

ORATION I

THE OBJECT OF THEOLOGY

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

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

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

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

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

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

I shall adopt that plain and simple species of oratory which, according to Euripides, belongs peculiarly to truth. I am not ignorant that some resemblance and relation ought to exist between an oration and the subjects that are discussed in it; and therefore, that a certain

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

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

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

I intreat you also, my most illustrious and polite hearers, kindly to grant me your attention for a short time while I endeavour to explain matters of the greatest importance; and while your observation is directed to the subject in which I shall exercise myself, you will have the goodness to regard IT, rather than any presumed SKILL in my manner of treating it. The nature of his great subject requires us, at this hour especially, to direct our attention, in the first instance, to the Object of Theology. For the objects of sciences are so intimately related, and so essential to them, as to give them their appellations.

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

In General Metaphysics, the object of study is, "BEING"

But let us consider the conditions that are generally employed to commend the object of any science. That OBJECT is most excellent (1.) which is in itself the best, and the greatest, and immutable; (2.) which, in relation to the mind, is most lucid and clear, and most easily proposed and unfolded to the view of the mental powers; and (3.) which is likewise able, by its action on the mind, completely to fill it, and to satisfy its infinite desires. These three conditions are in the highest degree discovered in God, and in him alone, who is the subject of theological study.

1. He is the best being; he is the first and chief good, and goodness itself; he alone is good, as good as goodness itself; as ready to communicate, as it is possible for him to be communicated: his liberality is only equaled by the boundless treasures which he possesses, both of which are infinite and restricted only by the capacity of the recipient, which he appoints as a limit and measure to the goodness of his nature and to the communication of himself. He is the greatest Being, and the only great One; for he is able to subdue to his sway even nothing itself, that it may become capable of divine good by the communication of himself. "He calleth those things which are not, as though they were," ([Rom. iv. 17](#)) and in that manner, by his word, he places them in the number of beings, although it is out of darkness that they have received his commands to emerge and to come into existence. "All nations before him are as nothing, the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers, and the princes nothing." ([Isa. xl. 17, 22, 23.](#)) The whole of this system of heaven and earth appears scarcely equal to a point "before him, whose center is every where, but whose circumference is no where." He is immutable, always the same, and endureth forever; "his years have no end." ([Psalm 102](#))

Nothing can be added to him, and nothing can be taken from him; with him "is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." ([James i. 17.](#)) Whatsoever obtains stability for a single moment, borrows it from him, and receives it of mere grace. Pleasant, therefore, and most delightful is it to contemplate him, on account of his goodness; it is glorious in consideration of his greatness; and it is sure, in reference to his immutability.

2. He is most resplendent and bright; he is light itself, and becomes an object of most obvious perception to the mind, according to this expression of the apostle, That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find Him, though he be not far from every one of us; for in him we live, and move, and have our being; for we are also his offspring;" ([Acts xvii. 27, 28.](#)) And according to another passage, "God left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness." ([Acts xiv. 17.](#)) Being supported by these true sayings, I venture to assert, that nothing can be seen or truly known in any object, except in it we have previously seen and known God himself.

In the first place he is called "Being itself," because he offers himself to the understanding as an object of knowledge. But all beings, both visible and invisible, corporeal and incorporeal, proclaim aloud that they have derived the beginning of their essence and condition from some other than themselves, and that they have not their own proper existence till they have it from another. All of them utter speech, according to the saying of the Royal Prophet:

"The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy-work." ([Psalm xix. 1.](#)) That is, the firmament sounds aloud as with a trumpet, and proclaims, that it is "the work of the right hand of the Most High." Among created objects, you may discover many tokens indicating "that they derive from some other source whatever they themselves

possess," mere strongly than "that they have an existence in the number and scale of beings." Nor is this matter of wonder, since they are always nearer to nothing than to their Creator, from whom they are removed to a distance that is infinite, and separated by infinite space: while, by properties that are only finite, they are distinguished from nothing, the primeval womb from whence they sprung, and into which they may fall back again; but they can never be raised to a divine equality with God their maker. Therefore, it was rightly spoken by the ancient heathens,

"Of Jove all things are full."

