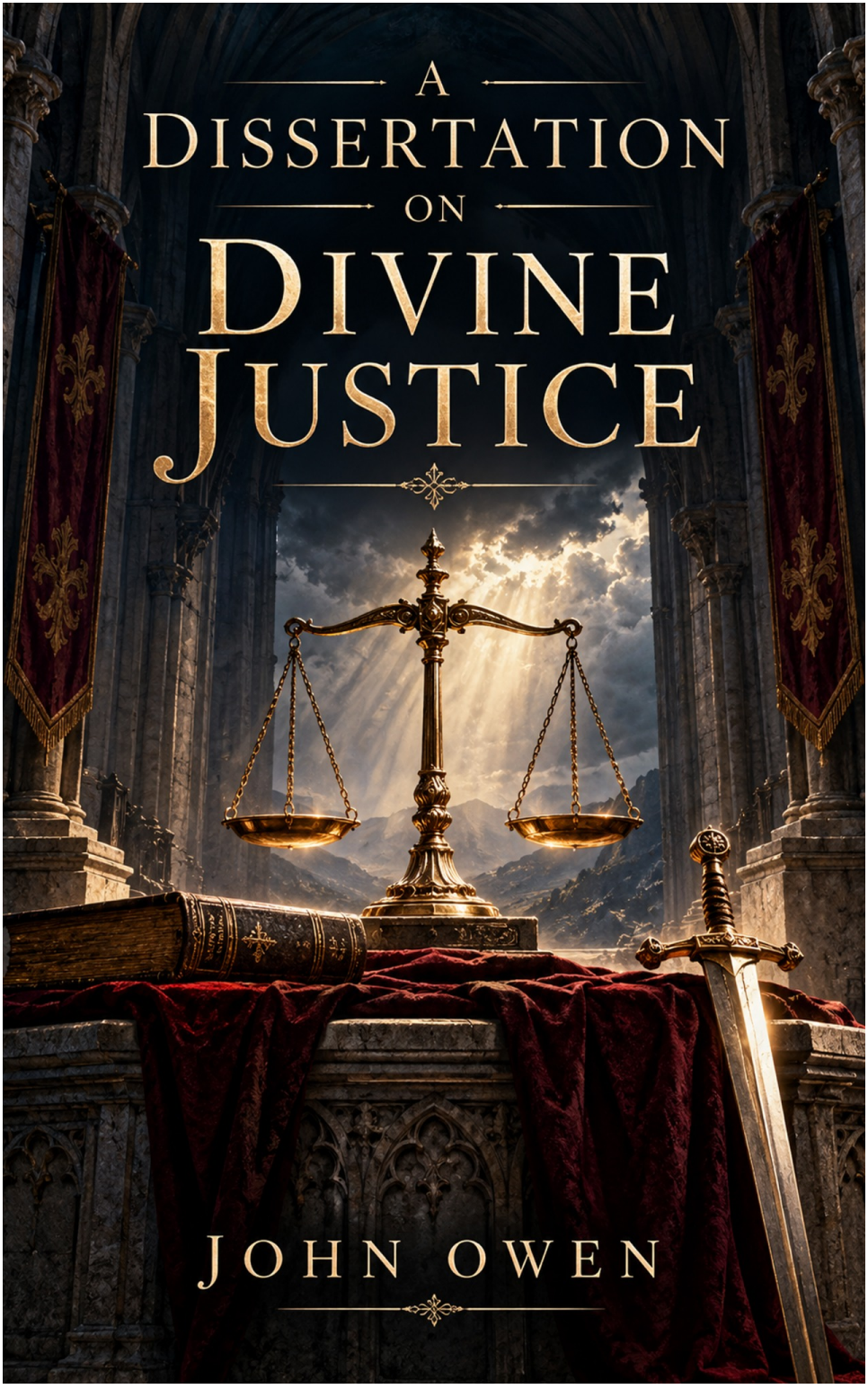
A
DISSERTATION
ON
DIVINE
JUSTICE
JOHN OWEN

Dissertation on Divine Justice

John Owen

Monergism Books

Dissertation on Divine Justice
by John Owen

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A

dissertation on divine justice:

or,

the claims of vindicatory justice vindicated;

wherein that essential property of the divine nature is demonstrated from the sacred writings, and defended against Socinians, particularly the authors of the Racovian Catechism, John Crellius, and F. Socinus himself;

likewise the necessary exercise thereof;

together with the indispensable necessity of the satisfaction of Christ for the salvation of sinners is established against the objections of certain very learned men, G. Twisse, G. Vossius, Samuel Rutherford, and others.

By John Owen,

Dean of Christ Church College, Oxford.

“Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world?” — Rom. iii. 5, 6.

Oxford: Thomas Robinson.
1653.

Prefatory note.

This work is devoted to a refutation of the doctrine that sin could be pardoned by a mere volition on the part of God, without any satisfaction to his justice; or, to state the question in the abstract form which it chiefly assumes in the reasonings of Owen, that justice is not a natural attribute of the divine nature, but so much an act of the divine will, that God is free to punish or to refrain from punishing sin. Owen clearly saw that if such a doctrine were entertained, there could be no evidence for the necessity of the atonement, and a stronghold would be surrendered to the Socinian heresy. He was the more induced to engage in the refutation of it, as it was maintained by some divines of eminent worth and ability. Calvin has been cited in its favour; and Owen, without naming him, refers to the only passage in his writings which, so far as we are aware, conveys the obnoxious sentiment, when in the second chapter he speaks of the learned men who, along with Augustine, and amongst orthodox divines, held the view in question. The passage occurs in his commentary on John xv. 13:— "Poterat nos Deus verbo aut nutu redimere, nisi aliter nostrâ causâ visum esset, ut proprio et unigenito Filio non parcens, testatum faceret in ejus personâ quantam habeat salutis nostræ curam." An isolated phrase, however, when the question was not specially under his review, is scarcely sufficient basis from which to infer that Calvin held the possibility of sin being forgiven without an atonement; and other parts of his works might be quoted, in which he speaks of the death of Christ as a satisfaction to divine justice, in such terms as almost to preclude the theory for which the sanction of his name has been pleaded. Dr William Twisse, the learned prolocutor of the Westminster Assembly, published in 1632 a large work, now almost fallen into oblivion, but which passed through several editions, and was justly held in high esteem, "Vindiciæ Gratiæ. Potestatis, ac Providentiæ

Divinæ." In the midst of his discussions he inserts several digressions on special topics; and the eighth digression contains an argument to prove that God punishes sin, not by any necessity of nature, or under the promptings of justice, as essential to the perfection of his character, but simply in virtue of a decree, originating in a free act of his will, and regulating, in this subordinate sense, all his procedure towards our race. He was followed by Rutherford in his "Disputatio Scholastica de Divinâ Providentiâ," 1649; and in his work on "Christ Dying, and Drawing Sinners," etc. One extract from the latter gives a plausible and condensed statement of the whole theory:— "If we speak of God's absolute power without respect to his free decree, he could have pardoned sin without a ransom, and gifted all mankind and fallen angels with heaven without any satisfaction of either the sinner or his surety; for he neither punisheth sin, nor tenders heaven to men or angels, by necessity of nature, — as the fire casteth out heat, and the sun light, — but freely."

Owen, in one of the public disputations at Oxford, had asserted that the exercise of divine justice was necessary and absolute in the punishment of sin. Though his arguments were directed against Socinians, some divines in the university, it was found, held a different opinion from our author on this particular point, and, in full explanation of his views, in 1653 he published his Diatriba. "It is almost entirely," says Mr Orme, "of a scholastic nature discovering, indeed, much acuteness, and a profound acquaintance with the subject, but not likely now to be read with much interest." We concur in this criticism, but must take exception to the last remark. The work, in our judgment, at least deserves to be read with interest, as the conclusive settlement of a question of vital moment, one of the most vigorous productions of Owen's intellect, a specimen of controversy conducted in the best spirit, and displaying powers of thought which remind us of the massive theology of Edwards, while rich in the stores of a learning to which

the great American could not lay claim. In the first part of it. Owen proves that “sin-punishing justice is natural, and its exercise necessary to God,” by four leading arguments, — 1. The statements of Holy Writ; 2. The consent of mankind; 3. The course of Providence; and, lastly, The attributes of God as revealed in the cross of Christ. Various subsidiary arguments of considerable importance follow. The second part refutes in succession the opposing arguments of the Socinians, Twisse, and Rutherford

Thomas Gilbert, so great an admirer of Owen that he was employed to write his epitaph, nevertheless combated the views maintained in the Diatriba, in a work entitled, “Vindiciæ Supremi Dei Domini (cum Deo) Initæ,” etc., 1665. Baxter, in a brief premonition to his treatise against infidelity, dissented from the doctrine of Owen on this subject.

The Diatriba was published in Latin. We have compared Mr Hamilton’s translation of it, which appeared in 1794, with the original, and have been constrained to make some serious changes on it, which we cannot but deem improvements. The title, page is more exactly and fully-rendered; a translation of the dedication to Cromwell is for the first time, inserted; passages which had been placed at the foot of the page are restored to their proper place in the body of the text; several passages altogether omitted are now supplied; minor errors have been corrected: and where the change was so extensive as to interfere with the translator’s responsibilities, we have appended a different rendering in a note. — Ed.

To the public.

The numerous and valuable writings of Dr Owen have long ago secured his praise in all the churches as a first-rate writer upon theological subjects. Any recommendation, therefore, of the present work seems unnecessary. As the treatise, however, now offered to the public, has long been locked up in a dead language, it may not be improper to say, what will be granted by all competent judges, that the author discovers an uncommon acquaintance with his subject; that he has clearly explained the nature of divine justice, and demonstrated it to be, not merely an arbitrary thing, depending upon the sovereign pleasure of the supreme Lawgiver, but essential to the divine nature. In doing this, he has overthrown the arguments of the Socinians and others against the atonement of Christ, and proved that a complete satisfaction to the law and justice of God was necessary, in order that sinners might be pardoned, justified, sanctified, and eternally saved, consistently with the honour of all the divine perfections.

Whoever makes himself master of the Doctor’s reasoning in the following treatise will be able to answer all the objections and cavils of the enemies of the truth therein contended for. It is, therefore, earnestly recommended to the attention and careful perusal of all who wish to obtain right ideas of God, the nature and extent of the divine law, the horrid nature and demerit of sin, etc., but especially to the attention of young divines. The translation, upon the whole, is faithful. If it have any fault, it is perhaps its being too literal.

That it may meet with that reception which it justly merits from the public, and which the importance of the subject demands, is the earnest prayer of the servants in the gospel of Christ,

S. Stafford, D.D.
J. Ryland, sen., M.A.
Rob. Simpson.

To his illustrious highness Lord Oliver Cromwell, commander-in-chief of the parliamentary forces of the Commonwealth of England, the right honourable chancellor of the very celebrated university of Oxford.

Had it not been almost a crime for me, holding my present place in this most celebrated university, under your appointment and auspices, to have inscribed any literary production with a dedication to any other name, I would not have held in such poor account the weight of business you sustain as to make an endeavour to divert your thoughts and attention, so constantly directed to the welfare of the commonwealth, to a little by-work of this kind. But since, according to the nature of my office, I am under frequent necessity to address your Highness in the name of literature and of learned men, the affability of your nature will not suffer me to remain under any anxiety but that you will condescend to examine even this humble production of ours. Perhaps the dedication of books to you (amid prevailing “wars and rumours of wars,” and the fury and commotion of parties bent with eagerness on mutual destruction) will seem unseasonable, and not unlike the celebrated abstraction of him who, amid the destruction of his country and the sack of the city to which he belonged, neglecting all concern about his personal safety, was so obstinately bent on learned trifles as to be slain by a soldier while persisting in those pursuits on account of his skill in which the commander had resolved to spare his life. But even Christian authors have their *polemics*; and these, alas! too much fitted to excite, increase, and promote bloody strife; — such is the blindness, nay, the madness of most men. Even this small piece of ours is polemical, I confess; but it fights by means of weapons not offensive to peace, not imbued with hostility, but appropriate to truth, — namely, by the

word of God and reason. In this arena, in this fortress, within this list and limit, if all controversies on divine things took place, no longer, on account of seditions and wars, would religion herself, over all Christendom, be so evil spoken of. The cause I maintain will not be esteemed by many of such consequence that I should contend for it so earnestly. But of how much importance it is in war (for it is a war in which we are engaged, and that a sacred one, with the enemies of truth) to secure a citadel or breast-work, your Excellency knows right well; that it is so to the army of the living God, redeemed and purified by the blood of Christ, whose truth we have undertaken, according to our ability, to defend, any man on serious reflection will easily perceive. Surely we may be permitted to contend for the truth. Some there are who, under pretence of zeal for the gospel, delight to mingle of their own accord in wars, tumults, strifes, and commotion, sufficiently skilled

"Ære ciere viros, Martemque accendere cantu."

We pretend, however, to no such eloquence, nor have we so learned Christ. My hope is, that the Lord and Judge of all will find me intently occupied in preaching Christ and him crucified, in season and out of season, and wrestling in prayer with God our gracious Father, for the salvation of the little flock of his well-beloved Son. Not as if it were in our power to keep free from controversies, for He who declared himself to have been sent, according to his own and the Father's counsel, not to destroy but to save the lives of men (that is, spiritually and eternally), predicted, however, that from the innate malice of men perversely opposing themselves to heavenly truth, not love, not tranquillity and peace, but strife, hatred, war, and the sword, would ensue upon the promulgation of that truth. Peace, indeed, he bequeathed to his own; but it was that divine peace which dwells in the bosom of the Father, and in the inmost recesses of their own souls. In truth, while his disciples live mingled with other men, and are exposed to national disturbances, how can they but share, like a small boat

attached to a ship, in the same tempest and agitation with the rest? But since we have it in command, “if it be possible, and as much as lieth in us, to live peaceably with all men,” that contention is alone pleasing which is in defence of truth; and it is pleasing only because for the truth we are bound to contend. Therefore, we address ourselves to this work, however humble it may be, in the service of our beloved Saviour, to whom we know that a work of this kind, although feeble and imperfect, is pleasing and acceptable; in whom alone, also, we would find both an encouragement and an aim in the prosecution of our studies, not unwilling to undergo any risk or danger under the guidance of such a Leader. But seeing what is acceptable to him cannot displease your Highness, I dedicate with pleasure to your Excellency, in testimony of my gratitude, what I have accomplished in fulfilment of my duty to him. For what remains (since a reason must elsewhere be rendered to the reader for undertaking this work, and

“— in publica commoda peccem,

Si longo sermone morer tua tempora”),

I bow before God, the best and greatest, beseeching him in Jesus Christ that he would continually direct, by his own Spirit, all the counsels, undertakings, and actions of your Highness; that he would turn all these to his own glory, and to the peace, honour, and advantage of the church, commonwealth, and university; and that he would preserve your spirit, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be honour and glory for ever. This I write under ill health at Oxford, the last day of the year 1652.

The devoted Servant of your Illustrious Highness, and your Vice-Chancellor in this famous University,

John Owen

The preface to the reader.

As perhaps, learned reader, you will think it strange that I, who have such abundance of various and laborious employment of another kind, should think of publishing such a work as this, it may not be improper to lay before you a summary account of the reasons that induced me to this undertaking; and I do it the rather that this little production may escape free from the injurious suspicions which the manners of the times are but too apt to affix to works of this kind. It is now four months and upwards since, in the usual course of duty, in defending certain theological theses in our university, it fell to my lot to discourse and dispute on the vindicatory justice of God, and the necessity of its exercise, on the supposition of the existence of sin. Although these observations were directed, to the best of my abilities, immediately against the Socinians, yet it was understood that many very respectable theologians entertained sentiments on this subject very different from mine; and although the warmest opposers of what we then maintained were obliged to acknowledge that our arguments are quite decisive against the adversaries, yet there were not wanting some, who, not altogether agreeing with us, employed themselves in strictures upon our opinion, and accused it of error, while others continued wavering, and, in the diversity of opinions, knew not on which to fix. Much controversy ensuing in consequence of this, I agreed with some learned men to enter, both in writings and conversation, upon an orderly and deliberate investigation of the subject. And after the scruples of several had been removed by a more full consideration of our opinion (to effect which the following considerations chiefly contributed, namely, that they clearly saw this doctrine conduced to the establishment of the necessity of the satisfaction of Jesus Christ, a precious truth, which these worthy and good men, partakers of the grace and gift of righteousness through means of the blood of

Christ, not only warmly favoured, but dearly venerated, as the most honourable[1] treasure of the church, the seed of a blessed immortality, and the darling jewel of our religion), I was greatly encouraged in the conferences with these gentlemen to take a deeper view of the subject, and to examine it more closely, for the future benefit of mankind.

Besides; several of those who had before examined and were acquainted with our sentiments, or to whom, in consequence of our short discourse in the university on the subject, they began to be more acceptable, — and these, too, considerable both for their number and rank, — ceased not to urge me to a more close consideration and accurate review of the controversy; for in that public dissertation, it being confined, according to the general custom of such exercises in universities, within the narrow limits of an hour, I could only slightly touch on the nature of vindicatory justice, whereas the rules and limits of such exercises would not permit me to enter on the chief point, the great hinge of the controversy, — namely, concerning the necessary exercise of that justice. This is the difficulty that requires the abilities of the most judicious and acute to investigate and solve. In this situation of matters, not only a more full view of the whole state of the controversy, but likewise of the weight of those arguments on which the truth of that side of the question which we have espoused depends, as also an explanation and confutation of certain subtilties whereby the opponents had embarrassed the minds of some inquirers after truth, became objects of general request. And, indeed, such were the circumstances of this controversy, that any one might easily perceive that a scholastic dissertation on the subject must take a very different turn, and could bear no farther resemblance, and owe nothing more to the former exercise, than the having furnished an opportunity or occasion for its appearance in public.

Although, then, I was more than sufficiently full of employment already, yet, being excited by the

encouragement of good men, and fully persuaded in my own mind that the truth which we embrace is so far from being of trivial consequence in our religion, that it is intimately connected with many, the most important articles of the Christian doctrine, concerning the attributes of God, the satisfaction of Christ, and the nature of sin, and of our obedience, and that it strikes its roots deep through almost the whole of theology, or the acknowledging of the truth which is according to godliness; — fully persuaded, I say, of these facts, I prevailed with myself, rather than this doctrine should remain any longer neglected or buried, and hardly even known by name, or be held captive by the reasonings of some enslaving the minds of mankind, "through philosophy and vain deceit," to exert my best abilities in its declaration and defence.

Several things, however, which, with your good leave, reader, I shall now mention, almost deterred me from the task when begun. The first and chief was, the great *difficulty of the subject* itself, which, among the more abstruse points of truth, is by no means the least abstruse: for as every divine truth has a peculiar majesty and reverence belonging to it, which debars from the spiritual knowledge of it (as it is in Christ) the ignorant and unstable, — that is, those who are not taught of God, or become subject to the truth, — so those points which dwell in more intimate recesses, and approach nearer its immense fountain, the "Father of lights," darting brighter rays, by their excess of light present a confounding darkness to the minds of the greatest men (and are as darkness to the eyes, breaking forth amidst so great light):—

"Suntque oculis tenebræ per tantum lumen obortæ."

For what we call darkness in divine subjects is nothing else than their celestial glory and splendour striking on the weak ball of our eyes, the rays of which we are not able in this life, which "is but a vapour" (and that not very clear), "which appeareth but for a little," to bear. Hence God himself, who is "light, and in whom there is no darkness at

all," who "dwelleth in light inaccessible," and who "clotheth himself with light as with a garment," in respect of us, is said to have made "darkness his pavilion."

Not, as the Roman Catholics say, that there is any reason that we should blasphemously accuse the holy Scriptures of obscurity; for "the law of the Lord is *perfect*, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is *sure*, making wise the simple: the statutes of the Lord are *right*, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is *pure*, enlightening the eyes." Nor is there reason to complain that any one part of the truth hath been too sparingly or obscurely revealed: for even the smallest portion of the divine word is, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, assisting to dispose and frame either the subject or our hearts, so as to view the bright object of divine truth in its proper and spiritual light, sufficient to communicate the knowledge of truths of the last importance; for it is owing to the nature of the doctrines themselves and their exceeding splendour that there are some things hard to be conceived and interpreted, and which surpass our capacity and comprehension. Whether this article of divine truth which we are now inquiring into be not akin to those which we have now mentioned, let the learned judge and determine, especially those who shall reflect what a close connection there is between it and the whole doctrine concerning the nature of God, the satisfaction of Christ, the desert of sin, and every one of the dark and more abstruse heads of our religion. I have, therefore, determined to place my chief dependence on His aid "who giveth to all liberally, and upbraideth not." For those unhappy gentlemen only lose their labour, and may not improperly be compared to the artists who used more than common exertions in building Noah's ark,[2] and who, like bees, work for others and not for themselves in the search of truth, who, relying on their own abilities and industry, use every effort to ascertain and comprehend divine truths, while, at the same time, they continue utterly regardless whether "He who commanded the light to shine

out of darkness hath hitherto shone in their hearts, to give them the light of the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jesus Christ;" for, after all, they can accomplish nothing more, by their utmost efforts, but to discover their technical or artificial ignorance.[3]

Setting aside, then, the consideration of some phrases, and even of some arguments, as to what relates to the principal point of the controversy, I hold myself bound, in conscience and in honour, not even to imagine that I have attained a proper knowledge of any one article of truth, much less to publish it, unless through the Holy Spirit I have had such a taste of it in its spiritual sense, as that I may be able from the heart to say with the psalmist, "I have believed, and therefore have I spoken." He who, in the investigation of truth, makes it his chief care to have his mind and will rendered subject to the faith, and obedient to the "Father of lights," and who with attention waits upon Him whose throne is in the heavens; he alone (since the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God) attains to true wisdom, — the others walk in a "vain show." It has, then, been my principal object, in tracing the depths and secret nature of the subject in question, — while I, a poor worm, contemplated the majesty and glory of Him concerning whose perfections I was treating, — to attend and obey, with all humility and reverence, what the great God the Lord hath spoken in his word; not at all doubting but that, whatever way he should incline my heart, by the power of his Spirit and truth, I should be enabled, in a dependence on his aid, to bear the contradictions of a false knowledge, and all human and philosophical arguments.

And, to say the truth, as I have adopted the opinion which I defend in this dissertation from no regard to the arguments of either one or another learned man, and much less from any slavish attachment to authority, example, or traditionary prejudices, and from no confidence in the opinion or abilities of others, but, as I hope, from a most humble contemplation of the holiness, purity, justice, right,

dominion, wisdom, and mercy of God; so by the guidance of his Spirit alone, and power of his heart-changing grace, filling my mind with all the fullness of truth, and striking me with a deep awe and admiration of it, I have been enabled to surmount the difficulty of the research. Theology is the "wisdom that is from above," a habit of grace and spiritual gifts, the manifestation of the Spirit, reporting what is conducive to happiness. It is not a science to be learned from the precepts of man, or from the rules of arts, or method of other sciences, as those represent it who also maintain that a "natural man" may attain all that artificial and methodical theology, even though, in the matters of God and mysteries of the gospel, he be blinder than a mole. What a distinguished theologian must he be "who receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God!"

But again, having sailed through this sea of troubles[4] and being ready to launch out upon the subject, that gigantic spectre, "It is everywhere spoken against," should have occasioned me no delay, had it not come forth inscribed with the mighty names of Augustine, Calvin, Musculus, Twisse, and Vossius. And although I could not but entertain for these divines that honour and respect which is due to such great names, yet, partly by considering myself as entitled to that "freedom wherewith Christ hath made us free," and partly by opposing to these the names of other very learned theologians, — namely, Paræus, Piscator, Molinæus, Lubbertus, Rivetus, Cameron, Maccovius, Junius, the professors at Saumur, and others, — who, after the spreading of the poison of Socinianism, have with great accuracy and caution investigated and cleared up this truth, I easily got rid of any uneasiness from that quarter.

Having thus surmounted these difficulties, and begun the undertaking by devoting to it a few leisure hours stolen from other engagements, the work prospered beyond all expectation; and, by the favour of the "Father of lights," who "worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure," in a few days it was brought to a conclusion.

And now that the labour of composing was ended, I again entertained doubts, and continued for some time in suspense, whether, considering the manners of the times in which we live, it would not be more prudent to throw the papers, with some other kindred compositions on other subjects of divinity, into some secret coffers, there to be buried in eternal oblivion, than bring them forth to public discussion.

For even all know with what vain arrogance, malice, party spirit, and eager lust of attacking the labours of others, the minds of many are corrupted and infected. Not only, then, was it necessary that I should anticipate and digest in my mind the contempt and scoffings which these bantering, saucy, dull-witted, self-sufficient despisers of others, or any of such a contemptible race, whose greatest pleasure it is to disparage all kinds of exertions, however praiseworthy, might pour out against me; but I likewise foresaw that I should have to contend with the soured tempers and prejudiced opinions of others, who, being carried away by party zeal, and roused by the unexpected state and condition of public affairs,[5] and who thinking themselves to be the men, and that wisdom was born and will die with them, look down with contempt upon all who differ from them; and not with these only, but I likewise knew that I had a more severe scrutiny to undergo from some learned men, to whom, it was easy to conjecture, this work, for many reasons, would not be acceptable, — for there are some by whom all labour employed in the search of any more obscure or difficult truth is accounted as misemployed, nor do these want the ingenuity of assigning honourable pretences for their indolence. I should, however, be ashamed to enter into any serious argument with such, nor is it worth while to enter upon a review of their long declamations. And although these, and many other things of such a kind, may appear grievous and hard to be borne to your dainty gentlemen, who eagerly court splendour and fame, yet, ingenuously to say the truth, I am very fully

persuaded that no man can either think or speak of me and my works with so much disregard and contempt as I myself, from my soul, both think and speak. And having in no respect any other expectation than that of contempt to myself and name, provided divine truth he promoted, all these considerations had long ago become not only of small consequence to me, but appeared as the merest trifles; for why should we be anxious about what shall become either of ourselves or our names, if only we “commit our souls to God in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator,” and by continuing in well-doing, stop the mouths of ignorant babblers? “God careth for us;” let us “cast our burdens upon him, and he will sustain us.” Let but the truth triumph, vanquish, rout, and put to flight its enemies; let the word of the cross have “free course and be glorified;” let wretched sinners learn daily more and more of fellowship with Christ in his sufferings, of the necessity of satisfaction for sins by the blood of the Son of God, so that he who is “white and ruddy, and the chiefest among ten thousand,” may appear so to them, “yea, altogether lovely,” till, being admitted into the chambers of the church’s husband, they drink “love that is better than wine,” and “become a willing people in the day of his power, and in the beauty of holiness;” and I shall very little regard being “judged of man’s judgment.”

Since, then, I not only have believed what I have spoken, but as both my own heart and God, who is greater than my heart, are witnesses that I have engaged in this labour for the truth under the influence of the most sacred regard and reverence for the majesty, purity, holiness, justice, grace, and mercy of God, from a detestation of that abominable thing which his soul hateth, and with a heart inflamed with zeal for the honour and glory of our dearest Saviour Jesus Christ, who is fairer than the sons of men and altogether lovely, whom with my soul and all that is within me I worship, love, and adore, whose glorious coming I wish and long for (“Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly”), for “whose sake I count all things but as loss and dung;” — since, I say,

I have engaged in this labour from these motives alone, I am under no anxiety or doubt but it will meet with a favourable reception from impartial judges, from those acquainted with the terror of the Lord, the curse of the law, the virtue of the cross, the power of the gospel, and the riches of the glory of divine grace.

There are, no doubt, many other portions and subjects of our religion, of that blessed trust committed to us for our instruction, on which we might dwell with greater pleasure and satisfaction of mind. Such, I mean, as afford a more free and wider scope of ranging through the most pleasant meads of the holy Scripture and contemplating in these the transparent fountains of life and rivers of consolation; subjects which, unencumbered by the thickets of scholastic terms and distinctions, unembarrassed by the impediments and sophisms of an enslaving philosophy or false knowledge, sweetly and pleasantly lead into a pure, unmixed, and delightful fellowship with the Father and with his Son, shedding abroad in the heart the inmost loves of our Beloved, with the odour of his sweet ointment poured forth. This truth, [however, which is under our consideration], likewise has its uses, and such as are of the greatest importance to those who are walking in the way of holiness and evangelical obedience. A brief specimen and abstract[6] of them is added, for the benefit of the pious reader, in the end of the dissertation, in order to excite his love towards our beloved High Priest and Chief Shepherd, and true fear towards God, who is a “consuming fire,” and whom we cannot serve “acceptably” unless with “reverence and godly fear.”

There can be no doubt but that many points of doctrine still remain, on which the labours of the godly and learned may be usefully employed: for although many reverend and learned divines, both of the present and former age, [from the time, at least, when God vouchsafed to our fathers that glorious regeneration, or time of reformation, of a purer religion and of sound learning, after a long reign of

darkness,] have composed from the sacred writings a synopsis, or methodical body, of doctrine or heavenly truth, and published their compositions under various titles; and although other theological writings, catechetical, dogmatical, exegetical, casuistical, and polemical, have increased to such a mass that the “world can hardly contain the books that have been written;” yet such is the nature of divine truth, so deep and inexhaustible the fountain of the sacred Scriptures, whence we draw it, so innumerable the salutary remedies and antidotes proposed in these to dispel all the poisons and temptations wherewith the adversary can ever attack either the minds of the pious or the peace of the church and the true doctrine, that serious and thinking men can entertain no doubt but that we perform a service praise-worthy and profitable to the church of Christ, when, under the direction of “the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, we bring forward, explain, and defend the most important and necessary articles of evangelical truth.

But to be more particular: how sparingly, for instance, yea, how obscurely, how confusedly, is the whole economy of the Spirit towards believers (one of the greatest mysteries of our religion, — a most invaluable portion of the salvation brought about for us by Christ) described by divines in general! or rather, by the most, is it not altogether neglected? In their catechisms, common-place books, public and private theses, systems, compends, etc., even in their commentaries, harmonies, and expositions, concerning the indwelling, sealing testimony, unction, and consolation of the Spirit, — Good God! concerning this inestimable fruit of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, this invaluable treasure of the godly, though copiously revealed and explained in the Scriptures, there is almost a total silence; and with regard to union and communion with Christ, and with his Father and our Father, and some other doctrines respecting his person, as the husband and head of the church, the same observation holds good.

For almost from the very period in which they were capable of judging even of the first principles of religion,[7] the orthodox have applied themselves to clear up and explain those articles of the truth which Satan, by his various artifices, hath endeavoured to darken, pervert, or undermine. But as there is no part of divine truth which, since the eternal and sworn enmity took place between him and the seed of the woman, he hath not opposed with all his might, fury, and cunning; so he hath not thought proper wholly to entrust the success of his interest to instruments delegated from among mankind, — though many of them seem to have discovered such a wonderful promptitude, alacrity, and zeal in transacting his business, that one would think they had been formed and fashioned for the purpose, — but he hath reserved, according to that power which he hath over darkness and all kind of wickedness, a certain portion of his work, to be administered in a peculiar manner by himself. And as he has, in all ages, reaped an abundant crop of tares from that part of his [domain] which he hired out to be improved by man, though, from the nature of human affairs, not without much noise, tumult, blood, and slaughter; so from that which he thought proper to manage himself, without any delegated assistance, he has received a more abundant and richer crop of infernal fruit.

The exertions of Satan against the truth of the gospel may be distinguished into two divisions. In the first, as the god of this world, he endeavours to darken the minds of unbelievers, “that the light of the glorious gospel of Christ may not shine unto them.” With what success he exercises this soul-destroying employment we cannot pretend to say; but there is reason to lament that he hath succeeded, and still succeeds, beyond his utmost hope. In the other, he carries on an implacable war, an unremitting strife; not, as formerly, with Michael about the body of Moses, but about the Spirit of Christ, about some of the more distinguished articles of the truth, and the application of each of them in order to cultivate communion with God the Father, and with

his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, — against the hearts of the godly and the new creature formed within them.

In this situation of affairs, most Christian writers have made it their study to oppose that first effort of the devil, whereby, through means of his instruments, he openly endeavours to suppress the light, both natural and revealed; but they have not been equally solicitous to succour the minds of believers when wrestling, “not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places,” and almost ready to sink under the contest. Hence, I say, a very minute investigation hath been set on foot by many of those articles of religion which he has openly, through the instrumentality of the slaves of error and darkness, attacked, and the vindication of them made clear and plain. But those which, both from their relation to practice and a holy communion, full of spiritual joy, to be cultivated with God, the old serpent hath reserved for his own attack in the hearts of believers, most writers, (partly either because they were ignorant of his wiles, or because they saw not much evil publicly arising thence, and partly because the arguments of the adversary were not founded on any general principle, but only to be deduced from the private and particular state and case of individuals,) have either passed over or very slightly touched upon.

As to what pertains to theology itself, or that “knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness,” wherewith being filled “we ourselves become perfect, and throughly furnished to every good work,” and “able ministers of the new testament, not of the letter, but of the spirit,” — “apt to teach, rightly dividing the word of truth;” that subject, I say, though a common and chief topic in the writings both of the schoolmen and others on religion, many have acknowledged, to their fatal experience, when too late, is treated in too perplexed and intricate a manner to be of any real and general service.

For while they are warmly employed in disputing whether theology be an art or a science, and whether it be a speculative or practical art or science; and while they attempt to measure it exactly by those rules, laws, and methods which human reason has devised for other sciences, thus endeavouring to render it more plain and clear, — they find themselves, to the grief and sorrow of many candidates for the truth, entangled in inextricable difficulties, and left in possession only of a human system of doctrines, having little or no connection at all with true theology.[8] I hope, therefore, — "if the Lord will, and I live," — to publish (but from no desire of gainsaying any one) some specimens of evangelical truth on the points before mentioned, as well as on other subjects.[9]

As to the work that I have now in hand, the first part of the dissertation is concerning *the cause of the death of Christ*; and in the execution of which I have the greatest pleasure and satisfaction (though proudly defied by the adversaries, so conceited with themselves and their productions are they), because "I have determined to know nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified," — at least, nothing that could divert my attention from that subject.[10]

But now, learned reader, lest, as the saving is, "the gate should become wider than the city," if you will bear with me while I say a few things of myself, however little worthy of your notice, I shall immediately conclude the preface.

About two years ago, the parliament of the commonwealth promoted me, while diligently employed, according to the measure of the gift of grace bestowed on me, in preaching the gospel, by their authority and influence, though with reluctance on my part, to a chair in the very celebrated university of Oxford. I mean not to relate what various employments fell to my lot from that period; what frequent journeys I became engaged in; not, indeed, expeditions of pleasure, or on my own or private account, but such as the unavoidable necessities of the university, and the commands of superiors, whose authority

was not be gainsaid, imposed upon me. And now I clearly found that I, who dreaded almost every academical employment, as being unequal to the task (for what could be expected from a man not far advanced in years, who had for several years been very full of employment, and accustomed only to the popular mode of speaking; who, being altogether devoted to the investigation and explanation of the saving grace of God through Jesus Christ, had for some time taken leave of all scholastic studies; whose genius is by no means quick, and who had even forgot, in some measure, the portion of polite learning that he might have formerly acquired, and at a time, too, when I had entertained hope that, through the goodness of God, in giving me leisure, and retirement, and strength for study, the deficiency of genius and penetration might be made up by industry and diligence), was now so circumstanced that the career of my studies must be interrupted by more and greater impediments than ever before.

For, to mention first what certainly is most weighty and important, the task of lecturing in public was put upon me; which would, strictly and properly, require the whole time and attention even of the most grave and experienced divine; and in the discharge of which, unless I had been greatly assisted and encouraged by the candour, piety, submission, and self-denial of the auditors, and by their respect for the divine institution and their love of the truth, with every kind of indulgence and kind attention towards the earthen vessel, which distinguish most academicians, of every rank, age, and description, beyond mankind in general, I should have long ago lost all hope of discharging that province, either to the public advantage or my own private satisfaction and comfort.

And as most of them are endowed with a pious disposition and Christian temper, and well furnished with superior gifts, and instructed in learning of every kind, — which, in the present imperfect and depraved state of human nature, is apt to fill the minds of men with prejudices against “the

foolishness of preaching," and to disapprove "the simplicity that is in Christ," — I should be the most ungrateful of mankind were I not to acknowledge that the humility, diligence, and alacrity with which they attended to and obeyed the words of the cross, indulging neither pride of heart, nor animosity of mind, nor itching of ears, though dispensed by a most unworthy servant of God in the gospel of his Son, have given, and still give me great courage in the discharge of the different duties of my office.

The most merciful Father of all things shall, in his infinite wisdom and goodness, dispose of the affairs of our university. Reports, however, are everywhere spread abroad concerning the abolition and destruction of the colleges, and efforts for that purpose made by some who, being entire strangers to every kind of literature, or at least ignorant of every thing of greater antiquity than what their own memory or that of their fathers can reach, and regardless of the future, imagine the whole globe and bounds of human knowledge to be contained within the limits of their own little cabins, ignorant whether the sun ever shone beyond their own little island or not, — "neither knowing what they say nor whereof they affirm;" and by others who are deeply sunk in the basest of crimes, and who would, therefore, wish all light distinguishing between good and evil entirely extinguished (for "evil doers hate the light, nor do they come to the light, lest their deeds should be reproved"), that they (mean lurchers hitherto) may "fill up the measure of their iniquity" with some kind of eclat. With this faction are combined those who, never having become candidates for literature themselves, yet, by pushing themselves forward, have unseasonably thrust themselves into such services and offices as necessarily require knowledge and learning. These, I say, like the fox which had lost his tail, would wish all the world deprived of the means of knowledge, lest their own shameful ignorance, despicable indolence, and total unfitness for the offices which they solicit or hold, should appear to all who have the least degree of understanding

and sense. And lastly, too, [the same reports are spread] by a despicable herd of prodigal, idle fellows, eagerly gaping for the revenues of the university. I could not, therefore, but give such a public testimony, as a regard to truth and duty required from me, to these very respectable and learned men (however much these treacherous calumniators and falsifying sycophants may rail and show their teeth upon the occasion), the heads of the colleges, who have merited so highly of the church [and of the commonwealth], for their distinguished candour, great diligence, uncommon erudition, blameless politeness;[11] many of whom are zealously studious of every kind of literature; and many, by their conduct in the early period of their youth, gave the most promising hopes of future merit: so that I would venture to affirm, that no impartial and unprejudiced judge will believe that our university hath either been, for ages past, surpassed, or is now surpassed, either in point of a proper respect and esteem for piety, for the saving knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, manners orderly and worthy of the Christian vocation, or for a due regard to doctrines, arts, languages, and all sciences that can be ornamental to wise, worthy, and good men, appointed for the public good, by any society of men in the world.

Relying, then, on the humanity, piety, and candour of such men (who may be “afflicted, but not straitened; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;” who carry about with them the life and death of the Lord Jesus Christ), though destitute of all strength of my own, and devoting myself entirely to Him “who furnisheth seed to the sower,” and who “from the mouths of babes and sucklings ordaineth strength,” who hath appointed Christ a perpetual source of help, and who furnishes a seasonable aid to every pious effort, — I have, in conjunction with my very learned colleague[12] (a very eminent man, and whose equal in the work of the gospel if the parliament of the commonwealth had conjoined with him, they would have

attended to the best interests of the university), continued in the discharge of the duties of this laborious and difficult province.

But not on this account alone would I have been reluctant to return, after so long an interval of time, to this darling university; but another care, another office, and that by far the most weighty, was, by the concurring voice of the senate of the university, and notwithstanding my most earnest requests to the contrary, entrusted and assigned to me, and by the undertaking of which I have knowingly and wittingly compounded with the loss of my peace and all my studious pursuits.[13]

Such, candid reader, is the account of the author of the following little treatise, and of his situation when composing it; a man not wise in the estimation of others, — in his own, very foolish; first called from rural retirement and the noise of arms to this university, and very lately again returned to it from excursions in the cause of the gospel, not only to the extremities of this island, but to coasts beyond the seas, and now again deeply engaged in the various and weighty duties of his station. Whether any thing exalted or refined can be expected from such a person is easy for any one to determine.

With regard to our manner of writing, or Latin diction, as some are wont to acquire great praise from their sublimity of expression, allow me but a word or two. Know, then, reader, that you have to do with a person who, provided his words but clearly express the sentiments of his mind, entertains a fixed and absolute disregard for all elegance and ornaments of speech; for, —

“Dicite, pontifices, in sacris quid facit aurum?”

“Say, bishops, of what avail is glitter to sacred subjects?”

In my opinion, indeed, he who, in a theological contest, should please himself with the idea of displaying rhetorical flourishes, would derive no other advantage therefrom but that his head, adorned with magnificent verbose garlands

and pellets, would fall a richer victim to the criticisms of the learned.

But whatever shall be the decision of the serious and judicious with respect to this treatise, if I shall any how stir up an emulation in others, on whom the grace of God may have bestowed more excellent gifts, to bring forward to public utility their pious, solid, and learned labours, and shall excite them, from their light, to confer light on the splendour of this university, I shall be abundantly gratified. Farewell, pious reader, and think not lightly of him who hath used his most zealous endeavours to serve thy interest in the cause of the gospel.

John Owen.

[1] Ὑπερτίμιον, invaluable, unspeakably precious. — Ed.

[2] Thereby hastening their own destruction. — Tr.

[3] The meaning is, “But to make a most elaborate display of their ignorance.” — Ed.

[4] Vado isto enavigato, “Having cleared these shallows.” — Ed.

[5] This treatise was written in the time of the Commonwealth. — Tr.

[6] [A few crumbs of these, by way of specimen are] added, etc. “Abstract” conveys a widely different idea from ἀποσπασμὰτα, — Ed.

[7] “Ab ipsis ferè religionis nostræ cunis et primordiis.” Surely the rendering above is a wide deviation from Owen’s meaning, — “From the infancy and origin of *our* religion,” that is, the Christian religion. — Ed.

[8] The full sentence in the original runs in the following terms:— “Not a few wooers of truth having followed their guidance, grieve and lament how they have strayed in their whole course, after finding themselves pushed into inextricable difficulties, (like that old man in Terence who was directed by a villain of a slave backward and forward, by steeps, and precipices, and obscure corners, to land at length in a narrow alley with no thoroughfare,) and left in possession only of a *human system* of doctrine, having scarcely any thing in common with true theology.” — Ed.

