

scheme, and are praised by Eichhorn for the acuteness and depth they often display.* In these, among his other deviations from the general orthodoxy of Christendom, Socinus astonished mankind by denying the evidences of natural religion, resolving our knowledge even of a deity into revelation. This paradox is more worthy of those who have since adopted it, than of so acute a reasoner as Socinus.¹ It is, in fact, not very congenial to the spirit of his theology, which, rejecting all it thinks incompatible with reason as to the divine attributes, should at least have some established notions of them upon rational principles. The later Socinians, even those nearest to the time, did not follow their master in this part of his tenets.² The treatise of Volkelius, son-in-law of Socinus, *De vera Religione*, is chiefly taken from the latter's writings. It was printed at Racow in 1633, and again in Holland in 1641; but most of the Dutch impression having been burned by order of the magistrates, it is a very scarce book, and copies were formerly sold at great prices. But the hangman's bonfire has lost its charm; and forbidden books, when they happen to occur, are no longer in much request. The first book out of five in this volume of Volkelius, on the attributes of God, is by Crellius.

40. Crellius was, perhaps, the most eminent of the Racovian school in this century.³ Many of its members, like himself, were Germans, their sect having gained ground in some of the Lutheran states about this time, as it did also in the United Provinces. Grotius broke a lance with him in his treatise *De Satisfactione Christi*, to which he replied in another with the same title. Each retired from the field with

* Eichhorn, vi. part 1, p. 283. Simon, however, observes that Socinus knew little Greek or Hebrew, as he owns himself, though he pretends to decide questions which require a knowledge of these languages. I quote from *Bibliothèque Universelle*, vol. xxiii. p. 498.

¹ Tillotson, in one of his sermons (I cannot give the reference, writing from memory), dissents, as might be expected, from this denial of natural religion, but with such encomiums on Socinus as some archbishops would have avoided.

² Socinum sectæ ejus principes nuper VOL. II.

Volkelius, nunc Ruarus non probant, in eo quod circa Dei cognitionem petita e natura rerum argumenta abdicaverit. Grot. Epist. 964. See, too, Ruari Epist. p. 210.

³ Dupin praises Volkelius highly, but says of Crellius, Il avoit beaucoup étudié, mais il n'étoit pas un esprit fort élevé. *Bibl. des Auteurs séparés*, li. 614, v. 628. Simon, on the contrary (*ubi supra*), praises Crellius highly, and says no other commentator of his party is comparable to him.

the courtesies of chivalry towards his antagonist. The Dutch Arminians in general, though very erroneously supposed to concur in all the leading tenets of the Racovian theologians, treated them with much respect.^f Grotius was often reproached with the intimacies he kept up among these obnoxious sectaries; and many of his letters, as well as those of Curcellæus and other leading Arminians, bear witness to the personal regard they felt for them.^g Several proofs of this will be also found in the epistles of Ruarus, a book which throws much light on the theological opinions of the age. Ruarus was a man of acuteness, learning, and piety, not wholly concurring with the Racovians, but not far removed from them.^h The Commentaries of Grotius on

^f The Remonstrants refused to anathematise the Socinians, Episcopi says, on account of the apparent arguments in their favour, and the differences that have always existed on that head. *Apologia Confessionis. Episc. Op. vol. i.* His own tenets were probably what some would call Arian; thus he says, *Personis his tribus divinitatem tribui, non collateraliter aut co-ordinatè, sed subordinatè. Inst. Theol. l. iv. c. 2, 32.* Grotius says, he finds the Catholics more tractable about the Trinity than the Calvinists.

^g Grotius never shrunk from defending his intimacy with Ruarus and Crellius, and, after praising the former, concludes, in one of his letters, with this liberal and honest sentiment: *Ego vero ejus sum animi, ejusque instituti, ut mihi cum hominibus cunctis præcipue cum Christianis quantumvis errantibus necessitudinis aliquid putem intercedere, idque me neque dictis neque factis pigeat demonstrare. Epist. 869.* *Hæretici nisi aliquid haberent veri ac nobiscum commune, jam hæretici non essent. 2da Series, p. 873.* *Nihil veri eo factum est deterius, quod in Id Socinus incidit. P. 880.* This, he thought, was the case in some questions, where Socinus, without designing it, had agreed with antiquity. *Neque me pudeat consentire Socino, si quando is in veram veteremque sententiam incidit, ut sanè fecit in controversia de justitia per fidem, et aliis nonnullis. Id. p. 797.* *Socinus hoc non agens in antiquæ ecclesiæ sensus nonnunquam incidit, et*

eas partes, ut ingenio valebat, percoluit feliciter. Admiscuit alia quæ etiam vera dicenti auctoritatem detraxere. Epist. 966. Even during his controversy with Crellius he wrote to him in a very handsome manner. *Bene autem in epistola tua, quæ mihi longè gratissima adventit, de me judicas, non esse me eorum in numero, qui ob sententias salva pietate dissentientes, alieno a quoquam sim animo, aut boni alicujus amicitiam repudiare. Etiam in libro de vera religione [Volkelli], quem jam percurri, relecturus et posthac, multa invenio summo cum judicio observata; illud vero sæculo gratulor, repertos homines, qui neququam in controversiis subtilibus tantum ponunt, quantum in vera vitæ emendatione, et quotidiano ad sanctitatem profectu. Epist. 280. (1631.)* He wrote with kindness and regret on the breaking up of the establishment at Racow in 1638. *Ep. 1066.* Grotius has been as obnoxious on the score of Socinianism as of Popery. His Commentaries on the Scriptures are taxed with it, and in fact he is not in good odour with any but the Arminian divines, nor do they, we see, wholly agree with him.

^h Ruarus nearly agreed with Grotius as to the atonement; at least the latter thought so. *De satisfactione ita mihi respondit, ut nihil admodum controversiæ relinqueretur. Grot. Epist. 2da Series, p. 881.* See also Ruari Epistola, p. 148, 282. He paid also more respect to the second century than some of his

the Scriptures have been also charged with Socinianism; but he pleaded that his interpretations were those of the fathers.

41. Two questions of great importance, which had been raised in the preceding century, became ^{Erastian-} still more interesting in the present, on account ^{ism} of the more frequent occasion that the force of circumstances gave for their investigation, and the greater names that were engaged in it. Both of these arose out of the national establishment of churches, and their consequent relation to the commonwealth. One regarded the power of the magistrate over the church he recognised; the other involved the right of his subjects to dissent from it by nonconformity, or by a different mode of worship.

42. Erastus, by proposing to substitute for the ancient discipline of ecclesiastical censures, and especially for

brethren, p. 100, 439, and even struggles to agree with the Ante-Nicene fathers, though he cannot come up to them, p. 275, 296. But in answer to some of his correspondents who magnified primitive authority, he well replies: *Deinde quare quis illos fixit veritati terminos? quis duo illa prima secula ab omni errore absolvit? Annon ecclesiastica historia satis testatur, nonnullas opiniones portentosas jam tum inter eos qui nomen Christi dederant, invaluisse? Quin ut verum fatear, res ipsa docet nonnullos posterioris avi acutius in enodandis Scripturis versatos; et ut de nostra etate dicam, valde me penitet Calvini vestri ac Beze si nihilo solidius sacras literas interpretarentur, quam video illos ipsos, quos tu mihi obducis, fecisse.* P. 183. He lamented the fatal swerving from Protestantism into which reverence for antiquity was leading his friend Grotius: *fortassis et antiquitatis veneratio, que gravibus quibusdam Pontificiorum erroribus preluxit, ultra lineam eum perduxit,* p. 277 (1642); and in answer to Mersenne, who seems to have had some hopes of his conversion, and recommended to him the controversy of Grotius with Rivet, he plainly replies that the former had extenuated some things in the church of Rome which ought to be altered. P. 253. This he frequently

laments in the course of his letters, but, in comparison with some of the sterner Socinians, treats him with gentleness. It is remarkable that even he and Crellius seem to have excluded the members of the church of Rome, except the "*vulgus ineruditum et Cassandri gregales,*" from salvation; and this while almost all churches were anathematising themselves in the same way. Ruar. *Epist.* p. 9, and p. 167.

