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BIBLICAL REPERTORY.

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A

Collection of Tracts

IN

**BIBLICAL LITERATURE.**

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BY CHARLES HODGE,

PROFESSOR OF ORIENTAL AND BIBLICAL LITERATURE, IN THE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, AT PRINCETON, N. J.

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Ἐρευνᾶτε τὰς γραφάς.

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*J. D. B. [unclear]*

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THE STATE  
OF  
**THE PROTESTANT CHURCH**  
**In Germany.**

—  
BY THE  
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OF TRINITY COLLEGE, AND VICAR OF HORSHAM, SUSSEX.

—  
[CONTINUED FROM PAGE 501.]



## DISCOURSE IV.

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ISAIAH XLVII. 10.

*Thy wisdom and thy knowledge, it hath perverted thee.*

HAVING now laid before you a sketch, though a very rapid and imperfect one, of the progress of the naturalizing school in Germany, it may perhaps appear right and necessary, that some account should be likewise offered of the effect of their doctrines. For it will be said, that such doctrines could hardly be taught by the public instructors of youth, and by the public preachers of, at least, the more remarkable towns in a country so filled with them, without producing great changes in men's opinions on the value of religion, and by consequence, great changes in moral conduct. But the task thus imposed would be one of great difficulty and danger. Nothing can be more rash, more improper, more unchristian, than lightly to bring forward sweeping charges of a want of morality. To judge with accuracy indeed of the tone of public morality in one's own country, is neither an easy, nor trifling matter; and to judge of its state in another, requires a mass of evidence, so great in extent, and so precise and particular in its nature, as can in very few instances be hoped for. The great variety of national character and disposition, must always be taken largely into account in weighing the practical effect of opinions, and an accurate knowledge and judgment of this preliminary step, presupposes the greatest nicety of observation, the widest extent of observation. The evidences as to the real state of things to be found in

the narration of the passing traveller, mistaken frequently, perhaps, as to facts, and still more mistaken as to the fair inference to be drawn from them, can be of little avail. But still something may perhaps be gathered from an union of the probabilities of the case, with such positive evidence as may actually exist. And as to the probability of the case, it will not, I think, be a rash judgment to say, that the constant collision of very wild opinions, very wildly produced and defended, would at length either so entirely weary the mind, as to leave little feeling on the subject so strong as an entire repugnance, or at least indifference to the farther agitation of the question; or it would beget a strong feeling of hatred to the principle of these opinions and discussions, and a violent adherence to some opposite and counteracting ones. And the two effects which appear probable, have really occurred. As to the existence of a widely-spread indifference, I may appeal to the German divines themselves.\* They have published a very large

\* Bretschneider has published a pamphlet on this subject, called *Ueber die Unkirchlichkeit dieser Zeit*, (Gotha, 1822.) (which I have already mentioned), in which he says that *so many have been published* that he doubts if any thing new can be said. Some of his statements are very strong on the subject. He thinks that the indifference began after the seven years' war (p. 2.), and I have little doubt myself, that in considering the religious state of Germany at more length than I have been able to do, the distracted state of the country during so large a part of the two last centuries, must be taken into the account, as very unfavourable to the cause. But (p. 3.) he states that this indifference is spread among all classes, that (p. 4.) the Bible used to be found in every house—that very many made it a law to read a chapter every day, or at least every Sunday; that it must have been a very poor family, where a Bible was not a part of the marriage portion, but that now, very many do not possess one, or let it lie neglected in a corner—that (p. 5.) now hardly one-fifth of the inhabitants of towns receive the Sacrament, or confess—that few attend the churches, which are now too large, though fifty years ago they were too small—that few honour Sunday, but that many make it a day for private business, or for work; and (p. 9.)

number of treatises, containing loud complaints of the total indifference existing towards all religious considerations. And it is very remarkable, that in many instances, these complaints come from those very persons who have been foremost in producing the mischief. They who have been most eager in rejecting all that is positive in religion, are surprised that men have become careless as to the negative part which they have left. There is also another fact which appears to indicate this indifference in no inconsider-

that there are now few students in theology, compared with those in law or medicine; and that if things go on thus, there will shortly not be persons to supply the various ecclesiastical offices. He tries to prove, that the new fancies of the Rationalists had not produced this indifference, for he asks (p. 47.) whether citizens and merchants ever read learned disquisitions; but here Tittman, (p. 330.) directly contradicts him, and bears positive testimony, that there were *popular* books in plenty, exhibiting these new notions; and that the critical journals spread a knowledge of them also—especially the *Allgem. Teutsch. Bibliothek*. He positively testifies also, that the consequence was distrust and suspicion of the doctrines of Christianity, among all classes; and an entire indifference to religion. Preaching had fallen into entire contempt, partly from the dreadfully low rate at which the preachers were paid, whence they were looked on with contempt, and could not of course be persons of education. Bretschneider is very loud also on this subject—and complains bitterly of the endeavours to deprive the clergy of all their rights, and impose duties not their own upon them. This has been confirmed to me by private information, with respect to the clergy of the north of Germany, where they were compelled often to add to their scanty income by farming in a small way, and where they constantly associated with the farmers. But to return to Bretschneider; he confesses (p. 49, and following,) that some preached on the Rationalist doctrines but only contends that all did not do so; and Titman tells us that some of the more orthodox preachers, very injudiciously in his opinion, attacked these new notions from the pulpit. Within sixty years, Bretschneider says, (p. 50.) the sermons have changed very much; and in contents, tone, and form, have followed the spirit of the age. They seem to have done so with a witness, from what he says in p. 49. for it thence appears, that many instead of preaching

able degree ;\* namely, the singular union which has lately taken place between the Calvinistic and Lutheran denomi-

on the doctrines of Christianity, betook themselves to the more useful subjects of politics and agriculture,\* &c. But all this alteration in preaching was the effect, he says, not the cause of the disinclination to the church ; for when the preachers found that the old doctrines would not attract the people, they betook themselves to the new.

I subjoin some books on the subject of the lately-prevailing indifference. Hoffman Ein Wort ueber die herrschende Irreligiositaet Berlin, 1804. Schleiermacher Ueber die Religion, Reden, &c. 2d ed. Berlin, 1806. and Zwei unvorgreiflichen Gutachten in Sachen des Protest, Kirchenwesens. Berlin, 1804. Boll Von dem Verfall und der Wiedersherstellung der Religiositaet (2 vols. Neustrelitz, 1809.†) Ueber das religioese und Sittliche Verderben unsers Zeitalters, von J. M. R. Biberach, 1805. Flugge Hist-krit. Darstellung-des Einflusses der Kantischen Philos. vol. I. p. 45, and following.

\* I ought to say, that some friends, for whose judgment I have the highest respect, differ with me entirely on this point ; and in consequence of their dissent, I have reconsidered the subject with all the attention in my power, but cannot arrive at any other conclusion than my former one. I cannot think, that the difference between the Calvinists and Lutherans, would be regarded as so trifling and unimportant as to justify a total inattention to them in an union, on the hypothesis assumed by those who differ from me, that the doctors of

\* It is to this, I suppose, which Schelling alludes in his Akademische Vorlesungen [though he rather speaks of what *must* be, than what is the consequence of these new doctrines] when he says, ‘ the preachers must be at various times, farmers, physicians, and every thing else, and not only recommend cowpock from the pulpit, but teach their flocks how to choose the best kind of potatoes.’

† I have seen an extract in Hohenegger, from this work, which seems too rich in absurdity, even for a Rationalist. The good priest must surely misrepresent Boll, when he makes him say, after speaking of the eternal duration of punishments, that if Christianity should be got rid of, *which seems likely*, men must labour not to let such absurd ideas get into the new religion, which will be established ; and that this would be no evil for real religion, and its necessary ideas, but rather an advantage, as these must gain by the fall of false religion, and a true one would be built on the ruins of superstition.



nations. However desirable unity may be (and, assuredly, it is one of the first blessings which a church can enjoy) it is too dearly bought, if bought at the expense of any essential principle of faith. Now in the case mentioned, no article of belief indeed was sacrificed on either side, because

each persuasion were not indifferent to their peculiar opinions. If we look, for example, to the doctrine of *absolute decrees*, practically perhaps in Germany, as I believe is the case in Scotland, that tenet was so softened down, that there might be no perceptible difference in the public teaching of the parties. If the Calvinists then would do in theory what they do (on this supposition) in practice, namely, renounce that doctrine, at least in its most offensive shape, there could be no further objection to an union on this point; but if they persisted in retaining the expression of it, and thus affording an opportunity to future enthusiasts to sow the seeds of discord by the recurrence to a doctrine (especially calculated to call forth active opposition) as never disavowed by the church, I cannot think, that Lutherans who had any regard for their own opinions, would assent to the union. Again had either party really thought *any* doctrines matters of consequence, they would surely have dreaded the effect of such an union on the laity, who could not but conclude, if they saw men, who differed so widely, and were sincere in that difference, yet uniting to form one common church, that doctrines were altogether mere speculative matters, and of no consequence in the formation of a Christian temper and disposition, or a Christian state of knowledge. The mischief of such a belief will far outweigh any good, which can arise from either the prevention or the cure of schism, desirable as such an end must be. But that end can, I think, be properly promoted only by the renunciation of error, except in minor matters, and not by throwing every positive doctrine into the shade, till there can at last be no reason, why heretics, Jews, and infidels should not alike range themselves under the banners of a new and generalized religion. The inculcation of a different opinion is, I think, a strong objection to the work of Dr. Hey, a name which cannot be mentioned without respect, as long as extensive learning, and the most candid and Christian spirit can command it.

The subject here brought into notice, is too extensive for a note; for it, in fact, includes the whole question of the propriety of articles of faith, and their limits. In the especial case before us, I think they who turn to any of the late writers, will be convinced that my theory

the principle of union was, that there should be no discussion of points of faith. The union consists merely in a community of churches and of ministers, and an indiscriminate reception of the sacraments at the hands of these ministers.\* But when we remember how very essential

does them no injustice. When indeed I find Wegscheider saying, (p. 431.) that on the subject of *absolute decrees*, one party has just as good ground in Scripture as the other, though one of course is necessarily false—and presently after giving it as his own opinion, that both are so—when I find him, though a Lutheran, asserting (p. 509---11.) that Luther's idea as to the communion was false, and (p. 517.) lowering that sacrament not only below the notions of his own, but below those of the reformed churches, making it only a rite for keeping up a memory of Christ, and a remembrance of his doctrine and death, and for confirming men in their resolution to lead a good life, and even die for the truth, I cannot doubt as to his indifference to the belief of his own church---and when I know that a very slight attention to the various works of his party will show, that these are very general opinions, I cannot feel that I have done injustice to them in citing this union in confirmation of my statement.

\* From a book called 'an Autumn near the Rhine,' it appears that the method pursued is such as to amalgamate the two methods followed by the opposite parties. The Lutherans were accustomed, like the catholics, to use a small wafer, whole; the Calvinists bread, which they broke. They now use in common a large Lutheran wafer, which is broken like the Calvinistic bread, p. 412. (ed. 1818.)

It is curious however that Wegscheider, (p. 516.) though a Lutheran, recommends the 'use of common and esculent bread, which should be broken into bits, instead of the wafers which under a barbarous name came into common use in the western church, in the course of the eleventh century.'

I cannot but observe that the clever author of the 'Autumn near the Rhine' has formed the same conclusions as myself. 'The animosity of doctrinal differences,' he says, which thirty years ago denied to the reformed at Frankfort a place of worship in the town—*having now subsided into the most quiescent apathy*, this amalgamation of forms was all that remained to be done.' My readers may perhaps wish to know in what part of Germany this union has been effected. Wegscheider (p. 520.) mentions parts of Prussia, the grand duchy

these two professions of faith vary, it must be evident that such an union can only have been effected by an entire indifference on each side to the peculiar tenets of its founder. Without noticing the other differences, great as they were, when we remember that on the important question of the corporal presence, these two churches differ almost as widely as we do from the Romish, it is obvious, that only indifference to their own tenets on the part of the Lutherans, could have induced them to communicate with the Calvinists, and only a persuasion of that indifference could have induced the Calvinists to enter into bonds of union with those who held what was, or ought to have been, in their eyes, a very serious corruption of the purity of the Christian doctrine.

On the other hand, the doctrine of the naturalizing party certainly produced very strong and serious disgust. Indeed, it was impossible to suppose, that the mischief which such doctrines must do, should not be deeply felt and deplored by all who were yet real Christians, who were preserved by stronger principles, and wider views of truth. But, however much inclined to rally in support of the good cause, the unhappy state of the German church, its total want of any centre of union, and of any (practically) definite system of doctrine, afforded them no opportunity of union and combination of force; and each advocate of religious truth was consequently left to defend it in his own way. Now religion was suffering both in her objective and subjective character, both as an external theory of faith, and a practical amender of the heart. On the one hand, almost every dogma had been either altered or destroyed; and on the other, the practical part of religion was nullified by the subtilty of philosophical reasoning. In a better

of Nassau, the principality of Hainau, the part of Bavaria to the west of the Rhine, the duchies or counties of Anhalt, Bernberg, Waldeck and Pymont, grand duchies of Baden, and of Hesse-Darmstadt.

constituted church then the powers of theological erudition on the one hand, would have been expended in defending the orthodox system of doctrine, and on the other, an appeal would have been made to the affections of mankind, in favour of the guide of their lives, the friend of their youth, their manhood, and their age. But although some of the sounder theologians,\* especially Storr, certainly

\* Let me again here bear my testimony to the high merits of Storr, whose school has been of the highest service in Germany, nor must I omit to mention the respectable names of Reinhardt and Staedlin. Krummacher, again, Luecke, Tholuck (though he is somewhat enthusiastic) and Winer, have expressed their horror at the system. Meyer, Kelle, Himly, and many writers in the Magazine of Flatt and Suesskind, and the latter writer himself, have all opposed parts of it.\* The writer in the archives, to whom I have before referred, gives a long list of other names as opponents of the system, to some of whom I must demur. Thus he names *Bretschneider*, who has attempted to destroy the authenticity of St. John's gospel, and who is very frequently in his other writings any thing but orthodox.

Some of the metaphysical writers have lately also enlisted themselves on the side of Christianity. Koeppen, in his *Philosophie des Christenthums*, (Leips. 1813.) vol. II. p. 30. has attempted to show the truth of the doctrine of Original Sin on philosophical grounds. A celebrated physician of Leipsic, Dr. Heinroth, has annoyed the rationalists dreadfully, (see the *Allg. Lit. Zeit.* for Oct. 1823. No. 270.) by a treatise on Anthropology, in which his views of the intellectual and moral part of man are entirely at variance with them, and in unison with the orthodox notions. The masterly nature of the work, and the high reputation of the author, were equally subjects of annoyance with the Rationalists. There is a work called *Revelation und Theologie* by Boeshammer, and one called *Die Religion und die Theologie* by C. G. Schmid (Stutg. 1822.) of which the writer in the archives speaks very highly.

\* It is so common to find Rationalist writers oppose one another even on points of importance, that one must not be hasty in ascribing orthodoxy to a writer merely because he is violent on particular occasions against anti-orthodox principles. Thus Gabber, who is at times quite as offensive as any of these writers, is furious [in the *Neuestes Theol. Journal*, vol. IX. p. 285.] against Paulus's method of explaining away some of the miracles.

maintained the old and orthodox principles, with great zeal, the greater number of those who opposed the Rationalists, appear to have considered some parts of the ancient system incapable of defence, and in others, to have dreaded the evils of protracted controversy. Dismayed by the actual evils which surrounded them, they desired to obviate them by any means; and as they were aware that in Semler's school, the commencement of this change of theoretical views had arisen from a desire of assisting the cause, and establishing the superiority of practical religion, they judged, it seems, that the same road should be pursued in defending the ancient faith, which had been followed in attacking it. They, therefore, made their appeal to the feelings and the heart; and such an appeal in such a cause, can never be in vain. But then, the feelings of an individual in favor of neglected religion, may act with respect to others, or to himself. They may rouse him like the Baptist to pour forth the fervor of his indignation on them who had forgotten their God, and attempt the restoration of his neglected worship; or they may impel him in despair at the sight of all around him, to retire within his own bosom, and in the indulgence of mystic meditation to enjoy, at least *within*, the religious excitement which he seeks in vain without. The latter was the course of many of the Germans. They resigned themselves to religious meditation, and to that fascinating dream of the mystics in all ages, the notion of an union with God, and an immediate perception of the truths of religion. In truth, as I observed in my first discourse, the open denial of all value of the reason is the constant, and from the very construction of the human mind, the necessary consequence of the reason's asserting her authority out of her own sphere. History, in fact, testifies to this great truth. The age which produced the scholastic philosophy, produced also one of the earlier schools of mystical theology. And so when the cold and scientific school of Wolf had perhaps sown the

first seeds of the rationalizing philosophy which sprung up afterwards, and the fruit was an attempt to tear away all religion by heartless reasonings, the heart and feelings were effectually roused, and the aversion from these proceedings showed itself in an entire resignation of the whole being, to the dominion of the feelings and senses, in short, to absolute mysticism. And this feeling was nourished in the less-informed class of society, by the constant circulation of enthusiastic tracts,\* either original or translated: in the higher class, by the reigning systems of philosophy of the age.† Any general inquiry into those schemes of philosophy would be a subject of far too difficult and extended a

\* Many of these were translations from the trash circulated in this country, by the enthusiasts in and out of the church. Borger says, (*De Mysticismo*, p. 32.) with some wonder, that the society of Basle in 1814 published 34000 copies of these tracts. What would he have said of our proceeding in England?

† I had resolved to give here a compressed sketch of the three systems of philosophy prevalent in Germany as far as they regard religion, such as might have at least done somewhat less injustice to them than the very brief notice in the Discourses, but after entering on it, I found it must extend to such a length as is not consistent with the limits of a note. I am however persuaded that they who will take the trouble of perusing Professor Borger's treatise *De Mysticismo*, or at least the chapters in Madm. de Stael's works on this subject, will be convinced that although it was assuredly not the design of the two first systems to promote *mysticism*, there were many elements in them which favoured it. Of the third, it is unnecessary to speak. But I must here mention some views both of Kant and Schelling, which, beyond all doubt, tended to foster the spirit of innovation and rash proceedings with scripture.

In Kant's book on Religion, he takes up the cause of Scripture, and expresses himself in terms of respect and anxiety for the ancient and orthodox belief. But it must be evident to any one who attends to it, that when he speaks of original sin, of redemption, and the other parts of the Christian scheme. he merely retains the words and attaches quite new meanings to them. Then, to make his theology agree with Scripture, he recommends an entirely new system of moral

nature ; but we may observe, that the two first systems so far at least prepared the way for mysticism, that they re-

interpretation, as he calls it. \* This is his account of it.\* 'To unite the foundations of a moral faith with empiric faith, (be it an end or only a means,) an exposition of the revelation handed down to us is required; that is, such an interpretation as agrees with the common practical rules of a pure religion of reason. For the theoretic part of church faith cannot interest us morally, unless it act for the fulfilment of all human duties which make the essential part of religion. This interpretation may often appear forced, when we look at the text, and *sometimes may be so*; and yet, if it is possible that the text admits it, it must be preferred to such a literal one, as contains nothing absolute for morality, or works almost in opposition to its motives. It will be found that such has always been the case with all old and new faiths, partly drawn up in books. Nor can such interpretations be accused of dishonesty, supposing that it is not maintained that the sense we give to the symbolical books, and even to Scripture, was entirely in their view, but that this is undecided; and that only the possibility of their having this sense is asserted. For even the reading the Scripture, or inquiring about its contents, has the aim of making men better. The historical part which does not contribute to this, may be dealt with as people please.' In one word, we are to find out what he thinks a good moral sense of Scripture, and make the words of Scripture agree with it by the most violent straining of its meaning. There are some very sensible remarks on this subject in Schroeckh, vol. VII. p. 630, in which the entirely arbitrary nature of this theory is shown; and that at best it should be called an *applicatian*, not an *exposition* of Scripture. There was a warm contest, as appears from Schroeckh, whether this *moral* sense, as Kant called it, was not merely a mystic, or allegoric sense; and for this side of the question Bauer declared himself. I recommend his chapter on the subject to the reader's attention. (Bauer's edition of Glass's Phil. Sacr. vol. II. Sect. 2. Part 1. Sect. 1. §. 10.) The very discussion of such an interpretation shows sufficiently that the value of Scripture was entirely fallen: for whatever name might be given to the interpretation, it meant in fact only that Scripture was to be adapted to Kant's views, and there was therefore no reason why it should not be so to those of any other philosopher. Hohen-

\* Kant. Die Religion innerhalb der Graenzen der blossen Vernunft, Königsberg, 1793. p. 150.

moved all objective arguments for religion, and substituted more subjective ones. I mean not, that these two systems *intentionally* promoted mysticism. But the first of these systems, when in its inquiries as to the limits of human knowledge, it bounded all our knowledge to the sensible world, and denied to man all knowledge of the intellectual world, at least, did this: it denied almost all power to theoretic reason, and it built our knowledge of God, of our moral liberty, and of a future life, not on reason, but wholly on a practical faith, founded on our moral constitution. Even they who opposed the full extent of the principle

egger, in fact, in a book which I have often referred to, attributes the whole of the Rationalist horrors to Kant, but this arises merely from Hohenegger's own ignorance; for Kant's book on religion was not published till 1793, and his first work not till 1781, nor did it attract my attention for some time after its publication, while I have sufficiently shown the far earlier rise and establishment of many of the Rationalist doctrines.

Schelling in his *Vorlesungen ueber die Methode des Akademischen Studiums*, (Tubingen. 1803.) has animadverted, and I think with great justice, on the *philosophy* of Kant's view, though his own is not at all more satisfactory. His two lectures on the Historical Construction of Christianity, and the Study of Theology, are most extraordinary; but in the most violent opposition to the Rationalist doctrines, against which he expresses himself with great energy and beauty. The Rationalists he compares to the unhappy beings whom Dante describes in the foreground of the mansion of wo, rejected by heaven, but not received by hell; not spiritual, but unbelieving; not pious, and yet not partakers of the frivolous wit of the infidel.

He seems to think, that what we call Christianity is, in fact, far older; that, to use his own phrase, it existed before and out of itself, but that a *more distinct manifestation* of its spirit took place in what we call the commencement of the system. He divides religion into two great branches, the one, which reigning in the Indian religions has handed down the highest Idealism, and the other containing the germs of the system opposed to it. The first after going through the East, found an abiding place in Christianity. The other has in the Greek Mythology, through an union with the *ideal* of art, produced perfect beauty.



would probably be led to grant that it was in part true, and would thus be induced to take a more frequent and anxious inspection of that practical moral principle, said to be situated in their own nature—a step assuredly in nearer relation with the cultivation of the feelings, than with that of the reason. And others, who felt themselves obliged to give up many of their old grounds for certain principles, were unwilling to relinquish the firm belief with which they held the principles themselves, even independently of revelation. If no reasoning could prove the existence of a God; that is, if reason has no right to transgress the limits of that sensible world, which according to this system bounds all our knowledge, and to introduce an intelligible author of this fair show of earth and sky, the senses, the feelings, would do it in defiance of the reason, and the very reposing so important a truth on the mere authority, was another, if not necessary, at least, probable, step to mysticism. But although this system said that we could not know what God was, it still recognised a separation of God from the world and from man. Now the succeeding system went much farther, and contended that a providence, or moral order of things, had no existence separate from our moral nature. Without judging of the ulterior tendency of these notions, or charging on their author that atheism, which he so strongly disclaimed, it is obvious, that such a doctrine, if received unsuspectingly, certainly leads to mysticism, because it leads to the foundation of all mysticism, the notion of an union with God, an union so strict that his very existence is inconceivable to man, apart from man's moral nature. It may be said, however, and with truth, that these tendencies to mysticism were unintentionally consequences of the systems I allude to; but in the school which sprung up afterwards, that of Schelling, the very foundation of all the doctrines, was mystical. For while its author despised the theoretical reason equally with the founder of the first system, he concluded, that the

inference made there, that we could have no knowledge of intelligible things, was quite false, and that we have a knowledge of intelligible things, by intuition. He taught, that God was the only existing being, that he was *one* and *all things*, that whatever was out of God, was not, existed not—that we ourselves as far as we really exist, exist in God, and that our individual and personal existence, is an apparent, and not a real one, for that our real existence consists in our identity with God. It is almost unjust to allude to such a system,\* in so passing and superficial a manner; but I do so merely to show how entirely this philosophy, which was, and is widely received, tended to the fostering of mysticism; and now much it is the same with the mysticism of former ages, with the Platonic mysticism, which inculcated doctrines, if not founded on the same ground, yet tending to the same effect (the necessity, namely, of an entire identification and union of the being with God), and also with the mysticism of subsequent times. Perhaps it differed in principle from all: but this at least was manifest, that assuming God as the only ground of all existences, the Absolute being in whom all other things exist, that is to say, assuming the actual identity of many things, which to us appear contrary to one another, this system could not appeal for proof of the possibility of the existence of this Absolute to any corporeal sense, or to the reason of mankind which could find nothing analogous to it in the visible world, nor in its own conclusions. It must necessarily rest upon the power of the imagination which could free itself from this empirical state of things, and rise to a state where that might be true, which could not be true according to the senses, and the reason. Here then *imagination*

\* 'Hoc unum postulabant,' says Rorger, p. 177. 'ut phantasia et sensus commoverentur.' See A. T. A. F. Lehms Predigten, nebst einer abhaendl. ueber die Predigt. (Nordling, 1806.) and Rosenmueller Beytr. zur Homiletik, nebst einer abhaendl. von der Beredsamkeit, Leips. 1814.

was the whole basis, as it was also with respect to the intuition of the Absolute, imagination too, carried to a higher pitch than even in poetry, which must never feign what the senses and reason do not confirm at least as possible. It was, therefore, to the cultivation and excitement of the imagination, and consequently of the senses, that all attention was to be directed, and not to any extension of knowledge, nor direct emendation of the heart. The public preachers were required by some of the disciples of this philosophy, to address themselves only to this point, and they were vehement accusers of the frigid sobriety of the Protestant worship, which rejected all splendid pomp and ceremonial, and the aid of all the elegant arts which could affect the senses and thus excite the imagination.\* It will hardly be believed, that some of this school seemed to regret on these grounds, the destruction of that heathen religion,† which was so entirely a religion of the senses, while the author of the system (if I do not misunderstand him) contended, that the Esoteric religion of the Greeks in their mysteries, was, in fact, the Christian system, which only revealed openly, what the mysteries had taught in private.‡ But it need hardly be said, that Catholicism soon be-

\* See Schiller Sammtl. Werke, tom. III p. 405. Schelling himself speaks constantly of the religion of Greece with an enthusiasm, which in a poetical view is quite intelligible, but is less pardonable in a philosophic moralist.

† See Schelling Philosophie und Religion (Tubingen, 1804.) p. 75. and Wegscheider's Tract De Græcorum mysteriis religioni non obtrudendis, p. 13—15. (Goettingen, 1805.)

‡ See Tzscherner's Kirchengeschichte seit der Reform. vol. IX. p. 636. For an example of the great admiration of the Catholic form, see Goethe's Life, vol. II. p. 178—183, in the original.

In the years 1813 and 1814, more than 300 men of cultivated minds went over to the Catholic Church. See a book called, Hat und behaelt der Mensch bei und nach einem Religionswechsel seine ge-

gan to find favour in the eyes of those who held those opinions, because it assuredly addresses itself so strongly to the senses, and in that respect, at least, supplies the void of which these writers complained. The consequence was, that many openly deserted the Protestant church,\* while others would have accommodated the Protestant to the Roman Catholic Religion, as to its ceremonies and worship; some really speak in the most extraordinary manner of the great consequence of a splendid form of worship,† and of the trifling importance of any positive doctrine; and, in a wild opposition to the naturalizing doctrines, maintain, that religion is to be felt, and not at all understood. There were differences of opinion, however, among them, as to the degree in which the Roman Catholic rites should be introduced, and others adopted what must be called a kind of allegorical catholicism. For they explain the philosophy of Schelling in words and phrases taken from the Catholic doctrines, and speak of the priests‡ and the sacrifices of the Christian religion, without at all meaning to receive these words in their strict and legitimate acceptation. I would not, however, be understood to say, that all who passed over to the Roman Catholic church, passed over in consequence of their acceptance of the mystical

*sunde Vernunft?* Berl. et Leips. 1816. Stolberg seems to have been disgusted by the uncertain and wavering doctrines of Protestantism. See his Letter in the *Theol. Nachr.* (1801, August,) p. 249.

\* See for example, the first vol. of Horst's *Mysteriosophie*, Frankf. 1817. See also Tzschurner *de sacris eccl. nostræ caute emendandis*, *Commentat.* III. p. 48. (1815.) reprinted in his *Memorabilien fuer das Studium d. Predigers*, vol. V. Part I. 1816.

† See Marheineke's *Grundlegung zur Homiletik*, p. 19. Hamb. 1811; and see also Rosenmueller *Beytr. zur Homil.* p. 43, to show the Catholics made use of their declarations.

‡ I need hardly say, that in writing expressly upon the subject of episcopacy, different, and far higher ground would have been taken.

doctrines. It is on record, that some sought in the bosom of a church, which in the midst of all its dreadful corruptions, at least possessed the form, and retained the leading doctrines of a true church, the peace which they sought in vain amid the endless variations of the Protestant churches of Germany, and their gradual renunciation of every doctrine of christianity.

It is indeed with sincere regret that one so often finds such inadequate and low views\* of our church government taken even by those who mean to be its defenders. The one and only correct ground is, that episcopacy is the originally appointed and the *sole* way of transmitting the commission to teach mankind, and administer the christian ordinance; a commission which is essential to the christian ministry, and which to be valid, must proceed from the great head of the church, through that channel in which his apostles, whom he authorized for the purpose, originally placed it. Earnestly, very earnestly indeed should it be recommended to those about to enter the ministry to study this subject fully; for the deep conviction of being entrusted with a divine commission, and not one which is the fruit of mere human views of expediency, is of all considerations, the one most calculated to excite a spirit of lively zeal, in the discharge of professional duty, and an entire devotion to professional feelings, and studies. Among all the works which I could mention as likely to be useful to a student, I hardly know one which takes so forcible yet so succinct a view of the subject, and which afterwards so earnestly presses on the younger clergy the awful nature of the duties they have undertaken, as a charge delivered to the clergy of New-York in 1815, by their admirable and invaluable bishop. In a subsequent charge in 1818, entitled, *The corruptions of the Church of Rome contrasted with certain Protestant errors*, he has entered on the same subject in some parts as I have done here; and I only wish that I were able to urge these topics with his force of argument and of language. Bishop Hobart is indeed a treasure of inestimable value to the church he governs. The impression which he has made on all who had the happiness of knowing him here, by his clear and lucid views his sincere and heartfelt, but inobtrusive piety, his deep

\* I presume the author of the article on Bishops in the *Encyclopedia Metropolitana* intends to plead the cause of episcopacy, but the Section I. 1. will show that he has not a just idea of the real grounds on which it rests.

Such, then, have been the effects of the naturalizing doctrines in Germany ; indifference on the one hand, and a violent reaction tending to mysticism on the other. Into their farther effects (except as matter of curiosity) we are the less concerned to enquire, as without any knowledge of what these proceedings have done, we can have no difficulty in judging what they are likely to do—no difficulty in rejecting every principle which they involve with disgust and detestation.