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

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

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

Three Considerations of this matter offer themselves to our notice: The First is, that we cannot receive this object in the infinity of its nature; our necessity, therefore, requires it to be proposed in a manner that is accommodated to our capacity. The Second is, that it is not proper, in the first moment of revelation, for such a large measure to be disclosed and manifested by the light of grace, as may be received into the human mind when it is illuminated by the light of glory, and, (by that process,) enlarged to a greater capacity: for by a right use of the knowledge of grace, we must proceed upwards, (by the rule of divine righteousness,) to the more sublime knowledge of glory, according to that saying, "To him that hath

shall be given." The Third is, that this object is not laid before our theology merely to be known, but, when known, to be worshipped. For the Theology which belongs to this world, is Practical and through Faith:

Theoretical Theology belongs to the other world, and consists of pure and unclouded vision, according to the expression of the apostle, "We walk by faith, and not by sight;" (2 Cor. v. 7,) and that of another apostle, "Then shall we be like him, for we shall see him as he is." (1 John iii. 2.) For this reason, we must clothe the object of our theology in such a manner as may enable it to incline us to worship God, and fully to persuade and win us over to that practice.

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

But that man may be induced, by a willing obedience and humble submission of the mind, to worship God, it is necessary for him to believe, from a certain persuasion of the heart: (1.) That it is the will of God to be worshipped, and that worship is due to him. (2.) That the worship of him will not be in vain, but will be recompensed with an exceedingly great reward. (3.) That a mode of worship must be instituted according to his command. To these three particulars ought to be added, a knowledge of the mode prescribed.

Our Theology, then, delivers three things concerning this object, as necessary and sufficient to be known in relation to the preceding subjects of belief. The First is concerning the nature of God. The Second concerning his actions. And the Third concerning his will.

(1.) Concerning his nature; that it is worthy to receive adoration, on account of its justice; that it is qualified to form a right judgment of that worship, on account of its wisdom; and that it is prompt and able to bestow rewards, on account of its goodness and the perfection of its own blessedness.

(2.) Two actions have been ascribed to God for the same purpose; they are Creation and Providence. (i.) The Creation of all things, and especially of man after God's own image; upon which is founded his sovereign authority over man, and from which is deduced the right of requiring worship from man and enjoining obedience upon him, according to that very just complaint of God by Malachi, "If then I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear," (i, 6.) (ii.) That Providence is to be ascribed to God by which he governs all things, and according to which he exercises a holy, just, and wise care and oversight over man himself and those things which relate to him, but chiefly over the worship and obedience which he is bound to render to his God.

(3.) Lastly, it treats of the will of God expressed in a certain covenant into which he has entered with man, and which consists of two parts: (i.) The one, by which he declares it to be his pleasure to receive adoration from man, and at the same time prescribes the mode of performing that worship; for it is his will to be worshipped from obedience, and not at the option or discretion of man. (ii.) The other, by which God promises that he will

abundantly compensate man for the worship which he performs; requiring not only adoration for the benefits already conferred upon man, as a trial of his gratitude; but likewise that He may communicate to man infinitely greater things to the consummation of his felicity. For as he occupied the first place in conferring blessings and doing good, because that high station was his due, since man was about to be called into existence among the number of creatures; so likewise it is his desire that the last place in doing good be reserved for him, according to the infinite perfection of his goodness and blessedness, who is the fountain of good and the extreme boundary of happiness, the Creator and at the same time the Glorifier of his worshippers. It is according to this last action of his, that he is called by some persons "the Object of Theology," and that not improperly, because in this last are included all the preceding.

