

V I E W  
O F T H E  
H E R E S Y  
O F  
A E R I U S.

Consisting of the following Articles.

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| I. That a Presbyter differs not in Order and Degree from a Bishop.                         | III. That Fasts ought not to be prefixed to certain and stated annual Days. |
| II. That there is no <i>Pasch</i> remaining to be observed or celebrated among Christians. | IV. That Prayers are not to be poured out and made for the Dead.            |

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*Non scripta negabo.*

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E D I N B U R G H:

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# P R E F A C E;

O R,

## ADVERTISEMENT concerning the Author.

**T**H E Author of this little Book can never pass either for a good Man, or a wise Man, in the Place where he lives; nor indeed in any other Place where Riches are esteemed Goodness, and where Cunning, and sacrificing all Things to the Love of Gain, are thought Wisdom.

He has no Connexion with any Party of Clergy striving about the publick Leading in Religion, having no Interest in this World to pursue or contend for in connexion with his Religion; though, as a human Creature, he must have some Religion, and, as an Animal, he must subsist and live on the Earth.

Most of his Study, for he is a sort of Student, has been spent in comparing Christianity, in all the Shapes wherein he could observe it appearing in the World, with the original Draught of it in the Scriptures: And, as he evidently sees the Scriptures fulfilled in a general falling away from that, under the Christian Name, this serves much to confirm him in the Truth of these Scriptures of the Apostles and Prophets, on which the only true Church is built, and which he can never enough value and regard, for the glorious Character of God, the divine Contrivance of Salvation through the Death and Resurrection of the Son of God, the excellent Character of Jesus Christ and of his true Followers in the Faith, and the agreeable Order wherein he would have them to follow him unto eternal Life, as the Captain of their Salvation made perfect through Sufferings.

He has conceived an unconquerable Aversion to the Character of all the Sorts of those Men whose Business it is to adapt this glorious Revelation to their Interests in this Life, and especially to make it subservient to their Honour and Glory in this present World. He sees them led by a Principle, which, while it governs them, must form them into a desperate Aversion from being as low and contemptible in this World, as Jesus Christ, his true Gospel, and his Kingdom, always was, and ever will be, to the End of the World.

While

*While he laughs at all the Pretences whereby these impose, perhaps, on themselves, and, most certainly, on the Christian World that follows their Ways; he laughs no less at those merry Fellows, who can gravely think that they are ridiculing true Christianity, when they ridicule the Clergy. The attentive narrow Observation he takes of the Clergy under their Mask, cannot hinder him from taking notice of the pitiful Grimace of those fine Gentlemen who, neglecting altogether that proper Instinct of Man by which alone he is capable of corresponding with his Maker, are strutting in the Airs of Masters and Patrons of a Reason and Virtue whereby it is impossible to distinguish them from the Brutes. And, whereas they pretend to be the Votaries of right Reason and true Virtue, in a grinning Sncer at the Word of Faith which the Apostles preached, he has been forced to see them, by several Instances, the most unreasonable and the most vitious of Mankind.*

*The following Lucubrations on Aeris shew that he reads a little; and it cannot be denied, that he puts Pen to Paper too. But, as he is far from doing this to please, or to make himself agreeable to any Party of Men in the World, he is ready also to laugh even at his Friend, that would advise him to spare his Pains in a Way wherein he loses himself, and wherein he is not capable to recommend himself to any sort of Men of Sense or Taste; for it is very ridiculous, to tell one that labours to please himself, and is accordingly pleased, that he loses his Labour: And, if he be much diverted with the Fault that all Sorts of Men find, in their Turn, with what he writes, and, when that cannot be handsomely gainsaid, with his Manner of Writing, he thinks it not quite friendly to grudge him this same Diversion.*



A  
V I E W  
O F

The Heresy of AERIUS.

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I N T R O D U C T I O N.

*Giving a short History of Aerius, and a large Account of the Use of the Word Heresy, in order to see how it should be applied to his Way.*

**E**PIPHANIUS, Bishop in *Cyprus*, who died in the Year 402 or 403, is reckoned among the Writers of the fourth Century. He wrote a History of all Heresies, with a large Confutation of them, to the Number of eighty. And, in this long List of Heresies, that of *Aerius* stands the 75th in Number. This great Work of *Epiphanius* seems to have been begun in the Year 374, and ended about the Year 376.

*Aerius*, whose Name distinguishes this 75th Heresy, had been a Companion, in the Monastick Way, to one *Eustathius*; who, upon his being made Bishop of *Sebastia* in *Pontus*, made *Aerius* a Presbyter, and gave him the Charge of a House there, for receiving and entertaining poor Strangers. This *Eustathius*, having at first adhered to the *Nicene* Faith, became afterward an *Arian* and *Macedonian* Heretick. And *Aerius*, after very sharp Contentions with him, separated from him; accusing him, to all, of covetously usurping to himself the whole Dispensation of the Church's Money. Having in this Manner given up with his old Comrade and his Bishop, he drew a great Multitude of Men and Women after him, and obstinately maintained four great Errors, as *Epiphanius* accounts them, which make up the whole *Aerian* Heresy.

Before we enter upon a particular Consideration of these, it will not be improper to inquire a little into the Sense and Meaning of the Word *Heresy*; that, if possible, we may have a just Notion of the Character *Heretick*, as it has been fixed upon this *Aerius*. And, because this Word is used in Scripture, and taken from thence, it cannot be thought amiss to observe, in the first place, how it is applied there.

In the *New Testament*, the Word *Sect* stands frequently, in our Translation, for *Heresy*. And some are of Opinion, that it is a Word used indifferently, sometimes in a good Sense, and sometimes in a bad. But, whereas the Apostle places *Heresies* simply among *the Works of the Flesh*, in Opposition to *the Fruit of the Spirit*, it may be observed, that the Word *Heresy* is not applied in the Scripture to signify a Thing esteemed good by them who use it; for, whatever sort of Men be there found using it, they always apply it to what is evil in their Account: As, when a Writer of the *New Testament* mentions *the Heresy of the Pharisees*, and *the Heresy of the Sadducees*, we may know he looked on both these as Ways of the *Jewish* Religion, contrary to the Doctrine of *Moses* and the Prophets, and opposite to the Spirit of their Writings, which the Apostles constantly appealed to, against them, as the true Standard of their Religion; even as the Lord bade his Disciples *beware of the Doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees*. And, when *Paul* commends his Testimony concerning Jesus to King *Agrippa*, from his known Character amongst the *Jews*, as having been very opposite to the Truth that he now testified, and as shewing that his Testimony was far from being influenced by any preconceived Prejudice at the *Jews* or their Religion, even in that Way of it that was most opposite to Christ; and therefore says, *After the most straitest heresy of our religion, I lived a Pharisee*; it is manifest, he then had such a View of a Pharisee, as a thorough Protestant has of a Jesuite.

And, on the other hand, when the *Jews* applied the Name *Heresy* to the Christian Way of Religion, they looked on that Way as very odious: For we must know, that Christianity itself passed under this Name by the Authority of the *Jewish* Church. The High Priest, and the Presbyters of that Church, called *Paul* a Ringleader of *the Heresy of the Nazarenes*, by the Mouth of their Orator, accusing him before the *Roman* Governor. And, in his Answer, it is plain, he takes not with the Name *Heresy*, which they fastened upon his Way of Religion, while he takes with the Way which they called *Heresy*, and vindicates himself, in these Words, to the Governor, before whom they accused him: *But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and the prophets: and have hope towards God, which they themselves also allow,*  
that



that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust. And herein do I exercise my self, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men. Though all this that he said in his own Vindication, was true, it did not in the least clear him, to the Rulers of the *Jewish* Church, of the Charge of Heresy, so justly due, in their Account, to the Way wherein he worshipped the God of his and their Fathers. And so the Way of Christianity passed currently under that same Name, that *Paul* publickly refused, among all the *Jews* throughout the World. For, when he came to *Rome*, he found himself also a Heretick there; where the *Jews* said to him, *We desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for, as concerning this heresy, we know that every where it is spoken against.* The *Jews* throughout the World looked on Christianity as a Way of Religion established on Principles contrary to the universal Tradition of the only Church of God upon the Earth, which he had avouched in the most solemn Manner to be his Church, in Distinction from the rest of Mankind, and to which he had committed his Oracles; as the Christians themselves also allowed, while they opposed a Tradition handed down to them, together with these Oracles, by that same Church; a Tradition as ancient at least as the completing of the Scripture-canon, or they could not tell when or how it commenced: And, at the same time that they received the Scriptures of *Moses* and the Prophets from the Church, they rejected the Church's Interpretation, and followed a new Gloss of these Scriptures, concerning the Messiah and his Kingdom, contrary to their common Sense, established by the Authority of all the holy and learned Rabbies and Fathers of the Church; a Gloss that led them, in opposition to this, to acknowledge a crucified Man as the great Messiah, and to worship him as God, glorying in his Cross, as the End of the Law for Righteousness to every sort of Men that believed in him; and, being but a few of the most ignorant and contemptible of the *Jewish* People, associated with as many of the uncircumcised Nations, even the vilest of them, as they could persuade to believe, as they did, in the crucified Jesus, and obey his Precepts, they called themselves the Church of God, the Kingdom of the Messiah, and Fellow-citizens, in a heavenly *Jerusalem*, with all the Saints who, they said, died of old in the Faith of their Christ to come; and, at the same time, pronounced the *Jewish* Church and Nation, with all who would not be persuaded to believe as they did, Slaves of Satan, Enemies to God, and Objects of his Wrath. This was the View the *Jews* had of *Paul's* Way of Religion, when they called it Heresy; not doubting but it was good Service done to God, not only to excommunicate, but also to kill him: And therefore, when he was rescued from the Mob, the High Priest and the Presbyters, the Rulers of the Church, came down to *Cesarea* to



## 4 INTRODUCTION.

seek his Death from the *Roman Governor*, before whom they accused him as *a Ringleader of the Heresy of the Nazarenes*.

Again, we shall find the Apostles, who were themselves called Hereticks by the *Jewish Church*, applying the Name *Heresy* to any Way of the Christian Profession that Men chused to themselves, opposite to the Doctrine which they taught by Commission from the Lord Jesus Christ, and calling them Hereticks, who, under the Christian Name, caused Divisions and Offences among Christians, contrary to the Apostolick Doctrine, chusing to themselves Ways of Christianity that were opposite to *the Unity of the Faith*, or to that Unity which Jesus would have to ly in believing on him through the Word of his Apostles. And so Paul places Heresies amongst the Works of the Flesh; and speaks of Heresies to the Corinthians, some of whom were beginning to say, *That there is no Resurrection of the Dead*, contrary to the Gospel which he delivered to them and they received. He says to them, *When ye come together in the church, I hear that there be schisms among you; and I partly believe it. For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved, may be made manifest among you. When ye come together therefore into one place, it is not to eat the Lord's supper.*

As we see the famous Word *Schism* here used to signify an Evil, not the very same with that which is intended by *Heresy*, it will be easy to observe, that it has happened to the Word *Schism*, as to most other Scripture-names which are not applied, in common Use now, to point out the same Things to which the Scripture applied them: For *Schisms* here cannot be taken to signify Separations of Communion, but Divisions in the same Communion, Factions and Parties among them who were coming together in one Place to the Lord's Supper; by which they were rendered unfit to eat it, and by reason of which their coming together was unto Condemnation. And any Man may perceive this to be a quite different Thing from separate Communions.

But, as to the Apostolick Use of the Word *Heresy*, we may have some Notion of it from a Direction that Paul gave to his Minister the Evangelist Titus, while he was executing a Commission for him in Crete. After he had given him a short Sum of the Doctrine of Faith, which he would have him to affirm constantly, commending it to him as the Source and Spring of good Works, and as good and profitable to Men, bidding him, at the same time, avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law, as unprofitable and vain; he then says to him, *An heretical man, after the first and second admonition, reject; knowing that he that is such, is subverted, and sinneth, being self-condemned.* By what he was just saying of Questions and Strivings about the Law, in opposition to the faithful Word which he had been commending to Titus, we may



may understand him to be here pointing at the *Judaisers*, or *them of the Circumcision* (as he had called them) who, under a Profession of Christianity, gave so much Disturbance to the Apostles Ministry every where, causing Divisions and Offences among Christians, contrary to *the Word of Faith* which he preached. And so it is a Man of this Sort that he here calls *heretical*, giving Order for his *Rejection* from the Christian Communion, *after the first and second Admonition*; with this Reason for it, That it is manifest, such a Man is *subverted*, or turned off the Hinge of Christianity, off the Foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, and turned out of that one Way wherein all those walk who believe in Christ through the Word of his Apostles; and that *he sinneth*, or trespasses upon the divine Authority in the Christian Revelation, to which he professes Subjection, and so *is self-condemned*: For there is a Chain of Christian Truth, a Connexion in the Words of Faith; so that he who, under a Profession of the Faith, sets himself against any of these Words, may be condemned out of his own Mouth. He may be condemned, in going about to deny a Part of the Truth, by the Part of it that he confesses; in like Manner as those in *Corinth*, denying the Resurrection of the Dead, stand condemned in that Denial, by their own Confession of Christ's Resurrection, without which they could have no Pretence to the Christian Name. And further, a Man that would pervert the Gospel, must have his Mind corrupted from the Simplicity that is in Christ, and cannot have his own Conscience testifying of that Simplicity and godly Sincerity in him wherewith the Apostles preached the Gospel, and true Christians professed it from the Beginning; and so, under a Profession of Faith and of Charity, or the Love of the Truth, he must be conscious of a Dislike of the Truth which he labours to pervert, and of a Disaffection to them who are of that Truth. Therefore *Paul* sets our being *carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive*, in opposition to *speaking the truth in love*. And *Peter* speaks of *false Teachers among Christians, who privily shall bring in, or slyly introduce, Heresies of Destruction*.