[9] See Owen on the Holy Spirit. [This note is by the translator. We apprehend that Owen alludes his work on “Communion with God.” See vol. ii. of his works. — Ed.]

[10] This paragraph is neither correctly rendered nor consistent with fact. The whole paragraph stands thus in the original:— “As to the work now in hand it is the first part of *a dissertation* concerning *the causes of the death of Christ*; to which I willingly apply because I have determined to know nothing but Jesus Christ, and him crucified: though sadly provoked to turn my thoughts in another direction by the insolent haughtiness of adversaries, who cannot think highly enough of themselves and their productions; — a sort of persons than whom none are more silly, or held more cheap by wise and thoughtful men.” Owen does not seem to have ever fulfilled his intention to complete this work on the causes of our Lord’s agony. The subject is fully considered in the Exercitations xxix. and xxx., prefixed to his Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews. — Ed.

[11] “Inculpatæ πολιτείας,” — rather, “Blameless administration.” — Ed.

[12] Mr T. Goodwin, president of Magdalen College.

[13] In the year 1651 Dr Owen was settled in the deanery of Christ Church, and in 1652 chosen vice-chancellor of that university.

A dissertation on divine justice

Part I.

Chapter I.

The introduction — The design of the work — Atheists — The prolepsis[14] of divine justice in general — The divisions of justice, according to Aristotle — The sentiments of the schoolmen respecting these — Another division — Justice considered absolutely; then in various respects.

In this treatise we are to discourse of God and of his justice, the most illustrious of all the divine perfections, but especially of his vindicatory justice;[15] of the certainty of which I most firmly believe that all mankind will, one time or other, be made fully sensible, either by faith in it here, as revealed in the word, or by feeling its effects, to their extreme misery, in the world hereafter, Rom. ii. 8, 9, 12; 2 Thess. i. 7–9. But as the human mind is blind to divine light, and as both our understandings and tongues are inadequate to conceive of God aright and to declare him (hence that common and just observation, that it is an arduous thing to speak of God aright), [and much darkness rests upon divine things],[16] that we may handle so important a subject with that reverence and perspicuity wherewith it becomes it to be treated, we must chiefly depend on His aid who was "made the righteousness[17] of God for us," himself "God blessed for ever," 1 Cor. i. 30; 2 Cor. v. 21; Rom. ix. 5. But whatever I have written, and whatever I have asserted, on this subject, whether I have written and asserted it with modesty, sobriety, judgment, and humility, must be left to the decision of such as are competent judges.

We think proper to divide this dissertation into two parts. In the first part, which contains the body of our opinion, after having premised some general descriptions of divine justice, I maintain sin-punishing justice to be natural, and in its exercise necessary, to God. The truth of this assertion forms a very distinguished part of natural theology. The defence of it, to the best of my abilities, both against

Socinians, who bitterly oppose it, as well as against certain of our own countrymen, who, in defiance of all truth, under a specious pretext, support the same pernicious scheme with them, shall be the subject of the latter part.

In almost all ages there have existed some who have denied the *being* of a God, although but very few, and these the most abandoned.[18] And as mankind, for the most part, have submitted to the evidence of a divine existence, so there never has existed one who has ever preferred an indictment of injustice against God, or who hath not declared him to be infinitely just.[19] The despairing complaints of some in deep calamities, the unhallowed expostulations of others at the point of death, do not bespeak the real sentiments of the man, but the misery of his situation: as, for instance, that expostulation of Job, chap. x. 3, "Is it good unto thee that thou shouldest oppress?" and among the Gentiles, that of Brutus, "O wretched virtue! how mere a nothing art thou, but a name!" and that furious exclamation of Titus when dying, related by Suetonius,[20] "who, pulling aside his curtains, and looking up to the heavens, complained that his life was taken from him undeservedly and unjustly." Of the same kind was that late dreadful epiphonema[21] of a despairing Italian, related by Mersennus,[22] who, speaking of God and the devil, in dread contempt of divine justice, exclaimed, "Let the strongest take me."

But as "the judgments of God are unsearchable, and his ways past finding out," Rom. xi. 33, those who have refused to submit to his absolute dominion and supreme jurisdiction (some monstrous human characters) have been hardy enough to assert that there is no God, rather than venture to call him unjust. Hence that common couplet:—

"Marmoreo tumulo Licinus jacet, at Cato parvo,
Pompeius nullo; credimus esse deos?"
"Licinus lies buried in a marble tomb, Cato in a mean one,
Pompey has none; — can we believe that there are gods?"

And hence Ulysses is introduced by Euripides, expressing his horror of the gormandizing of the man-devouring Cyclops, in these verses:—[23]

> "O Jupiter, behold such violations of hospitality; for if thou regardest them not,
>
> Thou art in vain accounted Jupiter, for thou canst be no god."

Beyond any doubt, the audacity of those abandoned triflers, who would wish to seem to act the mad part with a show of reason, is more akin to the madness of atheism than to the folly of ascribing[24] to the God whom they worship and acknowledge such attributes as would not only be unworthy but disgraceful to him. Protagoras,[25] therefore, not comprehending the justice of God in respect of his government, hath written, "With regard to the gods, I do not know whether they exist or do not exist." Yet, even among the Gentiles themselves, and those who were destitute of the true knowledge of the true God (for they, in some sense, were without God in the world), writers, of whom Seneca[26] and Plutarch were the most distinguished, have not been wanting who have endeavoured, by serious and forcible arguments, to unravel the difficulty respecting the contrary lots of good and bad men in this life. Our first idea, therefore, of the Divine Being, and the natural conceptions of all men, demand and enforce the necessity of justice being ascribed to God.[27] To be eloquent, then, in so easy a cause, or to triumph with arguments on a matter so universally acknowledged, we have neither leisure nor inclination. What, and of what kind, the peculiar quality and nature of sin-punishing justice is, shall now be briefly explained. And that we may do this with the greater perspicuity and force of evidence, a few observations seem necessary to be premised concerning justice in general, and its more commonly received divisions.

The philosopher Aristotle, long ago, as is well known, hath divided justice into *universal* and *particular*. Concerning the former, he says that he might compare it to

the celebrated saying, “In justice every virtue is summarily comprehended,” Ethic. ad Nicom., lib. v. cap. 1, 2; and he affirms that it in no wise differs from virtue in general, unless in respect of its relation to another being.

But he says that particular justice is a part thereof under the same name, which he again distinguishes into *distributive* and *commutative*.[28] The schoolmen,[29] too, agreeing with him (which is rather surprising), divide the divine justice into universal and particular; for that excellence, say they, is spoken of God and man by way of analogy.[30] Nor is it like that bird mentioned by Homer, which goes by a double name, by one among mortals, by another among the immortals, —

“The gods call it Chalcis, but men Cumindis,”

Hom.

but is understood as existing in God principally, as in the first analogised[31] being. Nor do later divines dissent from them; nay, all of them who have made the divine attributes the subject of their contemplations have, by their unanimous voice, approved of this distinction, and given their suffrages in its favour.[32]

But, farther, they assert that particular justice, in respect of its exercise, consists either in *what is said* or in *what is done*. That which is displayed in things said, in commands, is equity; in declarations, truth; — both which the holy Scriptures[33] do sometimes point out under the title of Divine Justice. But the justice which respects things done is either that of *government*, or *jurisdiction* or judgment; and this, again, they affirm to be either *remunerative* or *corrective*, but that corrective is either *castigatory* or *vindicatory*. With the last member of this last distinction I begin this work; and yet, indeed, although the most learned of our divines, in later ages, have assented to this distribution of divine justice into these various significations, it seems proper to me to proceed in a manner somewhat different, and more suited to our purpose.

I say, then, that the justice of God may be considered in a twofold manner:— First, *Absolutely*, and in itself. Secondly, In respect of its *egress* and *exercise*.

First, The justice of God, *absolutely* considered, is the universal *rectitude and perfection* of the divine nature; for such is the divine nature antecedent to all acts of his will and suppositions of objects towards which it might operate. This excellence is most universal; nor, from its own nature, as an excellence, can it belong[34] to any other being.

Secondly, It is to be viewed with respect to its *egress and exercise*. And thus, in the order of nature, it is considered as consequent, or at least as concomitant, to some acts of the divine will, assigning or appointing to it a proper object. Hence, that rectitude, which in itself is an absolute property of the divine nature, is considered as a relative and hypothetical[35] attribute, and has a certain habitude to its proper objects.

That is to say, this rectitude, or universal justice, has certain egresses towards objects out of itself, in consequence of the divine will, and in a manner agreeable to the rule of his supreme right and wisdom, — namely, when some object of justice is supposed and appointed (which object must necessarily depend on the mere good pleasure of God, because it was possible it might never have existed at all, God, notwithstanding, continuing just and righteous to all eternity). And these egresses are twofold:—

1. They are *absolute* and perfectly free, — namely, in *words*.

2. They are *necessary*, — namely, in *actions*.

For the justice of God is neither altogether one of that kind of perfections which create and constitute an object to themselves, as power and wisdom do, nor of that kind which not only require an object for their exercise, but one peculiarly affected and circumstanced, as mercy, patience, and forbearance do; but may be considered in both points of view, as shall be more fully demonstrated hereafter.

1. For the first, it has *absolute egresses in words* (constituting, and, as it were, creating an object to itself); as, for instance, in words of legislation, and is then called *equity*; or in words of declaration and narration, and is then called *truth*. Both these[36] I suppose for the present to take place absolutely and freely. Whether God hath necessarily prescribed a law to his rational creatures, at least one accompanied with threats and promises, is another consideration.

2. There are respective egresses of this justice in *deeds*, and according to the distinctions above mentioned; — that is to say, it is exercised either in the government of all things according to what is due to them by the counsel and will of God, or in judgments rewarding or punishing, according to the rule of his right and wisdom; which also is the rule of equity in legislation, and of truth in the declarations annexed. In respect of these,[37] I call the egresses of the divine justice *necessary*, and such that they could not possibly be otherwise; which, by divine help, I shall prove hereafter: and this is the same as saying that vindicatory justice is so *natural* to God, that, sin being supposed, he cannot, according to the rule of his right, wisdom, and truth, but punish it. But antecedent to this whole exercise of the divine justice, I suppose a *natural right*, which indispensably requires the dependence and moral subjection of the rational creature, in God, all the egresses of whose justice, in words, contain an arrest of judgment till farther trial, in respect of the object.

It now, then, appears that all these distinctions of divine justice respect it not as considered in itself, but its egresses and exercise only; to make which clear was the reason that I departed from the beaten track. Nay, perhaps it would be a difficult matter to assign any virtue to God but in the general, and not as having any specific ratio[38] of any virtue. But that which answers to the ratio of any particular virtue in God consists in the exercise of the same. For instance: mercy is properly attributed to God, so far as it denotes the

highest perfection in the will of God, the particular ratio or quality of which, — namely, a disposition of assisting the miserable, with a compassion of their misery, — is found not altogether as to some, as to others altogether and only, in the exercise of the above-mentioned perfection;[39] but it is called a proper attribute of God, because by means of it some operation is performed agreeable to the nature of God, which, in respect of his other attributes, his will would not produce. This kind, therefore, of the divine attributes, because they have proper and formal *objects*, thence only derive their formal and specific ratios. But all these observations upon justice must be briefly examined and explained, that we may arrive at the point intended.

[14]This word commonly means a previous and concise view of a subject, or an anticipation of objections. In this treatise it means a natural or innate conception of divine justice. — Tr. [See note on page 517. — Ed.]

[15] The Word in the original means either to claim and assert a right, or to punish the violation of it. By "vindicatory justice," then, we are to understand that perfection of the Deity which disposes him to vindicate his right by punishing its violators. It ought never to be translated vindictive, or understood as meaning revengeful. — Tr. [Though Dr Owen uses the expression, "My book of the Vindictive Justice of God," see vol. xii., "Vindiciæ Evangelicæ," chap. xxx., he explains his meaning in different parts of his works: see vol. xi., "Saints' Perseverance," chap. vii.; vol. xii., chap. xxiii.; and vol. ii., "On Communion with God," chap. iii., digression ii., p. 84. — Ed.]

[16] Πολὺς ταραγμὸς ἔν τε τοῖς θεοῖς ἔνι. —Eurip. Iphig. in Taur. 572.

[17] Or justice. — Tr.

[18] "Nullos unquam fuisse aut esse posse ἀθέους proprie dictos et speculative, seu plene persuasos, agnoscunt pene omnes." — Vid. Voet. Disp. de Atheismo. Ps. xiv. 1. "Non est potestas Dei in terris." — Chal. Par. "Eorum qui antiquitus horrendi criminis rei existimabantur vindicias instituerunt inulti." — Vid. Vos. de Idol. li. cap. 1. Ὡς τοῦ πιεῖν γε, καὶ φαγεῖν του φ' ἡμέραν, Ζεὺς οὗτος ἀνθρώποισι τοῖσι σώφροσι. —Eurip. in Cyclop 335.

[19] "Veritatis argumentum est omnibus aliquid videri tanquam deos esse, quod omnibus de diis opinio insita sit, neque ulla gens usquam est, adeo extra leges moresque posita ut non aliquos Deos credat." —Seneca, Epist. iii.

[20] Sueton. in Vitâ Titi, cap. x..

[21] A sudden, unconnected exclamation. — Tr.

[22] Mersen. ad Deistas Gall.

[23] Eurip. in Cyclop., verse 350.

[24] A slight alteration seems needed to elicit the real meaning, — “than to folly, in ascribing,” etc. Owen is speaking of “the audacity of these triflers” “in ascribing” unworthy attributes to God. — Ed.

[25] Diogen. Laert. in Protag., Ep. iii. 12.

[26] “Cur bonis mala fiant, cum sit providentia.” — Sen.

[27] “Illos qui nullum esse Deum dixerunt non modo philosophos, sed ne homines quidem esse dixerim, qui brutis simillimi solo corpere constiterunt, nihil omnino cernentes animo, sed ad sensum corporis cuncta referentes, qui nihil putabunt esse nisi quod oculis tuebuntur.” —Lactan. de plur., lib. i., etc. cap. 8. “Quia rationem mali non intellexerunt, et natura ejus abscondita fuit, duo principia bonum et malum finxit tota ethnicorum (ante natum Marcionem) antiquitas.” — Vid. Vos. de Idol., lib. i. cap. 5.

[28] That which relates to fair exchange. — Tr.

[29] Lombard., lib. iv. dist. 46; Thom. ii. 2, ti. 51; Pesant. in Thom., 2. a. ti. 58, ar. 4; Suarez. Relec. de Just. Div.; Hom. Iliad, Ξ. 291.

[30] Analogy means a resemblance between things with regard to some qualities or circumstances, properties or effects, though not in all. — Tr.

[31] That is, the first being whose perfections have been explained by analogy, or by tracing a resemblance between these perfections and something like them in ourselves, in kind or sort, though differing infinitely with respect to manner and degree. — Tr.

[32] Zanch. de Nat. Dei., lib. i.; Ames. Cas. Consc. , lib. v. cap. 2; Armin. Disput., part iv. thes. 15; Voet. Dis. de Jure et Just.; Mares. Hyd. Socin., lib. i. c. 25, etc.

[33] Rom. i. 17, iii. 21; Ezra ix. 15; Neh. ix. 8; Deut. iv. 8; Ps. cxix. 7; Heb. vi. 10; 2 Tim. iv. 8; 2 Thess. i. 5.

[34] Or, have a respect to any other being. — Tr.

[35] Conditional. — Tr.

[36] Namely, the egresses in words of legislation and in words of declaration and narration. — Tr.

[37] Namely, the egresses in the government of things according to what is due to them by the counsel of his will; or in judgments rewarding or punishing, according to the rule of his right and wisdom.. — Tr.

[38] That is, any distinguishing sort or quality. — Tr.

[39] In the general sparing mercy of God, the particular quality of mercy, — namely, a disposition of assisting the miserable, with a compassion of their misery, — is not wholly found, because there are many of mankind towards whom this disposition of assisting is never effectually exerted; but, in the pardoning mercy of God to his people, it is fully and gloriously displayed. — Tr.

Chapter II.

The universal justice of God — The idle fancies of the schoolmen — The arguments of Durandus against commutative justice — Suarez's censure of the scholastic reasonings — His opinion of divine justice — The examination of it — A description of universal justice from the sacred writings — A division of it in respect of its egress — Rectitude of government in God, what, and of what kind — Definitions of the philosophers and lawyers — Divisions of the justice of government — A caution respecting these — Vindicatory justice — The opinions of the partisans — An explication of the true opinion — Who the adversaries are — The state of the controversy farther considered.

We are first, then, briefly to treat of the universal justice of God, or of his justice considered in itself and absolutely, which contains in it all the divine excellencies. The schoolmen, treading in the steps of the philosophers, who have acknowledged no kind of justice which has not naturally some respect to another object, are for the most part silent concerning this justice. And once, by the way, to take notice of these [hair-splitters], on this, as almost on every other subject, they are strangely divided. Duns Scotus, Durandus, and Paludamus deny that there is commutative justice in God.[40]

For the Master of the Sentences himself calls God an impartial and just distributer, but says not a word of commutation. Thomas Aquinas[41] and Cajetan do the same; though the latter says "that some degree of commutative justice is discernible." So also Ferorariensis, on the same place; and Scotus, in the third book of his treatise, "Of Nature and Grace," chap. vii. Durandus, in particular, contends, with many arguments, that this kind of justice ought not to be assigned to God; — first, Because that this justice observes an equality between the thing given and received, which cannot be the case between us and God; — and, secondly, Because that we cannot be of any service to

him (which he proves from Rom. xi. 35; Job xxii. 3, xxxv. 7; Luke xvii. 10), whereby he can be bound to make an equality with us by virtue of commutation; — and, thirdly, Because that we cannot make an equal return to God for benefits received; — and, finally, That as there is no proper commutative justice between a father and his children, according to Aristotle's[42] opinion, much less can it subsist between God and us.

But the same Durandus likewise denies to God distributive justice,[43] because he is not indebted to any one. He, however, acknowledges some mode of distributive justice, and Pesantius[44] follows his opinion.

But Gabriel, on the same[45] distinction, asserts commutative justice to be inherent in God; for there is a certain equality, as he says, between God and man, from the acceptation of God the receiver. Proudly enough said, indeed!

But what shall we say of these triflers? They resemble those advocates in Terence, whose opinion, after Demipho, embarrassed by the cheats of Phormio the sycophant, had asked, he exclaims, "Well done, gentlemen; I am now in a greater uncertainty than before!" so intricate were their answers, and resembling the practices of the Andabatæ.[46]

Hence, Francis Suarez himself, after he had reviewed the opinions of the schoolmen concerning the justice of God, bids adieu to them all, declaring, "That the expressions of Scripture had greater weight with him than their philosophic human arguments," Opusc. vi. de Just. Div. sec. 1. But with much labour and prolixity he insists that both distributive and commutative justice are to be ascribed to God that so he might pave the way for that rotten fiction concerning the merits of Roman Catholics with God, — a doctrine which, were even all his suppositions granted, appears not to follow, much less to be confirmed.[47] This opinion of Suarez concerning vindicatory justice, as it is

deservedly famous in scholastic theology, we think proper to lay before you in few words.

In his discourses concerning the justice of God,[48] he contends that the affection[49] of punishing, which he calls "a perfection elicitive[50] of the act of punishing," is properly and formally inherent in God; and it is so because it hath a proper object, namely, to punish the guilt of sin, which is honourable; nor does it include any imperfection; and, therefore, that some formal and proper divine attribute ought to correspond to that effect.

He farther maintains that this affection of punishing is neither commutative nor distributive justice. His conclusions here I do not oppose, though I cannot approve of many of his reasonings and arguments. In fine, he contends that vindicatory justice in God is the same with universal, or legal, or providential justice, which we call the justice of government. But he makes a dishonourable and base conclusion from a distinction about the persons punished, namely, into such as are merely passive sufferers, and such as spontaneously submit themselves to punishment, that they may satisfy the punitory justice of God; reasoning in such a manner, that after he has forced the whole doctrine concerning the commutative and distributive justice of God to become subservient to that sacrilegious and proud error concerning the merits of man with God, and even of one from the supererogation of another,[51] he strenuously endeavours to establish a consistency between this doctrine of vindicatory justice and a fiction not less impious and disgraceful to the blood of Christ, which "cleanseth us from all sin," about penal satisfaction, to be performed by such ways and means as God hath never prescribed, or even thought of.

"— Ut turpiter atrum
Desinat in piscem mulier formosa superne."

Hor.

Dismissing these bunglers (who know not the righteousness of God), then, from our dissertation, let us attend to the more sure word of prophecy. That word everywhere asserts God to be just, and possessed of such justice as denotes the universal rectitude and perfection of his divine nature. His essence is most wise, most perfect, most excellent, most merciful, most blessed; that, in fine, is the justice of God, according to the Scriptures, namely, considered absolutely and in itself. Nor would the holy Scriptures have us to understand any thing else by divine justice than the power and readiness of God to do all things rightly and becomingly, according to the rule of his wisdom, goodness, truth, mercy, and clemency. Hence the above-mentioned sophists agree that justice, taken precisely and in itself, and abstracting it from all human imperfections, simply means perfection without intrinsic imperfection; for it is not a virtue that rules the *passions*, but directs their *operations*.

Hence it presides, as it were, in all the divine decrees, actions, works, and words, of whatsoever kind they be. There is no egress of the divine will, no work or exercise of providence, though immediately and distinctly breathing clemency, mercy, anger, truth, or wisdom, but in respect thereof God is eminently said to be just, and to execute justice. Hence, Isa. li. 6, he is said to be just in bringing salvation; Rom. iii. 25, 26, just in pardoning sin; Rev. xvi. 5, 6, just in avenging and punishing sin; Rom. iii. 5, 6, just in all the exercises of his supreme right and dominion, Job xxxiv. 12–14; Rom. ix. 14, 15, 18, he is just in sparing according to his mercy; just in punishing according to his anger and wrath. In a word, whatsoever, by reason of his right, he doeth or worketh “according to the counsel of his will,” whatever proceeds from his faithfulness, mercy, grace, love, clemency, anger, and even from his fury, is said to be done by, through, and because of his justice, as the perfection inducing to, or the cause effecting and procuring, such operations. It is evident, then, that justice, universally

taken, denotes the highest rectitude of the divine nature, and a power and promptitude of doing all things in a manner becoming and agreeable to his wisdom, goodness, and right.

The more solemn egresses of this justice, to which all particular acts may be easily reduced, have been already pointed out; but equity in legislation, fidelity and truth in threatenings and promises annexed to it, in which God is often said to be just, and to execute justice, I think may be passed over, as being too remote from our purpose. But as it appears that some light may be thrown on this subject which we are now treating of, from the consideration of the relation of rectitude and divine wisdom, that is, of universal justice, to government and judgment, we must say a few words on that head.

But rectitude of government, to which that justice analogically corresponds, is that which philosophers and civilians unanimously agree to be the highest excellence, though they have variously described it. Aristotle calls it “a habit by which men are capable of doing just things, and by which they both will and do just things;”[52] attributing to it aptitude, will, and action. Cicero calls it “an affection of the mind, giving to every one his due;”[53] understanding by “affection” not any passion of the mind, but a habit. The civilians understand by it “a constant and perpetual will, assigning to every one his due.” The propriety of their definition we leave to themselves. That “constant and perpetual will” of theirs is the same as the “habit” of the philosophers; which, whether it be the proper genus[54] of this virtue, let logicians determine. Again; as they constantly attribute three acts to right, which is the object of justice, — namely, “to live honestly, to hurt nobody, and to give every one his due,” — how comes it to pass that they define justice by one act, when doubtless it respects all right? therefore it is, they say, that to give every one his due is not of the same extent in the definition of justice and in the description of the acts of right.

But let them both unite in their sentiments as they please, neither the “habit” or “affection” of the philosophers, nor the “living honestly and hurting nobody” of the civilians, can be assigned to God; for in ascribing the perfection of excellencies to him, we exclude the ratio of habit or quality, properly so called, and every material and imperfect mode of operation. He must be a mortal man, and subject to a law, to whom these things apply.

Moreover, those (I speak of our own countrymen) who divide this justice of government into *commutative* and *distributive* rob God entirely of the *commutative*, which consists in a mutual giving and receiving. For, “Who hath first given to him?” “Who maketh thee to differ from another?” “He giveth not account of any of his matters.” But *distributive*, which belongs to him as the supreme governor of all things, who renders to every one his due, is proper to himself alone. This we have above asserted to be the justice of government or judgment. Of this justice of government frequent mention is made in the sacred writings. *It is that perfection of the Divine Being whereby he directs all his actions in governing and administering created things, according to the rule of his rectitude and wisdom.* But this excellence, or habitude for action, in no wise differs from universal justice, unless in respect of its relation to another being. But what is a *law* to us, in the administration of things, in God is his *right*, in conjunction with his most wise and just will; for God, as it is said, is a law unto himself. To this justice are these passages to be referred, Zeph. iii. 5; 2 Chron. xii. 6; Ps. vii. 9; Jer. xii. 1; 2 Tim. iv. 8, with almost innumerable others. But in all the effects and egresses of this justice God is justified, not from the reason of things, but from his dominion and supreme right. Thus, Job xiv. 14, xxxiii. 12, xxxiv. 12–15. And this is the first egress of the divine rectitude in *works*.

The other egress of this justice is in *judgment*, the last member of the divisions of which, above mentioned, — namely, that by which God punishes the crimes of rational

beings, to whom a law hath been given, according to the rule of his right, — is the vindicatory justice of which we are treating.

Here again, reader, I would wish to put you in mind that I by no means assert many species of universal justice, or, so to speak, particular or special justices, as distinct perfections in God, which others seem to do, but one only, — namely, the universal and essential rectitude of the divine nature variously exercised; and therefore I maintain that this vindicatory justice is the very rectitude and perfection of the Deity.

Some of the schoolmen, however, agree with me in opinion; for Cajetan[55] upon Thomas grants that vindicatory justice in a public person differs nothing from legal and universal justice; although he maintains that there is a peculiar species of justice in a private person, — a position which, I confess, I do not understand, since punishment, considered as punishment, is not the right of a private person. God certainly does not punish us as being injured, but as a ruler and judge. But again, concerning this justice, another question arises, Whether it be natural to God, or an *essential attribute of the divine nature*, — that is to say, such that, the existence of sin being admitted, God must necessarily exercise it, because it supposes in him a constant and immutable will to punish sin, so that while he acts consistently with his nature he cannot do otherwise than punish and avenge it, — or whether it be a free act of the divine will, which he may exercise at pleasure? On this point theologians are divided. We shall consider what has been determined on the matter by the most notorious enemies of divine truth, and especially by those of our own times.

1. Then, they own, "That such a kind of justice is applicable[56] to God, which were he always inclined to exercise, he might, consistently with right, destroy all sinners without waiting for their repentance, and so let no sin pass unpunished."

2. “That he will not pardon any sins but those of the penitent.” Nor do they deny, so far as I know, —

3. “That God hath determined the punishment of sin by the rule of his right and wisdom.” But they deny, —

1. That perfection by which God punishes sins either to be his justice or to be so called in Scripture, but only anger, fury, or fierce indignation, — expressions denoting in the clearest manner the freedom of the divine will in the act of punishing; although some of Socinus’ followers, among whom is Crellius, have declared openly against him on this point. Again, they deny, —

2. That there is any such attribute in God as requires a satisfaction for sins, which he is willing to forgive, but maintain that he is entirely free to “yield up his claim of right,” as they phrase it, at pleasure; that, therefore, divine justice ought, by no means, to be reckoned among the causes of Christ’s death. Nay more, say they, “Such a kind of justice may be found in the epistles of Iscariot to the Pharisees” (they are the words of Gitichius ad Luc.), “but is not to be found in the holy Scriptures.”

Such are the opinions of those concerning whom we are disputing at this present day, whether they be *heretics* because they are not *Christians*. Between their sentiments and ours on this point there is the widest difference; for we affirm the justice by which God punishes sin to be the very essential rectitude of Deity itself, exercised in the punishment of sins, according to the rule of his wisdom, and which is in itself no more free than the divine essence.

This kind of justice Faustus Socinus opposes with all his might in almost all his writings, but especially in his Theological Lectures of the Saviour, book i. chap. 1, etc.; Moscorovius, also, on the Racovian Catechism, chap. viii. quest. 19; Ostorodius, a most absurd heretic, in his Institutions, chap. xxxi., and in his Disputations to Tradelius; Volkelius, of the True Religion, book v. chap. 21; also Crellius, the most acute and learned of all the adversaries,

in that book which he wished to have prefixed to the Dissertations of Volkelius, chap. xxviii., and in his Vindications against Grotius, chap. i.; in a little work, also, entitled, “Of the Causes of the Death of Christ,” chap. xvi. He pursued the same object in almost all his other writings, both polemical and dogmatical, and likewise in his commentaries; — a very artful man, and one that employed very great diligence and learning in the worst of causes. Michael Gitichius has the same thing in view in his writings against Paræus, and in his dispute with Ludovicus Lucius in defence of his first argument; — a most trifling sophist, a mere copyist of Socinus, and a servile follower of his master. Of mightier powers, too, rise up against us Valentinus Smalcius against Franzius; and (who is said to be still alive) the learned Jonas Schlichtingius. All these, with the rest of that herd, place all their hopes of overturning the doctrine of the satisfaction of Christ in opposing this justice.

But these are not the only adversaries we have to do with: there are others, pious, worthy, and very learned divines, who, respecting the point of Christ’s satisfaction, are most strictly orthodox, and who, though they cannot find in their hearts directly to deny that such an attribute or power is essential to God, yet maintain all its egresses and its whole exercise respecting sin to be so free and dependent on the mere free motion and good pleasure of the divine will, that should not that oppose, God might by his nod, by his word, without any trouble, by other modes and ways besides the satisfaction of Christ, if it only seemed proper to his wisdom, take away, pardon, and make an end of sin, without inflicting any penalty for the transgression of his law; and this, it is said, was the opinion of Augustine. By which, I will say, rash and daring assertion, — be it spoken without offence, for they are truly great men, — by their nod and breath, they suspend and disperse the very strongest arguments by which the adversaries feel themselves most hardly pushed, and by which the belief of Christ’s satisfaction is strongly supported, and deliver up our most

holy cause, I had almost said defenceless, to be the sport of the Philistines. Nay, not very long ago, it has been discovered and lamented by the orthodox, that very considerable assistance has been imprudently given by a learned countryman of our own to these aliens, who defy the armies of the living God. “For if we could but get rid of this justice, even if we had no other proof,” says Socinus, “that human fiction of Christ’s satisfaction would be thoroughly exposed, and would vanish,” Soc. of the Saviour, book iii. chap. 1, etc.

Of our own countrymen, the only one I know is Rutherford, a Scotch divine, who roundly and boldly asserts “*punitive justice to be a free act of the divine will*.” Nor is he content with the bare assertion, but, supported chiefly by his arguments to whom the schoolmen are so much indebted, he defends the fallacy against both Cameron and Voetius, those two thunderbolts of theological war; though, in my opinion, neither with a force of argument nor felicity of issue equal to his opponents. But both the one and the others grant that *God hath decreed to let no sin pass unpunished without a satisfaction; but that decree being supposed, with a law given, and a sanction of the same by threatenings, that a satisfaction was necessary*. But that punitive justice necessarily requires the punishment of all sins, according to the rule of God’s right and wisdom, this is what they deny, and endeavour to overturn.

But to me these arguments are altogether astonishing, — namely, “That sin-punishing justice should be natural to God, and yet that God, sin being supposed to exist, *may either exercise it or not exercise it*.” They may also say, and with as much propriety, that truth is natural to God, but, upon a supposition that he were to converse with man, *he might either use it or not*; or, that omnipotence is natural to God, but upon a supposition that he were inclined to do any work without himself, that it were free to him to act *omnipotently or not*; or, finally, that sin-punishing justice is among the primary causes of the death of Christ, and that

Christ was set forth as a propitiation to declare his righteousness, and yet that that justice required not the punishment of sin, for if it should require it, how is it possible that it should not necessarily require it, since God would be unjust if he should not inflict punishment? Or farther, they might as well assert that God willed that justice should be satisfied by so many and such great sufferings of his Son Christ, when that justice required no such thing; nay more, that setting aside the free act of the divine will, *sin and no sin* are the same with God, and that man's mortality hath not followed chiefly as the consequence of sin, but of the will of God. These and such like difficulties I leave to the authors of this opinion (for they are very learned men) to unravel; as to myself, they fill me with confusion and astonishment.

But this I cannot forbear to mention, that those very divines who oppose our opinion, when hard pushed by their adversaries, perpetually have recourse in their disputations to this justice as to their sacred anchor,[57] and assert that without satisfaction God could not pardon sin consistently with his nature, justice and truth. But as these are very great absurdities, it would have seemed strange to me that any men of judgment and orthodoxy should have been so entangled in some of these sophisms as to renounce the truth on their account, unless I had happened at one time myself to fall into the same snare; which, to the praise and glory of that truth, of which I am now a servant, I freely confess to have been my case.

But to avoid mistakes as much as possible in discussing the nature of this justice, we will make the following observations:—

1. There are some attributes of Deity which, in order to their exercise, require no determined object antecedent to their egress; of this kind are *wisdom* and *power*. These attributes, at least as to their first exercise, must be entirely free, and dependent on the mere good pleasure of God only; so that antecedent to their acting, the divine will is so

indifferent as to every exercise of them, on objects without himself, that he might even will the opposite. But if we suppose that God wills to do any work without himself, he must act omnipotently and wisely.

There are, again, some attributes which can in no wise have an egress or be exercised without an object predetermined, and, as it were, by some circumstances prepared for them. Among these is punitive justice, for the exercise of which there would be no ground but upon the supposition of the existence of a rational being and its having sinned; but these being supposed, this justice must necessarily act according to its own rule.

2. But that rule is not any free act of the divine will, but a *supreme, intrinsic, natural* right of Deity, conjoined with wisdom, to which the entire exercise of this justice ought to be reduced. Those men entirely trifle, then, who, devising certain absurd conclusions of their own, annex them to a supposition of the necessity of punitive justice, as to its exercise: as, for instance, that God ought to punish sin to the full extent of his power, and that he ought to punish every sin with eternal punishment; and that, therefore, he must preserve every creature that sins to eternity, and that he cannot do otherwise. I say they trifle, for God does not punish to the *utmost extent of his power*, but so far as is *just*; and all modes and degrees of punishment are determined by the standard of the divine right and wisdom.

Whether that necessarily require that every sin should be punished with eternal punishment, let those inquire who choose. “Nobis non licet esse tam disertis.”

3. But the existence of a rational creature, and the moral dependence which it has, and must have, upon God, being supposed, the first egress of this justice is in the constitution of a penal law; not as a law which, as was before observed, originates from the justice of government, but as a penal law.

For if such a law were not made necessarily, it might be possible that God should lose his natural right and dominion over his creatures, and thus he would not be God; or, that right being established, that the creature might not be subject to him, which implies a contradiction not less than if you were to say that Abraham is the father of Isaac, but that Isaac is not the son of Abraham: for in case of a failure in point of obedience (a circumstance which might happen, and really hath happened), that dependence could be continued in no way but through means of a vicarious punishment, and there must have been a penal law constituted necessarily requiring that punishment. Hence arises a *secondary right of punishing*, which extends to every amplification of that penal law, in whatever manner made. But it has a second egress, in the infliction of punishment.

4. And here it is to be remarked, that this justice necessarily respects *punishment in general*, as including in it the nature of punishment, and ordaining such a vindication of the divine honour as God can acquiesce in: not the *time* or *degrees*, or such like circumstances of punishment, yea, not this or that species of punishment; for it respects only the preservation of God's natural right and the vindication of his glory, both which may be done by punishment in general, however circumstanced. A dispensation, therefore, with punishment (especially temporary punishment), by a delay of time, an increase or diminution of the degree, by no means prejudiceth the necessity of the exercise of this justice, which only intends an infliction of punishment in general.

5. But, again, though we determine *the egresses of this justice* to be necessary, we do not deny that God exercises it freely; for that necessity doth not exclude a *concomitant liberty*, but only an *antecedent indifference*. This only we deny, — namely, that supposing a sinful creature, the will of God can be indifferent (by virtue of the punitive justice inherent in it) to inflict or not inflict punishment upon that

creature, or to the volition of punishment or its opposite. The whole of Scripture, indeed, loudly testifies against any such indifference, nor is it consistent with God's supreme right over his creatures; neither do they who espouse a different side contend with a single word brought from the Scriptures. But that God punishes sins with a concomitant liberty, because he is of all agents the most free, we have not a doubt. Thus, his intellectual will is carried towards happiness by an essential inclination antecedent to liberty, and notwithstanding it wills happiness with a concomitant liberty: for to act freely is the very nature of the will; yea, it must necessarily act freely.

Let our adversaries, therefore, dream as they please, that we determine God to be an absolutely necessary agent when he is a most free one, and that his will is so circumscribed, by some kind of justice which we maintain, that he cannot will those things which, setting the consideration of that justice aside, would be free to him; for we acknowledge the Deity to be both a *necessary* and *free agent*, — *necessary* in respect of all his actions *internally*, or in respect of the persons in the Godhead towards one another. The Father necessarily begets the Son, and loves himself. As to these and such like actions, he is of all necessary agents the most necessary. But in respect of the acts of the divine will which have their operations and effects upon external objects, he is an agent absolutely free, being one "who worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will." But of these acts there are two kinds; for some are absolute, and admit no respect to any antecedent condition.

Of this kind is his purpose of creating the world, and in it rational creatures, properly adapted to know and obey the Creator, Benefactor, and Lord of all. In works of this kind God hath exercised the greatest liberty. His infinitely wise and infinitely free will is the fountain and origin of all things; neither is there in God any kind of justice, or any other essential attribute, which could prescribe any limits or measure to the divine will. But this decree of creating being

supposed, the divine will undergoes a double necessity, so to speak, both in respect of the event and in respect of its manner of acting: for in respect of the event, it is necessary, from the immutability of God, that the world should be created; and in respect of the manner of doing it, that it should be done omnipotently, because God is essentially omnipotent, and it being once supposed that he wills to do any work without himself, he must do it omnipotently. Yet, notwithstanding these considerations, in the creation of the world God was entirely a free agent; he exercised will and understanding in acting, although the choice of acting or not acting, and of acting in one particular way or another, is taken away by his immutability and omnipotence.

There is another kind of the acts of the divine will which could have no possible existence but upon a condition supposed.

This kind contains the egresses and exercise of those attributes which could not be exercised but upon a supposition of other antecedent acts, of which we have treated before. Of this kind are all the acts of the divine will in which justice, mercy, etc., exert their energy. But these attributes of the divine nature are either for the purpose of preserving or continuing to God what belongs to him of right, supposing that state of things which he hath freely appointed, or for bestowing on his creatures some farther good. Of the former kind is *vindicatory justice*; which, as it cannot be exercised but upon the supposition of the existence of a rational being and of its sin, so, these being supposed, the supreme right and dominion of the Deity could not be preserved entire unless it were exercised. Of the latter kind is *sparing mercy*, by which God bestows an undeserved good on miserable creatures; for, setting aside the consideration of their misery, this attribute cannot be exercised, but that being supposed, if he be inclined to bestow any undeserved good on creatures wretched through their own transgression, he may exercise this mercy if he will. But again; in the exercise of that justice, although, if it

were not to be exercised, according to our former hypothesis, God would cease from his right and dominion, and so would not be God, still he is a free and also an absolutely necessary agent; for he acts from will and understanding, and not from an impetus of nature only, as fire burns. And he freely willed that state and condition of things; which being supposed, that justice must necessarily be exercised. Therefore, in the exercise of it he is not less free than in speaking; for supposing, as I said before, that his will were to speak anything, it is necessary that he speak the *truth*. Those loud outcries, therefore, which the adversaries so unseasonably make against our opinion, as if it determined God to be an absolutely necessary agent, in his operations *ad extra*, entirely vanish and come to naught. But we will treat more fully of these things when we come to answer objections.

Finally, let it be observed that the nature of mercy and justice are different in respect of their exercise: for between the act of mercy and its object no natural obligation intervenes; for God is not bound to any one to exercise any act of mercy, neither is he bound to reward obedience, for this is a debt due from his natural right, and from the moral dependence of the rational creature, and indispensably thence arising. But between the act of justice and its object a natural obligation intervenes, arising from the indispensable subordination of the creature to God; which, supposing disobedience or sin, could not otherwise be secured than by punishment. Nor is the liberty of the divine will diminished in any respect more by the necessary egresses of divine justice than by the exercise of other attributes; for these necessary egresses are the consequence, not of an absolute but of a conditional necessity, — namely, a rational creature and its sin being supposed, and both existing freely in respect of God, but the necessary suppositions being made, the exercise of other perfections is also necessary; for it being supposed that God

were disposed to speak with man, he must necessarily speak according to truth.

[40] Palud. on the Sent., book 4. dist. 46.

[41] Thomas, first page of quest. 21, and Cajetan, ii. 2, q. 61, a. 4.

[42] Ethics, book viii. chap. 8.

[43] On dist. 46.

[44] In ii. 2, Thomas.

[45] A work to which he alludes. — Tr.

[46] A kind of fencers who fought on horseback hood-winked. — Tr.

[47] Suarez's Lectures of the Justice of God.

[48] Sect. 5.

[49] Or quality. — Tr.

[50] That is, inducing to, or drawing forth, the act of punishing. — Tr.

[51] In the original, "Immo etiam ex condigno," "And that, too, of condignity." — Ed.

[52] Ethics, book v. chap. 1.

[53] De Finibus.

[54] Or class. — Tr.

[55] Quest. 2, 2, quest. 108, a 2.

[56] Competere, "belongs." — Ed.

[57] The largest anchor in a vessel, used only in extreme danger, was so called. — Ed.

Chapter III.