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

Our sacred Theology, therefore, is chiefly occupied in ascribing to the One True God, to whom alone they really belong, those attributes of which we have already spoken, his nature, actions, and will. For it is not sufficient to know, that there is some kind of a NATURE, simple, infinite, wise, good, just, omnipotent, happy in itself, the Maker and Governor of all things, that is worthy to receive adoration, whose will it is to be worshipped, and that is able to make its worshippers happy. To this general kind of knowledge there ought to be added, a sure and settled conception, fixed on that Deity, and strictly bound to the single object of religious worship to which alone those qualities appertain. The necessity of entertaining fixed and determinate ideas on this subject, is very frequently inculcated in the sacred page: "I am the Lord thy God." ([Exod. xx. 2.](#)) "I am the Lord and there is none else." ([Isa. xlv. 5.](#)) Elijah also says, "If the Lord be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him." ([1 Kings xviii. 21.](#)) This duty is the more sedulously inculcated in scripture, as man is more inclined to depart from the true idea of Deity. For whatever clear and proper conception of the Divine Being the minds the Heathens had formed, the first stumbling-block over which they fell appears to have been this, they did not attribute that just conception to him to whom it ought to have been given; but they ascribed it either, (1.) to some vague and uncertain individual, as in the expression of the Roman poet, "O Jupiter, whether thou be heaven, or air, or earth!" Or, (2) some imaginary and fabulous Deity, whether it be among created things, or a mere idol of the brain, neither partaking of the Divine nature nor any other, which the Apostle Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans and to the Corinthians, produces as a matter of reproach to the Gentiles. ([Rom. 1](#), and [1 Corinthians 8.](#)) Or (3,) lastly, they ascribed it to the unknown God; the title of Unknown being given to their Deity by the very persons who were his worshippers. The Apostle relates this crime as one of which the

Athenians were guilty: But it is equally true when applied to all those who err and wander from the true object of adoration, and yet worship a Deity of some description. To such persons that sentence justly belongs which Christ uttered in conversation with the woman of Samaria: "Ye worship YE KNOW NOT WHAT." ([John iv. 22.](#))

Although those persons are guilty of a grievous error who transgress in this point, so as to be deservedly termed Atheists, in Scripture *aqeoi* "men without God;" yet they are by far more intolerably insane, who, having passed the extreme line of impiety, are not restrained by the consciousness of any Deity. The ancient heathens considered such men as peculiarly worthy of being called Atheists. On the other hand, those who have a consciousness of their own ignorance occupy the step that is nearest to sanity. For it is necessary to be careful only about one thing; and that is, when we communicate information to them, we must teach them to discard the falsehood which they had imbibed, and must instruct them in the truth alone. When this truth is pointed out to them, they will seize it with the greater avidity, in proportion to the deeper sorrow which they feel at the thought that they have been surrounded for a long series of years by a most pernicious error.

But Theology, as it appears to me, principally effects four things in fixing our conceptions, which we have just mentioned, on that Deity who is true, and in drawing them away from the invention and formation of false Deities. First. It explains, in an elegant and copious manner, the relation in which the Deity stands, lest we should ascribe to his nature any thing that is foreign to it, or should take away from it any one of its properties. In reference to this, it is said, "Ye. heard the voice, but saw no similitude; take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves, lest you make you a graven image." ([Deut. iv. 15, 16.](#)) -Secondly. It describes both the universal and the particular actions of the only true God, that by them it may distinguish the true Deity from those which are fabulous. On this account it is said, "The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, shall perish from the earth, and under these heavens." ([Jer. x. 11.](#)) Jonah also said, "I fear the Lord, the God of heaven, who hath made the sea and the dry land." (i, 9.) And the Apostle declares, "Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and by man's device:" ([Acts xvii. 29.](#)) In another passage it is recorded, "I am the Lord thy God which brought thee out of the land of Egypt;" ([Deut. v. 6.](#)) "I am the God that appeared to thee in Bethel." ([Gen. xxvi. 13.](#)) And, "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that they shall no more say, The Lord liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt, but, The Lord liveth which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the North Country," &c. ([Jer. xxiii. 7, 8.](#)) Thirdly. It makes frequent mention of the covenant into which the true Deity has entered with his worshippers, that by the recollection of it the mind of man may be stayed upon that God with whom the covenant was concluded. In reference to this it is said, "Thus shalt thou say unto the Children of Israel, the Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God