The Apostles plainly foretold a general Apostasy among Christians, from the Doctrine which they taught, and from the Spirit of Christianity, under a Form of it, conducted by false Teachers, much like those Causers of Divisions among Christians, contrary to their Doctrine, in their own Time, who adulterated the Word of Faith, by Mixtures of the *Jewish* Tradition, and of the Philosophy of the *Greeks*; and so, professing to believe the Gospel, perverted it, and made it as another Gospel. This was changing the Truth of God into a Lie: And therefore the Apostles called these first Perverters of the Gospel, *Liars* and *Antichrists*, as opposing Christ in the Name  
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of Christ. And they pointed out these Liars and Antichrists, as the Forefathers of *that* grand *Antichrist* to come after them, whom they called a *Liar*; because, *having a Form of Christianity denying the Power of it*, is the most damnable of all Lies. Therefore Paul represents that Man of Sin as opposing God, sitting in his Temple, where he exalts himself; and he says, *his coming is with all power, and signs, and wonders of a lie, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness, in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this God shall send them the energy of error, that they may believe a lie, i. e. believe a perverted Gospel, suited to their Taste who received the Truth without the Love of it.* In the View of this great Perversion of the Gospel, the Apostles wrote their Gospel to them *who know the Truth, and that no Lie is of the Truth*; and commend their inspired Writings, together with the prophetick Word of the Old Testament, whereof these Writings are the only publick authentick Interpretation, to their most careful Study and Observation, as the only Rule and Standard of Christian Religion; by cleaving to which, they should be kept from the general Seduction that was to prevail upon all those who receive not the Love of that Truth, which is only to be found pure and entire in these Writings. The Apostle Peter writes plainly to this Purpose in Words that may be here read.

*I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth. — Moreover, I will endeavour, that you may be able, after my decease, to have these things always in remembrance. For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father, honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount. And we have the prophetick word the more firm; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any \* private interpretation. For prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake moved by the Holy Ghost. But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring*

\* Such an Interpretation as the *Jewish Church* gave the Word of Prophecy by their own Will, is here called *private*, in opposition to the publick authentick Interpretation that the Holy Ghost gives that prophetick Word in the New Testament Revelation, which confirms it. And so the Scripture interprets itself.



*bring in heresies of destruction, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bringing on themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their destructions, for whom the way of the truth shall be reproached. And in covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandize of you. — This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you ; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance : that ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour. — As our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given unto him, hath written unto you ; as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things : in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction. Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness.*

When we read this, it may put us in mind of the Words of Moses, when he had made an end of writing the Words of the Law in a Book. He commanded the Levites, saying, *Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee. For I know thy rebellion, and thy stiff neck : behold, while I am yet alive with you this day, ye have been rebellious against the Lord ; and how much more after my death ? — For I know, that after my death ye will utterly corrupt and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you.*

The Scriptures of the Old Testament, containing the Words which were spoken before by the holy Prophets, were the only Rule of Religion for the *Jews* in the Time of our Lord, when he came to give them a new Revelation, according to these Scriptures, to which he constantly appealed from their Tradition. The Holy Ghost interprets these Scriptures in the new Revelation, that is contained in the Scriptures of the New Testament, setting forth the Commandment of the Apostles of the Lord and Saviour. And these Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, thus taken together, are, according to the Apostle *Peter*, the only Rule of Christian Religion, after the Decease of the Apostles. And in like manner as the Scriptures of *Moses* and the Prophets were kept among the *Jews* amidst all their Corruptions, and appealed to by the Lord and his Apostles, just as the *Jews* then had them, in opposition to their corrupt Interpretation, which they had by Tradition from their Fathers ; even so what *Peter* says, most plainly supposes, that the Apostolick Scriptures would be kept after their Death always among Christians, in midst of all their Corruptions, as a Witness against them : And that Supposition is now manifest in Fact. And, though he says, some Things in these Scriptures are hard to be understood, and liable to be wrested by those who are not taught of God, nor establish-  
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ed in the Faith ; yet he gives these same Scriptures, in place of the deceas'd Apostles, to preserve true Christians from being led away with the Error of the Wicked, and to guard them against the generally prevailing Seduction of false Teachers, privily bringing in Heresies of Destruction ; which he foretells would take place after their Decease.

The Heresies therefore of which the Apostles spake among Christians, must be these Ways, in the Profession of Christianity, wherein they have deviated from the Way of Truth, as it is set forth in the Apostolick Scriptures, following Teachers perverting the Gospel. And, to cause Divisions among Christians, contrary to the Apostolick Doctrine, as they delivered it to the first Christians while they lived, or as it is left written in their Scriptures after their Decease, is to be a Heretick in the Apostolical Sense : And this makes Men liable to the Destruction that they have connected with *Heresy* in their Writings.

But it is a quite different Use of the Word *Heresy*, to apply it to Deviations from any Forms or Standards of Christian Doctrine composed by uninspired Men, according to the most prevailing and universal Tradition, and according to the Art of the Disputers of this World, in their Oppositions of Science, and established by the Authority of the Church as Tests of Truth and Error. These Forms of Faith, contrary to their professed Design, have served to lead Men away from attending, as they ought, to the Scriptures of the Apostles, and have caused manifold Divisions and Offences among Christians ; who will never be united in any one of them ; while all true Christians, who believe in Christ through the Word of his Apostles, must only be united, as Christ would have them, by means of that Word ; which is not to be found pure and entire but in their Writings. The Apostles could have no regard to these uninspired Forms of Faith and Standards of Christian Religion, when they gave their own Writings as the Standard, in opposition to all the Heresies of Destruction that should be sily introduced after their Decease. And, if we would fasten the Name of Heresy upon a Deviation from any other Form of sound Words or Standard of Christianity, but what we have in their Scriptures, we shall not find any such Use of the Word *Heresy* in the Scripture, except that same Use which the *Jews* made of it, when they applied it to Christianity, and called the Way of Christ a Heresy.

After the Death of the Apostles, the Name *Heretick*, among Christians, in the second Century, was applied, much in the same way as the Apostles had applied it, to those who corrupted the Doctrine of the Gospel by the *Jewish* Tradition, and by the Philosophy of the *Gentiles* : And they were rejected by the Christian Churches, and confuted from the Scriptures of the Apostles and Prophets, which  
they



they kept, and from Tradition, among those who had seen the Apostles, only in so far as agreeing with these Scriptures; while Hereticks, in place of the false Apostles that troubled Christians in the Apostles Time, were troubling them with false Gospels, Acts, Epistles and Apocalypses, forged and vented by them as Apostolick Scripture. And, even in that second Century, some Philosophers, becoming Christians, began to use their Philosophy in the Explication and Defence of the Gospel, studying to adorn it with the Spoils of the Heathen Philosophers, and to set it off to the World in that Dress; which served at last to turn the simple Word of Faith into a Science, and the plain Form of sound Words, that was taught by the Apostles, and left in their Writings, into a System suited to the Oppositions of Science falsely so called: So that, however well it might be intended at first, it really tended to corrupt the Minds of Christians from the Simplicity that is in Christ; and so it did at last.

But, when Tradition came to be joined with the acknowledged Scriptures of the Apostles and Prophets, as the Rule of Christian Religion, as it was in the End of that second Century, when another Generation arose, that knew not the Apostles, when they had long Quiet in the Reign of *Commodus* (by means of his Whore *Martia*) and in the first ten Years of *Severus*, and when they grew to a considerable Party of Men in the World; then, whoever opposed and rejected the prevailing Tradition, came at length to be rejected as a Heretick, as they who caused Divisions contrary to the Apostolick Doctrine in the Scriptures. And then it was, that the Use of the Word *Heresy* among the *Jews*, as it had been by them applied to Christianity, took place again among Christians; so that any who took a different Way, in the Profession of Christian Religion, from the established Interpretation of Scripture, or from the prevailing Tradition, came at last to be rejected as a Heretick. Even in that Time, *Victor* Bishop of *Rome*, with a Synod of Western Bishops, resolved to reject the *Asian* Bishops, for keeping *Pasch* on the 14th Day of the Moon of *March*, contrary to a Tradition that he pretended to have handed down to him from *Peter* and *Paul*, by a lineal Succession of *Roman* Bishops keeping *Pasch* always on the Lord's Day; while the *Asian* Bishops persevered obstinately in their Practice, pleading as strongly a Tradition they pretended to have from the Apostle *John*, who died amongst them long after the Martyrdom of *Peter* and *Paul*. It is true, this is commonly called but a *Schism*; yet, when Tradition was thus joined to the Scripture, by the Consent of contending Parties, as the Rule of the Christian Religion, it begat the *Jewish* Use of the Word *Heresy* among Christians: And, in this Sense, the Church of *Rome* applies it to all Protestants to this Day.



Now, to put an End to this tedious History of the Name *Heresy*, and apply what has been said of the Uses of that Word to our Purpose, we shall soon see, that *Aerius* must be looked on as a Heretick, only in this last Use and Application of that Name. He seems indeed to have been obstinate in his Way; and, as *Epiphanius* informs us, Multitudes both of Men and Women followed it; and, if there were no Bishops in his Train, we may come to find a Reason for that. But his Errors cannot be traced up to these old Springs of Heresy, Philosophy and Tradition. Nor will it be easy, without the Help of Tradition, to fix upon him the Charge of departing, in any one of his four Points, from the Scriptures of the Apostles. He became a Heretick, by deviating from the Statutes of the Church: For *Epiphanius* convicts him of Heresy, even where he says with the Scripture, by his forsaking the Law of his Mother the Church. For, in the fourth Century, when *Aerius* lived, there happened a vast Alteration in the State of the Church; Christianity then becoming (against its Genius) the Religion of the *Roman Empire*, and, as much as was then possible, adapted to the State of that grand Kingdom of this World. The Church, being animated by its Genius, had many Statutes that could not be seen in the Apostolick Scriptures, which were calculated for Strangers and Pilgrims on the Earth; though not a few of these Statutes pleaded a Foundation in oral Tradition from the Apostles: For many things had concurred to pave the Way for this great Alteration, and to prepare the Church for it, long before it came. Now, *Aerius* appeared to *Epiphanius* pleading the Instruction of his Father in the Scriptures, against the Laws of his Mother the Church, handed to him by old Tradition, and contained in the Canons of her Synods; and so he fell into a Heresy; which is wholly summed up in the four following Heads.

*The four Errors laid to the Charge of Aerius by Epiphanius, who entered him into the List of Hereticks.*

I. *A Presbyter differs not in Order and Degree from a Bishop; but he who is a Presbyter, is called a Bishop; in as far as, in any one Act, wherein he is chosen by the Presbytery, he presides in the Congregation; because, in the Church, nothing should be done or carried on confusedly.*

II. *There is no Pasch remaining to be observed or celebrated among Christians.*

III. *Fasts ought not to be prefixed to certain and stated annual Days and Solemnities; such as, the Fast of Lent, and of the Week before Pasch.*

IV. *Prayers are not to be poured out and made for the Dead.*

For



For these four Negatives offered by *Aerius* to the prevailing Religion of his Time, he has been spoken against as a Heretick; and some who have happened, in later Ages, not to differ from him in these, have been reproached with him as their only Forefather among the Ancients: Yet this shall not hinder us from inquiring what we should think of them, any more than the Name of *Heresy*, and common bad Fame, frightened the *Jews* at *Rome* from inquiring what should be thought of Christianity. Let us then view them in the Order wherein they have been laid down; and they naturally cast our Thoughts into the four following Chapters.

C H A P. I.

*Of the Sameness of Bishop and Presbyter.*

S E C T. I.

*Shewing what might move Aerius to this Way of thinking, in the Time when he lived.*

WHEN the Difference of the Bishop in Order and Degree from the Presbyter, established by long Custom among suffering Christians, was found so very agreeable to the Change, in the Situation of Christianity, that happened in the Time of *Aerius*, to the great Joy and Satisfaction of all that wished its Prosperity in the World; it may be considered how *Aerius* could be led into his Way of thinking against it, and what should move him to oppose it with so much Zeal even in that Time.

Hereticks, we know, if nothing else can be laid to their Charge, are always suspected of Pride and Ambition in some Shape or other. And it is very true, that *Aerius* was but a Presbyter; and no more was *Jerom*, who, in the following Century, talked a little in the same Way. It is very possible, they might both have thought and spoke otherwise, if they themselves had been Bishops. Yea, it has been insinuated, that this Branch of the Heresy of *Aerius*, did spring out of a Disappointment of his Hopes of being made Bishop of *Sebastia*, in the Room of the deposed *Eustathius*; with whom, *Epiphanius* informs us, he had contended very sharply.

But it was very possible for *Aerius*, without this Ambition, to have fallen into that same odd Way of thinking in the very Time when he lived, by comparing the State of Christianity which was before his Eyes, with the original Draught of it in the Apostolick Scriptures; for which he seems to have had a very great Regard.



And this is what any Man may do at any Time. But the Difference of Bishop and Presbyter appeared, in the Time of *Aerius*, with so much of another Face from what it did before *Constantine*, as was sufficient to awaken his Attention to that same Subject particularly. Indeed that Difference had been made long before ; and, in the Time of *Cyprian*, if we may judge of the common Practice by his Writings, it was carried pretty far. But, even then, it lay under several Limitations ; which, being set aside in the fourth Century, made it have a quite different Appearance : So that one who could have borne with it before, might now declaim against it, as did *Aerius* ; and get a Hearing too, as he did, among Christians.