I have now terminated such a review of the state of Protestantism in Germany, as the limits of these discourses, and my own imperfect knowledge will allow. Even from that imperfect sketch, however, many important lessons may be drawn. The greatest of all is assuredly the conviction which it impresses so deeply, that *unassisted* reason never fails to mislead those who resign themselves to its guidance ; that whatever form it assumes, under every form it is frail or fallacious ; that whether it endeavours to elevate the being by the use of mere human and earthly means, or by connecting it with its maker through the medium of the imagination and the sense, its efforts are equally impotent ; that he who desires so to elevate himself, must have recourse to Scripture alone, and the moral improvement of the being which it directs, as the sure and only method of enlarging his intellect, and ameliorating his condition. But these are lessons for all ; there are others applicable to peculiar pursuits and conditions. The student in divinity may learn from the errors which this sketch of the modern German theology presents, that if he

and entire conviction of the truth of his principles, and his earnest zeal in their propagation, will not easily pass away. Let it be pardoned to private affection and regard, if it here utters the wish which indeed could be fully justified on public grounds, that his life may long be spared to the church and the country of which he is so bright an ornament.

assumes any arbitrary theory for the interpretation of Scripture, no extent, and no depth of learning will save him from falling into the wildest error. The philosopher may learn, that if he choose to form any theory of the Christian system, he must philosophize with the Bible in his hand, and verify every step by a recourse to Scripture. And the man of science may learn too, that the principles which he applies in other cases, are inapplicable here—that there is nothing to discover in revelation; that the province of the human understanding with respect to Scripture, is to believe, and to obey it. But a stronger, and perhaps more important lesson is offered on that subject, which is said to form the base, and the boast of protestantism—the right of private judgment. I speak not, of course, of the legal, or even of the moral right; but of the right as possessed by the members, and especially the ministers of any church. The church of England in her articles, expressly assumes the exercise of an authority entirely at variance with it; the practice, at least, of every body, even of dissenters, is at variance with it also; and the terrible evils resulting in the German church from its exercise, are the strongest practical proof of the wisdom, and necessity of restraining it. There was a time, however, and at no great distance, when a strong disposition existed, not indeed, in the largest or most respectable, but in the most clamorous of the clergy of England, to assert the right, to avoid subscription, or to evade its force. Many of their declarations have indeed been overstrained, and tortured into a form, far different from their own, and in their controversies with the Romanists of the present day, these tortured expressions are falsely and shamefully appealed to, as conveying the sense of the English clergy on this great question.\* But it must be al-

\* I have alluded here principally to the grossly unfair accusations of Dr. Milner in his 'End of Controversy.' I say grossly unfair, because I am persuaded that Dr. Millner is a man of too much talent,

lowed, that as the declarations on this point stand in the writings of some of the divines to whom I allude, even before their adversaries have had recourse to disingenuous suppres-

and too general knowledge, not to know perfectly that the opinions which he can cite from a very few writers of the English church, are *not* the opinions of that church. In fact, he hath misrepresented both Balguy and others. But if he had not done so, can he believe, that so idle a style of arguing as the attributing to an adversary, opinions which he disclaims, can have more than a temporary success? I wonder that a man of character and honour, can descend to such arts, or take advantage of the church being deprived of her public voice, to fix on her opinions, which, in his heart, he knows she condemns. He, however, is not alone in these discreditable practices, but is joined by allies from a very different quarter. The Unitarians and Catholics unite in attempting to force upon us on all points, the opinions of Hoadly, and Paley, and Blackburne with others of the same stamp and die. Mr. Belsham's late reply to the Quarterly Review,\* is almost entirely built on the fact, that the

\* A few words may be added here with respect to that Reply, which is manifestly too feeble and impotent for the Reviewer to waste his time in giving a separate answer to it.

[1.] Mr. Belsham complains heavily of personality. The personality consists of accusing him, not from any personal knowledge of him, but from the evidence of his works, of being ignorant and superficial. Whether the remarks are courteously expressed or not, may be another question; but if a critic may not express the opinion of an author, which is forced on him by a perusal of many of that author's works, on the ground that such a proceeding would be personal, there is an end of criticism. Of a different kind of personality, Mr. Belsham affords a specimen, when [p. 3.] instead of answering the Reviewer's arguments, in a fit of passion, he attacks his motives. Of rude and vulgar language too, such as the Reviewer never condescends to use, Mr. B's. pages supply an ample harvest, witness the following canto of elegantize Belshaminæ. Mr. B. calls his Reviewer, an obscure drudge, a young unfledged ecclesiastic, a gaping Reviewer, a high church bigot, a sapient critic, a conceited Reviewer, a paragon of Reviewers, guilty of base calumny, ignorance, malignity, hypocrisy, stupidity in the extreme, intemperance, slander, superciliousness, &c. &c. &c. This is indeed language, which, I should have hoped, no one, who had the habits of a gentleman, could debase himself by using.

[2.] Mr. B. (p. 6—8.) has obviously mistaken the charge brought against 'coxcombs in learning.' After noticing how meagre Mr. B's. reading is, the Reviewer says in passing, that on the other hand, he does not commend those



sions, these are principles, which every honest mind must disavow, and principles which it must give the bitterest regret to every true son of the church of England, to find in

opinions which the Reviewer maintains to be those of the church, are not the opinions of Watson, Paley, &c. to whom Mr. B. chuses

who seek to make a great display of their reading. The second remark Mr. B. appropriates to himself, as well as the first; but the Reviewer would not be so foolish as to accuse him in one page of displaying too little reading, and in the next, of too much. In fact Mr. B. and the Unitarians need be under no apprehensions of being attacked by any one for a superabundance of reading, or of learning.

[3.] Another source of Mr. B's complaints is, that the Reviewer has attacked Locke. Neither the Reviewer, or any one else, would presume to deny the *acuteness* of Locke's work on the Epistles; but every churchman must, if he examines the matter, entirely reject the theological principle of Locke's exposition. That principle tends directly to Socinianism; Mr. B. indeed charges the Reviewer with ignorance, for calling Locke a Socinian, and says he was an Arian; but the Reviewer spoke from the principles of his work, and may well retort the charge of ignorance on Mr. B. if he does not perceive that those principles are Socinian.

But to return, where is the rashness of attacking Locke as a divine? Archdeacon Balguy, whose panegyric Mr. B. cites, distinctly states, that Locke interpreted by means of his philosophy, and that his erudition was inferior to that of many who had gone before him. Locke was not a great biblical scholar, nor divine; nay, he was no biblical scholar nor divine at all, nor did he ever profess to be so, but merely by means of close attention to follow out reasonings, which without such attention, could hardly be understood.

[4.] Mr. B. afterwards attacks the Reviewer for not receiving Dr. Taylor's Theory of the Gospel-Scheme, when he can cite several writers of our communion as approving it, and its author. He especially mentions Bishop Green and Dr. Hey, as approving Dr. Taylor's scheme of a two-fold justification. If he had read that work of Dr. Hey which he quotes so often, or even his friend's notes and extracts from it [p. 15.] he might have found even there [vol. III. p. 168.] that our church holds the doctrine of a two-fold justification, and that it is therefore to that, and not to any new doctrine of Dr. Taylor's, that the writers whom he quotes, assent. As to Dr. Hey's praise of Taylor, he calls him the most eminent of the Socinian writers. That he was a Socinian, Mr. B. would boast. Does Mr. B. then mean to say, that any conscientious divine of the Church of England could assent to his scheme, when he understood it; or that the opinion of any number of divines [with Bishop Watson, and Dr. Paley at their head] who did so, can have, or ought to have, any authority with the very humblest student in divinity, who has rejected Socinianism? When Mr. B. has answered these questions, he may search for more authorities in favour

the works of any one of her members. Deeply, indeed, is it to be lamented on this, and on other accounts, that the church is deprived of a right, possessed by every other

to appeal, as great luminaries, men of profound learning, and as better authorities for her doctrines, than an anonymous Reviewer.

of Dr. Taylor, among our writers. I am very far, however, from denying the use of Dr. Taylor's book, while I reject his principles. The collections of passages which he has made, are eminently useful; and there can be no doubt of his having been a man of very considerable learning.

[5.] I must object decidedly to Mr. B's method of citing Dr. Paley, and Dr. Hey. He does them gross injustice, when he tries to represent them as so strongly and frequently accusing the writers of Scripture of erroneous opinions, or at least supposing that they might hold such opinions, &c. The simple fact is, that Paley and Hey frequently suppose themselves arguing with infidels, who would not allow either the inspiration or necessary correctness of every thing in Scripture; and they endeavour to show the truth of Christianity, even without these concessions, Dr. Paley, for example, in the passage cited by Mr. B. [p. 28.] says expressly, 'In arguing with unbelievers, it is competent to say, give me the apostle's testimony, and I do not want their judgment;' and both he and Hey constantly argue on the same supposition. But it is very discreditable to Mr. B. to represent concessions for the sake of argument, as concessions really made. These remarks apply most strongly to the extracts from Hey in pp. 1. and 2, of the notes extracts, to the first of those from Michaelis at p. 22, and to that from Bishop Gastrell at p. 20.

[6.] Mr. B. or his friend, has obviously been guilty of one great piece of injustice to several great divines of the Church of England, as well as to the Reviewer. Like the German divines, Mr. B. seeks to explain away all the strong passages in Scripture, by representing the writers as reasoning on Jewish principles, or in the Jewish taste, or in using the argumentum ad hominem. When the Reviewer objects to this, Mr. B's friend cites Warburton, Chandler, Sherlock, Atterbury, Paley, &c. as approving of such a principle of explanation. But the whole question is one of degree. The Reviewer never seeks to exclude it wholly, but to limit its application; and unless Mr. B's friend believes that the writers whom he cites, would go the same lengths as he does, he has no right to appeal to them. He assuredly knows that they would reject such an extension of their principles with indignation.

The only remark besides, which seems necessary is this. Mr. B's friend [p. 46.] is very indignant at the Reviewer's accusing Mr. B. of an intention of rejecting prophecy, and says, that the Reviewer garbled the words. The Reviewer did no such thing; but I will quote the whole sentence. When I have observed that in various parts of the book, the truth of parts of the Old Testament is questioned, I ask what other inference can be drawn from the following words? 'He [the apostle] probably referred [in 2 Tim. iii. 16.] only to the

church, nay, by every body of dissenters from her, however small or insignificant, that, namely, of deliberating in her collective capacity, of speaking with her public voice, and putting the seal of her public condemnation, on principles so utterly disavowed by an overwhelming majority of her own members, in the age when they were put forth, and so entirely at variance with every principle of her own. This cloud indeed has passed away from us ; common sense has shown the utter hopelessness of a church existing without making a declaration of faith, and requiring her ministers to subscribe to it, and common honesty and honour have pointed out the disgrace of countenancing subscription to that declaration in any but its literal, and obvious sense. Nay, it is quite certain, that the expression of other principles would, in this day, be greeted with such an expression of universal disgust, as is always due to every form and degree of equivocation and evasion. Yet these principles were avowed by men estimable in the highest degree in other points, and who, on other points, would assuredly have regarded evasion or equivocation with contempt. Neither were they faithless to the Christian cause, according to their own views of it, but on the contrary, defended it with zeal and ability and earnestness. One cause of their error seems to have been what may well be a cause for error again in these days, or in days to come, either an ignorance, or an undervaluing of the nature, the constitution

Even Mr. Belsham must know, that no fair inference can be made from talents to opinions, and must be aware, as well as Dr. Milner, of the unfairness of his premises, and the falsehood of his deductions.

I should conceive, that the Catholics would not be very proud of their allies, or of maintaining the same wretched sophism as the Unitarians.

prophetic Scriptures, which, *if genuine*, are unquestionably inspired.' Mr. B's. friend contends that the remainder of the note would destroy any notion of Mr. B's. being unfavourable to prophecy. I have read it again very carefully, but can find nothing to justify this assertion.

and requirements of the church, and more especially of one like the Church of England. It is the constant fault of mankind, when in the enjoyment of blessings to forget or overlook the source whence they flow, and as the question of church government and constitution had not been brought into view, by an especial controversy at the time to which we allude, its necessity faded from the mind, and loose indefinite views of the excellence of Christianity in general, were substituted. These divines forgot, that they were not ministers of any indefinite, but of a definite form of Christianity; that they had recorded their belief, that that was the true and apostolical form, and that consequently, they were bound by every tie, to support and defend the views of Christianity, which that form enforced and prescribed. The fair sounding words of liberty and of freedom from control, exercised that undue sway, which they always do exercise, when their meaning is not severely tried, and they who by their own acts had renounced that freedom, forgot their own act, and became its warmest advocates. And it is much to be feared, that in this present day, while the effects are different, there is the same ignorance, and the same forgetfulness of the leading principle, and constitution of our church. When we observe how much there is of impatient submission to authority, how much desire there is in individuals to quit their own sphere, to suggest and pursue their own plans for the confirmation, or advancement of the Christian cause, to become the advocates of general Christianity, and to testify an indifference to forms of belief, and of worship, we cannot but believe, that in those individuals, there must be a strange ignorance of what is required of them by the church to which they belong. In a deep feeling of the evils caused by such proceedings, we cannot but earnestly beseech those who are about to become public teachers in our church, not to overlook this essential branch of a clerical education, but to study

deeply her constitution, and to understand what is the real situation of the minister of an episcopal church, and what are his duties before they undertake them. True, indeed, it is, that the Christian spirit may exist, independently of all this. True it is, that at the farthest verge of the earth, and remote from every form of every church, the spirit of Christian hope, love, and joy, may glow in the bosom of the Christian. But that neither diminishes the necessity for forms of Christianity in the world, nor lessens their obligation when received. Their necessity and their expediency we need not, and we will not consider here; but thus much cannot be denied, that he who has become the minister of a form, which professes to be apostolical, has both set to the solemn record of his belief, that that claim can be justified, and has assumed every obligation, which such a profession implies. Before he does so, he may, if he pleases, become the minister of another form, or the minister of Christianity under no form; but when he has done so, he has declared, that in his belief, the one only true and effectual way of carrying on his Master's work on earth, is that way, on which he has entered, and that that form, to which he has declared his adherence, is the form approved by his Master himself. He is therefore become now the minister *of a church*, and as such, must pursue the road which that church dictates. He must no longer think his own thoughts, or form his own plans, but he must teach what the church commands in the sphere which she assigns. He may think that at some time, something is left in that church undone, which should be done, something done, which should be left undone—but he will know also that it belongs not to him to remedy the error, or supply the deficiency. He will know, that God, under whose especial guidance he believes the church to be, may indeed permit evil; but that his good spirit will rectify what is wrong, and supply what is wanting *in the appoint-*

*ed way*, and at the due season. His one aim will therefore be to understand fully what the spirit of the church is—his one aim to fulfil it, to unite with, not to separate from his brethren, to yield a ready and cheerful obedience to his superiors, not to endeavour to escape from it.

And, (if it may be permitted, in conclusion, to quit for a moment the more immediate object of these discourses,) does there not hence arise another, and a more solemn exhortation still to those who are about to become the ministers of the church? If it be true, that that church is indeed God's church, as they have declared that they believe it to be, if they who become her ministers, become therefore God's ministers, are they not at once bound to give themselves wholly to her service? It will not be enough that they pursue her plans *when* they engage in the duties connected with their profession, because they believe her work to be God's work, but for that same solemn reason they must devote to her every thought, every hope, every affection. No man having put his hand to this work, and looking back, is fit for it. The common professions of ordinary life require this, require the full devotion of the heart and mind; and shall the church demand, or obtain less? They give a tone to the whole thought, a colour to the whole life; and shall the church alone be contented with a half service, a perpetual vacillation from layman to priest, from priest to layman? Can he who is the minister of God, hope to edify God's people in the discharge of his duty to-day, unless to-morrow too, he recall to them, that holy, that indelible character in his business, his pursuits, and his amusement? Can the people believe, that the work of God is of such moment, unless he who has taken on himself to perform it, devote his whole being to its performance? But, indeed, can it be performed otherwise? It is a fatal error to suppose, that, because in the external discharge of the ordinary duties of the church, there is nothing

difficult, nothing which requires the devotion of any large portion of the time, the profession itself therefore requires no such devotion. For these very duties will be coldly and unprofitably discharged, unless the mind, by constantly dwelling on the subject, is deeply impressed with its importance; the studies of the profession require from all, whether they look to be the public defenders, or the private advocates of the church, the whole time which can be allotted to them, more especially in times, when disbelief and dissent, and opposition, are perpetually assuming some new shape, and offering some new difficulty; and on those solemn and awful occasions, when the servant of God is called on to attend the last fearful scenes of life, idly will he be called on, fatally, perhaps, to the poor penitent, fatally most assuredly, to himself, will he answer the call, unless he answer it with a heart, which is raised above the ordinary thoughts of ordinary life, hallowed, sanctified, and spiritualized. And so the whole man must be given to the service of the church with a deep feeling of regret, that the offering is at best so little worthy of her, and an intimate persuasion, that with less, her work cannot be done. There must be no other thought, than the promotion of that pure form of religion which she teaches, no other employment than its advancement, no hope, no pleasure, no delight, but its extension, its triumph, its victory. Shame, and guilt, and sorrow, be on him, who can either engage in that holy warfare from mere hopes of worldly advancement; or who can take it on him, as the service of a party, and introduce into it the unchristian feelings of worldly contention. But shame, and guilt, and sorrow on him too, who takes that service on him with indifference, and without a firm resolution to devote the best talents, and best energies he possesses to it. If any of you are about to become the ministers of God thoughtlessly, and with indifference to your profession—if any of you are about to become his

ministers, merely because his service offers you some prospect of temporal provision, be persuaded to renounce your intention, for with such thoughts and feelings, there can be no devotion to his cause, and yours will be an unworthy, and an unacceptable service. Renounce it for the sake of a righteous cause, which your carelessness will injure; renounce it for your own sake, in the remembrance of the strict and solemn account, which the minister of God must one day give before the judgment-seat of Christ, and of the heavy doom which awaits the sleeping and careless watchman. On the other hand, be not deterred, if you have a real and firm desire to become God's servants, by any fear of the duties to be required of you. With the trial, there comes strength to the righteous heart, with the difficulty, support and encouragement. The comfort and the help of the Spirit which will be given to all that ask it, will be given in full measure to you, and will carry you through every trial, and every danger. You are to engage in studies, which, most of all studies, enlarge and elevate the mind—in duties, which, most of all duties, tranquillize and sanctify it. You are to do the work of God in the world—You are to be a source of light, and truth, and blessing, and under every difficulty and discouragement, your reward here, will be the consciousness of having laboured diligently for the good of mankind; hereafter, it will be the approval of that Master, who will receive his good and faithful servant into his own eternal joy.

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With respect to Kuinoeel, I find his work getting into such general use (an honour little deserved in my opinion by any particular merit of the author, either as a critic or an interpreter) that I cannot but bring together a few of his



opinions and remarks, in order to set the book in the proper point of view. I will take a little of the commentary on St. Matthew. On chap. i. ver. 18. a page and a half is given to the detail of the Rationalists' opinions as to the birth of Christ from a virgin, viz. that it is either false, or a philosophic mythus, arising from the exalted actions of the Messiah, and from the sense given to Christ's declarations, that he was the Son of God; and that besides, every ancient nation has had heroes born of a virgin, or even without a mother. The note concludes with a reference to Ammon's Dissertation on the Nature of the histories of Christ's birth, and the works of Gabler, Bauer and Rosenmueller on this point; the three first at any rate prominent among the most violent Rationalists. In ver. 20, 21. we are told that as the Jews referred all unexpected events to invisible ministers of God, the author wished only to show, by mentioning the vision of the angel, that it was by God's providence, that Joseph did not reject his wife.

In ver. 22, 23. it is decided *without hesitation*, that the prophecy alleged, never applied to Jesus, and is only an accommodation. A double sense is entirely denied by all these writers.

Chapter ii. 1. We have a direct assertion, that if not here, at least in St. Luke, the *Gospel of the Infancy* is used as authority, and in the Prolegomena, this 'Gospel of the Infancy,' is said to be derived from traditions in the family of Jesus, preserved because they always expected him to be eminent.

Ver. 17. The prophecy of Jeremiah had not the least reference to the murder of the Innocents.

Chap. iii. 2. We have here an account of all the false notions entertained of the Messiah, and a direct assertion, that Christ accommodated himself to them as far as he could without hinderance to his own doctrine; and so endeavoured gradually to teach them better notions. Then we have

a detail of Eckermann's opinions, that the kingdom of the Messiah means only the society of Christ's disciples; that to be received into the kingdom of heaven, means nothing but to profess Christianity; and that by Christ's advent, and judgment, is only meant that happiness in a future life depends on the degree of zeal shown for Christ's doctrines on earth.

Ver. 3. The words of Isaiah, 'The voice of one, &c.' are a promise of the prophet to his countrymen of better times, in which he uses poetic images, that 'God himself will come to assist his people, &c.'

Ver. 11. 'The Holy Spirit' is a fuller knowledge of the heavenly doctrine.

Ver. 16. The explanation of the 'heavens opening, &c.' is thus given. Jesus after his baptism was praying—it lightened, his face shone with joy, fortitude, and constancy, his words were full of divine wisdom; and from that time he appeared ornamented with the excellent gifts of a teacher, and acted the part of the Messiah; and to complete this (ver. 17.) 'the voice from heaven' was thunder, and the word λέγουσα means *declaring* or *showing*, as the thunder was taken by John for a public declaration of God, that Jesus was the Messiah!

These last happy explanations are Kuinoel's own, that is, not original inventions, but meeting his approbation; nor is any other given or hinted at, as ever adopted by the orthodox.

Chap. iv. The devil was a member of the Sanhedrim, perhaps the high priest, who at intervals tried whether Jesus was the Messiah. It is only fair to say, that Kuinoel mentions all the other explanations, and states, likewise, that none is wholly satisfactory. In his, however, he says, most of the difficulties attending the others vanish. In ver. 2. we are told, that by Christ's fasting, is only meant that he lived on herbs, fruits, wild honey, &c.

In chap. viii. 4. he gives certainly his opinion against the naturalizing way of explaining the miracles; adding, however, that there may be some occasions where even a sober interpreter may depart from the common methods of explanation, without being attacked for it—though there will be more where he will confess, that he cannot say any thing certain. But that others may judge of the naturalizing style of explanation, he says he will occasionally give specimens, especially from Paulus, *selecting only the probable, and certainly ingenious conjectures.* In the course of this very chapter, he gives two of these probable and ingenious conjectures.

The first is at ver. 27. where Jesus stills the tempest. The author of Remarks on Paulus's Commentary says, that Jesus prayed with a loud voice, and uplifted hands—and that all he said could not be heard—and that the disciples supposed from the event, not from any thing they heard, that he had quelled the storm—and so very nearly Krummacher (pudet!) and Thiess of course.

The second is at ver. 28, and following, where Eichhorn's ingenious and probable conjecture is, that as the demoniac fancied that a legion of evil spirits had possession of him, Christ humoured his fancy, and managed so, that he rushed violently on the herd of swine, and drove them into the sea, and then 'when he believed that the evil spirits had gone into the swine, *he recovered his former health.*' Nothing can assuredly be more *easy, ingenious or probable.* But let us hear another *ingenious and probable* conjecture on this same subject. A certain Schmidt tells us, that when the swineherds were attending to Jesus, instead of minding their business, the pigs got too near the shore, fought, and many of them fell over, and that then Jesus took advantage of this, and told the madman, that the evil spirits had gone out of his body into the swine! This, I suppose, is Kuinoel's own notion, for he says a little below, in inquiring how Jesus came to do so great injury to the

swine herds, that if we admit Schmidt's opinion, Christ will require no apology.

I judge it unnecessary to give further specimens of Kuinoelh's method of commenting. I shall only add, that there is hardly one wild and wicked opinion set afloat by others, which he does not retail; I can therefore have no hesitation in expressing my regret at his work being used by students in divinity. It is convenient for those of maturer judgment, who do not read German, and yet wish to know the Rationalist's style of commenting—but it would be one of the last books I should think of giving to young men, whose minds and judgments are not sufficiently formed to take *general views* of this subject, but may be prejudiced on particular points by these *ingenious and probable* conjectures.

I think Rosenmueller's book on the New Testament less objectionable; though I quite agree in Bishop Blomfield's opinion, that there is very little that is new in it, and that that little is usually wrong. (Reference to Jewish Tradition, p. 26.)

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I cannot conclude these notes, without a few general observations. In the first place, it may perhaps appear no mark of discretion to bring forward such a mass of mischievous and evil opinions to public view; and assuredly I should not have done so, if the subject were a new one in this country. But all the worst part of these opinions, the decided rejection of every thing miraculous and mysterious, is already before us, in works which are in by far too general use, those, for example, of Rosenmueller and Kuinoeel. It is presented too in those works, in a shape best calculated (I do not mean by design) to deceive and mislead. For it is presented as the fruit of laborious and recondite investigation on the part of men, about whom we have no other

indications that they are not believers in Christianity as we are. The student has nothing positive to warn him, that the acceptance of these opinions is inconsistent with belief in it; and it is well known that when the mind is only in progress, there is nothing more captivating, than theories which tend to simplify, to level, and to reduce. I have therefore thought, that a distinct statement of the *principles* of the Rationalists—a proof that they are not believers in revelation, in the proper sense of the word, and that that disbelief, by sending them with prejudiced minds to the interpretation of Scripture, has been the parent of these strange expositions—would not only be useful, but that it is necessary to dispel the obscurity which may hang over the doctrines of the Rationalists here, and be favourable to their propagation.

It may perhaps be observed, that I have rarely made any remark in refutation of the doctrines I have mentioned. In truth, I have seldom felt it necessary, for in nine instances out of ten, the opinions of the Rationalists, are opinions, which have been expressed a thousand times in the pages of Deistical writers, and as often refuted. The only novelty about them is the simple fact of their being now expressed by men calling themselves believers in Christianity, and holding high situations in a Christian church. With respect to what is, if not an absolute novelty, yet the leading one of the system, viz. the accommodation-theory, I have made some remarks in these Discourses—and I cannot but add another here—that however ingeniously supported by the selection of instances, however finely woven the web may be, it is broken at once by the simple perusal of the New Testament. The decided conviction, I feel assured, on every man's mind, before such a theory is brought under his notice, is, that Christ instead of seeking favour and reception for his doctrines, by bowing to popular opinions, perpetually exposed himself to misrepresentation, and sometimes to danger, by his uncompromising opposition to them

—and that there is no feature in his character more remarkable than his rejection and bold condemnation of every favourite tradition, and every popular principle, which he thought injurious. In morals, in speculation, in faith, almost every word he said must have shocked the prejudices, and wounded the feelings of some of his hearers, and that not only by implication, but very frequently too by the bold and severe rebukes directly addressed to them. I can never indeed think of the theory of accommodation without wonder, that men who are at least ingenious and inquiring, should have adopted what, it appears to me, the most superficial inquiry must teach all to reject.

In conclusion, I cannot but express my sincere pleasure in knowing, that in Germany, a better order of things may be shortly expected. Some of the Rationalists have openly retracted—some are silent—the system is on the decline, and the new appointments to theological chairs, are made from a better class of thinkers and scholars. In fact, it could never be expected that in a nation like the Germans, so addicted to the loftiest speculations, a system so grovelling in its principles, and so debasing in their application, could have any long reign. We must only fervently wish for them, that their new inclinations may be fostered and confirmed by a better external regulation of the church; and for ourselves, that in our increasing, or rather commencing acquaintance with German writers, we may remember that what has been unfortunately first brought to our notice, is already rejected and condemned, by those to whom it owed its rise and propagation.

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ON THE  
**Mode of Catechetical Instruction**  
PURSUED BY THE APOSTLES :

AN EXTRACT FROM

**J. G. WALCH'S MISCELLANEA SACRA**

TRANSLATED FROM THE LATIN

BY DANIEL C. AXTELL.

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ON THE  
**MODE OF CATECHETICAL INSTRUCTION**

PURSUED BY THE APOSTLES.

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SYNOPSIS.

§ I. *Various modes of instruction* § II, III, IV. *General view of the catechetical mode and its use.* § V. *In particular, of the catechetical instruction of the Apostles; that in instructing the ignorant, they used this mode altogether.* § VI.—XIV. *Nature of the Apostolic catechesis. Fundamental truths of the Christian religion, which were taught, distinctly enumerated from Heb. vi. 1.* § XV.—XVIII. *The catechumens; among whom, in the New Testament, the Corinthians and Hebrews are particularly mentioned: also Theophilus and Apollos.* § XIX. *The manner in which the Apostles conducted these instructions. Whether they composed a catechetical compend?* § XX.—XXI. *The order,* § XXII.—XXVI. *The form, and qualities of this mode of instruction.*

SECTION I.

TRUTH can evidently be imparted in different ways to different individuals. Hence there are two modes of instruction accommodated to the capacity of the learner. One is called the *exoteric* and the other the *acroumatic* mode; the former is employed in the instruction of the more ignorant class—of those, whose capacity is not adapt-

ed to the most elevated subjects and the most refined mode of treatment, and who wish to acquire only the first principles and necessary outlines of any science. The latter or the acroamatic mode is used, when such minds, as can grasp the most profound and intricate truths, are to receive that cultivation, which may fit them for more extensive progress.

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[The remainder of this section is taken up with showing that the ancient philosophers, and Aristotle in particular, employed this twofold mode of instruction; and with a conjecture concerning its origin.]

## SECTION. II.

According to these two modes, the outlines of the Christian religion are commonly taught, and hence Theology also is divided into exoteric and acroamatic. To the former of these, belongs catechetical theology, which comprehends only the principal and most necessary truths of Christian doctrine, and requires a method adapted to the capacity of the more simple and ignorant class of men. It admits neither intricacy in the subjects which are proposed, nor obscurity in their discussion, nor artificial definitions, nor a citation of various writers and opinions. The mode of instruction in this branch of Theology is called *catechesis*, which is a Greek word, and is derived from the verb *κατηχέειν*. This verb seldom occurs among profane writers, but very often in the New Testament, although in different senses. For at one time *κατηχέισθαι* has the same general meaning, as to *hear any thing, to learn by common report*. Acts xxi. 21. At another time, it means, *to be instructed in things pertaining to religion*, as it is used Rom. ii. 18. Gal. vi. 6. 1 Cor. xiv. 19,

In another place *κατηχῆσθαι* means *to initiate in the rudiments of the Christian faith* whether that may be done in writing, or by the living voice. This is the meaning of the words of Luke (chap. i. 4.) in which he thus addresses Theophilus, to whom he had inscribed his Gospel: *ἵνα ἐπίγνωῖς περὶ ὧν κατηχήθης λόγων τὴν ἀσφάλειαν*,—*That thou mayest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed.* For Luke here evidently speaks of a more perfect knowledge in distinction from that slight acquaintance with the fundamental truths of Christian doctrine which Theophilus had already acquired. The same is the meaning of Acts xviii. 25, where Apollos is said to be *κατηχημένος τὴν ὁδὸν τῆς κυρίας*,—*instructed in the way of the Lord.* For as he had only been instructed concerning the baptism of John, and was afterwards taught the way of God more perfectly, by Aquila and Priscilla, as appears from verse 26, it is evident, that that knowledge with which he had at first been imbued, was only elementary and fundamental. This word is used in the same sense by ecclesiastical writers. We can adduce the *Constitutiones Apostolicas*,\* where it is said,—*ὁ μέλλων κατηχεῖσθαι τὸν λόγον τῆς εὐσεβείας, παιδεύεσθω πρὸ τῆς βαπτίσματος τὴν περὶ τῆς ἀγεννήτης γυνῶσιν τὴν περὶ τῆς οὐκ ἐκ μονογενεῶς ἐπίγνωσιν τὴν περὶ τῆς ἁγίας πνεύματος πληροφορίαν*, *Let him who is to be initiated in the doctrine of piety, be led as by the hand, before his baptism to the knowledge of him who is not begotten, to the knowledge of the only begotten Son, and to a full perception of the Holy Spirit.* We find more testimony of the same kind, in the records of Ecclesiastical antiquity, concerning the persons taught, the subjects of instruction, and the catechesis itself of the ancient church. Whoever wishes to see a compendious view of these points, can consult J. C. Suicer,†

\* Libr. 8. cap. 39. tom. 1. patr. apostol. Cotellerii, p. 332.

† Thesaur. ecclesiast. tom. 2. p. 69.

J. Bingham,\* and also C. Salmasius,† and J. A. Fabricius.‡

### SECTION III.

As to the subject of our present consideration, there is no doubt, that catechetical instruction has in all ages been employed. For as the condition of children and of ignorant men, who cannot comprehend the more elevated parts of a science, does not admit of any other mode of instruction, it must always have been in this way that the knowledge and worship of God was transmitted from one generation to another. That it was used among the Hebrews, is evident from various passages in the Old Testament. When the Messiah appeared to Abraham (Gen. xviii. 19.), he made the following declaration:—**כִּי יִדְעֶתְיוּ לְמַעַן אֲשֶׁר יִצְוֶה אֶת־בְּנָיו וְאֶת־בֵּיתוֹ אַחֲרָיו וְשָׁמְרוּ דֶרֶךְ יְהוָה לַעֲשׂוֹת צְדָקָה וּמִשְׁפָּט לְמַעַן הֵבִיא יְהוָה עֲלֵי אֲבְרָהָם אֵת אֲשֶׁר־דִּבֶּר עֲלָיו** *For I know him that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.*

We know indeed that the word **צִוָּה** means *to give a command or precept*; but surely the very giving of a precept or command implies some previous instruction as to its nature. The addition however of the words **יִצְוֶה אֶת־בְּנָיו** *he will command his children*, leaves no doubt as to the meaning. Abraham therefore, instilled into his children from their infancy, the purest divine precepts, and

\* Orig. sive antiquit. ecclesiast. vol. 2. p. 51. and vol. 4. p. 1.