A series of arguments in support of vindicatory justice — First, from the Scriptures — Three divisions of the passages of Scripture — The first contains those which respect the purity and holiness of God — The second, those which respect God as the judge — What it is to judge with justice — The third, those which respect the divine supreme right — A second argument is taken from the general consent of mankind — A threefold testimony of that consent — The first from the Scriptures — Some testimonies of the heathens — The second from the power of conscience — Testimonies concerning that power — The mark set upon Cain — The expression of the Emperor Adrian when at the point of death — The consternation of mankind at prodigies — The horror of the wicked, whom even fictions terrify — Two conclusions — The third testimony, from the confession of all nations — A vindication of the argument against Rutherford — The regard paid to sacrifices among the nations — Different kinds of the same — Propitiatory sacrifices — Some instances of them.

These preliminaries being thus laid down, to facilitate our entrance on the subject, I proceed to demonstrate, by a variety of arguments, both against enemies and against friends from whom I dissent, that this *punitive justice is natural to God, and necessary as to its egresses respecting sin*. But because, since the entrance of sin into the world, God hath either continued or increased the knowledge of himself, or accommodated it to our capacities by four ways, — namely, by the written word, by a rational conscience, by his works of providence, and, lastly, by the person of Jesus Christ, his only-begotten Son, and by the mystery of godliness manifested in him, — we will show that by each of these modes of communication he hath revealed and made known to us this his justice.

I. Our first argument, then, is taken from the testimony of the sacred writings, which, in almost numberless places, ascribe this vindicatory justice to God.

The passages of holy Scripture which ascribe this justice to God may be classed under three divisions. The first contains those which certify that the purity and holiness of God hostilely oppose and detest sin. Whether holiness or purity be an attribute natural to God, and immutably residing in him, has not yet been called in question by our adversaries. They have not yet arrived at such a pitch of madness. But this is that universal perfection of God, which, when he exercises [it] in punishing the transgressions of his creatures, is called vindicatory justice; for whatever there be in God perpetually inherent, whatever excellence there be essential to his nature, which occasions his displeasure with sin, and which necessarily occasions this displeasure, this is that justice of which we are speaking.

But here, first, occurs to us that celebrated passage of the prophet Habakkuk, chap. i. 13, “Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity.” The prophet here ascribes to God the greatest detestation, and such an immortal hatred of sin that he cannot look upon it, but, with a wrathful aversion of his countenance, abominates and dooms it to punishment. But perhaps God thus hates sin because he wills to do so, and by an act of his will entirely free, though the state of things might be changed without any injury to him or diminution of his essential glory. But the Holy Spirit gives us a reason very different from this, namely, — the purity of God’s eyes: “Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil.” But there is no one who can doubt that the prophet here intended the holiness of God. The incomprehensible, infinite, and most perfect holiness or purity of God is the cause why he hates and detests all sin; and that justice and holiness are the same, as to the common and general notion of them, we have shown before.

Of the same import is the admonition of Joshua in his address to the people of Israel, chap. xxiv. 19, “Ye cannot serve the Lord” (that is, he will not accept of a false and hypocritical worship from you): “for he is an holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions nor

your sins." God, then, will not forgive transgressions, — that is, he will most certainly punish them, — because he is most holy. But this holiness is the universal perfection of God, which, when exercised in punishing the sins of the creatures, is called vindicatory justice; that is, in relation to its exercise and effects, for in reality the holiness and justice of God are the same, neither of which, considered in itself and absolutely, differs from the divine nature, whence they are frequently used the one for the other.

Moreover, it is manifest that God meant this holiness in that promulgation of his glorious name, or of the essential properties of his divine nature, made face to face to Moses, Exod. xxxiv. 5–7; which name he had also before declared, chap. xxiii. 7. That non-absolution or punishment denotes an external effect of the divine will is granted; but when God proclaims this to be his name, "The Lord, The Lord God," etc, "that will by no means clear the guilty," he manifestly leads us to the contemplation of that excellence essentially inherent in his nature, which induces him to such an act. But that, by whatever name it be distinguished, in condescension to our capacities, is the justice that we mean.

That eulogium of divine justice by the psalmist, Ps. v. 4–6, favours this opinion: "For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee. The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity. Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing: the Lord will abhor the bloody and deceitful man." But those who deny this hatred of sin and sinners, and the disposition to punish them, to be perpetually, immutably, and habitually inherent in God, I am afraid have never strictly weighed in their thoughts the divine purity and holiness.

To the second class may be referred those passages of Scripture which ascribe to God the office of a judge, and which affirm that he judges, and will judge, all things with justice. The first which occurs is that celebrated expression of Abraham, Gen. xviii. 25, "Shall not the Judge of all the

earth do right?" These are not the words of one who doubts, but of one enforcing a truth acknowledged and confessed among all; a truth upon which the intercession of this faithful friend of God for the pious and just inhabitants of Sodom is founded: for Abraham here ascribes to God the power and office of a just judge; in consequence of which character he must necessarily exercise judgment according to the different merits of mankind. This the words in the preceding clause of the verse, accompanied with a vehement rejection and detestation of every suspicion that might arise to the contrary, sufficiently demonstrate: "That be far from thee to do," — namely, "to slay the righteous with the wicked." God, then, is a judge, and a just one; and it is impossible for him not to exercise right or judgment. But that justice wherewith he is now endowed, and by which he exerciseth right, is not a free act of his will, (for who would entertain such contemptible thoughts even of an earthly judge?) but a habit or excellence at all times inherent in his nature.

But this supreme excellence and general idea which Abraham made mention of and enforced, the apostle again afterward supports and recommends: Rom. iii. 5, 6, "Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world?" Unless he were just, how shall he judge the world? Therefore, this most righteous of all judges exerciseth justice in judging the world "because he is just."

For why should God so often be said to judge the world justly, and in justice, unless his justice were that perfection whence this righteous and just judgment flows and is derived? Acts xvii. 31, "He hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained;" and in Rom. ii. 5, the day of the last judgment is called "the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God."

But, again, on this very account the justice of God is celebrated, and he himself, in an especial manner, is said to

be just, because he inflicts punishment and exercises his judgments according to the demerits of sinners: Rev. xvi. 5, 6, “Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy.”

But all retaliation[58] for a crime proceeds from vindicatory justice; but that God exercises that justice, and is thence denominated just, is evident. ‘The Holy Spirit establishes this truth in the plainest words, Ps. ix. 4, 5, where he gloriously vindicates this justice of God: “Thou hast maintained my right and my cause,” says the psalmist; “thou satest in the throne judging right. Thou hast rebuked the heathen, thou hast destroyed the wicked, thou hast put out their name for ever and ever.” God exerciseth justice and determines causes as he sits upon his throne, — that is, as being endowed with supreme judiciary power, — and that as he is a judge of righteousness, or most righteous judge: Ps. cxix. 137, “Righteous art thou, O Lord, and upright are thy judgments.”

Thirdly, It now remains that we take a view of one or two of those passages of Scripture which, in consideration of this divine justice, assert the infliction of punishment for sin in itself, and as far as relates to the thing itself, to be just. To this purpose is that of the apostle to the Romans, chap. i. 32, “Who knowing the judgment,” or justice, “of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death.” Whatever, or of what kind soever, that justice or right of God may be of which the apostle is speaking, it seems evident that the three following properties belong to it:—

1. That it is *universally* acknowledged; nay, it is not unknown even to the most abandoned of mankind, and to those schools of every kind of wickedness which the apostle is there describing. Whence they derive this knowledge of the divine law and justice shall be made to appear hereafter.

2. That, it is the *cause*, *source*, and *rule* of all punishments to be inflicted; for this is the right of God, “that those who commit sin are worthy of death.” From this right of God it follows that “the wages of” every “sin is death.”

3. That, it is *natural* and *essential* to God: for although, in respect of its *exercise*, it may have a handle or occasion from some things external to the Deity, and in respect of its *effects* may have a meritorious cause, yet in respect of its source and root, it respects himself as its subject, if God be absolutely perfect. If belonging to any other being, it cannot agree to him.[59]

You will say that this right of God is free; but I deny that any right of God which respects his creatures can, as a habit inherent in his nature, be free, though in the exercise of every right God be absolutely free. Neither can any free act of the divine will towards creatures be called any right of Deity; it is only the exercise of some right. But an act is distinguished from its habit or root.

And now it appears evident that this right is not that supreme right or absolute dominion of God, which, under the primary notion of a Creator, must be necessarily ascribed to him; for it belongs not to the supreme Lord, as such, to inflict punishment, but as ruler or judge.

The supreme dominion and right of God over his creatures, no doubt, so far as it supposes dependence and obedience, necessarily requires that a vicarious punishment should be appointed in case of transgression or disobedience: but the very appointment of punishment, as well as the infliction of it, flows from his right as the governor; which right, considered with respect to transgressors, is nothing else than vindicatory justice. The apostle, therefore, signifies that that is the justice always resident in God, as a legislator, ruler, and judge of all things; which, by common presumption, even the most abandoned of mankind acknowledge.

To these may be added two other passages which occur in the writings of the same apostle: 2 Thess. i. 6, “Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you.” A recompense of tribulation is a real peculiar act of vindicatory justice; but that belongs to God as he is just. Thence the punishment of sin is called in Heb. ii. 2, “A just recompense of reward;” and by Jude, verse 7, “The vengeance,” or justice, “of eternal fire;” because, namely, it follows from that justice of God that such crimes are justly recompensed by such a punishment.

But we will not be farther troublesome in reciting particular proofs; from those already mentioned, and from others equally strong, we thus briefly argue:— That to that Being whose property it is to “render unto every man according to his deeds,” not to clear the guilty, to condemn sinners as worthy of death and to inflict the same upon them, to hate sin, and who will in no wise let sin pass unpunished, and all this because he is just, and because his justice so requires, sin-punishing justice naturally belongs, and that he cannot act contrary to that justice; but the passages of Scripture just now mentioned, with many others, assert that all these properties above recounted belong to and are proper to God, because he is just: therefore, this justice belongs to God, and is natural to him.

It matters not what we affirm of vindicatory justice, whether that it be meant of God essentially, and not only denominatively, that it has an absolute name (for it is called “holiness” and “purity”), that we have it expressed both in the abstract and concrete; for, what is more than that, it is affirmed expressly, directly, and particularly, ofttimes, in the passages above mentioned, that it requires the punishment of sinners, that it implies a constant and immutable will of punishing every sin according to the rule of divine wisdom and right.[60] Impudent to a high degree indeed, then, must Socinus have been, who hath maintained that that perfection of Deity by which he punisheth sin is not

called justice, but always anger or fury. Anger, indeed, and fury, analogically and effectively, belong to justice.

So much for our first argument.

II. The *universal consent of mankind* furnishes us with a second, from which we may reason in this manner: “What common opinion and the innate conceptions of all assign to God, that is natural to God; but this corrective justice is so assigned to God: therefore, this justice is natural to God.”

The major proposition is evident; for what is not natural to God neither exists in him by any mode of habit or mode of affection, but is only a free act of the divine will, and the knowledge of that can by no means be naturally implanted in creatures; for whence should there be a universal previous conception of an act which might either take place or never take place? No such thing was at the first engraven on the hearts of men, and the fabric of the world teaches us no such thing.

But the minor proposition is established by a threefold proof:— 1. By the testimony of the Scripture; 2. By the testimony of every sinner’s conscience; and 3. By that of the public consent of all nations.

First, The holy Scriptures testify that such an innate conception[61] is implanted by God in the minds of men. Thus the apostle to the Romans, chap. i. 32, “Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death.” He is here speaking of those nations that were the most forsaken by God, and delivered over to a reprobate mind; yet even to these he ascribes some remaining knowledge of this immutable right of God, which renders it necessary that “every transgression should receive its just recompense of reward,” and that sinners should be deserving of death in such a manner that it would be unworthy of God not to inflict it. That is to say, although the operations of this observing and acknowledging principle should often become very languid, and be even almost entirely overwhelmed by abounding wickedness, —

for “what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves,” — yet that mankind must cease to exist before they can altogether lose this innate sense of divine right and judgment. Hence the barbarians concluded against Paul, then a prisoner and in bonds, seeing the viper hanging on one of his hands, that “no doubt he was a murderer, whom, though he had escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffered not to live.” Here they argue from the effect to the cause; which, in matters relating to moral good or evil, they could not, unless convinced in their consciences that there is an inviolable connection between sin and punishment, which they here ascribe to Justice.[62]

Justice among them, according to their fabulous theology, which was particularly favoured by the bulk of the people, was the daughter of Jupiter, whom he set over the affairs of mortals, to *avenge the injuries* which they should do to one another, and to inflict condign punishment on all those who should impiously offend against the gods. Hence Hesiod, speaking of Jupiter, says, —

> “He married a second wife, the fair Themis, who brought forth the Hours,
> And Eunomia, and Justice, etc.,
> Who should watch o’er the actions of mortal men.”
>
> Hesiod in Theog. 901.

Again, the same author says, —

> “Justice is a virgin, descended from Jupiter,
> Chaste, and honour’d by the heavenly deities;
> And when any one hath injured her with impious indignity,
> [Instantly she, seated beside her father, Saturnian Jupiter,
> Complains of the iniquity of men,” etc.]
>
> Hesiod in Oper. 256.

Also, Orpheus in the hymns, —

> “I sing the eye of Justice, who looketh behind her, and is fair,

Who likewise sits upon the sacred throne of sovereign Jupiter

As the avenger of the unjust."

Hence, these common sayings, —

"God hath an avenging eye;

God hath found the transgressor."

In all which, and in numberless other such passages, the wisest men in those times of ignorance have announced their sense of this vindicatory justice.

And among the Latins, the following passages prove their sense of the same:—

"Aspiciunt oculis superi mortalia justis."

"The gods above behold the affairs of mortals with impartial eyes."

"Raro antecedentem scelestum,

Deseruit pede Poena claudo."

"Seldom hath Punishment, through lameness of foot, left off pursuit of the wicked man, though he hath had the start of her."

Horace.

Also, that celebrated response of the Delphic oracle, recorded by Ælian:—

"But divine Justice pursues those who are guilty of crimes,

Nor can it be avoided even by the descendants of Jupiter;

But it hangs over the heads of the wicked themselves, and over the heads of their Children; and one disaster to their race is followed by another."

All which assert this vindicatory justice.

This, then, as Plutarch says, is the "ancient faith of mankind;" or, in the words of Aristotle, "opinion concerning God," which Dion Prusæensis calls "a very strong and eternal persuasion, from time immemorial received, and still remaining among all nations."

Secondly, The consciences of all mankind concur to corroborate this truth; but the cause which has numberless witnesses to support it cannot fail. Hence, not only the flight, hiding-place, and fig-leaf aprons of our primogenitors, but every word of dire meaning and evil omen, as *terror, horror, tremor*, and whatever else harasses guilty mortals, have derived their origin. Conscious to themselves of their wickedness, and convinced of the divine dominion over them, this idea above all dwells in their minds, that he with whom they have to do is supremely just, and the avenger of all sin. From this consideration even the people of God have been induced to believe that death must inevitably be their portion should they be but for once sisted in his presence. Not that the mass of the body is to us an obscure and dark prison, as the Platonists dream, whence, when we obtain a view of divine things, being formerly enveloped by that mass, it is immediately suggested to the mind that the bond of union between mind and body must be instantly dissolved.

It must, indeed, be acknowledged, that through sin we have been transformed into worms, moles, bats, and owls; but the cause of this general fear and dismay is not to be derived from this source.

The justice and purity of God, on account of which he can bear nothing impure or filthy to come into his presence, occurs to sinners' minds; wherefore, they think of nothing else but of a present God, of punishment prepared, and of deserved penalties to be immediately inflicted. The thought of the Deity bursting in upon the mind, immediately every sinner stands confessed a debtor, — a guilty and self-condemned criminal. Fetters, prisons, rods, axes, and fire, without delay and without end, rise to his view. Whence some have judged the mark set upon Cain to have been some horrible tremor, by which, being continually shaken and agitated, he was known to all. Hence, too, these following verses:—

"Whither fliest thou, Enceladus? Whatever coasts thou shalt arrive on,
Thou wilt always be under the eye of Jupiter."

And these:—

"As every one's conscience is, so in his heart he conceives hope or fear, according to his actions.

"This is the first[63] *punishment, that ever in his own judgment no guilty person is acquitted.*

"Do you think that those have escaped whom a guilty conscience holds abashed, and lashes with its inexorable scourge, the mind, the executioner, shaking the secret lash?"

See Voss. on Idol. book i. chap. 2.

It is the saying of a certain author, that punishment is coeval with injustice, and that the horror of natural conscience is not terminated by the limits of human life:—

"Sunt aliquid manes: lethum non omnia finit,
Lucidaque evictos effugit umbra rogos."
"The soul is something: death ends not at all,
And the light spirit escapes the vanquished funeral pile."

Hence the famous verses of Adrian, the Roman emperor, spoken on his death-bed:—

"Animula vagula, blandula,
Hospes comesque corporis,
Quæ nunc abibis in loca?
Pallidula, rigida, nudula,
Nec, ut soles, dabis joca."

"Alas! my soul, thou pleasing companion of this body, thou fleeting thing, that art now deserting it! whither art thou flying? to what unknown scene? All trembling, fearful, and pensive! What now is become of thy former wit and humour? Thou shalt jest and be gay no more."[64]

"That which is truly evil," says Tertullian, "not even those who are under its influence dare defend as good. All evil fills nature with fear or shame. Evil doers are glad to lie concealed; they avoid making their appearance; they tremble when apprehended." Hence the heathens have represented Jove himself, when conscious of any crime, as not free from fear. We find Mercury thus speaking of him in Plautus:—

"Etenim ille," etc.

"Even that Jupiter, by whose order I come hither,
Dreads evil no less than any of us:
Being himself descended from a human father and mother,
There is no reason to wonder that he should fear for himself."

Hence, too, mankind have a dread awe of every thing in nature that is grand, unusual, and strange, as thunders, lightnings, or eclipses of the heavenly bodies, and tremble at every prodigy, spectre, or comet, nay, even at the hobgoblins of the night, exclaiming, like the woman of Zarephath upon the death of her son, "What have I to do with thee? art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance?" Hence, even the most abandoned of men, when vengeance for their sins hangs over their heads, have confessed their sins and acknowledged the divine justice.

It is related by Suetonius, that Nero, that disgrace of human nature, just before his death, exclaimed, "My wife, my mother, and my father, are forcing me to my end."[65] Most deservedly celebrated, too, is that expression of Mauricius the Cappadocian, when slain by Phocas, "Just art thou, O Lord, and thy judgments are righteous!"

But, moreover, while guilty man dreads the consequences of evil, which he knows he has really committed, he torments and vexes himself even with fictitious fears and bugbears. Hence these verses of Horace:—

"Somnia, terrores magicos, miracula, sagas,

Nocturnos lemures, portentaque Thessala finxit,"
[rides?][66]

— ideas for the most part ridiculous, but, as the old proverb says, " 'Tis but reasonable that they should wear the fetters which themselves have forged." Hence the guilty trembling mob is imposed upon and cheated by impostors, by vagrant fortune-tellers and astrologers. If any illiterate juggler shall have foretold a year of darkness, alluding, namely, to the night-season of the year, the consternation is as great as if Hannibal were at the gates of the city. The stings of conscience vex and goad them, and their minds have such presentiments of divine justice that they look upon every new prodigy as final, or portentous of the final consummation. I pass over observing at present that if once a conviction of the guilt of any sin be carried home to the mind, this solemn tribunal cannot thoroughly be dislodged from any man's bosom either by dismal solitude or by frequent company, by affluence of delicacies or by habits of wickedness and impiety, nor, in fine, by any endeavours after the practice of innocence. The apostle in his epistle to the Romans, chap. ii., enters more fully into this subject. Two things, then, are to be concluded from what has been said, that mankind are guilty, and that they acknowledge, —

1. *That God hates sin, as contrary to himself*, and that therefore it is impossible for a sinner with safety to appear before him. But if God hate sin, he does it either from his *nature* or because he so *wills* it. But it cannot be because he wills it, for in that case he might not will it; a supposition most absurd. And, indeed, that assertion of Socinus is every way barbarous, abominable, and most unworthy of God, wherein he says, "I maintain that our damnation derives its origin, not from any justice of God, but from the free-will of God;" Socinus de Serv. p. 3. cap. 8. But if God hate sin by nature, then by nature he is just, and vindicatory justice is natural to him.

2. *That our sins are debts*, and therefore we shun the sight of our creditor. But I mean such a debt as, with

relation to God's supreme dominion, implies in it a perpetual right of punishment.

And such is the second proof of the minor proposition of the second argument; the third remains.

Thirdly, The *public consent of all nations* furnishes the third proof of this truth. There are writers, indeed, who have affirmed (a thing by no means credible) that some nations have been so given up to a reprobate mind that they acknowledge no deity. Socinus hath written[67] that a certain Dominican friar, a worthy honest man, had related this much to himself of the Brazilians and other natives of America. But who can assure us that this friar has not falsified, according to the usual custom of travellers, or that Socinus himself has not invented this story (for he had a genius fertile in falsehoods) to answer his own ends? But let this matter rest on the credit of Socinus, who was but little better than an infidel. But nobody, even by report, hath heard that there exist any who have acknowledged the being of a God, and who have not, at the same time, declared him to be just, to be displeased with sinners and sin, and that it is the duty of mankind to propitiate him if they would enjoy his favour.

But a respectable writer objects, — namely, Rutherford on Providence, chap. xxii. p. 355, — that this argument, that that which men know of God by the natural power of conscience must be naturally inherent in God, is of no weight. "For," says he, "by the natural power of conscience, men know that God does many good things freely, without himself; as, for instance, that he has created the world, that the sun rises and gives light; — and yet in these operations God does not act from any necessity of nature."

But this learned man blunders miserably here, as often elsewhere, in his apprehension of the design and meaning of his opponents; for they do not use this argument to prove that the egresses of divine justice are necessary, but that justice itself is necessary to God; which Socinians deny.

What is his answer to these arguments? “Mankind acknowledge many things,” says he, “which God does freely.” To be sure they do, when he exhibits them before their eyes; but what follows from that? So, too, they acknowledge that God punishes sin, when he punishes it. But because all mankind, from the works of God and from the natural power of conscience, acknowledge God to be good and bountiful, we may, without hesitation, conclude goodness and bounty to be essential attributes of God: so likewise, because, from the natural power of conscience and the consideration of God’s works of providence, they conclude and agree that God is just, we contend that justice is natural to God.

But as mankind have testified this consent by other methods, so they have especially done it by *sacrifices*; concerning which Pliny says, “That all the world have agreed in them, although enemies or strangers to one another.” But since these are plainly of a divine origin, and instituted to prefigure, so to speak, the true atonement by the blood of Christ, in which he hath been the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, — that is, from the promise made of the seed of the woman, and from the sacrifice of Abel which followed, — the use of them descended to all the posterity of Adam: therefore, though afterward the whole plan and purpose of the institution was lost among by far the greatest part of mankind, and even the true God himself, to whom alone they were due, was unknown, and though no traces of the thing signified, — namely, the promised seed, — remained, yet still the thing itself, and the general notion of appeasing the Deity by sacrifices, hath survived all the darkness, impieties, dreadful wickedness, punishments, migrations of nations, downfalls and destructions of cities, states, and people, in which the world for these many ages hath been involved; for a consciousness of sin, and a sense of divine and avenging justice, have taken deeper root in the heart of man than that they can by any means be eradicated.

There were four kinds of sacrifices among the Gentiles:— First, the *propitiatory* or peace-making sacrifices; for by those they thought they could render the gods propitious or appease them, or avert the anger of the gods, and obtain peace with them. Hence these verses on that undertaking of the Greeks, in the exordium of Homer:—

"But let some prophet or some sacred sage
Explore the cause of great Apollo's rage:
Or learn the wasteful vengeance to remove
By mystic dreams; for dreams descend from Jove.
If broken vows this heavy curse have laid,
Let altars smoke and hecatombs be paid:
So Heaven atoned shall dying Greece restore,
And Phœbus dart his burning shafts no more."

Pope's Homer.

They were desirous of appeasing Apollo by sacrifices, who had inflicted on them a lamentable mortality. To the same purpose is that passage of Virgil, —

"The prophet[68] first with sacrifice adores
The greater gods; their pardon then implores."

Dryden's Virgil

Hence, too, that lamentation of the person in the Pœnulus of Plautus, who could not make satisfaction to his gods:—

"Unhappy man that I am," says he, "today I have sacrificed six lambs to my much-incensed gods, and yet I have not been able to render Venus propitious to me; and as I could not appease her, I came instantly off."

And Suetonius, speaking of Otho, says, "He endeavours, by all kinds of piacular sacrifices, to propitiate the manes of Galba, by whom he had seen himself thrust down and expelled." And the same author affirms of Nero, "That he had been instructed that kings were wont to expiate the heavenly prodigies by the slaughter of some illustrious victim, and to turn them from themselves upon the heads of

their nobles;" though this, perhaps, rather belongs to the second kind. But innumerable expressions to this purpose are extant, both among the Greek and Latin authors.

The second kind were the *expiatory* or purifying sacrifices, by which sins were said to be atoned, expiated, and cleansed, and sinners purified, purged, and reconciled, and the anger of the gods turned aside and averted. It would be tedious, and perhaps superfluous, to produce examples; the learned can easily trace them in great abundance. The other kinds were the *eucharistical* and *prophetical*, which have no relation to our present purpose.

In this way of appeasing the Deity, mankind, I say, formerly agreed; whence it is evident that an innate conception[69] of this sin-avenging justice is natural to all, and, therefore, that that justice is to be reckoned among the essential attributes of the divine nature; concerning which only, and not concerning the free acts of his will, mankind universally agree.

[58] "*Compensatio*" is the word in the original, and as "retaliation" is frequently used in a particular sense as connected with evil feeling, perhaps "retribution" would better express the meaning of Owen. — Ed.

[59] Here it is necessary to supply another translation: "Yet in respect of its *source* and *root*, so far as pertains to its subject, if God be absolutely perfect, it cannot be derived to him from any other source." — Ed.

[60] The sentence might be more intelligibly rendered: "There is nothing which we affirm of vindicatory justice, — whether that it is meant of God essentially, and not only denominatively, that it has an absolute name (for it is called "holiness" and "purity"), that we have it expressed both in the abstract and concrete, that it requires the punishment of sinners, that it implies a constant and immutable will of punishing every sin, according to the rule of divine wisdom and right, — but what is ofttimes affirmed expressly, directly, and particularly, in the passages above mentioned." — Ed.

[61] The Greek word πρόληψις is employed in the original, for which perhaps it was difficult to find a precise rendering in one English word. It was a word employed in the *canonics* or psychology of Epicurus to denote the second of his conditions or criteria of truth, which related to *ideas* as distinguished from *sensations* or *emotions*, though, like them, derived from sensuous perception. It implied such a primary and

absolute *idea* of a thing as existed in the mind antecedently to any objective presentation of it, and without which no mental act can take place regarding it, whether of naming, thinking, doubting, or inquiring. It is used by Owen to describe a principle in the human mind which is not created by the evidence of testimony or any course of training, which is naturally and essentially interwoven with our mental constitution, and is ready beforehand, by *anticipation*, as the word πρόληψις simply means, to respond to the abstract idea of equity, or to confirm the concrete application of it in the common awards of good or evil. — Ed.

[62] Ὤιμωξα κᾳγὼ πρὸς τέκνων χειρουμένης. Νέμει τοι δίκαν θεὸς ὅταν τύχῃ. Σχέτλια μὲν ἔπαθες, ἀνόσια δ’ εἰργάσω Τάλαιν’ εὐνέταν. Eurip. Elec., 1168.

[63] Or, chief. — Tr.

[64] Translated thus by Pope:— “Ah! fleeting spirit! wandering fire, That long hast warm’d my tender breast, Must thou no more this frame inspire? No more a pleasing, cheerful guest? Whither, ah! whither art thou flying? To what dark undiscover’d shore? Thou seem’st all trembling, shiv’ring, dying, And wit and humour are no more.”
— Tr.

[65] His mother, Agrippina, had poisoned her last husband, the Emperor Claudius, to make way for his succession, and Nero rewarded her by causing her to be murdered. He likewise caused his wife, Octavia, and his tutor, Seneca, to lose their lives; and was in every respect, perhaps, one of the greatest monsters of wickedness that ever disgraced human nature. — Tr.

[66] Hor. Epis. ii. 2, 208.

[67] Socin., de Authoritate Scripturæ; lib. edit. sub nomine Dominici Lopez, Soc. Jes.

[68] Namely, Helenus, Æneid, book iii. — Tr.

[69] See note, p. 517.

Chapter IV.

The origin of human sacrifices — Their use among the Jews, Assyrians, Germans, Goths, the inhabitants of Marseilles, the Normans, the Francs, the Tyrians, the Egyptians, and the ancient Gauls — Testimonies of Cicero and Cæsar that they were used among the Britons and Romans by the Druids — A fiction of Apion concerning the worship in the temple of Jerusalem — The names of some persons sacrificed — The use of human sacrifices among the Gentiles proved from Clemens of Alexandria, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Porphyry, Philo, Eusebius, Tertullian, Euripides — Instances of human sacrifices in the sacred Scriptures — The remarkable obedience of Abraham — What the neighbouring nations might have gathered from that event — Why human sacrifices were not instituted by God — The story of Iphigenia — The history of Jephthah — Whether he put his daughter to death — The cause of the difficulty — The impious sacrifice of the king of Moab — The abominable superstition of the Rugiani — The craftiness of the devil — Vindications of the argument — The same concluded.

But it is strange to think what a stir was made by the ancient enemy of mankind to prevent any ray of light respecting the true sacrifice, that was to be made in the fullness of time, from being communicated to the minds of men through means of this universal ceremony and custom of sacrificing. Hence he influenced the most of the nations to the heinous, horrible, and detestable crime of offering human sacrifices, in order to make atonement for themselves, and render God propitious by such an abominable wickedness.

But as it seems probable that some light may be borrowed from the consideration of these sacrifices, in which mankind, from the presumption of a future judgment, have so closely agreed, perhaps the learned reader will think it not foreign to our purpose to dwell a little on the subject, and to reckon up some examples. This abomination, prohibited by God under the penalty of a total

extermination, was divers times committed by the Jews, running headlong into forbidden wickedness, while urged on by the stings of conscience to this infernal remedy. They offered their children as burnt-sacrifices to Moloch, — that is, to the Saturn of the Tyrians; not to the planet of that name, not to the father of the Cretan Jupiter, but to the Saturn of the Tyrians, — that is, to Baal or to the sun; and not by making them to pass between two fires for purification, as some think, but by burning them in the manner of a whole burnt-offering. Ps. cvi. 36–38, "And they served their idols: which were a snare unto them. Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils, and shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and of their daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan: and the land was polluted with blood." Almost the whole world, during the times of that ignorance which God winked at, were indebted to the devil.[70] Since, then, it is abundantly evident from these sacrifices by what a sense of vindicatory justice, horror of punishment, and consciousness of sin, mankind are constrained, we must enlarge a little on the consideration of them.

Tacitus, speaking of the Germans, says, "Of the gods, they chiefly worship Mercury; to whom, on certain days, they hold it as an article of religion and piety to sacrifice human victims. Mars they have always been accustomed to appease by a most cruel worship; for his victims were the deaths of the captives." Jornandes affirms the same of the Goths. And thus Lucan writes in his siege of Marseilles:— "Here the sacred rites of the gods are barbarous in their manner; altars are built for deadly ceremonies, and every tree is purified by human blood."

And the same author, in the sixth book, from his Precepts of Magic, has these verses:—

"Vulnere si ventris," etc.

"If, contrary to nature, the child be extracted through a wound in the belly, to be served up on the hot altars."

Virgil bears witness that such sacrifices were offered to Phœbus or the Sun, Æneid x.:—

"Next Lycas fell; who, not like others born,
Was from his wretched mother ripp'd and torn:
Sacred, O Phœbus! from his birth to thee."

Dryden's Virgil

But Acosta asserts that infants are sacrificed even at this very time to the Sun, in Cuscum, the capital of Peru.

And thus the Scriptures testify, 2 Kings xvii. 29–31, "Howbeit every nation made gods of their own, and put them in the houses of the high places which the Samaritans had made, every nation in their cities wherein they dwelt. And the men of Babylon made Succoth-benoth, and the men of Cuth made Nergal, and the men of Hamath made Ashima, and the Avites made Nibhaz and Tartak, and the Sepharvites burnt their children in fire to Adrammelech and Anammelech, the gods of Sepharvaim."

Ditmarus, in his first book, testifies "That the Normans and Danes sacrificed yearly, in the month of January, to their gods, ninety-nine human creatures, as many horses, besides dogs and cocks." But what Procopius, on the Gothic war, writes, is truly astonishing, — namely, "That the Francs made use of human victims in his time, even though they then worshipped Christ." Alas! for such a kind of Christianity. The practices of the Tyrians,[71] Carthaginians, and Egyptians, in this respect are known to every one. And Theodoret says, "That in Rhodes, some person was sacrificed to Saturn on the sixteenth of the calends of November, which, after having been for a long time observed, became a custom; and they used to reserve one of those who had been capitally condemned till the feast of Saturn."

Porphyry, on "Abstinence from Animals," relates the customs of the Phœnicians concerning this matter. "The Phœnicians," says he, "in great disasters, either by wars, or commotions, or droughts, used to sacrifice one of their

dearest friends or relations to Saturn, devoted to this fate by the common suffrages." They were called Phœnicians from the word φοίνιξ, which signifies a red colour. Φοίνιξ, according to Eustathius, is from φόνος, which signifies blood; thence the colour called φοινίκεος, or the purple colour. Hence the learned conjecture that the Phœnicians were the descendants of Esau or Edom, whose name also signifies red; and from whom, also, the Red Sea was named. Edom, then, φοίνιξ, and ἐρυθραῖος, mean the; same, — namely, red. Why may we not, then, conjecture that the Phœnicians, or Idumæans, were first led to this custom from some corrupt tradition concerning the sacrificing of Isaac, the father of Esau, the leader and head of their nation? This, at least, makes for the conjecture, that while ether nations sacrificed enemies or strangers, Porphyry bears witness that they sacrificed one of their dearest friends or relations. But Isaac was not to Abraham one of the dearest, but the only dear one. From such corrupt traditions as these, it is not to be wondered that the consciences of men, struck with a fear of punishment, should have been encouraged to persevere in so cruel and superstitious a worship.

Concerning the ancient Gauls, we have the most credible evidences, — Cicero and Julius Cæsar; the former of whom charges them with the practice of offering human sacrifices, as a horrid crime, and certain evidence of their contempt of Deity. The other, however, commends them on this very account, on the score of a more severe religion. "If at any time, induced by fear, they think it necessary that the gods should be appeased, they defile their altars and temples with human victims, — as if they could not practice religion without first violating it by their wickedness; for who does not know that, even at this day, they retain that savage and barbarous custom of sacrificing human beings, thinking that the immortal gods can be appeased by the blood and wickedness of man?" Cicero pro Fonteio. But Cæsar, the conqueror of the Gauls, gives us a very different account of these kind of sacrifices. "This nation," says he, "of the Gauls,

is most of all devoted to religious observances; and for that reason, those who labour under any grievous distemper, or who are conversant in dangers and battles, either sacrifice human victims, or vow that they will sacrifice them, and they employ the Druids as the conductors of such sacrifices; for they have an opinion that unless a human life be given for a human life, the heavenly deities cannot be appeased." These last words seem to me to acknowledge a persuasion, that must have arisen from some ancient tradition, about the substitution of the Son of Man in the stead of sinners as a propitiation for sin.

No doubt can be entertained concerning the inhabitants of Britain but that they were guilty of the same practices; for from them came the Druids, the first promoters of that superstition, not only among the Gauls, but even in Italy and in the city of Rome itself. "The doctrine of the Druids," says Cæsar, "is thought to have been found in Britain, and brought thence into Gaul; and now such as are desirous to examine more particularly into that matter generally go thither for the sake of information," book vi. of the Wars in Gaul. But Tacitus informs us with what kind of sacrifices they performed their divine services there, in the fourteenth book of his Annals. "When the island of Anglesey was conquered by Paulinus, a guard," says he, "was placed over the vanquished, and the groves devoted to cruel superstitions were hewn down" (the same was done by Cæsar in the siege of Marseilles, Lucan, book iii.); "for it was an article of their religion to sacrifice their captives on the altars, and to consult their gods by human entrails."

Hence that verse in Horace:—

"Visam Britannos, hospitibus feros."

"I will visit the Britons, cruel to strangers."

At which remote place[72] the Britons used to sacrifice their guests for victims; yea, even in Rome itself, as Plutarch, in his Life of Marcellus, testifies, they buried, by order of the high priests, "a man and woman of Gaul, and a

man and woman of Greece," alive in the cattle market, to avert some calamity by such a fatal sacrifice. Whether this was done yearly, as some think, I am rather inclined to doubt.

Of the same kind was the religion of the Decii, devoting themselves for the safety of the city. Hence a suspicion arose, and was everywhere rumoured, among the Gentiles, concerning the sacred rites of the Jews, with which they were unacquainted, — namely, that they were wont to be solemnized with human sacrifices: for although, after the destruction of the temple, it was manifest that they worshipped the God of heaven only, yet so long as they celebrated the secret mysteries appointed them by God, Josephus against Apion bears witness that they laboured under the infamy of that horrible crime, — namely, of sacrificing human victims, among those who were unacquainted with the Jewish polity; where he also recites, from the same Apion, a most ridiculous fiction about a young Greek captive being delivered by Antiochus, when he impiously spoiled the temple, after having been fed there on a sumptuous diet for the space of a year, that he might make the fatter a victim.

A custom that prevailed with some, not unlike this untruth about the young Greek kept in the temple, seems to have given rise to it; for thus Diodorus, in book v., writes of the Druids, "They fix up their malefactors upon poles, after having kept them five years" (it seems they fattened much slower than at Jerusalem), "and sacrifice them to their gods, and, with other first-fruits of the year, offer them on large funeral piles." Theodoret also mentions something of that kind concerning the Rhodians, in the first book of the "Greek Affections;" the words have been mentioned before.

But that young Greek, destined for sacrifice, in Apion, has no name; that is, there never was any such person.

"But, friend, discover faithful what I crave, —

Artful concealment ill becomes the brave;

Say what thy birth, and what the name you bore,
Imposed by parents in the natal hour."

Pope's[73] Homer's Odyssey, book viii.

But, after having prepared the plot, he ought not to have shunned the task of giving names to the actors. We have the name of a Persian sacrificed even among the Thracians, in Herodotus, book ix. "The Thracians of Apsinthium," says he, "having seized Eobazus flying into Thrace, sacrificed him, after their custom, to Pleistorus, the god of the country."

There is still remaining, if I rightly remember, the name of a Spanish soldier, a captive, with other of his companions, among the Mexicans, well-known inhabitants of America, who being sacrificed, on a very high altar, to the gods of the country, when his heart was pulled out (if we can credit Peter Martyr, author of the History of the West Indies), tumbling down upon the sand, exclaimed, "O companions, they have murdered me!" Clemens of Alexandria makes mention of Theopompus, a king of the Lacedæmonians, being sacrificed by Aristomenes the Messenian. His words, which elegantly set forth this custom of all the nations, we shall beg leave to trouble the reader with: "But now, when they had invaded all states and nations as plagues (he is speaking of demons), they demanded cruel sacrifices; and one Aristomenes, a Messenian, slew three hundred in honour of Ithometan Jupiter, thinking that he sacrificed so many hecatombs in due form, and of such a kind. Among these, too, was Theopompus, king of the Lacedemonians, an illustrious victim. But the inhabitants of Mount Taurus, who dwell about the Tauric Chersonese, instantly sacrifice whatever shipwrecked strangers they find upon their coasts to Diana of Taurus. Thence, ye inhospitable shores! Euripides again and again bewails in his scenes these your sacrifices," Clemens' Exhortations to the Greeks.

But what he says concerning Euripides has a reference to the story of "Iphigenia in Tauris;" where, however, the poet signifies that she detested such kinds of sacrifices, for he

introduces Iphigenia, the priestess of Diana, thus bewailing her lot: “They have appointed me priestess in these temples, where Diana, the goddess of the festival, is delighted with such laws, whose name alone is honourable; but I say no more, dreading the goddess. For I sacrifice (and it long hath been a custom of the state) every Grecian that arrives in this country,” Eur. Iph. in Tauris, v. 34.

Thus far Clemens, who also demonstrates the same thing of the Thessalians, Lycians, Lesbians, Phocensians, and Romans, from Monimus, Antoclides, Pythocles, and Demaratus. That deed, too, of Agamemnon, alluded to by Virgil, furnishes another proof:—

“Sanguine placastis ventos, et virgine cæsâ.”

“O Grecians, when the Trojan shores you sought,
Your passage with a virgin’s blood was bought.”

Dryden’s Virg.

Tertullian also bears witness to this wickedness: “In Africa they openly sacrificed infants to Saturn, even down to the time of the proconsulate of Tiberius; and what is surprising, even in that most religious city of the pious descendants of Æneas, there is a certain Jupiter, whom, at his games, they drench with human blood.”

It is notoriously known, that in the sanguinary games of the Romans, they made atonement to the gods with human blood, — namely, that of captives. But Eusebius Pamphilus (Præp. Evang. lib. iv. cap. 16) enters the most fully of any into this matter; for he shows from Porphyry, Philo, Clemens, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, and Diodorus Siculus, that this ceremony of offering human sacrifices was practised all over the world. Porphyry, indeed, shows at large who instituted this kind of worship in different places, and who put an end to it. Another very ingenious poet brings an accusation of extreme folly and madness against this rite in these verses. It is a Plebeian addressing Agamemnon:—

“Tu quum pro vitula, statuis dulcem Aulide natam,
Ante aras, spargisque mola caput, improbe, salsa,

Rectum animi servas?”

Hor., lib. ii. sat. iii. v. 199.

“When your own child you to the altar led,
And pour’d the salted meal upon her head;
When you beheld the lovely victim slain,
Unnatural father! were you sound of brain?”

Agamemnon is introduced thus, apologizing for himself on account of the utility and necessity of the sacrifice:—

“Verum ego, ut hærentes adverso littore naves
Eriperem, prudens placavi sanguine divos.”
“But I, while adverse winds tempestuous roar,
To loose our fated navy from the shore,
Wisely with blood the powers divine adore.”

Francis’ Horace.

