile standard into this embattled field. For, since the doctrine of truth is not a source of profit, when those who have faithfully taught it are succeeded by unbelieving teachers, ‘who are ravening wolves, and suppose gain to be godliness,’ the latter effect a great change in it,

- i. either by ‘binding heavy burdens, and grievous to be borne, and laying them on the shoulders of the disciples’ (Matt. xxiii. 4), for whose redemption votive offerings may be daily made;
- ii. by inventing profitable plans for expiating sins; or, lastly, by preaching, in soft and complimentary language, such things as are agreeable to the ears of the people, for the purpose of gaining their favour, which, according to the expression of the Apostle, is a ‘corrupting of the word of God,’ or making a gain of it (2 Cor. ii. 17).

From these causes dissensions have often arisen;

- i. either when the faithful teachers that are in the church, or those whom God raises up for the salvation of his people, marshal themselves in opposition to the doctrine which is prepared for the sake of profit; or,
- ii. when the people themselves, growing weary of impositions and rapine, become seceders from these pastors, by uniting themselves with such as

are really better, or by receiving those as their substitutes who are in their estimation better.

This was the torch of dissension between the Pharisees and Christ, who opposed their avarice and came to loose all those grievous burdens. This was also the primary consideration by which Luther was excited to obstruct the sale of Popish indulgencies; and from that small beginning, he gradually proceeded to reforms of greater importance.

- c) Nor only that PLEASURE or ‘lust of the flesh,’ which specially comes under this denomination, and which denotes a *feeling or disposition for carnal things*, takes its part in the performance of this tragedy, but that also which in a general sense contains a *desire to commit sin* without any remorse of conscience: and both these kinds of pleasure most assiduously employ themselves in collecting inflammable materials for augmenting the flame of discord in religion.

For this passion or affection, having had some experience in the important ‘doctrine of the cross,’ desires as the very summit of all its wishes, both to riot, while here, in the pleasures of voluptuousness, and yet to cherish some hopes of obtaining the happiness of heaven. With two such incompatible objects in view this passion chooses teachers for itself, who may in an easy manner ‘place under the arm-holes of their disciples, pillows sewed and filled with soft feathers’ (Ezek. xiii. 18), on which they may recline themselves and take sweet repose, although their sins, like sharply pointed thorns, continue to sting and molest them in every direction. They flatter them with the idea of easily obtaining pardon, provided they purchase the favour of the Deity, by means of certain exercises apparently of some importance, but possessing in reality no consequence whatever, and by means of great donations with which they may fill his sanctuary. This is the complaint of the Apostle, who, when writing to Timothy, says, ‘For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.’ To this is subjoined an admonition, that Timothy should watch and discharge with fidelity the duties of his ministry (2 Tim. iv. 3–5). According to this quotation, a difference must of necessity exist between Timothy and those teachers.

But these three capital vices are serviceable to Satan, their author, in another way, and contribute under his direction to introduce changes in religion, and, consequently, to excite discord among Christians. In both sacred and profane history, egregious examples are recorded of princes and private men, who, being instigated by such a desire of power as partook at once of ambition and avarice, have invented new modes of religion, and accommodated them to the capacities, the wishes, and the opinions of their people; by means of which they might either restrain their own subjects within the bounds of their duty, or might subdue to their way the people that were under the rule of other princes. Ambition and avarice suggest to such aspiring persons the desire of inventing those modes of religious worship; while an itching for novelty, a wish to enjoy their pleasures, and the obvious agreement of the new doctrine with their preconceived opinions, influence the people to embrace the

modish religion. With these intentions, and under the impulse of these views, Jero-boam was the first author of a change of religion in the Israelitish Church. He built altars in Dan and Bethel, and made golden calves, that he might prevent the people from proceeding at stated periods to Jerusalem, for the purpose of offering sacrifice, according to the command of God, and from returning to the house of David, from which they had rent themselves. The same reasons also induced Mahomet to invent a new religion. By his frequent intercourse with Jews and Christian, he had learned from both parties those things which were most agreeable to them; he therefore adopted the very crafty counsel of Sergius, the monk, and devised a new mode of religion, which was gratifying to the human senses, and which, as it was digested in his Alcoran, he persuaded many people to embrace. The few individuals with whom he was able to prevail, were the foundation from which arose the immense Ottoman empire, and those extensive dominions which are to the present time in possession of the Turks.

2. We have now seen in what manner the *love of glory, of riches, and pleasure*, performs its several parts in this theater of religious dissensions. Let HATRED next appear and exhibit to us its actions, which, from the very nature of the cause, have a proper and direct tendency to excite discord.
 - a) The first of its actors that appears upon the stage, is a hatred of the truth, and of true doctrine. This species of hatred is conceived, partly from an *anticipated notion of the mind*, which, since it cannot be reconciled to the doctrine of truth, and yet is with difficulty drawn away from it, excites hatred against a sentiment that is opposed to itself. It is also partly conceived, because the true doctrine becomes the accuser of man, forbidding those things which are the objects of his desires, and commanding those things which he is most reluctant to perform. While it urges its precepts so rigidly, that every one who does not seriously regulate and conform his life to the conditions which they contain, is excluded from all hope of salvation.
 - b) The next in order, is *the hatred of peace and concord*. For there are men of a certain description who cannot exist without having an enemy, which Trogus Pompeius declares to have been a trait in the character of the ancient Spaniards. To such persons concord or amity is so offensive, that, out of pure hatred to it, they willingly expose themselves to the enmity of others. If such characters happen to obtain a station of some honour in the Church, it is amazing what scruples and difficulties they will not raise, what intricate sophisms they will not frame and contrive, and what accusations they will not institute, that they may have an opportunity of raising a contest about the articles of religion, from which proceed private enmity and rancor that can never be appeased, and dissensions of a more deadly kind than the greatest of those which relate to the present life.
 - c) The last which comes forward, is *a hatred against the professors of the true doctrine*, from which the descent is very rapid downwards to a dissent from that doctrine which those good men profess; because it is the anxious study of every one that hates another, not to have anything in common with his adversary. Of this the Arabians afford an example. Out of hatred to Heraclius