† In notis ad Sextum Empiricum, p. 285 and 339.

‡ De lingua Hellenistica, p. 103.

pointed out to them the only path in which those must walk who would secure the favour of God.

This he could do in no other way than by accommodating himself to their capacity, by teaching them at first the most simple truths, and afterwards as their minds became sufficiently mature, by enlarging and defining more fully and precisely. That Abraham will do this, God himself says that he certainly knows.

If we pass on from the Patriarchal to the Mosaic economy, we find many remarkable passages in proof of our position. In the first place, at the institution of the Paschal Lamb, as a memorial of deliverance from Egyptian bondage, Moses, after enumerating all the ceremonies which were, by Divine command, to be observed, adds these words.\*

*And it shall come to pass when your children shall say unto you, what mean ye by this service? That ye shall say, it is the sacrifice of the Lord's Passover, who passed over the houses of the Children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses. And the people bowed the head and worshipped.*

From these words it is evident that this excellent mode of instruction was commanded by God himself. The sacrifice here mentioned constituted a part and a very important part of the Jewish religion. The Jews were therefore required to explain it to their children, when they asked them its meaning; which proves, that the catechesis was not unknown among them; and the mention, in this passage, of questions and answers, gives us also some idea of the nature of the catechesis, which is best conducted in that way. Besides, the last words of verse 27, in the passage just cited, very clearly imply, that this requirement was submitted to, and sacredly observed by the Jews. For what else can be meant by their "*bowing the head,*" except an expression of their willingness to obey all the

\* See Ex. xii. 26, 27.

Divine requirements? Nor must it be supposed, that this was the only doctrine, which was taught the Jewish youth. For the mention of this evidently does not exclude others. And if we revert to the passage which we have just before quoted from Gen. xviii. 19. which from its connexion evidently relates to instruction in all parts of Divine service, we must be satisfied, that the whole system of sacred truth was explained in this simple manner to the Jewish children, both male and female. Moreover, in that passage, as elegant as it is explicit, commencing at Deut. vi. 2, Jehovah requires of infants as well as adults, that they should walk in the way of righteousness, and to enable them properly to do this, he adds (v. 6 and 7.)

וְהָיוּ הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר  
אָנֹכִי מְצַוֶּה הַיּוֹם עַל־לִבְךָ וְשִׁנְתָם לְבִנְיָךְ  
*And these words which I command thee this day. shall be in thine heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children.* The manner in which the Israelites were to explain to their children the Divine precepts is expressed by the verb *שָׁנַן* to sharpen or whet, which intimates, that they should teach them in such a way as their age and capacity required, and should add frequent and severe admonition, lest the inconsiderate youth should neglect or forget those instructions, that were designed for their benefit. How then would it be possible to prove more fully, that the mode of instructing the ignorant, which we denominate the catechesis, was in use among the Israelites? The same direction is repeated by Jehovah in the 20th verse of the same chapter. We might also adduce, on the subject of the Hebrew catechesis, various other passages, such as the following: Deut. xi. 19. Josh. iv. 6, 7, 22, and 24. 15. 1 Sam. i. 25. Psalms lxxviii. 4, 5. But we cannot give a particular exposition of these. See J. Hoornbeck,\* J. B. Carpzov,† and G. Langemack.‡

\* Miscellan. sacr. Libr. 1. Cap. 12. p. 327.

† Disputation. acad. p. 863]

‡ In histor. catechet, part 1. cap. 2. p. 13.

## SECTION IV.

Our blessed Saviour generally delivered his instructions by means of symbols and parables, which were in common use at that time. Sometimes, however, laying aside all figures, he stated in plain language the truths that were necessary to salvation. As those whom he taught, were commonly of the more ignorant class, and not fitted for the acroamatic method, he undoubtedly accommodated himself to their capacity, and employed that manner, which if not precisely catechetical, had however many of the properties of the catechesis. From the account given in Luke ii. 46, of Christ's sitting in the temple among the doctors, hearing them and asking them questions, some have concluded, that he occupied that situation among the catechumens, and that the questions and answers here referred to, were such as are used in the catechesis. But as the use of questions and answers is not confined to catechetical instruction, but may be admitted in the more advanced stages of Divine instruction, it is more probable that Christ disputed with the Jewish rulers about the more important parts of religious truth; especially as the Evangelist adds (v. 47), that *all who heard him were astonished at his wisdom and his answers*. This is also the opinion of J. F. Budaeus.\*

## SECTION V.

That the Apostles used the catechetical mode in instructing the more ignorant, is clearly proved by the testimony of Sacred Scripture. Paul writes to the Corinthians, *γάλα ἡμῶν ἐπότισα*—*I have fed you with milk*; which Clemens

\* Isag. ad theol. libr. 2. Cap. 1. § 4. p. 339.

Alexandrinus\* very properly explains, as referring to the catechesis. In the same manner also Cyril of Alexandria interprets the word γάλα. He sayst † γάλα ἐστὶ νηπιοπρεπῆς τροφή, ὁ τρυφερός καὶ ἀπλῆς τῆς κατηχήσεως λόγος—*Milk that is, the tender and simple language of catechetical instruction, is suitable nourishment for children.* So also Chrysostom calls γάλα—τὸν ταπεινὸν λόγον, διὰ τὸ τοῖς ἀφελεσέροισι ἀρμόζειν—*plain language, fit for the more ignorant.* See J. C. Suicer. ‡

Moreover, the sum of catechetical truth, as proposed by the Apostles, is stated Heb. vi. 1, and the Epistles of Paul to the Ephesians and Colossians were called by the ancients κατ' ἐξοχὴν—*catechetical.* Thus also saith the Author of the "Synopsis Scripturæ" § γράφει πρὸς αὐτὰς ταύτην τὴν ἐπιστολήν, ὡσπερ κατηχητικὴν. *He writes to them (the Ephesians) this Epistle as catechetical.* He gives the same opinion also concerning the epistle to the Colossians, as it is shown by J. C. Suicer. ||

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## SECTION VI.

Having therefore proved that the catechetical mode of instruction was used by the Apostles, we ought in the next place to explain the nature of this mode of instruction. In pursuance of this object, we must first consider the subjects which were presented in it, for preparing men for Christian communion, and for conducting them to eternal life. These we learn chiefly from the Epistle to the Hebrews. (vi. 1, 2.)—*Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfec-*

\* Lib. 1. pædag. c. 6. p. 119. edit. Potteri.

† Comm. in Jes. tom. 2. oper. p. 913.

‡ Thesaur. eccles. tom. 1. p. 721.

§ Which is commonly attributed to Athanasius, although some think that he was not the author.

|| As cited above 1. p. 1189.



tion; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith towards God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. If it be asked, by which of the Apostles these subjects of catechetical instruction were prescribed? We cannot answer the inquiry, without previously determining who was the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Concerning the author of this Epistle, there is a great difference of opinion among the learned. These various opinions are enumerated by I. A. Fabricius,\* I. G. Pritius,† and others. To none however can it more justly, or with a greater degree of probability be ascribed, than to Paul, whose claims as author have been maintained with a variety of arguments and testimony by I. H. Heidegger,‡ J. Lange,§ and especially by F. Spanheim.|| The arguments, by which this opinion is supported, are chiefly these. First, Peter (2 Epistle iii. 15.) appears to ascribe this Epistle to Paul. 2d, It is said (Heb. xiii. 24.) to have been written in Italy, where there was, at that time, no other person to whom it could so justly be attributed as to Paul. 3d, Its author asserts (x. 34.) that he wrote it *in bonds*; hence it is inferred that Paul wrote it, as it was his custom in his letters (Phil. i. 13.) to make mention of the bonds, with which he was confined at Rome. 4th, The author (xiii. 24.) mentions Timothy as the companion of his journeyings, who was confessedly a companion and fellow-labourer of Paul. 5th, It has been clearly shown by J. Lange,¶ that the whole argument, model, character, sentiments,

\* Bibliothec. Græc. lib. 4. cap. 5. § 159.

† Introduct. in lection. Nov. Testam cap. 4. p. 19.

‡ Enchirid. bibl. lib. 3. cap. 21. p. 609.

§ Comment. histor. hermeneut. de vita et epist. Apos. Pauli. part 1. Sect. 3. § 14. p. 156.

|| Libro de auctore epistolæ ad ebræos tom. 2. oper. p. 171.

¶ As cited above p. 157.

language and forms of address are very similar to the other epistles of this Apostle. Nor is there wanting testimony from ecclesiastical antiquity, to corroborate the foregoing arguments. For it was the opinion of the most distinguished ancient doctors, both of the Greek and Latin Church, as Justin, Clemens Alex., Epiphanius, Athanasius, Gregory Nazianzen, Cyril of Alex., Hieronymus, Ambrose, and Augustine, that this epistle was written by Paul. These arguments and authorities, when taken together; have so much weight that we must acknowledge it to be at least extremely probable, that the Apostle Paul wrote the epistle to the Hebrews. Hence then we conclude that Paul was the distinguished promoter of the catechetical mode of instruction.

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#### SECTION VII.

The author of the Epistle to the Heb. enumerates six subjects of catechetical instruction—1, Repentance; 2, Faith in Christ; 3, Baptism; 4, Laying on of hands, or the Church ministry; 5, The resurrection of the dead; 6, Eternal punishment. These six subjects or heads are connected with each other in the following manner. The two first (viz. repentance and faith) constitute the essential parts of true Christianity. Since no one can appropriate to himself the right and privilege of Christian communion, unless by regeneration, conversion, and repentance, he has been freed from, and entirely renounced all worldly desires; and having done this, has applied solely to Christ, as the Saviour of men, and laid hold of his merits with full confidence, and thus recovered the lost favour of God. The two following subjects (viz. baptism, and laying on of hands or the ministry of the church), relate to the means appointed by God for attaining the above end, by the use of which,

men may acquire faith, and thus become possessed of those graces which are essential to the character of a true Christian. The last two topics relate to the end or goal which is proposed to the followers and imitators of Christ—viz. eternal felicity. Before, however, they can attain to the full enjoyment of this, it is necessary for Christ, to recall the dead to life, and to institute the last judgment. Hence it is easy to see, why the Apostle subjoins to the four former subjects of catechetical instruction, two others—viz. the resurrection of the dead, and eternal punishment; and makes mention of those endless torments, which are opposed to the happiness of heaven.

It must not, however, be supposed, that the Apostles proposed to their catechumens no other subjects of sacred instruction, than those which have been enumerated from the Epistle to the Hebrews.

For it is evident both from the sacred Scriptures, and from the nature of saving knowledge, that they taught them all the other truths, which are essential to salvation. For the system of doctrine which is necessary for the attainment of faith and eternal salvation, has its several parts so closely connected together, that they can by no means be separated; and if any one article should be removed or destroyed, it would be impossible to sustain, or rightly to explain, the remainder. When, therefore, the Apostles gave precepts concerning repentance and faith in Christ, there is no doubt, but that they also delivered instructions concerning the law, concerning sin, concerning grace, and concerning Christ, in that way which the catechesis requires; and that they even delivered these instructions prior to those which relate to repentance and faith. When, moreover, they proposed the subject of eternal punishment, who can doubt, but that they, at the same time, showed, that eternal life may be hoped for by pious and holy men, and that in that

eternal life is implied the greatest felicity,—even the peace and joy arising from the presence of God himself.

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### SECTION VIII.

Having shown the connexion of the chief topicks of catechetical instruction, which are enumerated in the epistle to the Hebrews, we ought briefly to consider each of them by itself. The first topick is *μετανοία ἀπὸ νεκρῶν ἔργων* *repentance from dead works*; which very properly occupies the first place; as repentance is the way, by which we must return to God, and recover his favour. When the Apostles taught this doctrine, there is no doubt but that they clearly explained to their catechumens, the nature and several parts of repentance; and how true Christian repentance differs from that which was taught by men without Christianity.

The Apostles' doctrine of repentance, therefore, contained in it three principal points. The first referred to the true nature of repentance. True repentance requires an internal change of mind, by which a man passes from a state of death and wrath, to a state of spiritual life and grace. It is called in sacred Scripture both *μετανοία* and *μεταμέλεια*, the original difference between which words, is, that *μετανοία* signifies the act, by which a man perceives that he has erred, confesses it, and returns to a better mind; but *μεταμέλεια* implies the sorrow and anguish, which he experiences from a view of his evil actions. Nevertheless they are often used indiscriminately by the most approved writers, and even in the sacred Scriptures themselves.

As in repentance there is a change from one state to another, we ought to consider, both the state which the man leaves, and that to which he passes. To the former of these, the Apostle alludes, when he speaks of repentance

ἀπὸ νεκρῶν ἔργων *from dead works*. In various other passages of the sacred volume, repentance is connected with ἔργα *works*, to indicate, that he who would repent, must break off from evil practises—as in Rev. ii. 22. εἰν μὴ μετανοήσωσιν ἐκ τῶν ἔργων αὐτῶν—*except they repent of their deeds*; and in Heb. ix. 14. the term *dead works* is expressly applied in this sense. These works are called dead for these three reasons. 1. On account of the *subject*, or the man who performs them, who is dead in sins, Eph. ii. 1. v. 14. Col. ii. 13., who is destitute of that life which is from God Eph. iv. 18., who is the son of Adam, from whom natural and spiritual death was communicated to all his posterity, and to the whole race of mankind, Rom. v. 12. As therefore a dead man cannot put forth any of the actions of living beings, but is in darkness, and from his decaying carcase sends forth a noisome smell; so also he, who is spiritually dead, produces only dead works, such as, *darkness*. Eph. v. 8. 11. Rom. xiii. 12. *corruption*, Eph. iv. 29. and *filthiness*, Psalms, xiv. 3.

2. These works are called dead, on account of the *effect*; as the actions of those, who are not born again by the Holy Spirit, produce death, which every sin bringeth forth. Jac. i. 15. In the same sense also God threatened death to our first parents;—and death is called the *end of sin*, Rom. vi. 21., and the *wages* or reward due to it, v. 23. 3. They are called dead on account of the *acts* themselves, which are dead, as they are destitute of that goodness which it ought to possess, and, as it were, of that moral life, the love of God and of our neighbour, which is the fulfilling of the Law. Rom. xiii. 10. This subject has been more fully treated by I. Alting,\* Casp. Streso,† Io. Brown,‡ and S. Schmidt.§

\* Heptad. dissertat. academic. p. 5.

† Comm. in epist. ad ebr. p. 369.

‡ Comment. in epist. ad ebr. p. 314.

§ Comm. in epist. ad ebr. p. 588.

As therefore it was necessary, for the penitent to abstain from these dead works, the Apostle, without doubt, taught his catechumens, how many and what were the parts of repentance. The illustration of these constituted the *second* general division of this doctrine. By some, repentance is divided into three parts, viz. confession of sin ; contrition on account of it ; and faith in Christ ; by others, into two, viz. contrition and faith. These however, do not differ in reality. For those who admit only two parts, contrition and faith, either suppose confession of sin, without which there can be no true contrition ; or they include it in contrition.

In this passage, however, the Apostle so uses the term repentance as to exclude faith in Christ, inasmuch as he connects repentance from dead works with faith, and therefore by the former only implies contrition with confession of sin ; as the word occurs in the same sense, Mark i. 15. when the Saviour himself says,—*repent ye and believe the Gospel.*

We come now to the *third* general division. For when the Apostles explained to their adult catechumens the nature of true repentance, they would find it necessary to oppose those errors with which the doctrine of repentance, and especially of contrition, was corrupted, both among the Jews and Pagans.

For as to the Jews, God had indeed clearly explained to them in the Old Testament the true method of justification, and the way of obtaining it. But this truth, the Jewish rulers, especially the Pharisees, had greatly corrupted. Setting out with the opinion, that justification and eternal salvation was to be obtained by a careful observance of the Divine commands, they not only believed, that human nature was not naturally so depraved, but that it could fulfil the Divine Law ; but also, in order to defend their own weakness, and to remove any scruples which might arise, they

abandoned the true spiritual meaning of the Divine Law, and understood it as referring only to external actions; which false interpretation of the Law, originating principally with the Pharisees, the Saviour himself reprov'd and corrected, Mat. v. 20. &c. Entertaining such sentiments, they could not fully perceive the number and greatness of their sins, nor could they exercise in view of them sorrow and anxiety of mind. It is easy to determine therefore, what ideas they must have had of the nature of repentance, and especially of contrition. For a more full illustration of this subject, consult Herman Witsius,\* and Jo. Franc. Buddaeus.†

The same thing may be said of the Pagans, that they also were much in error respecting the true nature of repentance. We admit, that the ancient masters of wisdom, Pythagoras, Plato, Zeno, and their followers, gave precepts concerning the improvement of the mind, and recommended helps for that object. Nor can it be denied, that their writings, especially those of Seneca and Epictetus, contain sentiments concerning the improvement of the human mind so splendid, that one who should not nicely distinguish, might easily persuade himself, that he could discover in them traces of Divine and Christian truth. But such sentiments, although very splendid when expressed in their elegant language, are yet founded on principles essentially erroneous, as, concerning the soul of man, that it is a particle of the Divine essence; concerning the origin and seat of evil, that it is only in matter and in the body; and concerning a philosophical death.

\* *Miscell. sacra. part. 2. exercit. 21. § 4. p. 207.*

† *iscell. s. acra. part. 2. p. 239.*

## SECTION IX.

The second general subject of catechetical instruction instituted by the Apostle, is *πίστις ἐπὶ τὸν Θεὸν* *faith towards God*, and is intimately connected with the first.

For after the Apostle had taught the catechumens concerning contrition for sin; he very properly subjoined the doctrine of faith towards God; that he might at the same time show, how the mind, broken down with sorrow and anxiety, might again be raised up, and comforted; and might conceive the hope of recovering the favour of God and eternal salvation. But as to the meaning of the Apostle in the phrase *πίστιν ἐπὶ τὸν Θεόν*, there is a great difference of opinion among interpreters.

Some explain it as referring to the profession of faith made in baptism; others, however, and with more reason, understand by it, justifying faith itself. For, first, we see no necessity of departing from the proper signification of the term; then, in the next place, the connexion of the discourse requires this interpretation: as he had before spoken of repentance or contrition, he now adds faith, in the proper order, and with the design of proposing to his catechumens, in these two first subjects of repentance and faith, the entire doctrine of conversion. He requires not simply faith, but *faith towards God*. By God he principally means Christ, the *blessed* God, Rom. ix. 5., the *great* God, Titus ii. 13., the *true* God, 1 John v. 20., the chief and only object of faith; not however to the exclusion of the other persons of the Divine Essence—the Father and the Holy Spirit. For the Son and the Father are one, John x. 30. What things the Father does, the Son also does, John v. 29. He who knows the Son, knows also the Father, John ii. 23. He that believeth on the Father, believeth on the Son, John xii. 44, xiv. 1. Nor is it without reason, that the Apostle uses the preposition *ἐπὶ*, which



has here a peculiarly strong meaning. For he proposes *πίστιν ἐπὶ τῷ θεῷ upon God*—that faith, by which a man places all his confidence in God alone, so that he who hath this faith, seeks for life, happiness, and salvation, in no other but God, that is Christ, his own Saviour.

This faith in Christ, the Apostle proposes to his catechumens after repentance from dead works, so that having left the state of death, they may see the path, which leads to life. For the principle of spiritual life is faith itself; and that in a three-fold manner; first, on account of the essential acts, as assent, desire, apprehension, and confidence, in the exercise of which true faith is always alive. 2dly, On account of the object which it apprehends, that is, Jesus Christ, who being united to believers by faith, gives them spiritual strength, not only when he acts in common with the Father and the Holy Spirit, but especially when he confers upon them this peculiar favour, that they, as members of his mystical body, may receive from him, as from their head, all spiritual influences. Eph. i. 23 and iv. 15. Col. ii. 19. 3dly, On account of its effect, which is immediately love, as Paul says, *faith worketh by love*, Gal. v. 6.; but mediately other good works, which flow from love, as from a fountain.

When the Apostles explained to their catechumens the nature of this faith, they must have found it necessary at the same time, to touch upon other doctrines of the Christian system, without which, this could not clearly be understood, as for instance, the doctrine concerning grace, concerning Christ, concerning holiness and good works. They, however, chose only such topics, as the state and condition of the pupils required, and explained them in the most simple manner. But this topic, this fundamental truth of the Christian religion, concerning an evangelical righteousness, to be obtained by faith in Christ, was peculiarly necessary to the Jewish catechumens, as they were labouring under a very serious error concerning a legal righteousness, to be obtained by good works.

## SECTION. X.

The third subject of the catechetical system relates to the doctrine of baptism, or, in the words of the Apostle in his epistle to the Hebrews, βαπτισμῶν διδαχὴν. As to what the Apostle intended by the use of the plural number in the word βαπτισμῶν, interpreters greatly differ. Some suppose it was used on account of the variety and diversity of men who are baptized, so that, although the rite of baptism is in itself one, yet it may be spoken of as many, as it is received by many individuals. This is the opinion of G. J. Vossius, who says,\* “The word baptisms is used, not because there are many, but because of the baptism of many persons; for the rite is one in kind, but the occasions of administering it, many in number.” But this reason is not satisfactory, as it is repugnant to the nature and use of the language.

Jacob Alting,† and W. Cave,‡ incline to the opinion, that the baptisms here spoken of, ought to be understood of Jewish and of Christian baptism. Others think, that the plural number was used on account of the different baptisms of John and of Jesus Christ, as there has been a dispute among Christians, in what they agree, and in what they differ. To this opinion A. Van Dale,§ appears to lean, but those who will examine the subject carefully, will perceive that it is not sound or probable. For why is not the plural number used in other passages of Scripture, when both the baptisms of John and of Christ are mentioned? Indeed, the baptisms of John and of Christ were not different as to their nature; and although some may have imagined such a difference, it cannot be believed, that the

\* De baptism. disput. 8. § 12. tom. 6. oper. p. 280.

† Dissert. acad. heptad. p. 12.

‡ Antiquit. apost. p. 131.

§ Histor. baptismor. p. 369.

Holy Spirit would accommodate himself to their opinion in his style of speaking. Jo. Gerhård and others suppose that the matter can be decided in few words, by saying, that the number of the word has in some way been changed ; which opinion is neither inconsistent with the sense of the discourse or the nature of language, and unless another should appear more probable, ought to be admitted. Some refer the use of the plural number to the custom of triple immersion ; others to external and internal baptism, as Jo. Brown expresses himself,\* “ The baptisms of the New Testament are of two kinds, external and internal. The former is an outward washing ; the latter an inward purification. The former is the sacrament and sign ; the latter the thing signified. The former is administered by men, the ministers of the church ; the latter by Christ himself through the agency of the Holy Spirit.” By βαπτισμῶν διδαχὴν, some understand the instruction usually delivered to the candidates for baptism—e. g. Hugo Grotius,† Paullus Colomesius,‡ and F. Spanheim,§ which latter adds—“ this was indeed the common practice of the Apostles : they baptized ; they layed on hands ; but they previously gave instruction concerning faith, repentance, resurrection and judgment, which are the subjects enumerated by our author. It was also necessary for those about to be initiated, to be instructed respecting the nature of those rites, βαπτισμῶν, ἐπιθέσεως χειρῶν, which were usually administered to such.” But as neither of the former interpretations appears probable, we incline to the opinion of those who suppose, that the Apostle, in the use of the plural number, had reference to the practice of the Church formed out of the Hebrew nation ; in which, besides the baptism, which is a

\* Comra. in epist. ad Ebr. p. 317.

† Adnot. ad Matt. xxviii. 19. tom. 2. oper. theol. p. 227.

‡ Observat. sacr. p. 167.

§ De auctor. epist. ad Ebr. part 3. cap. 6. § 5. tom. 2. oper. p. 263.

sacrament of the New Testament, the various washings of the Old Testament were used, and, that the peace of the Christian Church might not be disturbed, were permitted, as ceremonies indifferent in themselves.

But that their catechumens might understand the difference between the washings and baptisms of the Jews, and Christian baptism, the Apostle introduced the doctrine of baptisms among the subjects of catechetical instruction. But why do I enlarge? However the term *baptisms* may be explained, it is very evident from this passage that the Apostles instructed their catechumens concerning Christian baptism. This is denied by Faustus Socinus: he even undertakes from the very words in question, to derive an argument against water-baptism\*—“For the fourth testimony,” says he, “we will produce what is written in the beginning of the sixth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, where the rudiments of Christian instruction are enumerated, and yet water-baptism is not mentioned among them, as has been already shown, chap. xi. For if water-baptism was to be received by all, who wished to be called Christians, so that no one could be called a Christian, before he had been baptized with water; then surely water-baptism would have been not only a rudiment of Christian instruction, but one of the chief rudiments.” But these assertions are utterly without foundation. Who can believe, that the Apostle made no mention of water-baptism, that sacrament appointed by God in the New Testament, as a means of faith and eternal salvation, when he expressly enumerates *διδασχὴν βαπτισμῶν* among the catechetical subjects? That water-baptism is meant by these words, can be easily gathered from the fact, that in other passages of Scripture, baptism is evidently spoken of, as of Divine authority, and that the doctrine relating to it, is treated as of the highest importance, and is therefore classed among the fundamental

\* Disput. de baptism. aquæ cap. 16. tom. 1. oper. p. 735

doctrines of the Christian religion, which the Apostle designed here to enumerate. The nature, therefore, of baptism required that the doctrine relating to it, should be unfolded to the catechumens, and that its divine origin, necessity, nature and efficacy should be explained; the heads of which doctrine, the Apostles undoubtedly delivered to their hearers, in the simple manner, which was peculiar to the catechesis. That these Gospel truths might be fully and distinctly understood by the catechumens, it was necessary to show them, wherein the baptism of Christ differed from the washings or baptisms of the Jews; and hence the Apostle made mention not of baptism, which is one, Eph. iv. 5. but of baptisms, βαπτισμῶν, chiefly because the Hebrews, those especially who had adopted the opinions and customs of the Pharisees, were still addicted to many washings, although they had embraced the Christian religion. In the time of Tertulhan, there were some who were addicted to the same superstitious practice.\* “But why,” says he, “do they deliver their discourse with washed hands, indeed, but with an unclean spirit? For their hands themselves require a spiritual cleansing, from falsehood, murder, witchcraft, idolatry, and other stains, which being conceived in the spirit defile the works of the hands. This is the true cleansing, and not that which many superstitiously perform, washing the whole body before every prayer.”

This topick of baptism, the Apostle, in proper order, subjoins to the two former topics of repentance from dead works and faith in Christ. For the Hebrew catechumens, for whom these catechetical doctrines were principally designed, were adults. In them, therefore, repentance and conversion were antecedent to baptism, and baptism was administered to them as a means of *strengthening* that faith, which, by means of the Divine word, they ought already

\* De oratione cap. 11.

to have received. Hence John baptized only those, who confessed their sins. Mat. iii. 2. Hence also Peter said, *Repent ye and be baptized, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.* Acts ii. 38. al-o Acts viii. 36, 37. If it be asked, whether the Apostles in discoursing concerning baptism, explained at the same time the Holy Supper ; we answer, that although this is not expressly asserted, nevertheless it appears probable, inasmuch as their adult catechumens ought to be instructed as well in relation to the Holy Supper, as a confirming sacrament, as in relation to baptism.

As it is observed also by Abraham Calovius,\* that since the adults were to be instructed concerning baptism, as a sacrament of regeneration and renovation, the kindred doctrine of the eucharist, as a sacrament of confirmation, was not to be omitted.

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## SECTION XI.

The fourth general head is the doctrine of the *laying on of hands*. There is here also a great difference of opinion among interpreters, as to the meaning of this phrase, *the laying on of hands*. The various explanations of it have been enumerated by A. Calovius, S. Schmidt, † and J. Alting. § It appears both from sacred and ecclesiastical writers, that the ceremonies of the imposition of hands among the ancients were of various kinds. Of those used in the primitive church, F. Spanheim, || enumerates

\* System. loc. theol tom. 2. p. 5.

† Apodix. artic. fidei p. 22.

‡ Comm. in epist. ad Ebr. p. 591.

§ Acad. dissert. heptad. p. 17.

|| Diatrib de impos. annum tom. 2. oper. p. 371.

seven kinds. He shows that this χειροθεσίαν *laying on of hands*, was administered to persons lately baptized; to new converts, who had not yet approached the sacred font; to the sick: to penitents; to hereticks, who returned to the Christian Church; to newly married persons when the priests gave them the benediction; and to those about to be ordained to the ecclesiastical office. B. Von Sanden,\* enumerates other occasions, of the use of this ceremony, and says, that the χειροθεσίαν was used as a sign of silence, or of a feigned cause; it was used also in contracting matrimony; in the solemn administration of an oath; in sacrifices; in condemning criminals to death; in the case of persons lately baptized; in conferring benedictions upon others; in healing the sick, and recalling the dead to life; and in ordaining priests. Consult also Jo. Caspar. Suicer,† and C. Du Fresne.‡

It is most probable, that the ἐπιθέσις χειρῶν, which the Apostle in this place mentions, refers to the ordination of the church ministry;§ since it is evident, as we learn from 1 Tim. iv. 14. and v. 22. and 2 Tim. i. 6. that the sacred office was solemnly conferred by the *laying on of hands*. Hence the phrase *laying on of hands* is here used for the ordination, or the constitution itself of the church ministry, as in this sense the term is elsewhere employed. The Apostle Paul himself in those passages just quoted, uses the term to denote the constitution of the church ministry; and it occurs also in the same signification among ecclesiastical writers. Theodoret says “ἐξετάζειν γὰρ πρότερον χερὶ τῆ χειροτονουμένου τὸν βίον εἰδ’ ἔτω καλεῖν ἐπ’ αὐτὸν τὴν χάριν τῆ πνεύματος — *For we ought first to examine the life of the person to be ordained, and then to supplicate upon*

\* Dissert. 1. de χειροθεσία. sect. 1.

† Thesaur. eccles. tom. 2. p. 1516.

‡ Gloss. græc. ling. tom. 2. p. 1647.

§ 1 Tim. v. 22.

*him the grace of the Spirit.*" Also Optatus Milevitanus.\* "Donatus has confessed that he has rebaptized and laid hands upon lapsed bishops, which is contrary to the rules of the church." The word χειροτονεῖν also sometimes means to ordain, or to consecrate, and thus is used for an initiation into the sacred office, and an inauguration, of which many examples are adduced by Jo. Caspar Suicer.†

The custom of laying hands upon a person in conferring on him any office, is itself a very ancient one. That it was used among the Hebrews is evident from Num. xxxvii. 18, 23. and Deut. xxiv. 9. It is not therefore wonderful, that the Apostles and ancient Christians retained the same custom, in ordaining to the sacred office. This doctrine concerning the church ministry, the Apostles very properly delivered to their catechumens. For they ought to understand the Divine institution, necessity, nature, and dignity of the church ministry, not only that they might, through the studies and labours of these ministers, make greater progress in knowledge and holiness, by hearing their sacred discourses and interpretations of the Divine will, but also that they might render those duties which they owed them. Especially in the time of the primitive Church, persons lately baptized were to be admonished, not immediately to enter upon the ecclesiastical office, the desire of which at that time was so common, that all wished to be teachers. Jac. iii. 1. ; and Paul found it necessary, 1 Tim. iii. 6., to charge Timothy, to exclude νεόφυτον *a novice*. The Jewish catechumens were also especially to be taught, to turn their attention to the doctrine of Christ and its teachers, and no longer to seek instruction from those Mosaic teachers who required obedience to old ceremonies. For this reason the Apostle very earnestly recommended to the Hebrews, the

\* Lib. 1. de schis. Donat.

† Thesaur. Eccles. tom. 2. p. 1514.



instruction of Christ, Heb. xii. 25. &c., and of those Apostles and other teachers through whom Christ spake. Heb. ii. 1. and xiii. 7, 17.

In the enumeration of these heads of instruction in the Epistle to the Hebrews, the doctrine of the church ministry very properly succeeds that of baptism. For those who were baptized ought next to apply to the servants of God, so that hearing them, they might make progress in saving knowledge, might receive from them the remission of sins, and the sacrament of the Holy Supper, and might hence obtain the necessary helps, for preserving and confirming their faith in Jesus Christ.

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## SECTION XII.