The Plebeian again charges him with madness:—

“Nempe tuo furiose?”

“What! your own blood, you madman?”

But Philo, in his first book, relates that one Saturn (there were many illustrious persons of that name, as well as of the name of Hercules), when the enemies of his country were oppressing it, sacrificed at the altars his own daughter, named Leüdem; which among them, namely, the Tyrians, means only-begotten.

I have little or no doubt but that this Saturn was Jephthah the Israelite; that their Hercules was Joshua, the celebrated Vossius has clearly proved, book i. of Idol.

But as we have made mention of Jephthah, it will not be foreign to our purpose briefly to treat of those three famous examples of human sacrifices recorded in the sacred writings. The first is contained in that celebrated history concerning the trial of Abraham; an undertaking so wonderful and astonishing that no age hath ever produced or will produce its like. It even exceeds every thing that fabulous Greece hath presumed in story. A most indulgent and affectionate father, weighed down with age,[74] is

ordered to offer his only son, the pillar of his house and family, the trust of Heaven, a son solemnly promised him by God, the foundation of the future church, in whom, according to the oracles of God, all the nations of the earth were to be blessed; this most innocent and most obedient son he is ordered to offer as a burnt-offering, — a dreadful kind of sacrifice indeed! which required that the victim should be first slain, afterward cut in pieces, and lastly burnt, by the hands of a father! What though the purpose was not accomplished, God having graciously so ordained it, this obedience of the holy man is, notwithstanding, to be had in everlasting remembrance! And forasmuch as he began the task with a sincere heart and unfeigned faith, the Holy Spirit bears testimony to him as if he had really offered his son: Heb. xi. 17, “By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac; and he that had received the promises offered up his only-begotten.” The fame of this transaction, no doubt, was spread in ancient times over many of the eastern nations. But that those who were altogether ignorant of the communion and friendship which Abraham cultivated with the Lord, and yet were convinced in their consciences that a more noble sacrifice than all cattle, and a more precious victim, was necessary to be offered to God (for if this persuasion had not been deeply impressed on their minds, the devil could not have induced them to that dreadful worship), assumed the courage of practising the same thing from that event, there is not any room to doubt. And, farther, if any report were spread abroad concerning the divine command and oracle which Abraham received, the eyes of all would be turned upon him as the wisest and holiest of men, and they would be led, perhaps, to conclude, falsely, that God might be propitiated by such kind of victims: for they did not this from any rivalship of Abraham, whom they respected as a wise and just man; but, being deceived by that action of his, and endeavouring at an expiation of their own crimes, they did the same thing that

he did, but with a very different end, for the offering up of Isaac was a type of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

But from that right and dominion which God naturally hath over all the creatures, or from that superior excellence and eminence wherewith he is endowed and constituted, he might, without any degree or suspicion of injustice or cruelty, exact victims as a tribute from man. But he hath declared his will to the contrary: Exod. xxxiv. 19, 20, "But the firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb; and the first-born of thy sons thou shalt redeem;" — partly, lest human blood, of which he has the highest care, should become of little account; but especially because all mankind in general being polluted with iniquities, a type of his immaculate Son could not be taken from among them.

But this history the falsifying poets of the Greeks have corrupted by that fable of theirs concerning the sacrifice of Iphigenia, begun by her father Agamemnon, but who was liberated by the substitution of a doe.[75] Hence, in Euripides, these words are falsely applied to the virgin destined to be sacrificed, which (the proper changes being made) might with more propriety be spoken of Isaac, when acting in obedience to the command of God and of his father.

— ὦ πάτερ πάρειμί σοι, etc.

"O, father, I am here present; and I cheerfully deliver up my body for my country and for all Greece, to be sacrificed at the altar of the goddess, by those who now conduct me thither, if the oracle so require," Euripid. Iphigenia in Aulis, near the end, v. 1552.

It is worth while to notice, by the way, the use of the word ὑπέρ. The virgin to be sacrificed declared that she was willing to appease the anger of the gods, and suffer punishment in behalf of, or instead of, her country and all Greece; and but a little before she is introduced exulting in these words, —

Ἐλίσσετ' ἀμφὶ ναόν, etc.

"Invoke to her temple, to her altar, Diana, queen Diana, the blessed Diana; for if it shall be necessary, by my blood and sacrifice I will obliterate the oracle," Ib. v. 1480.

Justly celebrated, too, in the second place, is the history of Jephthah's sacrificing his only daughter, related by the Holy Spirit in these words: Judg. xi. 30, 31, 34, 39, "And Jephthah vowed a vow unto the Lord, and said, If thou shalt without fail deliver the children of Ammon into mine hands, then it shall be that whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, shall surely be the Lord's, and I will offer it up for a burnt-offering." But when he returned, "his daughter came out to meet him;" and "at the end of two months, he did with her according to his vow." If any passage ever puzzled both Jewish and Christian interpreters, ancient and modern, as well as all your disputants upon and patchers up of common-place difficulties, this one has. For, on the one hand, here it is supposed that all offering of human sacrifices is detested and abhorred by God; and to ascribe such a thing to a man of piety, and one celebrated by the Holy Spirit for his faith, many will not venture. But again, on the other hand, the words of the history, the circumstances, the grief and lamentation of the father, seem hardly capable of admitting any other meaning. But to me these things are ambiguous.[76]

First, It is evident that a gross ignorance of the law, either in making the vow or in executing it, is by no means to be ascribed to Jephthah, who was, though a military man, a man of piety, a fearer of God, and well acquainted with the sacred writings. Now, then, if he simply made a vow, that a compensation and redemption, according to the valuation of the priests, ought to have been made, could not have escaped him; and therefore there was no reason why he should so much bewail the event of a vow by which he had engaged himself to the Lord, and to which he was bound, for

he might both keep his faith and free his daughter, according to the words of the law, Lev. xxvii. 1–8.

Or if we should conjecture that he was so grossly mistaken, and entirely unacquainted with divine matters, was there no priest or scribe among all the people, who, during that time which he granted to his daughter, at her own request, to bewail her virginity, could instruct this illustrious leader, who had lately merited so highly of the commonwealth, in the meaning of the law, so that he should neither vex himself, render his family extinct, nor worship God to no purpose, by a vain superstition? I have no doubt, then, but that Jephthah performed his duty in executing his vow, according to the precept of the law, however much he might have erred in his original conception of it.

Nor is it less doubtful, in the second place, that Jephthah did not offer his daughter as a burnt-offering, as the words of the vow imply, according to the ceremony and institution of that kind of sacrifice; for as these sacrifices could be performed by the priest only by killing the victim, cutting it in pieces, and consuming it by fire upon the altar, — offices in which no priest would have ministered or assisted, — so also, such kind of sacrifices are enumerated among the abominations to the Lord, which he hateth: Deut. xii. 31, “Thou shalt not do so unto the Lord thy God; for every abomination to the Lord, which he hateth, have they done unto their gods; for even their sons and their daughters have they burnt in the fire to their gods.”

Thirdly, Nor does it seem probable that Jephthah had dedicated his daughter to God, that she should perpetually remain a virgin; for neither hath God instituted any such kind of worship, nor could the forced virginity of the daughter by any means ever be reckoned to the account of the father, as any valuable consideration, in place of a victim.

As, then, there were two kinds of things devoted to God, the first of which was of the class of those which, as God did

not order that they should be offered in sacrifice, it was made a statute that they should be valued by the priest at a fair valuation, and be redeemed, and so return again to common use. The law of these is delivered, Lev. xxvii. 1, 2, etc., “And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When a man shall make a singular vow, the persons shall be for the Lord by thy estimation, And thy estimation shall be of the male from twenty years old even unto sixty years old, even thy estimation shall be fifty shekels of silver, after the shekel of the sanctuary. And if it be a female, then thy estimation shall be thirty shekels,” etc. And verse 8: “But if he be poorer than thy estimation, then he shall present himself before the priest, and the priest shall value him; according to his ability that vowed shall the priest value him.”

But the second kind of these were called *Cherem*,[77] concerning which it was not a simple vow נֶדֶר, of which there was no redemption or estimation to be made by the priest. The law respecting these is given in the 28th and 29th verses of the same chapter: “Notwithstanding no devoted thing, that a man shall devote unto the Lord of all that he hath, both of man and beast, and of the field of his possession, shall be sold or redeemed: every devoted thing is most holy unto the Lord. None devoted, which shall be devoted of men, shall be redeemed; but shall surely be put to death.”

The question, to which of these two kinds the vow of Jephthah belonged, creates, if I mistake not, the whole difficulty of the passage.

That it belonged not to the first is as clear as the day; because if we suppose that it did, he might easily have extricated himself and family from all grief on that account by paying the estimation made by the priest. It was, then, a *cherem* which by his vow Jephthah had vowed to the Lord, by no means to be redeemed, but accounted “most holy unto the Lord,” as in verses 28, 29, before mentioned.

But it is doubted whether a rational creature could be made a *cherem*; but, in fact, there can hardly remain any room for doubt. To the person who considers the text itself it will easily appear. The words are, “Every devoted thing is most holy unto the Lord. None devoted, which shall be devoted of men, shall be redeemed; but shall surely be put to death.” It is evident from the foregoing verse that the words, “of men,” point not at the *efficient* cause but the *matter*[78] of the vow; where the same words, in the original, cannot be otherwise rendered than by “of,” or “touching man,” or by “out of,” or “from among mankind or men,” or “of the class of men.” And all those writers interpret the words in this sense (and there are not a few of them, both among Jews and Christians), who are of opinion that the passage ought to be explained as relating to the enemies of God, devoted to universal slaughter and destruction.

As Jephthah, then, had devoted his daughter as a *cherem*, it seems hardly to admit of a doubt that the cause of his consternation and sorrow at meeting her was because that, according to the law, he had slain her, having devoted her to God in such a manner as not to be redeemed.

It would be foreign to our purpose to agitate this question any farther. We shall only say, then, that after having maturely weighed all the circumstances of the text and of the thing itself, according to the measure of our abilities, we have gone into the opinion of those who maintain that Jephthah gave up his daughter to death, she being devoted to God in such a manner as, according to the law, not to be redeemed, that Supreme Being, who has the absolute right and power of life and death, so requiring[79] it. The theologians of both nations[80] who espouse this side of the question are both numerous and renowned. Peter Martyr testifies that almost all the more ancient rabbins agreed in this opinion. Josephus in his Antiquities follows them, although he hath not determined Jephthah to be free of blame. Of the fathers, it is sufficient (for the matter is not to be determined by votes) that Jerome in his epistle to Julian,

Ambrose on Virginity, book iii., Augustine on the book of Judges; and of those in later times, Peter Martyr in his commentary on the 11th of Judges, and Ludovicus Cappellus in that excellent treatise of his concerning Jephthah's vow, have either approved, or at least have not dissented from, this opinion. What Epiphanius[81] relates concerning the deification of Jephthah's daughter favours this opinion. "In Sebaste," says he, "which was formerly called Samaria, having deified the daughter of Jephthah, they yearly celebrate a solemn festival in honour of her." Yea, more, the most learned agree that the fame of this transaction was so spread among the Gentile nations, that thence Homer, Euripides, and others, seized the occasion of raising that fable about Agamemnon's sacrificing his daughter, and that there never was any other Iphigenia than Jephthegenia, nor Iphianassa[82] than Ἰφθιανασς[83] or Jephtheanassa.

But this was a kind of human sacrifice by which, as God intended to shadow forth the true sacrifice of his Son, so the enemy of the human race, aping the Almighty, and taking advantage of and insulting the blindness of mankind and the horror of their troubled consciences, arising from a sense of the guilt of sin, influenced and compelled them to the performance of ceremonies of a similar kind.

There is no need that we should dwell on the third instance of this kind of sacrifices that occurs in the sacred writings, — namely, that of the king of Moab, during the siege of his city, offering up either his own son or the king of Edom's upon the wall, as he was a heathen and a worshipper of Saturn, according to the custom of the Phœnicians. Despairing of his situation, when it seemed to him that the city could no longer be defended, and when he had no hope of breaking through or of escaping, he offered his own son, in my opinion (for the king of Edom had no first-born to succeed him in the government, being himself only a deputy king), as a sacrifice to the gods of his country, to procure a deliverance. The three kings then departed from the city which they were besieging, God so directing it,

either having entered into an agreement to that purpose, or because of the war not being successfully ended (for the conjectures on this point are by no means satisfactory), some indignation having broke out among the troops of the Israelites, who also themselves were idolaters.[84] See 2 Kings iii. 26, 27.

We shall conclude this train of testimonies with that noted account of the Rugiani, certain inhabitants of an island of Sclavonia, related by Albertus Crantzius, from which we may learn the dreadful judgment of God against a late superstition of Christians.

"Some preachers of the gospel of Christ" (who and what they were the historian shows) "converted the whole island of the Rugiani to the faith. Then they built an oratory in honour of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and in memory of St Vitus, patron of Corveia. But after, by divine permission, matters were changed, and the Rugiani fell off from the faith, having instantly expelled the priests and Christians, they converted their religion into superstition;[85] for they worship St Vitus, whom we acknowledge as a martyr and servant of Christ, as God. Nor is there any barbarous people under heaven that more dread Christians and priests; whence also, in peculiar honour of St Vitus, they have been accustomed to sacrifice yearly any Christian that may accidentally fall into their hands." A more horrible issue of Christianity sinking into superstition would, perhaps, be difficult to be found. But we are now tired of dwelling on such horrid rites and abominable sacrifices. Forasmuch, then, as we ourselves are the offspring of those who were wholly polluted with such sacrifices, and by nature not better or wiser than they, but only, through the rich, free, and unspeakable mercy of God, have been translated from the power of darkness, and the kingdom of Satan, into his marvellous light, it is most evident that, by every tie, we are bound to offer and devote ourselves wholly to Christ, our Deliverer and most glorious Saviour, "who hath loved us, and who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from

all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Thus the prophecies concerning the oblation of Christ being but badly understood, mankind were seduced, through the instigation of the devil, to pollute themselves with these inhuman and accursed sacrifices. Perhaps, too, that most artful seducer had it in view, by such sacrifices, to prejudice the more acute and intelligent part of mankind against that life-giving sacrifice that was to be destructive of his kingdom; for such now hold these atrocious sacrifices and detestable rites in abhorrence. However, to keep the minds of men in suspense and in subjection to himself, he did not fail, from another quarter, by words dubious, to spread abroad and send forth ambiguous oracles, as if such rites and sacrifices were of no avail for the expiation of sins. Thence these verses in Cato's Distichs:—

"Cum sis ipse nocens, moritur cur victima pro te?
Stultitia est morte alterius sperare salutem."

"Since it is thyself that art guilty, why need any victim die for thee? It is madness to expect salvation from the death of another."

I have no doubt but that this last verse is a diabolical oracle.

By such deceitful practices, the old serpent, inflamed with envy, and being himself for ever lost, because he could not eradicate every sense of avenging justice (which is as a curb to restrain the fury of the wicked) from the minds of men, wished to lead them into mazes, that he might still keep them the slaves of sin, and subject to his own dominion.

There have been, and still are, some of mankind, I confess it, who, from indulging their vices, are seared in their consciences, and whose minds are become callous by the practice of iniquity; who, flattering themselves to their own destruction, have falsely conceived either that God does not

trouble himself about such things, or that he can be easily appeased, and without any trouble. Hence that profane wretch introduced by Erasmus, after having settled matters with the Dominican commissaries, to a jolly companion of his own, when he asked him, “Whether God would ratify the bargain?” answers, “I fear rather lest the devil should not ratify it, for God by nature is easy to be appeased.” It is from the same idea that many of the barbarous natives of America, idly fancying that there are two gods, one good and another evil, say that there is no need to offer sacrifices to the good one, because, being naturally good, he is not disposed to hurt or injure any one. But they use all possible care, both by words, and actions, and every kind of horrible sacrifice, to please the evil one. Likewise those who are called by Mersennus Deists, exclaim, “That the bigots, or superstitiously religious, who believe in infernal punishments, are worse than Atheists, who deny that there is a God.” So, too, some new masters among our own countrymen talk of nothing in their discourses but of the goodness of God. His supreme right, dominion, and vindicatory justice are of no account with them. But he himself knows how to preserve his glory and his truth pure and entire, in spite of the abilities, and without regard to the delicacy, of these fashionable and dainty gentlemen.

But Rutherford on Providence answers, “That the Gentiles formerly borrowed their purgations and lustrations[86] from the Jews, and not from the light of nature.” But he must be a mere novice in the knowledge of these matters into whose mind even the slightest thought of that kind could enter; for I believe there is no one who doubts the custom and ceremony of sacrificing among the Gentile nations to be much more ancient than the Mosaic institutions. Nor can any one imagine that this universal custom among all nations, tribes, and people, civilized and barbarous, unknown to one another, differently situated and scattered all over the world, could have first arisen and proceeded from the institutions of the Jews.

"But," says he, "the light is dark, that a sinful creature could dream of being able to perform a satisfaction, and make propitiatory expiation, to an infinite God incensed, and such, too, as would be satisfactory for sin." Yea, I say, that a sinful creature could perform this is false, and a presumption only, arising from that darkness which we are in by nature. But, notwithstanding, it is true that God must be appeased by a propitiatory sacrifice, if we would that our sins should be forgiven us; and this much he hath pointed out to all mankind by that light of nature, obscure indeed, but not dark. Nor is it necessary, in order to prove this, that we should have recourse to the fabulous antiquities of the Egyptians, the very modest writer of which, Manetho, the high priest of Heliopolis, who lived in the time of Ptolemy Philadelphus, and took his history from the Seriadic hieroglyphical[87] obelisks, writes, that the Egyptian empire had endured to the time of Alexander the Great, through thirty-one dynasties,[88] containing a period of five thousand three hundred and fifty-three years. This is the sum of the years according to that writer, as Scaliger collects it, to which Vossius has added two years. But other Egyptians have been by no means satisfied with this period of time; for "from Osiris and Isis, to the reign of Alexander, who built a city of his own name in Egypt, they reckon more than ten thousand years, and, as some write, little less than twenty-three thousand years," says Diodorus: during which period of time they say that the sun had four times changed his course, for that he had twice risen in the west and set in the east; which things, though they may seem the dreams of madmen, strictly and properly understood, yet some very learned men entertain a hope, by means of the distinction of the years which the Egyptians used, and the description of their festivals, of reconciling them with the truth of the holy Scriptures.

But passing over these things, it can hardly be doubted that Jupiter-ammon, among the Egyptians, was no other than Ham, the son of Noah, and Bacchus Noah himself; and

that Vulcan, among other nations, was Tubal-cain: to all whom, and to others, sacrifices were offered before the birth of Moses. What, too, do they say to this, that Job, among the Gentiles, offered burnt-offerings before the institution of the Mosaic ceremonies? See chap. i. 5, xlii. 8. And Jethro, the priest of Midian, offered a burnt-offering and sacrifices to God even in the very camp of the Israelites in the wilderness, Exod. xviii. 12. Either, then, the sacrifice of Cain and Abel, or that of Adam himself and Eve, consisting of those beasts of whose skins coats were made to them by God,[89] and by whose blood the covenant was ratified, which could not have been made with them after their fall without shedding of blood, gave the first occasion to mankind of discharging that persuasion concerning the necessity of appeasing the offended Deity, which hath arisen from the light of nature, through this channel of sacrificing. Yea, it is evident that this innate notion concerning vindicatory justice, and the observation of its exercise and egress, have given rise to all divine worship. Hence that expression, "Primus in orbe deos fecit timor," "Fear first created gods." And hence these verses in Virgil, spoken by king Evander:—

"— Non hæc solennia nobis," etc.

Æn, viii. 185.

"These rites, these altars, and this feast, O king!
From no vain fears or superstition spring,
Or blind devotion, or from blinder chance,
Or heady zeal, or brutal ignorance;
But saved from danger, with a grateful sense,
The labours of a god we recompense."

But I do not mention these things as if it were my opinion that sacrifices are prescribed by the law of nature. The most of the Romish clergy maintain this opinion, that so they may pave the way for establishing the blasphemous sacrifice of the mass. Thus Lessius on "Justice and Right," book ii. Suarez, however, is of a different opinion; "for," says he,

“there is no natural precept from which it can be sufficiently gathered that a determination to that particular mode of worship is at all necessary to good morals,” in p. 3 of his Theol. on quest. 8, distinct. 71, sect. 8. But from the agreement of mankind in the ceremony of sacrificing, I maintain that they have possessed a constant sense of sin and vindicatory justice, discovering to them more and more of this rite, from its first commencement, by means of tradition.

But to return from this digression: it appears that such a presumption of corrective justice is implanted in all by nature, that it cannot by any means be eradicated. But since these universal conceptions by no means relate to what may belong or not belong to God at his free pleasure, it follows that sin-avenging justice is natural to God; the point that was to be proved.

I shall only add, in one word, that an argument from the consent of all is by consent of all allowed to be very strong: for thus says the philosopher, “What is admitted by all, we also admit; but he who would destroy such faith can himself advance nothing more credible,” Aristotle, Nicom. iii.

And Hesiod says, “That sentiment cannot be altogether groundless which many people agree in publishing.” And, “When we discourse of the eternity of the soul,” says Seneca, “the consent of mankind is considered as a weighty argument; I content myself with this public persuasion,” Seneca, Ep. 117.

And again, Aristotle says, “It is a very strong proof, if all shall agree in what we shall say.” And in that observation another author concurs: “The things that are commonly agreed on are worthy of credit.” And here endeth the second argument

[70] “Were initiated by the devil in the same abomination.” — Ed.

[71] Concerning the Tyrians, see Curtius, book iv.; and concerning the Carthaginians, see Diodorus, book xx.:— Tr.

[72] Namely, Anglesey. — Tr.

[73] The words in the original apply much better to our author's meaning. See them, Odyss., lib. viii. v. 550. — Tr.

[74] Abraham is said to have been now a hundred and thirty-three years of age; for some are of opinion that Isaac, at the time he was to have been sacrificed, was thirty-three years old. Josephus says twenty-five; the Jews in Seder Olam, thirty-six. Nor is it any objection that he is called naar, for so Benjamin, the father of many children, is called, Gen. xliii. — Tr.

[75] Agamemnon, as the story runs, had killed one of Diana's stags, and the goddess would be appeased on no other terms than by the sacrifice of his daughter; but after she was laid on the pile, Diana, pitying the virgin, put a doe in her room, and made Iphigenia her priestess. — Tr.

[76] That is, the expressions relating to this subject are capable of more meanings than one, and to ascertain the right one is attended with difficulties. — Tr. [This seems a mistake. It is a Greek word in the original, ἀναμφισβήτητα, and signifies" indisputable," or "beyond controversy." Had the word been ἀμφισβήτητα, it might have borne the meaning attached to it by the translator. — Ed]

[77] A thing or person so devoted as not to be redeemed. — Tr.

[78] That is, pointing not at the persons vowing, but at the object of their vow, or at the thing vowed or devoted by them. — Tr.

[79] The author here uses the words, "at least interpretatively," before, so requiring it;" meaning thereby, as I understand him, that the just and proper interpretation of the passage wherein this history is recorded, and of the others quoted, relating to vows, had clearly determined him to adopt this opinion. — Tr.

[80] That is, both of the Jewish and Christian persuasion. — Tr.

[81] Patriarch of Constantinople in the year 520. — Tr.

[82] Iphianassa, as the story says, was daughter of Prœtus, king of the Argives, who preferring herself in beauty to Juno, was struck with such a madness as to believe herself to be a cow, but was afterwards cured by Melampus, a famous physician, to whom she was given in marriage. — Tr.

[83] Or, than the daughter of Jephthah. For Iphigenia, see note on p. 532.

[84] Dr Gill agrees with our author that the king of Moab sacrificed his own son, and thinks that he might be induced to offer him thus publicly on the wall, that it might be seen by the camp of Israel, and move their compassion; but rather that he did it as a religious action, to appease the Deity by a human sacrifice; and that it was offered either to the true God,

in imitation of Abraham, or to his idol Chemosh, the sun. It was usual with the heathens, particularly the Phœnicians, when in calamity and distress, to.offer up what was most dear and valuable to them. See p. 527. Dr Gill seems of opinion that the cause why the three kings broke up the siege was, that after this barbarous and shocking sacrifice the Moabites became quite desperate, and that the kings, seeing them resolved to sell their lives so dear, and to hold out to the last man, thought fit to raise the siege; a very natural explication of these words, "And there was great indignation against Israel," if the indignation be understood as applicable only to the Moabites. But the concluding sentence of our author on this subject seems to imply it to be his opinion, that there were also dissensions and indignation in the allied army; perhaps between the Edomites, the idolatrous Israelites, and the worshippers of the true God, arising from the horrid spectacle they had witnessed. This is only ventured as a conjecture, that may better account for the sudden departure of the kings. — Tr.

[85] Their religion at best had been contaminated with the superstitions of the church of Rome. — Tr.

[86] That is, their acts or ceremonies of cleansing or purifying themselves from guilt by sacrifice, or otherwise; the latter word more particularly means the operation of cleansing by water. — Tr.

[87] Hieroglyphics are emblems or pictures that were used in the first method of writing; but after characters were introduced, they became generally unintelligible, and contributed much to promote idolatry. They were used by the Egyptian priests to conceal the mysteries of their religion from the vulgar, and were thence called hieroglyphics; that is, sacred engravings or carvings. They were originally engraven or carved on walls and obelisks. — Tr. [It is hardly needful to advert to modern discoveries, from Champollion to Wilkinson, according to which it appears that, instead of being subservient merely to the purpose of concealment, these mystic characters, now that the key to them has been discovered, contain a rich treasury of information in regard both to the history and customs of ancient Egypt. — Ed.]

[88] A dynasty in history means a succession of kings in the same line. — Tr.

[89] Gen. iii. 21, "Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them." — Tr.

Chapter V.

The third argument — This divine attribute demonstrated in the works of providence — That passage of the apostle to the Romans, chap. i. 18, considered — Anger, what it is — The definitions of the philosophers — The opinion of Lactantius concerning the anger of God — Anger often ascribed to God in the holy Scriptures — In what sense this is done — The divine anger denotes, 1. The effect of anger; 2. The will of punishing — What that will is in God — Why the justice of God is expressed by anger — The manifestation of the divine anger, what it is — How it is "revealed from heaven" — The sum of the argument — The fourth argument — Vindicatory justice revealed in the cross of Christ — The attributes of God, how displayed in Christ — Heads of other arguments — The conclusion.

III. [90]It remains, then, that we should now consider, in the third place, what testimony God has given, and is still giving, to this essential attribute of his in the works of providence. This Paul takes notice of, Rom. i. 18. "The wrath of God," says he, "is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness."

The philosopher Aristotle says that "anger is a desire of punishing on account of an apparent neglect;"[91] a definition, perhaps, not altogether accurate. Seneca says that Aristotle's definition of anger, that it is "a desire of requiting pain," differs but little from his own, namely, that "anger is a desire of inflicting punishment," book 1. "Of Anger," chapter 3, where he discusses it with great elegance, according to the maxims of the Stoics. But Aristotle reckons ἀοργησίαν[92] among vices or extremes, Ethic. Nicom. lib. 2. cap. 7. But Phavorinus says that "anger is a desire to punish the person appearing to have injured you, contrary to what is fit and proper." But in whatever manner it be defined, it is beyond a doubt that it cannot, properly speaking, belong to God. Lactantius Firmianus,

therefore, is lashed by the learned, who, in his book “Of the Anger of God,” chapter 4, in refuting the Stoics, who contend that anger ought not in any manner whatever to be ascribed to God, has ventured to ascribe to the Deity commotions and affections of mind, but such as are just and good. Suarez, however, excuses him, in his disputation “On Divine Justice,” sect. 5, and contends that the nature of anger is very specially preserved in the disposition of punishing offences.

But however this matter be, certain it is that God assumes no affection of our nature so often to himself in Scripture as this; and that, too, in words which for the most part, in the Old Testament, denote the greatest commotion of mind. Wrath, fury, the heat of great anger, indignation, hot anger, smoking anger, wrathful anger, anger appearing in the countenance, inflaming the nostrils, rousing the heart, flaming and consuming, are often assigned to him, and in words, too, which among the Hebrews express the parts of the body affected by such commotions.[93]

In fine, there is no *perturbation* of the mind, no *commotion* of the spirits, no *change* of the bodily parts, by which either the materiality or formality[94] (as they phrase it) of anger is expressed, when we are most deeply affected thereby, which he has not assumed to himself.

But since with God, beyond all doubt, “there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning,” it will be worth while strictly to examine what he means by this description of his most holy and unchangeable nature, so well accommodated to our weak capacities. Every material circumstance, such as in us is the commotion of the blood and gall about the heart, and likewise those troublesome affections of sorrow and pain with which it is accompanied, being entirely excluded, we shall consider what this anger of God means.

First, then, it is manifest that, by the anger of God, the *effects of anger* are denoted: “Is God unrighteous who

taketh vengeance? God forbid," Rom. iii. 5. And it is said, Eph. v. 6, "Because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience;" that is, God will most assuredly punish them. Hence the frequent mention of "the wrath to come;" that is, the last and everlasting punishment. Thus, that great and terrible day, "in which God will judge the world by that man whom he hath ordained," is called "The day of his wrath," because it is the day of "the revelation of the righteous judgment of God," Rom. ii. 5. And he is said to be "slow to wrath" because he oftentimes proceeds slowly, as it seems to us, to inflict punishment or recompense evil. But, perhaps, this difficulty is better obviated by Peter, who removes every idea of slowness from God, but ascribes to him patience and long-suffering in Christ towards the faithful. And of this dispensation even the whole world, in a secondary sense, are made partakers. "The Lord is not slack," says he, "concerning his promise" (the promise, namely, of a future judgment), "as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance," 2 Pet. iii. 9.

Nay, the threatening of punishment is sometimes described by the words "anger, fury, wrath," and "fierce wrath." Thus, Jonah iii. 9, "Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?" that is, "whether he may not, upon our humiliation and repentance, avert from us the grievous punishment denounced by the prophet."

But, secondly, It denotes *a constant and immutable will in God of avenging and punishing, by a just punishment, every injury, transgression, and sin*. And hence that expression, Rom. ix. 22, "What if God, willing to show his wrath," — that is, his justice, or constant will of punishing sinners; for when any external operations of the Deity are described by a word denoting a human affection that is wont to produce such effects, the holy Scripture means to point out to us some perfection perpetually resident in God, whence these

operations flow, and which is their proper and next principle.[95]

And what is that perfection but this justice of which we are discoursing? For we must remove far from God every idea of anger, properly so called, which, in respect of its causes and effects, and of its own nature, supposes even the greatest perturbation, change, and inquietude of all the affections in its subject; and yet we are under the necessity of ascribing to him a nature adapted to effect those operations which are reckoned to belong to anger. But since the Scriptures testify that God works these works as he is just, and because he is just (and we have proved it above), it plainly appears that that perfection of the divine nature is nothing else but this vindicatory justice; whence Thomas Aquinas asserts[96] that anger is not said to be in God in allusion to any passion of the mind, but to the judgment or decision of his justice. Nay, that "anger" may not only be reduced to "justice," but that the words themselves are synonymous, and that they are taken so in Scripture, is certain: Ps. vii. 6, 9, "Arise, O Lord, in thine anger, lift up thyself because of the rage of mine enemies: and awake for me to the judgment that thou hast commanded. Oh let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end; but establish the just: for the righteous God trieth the hearts and reins." To "judge in anger," or with "justice," are phrases of the same import: Ps. lvi. 7, "Shall they escape by iniquity? in thine anger cast down the people, O God;" or, "In justice cast them down, because of their iniquity." Thus, when he justly destroyed the people of Israel by the king of Babylon, he says it came to pass through his anger: 2 Kings xxiv. 20, "For through the anger of the Lord it came to pass in Jerusalem and Judah, until he had cast them out from his presence, that Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon."

But the apostle says that this anger or punitory justice is "revealed from heaven." The apostle uses the same word here that is translated "revealed" in the preceding verse,

when speaking of the manifestation or revelation of the righteousness of faith in the gospel. Therefore, some have been of opinion that the apostle here asserts that this very anger of God is again and again made known and manifested, or openly declared, in the gospel against unbelievers. But to what purpose, then, is there any mention made of “heaven,” whence that manifestation or revelation is said to have been made? The apostle, therefore, uses the word in a different sense in Rom. i. 18, from that which it is used in the preceding. There it means a manifestation by the preaching of the word, here it signifies a declaration by examples; and therefore one might not improperly translate the word “is laid open,” or “clearly appears,” — that is, is proved by numberless instances. Moreover, this verse is the principal of the arguments by which the apostle proves the necessity of justification by faith in the remission of sins through the blood of Christ, because that all have sinned, and thereby rendered God their open and avowed enemy.

The apostle, then, affirms that God hath taken care that his anger against sin, or that his justice, should appear by innumerable examples of punishments inflicted on mankind for their sins, in his providential government of the world, and that it should appear in so clear a manner that there should be no room left for conjectures about the matter. Not that punishment is always inflicted on the wicked and impious while in this world, or, at least, that it appears to be so, for very many of them enjoy all the pleasures of a rich and flourishing outward estate; but besides that he exercises his anger on their consciences, as we proved before, and that the external good things of fortune, as they call them, are only a fattening of them for the day of slaughter, even in this life he ofttimes, in the middle of their career, exercises his severe judgments against the public enemies of Heaven, the monsters of the earth, the architects of wickedness, sunk in the mire and filth of their vices; and that, too, even to the entire ruin and desolation both of whole nations and of particular individuals, whom, by a

remarkable punishment, he thinks proper to make an example and spectacle of to the world, both to angels and to men.

Therefore, although “God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known,” not in that way only, — namely, by exercising public punishments in this life, — of which we are now speaking, “endure with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction,” and though he should not instantly dart his lightnings against all and every individual of the abandoned and profane, yet mankind will easily discern[97] what the mind and thoughts of God are, what his right and pleasure, and of what kind his anger and justice are, with regard to every sin whatever. Therefore, the apostle affirms that the anger of God, of which he gives only some instances, is by these judgments openly declared against all unrighteousness and ungodliness of men whatever, whether they fail in the worship and duty which they owe to God, or in the duties which it is incumbent on them to perform to one another; moreover, that the solemn revelation of this divine justice consists, not only in those judgments which, sooner or later, he hath exercised upon particular persons, but also in the whole series of his divine dispensations towards men: in which, as he gives testimony both to his goodness and patience, inasmuch as “he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust,” and “leaveth not himself without witness, in that he doeth good, and giveth us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness,” Matt. v. 45; Acts xiv. 17; so also he gives equally clear signs and testimonies of his anger, severity, and indignation, or of his punitory justice. Hence, on account of the efficacy of the divine anger exercising its power and influence far and near, this visible world, as if the very fuel of the curse, is appointed as the seat and abode of all kinds of misery, grief, lamentation, cares, wrath, vanity, and inquietude. Why need I mention tempests, thunders, lightnings, deluges, pestilences, with many things more, by

means of which, on account of the wickedness of man, universal nature is struck with horror? All these, beyond a doubt, have a respect to the revelation of God's anger or justice against the unrighteousness and the ungodliness of men.

Moreover, the apostle testifies this revelation to be *made from heaven*. Even the most abandoned cannot but observe punishments of various kinds making havoc everywhere in the world, and innumerable evils brooding, as it were, over the very texture of the universe. But because they wish for and desire nothing more ardently than either that there were no God, or that he paid no regard to human affairs, they either really ascribe, or pretend to ascribe, all these things to chance, fortune, the revolutions of the stars and their influence, or, finally, to natural causes. In order to free the minds of men from this pernicious deceit of atheism, the apostle affirms that all these things come to pass "from heaven;" that is, under the direction of God, or by a divine power and providence punishing the sins and wickedness of men, and manifesting the justice of God. Thus, "The Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven," Gen. xix. 24: which cities, by that punishment inflicted on them from heaven, he hath set up as an example, in every future age, to all those who should afterward persevere in the like impieties. To these considerations add, that the apostle, from this demonstration of the divine anger from heaven against the sins of men, argues the necessity of appointing an atonement through the blood of Christ, Rom. iii. 18–26; which would by no means follow but upon the supposition that that anger of God was such that it could not be averted without the intervention of an atonement.

But not to be tedious, it is evident that God, by the works of his providence, in the government of this world, gives a most copious testimony to his vindicatory justice, not inferior to that given to his goodness, or any other of his attributes; which testimony concerning himself and his

nature he makes known, and openly exhibits to all, by innumerable examples, constantly provided and appointed for that purpose. He, then, who shall deny this justice to be essential to God, may, for the same reason, reject his goodness and long-suffering patience.

IV. The fourth argument shall be taken from the revelation of that *name*, glory, and nature, which God hath exhibited to us in and through Christ: John i. 18, “No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him;” — him who, though he be light itself, and dwelling in light inaccessible, yet in respect of us, who without Christ are naturally blinder than moles, is covered with darkness. In creation, in legislation, and in the works of providence, God, indeed, hath plainly marked out and discovered to us certain traces of his power, wisdom, goodness, justice, and long-sufferance. But, besides that there are some attributes of his nature the knowledge of which could not reach the ears of sinners but by Christ, — such as his love to his peculiar people, his sparing mercy, his free and saving grace, — even the others, which he hath made known to us in some measure by the ways and means above mentioned, we could have no clear or saving knowledge of unless in and through this same Christ; for “in him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” In him God hath fully and clearly exhibited himself to us, to be loved, adored, and known; and that not only in regard of his heavenly doctrine, in which he hath “brought life and immortality to light through the gospel,”[98] God finishing the revelation of himself to mankind by the mission and ministry of his Son, but also, exhibiting, both in the person of Christ and in his mediatorial office, the brightness of his own glory and the express image of his person, he glorified his own name and manifested his nature, to all those at least who, being engrafted into Christ and baptized into his Spirit, enjoy both the Father and Son. But in the whole matter of salvation by the Mediator, God-man, there is no excellence of God, no

essential property, no attribute of his nature, the glory of which is the chief end of all his works, that he hath more clearly and eminently displayed than this punitory justice.

It was for the display of his justice that he set forth Christ as a propitiation, through faith in his blood. He spared him not, but laid the punishment of us all upon him. It was for this that he was pleased to bruise him, to put him to grief, and to make his soul an offering for sin.

The infinite wisdom of God, his inexpressible grace, free love, boundless mercy, goodness, and benevolence to men, in the constitution of such a Mediator, — namely, a God-man, — are not more illustriously displayed, to the astonishment of men and angels, in bringing sinful man from death, condemnation, and a state of enmity, into a state of life, of salvation, of glory, and of union and communion with himself, than is this punitory justice, for the satisfaction, manifestation, and glory of which this whole scheme, pregnant with innumerable mysteries, was instituted. But that attribute whose glory and manifestation God intended and accomplished, both in the appointment of his only-begotten Son to the office of mediator, and in his mission, must be natural to him; and there is no need of arguments to prove that this was his vindicatory justice. Yea, supposing this justice and all regard to it entirely set aside, the glory of God’s love in sending his Son, and delivering him up to the death for us all, which the Scriptures so much extol, is manifestly much obscured, if it do not rather totally disappear; for what kind of love can that be which God hath shown, in doing what there was no occasion for him to do?

We will not at present enter fully into the consideration of other arguments by which the knowledge of this truth is supported; among which that of the necessity of assigning to God (observing a just analogy) whatever perfections or excellencies are found among the creatures, is not of the least importance. These we pass, partly that we may not be tedious to the learned reader, partly because the truth flows

in a channel already sufficiently replenished with proofs. It would be easy, however, to show that this justice denotes the highest perfection, and by no means includes any imperfection, on account of which it should be excluded from the divine nature. Neither, in the definition of it, does one iota occur that can imply any imperfection; but all perfection, simple or formal, simply and formally, is found in God. But when this perfection is employed in any operation respecting another being, and having for its object the common good, it necessarily acquires the nature of justice.

I shall not be farther troublesome to my readers; if what has been already said amount not to proof sufficient, I know not what is sufficient. I urge only one testimony more from Scripture and conclude. It is found in Heb. x. 26, 27: “For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation.” “But perhaps God will pardon without any sacrifice.” The apostle is of a contrary opinion. Where there is “no sacrifice for sin,” he argues that, from the very nature of the thing, there must be “a looking for of judgment and fiery indignation;” — the very point that was to be proved.

I could heartily wish that some sinner whose conscience the hand of the omnipotent God hath lately touched, whose “sore ran in the night and ceased not,” and whose “soul refused to be comforted,” whose “grief is heavier than the sand of the sea,” in whom “the arrows of the Almighty” stick fast, “the poison whereof drinketh up the spirit,”[99] were to estimate and determine this difficult and doubtful dispute. Let us, I say, have recourse to a person, who, being convinced by the Spirit of his debts to God, is weighed down by their burden, while the sharp arrows of Christ are piercing the heart, Ps. xlv. 5, and let us inform him that God, with the greatest ease, by his nod, or by the light touch of his finger, so to speak, can blot out, hide, and forgive all sins. Will he rest satisfied in such a thought? will he immediately subscribe to it? Will he not rather exclaim, “I

have heard many such things; ‘miserable comforters are ye all;’[100] nay, ‘ye are forgers of lies, physicians of no value.’ The terrors of the Lord, which surround me, and beset me day and night, ye feel not. I have to do with the most just, the most holy, the supreme Judge of all, who ‘will do right, and will by no means clear the guilty.’ Therefore, ‘my days are consumed like smoke, and my bones are burned as an hearth. My heart is smitten, and withered like grass; so that I forget to eat my bread. By reason of the voice of my groaning, my bones cleave to my skin.’[101] ‘I am afflicted and ready to die from my youth up: while I suffer thy terrors I am distracted. Thy fierce wrath goeth over me; thy terrors have cut me off.’[102] I wish I were hid in the grave, yea, even in the pit, unless the Judge himself say to me, ‘Deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom.’[103] Indeed, when the recollection of that very melancholy period comes into mind, when first God was pleased by his Spirit effectually to convince the heart of me, a poor sinner, of sin, and when the whole of God’s controversy with me for sin is again presented to my view, I cannot sufficiently wonder what thoughts could possess those men who have treated of the remission of sins in so very slight, I had almost said contemptuous, a manner.” But these reflections are rather foreign to our present business.

[90] See division, page 512.