of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is. my memorial unto all generations", ([Exod. iii. 15.](#)) Thus Jacob, when about to conclude a compact with Laban his father-in-law, swears "by the fear of his father Isaac." ([Gen. xxxi. 53.](#)) And when Abraham's servant was seeking a wife for his master's son, he thus invoked God, "O Lord God of my master Abraham!" ([Gen. xxiv. 12.](#)) Fourthly. It distinguishes and points out the true Deity, even by a most appropriate, particular, and individual mark, when it introduces the mention of the persons who are partakers of the same Divinity; thus it gives a right direction to the mind of the worshipper, and fixes it upon that God who is THE FATHER OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST. This was manifested with some degree of obscurity in the Old Testament, but with the utmost clearness in the New. Hence the Apostle says, "I bow my knee unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." ([Ephes. iii. 14.](#)) All these remarks are comprehended and summed up by Divines, in this brief sentence, "That God must be invoked who has manifested himself in his own word." But the preceding observations concerning the Object of Theology, properly respect Legal Theology, which was accommodated to man's primeval state. For when man in his original integrity acted under the protecting favour and benevolence of a good and just God, he was able to render to God that worship which had been prescribed according to the law of legal righteousness, that says, "This do, and thou shalt live" he was able to "love with all his heart and soul" that Good and Just Being; he was able, from a consciousness of his integrity, to repose confidence in that Good and Just One; and he was able to evince towards him, as such, a filial fear, and to pay him the honour which was pleasing and due to him, as from a servant to his Lord. God also, on his part, without the least injury to his justice, was able to act towards man, while in that state, according to the proscription of legal righteousness, to reward his worship according to justice, and, through the terms of the legal covenant, and consequently "of debt," to confer life upon him. This God could do, consistency with his goodness, which required the fulfillment of the promise. There was no call for any other property of his nature, which might contribute by its agency to accomplish this purpose: No further progress of Divine goodness was necessary than that which might repay good for good, the good of perfect felicity, for the good of entire obedience: No other action was required, except that of creation, (which had then been performed,) and that of a preserving and governing providence, in conformity with the condition with which man was placed: No other volition of God was needed, than that by which he might both require the perfect obedience of the law and might repay that obedience with life eternal. In that state of human affairs, therefore, the knowledge of the nature described in those properties, the knowledge of those actions, and of that will, to which may be added the knowledge of the Deity to whom they really pertained, was necessary for the performance of worship to God, and was of itself amply sufficient.

But when man had fallen from his primeval integrity through disobedience to the law, and had rendered himself "a child of wrath" and had become devoted to condemnations,

this goodness mingled with legal justice could not be sufficient for the salvation of man. Neither could this act of creation and providence, nor this will suffice; and therefore this legal Theology was itself insufficient. For sin was to be condemned if men were absolved; and, as the Apostle says, (in the eighth chapter of his Epistle to the Romans,) "it could not be condemned by the law." Man was to be justified: but he could not be justified by the law, which, while it is the strength of sin, makes discovery of it to us, and is the procurer of wrath.

This Theology, therefore, could serve for no salutary purpose, at that time: such was its dreadful efficacy in convincing man of sin and consigning him to certain death. This unhappy change, this unfavourable vicissitude of affairs was introduced by the fault and the infection of sin; which was likewise the cause why "the law which was ordained to life and honour," ([Rom. vii. 10.](#)) became fatal and destructive to our race, and the procurer of eternal ignominy. (1.) Other properties, therefore, of the Divine Nature were to be called into action; every one of God's benefits was to be unfolded and explained; mercy, long suffering, gentleness, patience, and clemency were to be brought forth out of the repository of his primitive goodness, and their services were to be engaged, if it was proper for offending man to be reconciled to God and reinstated in his favour. (2.) Other actions were to be exhibited: "Anew creation" was to be effected; "a new providence," accommodated in every respect to this new creation, was to be instituted and put in force; "the work of redemption" was to be performed; "remission of sins" was to be obtained; "the loss of righteousness" was to be repaired; "the Spirit of grace" was to be asked and obtained; and a "lost salvation" restored. (3.) Another decree was likewise to be framed concerning the salvation of man; and another covenant, a new one, "was to be made with him, "not according to that former one, because those" who were parties on one side "had not continued in that covenant:" ([Heb. viii. 11.](#)) but, by another and a gracious will, they "were to be sanctified" who might be "consecrated to enter into the Holiest by a new and living way." ([Heb. x. 20.](#)) All these things were to be prepared and laid down as foundations to the new manifestation.