This book contains two centuries of epistles, the second of which is said to be very scarce, and I doubt whether many have read the first, which must excuse my quotations. The learning, sense, and integrity of Ruarus, as well as the high respect which Calixtus, Curcellaeus, and other great men felt for him, render the book of some interest. He tells us that while he was in England, about 1617, a professorship at Cambridge was offered to him worth 100*l.* per annum, besides as much more from private pupils. P. 71. But he probably mistook the civil speeches of individuals for an offer: he was not eminent enough for such a proposal on the part of the university; and at least he must have been silent about his Socinianism. The morality of the early Socinians was very strict and even ascetic, proofs of which appear in three letters. P. 306, et alibi.

excommunication, a perpetual superintendence of the maintained civil power over the faith and practice of the church, had given name to a scheme generally denominated Erastianism, though in some respects far broader than anything he seems to have suggested. It was more elaborately maintained by Hooker in his Ecclesiastical Polity, and had been, in fact, that on which the English reformation under Henry was originally founded. But as it was manifestly opposed to the ultramontane pretensions of the see of Rome, and even to the more moderate theories of the Catholic church, being, of course, destructive of her independence, so did it stand in equal contradiction to the presbyterian scheme of Scotland and of the United Provinces. In the latter country, the States of Holland had been favourable to the Arminians, so far at least as to repress any violence against them; the clergy were exasperated and intolerant; and this raised the question of civil supremacy, in which Grotius by one of his early works, entitled *Pietas Ordinum Hollandiæ*, published in 1613, sustained the right of the magistrate to inhibit dangerous controversies.

43. He returned, after the lapse of some years, to the same theme in a larger and more comprehensive work, *De Imperio Summarum Potestatum circa Sacra*. It is written upon the Anglican principles of regal supremacy, which had, however, become far less popular with the rulers of our church, than in the days of Cranmer, Whitgift, and Hooker. After stating the question, and proving the ecclesiastical power of the magistrate by natural law, Scripture, established usage, agreement of Heathen and Christian writers, and the reason of the thing, he distinguishes control over sacred offices from their exercise, and proceeds to inquire whether the magistrate may take the latter on himself; which, though practised in the early ages of the world, he finds inconvenient at present, the manners required for the regal and sacerdotal character being wholly different.^b

44. Actions may be prescribed or forbidden by natural divine law, positive divine law, or human law; the latter extending to nothing but what is left indefinite by the

His treatise
on ecclesiastical
power of
the state.

^b Cap. 4.

other two. But though we are bound not to act in obedience to human laws which contradict the divine, we are also bound not forcibly to resist them. We may defend ourselves by force against an equal, not against a superior, as he proves, first, from the Digest, and, secondly, from the New Testament.^c Thus the rule of passive obedience is unequivocally laid down. He meets the recent examples of resistance to sovereigns, by saying that they cannot be approved where the kings have had an absolute power; but where they are bound by compact or the authority of a senate or of estates, since their power is not unlimited, they may be resisted on just grounds by that authority.^d "Which I remark," he proceeds to say, "lest any one, as I sometimes have known, should disgrace a good cause by a mistaken defence."

45. The magistrate can alter nothing which is definitely laid down by the positive law of God; but he may regulate the circumstantial observance even of such; and as to things undefined in Scripture he has plenary jurisdiction, such as the temporalities of the church, the convocation of synods, the election of pastors. The burden of proof lies on those who would limit the civil power by affirming anything to be prescribed by the divine law.^e The authority attributed in Scripture to churches does not interfere with the power of the magistrate, being persuasive and not coercive. The whole church has no coercive power by divine right.^f But since the visible church is a society of divine institution, it follows that whatever is naturally competent to a lawful society is competent also to the church, unless it can be proved to be withdrawn from it.^g It has, therefore, a legislative government (*regimen constitutum*), of which he gives the institution of the Lord's day as an example. But this does not impair the sovereign's authority in ecclesiastical matters. In

^c Cap. 3.

^d *Sin alicubi reges tales fuere, qui pactis sive positivis legibus et senatus alicujus aut ordinum decretis adstringerentur, in hos, ut summum imperium non obtinent, arma ex optimatum tanquam superiorum sententia sumi iustis de causis poterunt.* Ibid.

^e Cap. 3.

^f Cap. 4.

^g *Quandoquidem ecclesia custos est divina lege non permissus tantum sed et institutus, de aspectabili costu loquor, sequitur ea omnia que costibus legitimis naturaliter competunt, etiam ecclesie competere, quatenus adempta non probatur.* Ibid.

treating of that supremacy, he does not clearly show what jurisdiction he attributes to the magistrate; most of his instances relating to the temporalities of the church, as to which no question is likely to arise.^b But on the whole he means undoubtedly to carry the supremacy as far as is done in England.

46. In a chapter on the due exercise of the civil supremacy over the church, he shows more of a Protestant feeling than would have been found in him when he approached the latter years of his life;^c and declares fully against submission to any visible authority in matters of faith, so that sovereigns are not bound to follow the ministers of the church in what they may affirm as doctrine. Ecclesiastical synods he deems often useful, but thinks the magistrate is not bound to act with their consent, and that they are sometimes pernicious.^k The magistrate may determine who shall compose such synods^m—a strong position, which he endeavours to prove at great length. Even if the members are elected by the church, the magistrate may reject those whom he reckons unfit; he may preside in the assembly, confirm, reject, annul its decisions. He may also legislate about the whole organisation of the established church.ⁿ It is for him to determine what form of religion shall be publicly exercised—an essential right of sovereignty as political writers have laid it down. And this is confirmed by experience; “for if any one shall ask why the Romish religion flourished in England under Mary, the Protestant under Elizabeth, no cause can be assigned but the pleasure of these queens, or, as some might say, of the queens and parliaments.” To the objection from the danger of abuse in conceding so much power to the sovereign, he replies that no other

^b Cap. 5.

^c Cap. 6. He states the question to be this: An post apostolorum aetatem aut persona aut certus sit aliquis aspeclabilis, de qua quove certi esse possimus ac debeamus, quæcunque ab ipsis proponantur, esse indubitata veritatis. Negant hoc Evangelici; aiunt Romanenses.

^k Cap. 7.

^m Designare eos, qui ad synodum sunt venturi.

ⁿ Cap. 8. Nulla in re magis elucescit

vis summi Imperii, quam quod in ejus arbitrio est quam religio publicè exerceatur, idque præcipuum inter majestatis jura ponunt omnes qui politicè scripserunt. Docet idem experientia; si enim quæras cur in Anglia Maria regnante Romana religio, Elizabetha vero imperante, Evangelica vigerit, causa proxima reddi non poterit, nisi ex arbitrio reginarum, aut, ut quibusdam videtur, reginarum ac parlamenti. P.

theory will secure us better. On every supposition the power must be lodged in men, who are all liable to error. We must console ourselves by a trust in Divine Providence alone.^o

47. The sovereign may abolish false religions and punish their professors, which no one else can. Here again we find precedents instead of arguments; but he says that the primitive church disapproved of capital punishments for heresy, which seems to be his main reason for doing the same. The sovereign may also enjoin silence in controversies, and inspect the conduct of the clergy without limiting himself by the canons, though he will do well to regard them. Legislation and jurisdiction, that is, of a coercive nature, do not belong to the church, except as they may be conceded to it by the civil power.^p He fully explains the various kinds of ecclesiastical law that have been gradually introduced. Even the power of the keys, which is by divine right, cannot be so exercised as to exclude the appellat jurisdiction of the sovereign; as he proves by the Roman law, and by the usage of the parliament of Paris.^q

48. The sovereign has a control (*inspectionem cum imperio*) over the ordination of priests, and certainly possesses a right of confirmation, that is, the assignment of an ordained minister to a given cure.^r And though the election of pastors belongs to the church, this may, for good reasons, be taken into the hands of the sovereign. Instances in point are easily found, and the chapter upon the subject contains an interesting historical summary of this part of ecclesiastical law. In every case the sovereign has a right of annulling an election, and also of removing a pastor from the local exercise of his ministry.^s

49. This is the full development of an Erastian theory, which Cranmer had early espoused, and which Hooker had maintained in a less extensive manner. Bossuet has animadverted upon it, Remark upon this theory nor can it appear tolerable to a zealous churchman.^t It

^o Cap. 8.