For, in *Cyprian's* Time, the Bishop's Charge was a Flock, only, of Christians made so by teaching, called out from the World, and called together by the Gospel, to profess the Faith and Hope that is in Christ Jesus, and to keep his new Commandment, of Love to one another as Disciples, whereby all Men should know them to be his Disciples, and for that hated and persecuted by the World. They then baptized none but Disciples, reckoning their Infants with them : For it had not yet come into their Heads, to pervert the Lord's Commission to his Apostles, to make Disciples of all Nations by teaching, and to baptize the Disciples, by turning it into a Commission to make Disciples by Baptism.

And the whole Flock, whereof the one Bishop was then Pastor, was but one Congregation of Christians, using one and the same Eucharist, or coming together in one place to eat the Lord's Supper ; because then it was as irregular to have what they called more than one Altar in one Church, as to have more than one Bishop. And, by the same Rule whereby we shall be able to conceive many Altars in one Church to be yet but one Altar, we shall conceive many Bishops in one Church to be no more but one Bishop.

Again, this one Bishop, however distinguished from the Presbyters of this Flock, did not then administrate the Government and Discipline without the Counsel of the Presbyters, yea nor without the Consent of the whole People, the whole Church. For *Cyprian*, the most zealous Man in his Age for the Episcopal Dignity and Authority, who speaks of it in the most high swelling Words, says fully as much, as has been just now said, concerning his own Conduct and Practice in that Office from the Beginning. This, with what he says of the Suffrage of the whole People in Peace, and of the Majesty of the Christian People, alluding to the Majesty of the *Roman* People, plainly shews, that he looked on himself, in the highest Dignity of his Episcopal Office, as no more but the President of that great Court, the whole Church, and upon his Presbyters, as Assessors to him, who presided in that august Assembly.

And



And further, in *Cyprian's* Time, there was nothing like a Difference of Station in the World attending upon the different Stations of Bishop and Presbyter in the Church; only the Bishop, being considered as the leading Man among the Christian People by their Heathen Neighbours, was the most exposed to Sufferings on the Account of Christianity.

While the Pre-eminence of the Bishop in Order and Degree, continued limited in this Manner, by these Remains of the Apostolick Institution, it was far more tolerable, than in the Time of *Aerius*, who saw a great Change in the State of this Matter, by the Removal of all these old Bounds.

For, now that Christianity became the established Religion of the Empire, after the most zealous Christians had been taken off in the ten Years of *Dioclesian's* Persecution, there were Multitudes of Christians, not made by the Influence of the Gospel, but by the Influence of the *Roman* Emperor and Power of that Empire; who, under the Christian Name, leading a Life almost Heathenish, gave abundant Cause for that new Distinction, betwixt Christians and Saints, which remains ever since every where well founded in the Christian World. And thus the Bishop's Charge came to be a confused Multitude (for a great Part of it) of such Christians as were not Disciples of Christ, nor capable to love one another as such; and who, in place of professing the Faith that is in Christ through the Word of his Apostles, were associated in the Profession of Faith, in the Forms and Standards of Faith that were established to them by the Authority by which they could be influenced.

And now the one Bishop's Flock became many Congregations of such Christians united in him as one Flock, compounded of many: For that ancient Mean or Sign of Union in a Church, the same Eucharist, was now set aside, as it had begun to be in some of the largest Cities in the End of the third Century. And the one Bishop, having got rid of his one Altar, appeared now in a higher Sphere, with many Altars, and Priests serving under him at these Altars, as their High Priest.

This Bishop and his Presbytery lorded over this Multitude of People; whose worldly Interest brought them in Subjection, and whose Religion lay chiefly in a blind Obedience, being unwilling and unable to judge for themselves, and having their Minds strongly possessed with the Fear of Disobedience, and of Separation from this one visible Head of their Church, as the greatest Impiety. And so the Bishop and his Presbytery were eased of the Labour of conducting a Flock of Christ's willing People, by Persuasion and Example, in the Observation of all his Commands, who was the only Lord of their Consciences.

And



And such Bishops, having the Christian Empire parcelled out among them into Districts, had Revenues suitable to their Station out of the Spoils of the Heathen Temples and Priests; and their Share of the Tythes behoved to be proportionable to the Difference of their Station in the Church or the World (now materially the same) from that of a mere Presbyter.

But this was not all that *Aerius* had to look to about Bishops in his Day. He saw a Difference again among them. He beheld the Bishops of each Province (the civil Provinces forming the Body of the ecclesiastical) dependent on their Metropolitan, the Bishop of the civil Metropolis; who called together, ordinarily twice a year, and presided over a Synod or Council of the Bishops of his Province. And, as many civil Provinces made one District, which was called a *Diocess*, so many ecclesiastical Provinces made one ecclesiastical Diocess; of which *Aerius* saw the Bishop of the principal City to be the Head, having the Rights, Prerogatives, Privileges of Honour and Jurisdiction over the whole Diocess, and enjoying the Right of ordaining Metropolitans. By this Subordination of Bishops to Metropolitans, and of those again to capital Bishops, the ecclesiastical Government of the Empire, now made Christian, and called the *Catholick Church*, became conformed to its civil Government, according to the new Distribution of its Provinces. But the Clergy were not yet the Head of this Christian Empire. The Christian Emperors ruled it, till it was broken, by barbarous Heathen Nations from the North, into about ten independent Kingdoms; which, submitting to the Religion of the broken Empire, and being made Christians by Baptism, became unanimously subject to the Clergy; and remained united in nothing else but their Religion, which they supported by their Power. This was the Work of the following Century, when *the Man of Sin*, conceived in the first Churches, brought forth by the Aid of *Constantine*, and nursed up and educated by the Christian Emperors, was enthroned, and exalted to reign as the eighth Head of that Beast having ten Horns; whom the Lord has been for some time consuming with the Spirit of his Mouth, and will soon destroy with the Brightness of his Coming.

*Aerius*, who lived an Age before this great Event came out, could not see it; but he saw the Foundation of it laid in the Work of this fourth Century wherein he lived. And it was easy for him to perceive, that all the Subordinations of the Clergy established in his Time, and making Way for their Kingdom in this World, had a Foundation in the Subordination of the Presbyters to a Bishop, that had been established in the Churches long before his Day, and yet had no Foundation, that he could see, in the Scriptures. Now, if the Church had Power, in any Time after the Apostles, upon any  
Emergency,



Emergency, to establish that first Subordination, and make that Difference of Order and Degree betwixt Bishop and Presbyter; then certainly, upon Occasion of further Exigencies, she might make further Subordinations, and establish new different Orders of ecclesiastick Officers. But *Aerius* was not satisfied that she had such a Power; and therefore contended, that the Bishop and Presbyter did not differ in Order and Degree.

S E C T. II.

*Setting forth the first Argument of Aerius for the Sameness, with the Answer of Epiphanius shewing the Difference.*

**A** *Erius*, to shew, that Bishop and Presbyter differ not in Order and Degree, pleaded, in the first Place, That their Office is the same, by their both doing the same Things, so that whatsoever the Bishop does, the Presbyter does likewise; as, laying on Hands, baptizing, dispensing the divine Worship, and sitting in the \* Throne; which, it seems, the Presbyters did in his Time. Now, if they did all the same Offices, if their Employment was the same, he supposed their Character the same; and so could not see how they differed in Order and Degree, unless he could see the one employed in any Work that the other could not be employed in.

In answer to this, *Epiphanius* denies not that the Presbyter did the same Offices which the Bishop did; but he charges Madness or Folly upon this Argument of his, because he should have added, that the Effects of these Offices or Works are the same; which his Wisdom clearly discerns to be vastly different: For he pleads, that the Bishop begets the Fathers of the Church; but the Presbyters beget not Fathers or Teachers; they beget only the Sons of the Church. And, by this Difference of the Effects, he shews the Difference of the Order and Degree.

It is not quite certain, whether the Assertion of *Aerius*, That the Presbyter did the same Offices with the Bishop, was wholly founded in the Practice of his Time, from which he enumerates the Actions of the Bishop; or whether (because we shall see he mainly pleads Scripture) it might not be also taken from *Peter's* Exhortation to the Presbyters among Christians in his Time, and so to all Presbyters in all Times, in that remarkable Passage, where he calls himself also a Presbyter; as having, with the other Apostles, exercised that Office in the Church at *Jerusalem*, before any other Presbyters were ordained there, even as they also exercised the Deacons Office

\* Sitting in the Throne.] *In the Time of Aerius, the Bishop's Seat in the Church had come to be called the Throne, and the Presbyters were said to be ἐπισκοποι and συνεπισκοποι.*



fice before the Ordination of the Deacons; for which Reason, *John* also calls himself a Presbyter. In that Passage, *Peter* sets himself above the Presbyters, in nothing but that wherein he was never succeeded by any; his being an Eye-witness of what he was chosen to testify as an inspired Apostle. And he exhorts them in these Words: *The presbyters which are among you I exhort, who am also a presbyter, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: feed the flock of God which is among you, exercising the bishop's office, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither exercising lordship over the lots, but being made examples to the flock. And, when the chief Pastor shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.* Then he turns his Exhortation to the Christian People, or the Lord's Lots, (being each of them allotted to him as his Property, and obtaining his Part in the Lord's Flock as by Lot); among whom these Presbyters were Bishops and Pastors: And he distinguishes the Flock of these chosen People, which they feed as Pastors, and oversee as Bishops, no otherwise from them, but as the younger from the elder; saying, *Like-wise ye younger, submit yourselves unto the presbyters: yea, all be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.*

As this Passage affords us a beautiful Prospect of the original Order of the Church, and the true Spirit of its Government; so we may see from it, as manifestly as Words can make any thing appear to us, that the Apostle charges the Presbyters among Christians, with the Work of Bishops, as well as of Pastors, under Jesus Christ the chief Pastor, committing the whole Care of the Flock, which is among them, unto them jointly, under him immediately, or without any one visible uniting Head.

Now, whether *Aerius* had any Respect to this Passage or not, in his Assertion, that the Bishop's Work was the same with the Presbyters, it was bold enough in *Epiphanius* to call him a Fool, or a Madman, for urging what *Peter* had expressly commanded, and making no Distinction where the Apostle had made none: For, would it not require a very extraordinary Degree of Wisdom, and Soundness of Mind, to discern a Distinction betwixt the Effect of the Bishop's Work done by *Peter's* Presbyters, and the Effect of that same Work done by another, called a *Bishop*?



S E C T. III.

*Wherein is considered the other Argument of Acrius for the Sameness, taken expressly from the Scriptures; with the Answer of Epiphanius, shewing the Difference.*

**T**H E main Strength of *Acrius* on this, as on all the other Branches of his Heresy, lay in what he had to say from the Scriptures, as appears from his other Argument; of which *Epiphanius* also informs us, for we have nothing from himself. This Argument, even as stated by his Adversary, serves to shew, from the Scripture, the Sameness; and even in that very Point where *Epiphanius* had been placing the Difference, with a Reflexion on his Folly for not perceiving it.

The Argument is to this Purpose. The Apostle writes *Presbyters* and *Deacons*, and writes not *Bishops*. And to a Bishop he saith, *Neglect not the gift which is in thee, which thou hast received by the hands of the presbytery.* And again, in another Place, he writes to the Bishops and Deacons.

And the Answer of *Epiphanius* comes to this: That Times are to be distinguished: For the Beginnings of all things are small; but they grow by Time. The Apostles could not, at once, constitute all Things. They wanted fit Men in some Places for the Bishop's Office; and, in other Places, for the Presbyter's Office: Therefore, where Bishops were already constituted, the Apostle wrote to the Bishops and Deacons; but, where they were not, he wrote to the Presbyters and Deacons.

Then he shews the Difference of *Bishop* and *Presbyter* from the same Apostle, in this Manner. *Paul* admonishes *Timothy*, a Bishop, not to rebuke a Presbyter; likewise, not to admit an Accusation rashly against a Presbyter: But he did not say to any Presbyter, *Receive not an accusation against a Bishop*; nor did he admonish him not to rebuke a Bishop.

In this Answer, there is no notice taken of what is said in the Objection, to shew, that the Effects are the same even there where *Epiphanius* himself places the Difference: For, as he looks on *Timothy* to be a Father of the Church, holding him as a Bishop, in Distinction from Presbyters; the Objection points out this same Bishop of his, begotten by the Presbytery, or Company of Presbyters, that laid Hands on him: So that Presbyters begat him who judged Presbyters. And what more could his Bishop do? For, if they were capable to ordain his Bishop, what made them unfit to judge him?

But here it is supposed, that *Timothy* was a Bishop, without the least Foundation for it in the Apostolick Writings; where it cannot be pretended that he is called so, and where he is represented in a



quite different Light from any Notion we have of a Bishop. He is plainly there one of the Ministers of the Apostle; whom he calls *Evangelists* and *Teachers*, in Distinction from the Prophets; setting them in the third place, next to the Prophets, who are second, as the Apostles are first; and distinguishing them from Pastors, or Bishops, and ordinary Teachers, as above them: For they are called *Evangelists* and *Teachers*, in Distinction from these, as being endued with that same Knowledge which the Apostle says should vanish away, when Prophecies failed and Tongues ceased, *i. e.* when the New Testament Revelation should be perfected. When therefore that Gift of Knowledge vanished away, whereby these Evangelists and Teachers were fitted for their Office, so did the Office vanish for which that Gift qualified them. And these Ministers of the Apostles, whose Business it was to attend upon them where-ever they went preaching the Gospel, to go every where upon their Errands, to carry their Messages to the Churches, and bring them Accounts from them, while they were laying the Plan of the Churches, and forming them, cannot remain, after the Apostles remain no more in the World, to be thus attended upon, and ministered to. *Paul* would have *Timothy* to go forth with him, from the Church where he was, unto this Work of his Minister and Evangelist, which was pointed out for him by Prophecy, and to which he was separated by the laying on of the Hands of the Presbytery of the Congregation of Christ's Disciples in *Lystra*, or in *Derbe*, or in *Iconium*, (for from one of these *Paul* took him, and there was a Presbytery in each of them); even as *Paul* and *Barnabas* were separated at *Antioch*, to the Work to which the Holy Ghost called them. And as their Separation to this Work did not give them the Charge of any particular Flock of Christians; so neither did his: And therefore it could not make him a Bishop. And it can never appear, that *Paul* made him Bishop of *Ephesus*, from his beseeching him, when he went into *Macedonia*, to stay and act for him in *Ephesus*; from whence, after a few Months Stay, he returned to him in *Greece*, and from thence attended him in his Journey to *Jerusalem*, in Company with several others of his Ministers. Even as it cannot appear, that he made *Titus*, another of these Ministers, Bishop in *Crete*, from his leaving him, to set in Order the Things left undone there; calling him from thence to him to *Nicopolis*, where he was to winter: For one might with equal Reason say, that he was Bishop in *Nicopolis*, or in *Dalmatia*, to which *Paul* informs *Timothy* he had departed from him as in *Crete*, where he left him for a while, to return to him.