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

But since God, the punisher and most righteous avenger of sinners, was either unwilling, or, (through the opposition made by the justice and truth which had been originally manifested in the law,) was unable to unfold those properties of his nature, to produce those actions, or to make that decree, except by the intervention of a Mediator, in whom, without the least injury to his justice and truth, he might unfold those properties, perform those actions, might through them produce those necessary benefits, and might conclude that most gracious decree; on this account a Mediator was to be ordained, who, by his blood,

might atone for sinners, by his death might expiate the sin of mankind, might reconcile the wicked to God, and might save them from his impending anger; who might set forth and display the mercy, long suffering and patience of God, might provide eternal redemption, obtain remission of sin, bring in an everlasting righteousness, procure the Spirit of grace, confirm the decree of gracious mercy, ratify the new covenant by his blood, recover eternal salvation, and who might bring to God those that were to be ultimately saved.

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

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

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

For God has unfolded in Christ all his own goodness. "For it pleased the Father, that in him should all fullness dwell;" ([Col. i. 19.](#)) and that the "fullness of the Godhead should dwell in him," not by adumbration or according to the shadow, but "bodily." For this reason he is called "the image of the invisible God;" ([Col. i. 15.](#)) "the brightness of his Father's glory, and

the express image of his person," ([Heb. i. 3,](#)) in whom the Father condescends to afford to us his infinite majesty, his immeasurable goodness, mercy and philanthropy, to be contemplated, beheld, and to be touched and felt; even as Christ himself says to Philip, "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father." ([John xiv. 9.](#)) For those things which lay hidden and indiscernible within the Father, like the fine and deep traces in an engraved seal, stand out, become prominent, and may be most clearly and distinctly seen in Christ, as in an exact and protuberant impression, formed by the application of a deeply engraved seal on the substance to be impressed.

1. In this Theology God truly appears, in the highest degree, the best and the greatest of Beings: (1.) The Best, cause he is not only willing, as in the former Theology, to communicate himself (for the happiness of men,) to those who correctly discharge their duty, but to receive into his favour and to reconcile to himself those who are sinners, wicked, unfruitful, and declared enemies, and to bestow eternal life on them when they repent. (2.) The Greatest, because he has not only produced all things from nothing, through the annihilation of the latter, and the creation of the former, but because he has also effected a triumph over sin, (which is far more noxious than nothing, and conquered with greater difficulty,) by graciously pardoning it, and powerfully putting it away;" and because he has "brought in everlasting righteousness," by means of a second creation, and a regeneration which far exceeded the capacity of "the law that acted as schoolmaster." ([Gal. iii. 24.](#)) For this cause Christ is called "the wisdom and the power of God," ([1 Cor. i. 24,](#)) far more illustrious than the wisdom and the power which were originally displayed in the creation of the universe. (3.) In this Theology, God is described to us as in every respect immutable, not only in regard to his nature but also to his will, which, as it has been manifested in the gospel, is peremptory and conclusive, and, being the last of all, is not to be corrected by another will. For "Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, today, and forever"; ([Heb. xiii. 8,](#)) by whom God hath in these last days spoken unto us." ([Heb. i. 2.](#)) Under the law, the state of this matter was very different, and that greatly to our ultimate advantage. For if the will of God unfolded in the law had been fatal to us, as well as the last expression of it, we, of all men most miserable, should have been banished forever from God himself on account of that declaration of his will; and our doom would have been in a state of exile from our salvation. I would not seem in this argument to ascribe any mutability to the will of God. I only place such a termination and boundary to his will, or rather to something willed by him, as was by himself before affixed to it and predetermined by an eternal and peremptory decree, that thus a vacancy might be made for a "better covenant established on better promises" ([Heb. vii. 22; viii. 6.](#))

2. This Theology offers God in Christ as an object of our sight and knowledge, with such clearness, splendour and plainness, that we with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord." ([1 Cor. iii. 18.](#)) In comparison with this brightness and glory, which was so

pre-eminent and surpassing, the law itself is said not to have been either bright or glorious: For it "had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth." (2 Cor. iii. 8.) This was indeed "the wisdom of God which was kept secret since the world began : " (1 Cor. ii. 7; Rom. xvi. 25.) Great and inscrutable is this mystery; yet it is exhibited in Christ Jesus, and "made manifest" with such luminous clearness, that God is said to have been "manifest in the flesh" (1 Tim. iii. 16,) in no other sense than as though it would never have been possible for him to be manifested without the flesh; for the express purpose "that the eternal life which was with the Father, and the Word of life which was from the beginning with God, might be heard with our ears, seen with our eyes, and handled with our hands." (1 John i. 1, 2.)