Caesar, and to the stipendiary Greek and Latin troops who served under him, they, who had long before departed from them in will and affection, effected a still more serious separation from them in religion; for, although they had previously been professors of Christianity, from that period they embraced the doctrines of the Alcoran and became followers of Mahomet.

But the professors of the true doctrine incur this species of hatred, either through *some fault of their own*, or through *the pure malice of men*.

- a) They incur this hatred *by their own fault*, if they do not administer the doctrine of the truth, with that prudence and gentleness which are appropriate to it; if they appear to have a greater regard for their own advantage, than for the advancement of religion, and, *lastly*, if their manner of life is in opposition to the doctrine. From all these circumstances a bad opinion is entertained of them, as though they scarcely believed the principles which they inculcate.
 - b) This hatred is also incurred by *the fault of another*, because the delicate and lascivious hearts of men cannot bear to have their ulcers sprinkled and purified by the sharp salt of truth, and because they with difficulty admit any censures on their life and manners. With a knowledge of this trait of the human heart, the Apostle inquires, 'Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth' (Gal. iv. 16). For truth is almost invariably productive of hatred, while an obsequious complaisance obtains friends as its reward.
3. The preceding appear to be the procuring causes of dissensions in religion; and as long as their efficacy endures, they tend to perpetuate these dissensions. There are other causes that we may justly class among those which perpetuate discord when once it has arisen, and which prevent the restoration of peace and unity.
- a) Among these perpetuating and preventing causes, the first place is claimed for the *various prejudices by which the minds of the Dissidents are occupied, concerning our adversaries and their opinions, concerning our parents and ancestors, and the Church to which we belong, and, lastly, concerning ourselves and our teachers*.
 - i. *The prejudice against our adversaries* is, not that we think them under the influence of ERROR, but under that of *pure malice*, and because their minds have indulged their humour in thus dissenting. This cuts off all hope of leading them to adopt correct sentiments, and despair refuses to make the attempt.
 - ii. *The prejudice against the opinions of our adversary* is, that we condemn them ourselves not only for being false, but for having been already condemned by the public judgment of the Church; we therefore consider them unworthy of being again brought into controversy, and subjected anew to examination.
 - iii. But *the preconceived opinion which we have formed concerning our parents and ancestors, is also a preventive of reconciliation*, both because we account them to have been possessed of such a great share of wisdom and piety, as rendered it improbable that they could ever have been guilty of

error; and because we conceive favourable hopes of their salvation, which is very properly an object of our most earnest wishes in their behalf. But these hopes we seem to call in question, if, in an opinion opposed to theirs, we acknowledge any portion of the truth appertaining to salvation, of which they have either been ignorant or have disapproved. It is on this principle that parents leave their posterity heirs as of their property so also of their opinions and dissensions.

- iv. Besides, *the splendour of the Church*, to which we have bound ourselves by an oath, dazzles our eyes in such a manner that we cannot suffer any persuasion whatever to induce us to believe the possibility, in former times or at present, of that church having deviated in any point from the right way.
 - v. *Lastly*. Our thoughts and sentiments *concerning ourselves and our teachers* are so exalted, that our minds can scarcely conceive it possible either for them to have been ignorant, or not to have had a sufficiently clear perception of things, or for us to err in judgment when we approve of their opinions. So prone is the human understanding to exempt from all suspicion of error itself and those whom it loves and esteems!
- b) It is no wonder if these prejudices produce *a pertinacity in eagerly defending a proposition once laid down*, which is a most powerful impediment to reconciliation.

Two kinds of fear render this pertinacity the more obstinate:

- i. One is a *fear of that disgrace* which, we foolishly think, will be incurred if we acknowledge ourselves to have been at all in error.
 - ii. The other is a fear which causes us to think, that the whole doctrine is exposed to the utmost peril, if we discover it even in one point to be erroneous.
- c) In addition to these, *the mode of action commonly adopted both towards an adversary and his opinion*, is no small obstacle to reconciliation, although that mode may seem to have been chosen for conciliatory purposes.
- i. An adversary is treated in a perverse manner, when he is overwhelmed by curses and reproaches, assailed with detractions and calumnies, and when he is menaced with threats of violence. If he despises all these things, which is not an uncommon occurrence when 'the testimony of his conscience' is in opposition to them (2 Cor. i. 19), they produce no effect whatever. But if his spirit broods over them, his mind becomes disturbed, and, like one stricken by the Furies, he is driven to madness, and is thus much worse qualified than before to acknowledge his error. In both these ways he is confirmed rather the more in his own opinion; either because he perceives, that those who use arms of this kind openly betray the weakness as well as the injustice of their cause; or, because he draws this conclusion in his own mind, that it is not very probable that those persons are instructed by *the Spirit of truth*, who adopt such a course of conduct.

ii. But contention is rashly instituted against the *opinion of an adversary*, *First*, when it is not proposed according to the mind and intention of him who is the assertor; *Secondly*, when it is discussed beyond all due bounds, and its deformity is unseasonably exaggerated; and, *Lastly*, when its refutation is attempted by arguments ill calculated to produce that effect.