*Epiphanius* finds himself obliged to account for what *Aerius* observed in the Scripture, That the Apostles write of the Bishop and Presbyter as one and the same Order, in distinction from the Deacon; and



and never speak of them as three Orders, Bishop, and Presbyter, and Deacon; but as two only, Bishop, or Presbyter, and Deacon. He denies not the Fact from which *Aerius* drew his Inference; but he accounts for it, and endeavours to make it consistent with the three Orders, by saying, that, in Places where they wanted fit Men for the Bishop's Office, there they write of Presbyters and Deacons; and in other Places, where they wanted fit Men for the Presbyter's Office, there they write of Bishops and Deacons. But here the orthodox Father speaks without Book to his Heretick, and, supposing the very Thing in debate, goes quite off the Question; which is, Whether it can appear, from the Writings of the Apostles, that they constituted these three Orders, Bishop, and Presbyter, and Deacon? And, when he cannot deny that the Apostles write of them as if they were but two, surely he cannot then pretend, that he, or his Heretick, might learn from their Writings, that they were three.

It is yet more surprising, how he came to guess, that the Apostles found Men in some Places fit for the one Office, and not for the other; so as in some Places they had Bishops, and not Presbyters, and in other Places, Presbyters, and not Bishops; seeing it is undeniable, that there is but one and the same Character for them both, left in the Apostolick Writings, in distinction from the Deacon. For, when *Paul* describes to *Timothy* the Men whom he should account fit for the Bishop's and Deacon's Office in *Ephesus*, he gives him no Character for a Presbyter distinct from that of the Bishop and that of the Deacon. And when, in his Journey from *Greece* to *Jerusalem*, attended by *Timothy*, touching at *Miletus*, he sent for the Presbyters of the *Ephesian* Church, and gave them his last Charge, leaving the whole Care of the Church and of themselves unto them, under God, and the Word of his Grace; he expressly calls these Presbyters, *Bishops*, saying, that they had been qualified by the Holy Ghost for that Office. His Words to the Presbyters of the Flock of God in *Ephesus* are: *Feed the flock of God, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you bishops.* And again to *Titus*, whom he left, to constitute Presbyters in every City in *Crete*, he describes what fits a Man for the Office of a Presbyter, and gives him the same Character over again that he gave to *Timothy* for a Bishop: And he says to him, *For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things left undone, and constitute presbyters in every city, as I had appointed thee. If any be blameless, the husband of one wife—For a bishop must be blameless.*—Now, if the Apostle had no other Direction to give *Titus*, for constituting fit Presbyters in every City, but a Description of the Character of a Bishop, how could *Epiphanius* imagine, that in some Places they had Men fit for being Presbyters, and not fit Bishops; and that in other Places they found



Men fit for being Bishops, but not Presbyters? We cannot but see a plain Necessity here for guessing again, or giving up the Point to *Aerius*: For, if the Presbyter's Character be not the same in Scripture with the Bishop's, it is certain he has no Character there. And, as *Paul* directed *Timothy* how he should constitute fit Bishops in *Ephesus*, it is quite ridiculous to seek the Difference of Bishop and Presbyter in *Paul*'s Advice to him about rebuking, and receiving Accusations against Presbyters there; who were all Bishops, and therefore might judge Bishops, as *Paul* bids them take heed to themselves, as well as to the Flock. And is not a Bishop to be intreated as a Father? or is an Accusation to be lightly received against a Bishop, any more than against an Elder?

And thus, for all that *Epiphanius* has said, the Difference of the Bishop in Order and Degree from the Presbyter cannot appear in the Scriptures of the Apostles; to which *Aerius* appealed in his Argument.

#### S E C T. IV.

*Which gives some Account of the Writers of the second Century agreeing with the Apostles and with Aerius, and of the Writers of that same Century agreeing with Epiphanius.*

**I**F we did not believe, that the same Providence that watched over the Oracles of God in the Scriptures of the Old Testament committed to the *Jews*, became also engaged for the Preservation of the New Testament Scriptures, we might wonder how they got safe thro' the second Century, which abounded as much with forged Scriptures, as the first Century did with false Apostles. And so much did the Humour of feigning and forging Writings prevail in that Time, that it produced false Writings of famous wise Men among the Heathen, as *Hermes Trismegistus*; and Heathen Oracles, as false Books of the *Sibyls*, cited by many ancient Christian Writers, and even of the second Century, in favour of Christianity; though *Origen* informs us, there were some Christians who opposed them that made use of their Testimony, and called them *Sibyllists*. Some in that Century indulged themselves in telling Fables, and speaking deceitfully for God; while others had an open Ear to hear those Fables and wonderful Stories told, to serve the Cause of Christianity, (as they supposed who could not rest in the Apostolick Evidence for it), but really serving against it. And we have a Swatch of the Manner of writing History in that Time, in the Fragments of *Hegeſyppus* preserved by *Eusebius*. Yet the Intercession of Jesus Christ for his Apostles has prevailed, and the Scriptures containing their Word, have come safe through that Century, and all the Centuries following, to the present, testifying against all the Corruptions



ruptions of the Christian Religion, by the very Men who have been instrumental in preserving them. And there are still some Records of the second Century extant, from which we may form some Judgment of the State of Christianity in that Period; and even with respect to this Question betwixt *Aerius* and *Epiphanius*.

The first of these is a Letter from the Church sojourning in *Rome*, to the Church sojourning in *Corinth*, said to be penned by the *Clemens* of whom the Apostle speaks. While that Letter mentions three Orders of Officers in the Church of the Old Testament, it at the same time confounds Bishop and Presbyter, even as the Apostolick Scriptures do; and it most plainly makes but two Orders of Church-officers in the New Testament Church; which, *Clemens* says, were constituted by the Apostles, in the Foresight of a Controversy that should arise about the Episcopacy, *i. e.* the Name of the Bishop's Office; saying, at the same time, that in this Apostolick Institution was fulfilled that Prophecy of *Isaiah*, which he renders thus: *I will constitute their Bishops in peace, and their Deacons in righteousness.*

The next is a Letter from *Polycarp*, and the Presbyters with him in *Smyrna*, to the *Philippians*. And, whereas *Paul* had wrote to the Bishops and Deacons in *Philippi*, without any mention of Presbyters, *Polycarp* commends to the *Philippians* due Subjection to their Presbyters and Deacons, without any mention of a Bishop. And this has obliged some of the Contenders for the three Orders to guess, like *Epiphanius*, that there was a Vacancy at that Time in *Philippi* by the Death of the Bishop.

And there is need for some Conjecture like this, in order to maintain, that the seven Epistles of *Ignatius*, commonly called the *genuine*, are the very same with those mentioned in *Polycarp's* Letter; and in order to reconcile them with that Letter, and with the common Stile of the first Part of that second Century; especially where they carry the Dignity and Pre-eminence of the one Bishop above the Presbytery so very high, and insist upon with so great Warmth and Zeal, that (not to speak of those learned Men who reject them altogether as spurious) they have been justly suspected by some as interpolated by \* some Author of these Forgeries committed, and false Writings passing current toward the End of that Century, when the Difference of the one Bishop from the Presbytery came to be established, especially in the greater Cities. Not that they doubt of *Ignatius's* having wrote Epistles, or of *Polycarp's* having had

\* Some Author of these Forgeries.] *Dionysius of Corinth*, who lived in that Time, wrote several Epistles, and complained, that the Ministers of the Devil had filled them with Tares, by retrenching and adding many Things.



had them, any more than they doubt that there were Books of the *Sibyls* kept in the *Capitol*: But they no more believe what is said of the one Bishop in these Epistles to have been written by *Ignatius*, than they believe the Books of the *Sibyls* cited by the Fathers to have been the same that were so carefully kept at *Rome*. The Author of that Interpolation, in all the Epistles of *Ignatius*, concerning the one Bishop, has been zealously engaged as a Party on that Side of the Controversy which *Clemens* said the Apostles foresaw would arise about the Episcopacy: And that Side of the Question prevailed toward the End of the Century, when they made up Lists, which have been handed down to us, of single Bishops above Presbyters, succeeding one another, at *Rome* and other great Cities. In these Lists they placed the first Bishops in Succession after one another; who yet appear to have been Bishops at the same Time: As, in *Rome*, they have, first, *Linus*; after his Death, *Cletus*, or *Anacletus*, (as *Irenæus* calls him); and, after he is defunct, *Clemens* comes; who is again succeeded by *Anacletus*, if he be not the same with the second, called *Cletus*. Whereas it cannot appear in the Scriptures, that the Apostles ever ordained a single Bishop in any Church; but it is manifest, they always constituted a Plurality of Presbyters, whom they called *Bishops*. And it appears from *Clemens's* Epistle to the Church in *Corinth*, and the State of the Church in *Corinth* represented in that Epistle, that the Church of *Rome* then knew of no such Thing as a single Bishop in one Church; as *Polycarp's* Epistle to the *Philippians* shews, he knew nothing of a single Bishop in *Philippi*, where the Apostle had a Plurality of Bishops. This one Bishop, in Distinction from the Presbyters, and Pre-eminence above them, was the Work of the latter Part of the second Century, when they made up their Rolls of Succession. And it is no wonder to find their Genealogy of Bishops a little confused, when it comes near the Apostles: For there they behoved to place those in Succession who were Bishops at the same Time, even as the Apostles constituted them in every Church.

Nor was this the only Deviation from the Commandment of the Apostles of the Lord and Saviour, that took place and began to prevail toward the End of the second Century: For, together with this Innovation, of one Bishop in a Church different in Order and Degree from the Presbyters, and as the native Fruit of it, Synods and Councils of such Bishops took place, after the Profession of Christianity had been maintained in the Churches for more than a hundred Years without them, to far better Purpose than ever it was since. This new Church officer, set over the Presbytery as the visible Head of the Church, and called a *Bishop*, could not be ordained or judged by the Presbyters, but by his Peers, the Bishops of other Churches: And this created Assemblies of such Bishops, and naturally



naturally brought the Churches into Dependence upon their Councils; which produced a new Kind of Catholick Church, visibly united in the Connexion of these Heads of the several particular Churches with one another. And, by a very great Inconsistency, while a Church, with its Clergy and People united to their one Bishop as the visible Head, was reckoned a compleat organized Body within itself, it became, at the same Time, through that Head, but a Part of a Body organized in the Connexion of such Heads. Whereas originally, every Church of the Saints, having one Eucharist, and the Catholick Rule of Christianity, the Word of the Apostles, with all the Officers of Christ's Institution within itself, and depending immediately upon him who walks in the midst of the golden Candlesticks, was considered as a compleat visible Representation of the only true Catholick Church, which is invisible; and not at all as a Part of any other visible organized Body or Church.

Now, these Councils or Synods of Bishops, whereby the Union of this Catholick visible Church is established and maintained, had a remarkable Beginning, and made their first notable Appearance in the End of the second Century, on Occasion of a Difference among Christians, as to an oral Tradition from the Apostles, about the Day on which *Easter* should be observed: For then Tradition began to be the Rule together with the Scriptures. And it was so ordered in Providence, that the Uncertainty of that Rule was manifest in Fact, from that very Question upon which these Synods met; and the Difference betwixt *Victor* of *Rome* and his Western Synod, and *Polycrates* of *Ephesus* with his *Asian* Synod, might have opened the Eyes of all Christians to see what Kind of Unity they were to expect from this Mean of Catholick visible Union. But the *Man of Sin* behoved to be revealed in his Time.

And we may likewise notice, while we are on the second Century, that, toward the End of it, and after *Polycarp's* Martyrdom, annual Days began to be observed to the Honour of Martyrs, and as an Incitement to follow them. And praying for the Dead began in a little to be talked of; as we see it is by *Tertullian* in the Conclusion of the Century. So that *Aerius*, who was no Friend to these Things, cannot be thought to have payed any regard to the Sayings or Doings of that Time. He maintained his Points by the Scriptures against Tradition; and he held every thing for an Innovation, however ancient, that had no Foundation there; in like Manner as those Christians did, who, not being satisfied, it seems, with the Ways then prevailing, were requiring Scripture for every thing; against whom *Tertullian* wrote, for Tradition. And these Opposers of Tradition, whom *Tertullian* could not call Hereticks, may be considered as the Opposers of the Innovations, and particularly of the Exaltation of one Bishop in every Church above the Presbytery,



Presbytery, contrary to what they saw in the Scripture. And so they may be looked on as holding the scriptural Side of that Controversy which, *Clemens* said, the Apostles foresaw would arise about the Episcopacy, and in the View of which, they constituted the two Orders, of Bishops, or Presbyters, and Deacons.