[91] Book viii. chapter 5, of his Topics.

[92] A deprivation of irascibility.

[93] Numb. xxv. 4; Deut. xiii. 17; Josh. vii. 26; Ps. lxxviii. 49; Isa. xiii. 9; Deut. xxix. 24; Judg. ii. 14; Ps. lxxiv. 1, lxix. 24; Isa. xxx. 30; Lam. ii. 6; Ezek. v. 15; Ps. lxxviii. 49; Isa. xxxiv. 2; 2 Chron. xxviii. 11; Ezra x. 14; Hab. iii. 8, 12.

[94] The materiality of anger is what is essentially necessary to constitute anger; the formality means its external marks and characters. — Tr.

[95] That is, the principle from which they immediately flow. — Tr.

[96] Quest. 47, art. 1.

[97] Namely, from those instances of punishment which he is pleased in his wisdom sometimes openly and awfully to inflict upon the wicked. — Tr.

[98] 2 Tim. i. 10.

[99] Job vi. 2–4.

[100] Job xiii. 4, xvi. 2.

[101] Ps. cii. 3–5.

[102] Ps. lxxxviii. 15, 16.

[103] Job xxxiii. 24.

Chapter VI.

Another head of the first part of the dissertation — Arguments for the necessary egress of vindicatory justice from the supposition of sin — The first argument — God's hatred of sin; what — Whether God by nature hates sin, or because he wills so to do — Testimonies from holy Scripture — Dr Twisse's answer — The sum of it — The same obviated — The relation of obedience to reward and of sin to punishment not the same — Justice and mercy, in respect of their exercise, different — The second argument — The description of God in the Scriptures in respect of sin — In what sense he is called a "consuming fire" — Twisse's answer refuted — The fallacies of the answer.

We have sufficiently proved, if I be not mistaken, that sin-punishing justice is *natural* to God. The opposite arguments, more numerous than weighty, shall be considered hereafter. We are now to prove the second part of the question, — namely, that the existence and sin of a rational creature being supposed, the exercise of this justice is necessary. And, granting what appears from what we have already said concerning the nature of justice, especially from the first argument, our proofs must necessarily be conclusive. The first is this:—

I. He who cannot but hate all sin cannot but punish sin; for to hate sin is, as to the affection, to will to punish it, and as to the effect, the punishment itself. And to be unable not to will the punishment of sin is the same with the necessity of punishing it; for he who cannot but will to punish sin cannot but punish it: for "our God is in the heavens; he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased," Ps. cxv. 3. Now, when we say that God necessarily punishes sin, we mean, that on account of the rectitude and perfection of his nature, he cannot possess an indifference of will to punish; for it being supposed that God hates sin, he must hate it either by *nature* or by *choice*. If it be by nature, then we have gained our point. If by choice, or because he wills it, then it is

possible for him not to hate it. Nay, he may even justly will the contrary, or exercise a contrary act about the same object; for those acts of the divine will are most free, namely, which have their foundation in the will only: that is to say, it is even possible for him to love sin; for the divine will is not so inclined to any object, but that, if it should be inclined to its contrary, that might, consistent with justice, be done. This reasoning Durandus agrees to, and this Twisse urges as an argument. The conclusion, then, must be, that God may love sin, considered as sin.

"Credat Apella."

"The sons of circumcision may receive
The wondrous tale, which I shall ne'er believe."

Francis' Horace.

For "God hates all workers of iniquity," Ps. v. 5. He calls it "The abominable thing that he hateth," Jer. xliv. 4. Besides these, other passages of Scripture testify that God hates sin, and that he cannot but hate it: "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity," Hab. i. 13. On account of the purity of God's eyes, — that is, of his holiness, an attribute which none hath ever ventured to deny, — he "cannot look on iniquity;" that is, he cannot but hate it. "Thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness," says the psalmist, Ps. v. 4, 5, — that is, "Thou art a God who hatest all wickedness;" — for "evil shall not dwell with thee, and the foolish shall not stand in thy sight; thou hatest all workers of iniquity." Is it a free act of the divine will that he here describes, which might or might not be executed without any injury to the holiness, purity, and justice of God; or the divine nature itself, as averse to, hating and punishing every sin? Why shall not the foolish stand in God's sight? Is it because he freely wills to punish them, or because our God to all workers of iniquity is a consuming fire? Not that the nature of God can wax hot at the sight of sin, in a natural manner, as fire doth after the combustible materials have been applied to it; but that punishment as

naturally follows sin as its consequence, on account of the pressing demand of justice, as fire consumes the fuel that is applied to it.

But it is not without good reason that God, who is love, so often testifies in the holy Scriptures his hatred and abomination of sin: “The wicked, and him that loveth violence, his soul hateth,” Ps. xi. 5. Speaking of sinners, Lev. xxvi. 30, he says, “My soul shall abhor you.” He calls sin “That abominable thing,” 1 Kings xxi. 26; Ps. xiv. 1; Deut. xvi. 22. There is nothing that God hates but sin; and because of sin only other things are liable to his hatred. In what sense passions and affections are ascribed to God, and what he would have us to understand by such a description of his nature and attributes, is known to everybody. But of all the affections of human nature, hatred is the most restless and turbulent, and to the person who is under its influence, and who can neither divest himself of it nor give a satisfactory vent to its motions, the most tormenting and vexatious; for as it takes its rise from a disagreement with and dislike of its object, so that its object is always viewed as repugnant and offensive, no wonder that it should rouse the most vehement commotions and bitterest sensations. But God, who enjoys eternal and infinite happiness and glory, as he is far removed from any such perturbations, and placed far beyond all variableness or shadow of change, would not assume this affection so often, for our instruction, unless he meant clearly to point out to us this supreme, immutable, and constant purpose of punishing sin, — as that monster whose property it is to be the object of God’s hatred, that is, of the hatred of infinite goodness, — to be natural and essential to him.

The learned Twisse answers, “I cannot agree that God by nature equally punishes and hates sin, unless you mean that hatred in the Deity to respect his will as appointing a punishment for sin; in which sense I acknowledge it to be true that God equally, from nature and necessity, punishes and hates sin. But I deny it to be necessary that he should

either so hate sin or punish it. If hatred be understood to mean God's displeasure, I maintain that it is not equally natural to God to punish sin and to hate it; for we maintain it to be necessary that every sin should displease God, but it is not necessary that God should punish every sin." The sum of the answer is this: God's hatred of sin is taken either for his will of punishing it, and so is not natural to God; or for his displeasure on account of sin, and so is natural to him: but it does not thence follow that God necessarily punishes every sin, and that he can let no sin pass unpunished.

But, first, this learned gentleman denies what has been proved; nor does he deign to advance a word to invalidate the proof. He denies that God naturally hates sin, hatred being taken for the will of punishing: but this we have before demonstrated, both from Scripture and sound reason. It would be easy indeed to elude the force of any argument in this manner. Afterward, he acknowledges that every sin must necessarily be displeasing to God. This, then, depends not on the free will of God, but on his nature. It belongs, then, immutably to God, and it is altogether impossible that it should not displease him. This, then, is supposed, that sin is always displeasing to God, but that God may or may not punish it, but pardon the sin and cherish the sinner, though his sin eternally displease him; for that depends upon his nature, which is eternally immutable. Nor is it possible that what hath been sin should ever be any thing but sin. From this natural displeasure, then, with sin, we may with propriety argue to its necessary punishment; otherwise, what meaneth that despairing exclamation of alarmed hypocrites, "Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?"[104]

The learned doctor retorts, "Obedience must necessarily please God; but God is not bound by his justice necessarily to reward it." But the learned gentleman will hardly maintain that the relation of obedience to reward, and disobedience to punishment, is the same; for God is bound

to reward no man for obedience performed, for that is due to him by natural right: Luke xvii. 10, “So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which was our duty to do.” Ps. xvi. 2, “My goodness extendeth not unto thee.” But every man owes to God obedience, or is obnoxious to a vicarious punishment; nor can the moral dependence of a rational creature on its Creator be otherwise preserved: “The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life,” Rom. vi. 23.

Away, then, with all proud thoughts of equalling the relation of obedience to reward and sin to punishment. “Who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen,” Rom. xi. 35, 36. “What hast thou,” O man, “that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?” 1 Cor. iv. 7. God requireth nothing of us but what he hath formerly given us; and, therefore, he has every right to require it, although he were to bestow no rewards. What! doth not God observe a just proportion in the infliction of punishments, so that the degrees of punishment, according to the rule of his justice, should not exceed the demerit of the transgression. “Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?” But beware, Dr Twisse, of asserting that there is any proportion between the eternal fruition of God and the inexpressible participation of his glory, in which he hath been graciously pleased that the reward of our obedience should consist, and the obedience of an insignificant reptile, almost less than nothing. Whatever dignity or happiness we arrive at, we are still God’s creatures.

It is impossible that he who is blessed forever and ever, and is so infinitely happy in his own essential glory that he stands in no need of us or of our services, and who, in requiring all that we are and all that we can do, only requires his own, can, by the receipt of it, become bound in

any debt or obligation. For God, I say, from the beginning, stood in no need of our praise; nor did he create us merely that he might have creatures to honour him, but that, agreeably to his goodness, he might conduct us to happiness.

But he again retorts, and maintains, "That God can punish where he does not hate; and, therefore, he may hate and not punish: for he punished his most holy Son, whom God forbid that we should say he ever hated." But, besides that this mode of arguing from opposites hardly holds good in theology, though God hated not his Son when he punished him, personally considered, he however hated the sins on account of which he punished him (and even himself, substitutively considered, with respect to the effect of sin), no less than if they had been laid to any sinner. Yea, and from this argument it follows that God cannot hate sin and not punish it; for when he laid sins, which he hates, to the charge of his most holy Son, whom he loved with the highest love, yet he could not but punish him.

II. The representation or description of God, and of the divine nature in respect of its habitude[105] to sin, which the Scriptures furnish us with, and the description of sin with relation to God and his justice, supply us with a second argument. They call God a "consuming fire," "everlasting burnings,"[106] a God who "will by no means clear the guilty."[107]

They represent sin as "that abominable thing which he hateth," which he will destroy "as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff."[108] As, then, consuming fire cannot but burn and consume stubble, when applied to it, so neither can God do otherwise than punish sin, that abominable thing, which is consuming or destroying it, whenever presented before him and his justice.

But the very learned Twisse replies, "That God is a consuming fire, but an intelligent and rational one, not a

natural and insensible one. And this," says he, "is manifest from this, that this fire once burnt something not consumable,[109] namely, his own Son, in whom there was no sin; which," says he, "may serve as a proof that this fire may not burn what is consumable, when applied to it."

But, in my opinion, this very learned man was never more unhappy in extricating himself; for, first, he acknowledges God to be "a consuming fire," though "a rational and intelligent one, not a natural and insensible one." But the comparison was made between the events of the operations, not the modes of operating. Nobody ever said that God acts without sense, or from absolute necessity and principles of nature, without any concomitant liberty. But although he acts by will and understanding, we have said that his nature as necessarily requires him to punish any sin committed, as natural and insensible fire burns the combustible matter that is applied to it. But the learned gentleman does not deny this; nay, he even confirms it, granting that with respect to sin God "is a consuming fire," though only "an intelligent and rational one."

I am sorry that this very learned author should have used the expression, that "this fire burnt something not consumable," when he punished his most holy and well-beloved Son; for God did not punish Christ as his most holy Son, but as our mediator and the surety of the covenant, "whom he made sin for us, though he knew no sin." Surely, "he laid upon him our sins," before "the chastisement of our peace was upon him." But in this sense he was very susceptible of the effects of this fire, — namely, when considered as bearing the guilt of all our sins; and therefore it was that by fire the Lord did plead with him.[110] Therefore, what this very learned man asserts in the third place falls to the ground; for the conclusion from such a very false supposition must necessarily be false. We go on to the third argument.

[104] Isa. xxxiii. 14.

[105] Habitude means the state of a person or a thing with relation to something else. The habitude of the divine nature with respect to sin is a disposition to punish it. — Tr.

[106] Heb. xii. 29; Deut. iv. 24; Isa. xxxiii. 14.

[107] Exod. xxxiv. 7.

[108] Jer. xliv. 4; Isa. v. 24.

[109] The word in the original is “combustible,” meaning something that is susceptible of and consumable by fire. It must be evident to every one that the phrase is used in allusion to the metaphor which represents God as a consuming fire. The Son of God, then, was not, strictly and properly speaking, consumable, or susceptible of this fire, — that is, he was by no means the object of divine anger or punishment, considered as the Son of God, and without any relation to mankind, — but, on the contrary, was the beloved of his Father, with whom he was always well pleased. But he was liable to the effect of this fire, — that is, of God’s vindicatory justice, — as our representative and federal head. And every sinner is consumable by this fire; that is, is properly and naturally the object of divine wrath and punishment. — Tr.

[110] Isa. lxvi. 16.

Chapter VII.

The third argument — The non-punishment of sin is contrary to the glory of God's justice — Likewise of his holiness and dominion — A fourth argument — The necessity of a satisfaction being made by the death of Christ — No necessary cause or cogent reason for the death of Christ, according to the adversaries — The objection refuted — The use of sacrifices — The end of the first part of the dissertation.

III. Our third argument is this: It is absolutely necessary that God should preserve *his glory* entire to all eternity; but sin being supposed, without the infliction of the punishment due to it he cannot preserve his glory free from violation: therefore, it is necessary that he should punish it. Concerning the major proposition[111] there is no dispute; for all acknowledge, not only that it is necessary to God that he should preserve his glory, but that this is incumbent on him by *a necessity of nature*, for he cannot but love himself. He is Jehovah, and will not give his glory to another.[112] The truth of the assumption is no less clear; for the very nature of the thing itself proclaims that the glory of justice or of holiness, and dominion, could not otherwise be preserved and secured than by the punishment of sin. For, —

First, The glory of God is displayed in doing the things that are *just*; but in omitting these it is impaired, not less than in doing the things that are contrary. "He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the Lord."[113] "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"[114] or what is just? But "it is a righteous" or just "thing with God to recompense tribulation" to the disobedient, and to punish those who, on account of sin, are "worthy of death."[115] Suppose, then, that God should let the disobedient, whom it is a just thing for him to punish, go unpunished, and that those who are worthy of death should never be required to die, but that he should clear the guilty and the wicked, although he hath

declared them to be an abomination to him, where is the glory of his justice? That it is most evident that God thus punishes because he is just, we have proved before. “Is God unrighteous,” or unjust, “who taketh vengeance? God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world?” And he is “righteous,” or just, “because he hath given them blood to drink, who were worthy of it,”[116] and would be so far unjust were he not to inflict punishment on those deserving it.

Secondly, A proper regard is not shown to divine *holiness*, nor is its glory manifested, unless the punishment due to sin be inflicted. Holiness is opposed to sin; for “God is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity,”[117] and is the cause why he cannot let sin pass unpunished. “Ye cannot serve the Lord; for he is an holy God: he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins,”[118] said Joshua to the Israelites. For why? Can any thing impure and polluted stand before his holy Majesty? He himself declares the contrary; — that he is “not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness;” that “evil shall not dwell with him;” that “the foolish shall not stand in his sight;” that “he hateth all workers of iniquity;” and that “there shall in no wise enter into the new Jerusalem any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie.”[119] Nor can Jesus Christ present his church to his Father till it be “sanctified and cleansed with the washing of water by the word,” and made “a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but holy and without blemish.”[120] And we are enjoined to be holy, because he is holy. But all things are to be “purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.”[121]

Thirdly, We have sufficiently shown above that the *natural dominion* which God hath over rational creatures, and which they by sin renounce, could not otherwise be preserved or continued than by means of a *vicarious punishment*. And now let impartial judges decide whether it be necessary to God that he should preserve entire the glory of his justice, holiness, and supreme dominion, or not.

IV. And which is a principal point to be considered on this subject, Were the opinions of the adversaries to be admitted, and were we to suppose that God might will the salvation of any sinner, it will be difficult, if not impossible, to assign any sufficient and necessary cause of the death of Christ. For let us suppose that God hath imposed on mankind a law, ratified by a threatening of eternal death, and that they, by a violation of that law, have deserved the punishment threatened, and consequently are become liable to eternal death; again, let us suppose that God in that threatening did not expressly intend the death of the sinner, but afterward declared what and of what kind he willed that the guilt of sin should be, and what punishment he might justly inflict on the sinner, and what the sinner himself ought to expect (all which things flow from the free determination of God), but that he might by his nod or word, without any trouble, though no satisfaction were either made or received, without the least diminution of his glory, and without any affront or dishonour to any attribute, or any injury or disgrace to himself, consistently with the preservation of his right, dominion, and justice, freely pardon the sins of those whom he might will to save; — what sufficient reason could be given, pray, then, why he should lay those sins, so easily remissible, to the charge of his most holy Son, and on their account subject him to such dreadful sufferings?

While Socinians do not acknowledge other ends of the whole of this dispensation and mystery than those which they assign, they will be unable, to all eternity, to give any probable reason why a most merciful and just God should expose a most innocent and holy man, — who was his own Son by way of eminence, and who was introduced by himself into the world in a preternatural manner, as they themselves acknowledge, — to afflictions and sufferings of every kind, while among the living he pointed out to them the way of life, and at last to a cruel, ignominious, and accursed death.

I very well know that I cannot pretend to be either ingenious or quick-sighted; but respecting this matter I am not ashamed to confess my dullness to be such, that I cannot see that God,[122] consistently with the preservation of his right and glory entire, could, without the intervention of a ransom, pardon sins, as if justice did not require their punishment, or that Christ had died in vain. For why? Hath not God set him forth to be a propitiation for the demonstration or declaration of his sin-punishing justice? But how could that justice be demonstrated by an action which it did not require, or if the action might be omitted without any diminution of it, — if God would have been infinitely just to eternity, nor would have done any thing contrary and offensive to justice, though he had never inflicted punishment upon any sin? Could any ruler become highly famed and celebrated on account of his justice, by doing those things which, from the right of his dominion, he can do *without injustice*, but to the performance of which he is no way obligated by *the virtue of justice*? But if the adversaries suppose that when God freely made a law for his rational creatures, he freely appointed a punishment for transgression, freely substituted Christ in the room of transgressors; in fine, that God did all these things, and the like, because so it pleased him, and that therefore we are to acquiesce in that most wise and free will of his disposing all things at his pleasure; — they should not find me opposing them. Unless God himself had taught us in his word that sin is “that abominable thing which his soul hateth,” which is affrontive to him, which entirely casteth off all regard to that glory, honour, and reverence, which are due to him; and that to the sinner himself it is something evil and bitter, for “he shall eat of the fruit of his way, and be filled with his own devices;” and that God, with respect to sinners, is a “consuming fire,” an “everlasting burning,” in which they shall “dwell;” that “he will by no means clear the guilty;” that “he judgeth those who are worthy of death, and by his just judgment taketh vengeance on them; and that,

therefore, “without the shedding of blood, there can be no remission,” and that without a victim for sin, there remaineth to sinners nothing but “a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, that shall consume the adversaries;” and that he had appointed from the beginning his only-begotten Son, for the declaration and satisfaction of his justice, and the recovery of his glory, to open the way to heaven, otherwise shut, and to remain shut forever; — if, I say, God had not instructed us in these and such-like truths from his word, I should not oppose them; but these being clearly laid down in the word, we solemnly declare our belief that no sinner could obtain the remission of his sins, provided that we are disposed to acknowledge God to be just, without a price of redemption.[123]

Perhaps some one will say, “It doth not follow from the death of Christ that God necessarily punisheth sin; for Christ himself, in his agony, placeth the passing away of the cup among things possible. ‘All things,’ saith he, ‘Father, are possible with thee. Let this cup pass from me.’ ”

I answer, It is well known that the word “impossibility” may be considered in a twofold point of view. The first is in itself *absolute*, which respects the absolute power of God, antecedent to any free act of the divine will: in this respect, it was not impossible that that cup should pass from Christ. The second is *conditional*, which respects the power of God, as directed in a certain order, that is determined, and (if I might so phrase it) circumscribed by some act of the divine will: and in this sense it was impossible; that is to say, it being supposed that God willed to pardon any sins to sinners, it could not be done without laying their punishment upon the surety. But we do not pursue this argument farther at present, because we intend to resume it again in the consideration of the doctrine of Christ’s satisfaction.

There are yet many arguments very proper for establishing the truth on our side of the question, which we choose not to enter on largely and on set purpose, lest we

should be tiresome to the reader. Perhaps, however, it will be judged worth while briefly to sketch out some heads of them, and annex them to the former arguments concerning justice and the exercise thereof. The first is to this purport:—

1. A *second* act presupposes a *first*, and a constant manner of operating proves a habit; a sign also expresses the thing signified. Because God doeth good to all, we believe him to be good, and endowed with supreme goodness; for how could he so constantly and uniformly do good, unless he himself were good? Yea, from second acts the holy Scriptures sometimes teach the first; as, for instance, that God is the *living* God, because he giveth *life* to all, — that he is good, because he *doeth good*. Why may we not also say that he is just, endowed with that justice of which we are treating, because "God perverteth not judgment, neither doth the Almighty pervert justice," but "the Lord is righteous, and upright are his judgments?"[124] A constant, then, and uniform course of just operation in punishing sin proves punitory justice to be essentially inherent in God. From his law, which is the sign[125] of the divine will, the same is evident; for the nature of the thing signified is, that it resembles the sign appointed for the purpose of expressing it. That the same thing may be said of the anger, fury, and severity of God hath been shown above, Rom. i. 18.

2. It is not the part of a *just judge*, of his mere good pleasure, to let the wicked pass unpunished: "He that justifieth the wicked is an abomination to the Lord," and, "Woe to them that call evil good!" But God is a just judge. "But one who is not liable to render a reason," you will say, "and who is by no means subject to a law." But the nature of God is a law to itself. He cannot lie, because he himself is truth; nor act unjustly, because he is just. Such as God is by nature, such is he in the acts of his will.

3. The argument, from the *immutable difference* of things in themselves is of very considerable weight; for that which

is sin, because it destroys that subjection of the creature which is due to the Creator, cannot, even by the omnipotence of God, be made to be not sin. To hate the supreme good implies a contradiction. But if, from the nature of the thing, sin be sin, in relation to the supreme perfection of God, from the nature of the thing, too, is its punishment. Yea, God hath ordered children to obey their parents, because this is right.[126]

4. The adversaries acknowledge "That God cannot save the impenitent and obstinately wicked without injury to the glory, and holiness, and perfection of his nature." Why so? "The justice of God," say they, "will not suffer it." But what kind of justice is that, I ask, which can regard certain modes and relations of transgression or sin, and will not regard the transgression or sin itself?

5. God punishes sin either because he simply wills it, or because it is just that sin should be punished. If because he simply wills it, then the will of God is the alone cause of the perdition of a sinful creature. But he himself testifies to the contrary, — namely, that man's ruin is of himself: "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thine help."[127] Again; justice does not require that the things which God doeth of his mere good pleasure should come to pass, more than that they should not come to pass. But if it be not more just that sins should be punished than that they should not be punished, it is certain that the non-punishment or free pardon of sin is more agreeable to the goodness, grace, love, and compassion of God than the infliction of punishment; how, then, comes it to pass that, disregarding these attributes, he should freely will that which no essential property of his nature requires? If, then, sin be sin because God wills it, if the transgression of the law deserve punishment because God wills it, and the punishment be at length inflicted because God wills it, the order of things, or the condition which they are in by virtue of their respect and relation to the dominion and perfection of God, requiring no such thing, why, pray, should we either hate or abhor sin,

when the bare will of God alone is to be considered, both in respect of the decree, which supposes that there is nothing in sin, and which implies no change of the state of things, and also in respect of its execution? But if God punish sin because, by virtue of his natural justice, it is just that it should be punished, then it is unjust not to punish it. But is God unjust? God forbid!

I am truly ashamed of those divines who have nothing more commonly in their mouths, both in their disputations and discourses to the people, than "that God might by other means have provided for the safety and honour of his justice, but that that way by the blood of his Son was more proper and becoming." So said Augustine of old. But what then? Of that absolute power which they dream of, by which he might, without any intervening sacrifice, forgive sins, not the least syllable is mentioned in the whole sacred writings; nor am I afraid to affirm that a more convenient device to weaken our faith, love, and gratitude, cannot be invented. Away, then, with such speculations, which teach that the mystery of the love of God the Father, of the blood of Jesus Christ, of the grace of the Holy Spirit, are either indifferent, or at least were not necessary, for procuring and bestowing salvation and eternal glory on miserable sinners. But it is manifest that by such artifices Socinians endeavour to overthrow the whole healing and heavenly doctrine of the gospel. "My soul, come not thou into their secret!" But that God should institute so many typical expiatory sacrifices, and attended with so great labour and cost, with a sanction of severe punishments upon delinquents, with this view only, to communicate instruction, and to serve to lead us to Christ, though they could in no wise take away the guilt of sin;[128] that he should appoint his own Son, not only to death, but to a bloody, ignominious, accursed death, to be inflicted with such shame and disgrace as hath not been purged away through so many generations that have passed since that death, even to the present time; that Jehovah himself should have been pleased to bruise him, to put him

to grief; that he made his own sword to awake against him, and forsook him;[129] — that God, I say, should have done these and such like things, without being induced to it by any *necessary cause*, let those who can, comprehend and explain.

[111] Our author here speaks in the language, and reasons in the manner, of logicians; the prevalent mode of reasoning at the time when he wrote. For the sake of those unacquainted with that art, it may not be improper to observe that the above argument is what they call a syllogism, and that a syllogism consists of three propositions. The first is called the major, the second the minor, and the third the conclusion. In the above argument the major proposition is, "It is absolutely necessary that God should preserve his glory entire to all eternity." The minor is, "But sin being supposed, without any punishment due to it he cannot preserve his glory free from violation." The conclusion is, "Therefore, it is necessary that he should punish it." The minor is sometimes called the assumption, and sometimes the conclusion is so named. They are both included under this title by our author in the following sentence. — Tr.

[112] Isa. xlii. 8.

[113] Prov. xvii. 15.

[114] Gen. xviii. 25.

[115] 2 Thess. i. 6; Rom. i. 32.

[116] Rom. iii. 5, 6; Rev. xvi. 5–7.

[117] Hab. i. 13.

[118] Josh. xxiv. 19.

[119] Ps. v. 4–6; Rev. xxi. 27.

[120] Eph. v. 26, 27.

[121] Heb. ix. 22.

[122] The misprint of *quia* for *quin* has occasioned some confusion in the translation. It should run thus: "I cannot see but that Christ has died in vain, on the supposition that God could pardon sins without the intervention of a ransom, consistently with the preservation of his right and glory entire, justice not demanding their punishment." — Ed.

[123] Or ransom. — Tr.

[124] Job viii. 8; Ps. cxix. 137.

[125] That is, which showeth what the divine will is. — Tr.

[126] In the original, “just.” — Tr.

[127] Hos. xiii. 9.

[128] Heb. x. 1. There the apostle argues for the necessity of the satisfaction of Christ, which he could not if the guilt of sin could have been taken away by any other way whatever. — Tr.

[129] Isa. liii. 10.

Part II.

Chapter VIII.

Objections of the adversaries answered — The Racovian catechism particularly considered — The force of the argument for the satisfaction of Christ from punitory justice — The catechists deny that justice to be inherent in God; and also sparing mercy — Their first argument weighed and refuted — Justice and mercy are not opposite — Two kinds of the divine attributes — Their second and third arguments, with the answers annexed.

It is now time to meet the objections of the adversaries, and so at length put an end to this dispute, as far as regards the subject-matter of it, already drawn out to such a length, and yet farther to be continued. We must first, then, encounter the Socinians themselves, on whose account we first engaged in this undertaking; and afterward we shall compare notes with a few learned friends. But as very lately the Racovian Catechism[130] of these heretics hath been repeatedly printed among us, we shall first consider what is to be met with there in opposition to the truth which we assert.

The Socinians grant, in that catechism of theirs, the argument for the satisfaction of Christ, drawn from the nature of this punitory justice, to be “plausible in appearance;” yea, they must necessarily acknowledge it to be such as that they cannot, even in appearance, oppose it, without being guilty of the dreadful sacrilege of robbing God of his essential attributes, and, therefore, they deny either this justice or sparing mercy to be naturally inherent in God. And they endeavour to defend the robbery by a threefold argument. Their first is this:— “As to mercy, that it is not inherent in God, in the manner that they think,[131] is evident from this consideration, that if it were naturally inherent in God, God would not wholly punish any sin; as, in like manner, if that justice were naturally inherent in God, as they think, God could forgive no sin: for God can never do

any thing against what is naturally inherent in him. As, for instance, as wisdom is naturally inherent in God, God never doeth any thing contrary to it, but whatsoever he doeth, he doeth all things wisely. But as it is manifest that God forgives and punishes sins when he will, it appears that such a kind of mercy and justice as they think of is not naturally inherent in God, but is the effect of his own will." I answer, first, that we have laid it down as a fixed principle that mercy is essential to God; and that the nature of it in God is the same with justice we willingly grant. Rutherford alone[132] hath asserted that mercy is essential to God, but that this justice is a free act of the divine will. The falsity and folly of his assertion let himself be answerable for; the thing speaks for itself. To speak the truth, justice is attributed to God *properly* and by way of habit, mercy only *analogically* and by way of affection; and in the first covenant God paved no way for the display of his mercy, but proceeded in that which led straight to the glory of his justice: nevertheless, we maintain the one to be no less naturally inherent in God than the other. "But if it were naturally inherent in God," say the catechists, "God would not punish any sin." Why? I say; mention some plea. "Because," say they, "God cannot do any thing contrary to what is naturally inherent in him; but it is manifest that God punishes sin." But whose sins doth God punish? The sins of the impenitent, the unbelieving, the rebellious, for whose offences the justice of God hath never been satisfied. But is not this contrary to mercy? Let every just judge, then, be called cruel. The punishment of sin, then, is contrary to mercy, either in respect of the infliction of the punishment itself, or because it supposes in God a quality opposite to mercy. The contrariety is not in respect of the infliction of punishment, for between an external act of divine power and eternal attributes of Deity, no opposition can be supposed; — nor can it be because punishment supposes some quality in God opposite to mercy, for that which is opposite to mercy is cruelty; but God is free from every

suspicion of cruelty, yet he punishes the sins of the impenitent, as the Socinians themselves acknowledge.

But, “That punitory justice,” say they, “which you assign as the source of punishment, is opposite to mercy.” How, I say, can that be? Punitory justice, essentially considered, is the very perfection and rectitude of God itself, essentially considered; and the essence of mercy, so to speak, is the same. But the essence of God, which is most simple, is not opposed to itself. Moreover, both have their actual egresses by means of the acts of the divine will, which is always one alone and self-consistent. Objectively considered, I acknowledge they have different but not contrary effects; for to punish the impenitent guilty, for whom no satisfaction hath been made, is not contrary to the pardoning of those who believe and are penitent, through the blood of the Mediator, which was shed for the remission of sins. In one word, it is not necessary that, though actions be contrary, the essential principles should also be contrary.

But they again urge, “Wisdom is naturally inherent in God, and he never doeth any thing contrary to it; for whatsoever he doeth, he doeth all things wisely.” We answer, It hath been proved before that the punishment of sin is not contrary to mercy. But they urge something farther, and insinuate that God not only cannot act contrary to his wisdom, but that in every work he exerciseth it: “Whatsoever he doeth,” say they, “he doeth wisely.” But the nature of all the divine attributes, in respect of their exercise, is not the same: for some create and constitute an object to themselves, as power and wisdom, which God must necessarily exercise in all his works; some require an object constituted for their egress, and for these it is sufficient that no work be done that is opposite or derogatory to their honour; of this kind are mercy and justice, as was said before.

Thus far concerning mercy.

The objections that they bring against justice are easily answered. “If justice be naturally inherent in God,” say they, “then he could let no sin pass unpunished.” We readily grant that God passes by no sin unpunished, nor can do it. He forgives our sins, but he doth not absolutely let them pass unpunished. Every sin hath its just recompense of reward, either in the sinner or the surety; but to pardon sin for which justice hath been satisfied is no wise contrary to justice. That the nature of justice and mercy, in respect of their relation to their object, is different, hath been shown before. Such is their first argument; the second follows, which is this:—

“That justice which the adversaries oppose to mercy,” say they, “whereby God punisheth sins, the sacred Scriptures nowhere point out by the name of ‘justice,’ but call it the ‘anger and fury of God.’ ”

We answer, in the first place, that it is a very gross mistake that we oppose justice to mercy. These catechists have need themselves to be catechised. In the second place, let those who shall please to consult the passages formerly mentioned and explained on this head, determine whether the sacred Scriptures call this justice[133] by its own proper name or not? In the third place, anger and fury are, in reality, as to their effects, reducible to justice; hence that which is called “wrath,” or “anger,” in Rom. i. 18, in the 32d verse is called “judgment.”[134] Such is their second; and now follows the third argument:—

“When God forgives sins, it is attributed in Scripture to his justice. ‘If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.’ ‘Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.’ ”[135] We answer,

that we have already shown at great length that justice, universally taken, is the perfection and rectitude of God, and has various egresses, both in words and in deeds, according to the constitution of the objects about which it may be employed; hence effects distinct, and in some measure different, are attributed to the same divine virtue. But the justice on account of which God is said to forgive sins is the justice of faithfulness, which has the foundation of its exercise in this punitory justice: which being satisfied, God, who cannot lie, promises the forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ; which promise, beyond all doubt, he will perform, because he is faithful and just.[136] And thus vanishes in smoke all that these unhappy catechists have scraped together against this divine truth.

[130] The Racovian Catechism is generally said to have been compiled by Smalcius, from the writings which Faustus Socinus left behind him at his death. Other authorities, who seem to have investigated this point with particular care, hold that a catechism under this name was in existence before Socinus repaired to Poland. The catechism of Smalcius is now, however, commonly regarded as the Racovian Catechism. An English translation of it was published by Biddle in 1652. It is fully reviewed and discussed in Owen's "Vindiciæ Evangelicæ," vol. xii. of his works. — Ed.

[131] Let the reader remember that the compilers of the Racovian Catechism are now speaking, and that the words "they think" allude to the sentiments of the orthodox. — Tr.

[132] De Provid., cap. xxii. assert. 6, p. 345.

[133] This point is treated at great length, and clearly proved, in the third chapter. — Tr.

[134] The original word means a just sentence, or righteous judgment. — Tr.

[135] John i. 9; Rom. iii. 24–26.

[136] The argument from 1 John i. 9, which would resolve justice simply into a modification of benevolent feeling, and confound it with a disposition to forgive, is sufficiently met by the considerations urged by our author. The reply to the inference founded on the words "just," and "the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus," Rom. iii. 26, is not so clear. The question turns upon the import of δίκαιος. Two passages are quoted by Socinians in proof that it may denote *clemency* or *mercy*; and if in this sense exclusively the term were applicable to the Divine Being, no argument for the necessity of a proper atonement could be founded on the texts that speak of the justice of God. The passages urged by the Socinians with this view are Matt. i. 19 and Rom. iii. 26. Δίκαιος, however, in its primary meaning, signifies, "observant of rule and custom," "having a respect to order and decency;" as when Cheiron, in contrast with his ruder brethren (Il. xi. 832), is described as δικαιότατος κενταύρων. In this sense, the term admirably befits the state of mind in which Joseph must have been when he discovered the condition of Mary, and before the truth was supernaturally explained to him. In its secondary meaning, δίκαιος signifies *equal*, *just*, *fair*, every shade of meaning it bears coming under the category of *right* or *equity*; and in no instance of which we are aware can it be rendered as expressive of *clemency* or *mercy*. In the two passages to which an appeal is made, the adversative force of καὶ is overlooked, "just, *and yet* not willing," "just, *and yet* the justifier." That καὶ frequently conveys this antithetic meaning might be proved from several passages, such as John vii. 19, Mark xii. 12, etc. See Winer's "Idioms of the Greek Language," part iii. chap. v. s. 57. — Ed.

Chapter IX.

Crellius taken to task — His first mistake — God doth not punish sins as being endowed with supreme dominion — The first argument of Crellius — The answer — The translation of punishment upon Christ, in what view made by God — Whether the remission of sins, without a satisfaction made, could take place without injury to any one — To whom punishment belongs — Whether every one can resign his right — Right twofold — The right of debt, what; and what that of government — A natural and positive right — Positive right, what — A description also of natural right — Concessions of Crellius.

John Crellius treats this subject at great length, and with his usual artifice and acuteness, in his first book "Of the True Religion," prefixed to the works of Volkelius on the same subject.[137]

First, then, he asserts, "That God hath a power of inflicting and of not inflicting punishment, but that it is by no means repugnant to divine justice to pardon the sinner whom by his right he might punish."

But here Crellius (which is a bad omen, as they say) stumbles in the very threshold, supposing punishment to be competent to God as he hath, or is endowed with, an absolute and supreme dominion over the creatures. God never punisheth, or is said to punish, as using that power. It is the part of a governor or judge to inflict punishment; and the Scriptures furnish sufficient evidence that both these relations belong to him in the infliction of punishment: "There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy." "He maintaineth right, and sitteth in his throne judging right." He is "judge of all the earth." He is the supreme "judge." "He hath prepared his throne for judgment; and he shall judge the world in righteousness, he shall minister judgment to the people in righteousness." He is "judge of the earth," who will "render a reward to the proud." He is "Jehovah, our judge, our lawgiver, and our king;" and "God

the judge of all."[138] In all the acts of his absolute dominion and supreme power God is most free; and this the apostle openly asserts with regard to his decrees making distinctions among mankind in respect of their last end, and the means thereto conducing, according to his mere good pleasure: see Rom. ix. Moreover, in some operations and dispensations of providence concerning mankind, both the godly and ungodly, I acknowledge that God frequently asserts the equity and rectitude of his government from that supreme right which he possesseth and may exercise. "Behold, God is greater than man. Why dost thou strive against him? for he giveth not account of any of his matters. Yea, surely God will not do wickedly, neither will the Almighty pervert judgment. Who hath given him a charge over the earth? or who hath disposed the whole world? If he set his heart upon man, if he gather unto himself his spirit and his breath; all flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust."[139]

But that God punishes omissions and avenges transgressions, as the supreme Lord[140] of all, and not as the Ruler of the universe and Judge of the world, is an opinion supported by no probable reason and by no testimony of Scripture. But let us hear what Crellius himself has to say. He thus proceeds:—

"He injures none, whether he punish or do not punish, if so be that the question is only respecting his right: for the punishment is not owing to the offending person, but he owes it, and he owes it to him upon whom the whole injury will ultimately redound; who in this matter is God. But if you consider the matter in itself, every one has it in his power to prosecute his right, and likewise not to prosecute it, or to yield up of it as much as he pleases; for this is the nature of a proper and sovereign right."

Ans. It is easy to be seen that the former fallacy diffuses its fibres through the whole of this reasoning; for the right, a dispensation with which he maintains to be lawful, he affirms to be a sovereign right, or the right of a lord and

master. But this right is not the subject in question. It is a ruler and judge to whom punishment belongs, and who repays it. I would not, indeed, deny that God's supreme and sovereign right has a place in the matter of the satisfaction made by Christ in our stead: for although to inflict punishment be the office of a ruler and judge (that both these relations, namely, of a ruler and judge, are to be assigned to God, the Scriptures amply testify, — see chap. iii.), yet the very translation of guilt from us upon Christ, constituting him sin for us, is a most free act, and an act of supreme power; unless, perhaps, the acceptance of the promise made by the surety belong of right to him as ruler, and there be no other act to be assigned to God.

But let us consider these arguments of Crellius severally. "He injures no one," says he, "whether he punish or not." But an omission of the infliction of punishment, where it is due, cannot take place without injury to that justice on which it is incumbent to inflict the punishment.[141] For "he that justifieth the wicked is abomination to the Lord;" and a heavy woe is pronounced equally on them that "call evil good, and good evil."[142] It is true that God neither injures nor can injure any one, either in what he hath done or might do; for "who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed to him again?" Nor is it less true that he will not, yea, that he cannot, do injury to his own justice, which requireth the punishment of every sin. An earthly judge may oftentimes spare a guilty person without injury to another, but not without injustice in himself. Yea, Crellius asserts that God cannot forgive the sins of some sinners, namely, the contumacious, without injury to himself; for this, as he says, would be unworthy of God. But we are sure that every sin, without exception, setting aside the consideration of the redemption by Christ, would be attended with contumacy forever. Were it not for that consideration, then, it would be unworthy of God to pardon the sins of any sinner.

Crellius adds: "Punishment is not owing to the sinner, but he owes it, and owes it to him on whom all the injury will

ultimately redound; who is God." But because punishment is not owing to the sinner, but he owes it to the ruler, it doth not follow that the ruler may not inflict that punishment. Punishment, indeed, is not so owing to the sinner that an injury would be done him were it not inflicted. The debt of a sinner is not of such a kind that he can ask or enforce the payment of it; and a debt, properly speaking, implies such a condition.[143] But the sinner hath merited punishment in such a manner that it is just he should suffer it. But, again, the infliction of punishment belongs not to God as injured, as Crellius signifies, but as he is the ruler of all and the judge of sinners, to whom it belongs to preserve the *good of the whole*, and the dependence of his creatures on himself.

He thus proceeds: "But if you consider the thing in itself, every one has it in his power to prosecute his right, and likewise not to prosecute it, or to yield up of it as much as he pleases."

Ans. As Socinus himself, in his third book "Of the Saviour," chap. ii., hath afforded an opportunity to all our theologians who have opposed Socinianism of discussing this foolish axiom, "That every one may recede from his right," we shall answer but in few words to these positions of Crellius, and to the conclusions which he there draws as flowing from them.

There is, then, a double right; — in the first place, that of a *debt*; in the second place, that of *government*. What is purely a debt may be forgiven; for that only takes place in those things which are of an indifferent right, the prosecution of which neither nature nor justice obliges. There is also a debt, though perhaps improperly so called, the right of which it is unlawful to renounce; but our sins, in respect of God, are not debts only nor properly, but metaphorically[144] so called.

