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(1)

The Doctrines of Predestination and Assurance examined, with a short View of the Pelagian Controversy,

IN

A SERMON



PREACHED BEFORE

THE LORD BISHOP OF LINCOLN;

AT HIS

TRIENNIAL VISITATION,

HELD AT

NEWPORT PAGNELL,

IN THE COUNTY OF BUCKS,

On TUESDAY, MAY 23, 1809,

BY THE

REV. THOMAS LE MESURIER, M. A.

RECTOR OF NEWNTON LONGVILLE, IN THAT COUNTY;

WITH LARGE NOTES.

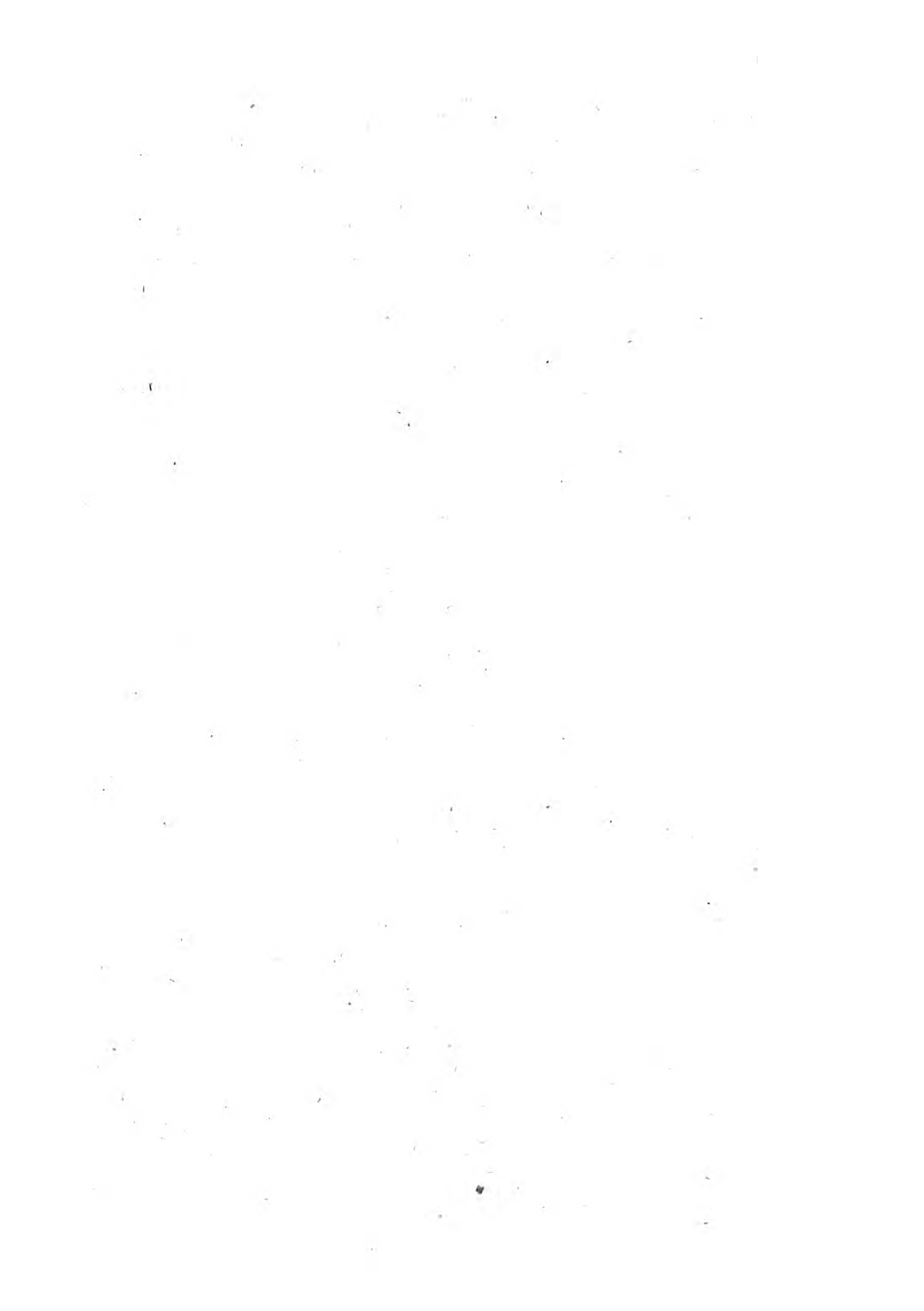
LONDON,

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1809.

**F. C. Mansard, Printer,
Peterborough-Court,
Fleet-Street,
London.**

TO THE
RIGHT REVEREND
GEORGE,
LORD BISHOP OF LINCOLN,
AND THE
REVEREND THE CLERGY
OF THE
DEANRY OF NEWPORT PAGNELL,
THE FOLLOWING
S E R M O N,
PREACHED BEFORE THEM,
AND PUBLISHED AT THEIR DESIRE,
IS
WITH DUTIFUL RESPECT
AND AFFECTION
INSCRIBED.



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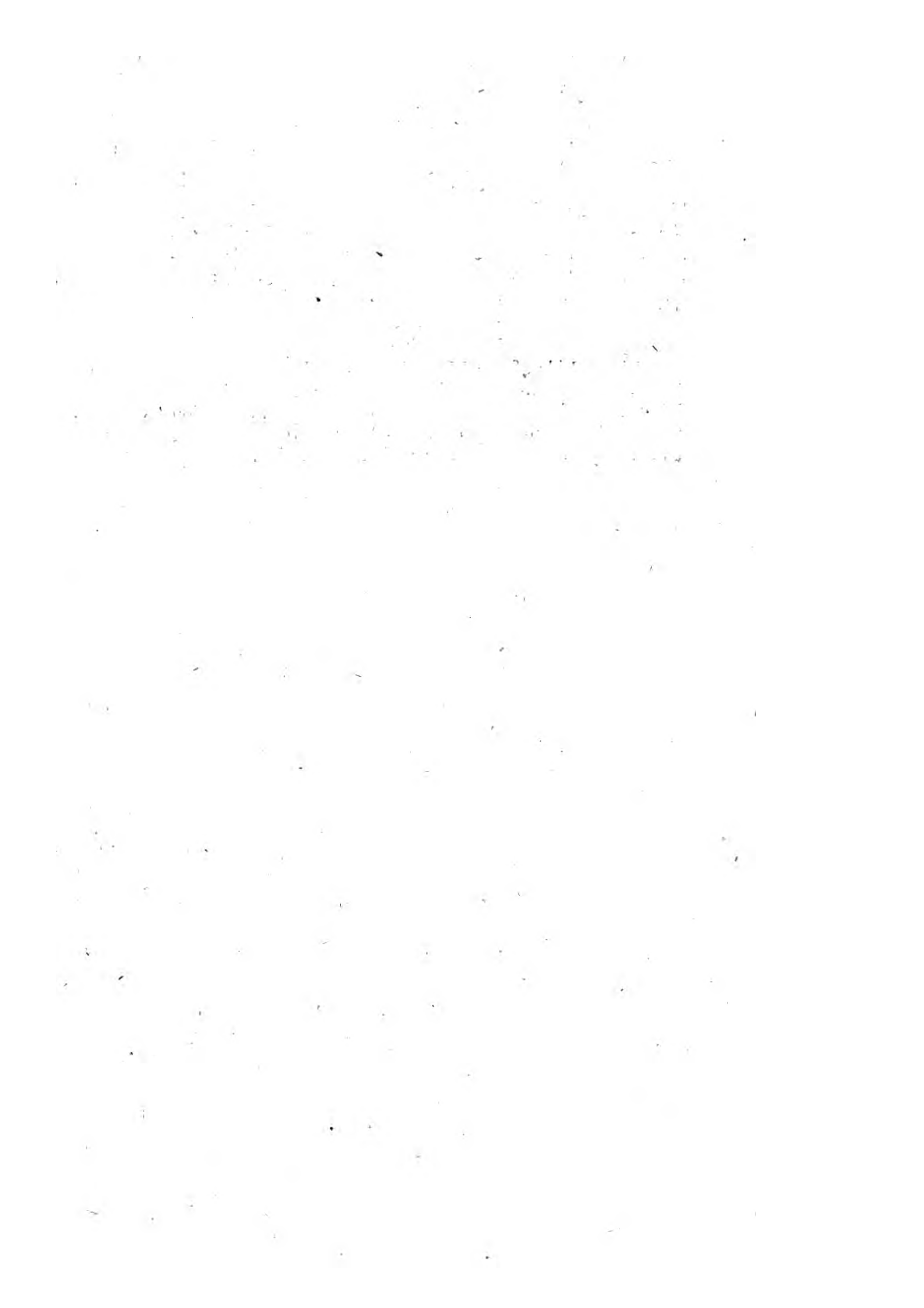
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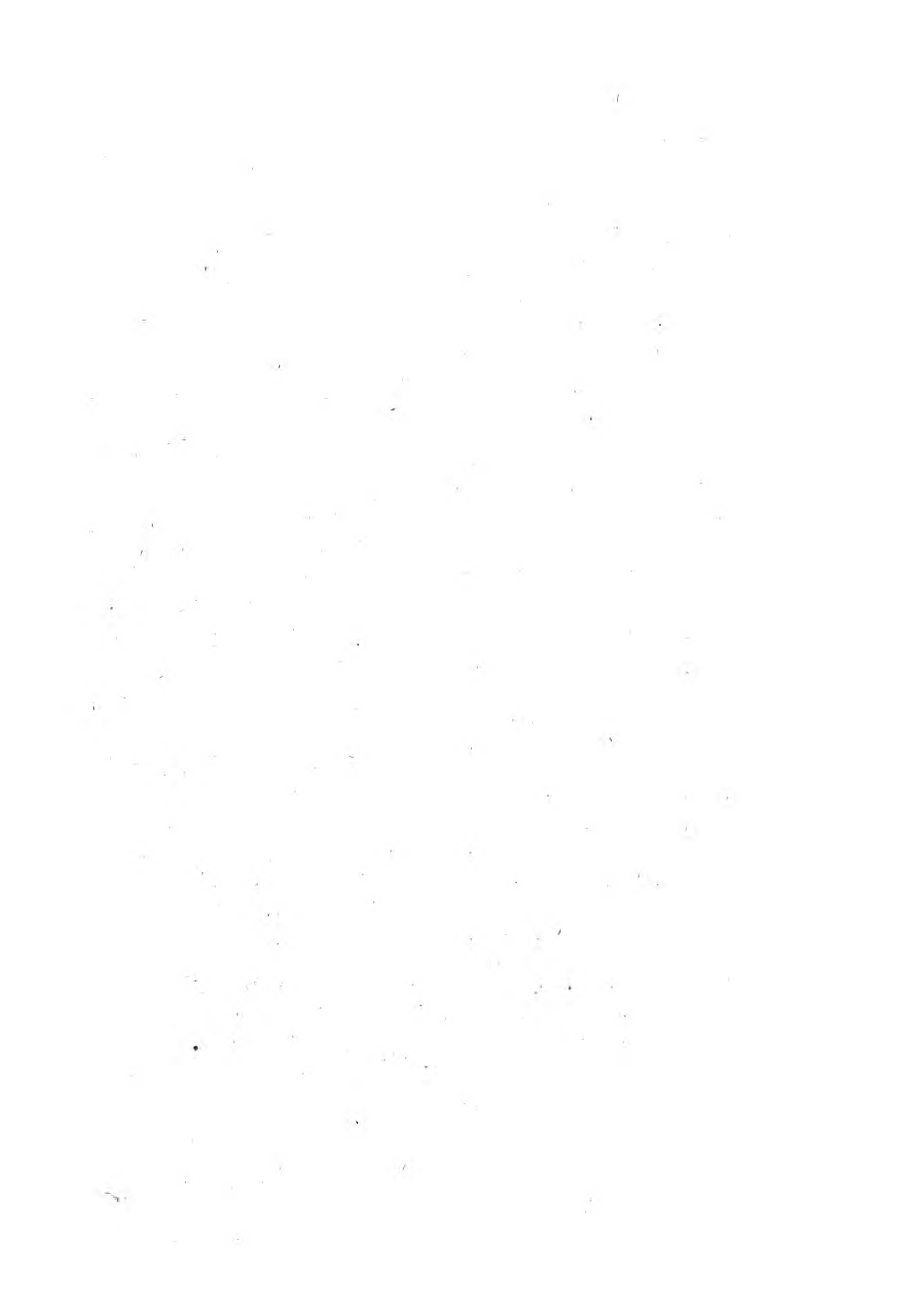
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A SERMON,

&c.

MATTHEW, xix. 17.

IF THOU WILT ENTER INTO LIFE, KEEP THE
COMMANDMENTS.

THE weakness of the human mind is in nothing more apparent than in its propensity to abuse and to pervert the best gifts of the Almighty: and this is in nothing more visible than in that best gift of all, our Reason. That most excellent Faculty, which was given us in order that we might acquaint ourselves with our Creator, and by understanding His will, and conforming ourselves to it, secure the blessings which He has prepared for us, has been in many cases so employed, as if it had been rather designed to draw away our attention and our love from God than to bring us nearer to him. Often it is taken up with the most empty and frivolous pursuits; and often has its utmost subtilty and vigour been exerted only to perplex and to confound that which before was evident and clear. In contemplating some of its most laborious operations, one is almost tempted to suppose that the effect produced was purposely intended, like the golden apples of which we read in fabulous history, to divert us from our proper course.

Thus it has happened that the religion of Christ, which in its very promulgation was declared to be "revealed to babes," that is, to the weak and ig-

norant, has been perplexed and clouded with such doubts and difficulties as even the best informed and the most wise have been greatly puzzled to remove and to unravel.

I speak this with a particular view to those controversies respecting Predestination and Grace; to that opposition so unnecessarily as well as foolishly set up between Faith and Good Works, which have for so many ages disturbed the peace of the Christian Church; and which, most unhappily, after having been in a great measure confined to the learned and the studious, have in these latter times become most prevalent and been brought into fashion, almost exclusively, among the uninformed and labouring classes of mankind; which therefore press themselves most imperiously on our notice; which we are no longer at liberty to overlook or to disregard; but respecting which we are even bound to express our opinion, lest those who look up immediately to us for Instruction, should, by our seeming acquiescence, be drawn into Error.

This is a state of things which was both apprehended and deprecated by our first Reformers. Many even of those who most strenuously contended for these tenets, yet with an inconsistency which betrayed the weakness of the cause, recommended that they should not be brought into frequent or general discussion: and as to our Church in particular, strong cautions were given by those who were her rulers, that they should not, without the most apparent necessity, and only by men of approved knowledge and character, be agitated or even named in public discourses. (1)

(1) See the Proclamation prefixed to the Articles; and James the First's Instructions to the Divines sent to the Synod of Dort; one of which was, "Your advice shall be to those churches that
 " their ministers do not deliver in the pulpit to the people those
 " things for ordinary doctrines, which are the highest points of
 " the schools, and not fit for vulgar capacity, but disputable on

Sentiments so rational, and provisions so wise, it is evident that we can no longer follow. Such is the state of society, and such the nature of our duties, that we cannot always be silent when we will. It is always in the power of the turbulent and the wrong-headed, to force into action and to harrass with contention, even the most peaceable and the most considerate. It is now more than half a century since a cry was raised, and has more or less been kept up against the Established Clergy, in a great measure because they were backward to preach on those subjects. They have been accused of deserting the true Faith, and stigmatized as dissemblers before God. Repeatedly as this charge has been repelled, it continues still to be brought forward: the same necessity therefore constrains us to be urgent, as well in the defence of ourselves as in the assertion of what we conscientiously be-

“both sides.” Collier’s *Eccl. Hist.* vol. ii. p. 716, and Fuller’s *Church Hist.* b. x. p. 78. See also his *Injunctions* in 1622, one of which was, “That no preacher, of what title soever, under the degree of a bishop, or a dean at the least, do, from henceforth presume to preach in any popular auditory the deep points of predestination, election, reprobation, or the universal efficacy, resistibility or irresistibility of God’s grace; but leave those themes rather to be handled by the learned men, and that moderately and modestly, by use and application rather than by way of positive doctrine; being fitter for the schools than for private auditories.” Collier’s *Eccl. Hist.* vol. ii. p. 723. As to the earlier Reformers, their opinion in this respect plainly appears from the circumstance of the word “Predestination” not being to be found (any more than the thing mentioned) in the *Homilies*: nor have I met with it in any of the *Injunctions* issued in Henry the VIIIth’s or Edward the VIth’s reign. On the contrary, in the “*Necessary Erudition of a Christian Man, put forth by Authority*,” it was directed that “All curious reasonings about predestination were to be set apart: there being no certainty to be had of an election, but by feeling the motion of God’s spirit in us, by a good and virtuous life, and by persevering in it to the end.” See *Burnet’s Hist. of the Ref.* vol. i. p. 292. To this I may add the well known fact, often referred to for this purpose, of Erasmus’s *Paraphrase* having been ordered to be placed in the churches, which, it is clear, does not favour absolute decrees.

lieve to be the truth. These are facts so notorious, more especially in this neighbourhood, that no man can wonder at my laying these topics before you at this moment. Indeed, if any apology were necessary, I might find it in the example of those whose authority must be considered to be, as in all places very weighty and important, so particularly in this place, and as to this point, most material and even conclusive. (2)

That which I before hinted at, as admitted even by some of the followers of Calvin, of the difficulty and liability to abuse of his doctrine, might go a great way of itself to decide the question. (3) For, to say of a doctrine that it is not fit for common use, and for all understandings, is to say that it cannot form an essential part of such a religion as ours. That which was preached so peculiarly to the poor could never be deemed to consist in matters of deep speculation and doubtful research.