^p *Ibid.*

^q Cap. 9. ^r

^s *Ibid.*

^t Cap. 10. *Confirmationem hanc summe potestati acceptam ferendam nemo sanus negaverit.*

^u See *Le Clerc's* remarks on what Bossuet has said. *Bibliothèque Choisie* p. 349.

was well received in England by the lawyers, who had always been jealous of the spiritual tribunals, especially of late years, when under the patronage of Laud they had taken a higher tone than seemed compatible with the supremacy of the common law. The scheme, nevertheless, is open to some objections, when propounded in so unlimited a manner, none of which is more striking than that it tends to convert differences of religious opinion into crimes against the state, and furnishes bigotry with new arguments as well as new arms in its conflict with the free exercise of human reason. Grotius, however, feared rather that he had given too little power to the civil magistrate than too much.^a

50. Persecution for religious heterodoxy, in all its degrees, was in the sixteenth century the principle, as well as the practice, of every church. It was held inconsistent with the sovereignty of the magistrate to permit any religion but his own; inconsistent with his duty to suffer any but the true. The edict of Nantes was a compromise between belligerent parties; the toleration of the dissidents in Poland was nearly of the same kind; but no state powerful enough to restrain its sectaries from the exercise of their separate worship had any scruples about the right and obligation to do so. Even the writers of that century, who seemed most strenuous for toleration, Castalio, Celso, and Koornhert, had confined themselves to denying the justice of penal, and especially of capital inflictions for heresy; the liberty of public worship had but incidentally, if at all, been discussed. Acontius had developed larger principles, distinguishing the fundamental from the accessory doctrines of the Gospel;

^a Ego multo magis vereor, ne minus quam par est magistratibus, aut plusquam par est pastoribus tribuerim, quam ne in alteram partem iterum (?) exacersem, nec sic quidem illis satisfaciet qui se ecclesiam vocant. *Epist.* 42. This was in 1614, after the publication of the *Pietas Ordinum Hollandiæ*. As he drew nearer to the church of Rome, or that of Canterbury, he must probably have somewhat modified his Erastianism. And yet he seems never to have been friendly to the temporal power of bishops. He

writes in August, 1641, *Episcopis Angliæ videtur mansurum nomen prope sine re, accesa et opulenta et auctoritate. Mihi non displicet ecclesiæ pastores et ab inani pompa et a curis secularium rerum sublevari.* P. 1011. He had a regard for Laud, as the restorer of a reverence for primitive antiquity, and frequently laments his fate; but had said, in 1640. *Doleo quod episcopi nimium intendendo potentia suæ nervos odium sibi potius quam amorem populorum pariunt.* Ep. 1390.

which, by weakening the associations of bigotry, prepared the way for a Catholic tolerance. Episcopus speaks in the strongest terms of the treatise of Acontius, *De Stratagematibus Satanae*, and says that the remonstrants trod closely in his steps, as would appear by comparing their writings; so that he shall quote no passages in proof, their entire books bearing witness to the conformity.*

51. The Arminian dispute led by necessary consequence to the question of public toleration. They sought at first a free admission to the pulpits, and in an excellent speech of Grotius, addressed to the magistrates of Amsterdam in 1616, he objects to a separate toleration as rending the bosom of the church. But it was soon evident that nothing more could be obtained; and their adversaries refused this. They were driven, therefore, to contend for religious liberty, and the writings of Episcopus are full of this plea. Against capital punishments for heresy he raises his voice with indignant severity, and asserts that the whole Christian world abhorred the fatal precedent of Calvin in the death of Servetus.⁷ This indicates a remarkable change already wrought in the sentiments of mankind. No capital punishments for heresy seem to have been inflicted in Protestant countries after this time; nor were they as frequently or as boldly vindicated as before.²

* Episcop. Opera, i. 301 (edit. 1665).

⁷ Calvinus signum primum extulit supra alios omnes, et exemplum dedit in theatro Gebennensi fucitissimum, quodque Christianus orbis merito execratur et abominatur; nec hoc contentus tam atroci facinore, cruento simul animo et calamo parentavit. *Apologia pro Confessa. Remonstrantium*, c. 24, p. 241. The whole passage is very remarkable, as an indignant reproof of a party who, while living under popish governments, cry out for liberty of conscience, and deny the right of punishing opinions; yet in all their writings and actions, when they have the power, display the very opposite principles. [The council of Geneva, in 1632, little ashamed of the death of Servetus, had condemned one

Nicolas Antoine to be strangled and burned for denying the Trinity. *Bibliothèque Raisonnée*, ii. 156. I do not distinctly recollect any later case in Protestant countries of capital punishment for mere heresy.—1842.]

² De hæreticorum poenis quæ scripsi, in his mecum sentit Gallia et Germania, ut puto, omnis. *Grot. Epist.*, p. 941 (1642). Some years sooner there had been remains of the heaven in France. *Adversus hæreticidia*, he says in 1626, satis ut arbitror plane locutus sum, certe ita ut hic multos ob id offenderim. P. 789. Our own Fuller, I am sorry to say, in his *Church History*, written about 1650, speaks with some disapprobation of the sympathy of the people with Legat and Wightman, burned by James I. in 1614;

52. The Independents claim to themselves the honour of having been the first to maintain the principles of general toleration, both as to freedom of worship and immunity from penalties for opinion. But that the Arminians were not as early promulgators of the same noble tenets seems not to have been proved. Crellius, in his *Vindiciæ pro Religionis Libertate*, 1636, contended for the Polish dissidents, and especially for his own sect.^a The principle is implied, if not expressed, in the writings of Chillingworth, and still more of Hales; but the first famous plea in this country for tolerance in religion, on a comprehensive basis and on deep-seated foundations, was the *Liberty of Prophecy* by Jeremy Taylor. This celebrated work was written, according to Taylor's dedication, during his retirement in Wales, whither he was driven, as he expresses it, "by this great storm which hath dashed the vessel of the church all in pieces," and published in 1647. He speaks of himself as without access to books; it is evident, however, from the abundance of his quotations, that he was not much in want of them; and from this, as well as other strong indications, we may reasonably believe, that a considerable part of his treatise had been committed to paper long before.

53. The argument of this important book rests on one leading maxim, derived from the Arminian divines, as it was in them from Erasmus and Acontius, that the fundamental truths of Christianity are comprised in narrow compass, not beyond the Apostles' creed in its literal meaning; that all the rest is matter of disputation, and too uncertain, for the most part, to warrant our condemning those who differ from us, as if their error must be criminal. This one proposition, much expanded, according to Taylor's

and this is the more remarkable, as he is a well-natured and not generally bigoted writer. I should think he was the latest Protestant who has tarnished his name by such sentiments.

^a This short tract, which will be found among the collected works of Crellius, in the *Bibliotheca Fratrum Polonorum*, contains a just and temperate pleading

for religious liberty, but little which can appear very striking in modern times. It is said, nevertheless, to have been translated and republished by D'Holbach about 1760. This I have not seen, but there must, I presume, have been a good deal of *condiment* added to make it stimulating enough for his school.

diffuse style, and displayed in a variety of language, pervades the whole treatise, a small part of which, in comparison with the rest, bears immediately on the point of political toleration, as a duty of civil governments and of churches invested with power. In the greater portion, Taylor is rather arguing against that dogmatism of judgment which induces men, either singly or collectively, to pronounce with confidence where only a varying probability can be attained. This spirit is the religious, though not entirely the political, motive of intolerance; and by chasing this from the heart, he inferred, not that he should lay wide the door to universal freedom, but dispose the magistrate to consider more equitably the claims of every sect. "Whatsoever is against the foundation of faith, or contrary to good life and the laws of obedience, or destructive to human society and the public and just interests of bodies politic, is out of the limits of my question, and does not pretend to compliance or toleration; so that I allow no indifference, nor any countenance to those religions whose principles destroy government, nor to those religions, if there be any such, that teach ill life."