3. The Object of our Theology being clothed in this manner, so abundantly fills the mind and satisfies the desire, that the apostle openly declares, he was determined "to know nothing among the Corinthians save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." (1 Cor. ii. 2.) To the Phillipians he says, that he "counted all things but lost for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus; for whom he had suffered the loss of all things, and he counted them but dung that he might know Christ, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings." (Phil. iii. 8, 10.) Nay, in the knowledge of the object of our theology, modified in this manner, all true glorying and just boasting consist, as the passage which we before quoted from Jeremiah, and the purpose to which St. Paul has accommodated it, most plainly evince. This is the manner in which it is expressed: "Let him. that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise lovingkindness, judgment and righteousness in the earth." (Jer. ix. 24.) When you hear any mention of mercy, your thoughts ought necessarily to revert to Christ, out of whom "God is a consuming fire" to destroy the sinners of the earth. (Deut. iv. 24; Heb. xii. 29) The way in which St. Paul has accommodated it, is this:

"Christ Jesus is made unto us by God, wisdom, righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption; that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord!" (1 Cor. i. 30, 31.) Nor is it wonderful, that the mind should desire to "know nothing save Jesus Christ," or that its otherwise insatiable desire of knowledge should repose itself in him, since in him and in his gospel "are hidden all the treasures of wisdom, and knowledge." (Col. ii. 3, 9.)

II. Having finished that part of our subject which related to this Union, let us now proceed to the Subordination which subsists between these two objects. We will first inspect the nature of this subordination, and then its necessity:

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

1. The communication which God holds with us is (i.) either in his benevolent affection towards us, or, (ii.) in his gracious decree concerning us, or, (iii.) in his saving efficacy in

us. In all these particulars, Christ comes in as a middle man between the parties. For (i.) when God is willing to communicate to us the affection of his goodness and mercy, he looks upon his Anointed One, in whom, as "his beloved, he makes us accepted, to the praise of the glory of his grace." ([Ephes. i. 6.](#)) (ii.) When he is pleased to make some gracious decree of his goodness and mercy, he interposes Christ between the purpose and the accomplishment, to announce his pleasure; for "by Jesus Christ he predestinates us to the adoption of children." ([Ephes. i. 5.](#)) (iii.) When he is willing out of this abundant affection to impart to us some blessing, according to his gracious decree, it is through the intervention of the same Divine person. For in Christ as our Head, the Father has laid up all these treasures and blessings; and they do not descend to us, except through him, or rather by him, as the Father's substitute, who administers them with authority, and distributes them according to his own pleasure.

2. But the communication which we have with God, is also made by the intervention of Christ. It consists of three degrees -access to God, cleaving to him, and the enjoyment of him.

These three particulars become the objects of our present consideration, as it is possible for them to be brought into action in this state of human existence, and as they may execute their functions by means of faith, hope, and that charity which is the offspring of faith.

(1.) Three things are necessary to this access; (i.) that God be in a place to which we may approach; (ii.) that the path by which we may come to him be a high-way and a safe one; and (iii.) that liberty be granted to us and boldness of access. All these facilities have been procured for us by the mediation of Christ. (i.) For the Father dwelleth in light inaccessible, and sits at a distance beyond Christ on a throne of rigid justice, which is an object much too formidable in appearance for the gaze of sinners; yet he hath appointed Christ to be "apropitiation. through faith in his blood;" ([Rom. iii. 25.](#)) by whom the covering of the ark, and the accusing, convincing, and condemning power of the law which was contained in that ark, are taken away and removed as a kind of veil from before the eyes of the Divine Majesty; and a throne of grace has been established, on which God is seated, "with whom in Christ we have to do." Thus has the Father in the Son been made *euwrositov* "easy of access to us." (ii.) It is the same Lord Jesus Christ who "hath not only through his flesh consecrated for us a new and living way," by which we may go to the Father, ([Heb. x. 20.](#)) but who is likewise "himself the way" which leads in a direct and unerring manner to the Father. ([John xiv. 6.](#)) (iii.) "By the blood of Jesus" we have liberty of access, nay we are permitted "to enter into the holiest," and even "within the veil whither Christ, as a High Priest presiding over the house of God and our fore runner, is entered for us,," ([Heb. v. 20.](#)) that "we may draw near with a true heart, in the sacred and full assurance of faith, (x, 22,) and may with great confidence of mind "come boldly unto the throne of grace." (iv, 16.) Have we therefore prayers to offer to God? Christ is the High Priest who displays them before the Father. He