That indeed Christianity was intended to be most emphatically a practical religion, is a position which seems to be with great explicitness laid down in my text. Our Lord being asked by one who appears to have been seriously, though not sufficiently, well disposed, "What good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?" the answer was, "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the Commandments:" And, that there might be the less doubt upon the subject, our great Teacher in the first instance specifies the Commandments of the second table, "Thou shalt do no murder;" "Thou shalt not commit adultery;" "Thou shalt not steal;" "Thou shalt not bear false witness;" "Honour thy father and thy mother;" and "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." All these

(2) The Bishop of Lincoln, in his two Charges already printed, as well as in those which he has since delivered, and which also he has, at the request of his clergy, declared his intention to publish.

(3) See additional note (A.)

are commandments which particularly point to good works, to virtues which must be openly and actively practised. Here also (and therefore it is that I have particularly singled out this passage) we have what I conceive to be the duty of a Christian clearly pointed out, and concentrated, as it were, into one general principle; a principle, which, if properly enforced, will not only direct us in the line which we are to pursue, but also essentially contribute to preserve us from error. The keeping of God's Commandments, or, in other words, obedience to his Will, does seem to me to be that principle, or that summary of our duty, which is applicable to all cases and to all persons, and least liable to abuse. It may materially prevent our being bewildered with distinctions between Faith and Good Works, Justification and Sanctification, if we accustom ourselves at all times to enquire what it is that God has positively commanded us to believe. When urged with any novel or strange doctrine, we may, in almost all cases, find a ready answer by asking whether it be the subject of any distinct precept. In all cases we are entitled to say not only "Where is it written?" but "Where is it commanded?" Because, if not explicitly enjoined, we may reasonably conclude, that the believing or maintaining of it is not essentially necessary to our salvation.

But here it may be proper to guard against any misunderstanding. Let it be observed, therefore, that among the Commandments of God are to be included, even according to this reasoning, matters of Faith, as well as of Practice: if indeed, properly speaking, the one can be separated from the other. The first great Commandment, which is also the first in the decalogue, is, that we shall serve God, or, as it is expressed, that we shall "love him with all our heart; and with all our soul, and with all our strength:" but it is impossi-

ble that we can love him or serve him, without putting our faith in him. "He that cometh to God," says the apostle to the Hebrews, in a well known passage, "must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." But this binds us, to whom the mystery hid from ages has been made known, not only to a general belief in God, but to a belief in the great work of our redemption, in the atonement, in the divinity of our Saviour and of the Holy Ghost, and if there be any other doctrine explicitly laid down, and directly connected with our salvation. Whatever there is for which we are expressly enjoined to give God thanks, and to render him praise and honour, most evidently must be taken as necessary to be believed; and without that belief we cannot be considered as keeping the Commandments. Indeed, those which I have specified, are all truly practical doctrines, calculated and intended to have the greatest and most beneficial influence upon the whole course of our lives. (4)

This may serve in some degree as an answer to the construction which has been put upon my text, and by which the advocates for absolute decrees endeavour to elude its force. Calvin and others will have it, that, in thus referring to the Commandments, our Lord did not mean really to propose the keeping of them as the way to be saved; but that he meant, from the example of the young man, to shew our inability to keep them, and consequently the fallacy of trusting to any such performance.

But that in fact, no such consequence can be deduced, may easily be shewn. In the first place, our Lord held the same language on other occa-

(4) So, I grant, it has been said of unconditional predestination, but with what propriety, I think, may be left with any reader to determine.

sions, where there could be no ground for any such inference. As in the case of the lawyer who tempted him, when, after a specification of the two great Commandments, our Lord positively said, "Thou hast answered right, this do, and thou shalt live." * The fact appears to be with respect to this young man, or ruler, that his faith was imperfect: and was immediately shewn to be so in practice. For, whereas he had answered with respect to the Commandments of the second table, that "all these he had kept from his youth up," our Lord proceeded to try him as to those of the first: as to his love of God: and required of him that proof of his devotion which he should not have hesitated to shew when called upon by one whom by his very manner, of addressing him he had acknowledged to be speaking with divine authority. Had he loved God, as he ought, with all his heart and with all his mind, he would not have hesitated to do as he was bid, to "sell all that he had, and give it to the poor, and take up his cross." But in this he failed; and, that as we are told, from his unfortunate attachment to his riches. (5) The lesson which was to be derived

* Luke x. ver. 28.

(5) "For he had great riches." *"Ἦν γὰρ ἔχων κτήματα πολλὰ."* Expressly and plainly as the cause of this young man's failure is here shewn; Calvin (in his Commentary ad loc.) chooses to assign another and a different one. "Obstabat," says he, "cæca operum confidentia." And this because he asks, "What good thing shall I do?" &c. "Non simpliciter rogat quomodo et quâ viâ perveniat ad viam, sed quid boni faciendo eam acquirat. Merita igitur somniat, quibus vita æterna reddatur quasi compensatio." Here we have a Pelagian conjured up, ages before any such Being existed. The young man had clearly no such idea in his head; he asked the question according to what he had been used to consider as the will of God. He asked it, as Calvin himself admits, sincerely. Indeed in another passage Calvin himself can see that nothing depends on this precise form of words. For when commenting on Luke x. 25. compared with Matt. xxii. and Mark xii. he says, "In formâ interrogationis nonnihil a Matthæo et Marco differt Lucas, nam apud hunc quærit scriba *quid faci-*

from this, our Saviour shewed by what he immediately subjoined as to the difficulty which there was in a rich man being saved : which, and which only, is the true inference to be drawn from the failure of the young man.

That, indeed, our Lord never meant (contrary to the plain import of his word), to have it understood that it was not by keeping the Commandments that we were to seek for salvation, further appears from this, that the very proof of devotion which was in this case required was no more than what had been actually shewn, and was afterwards in numerous instances displayed by many of his Disciples. Clearly, therefore, he proposed nothing which was out of the reach of human ability, even in the ordinary course of things. (6)

And this also may serve as an answer to the arguments which the Romanists have drawn from this passage in favour of their doctrine of Perfection, and their imposition or recommendation of Monastic Vows as connected therewith. For they say that hence it appears that there is a degree of perfection to which a man may attain beyond keeping the Commandments: and so go on to hold out a prospect of greater reward to those who embrace a state of what they call voluntary poverty and greater mortification, as being that state of perfection. Now I have shewn, I trust satisfactorily, that this passage proves no such thing; since the renunciation of the world at that moment, and under those circumstances, would in fact have been

*“endo vitam æternam consequantur homines : apud alios vero duos
“quodnam in lege summum sit mandatum. Idem tamen est finis,”*
&c. Now, as in this last case, there was nothing in the particular turn of the expression, why should there be in the other? For it will not be said that there is any real distinction to be made between “what thing” and “what good thing shall I do to inherit eternal life?” The young man was not, any more than the scribe, dreaming of merits, in the theological sense of the word.

(6) See additional note (B.)

neither more nor less than obedience to the first Commandment: an obedience which all we, who reprobate monastic vows, do, equally as much as they, allow to be indispensable whenever it can be shewn that God calls upon us to make the sacrifice. That, in those cases, so common in their church, there is no such call, is what we assert, and experience but too well proves. And it may be further shewn that their doctrine of Perfection, as managed by them, is not only highly presumptuous, but leads to something very like impiety.

There is also, I am well aware, another objection which may be made to me; it is, indeed, the great argument of the Antinomians; that in speaking of obedience to the command of God, as being the prescribed means of salvation, I attribute to the New Covenant, that which is true only under the Old; that it was only upon the Israelites that a strict observance of the Commandments was imposed: and, that only to them it was promised that the reward should follow upon the performance. Nay, I shall be told of "the liberty where-
"with Christ hath made us free," * in contradistinction to the bondage under which they were kept.

I must, however, still deny that any such distinction exists. In whatever respect there may be a difference between them and us, in this there is none. In truth, and in fact, obedience to God's Word is as much and as strongly required of us, as it was of them. The truth is, I say, that we as well as they, and they not more than we, are and were bound to serve God according to such Commandments as he has given us. And if he has to us in these latter days made a more full Revelation of his will, he has only thereby imposed upon us a stronger and more strict obligation to be zealous and punctual in the discharge of that duty.

* Gal. v. 1.

Neither is it true that forgiveness of sins, which of course, implies a departure from the rigour of the law, was a doctrine unknown to the Jews, or a blessing which was not extended to them. That they were often, in fact, forgiven, is plain. And that they might always entertain an expectation of forgiveness was a consequence which resulted from the various atonements which under the law were directed to be made by sacrifice. Neither were they devoid of that faith which is become our inheritance. True it is, that they, and even the fathers among them, "saw the promises only, "afar off:" yet they "embraced them," as it is expressly said, "and confessed that they were "strangers on the earth." * Nay, the mass of the people, however mistaken in their ideas of what their redemption should be, yet looked for a Redeemer; and it is evident that, at least in the age immediately preceding our Lord's coming, they extended their views into a world to come.

The motives held out to them for obedience, were indeed somewhat different from those with which we are or should be actuated; and this was of necessity; for while it pleased God to withhold from them the full knowledge of the spiritual blessings which he had prepared for the faithful and obedient, they could only, or, at least, best be incited to a zealous performance of their duty by the prospect of temporal rewards. Yet, let it be remembered, that to us also it is not forbidden to look for some sort of recompence upon earth; while, on the other hand, among them many individuals served God at the expence of their worldly possessions, and even of their lives; and so must have looked to something beyond this earth.

In one great point, it is clear also, that the command was and is the same to both. They, as well

* Hebrews xi. 13.

as we, were enjoined to put their whole trust in God, and to look up to him only for help in all their necessities of whatever description. It must be admitted, indeed, that in the nature of this aid thus to be expected from God, their case and ours might to a certain degree vary. They were supported by the actual presence or manifestation of God, or by having almost always with them some of his acknowledged and inspired Prophets. The grace therefore vouchsafed to them was for the most part that which is called external. We, on the contrary, are bidden to look for that which is internal; for that fellowship of the Holy Ghost, which is even to "prevent us," if I may use the expression, of our Liturgy, (7) by putting into our hearts good desires. Yet, with respect to this also, the observation which I before made as to a community of motives will be found equally applicable. For we need only turn to the Book of Psalms, that true and perfect manual of devotion for Christians, not less than for Jews, to be convinced that pious men under the first dispensation, both desired to be, and were supported inwardly by the Spirit of God: As, on the other hand, it is not less clear that we, on our part, pray for external graces also; that is, for that comfort and assistance which is derived from our being placed in circumstances, and meeting with events more or less advantageous, as well to our spiritual as to our temporal welfare.

That the idea of this affinity between, or rather identity with the Old and New Covenant is not

(7) I had said, "obsolete" expression, but I was properly reminded, that I might be misunderstood as disapproving of this and similar phrases in our services and translation of the scriptures, which it was never in my thoughts to do. Indeed I am persuaded, that it would be difficult, if not impossible, to find other words, which in these cases could, without prejudice to the force and clearness of the passage, be substituted.

novel, may be shewn further, as well from our seventh Article, as from the Homilies of our Church, in one of which, after observations of the same tendency as those which I have made, it is said with even more explicitness than I have used, of the good men in old time, that "in effect they and we be all one: We have the same faith that they had in God, and they the same that we have." (8) And if the fact be so, it will be sufficient of itself to establish the position which I have laid down respecting what should be the great and leading principle of action. Because it is certain, that under the law it was the one which was directly and solely held out. Obedience to God's will, or in other words, as I have before said, the observance of his Commandments, is the proclaimed condition under which the Israelites were to enjoy the promised blessings, whether of a temporal or spiritual nature; and disobedience to those Commandments (and that wilful) was equally held forth as the only cause of forfeiture.

That now the same condition is required of us under the New Covenant, I have already shewn, by two texts, as plain as possible, out of the mouth of our Saviour himself. If we take up again the inquiry, we shall find almost innumerable passages presenting themselves to that effect. Thus he tells us, in his Sermon on the Mount, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in Heaven." And before that, with a direct reference to what I have mentioned respecting the Old Covenant, having said,

(8) Second part of the Sermon on Faith, p. 23. fol. edit. the whole passage is remarkable, and fully supports all that I have advanced. Among other things it is said, "Although they were not named Christians, yet was it a Christian faith that they had, for they looked for all benefits of God the Father, through the merit of Jesus Christ, as we now do, &c."

“ Think not that I am come to destroy the law and
 “ the prophets ; I am not come to destroy but to
 “ fulfil.” (9) He subjoins, “ Whosoever therefore
 “ shall break one of the least of these Command-
 “ ments, and teach men so, shall be called the least
 “ in the kingdom of Heaven ; but whosoever shall
 “ do and teach them, the same shall be called great
 “ in the kingdom of Heaven.”* From what our
 Lord said in public, let us pass to the last scene of
 his life upon earth, then when in private converse
 with his Disciples, he partly opened to them, or
 rather prepared them for receiving, the mysteries of
 his Gospel. What was then his language? Still
 the same. “ If ye love me, keep my Command-
 “ ments.” † “ If ye keep my Commandments, ye
 “ shall abide in my love.” Again, “ Ye are my
 “ friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.”

(9) Calvin's words, in his commentary on this passage, are worth noting. “ *Duabus maximè causis adductus fuisse videtur* (sc. Christus) *ad testandum hunc legis et evangelii consensum.* “ Simulac emergit nova aliqua docendi ratio, id perinde vulgus arripit, ac si omnium rerum conversio fieret. Talis autem erat evangelii prædicatio ut spem faceret aliter constituendæ ecclesiæ quam prius fuerat. Putabant igitur vetus et usitatum regimen aboleri: quæ opinio multis modis valdè noxia erat; pii enim Dei cultores nunquam evangelium amplexi essent, si fuisset a lege defectio: leves autem et turbulenti spiritus ansâ ereptâ totum religionis statum convellere cupidè aggressi essent,” (which Calvin himself might as well have considered, when he took away episcopacy at Geneva. Lower down he says), “ Pollicitus quidem Deus fuerat novum fœdus Christi adventu, sed simul ostenderat minimè diversum fore a primo: quin potius hunc esse finem ut fœdus quod ab initio pepigerat cum suis in perpetuum sanciret. *Inscribam, inquit, leges meas in corda ipsorum, et peccata obliviscar.*” Jer. xxxi. ver. 33. And he concludes, “ Ideo discamus sacrum hunc legis et evangelii nexum inviolabilem servare, quem multi” (and, it may be thought, he among the rest: certainly many of his followers) “ perperam dissolvunt. Neque enim hoc ad stabiliendam evangelii fidem parum valet, dum audimus nihil aliud esse quam legis complementum, ut mutuâ concordia Deum communem auctorem referant.” Calv. Oper. t. vi. p. 68.

* Matth. v. 17. 19.

† John xiv. 15.

And afterwards, "These things I command you, "that ye love one another." * All these strong injunctions, pointing, as you see, to the same end, the keeping of the Commandments, and particularly those which are comprized in the love of our neighbour. (10) But, indeed, that to works of charity,

* John xv. 10. 14. 17.

(10) Calvin, however, is so averse to admitting that the fulfilment of God's promises at all depends on any act of our's, that he even contradicts the words of Christ. In his commentary on Matth. xxii. 40, "On these two Commandments hang all the law "and the prophets." He makes a distinction between Promises and Commandments, and then tells us that our reconciliation with God *does not depend* on these two Commandments. His argument is, That Christ does not mean to say generally what is God's word, "quid discendum sit in Dei verbo, sed pro circumstantiâ causæ in quem scopum dirigantur omnia mandata admonet. Interim (he goes on) gratuita peccatorum remissio per quam Deo reconciliamur, fiducia Dei invocandi, arrha futuræ hæreditatis et *aliæ* "OMNES *fidei partes* NON PENDENT in his duobus mandatis; "quia aliud est exigi quod debetur, aliud offerri quod deest." But what if the offer of forgiveness, and the encouragement to pray, nay, and the earnest of the inheritance be found equally with the exaction of the debt in the Old as in the New Testament? And see how this contradicts what is cited from him in the last note, particularly the passage from Jeremiah. What indeed hinders that our enjoyment of God's grace, and the full effect of faith, should be suspended on the event of our doing God's commandments? Luther's distinction is, "Novum Testamentum propriè constat promissionibus et exhortationibus, sicut vetus legibus et minis." De Servo Arbitrio, c. cxxi. As if there were not promises and threatenings, commandments and exhortations, just as much in the one as in the other: but such is the sort of reasoning by which plain texts are to be eluded, in order that they may not invalidate a favourite doctrine. Indeed the inconsistencies of absolute predestinarians, when commenting upon Scripture, are as numerous as they are inevitable. Take another specimen in Calvin's comment on the first of these great precepts. "Quamvis longè aliter Deum amare conveniat quam homines, non tamen abs re Deus pro cultu vel honore dilectionem a nobis requirit, quia hoc modo significat non alium sibi cultum quam *voluntarium* placere." And lower down he says, "Discamus itaque pietatis initium esse Dei amorem, quia Deus *coacta* hominum obsequia repudiat; vultque sponte et liberaliter coli." And yet according to him, a man is overruled by an antecedent and irresistible decree in every thing that he does! Calv. Oper. t. 6. p. 252 and 253. In this, as in other incon-

when done with the proper regard to God's word, eternal life is held out as a recompence, who can doubt, that but reads that awful and affecting representation of the last day recorded in St. Matthew? You cannot forget the words which, we are told, will then be pronounced by our righteous Judge to the blessed of his Father. "I was an-
 "hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty,
 "and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye
 "took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was in
 "prison, and ye came unto me." (11)

I need not multiply quotations in so plain a case, or I might adduce hundreds of texts to the same purpose. I might shew all the apostles concurring in the same language. That indeed this was the view of their duty, which was entertained by the primitive Christians, we might conclude even from that memorable appeal to their lives, which is handed down to us. "Non loquimur magna, sed
 "vivimus" (12), was the plain and forcible answer which they returned to the vaunts and the sophistry

sistencies, he only follows Austin. V. inf. Note (11) and additional note D.