The fifth subject of catechetical instruction is *the resurrection of the dead*, ἀναστάσις νεκρῶν. That by this is to be understood the resurrection of the *bodies* of the dead, is evident from the very nature of the case. The Apostle included this doctrine among the subjects of catechetical instruction, not only because the knowledge of this resurrection, in itself considered, is very necessary to Christians; but especially because the condition of the Hebrew catechumens peculiarly required it. For although God has revealed in the Old Testament the truth concerning the resurrection of the dead, as is evident from Job xix. 25, 26., Psalms xviii. 15., Deut. xii. 2., and other passages; nevertheless in the New Testament the Divine Oracles are much more explicit and clear, both concerning the resurrection, and concerning the life to be enjoyed after it, in heaven, with Christ sitting at the right hand of the Father, and in the society of Angels and of heavenly beings. Wherefore Louis Capell, after making such observa-

tions, adds,\* “ For what have Ezekiel and Daniel communicated concerning the resurrection of the dead (although of all the Prophets, these have written the most clearly on that subject) compared with those things, which are stated so explicitly and fully by Christ throughout the whole Gospel concerning a future life, and a happy resurrection ; by the Apostle Paul in 1. Cor. xv., and in the Epistle to the Thessalonians, concerning the last judgment ; and finally, by John in the Apocalypse concerning the Heavenly Jerusalem, and the glorious state of the faithful in it.”

We may add, that many at that time opposed this blessed truth, against whose frauds and malice the catechumens were to be strengthened, lest they should forsake the truth and fall into error. The Pagans were either ignorant of the resurrection of the dead, or did not believe it : wherefore when Paul spoke to the Athenians about the resurrection of the dead, some attempted to ridicule his doctrine. Among the Jews were the Sadducees, who denied it, Acts xxiii. 8. ; some also among the Christians in the time of the Apostles were in the same error, as Paul. 2 Tim. ii. 17, 18., expressly says of Hymeneus and Philetus, and of some in the church of Corinth, 1 Cor. xv. 12. Hence Augustine very justly remarked,† “ In no article is the Christian faith so much opposed as in the resurrection of the body.”

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### SECTION XIII.

The sixth and last subject, is that of *eternal punishment*. The knowledge of this also is necessary to Christians. For we ought to be acquainted not only with the mercy of God,

\* Dissert. in comm. et not. crit. in vetus Testamentum; p. 221.  
In Psalm. 88. tom. 4. oper. p. 713.

but also with his justice ; for both of which there is the same reason. But the most remarkable instance of his justice is in those eternal torments which are to be inflicted on the wicked. Nor can there be a stronger motive to excite men to enter upon and to persevere in a life of faith and holiness, than that derived from the last judgment, and eternal damnation. Wherefore John the Baptist, before commencing his exhortation, attempted to alarm the fears of his hearers by discoursing on this subject, Mat. iii. 7. ; Christ used the same motive, Mat. xiii. 33. ; and Paul, before Felix and his wife Drusilla, so stated the doctrine of faith in Christ, that he might at the same time treat of righteousness, of temperance, and (as his most powerful motive) of a judgment to come. Acts xxiv. 24, 25

Besides, there was a peculiar reason, why this doctrine should be proposed to the Hebrew catechumens. For although they could learn from the Old Testament that a final judgment was to be expected, and that in it eternal punishment would be awarded to the wicked, yet there were some things clearly revealed in the New Testament, of which they were yet ignorant, and which it was necessary for them to know. Thus they were to be made acquainted with the Judge, who is Jesus of Nazareth. John v. 27., Acts x. 42., and xvii. 31., and 2 Cor. v. 10. ; and with the rule, which is the Gospel. Rom. ii. 16.

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#### SECTION XIV.

These are the subjects of catechetical instruction, which were proposed by the Apostles to their catechumens, as fundamental truths, or principles of saving knowledge, as they are called in the Epistle to the Hebrews. There are various metaphorical names in the sacred writings, by

which these heads of catechetical instruction are called In Heb. v. 12. they are called *τα στοιχεῖα τῆς ἀρχῆς τῶν λογίων* τὰ δεξ *the elements of the beginning of the oracles of God*, by a figure of speech, taken from the elements of letters. As therefore these literal elements which as they are necessary for every discourse and are indeed its foundation ; so also the catechetical subjects are the elements necessary for the knowledge of religion, and are for that reason prepared, that with them the acquisition of this knowledge may commence. Thus the word *στοιχεῖα* is interpreted by the ancient doctors of the Church to mean the fundamental truths of the Christian religion, which children and other catechumens were required to learn. Says Theodoret \**στοιχεῖα τῆς ἀρχῆς τῶν λογίων τῶν δεξ, τὰς ταπεινοτέρους περὶ τῶν χριστῶν λόγων ἐκάλεσε. Τοῖς γὰρ μηδέπω τὴν πίσιν ἐσχηκόσι τελείαν, τὰ περὶ τῆς ἀνθρωπότητος προσέφερον μόνα τῆς ἀληθείας οἱ κήρυκες, “ The more simple discourses concerning Christ, he called first principles of the oracles of God. For to those, who had not yet perfect faith, the preachers of truth only explained those things pertaining to humanity.”* Also Chrysostom †*ἐνταυθα στοιχεῖα ἀρχῆς τὴν ἀνθρωπότητά φησιν· ὡσπερ γὰρ ἐπὶ τῶν ἕξωθεν γραμματῶν πρῶτον τὰ στοιχεῖα δεῖ μαθεῖν, ἔτω καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν θεῶν λογίων πρῶτον περὶ τῆς ἀνθρωπότητος ἔδει διδασκέσθαι. In this place he calls humanity, first principles. For as in mere human learning, the elements ought first to be learnt ; so also out of the oracles of God, they ought first to be instructed concerning humanity* Paul calls the catechetical doctrines *γάλα milk*, 1 Cor. iii. 2. Heb. v. 12., concerning which word, we have observed before, that the doctors of the ancient Church understood it to mean the catechetical doctrine. The meaning of this metaphor may be easily perceived. For the Apostle compares the catechumens with new-born infants, whose first and most simple nourish-

\* On this passage of the Apostle p. 417.

† Homil. 8. in Epist. ad Ebr. p. 476.

ment is milk ; and as the word of God, the blessed truth of the Gospel, is the spiritual nourishment of the soul, it is very proper to select for the catechumens that portion and kind of this spiritual food, which is adapted to their nature, and so to prepare it, that they may enjoy it, and be nourished by it. Hence this metaphorical manner of speaking has reference not only to the subjects of instruction, but also to the simple or catechetical manner of delivering them.

To this milk the Apostle opposes *ερεάν τροφήν strong meat* Heb. v. 14., and *βρωμα*, 1 Cor. iii. 2., *solid food*, fit for the stomach of a hearty man, meaning by it the more abstract and sublime doctrines of the Christian religion, so presented, as to be above the capacity of babes in Christ.

So also the word *θεμέλιον*, which is used, Heb. vi. 1. to denote the heads of catechetical doctrine, has reference to an edifice, in which the foundation is rough indeed, but is nevertheless the chief and most necessary part, so that upon it the whole building rests, and must certainly fall if it be removed ; which also may be said of the chief topicks of catechetical instruction. For they constitute the foundation both of the knowledge and practice of religion, and are so necessary that without them nothing can be rightly conceived, understood, decided, or executed. Besides these metaphorical names of the catechetical doctrines, there is that peculiar appellation, in Heb. vi. 1., *ὁ τῆς ἀρχῆς τῶν χειρῶν λόγος*, where *ἀρχή* refers to the topicks, in which instruction is to be commenced, and *λόγος* to the manner of treating or proposing these heads of Christian doctrine or of the doctrine *περὶ τῶν χειρῶν*. These first principles, therefore, are nothing else than the topicks of catechetical instruction.

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## SECTION XV.

Having said thus much of the catechetical doctrines, we will now consider the catechumens themselves, whose

minds were imbued in this simple manner with the principles of the Christian religion. These were indeed adults in age; but in faith and in saving knowledge, they were yet babes, with all the weakness of infancy. Thus they are denominated in the Scriptures themselves. The Apostle, Heb. v. 13, 14. divides Christians into two classes; one he calls *νηπίους*, *babes using milk*; the other *τελείους*, *full grown men*, requiring solid food: *every one*, says he, *that useth milk, is unskilful in the word of righteousness*: *νήπιος γὰρ ἐστὶ* *for he is a babe*: *τελειῶν δὲ ἐστὶν ἡ ἐσθρα τροφή*, *but strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age*. These also are the babes, of whom the Apostle speaks, 1 Cor. iii. 1., *And I brethren, could not speak unto you, as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ*. Of these there were two classes. Some were entirely ignorant of the word of righteousness, so as not even to have imbibed the milk or the first principles of saving faith. Others were called babes, in comparison with those who were adults in knowledge; these although they had learnt the fundamental truths of the Christian religion, had nevertheless not yet advanced as far in attainments as those of full age. This distinction also is recognised in the Epistle to the Hebrews. For the Apostle says, that the Hebrews are *babes* *νηπίους*, *who yet have need of milk*; and not of strong meat, v. 12. Nevertheless he adds, vi. 1., *therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ*, *ἐπὶ τὴν τελειότητα φερώμεθα*, *let us go on unto perfection*; and to infants he opposes, v. 14., *τελείους* *those of full age*. Hence it may be inferred, that the Hebrews were not wholly unskilful in the word of righteousness; but had already taken the incipient steps in their progress towards perfection.

## SECTION XVI.

As to the particular nations, to which the catechumens belonged, we find the Corinthians and Hebrews especially mentioned in the New Testament; whence it is manifest that both Pagans and Jews were instructed according to this mode. Of the Corinthians, Paul says, (1 Cor. iii. 2.) γάλα ἐπότισα καὶ ἔβρωμα, *I have fed you with milk, and not with meat.* Let us then inquire, when and how the Apostle had fed the Corinthians with milk. It appears, from Acts xviii. that Paul, having left Athens, came to Corinth in the fifty-second year after the birth of our Saviour. Corinth was a large, rich, and gay city, distinguished as the residence of the most ingenious artists, denominated by Cicero the light of all Greece, and highly extolled in the writings of Strabo and others. But as it abounded in wealth, it was also notorious for luxury, sensuality and pride, so that its vices are severely censured by the Apostle throughout the whole of his first Epistle to the Corinthians, Luke simply asserts in general, that Paul taught the Corinthians the word of God. Acts xviii. 11. The Apostle himself however, more fully describes the manner in which he discharged the duties of his sacred office, declaring among other things (1 Cor. 3.) that he had planted the Corinthian church; that he, as a wise master-builder, had laid the foundation, even Jesus Christ, than which no man can lay any other; adding also (iv. 17.) that he had sent Timothy to Corinth for the purpose of preaching the Gospel; and Luke asserts, Acts xviii. 5. that Timothy was associated with Paul in founding this church. By means of these sacred ministrations of the Apostle, the Corinthians were "*enriched in all utterance and knowledge,*" which divine riches he himself speaks of, 1 Cor. i. 4.; and as Paul continued among them for the space of one year and

six months, Acts xviii. 11., they had opportunity during this time of making very considerable attainments : although the longer the time, which the Apostle spent in organizing this church, the more wonderful is it, that the Corinthians had made so little progress in the knowledge of the Christian religion, and that they required still to be fed with milk and not with solid food. For a more particular account of Paul's labours at Corinth, consult Herman Witsius,\* J. Lange,† and other writers of his life.

Among the catechumens of whom we are now speaking, besides the Corinthians, were the Hebrews, as is evident from the Epistle to them. v. 12. &c., and vi. 1, 2. These were of the Hebrew nation, and had formerly been of the Jewish religion; some of whom were scattered abroad among other nations; but the greater part resided in Judea.

There is, indeed, a difference of opinion among interpreters, as to the particular class of Hebrews, to whom that remarkable Epistle in the sacred volume was sent; some supposing that it was written to the converted Jews who dwelt in Judea, alone; others, that the Apostle intended to write not only to the Hebrews in Judea, but to any others, who were dispersed abroad. These two opinions, however, can be easily reconciled; for we suppose, that this Epistle was sent primarily and immediately to those Jews who dwelt in Judea, and afterwards, from them to those also who were scattered abroad. Hence also it is extremely probable, that those were the same Hebrews, to whom Peter wrote both his Epistles, and whom he salutes as strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. 1 Pet. i. 1. For

\* Meletemat. Leidens. p. 89.

† Commentat. Historico. Hermeneutica de vita et epist. apostol. Pauli p. 39.



that Hebrews are to be understood by those, whom the Apostle Peter addresses, has been clearly shown by F. Spanheim.\* These Hebrews ought by this time to have been teachers; nevertheless they still required milk and not strong meat; and had need, as the Apostle says, v. 12. to be taught again, the first principles of the oracles of God.

As from their earliest infancy they had been accustomed to the rites and ceremonies of the Levitical worship, and knew that this worship was instituted by God himself, and had been confirmed by Divine miracles and judgments; these early impressions and habits, and especially their opinion of the eternity and immutability of the law of God given by Moses, exerted so strong an influence over their minds, that they rejected the liberty of the Gospel, offered to them in Christ, fearing even a lawful enjoyment of it.

For this reason, in their knowledge of the Christian system, they had not advanced beyond its first principles, although from their opportunity and their mode of instruction they ought to have made much greater progress. As they were therefore in that state in which they required milk, the Apostle could have repeated and unfolded anew the first principles of the Divine oracles, but as these had been already inculcated, and as the Apostle wished to direct their attention to the sublime and necessary doctrine of the dignity of Christ's Priesthood, and its superiority over that of Aaron, he thought it advisable, only to enumerate the heads of these catechetical doctrines, and to leave the full investigation of them to their own efforts; at the same time, however, preparing the way for more perfect attainments in saving knowledge. Thus these catechumens also were adult converts, but as to the strength of spiritual life they were yet feeble infants, as is evident from many passages of this Epistle, (especially ii. 3., v. 12., vi.

\* De auctore epist. ad Ebr. part 1. cap. 2. tom. 2. oper. p. 176.

1., x. 25, 32, 33, 34). The Apostle preferred to call them Hebrews rather than Jews, because the name of Hebrews was honourable among believers. 2-Cor xi. 22., Acts vi. 1., Phil. iii. 12. At what time the Hebrews became catechumens, having need of milk, must be determined from the date of the Epistle written to them; about which there is a great difference of opinion among learned men. It is supposed, by Baronius, to have been written A. D. 60; by Blondel, 61; by Usher, 64; by Scaliger, 58. See F. Spanheim,\* and Jo. Mill.†

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### SECTION. XVII.

Among these catechumens were included Theophilus and Apollos. Concerning Theophilus, there is a considerable dispute among learned men; whether the name is proper or common? And if proper, what was the character and religion of the man? which points have been fully discussed by J. G. Stoltz,\* G. Schelwig,† C. A. Heumann, T. Hase, and J. Hase‡. We agree in opinion with those who suppose Theophilus to be a proper name, for the following reasons. Luke in the beginning of his Gospel, not only addresses Theophilus, as a man well known to himself, with whom he had previously conversed on the subject of Christianity, and whom he was now about attempting to build up in evangelical truth; but he also applies to him the honourable epithet *κατ' ἄξια*, which implies official dignity, and is the same as *optimi*, being a title usually confer-

\* De auctor. epist. ad Ebr part 2. cap. 4. tom. 2. oper. p. 226.

† Prolegom. Novi Testamenti p. 10.

\* Vindic. Theophili evangelici, Virtemberg. MDCXCIII.

† Schediasmat. literar. de Theophilo, cui Lucas evangelium et acta inscripsit edan MDCXXI.

‡ Bibliotheca Bremens. class IV. 483. 506. 1049. p. 298.

red by public authority on men of distinction. Thus Paul, who cannot be suspected of flattery, salutes Festus, the Roman Governor as *κρείτιστον most noble* (Acts xxiv. 3); and the letter, which Lysias sent to Felix, has this inscription *Κλαύδιον τῷ Λυσίας τῷ κρείτιστῳ ἡγεμόνι Φήλικι χαίρειν—Claud us Lysius unto the most excellent governor Felix. greeti ng* (Acts xxiii. 26). We might add also, that at that time, the name Theophilus was in very common use as a proper name. This point then being established, it is evident that this Theophilus was one of the catechumens, which we infer from the words of Luke *ἵνα ἐπιγνώσῃς περὶ ὧν κατηχήθης λόγων τὴν ἀσφάλειαν—That thou mightest know the certainty of those things in which thou hast been instructed* (i. 4). For here the term *κατηχήθης* is actually expressed, nor is the verb *κατήχεῖν* to be understood of the simple hearing of any uncertain rumour, as some suppose. For it is evident from various passages of Scripture, that in its common acceptation it implies elementary instruction; and that such is its meaning in this place is farther proved by the use of the verb *ἐπιγνώσκω*, which indicates a more perfect understanding of things already known. By whom Theophilus had been instructed, before Luke inscribed to him his Gospel, cannot be determined. Theophylact indeed in reference to this passage observes \**πρίτερον μὲν ἀγγέλωσ σε κατήχητα, ὧ Θεόφιλε, νῦν δὲ ἐγγράφωσ σοι περιτίδεις τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, ἀσφαλιζομαι τὸν σὸν λογισμὸν, ἵνα μὴ ἐπιλάθῃται, τῶν ἀγγέλωσ παραδεδομένων.* *Before, I delivered to you instructions that were not written, O Theophilus, but now I send you a written Gospel, thus fortifying your mind, that you may not forget those verbal instructions which you have received.*

But however this may be; whether he had been instructed by Luke or by some other teacher; one thing is evident, that he was taught by the catechetical mode, and that Luke by inscribing his Gospel to him, wished to give him

\* P. 298.

an opportunity of making greater attainments in divine knowledge, and of more deeply impressing that which he already knew. This appears from the use of the two words ἐπιγινώσκειν and ἀσφάλεια: the former of which implies increase of knowledge, and the latter that degree of increase which is necessary to the certain and full comprehension of truth.

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### SECTION XVIII

Besides Theophilus, we have mentioned Apollos, whose praises Luke celebrates (Acts xviii. 24). He was by birth a Jew, a native of Alexandria, and a man of excellent character. He is called, by Luke, not only ἀνὴρ λόγιος *an eloquent man* but also δυνατὸς ἐν ταῖς γραφαῖς *mighty in the scriptures*; which words were added, to indicate that his eloquence was not profane and useless, but was acquired for explaining and proving divine truth, and for vindicating it from errors and false interpretations. Although Apollos excelled in this power of speaking, he had nevertheless only learnt as yet the elements of the Christian religion, and had become acquainted with nothing more than the baptism of John, or the truths which John taught.

For thus Luke adds—ἕστος ἦν κατηχημένος τὴν ὁδὸν τοῦ κυρίου—*This man was instructed in the way of the Lord*; and a little after—ἐπιστάμεν μόνον τὸ βάπτισμα Ἰωάννου—*knowing only the baptism of John*; by these words very clearly implying that he was classed among the catechumens. For he uses the term κατηχημένον, which, as we have before shown, is to be understood of catechetical instruction, and he also mentions the subject in which he had been instructed—viz. the Christian religion. This is what he means by ὁδὸν τοῦ κυρίου *the way of the Lord*, which is also called ὁδὸς

τῆς ἀληθείας, *the way of truth* (2 Peter ii. 2.), also by excellence ὁδὸς *the way* (Acts xix. 23). As the way is the rule and guide of the traveller, so also the Christian religion is the rule of faith, and the believer's guide to his heavenly home.\*

By whom Apollos had been taught the elements of Christian doctrine, is unknown. It is the opinion of Le Clerc that he was taught by certain disciples of John the Baptist; which may be true, though we have no certain evidence of the fact. His knowledge was indeed limited, if it was confined, as Luke says, to the *baptism of John* το βάπτισμα τῆς Ἰωάννου. These words have been differently explained by interpreters. Some understand them only of the *knowledge* of baptism as administered by John, not including the administration of the ordinance; others more justly observe, that the word βάπτισμα implies both the doctrine relating to baptism, and its actual administration; or the whole ministry of John, including the doctrine of repentance and the baptism of water which was a seal of that doctrine.

But although his knowledge of the Christian system was imperfect, he was nevertheless very zealous in proclaiming, in the synagogue, all that he had yet learnt of the way of the Lord and the means of obtaining salvation. When, therefore, Aquila and Priscilla heard him thus *speaking boldly, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly*; this Luke asserts (Acts xviii. 26), using the term ἀκριβέστερον, which implies extraordinary industry and earnest application in investigating the mysteries of divine truth, and in teaching them to others; as therefore Aquila and Priscilla exhibited such diligence for the sake of Apollos, it is manifest, not only that

\* See S. Le Moyne, de voce ὁδὸς, in Var. Sacr. tom. 2. p. 922.

† Historia Ecclesiastica p. 330.

their own knowledge of sacred things was very extensive, but also that that of Apollos was, by this means, greatly increased. Hence also it more fully appears, that Apollos had been one of the catechumens, before he put himself under the instruction of Aquila and Priscilla. But as a full investigation of the character and history of Apollos would be foreign from our present purpose, we would refer the reader on this subject to J. Prideaux,\* C. Vitringa,† H. Witsius,‡ J. Le Clerc§, and other ecclesiastical historians; also to J. C. Wolf.||

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### SECTION XIX.

But while we maintain that the Apostles used the catechetical mode in the instruction of the ignorant, we do not believe that they composed a catechetical compend; or that they adopted a formulary, which they invariably followed. Indeed, when we consider the nature of a compend, and at the same time examine the manner of teaching which Paul and the other Apostles pursued in their Epistles, we must be convinced, that these Divine ambassadors were very far from writing catechisms or systems of theology. They did, indeed, propose every point relating both to faith and practice, which was necessary to salvation; and sometimes they even presented, in few words, the whole sum of theology, or at least distinctly alluded to every article. Thus from the 1st chapter of Luke, J. G. Dorsch¶

\* Opera latina p. 463.

† Observation. Sacr. lib. III. cap. 21. p 799.

‡ Meletemata. Leidens. p. 103.

§ Historia Ecclesiastica p. 380.

|| Cura philologic. in acta apostolorum p. 1282.

¶ Commentar. in quatuor evangelistas. p. 661.

has deduced the whole doctrine relating to Christ; and A. Hunn\* in one of his orations has shown, that the first Epistle to the Corinthians contains a system of theology. But as in their manner of treating these heads of Christian doctrine, they accommodated themselves to the nature and capacity of those whom they instructed, and to the condition of the churches to which they wrote, it cannot be expected that the truths which they presented, should have a regular and connected order, or that any thing like a compend or system of theology should be found in their writings. Some suppose, that by the *form of sound words* ὑποτύπωσιν ὑγιαίνοντων λόγων, which Paul recommends to Timothy (2 Tim. i. 13.), is meant something like a formulary, drawn up by Paul, as a guide to Timothy in the duties of instruction. Others, however, do not think it probable that Paul referred to a written form; although they admit that the word ὑποτύπωσις signifies a *pattern* or *model*; and that the metaphor is taken from the rough outline which painters are in the habit of sketching, before they begin the shading and filling up of the picture. But the word may also signify an image conceived in the mind, and held up to its own view, to which signification we see no objections in this case. This is the opinion of H. Grotius,† who observes—“ὑποτύπωσις means an exemplar,” adding, “by this must be understood an image or form impressed on the mind, which the disciples of Plato call an idea, (ἰδεαν).” This image which Timothy was to place before his eyes, as his model in teaching, was that Divine truth, which had been communicated to him, and by which the Apostle wished him to regulate the instruction of others. Thus Theodoret, ‡ μιμῶ, φησι, τὰς ζωγράφους, καὶ κατὰ τὰς ἐκείνοις ἀρχε-

\* Tom. iv. oper. p. 144.

† Adnotat. ad 2 Tim. i. 13. tom. iii. oper. theol. p. 934.

‡ On this passage p. 494.

τύποις προσέχοντες, σὺν ἀκριβείᾳ, ἐκείνων ζωγραφῶσιν εἰκόνας, ἕτω καὶ σὺ οἶόντι ἀρχέτυπον ἔχε τὴν παρ' ἡμῶν περὶ πίστεως καὶ ἀγάπης γεγεννημένην διδασκαλίαν.—“Imitate,” says he, “the painters, and as they, attending to their models, very carefully copy them; so also do you retain as an original pattern, the doctrine of faith and charity, which you have learnt from me.” Consult also Jo. C. Suicer,\* H. Witsius,† and J. F. Buddæus.‡

In short, if any form had been written by the Apostles, it could not always have been followed in the catechesis. For they had to teach both Jews and Pagans, whose system of religion had been different, and who therefore required a different mode of instruction, and a different order in the precepts, which were to be delivered and explained, as we will more fully show hereafter. Nor is there any evidence that the “*symbolum Apostolicum*” was composed by the Apostles as a catechetical compend. It has long ago been proved by the most learned men, that the Apostles were not the authors of this symbol, although it contains the doctrines which they taught, and is therefore called *apostolical*. Not a word is said of it by the sacred writers, or by the doctors of the church in the three first centuries; the copies of it, which were in the possession of the ancient church, were various; some longer, and some shorter; some containing one thing, and some another; from which and other arguments, it is very evident, that the Apostles were not its authors, as I have in another place§ more fully shown, and have there also referred to the authors who have written on the subject.

\* Thesaur. ecclesiast. tom. 2. p. 1393.

† Miscellan. sacr. tom. ii. exercitat. 16. p. 561.

‡ Isagog. in theologiam. p. 341.

§ Introd. in libros ecclesiæ. Luther. symbolicos p. 89.



## SECTION XX.

As to the exact manner in which the Apostles conducted their catechetical instructions, although nothing is expressly said concerning it in the sacred Scriptures; yet we can easily infer what it was, from their usual manner in teaching, as well in their sacred discourses, as in their Epistles and other writings. Hence also, we see at the same time, that the Apostolic catechesis was essentially different, in various particulars, from that of succeeding ages. This difference arose necessarily from the different character both of the teachers and catechumens; and from the different state of the churches themselves. On this point A. Van Dale\* thus observes—"Let it not be supposed, that the same kind of catechetical instruction was used in the time of the Apostles, which obtained in later ages, especially in the fourth and fifth centuries, when the catechumens were divided into distinct grades and classes. For in that first age of Christianity, when the Gospel was preached by the Apostles themselves, many extraordinary and miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit were enjoyed, and especially that peculiar gift, conferred on the Apostles, of trying the spirits whether they were of God. By this, they were able to judge of the hypocrisy of Annanias and Saphyra, of Simon Magus and others; neither did the circumstances of the Apostolic age, and of that infancy, as it were, of Christianity, render necessary or permit that kind of catechesis, which was used at a later period."

## SECTION XXI.

But that we may more particularly explain the manner in which this catechesis was conducted, we will first consi-

\* *Historia baptismorum.* p. 416.

der the order in which the Apostles delivered to their pupils the heads of doctrine. That this was various, we infer from the variety of their catechumens, who were partly Jews, and partly Pagans, and therefore as they had been attached to different systems of religion heretofore, they could not be conducted by the same process and in the same order to the knowledge of evangelical truths. The same fundamental principles of religion, ought indeed, to be known by both Jews and Pagans, inasmuch as the same saving knowledge is necessary to faith and salvation; still, however, these principles could not be proposed in the catechesis, in the same connexion and order, on account of the different character of these nations, and the different forms of religion to which they had previously been attached. The Jews had learnt many things out of the Old Testament of which the Pagan idolaters were ignorant; and although both were in error, yet their errors were of different kinds, on account of which diversity in the condition of the learners, every one must admit that a difference must have been made in the mode of instruction. This is evident also from those heads of catechetical doctrine, which are enumerated in the Epistle to the Hebrews, and which we have already illustrated. If the Apostle had designed to state the first principles of the Christian religion for a different class of his catechumens, he would have used not only other topicks, but also a different order and connexion. In the instruction of Pagans, he would have treated primarily of God, of Creation, of the fall of our first parents, and of sin, all which subjects are omitted in the Epistle to the Hebrews, because the Apostle had reference there not to Pagans, but to Jews. And as he had to deal with adult Jews, who had already, from their earliest infancy, been instructed in many points of the Mosaic religion, he could entirely omit many things which must otherwise have been stated, and could confine himself to those points in which Chris-

tianity differed from Judaism. Thus J. Alting\* in illustrating the catechetical heads of the Christian religion, which are enumerated Heb. vi. 1, 2, for the adult Hebrew catechumens, among other remarks has the following :—“ he has not reference to children who were now for the first time to be imbued with a knowledge of religion ; but to adults, brought up in the Jewish religion from infancy, but now to be initiated in the Christian system. For if it had been his design to begin at the very foundation, where the instruction of a Gentile, or of a child must have been commenced, he would have mentioned other subjects prior to these, as for instance, the subject of God ; of creation ; of the fall of man ; of sin and its punishment ; of the providence of God, both general and particular ; of the church ; of God’s covenant with it, &c. But as he was addressing adult Jews, to whom God had formerly revealed his will through Moses and the Prophets, and who from childhood had been instructed in the synagogues in relation to many subjects, and to those especially which we have just enumerated ; it was not necessary for him to treat of these points which were common both to the Jewish and the Christian religion, and with which they were already perfectly acquainted. But he need only enumerate such as were peculiar to Christianity, and in which the two systems were opposed to each other, or such as were intermediate and preparatory to these ; all those, in short, which were necessary in laying the foundation for that new profession which they meditated. This view of the subject not only accounts for the fewness of the points proposed, but also assists very much in understanding them.”

\* Academic. dissertation. heptad. p. 3.

## SECTION XXII.

In illustrating the nature of the Apostolic catechesis, we ought not to omit the form or mode of proceeding. Catechetical instruction is often, and indeed, generally, conducted by the use of questions and answers; inasmuch as this form is very well adapted to the nature of catechumens, and is especially fitted for trying as well as for increasing their knowledge. It is necessary however that the questions should be adapted to the capacity of the pupil, and should contain, in themselves, the materials, for easily understanding and readily answering them. Thus J. Hoornbeek\* observes: "The questions, the manner of examining, and the explanation ought to be conformed to the capacity of the catechumens and hearers, (Prov. xxii. 6.—Is. viii. 2.), so that all things may be done with simplicity and perspicuity, for the edification and salvation of all. Wherefore the first and principal study of the catechist is to be able to interrogate with dexterity (Luke ii. 46), so to propose and to vary his questions, that the mind may be insensibly directed to the answer, and may scarcely avoid seeing it; and nothing is so necessary to this end, as to let down the manner of proposing questions to the capacity of children. It is more important to interrogate properly, than to explain; for the former enters into the very nature of the catechesis, and the whole answer follows more or less readily, according as the question has been more or less clearly proposed."

It is evident that our Saviour followed the catechetical mode of instruction so far, as to adapt his discourses to the capacity of the ignorant. It is also evident that the use of questions and answers in teaching was very common among the Jews, of which we have a remarkable example in Matt.

\* *Miscellan. sacr. lib. 1. cap. 12. de catechisationibus p. 346.*

xvi. 13. The Scriptures do not inform us, in what particular form the Apostles delivered their instructions to their catechumens; it is probable, however, that they made use of questions and answers. This we infer from the very nature of the catechesis, and also from the fact, which we have just stated, that the manner of teaching by questions and answers was in very common use at that time. But even if it should appear, that they did not adopt this particular form, still it would not follow that they did not make use of the catechetical mode of instruction. For the chief requisite to the catechesis, is, that instruction be adapted to the capacity of the ignorant, which can evidently be done without the use of questions and answers; just as the use of questions and answers is not so far peculiar to the catechesis, but that they may be employed in communicating the more elevated truths of the Christian religion. Thus various doctors of the ancient church, as Theophilus, Clemens Alexandrinus, Cyril of Jerusalem, and others, have expounded divine truth in their writings by the catechetical mode, without the use of questions and answers, who are nevertheless very properly classed by B. Bebel\* among the catechists.

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### SECTION XXIII.

We have yet to speak of the qualities for which the Apostolic catechesis was distinguished; which were indeed so remarkable, that their manner of conducting instructions of this kind ought to be a model for all others. The Apostles then, in their catechetical instructions, excelled in these *four* particulars, viz. in simplicity, in holiness, in prudence and in kindness. First, in *simplicity*. The Apostles were

\* Antiq. Eccles. sec. 2. p. 200. and sec. 3. p. 510.

very careful in this respect, so that in selecting and proposing the heads of the Christian religion, in explaining, illustrating, and connecting them, and even in their expressions and forms of speech they might accommodate themselves to the capacity of the catechumens. These catechumens the Scriptures represent as babes, whose capacity was not fitted for obscure, difficult, and abstract sentiments, or for a subtle mode of demonstration.