is also the altar from which, after being placed on it, they will ascend as incense of a grateful odour to God our Father. Are sacrifices of thanksgiving to be offered to God? They must be offered through Christ, otherwise "God will not accept them at our hands." ([Mal. i. 10.](#)) Are good works to be performed? We must do them through the Spirit of Christ, that they may obtain the recommendation of him as their author; and they must be sprinkled with his blood, that they may not be rejected by the Father on account of their deficiency.

(2.) But it is not sufficient for us only to approach to God; it is likewise good for us to cleave to him. To confirm this act of cleaving and to give it perpetuity, it ought to depend upon a communion of nature. But with God we have no such communion. Christ, however, possesses it, and we are made possessors of it with Christ, "who partook of our flesh and blood." ([Heb. ii. 14.](#)) Being constituted our head, he imparts unto us of his Spirit, that we, (being constituted his members, and cleaving to him as "flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone,") may be one with him, and through him with the Father, and with both may become "one Spirit."

(3.) The enjoyment remains to be considered. It is a true, solid and durable taste of the Divine goodness and sweetness in this life, not only perceived by the mind and understanding, but likewise by the heart, which is the seat of all the affections. Neither does this become ours, except in Christ, by whose Spirit dwelling in us that most divine testimony is pronounced in our hearts, that "we are the children of God, and heirs of eternal life." ([Rom. viii. 16.](#)) On hearing this internal testimony, we conceive joy ineffable, "possess our souls in hope and patience," and in all our straits and difficulties we call upon God and cry, Abba Father, with an earnest expectation of our final access to God, of the consummation of our abiding in him and our cleaving to him, (by which we shall have "all in all,") and of the most blessed fruition, which will consist of the clear and unclouded vision of God himself. But the third division of our present subject, will be the proper place to treat more fully on these topics.

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

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

The consideration of this necessity is of infinite utility, (i.) both in producing confidence in the consciences of believers, trembling at the sight of their sins, as appears most evidently from our preceding observations; (ii.) and in establishing the necessity of the Christian Religion. I account it necessary to make a few remarks on this latter topic, because they are required by the nature of our present purpose and of the Christian Religion itself.

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

I am not in the least influenced by the argument by which some persons profess themselves induced to adopt the opinion, "that a faith in Christ thus particular and restricted, which is required from all that become the subjects of salvation, agrees neither with the amplitude of God's mercy, nor with the conditions of his justice, since many thousands of men depart out of this life, before even the sound of the Gospel of Christ has reached their ears." For the reasons and terms of Divine Justice and Mercy are not to be determined by the limited and shallow measure of our capacities or feelings; but we must leave with God the free administration and just defense of these his own attributes. The result, however, will invariably prove to be the same, in what manner soever he may be pleased to administer those divine properties—for, "he will always overcome when he is judged." ([Rom. iii. 4.](#)) Out of his word we must acquire our wisdom and information. In primary, and certain secondary matters this word describes—the Necessity of faith in Christ, according to the appointment of the just mercy and the merciful justice of God. "He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." ([John iii. 36.](#)) This is not an account of the first kindling of the wrath of God against this willful unbeliever; for he had then deserved the most severe expressions of that wrath by the sins which he had previously committed against the law; and this wrath "abides upon him," on account of his continued unbelief, because he had been favoured with the opportunity as well as the power of being delivered from it, through faith in the Son of God. Again: If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." ([John viii. 24.](#)) And, in another passage, Christ declares, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee

the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." (John xvii, 3.) The Apostle says, "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." That preaching thus described is the doctrine of the cross, "to the Jews a stumbling block and unto the Greeks foolishness:

But unto them which are called both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God:" (1 Cor. i. 21, 23, 24.) This wisdom and this power are not those attributes which God employed when he formed the world, for Christ is here plainly distinguished from them; but they are the wisdom and the power revealed in that gospel which is eminently "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." (Rom. i. 16.) Not only, therefore, is the cross of Christ necessary to solicit and procure redemption, but the faith of the cross is also necessary in order to obtain possession of it.