- *The First* occurs when we do not attend to the words of an adversary, with a becoming tranquillity of mind and suitable patience; but immediately and at the mention of the first word, we are accustomed to guess at his meaning.
- *The Second* arises from the circumstance of no one wishing it to appear as if he had begun to contend about a thing of trifling importance.
- *The Last* proceeds from ignorance or from too great impetuosity, which, on being precipitously impelled into fury, augments its mischievous capabilities. It then seizes upon anything for a weapon, and hurls it against the adversary.
- When *the first mode* is adopted, the person whose meaning is misrepresented, thinks that an opinion, not his own, has been calumniously attributed to him.
- *The second course*, according to his judgment, has been pursued for the purpose of affixing an envious mark upon his opinion, and upon the dignity which it has acquired.
- When *the last* is put in practice, he considers his opinion to be incapable of refutation, because he observes that it remains uninjured amidst all the arguments which have been directed against it. All and each of these add fuel to the flame of dissensions, and render the blazing fire inextinguishable.

III. We have now considered THE NATURE, THE EFFECTS and THE CAUSES of *religious dissension*. It remains for us to inquire into the REMEDIES for such a great evil. While I attempt this in a brief manner, I beg that you will favour me with that degree of attention which you have already manifested. The professors of medicine describe the nature of all *remedies* thus, 'they are never used without some effect.' For if they be true remedies, they must prove beneficial; and, if they do not profit, they prove hurtful. This latter circumstance reminds me, that I ought first to remove certain corrupt remedies which have been devised by some persons and occasionally employed.

1. The first of these false remedies which obtrudes itself, is the fable of *the sufficiency of implicit faith*, by which people are called upon, without any knowledge of the matter, to believe that which is an object of belief with the Church and the Prelates. But the Scripture places righteousness 'in the faith of the heart,' and salvation 'in the confession of the mouth' (Rom. x. 10); and says, 'The just shall live by his faith' (Heb. ii. 4), and 'I believe and therefore have spoken' (2 Cor. iv. 13). This monstrous absurdity is, therefore, exploded by the scripture. Not only does this fable take away

all cause of religious dissension, but it also destroys religion itself, which, when it is destitute of KNOWLEDGE and FAITH, can have no existence.

2. The next figment is nearly allied to this; it concludes, that *every one may be saved in his own religion*. But while this remedy professes to cure one evil, it produces another much more hurtful and of greater magnitude; and that is, the certain destruction of those who are held in bondage by this error. Because this opinion renders the error incurable; since no one will give himself any trouble to lay it aside or to correct it. This was Mahomet's devise, for the purpose of establishing his Alcoran free from all liability of its becoming an object of dispute. The same doctrine obtained in Paganism, where the worship of demons flourished, as is evident from the title on a certain altar among the Athenians, the high stewards of Pagan wisdom. That altar bore the following inscription, 'TO THE GODS OF ASIA, EUROPE, AND AFRICA; TO THE UNKNOWN AND FOREIGN GODS:' which was after the manner of the Romans, at that period, 'the masters of the world,' who were accustomed to invoke the tutelary deities of an enemy's city before they commenced hostilities against it. In this manner has Satan exerted himself, lest his 'kingdom, being divided against itself should fall.'
3. The third false remedy is *a prohibition of all controversies respecting religion*, which lays down the most stupid ignorance for a foundation, and raises upon it the superstructure of religious concord: In Russia, where such an ordinance is in operation, this is obvious to every one that contemplates its effects. Yet it is hurtful, whether it be *true Religion* that flourishes, or it be *false*. In the first case, on account of the inconstancy of the human mind; and in the second case, because it stamps perpetuity on error, unless the preceding fiction concerning the *equality of all religions* meet with approval, for on that foundation, Mahomet raised this prohibition against religious controversies.
4. Next to this in absurdity is the advice, *not to explain the sacred Scriptures, but only to read them*: which is not only pernicious, on account of the omission of their particular application, and repugnant to the usage both of the ancient Jewish Church and of the primitive Church of Christ; but it is also of no avail in the cure of the evil, since any one might, by reading, discover the meaning for himself, according to his own fancy; and that reading which is instituted at the will of the reader, would act the part of an explanation, on account of the parallelism of similar and dissimilar passages.

But the Popish Church exhibits to us THREE REMEDIES.

FIRST, *that, for the sake of certainty, we shall have recourse to the CHURCH UNIVERSAL*. However, since the whole of this church cannot meet together, the court of Rome has appointed in its place a *representative* assembly, consisting of the Pope, the Cardinals, the Bishops, and the rest of the prelates who are devoted to the Roman See, and subject to the Pontiff. But, in addition to this, because it believes that it is possible for all the Cardinals, Bishops and Prelates to err, even when united together in one body, and because it considers the Pope alone to be placed beyond the possibility of error, it declares that we must apply to him for the sake of obtaining a decisive judgment concerning Religion. This remedy is not only vain and inefficient, but it is far more difficult to induce the rest of the Christian world to adopt it than any controverted article in the whole circle

of religion: And since the Papists endeavour to prove this point from the scriptures, by that very circumstance they declare that the scriptures are the only sanctuary to which we can repair for religious information.