For this reason the Apostles stated to them the principles of the Christian system clearly and distinctly, without any disguise, free from all ambiguous expressions or artificial ornament, so that there should be not the least difficulty in understanding them. That this simplicity was actually a quality of their instructions is evident as well from the nature of the case, as from the Holy Scriptures. For simplicity enters into the very nature of the catechetical mode of instruction, inasmuch as this mode is designed for men of limited talents and acquirements, who must therefore, if they are taught at all, be taught in a simple manner. This point however is confirmed by the sacred Scriptures, wherein terms are used, in speaking of the catechesis very clearly expressive of its simplicity. We have one instance of this in the expression which Paul uses (1 Cor. iii. 1). *ποσιζεν γάλα*, *to feed with milk*. For as the nurse, in feeding an infant with milk, neglects all the ceremonies of the regular meal, and is only solicitous that the infant may receive, in the easiest manner possible, the simple aliment designed for the nourishment of its body; so also the Apostle, when he discharged the office of a catechist, abandoned every art of oratory, and laboured for the sole purpose, that the Corinthian babes might receive in a proper manner the spiritual milk, and might be nourished by it. We have also another instance in the word *φυτεύειν*, *to plant*, used by the same Apostle (1 Cor. iii. 6). For as the soul of man is compared, by the Saviour himself, to

the earth, in which, when cleared of stones and thorns, Christ is to be planted, by means of the incorruptible seed ; so in the same sense Paul used this word, and meant to imply, that he had implanted in the minds of the Corinthians, the first *root of faith* ῥίζαν τῆς πίστεως, that is, the first principles of the Christian religion. And as the husbandman who is engaged in planting, is solely intent, that the tender plant may be properly inserted in the earth, and neglects almost every thing else ; so also the catechist is solicitous only for this one thing, that Christ may be rightly and firmly planted in the hearts of believers. There is also still another instance of this, in these words of Paul (1 Cor. iii. 10) κατὰ τὴν χάριν τῆς θεῆς τὴν δοθεῖσαν μοι, ὡς σοφὸς ἀρχιτέκτων θεμέλιον τέθεικα. *According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master-builder I have laid the foundation.*

The foundation of a building is usually unpolished, and the skill of the architect is manifested in giving it simplicity and strength, rather than ornament. Consult C. Vitringa.\*

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#### SECTION XXIV.

The second quality, by which the catechetical instruction of the Apostles was distinguished, is *holiness*, to the desire and pursuit of which, they endeavoured to excite those whom they instructed. For as genuine saving knowledge could not be possessed without that piety and true renovation of soul which is effected by the grace of the holy spirit, the Apostles, when delivering and explaining the principles of the Christian religion, could hardly have avoided recommending at the same time a holy life, and pointing out the rules, by which such a life must be regulated.

This we infer not merely from the nature of the case, but also from those heads of catechetical doctrine, which are enumerated in the Epistle to the Hebrews. The Apostles

\* Observation. sacr. lib. 3 cap. 21. sec. 8. p. 305.

delivered instructions concerning the correction of dead works, concerning faith in Christ, concerning the resurrection of the dead and eternal punishment, which topics they must have found it impossible properly and fully to explain without at the same time giving precepts concerning piety and Christian morality. They adopted the same manner of teaching which is pursued in their Epistles, and especially in the Epistles of Paul, in which they usually connect together duties of faith and practice, and after having expounded the mysteries and objects of faith, make the application by pointing out and enforcing practical duties, giving their readers to understand, that true faith cannot possibly exist without holiness of life. The most remarkable examples of this kind of teaching are found in the Epistles to the Romans and Hebrews, as has been well observed by that excellent man, Martin Luther \* There is no doubt, therefore, but that the Apostles conducted all parts of the catechesis not only in a simple but also in a holy manner; so that they pointed out not only the particular duties of a holy life which are required of Christians, but also the relation which faith bears to these duties, and its influence in producing them.

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#### SECTION XXV.

The third particular for which the Apostolic catechesis was remarkable, is *prudence*. Prudence is that quality, by which the best means are selected and properly applied, for the attainment of any proposed end. Hence those catechists, who would perform the duties of their office with prudence, ought to be very careful about the means which they employ, and ought to imitate the Apostles, whose example in this respect is every way worthy of imitation. For although, as we have before said, the sacred volume

\* Tom. 8. oper. Altmburgens. p. 511.



does not expressly inform us as to the particular form, in which they taught the ignorant the first principles of the Christian system, nevertheless it does contain their sacred discourses and letters, and exhibits their usual manner of treating with men on the subject of their eternal salvation; and as in all the other duties of their sacred office they evinced the most remarkable prudence, we cannot doubt, that they manifested the same quality in the catechesis. In the exercise of this prudence, they adapted all their instructions to the character and capacity of their pupils, selected only such subjects as they knew to be most necessary and useful, and so framed their questions, that the catechumens could without difficulty understand and answer them, and could thus retain the truth in their memory. Christ himself in his manner of teaching has left his ambassadors an illustrious example of this prudence. For in all the discourses which he delivered, and in which he pointed out to men the way of salvation, we clearly see, that he kept in view the character of his hearers, and accommodated his instructions to their circumstances. Thus when men came to him groaning under the burden of their sins, and sincerely desirous of saving knowledge; he talked to them of the grace of God, and of the way of salvation, (John iii. 16. v. 24. and vi. 40.); but when the hypocrite and the self righteous man approached him, he expounded to them the law, the wrath of God, the punishment of sin, and the duty of repentance. This illustrious example of our blessed Saviour, the Apostles imitated, whenever an opportunity offered of explaining to men the principles of the Christian religion, and of pointing them to Christ, their leader and guide in their heavenly course; as is evident from the "Acts of the Apostles" recorded by Luke. But if in their sacred discourses and epistles they accommodated themselves to the capacity of their hearers and readers, they undoubtedly did the same in the catechesis; especially

as in this mode of instruction, it was peculiarly necessary to examine the capacity of the catechumens, and to select that form of instruction best adapted to it.

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#### SECTION XXVI.

The fourth quality of the Apostolic catechesis is *kindness*. This quality ought always to be exhibited by masters and teachers, so that they may thus engage the affections of their pupils, and may excite and keep alive within them an ardent thirst for knowledge. In this particular also, we are called upon to admire and imitate the illustrious example of the Apostles, and especially of the Apostle Paul. The most wonderful affection, gentleness, and kindness, pervade the whole of his Epistles. When he writes to the Romans, he accosts both Jews and Gentiles as dear brethren. He warns the Corinthians, as his beloved sons, whom he had begotten in Christ Jesus through the Gospel, 1 Cor. iv. 14, 15. He writes to them out of much affliction and anguish of heart, with many tears, that he may testify his love to them, 2 Cor. ii. 4. He calls the Galatians his little children, of whom he travails in birth again, until Christ be formed in them, Gal. iv. 19. So dear were the Thessalonians to this Apostle, that he was willing to have imparted unto them not only the Gospel of God, but also his own soul; he was gentle among them, even as a nurse cherisheth her children, 1 Thess. ii. 7, 8. He declares that he has the Philippians in his heart, Phil. 1. 7. The same love also is manifested by the other Apostles, Peter, John, and James, in their Epistles; although it cannot be denied, that its most remarkable exhibition is in the character of the Apostle Paul. Hence, then, we hesitate not to affirm, that the Apostles manifested great kindness and love in their mode of conducting catechetical instruction.

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## Tracts

### ON THE INTERPRETATION OF THE SCRIPTURES.

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- I. ON THE DIFFICULTIES ATTENDING THE RIGHT INTERPRETATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.
- II. DEFENCE OF GRAMMATICAL INTERPRETATION, PARTICULARLY OF THE ENSPIRED WRITINGS.
- III. ON THE FOLLY OF THOSE WHO PHILOSOPHIZE IN INTERPRETING THE SCRIPTURES.
- IV. ON THE DIFFICULTY ATTENDING THE GRAMMATICAL INTERPRETATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.
- V. ON ORIGEN, THE FATHER OF THE GRAMMATICAL INTERPRETATION OF THE SCRIPTURES.



FROM JO. AUG. ERNESTI'S *OPUSCULA PHILOLOGICA CRITICA*;—TRANSLATED BY R. B. PATTON.

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ON

**THE DIFFICULTIES**

ATTENDING

**THE RIGHT INTERPRETATION**

OF THE

**New Testament.**

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ON THE

**INTERPRETATION OF THE N. TESTAMENT.**

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AMONG the popular errors of the literary community, should be numbered also, in my opinion, that widely disseminated and prevalent notion, that the correct understanding and interpretation of the sacred books, which, collectively, we denominate the New Testament, is a very easy matter, or at least a far easier matter than that of the other Greek writings. For, to what, except to the influence of this hasty notion, can we ascribe the reiterated expressions of those, who either advocate their own ignorance of Greek letters, by saying, *they know enough if they understand their New Testament*; or excuse the ignorance of another, with these words, *the New Testament, however, he will be able to interpret?*

It is easy to conjecture whence this notion originated. It is a well known fact, that in our elementary schools universally, the boys commence their Greek reading with the New Testament. This practice, which was introduced with the best intentions by our forefathers, and with a special design to promote the interests of religion, might still be adhered to, without any disadvantage as it regards the knowledge of the Greek language or the understanding of the sacred volume, provided it were regulated by suitable laws, and restricted to such portions as reveal most clearly the principal points of Christian doctrine, and to the familiar narratives and the parables. As it now is, the inexperienced beginner is introduced to all the books with-

out distinction; no becoming selection is made of particular passages. The translation, moreover, is conducted by rendering word for word into Latin; whence arises a latinity frequently as unintelligible as the original Greek. Besides, this mode of proceeding is comparatively easy. It demands no other aid than what is furnished by a common school-lexicon, from which the signification of detached words may be obtained; or by a literal vernacular or Latin version. When men have been accustomed for many years, and inured by education, to this method, they begin gradually to imagine that they understand also what they are able to translate in so puerile a manner,—especially when they see others, whose example they think themselves obligated or competent to follow, translating in the very same manner, and not only tolerating such translations, but receiving and approving them as good, demanding nothing better. How is it possible for those who are thus instructed and educated, to believe that the interpretation of the New Testament is a difficult matter, or to suspect that it calls for much and various learning?

I should have been disposed, however, to regard this error, like very many others, as excusable, on the ground that it proceeds from the natural weakness of the human mind; or as meriting only silent contempt; if it did not operate greatly to the disadvantage of learning, and especially of sacred learning, an effect which those peculiarly are bound to prevent, who sustain the profession, and, as it were, the guardianship of useful letters. For it is manifestly a fact, that the majority of those who devote their attention to theology, bestow but little or no time and study to the cultivation of Greek letters, and of polite learning in general, for this special reason, that they imagine they stand in need of a very slender knowledge of these things, for the understanding, as well of theology generally, as of the sacred books in particular. Far different from this was



the opinion of Luther, that admirable man, who esteemed theology, in the highest and genuine sense, to be nothing else than grammatical\* knowledge, that is, the knowledge of Greek and Hebrew letters. By means of this knowledge especially, he confessed he had been enabled to restore purity to religion, and to silence the adversaries. The most distinguished theologians, after him, maintained the same opinion. Their disciples also, with Glass, in his most celebrated work on sacred philology, again and again insisted, that the better *grammarian* a man is, the better *theologian* he will be. How detrimental and destructive the contrary sentiment has already proved, and is still, as I fear, about to prove, to the interests of Christianity, is abundantly shown by experience, and has already been demonstrated by others of distinguished learning and talents. It is our design, therefore, in the present discourse, to prove how difficult the interpretation of these books is; not any interpretation at random, nor such as may suffice for popular discourses but legitimate, and worthy of the man who aspires to be a teacher of sacred things: indulging the hope, that we may stimulate, perhaps, the minds of the young, to a more diligent study of that department of letters, with the knowledge of which every one should be furnished who desires to be successfully employed in sacred interpretation.

The difficulty of this interpretation is owing, partly to

\* It is well known to those who are conversant with the works in our language, whether original or translated, on the subject of *interpretation*, that the terms *grammatical*, *grammarian*, and *grammar*, are there employed in the comprehensive sense of the corresponding Latin terms, and nearly equivalent to our *philological*, *philologist*, and *philology*. It has not, therefore, been deemed advisable to restrict them, in this translation, to the technical sense which they more commonly bear; and when they occur in the following pages, they will, in most cases, be employed in the comprehensive sense above alluded to. (Tr).

the books themselves, and partly to their interpreters. The first occasion of difficulty is not, however, inherent in the sacred books, nor does it spring originally from them; but is attributable rather to the operation of time and of external circumstances. For, as the transactions of Christ and of the Apostles, and the whole method of obtaining eternal felicity, are set forth in these books, the Holy Spirit undoubtedly suggested every thing to the writers of them in such a manner as to render them intelligible even to the vulgar and illiterate; especially as it was foreseen, that men of this character would more easily and readily receive the doctrine of salvation, than the noble and the learned: see 1 Cor. i. Accordingly the greatest degree of perspicuity, and such as adapted itself to the capacity of the common people, was employed both in the matter and the language; unless, perhaps, allowance should sometimes be made for the peculiar genius of the writer; as in the case of Paul, in whose Epistles are some things which Peter denominates "*hard to be understood*" And this appears to me to be the true, and perhaps the only reason, why we find the Hebraeo-Greek dialect employed throughout all the books alike. For as to the opinion, maintained by some, that the purity of the Greek language is preserved inviolate in these books, it is, indeed, (as Hemsterhusius,\* an eminent scholar, and one who doubtless knows what is good Greek and what is not, rightly remarks,) the exceedingly silly notion of men whose knowledge of the Greek extends to certain words derived from the dictionaries, but who are egregiously ignorant of the nature and genius of the language.

In those times, the Jews, especially such as resided in Judea, spoke commonly the Hebraeo-Syriac dialect; and the Hebrew writings of Moses and the Prophets were

\* Lucian I. p.300.

read in the synagogues, and not the Greek translation, as some persons, unacquainted with the history of that age, suppose. This mistake has already been corrected, however, by Salmasius, in his *Remarks upon the Helenistic dialect*, and by Scaliger, in some passages of his *Observations upon Eusebius*. These same Jews regarded also with the greatest hatred, both the Greeks and their language. When the Jews,\* both those of Palestine and the others from the Greek cities of Asia,† understood that Paul was about to address them in Hebrew, they became more quiet than they had been before, when they expected he would address them in Greek. He was charged by the Jews, even by those of the Greek cities in Asia, with the crime of having introduced Greeks into the temple; which mistake originated in this circumstance, that they had seen him in company with Greeks, and supposed him to be a favourer of that nation. Josephus also, after having devoted himself to the study of Grecian literature, with a thorough knowledge of the rules of grammar; and after having attained, by his great talents and application, to such proficiency that he seemed to have approached as nearly as possible to the style of the ancient Attics, (a fact which no one, who is a competent judge in such matters, will deny,) neglected, notwithstanding, the genuine and elegant pronunciation, in compliance with the feelings of the Jews; because they regarded with disapprobation all those who diligently cultivated foreign letters, and studied the elegancies of speech.‡ So that, if any persons made themselves acquainted with the Greek language, it was from necessity, because they were thrown among Greeks: but they learned it, without regard to the rules of grammar, from their daily intercourse with Greeks, either of the common sort,

\* Acts xxii. 1, 2.

† Acts xxi. 27.

‡ Ant. Jud. xx. 11.

and employing, as usual, a corrupt idiom, or at least of that class who spoke the Macedonian dialect, which had been spread with the Macedonian empire over all that portion of Asia. Those of the Apostles, therefore, who understood the Greek, (which is not historically true of all,) did not speak with the accuracy of grammarians, nor with the elegance of the Attics. For all of them were common and illiterate men, with the exception of Paul; and he too was brought up in the school of the Pharisees, not in that of the Greeks. As to the fact, that certain expressions from the Greek poets occur in his writings, this no more proves that he had read those poets, than the practice of citing such expressions as these, "*labor improbus omnia vincit*," "*optat ephippia bos*," and the like, proves that those who use them have read Virgil and Horace. Nor, indeed, so far as this fact goes, does it disprove the assertion of Chrysostom,\* that Paul was unacquainted with the Greek; which assertion, however, I think is abundantly refuted by the facts recorded in the Acts of the Apostles.† It is certainly very improbable, that he who was so devoted a disciple of the school of the Pharisees, who emulously strove to conform to its institutions, and who desired to render his profession conspicuous, should have been very studious of the Grecian arts and letters, which the Pharisees, according to Josephus, held in abhorrence. If these things be so, the inspired writers, when they used the Greek language, could not be expected to write with elegance and purity, particularly on subjects pertaining to the Jewish and Christian religion. They necessarily conveyed, literally, in so many Greek words, the thoughts which, when revolved in their minds, were associated with Hebrew expressions.

\* Tit. ii. Homil. 4.

† xxi. 25.

But even admitting that, from the reading of the Greek writers and daily exercise, they possessed the ability to write with purity and elegance concerning other affairs of human life; still it would not follow, that they would be able, forthwith, to write with the same purity and elegance on matters pertaining to the Christian religion. For, it is well known to those who have attained to any skill in the art, to be a work which demands considerable talent, very much exercise, and arduous labour, to transfuse, for the first time, an elegance of diction into any science or subject which is new.

Nec me animi fallit, Graiorum obscura reperta  
 Difficile illustrare Latinis versibus esse,  
 Multa novis verbis præsertim cum sit agendum,  
 Propter egestatem linguæ, et rerum novitatem, &c.\*

How unfavourably were those regarded by Cicero†, who first ventured to discourse in Latin on philosophical subjects. It was an undertaking to which the talents of Cicero alone were adequate, to set forth the philosophy of the Greeks in a Roman dress, and to present, in an elegant Latin diction, the doctrines of their philosophers. Josephus\* also, a man in other respects modest and unassuming, affirms nevertheless, confidently, that no one among the Jews was able to discourse, in the Greek language, to which he was particularly devoted, upon the Jewish affairs, drawn from the original Hebrew sources, with as much elegance and accuracy as himself. It is well known also, how much celebrity Lucretius and Virgil promised themselves, because they had been the first to clothe in the elegance of Latin verse, the one, the philosophy of Epicurus, and the other, the affairs of agriculture.

\* Lucretius I. 137.

† Acad. I. 2.

‡ Ant. XX. 11.

Avia Pieridum, (says Lucretius l. 925) peragro loca, nullius ante  
 Trita solo; juvat integros accedere fontes  
 Atque haurire: juvatque novos decerpere flores,  
 Insignemque meo Capiti petere inde coronam.

And Virgil sings exultingly—\*

——Tentanda via est, qua me quoque possim  
 Tollere humo, victorque virum volitare per ora. &c.

In our own days also, we have frequently met with men, in other respects able, who furnish a very tolerable latinity, whenever they write on those subjects on which they have been accustomed for some time to express their sentiments in the Latin language, with the classic ancients for their model; but as soon as they betake themselves to their own science, to theology, for example, or to philosophy, their Latin assumes a semibarbarous appearance; for this reason, that a man who writes correctly in any one department in which he has exercised himself for a considerable time, cannot, as a matter of course, succeed as well in another department. How then could it be demanded or expected of the Apostles, who style themselves *unlearned men*, ἀγχαμμάτους, that they should be forthwith competent to write on subjects entirely new to them, and in a foreign language, with as much refinement as if they had been born at Athens, and had all their lives employed this dialect? This view of the subject is strikingly corroborated by the example of Luke, who is universally supposed to have been better versed in the Greek than the other inspired writers. The first four verses of his gospel, which constitute the preface and announce his design, are composed in a style which would suffer nothing in comparison with that of Polybius or Diodorus or other Greek writers of this class, who, although not the very best, nor purely Attic, are still good

† Georg. iii. 8.

writers. But in the fifth verse, in which he first begins to speak of the subject itself of which he had undertaken to write, the complexion of the style is as completely Hebrew as if the narrative had been translated word for word out of a Hebrew book. Still, I confess, I am somewhat inclined to the opinion, that this mode was adopted by Luke, not because he was not competent to write in a different style, but because, for satisfactory reasons, he preferred to neglect it. On this point however it may be well to enlarge.

From this short preface of Luke, of which I have just spoken, and from some other passages, it is manifest that he possessed the ability to write on ordinary subjects with purity, at least with such purity as those times permitted. Nevertheless, even on such occasions, he employs a phraseology not Greek but Hebrew. For example, when he describes a person as *saying, seeing, or doing* any thing, he commonly adds the following expressions, "*And he opened his mouth,*" "*and he lifted up his eyes,*" "*and he arose,*" &c. These are redundancies which characterize languages in their pristine simplicity. They remained in vogue, in the language of the Hebrews, because the study of eloquence and letters, never flourished among them. The Greeks, however, expunged them, together with many other similar vestiges of ancient simplicity. Still, we cannot entertain a doubt but Luke was able, in such cases, to have written more tersely and unexceptionably, in conformity with the usage of the classic Greek, if such had been his will. It follows therefore that he purposely gave the preference to the style and usage of the Hebrew. And this preference I conceive to have been a very wise and beneficial one.

At the time when Christianity was first promulgated, the Jews were permitted the free exercise of their religious rites throughout the whole of western Asia, and a large portion of Europe which acknowledged the Roman sway

A considerable number of them enjoyed also the privileges of Roman citizenship, as Josephus expressly informs us.\* And here we cannot but admire the wisdom and providence of God, which so manifestly turned the avarice of the Romans to the advantage of the Christian religion, just then about to be spread abroad over the face of the whole earth. Owing to this circumstance, an easy access and introduction was offered to the Apostles, to all the more opulent and illustrious cities, which the Jews, in their thirst for gain, had selected as the abode of their fortunes; and to the city of Rome itself, in which, under Cæsar the Dictator, a great multitude of Jews resided, beyond the Tiber, and assembled, without molestation, in the synagogues, on the sabbath, for the purpose of celebrating their religious rites, according to the customs of their country.† The conduct of Paul himself abundantly proves, that in all the Grecian cities, his first attention was directed to the Jews, and that he commenced his instructions relative to the doctrine of Christ, in their synagogues, on the sabbath, where the Jews were assembled at that time for the purposes of religion. And, from what I have advanced above, it scarcely admits a doubt, but Paul addressed them there in the Hebrew language. But, inasmuch as, both at Rome and in the Grecian cities, there were many followers of Judaism, who were not of the Jewish nation, and many also of these had embraced Christianity, Paul and the other apostles wrote their epistles in Greek, in order that all might understand them, without the aid of an interpreter; and for the very same reason, beyond a doubt, it was deemed expedient that the historical books also of the New Testament should be written in Greek. But as they consulted the interests of

\* Ant. XIV. 10.

† Philo Leg. ad Cæs. p. 1014, at which place see also the Engl. Edit. of Mangey.



the Greeks, in their choice of the language, it behooved them to have special regard to the Jews, in its fashion and form. So that, even admitting the inspired writers were fully competent to employ a style which would evidently comport with the usage and elegance of the classic Greek ; still, it is perfectly obvious, from what I have said before, that they would most carefully have avoided it, lest they should give offence to the Jews, and their language should thus become a hindrance to the reception and understanding of the matter—an inadvertency which would ill become a wise man, much less an inspired Apostle. Add to this a still weightier reason, that if they had employed the style of writing which is found in Thucydides, Plato, and Aristotle, they could not have been comprehended by those to whom or for whom they wrote. Nor should this be a matter of uncertainty or doubt to any one. For a person may fully comprehend those who discourse familiarly, on ordinary matters, and such as concern the practice of common life ; who would not, from this circumstance alone, be able to comprehend those who discourse with elegance on learned topics. The old woman at Athens, who understood Theophrastus when he discoursed with her about pot-herbs, would certainly not have comprehended his subtle discussions in the Lyceum, on the nature of the gods, and on the chief good. Neither would the common people at Rome, I apprehend, have understood the *Academica* or the *Topica* of Cicero, merely because they understood his orations against the Agrarian law, and against Cataline. And we are not to suppose, that this is owing to the matter rather than the words. Do we not meet with men, even learned men, who fail to comprehend, and even regard as obscure, what is written in a purer and more elegant Latin style, on some art or science sufficiently familiar to them ; but who easily comprehend, or at least, think they comprehend, those writers on the very same subjects, whose style

is harsh and barbarous? The opinion entertained by some, that *he who understands the subject, understands the words also*, is entirely without foundation. The ideas of Plato on this subject, are far more consonant with the truth, that *he who thoroughly understands the words has a clear perception of the matter also*. I am of opinion, therefore, that the common Jews although resident in Grecian cities, were unable to understand Philo and Josephus, writers of the greatest elegance, on account of this very elegance of diction; and I am the more inclined to this opinion, because this same elegance in Josephus, has presented difficulties to many learned men, (to Schotan, for example,) of modern times.

This being the case, we must conclude that the inspired writers are excusable, and not at all worthy of reprehension, because they either had not the ability to write with all the elegance of the classic Grecian diction, (especially as they wrote not for the sake of promoting their own reputation, nor of their own accord; from such writers, indeed, this elegance of style may justly be demanded;) or if they possessed, perhaps, the ability, were unwilling to exercise it; because they preferred an uncultivated discourse with perspicuity and the profit of the readers, to an elegant discourse with their own renown. Nay indeed, they must be thought to have acted, in this respect, with uncommon wisdom; whether this plan were suggested to them by their own prudence, and a regard, superior to every other, for the public good, or, as is most probable, by a higher and a celestial power. For their writings were thus rendered intelligible to all those for whom they were originally designed; inasmuch as these were accustomed to the Hebrew mode of discoursing on religious matters, and to the forms of speech peculiar to the Hebrew language. I consider, therefore, the position which I assumed at the outset, as fully established—that the sacred books are, in themselves, with the

exception of a few passages, eminently perspicuous, and, at the time of their publication, could easily be comprehended by all, even by the common people and the unlettered multitude, without any assistance from the talents and learning of an interpreter. So that, the difficulty of interpreting them, which is the subject of our present discussion, originated from some other source, concerning which we shall now proceed to speak.

And here I shall ingenuously acknowledge, that from the time that I could first distinguish between the sounds of words and things, and between the signification and purport of the word and the signification and purport of the thing; especially, from the time that I began to entertain any clear views of the business of interpretation, the legitimate and just interpretation of the New Testament appeared to me much more difficult and troublesome than that of Homer, Thucydides, Polybius, and the other Greek writers. Nor do I think I am mistaken in this opinion. For, if this be not the fact, how has it come to pass, that we possess, upon no Greek or Latin writer, even the most difficult, so few tolerable commentaries, as upon the New Testament; so many, on the other hand, and such voluminous commentaries upon the latter, concerning which it may justly be said, as Bernard, a very learned Briton, in his notes to Josephus iv. 6. 2., says concerning Cornelius a Lapide, Menochius, and others, that they serve only to exhaust the talents and waste the time of Theologians? To what profane writer can we point, whose interpreters so uniformly and so obstinately disagree, on so many and such important passages, as the interpreters of these writings have done for many ages,—those very interpreters, too, who were most clearly agreed on the principal points of Christian doctrine? Why should this be so, unless many and great difficulties present themselves in rightly interpreting them: In other writings, however, this difficulty is

wont to proceed, either from the want of approved copies, or from some fault of the writers themselves who, through ignorance or negligence, have failed, perhaps, to express themselves with sufficient perspicuity; or, from some obscurity in the subjects of which they treat. That no one of these sources of difficulty exist in reference to the inspired books, has been frequently proved by others, and has been already partially shown by myself also. The whole difficulty, therefore, must be exterior to the books themselves; arising partly from time, partly and principally, from the sluggishness, or levity, or perverseness, of the human mind.

In all those books which are not devoted to subjects in their nature uniform, durable and necessary; or which contain many things interspersed, which are naturally subject to decay and change, with the progress of time; in all such books, time and age avail much to occasion a certain degree of obscurity and difficulty. Those books, on the contrary, which treat of subjects necessary and unchangeable, possess, at all times, an unchanging and a lasting perspicuity. To the former class belong those books which are conversant about affairs of ordinary life, and accommodated to the taste and apprehension of the multitude; for such affairs are wont to receive a peculiar complexion in different nations, and submit to no laws but those of custom, which, from the fickleness of the human mind, are arbitrary and mutable. The latter class comprises those books which treat of things universally intelligible, necessary and immutable. The influence of so many centuries has detracted nothing from the clearness, nor added any thing to the difficulty of Euclid; while the orators, the poets, and the historians, on the other hand, have been rendered more difficult to understand in proportion to their antiquity. Now, as the sacred books, of which we are treating, belong to this latter description, inasmuch as they are either historical in their nature, or contain a multitude of allusions

to the condition, circumstances, manners, and institutions of the times in which they were written, they must have been subjected gradually to a considerable share of difficulty. And this difficulty is greater in these books than in many others, because their contents are so very various. For the right understanding of Demosthenes, for example, or Livy, or Tacitus, an acquaintance with the manners and institutions of one nation will suffice ; but, for the right understanding of these books, is required a knowledge of the manners and customs of the Hebrews, Greeks, and Romans, which circumstance evidently augments the difficulty. For, in consequence of this, a competent interpreter of these books must possess, what Casaubon demands in a good commentator of Josephus, an uncommon familiarity with Hebrew, Greek and Latin learning. And as this is a combination rarely to be met with in one individual, it is not to be wondered at, that Josephus has, as yet, obtained no competent expositor ; and that the books of the New Testament have found so few good interpreters ; while so much has been written, in the shape of commentary, of such a character as to appear contemptible in the eyes of the thorough Biblical scholar.

But the language itself, which the inspired writers employed, has been subjected to a far greater difficulty, by the operation of time. For although this language was, as I have before remarked, in the age of those writers, in the highest degree intelligible to all ; it became obscure, in the first place, shortly after their time, to those who were unacquainted with the Hebrew language and its peculiar genius ; and subsequently to all, when the Hebrew ceased to be a living language. Nor is the language of the inspired writers obnoxious to this difficulty alone, in common with all other books in the dead languages. It is subjected to a peculiar difficulty also, and, perhaps, the greatest of all. For the other dead languages, the Latin and Greek, for ex

ample, bear a very close resemblance, in their modes of expression to the living languages of the more cultivated nations ; while the Hebrew is placed at the farthest remove, in its genius and spirit, from these as well as from the Greek and Latin languages. This circumstance occasions considerable difficulty ; for there is a natural tendency, perhaps, in all, in reading or writing any thing in a foreign language, to examine the expressions and idioms of this language, by the expressions and idioms of their own, and to limit and interpret the former with referencé to the latter ; and it is only after much practice and exercise, that they are enabled to withdraw the attention from their vernacular tongue when interpreting or employing another.