## S E C T. V.

*Which takes the Hint given by Acrius, to shew, that the one Bishop was grafted upon the Apostolick presiding Presbyter; and gives some Account of him.*

**W**HEN *Acrius* speaks of his being called *Bishop* who was chosen by the Presbytery to preside in the Church in any one Act, he plainly refers to what the Apostle wrote of *Presbyters presiding well*, in Distinction from *Presbyters labouring in the Word and Doctrine*, and of him *that teacheth*, him *that exhorteth*, and him *that presaleth*. For, while the Apostles made Bishop and Presbyter the same, their Office the same, and their Character the same, in Distinction from the Deacons, or the Ministers of Tables, as being Ministers of the Word, *apt to teach*, or *holding fast, as to doctrine, the faithful word, that they may be able both to exhort in sound teaching, and to convince the gainsayers*, by which they were qualified to take care of, and preside in the Church, which is to be conducted by the Word of Faith; they at the same time made a Distinction in this Ministry of the Word, according to three remarkably different Ways wherein it may be exercised, with a threefold Difference of Effects; for every one of which, every Minister of the Word is not equally sufficient; and in each of which, every Presbyter or Bishop does not equally excel. For one excels in the Explication of the Word of Faith that was taught by the Apostles, and in leading the Church into a more explicit Knowledge of that Word, and in convincing Gainsayers by it: And he who excels in this, and so gives himself especially to it, or labours in it, is *he that teacheth*, or the *Presbyter that labours in teaching*. Another excels in Exhortation, by that same Word, moving the Affections, and warming the Heart with the Love of the known Truth: And he who excels in this, and gives himself especially to it, is *he that exhorteth*, or the *Presbyter that labours in the Word of Exhortation*. And another excels in the Application of the same Word, for the Direction of the outward Conversation in the World, and among the Brethren, in all good Works, and in all the mutual Offices of brotherly Love, according to the new Commandment; whose Talent lies therefore in the Direction of the Discipline of the Church, that goes upon the Works and Conversation of the Brethren: And he who excels this Way, and so gives himself mostly to it, and does it to the best Purpose,



Purpose, or to the greatest Advantage, is *he that presideth*, or the *Presbyter presiding well*. One of this last Sort ordinarily presided in the Assemblies of the Church, while the others were as his Assessors in the Discipline, every one exercising himself mostly in that Branch of the same Office wherein his Fellow-Presbyters agreed that he excelled. All these Presbyters or Bishops did teach, exhort, and preside: But he who excelled in teaching, was the Labourer in teaching; and he that excelled in Exhortation, was the Labourer in the Word of Exhortation; and he that excelled in presiding, was the Presbyter presiding well. It required these three in every Church or Congregation of the Saints, to perfect its Order, and to make it fully compleat. And, according to Christ's Institution of binding and loosing by Discipline, no Church can exercise that Discipline without two of them, at the very least, harmonising to ask concerning every Deed to be done for them of the Father which is in Heaven: And therefore the Apostles left a Plurality of Presbyters or Bishops in every Church immediately dependent on Heaven.

Now, in a Church where they left but one Bishop teaching, and one exhorting, and one presiding, the last presided ordinarily in the Assemblies of the Church, whereof they were all Bishops: And, when he did so, he was called *the Angel of the Church*, by a Name borrowed from the Synagogue, (even as the Assembly of Christians is called by *James* their *Synagogue*), where there was certainly a Plurality of chief Rulers, the *Archisynagogoi*: And he, by whose Mouth, at any Time, the Congregation sent up their Prayers to God, was called *the Angel of the Congregation*, that is, their Messenger to God, whether he was an *Archisynagogos* or not, (for any *Jew* might be, at some times, the Mouth of the Synagogue in Prayer); but he that was so ordinarily, was distinguished by the Name of *the Angel of the Congregation*. Even so, whereas the Discipline of the Church was executed by Prayer, and this Prayer was in the Mouth of one presiding, that President who spake the Prayer of the Presbytery in the consenting Church, was called *the Angel of the Church*, their Messenger to God, to whom they sent up their Prayers by his Mouth. And so we see the Lord Jesus directing his Epistle to a Church from Heaven, unto him by whose Mouth they sent up their Prayers to Heaven.

But this was far from being limited to any single Person, so as to make the Unity of the Church to hinge upon him, as set above the Presbytery, (as the Interpolator of *Ignatius's* Epistles would do), and especially where there were more presiding Presbyters than one in a Church: For the Apostles no where limit a Church to a single teaching, a single exhorting, and a single presiding Presbyter; and, where there were more than one, they might take it by turns,



even as the Presbytery of the consenting Church chused. Therefore we find the Lord Jesus, writing to the Angel of the Church in *Thyatira*, speaks to this Angel as more than a single Person, saying, *Unto you* (*υμιν*) *and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as hold not this doctrine.*

The Stile of the Writers of the second Century agrees with what has been said of the Apostolick Way of writing, concerning presiding Presbyters: For *Justin Martyr*, who wrote about the Middle of that Century, calls him the President, by whose Mouth the eucharistical Prayers of the whole Church saying *Amen*, were sent up to God; the President, not of Presbyters, but of the Brethren; not of a Presbytery, but of the whole Brotherhood assembled in one Place to eat the Lord's Supper. And even *Tertullian*, in the very Conclusion of that Century, retains something of this primitive Stile: For, when he is describing the Order and Discipline of a Christian Church, or worshipping Congregation of Christians, he says, that approved Elders preside.

But, toward the End of that Century, they began to appropriate the Scripture Name *Bishop*, which it gives in common to all Presbyters, unto the presiding Presbyter; and called him the Bishop in their Lists of Succession from the Apostles. Thus *Poly-carp*, a famous Martyr, who had been only a presiding Presbyter in the Church of *Smyrna*, came to be called the Bishop of *Smyrna*; and *Anicetus*, who had been, at that same time, but the presiding Presbyter in the Church sojourning in *Rome*, came to be afterward called the Bishop of that Church, and to stand under that Name in the Genealogy of Succession. It might have then been thought an odd Scrupulosity and extreme Preciseness, to quarrel or make any Noise about a small Variation in the Use of a Word, or the Application of a Name; but all new Uses of Scripture-words, and different Applications of Scripture-names, have brought Innovations with them in the Christian Religion. And so did this: For, under this new Use of the Name *Bishop*, a new Order of Church-officers was introduced, different from, and set above the Presbytery. And this human Plant, being thus cunningly grafted upon the scriptural Stock of the presiding Presbyter, was the more easily suffered to fasten and grow up at first in the Churches; who never imagined, that it would grow to the Height that *Aerius* beheld it at in his Day. And so it may be true that *Aerius* insinuates, *viz.* That the Difference of the Bishop from the Presbyter in Order and Degree, began at calling the presiding Presbyter the Bishop.

And here it is much to be remarked, that the Apostle, no doubt foreseeing this, took sufficient Care to prevent it; and has said enough to hinder as many from complying with it, as would  
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take earnest heed to the Scriptures as the only Rule of their Religion. For what can be more express against the Pre-eminence of the presiding Presbyter above the other Presbyters, than this that he says, *Let the presbyters that preside well, be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and teaching?* If the Things the Apostles wrote, must be acknowledged, by Christians, as the Commandments of the Lord, was not this Commandment of his plainly made void by the Tradition that gave the Pre-eminence to the presiding Presbyter, under the distinguishing Name of *Bishop*, in Order and Degree above the Presbytery? And had not *Aerius* Reason to reject such a Tradition? Or should Christians reject him as a Heretick, for not receiving an oral Tradition from the Apostles, contrary to their express Writings?

S E C T. VI.

*Wherein it is observed, that the Moderns who agree with Aerius as to the Sameness of Bishop and Presbyter, have yet no Connexion with him in their Presbyterian Form of Church-government.*

**J**ohn Calvin was a great Divine and excellent Writer of the sixteenth Century, no way equalled by those who shew the greatest Contempt of him in comparison with their Ancients. The fourth Century has not furnished us with any Writing on Divinity that can be compared with the *Institutions* which this Modern is said to have wrote at twenty two Years of Age, and which he dedicated to the King of *France*. And, if he had lived in the fourth Century, with the Knowledge he had of the Scriptures, one may be bold to say, that even *Epiphanius* might have been his Scholar in Divinity. He happened to agree with *Aerius* as to the Sameness of Bishop and Presbyter: And a great many Protestants are the same way minded with him on that Point; which is so manifest in the Scriptures, that it may at any Time be observed there, by any attentive Reader or Hearer, though neither *Aerius* nor *Calvin* had ever said a Word of it.

But, though *Calvin* agrees with *Aerius*, and with the Apostles, as to the Sameness of Bishop and Presbyter; yet his Form of Presbyterian Church-government, grafted upon that by him in *Geneva*, and brought from thence to *Scotland* by his Disciple *John Knox*, has no Connexion with any thing that *Aerius* built on that Sameness, any more than it has with the Apostolick Order in the Churches of the Saints. For *Aerius* had no other Followers in his Day to bring into Church-order, but as many as would hearken to him pleading Scripture against established Tradition; having no worldly Interest, nor any other Influence, but that of Persuasion, to draw them in to that Order, in opposition to the Order established in every Province



by the Power of the Empire: And so he had no more Occasion than the Apostles had, for making out a Draught of Church-government fit for being established by the civil Power in any Commonwealth, or Kingdom, or Province of this World, as its Ecclesiastick Government. But *Calvin* had Occasion for this; and accordingly devised a Form of Church-government fit to be established in *Geneva*, building it upon the Sameness of Bishop and Presbyter; and his Disciple adapted it to *Scotland*, where he laboured to have it established by the civil Power. And though this Form, once established, may subsist, among People that have been accustomed to it, without an Establishment; as the Episcopal Form likewise can do; yet it is made fit for an Establishment; and the want of that must still be a great Loss to it: Whereas the Draught of the Apostolick Order in the Churches of the Saints that is to be seen in the Scriptures, appears not there with the least Air of a Design to be so established; and is at no manner of Disadvantage by the Want of it: For indeed it must undergo some considerable Alterations, before it can become the Ecclesiastical Government of any Commonwealth, or Kingdom, or Province of a Kingdom of this World. There is one Thing that *Calvin* sets aside, as incompatible with his System, which some, it seems, were insisting for in his Time; and that is, the Necessity of all the Members of a Church partaking of the Eucharist, being satisfied in one another as Christians and Brethren in Christ, in order to their coming together as one Body, to eat of that Bread, and to drink of that Cup, in brotherly Love to one another, as joint Partakers of Christ. The People of his communicating Church, the Parish, must not be allowed in scrupling to partake with any whom the Presbyter and Kirk-session judges fit to communicate. And this makes a Church of a different Kind from the Apostolick Churches of the Saints, and Faithful in Christ Jesus, while it gives the Presbyter, in his Session of Presbyters not apt to teach, more Power over the People than ever Bishop *Cyprian* and his Presbytery offered to assume to themselves over their Flock. And this is a first and most necessary Article in the Presbyterian Form of a Church, or in any other Form, to make it fit for an Establishment in any Nation of this World.

Again, the Presbytery of *Acrius* and of the Apostles, governs a Congregation of Christians assembling in one Place to eat the Lord's Supper; and his presiding Presbyter presides in this Congregation, as *Justin Martyr's* President of the Brethren, who was the Mouth of their Assembly all saying *Amen* to his Prayers at the same Eucharist, whereof his whole Church did partake: And such, and no more, was the Flock, the whole Church, ruled by *Cyprian's* Presbytery, in the Middle of the third Century. But *Calvin's* Presbytery is a Council of Presbyters, gathered out of Kirk-sessions, and governing



verning them and all the Congregations of the District, which make one Presbyterial Church, the Flock fed by this Presbytery, and united in it. And, to prevent Confusion in this Presbytery, one is chosen to preside among them, who is called *Moderator*. And here it is that the Difference of this Form from Diocesan Episcopacy is most manifest; for they all have Access to this Moderatorship. This Presbytery, over-ruling a Cluster of Congregations or parochial Churches, is again subordinated to a Synod of such Presbyters, governing all the Presbyteries of a Province; and this provincial Synod, is again subject to a national Synod, governing a national Church: And there is Room left in this Draught for an œcumenick Synod of Presbyters, governing all the Nations of the Earth, when they can be made Christian, and brought in Subjection to this Presbyterial Form of Government. I dare say, *Aerius* had not the least Notion of this Frame of Church-government by Presbyters. Does any Man really perceive it in the Scriptures? or will any one pretend to shew, that ever it appeared in the World before the sixteenth Century?

A Presbyter, presiding in a Kirk session chiefly composed of a sort of Presbyters who are not at all Ministers of the Word, can have no Pretence to being any thing like him who *Aerius* says was chosen by the Presbytery to preside in the Congregation or Church; and it is no more like *Cyprian's* Bishop, governing with the Counsel of his Presbytery, and the Consent of his whole People, than an Apple is like an Oyster.

## C H A P. II.

### *Of no annual Christian Pasch.*

#### S E C T. I.

*Explaining the Subject, and stating the Question, from the Argument of Aerius, and the Answer of Epiphanius.*

**T**H E next Branch of the *Aerian* Heresy is, *That there is no Pasch remaining to be observed and celebrated among Christians.*

And for this *Aerius* alledged, what *Paul* says in his first Epistle to the *Corinthians*, *That Christ our pasch is sacrificed for us.*

To which *Epiphanius* answers, *That Paul* himself celebrated *Pasch*; because he kept the Day of *Pentecost* in *Jerusalem*: So that  
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the *Pasch* of Christians is not subverted by the Authority of his Epistle.