(11) Matth. xxv. 35, 36. Here also (such is the force of truth) we have Calvin against himself. After making a number of distinctions, in order to take off the full force of this text, he is fain to add, "Unde etiam colligimus, si cupimus summo judici pro-
 "bari vitam nostram, non esse vagandum in nostris figmentis." (He says this against the Romanists, but it is just as applicable to other persons). "Sed potius spectandum *quid ille præcipuè a*
 "*nobis exigat.* Nam quicumque *ab ejus præceptis discesserint* quan-
 "tum vis ludent ac se macerent in fictitiis operibus" (or we may add, in vanâ fidei jactantiâ) "ultimo die hoc tandem audient *Quis*
 "*hæc quæsitit a manibus vestris?*" Calv. Oper. t. vi. 284. And now let any Calvinist (or rather, I should say, any fair reasoner,) reconcile this with absolute decrees, or even with what Calvin (as cited in the preceding note) has said of the effect of keeping the Commandments, and our salvation not depending upon them.

(12) See Cyprian de Dono Patientiæ, towards the beginning; and Minutius Felix, § 38. Which of these authors wrote first, I believe is not clear. The same plea in substance is, however, urged by others of the early apologists.

of their pagan antagonists. By what process it happened, that in a subsequent age words came to take the place of actions, that good works came first to be undervalued and afterwards in a manner overlooked; how men became so rash as to circumscribe, within bounds of their own making, that redemption which is expressly declared to belong to all, and by fanciful systems of their own, to shut out from the hope of salvation the greater part of mankind, is indeed surprising, and it may be worth our while shortly to enquire, in the hope that in this, as in all other cases, the tracing of an error may enable us to shew the rottenness of its foundations.

During the first ages of the church, when the disciples were almost continually suffering under persecution, or living in the apprehension of it, the idea does not seem to have entered into any man's mind of enquiring with any great degree of nicety the measure of grace which was to be prayed for, or the nature and extent of that support and assistance which was to be expected at the hand of God. When the necessity for divine aid was so apparent and unquestionable; when the wants and imperfections of every individual were, by the dangers and the labours of his situation, so powerfully and so constantly forced upon his recollection, it was natural that he should be only anxious to secure that help by any means in his power, and not cavil or perplex himself about the terms upon which it was granted, or might be obtained (13). It was only when the churches had

(13) This is clearly admitted by Austin himself, in his treatise "De Predestinatione Sanctorum," § 27, where, after citing the book of Wisdom and the epistle to the Romans, and referring generally to what he has alleged from the Scriptures, he adds, "Quid igitur opus est ut eorum scrutemur opuscula, qui prius quam ista hæres oriretur non habuerunt necessitatem in hac difficili ad solvendum quæstione versari? quod procul dubio

rest, and external violence ceased to be any longer a matter of apprehension, that questions of that sort came to be agitated. This novelty too (for such I must call it), originated precisely in the quarter where we should most expect to find it; among those who, out of a mistaken idea of perfection, having retired from the world in order to devote themselves to contemplation, and having renounced at once the cares and the duties of active life, of course gave up their minds a prey to their imagination, and were glad to lay hold of a new opinion, if it were only as a subject upon which to employ their thoughts. It was, in short, a monk, (14) the well-known Pelagius, who, in the

facere si respondere talibus cogentur. Unde factum est ut de gratiâ Dei quid sentirent breviter quibusdam horum scriptorum locis et transeunter attigerint.” And he collects their tenets respecting grace from the number and scope of their prayers only. “*Frequentationibus autem orationum simpliciter apparebat Dei gratia quid valeret; non enim posceretur a Deo quæ præcipit fieri, nisi ab illo donaretur ut fierent.*” Observe too in addition to what has been said in note (§) what he says of the difficulties of Predestination; that it is “*difficilis ad solvendum quæstio.*” See more fully Gerard. J. Vossius in *Historiâ Controversiarum quæ Pelagius et ejus reliquiæ moverunt. Lib. iv. par. ii. thes. i.* Where he shews from Austin’s own words that his early opinions were even Semipelagian, and the same of many of the earlier fathers, though he is not willing to allow it to have been the case with all. I cannot help subjoining the note of the Antwerp editor of Austin’s works to the commentary on the epistle to the Romans. “*Hoc opus conscripsit Presbyter Augustinus circ. ann. cccxciv. cum ex communibus notionibus scripturam interpretaretur. Quare in eo multa inveniuntur quæ meré Pelagiana sunt, ut vel retractationum loco præfixo videre est. Mirum est hominem qui nunquam a quoquam propterea damnatus fuerat quasi hæreticus, imo vero ab omnibus laudatus, postea in eadem dogmata invecum fuisse, quasi cum religione Christianâ consistere non possent. Si nunquam exortæ fuissent rixæ Pelagianæ in eis sententiis mortuus esset.*” Appendix Augustiniana, p. 436.

(14) This circumstance is mentioned by Austin himself, in a way that seems to shew no great respect, certainly not to attribute any excellence to that order. “*Post veteres hæreses invecum etiam modo hæresis est, non ab episcopis, seu presbyteris, sed a quibusdam veluti monachis, quæ contra Dei gratiam, &c.*” *De gestis Pelagii, § 61.*

beginning of the fifth century, first took upon himself to advance and to teach, that man, by his natural powers, as he is born into the world, is fully able to work out his salvation; that the divine grace therefore, although it be useful and convenient, is not necessary: thus materially weakening the foundations of our faith, and taking away one of the strongest motives, by which we are drawn to prayer and devotion.

This was an error so palpable and so material, that the refutation of it admitted of no delay, nor was attended with any great difficulty. From the plain words of Scripture, as well as from the writings of the primitive Fathers, as far as they had been led to express themselves on the subject, it was shewn, that the assistance of God's spirit was required even in our very first endeavours after righteousness, that without that we were unable, not only to accomplish, but to begin upon any good work. So evidently false indeed was this doctrine of Pelagius, that, in the course of the Controversy, he was fain very much to soften it, and even to contradict himself. (15) And by those who fol-

(15) This is so much the case, that the last editor of Austin (the Antwerp), strongly contends that Pelagius's opinions were very much misrepresented. However that be, he certainly did on more than one occasion pointedly condemn and anathematize the opinions which go under his name. Thus in the synod of Diospolis, he anathematized several positions of Celestius. Aug. de gest. Pelag. c. xiv. § 30.; as also those who should say "absque adjutorio Dei posse hominem ad perfectum omnium venire virtutum." Ib. § 37. So in the treatise "De gratiâ Christi," at the outset Austin states, on the authority of those whom he is addressing, that Pelagius said in their hearing, "Anathema qui vel sentit vel dicit gratiam Dei quâ Christus venit in hunc mundum peccatores salvos facere non solum per singulas horas, aut per singula momenta, sed etiam per singulos actus non esse necessariam, et qui hanc conantur auferre pœnas sortiantur æternas." See as to this Vossius *Histor. Controvers.*, &c. lib. iii. part ii. thes. i. which begins "Pelagius nec idem semper de gratiâ sensit, nec dixit," &c. See also Usher's *Britannic. Ecclesiar. Antiquit.* p. 127 et seq. where he calls Pelagius "versipellem hæreticum."

lowed him, it was so modified and explained as hardly to be a fit subject for reprehension. And accordingly the Semipelagians, even in those days, were never treated as Heretics, but only as men who were in an error, evidently not of a dangerous kind. (16)

The answer which I have stated as given to this doctrine might well have been considered as sufficient, and appears calculated properly to meet the evil which was apprehended. But unfortunately (as in all cases there are ardent spirits who are not content to do well, but who in the too eager pursuit of their object will err in the opposite extreme) it occurred to St. Austin, a man deservedly esteemed, but who had more of piety and zeal than of judgment, to take a more decisive way of putting down such heresies. Having bewildered himself with certain texts of St. Paul, although it is a question, whether he could at all, or with any critical understanding at least, read him in the original, (17)

(16) See Vossius ubi supr. lib. vi. and Cardinal Noris's *Historia Pelagiana*. lib. ii. c. v. or the letters of Prosper and of Hilary, (Epist. inter Augustinian: ccxxv. & vi. Ed. Bened.) and the account which Austin gives of these mistaken brethren as gathered from those letters. He speaks of them as only not having attained the perfection of Christian doctrine. "Pervenerunt," he says, "isti fratres nostri ut crederent cum Ecclesiâ Christi peccato primi hominis obnoxium nasci genus humanum, nec ab isto malo nisi per justitiam primi hominis aliquem liberari. Pervenêrunt etiam ut præveniri voluntates hominum Dei gratiâ fateantur, utque ad nullum opus bonum vel incipiendum vel perficiendum sibi ququam sufficere consentiant. Retenta ergo ista in quæ pervenerunt plurimum eos a Pelagiano errore discernunt. Proinde si in eis ambulent et orent eum qui dat intellectum si quid de *prædestinatione* aliter sapiunt, &c." All the error here imputed to them is a rejection of absolute decrees: that is what has never by any sober man been maintained as a point necessary to salvation. See also Du Pin *Eccl. Hist. Cent. v. Art. Cassianus*.

(17) Erasmus (undoubtedly a most competent judge), makes no doubt of it. He says positively, "Augustinus Græcè nesciit; aut si quid attigit, non magnopere fuit usui ad Græcorum Commentarios evolvendos." *Erasm. Oper. t. iii. p. 400*. Of this ignorance the Antwerp editor adduces a striking proof, in the notes

He advanced, that not only we had no natural power to serve God, but that the greater part of mankind had no power at all by any means to do him service; that this advantage was confined to the Elect, that is, to a few whom God had from the beginning determined, without consideration of what they should do, to bring to the knowledge of him and to reward everlastingly; while all the rest were left utterly destitute of the power of drawing near to him, or of avoiding that everlasting misery to which they were from the beginning absolutely and unconditionally reserved. (18)

upon Genesis, lib. i. c. ii. where Austin says "His respondemus Deum in principio fecisse cœlum et terram, non in principio rerum, sed in Christo. Dominus enim, cum eum Judæi interrogassent quis esset, respondit, *Principium*, quia et loquor vobis." The editor observes, "Locus est Joannis viii. 25. Sed erravit Augustinus deceptus versione Latinâ, si enim Græcè tum legisset, vidisset Christum dicere accusativo casu *τὸν ἀρχὴν*, ac proinde non posse hoc haberi pro Christi nomine." Append. Augustin. p. 484. See also another glaring instance, p. 497.

(18) See Vossius ubi supr. lib. vi. thes. x. which begins "Cæterum Augustinus, *ut fortius premeret Pelagium*, communi Patrum et a se jam Episcopo defensæ sententiæ appendicem hanc annexit, quod gratia uni præ altero offeratur, id ab absoluto Dei decreto provenire, &c." Note too what he says lower down. "Quæstio est cur vocatorum unus præ altero convertatur. Patres ante Augustinum, et ipse prius Augustinus contenti fuissent dicere id esse a recto usu liberi arbitrii, &c." See also the theses following respecting Perseverance, and how far and by whom this appendix or "additamentum," to the previously current doctrine was received. See also Augustin's own account in the passage next cited. "Quid autem coegit loca scripturarum quibus Prædestinatio commendata est copiosius et enucleatius isto nostro labore defendi, nisi quod Pelagiani dicunt gratiam Dei secundum merita nostra dari, quid quod est aliud quam gratiæ omnino negatio?" De dono Persever. ubi supr. I am afraid, however, that there is but too much reason to believe with the Antwerp editor, that there was much of private pique in Austin's opposition to Pelagius. This editor goes on after the passage cited in note (13.) "Imo vero fortasse nunquam ita invectus in eas (that is, the Pelagian doctrines), fuisset, nisi Pelagius aliquid in ejus scriptis carpsisset. In libro *De Dono Perseverantiæ*, Cap. xx. § 53, narrat his verbis primam in Pelagium indignandi occasionem." "Quid meorum opusculorum frequentius et delectabilius innotescere potuit quàm libri confessionum

This first promulgation of the Predestinarian system was not, however, received with universal or even general assent. Many thought that whatever reason there might be in it, there was no necessity for bringing it forward: to others, it appeared evidently to have no foundation but in God's foreknowledge: while all, and even Austin himself, shewed a reluctance to dwell upon that part of the decree which concerned the Reprobate. Thus it was that the doctrine, although accredited, and having gained a sort of established footing in the writings of Austin and others, was suffered in a manner to sleep without being of material prejudice to the cause of religion; and so continued for three centuries after. (19)

About the middle of the ninth century, however, we have what I may call a second epoch.

It was then that Gotescalc, a monk also, who we are told was destined to a convent before he could have an opinion of his own, who would have retracted but was not allowed to do it, whose mind therefore had naturally become doubly impatient and restless, and prepared for every extreme, started up and again brought forth into notice St. Austin's doctrine, but without any of his qualifications. He displayed to view, and taught the tenet of Reprobation in its most absolute sense, and dressed out in all the horrors with which it teems. Thus nakedly presented to the sight, it caused immediate

mearum? cum et ipsos ediderim antequam Pelagiana hæresis extitisset, in eis certé dixi, Da quod jubes, et jube quod vis." (Austin says this as shewing that his thoughts on predestination were not newly taken up), "*quæ mea verba Pelagius Romæ cum a quodam fratre et coepiscopo meo fuissent eo præsentate commemorata, ferre non potuit, et contradicens aliquanto commotiùs, pœne cum eo qui illa commemoraverat itigavit.*" "*Hinc,*" the editor goes on, "*prima origo mali, nam nihil magis irritabile scriptoribus, qui pro scriptis postea tanquam pro aris et focus pugnant.*" Appx. August. p. 536. Let the reader compare this with the beginning of the Arian controversy.

(19) See additional note (C.)

and almost universal disgust; and the man was not only condemned as being in a dangerous error, and even a blasphemer, but cruelly persecuted; and although afterwards some persons of note were found to support his cause, he continued under the sentence of condemnation, and was in confinement nearly, if not quite, to the time of his death. (20)

From that time to the æra of the Reformation, the dispute was confined to the schools: There, as the authority of St. Austin was great, this among his other tenets, was frequently agitated, and became in some degree a party question. The Dominicans, with Thomas Aquinas at their head, maintained absolute decrees in their strictest form; while the Franciscans, following the opinions of Scotus, were of a different and more mitigated sentiment. (21)

While however these debates were going on in the cloyster, the practice of the Church of Rome

(20) For this see Vossius ubi supr. lib. vii. part. iv. Before I quit this very respectable writer, I must observe, that he seems to have incurred some odium, perhaps some danger, by his book, on account of the candour with which he has stated the doctrines of the church before Austin, and the earlier opinions of Austin himself. He therefore, as I conjecture, found it prudent to make a formal profession of his agreeing to the tenets of the synod of Dort, which had sat in the mean time, and in contemplation of which his book had originally been written. See his treatise *De Historicis Latinis*. lib. ii. c. 17, which our Usher (a most strenuous predestinarian), takes great care to bring forward. See *Usserii Britannic. Ecclesiar. Antiquit.* Ed. 2dæ p. 189, where the reader may find the history of Pelagius given in the true spirit of an adversary. See also as to Gotescalc, and the whole controversy as carried on in that age, *Du Pin Eccl. Hist.* vol. vii. c. 2.

(21) That in fact, there was no marked distinction between the doctors of the Romish church and the first Reformers on the subject in question, is clearly shown by Le Blanc in his *Theses Theologicæ*. The third edition of which was printed at London, in the year 1683, in fol. See also a tract of Dean Tucker's, "Letter to Dr. Kippis, occasioned by his Vindication of the Protestant Dissenting Ministers." Printed by Raikes, Gloucester, 1773. Where the reader will find much information very clearly delivered.

was notoriously abhorrent from any such doctrine. She held not only that men might have such merits as entitled them to salvation, but that they might have even a surplusage of this claim, arising from the good works which they had done. She determined particularly that this was the case with all those whom she declared to be Saints; and upon that founded, as you know, her doctrine of indulgences and pardons, which by the application of these works, as they were called, of supererogation, might be secured for those whom she might deem worthy of that benefit. (22)

The length to which in fact this corrupt system was pushed, and the scandalous traffic in Indulgences which followed, you may recollect, revolted men's minds to such a degree, that when Luther rose up in opposition to them, he was heard with much favour, and soon met with powerful support. Unfortunately this great man having been early conversant in the works of St. Austin, had deeply imbibed his doctrine, and in combating an error somewhat similar, though more abusive in practice, than that of Pelagius, was also hurried into the opposite extreme. He went on indeed in the most formal manner to deny the existence of Free-will in man. (23). In all this he was followed by Calvin, who not having, as Luther is understood to have done, (24) at all changed his opinion, but maintained it to the last, even to the full extent in which it was held by Gotescalc, is considered as the great teacher of absolute decrees in modern times; so

(22) Those who may wish for more particular information on the subject of Indulgences, I beg leave to refer to my Supplement to the Reply to Dr. Milner, lately published.