The right of government, moreover, is either *natural* or *positive*. The *positive* right of government, so to speak, is that which magistrates have over their subjects; and he who

affirms that they can recede wholly from this right must be either a madman or a fool. But this right, as far as pertains to its exercise in respect of the infliction of punishment, either tends to the good of the whole republic, as in *ordinary* cases, or, as in some *extraordinary* cases, gives place to its hurt; for it is possible that even the exaction of punishment, in a certain condition of a state, may be hurtful. In such a situation of things, the ruler or magistrate has a power not to use his right of government in respect of particular crimes, or rather, he ought to use it in such a manner as is the most likely to attain the end; for he is bound to regard principally the good of the whole, and the safety of the people ought to be his supreme law. But he who affirms that, in ordinary cases, a magistrate may renounce his right, when that renunciation cannot but turn out to the hurt of the public good, is a stranger to all right. The same person may also affirm that parents may renounce their right over their children, so as not to take any care at all about them; and that they might do so lawfully, — that is, consistently with honour and decency. Yea, this is not a cessation from the *prosecution of right*, but from the *performance of a duty*; for the right of government supposes a duty: "For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: for he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil."[145] The question is not what magistrates do, but what, as the guardians and protectors of the law, they ought to do. See Ps. ci. 8.

There is also a *natural right* of government; such is the divine right over the creatures. The right, I say, of God over rational creatures is natural to him; therefore immutable, indispensable, and which cannot by any means be derogated. Thence, too, the debt of our obedience is natural and indispensable; nor is there any other kind of obligation

to punishment. God, from the very nature of the thing, has dominion over us; and our subjection to him is either by obedience or a vicarious punishment, which comes in place of any omission or transgression on our part, as Crellius himself acknowledges. Those, then, who say that it is free to God to use this right or not, as he pleaseth, may as well say that it is free to God to be our God and Lord or not; for the demand of obedience and the exaction of punishment equally belong to God. But the Judge of the universe exercises his right; and his perpetual right, whence sinners are accounted worthy of death, he cannot but preserve unimpaired and entire.

The remaining objections, which are interspersed here and there in that book of his "Concerning God," against the vindicatory justice of God, either fall in with those which have been mentioned from the Racovian Catechism, or shall be reduced to the order of those which follow.

We think proper, by way of conclusion, to annex some concessions of Crellius. "There is," says he, "a certain regard to honour, with which God himself cannot dispense."[146] Every transgression, then, of that regard hath a punishment coeval with itself, which, from the justice of God, must necessarily be inflicted. "Yea," says he, "neither the holiness nor majesty of God permits that his commands should, in any respect be violated with impunity."[147] But the holiness of God is natural to him; an essential, then, and necessary attribute of God requires the punishment of sinners. But he himself farther adds, "It is unworthy of God to let the wickedness of obstinate sinners pass unpunished; for this is the first and perpetual effect of divine severity, not to pardon those who do not repent."[148] But we know for certain that all sinners would continue obstinate to all eternity, unless God be pleased, for Christ's sake, to renew them by his omnipotent grace to repentance. Crellius, then, grants that it is unworthy of God to let the sins of those pass unpunished for whom Christ hath not made satisfaction. He again testifies, also, that God hates and abhors all sin;[149]

and grants that the mode of conducting the punishment of sin is derived from the divine justice.[150] But the thing itself is from that same Being from whom the mode or manner of it is derived. If the mode of punishment be from divine justice, the punishment itself can flow from no other source.

[137] Chap. xxiii., title, “Of the Power of God,” p. 181, etc.

[138] James iv. 12; Ps. ix. 4; Gen. xviii. 25; Ps. l. 6, ix. 7, 8, xciv. 2; Isa. xxxiii. 22, Heb. xii. 23, etc.

[139] Job xxxiii. 12, 13, xxxiv. 12–15.

[140] As supreme Lord of the universe he exerciseth an uncontrolled dominion, doing “in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth,” whatsoever seemeth good unto him; but as the Ruler and Judge of the world he distributeth impartial justice, “giving to every one according to his works.” The force of this argument, then, is this, — That in viewing God as punishing sin, we are not to consider him as supreme Lord, who may exercise an absolute and uncontrolled will, but as a righteous Judge, bound by a law to administer justice, and by a law founded in his nature, necessarily requiring him so to do. — Tr.

[141] The translation of the last clause is ambiguous. The words in the original are, “Justitiæ illius, cui pœnas irrogare incumbit,” — “That justice on which rests the obligation, which is bound, to inflict the punishment.” — Ed.

[142] Prov. xvii. 15; Isa. v. 20.

[143] The debt of a sinner is not any valuable consideration due to him, as a debt is to a creditor, but due by him as a debt is by a debtor; and in consequence of the failure of payment, punishment becomes due to him, — i.e., is or may be inflicted in vindication of violated justice. But this is what he could not either claim or would wish to receive. — Tr.

[144] Sin is most accurately defined by our Westminster divines, in that inimitable compendium of sound doctrine, the Shorter Catechism, to be “any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God.” — Tr.

[145] Rom. xiii. 3, 4.

[146] Book i. chap. xxiii., p. 180, “Of the True Religion.”

[147] Chap. xxviii.

[148] Chap. xxii. 186, and chap. xxviii.

[149] Chap. xxx. 3, 9.

[150] Chapt. i. p. 78, of his Answer to Grotius.

Chapter X.

The opinion of Socinus considered — What he thought of our present question,[151] namely, that it is the hinge on which the whole controversy concerning the satisfaction of Christ turns — His vain boasting, as if, having disproved this vindicatory justice, he had snatched the prize from his adversaries — Other clear proofs of the satisfaction of Christ — That it is our duty to acquiesce in the revealed will of God — The truth not to be forsaken — Mercy and justice not opposite — Vain distinctions of Socinus concerning divine justice — The consideration of these distinctions — His first argument against vindicatory justice — The solution of it — The anger and severity of God, what — Universal and particular justice, in what they agree — The false reasoning and vain boasting of the adversary.

We come now to Socinus himself. In almost all his writings he opposes this *punitory justice*. We shall consider what he hath written against Covetus, in that treatise of his entitled, “Of Jesus Christ the Saviour,” and what he only repeats in other places, as occasion required. In the first book and first chapter, and also in the third book and first chapter, of that work, expressly, and of set purpose, he opposes himself vehemently and with all his might to the truth on this point. But because he very well understood that by the establishment of this justice a knife is put to the throat of his opinion, and that it cannot be defended (that is, that no reason can be given why Christ our Saviour is called Jesus Christ), he maintains that the whole controversy concerning the satisfaction of Christ hinges on this very question. The reader will perceive, from the arguments already used, that I am of the same opinion: for it being granted that this justice belongs to God, not even Socinus, though doubtless a man of a great, very artful, and fertile genius, could devise any way of obtaining salvation for sinners without a satisfaction; for had he either found out one, or even feigned it upon a supposition, he would not

have wanted the effrontery of imposing it on the minds of the credulous and fanatic; which, however, he nowhere hath attempted.

But, on the other hand, gallantly supposing that he had removed this justice out of the way, as if the business were entirely settled, and the strong tower of his adversaries destroyed, he highly glories in the triumphs acquired for himself and his followers; “for,” says he, “having got rid of this justice, had we no other argument, that human fiction of the satisfaction of Jesus Christ must be thoroughly detected, and totally vanish.” This vain boasting of his the learned and pious have long ago sufficiently checked by innumerable testimonies from Scripture.

And forasmuch as the fact is abundantly clear that Christ bore our sins, God laying them upon him, and that by his satisfaction he purchased eternal salvation, though it had even pleased God to keep the causes and reasons of this infinitely wise transaction hid to all eternity in the abyss of his own goodness and wisdom, it would have been our duty to acquiesce in the infinite holiness and wisdom of his will. So, also, it is beyond any doubt that no helps of our faith are to be despised, and that no revelations of the divine nature and will are to be neglected, by which our merciful Father leads us into a more intimate and saving knowledge of this mystery of holiness.

We, also, to whom the most sacred deposit of this divine truth hath been committed, would immediately judge ourselves unworthy of it should we spontaneously betray any one point or jot of it, much less so strong a pillar of our faith and hope, to its adversaries. Though, then, we have other unanswerable proofs of the satisfaction of Christ, which the gates of hell shall in vain oppose, and numberless testimonies of the God who cannot lie, so that we may suppose Socinus is only idly insulting those who grant that God might forgive sin without any intervention of a satisfaction, but that he would not, (an expression which I by no means approve), we however think it necessary that

this bulwark of punitory justice, a point, beyond all doubt, of the last importance to the cause, however it shall be disposed of, should be defended from the insults of adversaries.

In the first place, then, in the first chapter of the before-mentioned book, when going to dispute against this justice, he supposes that, according to our opinion, it is opposed to mercy, and that it is contrary to it, and builds upon this false supposition through the whole of his treatise, both in making his objections and answers. I acknowledge that he seized the opportunity of making this blunder from Covetus, against whom he is combating, who improperly and inaccurately hath said that this justice is opposed to mercy, because they have different effects; but we have formerly shown that they are neither *essentially*, nor *actually*, nor *effectively* opposite, as both of them are the very perfection of Deity itself, but that they are only distinguished as to their object, and not as to their subject. In all the sophisms, then, in which he afterward endeavours to prove that the Scripture acknowledges no such justice in God as is opposed to mercy, he trifles, through a perpetual mistake of the argument. But that justice which we mean, he says, is twofold in God. “The first,” as he says, “is that by which he punishes and destroys the wicked and ungodly, — that is, those who obstinately persevere in wickedness, and who are not led, from a repentance of their sins, to have recourse to God. The second is that by which even those whom, in his great goodness, he approves as just, were he so to will it, could not stand in his presence.”

But he again affirms, in the same chapter, “That the justice of God is twofold: that one kind he always uses when he punishes abandonedly wicked and obstinate sinners, sometimes, according to his law; the other kind, when he punishes sinners neither obstinate nor altogether desperate, but whose repentance is not expected.” And of both these kinds of justice he brings some proofs from Scripture.

That punitory justice is one alone and individual, we affirm; but that it is variously exercised, on account of the difference of the objects about which it is employed, we acknowledge; — but this by no means proves it to be twofold; for he ought not, among men, to be said to be endowed with a twofold justice who renders different recompenses to those who merit differently. But his whole treatise, from beginning to end, is disgracefully built on a mistaken and falsely-assumed principle; for he supposes that "every sin shall not receive its just recompense of reward" from divine justice, but that God punishes some sins, and can punish others only if he please. From an exceeding desire to exclude all consideration of the satisfaction of Christ entirely in the matter of inflicting punishment for sins, he against this stone: for God most certainly will finally punish the impenitent to all eternity, because he is just, and because there is no sacrifice for their sins; nor is it less true that God casts out and destroys many who are strangers to the covenant of grace, not waiting for their repentance, but that he effectually leads others to repentance; — not because he exerciseth a twofold justice, but because his justice hath been satisfied for the sins of the latter by Christ, whereas it is not so with regard to the former. See Rom. iii. 24, 25. But because he would not acknowledge the foundation for that distinction, which may be seen in the acts or exercises of the divine justice concerning sinners, to be laid in the blood of Christ, he hath feigned a twofold justice, and a twofold mercy opposed to it, of which there is not the most distant mention made in the sacred Scriptures, and which ought not by any means to be ascribed to the divine nature, which is in itself most simple.

But coming to himself again, he denies that in the sacred writings there is any mention at all made of any kind of justice that is opposed to mercy. We, indeed, have never said that justice is opposed to mercy; but as it clearly appears that it is his wish to deny to God the whole of that kind of justice whence, in punishing sins, he is said, or may

be said, to be just (which punishment is an effect different from the pardon of sin that flows from mercy), we choose not to contend about words. Let us see, then, what kind of arguments he produces to support his robbing God of this essential attribute. He says, "that the word 'justice,' when applied to God in the sacred writings, is never opposed to 'mercy,' but chiefly, and for the most part, means rectitude and equity."

It hath been already several times shown that justice and mercy are not opposite. We have likewise demonstrated, by many proofs adduced before, that the rectitude or supreme perfection of the divine nature is often called "justice" in Scripture; but this, I am sure, is by no means of advantage, but of much hurt, to the cause of Socinianism. Let him proceed, then.

"But that," says he, "which is opposed to 'mercy' is not named 'justice' by the sacred writers, but is called 'severity,' or 'anger,' or 'fury,' or 'vengeance,' or by some such name."

But our opponent avails himself nothing by this assertion; for that which is false proves nothing. By that which, he says, is opposed to mercy, he understands that virtue in God by which he punishes sins and sinners according as they deserve. But that this is never called "justice" in Scripture, or that God is not thence said to be "just," is so manifestly false that nobody would dare to affirm it but one determined to say any thing in support of a bad cause. Let the reader but consult the passages adduced on this head in the third chapter, and he will be astonished at the impudence of the man. But all are agreed that anger, fury, and words denoting such troubled affections, ought not properly to be ascribed to God, but only in respect of their effects, — though analogically and reductively[152] they belong to corrective justice, — because, in exercising his judgments, God is said to use them, but they do not denote any perfection inherent in God any farther than they can be reduced to justice, but only a certain mode of certain divine actions; for God doth not punish sins because he is angry,

but because he is just, although in the punishment of them, according to our conception of things, he discovers anger.

He next proceeds to produce some passages, in order to prove that the justice of God in the sacred writings, — namely, that universal justice which we have before described, — is often used for the infinite rectitude of the divine nature (what nobody ever denied), where, in mentioning the justice of faithfulness and remunerative justice, agreeably to his faithfulness, which always hath respect to the covenant of grace ratified and established in the blood of Christ, God is said to pardon sins, and to reward those that believe, according to his justice; and thence he concludes, “that a justice opposed to mercy, by which God must punish sin, is not inherent in God.” “For what,” says he, “is more agreeable to the divine nature, and consequently more equitable and just, than to do good to the wretched and despised race of mankind, though unworthy, and freely to make them partakers of his glory?”

This surely is trifling in a serious matter, if any thing can be so called; for even novices will not bear one to argue from a position of universal justice to a negation of particular justice; much less shall we readily assent to him, who maintain that that particular justice is by no means distinguished from the universal rectitude of the divine nature, but that that rectitude is so called in respect of the egresses that it has, in consequence of the supposition of sin. But it is consonant with sound doctrine, “that that which is agreeable to the divine nature should be considered also as righteous and just;” and this Socinus acknowledges. We agree that it is agreeable to the divine nature to do good to sinners, but at the same time we dare not deny that the right of God is, that those who transgress are worthy of death; both which properties of his nature he hath very clearly demonstrated in the satisfaction of Christ, “whom he hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins;” whom, while the heretic rejecteth, he walketh in darkness, a

stranger to the true and saving knowledge of God, and engaged wholly in his own vain imaginations.

But Socinus, as if having achieved some great exploit, at length thus concludes: “That punitory justice is not a virtue inherent in God, or a divine quality or property, but the effect of his will; and that that justice by which God always punishes impenitent sinners is so called, not properly, but by accident, namely, because it is agreeable to true justice or rectitude.” We have already considered the arguments that he has produced in support of this opinion; whether they be of such weight that they should induce us to deny this justice, and whether to punish sinners be essential and proper to God or only accidental, let the reader, from what hath been said on the subject, determine. So much for our first skirmish with Socinus.

[151]Namely, Whether vindicatory justice be essential and natural to God, and the exercise of it, or the punishment of sin, consequently necessary? — Tr.

[152] That is, by consequence. — Tr.

Chapter XI.

The arguments of Socinus against punitory justice weighed — A false hypothesis of his — Sins, in what sense they are debts — The first argument of Socinus, in which he takes for granted what ought to have been proved — A trifling supposition substituted for a proof — Whether that excellence by virtue of which God punishes sins be called justice in the Scriptures — The severity of God, what — Our opponent's second argument — It labours under the same deficiency as the first — It is not opposite to mercy to punish the guilty — The mercy of God, what — There is a distinction between acts and habits — Our opponent confounds them — The mercy of God infinite, so also his justice — A distinction of the divine attributes — In pardoning sins through Jesus Christ, God hath exercised infinite justice and infinite mercy — The conclusion of the contest with Socinus.

In the third part and first chapter of his treatise, being determined to contend to his utmost against the satisfaction of Christ, he maintains "That God, consistently with his right, could pardon our sins without any real satisfaction received for them;" and he endeavours to support the assertion chiefly by the following argument, — namely, "That God is our creditor, that our sins are debts which we have contracted with him, but that every one may yield up his right, and more especially God, who is the supreme Lord of all, and extolled in the Scriptures for his liberality and goodness." Hence, then, it is evident that God can pardon sins without any satisfaction received; and that he is inclined to do so, he uses his best endeavours afterward to prove.

But because he foresaw that his first supposition, the foundation of his whole future reasoning, was too much exposed and obnoxious to the divine justice, he labours hard in the first chapter to remove that out of the way entirely. Let us attend, then, to his reasoning, and follow him step by

step: for if he have not insuperably, and beyond all confutation, proved that God can forgive sins without a satisfaction, what he afterward argues concerning the will, liberality, and mercy of God will become of no weight or consideration; yea, the foundation being destroyed, the whole edifice or Babylonish tower must instantly tumble to the ground. He thus proceeds:—

"But you will say, 'It is necessary that God should take care to satisfy his justice, which he cannot even himself renounce, unless he in a manner deny himself.' "

Ans. You are right, Socinus. We do affirm, agreeably to the holy Scriptures, that the justice of God is in such a manner natural to him, that if it be necessary that he should preserve the glory of his essential attributes undiminished, he cannot but indispensably exact the punishment of every sin and transgression of his law, and render a just recompense of reward to all sinners, or to their surety; and, therefore, we contend that without a satisfaction made no one could obtain the remission of sins and eternal salvation. Let us see, Socinus, what you have to oppose to this.

"All along, from the beginning of this answer," says he, "I have sufficiently shown that that justice which you contend ought at all events to be satisfied is not inherent in God, but is the effect of his own will; for when God punishes sinners, that we may call this work of his by some worthy name, we say that he then exerciseth justice: wherefore, there is no need that God should either provide for the satisfaction of that justice or renounce it."

Ans. We have already considered what Socinus says in the beginning of his treatise against the justice of God. If I mistake not, we have shown that the heretic has lost his labour, and that it is far beyond his power to dethrone the Deity; for "he sitteth in the throne judging righteously."[153] But we, diminutive beings, have not first, or of our own accord, maintained that God is just, and that he exerciseth justice in the punishment of sinners, "that we might call his

work by some worthy name." But the Judge of all the earth himself, the God of truth, in almost innumerable places, gives this testimony of himself in the sacred records; and these ought always to be the only, as they are the infallible, guide of our judgments.

Distrusting, then, what he had formerly asserted (or it being manifestly of no weight), he attempts again by other sophisms to establish the reasoning which he had formerly begun. And he thus proceeds:—

"But besides the arguments which I have already used to prove that that justice is not inherent in God, it chiefly appears from this, that were it naturally resident in God, he could never pardon not even the least transgression to any one; for God never doth any thing, nor can do any thing, that is opposite to the qualities inherent in him. As, for instance, as wisdom and equity are naturally inherent in God, that justice never doth or can do any thing contrary to wisdom and equity, as we have seen above," etc.

The intelligent reader can easily perceive that Socinus proves nothing by this argument, but that he even absurdly adds heap upon heap to his own supposition; or that with a bold effrontery, he takes for granted the thing to be determined. It is indeed our opinion, that God cannot pass the smallest sin unpunished; and that he cannot, because he can do nothing that is opposite to the qualities inherent in him. But this our opponent brings forward as a great absurdity, that must bear against us in support of his own cause; but without even any appearance of a proof. But we have before demonstrated the state of the matter to be thus, — That God neither actually pardons any sin without a satisfaction made, nor can pardon it, without an infringement of his justice, by which he condemns sinners as worthy of death. So that as God never doth nor can do the things which are opposite to his equity and wisdom, so he neither doth nor can do those which are opposite to his justice. But to pardon the sins of believers on account of the satisfaction of Christ, "whom he hath set forth as a

propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness," is not opposite to his justice. But these seem absurdities to Socinus. And why should they not? for "we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness." But "the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness."[154]

Yea, in common equity, nothing could be mentioned more inequitable and unwise than this would be opposite to justice, — namely, not to pardon those sins for which that justice hath been amply satisfied. And must, then, this heretic, not only for nothing, substitute his own most absurd, yea, execrable opinion, namely, "That Jesus Christ hath not made satisfaction for our sins, nor borne their punishment," — that is, that he was not "made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him," — an opinion neither proved, nor that will ever be proved to all eternity; but also insinuate it as a proof of another error, which that alone, it is evident, first begot in his mind? Indeed, I cannot sufficiently wonder that some, by the sophisms of such disputants, are so easily "removed unto another gospel," forsaking "him that called them into the grace of Christ."

"But that justice," says Socinus, "which, as we have seen before, in the sacred writings is not called 'justice,' but 'severity' or 'vengeance,' or by some such name, so far as it is opposed to mercy is nothing else but to punish sins; but to punish sins and to pardon sins are entirely opposite to one another."

A fine painter's show-board, but void of truth.

Ans. What the adversary so often yelps out is totally without foundation, — namely, that that justice is never called by its proper name in the Scriptures. It is not only called by its own name, but is also called "purity" and "holiness," which are essential attributes of the Deity. It is called "severity," "vengeance," and "anger," but only

improperly and analogically, and in respect of the effects which it produceth. What he asserts, too, of this justice, namely, that it is nothing else but to punish sin, — very improperly confounding a habit, an act, and an effect, — is altogether without foundation, and most absurd. “The Lord is just, and his judgments are righteous. The Judge of all the earth doeth right.” And, in fine, it is false that this justice is opposed to mercy; for it is beyond any doubt that different operations and effects may, in different views, be ascribed to one and the same righteous principle. To punish sins and to pardon sins, unless spoken in the same point of view, are not opposed to one another. God, indeed, pardons to us those sins which he punished in our surety: which “foolishness of God is wiser than men.”

Our opponent thus proceeds:— “If that justice be inherent in God, — that is, if there be any property in God which is altogether inclined expressly to punish any sins of mankind whatsoever, whether penitent or impenitent, — he neither spares nor can spare any one; for as to what your teachers in the church have devised, that according to this justice he can punish sin, even though the sinner should not be punished, that is quite inconsistent with this and every other kind of justice.”

Our opponent again idly fancies that we are hard pressed by this conclusion. We grant, yea, we solemnly believe and declare, that because of his justice God can never spare any sinner, unless he expressly punish his sins in another. But he artfully and shrewdly endeavours to load our opinion with prejudice, insinuating “that God then could not even spare the penitent.” But we believe all repentance of sin to be founded in the satisfaction and blood of Christ; for “him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.”[155] God, then, both can spare the penitent, and, according to the promises of the gospel, most certainly will spare them, — those, namely, for whose sins satisfaction hath been made through the blood of Christ, “who gave

himself a ransom for them;" but that to punish sin, without the delinquents being punished, is neither contrary to this nor to any other kind of justice, absolutely considered, through divine help, shall be demonstrated in its proper place.

Hitherto our opponent hath discovered nothing but mere fancies, vain repetitions, absurd allegations, and a shameful ignorance of the argument. He thus proceeds: "But should you say, that by the same reasoning it may be proved that mercy is not inherent in God; for if it were, he could never inflict punishment on any, as mercy is nothing else but to pardon those who have offended; — I will answer, as I have slightly noticed before, that it is very true that mercy, so far as it is opposed to that justice, that is, to severity and vengeance, is not inherent in God, but is the effect of his will. When, then, the sacred Scriptures testify that God is merciful, they mean nothing more than that God very often and very easily pardoneth sin, if, at least, they speak of this mercy; for there is another kind of divine mercy, of which, according to the old translation, mention is frequently made in the sacred writings, which ought rather to be called goodness, and hath a more extensive signification, for it comprehends the whole divine beneficence, whether it be exercised in the pardon of sin or in communication of any other kind of benefit to mankind."

It hath been shown already that it is not proved by such reasoning as this that justice is not inherent in God; nor from the force of such an argument will it easily appear that the divine mercy suffers any degradation. What he supposes, in the first place, is altogether without foundation, namely, "That the divine mercy is nothing else than to forgive offenders;" whereas in this an external effect of that mercy only is shown, which is itself an essential property of the divine nature, for he pardoneth sins because he is merciful. The supposition, also, is groundless, "That if mercy were inherent in God he could never inflict punishment on any;" for to inflict punishment on the impenitent, and those

for whose sins the divine justice hath in no manner been satisfied, is not opposite to mercy. For mercy in God is not a sympathy or condolence with the miseries of others, with an inclination of assisting them, — a virtue which ofttimes borders near upon vice, — but is that supreme perfection of the divine nature whereby it is naturally disposed to assist the miserable, and which, the proper suppositions[156] being made, and the glory of his other perfections preserved, he willingly exerciseth, and is inclined to exercise. But this is not "opposed to the justice of God;" neither is it an "effect of his free will" (which expression, concerning the exercise of justice, our opponent foolishly wrests to the virtue itself), but a natural attribute of the Deity. What he adds concerning a twofold mercy of God are idle fancies: for the sparing mercy of which we are discoursing by no means differs from that benignity, grace, or goodness of God, of which he makes mention; for that very benignity, with respect to the special egresses which it hath towards miserable sinners, from the free-will of God, is that very mercy itself. That assertion of his, too, must also be noticed by the way, — namely, "That God very easily pardoneth sin;" which as it is a very precious truth if a regard be had to the oblation and satisfaction of his Son, so, simply spoken of him who hath threatened death to every transgression, and whose right it is that sinners should be worthy of death, all, whosoever shall be cited before his tribunal, aliens and strangers to Christ, will find to be without foundation, and an absolute falsehood.

"But it is evident," says he, "that neither the justice nor mercy of which we are treating is inherent in God, from what we read, namely, that he is 'The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness;'[157] which plainly shows that these two, — namely, his justice and mercy, — are the effects of his will, the one of which is surpassed in greatness by the other, and they cannot consist with one another, and they are limited; whereas those qualities which are truly inherent in God have no limit, and

are all consistent with one another, and, in respect of their greatness, are all absolutely equal."

Our opponent again very improperly applies a comparison made between external acts to the internal habits themselves. That anger and compassion, which are only attributed to God effectively, are free effects of the divine will, limited as to their object, and unequal, which cannot be exercised about the same person, in their highest degree, we acknowledge;[158]

But there is no reason that what is applicable to acts, or rather to effects, should also be applicable to the perfections whence these flow. But in that promulgation of the glory or name of God which we have in Exod. xxxiv. 6, he shows what and of what kind his disposition is towards those whom, namely, he hath purchased as his peculiar people through Jesus Christ, and what patience, long-suffering, and compassion, he is disposed to exercise towards them;[159] but in respect of all other sinners, he concludes that he "will by no means clear the guilty," or deliver them from the guilt of sin; which, indeed, strikes at the very root of Socinianism. But to conclude from this that the divine perfections are opposite one to another, unequal, or surpassing one another in greatness, is only the extreme folly of one ignorant of the righteousness or justice of God, and going about to establish a righteousness or justice of his own. He proceeds thus:—

"Hence it is manifest how grievously they err who affirm both this justice and mercy of God to be infinite; for as to justice, being deceived by the appearance of the word, they see not that they say no more than this, that the severity and anger of God are infinite, contrary to the most express testimonies of the sacred Scriptures, which, as we have just now said, declare God to be 'slow to anger.' That divine justice which hath no limit is not this of which we are discoursing, but that which alone, as we have seen before, is distinguished by this illustrious name in Scripture, and which, by another name, may be called rectitude and equity. This, indeed, is inherent in God, and is most conspicuous in

all his works; and by virtue of this alone, as we shall see hereafter, even if we had no other proof, that human fiction of the satisfaction of Christ would be thoroughly detected, and vanish."

Our opponent here serves up again nothing but his old dish, variously dressed, and repeatedly refused. We declare justice to be infinite, not deceived by the show of a word, but being so taught by the express testimonies of the sacred Scriptures, and by the most convincing and unanswerable arguments, — and we solemnly maintain it, not only with regard to that universal justice which may be called rectitude (though improperly), but also concerning that particular sin-avenging justice, which we deny to differ, either essentially or subjectively,[160] from the former, — but that anger and severity, so far as they denote effects of divine justice, or punishment inflicted, are infinite only in duration: "Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to take vengeance on them who know him not, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."[161] But in respect of that divine excellence which they point out, we affirm them to be in every respect infinite.

But it would be altogether superfluous here again to repeat what we have before clearly settled concerning this justice, or again to recite the texts of Scripture formerly adduced. The sum is this: Sin-avenging justice differs not in reality from that universal justice which our opponent does not deny to be perpetually inherent in God and a natural attribute. It is only distinguished from it in respect of its egress to its own proper object; for the egresses of justice against sin flow from the most holy perfection of Deity itself. But anger and severity, so far as they may be reduced to that justice which is manifested in them, are also infinite; in respect of their effects, they have their limits assigned them by the wisdom and justice of God. These things, however, have been proved before.

But let the pious reader judge whether our opponent, who hath presumed to call the highest mystery of the gospel, the alone foundation of the salvation of sinners, the darling jewel of our religion, the greatest testimony of the divine love, our victory over the devil, death, and hell, “a human fiction,” had sufficient cause to annex so dreadful an omission to the conclusion of this so long continued debate. He adds, in the last place, —

“But as to mercy, that is, the pardon of sins, how dare they affirm that to be infinite, when it is evident from the whole of Scripture that God doth not always use it, but frequently exerciseth vengeance and severity? Why, but because they have so shockingly blundered, that they have not attended to this, that these are only different effects of the divine will, but are not any properties, and have persuaded themselves that both of them are inherent in God. But how could they ever entertain such a persuasion, when, as we have said, the one destroys the other? But this they deny, and maintain that God exercised both of them perfectly in the salvation procured for us by Christ; which will more clearly appear, from what follows, to be not only false but ridiculous. Meantime, let them tell us, pray, when God punishes the guilty, but especially when he doth not even grant them time to repent, what kind of mercy he exerciseth towards these? But if God do many things in which not even any trace of that mercy appears, although he be said to be ‘merciful and full of compassion’ in Scripture, must we not say that he doth many things in which that justice is by no means discernible, to which he is said to be exceeding slow? We must then conclude, according to our opinion, that there is no such justice in God as expressly dictates the necessary punishment of sin, and which he hath not a power to renounce. And since this is the case, it is abundantly evident that there is no reason why God cannot freely pardon the sins of whomsoever he may please, without any satisfaction received.”

Ans. On these heads a few observations shall suffice:— 1. It is affirmed, without any show of reason, that mercy in God is not *infinite*, because sometimes he exerciseth severity; that is, that God cannot be called merciful, if he punish any guilty and impenitent sinners. To prove mercy to be an essential property of God, it is sufficient that he exercises it towards any: for in this very matter, that ought to be set down as a natural perfection in God which is the proper and immediate source and ground of that operation: which attributes (mercy and justice) have no egress but towards objects placed in particular circumstances; nor have they any effects without some free act of the divine will intervening. See Rom. ix. 13. Nor does it any more follow that the effects of mercy ought to be infinite if it be itself infinite, than that the works of God ought to be immense because immensity is an essential property of his nature.

2. By what argument will our opponent prove that the relation between mercy and justice is in such a manner the same, that because God exerciseth no mercy towards some, — that is, so as to pardon their sins, — that therefore he should not account it necessary to exercise justice towards every sin? We have formerly mentioned in what view they are distinct, — namely, that God is bound to exercise mercy to none, but that he cannot but exercise his justice towards sinners (provided he be inclined to be just), if he would preserve his natural right and dominion over his creatures, and the holiness and purity of his nature uninjured and entire; for disobedience would take away all dependence of the creature on God, unless a compensation were made to him by a vicarious punishment. But, according to the sacred Scriptures, we maintain that God exercised both the one and the other, both justice and mercy, in justly punishing Christ, in mercifully pardoning sins, which he laid upon him, to us, who deserved everlasting punishment; which things, though they may be ridiculous to Socinus (for “the things of the Spirit of God are foolishness” to him), no divine truth, however, of any kind whatever, is more frequently, more

plainly, or more clearly declared in the sacred writings: “All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus,” Rom. iii. 23–26. But setting the consideration of Christ altogether aside, there is no doubt but that Socinus would carry off the prize in this contest. But while it is reckoned worth while to have any regard to him, it is easy to perceive that this heretic uses nothing but continued false reasonings and false conclusions; for it is made evident to us in Christ the Son, how and by what means God, infinitely merciful and infinitely just, — acting on the principles of strict justice with some, and of mere grace with others, but in exercising both the one and the other, both justice and mercy, in and through the Mediator, the one, indeed, in his own proper person, and the other towards those for whom he was surety, — hath declared himself.

But while Socinus despised and set at nought him and his grace, is it to be wondered at if he “became vain in his imaginations,” and that his “foolish heart was darkened?”

For what need I say more? Doth not God exercise supreme and infinite mercy towards us, miserable and lost sinners, in pardoning our sins through Christ? Have we deserved any such thing, who, after doing all that we can do, even when roused and assisted by his grace, are still unprofitable servants? Did we appoint a sacrifice, that his anger might be averted, and that an atonement to his justice might be made from our own store-house, sheep-fold, or herd? Yea, when we were enemies to him, alienated from his life, without help and without strength, dead in trespasses and in sins, knowing of no such thing, wishing for or expecting no such thing, he himself “made Christ to be sin for us, who knew no sin,” that he might “save us from the

wrath to come;" that, an expiation being made for our sins, we might be presented blameless before him, to the praise and glory of his grace. But whether he showed the strictest justice and severity towards our surety, over whom he exercised a most gracious care, both on his own account[162] and for our sakes, and whom he did not spare, shall afterward be considered.

Whether, then, when our opponent, relying on these subtleties of his, concludes, "That there is no justice in God which dictates the necessity of punishing sin, and that therefore there is no reason why God cannot freely pardon the sins of whomsoever he may please, without any satisfaction received," and then, as if he had accomplished a glorious achievement, triumphs over the cross of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, be not acting the part of a most silly trifler and absurd heretic, let the reader determine. But, as all the arguments which he afterward uses against the satisfaction of Christ have their foundation in this most false supposition, which the Scriptures, as hath been shown, so often contradict, and on which he always depends in all his disputations, whether those have acted for the interest of the church of God who have voluntarily surrendered to him this impregnable tower of truth, which he hath in vain laid siege to, that he might with greater audacity carry on his attacks upon the gospel, is well known to God. We, as we hope, instructed by his word, entertain very different sentiments from theirs on this point.

But when our opponent has come to the conclusion of this dispute, he introduces many fictions about the mere good-will of God in pardoning sins, about his ceasing from his right without injury to any one, about the injustice of the substitution of a surety in the room of sinners; — all which arguments, as they depend on a false foundation, yea, on a most base error, it would be easy here to show how vain, false, inconclusive, and absurd they are, unless we had determined, with God's will, to explain the doctrine of the satisfaction of Jesus Christ, the greatest treasure of the

gospel, and to defend and vindicate it from the unjust calumnies of heretics, in the proper place and time.

[153] Ps. ix. 4.

[154] 1 Cor. i. 18, 23, 24.

[155] Acts v. 31.

[156] That is, the existence and misery of a rational creature being supposed. — Tr.

[157] See Exod. xxxiv. 6; Numb. xiv. 18.

[158] Omitted: “though it is plain from the holy Scriptures that God not unfrequently manifests some kind of anger, in his paternal chastisements, towards those who all the while are the objects of his supreme love and mercy.” — Ed.

[159] See 2 Pet. iii. 9, etc.

[160] That is, as it relates to God, who is the subject of it. — Tr.

[161] See 2 Thess. i. 6, 8, 9.

[162] “Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth.” — Isa. xlii. 1. — Tr.

Chapter XII.

The progress of the dispute to the theologians of our own country — The supreme authority of divine truth — Who they are, and what kind of men, who have gone into factions about this matter — The Coryphæus of the adversaries, the very illustrious Twisse — The occasion of his publishing his opinion — The opinion of the Arminians — The effects of the death of Christ, what — Twisse acknowledges punitory justice to be natural to God — The division of the dispute with Twisse — Maccovius' answers to the arguments of Twisse — The plan of our disputation.

We come now to those, and the consideration of their opinion, who, agreeing with us concerning the satisfaction of Jesus Christ, as revealed in the Scriptures, yet, it being supposed that God willed the salvation of sinners, contend that the whole necessity of it flowed from the most free will of God, though they by no means deny sin-avenging justice to be natural to God.[163]

But those who maintain this opinion are so numerous and respectable, and men who have merited so highly of the church of God, that although the freeman of Christ, and taught to call no man on earth master in matters of religion, unless I had on my side not fewer and equally famous men, I should have a religious scruple publicly to differ from them. I acknowledge that every, even the least particle of divine truth is furnished from heaven with authority towards every disciple of Jesus Christ, who is the way, the truth, and the life, of holding it fast in the love and admiration of it, and of enforcing its claim, defence, and declaration, even though the whole world should rise up against him; but, perhaps, it would be unbecoming in one who would cheerfully enter as a disciple to oppose such great, learned men, and those, too, so well trained to the field of dispute, unless supported by the dignity and suffrages of others not inferior even to those in merit.

But if modesty must be violated, all will agree that it ought to be violated in the cause of truth, and especially as I perceive that the authority of some theologians is of so great weight with many of our countrymen, that, not having duly weighed and pondered the matter, but relying on this, they go into the opinion contrary to that which we have undertaken to defend. Considering it of importance to weigh the arguments which these very illustrious men have used, although I know myself not only unequal to the task, but that, in marshalling the line for such a controversy, I am not deserving of even a third or fourth place from the van, having been only accustomed to the popular mode of declaiming; however, I do not fear to engage in this undertaking, whatever it be, nothing doubting but that from my attempt, though weak, the readers will easily perceive that the truth might triumph gloriously, were any one furnished with better abilities to come forward in its defence.

But here, first of all the antagonists, and who, indeed, is almost equal to them all, the very learned Twisse[164] opposes himself to us; concerning whose opinion in general a few things are to be premised before we come to the answers of objections.

The consideration of Arminius' opinion concerning the efficacy of the death of Christ and its immediate bearing, gave occasion to this learned man of publishing his own sentiments. Arminius contends, "That Christ by his satisfaction only accomplished this much, that God now, consistently with the honour of his justice (as it had been satisfied), might pardon sinners if he willed so to do."

This most absurd opinion, so highly derogatory to divine grace and the merit of the death of Christ, this illustrious man was inclined to differ from, so far that he maintained that that consideration, namely, "That God could forgive sins, his justice notwithstanding, as having been satisfied," had no place among the effects of Christ's death.

But Arminius is the only one, so far as I know, among our opponents of this opinion; and he himself, in asserting it, is scarcely uniform and self-consistent. I may venture to affirm that of his followers there are none, unless it be some mean skulker, who swears by the words of his master. The opinion of Corvinus, which Twisse afterward discusses, is plainly different. Episcopius, likewise, after Arminius, the Coryphæus of that cause, and by far its most noble champion, defends this very sentiment of this learned man. The Pelagian tribe have become reconciled with the Socinians, rather than brandish any more that very sharp-pointed weapon which cut the throat of their own desperate cause.

Nor can I at all see how this divine truth of ours should contribute to the support of Arminianism, as this illustrious writer seems to signify; for is he who says that Christ by his death and satisfaction effected this, that God might forgive sins, his justice not opposing, bound also to affirm that he accomplished nothing farther? God forbid. Yea, he who, without the consideration of the oblation of Christ, could not but punish sins, that oblation being made, cannot punish those sins for which Christ offered himself;[165] yea, that he is more bound, in strict right and in justice, in respect of Jesus Christ, to confer grace and glory on all those for whom he died, I have in its proper season elsewhere demonstrated.

The learned Twisse grants that punitory or sin-avenging justice is *natural* to God, or that it is an essential attribute of the divine nature. This he very eloquently maintains; and several times, when it is introduced by the adversaries[166] whom he selected to refute, he gives his suffrage in its favour. But what else is that justice but a constant will of punishing every sin, according to the rule of his right? The learned gentleman, then, grants that an immutably constant will of punishing every sin is natural to God: how, then, is it possible that he should not punish it? for who hath opposed his will?

There are two parts of the Twissian disputation. The first is contained in four principal arguments, supported by various reasons, in which he attacks this sentiment, — namely, "That God cannot without a satisfaction forgive sin." In the second, he endeavours to answer the arguments of Piscator and Lubbertus in confirmation of this point; and he intersperses everywhere, according to his custom, a variety of new arguments on the subject. We shall briefly consider what this learned man hath done in both parts.

As to what relates to the first or introductory part, perhaps our labour may appear superfluous. The judicious Maccovius hath, with great success, performed this task, giving by no means trifling, but rather, for the most part, very solid answers to those four arguments, which Twisse calls his principal, and in a very plain and perspicuous manner; as was his general custom in all his writings.

But neither the plan of our work permits us to withdraw from this undertaking, though unequal to it, nor, perhaps, hath Maccovius satisfied his readers in every particular. Indeed, some things seem necessary to be added, that this controversy with Twisse may occasion no trouble to any one for the future. This veteran leader, then, so well trained to the scholastic field, going before and pointing us out the way, we shall, with your good leave, reader, briefly try these arguments by the rule of Scripture and right reason; and I doubt not but we shall clearly demonstrate, to all impartial judges of things, that this learned man hath by no means proved what he intended.

[163] They agree that the satisfaction by Christ is the way of salvation revealed in the Scriptures, but that it is so because God willed it should be so, and deny that there was any necessity for such a satisfaction arising from the nature of divine justice. — Tr.

[164] Twiss. Vind. Grat. lib. i. p. 2, sect. 25, digress. 8.

[165] Rom. iii. 23–26.

[166] Namely, Piscator and Lubbertus.

Chapter XIII.

Twisse's first argument — Its answer — A trifling view of the divine attributes — Whether God could, by his absolute power, forgive sins without a satisfaction — To let sins pass unpunished implies a contradiction; and that twofold — What these contradictions are — Whether God may do what man may do — Whether every man may renounce his right — Whether God cannot forgive sins because of his justice — The second argument — Its answer — Distinctions of necessity — God doth no work without himself from absolute necessity — Conditional necessity — Natural necessity twofold — God doth not punish to the extent of his power, but to the extent of his justice — God always acts with a concomitant liberty — An argument of the illustrious Vossius considered — God "a consuming fire," but an intellectual one — An exception of Twisse's — Whether, independent of the divine appointment, sin would merit punishment — In punishment, what things are to be considered — The relation of obedience to reward and disobedience to punishment not the same — The comparison between mercy and justice by Vossius improperly instituted.