The Question here is plainly about the Christian Festival that we call *Easter*, from the Name of an old *Saxon* Goddess, called *Aester*, or *Aestar*; the same, as *Bochart* thinks, with the *Phœnician Astarte*, to whom the Heathen *Saxons* had sacrificed, and kept a solemn annual Feast, about the same Time in which they kept *Pasch* after they became Christians by Baptism, by which many thousands of them were made Christians in a Day. And the *Hebrew Pasch*, or *Pesach*, is, in plain *English*, *Passover*. So that the Question betwixt *Aerius* and *Epiphanius*, who had nothing to do with the *Saxon Easter*, must be, Whether Christians ought to observe, as the Christian Passover, that annual religious Festival which they kept at the Season of the *Jewish Passover*? For the Argument of *Aerius*, which *Epiphanius* answers, is far from setting aside the true Christian Passover. He cannot be charged with denying, that Christians ought always to feast on Christ their Passover sacrificed for them. He did not deny, that they ought still to keep a holy Remembrance of Christ's Death and Resurrection, and in a solemn Manner, every first Day of the Week when they come together to break Bread. But he denied, that the annual Solemnity which we call *Easter*, is the Christian Passover, and that it is to be kept by Christians in place of the *Jewish Passover*: For, it seems, it appeared to *Aerius*, that, when God instituted annual Feasts to be kept to him, he distinguished these Solemnities by peculiar Ordinances to be observed at them; as, at the Passover, the sacrificing of the *Paschal Lamb*, with all the Rites proper to it, repeated yearly at the appointed Time. But the Sacrifice of Christ, the Truth of that *Paschal Sacrifice*, and the only Christian Passover, being once made, and never to be repeated, has put an End to the annual Solemnity of the Passover. And, as God has not distinguished that Time to Christians by any peculiar Ordinance to be observed in that Season, it must be a holy Feast wholly of their own making, if they keep it, and not as the *Jewish Passover*, which was a divine Institution; in the Place of which, he hath given to Christians, Christ their Passover already sacrificed for them, and not to be sacrificed annually, or at any Time again for ever: And it derogates from this, as the End of the Passover, to hold an annual Christian Passover in place of the *Jewish*.

*Epiphanius* denies not, that *Paul*, in his Epistle, gives us Christ sacrificed for us, and our feasting upon him, as the true Christian Passover; nor does he deny, that this is a different Thing from the Passover in question betwixt him and *Aerius*: But he pleads, that, besides the Passover whereof *Paul* speaks in his Epistle, he hath also recommended to us, by his Example, the Observation of the annual Festival of the Passover; because it is plain, from the History of him



him in the *Acts of the Apostles*, that he hastened, if possible, to be at *Jerusalem* the Day of *Pentecost*. If he then studied to keep these annual solemn Feasts himself, notwithstanding what he writes in his Epistle of Christ our Passover, surely it cannot make it unlawful for us to keep that annual Solemnity, the Christian Passover: For, if the Apostle of the *Gentiles* kept the *Jewish Pentecost*, after the first Fruits of the Spirit had come, on that Day, as the End of that Feast; no doubt he as well observed the *Jewish Passover*, after Christ our Passover had been sacrificed, as the End of that Feast: And, if this was not unlawful for him, far less is it unlawful for Christians, to regard the Season of the sacrificing of Christ our Passover, and keep an annual Day to the solemn Remembrance of that great Benefit. And therefore the Church ought no more to be condemned by *Aerius* for regarding that Day, than the same Apostle would have those condemned who, being Christians, in his Time regarded the *Jewish Days*.

## S E C T. II.

*Which serves to shew, that the annual Christian Passover did not rise from the Apostle's keeping the Jewish Feasts, and that the Lawfulness of keeping it cannot be made appear from his Practice.*

**T**HE Apostles declared plainly to the *Gentile Converts*, that they ought not to observe the Law of *Moses*, while they themselves, being *Jews*, and all the Christian *Jews* with them, continued in the keeping of that Law, till that Part of the New Testament Revelation came forth which looses the *Jews* from the Obligation of that Law, once laid upon them by divine Authority; and makes it as unlawful for them, by that same Authority, to keep its peculiar Precepts, as it is for the *Gentiles*. And this is that Part of the New Testament Revelation which we have written in the Epistle to the *Hebrews*. Before this came, the Consciences of the believing *Jews*, who sought not Justification by the Deeds of the Law of *Moses*, but by the Faith of Christ, *as the end of that law for righteousness*, did yet remain obliged by the divine Authority in the Precepts of that Law, ay and until that Obligation was loosed by that same Authority, in a new Revelation, shewing, that they ought no more to observe them: For the first Christians, who believed the Imputation of Righteousness without Works, both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, made a great Difference betwixt keeping divine Precepts, and seeking to be justified thereby; yea, their Faith in Christ for Righteousness, shewed itself in the most tender Regard to every divine Precept. And therefore, long after the Will of God was made known, that the *Gentile Disciples* should not be circumcised, nor keep the peculiar Precepts of *Moses*, the Apostles, and other believing *Jews*, kept



kept them : And even *Paul*, the Apostle of the *Gentiles*, who contended most zealously against their observing the Law, kept it himself ; as we may see from a Passage in the *Acts of the Apostles*, where *James*, and the Presbyters of the Church in *Jerusalem*, say to him, *Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe, and they are all zealous of the law. And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying, that they ought not to circumcise children, neither to walk after the customs. — Do therefore this that we say to thee : we have four men which have a vow on them ; take them, and purify thy self with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave their heads : and all may know that those things whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing, but that thou thy self walkest orderly, and keepest the law. As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written and concluded, that they observe no such thing. — Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them, entered into the temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them.* By this we see, that *James*, and the Presbyters in *Jerusalem*, agree with *Paul* in the Revelation already made, and acknowledge, with him, that the *Gentiles* should not observe the Law ; and even the Multitude of believing *Jews*, zealous of the Law, had no Offence at *Paul* on this Head : And, by the Reference here made to that Revelation, touching the *Gentiles* which believe, it appears, they, as yet, knew of no Revelation obliging the believing *Jews* to forsake *Moses*, and to observe his peculiar Precepts no more than the *Gentiles* ; yea *Paul* plainly shews he knew then of no such Revelation, and declares, in the most solemn Manner, that he had never yet taught the *Jews* to forsake *Moses*, and that he had not forsaken him himself. Now, this happened at that same Feast of *Pentecost*, which, *Epiphanius* observes, *Paul* kept in *Jerusalem*. And he might as well have said, that his forbidding the *Gentiles*, in his Epistles, to keep *Moses's* Law, ought not to hinder them from following his Example in keeping it. The Apostles, and all the Christian *Jews*, observed the Law, till they were loosed from it, by the Revelation written in the Epistle to the *Hebrews*, about the Beginning of the *Jewish* War, when the Destruction of the Temple was approaching ; which makes it as unlawful for the *Jews*, as it was before for the *Gentiles*, to serve the Tabernacle, or keep the Law of *Moses*. But, after that Revelation came, it cannot be made appear, that any Apostle, or true Christian *Jew*, did any more observe any of the peculiar Precepts of *Moses* ; nor could any believing *Jew*, after that, regarding the Days instituted in that Law, claim the Forbearance that was due to them who regarded these Days of divine Institution, before the Will of God was made known, that loosed them from  
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the Obligation of these Institutions. And if it be not now lawful for a Christian *Jew* to observe the holy Days of the Law of *Moses*, much less is it lawful to regard any such Days that God never instituted.

## S E C T. III.

*Which considers how Christians might fall in very early to the keeping of an annual Pasch, without being led in to it by the Apostles keeping the Jewish Feasts.*

**F**ROM what is said it may appear, that the Observation of an annual Passover among Christians, after the Death of the Apostles, did not arise from their Practice of keeping the Feasts enjoined in the Law of *Moses* until God declared them free from the Obligation of that Law. And there appears not any thing in the Apostolick Writings, to give Rise to it, beside that Practice; which, instead of leading Christians into the Observation of their annual Passover in place of the *Jewish*, would have led them to keep the *Jewish* Law and *Jewish* Feasts. Yet it was very possible for Christians, both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, who had been always accustomed to annual Solemnities in the Religions of their Education, to think of the Observation of an annual Solemnity in their new Religion, very soon after the Apostles.

They all knew, that Christ their Passover was sacrificed for them, at the very Time of the *Jewish* Passover; and that he rose again for their Justification on the first Day of the Week, as the first Fruits of them that slept, the Morrow after the great Sabbath of the Passover, when the first ripe Sheaf was offered; and that, being by the right Hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the Promise of the Holy Ghost, he poured out the first Fruits of the Spirit upon his Disciples on the first Day of the Week, which was the Morrow after the seventh Sabbath from the great Sabbath of the Passover, and the waving of the first ripe Sheaf; that Morrow after the seventh Sabbath being the very Day of *Pentecost*, which was the Feast of first Fruits. And they were taught by the Apostles, even in that Epistle which discharges the *Jews* from the Observation of the Law of *Moses*, and seventh Day Sabbath, to observe this eighth Day, or first Day of the Week, this other Day, on which Jesus ceased from his own Works, and entered into his Rest, as the Sabbatism, or weekly Day of Rest, remaining to the People of God in place of the Sabbatism of the seventh Day: They were led by the Apostles to assemble together on that Day to break Bread; and, in the Observation of that and all the other Institutions of Worship, to remember Christ's Incarnation, Death and Resurrection, and the Descent of the Holy Ghost. While they

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were doing this weekly, it was very natural for them, at the Season of the *Jewish* Passover and *Pentecost*, to reflect, that this was the very Time of the Year when the great Events fell out which they were always remembering on the first Day of the Week, and to consider the Day on which they were then assembling, as the Day of the Year whereon Christ arose, being the third from that whereon he suffered; and again, at *Pentecost*, as the Day of the Year whereon his Entrance into his Rest was notified on Earth, by the Descent of the Holy Ghost. And how easy was it for them, who had been used to annual Solemnities in the *Jewish* or Heathenish Religions, to incline to distinguish, from other Times of the Year, those Times wherein the great Events happened, upon which their whole Religion now depended, as well as their eternal Salvation?

But they had nothing written to them by the Apostles, of the Manner wherein such an annual Day should be distinguished and solemnised: They had no other Ordinances of Worship left them; to be observed on such a Day, but those they were already observing every first Day of the Week; which was the only set Day of Rest, and set Day of solemn Assembling, left to them in the New Testament Scripture. And therefore they behoved to distinguish such a Day to themselves, and make it solemn the best way they could, borrowing as much from the Solemnities of their old Religions as they could, without the *Jewish* Sacrifices, and without the idolatrous Rites of the *Gentiles*; at the same time reserving something of that Zeal and Fervor in the Christian Worship which was due to the Lord's Day every Week, and keeping it up for these annual high Days.

Yet, as to the Time of the Passover, when Christ died and rose again, they did not all happen to fix upon the same very Day for the high Day of their annual Solemnity: For some, considering the Day before the great *Jewish* Sabbath of the Passover, as the Day on which Christ their Passover was sacrificed for them, made that the great Day of the annual Solemnity, in honour to his Death, and called that the Christian Passover, whatever Day of the Week it fell upon; while others, considering the first Day of the Week, the Lord's Day, as the Day in which they had always remembered these great Events of his Death and Resurrection, fixed upon the Lord's Day that followed the *Jewish* Passover, and, holding that as the Day of Christ's Resurrection, made it the high Day of the annual Solemnity, and called that the Christian Passover. And hence came the different Practice of *Polycarp* in *Smyrna*, and *Anicetus* in *Rome*, and the great Breach that fell out after that, in the End of the second Century, betwixt *Victor* of *Rome*, and *Polycrates* of *Ephesus*. Each of these contending Parties pleaded Tradition from the Apostles, for the high Day of their annual Solemnity, the Passover. And



And the very Opposition of these two Traditions, shews the Agreement of both Parties, that the Apostles had left in the Churches an unwritten Tradition, (for there can be no Plea for a written one), that a Day should be observed annually, and an annual Solemnity kept among Christians, as the Christian Passover, about the Time of the *Jewish* Passover.

## S E C T. IV.

*Shewing the Necessity of a Warrant from the Apostles for Pasch, from the very Plea of Tradition from them; and the Falshood of that Tradition, from the manifest Contradiction in it, as well as from Acrius's Argument.*

**W**Hen both contending Parties pleaded Apostolick Tradition for the Day of the Christian Solemnity of the *Passover*, it is plain, this Plea, on both the Sides, went upon the Necessity of a Warrant from the Apostles for the Observation of such a holy Day. They were all agreed, that such a religious Solemnity is a Thing of that Nature which requires Apostolick Authority, or an Institution from Jesus Christ himself by his inspired Apostles: And therefore, having no written Tradition, either for the Thing itself, or the Manner and precise Day of it, they pleaded an oral one. For, if there was no need of Apostolick Authority in the Case; if the Churches had Power, in any Time after the Apostles, to make such an Institution of Christian Religion, where was the Occasion for making any Work or Noise about Apostolick Tradition in the Case? This was a proper Occasion for shewing that the Church was vested with this Authority, and so condemning any Party that took a different Course from the most established and common Custom of the Churches, that had the best and the most of ecclesiastical Authority on its Side. But even *Victor*, who condemned the *Asians*, did not therein suppose that Christians were to be condemned for any thing but a Transgression of the Commandment of the Apostles: And *Polycrates* agreed with him; tacitly owning, that he were indeed blame-worthy, if he transgressed the Apostolick Commandment; while he vindicated himself, and condemned *Victor*, by Apostolick Tradition. Indeed *Polycarp* and *Anicetus*, who lived a little nearer the Time of the Apostles, found no fault with one another, did not condemn one another for their different Practices in this Matter; being conscious there was no Transgression of any Apostolick Commandment on either Side, as knowing no Authority in the Case but the Custom of the Churches where they happened to preside. But, when Christians began to condemn one another for their different Practices in keeping their *Passover*, they found the Necessity of an Apostolick Commandment to do it by: And so *Victor* pleaded a Commandment



from *Peter* and *Paul*, handed down to him through little more than a hundred and twenty Years, by a lineal Succession of Bishops in *Rome*, his Forefathers, who always kept the *Passover* on his Day ; while, on the other Side, *Polycrates* pleaded a Commandment from the Apostle *John*, handed down to him through not much more than ninety Years, by the lineal Succession of the Bishops of *Ephesus*, where *John* died, his Forefathers, who, as well as *Polycarp* of *Smyrna*, who had seen *John* in his Youth, kept the *Passover* on his Day.