(23) See additional note (D.)

(24) In consequence of which the Lutheran church is not at this day predestinarian, nor I believe, properly speaking, ever was, that is from the time of its being regularly established. See also Dr. Laurence's Bampton Lectures, p. 249, &c.

much so, as for them to go commonly under his name.

I have set before you this short sketch of the different æras, as they may be called, of the Calvinistic Doctrine, because I think that it will assist us in estimating its merits, as well as accounting for its prevalence, and for the credit which it has obtained at different periods. You see it in its origin brought forward for the mere purpose of silencing an antagonist : Even then doubtfully entertained by the generality of Christians, and languishing, as I may say, in a sort of obscurity for a considerable period. When afterwards it rises again into notice, you find one part of it, which yet Calvin states most truly to be inseparable from the rest, the tenet of unconditional reprobation, most pointedly, in the person of Gotescalc, condemned ; and the whole withdrawing again, as it were, into holes and corners, and disregarded in practice. When afterwards, at the distance of a thousand years from its first promulgation, it springs forth into credit and acquires strength, it is only from a consideration of the very mischievous errors to which it is opposed. We shall also find throughout (I will add) the same variableness and inconsistencies in those who maintain it ; the same backwardness to give it its full extent : and in many, and the sounder part, even of those who go all lengths, the same consciousness that it is a doctrine pregnant with abuses, and peculiarly liable to be misunderstood.

And, indeed, who can deny that of this doctrine of absolute decrees Antinomianism with all its abominations, is a legitimate offspring ? When a man is told that his salvation or perdition in no respect depends upon his exertions ; but that if he be not by the Decree which is gone out before the ages elect, he must be lost, however he may strive ; while if he be among the favoured number, nothing can prevent his being saved ; what should follow

but a total indifference to his manner of life, and every sort of extravagance, both in word and deed? (25) Nay, do we not know and see that such is the fact? I am aware, indeed, (and must say it is wonderful that it should be so) that the doctrine is held by many pious and worthy men who shew plainly by their conduct that they hold in abhorrence any such consequences. Upon individuals, therefore, we must be very cautious how we charge them, but to divest the doctrine itself of them, I will venture to say is beyond the art of man. (26).

It is affirmed, however, and that most positively, that this is scriptural doctrine. (27) It has also been asserted, that it is the language of our Church; but this has been of late so completely refuted (here, indeed, as well as elsewhere) (28), that I need not trouble you much at large on that head.

(25) Austin gives us a striking example of this, and one that might have startled a less sturdy predestinarian than he. "Fuit," says he "quidam in nostro Monasterio, qui, corripientibus fratribus cur quædam non facienda faceret, et facienda non faceret, respondebat, 'Qualiscunque nunc sum, talis ero qualem me Deus futurum esse præcivit.' Qui profecto et verum dicebat, et hoc vero non proficiebat in bonum, sed usque adeo profecit in malum, ut desertâ monasterii societate fieret canis reversus ad vomitum. Et tamen adhuc qualis futurus sit incertum est." (He is not, we see, wholly given up in favour of his tenets) August. de dono perseverant, c. xv. § 38. The conclusion which he goes on to draw, does not seem to be exactly that which should naturally follow. "Nunquid ergo propter hujusmodi animas ea quæ de præscientiâ Dei vera dicuntur, vel neganda sunt vel tacenda? tunc scilicet, quando si non dicantur in alios itur errores?" Here the question is begged in two ways: first, that absolute predestination (for that is what is here meant by "præscientiâ,") is the true doctrine: and next, that it preserves men from error. The contrary to which we affirm, and indeed, that it rather leads men into error, is clearly shewn by the very instance here adduced.

(26) See additional note (E.) (27) See additional note (F.)

(28) In the bishop of Lincoln's Charges already alluded to, and more at large by Mr. Daubeny and by Dr. Laurence in his Bampton Lectures (a work which those who have carped at Mr. Daubeny have very prudently abstained from noticing.) See also some articles in the British Critic and other Reviews, and Dean Tucker's letter to Dr. Kippis before referred to.

With respect to the passages of Scripture commonly cited on these occasions, I must, however, say a few words. In the first place, I presume, that we must deal with the Scripture as we do with other books. And should we not, in all cases, look to the general scope and purport of any writing? Must we not also, in case of any difficulty arising, any seeming contradiction offering itself, take that meaning which best accords with the manifest intent of the whole; which is agreeable to the greatest number of other passages, particularly such passages as are clear, and subject to no manner of doubt?

Now then, apply this rule to the Scripture. How many hundreds, nay thousands of texts are there, which necessarily presuppose in us a power to choose between good and evil? which speak to us as accountable creatures? which treat our disobedience as a wilful crime? Shall we pass by all these, shall we deprive them of all effect, merely on account of two or three doubtful expressions used in the course of a particular argument on a particular subject, and with a particular people? Would there be common sense in this (29).

But what after all are these expressions? In the first place let us consider the occasion of St. Paul's writing his epistle to the Romans, as well as that to the Galatians. The latter, it may be observed, was written to put down an error in practice. The former was actually drawn up in opposition to a system of absolute decrees. It was St. Paul's object to convince the Jews that God had not, unconditionally and exclusively of all others, called them to salvation. Nay, he tells them, that they had forfeited the privileges which they enjoyed in that respect by wilful disobedience, by not fulfilling the terms of the covenant (30). Can it be supposed

(29) See additional note (G.)

(30) This is distinctly stated by Calvin himself, in the argu-

that he would do this by setting up another sort of unconditional predestination? Will it also be argued, that the Galatians would be prevented from circumcising themselves, or putting their trust in legal observances, by being told of absolute election and reprobation? Indeed it has been clearly shewn, that all the decrees which are there spoken of relate only to God's temporal dealings with the Jews as a nation; or rather to those external graces, to those privileges or advantages, in respect of spiritual blessings, which they enjoyed for the good of the whole, and which were now communicated to the Gentiles also: which of course he might dispense in his good time, and as he saw to be fitting. And to this the case put of Jacob and Esau has a direct reference (31).

ment to the epistle to the Romans. "Hic primum docet jure fæderis nihil præcellere aliis, quando suâ perfidiâ (note this, *suâ perfidiâ*, not by any absolute decrees) ab illo desciverint." Oper. l. vii. Again, in another place, "Origo hujus disputationis erat ex superbiâ fallacique gloriatione Judaici populi: nam quum sibi ecclesiæ nomen assererent, volebant a suo arbitrio pendere fidem evangelii." Instit. lib. iii. c. 22. § 4.

(31) For they were the heads of nations;—and this was expressly revealed to Rebekah before they were born. "And the Lord said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels: and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger." Gen. xxv. 23. It should not be forgotten also, that the birthright which Esau forfeited, was this privilege of being the head of the people through which the blessing promised to Abraham should be transmitted. And Esau was well aware of this, and that it was not any thing which was to be enjoyed by him personally. And this is the meaning of those words of his, "Behold I am at the point to die, and what profit shall this birthright do to me?" It was not that in a house like Isaac's he could be dying for want of refreshment (as is well observed by Patrick), but that, making light of, or despising such a privilege, he preferred the gratifying of a present appetite. Isaac too, in wishing still to give the blessing to Esau, was acting against the declared will of God; and this justified Rebekah in the sleight which she put upon him, and in which too she probably acted by a divine command. Add too, that both Austin and Calvin admit that Esau was rejected, through his own fault. See

True it is, that in remonstrating with the Jews upon the claim of merit which they set up for themselves, the apostle uses strong language; nothing however, which can be taken to mean that God, for any purpose of his, made men wicked, or inevitably caused them to be so; but only that he makes use of wicked men, according to his wisdom, in accomplishing the counsels of his providence. This, and this only, is affirmed with respect to Pharaoh (32). As to the simile of the Potter, let it be observed, that it is not St. Paul's own, but taken from Isaiah and Jeremiah; nor will it be pretended that in those prophets it has any thing to do with absolute decrees (33). But further, consider what it is that the Potter does? He does not, you will recollect, make the clay: he finds it, and employs it according to what best answers his pur-

Austin Quæst. ad Simpliç. lib. i. qu. xi. "Noluit ergo Esau et non cucurrit: sed et si vpluisset et cucurrisset Dei adjutorio pervenisset, &c." Calvin's words are very strong: "Vitio suo et culpâ fateor, exciderunt ab adoptione Ismael, Esau, et similes; quia apposita erat conditio ut fideliter colerent Dei fœdus, quod perfidi violârunt." Inst. lib. iii. c. xxi. § 6. Here we find that both that wilful sin is the cause of a man's rejection, and that his acceptance depends upon the observance of conditions.

(32) Such is the true meaning of "I have raised thee up," or "made thee to stand." Austin distinctly admits, that the hardening of Pharaoh was a judicial hardening, which he had brought upon himself by his wickedness, and of his own free will. "Nam de Pharaone facile respondetur prioribus meritis quibus afflixit in regno suo peregrinos dignum effectum cui obduraretur cor, ut nec manifestis signis jubentis Dei crederet." Lib. de divers. Quæstion. Quæst. lxxviii. § 4. And in the book De Gratiâ et libero Arbitrio, after what I have above cited in note (27), he goes on, "Nec ideo auferatis a Pharaone liberum arbitrium, quia multis locis dicit Deus. 'Ego induravi Pharaonem,' vel 'induravi' aut 'indurabo cor Pharaonis.' Non enim propterea Pharaon non induravit cor suum. Nam et hoc de illo legitur, quando ablata est ab Ægyptiis cynomyia, dicente scripturâ et induravit Pharaon cor suum, et in isto tempore et noluit dimittere populum. "Ac per hoc et Deus induravit per justum judicium et ipse Pharaon per liberum arbitrium."

(33) See additional note (H.)

pose. He does not do it arbitrarily. So only is it that God, as compared with the Potter, disposes of men. He takes the good and the wicked, and places them in such situations as best suit their natural disposition, and as may best contribute to his glory. He bears with them also, as the Apostle goes on to say, for a longer or a shorter time, as it pleases him.

And, indeed, the passage in which the Apostle expresses this last idea, compared with what I conceive to be a parallel passage, seems to me in a great measure decisive. "What," says he, at the close of his remonstrance, "if God, willing to shew "his wrath, and to make his power known, endured" (observe, not "made," but "endured,") "with much "long suffering, the vessels of wrath fitted for destruction;" ("fitted," observe too, but it is not said by him) (34). Now turn with me to the second chapter of the same epistle, and mark a similar, though more direct expostulation with a wicked Jew. "Despisest thou," he says, "the riches of "his goodness and forbearance, not knowing that "the long-suffering of God leadeth thee to repent-

(34) But rather by themselves. *Καταρτισμένα* voce mediâ seu reciprocâ. v. Rosenmüller ad loc. et Schleusner. in voc. Calvin however very boldly makes St. Paul affirm it to be God's work. "Nec vero Paulus ubi asseruit *arcano ejus decreto vasa iræ aptata esse ad interitum*, lenitatem ejus et patientiam laudare dubitat." De occultâ Dei Providentiâ. Oper. t. viii. p. 646. This, I must say, is not dealing fairly with Scripture. Austin here again might have set him right: "Et eo ipso quod ait *in multâ patientiâ* satis significavit priora eorum peccata in quibus eos pertulit ut opportunè eos vindicaret, quando de illorum vindictâ subveniendum erat illis qui liberabantur." And lower down, he says, "Præcedit itaque aliquid in peccatoribus, quo quamvis nondum sunt justificati digni efficiantur justificatione; et item præcedit in aliis peccatoribus quo digni sint obtusione." Ubi supr. § 4. When, therefore, the Jew is introduced, saying, "Who hath withstood his will?" it is to be understood of the wickedness committed by him subsequent to that hardening brought upon himself: and so St. Paul takes it, and thus only his answer is every way proper and applicable.

“ance ; but after thy hardness and impenitent heart
 “treasurest up to thyself wrath against the day of
 “wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment
 “of God.” We see here, in both cases, the forbearance of God spoken of as aggravating both the crime and the punishment of the sinner. In the first case the Apostle having in mind only to put down the arrogance of the Jew, goes no further. But, in the last cited passage, having a more general object in view, he goes on also to explain what this judgment is, to which the sinner will be finally exposed. “Who,” (that is, God) he adds, “will render to every man according to his deeds. To them who, by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory, and honour and immortality, eternal life. But to them that are contentious” (mark the word, and how strongly it denotes something that is wilful,) “and obey not the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile.” Now, can it be believed that the man who wrote this did, in the very same epistle, mean to tell us that we had no choice or will of our own in what we did or left undone? Surely this is not credible. Observe too, that in a subsequent chapter he threatens the Gentiles, that, if they are disobedient as the Jews have been, they shall also, in like manner, be cut off from being heirs of the promise. And as it were, to preclude any improper conclusion, he closes the argument in the eleventh chapter, in a very remarkable manner: “Thus,” says he, “God hath concluded them all in unbelief.” Why? that he might save a few? No: “that he might have mercy upon all.” So strongly does the whole current of this epistle run against partial election (35).

(35) Calvin however, as may be supposed, explains away this also. “Hôc etiam modo quod ex alio loco obtendunt diluitur

After all, whatever predestination St. Paul spoke of, was evidently founded on God's foreknowledge ; for he says expressly, " Whom he foreknew, them " he predestined ;" which of itself would overthrow Calvin's system (36).

Thus have I laid before you, not impertinently, I hope, some observations in refutation of this doctrine of Absolute Decrees, because not only it seemed to me particularly called for at this time, and in this part of the country, but because I conceive the system to be fundamentally injurious to the real doctrine of salvation. Because, as was truly said by that high authority to which I have before alluded, " Calvinism is a system peculiarly " liable to abuse." (37).

On the other, as it were, subordinate, tenets which are built on this foundation of absolute decrees, the irresistibility of divine grace, as well as its inamissibility, I need not now detain you, for it has been truly observed, that the whole system so hangs together, that if one part be overthrown, the rest must follow.

Of one tenet however, which does not necessarily belong to Calvinism, though in these latter days it is almost always connected with it, which is indeed particularly attractive to the lower classes, that which is called Assurance, it may be proper to take some notice, more especially as it is to a cer-

Deum clausisse omnes sub peccato, ut omnium misereatur : nempe quia omnium qui salvi fiunt salutem misericordiæ suæ vult ascribi, quamvis non omnium sit beneficium." Instit. lib. iii. c. xxiv. § 17. And this is the man who, in other cases, insists that we are bound by the very letter of Scripture. In his commentary on the place, he is somewhat more reasonable ; for though in the end he recurs to the same " dilutio," yet in the beginning he cannot help observing how beautifully this is calculated to prevent despair. " Pulcherrima clausula, quæ ostendit non esse cur de aliis desperent, qui spem aliquam habeant salutis. Quicquid enim nunc sunt, fuêrunt et alii omnes." Oper. t. vii. p. 83.

(36) See additional note (I.)

(37) The bishop of Lincoln's charge in 1303, p. 24.

tain degree held, and we are reproached for not holding it, by that other sect of Methodists, who, reprobating predestination as much as we do, and professing no hostility to our church, do yet stand in most decided opposition to us, the regular clergy.

You must be well aware, that I allude to those who have now, it seems, vindicated to themselves exclusively the right of being called Methodists; the followers of the late John Wesley (38): men who particularly unite with their brethren, of what is now called the Evangelical Connection, in alleging against us the articles of our church, and boast, that out of them they can convict us of not preaching the true doctrine.

To shew that there is no foundation for this boast: that, in fact, in those points in which any difference can be shewn, or is pretended, it is they, and not we, who err, must always be material; and I trust it may be done in few words.

They seem, indeed, to have taken great pains to set themselves at variance with us; yet, I think, the opposition will be found upon examination to consist rather in words than in substance: or at least in that exaggeration which always attends upon enthusiasm, and which never fails, more or less, to pervert or distort the truth.

* Their great error lies in their representation of what should be the spiritual state of a Christian: that is, of course, their own: of the perfection to which they have attained, and the way in which it has been manifested. Their history, as it stands

(38) When this distinction of Wesleyian Connection and Evangelical Connection took place, and how soon after the separation of Wesley and Whitfield, I am unable to ascertain: Nor indeed was it till the jealousy of the Wesleyans now become superior to their brethren in point of numbers as well as in the vehemence of their enthusiasm, proclaimed the fact, that it was at all known to the public at large. See a note upon this subject in my Bampton Lectures, p. 387.

recorded in numerous instances (for they deal very much in biography, or rather in eulogies of their own people) is almost always to this effect. That they were originally, either very wicked sinners or mere formal Christians; and this, in some cases, even while attending our worship with a great degree of sincerity; but that at some period, on a sudden, generally upon hearing accidentally some methodist preacher, they were (as in their jargon they call it) (39) "convinced of sin," or "for sin." And then, and not till then, they became sensible that Christ died for them. Upon this follow such influxes of Divine Grace, called by them "Experiences," that the man continues from thenceforth fully assured of his salvation. Occasionally, indeed, certain doubtings and backslidings occur; but, upon the whole, there is a perseverance to the end in this blessed state.