The first argument of this great man is this: "If God cannot forgive sins without a satisfaction, it is either because he cannot on account of his justice, or because he cannot by his power; but neither of these can be affirmed."

Ans. That enumeration of the divine attributes, as to the present cause, is mere trifling: for what God cannot do in respect of *one* attribute, he can do in respect of *none*; or, in other words, that which cannot be done because of any one essential property, cannot be done because of them all. As, for instance, if there be any thing which God cannot do in respect of *truth*, he cannot do that in any manner or in any respect. In the acts of the divine will, purely free, the case is otherwise; for, in a divided sense, God may do any thing (that is, he may create new worlds), which if a decree of creating this and no other be supposed, he could not do. But the objects presented to any attribute of the divine nature

admit not of various respects, but are in their own kind absolutely necessary; therefore, we deny the minor. Neither in respect of justice nor in respect of power can this be done.

But our learned antagonist leads the proof of it through its parts; and, first, after a marginal animadversion on a certain oversight of Piscator, he affirms "That it cannot be maintained that God cannot forgive sins by his power, without a satisfaction."

"For," says he, "if God by his might or absolute power cannot pardon sin, then it is absolutely impossible for sin to be pardoned, or not to be punished; therefore, not to pardon sin consists of contradictory terms. The contradiction, then, ought to be shown, as none appears from the formal terms. And, on the other hand, it is evident that man not only can pardon, but that it is his duty to pardon his enemies when they transgress against him."

Ans. The non-punishment of sin implies a contradiction, — not, indeed, formally and in the terms, but virtually and eminently in respect of the thing itself: for, in the first place, it implies that God is the Lord of mankind by a natural and indispensable right, but that mankind are not subject to him, neither as to obedience nor as to punishment, which would be the direct case if sin should pass with impunity; for that natural and necessary dependence being cut off (which, also, in another respect is moral) which accords to a rational creature in respect of its Creator and supreme Lord, which really comes to pass by means of sin, it cannot be renewed or made amends for but by punishment. In the second place, to hate sin, that is, to will to punish it, and not to hate sin, to will to let it pass unpunished, are manifestly contradictory.

If you say that God hath it in his power not to hate sin, you say that he hath the contrary in his power, — that is, that he can love sin; for if he hate sin of his free will, he may will the contrary, for "the divine will is not so determinately inclined towards any secondary object by any thing in itself

that can justly oppose its inclination to its opposite." This Scotus maintains, and Twisse agrees with him. But to will good and to love justice are not less natural to God than to be himself. Here is, then, a double contradiction in that assertion of this very learned man, namely, "That God can forgive sin absolutely, without any satisfaction received."

"But it is manifest," says he, "that man not only can pardon, but that it is his duty to pardon his enemies; and, therefore, this does not imply a contradiction."

Ans. The supposition is denied, that God may do what man may do. That learned man raises this objection himself, that man may sin, which God cannot do, and at great length, and with much erudition, explains away this example. But as this instance of Twisse's is not quite satisfactory to us, we think proper to proceed in a different manner.

I say, then, in the first place, that divine and human forgiveness are plainly of a different kind. The forgiveness of man only respects the *hurt*; the forgiveness of God respects the *guilt*. Man pardons sins so far as any particular injury hath been done himself; God pardons sin as the good of the universe is injured. Secondly, Neither is it in the power of every man to let sins pass unpunished, yea, of none absolutely to whom the right of punishing is competent; for although a *private person* may recede from his right, which for the most part is of charity, yet it is by no means allowed to a *public person* to renounce his right, which is a right of government, especially if that renunciation should in any way turn out to the hurt of the public. In the third place, then, I say that that instance is nothing to the purpose; for although a private person may, at certain times, renounce his right and dominion in certain cases, and ought to do so, it doth not follow from that that God, whose right and dominion is natural and indispensable, and which he cannot renounce unless he deny himself, can do the same. In the fourth place, the non-punishment of sin is an injury to the universe; for the glory of divine justice would be affronted with impunity.

Our celebrated antagonist proceeds to the consideration of divine justice. “But neither,” says he, “can it be consistently said that God cannot do this because of his justice, if it be supposed that he can do it by his power. But Scotus reasons with more judgment and accuracy on this point. ‘The divine will is not so inclined towards any secondary object by any thing in itself,’ says he, ‘that can oppose its being justly inclined towards its opposite in the same manner, as without contradiction it may will its opposite; otherwise, it may will absolutely and not justly, which is inconsistent with divine perfection.’ ”

Ans. We maintain that God from his nature cannot do this, and, therefore, that he cannot either by his power or his justice; and as our learned antagonist produces no argument to prove that God can do it without resistance from his justice, but what flows from this false supposition, that he can do it by his power, it is not necessary to give ourselves any trouble on this head. But to Scotus we answer: The divine will may incline to things opposite, in respect of the egresses of all those divine attributes which constitute and create objects to themselves, but not in respect of those attributes which have no egress towards their objects but upon a condition supposed. As, for instance: God may justly speak or not speak with man; but it being supposed that he wills to speak, the divine will cannot be indifferent whether he speak truth or not. So much for his first principal argument.

The second is this: “If God cannot let sin pass unpunished, then he must punish it from an absolute necessity; but this no one can maintain consistently with reason.”

This consequence the learned doctor supposes, without any argument to support it; but we deny the consequence, nor will he ever be able to prove that there is no other kind of necessity but an absolute necessity. There is also a necessity arising from a supposed condition, and which deprives not the agent of a concomitant liberty. God could

not but create the world; but God did not create the world from an absolute necessity, although it was necessary upon a supposition that it should be created. It is necessary that God should speak truly, but he doth not speak from an absolute necessity; but it being supposed that he wills to speak, it is impossible that he should not speak truly. We say, therefore, that God cannot but punish sin, or that he necessarily punishes sin; not, however, from an absolute necessity of nature, as the Father begets the Son, but upon the suppositions[167] before mentioned, — by a necessity which excludes an antecedent indifference but not a concomitant liberty in the agent, for in punishing sins he acts by volition and with understanding.

"But that necessity," you will say, "of what kind soever it be, flows from the nature of God, not his will or decree; but all necessity of nature seems to be absolute." I acknowledge, indeed, that all necessity of nature, considered in the first act and thing signified,[168] is absolute in its kind; but in the second act, and in its exercise, it is not so. The reader will easily perceive now that our very learned antagonist had no reason for freely supposing that consequence; which I reckon the very lowest of all the devices he has fallen upon. "If, then," says he, "God must punish sin from a natural necessity, he must necessarily punish it to the extent of his power;" but this, with great accuracy, he shows to be absurd, by a variety of arguments.

Ans. Maccovius hath, some time ago, very clearly answered this reasoning. We reject his consequence, as built upon a false supposition; for that necessity from which God punisheth sin does not require that he should punish it to the extent of his power, but so far as is just. We do not conceive God to be a senseless, inanimate agent, as if he acted from principles of nature, after a natural manner, without a concomitant liberty; for he doth all things freely, with understanding and by volition, even those things which by supposition he doth necessarily, according to what his most holy nature requires.

The argument which the celebrated Vossius uses against our opinion is of no greater weight.[169] "Every agent," says that very learned man, "that acts naturally, acts upon an object naturally receptive of its action: wherefore, if to punish were natural, namely, in that acceptation which necessity carries with it, such action could not pass from the person of a sinner to another person."

But this learned man is mistaken when he imagines that we affirm God to be such a natural agent as must, without sense and immediately, operate upon the object that is receptive of it, in a manner altogether natural, and without any concomitant liberty, — that is, without any free act of understanding or volition; for although God be "a consuming fire," he is an intellectual one. Nor is a sinner alone an object properly receptive of the exercise of God's vindicatory justice, as he hath committed the transgressions in his own person; for antecedent to every act of that justice, properly so called, in respect of the elect, God appointed a surety, and this surety being appointed, and all the sins of the elect laid upon him, he in their room and stead is the proper object of this vindicatory justice, so far as relates to their sins. "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him," 2 Cor. v. 21.

But Twisse thus replies, "If God punish as far as he can with justice, — that is, as far as sin deserves, — then it must be either as far as sin deserves according to the free constitution of God, or without any regard to the divine constitution. If according to the divine constitution, this is nothing else but to assert that God punishes not so far as he can, but so far as he wills. If without any regard to the divine constitution, then without the divine constitution sin so deserves punishment that God ought to punish sin because of his justice. But I conclude this to be false in this manner: If disobedience deserve punishment in this manner, — that is, without the divine constitution, — therefore obedience will also, in like manner, deserve a reward

without the divine constitution; for no reason can be shown that any one should maintain that even angels have merited, by their obedience, that God should reward them with celestial glory."

But although these arguments are specious, yet, strictly considered, they have no greater weight than those already discussed; for in the punishment of sin two things are to be considered:— 1. The punishment itself, so far as it is in its own nature something grievous and troublesome to the creature, and proper to recover the violated right of God. In this respect we say that sin merits punishment antecedently to every free act of the divine will, or to the divine constitution; or, if you would rather have it thus expressed, that it is just that God should inflict punishment, considered as such, on the transgressor, without regard to any free constitution: for if, without regard to such a constitution, sin be sin, and evil, evil, — and unless it be so, to hate the greatest and best of Beings may be the highest virtue, and to love him the greatest vice, — why may not punishment be due to it without regard to such a consideration? 2. In punishment, the mode, time, and degree are especially to be considered. In respect of these God punishes sin according to the divine constitution; for the justice of God only demanding punishment in general, as including in it the nature of punishment, nothing hinders but that God should freely appoint the mode and degree of it. He punishes them because it is just that he should do so, and consequently indispensably necessary. He punishes in one mode or in another, in one degree or in another, because, according to his wisdom, he hath determined freely so to do. What we understand by modes and degrees of punishment shall be afterward explained.

"But," says our celebrated antagonist, "if disobedience thus deserve punishment, why should not obedience in like manner deserve a reward, for no reason to the contrary can be assigned?" I wish this learned man had not so expressed himself, for he will never be able to prove that the relation

of obedience to reward and disobedience to punishment is the same; for between obedience and the reward there intervenes no natural obligation. God is brought under an obligation to no one for any kind of obedience; for “after we have done all, we are still unprofitable servants.” But God’s right that rational creatures should be subject to him, either by obedience or a vicarious punishment, is indispensable. In a word, obedience is due to God in such a manner, that from the nature of the thing he can be debtor to none in conferring rewards; but disobedience would destroy all dependence of the creature upon God, unless a recompense be made by punishment.

The celebrated Vossius, again, reasons improperly, in the passage before quoted, from a comparison made between justice and mercy. “The question is not,” says he, “whether it be just that a satisfaction be received? but whether it be unjust that it should not be received? for it doth not follow that if God be merciful in doing one thing or another, that he would be unmerciful in not doing it.” I acknowledge that it does not follow: for although mercy be natural to God as to the habit, yet because there is no natural obligation between it and its proper object, it is as to all its acts entirely free; for the nature of the thing about which it is employed is not indispensable, as we have shown before to be the case with regard to justice. So much for the learned Twisse’s second argument, with the consideration of it.

[167] Namely, That he willed to create a rational being, and to permit it to transgress the law of its creation. — Tr.

[168] “Actu primo et signato,” — “In its first and manifested act, its first act and manifestation.” — Ed.

[169] At the end of the “Defensio Fidei Catholicæ de Satisfactione Christi,” by Grotius, there is appended “G. J. Vossii Responsio ad Herm. Ravenspergeri Judicium de eodem.” It is in this “Responsio” that the sentiments refuted by Owen occur. — Ed.

Chapter XIV.

Twisse's third argument — A dispensation with regard to the punishment of sin, what, and of what kind — The nature of punishment and its circumstances — The instance of this learned opponent refuted — The considerations of rewarding and punishing different — How long, and in what sense, God can dispense with the punishment due to sin — God the supreme governor of the Jewish polity; also, the Lord of all — The fourth argument of Twisse — The answer — Whether God can inflict punishment on an innocent person — In what sense God is more willing to do acts of kindness than to punish — What kind of willingness that assertion respects — The conclusion of the answer to Twisse's principal arguments.

The third argument is this: "God can inflict a milder punishment than sin deserves; therefore, he can by his absolute power suspend the punishment altogether."

Ans. I answer, that the punishment which a sin deserves may be considered in a twofold point of view:— 1. As by means of it God compels to order a disobedient creature, that hath cast off its dependence on his supreme and natural dominion, in such a manner that his will may be done with that creature, that is itself unwilling to do it; and in this point of view he cannot inflict a more mild punishment than sin deserves. Yea, properly speaking, in this respect it cannot be said to admit of degrees, either milder or more severe. And in this sense we simply deny the foregoing proposition. 2. It may be considered in this other point of view, — namely, as God, for the greater manifestation of his glory, hath assigned to it modes, degrees, and other circumstances. But if punishment be considered in this view, we deny the sequel;[170] for though it be granted that he exerciseth liberty as to the modes and degrees, as these flow from the free appointment of God, it doth not follow that the punishment itself, so far as the nature of

punishment is preserved in it, and which takes its rise from the natural justice of God, can be altogether dispensed with.

What says our learned antagonist to this? He supposes the author of the supplement his opponent, and discusses his opinion in a variety of subtile reasonings, in his answer concerning the extent and different degrees of justice. But he confesses that these have no relation to Piscator; and as they are of no avail to the argument, we therefore pass over the consideration of them.

But this learned gentleman has still something to oppose to our reasoning; for he thus proceeds, "God may reward beyond merit; therefore, he may punish less than what is merited." But this reason is evidently of no force; for besides that arguments from opposites do not hold always good in theology, as hath been shown in various instances by Maccovius, we have before demonstrated at large that the relation between remunerating grace and punitory justice is not the same.[171] Moreover, these considerations all along arise not from the nature of punishment, but from its degrees, about which we have no controversy, for we have never said that God in punishing sins acts without any concomitant liberty, which respects those degrees.

But forasmuch as Socinians[172] argue from the divine dispensation with regard to the punishment of sins to the free pardon of them without any satisfaction, we must say a few things in reply to this argument of our learned antagonist, as it seems pretty near akin to them, and as they are so very eager in wresting every thing to favour their own side of the question.

The divine dispensation, then, with the punishment of sins, respects either temporary or eternal punishment; but a temporary punishment may be considered either in respect of monitory threats or of a peremptory decree, and both in respect of the time of the infliction and of the degrees in the punishment to be inflicted. But God, as the avenger of sin, is considered in Scripture in a twofold point of view:— 1. As

the Legislator and supreme Lord of the Jews and their commonwealth; whose state, from that circumstance, Josephus calls a “theocracy:” or, 2. As the supreme Lord and just Judge of the universe. If these considerations be properly attended to, the subtleties of Crellius are easily dissolved: for God, as the Legislator and supreme Ruler of the Jewish republic, ofttimes dispensed with temporary punishments, as denounced in his threatenings, both as to the place, degree, and time of their execution; but God, as the supreme Lord and just Judge of the universe, doth not dispense with the eternal punishment of sin, to be inflicted at the proper and appointed time. The learned Twisse’s fourth argument remains only to be considered.

“God is able,” says he, “to inflict any torture, however great, even an infernal one, upon any person, without the consideration of any demerit; therefore, he is also able, notwithstanding the greatest demerit, to suspend the greatest punishment whatever. The antecedent hath been proved; the consequence from it is notorious, as God is more willing to do good than to punish.”

Ans. 1. We have before observed that this mode of reasoning does not always hold good in theology; neither, however, in the second place, are these opposites, namely, to inflict torture and to suspend punishment, for torture and punishment are different. But to inflict an infernal punishment upon any innocent person is a thing impossible; for punishment supposes a transgression: and, therefore, not to inflict punishment upon a guilty person is also impossible; for transgression, from the very nature of the thing, requires punishment. But it is astonishing that this learned writer should insist on the proof of the sequel, namely, “That God is more willing to do good than to punish,” as he hath many times, by very strong arguments, disallowed the natural inclination of the Deity towards the good of the creature; nor will he ever be able to prove that God is inclined to bestow such kind of benefits on a sinful creature as are opposite to the punishment due to sin,

without regard to Christ and his satisfaction. But that difference respects a will commanding and exhorting according to morality, not decreeing or acting naturally.

And these are what this learned writer calls his “principal arguments;” in which he contends that God can let sin pass unpunished without any satisfaction. I hope that impartial judges, however great respect they may have for the name of Twisse, will not be offended that I have made these short answers to his arguments; as certainly they have been conducted without violence or sarcasm, and by no means from any weak desire of attacking so very illustrious a man, for whose many and great qualities none can have a greater respect. But I have engaged in this task from an earnest desire of preserving undiminished the glory of divine justice, and of establishing the necessity of the satisfaction of Christ, lest the Socinians should wrest to their purpose the arguments of this learned man, on the principal of which they place a principal dependence, and by which they acknowledge that they have been induced to adopt heretical opinions.

Our very learned antagonist adds other arguments to these; some of which have been satisfactorily answered by Maccovius; others belong not, according to our view of it, to the present controversy; and others will come to be considered in our vindication of the arguments of Piscator and Lubbertus, impugned by this celebrated writer, of which we shall take a short review, and, therefore, shall not now enter into any particular consideration of them.

[170] Namely, That God, by his absolute power, can suspend the punishment of sin altogether. — Tr.

[171] That is, their relation to their objects, or their qualities considered in this point of view, is different. Divine justice necessarily operates towards its object to punish the sinner, otherwise it would not be justice; but as no creature can merit any thing of God, it depends on God’s good pleasure whether he bestow rewards or not. — Tr.

[172] Crellius, “Of the True Religion,” p. 308.

Chapter XV.

The defence of Sibrandus Lubbertus against Twisse — The agreement of these very learned men in a point of the utmost importance — A vindication of his argument from God's hatred against sin — Liberality and justice different — The opinion of Lubbertus undeservedly charged with atheism — What kind of necessity of operation we suppose in God; this pointed out — The sophistical reasoning of this learned writer — How God is bound to manifest any property of his nature — The reasons of Lubbertus, and Twisse's objections to the same considered — That passage of the apostle, Rom. i. 32, considered and vindicated — His[173] *mode of disputing rejected — The force of the argument from Rom. i. 32 — The "righteous judgment of God," what — Our federal representative, and those represented by him, are one mystical body — An answer to Twisse's arguments, Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7 — The learned writer's answer respecting that passage — A defence of the passage — Punitory justice a name of God — Whether those for whom Christ hath made satisfaction ought to be called guilty — Ps. v. 4–6, the sense of that passage considered — From these three passages the argument is one and the same — Lubbertus' argument from the definition of justice weighed — How vindicatory justice is distinguished from universal — The nature of liberality and justice evidently different — Punishment belongs to God — In inflicting punishment, God vindicates his right — Will and necessity, whether they be opposite — The end of the defence of Lubbertus.*

The learned Twisse, when about to reply to the arguments of Lubbertus,[174] brings forward two assertions of his, to the first of which he consents, but not to the latter. The first maintains "corrective justice to be essential to God," which he approves; and herein we congratulate this very learned man that thus far, at least, he assents to the truth, and in so doing hath given cause to the Socinians to grieve. But, that "it is natural to God to hate and punish sin," which is Lubbertus' second assertion, he denies. The

nicety of his discrimination here is truly astonishing; for what is God's hatred against sin but this corrective justice? How, then, is it possible that that justice should be natural to God, and the hatred of sin not so likewise? I very well know that the learned man will not allow that there is any such affection as hatred in God, properly so called. What is it, then, else than the constant will of punishing sin? but that is the very vindicatory justice of which we treat. Besides, if to hate sin be not natural to God, then it is a thing free and indifferent to him; he may then not hate it; he may, according to the opinion of Scotus formerly mentioned, as approved by Twisse, will its contrary, — that is, he may love and approve of sin, though "he be of purer eyes than to behold iniquity." But, with good reason, he farther maintains that "mercy is essential to God, and yet that it is not necessary that he should show mercy to any one; but of his free good pleasure he showeth mercy to whomsoever he showeth mercy." We have again and again before shown that justice and mercy, in respect of their exercise, are different. God is under no obligation to exercise mercy towards any one, but he owes it to himself to preserve his own natural right and dominion over his rational creatures; and the learned gentleman cannot show that there is any such obligation, arising from the nature of the thing itself, between remunerating justice and liberality, on which he next insists, and their objects, as there is between corrective justice and its objects.

But he brings a grievous charge, no less than even that of atheism, against this sentiment of Lubbertus, and on a double account: for, first, he says that "hence it follows that God is a necessary and not a free agent;" and he calls that proposition a spreading gangrene. 1. But theologians agree, and without any risk of atheism, that God is, in respect of his operations within himself, a necessary agent. 2. If it be necessary that God should do any thing upon some condition supposed, is he therefore to be accounted a necessary and not a free agent? Perhaps never any one hath made God

more a necessary agent than Twisse himself doth, for he everywhere maintains, that upon the supposition of a decree, it is necessary that God should do all things in conformity to it; which, however, I do by no means mention as finding fault with. Upon the supposition of a decree, for instance, God could not but create the world; but is he therefore to be called a necessary agent in the creation of the world? By no means. But you will say, "That necessity flows from the free will of God, but that which you dream of arises from the principles of his nature, and therefore how widely different!" I willingly grant, indeed, that the decree of creating the world flowed from the free will of God; but this being supposed, it was necessary to the divine nature, which is immutable, that it should be created. Nor do we ascribe any other kind of natural necessity to God in punishing sins. The decree of creating rational creatures bound to render him obedience, and so far liable to his right and dominion, and that he willed to permit these creatures to transgress the law of their creation, flowed merely from his free will; but these things being once supposed, it necessarily belongs to the divine nature, as it is just, to punish those who so transgress. But that God exerciseth a concomitant liberty in punishing them, we have several times allowed, and we have no doubt but, if this be atheism, it is also Christianity.

Secondly, "Is God at all bound," says our very learned antagonist, "or in any manner obliged, to manifest his justice, more than to manifest his mercy, munificence, and liberality? It is evident that God is not bound to exercise any one property whatever more than another. Wherefore, either all things must be said to be necessarily performed by God, and even that the world was not made of his free will, but from a natural necessity; or that all things have been, and still are, freely done by God." But besides that this reasoning is sophistical, it injures not our cause. The whole matter may be clearly explained in one word: God is not absolutely bound to manifest any property of his nature,

much less one more than another, for this respects the free purpose of God; but upon a condition supposed, God may be more bound to exercise one property than another, for this relates to its exercise. But none of us have said that it is necessary that God should punish sin because he is necessarily bound to demonstrate his justice: in this very thing he demonstrates his justice indeed;[175] but it is necessary that he should punish sin because he is just. The learned writer then confounds the decree of manifesting the glory of the divine properties, to which God is absolutely bound by none of his properties, with the exercise of these properties upon a condition supposed; which we have endeavoured to prove to be necessary with respect to vindicatory justice.

In what sense all things are said to be done by God necessarily, though he be a free agent, hath been already explained. By these arguments, then, whereby he endeavours to weigh down our opinion with prejudices, it is evident that our antagonist hath nothing availed himself. Let us now see whether he hath been more successful in his replies to Lubbertus than in his system of opposition.

He briefly states five arguments of Lubbertus, each of which he answers in order.

That passage of the apostle to the Romans, chap. i. 32, “Who, knowing the judgment” (that is, the just right or righteous judgment) “of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death,” is quoted as a proof of this doctrine by Lubbertus. Twisse thus replies: “I acknowledge that they who commit such things are worthy of death. But it by no means follows from this that it is necessary that God should punish them; which I shall demonstrate by a twofold argument: For if that followed, it would follow that they who commit such things must necessarily be punished; but the elect, because of sin, are worthy of death, but they are not punished at all, much less necessarily. Will you say, because they who have committed such things are worthy of death, that therefore it is necessary, from an absolute necessity,

that either they or others, — that is, that either they themselves, who are deserving of death, or some one else on their account, though innocent, — should be punished? Who can digest such a consequence as this? Again: If they are worthy of death, then they shall die the death; either, then, a temporal or eternal one. Beyond all doubt, he will answer an eternal death. It is necessary, therefore, that they should exist to all eternity, and by an absolute necessity, to the end that they may be punished to all eternity. And so, then, God cannot annihilate a creature."

But, with this great man's good leave, neither his mode of disputing, — namely, by substituting a double argument in the place of one solid and clear answer, — is at all satisfactory, nor are these arguments of any service to his cause, the first of which is captious and not at all solid, the other too nice and curious. For, first, Lubbertus does not contend that God cannot pardon sin without satisfaction, because simply, by some reason or other, sinners are worthy of death; but for this reason only, because the righteous judgment or just right of God is, that they who commit such things are worthy of death, and that, therefore, it would be unjust in God not to inflict that punishment, — namely, because, according to the justice of God, which Twisse himself acknowledges to be natural and essential to him, they are worthy of death, and therefore necessarily to be punished. But the arguments of Twisse do not prove the contrary; for the elect themselves are worthy of death, and therefore necessarily to be punished, — not from an absolute necessity in respect of the mode of acting in God the punisher, but in respect of a condition supposed, and which excludes not the liberty of the agent. That is to say, God may inflict the punishment due to one on another, after, — in consequence of his own right and the consent of that other, — he hath laid the sins upon that other on account of which he inflicts the punishment. He might punish the elect either in their own persons, or in their surety standing in their room and stead; and when he is punished, they also

are punished: for in this point of view the federal head and those represented by him are not considered as distinct, but as one; for although they are not one in respect of personal unity, they are, however, one, — that is, one body in mystical union, yea, *one mystical Christ*;[176] — namely, the surety is the head, those represented by him the members; and when the head is punished, the members also are punished. Nor could even he himself be called a surety absolutely innocent: for although he was properly and personally innocent, he was imputatively and substitutively guilty; for "God made him to be sin for us;" He "laid on him the iniquity of us all."[177]

The second argument which this learned writer uses to confute the conclusion of Lubbertus is of no greater weight. We are not in the counsels of God, so that we can precisely pronounce with regard to his judgments and his ways. That God is able absolutely to reduce to nothing any creature that he hath created out of nothing, no one can doubt; but it being supposed that that creature is guilty of sin, and that that sin, according to the right and justice of God, deserves eternal death, we with confidence maintain that God, who cannot deny himself, cannot reduce it to nothing. Neither is there anything absurd that can be inferred from this.

To the second proof brought from the word of God, declaring himself by that name of his, "Who will by no means clear the guilty," Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7, he answers: "It is true that God will by no means clear the guilty, yet it is evident that not a few are cleared by God. The guilty, then, whom he doth not clear, must be those who have neither repented nor believed in Christ. Hence it follows that every one hath either been punished or will be punished, either in himself or in Christ; which we do not at all deny. But it doth not at all follow hence that God doth this from a necessity of nature, for it is possible that it may proceed from the free will of God; neither doth it belong to him to exercise his mercy and bounty from a necessity of nature, but of his free will."

But, 1. It is of no service to his cause to urge that God does not punish some guilty sinners in their own persons, but clears them, when this learned man grants, yea, contends, that they have all been punished in Christ their head, by whom justice was fully satisfied. 2. It hath been several times shown before how God, from a necessity of nature, punishes sin, and yet with a concomitant liberty of will; and the difference between justice and mercy, in respect of their exercise and egress towards their proper objects, hath been shown; so that we do not think it proper to insist farther on these at present. These considerations, then, being set aside, it is evident that this learned man has not attended to the force of the argument: for it does not amount to this, that in respect of the event God clears none unpunished, either in themselves or in their surety, — an assertion which nobody but a Socinian speaks against; but rather to this, that as punitory justice is a natural attribute of God, a very considerable portion of his essential glory, yea, a well-known name of God, he can "by no means clear the guilty," unless he were to deny himself, and deliver up his glory to another, — than which nothing is farther from God. But those for whom the divine justice hath been satisfied by Christ ought not, in respect of the demand of that justice, to be called guilty, for their obligation to punishment, namely, the guilt of sin, is taken away; so that it is just with God to deliver them from the wrath to come, although it be free to him at what time he may will that that deliverance, in respect of them, should take place and be manifested to their consciences, that so "being justified by faith, they may have peace with God."

To those verses cited by Lubbertus from Ps. v. 4–6, he thus replies: "The prophet is testifying," says he, "that God hates all who work iniquity; however, it is sufficiently evident that God does not punish all who work iniquity, for he does not punish the elect. I acknowledge that God will in his own time destroy all the wicked out of Christ; but of his

free will, and from no consideration of necessity, as he is an agent entirely free."

I am not altogether satisfied with this assertion, "That God doth not punish all who work iniquity;" neither does the instance of the elect confirm it, for even the learned gentleman does not deny that all their sins have been punished in Christ. We maintain alone that God cannot but punish every sin, because he is just; but whether he choose to do this in their own persons or in their surety rests entirely with himself: therefore, it doth not derogate from his justice that he transferred the sins of some upon Christ, and punished them in him. But they themselves, though personally guilty before Christ took their guilt upon himself, are not, however, punished, nor can be accounted guilty in respect of the judgment of God, their sins not being imputed to them; or, they ought to be said to have been punished in Christ their head, with whom they are now closely united. In the second place, we have shown before, and the learned gentleman acknowledges it, that a free act of the will may be consistent with some regard to necessity.

Allow me, then, from these three passages of Scripture cited by Lubbertus to collect one argument only; which, if I mistake not, no one of the various arguments of our very learned antagonist, nor even all of them, will be able to overthrow. It is to this purpose: If that just right or righteous "judgment of God" be essential, — namely, that which is made manifest and known to all by nature;[178] if his avenging justice be such that he "will by no means clear the guilty;"[179] if as he hates sin, so he will "destroy all the workers of iniquity,"[180] then it is natural to God to punish sin, and he cannot let it pass unpunished, for he can do nothing contrary to his natural attributes, exercised about their proper objects. But the former part of the argument is true;[181] so also must the latter.

But Lubbertus likewise reasons by an argument taken from the common definition of justice, to which Twisse also refers. "Vindicatory justice," says he, "is the eternal will of

God to give to every one his own; therefore, it belongs truly or naturally to God." Twisse cites these words from Lubbertus; for his writings against Vossius I have not by me at present. Now, although this justly celebrated man sometimes agrees to this conclusion, yet as he twitches[182] the argument various ways, we shall, as briefly as possible, bring it in regular order to a point. "First of all," says he, "allow me to put you in mind that that definition of justice holds good only with regard to justice in general, but not with regard to vindicatory justice in particular; for the whole of justice is employed in giving to every one his own." I have said before that that definition of the civilians was not quite agreeable to me, nor in every respect satisfactory. But the objection of Twisse is of no weight: for vindicatory justice is not distinguished from universal justice, or justice generally so called, as to its habit, but only in respect of its egress to its proper object; and, therefore, nothing ought to be included in the definition which is not found also in the thing itself. Although, then, the learned opponent throws obstacles in the way, he cannot deny that vindicatory justice is "a will to give to every one his own, or what is due to him."

"But let Lubbertus bethink himself," says Twisse, "whether the divine bounty is not likewise the eternal will of the Deity to give to some beyond what is their own. Would it not, then, justly follow that it is necessary, and even from absolute necessity, that he should exercise his bounty towards some?"

But neither is this comparison between things dissimilar of the smallest advantage to our adversary's cause: for, — 1. The objects themselves about which these attributes are employed are very different; for who does not see that there cannot be any comparison formed between the giving to every one according to his right, and giving to some beyond their right? That to give to any one beyond his right is a most free act of the will, the thing itself declares; but to give to every one his own, or what is due to him, the very thing

itself requires. All acknowledge that it depends on the mere good pleasure of the Deity whether he may will to be bounteous, towards any; but who but an impious wretch would be bold enough to dispute whether he may will to be just towards any? But besides; supposing a constant will in the Deity of giving to some beyond their right, or of bestowing on them more than they deserve, in what respect it would not be necessary (the question does not respect absolute necessity) to him to exercise that bounty towards these some, I absolutely do not comprehend. But with regard to the divine bounty, and in what sense that is ascribed to God, and what kind of habitude of the divine will it denotes, this is not the place to inquire.

He again says: “If hence it follow that it is necessary that God should give to each his due, it will certainly be necessary that he should give to each of us eternal damnation.”

That punishment belongs not to us, but to God himself, the learned gentleman will afterward acknowledge. But God may give to every one his own, or what is due to every one, in the infliction of punishment, although he do not inflict it on the sinners themselves, but on their surety, substituted in their room and stead. Thus he gives glory to his justice, and does no injury to us: for no one can demand it as his right to be punished; for no one hath a right to require punishment, which is an involuntary evil, but rather becomes subject to the right of another.

To these he replies: “If justice be only the *will* of giving to every one his own, it is not the *necessity* of giving it.”

But here the learned gentleman trifles; for *will* and *necessity* are not opposed, as a thing itself may be prior, and the mode or affection of it posterior, to some other things, either in the first or second act.[183] Neither hath any one defined the justice of God by necessity, although from his justice it is necessary that he should act justly. Though it be the will of God, namely, “to give every one what is his due,”

yet it is a constant and immutable will, which, as it differs not in any respect from the divine essence itself, must exist necessarily; and a proper object for its exercise being supposed, it must necessarily operate, though it act freely.

In the last place, then, this celebrated writer denies that "punishment can properly be called ours, in such a sense that, from his will of giving to every one his own, it should be necessary that God should inflict it upon us sinners;" but he asserts that "it belongs to God, as having the full power either of inflicting or relaxing it." That punishment is ours, or belongs to us, cannot be said with propriety; it must be traced to the source whence it hath its rise, that is, whence it is just that it should be inflicted upon sinners; but this is the just right or righteous judgment of God, Rom. i. 32. Thus far, then, it may be reckoned among the things that belong to God, as it is his justice that requires it should be inflicted. But it does not follow that God has a full power of inflicting it or relaxing it, because in this sense it may be accounted among the things which belong to him. God owes it to himself to have a proper regard to the honour of all his own perfections.

We choose not to enter any farther on the arguments which this learned writer advances, either in his disputations against Lubbertus, or in his answers to his arguments; partly as they coincide with those mentioned before, and have been considered in the vindication of the argument taken from the consideration of God's hatred against sin; and partly as they militate only against a natural and absolute necessity, which in the present case we do not assert.

[173]Namely, Twisse's. — Tr.

[174] A learned protestant divine, who was born in Friesland, and lived 1556–1625. He wrote several works against Bellarmine, Socinus, Arminius, etc., but his best work is said to be "De Papâ Romanâ." — Ed.

[175] Rom. i. 18.

[176] See 1 Cor. xii. 12, etc., “For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ,” etc. — Tr.

[177] 2 Cor. v. 21; Isa. liii. 6.

[178] Rom. i. 32.

[179] See Exod. xxxiv. 7.

[180] Ps. v. 4–6.

[181] Being founded on the words of Scripture. — Tr.

[182] “Objects to the argument on various grounds, which we shall, as briefly as possible, consider in succession.” — Ed.

[183] God’s will of giving to every man his own was from everlasting, justice being an essential attribute of his unchangeable nature; but it is only after the supposition of a rational being that had sinned, that he must necessarily, — that is, from the very principles of his nature, — exercise that will towards sinners, and give them the wages of sin, namely, death. — Tr. The Latin is: “Cum prior res ipsa sit, posterior aliquarum rerum, vel in actu primo vel secundo, modus seu affectio,” — “Since the former is the thing itself, the latter a mode or affection of some things,” etc. — Ed.

Chapter XVI.

Piscator's opinion of this controversy — How far we assent to it — Twisse's arguments militate against it — How God punishes from a natural necessity — How God is a "consuming fire" — God's right, of what kind — Its exercise necessary, from some thing supposed — Whence the obligation of God to exercise it arises — Other objections of Twisse discussed.

The consideration of what our justly celebrated antagonist hath advanced against Piscator,[184] whom he declares to hold the first place among the theologians of the present day, and to shine as far superior to the rest as the moon doth to the lesser stars, shall put an end to this dispute. He has chosen Piscator's notes upon his Collation of Vorstius,[185] as the subject of his consideration and discussion. In general we are inclined to give our voice in favour of the sentiments of Piscator; but as the disciples of Christ ought to call none on earth master in matters of religion, we by no means hold ourselves bound to support all the phrases, arguments, or reasons that he may have used in defence of his opinion. Setting aside, then, all anxious search after words, expressions, and the minutiæ of similes, which I could wish this distinguished writer had paid less attention to, we will endeavour to repel every charge brought against our common and principal cause, and to place this truth, which we have thus far defended, as we are now speedily hastening to a conclusion, beyond the reach of attacks and trouble from its adversaries.

The first argument, then, of Piscator, to which he replies, is taken from that comparison made in Heb. xii. 29, between God in respect of his vindicatory justice and a "consuming fire." From this passage Piscator concludes, "That as fire, from the property of its nature, cannot but burn combustible matter when applied to it, and that by a natural necessity; so God, from the perfection of his justice, cannot but punish sin when committed, — that is, when presented before that

justice." What he asserts, with regard to a natural and absolute necessity, we do not admit; for God neither exerciseth nor can exercise any act towards objects without himself in a natural manner, or as an agent merely natural. He, indeed, is a fire, but rational and intelligent fire. Although, then, it be no less necessary to him to punish sins than it is to fire to bum the combustible matter applied to it, the same manner of operation, however, accords not to him as to fire, for he worketh as an intelligent agent; that is, with a concomitant liberty in the acts of his will, and a consistent liberty in the acts of his understanding. We agree, then, with Piscator in his conclusion, though not in his manner of leading his proof.[186] The objections made to it by the learned Twisse we shall try by the standard of truth.

First, then, he maintains, and with many laboured arguments, that God doth not punish sin from a necessity of nature, which excludes every kind of liberty. But whom do these kinds of arguments affect? They apply not at all to us; for Piscator himself seems to have understood nothing else by a "natural necessity" than that necessity which we have so often discussed, particularly modified: for he says, that "God doth some things by a natural necessity, because by nature he cannot do otherwise." That is, sin being supposed to exist, from the strict demands of that justice which is natural to him, he cannot but punish it, or act otherwise than punish it; although he may do this without any encroachment on his liberty, as his intellectual will is inclined to happiness by a natural inclination, yet wills happiness with a concomitant liberty; for it would not be a will should it act otherwise, as freedom of action is the very essence of the will. But the arguments of Twisse do not oppose this kind of necessity, but that only which belongs to inanimate, merely natural agents, which entirely excludes all sorts of liberty, properly so called.

Let us particularly examine some of this learned gentleman's arguments: "If," says he, "God must punish sin from a necessity of nature, he must punish it as soon as

committed." Granted, were he to act by such a necessity of nature as denotes a necessary principle and mode of acting; but not if by a necessity that is improperly so called, because it is supposed that his nature necessarily requires that he should so act. As, for instance: suppose that he wills to speak, he must, by necessity of his nature, speak truly, for God cannot lie; yet he speaks freely when he speaks truly.

Again: "If," says he, "God punished from a necessity of nature, then, as often as he inflicted punishment, he would inflict it to the utmost of his power, as fire burns with all its force; but this cannot be said without blasphemy."

Here again this learned man draws absurd conclusions from a false supposition. The nature of God requires that he should punish as far as is just, not as far as he is able. It is necessary, sin being supposed to exist, that he should inflict punishment, — not the greatest that he is able to inflict, but as great as his right and justice require; for in inflicting punishment, he proceeds freely, according to the rule of these. It is necessary that the glory of the divine holiness, purity, and dominion should be vindicated; but in *what manner*, at *what time*, in *what degree*, or *by what kind of punishment*, belongs entirely to God, and we are not of his counsels. But I am fully confident that the arguments last urged by this learned gentleman may be answered in one word. I say, then, God punishes according to what is due to sin by the rule of his right, not to what extent he is able. As, for instance: God does not use his omnipotence from an absolute necessity of nature; but supposing that he wills to do any work without himself, he cannot act but omnipotently. Neither, however, doth it hence follow that God acts to the utmost extent of his power, for he might have created more worlds. We do not, then, affirm that God is so bound by the laws of an absolute necessity that, like an insensible and merely natural agent, it would be impossible for him, by his infinite wisdom, to assign, according to the rule and demand of his justice, degrees, modes, duration, and extension of punishment, according to the degrees of

the demerit or circumstances of the sin, or even to transfer it upon the surety, who has voluntarily, and with his own approbation, substituted himself in the room of sinners: but we only affirm that his natural and essential justice indispensably requires that every sin should have its "just recompense of reward;" and were not this the case, a sinful creature might emancipate itself from the power of its Creator and Lord. This very learned man having, according to his usual custom, introduced these preliminary observations, at length advances his answers to Piscator's argument, the nature and quality of which we shall particularly consider. That which he chiefly depends upon, which he forges from the Scripture, that asserts God, in respect of sin, to be a "consuming fire," we have examined in the proof of our second argument, and have shown of how little weight it is to invalidate the force of our argument.

To that asseveration of Abraham, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" he thus answers, "He will do right certainly, but his own right, and will exercise it according to his own free appointment. But without the divine appointment I acknowledge no right to the exercise of which God can be influenced by any kind of necessity."

Ans. That God exerciseth his right, or doeth right, according to his own free appointment, may be admitted in a sound sense; for in that exercise of his right he uses volition and understanding, or, more properly, he hath not appointed or determined so to act, for so to act is natural and essential to him concerning the things about which there is no free determination. It is, indeed, of the free determination of God that any right can be exercised, or any attribute manifested, for he freely decreed to create creatures, over which he hath a right, but he might not have decreed it so; and in every exercise of his right there are certain things, which we have mentioned before, which are not the objects of free determination. But that no right belongs to God without his divine appointment, to the exercise of which he is bound, is asserted without

probability, and appears evidently false; for supposing that God willed to create rational creatures, does it depend upon his free determination that the right of dominion and the exercise of it should belong to him? If so, God might be neither the Lord nor God of his creatures, and a rational creature may be neither creature nor rational; for both its creation and reason suppose a dependence on and subjection to some Lord and Creator. If the right, then, of dominion depended on the free determination of God, then God might freely and justly determine that he would neither have nor exercise such right; for he might determine the contrary of that which he hath freely determined, without any injustice or any incongruity. From himself, then, and not from any one without himself, — that is, from his own nature, — he receives the obligation to exercise his right, both of dominion and of justice. Thus by nature he must speak truly, if he wills to speak.