Now, this being the first remarkable Instance wherein oral Apostolick Tradition was pleaded among Christians as the Rule of Christian Religion, let us see what can be made of it to form our Judgment about all other ancient Traditions, for which we see not a Foundation in the Apostolical Scriptures. Shall we then say, that one of these contradictory Traditions must be false ; or that either the *Ephesian* or the *Roman* Tradition must be true, and the other false ? But how shall we then find which to call the true one ? For we cannot reject the other as false, without razing the firmest Foundations upon which any oral Tradition from the Apostles can be established ; so that we shall not leave any thing whereon to build the Truth and Certainty of the other that we admit as true. Shall we therefore say, for the Credit of the Succession of Bishops handing down Tradition, that both these contradictory Traditions are true ; or that the Tradition of *Victor* was the Commandment of *Peter* and *Paul*, and that the Tradition of *Polycrates* was the Commandment of *John* ? But this is to say, that the Apostles have left contradictory Commandments to be observed by Christians : And, if we stand not by *John's* Command as the last, who shall tell us which of them to observe ? for we cannot take up with any one of them, without transgressing the other Apostolical Commandment. Shall we therefore say, which is the only Thing left to be said, that both these Traditions were false ; or, as the Apostles said of a Tradition that some Teachers brought from them in *Jerusalem* to *Antioch*, That they gave no such Commandment either to the Church of *Rome* or *Ephesus* ? They gave no Commandment about an annual *Pasch* among Christians. That Usage, though the most ancient of all unscriptural Usages, has no Connexion with the Apostles, has no Relation to their Word, wherein the Lord prays, that they, and all that believe on him through it, may be one ; and therefore should be rejected, as wholly foreign to true Christian Unity, and serving to divide them whom Christ would have united only by the Word of his Apostles. And, if that Word do not unite Christians, Tradition, that caused Divisions from the Beginning of its Establishment as a Rule, never will.

But we must not imagine, that all Christians, in that Time when the contending Parties about *Easter* agreed in oral Tradition as a Rule



Rule of Religion, were agreed with them on that Head: For *Tertullian* informs us of some Christians in those Days, who demanded Scripture-authority for every thing; against whom he pleads for Tradition, from the common Practices of Christians in his Time, that had no Foundation in Scripture. And it seems those Christians who made this Demand, did not find themselves obliged to tell when or how any universal Practice commenced, if it came not from the Apostles; but wanted to oblige the zealous Maintainers and Promoters of such religious Usages, to shew them Apostolick written Tradition for them. *Aerius* appears to have been the same very Way disposed. But he carried this Matter a little further: He pretended to shew from the Scripture, that the Apostles had left a quite different Account of the Christian *Pasch* from that of an annual Solemnity coming in place of the *Jewish*; and therefore denied that they could leave any Tradition about such a *Pasch*. And *Epiphanius* cannot deny the Fact, that the Apostle writes of the Christian *Pasch* as a different Thing; but yet makes *Aerius* a Heretick, by the Example of the Apostle studying to be at *Jerusalem* the Day of *Pentecost*. And so we have seen the second Branch of the *Aerian* Heresy.

## C H A P. III.

*Of no fixed annual Fasts.*

**T**HE third Branch of the *Aerian* Heresy, is, *That Fasts ought not to be prefixed to certain and statcd annual Days and Solemnities, such as the Fast of Lent, and of the Week before Pasch.*

Here *Epiphanius* mentions a Scripture which *Aerius* made use of to shew that Christians are not bound to such fixed Times of Fasting. And that Scripture is found in *Paul's* first Epistle to *Timothy*; where he says, *But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully; knowing this, that the law is not laid to a righteous man, but to the lawless and disobedient, &c. — and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine, according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust.*

The Words here, that *Aerius* is said to have founded especially upon, are these, *The law is not laid to a just man.* But, as we are not informed by the Answer of *Epiphanius*, how he built upon it, all that can be made of his Argument is this: That a Christian, or a righteous Man, (for the Heretick made not the Difference betwixt the two that was made in his Time), is not under the Law  
of



of *Moses*, that obliged the *Jerus* to fast annually at the Time therein fixed; but under the Gospel; which is indeed opposite to all Unrighteousness as any thing can be, but fixes no annual stated Time of Fasting; though it be agreeable to it to fast occasionally, or as the proper Occasions of Fasting lead the Righteous to think it fit for them; who are not limited to the Times of *Moses's* Law, and far less can they be limited by the Commandments of Men, fixing annual Solemnities, with certain Days of Fasting, in Imitation of that abrogated Law.

And all that can be made of the Answer of *Epiphanius* is, That, without touching the Scripture, he opposes only to him, the common Consent of the Christian World, and the Constitution of the Apostles, decreeing the Fast of every *Wednesday* and *Friday* throughout the Year, excepting from *Pasch* to *Pentecost*, and of the six Days of *Pasch*, how nothing at all is to be taken, but Bread, Salt, and Water.

It is odd that the Slaves of Church-authority must always be betraying a Consciousness of the Need of Apostolick Authority for the religious Customs that they scrupulously observe. We find them still grasping at every Shadow for some Pretence of a Countenance to their Usages from the Scriptures; even as, when they came first into the Use of Fasting before their annual *Pasch*, and fasted forty Hours, as from the Time of Christ's Death to the Time of his Resurrection, they encouraged themselves in this Usage, by the Countenance they imagined this Scripture gave to it: *When the bridegroom shall be taken from them, then shall they fast in those days.* But *Epiphanius* here, not satisfied in the common Consent of the Christian World, and finding no Pretence from the Scriptures for his stated Fasts, is fain to seek for some Pretence to Apostolick Authority, by having Recourse to the Work of that Impostor, who, about the Beginning of the fourth Century, made a Collection of all the Innovations that had taken place any where among Christians after the Death of the Apostles, throughout the second and third Centuries, and palmed them upon the World for Constitutions of the Apostles.

And what sort of Authority is it that warrants us in saying, that he who eats Bread with Salt and Water, is not breaking his fast? When the Ancients fasted on *Wednesdays* and *Fridays* till three o'Clock in the Afternoon only, we understand they did not break their Fast by taking any thing till that Hour. And we may conceive it possible for them to keep the *Paschal* Fast while it lasted but forty Hours: But, when it extended to six Days, and at last to forty Days, there was then a Necessity for making an Alteration in the very Nature and Notion of Fasting, or Abstinence from Food; which was always essential in Fasting, whatever else belonged



ed to it. For, though they pretended to imitate the Lord fasting forty Days before his entering on his publick Ministry, as *Moses* did at the giving of the Law by him; and though the Promoters of such Institutions as this, boasted of Miracles, as serving to countenance them: yet they were not possessed of miraculous Power enough to make the Appointment of a Fast of forty Days, or even of six Days, effectual upon the Christian World, nor had they Influence enough to obtain common Consent to it. But they had as much Influence upon the Christian World, as to obtain their Consent to an Alteration of the Notion and Nature of Fasting, which they thought themselves possessed of a Power to make. The Clergy are capable of doing great Things, and marvellous in the Sight of Men, by means of Distinctions. Some of them have Distinctions ready to support us in believing them, telling us such Stories as these, That one held his Head in his Teeth, or that one held his Body in his Hand, and the like. And, as Distinctions have served all sorts of them much, in making void the Commandments of God to establish their own Tradition, they had an easy Distinction here ready to serve them in the Matter of their Fasts, wherein they have especially displayed their Authority: For, whereas Fasting, if it be any thing at all that can be seen, is Abstinence from Meat, it was the easiest Thing in the World, to distinguish betwixt a *total* and a *partial* Abstinence, and so to make the partial to be fasting, as well as the total. Thus eating Bread with Salt and Water only, came to be strict religious Fasting. And thus they made Room for the brightest Display of ecclesiastical Authority and Power: For now they had Power to command Men to fast while they were eating, and to permit and allow them to eat while they were fasting. But, as they do not shew their Authority and Power sufficiently, but where it incroaches upon the divine, and in his Name too, they have made void the divine Apostolick Commandment, that takes away all Distinction of Meats of God's Creatures, forbidding nothing but the Blood; and, by their own Authority, have established a new Distinction of Meats, which God hath created to be received with Thanksgiving. And so they have given a Commandment, whereby it is unlawful, without their Leave, to eat Flesh, while it is lawful and right to eat Fish, throughout the whole Fast of forty Days. These religious Eaters of Fish, who think it a Sin to eat Flesh in the Season of their Fast, yet, for the most part of them, think it is nothing to eat the Blood, when they may lawfully eat Flesh. And though some of this sort of Christians scruple at the Blood, yet this Scruple arises not so much from the Apostolick Commandment, (for then they would regard it in other Things), as from the Tradition of their Ancients.

But



But here it shall be said, Why is all this Clamour and Noise raised upon nothing but the Sense of the Word *Fasting*? Has it any other Foundation but the fixing of the Idea of total Abstinence to that Word? And that not agreeably to the Scripture either: For, was not *Daniel* fasting, when he ate no pleasant Bread, neither came Flesh nor Wine in his Mouth, neither did he anoint himself at all, till three whole Weeks were fulfilled? And is it not said expressly, that the Men of *Jabesh* fasted seven Days, when they buried the Bones of *Saul* and his Sons?

And to this it shall be answered, That, if there be any Fault in fixing the Idea of total Abstinence to *Fasting*, the Scripture must be charged with it. For it says not at all, that *Daniel* fasted in the three full Weeks of his Mourning: Nor says it, that the Men of *Jabesh-gilead* fasted from the Beginning of their seven Days till they were finished; for then, according to Scripture-stile, it must have been said, they fasted seven Days and seven Nights; as is said of *Esther* and her People fasting, neither eating nor drinking three Days, Night nor Day. For, when the *Jerus* fasted a Day, their Fast ended at Sun-set; and so the Men of *Jabesh* might easily fast seven Days, while yet they could not fast seven Days and seven Nights, like as *Moses* was, at the receiving of the written Law which he gave to *Israel*, forty Days and forty Nights neither eating Bread nor drinking Water; and as our Lord is said to have fasted in the Wilderness forty Days and forty Nights; which is pretended to be imitated in taking, not Flesh, but Fish, or let it be but Bread, Salt, and Water, from the Beginning of their forty Days, till they be all finished. But, though it cannot appear from the Scripture, that a Man fasts who takes any thing in the Way of Meat or Drink; who would strive with them about the Use of a Word, if there were no such Thing built upon it as a Tradition and Commandment of Men making void a Commandment of God? And indeed we had need to look well about us, as to the Use and Application of Scripture-words: For the Corruptions of Christian Religion, and the Innovations that have been made in it since the Days of the Apostles, have always been promoted and maintained by perverting and misusing Scripture Words and Names.



## C H A P. IV.

*Of no Prayers for the Dead.*

## S E C T. I.

*Which treats of the first Use that Epiphanius finds for Prayers for the Dead.*

**W**HEN *Aerius* denied, that Prayers are to be poured out and made for the Dead, he supported himself in this Denial, by alledging, in the *first* place, That our Prayers can be of no Use to them in that State: For, it seems, it was his Persuasion, that they who had lived and died in Unbelief, and so in a State of Condemnation, could receive no more Refreshment or Ease of their Pain in that State, by means of our Prayers, than the rich Man's Soul in the Parable had, or could receive from his Father *Abraham* and *Lazarus*; and that they who had died in the Faith, and so in a State of Justification, cannot, through our Prayers, receive, in the separate State, any Addition to that Comfort wherewith they are comforted in the blestful Sight and Presence of the Lord Jesus; and, whereas their Bodies are to be taken into his Rest at the Resurrection of the Just, and they are then to stand in their Lot in his Kingdom, according to their Works done in the Body before they died, they can receive no Benefit in that Resurrection from any Works done or Prayers poured out for them after their Death. And thus *Aerius*, or any other Man who cannot stand a Moment upon Scruples about the Benefit that the living Saints, who are in the Trial of Faith, may receive from his Prayers, might yet confidently deny, that the Dead in Christ have any need of his Prayers, or can have any Advantage by them.

*Epiphanius*, in answer to this first Objection of *Aerius*, finds himself obliged, in not very few Words, to point out the Usefulness of Prayers for the Dead; and he condescends on three Uses of them.

The *first* of them is, That such Prayers are useful as a Testimony of our Faith concerning the Life of the Saints with the Lord. And this must be considered as the Use he assigns for reciting the Names of the Dead in the Prayers, to persuade those that are present that the Souls of the Dead are still alive, and to let us see that there is good Hopes of those that are dead.