Now it is plain that this is only our doctrine of Repentance and Faith, dressed up in new colours with the addition of a few extravagances. Repentance is called being "convinced of sin;" because a new term may be made better to accord with their theory of sudden conversions. And to Faith is superadded the notion of Experiences, admirably calculated by the promise which it holds out of distinguished favour, to strike the imagination, and to allure the vain and the conceited, the weak and the unwary, to flatter the pride and the presumption of man. (40)

There is surely great mischief, and great delusion in this; nay, and great temptation to hypocrisy; more especially when we consider, that by their established rules this people are in their class-meetings, or bands, as they are called, particularly invited to compare with each other the state of their

(39) See additional note (K.)

(40) See additional note (L.)

souls, and the progress of each individual in the Faith; as it is thus supposed to be experienced. (41) I say, that this is a temptation to hypocrisy, because we know, and the history of the human mind in all ages will tell us, that in these, as in all other matters, men will not easily bear to be outdone; and it is to be expected, that if at any meeting one of the parties have related any extraordinary experience with which he has been favoured, it will operate as a temptation to his neighbour to come prepared on a future day, with some similar manifestation of grace which he will have contrived some how or other to meet with. (42.)

I do not deny, at the same time, that by these men the necessity of good works is duly and strongly inculcated; but I say that the effect of their preaching in that respect must be greatly diminished by this overweening confidence of their acceptance with God; that the mind which is occupied with this sort of extravagance must be greatly diverted from a practical attention to the Commandments of God.

That now, for these notions, there is no warrant in Scripture or in our Articles, needs no proof. It

(41) "The chief rules of the bands are "In order to confess "our faults to one another, and pray for one another that we may "be healed, we intend: 1. To meet once a week at the least: "2. To come punctually at the hour appointed: 3. To begin "with singing or prayer: 4. To speak each of us in order, freely, "and plainly, the true state of our souls: 5. To desire some "person among us (thence called a leader), to speak his own state "first, and then to ask the rest in order, as many, and as searching "questions as may be, touching their state, sins, and temptations." Wesley's letter to Mr. Perronet. See Benson's Apology, p. 195. The reader will do me the justice to observe, that I have taken these people's own statement of their case: that I have not resorted to authorities which they contest: though, I must say, that I cannot see any thing substantially unfaithful in Nightingale's *Pourtraiture of Methodism*, which they so much cry out against.

(42) Far different from St. Paul's exhortation to the Galatians, c. vi. v. 4. "Let every man *prove his own work*, and then shall he "have *rejoicing in himself and not in another.*"

might be sufficient to ask, where are any such to be found? But, indeed, they are at variance with the whole tenour of the Apostolical Writings. In them we are particularly cautioned to “be sober, “to be vigilant:”* “not to be high-minded, but “fear:” † and this with a particular reference to spiritual privileges: to “work out our salvation “with fear and trembling:” ‡ “not to deceive our- “selves;” ¶ “not to fall from our stedfastness:” ¶¶ All which expressions, and many others which might be adduced, are inconsistent with every idea of this personal and sensibly continued communion with the spirit, and assurance of salvation. Thus too, when the apostles speak of their feelings, the terms which they use are only such as might become any man who was conscious of having endeavoured to do his duty, and entertained a well-grounded hope that he had not failed. “We “trust,” says St. Paul, “that we have a good con- “science in all things**.” “Our rejoicing is this, “the testimony of a good conscience ††.” “Here- “in,” he says elsewhere, “do I exercise myself day “and night, to have a conscience always void of of- “fence towards God and man †††.” St. Peter, too, speaks of “the answer of a good conscience to- “wards God. §§” St. John’s expression is somewhat different, but to the same effect: “Beloved,” he says, “if our heart condemn us not, then have we “confidence towards God ¶¶¶.” All these passages clearly pointing out that satisfaction, and that only, which results from reflecting upon a life well spent, and agreeing with what St. James teaches, that our faith must be shewn by our works (43).

* 1 Pet. v. 8. † Rom. xi. 20. ‡ Philip. xi. 2.
 ¶ Corinth. iii. 18. ¶¶ 2 Pet. iii. 17. ** Heb. xiii. 8.
 †† 2 Cor. i. 12. ††† Acts xxiv. 16. §§ 1 Pet. iii. 21.
 ¶¶¶ 1 John iii. 21.

(43) James ii. 18. Even Calvin admits that it is best to look for evidence of salvation to what he calls “*signa posteriora*,” i. e. the

We have indeed, no authority for believing that the support which we derive from the Holy Ghost, the direction which our thoughts may receive from him, and the strength which he adds to our good resolutions, are intended to be felt by us in an extraordinary manner, or to be otherwise discernible by us, than from their effects; by their leading us to what is upright and true in practice.

Positive and precise to this point is the language of our Homilies; those Homilies to which our adversaries affect so triumphantly to appeal. In discoursing of a lively faith, our church declares expressly that "the trial of all these things is a very "godly and a Christian life." And after giving a description of a good man, she adds, "Such a one "may well rejoice in God, perceiving, by the "trade of his life, that he hath the right knowledge of God (44)." We have here no reference

works that follow justification. "Optimum tenebimus ordinem si in quærendâ electionis nostræ certitudine in iis signis posterioribus quæ sunt certæ ejus testificationes hæreamus." Inst. lib. iii. c. xxiv. § 4. And his great master, Austin, expressly says that there is great utility in our being kept uncertain as to our final perseverance, for that it keeps down our pride. "Quod autem etiam perseveraturis sanctis sic ista dicuntur, quasi eos perseveraturos habeatur incertum, non aliter hæc audiri debent quibus expedit *non altum sapere sed timere*. Quis enim ex multitudine fidelium quamdiu in hac mortalitate vivitur, in numero prædestinatorum se esse præsumat? Quia id occultari opus est in hoc loco, ubi sic cavenda est elatio, ut etiam per Satanæ colaphum, ne extolleretur, tantus colaphizeretur Apostolus." And lower down he says "Quæ præsumptio in isto tentationum loco non expedit, ubi tanta est infirmitas ut superbiam possit generare securitas. Denique etiam hoc erit; sed tunc quod jam est in angelis etiam in hominibus erit, quando ulla superbia esse non poterit." Lib. de Corrept. et Grat. c. xiii. § 40. According to him we are to have that assurance only in heaven. The Methodists say that unless we have it here we are not in a state of salvation.

(44) Third part of the Sermon on Faith. The words which precede are also remarkable, and not inapplicable to what has been said. "A man may soon deceive himself, and think in his "own phantasie that he by faith knoweth God, loveth him,

to experiences, to sudden raptures or convictions, but to that which cannot deceive us. The appeal is to facts. - Indeed, can we forget that in one remarkable passage (and that not the only one) our Saviour expressly annexed the promise of the true saving knowledge, that is, of faith itself, to the keeping of the Commandments? "If any man," says he, "will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God*." So strongly are we invited to refer to our good works as a proof, nay as means, of our acceptance with our Maker.

You may judge from this of the truth of that other charge, equally brought against us, that we do not preach as we ought the doctrine of justification by faith only. And at such times the eleventh article is usually adduced against us. Now, what is that? "That we are accounted righteous before God only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ through Faith." And we are referred for further information to the Homily on Justification; that is, on Salvation, as it should have been called. Now, on turning to that Homily, in the very beginning we find the justification there set forth to be "the forgiveness of a man's sins and trespasses in such things as he hath offended." "And," it goes on, "this Justification or righteousness" (that is, this forgiveness of sins) "which we so receive of God's mercy and Christ's merits, is taken, accepted and allowed of God as our perfect and full Justification." (45) Now, my brethren, I may ask, Do

"feareth him, and belongeth unto him, when in very deed he doth nothing less. For the trial, &c."

* John vii. 17.

(45) Here I have to complain of a most gross suppression or misquotation on the part either of Wesley, or of his Apologist, or both. In Benson's Apology before cited, he is stating that the doctrine of Wesley and the Methodists is only the doctrine of our church, and adduces this homily in proof, but leaves out totally the material passage above cited. He gives it thus, (and I am

you not preach this doctrine? Do you ever bid your hearers look for forgiveness of their sins from any other quarter, or on any other grounds than the merits of Christ? I am sure that you do not. This is plain and intelligible doctrine. If for the very purpose of raising doubts our adversaries will resort to ambiguous or less clear passages, they must not expect us to follow them in that unprofitable labour. Nor is the Homily less clear as to the nature of that Faith which is required of us. Towards the close of it, we are told in the same plain language, "that it is a true and lively Faith in Christ bringing forth good works, and a life ac-

not sure if in this he speaks after Wesley or of himself :) "Be-
 "cause all men are sinners against God and breakers of his law,
 "therefore can no man by his works be justified before God.
 "But every man is constrained to seek for another righteousness
 "or justification at God's hand.—And this justification or righte-
 "ousness which we so receive, &c." Omitting after "God's
 hand," the above cited, and most material passage "that is to say,
 "the forgiveness of our sins and trespasses in such things as he
 "hath offended," which being professedly an explanation of what
 was the justification to be sought, should have been the last thing
 omitted, and could have been so omitted only to mislead the
 reader, and give him enthusiastical and mystical notions of justifi-
 cation. Another very material omission follows after the words
 of my text, "full justification." For they pass over the paragraph
 almost immediately following, which states that "infants being
 "baptized and dying in their infancy are by this sacrifice washed
 "from their sins, brought to God's favour, and made his children
 "and inheritors of his Kingdom of Heaven." And go on, "This is
 "that justification, &c." Both which passages so omitted, they
 perceived to be clearly contrary to their doctrine of the necessity of
 actual and sensible conversion or "conviction for sin, "as they call
 it. Such is their good faith, even when reproving us. They have
 dealt in the same manner with another remarkable passage in the
 homily, which shews how little the compilers of it were disposed
 to think of us as mere machines. By them we are referred to
 "a true and lively faith, which, nevertheless, is the gift of God,
 "and not man's *only* work without God:" which evidently implies
 that something is expected from man, even as to faith. Which
 passage is therefore mutilated by Wesley and Benson, for thus they
 cite it: "a true and lively faith which itself is God's work." All
 that can give a check to enthusiasm is thus rejected! Benson's
 Apology, 231. 233.

“ cording to God’s Commandments.” (46) This Faith also I am sure that you inculcate, and, on every occasion, extol. Nor can we, I am confident, better please our great Master than by teaching and enforcing these simple and easily comprehended truths.

All this hinders not that we should acknowledge, what I am sure you and I fully acknowledge, that which is set forth in our excellent Church Catechism, that “ we cannot serve God nor walk in “ his Commandments without his special grace,” and that “ we must call for it by diligent prayer.” Indeed, what is more repeatedly *commanded* in Scripture than this duty of prayer? True it is, I admit also, most fully, that “ by grace we are saved, through faith; not of ourselves * (47).” It is of grace that we were originally redeemed: It is of grace that we have the means of securing the benefit of that redemption. It is not “ of works;” but works may notwithstanding be made, as they are, the condition of our salvation. A favour is surely not less a favour because it is conferred only on those who are willing or fitted to receive it. It is not “ of works; lest,” as the apostle adds, “ any “ man should boast.” And it is, among other things, with a view of shutting out this boasting, which experience shews to reside with religious enthusiasts full as much as with any other description of men, (48) that I have recommended so strongly the attending to that clear line of duty, the keeping of the commandments. Nothing, surely, can more contribute to the casting down of all pride, than the persuasion that we are in all things to consider not any will of ours but the will of God; not to

(46) In the third part towards the beginning.

* Ephes. ii. 8, 9.

(47) “ It is the gift of God,” as the Apostle goes on, as to which particularly see what I have set down in note (B.)

(48) See additional note (M.)

walk according to what pleases us, but according to what he has enjoined.

In this too, I should hope, that we may find a rule not only safe but sufficient for every good purpose. For I am very sensible that it is incumbent upon us not to keep back any thing, but to "declare all the counsel of God." I have, I trust, done it now: it is ever in my mind so to do. But I must remember that the same authority which has bidden us not to diminish ought from what is commanded, has also in the same place and with equal positiveness required of us not to add thereto. † We must, therefore, be upon the watch, and resist any novel and unfounded doctrines. We must believe, indeed, but only what is propounded to us in scripture as matter of faith. We must not presume on an election different from that which is held out to us. And in looking for the assistance of God's spirit, we must be content to receive it as he gives it us, not according to any fanciful notions of our own. We must "do the Commandments and teach men so *," not by fits and starts, but with a view to "patient continuance in well doing." †

Happy shall I be, if on this or any other occasion, I shall be found duly setting forth that "grace of God that bringeth salvation," and which is so truly described by the Apostle as "teaching us that, denying all ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly, in this present world: looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearance, of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." ‡

† Deuteronomy iv. 2.—xii. 32. Revelations xxii. 18, 19.

* Matthew v. 19. † Romans ii. 7. ‡ Titus ii. 11, 12, 13.

ADDITIONAL NOTE (A.) p. 4.

THIS is indeed admitted by Calvin himself, though he conceives it to be no reason why it should not be agitated. He says in the very outset, "*Disputationem de predestinatione, quum per se sit aliquantum impedita valdè perplexam atque adè periculosam reddit hominum curiositas: quæ nullis repagulis cohiberi potest, quin et in vetitas ambages evagetur, &c.*" *Instit. Christ. Rel. lib. iii. c. xxi. &c.* See also c. xxiii. where he professes to refute the "calumnies with which the doctrine has been unjustly charged." In the close, he cites Austin, as his authority, in a curious passage, where the Saint considers the mischief to lie only in the mode of stating the doctrine, or rather of addressing the hearers. "*Ut singulare ædificationis studium,*" says Calvin, "*in sancto viro fuit, sic docendi veri rationem temperat, ut prudenter caveatur, quoad licet, offensio. Nam quæ verè dicuntur congruenter dici posse admonet. Si quis ita plebem compellet, si non creditis ideò fit quia divinitus exitio destinati estis; is non modo ignaviam fovet, sed etiam indulget malitiæ. Si quis in futurum quoque tempus sententiam extendat, quod non sint credituri quia reprobati sunt, imprecatio erit magis quam doctrina. Tales itaque Augustinus non immeritò tanquam vel insulsos doctores, vel sinistros et ominosos Prophetas ab Ecclesiâ jubet facessere."* The passage is very well worth attention. Of those who should tell the people "if you do not believe, it is because God has doomed you to perdition" Austin says, that they minister encouragement not only to the sloth but to the wickedness of man. Of those who go farther, and putting the proposition in the future tense, would say to their audience that they will not believe because they are reprobates, he says, that this is more like cursing than teaching; and he would turn such men out of the Church as foolish teachers, or unlucky and ill-omened prophets. Now, I would ask my readers, if this sort of doctrine, thus condemned by Austin and by Calvin after him, be not that which is commonly, and almost in terms, preached by the followers of Whitfield? The reader may see the whole of Austin's argument in the Treatise "*De Dono Perseverantiæ,*" c. xxi. tom. x. of the Benedictine edition. He says, this

sort of preaching is "verissimum," yet "improbissimum, importunissimum," and "incongruentissimum." In the close he adds, "Atque utinam tardi corde et infirmi qui non possent vel nondum possent Scripturas vel earum Expositiones intelligere, sic audirent vel non audirent in hâc quæstione disputationes has nostras ut magis intuerentur orationes quas habuit et semper habebit Ecclesia, &c."—He thus refers the unlearned to the prayers of the Church for instruction, which prayers did not, in his time any more than in ours, contain a word in favour of absolute decrees. As to the manner how Predestination is to be taught, or rather not taught, we have further the opinion of Turretin, one of the most learned of Calvin's followers; "Licet vero docendam censeamus Prædestinationem, non propterea fibulam curiositati humanæ laxandam arbitramur; sed magnâ subtilitate et prudentiâ hic opus esse credimus, tum ut maneamus intra terminos a Scripturâ præscriptos, nec sapiamus *παρ' ὃ γρηγορήσαι*, tum ut prudenter rationem habeamus personarum, locorum et temporum quibus proponi debet. Nec enim quibusvis statim et primo ingressu hoc mysterium tradi debet, sed paulatim et per gradus: nec æquè quoad omnes suas partes: quædam enim sæpius inculcari debent, ut utiliores et ad solatia piorum accommodatiores ut Electiones doctrina, aliæ vero parcius tractari ut Reprobatio, nec tam plebi in Ecclesiâ quam *τοῖς μουσαῖς* in Scholâ." This speaking of it as a *mystery* is remarkable. What our Whitgift's opinion and conduct were as to this point, I have already observed in my Bampton Lectures, p. 376, in note.

NOTE (B.) p. 8.