SECONDLY. Their next remedy is proposed, if I may, be allowed the expression, merely for the sake of form, and lies in *the writings and agreement of the ancient Fathers*. But, since the Christian Fathers have not all been authors, and few of those who have written, have concerned themselves with controversies, (which takes away from us the *universal consent* of all of them together), this remedy is also useless, because it is a fact to the truth of which the Papists themselves assent, that it was possible for each of these Fathers to err. From this circumstance, therefore, we conclude, that the consent of all of them is not free from the risk of error, even if each had separately declared his own individual opinion in his writings. Besides, this general agreement is no easy matter; nay, it is to be obtained with the greatest difficulty; because it is in the power of very few persons, (if of any man whatever), to make themselves acquainted with such universal consent, both on account of the bulky and almost innumerable volumes in which the writings of the Fathers are contained, and because the dispute among different parties is no less concerning the meaning of those Fathers than concerning that of the Scriptures, the contents of which are comprised in a book of small size when compared with the dimensions of their massy tomes. We are thus sent forth on an endless excursion, that we may at length be compelled to return to the Sovereign Pontiff.

THIRDLY. The other remedy of the Papists is not much dissimilar to the preceding one. It is thus stated: *The decrees of former councils may be consulted; from which, if it should appear that the controversy has been decided, the judgment then passed upon it must stand in the place of a definitive sentence: nor must any matter, the merits of which have been once decided, be brought again into judgment.* But of what avail would this be, if a good cause had been badly defended, and had been overpowered and borne down, not by any defect in itself, but through the fault of those who were its defenders, and who were either awed into silence through fear, or betrayed their trust by an incompetent, foolish and injudicious defense? And of what consequence does such a remedy appear, if one and the same spirit of error have conducted on such an occasion both the attack and the defense. But grant that it has been fairly defended: Yet, I declare that the CAUSE OF RELIGION, WHICH IS THE CAUSE OF GOD, IS NOT AN AFFAIR TO BE SUBMITTED TO HUMAN DECISION, or *'to be judged of man's judgment.'*

The Papists add a FOURTH remedy, which, on account of its fierce and most violent efficacy, will not easily be forgotten by us as a people who have been called to endure some of its cruelties. It acts like the fulcrum of a lever for confirming all the preceding suggestions, and is the foundation of the whole composition. It is this: 'Whosoever refuses to listen to the councils and writings of the fathers, and to receive them as explained by the Church of Rome — whosoever refuses to listen to the Church, and especially to her husband, that High Priest and Prophet, the vicar of Christ and the successor of St Peter, let that soul be cut off from among his people: And he who is unwilling to yield to an authority so sacred, must be compelled, under the sword of the executioner, to express his consent, or he must be avoided,' [*devitetur*], which, in their language, signifies that he must be deprived of life. To murder and utterly to destroy the adverse and gainsaying parties is indeed, a most compendious method of removing all dissensions!

In the midst of these difficulties, some persons have invented other remedies, which, since they are not within the power of man, ought, according to their views, to be asked of God in prayer.

1. One is, *that God would be pleased to raise some one from the dead, and send him to men*: From such a messenger, they might then hope to know what is God's decisive judgment concerning the clashing opinions of the various dissidents. But this remedy is discountenanced by Christ when he says, 'If they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead' (Luke xvi. 31).
2. Another of these remedies is, *that God would by a miracle distinguish that party of whose sentiments he approves*; which appears to have been a practice in the times of Elijah. But if no sect be entirely free from every particle of error, can it be expected that God will set the seal of his approval on any portion of falsity? But this wish is unnecessary, since the things which Christ did and spoke 'are written that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that, believing, we might have life through his name' (John xx. 31). But the remedy itself, if applied, would prove to be inefficacious. For even in the days of Christ and his apostles, dissensions existed; and many of them were excited against the primitive heralds of the gospel, although they had acquired great renown by the benevolent exercise of the miraculous powers with which they were endued. To this remark I must add that the approaching advent of ANTICHRIST is predicted to be 'with all power, and signs, and lying wonders' (2 Thess. ii. 9).
3. A third remedy, of a horrid description, remains to be noticed, which, nevertheless, is resorted to by some persons. It is *an adjuration of the devil*, to induce him by means of incantations and exorcisms to deliver an answer, from the bodies of *possessed persons*, concerning the truth of such doctrines as are at any period the existing subjects of controversy. This method is both a mark of the utmost desperation, and an execrable and insane love of demons.

But, dismissing all these violent medicines, that are of a bad character and import, I proceed to notice such as are holy, true and saving; these I distribute into *preparatives* and *aphaeretics* or *removers*, of this dissension.