54. No man, as Taylor here teaches, is under any obligation to believe that in revelation, which is not so revealed but that wise men and good men have differed in their opinions about it. Boldness of his doctrines. And the great variety of opinions in churches, and even in the same church, "there being none that is in prosperity," as he with rather a startling boldness puts it, "but changes her doctrines every age, either by bringing in new doctrines, or by contradicting her old," shows that we can have no term of union, but that wherein all agree, the creed of the apostles.^b And hence, though we may undoubtedly carry on our own private inquiries as much farther as we see reason, none who hold this fundamental faith are to be esteemed heretics, nor liable to punishment. And here he proceeds to

^b "Since no churches believe themselves infallible, that only excepted which all other churches say is most of all deceived, it were strange if, in so many articles, which make up their several bodies of confessions, they had

not mistaken, every one of them, in some thing or other." This is Taylor's fearless mode of grappling with his argument; and any other must give a church that claims infallibility the advantage.

reprove all those oblique acts which are not direct persecutions of men's persons, the destruction of books, the forbidding the publication of new ones, the setting out fraudulent editions and similar acts of falsehood, by which men endeavour to stifle or prevent religious inquiry. "It is a strange industry and an importune diligence that was used by our forefathers: of all those heresies which gave them battle and employment, we have absolutely no record or monument, but what themselves who are adversaries have transmitted to us; and we know that adversaries, especially such who observed all opportunities to discredit both the persons and doctrines of the enemy, are not always the best records or witnesses of such transactions. We see it now in this very age, in the present distemperatures, that parties are no good registers of the actions of the adverse side; and if we cannot be confident of the truth of a story now, now I say that it is possible for any man, and likely that the interested adversary will discover the imposture, it is far more unlikely that after ages should know any other truth, but such as serves the ends of the representers."^c

55. None were accounted heretics by the primitive church, who held by the Apostles' creed, till the council of Nice defined some things, rightly, indeed, as Taylor professes to believe, but perhaps with too much alteration of the simplicity of ancient faith, so that "he had need be a subtle man who understands the very words of the new determinations." And this was carried much farther by later councils, and in the Athanasian creed, of which, though protesting his own persuasion in its truth, he intimates not a little disapprobation. The necessary articles of faith are laid down clearly in Scripture; but no man can be secure, as to mysterious points, that he shall certainly understand and believe them in their true sense. This he shows, first, from the great discrepancy of readings in manuscripts (an argument which he overstates in a very uncritical and incautious manner), next, from the different senses the words will bear, which there is no certain mark to distinguish, the infinite

His notions
of uncertainty
in
theological
tenets.

^c Vol. vii. p. 424. Heber's edition of Taylor.

variety of human understandings, swayed, it may be, by interest, or determined by accidental and extrinsical circumstances, and the fallibility of those means by which men hope to attain a clear knowledge of scriptural truth. And after exposing, certainly with no extenuation, the difficulties of interpretation, he concludes that since these ordinary means of expounding Scripture are very dubious, "he that is the wisest, and by consequence the likeliest to expound truest, in all probability of reason, will be very far from confidence; and therefore a wise man would not willingly be prescribed to by others; and if he be also a just man, he will not impose upon others; for it is best every man should be left in that liberty, from which no man can justly take him, unless he could secure him from error; so here there is a necessity to conserve the liberty of prophesying and interpreting Scripture; a necessity derived from the consideration of the difficulty of Scripture in questions controverted, and the uncertainty of any internal medium of interpretation."

56. Taylor would in much of this have found an echo in the advocates of the church of Rome, and in some Protestants of his own communion. But he passes onward to assail their bulwarks. Tradition, or the testimony of the church, he holds insufficient and uncertain, for the reasons urged more fully by Daillé; the authority of councils is almost equally precarious, from their inconsistency, their liability to factious passions, and the doubtful authenticity of some of their acts; the pope's claim to infallibility is combated on the usual grounds; the judgment of the fathers is shown to be inconclusive by their differences among themselves, and their frequent errors; and professing a desire that "their great reputation should be preserved as sacred as it ought," he refers the reader to Daillé for other things; and, "shall only consider that the writings of the fathers have been so corrupted by the intermixture of heretics, so many false books put forth in their names, so many of their writings lost which would more clearly have explicated their sense, and at last an open profession made, and a trade of making the fathers speak not what themselves thought, but what other men pleased, that it is a great instance of God's providence and care

His low
opinion of
the fathers.

of his church, that we have so much good preserved in the writings which we receive from the fathers, and that all truth is not as clear gone as is the certainty of their great authority and reputation."^d

57. The authority of the church cannot be any longer alleged when neither that of popes and councils, nor of ancient fathers, is maintainable; since the diffusive church has no other means of speaking, nor can we distinguish by any extrinsic test the greater or better portion of it from the worse. And thus, after dismissing respectfully the pretences of some to expound Scripture by the Spirit, as impertinent to the question of dictating the faith of others, he comes to the reason of each man, as the best judge, for himself, of religious controversies; reason, that may be exercised either in choosing a guide, if it feel its own incompetency, or in examining the grounds of belief. The latter has great advantages, and no man is bound to know anything of that concerning which he is not able to judge for himself. But reason may err, as he goes on to prove, without being culpable; that which is plain to one understanding being obscure to another, and among various sources of error which he enumerates as incidental to mankind, that of education being "so great and invincible a prejudice, that he who masters the inconvenience of it is more to be commended than he can justly be blamed that complies with it." And thus not only single men but whole bodies take unhesitatingly and unanimously opposite sides from those who have imbibed another kind of instruction; and "it is strange that all the Dominicans should be of one opinion in the matter of predestination and immaculate conception, and all the Franciscans of the quite contrary, as if their understandings were formed in a different mould, and fur-

^d It seems not quite easy to reconcile this with what Taylor has just before said of his desire to preserve the reputation of the fathers sacred. In no writer is it more necessary to observe the *animus* with which he writes; for, giving way to his impetuosity, when he has said any thing that would give offence, or which he thought incautious, it was not his custom, so far as we can judge, to ex-

punge or soften it, but to insert something else of an opposite colour, without taking any pains to harmonise his context. This makes it easy to quote passages, especially short ones, from Taylor, which do not exhibit his real way of thinking; if indeed his way of thinking itself did not vary with the wind that blew from different regions of controversy.

nished with various principles by their very rule." These and the like prejudices are not absolute excuses to every one, and are often accompanied with culpable dispositions of mind; but the impossibility of judging others renders it incumbent on us to be lenient towards all, and neither to be peremptory in denying that those who differ from us have used the best means in their power to discover the truth, nor to charge their persons, whatever we may think their opinions, with odious consequences which they do not avow.

58. This diffuse and not very well arranged vindication of diversity of judgment in religion, comprised in the first twelve sections of the Liberty of Propheſying, is the proper basis of the second part, which maintains the justice of toleration as a consequence from the former principle. The general arguments, or prejudices, on which punishment for religious tenets had been sustained, turned on their criminality in the eyes of God, and the duty of the magistrate to sustain God's honour, and to guard his own subjects from sin. Taylor, not denying that certain and known idolatry, or any sort of practical impiety, may be punished corporally, because it is matter of fact, asserts that no matter of mere opinion, no errors that of themselves are not sins, are to be persecuted or punished by death or corporal infliction. He returns to his favourite position, "that we are not sure not to be deceived;" mingling this, in that inconsequent allocation of his proofs which frequently occurs in his writings, with other arguments of a different nature. The governors of the church, indeed, may condemn and restrain, as far as their power extends, any false doctrine which encourages evil life, or destroys the foundations of religion; but if the church meddles farther with any matters of question, which have not this tendency, so as to dictate what men are to believe, she becomes tyrannical and uncharitable; the Apostles' creed being sufficient to conserve the peace of the church and the unity of her doctrine. And with respect to the civil magistrate, he concludes that he is bound to suffer the profession of different opinions, which are neither directly impious and immoral, nor disturb the public peace.

59. The seventeenth chapter, in which Taylor pro-

fesses to consider which among the sects of Christendom are to be tolerated, and in what degree, is written in a tone not easily reconciled with that of the rest. Though he begins by saying that diversity of opinions does more concern public peace than religion, it certainly appears, in some passages, that on this pretext of peace, which with the magistrate has generally been of more influence than that of orthodoxy, he withdraws a great deal of that liberty of prophesying which he has been so broadly asserting. Punishment for religious tenets is doubtless not at all the same as restraint of separate worship; yet we are not prepared for the shackles he seems inclined to throw over the latter. Laws of ecclesiastical discipline, which, in Taylor's age, were understood to be binding on the whole community, cannot, he holds, be infringed by those who take occasion to disagree, without rendering authority contemptible; and if there are any as zealous for obedience to the church, as others may be for their opinions against it, the toleration of the latter's disobedience may give offence to the former: an argument strange enough in this treatise! But Taylor is always more prone to accumulate reasons than to sift their efficiency. It is indeed, he thinks, worthy to be considered, in framing a law of church discipline, whether it will be disliked by any who are to obey it; but, after it is once enacted, there seems no further indulgence practicable than what the governors of the church may grant to particular persons by dispensation. The laws of discipline are for the public good, and must not so far tolerate a violation of themselves as to destroy the good that the public ought to derive from them.*

* This single chapter is of itself conclusive against the truth of Taylor's own allegation that he wrote his *Liberty of Prophesying* in order to procure toleration for the episcopal church of England at the hands of those who had overthrown it. No one ever dreamed of refusing freedom of opinion to that church; it was only about public worship that any difficulty could arise. But, in truth, there is not one word in the whole treatise which could have been written with the view that Taylor pretends.