The same may be said of the parable put in Luke x. in answer to the Scribe. What the good Samaritan is there said to have done was no more than any one might do. Had it therefore been in our Saviour's mind to insinuate the nothingness or impossibility of good works in the extreme sense in which Calvin understands it, he would not, one would think, have put an instance so familiar and so easy to be followed, or, I may say also, so calculated to mislead. Calvin's reasoning is, that true it is, that by the keeping the Law we might obtain eternal life, if we were able properly to keep it, but that we cannot, and therefore must have recourse to God's grace. "Negandum ergo non est quin legis observatio justitia sit, quâ vitam sibi acquireret, si quis

perfectus esset legis observator. Sed quia destituimur omnes gloriâ Dei, in lege non nisi maledictio reperietur: nec aliud nobis restat quam confugere ad gratuitum justitiæ donum. Itaque Paulus duplicem statuit justitiam legis et fidei; priorem in operibus locat, secundam vero in merâ Christi gratiâ." Now, as to this, let me be allowed a word or two of observation; as it seems to me that the inferences commonly drawn, or intended to be drawn, from these and the like premises, do not properly follow. In the first place, as far as this may appear to encourage an idea, that if we could keep the Law in all its points, we should thereby become strictly, and in the proper sense of the word, intitled, as of right, to everlasting Life, I must deny it. Nothing that we could do could in itself establish a right to such a blessing as eternal Life, nor indeed could we merit any thing at all, as abstractedly taken with respect to God. We must always be, and have been in any case, "unprofitable servants." For, in the instance, (Luke xvii.) to which I am now referring, the servant is supposed to do his Master's will, and yet is called "unprofitable." Our Salvation, that is, eternal Life, must always, and in every case, even that of Adam persisting in original righteousness, have been of Grace. But, if of Grace, God might surely grant it upon what terms he pleased; whether of perfect obedience, as to Adam, or of imperfect, but sincere obedience, as to us. And the latter is, and has been the case of all human kind since the fall, as well before as since the coming of Christ, as I have urged in the text. See also as to this Whitby upon Matth. xix. Nor is it any answer to this that the terms of the Law are express, "Whoso doeth these things shall live in them," Rom. x. 5. because this must be the case with all Law, otherwise the Law would be radically faulty and incomplete. It must not, in the first instance, derogate from itself, or leave any pretext for evasion; yet this hinders not that there may be in those who administer it a power of mitigation or of pardon.

As to the reasonings of St. Paul, here and elsewhere, it seems to me that one material circumstance has been generally overlooked; where he presses the strictness of the Law, it is against those who prefer standing upon the Law, and in order to shew the folly of preferring a Covenant of Works to one of Grace. His is most pointedly the *argumentum ad hominem*; and so ought to be limited, as all such arguments are in their nature intended to be. Had this one plain circumstance been always attended to, men would

not so frequently have "wrested the Scriptures," (and particularly those of St. Paul) "to their own undoing."

One word more as to the "gratuita remissio," and "gratuitum donum," on which Calvin so repeatedly harps: Gratuitous indeed they are most strictly, when considered with respect to God who gives, but we must take care not to suppose them to be such with respect to us, who are to receive. We must strive, and run, and labour, or we shall never obtain.

NOTE (C.) p. 21.

See as to this Cardinal Noris's *Historia Pelagiana*, lib. ii. c. xv. &c. and particularly p. 181. (Ed. 1677.) where he tells us that, "Cum doctissimi fere omnes in Galliâ Massiliensibus et Lirinensibus (that is to the Semi-pelagians) adhærent, Augustinianam non modo sententiam de gratuitâ prædestinatione ad fidem abhorrebant, verum etiam quoslibet ejusdem sectatores prædestinatos ignominia causâ appellabant." And these "Prædestinati" were afterwards condemned, though, as he shews, they held only the tenets of Austin. *Ibid.* p. 183. &c. The Cardinal indeed tells us further, that afterwards "tota Gallia in Augustini partes transiit;" but with how little reason he says this, or at least how little of certainty there was in men's opinions on the subject in those days, will appear clearly from this curious fact, that Pelagius's Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, for several ages passed for St. Jerome's, and was actually printed at first as St. Jerome's; and this with evident marks of Pelagius's particular doctrines upon the face of them; *vid. Garnerii App. ad Dissertat. vi. c. ii. in Appendice Augustinianâ*, p. 258. And to this circumstance Garnier attributes their preservation to our times: "Eo pacto ad nos transmisit (sc. credula antiquitas) alioquin facile peritura, nisi dignum æternitate nomen mentita essent." He had before lamented (*Dissert. i. cap. 4.*) that the Catholic Doctors should have fallen foul of each other without any reason, and when they were in fact of the same opinion: "Doctores Catholicos hæc regulâ relictâ (that is, certain canons to which he refers) sibi invicem aliquando ubi incallescunt animi vel partium studio vel disputandi æstu Pelagianismi crimen objicere, et in eo sæpe in quo ambæ partes traditam ab Augustino, et ab Ecclesiâ receptam Ορθοδοξίας regulam sequuntur;" though this seems to allude to later

periods also, and probably to the Jansenist Controversy. However that be, the Antwerp Editor likewise attributes to this confusion, our having received these Commentaries of Pelagius so entire, though not without interpolation. "Nisi constaret per aliquot ætates non satis intellectam Augustini ejusque adversariorum doctrinam, ita ut multi sese Augustinianos esse crederent qui Pelagii sententiam sequebantur, mirum esset eos, qui sæpius interpolant hosce Commentarios, loca illa quibus Pelagii doctrina manifesto habetur, non expunxisse. Sed multi adeo rudes fuêrunt, ut Augustinum merè Pelagianum facerent, et Pelagium vicissim Augustinianum, eâque imperitiâ factum est ut Pelagianismus manifestus correctorum manus hic effugerit. App. August. in Præf.

NOTE (D.) p. 23.

His Treatise "de Servo Arbitrio," is well known. It was written in answer to Erasmus's Tract "de Libero Arbitrio;" and it is very characteristic of a violent and overbearing mind, ungovernable and impatient of opposition. He therefore runs into all sorts of extravagance. First, he is outrageously angry with Erasmus, for saying that it was not necessary to stir the question at all. "Sed illud magis est intolerabile quod causam hanc liberi arbitrii inter ea numeras quæ sunt inutilia et non necessaria," c. xi. And insinuates, that he is as bad as Lucian and Epicurus for doubting of it. "Totus mihi Lucianum spiras, et inhalas grandem Epicuri crapulam." And like Austin, he connects this with predestination, and makes the same assertion as to the necessity of dogmatizing upon both. "Altera pars summæ Christianæ nôsse an Deus contingenter aliquid præsciat; et an omnia faciamus necessitate. Et hanc etiam irreligiosam curiosam et vanam facis, sicut et omnes impii faciunt. Quin dæmones et damnati execrabilem faciunt." He seems however to admit that it would not be the worse if it were possible, to get rid of these sort of questions, but that it cannot be. "Neque stultus et qui te hujusmodi quæstionibus eximis, modo id fieri liceat: Sed interim parum bonus Rhetor et Theologus es qui de libero arbitrio sine istis partibus dicere et docere presumis," Ib c. xvi. This is the great foundation of all Austin's, and Luther's, and Calvin's reasonings: that the doctrines of the necessity of Grace and of absolute Predestination, are inseparably connected; which connection I will defy any man to make out, as certainly it never has been made out, unless it be by

repeated assertion. Take another of Luther's positions. "Sequitur nunc liberum arbitrium esse plañè divinum nomen, nec ulli posse competere quam divinæ majestati!" Cap. xlvii. Here he turns Free-will into Omnipotence; for his editor tells us he meant it, "eo sensu quo se explicat ut per liberum arbitrium intelligatur vis quæ nulli subjecta sit." This same Editor however admits in another place, (ad cap. lxxiii.) that, "Aliter voce eâ utuntur fermè Theologi;" and, indeed, with such an arbitrary use of terms, what may not one do? Thus again in ch. xlv. Luther positively pronounces that Man "in rebus quæ pertinent ad salutem vel ad damnationem, non habet liberum arbitrium, sed captivus servus et subjectus est vel voluntatis Dei vel voluntatis Satanæ."

Luther undoubtedly was aware of and felt the difficulties in which Austin had involved himself on the subject of Free-will, and was determined at once to cut the knot. The necessity of Free-will was admitted by Austin in the most direct manner. "Quid illud," says he, "quod tam multis locis omnia mandata sua custodiri et fieri jubet Deus: quomodo jubet si non est liberum arbitrium?" Lib. de Grat. et lib. arbit. in init. And in the epistles to Valentinus (ccxiv. and ccxv. ed Bened.) he has asserted the compatibility of Grace and Free-will in the strongest terms. "Si igitur non est Dei gratia, quomodo salvat mundum? et si non est liberum arbitrium quomodo judicat mundum?" Again he says that the sound Catholic Faith neither denies Free-will, whether as to the leading a good or a bad life, nor attributes so much to it as that it can avail any thing without the Grace of God; "neque liberum arbitrium negat, sive in vitam malam sive in bonam; neque tantum ei tribuit ut sine gratiâ Dei valeat aliquid." What shall we say also to the following passage written long before: "Quæcunque ista causa est voluntatis (sc. malæ), si ei non potest resisti, sine peccato ei ceditur; si autem potest, non ei cedatur." And lower down, "Quis enim peccat in eo quod nullo modo caveri potest?" Lib. de liber. Arbit. iii. c. xvii, § 50. Which it is no wonder if Pelagius urged against him, and that he should endeavour to explain it away, as well as he could, in his book "de Retractationibus." Though, as Erasmus truly says, "non sine tergiversatione." Again, "Peccata ut jam disseruimus non nisi propriæ voluntati earum (scil. animarum) tribuenda sunt, nec ulla ulterior peccatorum causa quærenda." Ibm. cxxii § 63. Which seems to have been too hard for him to get over, and so he does not take any notice at all of it in his Retractations. But when he wrote his book "de Libero

Arbitrio," he was contending against the Manichæans, which made all the difference.

Where however, as I said before, shall we find the advocate for absolute Decrees that is consistent? This is not the case, as might be shewn, even with Luther, not even in his book "de Servo Arbitrio." He did also, as I have observed in another Note, when he grew older, change his opinions on that head. A certain Dr. Kimedontius, who published an edition of the book "de Servo Arbitrio," now lying before me, is hard put to it to do away the effect of what Luther has said in his Commentary on Genesis, c. xxvi. This edition, by the by, (Neustadt 1691) is set forth, "in usum studiosæ Juventutis." Calvin also, even where he is most vehemently maintaining his positions respecting absolute Predestination, is fain to admit, that without Free-will there can be no sin. "Inter omnes sanæ mentis optimè convenit peccatum nullum esse nisi voluntarium," Oper. t. viii. 630. Yet in the very next page he tells us that God not only foresaw, but decreed the fall of Adam! "Deus ergo Adæ præcipiens ne gustaret de arbore scientiæ boni et mali, obedientiam quam probabat exegit. Interea quid futurum esset non modo præscivit sed decrevit:" that is clearly Adam's sin. Indeed elsewhere he says this in so many words, "Hanc esse meam doctrinam agnosco non solo Dei permissu sed arcano consilio lapsus fuisse Adam omnesque posteros suo lapsu in æternum interitum traxisse." *Ibm.* p. 634. Yet in the same work he says also, "Facessat illa calumnia de nomine mali vel peccati; scimus enim nihil magis alienum esse a Dei naturâ, quam peccatum, sed homines *propriâ* malitiâ, sic agi, ut culpa tota penes ipsos resideat:" *Ibm.* 631. That is in other words, the blame of what God has antecedently and irreversibly decreed. I know very well that in a certain way Calvinists reconcile, or profess to reconcile these subjects; but the question is, Do they, or can any man in his proper senses ("sanæ mentis," to use Calvin's own words) reconcile them? Either God in all that he has previously decreed, overrules and irresistibly controuls the Free-will of Man, or he does not. If he does, where is the sin? for how can it be shewn that there is any thing voluntary in the man? If he does not, then we are merely disputing about words; and our opponents are in fact perverting language from its proper use. In either case, to be sure, they are well advised by Calvin, who says that common sense and reason have nothing to do with this. "Cæterum," says he, to his opponent, "tam sublime mysterium," (it is with him also a mystery)" *nimis pueriliter exigis ad regulam communis sensus.*

Ibm. 638. "Stultescere nos jubet spiritus sanctus," (where?) "tu contra de mysteriis Dei judicium fieri vis ex humano sensu: et rationem quæ suâ cæcitate omnem Dei gloriam extinguit non modo statuis ducem et magistram sed scripturæ præferre audes!" Ibm. 646. In which I doubt not but he calumniates his opponent, who never conceived them to be at variance. How indeed we are in the first place to understand Scripture without the use of reason and common sense, let Calvin or his followers declare: we admit no such mode of proceeding in the Church of England.

NOTE (E.) p. 25.

The way in which Calvin defends himself and his Doctrine, is in a great measure by calling his opponents hard names, as "nebulones," "porci," and "impuri canes." Sometimes when hard pressed he lowers his Doctrine to what almost any man would admit: that all things are disposed by the Providence of God." "Docet quidem ubique, (thus he speaks of himself) nihil fieri nisi volente Deo. Interea quæ sceleratè fiunt ab hominibus Deum arcano judicio ita moderari asserit ne quid affine habeat hominum vitio. Summa doctrinæ ejus est Deum mirabiliter et modis nobis incognitis in quemcunque vult finem omnia dirigere, ut æterna ejus voluntas prima sit omnium causa. Cur autem Deus velit quod nobis videtur minimè consentaneum fatetur esse incomprehensibile." Responsio ad nebulonis cujusd. calumnias. Oper. t. viii. p. 619. But what has this to do with absolute Predestination? At other times, when urged with the hard case of the reprobates, who must be lost however they may strive, his answer is, that it is an impudent falsehood that they can strive at all! "Quod autem suas blasphemias longius extendunt, dum eum qui sit a Deo reprobatus perditurum operam dicunt, si innocentia et probitate vitæ se illi approbare studeat; in eo vero impudentissimi mendacii convincuntur. Unde enim tale studium oriri possit nisi ex electione? Nam quicumque sunt ex reprobatorum numero, ut nunc sunt vasa in contumeliam formata, ita non desinunt perpetuis flagitiis iram Dei in se provocare; et evidentibus signis confirmare quod jam in se latum est Dei judicium. Tantum abest ut cum ipso contendant." Instit. lib. iii. c. xxiii. § 12. A pretty answer truly! Take another specimen. "Cavillis etiam ludunt quum Deus omnium sit Pater, injustum esse ut quenquam abdicet, nisi qui suâ culpâ pœnam antea fuerit promeritus. Quasi vero non ad canes et porcos pateat Dei liberalitas!" Ibm. § 17. A great comfort this for those who may

fancy themselves to be in the number of the reprobates! The way in which, immediately before, he argues that absolute Predestination is not at variance with the universality of the divine promises, is really nothing more nor less than making God a prevaricator.

The great argument, however, which is most commonly by him, and Luther, and Austin, adduced, is the passage in St. Paul, (Rom. ix. 20.) "O homo tu qui es qui disceptas cum Deo," &c. or (Rom. xi. 33.) "O Alitudo," &c. And in one place he, Calvin, says, "Quasi vero meum sit de absconditis Dei judiciis exactam rationem dare, ut ad unguem teneant mortales cœlestem illam sapientiam cujus altitudinem suspicere jubentur." Oper. T. viii. p. 650. But what has this reasoning to do with those who do not endeavour to pry into the hidden counsels of God: but rather blame those who do? And this is our case; who think that the absolute Predestinarians are themselves chargeable with this rashness. They adopt their system because they fancy that it clears up difficulties. We say that, besides the dangerous effects which it is calculated to produce, it only makes one difficulty the more. After having determined that one man's being wicked and another good, happens by the absolute Predestination of God, when they are asked to reconcile this with the ideas given us in Scripture of the divine Mercy and Justice, they bid us not ask a Reason, for that those things are too high for us. And by way of shewing us how impossible it is that we should be able to pronounce on the subject, they press us continually with the circumstance of the Gospel's being only partially preached in the world; with its having been known at all only in later ages; and such Questions: To all which we are ready to reply by confessing our ignorance, and considering these as among the "Secret Things" of God, which he will reveal or not as he thinks fit. Nay, further, when we consider the different circumstances in which different men are placed, nay, the difference of disposition, which there is in individuals, and how much greater opportunities for attaining the knowledge of God some of us have than others, we are content to refer this also to him, who is the Judge; humbly trusting that all due allowance will be made for the situation in which a man is placed, and the disposition with which he was born, by that infinite Mercy and Goodness which placed him in that situation, and gave him that disposition. What we object to, is, that Calvin and his followers should thus interpose absolute Predestination, since we can as readily, and at least one step sooner, acquiesce in the Counsels of Providence without

that. Indeed it is curious to consider some of these Questions which Austin, and Luther and Calvin after him, bring forward, in order to silence their opponents, "How," say they, "can you account for this, that of those who are justified, some persevere to the end, and some do not? And that of Infants, who cannot have been guilty of actual sin, some are received into the kingdom of God by baptism, and thus saved, and others are not?" In the first of which Questions, they are arguing upon what can never be the subject of reasoning for any man alive; since it depends upon that knowledge of the human heart which belongs to God alone: For who but he can know of any individual, whether he have been justified, or whether he have persevered to the end? As to the second case they assume what is nowhere said in Scripture, viz. that Infants dying unbaptized are doomed to perdition. Such is the rashness and presumption which arise out of these Tenets, and which display themselves in men, otherwise good, and respectable, and pious. See Augustin, Lib. de Corrept. et Grat. c. viii. § 18, 19, 20, &c. Also de Grat. et lib. Arbit. c. xxiii. § 45.

NOTE (F.)