How long then, and how arduous, is the way which alone conducts to the thorough understanding of the spirit of the Hebraeo-Greek dialect ? As the idiom of the New Testament so closely resembles the Hebrew, it is acknowledged by those who have any discernment in such matters, that the best furniture for the understanding of the New Testament idiom, is a familiar acquaintance with the Greek translation of the Hebrew books ; that is, a careful comparison of this translation with the Hebrew original ; learning, in the first place, from this diligent comparison, to understand the Greek version, and then collecting from it what senses we ought to attach to certain words, and what meaning to certain forms of speech, in the New Testament. For, while I am aware and acknowledge, that light is sometimes reflected from this translation upon the Hebrew text, I still must think that it derives more illustration from the Hebrew, than the Hebrew from it. The truth is this. Those translators, whoever they were, pursued a two-fold course, in converting the Hebrew into Greek. Sometimes, when they were able, they presented, as it seems to me, the force itself of the expressions, in appropriate Greek words, in a manner accommodated to the spirit and usage of the

Greek language as it then obtained. Much more frequently, however, their object seems to have been, not so much to present the meaning, as to express the Hebrew, word for word, preserving the Hebrew idiom, form, and construction, and at times retaining the Hebrew words themselves. Examples of the former mode are the following:— $\text{יְהוָה}$  denotes *one only, sole*. The Greek version Gen. xxii. 2., translates it  $\alpha\gamma\alpha\pi\eta\tau\omicron\varsigma$  which literally means *beloved*, instead of  $\mu\omicron\nu\omicron\gamma\epsilon\nu\eta\varsigma$  *only begotten*, as Aquila, Symmachus, and Josephus have rendered it. The Septuagint translators adopted, therefore, the more refined and elaborate Greek expression: see Suidas at this word with Kuster's remarks. This use of the word  $\alpha\gamma\alpha\pi\eta\tau\omicron\varsigma$  by the Septuagint may serve to explain its use in Mat. iii. 17., Mark i. 11, &c. Again, the phrase  $\text{סָתַר אֶת עֵינָיו}$  Num. xxv. 4. which the Chaldee and other interpreters, both Greek and Latin, explain of *suspension*, the Septuagint translates  $\pi\alpha\rho\alpha\delta\epsilon\iota\gamma\mu\acute{\alpha}\tau\iota\sigma\omicron\nu\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$  *expose them to public ignominy*, which translation however, Casaubon disapproves.\* Indeed, the expression is a most elegant one, by which it is declared, that God commanded Moses to inflict, on the princes who had defiled themselves in so impious a manner, a punishment of extraordinary ignominy, in a conspicuous place, before the eyes of all, according to the custom and practice of the people. For the verb  $\pi\alpha\rho\alpha\delta\epsilon\iota\gamma\mu\alpha\lambda\iota\zeta\epsilon\iota\nu$  denotes *the infliction of any public ignominy*, by means of which, the turpitude of some one, is openly declared for the purpose of an example; and hence also some passages of the New Testament may receive illustration. On the other hand, in the very same passage is added by the Septuagint translators  $\kappa\alpha\tau\acute{\epsilon}\gamma\alpha\nu\tau\iota\ \tau\omicron\upsilon\ \zeta\eta\mu\acute{\iota}\omicron\nu$  which means *in a conspicuous place before the eyes of all*, a Hebraism which renders the word  $\pi\alpha\rho\alpha\delta\epsilon\iota\gamma\mu\alpha\lambda\iota\zeta\epsilon\iota\nu$

\* Adv. Baron. Exercitat. xxi. n. 76.

superfluous. Again the expression אָרְרַת שְׁנָעַר Jos. vii. 21. is accurately translated, and better, in my opinion, than by the other interpreters, ψιλὴ ποικίλη *a delicate embroidered* (understand) *garment*, similar to those of the most costly and magnificent kind; for these words allude, manifestly, to the nature and character of the Babylonian mantle, which was shorn (ψιλὴ) and therefore soft and delicate, as the ψηλαὶ Περσικαὶ in Athenæus, B. v. p. 197., and, at the same time, variegated (ποικίλη) with inwoven figures.\* Again, in 1 Sam. ix. 2 Saul is styled בְּחֹרֵב which the Septuagint renders ἐμμεγέθης *tall*, in which they have followed the sense alone, for בְּחֹרֵב literally denotes *chosen, choice*, although it is also spoken of *young men*. So much for the examples of the former mode; of the latter, we shall present the few that follow. In Deut. xxvi. 13. we have these words ἐρεῖς ἔναντι κυρίου τοῦ θεοῦ σου, &c. *thou shalt say before the Lord thy God, &c.* This phrase, employed in such a connexion, will be unintelligible to any one who is not familiar with the corresponding Hebrew phrase in the original. Josephus† renders it correctly ἀντικρὺς τοῦ τεμενίσματος *over against the altar*. Again, in Judges xvi. 19. and elsewhere ταπεινώσαι is used to denote *the subduction of the natural strength*, which sense would not readily be suggested by the Greek alone, nor would the meaning be more obvious in the 20th chapter, where it is spoken of *a rape*. Again, in 1 Sam. viii. 3., the Hebrew word יָצַב which, in that passage, imports *lucre or avarice*, the Septuagint translates συντέλεια *impiety*, which signification the word, it is true, sometimes admits, but not in this passage. Again, these same translators frequently, as in Gen. xix. 19., xx. 13., employ the word δικαιοσύνη *justice or righteousness*, in the sense of kindness or benignity. In this instance also the Greek word is rendered intelligi-

\* See Js. Vossius. on Catullus p. 197.

† Ant. Jud. iv. 22.



ble by comparing it with the corresponding Hebrew expression  $\text{רָחַם}$ . To this class belong also such forms of speech as the following:  $\epsilon\kappa\lambda\acute{\epsilon}\xi\alpha\sigma\theta\alpha\iota \epsilon\nu \tau\iota\nu\iota$  *to love any one*,  $\alpha\pi\omicron\sigma\tau\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\lambda\epsilon\iota\nu \epsilon\nu \chi\epsilon\iota\rho\iota \acute{\alpha}\gamma\gamma\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\omega\nu$  *to send by the hand of angels*, and innumerable others. Is it not obvious, then, that a knowledge of the Greek is requisite for a correct understanding of the passages of the former class? and of those of the latter, an assiduous and careful comparison of the Hebrew original with the Greek translation? And is it not manifest, how great an amount of labour and learning this occupation demands?

But here a new and by no means inconsiderable difficulty presents itself, arising from the Greek language itself, and the use that is made of it in interpreting the books of the New Testament. For, while we are constrained to acknowledge, that much assistance in rightly discharging this duty, may be expected from the profane writers, it must at the same time be confessed, that much caution and discernment are necessary, which, from the circumstances of the case, but few can exercise. If I mistake not, a goodly number of those who have aimed to elucidate the inspired writings by means of the profane Greek authors, have failed most egregiously, and have impeded rather than advanced the business of interpretation. I am inclined, therefore, to regard it as far more easy to abuse the knowledge of the Greek language, than to use it aright, and in its proper place. On the abuse of the older glossaries, in interpretation, I have spoken already, and have shown how difficult it is, in using them, to observe a regard for reason and moderation. How many also, of eminent attainments in Greek learning, have erred in their use and application of the Greek poets and philosophers! What can we expect, then, from those whose acquaintance with this department of learning is but superficial, and who are desirous, nevertheless, of throwing light upon the sacred writings, from

this source, whenever some hasty academical performance, for form's sake, is to be prepared? It matters not with what particular class of writers their reading has been employed, they long to contribute something to the elucidation of the New Testament, without considering whether the books they aim to illustrate, and those from which they draw their illustrations, be in any manner connected or related. Time would fail me to enumerate the examples, which are at hand, of this error.

In fine, if any one desires to make a proper use of the Greek profane writers, in illustrating the diction of the New Testament, so far as this corresponds with the ordinary classical diction of the Greeks, it will be necessary for him, in my opinion, to give diligent heed, in the first place, to this caution, not to undertake to translate and explain by the aid of the profane Greek, detached words and phrases, in regard to which the Hebrew usage is rather to be consulted; in which respect, it is incredible to relate, what mistakes have in all ages been committed. Many interpretations entirely foreign from the design of the Holy Spirit, have thus been introduced. In the next place, he must see to it that such writings alone be employed, for the purposes of illustration, as belong to the popular class, and, indeed, to the very same class with the books of the New Testament. The age, also, in which the writers flourished, must be considered; for in the Greek as well as in the Latin, each several age possesses a different form and character of style, nor will the writers of any other age be so successfully employed for this purpose, as those of the age from which the inspired writers themselves derived their diction and style. It was observed, a long time since, by men of learning, that the language of Pólybius in particular, presented many things which bore a striking resemblance to the diction and style of the inspired writers. I shall briefly explain what I take to be the reason of this

resemblance. For, to assert, as some one has done, that the Holy Spirit peculiarly delighted in the diction of Polybius, is absurd beyond expression.

From the time that Greece was first subjected to the Macedonian sway, that exquisite and elegant dialect of the Athenians, which is found in Thucydides, Plato, Xenophon, Demosthenes, and others of that class and age, began gradually to decline, and was succeeded by that which is usually known by the name of the common dialect, although it may, perhaps, with more propriety, be denominated the Macedonian. For we cannot entertain a doubt, that the Macedonian domination was fatal to this Attic elegance, and introduced this other dialect, especially when we find the admirable dialect and style at Rome also, expiring with liberty. It is this common or Macedonian dialect, which we find employed by Philip the king, in his letters, as cited by Demosthenes. Hence new significations of words were adopted, and new forms of speech, unknown to the ancient Attics, were introduced, as any one may easily observe who reads with attention Polybius and other writers of that class. At length, some men of a more cultivated taste, aware of this variation from the standard of purity, began to imitate the style and dialect of those ancient Attics, and may aptly be compared with those illustrious men, who, after the revival of letters, some centuries since, devoted themselves to the imitation of Cicero and his contemporaries. This same dialect, of which I have been speaking, crossed the sea with the Macedonian empire, and prevailed throughout western Asia and in Egypt. It need not excite our surprise, therefore, if the Septuagint translators and the writers of the New Testament, who lived in those parts, and had not aspired to the elegance of the ancient Attics, are found to bear a resemblance to the writers of this common dialect, and to have many things in common with them. Let this, however, suffice in regard to the

difficulty of interpreting the New Testament, so far as it proceeds from the character and form of the language.

There are other difficulties still remaining, both numerous and great, with which the interpreter must conflict, at the present day, which owe their origin to the weakness and corruption of the human mind, and the mistakes of interpreters themselves. It is not my design, however, here to speak of the rash and erroneous opinions introduced by many in regard to the mode and nature of the interpretation, either of the whole inspired volume, or of the New Testament in particular; which errors the inexperienced find it somewhat difficult to avoid. I shall confine myself to one mode of interpretation which has prevailed from the earliest ages, and originated from ignorance of the original words themselves. For after the Christian religion had been spread abroad to the Greeks, most of the teachers of the church, who were occupied with the explanation of divine things, were, as is abundantly manifest, unacquainted with the Hebrew, and made use of the Greek alone in their interpretations. Hence, of necessity, they explained, by the aid of the Greek, a multitude of words and phrases, whose explication was to be sought for from the Hebrew language alone; and, in this manner, they wandered from the true sense. From this circumstance originated many interpretations of the sacred books, which were introduced into the church, and approved as true, which, although not repugnant to the Christian doctrine in the main, (which was however the fact with some,) were, nevertheless, false and inaccurate. This evil was still further aggravated by the Latins, some of whom were ignorant even of the Greek, and depended upon the literal Latin versions then in vogue. And if any of them resorted to the Greek for aid, still, not having a competent knowledge of the language, especially of that which the inspired writers employed, they consulted, for the most part, no-

thing but the Gracco-Latin glossaries, as is done by many at the present day, seizing upon the first Latin word, and, by the aid of this meaning, with which they were familiar, and of etymology also, interpreting the inspired writers, and disputing and philosophizing about matters of theology, without once considering that languages do not answer to one another in such a sense, that words, which are coupled together in the columns of a dictionary, preserve, under all circumstances, this equivalency of signification. Those, however, who were unable to avail themselves of the assistance of a Greek lexicon, adhered to the words of the Latin translation, which they interpreted with reference to the usage of their own day, and to the prevailing principles of philosophy, and engaged in philosophical disquisitions, drawn even from etymological considerations, and conceived they had in this manner nobly discharged the duties of a good interpreter. Hence originated baneful controversies, which might have been avoided if they had sought to interpret the sacred writings by the assistance of Greek and Hebrew rather than of Latin words. Many of these interpretations have been adopted and approved, and have prevailed even to the present day, to such an extent, that it becomes extremely difficult to avoid them; and even now, many persons, who are not deficient in Greek learning, hold and defend them. The reason is obvious. We are slow to detect any thing wrong in those things which we have learnt in childhood,—which we have ever been accustomed to recognize as true and right, and have maintained for years. This description of error, as it seems to me, is the most extensively prevalent, and with this the competent interpreter of the sacred books, must principally contend. Nor is the victory an easy one. I shall adduce here a few pertinent and evident examples, intending to cite a greater number hereafter, should Providence permit, in a future discussion, in which I design to

oppose the practice of those interpreters who philosophize rather than interpret, and who prefer to derive their expositions from the nature of things rather than from words, from logical, rather than from grammatical precepts; and I shall show that nothing can be more dangerous and fallacious than this method—that nothing involves the interpreter in greater darkness even in the most obvious and easy passages.

The occasion itself persuades me to take for my first example the word παρακλήτος,\* by which name, the Holy Spirit is styled by our divine Saviour in John xiv. 16. 26 xv. 26. xvi. 7. The Greeks, when they came to this word, adopted the meaning which was suggested by the verb παρακαλεῖν. As this verb occurs sometimes in the Septuagint, and in the New Testament writers, in the sense of *comforting*, in accordance, perhaps, with the popular usage of those times, they attached to the word παρακλήτος this same signification in some passages where the context plainly forbids it. They translated it accordingly, in this passage, *comforter*, as most of the Latins also have done; which sense, it must be acknowledged, accords very well with the office of the Holy Spirit, who, like the Father, is θεὸς πάσης παρακλήσεως *the God of all consolation*: 2 Cor. i. 1. Others, who were aware that this word was used to denote the *advocate* in the forum, preferred to adopt such a sense as would intimate that the Holy Spirit was our *intercessor* and *advocate* before God, especially as Christ also is styled by John παρακλήτος in this sense, and the Saviour himself declares that he will send them another παρακλήτον *comforter*. This interpretation has met with extensive

\* See a laboured discussion of this subject, in Knapp *De Spiritu Sancto et Christo Paracletis, item de varia Potestate vocabulorum παρακαλεω, παρακλησις παρακλητος*; translated in Vol. 1. p. 237 of the *Repository*. See especially p. 245, where these views of Ernesti are criticised. (T.)

approbation, and is, at the present day, adopted by those who affect to know more than others, influenced by this consideration especially, that it is more agreeable to the usage of the Greek language in its Attic purity.\* Indeed, if the choice must be between these two modes of interpretation alone, I should, without hesitation, prefer the former, and with the late Godfrey Olearius,† follow the example of Luther, who decides in favor of the sense of *advocacy*, especially as this sense comports better with the drift and aim of the consolatory discourse of Christ to his disciples, disheartened by the annunciation of his intended departure and future personal absence. Be this as it may, these interpretations have become so prevalent, that scarcely an individual can be found who does not adopt either the one or the other. I have no doubt, however, that if they had not originally resorted to these significations in their endeavours to interpret the passage, but had thought of eliciting the meaning from the usage of the Hebrew language, at the time of Christ, and from the context; or, if scholars of the present day had not approached the passage, with their minds preoccupied, even from childhood, with one or other of these opinions, they would have discovered an interpretation different from either. For my part, I regard it as indubitable, that the word *παρακλήτος*, when spoken of the Holy Spirit, denotes *a teacher, a master, an expounder* of divine truth to the Apostles. I have no doubt, that Christ himself employed this very word, in the Hebrew form, and that it was thence transferred into the Greek by John, who had heard it from the mouth of Christ. For it is abundantly manifest, that this word, together with many other Greek words, was in common use among the Hebrews in

\* See Gataker Adversar. Postum. c. 35. Suicer Thesaur. Ecclesiast. and others.

† Dissert. de Adorat. Patr. per Chr. p. 56.

those days, in the form פִּרְקָלִיטָא or פִּרְקָלִיט. Nor can we suppose that it was regarded by the disciples as an unusual or unintelligible term, for they request no explanation, as we find they did in regard to other expressions, on this very occasion.

This word answers to the Hebrew מַלְיָן, in translating which, the Chaldee paraphrast uses it in Job xvi. 20. xxxiii. 23. מַלְיָן is moreover rendered in the Septuagint by ἀρμηνηνευτής *an interpreter* of the language or opinion of another,\* and by πρεσβευτής *an ambassador, an orator*, whose business it was to be the bearer of the will of another or the expressions of his kind regard. † Although I am well aware, that the word מַלְיָן was also spoken of an *intercessor* and *advocate*. But the word has reference generally to the faculty of speaking and teaching, and this is its primary signification, whence the abstract term, as the logicians call it, מַלְיָנָה, is spoken of a *perspicuous discourse*, and even of *eloquence*, as is also the abstract פִּרְקָלִיטָא of that Hebraeo-Greek word פִּרְקָלִיט. Whenever the term is used by John, such expositions of it, and such attributes and actions of this παρακλήτος are added, as make it manifest, that it relates wholly to the notion of *teaching*. For, in some passages is added, by way of exposition, πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας *The Spirit of truth, or the author and teacher of all truth, the very truth itself*, the peculiarly competent teacher whose instructions we ought to receive with entire confidence, and in which alone we can confide without the least hazard. In all the other passages, no other attributes are ascribed to him, excepting those which pertain to a perfect *teacher*; not a word is said of *consolation*, or *intercession*, or *advocacy*. So that it is a matter of astonishment, how those interpretations could have prevailed, and obtain so firm a hold among the learned, unless it can

\* Gen. xi. 11. 23.

† 2 Chron. xxxii. 31.



be accounted for from what I have before said. This surprise is increased, when we find that Tertullian, who was undoubtedly the most ancient and learned teacher of the Latin church, understands it in this sense of *teaching*.\* “*In what then*” says he “*is the administration of the παρακλήσις manifest, but in guiding us in learning, in unfolding the Scriptures, in reforming the understanding, in advancing us toward perfection, &c.*” I am aware, however, that this same Tertullian has, in other places, rendered it by the word *advocatus*, but there is reason to believe that he intends, in those instances, to denote that class of advocates, that *gives counsel, advises, suggests, is seated next to one, or is at hand*, of which description, are all the *advocati* in Cicero, as also those in Terence, not pleaders of causes, solicitors or intercessors; unless perhaps he is chargeable with a want of consistency in the use of the term, as is the case with some of the other teachers of the primitive church, as Augustine, for example, in the case of this very word. But enough of this example. Let us take another.

Among the Greek expressions used in a Hebrew sense, the words ἐκλέξασθαι and ἐκλογή occupy an important place. The Latin translators having rendered them by the terms *eligere* and *electio*, which corresponded with them in the school-lexicons, the theologians of the Latin Church (with Augustine at their head, a man of eloquence and talents, but very deficient in the knowledge of the Hebrew and Greek language, although he earnestly recommends the study of both, to the interpreters of the sacred writings,)<sup>†</sup> began in the first place to ascertain the import of these terms from the usage of the Latin language, then they proceeded to philosophize strangely about this Latin *electio*, to dispute warmly, and finally, to the great detriment of

\* De Veland. Virginibus, chap. 1.

† Doctrina Christ. ii. J. 11.

the Church, to excite controversies which it has not been possible to settle even to the present day. For myself, I am clearly of opinion, that these disputes about *election* and *predestination* would never have existed in the Greek Church, nor would it have been necessary, in the elementary works of theology, to devote a special chapter to the subject of *Election* and *Predestination*; but all would have simply believed, what our church\* maintains and defends, as being consistent with reason and the sum of Christian doctrine, that to such as it was foreseen by God from eternity, would remain faithful to the end, he determined, even then, to give eternal life;—this naked truth, I say, they would, as I suppose, have universally believed, if the Latin theologians had not involved themselves in those philosophical disquisitions about the Latin term *electio*, and had been aware that the word ἐκλέξασθαι, which generally answers to the Hebrew רָחַם, is used, in the Hebraeo-Greek dialect, for *to love*, *to approve*, as the Latin *diligere*; and the word ἐκλεκτός for *beloved*, *dear*, *approved*, even without the notion of election, as the Latin *eximius*, *egregius*, *dilectus*. I do not deny that this word occurs in the Scriptures, in the sense of *election*, properly so called, but I think I can show that in those passages from which the theological schools derive or rather extort their doctrine of *predestination*, this sense, if we proceed with any regard to the legitimate precepts of interpretation, cannot be admitted. Other examples of this sort might be adduced, but our limits forbid us to enlarge. Even from these examples, however, it may be understood, how great is the difficulty arising from this source, of interpreting, at the present day, the sacred books.

There remains still one species of difficulty, concerning which I had designed to speak, which respects the use of the observations and precepts of the grammarians. For,

\* The Lutheran.—(Tr).

as in every art, it is easier to learn rules than to reduce them to practice : so in interpretation also, it is not so very difficult a matter to discover, in general, what course we ought to pursue ; but when we come to the business of practice and application, to have each precept ready in its proper place, and to examine the expressions and direct the interpretation with a strict regard to it, this indeed demands, if not uncommon talents, at least a great share of diligence and unremitting exercise. In attaining to this ability, there is one circumstance peculiarly adverse—that mankind in general, and the young in particular, are exceedingly prone to form their judgment of the meaning of expressions from their knowledge of things, rather than from their knowledge of words, and to examine these expressions by the analogy of the art or science (which is indeed by no means to be neglected) rather than recall them to the precepts of the grammatical art. But I find I have already exceeded the limits of this discussion, and this part of the subject must be reserved, as I have stated before, for another discourse.



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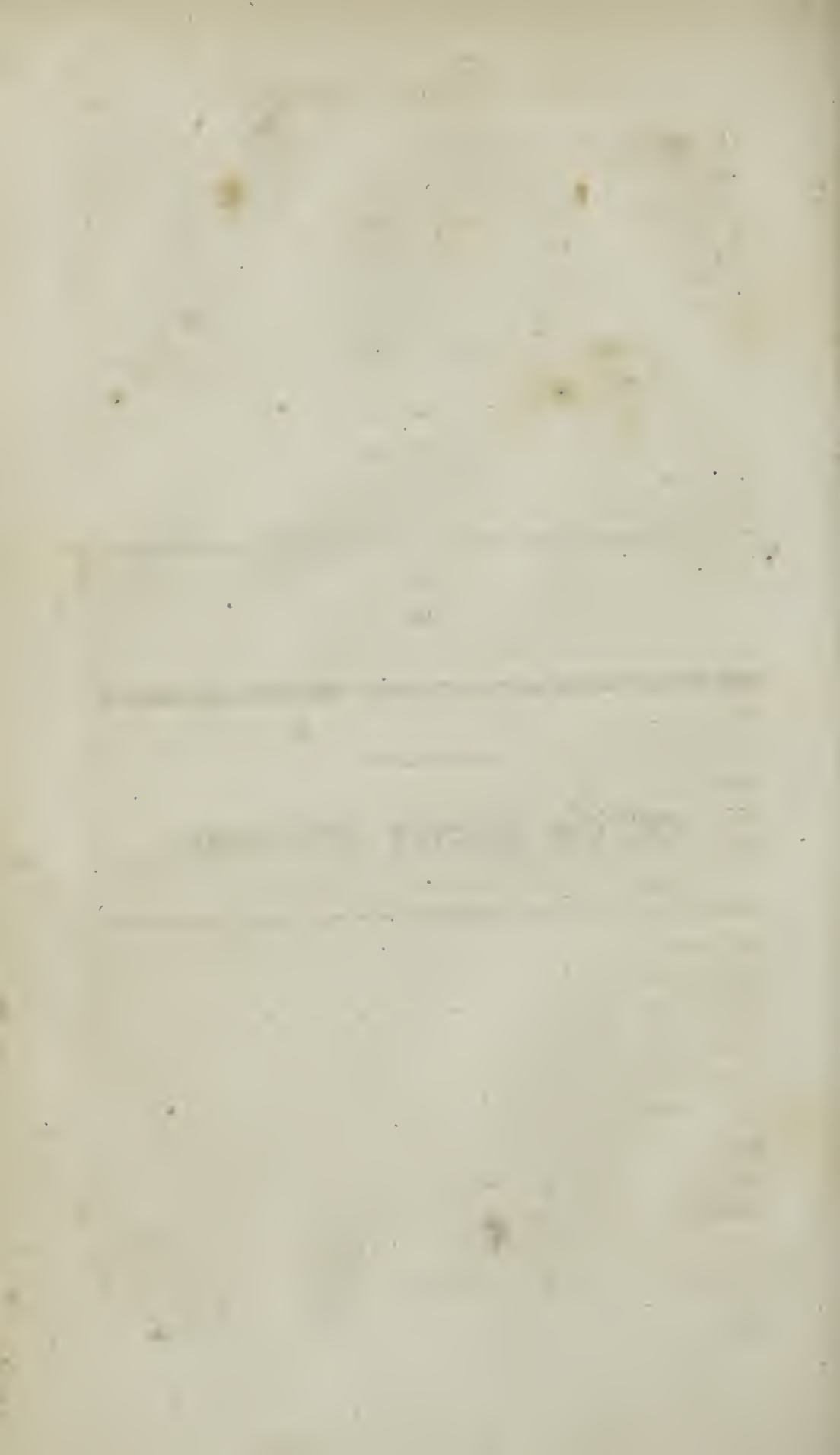
IN

**DEFENCE OF GRAMMATICAL INTERPRETATION,**

PARTICULARLY

**Of the Sacred Writings.**

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IN DEFENCE  
OF  
**GRAMMATICAL INTERPRETATION,**

*Ec. Ec.*

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IN enumerating the difficulties attending the correct interpretation of the New Testament (which formed the subject of our discourse the preceding year), I mentioned barely, at the close, that difficulty which consists in the knowledge and application of grammatical precepts and instructions,—a difficulty of the first magnitude undoubtedly, and well nigh embracing all the rest. I promised, accordingly, to give it a separate discussion, and, at the same time, to combat that method of interpretation, which philosophizes rather than interprets, and prefers to be metaphysical rather than grammatical, or, as it is uncouthly expressed, *real* rather than *verbal*, glorying also in this character, and spurning, as meagre, little, and inefficient, the grammatical method, which adheres to the words, and directs us to comprehend things through the medium of words, and not words through the medium of things. And I feel myself urged to fulfil this promise as soon as possible, and to liberate, if I can, the minds of the studious from the influence of these erroneous notions, because I am persuaded, that nothing operates more successfully to seduce men from the study of the languages, to which we are already rendered sufficiently averse by our natural sluggishness and dread of difficulties. The discussion will be so arranged as to show, in the first place, that the mode of

interpretation which proceeds entirely upon grammatical principles, is the only legitimate one, and that the other method, the philosophical or the doctrinal, is frequently detrimental, dangerous, fallacious, and unsatisfactory ; and finally, we shall set forth the difficulty of the grammatical method, as it regards both its acquisition and its application.

Should any intelligent person, however, wonder what has induced me to undertake this discussion, permit me to say, that the number has always been, and still is, considerable, of those who persuade themselves that the successful interpretation of such books as are designed to teach the more important branches of knowledge, or have any connexion with them, depends more upon a knowledge of things than of words. There have been persons, who denied that Cicero could be understood by grammarians and commentators, because, not a few things occur in his writings which pertain to the Roman law ; and claim, therefore, upon this pretext, for lawyers alone, the ability to understand them. I once heard a certain master of a celebrated school, relate that he was once, in a company of Aulick counsellors, chagrined at the incivility of one of their number, who asserted that no school-master—in short, that no one of those who professed to be teachers of polite literature—was competent to understand Cicero, on account of those things interspersed throughout his writings which pertain to the civil law. Upon his replying that the reasoning did not appear to warrant such a conclusion, and requesting that some passages of this description might be proposed, he cited, in the first place, those phrases which occur in the first book of his treatise *de Officiis*, “*usus fundi biennium esto,*” “*cum hoste aeterna auctoritas,*” and afterwards a second, and a third, of a similar character. All these being promptly explained, he was reduced to the necessity of saying, “You are the only one, however, of



this class who understands this author." Oh ! if the school-master, in his turn, had ventured to inquire of the counselor, what the *jus auctoritatis* of Cicero meant, what the *jus applicationis*, and what the *partitio*, I apprehend it would have been his good fortune, as it has been mine more than once, to render this man of the law as mute as a fish. Many such instances I have heard related, and have myself personally known, which it is unnecessary to relate ; and yet we find the greater number of those who approach the interpretation of the sacred writings, and of the books of civil law, regarding the employment in such a light, as to imagine themselves adequately furnished for this business if they are masters of a certain amount of learning, whether sacred or civil, derived from the popular compends of the day ; and such too are accounted by the multitude almost the only competent and learned interpreters. We shall demonstrate very clearly, that this notion is at the farthest remove from the sentiments and practice of the wisest men of every age, as well as at variance with the nature of the thing itself and with truth.

For the wise and prudent have always been of opinion, that correct apprehensions in general, and especially the knowledge of things and sciences, depend upon the understanding of words, and not the knowledge of words upon things and sciences. Socrates declares, according to Xenophon, that he was first enabled to commence his inquiries and acquisitions in knowledge from the time he was first able to comprehend the force of words ἐξ ὧν ξυνιέναι τὰ λεγόμενα ἤρξατο. And with this sentiment the philosophers of our own day manifestly accord, when they maintain, that mankind would be incapable of the exercise of reason, without the use of words and the understanding of their import. In the *Gorgias* of Plato, this same Socrates declares, that he who understands the words, understands the things ὅστις ἂν εἰδῇ τὰ ῥήματα εἴσεται καὶ τὰ πράγματα. And all the philosophers who

proceeded from the school of Socrates, that is, the most distinguished philosophers that have ever existed, maintained the same opinion. Plutarch also expressly asserts that those who have not learned to understand the import of words, cannot rightly discourse about things τὰς μὴ μανθάνοντες ὀρθῶς ἀκρίειν ὀνομάτων κακῶς χρῆσθαι καὶ τοῖς πράγμασι. But if this is universally true, with how much more reason may we conclude in regard to interpretation, that it depends entirely upon the knowledge of words. For what is the business of interpretation, but to make known the signification and sense of words? and in what does the signification and sense of words consist, but in the notions attached to each word? This connexion between the words and ideas, in itself arbitrary, has been fixed by usage and custom. And what art but that of the grammarian, is employed in discovering and teaching this usage and custom of speech, especially of the dead languages? To the grammarian this business has been conceded by every age. For the knowledge of this usage depends entirely upon observation, and not upon the nature of things ascertained by necessary inference in any science. Theologians are right, therefore, when they affirm the literal sense, or that which is derived from a knowledge of words, to be the only true one; for that mystical sense, which, indeed, is incorrectly called *a sense*, belongs altogether to the thing and not to the words. The former, accordingly, which is the only true sense, they denominate the *grammatical*; and some also, as Sixtus of Sienna. because it is ascertained by an observation of facts, style it the *historical* sense.

It should also be remarked, that the grammatical mode of interpretation is the only clear and satisfactory one; at least it is far more so than that which is conducted upon doctrinal and metaphysical principles. It will be acknow-

\* Apologia Socratis.

ledged by all who would avoid the imputation of dulness in logical matters, that whatever, in any department of science, is certain and absolutely free from doubt, possesses this character of certainty from some necessity belonging to the thing itself; not, indeed, a necessity invariably the same in all cases, but such as the nature of the thing admits. So that the certainty of interpretation is derived from some necessity of signification. That there exists such a necessity of signification in words, will easily be seen. For the connexion between ideas and words, of which we have already spoken, although at first arbitrary and unconstrained, nevertheless, when once fixed by use and custom, is become necessary, and preserves its necessity so long as this use and custom continue. For that alone is not to be regarded as necessary which proceeds from a necessary cause, but a certain necessity may also result from things assumed and fixed at will. It is left to our option, for example, whether to describe two parallelograms upon the same base, and of the same altitude, or not. But, as soon as we give the same base and altitude to both, the necessity of equality immediately follows, which is again removed when this condition is taken away. Nor do the frequent changes, to which the usage of speech is liable, and which, in all languages, so long as they continue to be spoken, are owing to various causes, destroy this necessity. For as, in speaking of the usage of speech, we wish to be understood as inquiring in what sense each word was employed, in each particular age, by every description of men, and in a certain connexion; so also we understand the necessity of signification in words, to be determined by the same circumstances of place and time. If these be changed, a new necessity is induced. Wherefore, since the art of the grammarian alone ascertains and teaches this usage of speech, it follows, that from the knowledge of that art alone, a sure method of interpretation is to be sought, both in human

writings, and the inspired volume, so far as this is to be understood by human effort. But this point has already been decided by the most distinguished theologians and interpreters of the sacred books; and by their decision we ought certainly to abide, since it has been the result of reasonings so clear and necessary. It was said by Melancthon, that the Scriptures could not be understood *theologically*, without first of all being understood *grammatically*; and in support of this assertion he argues in very many places. Camerarius also, an eminently great man, urges more than once, the same sentiment. But, omitting all other authorities, no one more earnestly or frequently commends the study of the original languages, which is altogether grammatical, and declares that in it consists all true interpretation of the sacred books, than the illustrious Luther; particularly in that golden epistle which he wrote concerning the establishment of schools throughout the German States; in which, among other things against the Waldenses, who despised the knowledge of languages in sacred things, and attributed every thing to divine influence, he writes as follows. “*Spirit here or spirit there, what signifies it? I also have been in the spirit, and have also seen spiritual things, (if a man may be permitted to boast of himself,) more, perhaps, than these same persons will see for a year to come, however they may glory. My spirit also has accomplished somewhat \* \* \* \* \** But this I know, full well, that how much soever we are dependant upon spiritual influences, I had been left entirely unmolested by my vigilant adversaries, if the languages had not come to my assistance, and afforded me confidence in the Scriptures. I might also have been very pious, and have preached well in retirement and quietness, but I must then have left the Pope and the Sophists, and the whole regiment of their followers, just where they were. The devil gives himself much less con-

*cern about my spirit, than about my tongue and pen. For my spiritual exercises take from him nothing but myself alone. whereas the knowledge of the Scriptures, and of the sacred languages, make the world too narrow for him, and strikes at his very kingdom.”\** Let such then as aim really to be, as well as to be accounted, emulators of his example, respect the authority of this experienced man, without heeding those upstart advocates of ignorance, who recommend them to pursue that way to proficiency in interpretation, which conducts to the meaning and sense of words through the knowledge of things. For, in this method of interpretation, it is impossible that either the necessity of which we have already spoken, or the certainty, which should principally be aimed at in interpreting, can exist. The reason is obvious. For who does not see,

\* This passage is given by Ernesti in the original German of Luther, which is characterized by an idiom very different from that of the present day, to which the translator has been most accustomed. He begs leave, therefore, to subjoin the original extract, in order that those readers of this work who are familiar with the language of the Reformer, may elicit, for themselves, the exact sense, in case the one here given be deemed inadequate. (*Tr.*)

“Geist hin, Geist her. Ich bin auch im Geist gewesen, und habe auch Geist gesehen, (wenns je gelten soll von eigenem Fleisch ruehmen) vielleicht mehr, denn eben dieselbigen noch im Jahr sehen werden, wie fast sie auch sich ruehmen. Auch hat mein Geist sich etwas beweiset \* \* \* \* \* Das weiss ich aber wohl, wie fast der Geist auch alles alleine thut, waere ich doch allen Poeschen zu ferne gewesen, wo mir nicht die Sprachen geholfen, und mich der Schrift sicher und gewiss gemacht haetten. Ich haette auch wohl kunt fromm sein, und in der Stille fein predigen, aber den Babst und die Sophisten mit dem ganzen Endechristischen Regiment, wuerde ich wohl haben lassen sein, was siesind. Der Teuffel achtet meinen Geist nicht so fast, als meine Sprache und Feder in der Schrift. Denn mein Geist nimt ihm nichts, denn mich allein, aber die heil. Schrift und Sprachen machen ihm die Welt zu enge, und thun ihm Schaden in seinem Reich.”

that a sense may be true in itself, which is not, however, conveyed by the words under consideration ?