[It has been suggested, by an anonymous correspondent, that I have put a wrong construction on this seventeenth chapter, and that Taylor's design was to withstand that Puritan party within the church who refused to submit to the established laws of ecclesiastical discipline. It is certain that much which he has said will bear that construction; but, if he meant only this, he has not expressed himself with uniform clearness and consistency, as indeed is too common with him. He is so far from being dis-

60. I have been inclined to suspect that Taylor, for some cause, interpolated this chapter after the rest of the treatise was complete. It has as little bearing upon, and is as inconsistent in spirit with, the following sections as with those that precede. To use a familiar illustration, the effect it produces on the reader's mind is like that of coming on deck at sea, and finding that, the ship having put about, the whole line of coast is reversed to the eye. Taylor, however, makes but a short tack. In the next section he resumes the bold tone of an advocate for freedom; and, after discussing at great length the leading tenet of the Anabaptists, concludes that, resting as it does on such plausible though insufficient grounds, we cannot exclude it by any means from toleration, though they may be restrained from preaching their other notions of the unlawfulness of war, or of oaths, or of capital punishment; it being certain that no good religion teaches doctrines whose consequences would destroy all government. A more remarkable chapter is that in which Taylor concludes in favour of tolerating the Romanists, except when they assert the pope's power of deposing princes, or of dispensing with oaths. The result of all, he says, is this: "Let the prince and the secular power have a care the commonwealth be safe. For whether such or such a sect of Christians be to be permitted, is a question rather political than religious."

61. In the concluding sections he maintains the right of particular churches to admit all who profess the Apostles' creed to their communion, and of private men to communicate with different churches, if they require no unlawful condition. But "few churches, that have framed bodies of confession and articles, will endure any person that is not of the same confession; which is a plain demonstration that such bodies of confession and articles do much hurt." "The guilt of schism may lie

distinct in the whole treatise as to what he aims at, that his editor, Heber, imagines him to have contended under the name Liberty of Propheying, not for toleration of sectaries, but of an exemption from fixed articles of faith for the clergy themselves. I conceive this to be a mistake; but Heber was not deficient in

acuteness, and could hardly have misunderstood a plain meaning. The hypothesis of my correspondent, it may be observed, strengthens the presumption that the Liberty of Propheying was chiefly written while the church of England was still in the ascendant.—1842.

on him who least thinks it; he being rather the schismatic who makes unnecessary and inconvenient impositions, than he who disobeys them, because he cannot do otherwise without violating his conscience."† The whole treatise on the Liberty of Propheying ends with the celebrated parable of Abraham, found, as Taylor says, "in the Jews' books," but really in an Arabian writer. This story Franklin, as every one now knows, rather unhandsomely appropriated to himself; and it is a strange proof of the ignorance as to our earlier literature which then prevailed, that for many years it continued to be quoted with his name. It was not contained in the first editions of the Liberty of Propheying; and indeed the book from which Taylor is supposed to have borrowed it was not published till 1651.

62. Such is this great pleading for religious moderation; a production not more remarkable in itself than for the quarter from which it came. In the polemical writings of Jeremy Taylor we generally find a staunch and uncompromising adherence to one party; and from the abundant use he makes of authority we should infer that he felt a great veneration for it. In the Liberty of Propheying, as has appeared by the general sketch rather than analysis we have just given, there is a prevailing tinge of the contrary turn of mind, more striking than the comparison of insulated passages can be. From what motives, and under what circumstances, this treatise was written, is not easily discerned. In the dedication to Lord Hatton of the collective edition of his controversial writings after the Restoration, he declares that "when a persecution did arise against the church of England, he intended to make a reservative for his brethren and himself, by pleading for a liberty to our consciences to persevere in that profession, which was warranted by all the laws of God and our superiors." It is with regret we are compelled to confess some want of ingenuousness in this part of Taylor's proceedings. No one reading the Liberty of Propheying can perceive that it had the slightest bearing on any toleration that

† This is said also by Hales, in his *Propheying*. It is, however, what Taylor would have thought without a prompter. some years before the Liberty of Pro-

the episcopal church, in the time of the civil war, might ask of her victorious enemies. The differences between them were not on speculative points of faith, nor turning on an appeal to fathers and councils. That Taylor had another class of controversies in his mind is sufficiently obvious to the attentive reader of his work, and I can give no proof in this place to any other.

63. This was the third blow that the new school of Leyden had aimed in England at the positive dogmatists, who, in all the reformed churches, as in that of Rome, laboured to impose extensive confessions of faith, abounding in inferences of scholastic theology, as conditions of exterior communion, and as peremptory articles of faith. Chillingworth and Hales were not less decisive; but the former had but in an incidental manner glanced at the subject, and the short tract on Schism had been rather deficient in proof of its hardy paradoxes. Taylor, therefore, may be said to have been the first who sapped and shook the foundations of dogmatism and pretended orthodoxy; the first who taught men to seek peace in unity of spirit rather than of belief; and, instead of extinguishing dissent, to take away its sting by charity, and by a sense of human fallibility. The mind thus freed from bigotry is best prepared for the public toleration of differences in religion; but certainly the despotic and jealous temper of governments is not so well combated by Taylor as by later advocates of religious freedom.

64. In conducting his argument, he falls not unfrequently into his usual fault. Endowed with a mind of prodigious fertility, which a vast erudition rendered more luxuriant, he accumulates without selection whatever presents itself to his mind; his innumerable quotations, his multiplied reasonings, his prodigality of epithets and appositions, are poured along the interminable periods of his writings, with a frequency of repetition, sometimes of the same phrases, which leaves us to suspect that he revised but little what he had very rapidly composed. Certain it is that, in his different works, he does not quite adhere to himself; and it would be more desirable to lay this on the partial views that haste and impetuosity produce, than on a deliberate

employment of what he knew to be insufficient reasoning. But I must acknowledge that Taylor's fairness does not seem his characteristic quality.

65. In some passages of the *Liberty of Propheying*, he seems to exaggerate the causes of uncertainty, and to take away from ecclesiastical antiquity even that moderate probability of truth which a dispassionate inquirer may sometimes assign to it. His suspicions of spuriousness and interpolation are too vaguely sceptical, and come ill from one who has no sort of hesitation, in some of his controversies, to allege as authority what he here sets aside with little ceremony. Thus, in the *Defence of Episcopacy*, published in 1642, he maintains the authenticity of the first fifty of the apostolic canons, all of which, in the *Liberty of Propheying*, a very few years afterwards, he indiscriminately rejects. But this line of criticism was not then in so advanced a state as at present; and, from a credulous admission of everything, the learned had come sometimes to more sweeping charges of interpolation and forgery than would be sustained on a more searching investigation. Taylor's language is so unguarded that he seems to leave the authenticity of all the fathers precarious. Doubtless there is a greater want of security as to books written before the invention of printing than we are apt to conceive, especially where independent manuscripts have not been found; but it is the business of a sagacious criticism, by the aid of internal or collateral evidence, to distinguish, not dogmatically as most are wont, but with a rational, though limited assent, the genuine remains of ancient writers from the incrustations of blundering or of imposture.

66. A prodigious reach of learning distinguishes the theologians of these fifty years, far greater than even in the sixteenth century; and also, if I am not mistaken, more critical and pointed, though in these latter qualities it was afterwards surpassed. And in this erudition the Protestant churches, we may perhaps say, were, upon the whole, more abundant than that of Rome. But it would be unprofitable to enumerate works which we are incompetent to appreciate. Blondel, Daillé, and Salmasius on the Continent, Usher in England, are the most conspicuous names. Blondel

Great erudition of this period.

sustained the equality of the apostolic church both against the primacy of Rome, and the episcopacy for which the Anglicans contended; Salmasius and Daillé fought on the same side in that controversy. ^{Usher.}
 The writings of our Irish primate, Usher, who ^{Petavius.} maintained the antiquity of his order, but not upon such high ground as many in England would have desired, are known for their extraordinary learning, in which he has perhaps never been surpassed by an English writer. But for judgment and calm appreciation of evidence, the name of Usher has not been altogether so much respected by posterity as it was by his contemporaries. The church of Rome had its champions of less eminent renown: Gretser, perhaps the first among them, is not very familiar to our ears; but it is to be remembered, that some of the writings of Bellarmin fall within this period. The *Dogmata Theologica* of the jesuit Petavius, though but a compilation from the fathers and ancient councils, and not peculiarly directed against the tenets of the reformed, may deserve mention as a monument of useful labour.[§] Labbe, Sirmond, and several others, appear to range more naturally under the class of historical than theological writers. In mere ecclesiastical history—the records of events rather than opinions—this period was far more profound and critical than the preceding. The *Annals* of Baronius were abridged and continued by Spondanus.