The principal Texts relied on are those in Rom. ix. some of which are examined in the Text. One however there is which is considered as paramount, and brought forward upon all occasions. "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy," &c. v. 15 and 18. This, says Calvin, shews that God has no regard to any thing but his will. "Ac si diceretur Deum non aliâ ratione ad misericordiam moveri, nisi quia misereri velit." Inst. lib. iii. cxxii. § 8. Suppose this were allowed, it will then remain to be shewn, What is his will? And let Calvin and his followers shew, if they can, that absolute Predestination is that Will, or that he judges without any regard to a man's endeavours. St. Paul indeed concludes from the above, "Therefore he will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth." But still this leaves the Question the same; that is, What is the rule which he has prescribed for himself? But what, it, as I have argued in note 34, all this relates only to those who have previously made themselves objects of God's vengeance, who have brought down this hardening upon themselves? Then comes the case of Esau and Jacob. God, it seems, determined as to them, "neither having done good or evil," what? why, that Jacob should be the ancestor, through whom the

Blessing promised to all Nations should be transmitted, and not Esau. Why should he not? If one was to be preferred, God must make the choice. He might have made Jacob the first-born, and there would then have been no pretence for any reasoning on the ground of preterition. He ordered it otherwise, no doubt for wise and good ends; even perhaps, among others, that St. Paul might have this argument to urge against his rebellious countrymen. But what has this to do with the eternal salvation of individuals, or God's having, by an antecedent and absolute Decree, determined that the greater part of us should be irrecoverably miserable, without any consideration of our endeavours to serve him? I cannot but observe that in these passages they press us with the very Letter of Scripture, yet when pressed in return with the necessary consequences of their doctrine, and as I may say, with the Letter, they fly off. Indeed if we are to go according to the Letter, how will they avoid making God the author of Evil? There are passages enough in Scripture, which, if taken literally, would authorize such a conclusion. But they justly, though inconsistently, abhor this as much as we do. What Erasmus says as to this is very true. "*Si literam urgeas, Deus nec amat quemadmodum nos amamus, nec odit, cum in hunc non cadant affectus hujusmodi.*" Oper. t. ix. 1232. Yet while they are dogmatizing so improperly with respect to this case of God's "hating Esau and loving Jacob," they condemn us as guilty of Impiety, because we reason of God's Justice, according to the ideas which he has implanted in us, and according to which he has in numerous passages not only permitted, but called upon us, to contemplate, nay, to judge his ways. I do say, that as to Justice, there is no reason to suppose that quality to be different in God (except in degree) from what it should be in man; and so we may well reason upon it. But as to his Wisdom and Mercy, combined together, as they necessarily are and always must be, and upon which, strange to say, as well upon his Power, Calvinists found their Predestination; we have absolutely no measure in ourselves whereby we can form any adequate idea of them. It is with respect to them, more especially, that St. Paul says most truly, "O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God, how unsearchable are his Judgments, and his ways past finding out," &c. Rom. xi. 33, &c. Before I close this, I cannot help observing that Austin himself in one place admits the hardening in the passage first cited, to take place in consequence of the wickedness of the individual. "*Quando ergo auditis dicentem*

Dominum Ego Dominus seduxi prophetam illum, et quod ait Apostolus. *Cujus vult miseretur, et quem vult indurat*; in eo quem seduci permittit vel obdurari, mala ejus merita credite," &c. And it is evident that he means personal demerit. A little above he says, that even salvation is granted upon some such motive or examination. "Quamvis et in hoc tempore ipsa Salvatio non fiat sine judicio, sed occulto," Lib. de Grat. et lib. Arbit. c. xliiii. § 44 and 45. So impossible is it for absolute Predestinarians to preserve any consistency! Calvin indeed says otherwise; "Vides," says he, "ut in solum Dei arbitrium," (that is, the having mercy and hardening) "conferat." Instit. Lib. iii. c. xxii. § 8. And in another place he boldly makes St. Paul say, "that God does not choose to have Mercy upon all." "Unde colligit Paulus non omnium misereri quia non vult." De occultâ Dei Providentiâ. Oper. t. viii. p. 636. As if there was any such inference drawn by St. Paul! And this is a man who in this very treatise complains bitterly of those who put words into his mouth, which he has not uttered. "Hæc tamen loquendi formula nunquam apud me occurret," Ibm. 633; and afterwards "neque tamen refugio quod objicit: tantum quod aliter dictum a me fuerat, mutatis verbis malignè ad invidiam torqueri queror." Ibm. 638. See also note (31) as to the case of Esau and Jacob.

NOTE (G.)

It is curious to observe that although Calvin chooses almost always to forget this circumstance when arguing upon the Epistle to the Romans, yet when pressed with other passages he defends himself by insisting upon it; and this in cases where there is really no foundation for any such distinction. As where in Rom. xi. 20. St. Paul says "Let him that standeth take heed lest he fall." After other observations, he says, "Adde quod non *singulos* sed *sectas* alloquitur." Instit. Lib. iii. c. xxiv. § 7. Again, when his opponents quote against him that passage in St. Paul, (1 Tim. ii. 4.) That, "God will have all men to be saved," he says, "Quod citare soletis ex Paulo *Deum omnes velle salvos fieri*, quam nihil vestro errori suffragetur, alibi planum fecisse mihi videor. Nam certo certius est Paulum illic non de *singulis* hominibus agere, sed intelligere ordines et genera vocationum." Oper. t. viii. p. 635. The passage here alluded to in the word, "alibi," is found in his Institutes, Lib. iii. c. xxiv. § 16. where, after arguing upon this text he says, "Nihil aliud profecto significat quam nulli or-

dini hominum viam ad salutem, præclasisse." And lower down he adds, "Ubi clarè apparet non de singulis hominibus, sed de hominum ordinibus illic agi, facessat longior disputatio." And so may we say; for, if there be any passage or reasoning in St. Paul, restricted to particular orders, or sects, and which is to be taken as the Logicians say, "secundum quid," it is most pointedly all that is contained in the ninth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, and the other Texts adduced by the Calvinists; much more surely than the Texts here mentioned, in which it is difficult, I might say impossible to see, the least ground for any such restriction. And therefore let us hear no more of the ninth of the Romans, as authorizing absolute Decrees. As to this, I say again, according to Calvin's own position, "facessat longior disputatio." Calvin also adds a maxim which he should himself have observed, "sic ergo exponendum est hoc verbum," (that is, "God will have all men to be saved;") "ut cum altero," (that is, with the other text, "He will have mercy "on whom he will have mercy.") "conveniat." How well may we turn the tables upon him? How much better indeed do these passages agree in our way of taking them, than in his! With respect to this, let us hear also a Calvinist, one who seems indeed to have been such rather by chance than by choice; who certainly was not insensible to the difficulties of his Creed, and has treated the Question with great candour as well as learning, the same writer whom I have before quoted more than once on the subject. "Atqui non in Scripturarum particulas quasdam, et sæpe hujusmodi ut de eorum sensu semper in Ecclesiâ disputatum sit, oculos conjici oportebat: Sed in Scripturam universam, ac primam et præcipuè in illa quæ sunt apertissima. Quemadmodum enim fidus pueritiæ informator ea quæ imprimis necessaria sunt, clarè proponit, ut facilè intelligantur; hæc iterat et tertiat, quo si alia excidant, ista saltem imis manent animis inscripta; similiter summus ille doctor, qui non sapientiâ solum, sed etiam discipulorum amore infinitis partibus terrenos exsuperat magistros, ea quæ maximè sciri vult, et apertissimè ob stuporem nostrum pronuntiat, et sæpissimè ut madidæ consulat memoriæ inculcat. Quod si in aliqua inciderimus quæ repugnare istis videantur; non eo vim faciemus apertæ veritati; sed illa sic interpretabimur, ut ne istis pugnent, quibus undique personat Scriptura." Ger. J. Vossius in præfat. ad Historiam Controvers. quæ Pelagius &c. moverunt.

NOTE (H.)

See Jeremiah xviii. Calvin's Commentary upon this Chapter is very remarkable. I shall set down the beginning, as it confirms all that I have said: "Hæc summa est hujus doctrinæ, quia Judæi gloriabantur isto singulari Dei beneficio, quod tamen collatum illis fecerat in diversum finem: nempe ut essent sacra ejus hæreditas, oportuit hujusmodi fiduciam illis eripi, quoniam interea Deum spernebant, et ejus legem." (Something like this if I mistake not has been seen in certain Predestinarians.) "Atqui scimus in fœdore Dei fuisse mutuam stipulationem, (nothing unconditional;) nempe ut genus Abrahæ purè Deum coleret, sicuti Deus paratus erat præstare quæcunque fuerat pollicitus. Nam illa fuit lex perpetua fœderis, *Ambula coram me et sit integer.*" (a Condition or Law, by the by, which is almost always spoken of, as having been kept by Abraham;) quæ semel Abrahæ lata etiam ad omnes ejus posteros spectabat. Quum ergo Judæi putarent Deum inviolabili pacto sibi esse obstrictum," (something like certain persons who presumed themselves to be of the number of the elect in later ages) "interea autem rejicerent superbè omnes ejus Prophetas, et polluerent, imò quantum in se erat, abolerent ejus cultum; necesse fuit illis detrahere stultam hanc gloriationem quâ se fallebant, &c." And so he goes on to shew that the object of the Prophet was to remind his countrymen that we are all in the hands of God, to do with us as he pleases. But this was the very case of the Jews, whom Paul in his Epistle to the Romans was addressing. Yet Calvin, aware of the effect of his reasoning, endeavours to do it away in a subsequent page, by making a distinction between them. He says that the doctrine of the Prophet was purposely accommodated to the ideas of the people, because he was urging them to repentance; "Magis esse popularem quia ad pœnitentiam spectat:" whereas Paul in the Epistle to the Romans did not speak in the same manner: "non ita populariter." For which distinction I believe the Reader, as well as I, will require some better proof than Calvin's *ipse dixit*.

There is a remarkable passage in Austin, where he plainly intimates that it is in our power not to be of the "Perdita Massa;" of the clay or the vessels formed to dishonour. In arguing on this passage of St. Paul's, he says "Cum ergo meritum *peccando amiserimus*, et misericordiâ Dei remotâ nihil aliud peccantibus nisi æterna damnatio debetur, quid sibi vult homo de hâc massâ ut Deo respondeat, et dicat

‘Quare me fecisti?’ Si vis ista Cognoscere, *noli esse lutum et efficere filius Dei per ejus misericordiam, &c.*” Liber de divers. quæstion. Quæst. lxxviii. § 3. I will add a few words from Erasmus’s Paraphrase on the passage, because, for the reason observed in note 1, it may shew the opinion of our first reformers. “Deus non finxit te vas immundum. Tu teipsum conspurcasti, et immundis usibus addixisti, &c.” Oper. t. vii. p. 808.

Lastly, I must refer the reader to that remarkable passage in St. Paul, (2. Tim. c. ii. v. 20.) where the Apostle again makes use of the same metaphor. “In a great house there are not only vessels of gold, and of silver, but also of wood and earth: and some to honour, and some to dishonour. If a man therefore *purge himself* from these,” (that is, from false doctrines, or false teachers) “he shall be a vessel unto honour.” Which, if you will allow an author to be the proper Commentator upon himself, shews that he did conceive that our efforts will have an effect upon our destination.

NOTE (I).

Erasmus (in not. ad loc.) is of opinion that the only difference between “foreknown” and “predestined,” lies in this, that fore-knowledge implies the purpose of God while it yet remains with him and may be altered: and that “præ-destination” commences when the divine counsel is declared, or any step taken to give it effect. Certain it is that in Austin and others, “præscientia” and “prædestinatio,” are in many cases used indiscriminately for the same thing. However in this passage, where both are used, and apparently contradistinguished from each other, the meaning, one cannot but think, must be different. Either way should seem that that must be true which is stated in the text, that God’s Predestination, whatever we conceive it to be, is founded on his Fore-knowledge. What Dr. Hey has said in his Lectures on this subject is well worthy our consideration. He observes that, “There is really no theory of Predestination in Scripture: there are separate pious References of important and happy events to the unbounded foresight and superintendence of the Deity; and out of these Men have formed theories, but such Theories are merely human.” Vol. iv. p. 25. Most true also is what follows, “Each passage of Scripture aims at producing Faith and Love: and we have no right to use any

“ passage for any other purpose.” Very deserving of attention also is what he says, at p. 30, “ I have several times said that I look upon the passages of Scripture from which the doctrine of predestination has been derived, as being of the nature of *eloquence*, and not of speculation. And they will be, of course, much *less plain* and perspicuous, because more indefinite, than practical directions, and therefore ought to be interpreted less literally.” *Ibm.* p. 30. After all, we must be content not very nicely to enquire what is God’s predestination. It is easier indeed to say what it is not, than what it is. But we must be safe in saying, that it is not any thing which runs counter to those ideas of justice which are so natural to us that they may be said to have been implanted in our breasts, and to which the Almighty himself, as I have said before, deigns to refer, in his “ controversies with his people.”

I had forgot to mention, what is well known, that absolute predestination is no tenet of the Greek fathers; for which Chrysostom, among others, is abused by Calvin. After referring all things to the mere will of God, he adds, “ *Multo id satius quam tergiversari cum Chrysostomo quod*” volentem trahat et manum porrigentem.’ *Inst. lib. iii. c. xxiv. § 13.* Yet it is evident, that what Chrysostom here says, is no more than what has been said by Austin, nay, even by Calvin, in other places, almost as plainly.

NOTE (K.)

I call it “ jargon,” in respect of the abuse of the term, as well as the nonsense of being “ convinced *for sin*,” which phrase is almost as common with them as the other. Even that however is hardly a Scriptural term; and in the few instances in which it is used by our translators, evidently means, as does the Greek word for which it stands, open conviction brought about and made manifest by proofs or arguments, not the inward affection or persuasion of a man’s mind: if indeed it do not more properly mean “ re-*proof*.” Certainly, however, considered (as they evidently consider it) as a technical word, it does not signify what they would have it signify, a more perfect repentance and contrition for sin. It is indeed the “ *Shibboleth*,” as it were, of their sect. Yet it is sometimes also used by them in its popular sense. For in one passage of Wesley’s Minutes of Conference, where “ conviction of sin,” and “ repentance,” are mentioned as the same thing; imme-

diately afterwards the word is used to describe "Faith," also, and that of course in the sense in which commonly understood. "Faith in general is a divine supernatural *ἐλεγχος*" [that is] as it is explained in the margin, "Conviction," or "Evidence," of things not seen. First, "a sinner is *convinced* by the Holy Ghost 'Christ loved me, and gave himself for me.' This is that Faith by which he is justified and pardoned the moment he receives it. Immediately the same spirit beareth witness, 'Thou art pardoned, thou hast redemption in his blood.'" And this is "saving Faith." Benson's Apology for the Methodists, p. 205. This author is, I believe, considered as in the very first class of his sect. After Dr. Coke and Adam Clarke, none appear to rank higher. He is also the Book Editor nominated by the Conference. His Book therefore must be considered quite as an authentic record. In a subsequent part of the work, giving an account of Wesley's Tenets, and the Doctrine of the Methodists as derived from him, he says, "It," (the Gospel) "promises, and God actually gives, *the spirit of promise which convinces the world of sin.*" And after describing the operation of the Spirit of God in awakening the conscience, &c. he subjoins, "This he," (i. e. Wesley) "used to call repentance and often *conviction for sin.*" *Ibm.* p. 244. In the Minutes of Conference, where it is asked, "How shall we try those who think they are moved by the Holy Ghost to preach?" The third requisite is, "Have they *fruit?* are any truly *convinced of sin*, and converted to God by their preaching?"

Of these "*Convictions for Sin*," and how necessary and even indispensable they are considered, take the following specimens from their histories, extracted at a venture out of that other authentic record, the Methodist's Magazine, of which the same Joseph Benson is editor. "August 13th, 1807, died Sarah Ashby, wife of William Ashby, an acceptable and useful local preacher, &c. When near twenty years of age, it pleased God to awaken her to a sense of her sin and danger, at Chapel-in-le-Frith, in Derbyshire, under the ministry of that excellent man, Mr. Thomas Hanby. Her *convictions for sin* were increased by an awful dream which she had," &c. Methodist Magazine, Appendix for 1808. "Obituary 3. Peter Haslam. He was early *convinced* of sin, and shortly after brought to an experimental knowledge of God in Christ." *Ibm.* Sept. 1808. In Magazine for May 1808, we are told of John Shewell, that, on going to the

" cold bath at Holywell, for a disorder which he had, his
 " *convictions for sin* took deeper root in his heart," p. 221.
 It is not said whether he went at the same time as Winifred
 White. He, it seems, though brought up at a free-school,
 and of course in the habit of going to Church, " lived in a
 " place where thick darkness reigned, and no Gospel ser-
 " mons were to be heard." In another place we have Mrs.
 James, and her late husband, William James, " *providen-*
 " *tially brought* to Pitt-street chapel, at a time when the
 " late Mr. Pawson and Mr. Allen were stationed on the Li-
 " verpool circuit. Under their ministry they were truly
 " *convinced of sin*, and seemingly converted to God." *Ibm.*
 June 1809. Again, at p. 232, " It was under these
 " awakening and consoling truths, that Mrs. Bennett and
 " her daughter, were deeply *convinced of sin*, and their
 " desert of condemnation and wrath; and were encouraged
 " to seek in the appointed methods of mercy," that is, with
 the Methodists, " that salvation, the want of which they so
 " sincerely deplored." This is a remarkable case, as the
 daughter's age was such, that she could not, one would
 think, have known much of actual sin. " It was at the early
 " age of 13, that she found those evidences of personal salva-
 " tion, which she continued to retain in the decline of life,
 " &c." Mr. Charles Kyte's case was somewhat more ex-
 traordinary, for, he says, " I was only *four* years of age,
 " when God first influenced my heart by his holy Spirit,
 " and when I was between five and six, about seven o'clock
 " one Saturday morning, I was deeply *convinced of sin*,
 " while God spoke in awful majesty by thunder and light-
 " ning." *Ibidem*, January 1804. Yet, notwithstanding
 this great step, he continued thirteen years after that in
 a wretched and deplorable state, though with very good dispo-
 sitions. For, although he " had made it a rule on the Sab-
 " bath-day, to go to church at least once," yet, like
 Shewell, till he was twenty years of age, " he never heard one
 " Gospel sermon from any true minister of Jesus Christ!"
 This is their charitable way of treating the regular clergy!
 However, then, it seems, he went to hear the Methodist
 Preachers, at Mr. Ward's in Oxhill. Of course things went
 on better. But what shall we say of Mrs. Eliza Byron?
 " She," as her husband tells us, " had from her early
 " years the fear of God before her eyes, and an earnest de-
 " sire to serve the Lord to the best of her knowledge.
 " This, with the preventing grace of God, saved her from
 " running into those sins and follies which ensnare many.
 " But it was not until she was fourteen years that she was

“ deeply convinced of the sinfulness of her heart and life,” (and life too!) “ and of the need of a new birth. It is true she had not a single sin, in the eye of the world, to be convinced of, nevertheless she was made truly sensible that mankind are fallen creatures, unholy and unhappy, and that nothing short of divine Power can restore them to either the favour or the image of God. But how to attain this she knew not. She had regularly attended divine worship with the family in the Church of England. Besides hearing, she had attentively perused the sacred volume; had used frequent and fervent prayer and retirement from the bustle and vanity of her young companions.” One would think that by such endeavours the grace of God might have been obtained; but no.—Her friends too were unable to help her.—“ It was all as yet to little purpose. *The good she sought was not to be gained by these things;*” that is, by going to church, by reading the Scriptures, by fervent prayer and meditation!—“ In this distress she was at a loss where to go and what to do.—*At length it pleased God to direct her steps to the Methodist chapel, in St. John’s, near Helston,*” &c. *Ibm.* 42.