In interpreting, moreover, we do not, strictly speaking, inquire *what is true* ; for, the ascertaining, comprehending, and understanding what is true, is quite another business, and to be compassed by entirely different means ; otherwise a Porphyry and a Celsus, and other adversaries of the Christian religion, having read and understood the inspired writings, would straightway have perceived the truth of Christianity. In interpreting, the simple inquiry is, *what has been said*, without regard to its relative nature or to the degree of truth with which it has been said. In human writings, as all are aware, many things are said which are not true ; nevertheless, these very untruths are susceptible of a correct interpretation. But in the inspired volume, being already persuaded of the truth of all that it reveals, it only remains for us to ascertain what it really declares. That Christ, for example, is an expiatory sacrifice for our sins, is most true ; but it does not follow from this, that he is called an expiatory sacrifice, in the passage of Paul, Rom. iii. 25. ὃν προσέθετο ἱλαστήριον. Unless this can be established upon grammatical principles ; that is, unless it can be shown, from the usage, not of the Greek language generally, but of the Hebraising dialect in particular, that the word ἱλαστήριον denoted *an expiatory sacrifice* ; and also, that the verb προσίδεσθαι was spoken of *victims* ; however true the doctrine may be in itself, nothing is effected toward the interpretation of this passage. But as the former position cannot be established, and it has been proved, by the most erudite scholars, particularly by Deilingius, in his volume of *Observations*, that כַּפֹּרֶת (*mercy seat*) alone was thus designated by that class of writers ; and, as it indicates sheer ignorance of the Greek, to favour, for a moment, the latter position, inasmuch as the verb προσίδεσθαι was never spoken but of a thing set forth as a spectacle, or

as a goal, or as an object of desire or aversion, (not to mention other reasons,) the interpretation above alluded to of the passage, is deservedly rejected as false, and is scarcely pardonable even in a school-boy. Hence it is obvious, that the true sense, is not, as a matter of course, to be understood and defined from the truth of the thing; especially as the number of those things which are consonant to truth, is endless: and if it be permitted to ascertain the truth of the sense by conclusions drawn from the truth of the thing, then every word might assume every variety of signification, which would be worse than skepticism.

What I have now advanced, does not militate, in the least with that precept of theologians, which enjoins, that every interpretation harmonize with the sum of christian doctrine, which is commonly called *the analogy of the faith*. For this precept was framed, almost entirely for the purpose of testing and rejecting a false sense, and not of discovering the true one. Nor does it follow, that because an interpretation, which is at variance with the analogy of the faith, is false, therefore any one, which is consonant to it, is true. For, there may be very many of this character; but that one alone, of all these, which is most in accordance with grammatical principles, is the truest, or, at least, the most probable. Let those, therefore, who are compelled, by their ignorance of the original languages, to trust too much to this analogy of the faith, be on their guard, lest they bring forward expositions entirely at variance with the words and intention of the inspired writers; which the benevolent scholar perceives, with regret, to have been frequently the case in all ages, and to be too often the case at the present day also. This same analogy of doctrine, however, when inspected narrowly, will be found to be altogether grammatical. For, strictly speaking, it is only a comparison of the sense which occurs in the more difficult passages, not with the dogmas of the learned, which are set forth in

the compends of theological science; for, in that case, the analogy would vary with the opinions of the different sects; whereas, from its nature, it ought to be but one; but with the more perspicuous passages, whose interpretation is also itself grammatical. Such a comparison has been instituted by grammarians in every class of writings, in history, for example, and in poetry; but they have never been heard to insist upon an analogy of history or of poetry.

Perceiving, however, that those whose method differs from ours, dwell particularly upon the following circumstance, and pervert it in defending their views, viz. that the mode of interpretation varies with the diversity of the subjects; and perceiving that they cannot persuade themselves that the grammarian is competent to interpret books of every class, of theology, for instance, of law, of medicine, of philosophy, I feel it incumbent on me to expose the folly of this doubt. First of all, then, it is not true, that the mode of interpretation is so affected by the nature of the subject, that the former must vary with the latter. For as, in every species of discourse, whatever be the subject, the grammatical sense, as was stated before, is the only true one, it follows also, that there can be no other legitimate interpretation but the grammatical; because the character of the sense necessarily defines the nature and kind of interpretation, and there cannot possibly be more kinds of interpretation than of senses. And if a difference in the nature of the subject demanded a different mode of interpretation, it would follow, as a necessary consequence, that there would be as many kinds of interpretation as there are different subjects; which I find to be the opinion of some, of V. G. Forster, for instance, in his work on *the Interpretation of Law*,\* who makes as many methods of interpretation as there are distinct sciences and arts: the historical

\* *Thes. Otton. V. II. p. 954.*



interpretation, for example, the physical, the arithmetical, the geometrical, the medical, &c. which is incomparably silly.

Some years since, when the hope was entertained that an edition of Pliny, the natural historian, would be prepared by Gesner, a scholar of distinguished reputation, I recollect to have been present at a conversation of some very learned physicians, who expressed their wishes, that an edition of this historian might be prepared rather by a physician, because, forsooth, no one but a physician seemed to them competent to the undertaking. When I discovered, upon inquiry, the reason of this opinion to be, that many things were met with in that work, which pertain to medicine, I began to defend Gesner, by saying, that I was surprised that a physician should seem to them the only competent interpreter of that work, whose author himself was not a physician. But if Pliny, who made no profession of medicine, had nevertheless been able to understand the Greek physicians, and to collect together, in his own work, such and so many things from their writings; if Celsus also, who it is manifest, was not a physician, had been able to explain, from the Greek medical writers, the whole science of medicine, so perspicuously and elegantly, that no professed physician could cope with him in this respect; why could not these writers themselves be understood and interpreted by one who was not professedly devoted to the science of medicine? I ventured also to express the opinion, that the reason why no creditable edition of Celsus had yet appeared—a fact lamented by the medical profession—was simply this, that, as yet, no grammarian had devoted himself to the business. Moreover, if it was a necessary consequence, that, because many things pertaining to medicine were taught in the work of Pliny, therefore physicians alone are able to interpret him; with the same justice, astronomers, geographers, huntsmen, shepherds, vine-

dressers, statuaries, painters, miners, and what not, would claim the exclusive right and ability to interpret and publish the books of Pliny, because so many things are found in them which pertain to their appropriate science, or art, or employment. When I had finished, and a moderate laughter was excited at their expense, they seemed to accede to my opinion. In fact, there is but one and the same method of interpretation common to all books, whatever be their subject. And the same grammatical principles and precepts, ought to be the common guide in the interpretation of all. Epictetus\* gives it as his opinion, that he who can interpret the obscure writings of the philosopher Chrysippus, must be a grammarian; and between this grammarian and another, the only difference is, that one interprets Chrysippus, and another, it may be, interprets Homer.

In presenting, however, this view of the subject, I do not maintain that one and the same interpreter possesses the ability to interpret books of every class. This might possibly have been the case with Scaliger, Salmasius, Casaubon, Grotius, and a few others, of equal talents; who, by an incredible force of genius and amount of reading, seem to have attained to a familiarity with the usage of speech of every age, science, art, or individual; it cannot however, be believed, that all, or even many, can arrive at this proficiency. As all who profess theology, or law, or medicine, do not cultivate, with eminent success, every department of their science; but some are profound in one department, while they are but superficially acquainted with another; and some attain to eminence in one department, while others are distinguished in another; so it is also with grammarians. Not every one, or perhaps I may say, no one, can, by any force of genius or assiduity of application, acquire a familiarity with every usage of speech.

\* Ch. lxxiii.

of every ancient language, as it obtained in different ages, in different departments of learning, in different sects, and, I had almost said, in different individuals. But, whoever is fully master of any one part of any language, and has acquired, by daily exercise, the ability to explore this portion, he is a grammarian worthy of the name; and if he wishes to transfer his study to any other portion, he can acquire the same ability in exploring this also.

Some one, perhaps, will here ask, If grammatical interpretation alone be recognized as true and legitimate, what becomes of Melancthon, whose words you cited above, in which he associates the *theological* interpretation of the sacred books, with the grammatical? What becomes of so many other eminently learned theologians, who declare it to be the business of the *theologian*, to interpret those books? What of the lawyers, and the philosophers, who are accounted our interpreters of the books of civil law and of philosophy? The answer is easy. The accomplished theologian sustains, as it were, a twofold character; the one, in common with grammarians; the other, his own and peculiar. His duty, in the capacity of a grammarian, will be, first of all, to vindicate the soundness of the readings, against the corruptions introduced by transcribers, heretics, and critics; and, to this end, to have at hand a suitable store of the materials of criticism, derived from manuscript and printed copies, and also the means of deciding on the merits of the various readings; and then, to make known the sense of the words from the usage of the Greek and Hebrew. In his other character, he will be called upon, from the words rightly understood, to derive his definitions and divisions, together with the particulars of faith and duty; to set forth legitimate conclusions; so to digest and arrange these as to form a system of doctrines; and also, to teach and defend these, whether by disputation or by preaching, and by every possible me-

thod to convert them to the advantage of mankind. In the discharge of his duties in the former character, he will interpret grammatically; in the latter, theologically. The former interpretation accordingly will be grammatical; the latter, theological. If both be found in one man, as was the case with Origen and Jerome, and in many more since the reformation, we have an absolutely perfect theologian. The same is true of the lawyer and the philosopher. But it must be obvious to every one, that this latter method can with little propriety be denominated interpretation; at least, that it is quite another thing from that, which we intend, when we speak of the interpretation of books; and that those who embrace and practise this latter method, to the neglect of the former, and, as we have before shown, the more difficult one, are to be regarded as interpreters and teachers of theological compends and catechisms, rather than of the inspired volume. That this latter method has received the name of *interpretation*, is owing, to the ambiguity of the latin term *interpretatio*, which was originally spoken, not only of him who explained the sense of words, but of him also who expounded any thing to others, in whatever manner.

What then? Is the interpreter to derive no assistance whatever from the knowledge of the subject itself? Certainly, indeed, there are times, when the grammarian also must resort to things, for the purpose of compassing the true force of the words. When and why this is necessary, it seems proper briefly to explain; that it may be clear, what use can be made of the knowledge of things in interpreting; and that this use may be circumscribed within just limits. I have shown above, that, from the very nature of interpretation, properly so called, and accurately examined, all legitimate interpretation must be derived from such an observation and knowledge of the usage of speech, as I have already defined. Now it cannot be satis-

factorily collected, except from adequate testimony, what particular signification the usage of speech, of every age, has fixed upon each word, in every connexion, and also upon each form of expression; because, it belongs to that class of things which are matters of fact and observation.

What the different kinds of testimony are, and how they are obtained, examined, and judged of, (which is a point of capital importance,) is unfolded by us carefully when we deliver the rules of interpretation. It is unnecessary to dwell upon these topics here. But it sometimes happens, that adequate testimony of the fact either does not exist, or has not yet been discovered and prepared. Sometimes also, the writers themselves, compelled by necessity, or from some other cause, have introduced an unusual mode of expression. Sometimes the nature of the things treated of is such, as to forbid their being adequately described by any words. And finally, some words are liable to a certain ambiguity from the circumstances of their collocation. By all which it is effected, that the usage either cannot be ascertained at all, or else, when ascertained, is not sufficient for the discovery of the sense of the words. When reduced to this extremity, we must resort to certain means, which take the place, as it were, of the usage of speech, by the aid of which we may come at the true sense,—means, however, which have been already employed by grammarians in every class of writings. And this necessity presents itself, I think, no where more frequently than in the interpretation of the sacred writings, and gives rise to considerable difficulty. For those writings, not only the Hebrew but the Greek also, stand almost alone in respect of the form of the language and the character of the style. For, notwithstanding the same general character belongs to the Alexandrine version and to the New Testament; and the former, in consequence, assists as much in ascertaining the usage of speech of the latter, if

rightly compared, as before hinted, with the Hebrew text, and also with the remains of Symmachus, with Josephus, and with Philo: still it will be found that many expressions are used in an unusual sense, and many are newly coined on account of the novelty and sublimity of the subject, transcending the powers of the human understanding. So that, it necessarily happens, either that the testimony is wanting, by which the usage may be established, or that this usage, when known, may not suffice for the discovery of the sense of the words. Among the means, therefore, sometimes resorted to, in place of the usage of speech, is to be numbered, the knowledge of the subject under discussion. It must be employed, however, with great moderation and prudence, otherwise unspeakable injury is done;—of which it is my design to speak in another part of the proposed discussion. In the first place, much caution is necessary, that it be chiefly employed in things pertaining to ordinary life, and well understood; but in divine things, on the contrary, beyond the reach of human comprehension, that we do not seek to elicit the interpretation from the nature of things, however known to us, contrary to the force and proper signification of the words. How very easy it is to err in this respect, we know from experience, in so great a proneness and desire in mankind, to reduce divine things within the contracted limits of human knowledge. In the next place, care must be taken, not to resort to it unnecessarily; for this method is inferior to the grammatical, in virtue and efficacy, whether in persuading or refuting, especially in contested points; and it is inexcusable to employ a weaker method when a stronger one is at hand. That many errors have been committed in this respect, I could prove by a multitude of examples. Those who are even slightly acquainted with the controversies, which have been agitated, from time immemorial, amongst theologians, both orthodox and heretical, must be aware, on the one hand, how great an abuse of

this method has prevailed, in the most serious and important matters; and on the other how little it has availed against the adversaries, even when skilfully and properly employed. So that our theologians have done well, when giving rules for regulating the interpretation of the sacred books, to insist especially upon a faithful and diligent search for and acquaintance with the usage of speech, or as it is commonly denominated, *the propriety of words*, without departing from it, in any case, unless from the most urgent necessity.

But, while it is acknowledged, that the grammarian is only now and then to seek for the sense of the words from a knowledge of things, he is not, however, on this account, to be denied the ability to expound these latter also. For, if the things be of that class which is obvious to the senses, or intelligible to all, grammarians certainly will not be ignorant of what all are familiar with. And if the knowledge of the things is to be sought from some abstruse and recondite science, what forbids that they also should draw from this source? For if this knowledge should be derived from the fountain-head, which is most desirable, they will be the more competent to this undertaking, the greater their diligence in understanding languages. And if, again, this knowledge is to be obtained from the commentaries and writings of the learned, they certainly will not fail to understand these, which the tyro, in every department of science, is supposed to comprehend. But here, as I see, is the great, and, I had almost said, ridiculous mistake of many, and in particular of those who style themselves philosophers, that they imagine, that the man who has not listened to interpreters, however barbarous and incompetent, of the compends of any department of learning, and who has not consumed a goodly portion of his life, within the contracted atmosphere of such compends, in teaching or reading them, is neither skilled in his science nor has any right

perceptions of things pertaining to it. And, indeed, I know not but the observation of Mark Antony, which he made, according to Cicero, concerning the orator, when disputing against Crassus, may be transferred to the grammarian. For when Crassus denied that a forensic orator could exist, without a thorough knowledge of the civil law, Anthony replied, that the orator, although unskilled in civil law, provided he should obtain from professed lawyers, what was requisite of this knowledge, in any cause, would deliver those things thus received, better than the lawyers themselves. Gesner, of whom mention was made above, having applied himself to the interpretation of the very difficult treatise of Hippocrates, succeeded to such a degree, as to be thought to have been the first to discover the right method of interpreting this author. This success was owing, undoubtedly, to the fact, that he came to the interpretation of that treatise, with a great store of Greek learning, and after the practice and exercise of many years in the business of interpretation.

Let all those, therefore, who wish to be successfully employed in the interpretation either of the divine writings or of others, be assured of this, that the only true, compendious and certain way to the acquisition of this ability, is that which grammarians have pointed out and prepared; and let them not suppose, that, because grammarians are busied about words, they are destitute, for this reason, of the knowledge of things; nor imagine that they are unable to interpret those books in which sciences are taught.

The next thing in order, according to our division of the subject, is, to engage in the other proposed discussion, and show how dangerous and slippery, how vain and fallacious a method those adopt, who wish to prove themselves logicians, philosophers and metaphysicians, in interpreting, rather than grammarians. But as the former part has already exceeded the limits we had proposed, it must, together with the third, be deferred to another time.



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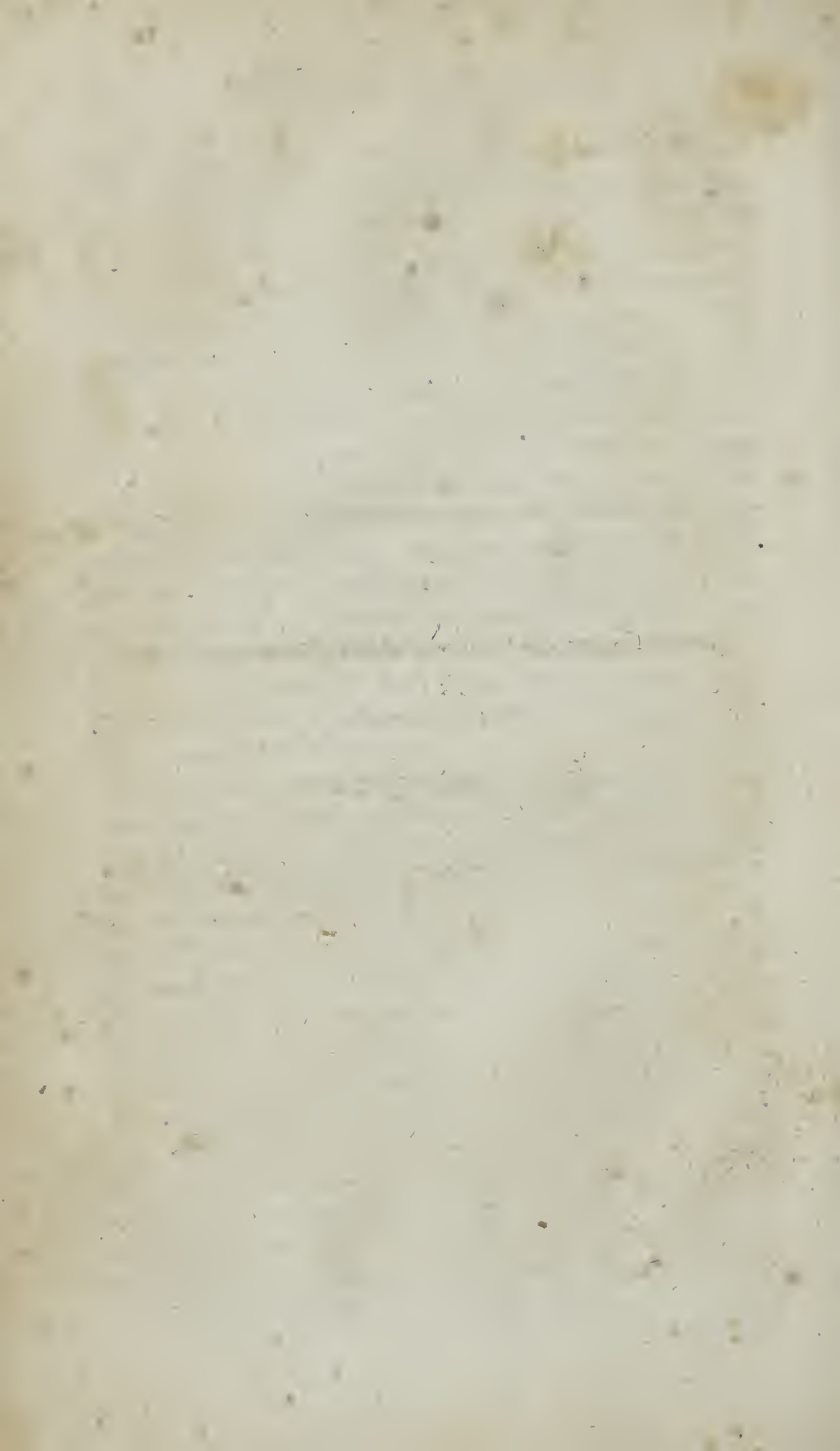
ON

THE FOLLY OF THOSE WHO PHILCSOPHIZE

IN INTERPRETING

*The Scriptures.*

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ON THE  
FOLLY OF THOSE WHO PHILOSOPHIZE  
IN INTERPRETING  
**THE SCRIPTURES.**

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HAVING undertaken to prove, contrary to the notion entertained by those, whose province it is to judge concerning the pursuits of letters and the merits of the learned, and by those, who are themselves devoted to the cultivation of such studies,—how numerous and how great are the difficulties, to be encountered by all, who would engage, with success, in interpreting the books of the New Testament; we arrived at that point in the discussion, at which it devolved on us to show, how large a portion of the difficulty proceeds from the want of a just knowledge and legitimate application of the precepts and observations of grammarians;—not only of the difficulty, which these books present in common with the rest of ancient writings, but of that also which is peculiar to this class. And here, when we reflected, how many were disposed to think meanly of grammatical interpretation, because it is busied about words and syllables, and even letters; about nice rules and minute observations; and to imagine, that the knowledge of things promises a more efficient aid in the business of interpretation; we began to fear lest this widely disseminated opinion might withdraw the attention of readers from the subject of this discussion; and, if its effects extended no further, might still induce men to conclude, that if the grammatical method of interpretation

presents such difficulties, it deserves the rather, on this very account, to be neglected and abandoned. Accordingly, we thought it expedient, to fortify our way beforehand, and to prove, that the grammatical method alone deserves the name of interpretation; that it is the only legitimate, satisfactory, and sure method; and that neither correct interpretations can be ably defended against the adversaries, nor false interpretations, especially if they be not, in themselves, repugnant to *the analogy of the faith*, be unanswerably refuted, except upon grammatical principles. We have reason to think and hope, that the discussion obtained the approbation of the learned and intelligent,—of those, at least, whose minds were not preoccupied with the ill founded notion above alluded to, or otherwise shackled. It now remains, to pursue the plan marked out in the preceding discourse, and expose, in the first place, the folly of that method of interpretation, which is derived from the knowledge of things rather than of words; which aims to be philosophical and metaphysical, rather than grammatical: and then, to point out the difficulties of the grammatical method, as it regards both the knowledge of it and its application. This latter discussion, however, as it ranges over too wide a field, to admit of its being embraced within the limits prescribed on the present occasion, I have reserved for a special academical exercise: the former part of the subject alone will occupy our attention at present.

I am well aware, how difficult it is, to wrest from men the opinion and the practice, against which this discussion is directed. For not only are other allurements presented,—the dignified name, for example, of philosophy, which this method assumes,—but we are constantly exposed to the seductive influence of two insinuating and powerful mistresses, or rather procuresses, pride and sloth. It is evident, that those, who come to the business of interpreta-

tion, ignorant of letters, or but superficially acquainted with them, and familiar with the compends merely of any science ; and who, nevertheless, wish to be, and to be accounted, interpreters either of divine or human writings, can, by no means, accede to our views ; for, in that case, they must, of necessity, cease to be enrolled in the number of genuine interpreters. Besides, it calls for neither distinguished talents, nor uncommon industry, to understand, remember, and teach, the elements and rudiments of some art or science, compressed within the narrow limits of a compend. For it is notorious, how many attain to this proficiency, and in how short a time, even in the midst of daily sports, and almost in the midst of other serious occupations. Those, on the other hand, who desire to draw for themselves from the fountain-head, or to render it accessible to others, through a knowledge of the languages and of the grammatical art, must embrace and thoroughly understand an almost endless variety of things and observations, many of which will be found to be subtle and minute, and, for that very reason, the more apt to escape us : a very large number of books must be carefully read and critically examined : an extraordinary diligence and attention also must be employed, descending even to the most trivial and minute matters :—all which things are directly hostile to that sloth and sensuality, to which the manners of the present age are so propense. Indeed, there is scarcely any employment of the literary kind, which presents fewer difficulties, than that mode of interpretation, which neglects the assistance of grammarians, and elicits the sense from things ; which labours in the explication of things, rather than of words ; and resorts to philosophy, rather than to the instructions of grammarians, for the true sense of the words. For, it not only demands a very moderate share of knowledge, but is even employed, with success, by a mind that is neither great nor cultivated.

And it requires also neither rigid accuracy, nor uncommon diligence, nor vigorous intellect. It is the opinion of Vitringa,\* one among a few excellent interpreters, that it is a very laborious matter, to ascertain the grammatical sense, on account of the difficulty of the thing itself, and the diversity of opinion among interpreters; but, when this grammatical sense has been once ascertained, the ability and the means are afforded to all, even to those who are ignorant of the languages, of disputing and deciding upon the other individual questions. What is here advanced by Vitringa in relation to the book of Isaiah alone, admits an application to all the other books of the sacred volume. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that most persons so eagerly embrace this easier method. For my own part, I am convinced, from the experience and observations of many years spent in the management of youth of various dispositions, that the young mind is peculiarly inclined to adopt it; especially, if it be of a more lively and impatient character, and not yet sufficiently trained to investigate the sense under the guidance of grammatical principles and rules. For frequently, when some difficulty has presented itself, arising from the words themselves, or from their collocation, upon directing them to give their minds to the search, and to communicate their views, or to give a reason of their decision, I have observed, that, neglecting the knowledge of grammatical rules, they have resorted to the thing itself, ascertained, some how or other, from the context, or from some other source, and were disposed to seek aid from this quarter in ascertaining or in confirming the interpretation; flattered, at the same time, by a certain show and notion of genius, the praise of which, we all, at that age, covet more eagerly than that of diligence. In fine, if any one will examine the record of

\* Praef. ad Comment in Esa. p. 6.

past ages, beginning from the infancy of Christianity, he will find, I am confident, that the practice of philosophizing in interpretation, originated from ignorance of the original languages; for the successful study of which no facilities were afforded; or, from the study of which, if the requisite facilities were afforded, they were deterred by a dread of the labour necessarily incurred in attaining to a thorough understanding of these languages: he will find, also, that those who possessed this requisite knowledge, were never desirous of employing that other method. The philosophical interpretation, therefore, and the allegorical, may be referred to the same cause. "*Formerly,*" says Jerome, in the preface to his Commentary upon Obadiah, "*I interpreted the prophet Obadiah allegorically, through ignorance of history.*" In the same manner, ignorance of the Greek and Hebrew, has led most others also to the allegorizing, and all, to the philosophizing method. All these things clearly evince that the philosophical mode of interpretation cannot, in any view of it, be approved. But we must pass on to other things of more importance. Before we proceed, however, to the particular consideration of these, we must explain, more definitely, what we understand by this method.

We have not, then, undertaken this discussion against all those indiscriminately, who abuse philosophy in interpreting the inspired writings. We have nothing to do with those, who torture the passages which treat clearly and expressly of the most sacred mysteries of the Christian religion, until they seem to be brought down to a level with the capacity of human wisdom, and nothing mysterious be left; or, by a violent mode of interpretation, refer the miracles to natural causes, or explain them after the manner of natural effects; or, in some other such way, pervert the sacred Scriptures. These deserve imprisonment and bonds, rather than a serious refutation;—

especially as they have already been frequently refuted and exposed, by the most learned theologians. It is not my design, to contend with the madness of the impious, but to correct the errors of the inexperienced and unskilful; for the former deserve our contempt, the latter our pity. We have, accordingly, to deal, in the first place, with those, who abuse philosophy in interpretation, but without impiety; and then, with those who abuse the truths themselves of religion, but, generally, without any serious harm.

Such, then, are the persons, whom we specially intend to oppose, as philosophizing in the interpretation of the sacred writings. They err, however, in various ways. In the first place, and principally, in determining the force of detached words; which is a very important branch of the business of interpretation. For, accustomed, as they are, to the notions prevalent in the schools of philosophy, with which they are particularly conversant, and these same notions forthwith suggesting themselves, whenever the original, or a version, or their dictionaries present a word, to which some signification or other has been attached by their teacher; it so happens, that they attach to the word under consideration, this same meaning, which is frequently entirely foreign from the intention of the inspired writer. This abuse has prevailed extensively, and has proved a stumbling block to interpreters in every age. It is well known, that very many expositors among the Greeks attached to the words of the evangelists and apostles, at one time, the Platonic notions, at another, the Aristotelian, and at another, the Stoical, which gave birth to expositions, at variance with the design of the sacred writers, and frequently in direct contradiction to revealed truth. As many writers, however, have already abundantly discussed this part of the subject, I shall forbear to enlarge. This abuse, it must be acknowledged, has not been confined to professed philosophers. Others also, who



have not proceeded from the schools, deceived sometimes by the resemblance of words, have been led to attach philosophical notions to passages which utterly forbid them. Of this description is the Scholion of Oecumenius, upon Heb. xi. 1., where faith is styled by Paul ὑπόστασιν ἐλπίζομένων *the substance of things hoped for*. The word ὑπόστασις having been in vogue among the ancient philosophers in the sense of *essence* or *substance* (ἔσῆα), Paul employs it, in this same sense, in the first chapter. This commentator, however, adopts the same signification, in the passage above cited; and then indulges in smart speculations, which, to my astonishment, meet the approbation of Beza. Among the commentators of the Latin Church, owing to their ignorance of the Greek as well as of the Hebrew, the evil was still more aggravated; especially in the age of the schoolmen, who crammed every thing with the notions of their philosophy. Afterwards, upon the revival of the study of the ancient languages, when this barbarism was banished, and the thick darkness, which hung around the preceding ages, was dispelled, this evil was the first to be remedied. But when the ardour of these philological studies was again cooled by the predominance of sloth,—an ardour which, at the present day, is almost extinguished, because the inexperienced are induced to believe, that the knowledge of things is of more importance and advantage than the knowledge of words, although this knowledge they obtain is generally little else but words,—this evil again returned, and spread far and wide. So that, from what we now hear and read, we should be led to conclude, that the inspired writers speculated as if they came from the interior of the Wolfian, or some other such school of philosophy; inasmuch as some have arisen who endeavour, in entire treatises and essays, to obscure (I had wished to say, elucidate,) the words of

the apostles, from the instructions of their philosophical teachers.