1. To the class of *preparatives* belong,
 - a) in the first place, PRAYERS AND SUPPLICATIONS TO GOD, that we may obtain a knowledge of the truth, and that the peace of the Church may be preserved: and these religious acts are to be performed, at the special command of the magistrates, with fasting, and in dust and ashes, with seriousness, in faith, and with assiduity. These services, when thus performed, cannot fail of being efficacious; because they are done according to the ordinance of God, whose command it is, that 'we pray for the peace of Jerusalem' (Psalm cxxii. 6), and according to the promise of Christ, who has graciously engaged that 'the Spirit of truth shall be given to those who ask him' (Luke xi. 13).
 - b) *Let a serious amendment of life and a conscientious course of conduct be added*: For, without these, all our prayers are rendered ineffectual, because they are displeasing to God, on the ground, that 'he who misemploys that portion of

knowledge which he possesses, becomes, by his own act, unworthy of all further communications and increase of knowledge.’ This is in accordance with that saying of Christ: ‘Unto every one that hath, shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that which he hath shall be taken away from him’ (Luke xix. 26). But to all those who employ and improve the knowledge which is given to them, Christ promises *the Spirit of discernment* in these words: ‘If any man will do the will of my Father, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself’ (John viii. 17).

2. But amongst the very first *removals*, let those causes be put away which, as we have previously stated, have their origin in the affections, and which are not only the instigators of this dissension, but tend to perpetuate and keep it alive. Let humility overcome pride; let a mind contented with its condition become the successor of avarice; let the love of celestial delights expel all carnal pleasures; let good will and benevolence occupy the place of envy; let patient forbearance subdue anger; let sobriety in acquiring wisdom prescribe bounds to the desire of knowledge, and let studious application take the place of learned ignorance. Let all hatred and bitterness be laid aside; and, on the contrary, ‘let us put on bowels of mercies’ towards those who differ from us, and who appear either to wander about in the paths of error, or to scatter its noxious seeds among others.

These necessary concessions we shall obtain from our minds without much difficulty, if the following four considerations become the objects of our sedulous attention:

FIRST. *How extremely difficult it is to discover the truth on all subjects, and to avoid error.* On this topic, St Augustine most beautifully descants, when he thus addresses those worst of heretics, the Manichees: ‘Let those persons be enraged against you, who are ignorant of the immense labour that is required for the discovery of truth, and how difficult it is to guard against error. Let those be enraged against you who know not how uncommon a circumstance and how arduous a toil it is to overcome carnal fantasies, when such a conquest is put in comparison with serenity of mind. Let those be enraged against you who are not aware of the great difficulty with which the eye of ‘the inner man’ is healed, so as to be able to look up to God as the sun of the system. Let those be enraged against you, who are personally unconscious of the many sighs and groans which must be uttered before we are capable of understanding God in the slightest degree. And, lastly, let them be enraged against you, who have never been deceived by an error of such a description as that under which they see you labouring. But how angry soever all these persons may be, I cannot be in the least enraged against you, whose weaknesses it is my duty to bear, as those who were near me at that period bore with mine; and I ought now to treat you with as much patience as that which was exercised towards me when, frantic and blind, I went astray in the errors of your doctrine.’

SECONDLY. That those who hold erroneous opinions have been induced through *ignorance* to adopt them, is far more probable, than that *malice* has influenced them to contrive a method of consigning themselves and other people to eternal destruction.

THIRDLY. It is possible that they who entertain these mistaken sentiments, are of the number of the elect, whom God, it is true, may have permitted to fall, but only

with this design, that he may raise them up with the greater glory. How then can we indulge ourselves in any harsh or unmerciful resolutions against these persons, who have been destined to possess the heavenly inheritance, who are our brethren, the members of Christ, and not only the servants but the sons of the Lord Most High?

LASTLY. Let us place ourselves in the circumstances of an adversary, and let him in return assume the character which we sustain; since it is as possible for us, as it is for him, to hold wrong principles. When we have made this experiment, we may be brought to think, that the very person whom we had previously thought to be in error, and whose mistakes in our eyes had a destructive tendency, may perhaps have been given to us by God, that out of his mouth we may learn the truth which has hitherto been unknown to us.

To these four reflections, let there be added, *a consideration of all those articles of religion respecting which there exists on both sides a perfect agreement.* These will perhaps be found to be so numerous and of such great importance, that when a comparison is instituted between them, and the others which may properly be made the subjects of controversy, the latter will be found to be few in number and of small consequence. This is the very method which a certain famous prince in France is reported to have adopted, when Cardinal Lorraine attempted to embroil the Lutherans, or those who adhered to the Augustan Confession, with the French Protestants, that he might interrupt and neutralize the salutary provisions of the Conference at Poissy, which had been instituted between the Protestants and the Papists.

But since it is customary after long and grievous wars, to enter into a truce, or a cessation from hostilities, prior to the conclusion of a treaty of peace and its final ratification; and, since, during the continuance of a truce, while every hostile attempt is laid aside, peaceful thoughts are naturally suggested, till at length a general solicitude is expressed with regard to the method in which a firm peace and lasting reconciliation may best be effected; it is my special wish, that there may now be among us a similar cessation from the asperities of religious warfare, and that both parties would abstain from writings full of bitterness, from sermons remarkable only for the invectives which they contain, and from the unchristian practice of mutual anathematizing and execration. Instead of these, let the controversialists substitute *writings full of moderation*, in which the matters of controversy may, without respect of persons, be clearly explained and proved by cogent arguments: Let such sermons be preached as are calculated to excite the minds of the people to the love and study of truth, charity, mercy, long-suffering, and concord; which may inflame the minds both of Governors and people with a desire of concluding a pacification, and may make them willing to carry into effect such a remedy as is, of all others, the best accommodated to remove dissensions.