The necessity of faith in the cross does not arise from the circumstance of the doctrine of the cross being preached and propounded to men; but, since faith in Christ is necessary according to the decree of God, the doctrine of the cross is preached, that those who believe in it may be saved. Not only on account of the decree of God is faith in Christ necessary, but it is also necessary on account of the promise made unto Christ by the Father, and according to the Covenant which was ratified between both of them. This is the word of that promise: "Ask of me, and I will give thee the Heathen for thine inheritance." (Psalm ii. 8.) But the inheritance of Christ is the multitude of the faithful; "the people, who, in the days of his power shall willingly come to him, in the beauties of holiness." (Psalm cx. 3.) "in thee shall all nations be blessed; so then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham." (Gal. iii. 8, 9) In Isaiah it is likewise declared, "When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed. He shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hands. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by the knowledge of himself [which is faith in him] shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities." (Isa. liiii. 10, 11.) Christ adduces the covenant which has been concluded with the Father, and founds a plea upon it when he says, "Father glorify thy Son; that thy Son also may glorify thee: as thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal," &c., &c. (John xvii. 1, 2, 3, 4.) Christ therefore by the decree, the promise and the covenant of the Father, has been constituted the saviour of all that believe on him, according to the declaration of the Apostle: "And being made perfect he became the author of eternal salvation, to all them that obey him." (Heb. v. 9.) This is the reason why the Gentiles without Christ are said to be "alien from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world." Yet through faith "those who some time were thus afar off and in darkness" are said to be made nigh, and "are now light in the Lord." (Ephes. ii. 12, 13, and v. 8.) It is requisite, therefore, earnestly to contend for the Necessity of the Christian religion, as for the altar and the anchor of our salvation, lest, after we have

suffered the Son to be taken away from us and from our Faith, we should also be deprived of the Father:

"For whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father." ([1 John ii. 23.](#)) But if we in the slightest degree connive at the diminution or limitation of this Necessity, Christ himself will be brought into contempt among Christians, his own professing people; and will at length be totally denied and universally renounced. For it is not an affair of difficulty to take away the merit of salvation, and the power to save from Him to whom we are not compelled by any necessity to offer our oaths of allegiance. Who believes, that it is not necessary to return thanks to him who has conferred a benefit? Nay, who will not openly and confidently profess, that he is not the Author of salvation whom it is not necessary to acknowledge in that capacity. The union, therefore, of both the objects, God and Christ, must be strongly urged and enforced in our Christian Theology; nor is it to be endured that under any pretext they be totally detached and removed from each other, unless we wish Christ himself to be separated and withdrawn from us, and for us to be deprived at once of him and of our own salvation.

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

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

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

But these our admonitions more particularly concern you, most excellent and learned youths, who, by the wish of your parents or patrons, and at your own express desire, have been devoted, set apart, and consecrated to this study; not to cultivate it merely with diligence, for the sake of promoting your own salvation, but that you may at some future period be qualified to engage in the eligible occupation, (which is most pleasing to God,) of teaching, instructing, and edifying the Church of the saints—"which is the body of Christ, and the fullness of him that filleth all in all." ([Ephes. i. 23.](#)) Let the extent and the majesty of the object, which by a deserved right engages all our powers, be constantly placed before your eyes; and suffer nothing to be accounted more glorious than to spend whole days and nights in acquiring a knowledge of God and his Christ, since true and allowable glories consists in this Divine knowledge. Reflect what great concerns those must be into which angels desire

to look. Consider, likewise, that you are now forming an entrance for yourselves into a communion, at least of name, with these heavenly beings, and that God will in a little time call you to the employment for which you are preparing, which is one great object of my hopes and wishes concerning you.

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

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

"Far, far from hence, let the profane depart!"

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