Among the Greeks, indeed, this error was chiefly occasioned by their ignorance of the Hebrew, and of the method of ascertaining the sense of the words, by a comparison of the Alexandrine version with the Hebrew text; to which subject I have alluded already. Still, I am disposed to think, with Vitringa,\* the Commentator already cited, that they might have compassed this object, although ignorant of Hebrew, by a comparison of this Greek version with others,—with that of Aquila, for example, and Symmachus; the former of whom had furnished a strictly literal Greek translation of the Hebrew text; so much so, that he is cited, by some of the ancients, under the name of *Hebrew verity*; the latter had aimed to preserve the purity of the Greek idiom: as we find, in either case, from their exceedingly precious remains. Concerning this mode of comparison, however, we shall treat more at large in another place. If that scholiast, (to keep to our former example,) after consulting the Alexandrine version, had been aware, that the term *ὑπόστασις* is used where, in the Hebrew, we find the word *תּוֹחֵלֶת*, and such words as, in other places, are rendered by the Greek terms *ὑπομονή*, *ἀπεκδοχή*, and the like, which denote *a patient and constant expectation of things hoped for*; and also, if he had consulted the Hexapla, in Ps. xxxix. 7., where the Alexandrine version translates the word, *תּוֹחֵלֶת* by *ὑπομονή*, and had found that Aquila has *καταδοχία*, and Symmachus, *ἀναμονή*, he might easily have avoided those subtleties; especially, if he had considered, that the verb *ὑφίστασθαι*, from which *ὑπόστασις* is derived, is used, by the Greek writers, to denote, *to have a clear, confident persuasion*, in which sense, not yet noticed by the lexicons, it frequently occurs

\* Praef. ad Comment. in Esa. p. 5.

in Diodorus Siculus, as in I. 6. 11. 12, &c. The Latins, also, might have avoided, in the same manner, the like speculations; and so may the commentators of our own day, although the former could do it more easily, inasmuch as they possessed the Hexapla entire.

In fine, it behooved them all to consider, in the first place, that languages do not so correspond, as to have all the words in any one, in the Greek, for example. convertible into corresponding and precisely equivalent terms in the Latin; which subject has been treated at large by Le Clerc, in his *Ars Critica*,—a writer, however, who should be read with caution. In the next place, they should have considered, that a great difference obtains between the refined notions of philosophers, and the plainer notions of popular writers, which cannot be tested by the refinements of philosophy. It should also have been particularly attended to, that the inspired writers have employed some words, drawn, indeed, from the common usage, but in a peculiar signification; which signification is to be ascertained by a diligent comparison of various passages and examples. To this class belongs the word πίστις *faith*. Even the Greek Jews themselves have erred in their acceptation of this term, estimating its meaning from its use among the Greek writers, and thus converting the faith which is the instrument of salvation, into that virtue which is enjoined by the Mosaic law, which is attainable even by the human powers. Philo, for example, lauds faith exceedingly, and places it above every other virtue; in the sense, however, just now specified.\* Let all, then, who aim to be successful interpreters of the inspired volume, carefully guard against this mistake, not consulting philosophers, for the purpose of determining the sense of words, but the usage of speech of

\* *Quis heres rerum div.* I. p. 435. 436. Ed. Lond. and *de Abrahamo* II. p. 39.

the original languages, and of each particular writer. In order to acquire the knowledge of this usage, in the right and legitimate way, they must attend upon the instructions of grammarians.

Another mode of philosophizing in interpretation, akin to the former, is *when the sense of the words is exacted according to the subtilty of logicians and metaphysicians*. Nothing can be said or imagined, more absurd. In other writings, both Greek and Latin, this mode of proceeding has been already rejected, under such circumstances, that, if any one, at the present day, should desire to examine and interpret the words of any historian, orator, or poet, Greek or Latin, with reference to this logical and metaphysical refinement, he would become the laughing stock of all intelligent scholars. All these classes of writers, and such as write, not for philosophers, but for all alike,—of which description are those, especially, who labour to instruct the human race, even the lowest grade of society, in the knowledge of divine things,—not only disregard this philosophical subtilty, in their ordinary language, but purposely avoid it in their words and sentences. If this be not the case; but if, either from ostentation of learning, or from want of experience, they employ the notions and forms of speech peculiar to the schools of philosophy; they err, most egregiously, through ignorance and unskilfulness, and are deservedly laughed at. Of this circumstance, these do not seem to be sufficiently aware, who, at the present day, in discourses addressed to the populace on divine subjects, make use of strange words, and forms, invented, I shall not say how felicitously, some day or two since, by philosophers; to be tolerated, perhaps in the schools, but wholly unintelligible to those who have not heard the same philosophers, or become acquainted with them by reading. If this be so, are not those proceeding upon a most objectionable plan, at variance with the design of the inspired

writers, and subversive of the common good, who, in interpreting those books, aim at a logical and metaphysical refinement. For the writers neither came forth from the schools of philosophy, accustomed to employ their words and forms and sentences, adapted to the subtilty which there obtains ; nor were they engaged in instructing philosophers, but the illiterate multitude, utterly incapable of this niceness and accuracy of thought. Still, this objectionable course has been pursued, in every age, and is adopted, at the present day, particularly by those who foolishly suffer themselves to be persuaded, that by means of a knowledge of things, derived from philosophy, and without any considerable amount of knowledge of languages, and assiduous exercise in interpretation under the guidance of grammatical principles, they may acquire the reputation of interpreters, and, in general, of good theologians : when the thing itself and experience clearly teaches, that the former proficiency, unless preceded by the latter, has never availed, and has proved, for the most part, a hinderance and a stumbling-block. Nor can this faulty mode of proceeding be avoided, except by those, who devote a very considerable portion of time to the study of the genius of the original languages, and to the reading of the originals themselves ; especially as it has, in the estimation of some vain minds, a certain delusive charm thrown around it, from the show of acumen and refinement, which some men of extraordinary stupidity, are pleased to denominate *solidity*. For, this mode is sometimes adopted, even by those, who are not chargeable with the ignorance and error alluded to above, from a desire to detect some peculiar emphasis, which, when discovered, they think will add somewhat of dignity to the inspired writers ; in which respect, all those are apt to expose themselves to ridicule, who interpret from things rather than from a thorough knowledge of the usage of speech. But let us adduce a few examples,

drawn, principally, from the more ancient commentators, whom we may reprehend with impunity; although we are well aware, that more objectionable and even sillier things have been said and written by the moderns. In 1. Cor vii. 31., Paul has this expression *παράγει γὰρ τὸ σχῆμα τῷ κόσμῳ τούτῳ* for *the fushion of this world passeth away*. The phrase *τὸ σχῆμα τῷ κόσμῳ* might easily have been regarded as a periphrasis for *ὁ κόσμος*, (a mode of circumlocution common among the Greeks, but which has frequently deceived interpreters,) especially upon a comparison of the passage in 1 John ii. 17. *ὁ κόσμος παράγεται* *the world passeth away*. But Theophylact discovers a more exquisite and subtile meaning. The phrase *σχῆμα τῷ κόσμῳ*, according to him, is employed, because this world possesses nothing solid, but presents only the vain show of good and evil things, all of which fade and pass away, &c. Again, it has been made a question, how the words of Micah, concerning the town of Bethlehem, are to be reconciled with the Greek words in Matthew ii. 6.; inasmuch as the latter styles it the least, the former, *not* the least; so, at all events, the versions have it. I have not time to enumerate all the opinions. Dannhauer, however, a learned theologian, and bred amongst metaphysicians, as may easily be conjectured by any one who reads his writings, advances, in his *Idea Boni Int. et Malit Calumniatoris*, p. 93., a book replete with valuable observations and precepts, the following as the most satisfactory explanation, that this town was styled by the prophet *the least*, having regard to its mode of existence, which is manifest, says he, from the addition of the term *תחתית*, which denotes *in the mode of its existence*; but by the Scribes it was called *the greatest*, in regard to its dignity, because it was to be the birth-place of the Messiah. These are mere metaphysical subtilities, vain and unsatisfactory, as is correctly observed by Theod. Hackspan, when remarking upon this interpretation,—a

theologian of former days, remarkably versed in the true method of interpretation, adding wisely, \* *He loses his labour, and, indeed, runs much hazard of inventing many things false or ridiculous, or, at least, impertinent, who demands from grammarians, a metaphysical subtlety, which has never been conceded to them.* Into similar trifling, the Greek theologians have fallen, in interpreting the phrase ἄρτος ἐπίσιος *daily bread*, which was so designated, as they supposed, because it pertained to the *ἔσῃα essence* or *substance* of the mind or body, or supported it; as if, in the ordinary and popular manner of speaking, the term *ἔσῃα* was ever employed in such a sense.\* Again, the distinction which Augustine makes between συναγωγή and ἐκκλησία, is, like many others, a curious one. He asks why the Apostles never use the term συναγωγή for the assemblies of Christians, but always ἐκκλησία, which, however, he might easily have found not to be the fact, if he had ever read the Greek text. He answers, “that the assembly of the Jews was called συναγωγή, that is, *congregation*, because cattle were wont to be congregated; and rightly, indeed, for the term *greges herds*, is properly applied to them; but the assembly of christians was called ἐκκλησία, that is, *convocation*, because this term is more properly applied to rational beings.”\* Here, I suppose, some will smile, who, themselves, from the version of Luther, as Augustine from the Latin, failing to consult or to understand the original, have frequently brought forward similar conceits.

The third method of philosophizing is, when they employ

\* *Miscell. Sacr.* p. 36. compare also p. 13.

\* See passages from the Fathers in Casaubon *Adv. Baron. Exerc.* xvi. 39.

† See for example *Comment. in Psalm Ixxxii.* Vol. viii. *Opp.* p. 906. ed. Frob.

*a meagre logical analysis* of the ideas and propositions ; which they insist to be necessary for eliciting the true sense with certainty, boasting themselves also to be the masters of this method. Whereas, in the first place, it is rarely necessary ; and, in the next place, when not accompanied with a competent knowledge of the original languages, is empty and ridiculous. I shall say nothing of the commentaries of former ages, which afford many examples of such laboured analyses, and which, for this very reason, have already been sent forth from the hands of the learned. In our own day, philosophers have arisen, who recommend this same method. “*It is of vast importance,*” says one of them, “*to reason about sacred things, from genuine principles. I call genuine principles, such as are inherent in the scriptures themselves, not derived from without, as interpreters are wont to do. It is no wonder, then, that they should attach vague and indeterminate notions to the words of the Scriptures, each one attributing what sense he thinks best.*” Such are his views of this subject. “*We present, accordingly,*” he continues, “*examples of the proper mode of interpreting the Sacred Scriptures, that it may appear how much those persons stand in their own light, who are desirous of labouring successfully in interpreting the same, and yet contemptuously despise the aid which they might receive from philosophy.*” What will the man produce worthy of such magnificent boasting ? He undertakes, for example, to investigate what sense is to be attached to the words of Paul, when, in the commencement of the Epistle to the Romans, he styles himself *a servant of Christ*. And now, listen, I pray, all you who are desirous of learning how the sense of words in the inspired writings, is to be discovered. The exposition is passing shrewd : “*The apostle,*” says he, “*does not inform us in what sense he understands the word servant (Ser-*



*us*); for we find there no Definition of the term." See, now, what those can accomplish, who maintain that Paul had been a disciple of the philosophers of Tarsus. "Wherefore, if the writer wished to be understood by the Romans, he could have intended the term *servant*, to be understood in no other sense than what obtained among them. And this notion of the term *servant*, which obtained among the Romans, was that which occurs in the Justinian code; inasmuch as the Roman laws speaks of *servants*, such as the Romans used." Wo, then, to Paul, if he understood the word in a different sense, "Wherefore, that idea is to be attached to the word *servant*, as applied to Paul, which obtains in the Roman law." And thus he follows out his explication. Is not this egregious trifling? The good man seems to have cast his eye upon the commencement of this solitary epistle alone. He manifests, besides, an ignorance of the fact, that those Romans to whom the epistle was addressed, consisted, for the most part, of Jews and Jewish proselytes, in writing to whom, the apostle might readily annex a Hebrew sense to Greek words; as he has, in fact, done, throughout the whole epistle. And, in the next place, he was not aware, that the usage of speech permitted, in prefatory portions of the epistles, the apostolical epistles especially, terms of dignity to be used, rather than expressions of modesty, in order that authority might be secured to the writer,—a fact abundantly manifest from the introduction to the epistle to the Galatians. How much better, therefore, and compendious, is the exposition of the grammarian, that, according to the Hebrew usage, those are styled *servants* of royal personages, whom we, at the present day, designate by the most honourable appellation of *ministers*; that it is frequently a term of dignity; and that, in the Old Testament, Moses is styled, in the same sense, *a servant of God*, as is observed by

Masius, an interpreter of the first rank, when commenting upon Jos. i. 1. ; and that Paul, also, is here denominated a *servant of Christ*, on account of his venerable apostolical office. I might cite many more such specimens of interpretation, from this same author. Nevertheless, on a certain occasion, having despatched an analysis of this kind, he makes his empty boast, in the first place, that he who shall have known how to apply, with skill, (as in the example, I suppose, just cited,) the principles of philosophy, in interpreting the sacred Scriptures, will be able to satisfy himself that he has elicited the genuine sense (we have just seen, forsooth, a specimen of this); and, in the next place, that the interpretation, thus pursued, penetrates more deeply into the very core of the thing (he plays the mischief, indeed, with the core of the Scriptures,) than is usually done, &c. Nor, indeed, is this folly peculiar to one class of philosophers alone; but all, in proportion as they are, or wish to be esteemed, the most ingenious, are especially devoted to it. So that, according to the Latin proverb, they excite waves in a porringer: in other words, those passages, which might have been explained briefly, clearly, and satisfactorily, upon grammatical principles, as an endless number of passages of the Greek and Latin authors have been explained, they so involve in the mazes and obscurity of logical subtilty, that it becomes more difficult for an interpreter to understand their explication, than the thing itself which is attempted to be explained. Of this kind, I have met with two remarkable specimens in the *Dialectica* of Adolp. Fr. Hofmann, p. 1146., upon the reading of which, I was forced to exclaim ὄστε μοι λεχά-  
 νην *bring me the basin.*

I do not consider it necessary, to animadvert upon those also, who find in the sacred Scriptures all the dogmas of their own sect. For they fall, of course, under our general reprehension, from this circumstance, that they annex to

the words of the sacred books, the senses suggested by the instructions of their several masters, derived generally, from a vernacular version, or from some three-penny vocabulary. Nor, is it necessary, to spend much time in exposing the folly of those, who make use of uncertain opinions, which they denominate *hypotheses*, in investigating the sense of the words; which many have done, for example, in explaining the words in relation to Sarah, found in the epistle to the Hebrews, vi. 11. δύναμιν ἔλαβεν εἰς καταβολὴν σπέρματος, where, according to these hypothetical interpreters, the phrase καταβολὴ σπέρματος is to be understood of the female seed, by whose commixture with that of the male, according to the philosophers, the offspring is generated. For, this is altogether hypothetical; or, I might rather say, false. Nor, is it to be credited, that Paul would have accommodated his forms of speech to these notions, even if they had been true, as Grotius, Calov, and others, have observed. In fact, the word καταβολή, in the phrase καταβολὴ σπέρματος, imports the same as it does in the phrase καταβολὴ κόσμου *the beginning of the world, or the Creation*. Josephus,\* also, uses the expression καταβολὴ πολέμου; Clemens,† καταβολὴ στάσεως; and the Greek physicians, καταβολὴ πυρετοῦ, which the Latins denominate *accessio*, and *initium febris, the fit, commencement of a fever, paroxysm*. Accordingly, καταβάλλειν σπέρμα will denote the same as the Latin *fundare domum, or familiam*, as Drachenborch ‡ has proved, by many examples; and this takes place when an offspring is obtained, especially a male offspring and a first born, on which rests the hope of a seed: so that καταβολὴ σπέρματος will denote either the procreation of offspring, or the founding of a family and house, from which the Messiah was to come. I shall dwell, therefore, only upon that mode of

\* B. I. ii. 17. 2.

† Ep. ad. Corinth. extr.

‡ Sil. Ital. II. 65.

interpretation, which makes it a principal part of the business of the interpreter, to search out subtile arguments from philosophy, by means of which, he may pour light, forsooth, upon the expressions of Christ and the apostles: or, as they express themselves, declare the connexion of the predicate with the subject, by an analysis of the proposition, into the principles either of reason alone, or of reason and revelation. There fell into my hands, by some accident, the notes of a certain rector in a school of some repute, in which, by means of this art, among others, he had vitiated the fifth chapter of Matthew. For, from the very outset, having explained the blessedness there spoken of, from the leaves of some philosophical compend, he had undertaken to show, by the aid of demonstrations, more keen and delicate than even the beards upon the wheat, and drawn from the first principles of unerring reason, in what manner the notion of this blessedness was determined by ideas of the subjects, or by the subjective notions; as if the words of our consummately wise Saviour could not otherwise be received, or as if the divine authority were not of more avail than any metaphysical demonstration. Some, however, have even given to the public such speculations as these, which impede, rather than advance, the understanding of the sacred books; especially if they do not rest upon the legitimate interpretation of the words, which is generally neglected in these abstract demonstrations. Whence it frequently happens to the demonstrators, as it did to those keen philosophers in Plutarch, who, upon some figs being brought forward to the repast, among which they discovered some locks of wool, began, forthwith, to dispute, with great acuteness, and to inquire into the manner and the cause of the growth of locks of wool amongst the figs; until, after a very protracted and keen discussion, a servant entered and informed them by what accident the wool had adhered to the figs: and thus, to the

great mortification of the fools, put an end to the idle dispute. These are the *cunningly devised fables*, (σεσοφισμένοι μῦθοι) the *skilfully invented arguments*, which Peter declares, he had not followed, in proving the majesty and dignity of Christ; from which, also, it becomes the good and prudent interpreter to abstain. It is quite sufficient, if he simply understands the mind of the inspired writers, as those understood it, to whom they originally wrote. I think it is Gregory Nazianzen who says, *it does not become us to dispute ingeniously, and with logical art, but to be thoroughly versed in divine things*. And, indeed, the Holy Spirit does not assert his power over the minds of men, in bringing them to the faith, and conforming them to holiness, by means of exquisite arguments, excogitated in the human brain, but by means of the sense and meaning of his own words. Enough has been said upon that mode of interpretation which abuses philosophical subtilty. Let us now add a few words concerning the other mode, (a more tolerable one, indeed, because it is comparatively harmless; but, still, not altogether worthy of approbation,) which misapplies theological truth itself, and thus is engaged in philosophizing, in a certain sense, about the words of the inspired writers, rather than in rightly discharging the office of an interpreter.

The number is, and always has been, very limited, of those who are as familiar with the diction of the New Testament, as we have shown, in the discussion *on the difficulties attending the interpretation of the New Testament*, every one should be, who seeks to attain a competent ability in the discharge of this duty. For, I have been taught by observation and experience, that such only, as have carefully perused the Alexandrine Version, and have compared it, on the one hand, with the Hebrew text, and on the other, with the remains of Aquila, Symmachus and Theodotion, connecting with this, the reading also of

Philo and Josephus, are very successful in this business ; to say nothing of other qualifications, necessary for attaining to a competent knowledge of the diction of the New Testament. Most persons either do not possess the means, which would enable them to procure, for themselves, this apparatus of books ; or else are destitute of that familiarity with Greek letters, which would qualify them to make a right use of such books, and to engage, rightly, in the comparison above alluded to ; or, finally, have not the leisure from necessary avocations, which suffices for that labour. It is not, therefore, to be wondered at, that few have been found, during all ages, who have been sufficiently equipped for the business of interpretation. But, having, notwithstanding this incompetency, assumed the office of interpreting, they adopt, as a substitute for the proper knowledge and ability, the knowledge of sacred things derived from perspicuous passages, and from the systems of theologians, and, sometimes, even of philosophers ; and having formed an acquaintance, in some sort, with words, from the lexicons in common use, and from vernacular versions, especially from the Vulgate, they commence, with this apparatus, the interpretation of the more difficult passages, sometimes with success, but frequently with utter failure. Accordingly, so great a number of false, or rather, inaccurate, interpretations, has come into vogue, that if any one, after the example of Amama Sixtinus, were desirous of composing an *Antibarbarus Biblicus*, for the purpose of collecting and refuting such errors, in the interpretation of the New Testament, as he collected and refuted, in the interpretation of a great part of the Old, he might easily fill a massive volume. Let us however cite a few examples, confining ourselves to the Epistle to the Romans alone ; from which, it will be obvious to any one, that if these learned commentators had been more diligent and accurate in learning and applying the grammatical art, they

would have been less entangled with difficulties ; and certain controversies would never have existed. For experience has convinced me, that apparently trifling grammatical observations, are sometimes of incalculable service ; and that, when these are not readily and seasonably applied, great difficulties occur, of which fact I have many examples in store, which shall be produced in a more convenient place.

In the portion which occurs in ch. vii. 14. ὁ νόμος πνευματικός ἐγὼ δὲ σαρκικός *the law is spiritual but I am carnal*, some are wont to philosophize exceedingly upon the attribute of the law πνευματικός, and to insist, that the law is thus styled, because it proceeds from God who is a Spirit ; because it demands spiritual, and not merely an external, obedience ; because it ought to render us spiritual ; &c. All these explications have arisen from a metaphysical treatment of the corresponding word in the Vulgate, and could not, possibly, have entered into the minds of those to whom Paul wrote. These expositors should have known, that the Hebrews were accustomed to attach to the word קִיָּץ the signification of *perfection, excellence, strength, efficiency* ; and to the word רֵשָׁע, the notion of *imperfection, weakness*, by a very apt and beautiful metaphor : See Is. xxxi. 3. *Now the Egyptians are men, and not God, and their horses, flesh, and not spirit* ; not to speak of other passages to the same effect. Hence the Jews who used the Greek language, when they translated the word קִיָּץ by πνεῦμα, attached the same meaning to this latter word. The Gospel, for instance, is denominated πνεῦμα *spirit*, because of its power to confer salvation ; while the law is styled σὰρξ *flesh*, because it can neither confer salvation, nor render men holy. In 1 Cor. iii. 1., tyros in Christian doctrine and experience, are called σαρκικοί ; those more advanced, πνευματικοί. So that, the law is styled, in the passage under consideration, πνευματικός, on account of the perfection and excellence

of its precepts, and for no other reason, as the context clearly proves. Paul, on the contrary, styles himself σαρκικός, on account of his inability to observe the law, from the influence of the natural corruption under which he laboured, which prevented his ever acquiring sufficient moral strength to satisfy the perfection of the law by a perfect holiness. Is not such an explication more easy and clear, than those just adverted to, and other hallucinations, which are advanced by some, concerning Paul, in relation to his carnal nature?

In ch. viii. 15., we have the following words, ἐν ᾧ κράζομεν Ἀββᾶ ὁ πατήρ *whereby we cry Abba, Father*. It has been asked, why a Syriac word and a Greek one are here used conjointly? The difficulty could easily have been solved, grammatically, by saying, that ὁ πατήρ is a translation of the other word, the connecting words ἰ ἐστίν being omitted, which are, on some occasions, introduced, though not on all: see Acts xiii. 8., on which passage, consult Drusius and Grotius. But a more sagacious, exquisite, and silly explication was discovered. This form of expression, it is said, was adopted, in order to show, that the Jews and the Greeks were permitted to call God *Father*, as Augustine explains it, in his remarks upon Ps. lxxxvii. (Opp. T. viii. p. 878); or, because it is the practice of those, who solicit any thing affectionately from another, to employ repetition; which latter solution meets the approbation of Grotius. That there is nothing in all this, might easily be shown. We shall decline, here, saying any thing about the words κλητός, κλησίς, πρόθεσις, πρόγνωσις, and others in this same chapter, in elucidating which, more regard has been had, in general, to versions, than to the Hebrew usage of speech in respect to the original words, which those were intended to express; from which circumstance, have proceeded difficulties and controversies, which even now disturb the peace of theologians.



The words which occur in the 11 vs. of the ix. ch. ἢ κατ' ἐκλογὴν πρόθεσις μένῃ, have also perplexed interpreters. For, finding the term ἐκλογὴ expressed, in the dictionaries, by the word *electio*, and πρόθεσις, by *propositum*; and being aware, that *propositum secundum electionem decre* according to election, could not be understood, nor reconciled with their system of doctrine; they resorted to the figure *hypallage*, as if the thing intended to be expressed were ἢ κατὰ πρόθεσιν ἐκλογὴ *the election according to the decree*. The interpretation of Grotius is equally harsh, *libertas in rebus quae ad praelationem pertinent freedom in things pertaining to preference or election*, which rendering the Greek construction forbids. Without regarding such modes of explication, the force of the words might have been more successfully ascertained. For, in the first place, πρόθεσις is equivalent to δέλημα as in 2 Macc. iii. 8., denoting *good will, kind regard, beneficent mind*, or, in one word *kindness, benignity*; in which sense δέλημα frequently occurs, answering to the Hebrew יִצְרָה and יְרַחֵם, as in Rom. i. 10. Πρόθεσις is clearly used, in 2 Tim. i. 10., to denote *gratuitous favour, benignity, grace*, for, it is there opposed to *works ἔργοις*, which do not make void the purposes of God, but annul his free grace and the gratuitousness of the divine goodness. Moreover, ἐκλογὴ, in the sense of *free will, choice*, is the foundation, or source, or original principle, of liberty; where it exists, liberty is also found; accordingly, it is used to denote *liberty or freedom in choice*, according to the idiom of the Hebrews, who were unable, or unaccustomed, I believe, to express liberty in acting, especially in acts of beneficence, but by the word רַחֵם. *Ἐκλογὴ*, therefore, is *liberty*. The phrase κατ' ἐκλογὴν, which intervenes between the article and the substantive, takes the force of an adjective, according to the usage of the Greeks. In Polybius οἱ κατ' ἐκλογὴν ἀνδρες are *chosen men*. In this very epistle, below, ch. κ.,

ζῆλος κατ' ἐπίγνωσιν *a wise and intelligent zeal*. So also in ch. xi. οἱ κατὰ φύσιν κλάδοι *the natural branches, &c.* So that, the sense of the passage is this, *but that the kindness of God might be unhesitatingly regarded as free; or, that the free grace of God might remain unimpeached and acknowledged;* which sense accords, most evidently, with the drift of the discourse of Paul.

I shall adduce one more example, from the 18. vs. of the same chapter, οὐκ ἐλεεῖ, ὃν θέλει, ὃν δὲ θέλει, σκληρύνει. I shall not rehearse the violent interpretations, which have been given, of this passage, by our own theologians as well as others. The verb σκληρύνειν, they rendered *indurare (to harden)*, the signification of which term, had been settled, and defined in their theological compends. A discussion, accordingly, was started, how God could be said, in consistency with his goodness and justice to *harden men*. But, in this passage, there is no allusion to that *hardening* which theologians speak of in their systems. The fact is simply this: It is manifest, in the first place, from vs. 25., where we have the term ἠγαπημένην that ἐλεεῖν, by a Hebraism, denotes *to love, to bestow kindness upon*, since, in Hosea, the Hebrew word is properly to be translated ἠλεημένην, and the whole discourse of the prophet shows, that he speaks of the universal regard and care of God for the Israelites. If this be settled, it follows, even from the nature of the opposition, that σκληρύνειν denotes *not to love, not to care for, not to bestow kindness upon*, (in the same sense as the word occurs a little before, in vs. 13, *to esteem less, to slight*,) and hence, *to treat more harshly*, by sending want, and servitude, and other calamities. But this is also clear, from a comparison of the word σκληρύνειν, with the Hebrew חִשְׁרָה, to which it corresponds. I have read, somewhere, a remark of Kimchi, that it is spoken also of God, when he conceals from some men his counsels, which he reveals to others whom he loves. But

it is abundantly manifest, from Job xxxix. 16, that it denotes *to treat harshly, not to regard with kindness*, for it is there spoken of the ostrich, who does not nourish and cherish her young, as other birds are wont to do. The Septuagint translates it ἀπεσκέλησεν τὰ τέκνα αὐτῆς *she neglects her young*. With this explication, every thing is easy, and plain. *God bestows his favours, at his pleasure; he bestows them, on whom he will, and from whom he will, he withholds them.*

From these examples, I think it is plain, (as might be shown from other examples also, without number,) that the method of discovering the true sense of the sacred books, and of defending the truth against the assaults of adversaries, by means of a correct knowledge of the original languages, is both more expeditious and more satisfactory, than that, which promises the same by means of doctrinal systems and metaphysical principles.

And now, although what we have said, concerning this whole method of philosophizing in interpretation, without the aid which grammatical studies proffer, is calculated to evince its folly; still, I wish to add a few remarks, upon the subject in general, if, perhaps, we may thus be enabled to withdraw from the pursuit of this method, those youth who are devoted to sacred letters, and excite them to the study of languages.

And, first of all, it is much to the prejudice of this method, that the history of every age teaches, that barbarism, and corruption of sacred things, both came into existence and vanished with it; while, by the method which we advocate, that is, by the grammatical method, the purity of religion has been both restored and preserved. Accordingly, at the reformation, in which Luther acted so conspicuous a part, nothing was more frequently lauded, nor more zealously cultivated, than the study of languages, which circumstance, every where gave birth to men, with

whom, we find none, at a period when those studies had again declined, who will bear even a remote comparison. Hence the frequent reprehensions, which occur in the writings of Luther, directed against philosophy, or rather, against those persons who philosophize in sacred things, and, by their empty wisdom, and stupid subtilties, either obscure or pervert the inspired writings. It is also a circumstance worthy of commemoration, that some illustrious men, richly furnished with the knowledge of philosophy and of theological learning, still, in presenting precepts of interpretation, recommend the languages and grammatical learning, and not the arts with which they themselves were most familiar. In which number, Augustine may be mentioned, who, being, as is abundantly manifest, ignorant of the Greek and Hebrew languages, and well skilled in all the other departments of learning, nevertheless, attributes the highest importance to a knowledge of those languages, and to the just comparison of versions, for rightly understanding the sacred books;\* who calls in the aid, however, of philosophy, for the digesting and reducing to the fashion and form of a science, and for discussing and defending, those things which have been known by means of a correct understanding of the inspired writings, and from no other source. It is well enjoined by the masters of the art of interpretation, that the sense is to be brought *out* of the sacred books, and not to be brought *into* them, from some other quarter. But is not this latter the course pursued by those, who adopt, in interpretation, the notions derived from philosophy? And is not the former the course of those, who inquire, grammatically, what is the usage of speech of each language, age, and writer respectively; and aim, by the aid of this, to elicit the sense? You subtilize admirably, it may be; you set forth nice definitions, drawn

\* Lib. II. de Doctr. Christiana.

from the instructions of your master. From these you draw out, if possible, long series of demonstrations. What if some one should arise and say, *the words have quite a different signification?* Will not the whole fabric of your subtle demonstrations fall to the ground? This, then, is the surest way to pyrrhonism in religion. You do well, indeed, to cite arguments from some system of science, according to which, you think the words are thus to be understood. Another advances, of another sect, and asserts, from his system, that all this is false, and goes to work, in the same manner, to establish the contrary. What can you say in return? Must you not, of necessity, resort to the usage of speech, if you wish to establish any thing certain, to which your opponent will be constrained to yield?

Wherefore, since, by the goodness of God, we have been favoured with the results of the labours of so many distinguished men, from the reformation down to the present day, by whom every necessary help has been supplied, for the successful study of the original languages, by rightly employing which, we are enabled to investigate and discover, with ease and certainty, the true sense of the sacred writings; let us gratefully accept and use this assistance, afforded in the kind providence of God, and not permit things to revert again to a state of barbarism. This must, of necessity, be the case, as is rightly concluded by Perizonius,\* if that metaphysical method prevails. “*If*” says he, “*this study and labour, to understand thoroughly the sacred Scriptures, should cease, (and they will, of necessity cease, the moment the original languages shall be buried in ignorance,) what, then, will remain, but that the human mind, which cannot lie altogether idle and torpid, will give itself up to metaphysical subtilties, and employ itself in madly disputing, with the greatest zeal*

\* Or. de usu Graecae et Latinae Linguae p. 33.

*and industry, about things of no importance; which circumstance has proved, in the ages that are past, a source of the most grievous calamity to the theological community?"* And, we should be the rather induced to do this, from this additional consideration, that other advantages also are proffered to those who pursue the course here recommended. For, men are sometimes found to labour hard, under the guidance of the metaphysical method, when something is to be written, and a specimen of their talents and learning is to be presented, and to give birth, at length, to monstrous and ridiculous productions, which certainly can boast of no utility. But, if they pursue the way which we have proposed, they will not experience this sterility, nor be crowded within such narrow limits. For that field is fertile, nor can subjects for writing ever be wanting to those who cultivate it; while, at the same time, their productions may be perused and approved by the learned of every sect, and may prove useful in fixing and confirming the truths of Christianity.

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