I will only add one case more, that of a gentleman, who was converted almost without knowing it, or at least having occasion for it. Mr. Lawson used to say, “ that he did not remember the time when he was destitute of the fear of God, and that the Spirit of God strove with him at a very early period. It is about thirteen or fourteen years since he fully closed in with the overtures of Divine Mercy, and found redemption in the blood of Christ, the forgiveness of all his sins.” After his conversion (if any such there was, for it does not here appear,) “ he was upright in all his dealings among men,” &c. which might well be supposed to have been always the case with a man who was never without the fear of God and the help of the Holy Ghost. *Ibm.* May 1809.

Indeed this class of cases, that is, where the parties have from the beginning led good lives, seem to the biographers to require a sort of apology or explanation. Thus, in Magazine for May 1808, the writer says of Mrs. Anne Reynolds, “ I am not able to ascertain the exact period when she was brought to a saving knowledge of God, yet her christian experience evidenced for many years, the love she evidenced for God’s cause and people; [that is, for Methodism and Methodists,]” with her steady uniform life, demonstrated that a real work was wrought in her soul.” But of this more in the next note.

NOTE (L.)

Indeed they seem to be well aware of this danger, but hold it no sufficient objection to the doctrine. In Wesley's Minutes of Conferences, cited by Benson, (Apology, p. 218.) we have the following Question and Answer.—“ Q. Do we not discourage believers from rejoicing evermore?—
 “ A. We ought not so to do. Let them all their life long rejoice unto God, so it be with reverence; and, even if *lightness or pride* should mix with their joy, let us not strike at the joy itself, [this is the gift of God;]” (What, and when so mixed?) “ but at that *lightness and pride*, that the evil may cease and the good remain.”

This joy or experience, they teach us to be so indispensable, that no piety, no zeal, no labour in the service of God can supply its place. This is enforced in the strongest manner by the instances put by Benson of Wesley himself, and his Mother; and the reader should recollect that Mrs. Wesley is represented as most pious and zealous, the daughter and wife of a clergyman, all her life labouring to serve God.

Thus it is said “ We have seen above what great encouragement, and how much assistance Mr. Wesley received in his pious cause, from the letters and advice of his mother. It seems, however, that it was not till within a few years of her death, that she was fully assured of her acceptance with God.” “ Monday, Sept. 3,” says he, (that is Wesley) “ I talked largely with my mother, who told me, that till a short time since she had scarce heard such a thing mentioned as having forgiveness of sins now, or God's Spirit bearing witness with our Spirit, much less did she imagine that this was the common privilege of all true believers. Therefore,” says she, “ I never durst ask for it myself. But two or three weeks ago, while my son Hall was pronouncing these words, in delivering the cup to me, “ The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for thee,” the words struck through my heart, and I knew God had forgiven me all my sins.” Benson's Apol. p. 120. With a reference to this, her Epitaph, inserted two pages after, (p. 122) has the following Stanzas:—

“ True daughter of affliction she,
 “ Inur'd to pain and misery,
 “ Mourn'd a long night of griefs and fears,
 “ *A legal night of seventy years.*”

“ The Father then reveal'd his Son,
 “ Him, in the broken bread made known ;
 “ She knew and felt her sins forgiv'n,
 “ And found the earnest of her heaven.”

Then comes a climax indeed !

“ Meet for the Fellowship above ;
 “ She heard the call, ‘ Arise, my love.’
 “ ‘ I come,’ her dying looks replied,
 “ And *Lamb-like as her Lord*, she died.”

Which is one of the numerous instances of presumption, approaching to blasphemy, which shock us in these writers ; and the reader will recollect, that these are none of those expressions of which they admit the impropriety, and into which they say, that their first founders were betrayed in the effervescence of their zeal ; but what is at this time brought forward as unexceptionable doctrine. This is the case likewise with the account given of himself by Wesley, before he attained perfection, and cited also by Benson, in his *Apology*, p. 66. It should first be remembered, that Bishop Lavington, in his “ *Enthusiasm of the Papists and Methodists compared*,” brought Whitfield to a confession, that he had sometimes been too *Apostolical* in his language, that is, that he had assumed a tone which only became the immediate Apostles of Christ. See Pref. to 2d Part of *Enth. of Meth. and Pap. compared*. But here Wesley not only arrogates to himself the same character ; but in his very awkward aping of St. Paul, totally misapplies the words, or rather his parody of the words, of the Apostle. For St. Paul, when he commended himself, did it because his authority had been questioned, and without vindicating and establishing it, he could not do the good to which he was deputed. But the self-commendation of Wesley is all to himself, not called for nor required for any purpose that could not as well have been answered without it. He describes himself while in America, as having great doubts of his salvation. He says, “ I have learned, that I who went
 “ to America to convert others, was never myself converted
 “ to God. *I am not mad*,” he goes on, “ though I thus
 “ speak ; but *I speak the words of truth and soberness* ;
 “ if haply some of those who still *dream* may *awake*, and see
 “ that as I am so are they. Are they read in Philosophy ?
 “ so was I. In ancient or modern *tongues* ? so was I also.
 “ Are they versed in the *science of divinity* ? I too have
 “ studied it many years. Can they talk fluently upon

“ spiritual things? the very same could I do. Are they
 “ plenteous in *alms*? Behold, I gave all my goods to feed
 “ the poor. Do they give of their labour as well as their
 “ substance? *I have laboured more abundantly than they*
 “ *all*. Are they willing to *suffer* for their brethren?
 “ I have thrown up my friends, reputation and country.
 “ I have put my life in my hand, wandering into strange
 “ lands: I have given my body to be devoured by the
 “ deep, parched up with heat, consumed by toil or weariness,
 “ or whatsoever God may lay upon me.” After all
 this commendation comes the self-abasement part of the
 story. “ But does all I ever did, or can *know, say, give,*
 “ *do, or suffer,* justify me in his sight? Yea, or the *con-*
 “ *stant use of all the means of grace?*” No, he discovers
 that “ he is *fallen short of the glory of God*; that his
 “ whole heart *is become corrupt and abominable*; that *his*
 “ *sins are more in number than the hairs of his head, &c.*”
 After much more of this, we find, that though he has
 a *sort* of faith, yet it is not the *right* faith. “ The faith I
 “ want is, a sure trust and confidence in God, that through
 “ the merits of Christ, my sins are forgiven, and I recon-
 “ ciled to the favour of God.” Without this full assurance,
 it seems, there is no salvation! On the other hand, he
 who hath it, he tells us, is “ *freed from the power of sin.*”
 What a pretty encouragement to enthusiasm! and what a
 lively picture have we here of that vanity which leads men
 to be founders of sects. Further, at page 260, we have
 an account of the same experience as given by Mr. White-
 head, which is too long to transcribe. The conclusion is,
 “ Christian experience then, as the Rev. Mr. Wesley long
 “ explained it, has certainty in it: if a man has it, he can-
 “ not be ignorant of it. But, I must say, that those who
 “ have it not, cannot form a just conception of it,” &c.
 After this, it may not be amiss, to give some of their own
 descriptions of what this Christian experience is. We are
 told of Mrs. Torkington, that at the approach of death,
 “ her very soul seemed to be filled with marrow and fat-
 “ ness.” “ One day,” says her biographer, “ she sent for
 “ me in haste.” In an extacy of heavenly transport, she
 “ said, ‘ Oh! I wanted to tell you, *I have had angels here!*’”
 The Italics are not mine but the editor’s, who would thus
 mark the passage for the edification of his readers. “ I shall
 “ soon be in glory! I shall soon be with Jesus!”—“ I,”
 boldly says Mr. Gaulter, the writer of the article, “ was
 “ not surprised at this, as I have known the Lord comfort
 “ his children by such display of his power.” Methodists

Magazine, for Aug. 1808, p. 371. Of Elizabeth Braithwaite it is said, that "while at a prayer-meeting, the Lord manifested himself to her waiting soul, filling her with peace and joy through believing." It is added, "that from some of her letters, written to a female friend, the first year of her conversion," (so decided a thing are these convictions or conversions that they date from them) "it plainly appears that she enjoyed much of the presence of God her Saviour." *Ibm.* p. 377. But upon the subject of a Miss Isabella Wilson, they are unusually copious. Of her journals they give large extracts, which almost rival the visions of St. Teresa. First, however, we are given to understand, that being born of parents that were disinclined to Methodism, she was brought up to the Church, she was "confirmed, as it is called." (Such is the way in which they speak of an Ordinance of that Church, to which they say that they belong.) She "took the Communion," and attended, what we consider, the proper means of grace. "Nothing," she says, pleased me so much as going to hear the word, and attending the service of the Church. I was, however, in a state of darkness with regard to the way of accepting the offers of mercy." Afterwards, in consequence of her visiting a relation, who, though on his death-bed, was little concerned for his soul, "she felt greatly distressed, and thereupon the Lord most graciously manifested his love to her soul. I prayed to the Lord," says she, "and at that moment he gave me to see that I was wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked. I no sooner saw myself in this dreadful state, than I was directed" (How?) "to look to Jesus, and was enabled to cast myself upon him just as I was," &c. *Ibm.* p. 375. After this (at p. 412. *Mag.* for Sept.) it is said, "she had some opportunities of attending the means of grace, and formed a fuller acquaintance with the people of God." Thus it is, that they always speak of themselves. The consequence which ensued was a great increase of familiarity with her Saviour. He is now "my Jesus." "My Jesus was with me in the furnace, and brought me out, &c. By it I was brought into a closer communion with God," p. 414. "I cannot distrust my Jesus, who has dealt so lovingly with me, &c." *Mag.* for Oct. p. 465. At p. 468, we have a prayer of hers, in which is this curious passage: "My little vessel is as full as it can hold, and I would pour out all my fulness before thee, that my heart may become capable of receiving more and more."

Again, in Mag. for Nov. p. 516, she is introduced as saying:—

“ While *my* Jesus is nigh,
 “ Who shall violate my rest :
 “ Sin, earth, and hell, I now defy,
 “ I lean upon my Saviour’s breast.”

Lower down, we have “ The friendship of Jesus, whose love is unspeakable, is my joy, &c.” Her Journal goes on, “ May 14. Blessed be the Lord God of all mercies for his unbounded love to me, *who am the least of all saints,*” p. 517. “ My God is with me every step I take. Oh! may I be ever devoted to this lover of my soul,” &c. p. 518. Again, in Mag. for Dec. p. 565, “ Satan comes, and wants entrance, but *my* Jesus keeps his abode. Last Friday was a blessed day to my soul. Heaven and Jesus were very precious; I feel I abide in him, but I want a closer abiding in him, &c.” Then, at p. 567, comes a compliment to the preachers. “ I had an opportunity of hearing that man of God, Mr. ———. The word was marrow and fatness to my soul. How is it, Lord, that all thy servants are not as flames of fire in thy hand? How soon then would England feel the blessed effects! O Jesus, take to thee thy great power, &c. teach them to come *more* to the tree of life than to that of knowledge!” Lastly, in the Appendix, p. 596, we have Satan brought in again with more profaneness. “ Though Satan tries by every means to stop me in my heavenly way, he cannot. *My* Jesus helps me, and I tread him under my feet. It is true he sometimes *bruises my heel,* but I am more than ever determined to *bruise his head.*” This application to themselves of prophecies relating to our Saviour is not uncommon. Wesley used this very passage in the same way. Take another specimen, “ Jesus is the reigning sovereign of my heart; O how I long to be more like him! to be all on a flame with his glory, that *the zeal of his house may eat me up.*” *Ibm.* p. 600. To complete the whole, she goes on to say, “ I feel no ties to earth, I feel *the Trinity* abides with me!” I trust that this may suffice; nor would I have transcribed so much, but that this may be taken as a fair specimen of the sort of “ experiences” sought for by these people, recommended by their preachers, and detailed at their class meetings. For she is called, “ a triumphant spirit.” It is said by one

of her eulogists, what one may easily believe, that "her confidence in the cleansing blood was strong. *I never heard her express a doubt.*" (These also their own Italics.) And, lastly, "Her life has convinced me that we may live pure." *Ibm.* p. 605. Surely therefore I shall not be accused of unfairness in quoting from such a character. This lady too speaks of *their privilege* (for this they insist upon) of knowing that they are saved. Surely too, I must repeat, as I have said in the text, there is great delusion and great mischief in this.

Since the above was written I have received the Magazine for August last, and there I find mention of two other saints of much the same water. Of one of them we are told that, when on her death-bed, her exclamations were, "The Lord is mine; a very present help in trouble. O my Jesus, my dear Jesus!"—The other was still more familiar. Having recovered from a fainting fit, she said, "If I had gone, I should have been with my Jesus. I love him; I love him, because he first loved me. *What—my Jesus leave me? No: He loves me but too well.* He has been with me every moment." *Meth. Mag.* for Aug. 1809, pp. 342. and 345. It is really difficult to say what should be our feelings at reading such effusions as these. Certainly one would not dwell upon them more than is absolutely necessary, for fear of being tempted to depart from the seriousness and the awe with which such subjects should ever be contemplated.

NOTE (M.)

It is unnecessary for me to resort to quotations, in order to shew this more especially in respect to these adversaries of ours. It is sufficiently apparent, even from those passages which I have cited for other purposes. They continually call themselves "the people of God," and their work "God's work." They also, as I have further shewn, treat with contempt and contumely all the ministers of the established church; nay, and her discipline; while at the same time they most hypocritically profess to belong to her. As to their pretensions and boastings of the good which they have done in converting notorious sinners; I, for one, should be glad to be persuaded that it is so. But I must still remind them that the circumstance of their labours having succeeded, is not of itself a proof that they are right. We find that there were men, who, in opposition even to St. Paul, "preached

“ Christ out of envy and strife; out of contention, not sincerely,” yet not without success; for the Apostle says, “ What then? notwithstanding, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached,” and he rejoices at it; yet surely they were not to be commended who did this. Even therefore if we would concede to them all that they can ask, they might be schismatics and “ contentious.” But, taking it in another way not so favourable for them, do we not know that there were men to whom it was said, “ Ye compass heaven and earth to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him two-fold more a child of hell than yourselves.” That they have “ laboured,” (as Mr. Wesley is pleased to say) “ more abundantly than we all,” may therefore turn out to be that they have so laboured in the production of a great deal of mischief. And as to the numbers converted by them, it is shewn by Bishop Lavington, that the popish Saints made the same boast and to the same extent. See *Enthus. of Method. and Pap. &c. vol. i. p. 2. p. 131. &c.* which book they will do well to consult who are yet unacquainted with what the first dawnings of Methodism were. It may be added also, that this boasted success is much inferior to that of Montanus or Manes, or many heretics in all ages.

Being now to take leave of these people, I must recommend seriously to their consideration the following passage, which to my utter astonishment I met with in their Magazine for June last. How such sentiments or such expressions could get there, I am utterly at a loss to conceive. But there the reader may find them, at p. 243. “ Why is divinity, of all things in the world, to be professed by those who can make no reasonable pretension to the knowledge of its nature and properties, its distributions, and designs? No human service is disgraced in like manner, though the whole Cyclopædia is of infinitely less importance, proportionably as the concerns of time are in the import of their consequences exceeded by eternity. Preposterous as is the professing the sacred science of Theology, by those who never so much as entered on their noviciate, the ridiculousness bears no comparison with the evil of such attempts, and the mischief rises still higher when those professors assume;” [this, of course, belongs to the self-ordained or self-appointed,] “ to be the *only* persons capable and qualified, and require the unquestioning assent of every man to their sweeping claims,” [such as, that they are the *only people of God, or the people of God* κατ’ ἐξοχην, and that they have sensible and constant