67. A numerous list of writers in sacred criticism might easily be produced. Among the Ro- ^{Sacred criticism.}
 manists, Cornelius à Lapide has been extolled above the rest by his fellow-jesuit Andrès. His Commentaries, published from 1617 to 1642, are reckoned by others too diffuse; but he seems to have a fair reputation with Protestant critics.^h The Lutherans extol Gerhard, and especially Glass, author of the *Philologia Sacra*, in hermeneutical theology. Rivet was the highest name among the Calvinists. Arminius, Episcopius, the *Fratres Poloni*, and indeed almost every one who had to defend

§ The *Dogmata Theologica* is not a complete work; it extends only as far as the head of free-will. It belongs to the class of *Loci Communes*. Morhof, §. 539.

^h Andrès, Blount. Simon, however, says he is full of an erudition not to the purpose, which, as his Commentaries on the Scriptures run to twelve volumes, is not wonderful.

a cause, found no course so ready, at least among Protestants, as to explain the Scriptures consistently with his own tenets. Two natives of Holland, opposite in character, in spirit, and principles of reasoning, and consequently the founders of opposite schools of disciples, stand out from the rest—Grotius and Coccejus. Luther, Calvin, and the generality of Protestant interpreters in the sixteenth century had, in most instances, rejected with some contempt the allegorical and multifarious senses of Scripture which had been introduced by the fathers, and had prevailed through the dark ages of the church. This adherence to the literal meaning was doubtless promoted by the tenet they all professed, the facility of understanding Scripture. That which was designed for the simple and illiterate was not to require a key to any esoteric sense. Grotius, however, in his Annotations on the Old and New Testament, published in 1633—the most remarkable book of this kind that had appeared, and which has had a more durable reputation than any perhaps of its precursors—carried the system of literal interpretation still farther, bringing great stores of illustrative learning from profane antiquity, but merely to elucidate the primary meaning, according to ordinary rules of criticism. Coccejus followed a wholly opposite course. Every passage, in his method, teemed with hidden senses; the narratives, least capable of any ulterior application, were converted into typical allusion, so that the Old Testament became throughout an enigmatical representation of the New. He was also remarkable for having viewed, more than any preceding writer, all the relations between God and man under the form of covenants, and introduced the technical language of jurisprudence into theology. This became a very usual mode of treating the subject in Holland, and afterwards in England. The Coccejans were numerous in the United Provinces, though not perhaps deemed quite so orthodox as their adversaries, who, from Gisbert Voet, a theologian of the most inflexible and polemical spirit, were denominated Voetians. Their disputes began a little before the middle of the century, and lasted till nearly its close.¹ The *Summa Doctrinæ* of Coccejus ap-

¹ Eichhorn, vi. part i. p. 264; Mosheim.

peared in 1648, and the *Dissertationes Theologicae* of Voet in 1649.

68. England gradually took a prominent share in this branch of sacred literature. Among the divines of this period, comprehending the reigns of James and Charles, we may mention Usher, Gataker, Mede, Lightfoot, Jackson, Field, and Leigh.^k Gataker stood, perhaps, next to Usher in general erudition. The fame of Mede has rested, for the most part, on his interpretations of the Apocalypse. This book had been little commented upon by the reformers; but in the beginning of the seventeenth century, several wild schemes of its application to present or expected events had been broached in Germany. England had also taken an active part, if it be true what Grotius tells us, that eighty books on the prophecies had been published here before 1640.^m Those of Mede have been received with favour by later interpreters. Lightfoot, with extensive knowledge of the rabbinical writers, poured his copious stores on Jewish antiquities, preceded in this by a more obscure labourer in that region, Ainsworth. Jackson had a considerable name, but I do not think that he has been much quoted in modern times.ⁿ Field on the Church has been much praised by Coleridge; it is, as it seemed to me, a more temperate work in ecclesiastical theory than some have represented it to be, and written almost wholly against Rome. Leigh's *Critica Sacra* can hardly be reckoned, nor does it claim to be, more than a compilation from earlier theologians: it is an alphabetical series of words from the Hebrew and Greek Testaments, the author candidly admitting that he was not very conversant with the Latin language. Leigh, it should be added, was a layman.

^k "All confess," says Selden, in the *Table-talk*, "there never was a more learned clergy—no man taxes them with ignorance." In another place, indeed, he is represented to say, "The Jesuits and the lawyers of France, and the Low Country-men, have engrossed all learning; the rest of the world make nothing but homilies." As far as these sentences are not owing to difference of humour in the time of speaking, he seems to have taken learning in a larger sense the second time than the first. Of learning

not theological, the English clergy had no extraordinary portion.

^m *Si qua in re libera esse debet sententia, certè in vaticiniis, præsertim cum jam Protestantium libri prodierint fermè centum (in his octoginta in Anglia sola, ut mihi Anglici legati dixerunt) super illis rebus, inter se plurimum discordes.* Grot. *Epist.* 895.

ⁿ [The entire works of Jackson have been reprinted at Oxford within a few years.—1853.]

69. The style of preaching before the Reformation had been often little else than buffoonery, and self-dom respectable. For the most part, indeed, the clergy wrote in Latin what they delivered to the multitude in the native tongue. A better tone began with Luther. His language was sometimes rude and low, but persuasive, artless, powerful. He gave many useful precepts, as well as examples, for pulpit eloquence. Melanchthon and several others, both in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as well in the Lutheran as in the reformed church, endeavoured by systematic treatises to guide the composition of sermons. The former could not, however, withstand the formal, tasteless, and polemical spirit that overspread their theology. In the latter a superior tone is perceived. Of these, according to Eichhorn, the Swiss preachers were most simple and popular, the Dutch most learned and copious, the French had most taste and eloquence, the English most philosophy.^o It is more than probable that in these characteristics he has meant to comprise the whole of the seventeenth century. Few continental writers, as far as I know, that belong to this its first moiety, have earned any remarkable reputation in this province of theology. In England several might be distinguished out of a large number. Sermons have been much more frequently published here than in any other country; and, from the beginning of the seventeenth century, form a large proportion of our theological literature. But it is of course not requisite to mention more than the very few which may be said to have a general reputation.

70. The sermons of Donne have sometimes been praised in late times. They are undoubtedly the productions of a very ingenious and a very learned man; and two folio volumes by such a person may be expected to supply favourable specimens. In their general character they will not appear, I think, much worthy of being rescued from oblivion. The subtilty of Donne, and his fondness for such inconclusive reasoning as a subtle disputant is apt to fall into, runs through all of these sermons at which I have looked. His learning he seems to have perverted in order to cull

^o Eichhorn, vi. part ii. p. 219, et post.

every impertinence of the fathers and schoolmen, their remote analogies, their strained allegories, their technical distinctions; and to these he has added much of a similar kind from his own fanciful understanding. In his theology, Donne appears often to incline towards the Arminian hypotheses, which, in the last years of James and the first of his son, the period in which these sermons were chiefly preached, had begun to be accounted orthodox at court; but I will not vouch for his consistency in every discourse. Much, as usual in that age, is levelled against Rome: Donne was conspicuously learned in that controversy; and, though he talks with great respect of antiquity, is not induced by it, like some of his Anglican contemporaries, to make any concession to the adversary.^p

71. The sermons of Jeremy Taylor are of much higher reputation; far, indeed, above any that had preceded them in the English church. An imagination essentially poetical, and sparing none of the decorations which, by critical rules, are deemed almost peculiar to verse; a warm tone of piety, sweetness, and charity; an accumulation of circumstantial accessories whenever he reasons, or persuades, or describes; an erudition pouring itself forth in quotation till his sermons become in some places almost a garland of flowers from all other writers, and especially from those of classical antiquity, never before so redundantly scattered from the pulpit, distinguish Taylor from his contemporaries by their degree, as they do from most of his successors by their kind. His sermons on the Marriage Ring, on the House of Feasting, on the Apples of Sodom, may be named without disparagement to others, which perhaps ought to stand in equal place. But they are not without considerable faults, some of which have just been hinted. The eloquence of Taylor is great, but it is not eloquence of the highest class; it is far too Asiatic, too much in