That remedy is, *an orderly and free convention of the parties that differ from each other:* In such an assembly, (called by the Greeks a SYNOD and by the Latins a COUNCIL), after the different sentiments have been compared together, and the various reasons of each have been weighed, in the fear of the Lord, and with calmness and accuracy, let the members deliberate, consult and determine what the word of God declares concerning the matters in controversy, and afterwards let them by common consent promulge and

declare the result to the Churches.

The Chief Magistrates, who profess the Christian religion, will summon and convene this Synod, in virtue of the Supreme official authority with which they are divinely invested, and according to the practice that formerly prevailed in the Jewish Church, and that was afterwards adopted by the Christian Church and continued nearly to the nine hundredth year after the birth of Christ, until the Roman Pontiff began through tyranny to arrogate this authority to himself. Such an arrangement is required by the public weal, which is never committed with greater safety to the custody of any one than to his whose private advantage is entirely unconnected, with the issue.

But men endued with wisdom will be summoned to this Synod, and will be admitted into it — men who are well qualified for a seat in it by the sanctity of their lives, and their general experience — men burning with zeal for God and for the salvation of their mankind, and inflamed with the love of truth and peace. Into such a choice assembly all those persons will be admitted who are acknowledged for any probable reason to possess the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of discernment between truth and falsehood, between good and evil, and those who promise to abide by the Scriptures, that have been inspired by the same Holy Spirit. Not only will ecclesiastics be admitted, but also laymen, whether they be entitled to any superiority on account of the dignity of the office which they sustain, or whether they be persons in private stations. Not only will the representatives of one party, or of some parties, be admitted, but deputies from all the parties that disagree, whether they have been defenders of the conflicting opinions that are at issue, or whether they have never publicly explained their own sentiments either in discourse or by writing. But it is of the utmost consequence, that this sentence should, after the manner of Plato, be inscribed in letters of gold on the porch of the building in which this sacred meeting holds its sittings: ‘LET NO ONE THAT IS NOT DESIROUS OF PROMOTING THE INTERESTS OF TRUTH AND PEACE, ENTER THIS HALLOWED DOME!’ It is my sincere and earnest wish, that God would ‘place his angel with a flaming two-edged sword at the entrance of this paradise,’ in which DIVINE TRUTH and the lovely CONCORD of the Church will be the subjects of discussion; and that he would by his Angel drive away all those who might be animated with a spirit averse to truth and concord, while the sacred guardian repeats, in tones terrific and a voice of thunder, the warning words used by the followers of Pythagoras and Orpheus preparatory to the commencement of their sacred rites:

Far, far from hence, ye multitude profane!

The situation and other circumstances of the town or city appointed for holding such a Council, must not be neglected. It should be so accommodated to the convenience of those who have to assemble in it, that neither the difficulty of approaching it, nor the length of the journey to it, should operate as a hindrance on any of the members deputed. It should be a place free from danger and violence, and secured against all surprise and ambuscades, in order that those who are summoned may come to it, remain in it, and return to their homes, in perfect safety. To secure these benefits, it will be necessary for a public pledge to be given to all the members and solemnly observed.

In this council the subjects of discussion will not be, the jurisdiction, honours, and rights of precedence on the part of princes, the wealth, power and privileges of Bishops, the commencement of war against the Turks, or any other political matters. But its discussions will relate solely to those things which pertain to *Religion*: Of this description are

the doctrines which concern faith and manners, and ecclesiastical order.

1. In these *doctrines*, there are two objects worthy of consideration, which are indeed of the greatest consequence:
 - a) *Their truth*, and
 - b) *The degree of necessity which exists for knowing, believing and practicing them.*
2. As to *Ecclesiastical order*, because a good part of it is positive and only requires to be accommodated to persons, places and seasons, it will be easily dispatched.

The end of such a holy convention will be the illustration, preservation, and propagation of the truth; the extirpation of existing errors, and the concord of the Church. The consequence of all which, will be the glory of God and the eternal salvation of men.

The presidency of that assembly belongs to HIM ALONE who is the HEAD and the HUSBAND of the Church, to Christ by his Holy Spirit. For he has promised to be present in a company that may consist only of two or three individuals gathered together in his name: His assistance, therefore, will be earnestly implored at the beginning and end of each of their sessions. But for the sake of order, moderation, and good government, and to avoid confusion, it will be necessary to have presidents subordinate to Christ Jesus. It is my sincere wish that the magistrates would themselves undertake that office in the Council; and this might be obtained from them as a favour. But in case of their reluctance, either some members deputed from their body, or some persons chosen by the whole Synod, ought to act in that capacity. The duties of these Presidents will consist in convening the assembly, proposing the subjects of deliberation, putting questions to the vote, collecting the suffrages of each member by means of accredited secretaries, and in directing the whole of the proceedings. The course of action to be adopted in the Synod itself, is this;

1. a regular and accurate debate on the matters in controversy,
2. mature consultation concerning them, and
3. complete liberty for every one to declare his opinion.

The rule to be observed in all these transactions is the WORD OF GOD, recorded in the books of the Old and New Testament. The power and influence which the most ancient Councils ascribed to this sacred rule, were pointed out by the significant action of placing a COPY OF THE GOSPELS in the first and most honourable seat in the assembly. On this point the parties between whom the difference subsists, should be mutually agreed.