"But I cannot," says this renowned man, "sufficiently express my astonishment at this very grave divine's assertion,[187] — namely, 'That God, without injury to his justice, may will evil antecedently to whomsoever he pleases;' for which I do not find fault with him, but that he does not assert that God, for the same or a better reason, might do good to a creature, notwithstanding its demerit, by pardoning its sin."

If by "willing evil antecedently" be understood his willing to inflict evil without regard to the demerit of sin, it is a point too intricate for me to determine. If the evil refer *to the infliction of it*, I must differ from this learned doctor. If it refer to the *willing*, the assertion avails not his cause; for if we suppose that God, without doing injury to any one, without dishonouring any of his own attributes, without regard to sin, hath decreed to punish a creature for the sin that it was to commit, would it not thence follow that God might let sin pass unpunished, in despite both of his own glory, and to the entire destruction of the dependence of rational creatures.[188] Nor is the following comment of our

celebrated opponent of any greater weight, — namely, “That God would not be omnipotent if he necessarily punished sin, for thence it would follow that God cannot annihilate a sinful creature which he created out of nothing; which,” says he, “is evidently contrary to omnipotence.”

But how many things are there which this learned gentleman himself acknowledges that God, with respect to his decree, cannot do, without any disparagement to his omnipotence! He could not break the bones of Christ; but the person must be deprived of reason who would assert that this is any diminution of the divine omnipotence. If, then, there be many things which God cannot do, without any the smallest detraction from his omnipotence, because by a free determination he hath decreed not to do them, is he to be thought less omnipotent, so to speak, because he cannot, on account of his justice, let sins committed pass unpunished? Is God not omnipotent because, on account of his nature, he cannot lie? Yea, he would not be omnipotent if he could renounce his right and justice; for to permit a sinful creature to shake off his natural dominion is not a mark of omnipotence but of impotence, than which nothing is more remote from God.

After having brought the dispute thus far, and accurately weighed what remains of Dr Twisse’s answer to Piscator, there seemed to me nothing that could occur to give any trouble to an intelligent reader. As there is no reason, then, either to give farther trouble to the reader or myself on this point, we here conclude the controversy; and this I do with entertaining the strongest hopes that no person of discretion, or who is unacquainted with the pernicious devices which almost everywhere abound, will impute it to me as a matter of blame, that I, a person of no consideration, and so very full, too, of employment, that I could devote only a few leisure hours to this disputation, should have attacked the theological digression of a man so very illustrious and renowned, not only among our own

countrymen, but even in foreign nations, as the attack has been made in the cause of truth.

[184] A learned professor of divinity at Herborn. He was born at Strasburg 1546, and died 1626. He was the author of several commentaries, controversial treatises, and a translation of the Bible into German. — Ed.

[185] "In Collationem Vorstii." The translation is not very intelligible. Vorstius wrote work with this title, "Parasceue ad amicam collationem cum Jo. Piscatore," and Owen refers to Piscator's notes upon it. — Ed.

[186] It is not Piscator's reasoning, but the kind of necessity implied in the reasoning, to which Owen takes exception. The words "nature" and "natural" also occasion considerable ambiguity. Justice is *natural* and *necessary*, according to Owen, in so far as it is not an act of the *will* merely; but he does not hold it to be natural in Piscator's sense, as operating by a blind and physical necessity, apart from the exercise of intelligence and volition, and the existence of an object requiring the manifestation of it. We might render the passage above as follows: "To this extent, then, I adopt Piscator's conclusion, — namely, in so far as he maintains the existence of a necessity, but not as regards the mode or kind of it." — Ed.

[187] Namely, Piscator's. — Tr.

[188] Because if he punished a creature for sin merely because he willed or determined so to do, and not because the nature of sin necessarily so required, he might as easily will the contrary; and, consequently, the subordination of the creature would be entirely subverted. — Tr.

Chapter XVII.

Rutherford reviewed — An oversight of that learned man — His opinion of punitory justice — He contends that divine justice exists in God freely — The consideration of that assertion — This learned writer and Twisse disagree — His first argument — Its answer — The appointment of Christ to death twofold — The appointment of Christ to the mediatorial office an act of supreme dominion — The punishment of Christ an act of punitory justice — An argument of that learned man, easy to answer — The examination of the same — The learned writer proves things not denied — Passes over things to be denied — What kind of necessity we ascribe to God in punishing sins — A necessity upon a condition supposed — What the suppositions are upon which that necessity is founded — A difference between those things which are necessary by a decree and those which are so from the divine nature — The second argument of that learned man — His obscure manner of writing pointed out — Justice and mercy different in respect of their exercise — What it is to owe the good of punitory justice to the universe — This learned man's third argument — The answer — Whether God could forbid sin, and not under the penalty of eternal death — Concerning the modification of punishment in human courts from the divine appointment — The manner of it — What this learned author understands by the "internal court" of God — This learned author's fourth argument — All acts of grace have a respect to Christ — His fifth argument — The answer — A dissertation of the various degrees of punishment — For what reason God may act unequally with equals — Concerning the delay of punishment, and its various dispensations.

The consideration of the arguments advanced by Mr Samuel Rutherford[189] against this truth which we are now maintaining shall conclude this dissertation. He maintains, as I have observed before, "That punitory justice exists not in God by necessity of nature, but freely;" and he has said that Twisse hath proved this by a variety of arguments, one of which, in preference to the others, he builds on, as unanswerable.

But, with this great man's leave, I must tell him that Twisse hath never even said, much less proved, "That punitory justice exists freely in God, and not from a necessity of nature;" nor, indeed, can it be said by any one, with any show of reason, for punitory justice denotes the habit of justice, nor is it less justice because it is punitory. But be assured the accurate Twisse hath never maintained that any habit exists in God freely, and not from a necessity of nature. We have before accounted in what sense habits are ascribed to God. Even the more sagacious Socinians do not fall into such a blunder; but they deny such a habit to exist in God at all, and entirely divest him of this justice. Twisse, indeed, maintains that the exercise of that justice is free to God, but grants that justice itself is a natural attribute of God; the Socinians, that it is only a free act of the divine will. Which party this learned author favours appears not from his words. If by justice he mean the habit, he sides with the Socinians; if the act and exercise, he is of the same opinion with Twisse, although he expresses his sentiments rather unhappily. But let us consider this learned writer's arguments:—

The first, which he acknowledges to be taken from Twisse (the same thing may be said of most of his others), and which he pronounces unanswerable, is this: "God gave up his most innocent Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, to death, in consequence of his punitory justice, and it was certainly in his power not to have devoted him to death, for from no necessity of nature did God devote his Son to death; for if so, then God would not have been God, which is absurd, for of his free love he gave him up to death, John iii. 16; Rom. viii. 32."

As there is no need of a sword to cut this "indissoluble knot," as he calls it, let us try by words what we can do to untie it. I answer, then, The devoting of Christ to death is taken in a twofold sense:— 1. For the appointment of Christ to the office of surety, and to suffer the punishment of our sins in our room and stead. 2. For the infliction of

punishment upon Christ, now appointed our surety, and our delivery through his death being now supposed.

The devoting of Christ to death, considered in the first sense, we deny to be an act of punitory justice, or to have arisen from that justice; for that act by which God destined his Son to the work of mediation, by which, in respect of their guilt, he transferred from us all our sins and laid them upon Christ, are acts of supreme dominion, and breathe love and grace rather than avenging justice. But the punishment of Christ, made sin for us, is an act of punitory justice; nor, upon the supposition that he was received in our room as our surety, could it be otherwise. And although, in drawing such consequences, I think we ought to refrain as to what might be possible, I am not, however, afraid to affirm that God could not have been God, — that is, just and true, — if he had not devoted to death his Son, when thus appointed our mediator.

What shall we say? — that even this learned man was aware of this twofold sense of the phrase, "The devoting of Christ to death?" He either had not thoroughly weighed that distinction, or else he is inconsistent with and shamefully contradicts himself; for in the beginning of the argument he asserts, that "the devoting of Christ to death had its rise from *punitory justice*," but in the end he says it was from "*free love*." But certainly punishing justice is not free love. He must, then, either acknowledge a twofold appointment of Christ to death, or he cannot be consistent with himself. But the passages of Scripture that he quotes evidently mean the appointment of Christ to death, as we have explained it in the first sense of the phrase.

What reason this learned man had for so much boasting of this argument as unanswerable, let the reader determine; to me it appears not only very easily answerable, but far beneath many others that one disputing on such a subject must encounter.

But he introduces some as making answers to his argument, who affirm "That Christ was not innocent, but a sinner by imputation, and made sin for us; and that it was necessary from the essential justice of God, and his authority, as enjoining that he should make atonement for sin in himself and in his own person."[190]

I applaud the prudence of this learned man, who, from *no kind of necessity*, but *freely*, frames answers to his own arguments. Here he has exhibited such a one as nobody but himself would have dreamed of; for although what your crazy disputants, or this learned divine, fighting with himself, say be true, he must, however, be a fool who can believe that it has any relation to the present subject. To those adversaries who urge that "God freely punishes sin because he punished his Son who knew no sin," and who contend that "God may equally not punish the guilty as punish the innocent," we answer, that Christ, though *intrinsically* and *personally innocent*, yet as he was by *substitution*, and consequently legally, guilty, is no instance of the punishment of an innocent person; for he was not punished as the most innocent Son of God. Passing over these things, then, — and indeed they are of no import to the present subject, — he endeavours to prove, by several arguments, that God laid our sins upon Christ by constituting him surety, and from no necessity of nature. But even this effort is of no service to his cause, for this we by no means deny; so that his labour is entirely superfluous. At length, however, in the progress of the dispute, this learned gentleman advances some arguments that seem suitable to his purpose.

"We readily grant," says he, "upon supposition that Christ was made our surety by the decree of God, that he could not be but punished by God, and yet freely, as God created the world of mere free will, though necessarily, in respect of his immutability; for it cannot be that a free action should impose on God a natural or physical necessity of doing any thing."

We have shown before what kind of a necessity we ascribe to God in punishing sins. It is not an inanimate or merely physical necessity, as if God acted from principles of nature, in a manner altogether natural, — that is, without any intervening act of understanding or will; for “he worketh all things according to the counsel of his will.” But it is such a necessity as leaves to God an entire concomitant liberty in acting, but which necessarily, by destroying all antecedent indifference, accomplishes its object, — namely, the punishment of sin, — the justice, holiness, and purity of God so requiring. But this necessity, though it hindereth not the divine liberty, any more than that which is incumbent on God of doing any thing in consequence of a decree, from the immutability of his nature, yet it arises not from a decree, but from things themselves particularly constituted, and not as the other kind of necessity, from a decree only. And, therefore, in those things which God does necessarily, merely from the supposition of a decree, the decree respects the thing to be done, and affects it antecedently to the consideration of any necessity incumbent on him; but in those whose necessity arises from the demand of the divine nature, a decree only supposes a certain condition of things, which being supposed, immediately, and without any consideration of any respect to a decree, it is necessary that one or another consequence should follow. As, for instance: after God decreed that he would create the world, it was impossible that he should not create it, because he is immutable, and the decree immediately respected that very thing, namely, the creation of it. But the necessity of punishing sin arises from the justice and holiness of God, it being supposed that, in consequence of a decree, a rational creature existed, and was permitted to transgress; but he punishes the transgression which he decreed to permit because he is just, and not only because he decreed to punish it. The necessity, then, of creating the world arises from a decree; the necessity of punishing sin, from justice.

"But it is impossible," says Rutherford, "that a free action can impose a natural or physical necessity of doing any thing upon God."

But by a "free action" it can be proved that certain things may be placed in such a condition that God could not but exercise certain acts towards them, on account of the strict demand of some attribute of his nature, though not from a physical and insensible necessity, which excludes all liberty of action; for it being supposed that in consequence of a free decree God willed to speak with man, it is necessary from the decree that he should speak, but that he should speak truth is necessary from the necessity of his nature. Supposing, then, a free action, in which he hath decreed to speak, a natural necessity of speaking truth is incumbent on God, nor can he do otherwise than speak truth. Supposing sin to exist, and that God willed to do any thing with regard to sin (although perhaps this is not in consequence of a decree), it is necessary, by necessity of nature, that he should do justice, — that is, that he should punish it; for the righteous judgment of God is, "That they which commit such things," namely, who commit sin, "are worthy of death." There are certain attributes of the Deity which have no egress but towards certain objects particularly modified, for they do not constitute or create objects to themselves, as other divine attributes do; but these objects being once constituted by a free act of the divine will, they must necessarily, — for such is their nature and manner, — be exercised.

What this learned writer farther adds in support of his argument is founded on a mistaken idea of the subject in question; for as the necessity of punishing sin arises from the right and justice of God, it is by no means necessary that he should punish it in one subject more than in another, but only that he should punish it, and that thereby his right may be restored and his justice satisfied.

The second argument of this learned writer is this: "As God freely has mercy on whom he will, — for he is under

obligation to none, and yet mercy is essential to him, — so God does not by any necessity of nature owe punishment to a sinner. Although, then, man owe obedience to God, or a vicarious compensation by means of punishment, from the necessity of a decree, yet those who say that God, by necessity of nature, owes the good of punitory justice to the universe, which were he not to execute he would not be God, — those, I say, indirectly deny the existence of a God."

Although any one may perceive that these assertions are unsubstantial, unfounded, and more obscure than even the books of the Sibyls, we shall, however, make a few observations upon them. In the first place, then, it must be abundantly clear, from what has been already said, that mercy and justice are different in respect of their exercise, nor need we now farther insist on that point. But how this learned man will prove that sparing mercy, — which, as not only the nature of the thing itself requires, but even the Socinians with the orthodox agree, ought to be viewed in the same light as punitory justice, — is essential to God, when he affirms punitory justice to exist in God freely, I cannot conjecture. But as there is no one who doubts but that God does all things for the glory and manifestation of his own essential attributes, why it should be more acceptable to him, in his administration respecting sin committed, to exercise an act of the will purely free, no excellence of his nature so requiring, than of an essential property,[191] to do in all respects whatsoever he pleaseth, and to spread abroad its glory, it will be difficult to assign a reason. God, I say, has a proper regard for the glory of his attributes; and as mercy earnestly and warmly urges the free pardon of sins, if no attribute of the divine nature required that they should be punished, it is strange that God, by an act of his will entirely free, should have inclined to the contrary. But we have shown before that the Scriptures lay a more sure foundation for the death of Christ.

Secondly, God does not owe to the sinner punishment from a necessity of nature, but he owes the infliction of

punishment on account of sin to his own right and justice, for thence the obligation of a sinner to punishment arises; nor is the debt of obedience in rational creatures resolvable into a decree in any other respect than as it is in consequence of a decree that they are rational creatures.

In the third place, the conclusion of this argument would require even the Delian swimmer's abilities to surmount it. So very puzzling and harsh is the diction, that it is difficult to make any sense of it; for what means that sentence, "That God, by a necessity of nature, owes the good of punitory justice to the universe?" The good of the universe is the glory of God himself. To owe, then, "the good of punitory justice to the universe," is to owe the good of an essential attribute to his own glory. But, again, what is "the good of punitory justice?" Justice itself, or the exercise of it? Neither can be so called with any propriety. But if the learned author mean this, that God ought to preserve his own right and dominion over the universe, and that this is just, his nature so requiring him, but that it cannot be done, supposing sin to exist, without the exercise of punitory justice, and then that those who affirm this indirectly deny the existence of God, — this is easy for any one to assert, but not so easy to prove.

This learned author's third argument is taken from some absurd consequences, which he supposes to follow from our opinion; for he thus proceeds to reason: "Those who teach that sin merits punishment from a necessity of the divine nature, without any intervention of a free decree, teach, at the same time, that God cannot forbid sin to man without necessarily forbidding it under the penalty of eternal death. As if," says he, "when God forbids adultery or theft, in a human court he forbids them with a modification of the punishment, — namely, that theft should not be punished with death, but by a quadruple restitution, — he could not forbid them without any sanction of a punishment; and as he commands these to be punished by men because they are sins, why cannot he for the same reason manage matters so

in his own internal court,[192] and suspend all punishment, and nevertheless forbid the same transgressions?"

A fine show of reasoning; but there is no real solid truth in it, for all is false.

In what sense sin deserves punishment from the necessity of the divine nature, we have already shown at large. Neither, however, do we think ourselves bound to teach that God could not forbid sin but under the penalty of eternal death; for we hold that not one or another kind of punishment is necessary, but that punishment itself is necessary, and the punishment, according to the rule of God's wisdom and justice, is death. Moreover, a rational creature, conscious of its proper subjection and obediential dependence, being created and existing, God did not account it at all necessary to forbid it to sin by a free act of his will, under one penalty or another; for both these follow from the very situation of the creature, and the order of dependence, — namely, that it should not transgress by withdrawing itself from the right and dominion of the Creator, and if it should transgress, that it should be obnoxious and exposed to coercion and punishment. But it being supposed that God should forbid sin by an external legislation, the appointment of punishment, even though there should be no mention made of it, must be coequal with the prohibition.

"But God," says he, "in his human court forbids sin by a modification of the punishment annexed; as, for instance, theft, under the penalty of a quadruple restitution: why may he not do likewise in his own internal court, and consequently suspend all punishment?"

There is no need of much disputation to prove that there is nothing sound or substantial in these arguments. The modification of punishment respects either its appointment or infliction. Punishment itself is considered either in respect of its general end, which is the punishment of transgression, and has a regard to the condition of the

creatures with respect to God; or in respect of some special end, and has a respect to the condition of the creatures among themselves. But whatever modification punishment may undergo, provided it attain its proper end, by accomplishing the object in view, the nature of punishment is preserved no less than if numberless degrees were added to it. As to the establishment of punishment, then, in a human court, as it has not primarily and properly a respect to the punishment of transgression, nor a regard to the condition of the creatures with respect to God, but with respect to one another, that degree of punishment is just which is fit and proper for accomplishing the proposed end.

The punishment, then, of theft by a quadruple restitution had in its appointment no such modification conjoined with it as could render it unfit and improper in respect of the end proposed, among that people to whom that law concerning retributions was given; but as the infliction of punishment, according to the sentence of the law, depended on the supreme Ruler of that people, it belonged to him to provide that no temporal dispensation with punishment exercised by him, in right of his dominion, should turn out to the injury of the commonwealth.

But hence this learned writer concludes, “That in his own internal court God may modify and suspend punishment.”

We can only conjecture what he means by the “internal court” of God. From the justice of God the appointment of punishment is derived; but that is improperly called a court. How far God is at liberty, by this justice, to exercise his power in pardoning sins the Scriptures show. The just right of God is, “that they who commit sin are worthy of death.” “But he may modify the punishment,” says our author. But not even in a human court can any such modification be admitted as would render the punishment useless in respect of its end; nor, in respect of God, do we think any degree or mode of punishment necessary, but such as may answer the end of the punishment, so far as respects the state of the creatures with respect to God. Nor is any argument from a

human court applied to the divine justice, nor from the modification to the suspension for a limited time, nor from a suspension to the total punishment, all which this learned author supposes, of any force.

The sum of the whole is this, as we have laid it down, — That God must necessarily, from his right and justice, inflict punishment on sin, so far as this punishment tends to preserve the state of the creature's dependence on its Creator and proper and natural Lord; so, whatever constitutions or inflictions of punishment, with any particular modification or dispensation, we have admitted, these do not, as the supreme judgment of all is reserved to the destined time, at all operate against our opinion.

The other reasons advanced by this learned author in support of this argument are not of sufficient weight to merit attention. It hath been clearly proved already that the supposition of the pardon of sin, without an intervening satisfaction, implies a contradiction, though not in the terms, in the very thing itself. Nor does it follow that God can without any punishment forgive sin, — to avoid which all rational creatures are indispensably bound from his natural right over them, — because any distinguished action among mankind, to the performance of which they are bound by no law, may be rewarded, there being no threatening of punishments for the neglect of it annexed, that has a respect to a privilege not due.[193] By such consequences, drawn from such arguments, the learned gentleman will neither establish his own opinion nor prejudice ours.

He proceeds, in the fourth place: "God," says he, "worketh nothing without himself from a necessity of nature." This objection hath been already answered by a distinction of necessity into that which is absolute and that which is conditional, nor shall we now delay the reader by repeating what has been said elsewhere. "But to punish sin," says he, "is not in any respect more agreeable to the divine nature than not to punish it; but this is an act of grace and liberty, — that is, an act which God freely exerciseth."

But, according to Rutherford, “it is much more disagreeable,” to speak in his own words, “to the divine nature to punish sin than not to punish it; for not to punish it, or to forgive it, proceeds from that mercy which is essential, but to punish it from that justice which is a free act of the divine will. But such things as are natural and necessary have a previous and weightier influence with God than those which are free and may or may not take place.” Our learned author means, that setting aside the consideration of his free decree, God is indifferent to inflict punishment or not inflict it. But by what argument will he maintain this absurd position? Does it follow from this, that God is said in Scripture to restrain his anger, and not to cut off the wicked? But surely he is not ignorant that such declarations of divine grace have either a respect to Christ, by whom satisfaction for sin was made, or only denote a temporal suspension of punishment, till the day of public and general retribution.

In the fifth place, he maintains “That a natural necessity will admit of no dispensation, modification, or delay; which, however, it is evident that God either uses, or may use, in the punishment of sin.”

Ans. With respect to absolute necessity, which excludes all liberty, perhaps this is true; but with respect to that necessity which we maintain, which admits of a concomitant liberty in acting, it is altogether without foundation. Again: a dispensation with or delay of punishment regards either temporary punishment, with which we grant that God may freely dispense, when the immediate end of that punishment hath not a respect to the creatures in that state of subjection which they owe to God; or eternal punishment, and in respect of that, the time of inflicting it, etc., and freely to appoint it, belong entirely to God; — but that he should inflict the punishment itself is just and necessary.

Nor does that instance, brought from the various degrees of punishment, at all avail him, — namely, “That if God can add or take away one degree of punishment, then he may

two, and so annihilate the whole punishment:" for we are speaking of punishment as it includes in it the nature of punishment, and is ordained to preserve God's right and dominion over his creatures, and to avenge the purity and holiness of God; not of it as, in consequence of the divine wisdom and justice, being this or that kind of punishment, or consisting of degrees. For thus far extends that liberty which we ascribe to God in the exercise of his justice, that it belongs to him entirely to determine, according to the counsel of his will, with regard to the degrees, mode, and time to be observed in the infliction of punishment; and no doubt but a proportion of the punishment to the faults is observed, so that by how much one sin exceeds another in quality, by so much one punishment exceeds another punishment in degree; and in the infliction of punishment, God has a respect to the comparative demerit of sins among themselves. We acknowledge, indeed, that God acts differently with persons in the same situation, but not without a respect to Christ and his satisfaction. The satisfaction of Christ is not, indeed, the procatarctic cause of that decree by which he determined such a dispensation of things; but the mediation of Christ, who was made sin for those to whom their sins are not imputed, is the foundation for the actual administration of the whole of that decree, respecting that part of it which consists in the dispensation of free grace and sparing mercy. What this learned writer adds, namely, "That not to punish is sometimes an act of severe justice, and that therefore God does not punish from a necessity of nature," is grossly sophistical: for not to punish denotes either the total removal of punishment altogether, as is the case with the elect, for whom Christ died, which, so far from being an act of severe justice, this learned man will not deny to proceed from the highest grace and mercy; or it denotes only a suspension of some temporal punishment, and for a short time, to the end that sinners may fill up the measure of their iniquity. But this is not, properly speaking, not to punish, but to punish in a different

manner, and in a manner more severe, than that to which it succeeds.

What observations our learned author adds in the close of his arguments are either sophistical or very untheological. He says, namely, “That God, influenced by our prayers, averts even an eternal punishment after that we have deserved it.” But what! is it to be imputed to our prayers that God averts from us the wrath to come? What occasion is there, pray, then, for the satisfaction of Christ? We have hitherto been so dull and stupid as to believe that the turning away from us of punishment, which has a respect to our faith and prayers, consisted in the dispensation of grace, peace, and the remission of the sins for which Christ made satisfaction, and that God averted from us no deserved punishment but what was laid upon Christ, “who hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, by being made a curse for us.”

In his proofs of the sixth argument, which this learned author adds to his former from Twisse, he says, “There is neither reason nor any shadow of reason in it, that the delay of punishment, or a dispensation with it, as to time and manner, can be determined by the free good pleasure of God, either one way or other, if to punish, or punishment in itself and absolutely considered, be necessary.”

We have explained before what were our sentiments as to what relates to the distinction between punishment simply considered, and attended with particular circumstances in the manner of its infliction. We affirm that a punishment proportioned to sin, according to the rule of the divine justice, from God’s natural right, and from his essential justice and holiness, is necessarily inflicted, to vindicate his glory, establish his government, and preserve his perfections entire and undiminished: and God himself hath revealed to us that this just recompense of reward consists in death eternal; for “the righteous judgment of God is, that they who commit sin are worthy of death.” It is just, then, and consequently necessary, that that punishment of death,

namely, eternal, should be inflicted. But as God, though a consuming fire, is a rational or intellectual fire, who, in exercising the excellencies or qualities of his nature, proceeds with reason and understanding, it is free to him to appoint the time, manner, and suchlike circumstances as must necessarily attend that punishment in general, so as shall be most for his own glory and the more illustrious display of his justice. But when Rutherford says, somewhat dogmatically, that "there is neither any reason nor shadow of reason in this," let us see what solidity there is in the arguments by which he supports his assertion:—

"The determination of an infernal punishment, as to its manner and time, and consequently as to its eternal duration, will then depend on the mere good pleasure of God; therefore, God can determine the end and measure of infernal punishment; and therefore he is able not to punish, and to will not farther to punish, those condemned to eternal torments: therefore, it is not of absolute necessity that he punishes." But here is nothing but dross, as the saying is, instead of a treasure. The time concerning which we speak is of the infliction of punishment, not of its duration. He who asserts that an end may be put to eternal punishments expressly contradicts himself. We say that God hath revealed to us that the punishment due to every sin, from his right and by the rule of his justice, is eternal; nor could the thing in itself be otherwise, for the punishment of a finite and sinful creature could not otherwise make any compensation for the guilt of its sin. But as it is certain that God, in the first threatening, and in the curse of the law, observed a strict impartiality, and appointed not any kind of punishment but what, according to the rule of his justice, sin deserved; and as the apostle testifies, that "the righteous judgment of God is, that they who commit sin are worthy of death;" and we acknowledge that death to be eternal, and that an injury done to God, infinite in respect of the object, could not be punished, in a subject in every respect finite, otherwise than by a punishment infinite in respect of

duration; — that the continuation or suspension of this punishment, which it is just should be inflicted, does not undermine[194] the divine liberty, we are bold to affirm, for it is not free to God to act justly or not. But we have shown before how absurd it is to imagine that the divine omnipotence suffers any degradation, because upon this supposition he must necessarily preserve alive a sinful creature to all eternity, and be unable to annihilate it.

[189] In his book on Providence, chapter xxii. page 345, assert. 6.

[190] "Necessary from the essential justice of God that he should suffer the punishment due to sinners, either in his own proper person, or in that of a surety." — Ed.

[191] Namely, mercy. — Tr.

[192] "Et moderari et suspendere," — "In his own internal court both mitigate and suspend," etc. — Ed.

[193] See Suarez de Legib. Priv.

[194] "Dei libertati non subjacere," — "is not subject to." — Ed.

Chapter XVIII.

The conclusion of this dissertation — The uses of the doctrine herein vindicated — The abominable nature of sin — God's hatred against sin revealed in various ways — The dreadful effects of sin all over the creation — Enmity between God and every sin — Threatenings and the punishment of sin appointed — The description of sin in the sacred Scriptures — To what great miseries we are liable through sin — The excellency of grace in pardoning sin through Christ — Gratitude and obedience due from the pardoned — An historical fact concerning Tigranes, king of Armenia — Christ to be loved for his cross above all things — The glory of God's justice revealed by this doctrine, and also of his wisdom and holiness.

Let us at length put an end to this dispute; and as all "acknowledging of the truth" ought to be "after godliness,"[195] we shall adduce such useful and practical evident conclusions as flow from this truth, which we have thus far set forth and defended, that we may not be thought to have spent our labour in vain.

First, then, Hence we sinners may learn *the abominable nature of sin*. Whatever there is in heaven or in earth that we have seen, or of which we have heard, whatever declares the glory of the Creator, also exposes this disgraceful fall of the creature. The genuine offspring of sin are death and hell; for "sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."[196] That the heavens cast out their native inhabitants, namely, "the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation,"[197] etc; that the earth is filled with darkness, resentments, griefs, malediction, and revenge, — is to be attributed entirely to this cankerous ulcer of nature. Hence "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven;"[198] — the earth, lately founded by a most beneficent Creator, is "cursed."[199] Hence, the old world having but just emerged from the deluge, "the heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire

against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men."[200]

Yea, forasmuch as, in this state of things which we have described as being permitted by the will of God, "the creature was made subject to vanity,"[201] there is none of the creatures which, by its confusion, vanity, and inquietude, does not declare this detestable poison, with which it is thoroughly infected, to be exceeding sinful. This is the source and origin of all evils to sinners themselves. Whatever darkness, tumult, vanity, slavery, fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation to consume the adversaries, oppresses, tortures, harasses, vexes, burns, corrupts, or kills; whatever from without, penal, grievous, sad, dire, dreadful, even the last unavoidable calamity itself, — is all to be attributed to this prolific parent of miseries. Some one, perhaps, will wonder what this so great a plague is, which perverts the course of the creation; what crime, what kind of inexpiable wickedness, that it hath procured to creatures so very highly exalted, and created in the image of God to share in his glory, after being banished from heaven and paradise, an eternal deprivation of his glory, punishment to which no measure or end is appointed; what hath so incensed the mind of the most bountiful and merciful Father of all, and imbittered his anger, that he should bring eternal sorrows on the work of his own hands, and "kindle a fire that should burn to the lowest bottom, and inflame the foundations of the mountains." I will tell him in one word.

Is it to be wondered at, that God should be disposed severely to punish that which earnestly wishes him *not to be God*, and strives to accomplish this with all its might? Sin opposes the divine nature and existence; it is enmity against God, and is not an idle enemy; it has even engaged in a mortal war with all the attributes of God. He would not be God if he did not avenge, by the punishment of the guilty, his own injury. He hath often and heavily complained, in his word, that by sin he is robbed of his glory and honour,

affronted, exposed to calumny and blasphemy; that neither his holiness, nor his justice, nor name, nor right, nor dominion, is preserved pure and untainted: for he hath created all things for his own glory, and it belongs to the natural right of God to preserve that glory entire by the subjection of all his creatures, in their proper stations, to himself. And shall we not reckon that sin is entirely destructive of that order, which would entirely wrest that right out of his hands, and a thing to be restrained by the severest punishments? Let sinners, then, be informed that every the least transgression abounds so much with hatred against God; is so highly injurious to him, and as far as is in its power brands him with such folly, impotence, and injustice; so directly robs him of all his honour, glory, and power, — that if he wills to be God, he can by no means suffer it to escape unpunished. It was not for nothing that on that day on which he made man a living soul, he threatened him with death, even eternal death; that in giving his law he thundered forth so many dread execrations against this fatal evil; that he hath threatened it with such punishment, with so great anger, with fury, wrath, tribulation, and anguish; that with a view to vindicate his own glory, and provide for the salvation of sinners, he made his most holy Son, who was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners," "sin" and a "curse,"[202] and subjected him to that last punishment, the death of the cross, including in it the satisfaction due to his violated law. All these things divine justice required as necessary to the preservation of his honour, glory, wisdom, and dominion. Let every proud complaint of sinners, then, be hushed, for we know that "the judgment of God is according to truth against them that do evil."[203]

But sin, in respect of the creature, is folly, madness, fury, blindness, hardness, darkness, stupor, giddiness, torpor, turpitude, uncleanness, nastiness, a stain, a spot, an apostasy, degeneracy, a wandering from the mark, a turning aside from the right path, a disease, a languor, destruction,

— death. In respect of the Creator, it is a disgrace, an affront, blasphemy, enmity, hatred, contempt, rebellion, — an injury. In respect of its own nature, it is poison, a stench, dung, a vomit, polluted blood, a plague, a pestilence, an abominable, detestable, cursed thing; which, by its most pernicious power of metamorphosing, hath transformed angels into devils, light into darkness, life into death, paradise into a desert, a pleasant, fruitful, blessed world into a vain, dark, accursed prison, and the Lord of all into a servant of servants; which hath rendered man, the glory of God, an enemy to himself, a wolf to others, hateful to God, his own destroyer, the destruction of others, the plague of the world, a monster, and a ruin. Attempting to violate the eternal, natural, and indispensable right of God, to cut the thread of the creature's dependence on the Creator, it introduced with it this world of iniquity.

First, then, to address you who live, or rather are dead, under the guilt, dominion, power, and law of sin, "how shall ye escape the damnation of hell?" The judgment of God is, that they who commit those things to which you are totally given up, and which you cannot refrain from, are "worthy of death." "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God;"[204] since it is "a just thing with him to render to every one according to his works." And who shall deliver you out of his mighty hand? Wherewith can "the wrath to come" be averted? wherewithal can you make atonement to so great a judge? Sacrifices avail nothing; hence those words in the prophet, which express not so much the language of inquiry as of confusion and astonishment: "Wherewithal shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?"[205] Would you attempt an obedience arduous and expensive beyond all credibility? By such dreadful propitiations, by such dire and

accursed sacrifices, at the thought of which human nature shudders, would you appease the offended Deity? You are not the first whom a vain superstition and ignorance of the justice of God hath forced to turn away their ears from the sighs and cries of tender infants, breathing out their very vitals, your own blood, in vain. These furies, which now by starts agitate us within, will, by their vain attempts against the snares of death, torment us to all eternity: for God, the judge of all, will not accept of "sacrifice, or offering, or burnt-offerings for sin;" with these he is not at all delighted; for "the redemption of the soul is precious, and ceaseth for ever."[206] God cannot so lightly esteem or disregard his holiness, justice, and glory, to which your sins have done so great an injury, that he should renounce them all for the sake of hostile conspirators, unless there should be some other remedy quickly provided for us; — unless the judge himself shall provide a lamb for a burnt-offering; unless the gates of a city of refuge shall be quickly opened to you, exclaiming and trembling at the avenging curse of the law; unless you can find access to the horns of the altar. If God be to remain blessed for ever, you must doubtless perish for ever. If, then, you have the least concern or anxiety for your eternal state, hasten, "while it is called To-day," to "lay hold on the hope that is set before you." Give yourselves up entirely to him; receive him "whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, that he might declare his righteousness." But what and how bitter a sense of sin; how deep a humiliation, contrition, and dejection of heart and spirit; what self-hatred, condemnation, and contempt; what great self-indignation and revenge; what esteem, what faith in the necessity, excellence, and dignity of the righteousness and satisfaction of Christ, especially if God hath graciously condescended to bestow his holy Spirit, to convince men's hearts of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment (without whose effectual aid and heart-changing grace even the most apposite remedies applied to this disease will be in vain), and[207] to excite and work such

sentiments concerning the transgression of the divine law, the nature of sin, or the disobedience of the creatures! A persuasion how fit and proper, those who have spiritual eyes will easily perceive.

To those happy persons “whose sins are forgiven, and to whom God will not impute iniquity,” because he hath laid their transgressions upon Christ, the knowledge of this divine truth is as a spur to quicken them to the practice of every virtue and to sincere obedience; for in what high, yea, infinite honour and esteem must God be held by him who, having escaped from the snares of death and the destruction due to him, through his inexpressible mercy, hath thoroughly weighed the nature of sin and the consequences of it, which we have mentioned before! for whosoever shall reflect with himself that such is the quality and nature of sin, and that it is so impiously inimical to God, that unless by some means his justice be satisfied by the punishment of another, he could not pardon it or let it pass unpunished, will ever acknowledge himself indebted to eternal love for the remission of the least transgression, because in inexpressible grace and goodness it hath been forgiven. And hence, too, we may learn how much beyond all other objects of our affection we are bound to love with our heart and soul, and all that is within us, our dear and beloved Deliverer and most merciful Saviour, Jesus Christ, “who hath delivered us from the wrath to come.”

When Tigranes, son of the king of Armenia, had said to Cyrus that he would purchase his wife’s liberty at the price of his life, and she was consequently set free by Cyrus, while some were admiring and extolling one virtue of Cyrus, and some another, she being asked what she most admired in that illustrious hero, answered, “My thoughts were not turned upon him.” Her husband again asking her, “Upon whom, then?” she replied, “Upon him who said that he would redeem me from slavery at the expense of his life.” Is not He, then, to be caressed and dearly beloved, to be contemplated with faith, love, and joy, who answered for our

lives with his own, — devoted himself to punishment, and at the price of his blood, “while we were yet enemies,” purchased us, and rendered us “a peculiar people to himself?” We, now secure, may contemplate in his agony, sweat, tremor, horror, exclamations, prayers, cross, and blood, what is God’s severity against sin, what the punishment of the broken law and curse are. Unless God, the judge and ruler of all, after having thoroughly examined the nature, hearts, breasts, ways, and lives of us all, had thence collected whatever was contrary to his law, improper, unjust, and impure, — whatever displeased the eyes of his purity, provoked his justice, roused his anger and severity, — and laid it all on the shoulders of our Redeemer, and condemned it in his flesh, it had been better for us, rather than to be left eternally entangled in the snares of death and of the curse, never to have enjoyed this common air, but to have been annihilated as soon as born. “Wretched men that we are, who shall deliver us” from this most miserable state by nature? “Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” May we always, then, be “sick of love” towards our deliverer! may he always be our “beloved, who is white and ruddy, and the chiefest among ten thousand!”

The acknowledging of this truth has a respect not only to the manifestation of his justice, but also of the wisdom, holiness, and dominion of God over his creatures: for that justice which, in respect of its effect and egress, we call vindicatory, which, as we have before demonstrated, is natural to God and essential, and therefore absolutely perfect in itself, or rather perfection itself, this very truth, which we have thus far defended, evidently illustrates; as also his supreme rectitude in the exercise of it, “when he sits on his throne judging righteously;” and how severe a judge he will be towards impenitent sinners, whose sins are not expiated in the blood of Christ! That justice is not a free act of the divine will, which God may use or renounce at pleasure; nor is sin only a debt of ours, which, as we were

unable to pay, he might forgive by only freely receding from his right: for what reason, then, could be assigned why the Father of mercies should so severely punish his most holy Son on our account, that he might, according to justice, deliver us from our sins, when, without any difficulty, by one act of his will, and that too a most free and holy act, he could have delivered both himself and us wretched sinners from this evil? But it exists in God in the manner of a habit, natural to the divine essence itself, perpetually and immutably inherent in it, which, from his very nature, he must necessarily exercise in every work that respecteth the proper object of his justice; for sin is that ineffable evil which would overturn God's whole right over his creatures unless it were punished. As, then, the perfection of divine justice is infinite, and such as God cannot by any means relax, it is of the last importance to sinners seriously and deeply to bethink themselves how they are to stand before him.

Moreover, the infinite wisdom of God, the traces of which we so clearly read in creation, legislation, and in the other works of God, is hereby wondrously displayed, to the eternal astonishment of men and angels; for none but an infinitely wise God could bring it about, that that which in its own nature is opposite to him, inimical, and full of obstinacy, should turn out to his highest honour, and the eternal glory of his grace. Yea, the divine wisdom not only had respect to God himself, and to the security of his glory, honour, right, and justice, but even provided for the good of miserable sinners, for their best interests, exaltation, and salvation, and from the empoisoned bowels of sin itself. "Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness." By interposing a surety and covenant-head between sin and the sinner, between the transgression of the law and its transgressor, he condemned and punished sin, restored the law, and freed the sinner both from sin and from the law. "He hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence," Eph. i. 8, when he "made all men see what is

the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God," chap. iii. 9; for "in Christ are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," Col. ii. 2, 3.

It will be for ever esteemed a miracle of God's providence, that he should have made the captivity or wicked sale of Joseph, by means of so many windings, perplexed mazes, and strange occurrences, issue at last in his own exaltation and the preservation of his brethren, who impiously sold him. But if any one, though endowed with the tongues of angels and of men, should attempt to describe this mystery of divine wisdom, whereby it is evident that God exalts his own name, and not only recovers his former honour, but even raises it, manifests his justice, preserves inviolable his right and dominion in pardoning sin, wherewith he is highly pleased and incredibly delighted (and unless this heavenly discovery, a truly God-like invention, had intervened, he could not have pardoned even the least sin), he must feel his language not only deficient, but the eye of the mind, overpowered with light, will fill him with awe and astonishment. That that which is the greatest, yea, the only disgrace and affront to God, should turn out to his highest honour and glory; that that which could not be permitted to triumph without the greatest injury to the justice, right, holiness, and truth of God, should find grace and pardon, to the eternal and glorious display of justice, right, holiness, and truth, — was a work that required infinite wisdom, an arduous task, and every way worthy of God.

Finally, Let us constantly contemplate in the mirror of this truth the holiness of God, whereby "he is of purer eyes than to behold evil," in "whose presence the wicked shall not stand," that we ourselves may become more pure in heart, and more holy in life, speech, and behaviour.

[195] Tit. i. 5.

[196] James i. 15.

[197] Jude 6.

[198] Rom. i. 18.

[199] Gen. iii. 17.

[200] 2 Pet. iii. 7.

[201] Rom. viii. 20.

[202] Heb. vii. 26; 2 Cor. v. 21; Gal. iii. 13.

[203] Rom. ii. 2.

[204] Heb. x. 31.

[205] Mic. vi. 6, 7.

[206] Ps. xlix. 8.

[207] From the figure of notation to the close of the paragraph, the sense of the author has been entirely misapprehended. Read, “must be excited and kept alive by such a fit and adequate view respecting the transgression of the divine law, the nature of sin, or the disobedience of the creature, — those who have spiritual eyes will easily perceive.” — Ed.

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