^p Donne incurred some scandal by a book entitled *Biathanatos*, and considered as a vindication of suicide. It was published long after his death, in 1651. It is a very dull and pedantic performance, without the ingenuity and acuteness of paradox; distinctions, objections, and quo-

tations from the rabble of bad authors whom he used to read, fill up the whole of it. It is impossible to find a less clear statement of argument on either side. No one would be induced to kill himself by reading such a book, unless he were threatened with another volume.

the style of the declaimers of the fourth century, by the study of whom he had probably vitiated his taste; his learning is ill-placed, and his arguments often as much so; not to mention that he has the common defect of alleging nugatory proofs; his vehemence loses its effect by the circuitry of his pleonastic language; his sentences are of endless length, and hence not only altogether unmusical, but not always reducible to grammar. But he is still the greatest ornament of the English pulpit up to the middle of the seventeenth century; and we have no reason to believe, or rather much reason to disbelieve, that he had any competitor in other languages.

72. The devotional writings of Taylor, several of which belong to the first part of the century, are by no means of less celebrity or less value than his sermons. Such are the *Life of Christ*, the *Holy Living and Dying*, and the collection of meditations, called the *Golden Grove*. A writer as distinguished in works of practical piety was Hall. His *Art of Divine Meditation*, his *Contemplations*, and indeed many of his writings, remind us frequently of Taylor. Both had equally pious and devotional tempers; both were full of learning, both fertile of illustration; both may be said to have had strong imagination and poetical genius, though Taylor let his predominate a little more. Taylor is also rather more subtle and argumentative; his copiousness has more real variety. Hall keeps more closely to his subject, dilates upon it sometimes more tediously, but more appositely. In his sermons there is some excess of quotation and far-fetched illustration, but less than in those of Taylor. In some of their writings these two great divines resemble each other, on the whole, so much that we might for a short time not discover which we were reading. I do not know that any third writer comes close to either. The *Contemplations* of Hall are among his most celebrated works. They are prolix, and without much of that vivacity or striking novelty we meet with in the devotional writings of his contemporary, but are perhaps more practical and generally edifying.^a

73. The religious treatises of this class, even those

^a Some of the moral writings of Hall in the seventeenth century, and had much success. *Niceron*, xl. 348. were translated into French by Chevreau

which by their former popularity, or their merit, ought to be mentioned in a regular history of theological literature, are too numerous for these pages.

In the
Roman

A mystical and ascetic spirit diffused itself more over religion, struggling sometimes, as in the Lutherans of Germany, against the formal orthodoxy of the church, but more often in subordination to its authority, and co-operating with its functions. The writings of St. Francis de Sales, titular bishop of Geneva, especially his treatise on the Love of God, published in 1616, make a sort of epoch in the devotional theology of the church of Rome. Those of St. Teresa, in the Spanish language, followed some years afterwards; they are altogether full of a mystical theopathy. But De Sales included charity in his scheme of divine love; and it is to him, as well as others of his age, that not only a striking revival of religion in France, which had been absolutely perverted or disregarded in the sixteenth century, was due, but a reformation in the practices of monastic life, which became more active and beneficent, with less of useless penance and asceticism than before. New institutions sprang up with the spirit of association, and all other animating principles of conventual orders, but free from the formality and torpor of the old.*

74. Even in the German churches, rigid as they generally were in their adherence to the symbolical books, some voices from time to time were heard for a more spiritual and effective religion. Arndt's Treatise of True Christianity, in 1605, written on ascetic and devotional principles, and with some deviation from the tenets of the very orthodox Lutherans, has been reckoned one of the first protests against their barren forms of faith;* and the mystical theologians, if they had not run into such extravagances as did dishonour to their name, would have been accessions to the same side. The principal mystics or theosophists have generally been counted among philosophers, and will therefore find their place in the next chapter. The German nation is constitutionally disposed to receive those forms of religion which address themselves to the imagination and the heart. Much, therefore, of this

and Lu-
theran
church.

* Ranke, ii. 430.

* Eichhorn, vi. part i. p. 265; Biogr. Univ.; Chalmers.

character has always been written, and become popular, in that language. Few English writings of the practical class, except those already mentioned, can be said to retain much notoriety. Those of George Herbert are best known; his *Country Parson*, which seems properly to fall within this description, is, on the whole, a pleasing little book; but the precepts are sometimes so overstrained, according to our notions, as to give an air of affectation.

75. The disbelief in revelation, of which several symptoms had appeared before the end of the sixteenth century, became more remarkable afterwards both in France and England, involving several names not obscure in literary history.

Infidelity
of some
writers.
Charron.

The first of these, in point of date, is Charron. The religious scepticism of this writer has not been generally acknowledged, and indeed it seems repugnant to the fact of his having written an elaborate defence of Christianity; yet we can deduce no other conclusion from one chapter in his most celebrated book, the *Treatise on Wisdom*. Charron is so often little else than a transcriber, that we might suspect him in this instance also to have drawn from other sources; which, however, would leave the same inference as to his own tenets, and I think this chapter has an air of originality.

76. The name of Charron, however, has not been generally associated with the charge of irreligion.

Vanini. A more audacious and consequently more unfortunate writer was Lucilio Vanini, a native of Italy, whose book *De Admirandis Naturæ Reginae Deæque Mortalium Arcanis*, printed at Paris in 1616, caused him to be burned at the stake by a decree of the parliament of Toulouse in 1619. This treatise, as well as one that preceded it, *Amphitheatrum Æternæ Providentiæ*, Lyons, 1615, is of considerable rarity, so that there has been a question concerning the atheism of Vanini, which some have undertaken to deny.* In the *Amphitheatrum* I do not perceive anything which leads to such an imputation, though I will not pretend to have read the whole of a book full of the unintelligible metaphysics of the later Aristotelians. It professes, at least, to be a vindication of the being and providence of the Deity. But the later

* Brucker, v. 678.

work, which is dedicated to Bassompierre and published with a royal privilege of exclusive sale for six years, is of a very different complexion. It is in sixty dialogues, the interlocutors being styled Alexander and Julius Cæsar, the latter representing Vanini himself. The far greater part of these dialogues relate to physical, but a few to theological subjects. In the fiftieth, on the religion of the heathens, he avows his disbelief of all religion, except such as Nature, which is God, being the principle of motion, has planted in the hearts of man; every other being the figment of kings to keep their subjects in obedience, and of priests for their own lucre and honour;^u observing plainly of his own Amphitheatrum, which is a vindication of Providence, that he had said many things in it which he did not believe.^x

^u In quam religione verè et piè Deum coli vetustii philosophi existimârunt? In unica Naturæ lege, quam ipsa Natura, quæ Deus est (est enim principium motûs), in omnium gentium animis inscripsit; cæteras vero leges non nisi figmenta et illusiones esse asserebant, non a cacodemone aliquo inductas, fabulosum namque illorum genus dicitur a philosophis, sed a principibus ad subditorum pædagogiam excogitatas, et a sacrificulis ob honoris et auri aucupium confirmatas, non miraculis, sed scriptura, cujus nec originale ullibi adinventur, quæ miracula facta recitet, et bonarum ac malarum actionum repromissiones polliceatur, in futura tamen vita, ne fraus detegi possit. P. 366.

^x Multa in eo libro scripta sunt, quibus a me nulla præstatur fides. Così va il mondo.—ALEX. Non miror, nam ego crebris vernaculis hoc usurpo sermonibus: Questo mondo è una gabbia de' matti. Reges excipio et Pontifices. Nam de illis scriptum est: Cor Regis in manu Domini, &c. Dial. LVI. p. 428.