1. The debates will not be conducted according to the rules of Rhetoric, but according to Dialectics. But a logical and concise mode of reasoning will be employed; and all precipitancy of speech and extempore effusions will be avoided. To each of the parties such an equal space of time will be allowed as may appear necessary for due meditation: and, to avoid many inconveniences and absurdities, every speech intended for delivery will be comprised in writing, and will be recited from the manuscript. No one shall be permitted to interrupt or to close a disputation, unless, in the opinion of the whole assembly, it appear that sufficient reasons have been advanced to satisfy the subject under discussion.
2. When a disputation is finished, a grave and mature deliberation will be instituted both concerning the controversies themselves and the arguments employed by both

sides; that, the limits of the matter under dispute being laid down with great strictness, and the amplitude of debate being contracted into a very narrow compass, the question on which the assembly has to decide and pronounce may be perceived as at one glance with complete distinctness.

3. To these will succeed, in the proper course, a free declaration of opinion — a right, the benefit of which will belong equally to all that are convened of each party, without excluding from it any of those who though not invited, may have voluntarily come to the town or city in which the Synod is convened, and who may have been admitted into it by the consent of the members.

And since nothing to the present period has proved to be a greater hindrance to the investigation of truth or to the conclusion of an agreement, than this circumstance — that those who have been convened were so restricted and confined to received opinions as to bring from home with them the declaration which they were to make on every subject in the Synod: it is, therefore, necessary that all the members assembled, should, prior to the commencement of any proceedings, take a solemn oath, not to indulge in prevarication or calumny. By this oath they ought to promise that every thing shall be transacted in the fear of the Lord, and according to a good conscience; the latter of which consists, in not asserting that which they consider to be false, in not concealing that which they think to be the truth, (how much soever such truth may be opposed to them and their party), and in not pressing upon others for absolute certainties those points which seem, even to themselves, to be doubtful. By this oath they should also promise that every thing shall be conducted according to the rule of the word of God, without favour or affection, and without any partiality or respect of persons; that the whole of their attention in that assembly shall be solely directed to promote an inquiry after truth and to consolidate Christian concord; and that they will acquiesce in the sentence of the Synod on all those things of which they shall be convinced by the word of God. On which account let them be absolved from all other oaths, either immediately or indirectly contrary to this by which they have been bound either to Churches and their confessions, or to schools and their masters, or even to princes themselves, with an exception in favour of the right and jurisdiction which the latter have over their subjects. Constituted after this manner, such a Synod will truly be a free assembly, most suitable and appropriate for the investigation of truth and the establishment of concord. This is an opinion which is countenanced by St Augustine, who, expostulating with the Manichees, in continuation of the passage which we have just quoted, proceeds thus: ‘But that you may become milder and may be the more easily pacified, O Manicheans, and that you may no longer place yourselves in opposition to me, with a mind full of hostility which is most pernicious to yourselves, it is my duty to request of you (whoever he may be that shall judge betwixt us), that all arrogance be laid aside by both parties; and that none of us say, that he has discovered the truth. But rather let us seek it, as though it were unknown to each of us. For thus it will be possible for each of us to be engaged in a diligent and amicable search for it, if we have not by a premature and rash presumption believed that it is an object which we had previously discovered, and with which we are well acquainted.’

From a Synod thus constructed and managed, those who rely on the promise of God may expect most abundant profit and the greatest advantages. For, though Christ be provoked to anger by our manifold trespasses and offenses, yet the thought must not be once indulged, that his church will be neglected by him; or, when his faithful servants

and teachable disciples are, with simplicity of heart, engaged in a search after truth and peace, and are devoutly imploring the grace of his Holy Spirit, that He will on any account suffer them to fall into such errors as are opposed to truths accounted fundamental, and to persevere in them when their tendency is thus injurious. From the decisions of a Synod that is influenced by such expectations, unanimity and agreement will be obtained on all the doctrines, or at least on the principal part of them, and especially on those which are supported by clear testimonies from the Scriptures.

But if it should happen, that a mutual consent and agreement cannot be obtained on some articles, then, it appears to me, one of these two courses must be pursued.

- **FIRST.** It must become a matter of deep consideration, whether a fraternal concord in Christ, cannot exist between the two parties, and whether one cannot acknowledge the other for partakers of the same faith and fellow-heirs of the same salvation, although they may both hold different sentiments concerning the nature of faith and the manner of salvation. If either party refuse to extend to the other the right hand of fellowship, the party so offending shall, by the unanimous declaration of all the members, be commanded to prove from plain and obvious passages of scripture, that the importance attached to the controverted articles is so great as not to permit those who dissent from them to be one in Christ Jesus.
- **SECONDLY.** After having made every effort toward producing a Christian and fraternal union, if they find that this cannot be effected, in such a state of affairs the second plan must be adopted, which indeed the conscience of no man can under any pretext refuse. The right hand of friendship should be extended by both parties, and all of them should enter into a solemn engagement, by which they should bind themselves, as by oath, and under the most sacred obligations, to abstain in future from all bitterness, evil speaking, and railing; to preach with gentleness and moderation, to the people entrusted to their care, that truth which they deem necessary; and to confute those falsities which they consider to be inimical to salvation and injurious to the glory of God; and, while engaged in such a confutation of error, (however great their earnestness may be), to let their zeal be under the direction of knowledge and attempered with kindness. On him who shall resolve to adopt a course of conduct different to this, let the imprecations of an incensed God and his Christ be invoked, and let the magistrates not only threaten him with deserved punishment, but let it be actually inflicted.