The concluding pages are enough to show with what justice Buhle and Tennemann have gravely recorded Vanini among philosophers. Quæso, mi Julii, tuam de animæ immortalitate sententiam explices.—J. C. Excusatum me habeo rogo.—AL. Cur ita?—J. C. Vovi Deo meo questionem hanc me non pertractaturum, antequam senex dives et germanus evasero.—AL. Dii tibi Nestoreos pro literariæ republicæ emolumento

dies impertiant: vix trigesimum nunc attigisti annum et tot præclaræ eruditionis monumenta admirabili cum laude edidisti.—J. C. Quid hæc mihi prosunt?—AL. Celebrem tibi laudem compararunt.—J. C. Omnes famæ rumusculos cum uno amasiæ basilo commutandos plerique philosophi suadent.—AL. At alter ea perfrui potest.—J. C. Quid inde adimit? . . .—AL. Uberrimos voluptatis fructus percepisti in Naturæ arcanis investigandis.—J. C. Corpus mihi est studiis enervatum exhaustumque; neque in hac humana caligine perfectam rerum cognitionem assequi possumus; cum ipsummet Aristotelem philosophorum Deum infinitis propemodum locis hallucinatum fuisse adverto, cumque medicam facultatem præ reliquis certissimam adhuc incertam et fallacem exterior, subscribere cuperem Agrippæ libello quem de scientiarum vanitate conscripsit.—AL. Laborum tuorum præmium jam consecutus es; æternitati nomen jam consecrasti. Quid jucundius in extremo tuæ ætatis curriculo accipere potes, quam hoc canticum? Et superest sine te nomen in orbe tuum.—J. C. Si animus meus ura cum corpore, ut Athei fingunt, evanescat, quas ille ex fama post obitum delicias nancisci poterit? Forsitan gloria voculis, et fidiculis ad cadaveris domicilium pertrahatur? Si animus, ut credimus libenter et speramus, interitum non est obnoxius, et ad superos evolat, tot ibi perfruetur cupidis et voluptatibus, ut illustres ac splendidas mundi pompas et

Vanini was infatuated with presumption, and, if he resembled Jordano Bruno in this respect, fell very short of his acuteness and apparent integrity. His cruel death, and perhaps the scarcity of his works, has given more celebrity to his name in literary history than it would otherwise have obtained.

77. Lord Herbert of Cherbury, in his treatise De Veritate and still more in that De Religione Gentilium, has been justly deemed inimical to every positive religion. He admits, indeed, the possibility of immediate revelation from heaven, but denies that any tradition from others can have sufficient certainty. Five fundamental truths of natural religion he holds to be such as all mankind are bound to acknowledge, and damns those heathens who do not receive them as summarily as any theologian.^f

78. The progress of infidelity in France did not fail to attract notice. It was popular in the court of Louis XIII., and, in a certain degree, in that of Charles I. But this does not belong to the history of literature. Among the writers who may have given some proofs of it we may reckon La Mothe le Vayer, Naudé, and Guy Patin.^g The writings of Hobbes will

laudationes nec pilli faciat. Si ad purgatorias flammam descendet, gratior erit illi illius orationis, Dies ira, dies illa, mulierculis gratissima recitatio, quam omnes Tulliani glossuli, dicendique lepores, quam subtilissima et pene divina Aristotelis ratiocinationes: si Tartareo, quod Deus avertat, perpetuo carceri emancipatur, nullum ibi solatium, nullam redemptionem inveniet.—AL. O utinam in adolescentia limine has rationes excepissem! —J. C. Præterita mala ne cogites futura ne cures, presentia fugias.—AL. Ah! —J. C. Liberaliter inspiras.—AL. Illius versiculi recorder. Perduto è tutto il tempo, che in amor non si spende.—J. C. Eja quoniam inclinatio jam die ad vesperam perducta est disputatio, (cujus singula verba divino Romanae ecclesiae oraculo, infallibilis cujus interpres a Spiritu Sancto modo constitutus est Paulus V., serenissima Burghesia familia soboles, subjecta esse volumus, ita ut pro non dictis habeantur, si que forsitan sunt, quod vix crediderim, quæ illius placitis ad attentam non consentiant,) laxemus

paulisper animos, et a severitate ad hilaritatem risumque traducamus. Heus pueri! lusorias tabulashuc adferite. The wretched man, it seems, had not much reason to think himself a gainer by his speculations; yet he knew not that the worst was still behind.

^f These five articles are: 1. Esse Deum summum.—2. Coll. debere.—3. Virtutem pietatemque esse præcipuas partes cultus divini.—4. Dolendum esse ob peccata, ab hisque respiscendum.—5. Dari ex bonitate justitiæ divina præmium vel poenam tum in hac vita, tum post hanc vitam. . . . Hisce quippe ubi superstitiones figmenta que commiscuerint, vel animas suas criminibus que nulla satis eluat poenitentia, commaculaverint, a seipsis perditio propria, Deo vero summo in æternum sit gloria. De Religione Gentilium, cap. 1.

^g La Mothe le Vayer has frequently been reckoned among those who carried their general scepticism into religion. And this seems a fair inference, unless the contrary can be shown; for those who

be treated at length hereafter. It is probable that this sceptical spirit of the age gave rise to those vindications of revealed religion which were published in the present period. Among these the first place is due to the well-known and extensively circulated treatise of Grotius. This was originally sketched in Dutch verse, and intended for the lower classes of his countrymen. It was published in Latin in 1627.* Few, if any, books of the kind have been so frequently reprinted; but some parts being not quite so close and critical as the modern state of letters exacts, and the arguments against Jews and Mahometans seeming to occupy too much space, it is less read than formerly.

79. This is not a period in which many editions or versions of the Scriptures were published. The English translation of the Bible had been several times revised, or re-made, since the first edition by Tyndale. It finally assumed its present form under the authority of James I. Forty-seven persons, in six companies, meeting at Westminster, Oxford, and Cambridge, distributed the labour among them, twenty-five being assigned to the Old Testament, fifteen to the New, seven to the Apocrypha. The rules imposed for their guidance by the king were designed, as far as possible, to secure the text against any novel interpretation; the translation, called the Bishop's Bible, being established as the basis, as those still older had been in that; and the work of each person or company

English translation of the Bible.

doubt of what is most evident, will naturally doubt of what is less so. In La Mothe's fourth dialogue, under the name of Oratius Tubero, he pretends to speak of faith as a gift of God, and not founded on evidence; which was probably but the usual subterfuge. The Naudæana are full of broad intimations that the author was, as he expresses it, *bien déniâsé*; and Guy Patin's letters, except those near the end of his life, lead to a similar conclusion. One of them has certainly the appearance of implicating Gassendi, and has been quoted as such by Sir James Mackintosh, in his Dissertation on Ethical Philosophy. Patin tells us that Naudé, Gassendi, and he were to sup together the following Sunday. Ce sera une débauche, mais philosophique, et peut-être quelque chose

d'avantage, pour être tous trois guéris du loup-garou, et être délivrés du mal des scrupules qui est le tyran des consciences, nous irons peut-être jusque fort près du sanctuaire. Je fis l'an passé ce voyage de Gentilly avec M. Naudé, moy seul avec luy, tête-à-tête; il n'y avoit point de témoins, aussi n'y en faisoit-il point; nous y parlâmes fort librement de tout, sans que personne en ait été scandalisé. P. 32. I should not, nevertheless, lay much stress on this letter, in opposition to the many assertions of belief in religion which the writings of Gassendi contain. One of them, indeed, quoted by Dugald Stewart, in note Q to his first Dissertation, is rather suspicious, as going too far into a mystical strain for his cold temperament.

* Nicéron, vol. xix.; Biogr. Univ.

being subjected to the review of the rest. The translation, which was commenced in 1607, was published in 1611.^b

80. The style of this translation is in general so enthusiastically praised, that no one is permitted
 Its style. either to qualify or even explain the grounds of his approbation. It is held to be the perfection of our English language. I shall not dispute this proposition; but one remark as to a matter of fact cannot reasonably be censured, that, in consequence of the principle of adherence to the original versions which had been kept up ever since the time of Henry VIII., it is not the language of the reign of James I. It may, in the eyes of many, be a better English, but it is not the English of Daniel, or Raleigh, or Bacon, as any one may easily perceive. It abounds, in fact, especially in the Old Testament, with obsolete phraseology, and with single words long since abandoned, or retained only in provincial use. On the more important question, whether this translation is entirely, or with very trifling exceptions, conformable to the original text, it seems unfit to enter. It is one which is seldom discussed with all the temper and freedom from oblique views which the subject demands, and upon which, for this reason, it is not safe for those who have not had leisure or means to examine it for themselves, to take upon trust the testimony of the learned. A translation of the Old Testament was published at Douay in 1609 for the use of the English Catholics.

^b Fuller's Church History.

END OF VOL. II.

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