But the Synod will not assume to itself the authority of obtruding upon others, by force, those resolutions which may have been passed by unanimous consent. For this reflection should always suggest itself, 'Though this Synod appears to have done all things conscientiously, it is possible, that, after all, it has committed an error in judgment. Such a diffidence and moderation of mind will possess greater power, and will have more influence, than any immoderate or excessive rigor can have, on the consciences both of the contumacious dissidents, and of the whole body of the faithful; because, according to Lactantius, 'To recommend faith to others, we must make it the subject of persuasion, and not of compulsion.' Tertullian also says, 'Nothing is less a religious business than to employ coercion about religion.' For these disturbers will either then

1. desist from creating further trouble to the Church by the frequent, unreasonable and outrageous inculcation of their opinions, which, with all their powers of persuasion,

they were not able to prevail with such a numerous assembly of impartial and moderate men to adopt. Or,

2. being exposed to the just indignation of all these individuals, they will scarcely find a person willing to lend an ear to teachers of such a refractory and obstinate disposition.

If this should not prove to be the result, then it must be concluded that there are no remedies calculated to remove all evils; but those must be employed which have in them the least peril. The mild and affectionate exhortation of Christ our saviour, must also live in our recollections. He addressed his disciples and said, 'Will ye also go away' (John vi. 67). We must use the same interrogation; and must rest at that point and cease from all ulterior measures.

My very famous, most polite and courteous hearers, these are the remarks which have been impressed on my mind, and which I have accounted it my duty at this time to declare concerning the reconciliation of religious differences. The short time usually allotted to the delivery of an address on this occasion, and the defects of my own genius, have prevented me from treating this subject according to its dignity and amplitude.

May the God of truth and peace inspire the hearts of the magistrates, the people and the ministers of religion, with an ardent desire for truth and peace. May He exhibit before their eyes, in all its naked deformity, the execrable and polluting nature of dissension concerning religion; and may He affect their hearts with a serious sense of these evils which flow so copiously from it; that they may unite all their prayers, counsels, endeavours, and desires, and may direct them to one point, the removal of the causes of such a great evil, the adoption of a mild and sanatory process, and the application of gentle remedies for healing this dissension, which are the only description of medicines of which the very weak and sickly condition of the body of the Church, and the nature of the malady, will admit. 'The God of peace,' who dignifies 'the peace makers' alone with the ample title of 'children' (Matt. v. 9), has called us to the practice of peace. Christ, 'the Prince of peace,' who by his precious blood, procured peace for us, has bequeathed and recommended it to us with a fraternal affection (John xiv. 27). It has also been sealed to us by the Holy Spirit, who is the bond of peace, and who has united all of us in one body by the closest ties of the new covenant (Ephes. iv. 3).

Let us be ashamed of contaminating such a splendid title as this by our petty contentions; let it rather be to us an object of pursuit, since God has called us to such a course. Let us not suffer that which has been purchased at such a great price to be consumed, and wasted away in the midst of our disputes and dissensions; but let us embrace it, because our Lord Christ has given it the sanction of his recommendation. Let us not permit a covenant of such great sanctity to be made void by our factious divisions; but, since it is sealed to us by the Holy Spirit, let us attend to all its requisitions and preserve the terms inviolate. Fabius, the Roman ambassador, told the Carthaginians, 'that he carried to them in his bosom both WAR and PEACE, that they might choose either of them that was the object of their preference.' Depending not on my own strength, but on the goodness of God, the promises of Christ, and on the gentle attestations of the Holy Spirit, I venture to imitate his expressions, (full of confidence although they be), and to say, 'Only let us choose peace and God will perfect it for us.' Then will the happy period arrive when with gladness we shall hear the voices of brethren mutually exhorting each other, and

saying, 'Let us go into the house of the Lord,' that he may explain to us his will; that 'our feet may joyfully stand within the gates of Jerusalem;' that in an ecstasy of delight we may contemplate the Church of Christ,' as a city that is compact together, whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, unto the testimony of Israel to give thanks unto the name of the Lord:' that with thanksgiving we may admire 'the thrones of judgment which are set there, the thrones of the house of David,' the thrones of men of veracity, of princes who in imitation of David's example are peace makers, and of magistrates who conform themselves to the similitude of the man after God's own heart. Thus shall we enjoy the felicity to accost each other in cheerful converse, and by way of encouragement sweetly to whisper in the ears of each other, 'pray for the peace of the Church Universal,' and in our mutual prayers let us invoke 'prosperity on them that love her;' that with unanimous voice, from the inmost recesses of our hearts, we may consecrate to her these votive intercessions and promises. 'Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces: for our brethren and companions' sakes, we will now say, PEACE BE WITHIN THEE! Because of the house of the Lord our God we will seek thy good' (Psalm 122). Thus at length shall it come to pass, that, being anointed with spiritual delights we shall sing together in jubilant strains, that most pleasant Song of Degrees, 'Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity,' etc. And, from a sight of the orderly walk and peaceable conduct of the faithful in the house of God, filled with the hopes of consummating these acts of pacification in heaven, we may conclude in these words of the Apostle, 'And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy upon the Israel of God' (Gal. vi. 16). Mercy, therefore, and Peace, be upon the Israel of God. I have concluded.