But this can never be thought of as a Reason why any Petitions should be put up for the Dead in our Prayers: For, if we testify



our Faith of their living with the Lord, this is a plain Declaration and Confession, that they do not need our Prayers for them, as being beyond our State of Probation, and at rest with the Lord, as much as they can be before their Bodies be taken into his Rest at the Resurrection. It is not charged upon *Aerius*, that he, in the least, denied the Prayers of all Saints for the second Appearing of the Lord Jesus, and the Redemption of the Bodies of the whole Church in the Resurrection of the Just. But as, it seems, he thought that the Saints, in that Resurrection, must enjoy Christ's Reward, according to each one's Works done before Death, even his Works of Charity; he could not be persuaded, that any one of them could, then, enjoy one whit more of that Reward, through any Prayers that can be made or poured out for them after they are dead, and all their Works are finished that shall be recompensed in the Resurrection of the Just. And so he was clear to say, that our Prayers can be of no Use to the departed Saints, either as considered in the separate State wherein they are living with the Lord, or as considered in the State of the Resurrection, wherein Christ will give his own Reward to every one of his Saints, according as his Works done in the Body shall then be found to be. We must not suppose, as some would do, that either *Aerius*, or any other who agrees with him on this Head, makes no Difference betwixt the separate State of the Spirits of just Men, and the State of the Resurrection. For who ever said that these two States are the same? Is it not confessed, that Jesus Christ himself is expecting till his Enemies be made his Footstool? And can they who acknowledge this, deny, that the Spirits of just Men, living with him, are in a State of Hope and Expectation, even while they deny that they can receive from our Prayers any Addition to their Joy of that Hope in the separate State? So that, while every Christian joins in the common Prayer of all Saints in Heaven and Earth, for the glorious Appearance of Christ, and the Resurrection of the Just, it is very idle to be telling us of the Difference betwixt the separate State, and the State of the Resurrection, as if that could shew us the Usefulness of the Prayers for the Dead, which *Aerius* denied. One of those who insist on the Difference to this Purpose, is very diverting in his Manner of describing it. He would shew us the Happiness of Souls in the separate State, consisting in a joyful Retrospect upon their past Labours, and Holiness of their Lives, (here suppose the Thief on the Cross now in Paradise), and in a certain Prospect of their future Bliss, rather than in a full Participation of their ultimate Reward. And he would shew us these same happy Reflecters on the Labours of their holy Lives, when they pass out of that State at the Resurrection, the Time of their full Recompence, not at all conscious of their Actions for which their Judge shall then reward them with  
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that same Reward, in the Prospect of which they were before right happy. But how is it that they are not conscious of these Actions, these past Labours, upon which they had such a joyful Retrospect in the separate State? Why, it seems they come out of that State ignorant of this, that Christ esteems what is done to the least of his Brethren, as done to himself. He brings them out of that State, not as yet acquainted with this Goodness and Condescension of the Lord, which every Believer of the Scripture on Earth, and every Worker of the Works of Charity, knows very well. This learned Doctor, interpreting Scripture to us, and shewing us the Blessedness of separate Souls, can tell us no more of the Blessedness of the Man to whom the Lord imputeth Righteousness without Works, than a Heathen Poet entertaining us with a Fable of his *Elysian* Fields. He has no Notion to give us of the Happiness of separate Souls, and even the Souls of Infants, in the Presence of the Lord, partaking with him, as joint Heirs, in the Light of the Father's Countenance, that Fulness of Joy in his Presence, and those eternal Pleasures at his right Hand, wherein is rewarded that one Obedience whereby they are all made righteous, as it will also be further in the Resurrection at his Appearing and his Kingdom, and yet further after the last Judgment, when all Things are made new, and all Christ's People, as joint Heirs with him, shall inherit the new Heavens and the new Earth. And with this those only are truly acquainted, who, being made the Sons of God by Faith in Christ Jesus, receive the Spirit of Adoption, giving them a lively Sense of his fatherly Love and Favour, through the Righteousness of his Son, wherein they believe: For this is the very Beginning and the Earnest of all the Christian Happiness. But neither has this *Elysian* Doctor any Notion to give us of the Relation that the Works of Christian Faith and Charity have to him who was delivered for our Offences and raised again for our Justification, nor any Notion of the Connexion of these Works with the Reward of his Righteousness in the Resurrection of the justified by Faith, who shall then all partake with him of that Reward as Brethren and joint Heirs, every one according to his Works of Faith in that Righteousness, and of Love to it. He is as ignorant of the Relation of these Works to his Righteousness, and of their Connexion with his Reward, as his *Elysians* are when they come up from that State. But, leaving him and them to be as happy as the Retrospect of their past Labours and Holiness of their Lives, and the Prospect of a Reward suitable to them, can possibly make them, we must return to *Epiphanius*.

And, if what he says of departed Saints living with the Lord, were to be understood of that Life, whereof they had the Beginning and Foretaste while they lived by the Faith of Christ, and now, see-



ing him, and being present with him where he is in Heaven, they enjoy; partaking there with him in that Light of his Father's Countenance, that full Sense of his Favour and Love wherewith he is made most blessed for ever, and which is the most proper Life that can be thought of for the Soul of a Man; this would be an Argument against their standing in any manner of Need of our Prayers, and so against the Usefulness of these Prayers for them. But it is to be feared, his living with the Lord is another Thing: For it is his Opinion, that all the Dead, except those who rose with the Lord, are absent from him; and so he encourages those who can now affirm, that even the highest of the departed Saints, the blessed Virgin herself, is not yet admitted into Heaven; in express Contradiction to *Paul*, confidently affirming, from his certain Knowledge, that he, and others having the Earnest of the Spirit, would have a Mansion there upon the Dissolution of the Body, and, when they were absent from the Body, be present with the Lord. But the Faith that *Epiphanius* would have to be testified in Prayers for the Dead, is not the Faith of what is said in the Apostolick Writings concerning the State of the Souls of Saints departed. His Faith of their living, is indeed a Belief that they are not annihilated, but living still in some dark Place of painful Desires and Longings for being acquitted in the Judgment, where they are sequestrated till the Day of Judgment, and where they may be refreshed with some sort of Visits from the Lord, and enjoy Happiness in various Degrees; the highest of those Degrees being still much more inferior to the Happiness of Heaven, than it is superior to any Happiness in this World. And this Belief concerning the Life of Saints departed, may indeed be testified in Prayers for them: For such a Place and State of the Saints departed, is very consistent with their need of Prayers to be poured out for them, and with the Usefulness of these Prayers. But this Faith has no Connexion with the Word of the Apostles; no Foundation in their Scriptures, except the Names of *Hades*, and *Abraham's Bosom*, and *Paradise*, which have been borrowed from them, and applied to this Heathenish Place of Shades: For the true Foundation of this Faith lies in that ancient Forgery, the Books of the *Sibyls*, which began to appear about the End of the Reign of *Antoninus Pius*, who died about the Year of our Lord 161. The Villain who makes these Heathen Prophetesses, the *Sibyls*, testify concerning Christ, *Hades*, and the Judgment, was, it seems, very full of *Hades*; for he derives *Adam's* Name from *Hades*. And the simple Fathers, who were glad of the Testimony of the *Sibyls* to Christianity, as it was laid in the Work of this Impostor, and openly pleaded this Testimony, sucked in with it this new Notion of the separate State among Christians, very different from the Apostolick Notion of it, but altogether agreeable to the Heathen Notion of the Place



Place of Shades. But, as *Aerius* had nothing to do with this *Sibylline* Faith, he could never perceive the Use of testifying it, in Prayers for any who were believed to live in that *Sibylline* Place.

S E C T. II.

*Which shews that the new Sort of Correspondence with departed Saints after the Death of Polycarp, and the new Place assigned them toward the End of the second Century, was wholly unknown to the Apostles and first Christians, and had no Connexion with the Scriptures.*

**A**FTER the Death of *Polycarp*, which happened in the Year of our Lord 167, the Church in *Smyrna* gives an Account of his Martyrdom, in a Letter to those of *Pontus*; and, after telling a marvellous Story of some very strange Circumstances of his Death, they say, they carried away his Bones, being more valuable than the most precious Stones, and more pure than Gold, which they buried in a Place where they assembled together to celebrate with Joy and Chearfulness the Day of his Martyrdom; thus honouring the Memory of those that have fought gloriously for the Defence of their Religion, and to confirm and instruct others by such Examples. And, at the same time, they take care to vindicate themselves from the Charge of worshipping him, which their Enemies wanted to fix upon them, declaring, that they worshipped only Jesus Christ, because he is the Son of God.

One would think that the Martyrdom of *Stephen* was as great an Occasion for commencing a Practice of this Kind, as that of *Polycarp*, even though all the marvellous Story told about it were true. But no such Thing as this was once thought of on that Occasion. The devout Men that carried him to his Burial, and made great Lamentation for him, took no such Purpose as this in their Heads, about the Burial-place of *Stephen*. And this Business about *Polycarp* must be looked on as the Commencement and first Beginning of the Practice of celebrating the Memory of Martyrs, on the Anniversaries of their Martyrdom, which they called their Birth-days, with Panegyricks upon them, like as the *Greeks* had used to make on their illustrious Men; and as the Beginning of their holding their religious Assemblies at the Places of their Burial, and of their making honourable Mention of them in their Prayers; which *Tertullian* seems to call making Oblations for them. And this new Kind of Correspondence with the Dead, and Honour done them on the Earth, was attended with the *Sibylline* Faith, about their Situation in the separate State, very consistent with their Need of Prayers to be poured out for them by the Living: For, about the End of this second Century, they began to speak of these Prayers; and these  
are



are the Ends and Uses of them that they spake of, *viz.* To obtain for these Souls, Light, Quiet from Satan's Insults, Refreshment in their painful Thirst of Desires, a happy Resurrection and Introduction into Heaven. And thus, while they contrived new Ways of exalting them on the Earth, which was a new Incitement to the suffering of Martyrdom, that a Christian should not wish to have been the Apostolick Motive, they, at the same time, depressed them in the separate State, and brought them down from the heavenly Presence of the Lord, to a low dark Place; which, to make it Christian, they called *Abraham's Bosom*, and *the Place of the Prophets*, and *Paradise*, from which they were not to be introduced or admitted into Heaven, till after the Judgment; though it might be much more easily shewed from the Scriptures, that Heaven, which must contain Jesus till the Times of Restitution of all Things, is their Place before that Restitution, than after it. And now this new Motive to Martyrdom, which he who believes the Testimony of the Apostles, must be assured was unknown to them, plainly set aside that first good old one which animated Christians to undergo Martyrdom in the Time of the Apostles, and which we may suppose influenced Polycarp himself. It was this:—*Though our outward man perish, yet the inward is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen, are temporal; but the things which are not seen, are eternal. For we know, that, if our earthly house of tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan earnestly, desiring to be clothed upon with our habitation which is of heaven: if so be that being clothed, we shall not be found naked. For we that are in the tabernacle do groan, being burdened: wherein we are not willing to be unclothed, but to be clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. Now he that hath wrought us for the self same thing, is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. Therefore always confident, and knowing that, being at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (for we walk by faith, not by sight.) Now we are confident, and are well pleased rather to be absent from the body, and to be at home with the Lord. Wherefore we are also ambitious, either being present, or being absent, to be acceptable to him.* This first and nearest Hope, for which they found God had begun to form them, and whereof they had the Earnest, as well as the Hope of the Resurrection, and Regard to the Judgment seat, which was further off, and which the Apostle also speaks of in that Passage, was that which moved and animated the Apostles and first Christians boldly to suffer for Christ, and undergo Martyrdom. But they were far from  
being



being moved with any Ambition of being honoured either with civil or religious Honour in this World, by the Living after their Death. And, if their Words can tell us their Mind, we may be very sure, nothing could be farther from their Mind than this, that, when they should be absent from the Body, they would then be still absent from the Lord, in some dark Place, where, being liable to Satan's Insults, they would groan, being burdened, as having anxious painful Desires of Acquittment in the Judgment, and Admittance into Heaven, so as to need the Prayers of the Living, for Light, Quiet and Refreshment, for Acquittment in the Judgment, and Introduction into Heaven at last, to them.

The Apostles, and Christians in their Time, knew of no Place for God's whole Family, but either Heaven, his Dwelling-place, the House of that Family ; or Earth, where they were sojourning, as Strangers, in the Body, as in a Tabernacle ; expecting, upon the Dissolution of that Tabernacle, to be at home, in a Mansion of their heavenly Father's House, beside the Lord Jesus ; there seeing him, with whom they had, even now on the Earth, a Correspondence by Faith, entering into the holiest of all by his Blood. And, being estranged from the Things of this Earth, and seeking the Things above, where Jesus sat on the right Hand of God, they looked upon themselves as Citizens of Heaven, Fellow-citizens in that heavenly *Jerusalem* with the Saints of the Old Testament, who had died in the Faith of that Promise which they now believed to be performed in Jesus Christ, and whereof they were Partakers with them. They knew by Revelation, and believed, that those Saints were perfected in Heaven, by becoming Partakers with Jesus in his Inheritance there, by becoming Members of the Body whereof he living there is the Head, and by sharing with him in the Promise of Blessedness there ; and they knew, that they were not thus perfected in Heaven without them, who were Believers on Earth, not only *Jews*, but *Gentiles* also, partaking with them, as being Fellow-heirs and of the same Body, and joint Partakers of that Promise in Christ by the Gospel. So these Saints in Heaven were not perfected there without them.

They plainly supposed these Saints to have been in Heaven, before Jesus rose from the Dead, and ascended there : For, as they knew that God had taken up *Enoch* and *Elias* bodily into his Dwelling-place in Heaven, they knew nothing to hinder the Spirits of just Men from being there in company with them ; even as they knew that *Moses*, who died and was buried, was in company with *Elias*, who never died, conversing with Jesus at the Transfiguration. And *Paul* knew nothing to hinder his being in the third Heaven, (which he makes the same with Paradise), and conversing there out of his Body, as well as in it. And why should they,  
who



who believe that the Angels, those heavenly Spirits, conversed familiarly with Men upon the Earth by a Vehicle fit for that Purpose, yet think it any way strange, that the Spirit of a just Man, upon the Dissolution of his Body, should have a fit Mansion in Heaven, God's Dwelling-place, and converse with the Inhabitants there? When *Abraham*, the Friend of God, expired, he had no other Fathers to go to in the separate State, wherein all earthly Relations are dissolved, he had no other People to be gathered unto, but those who had gone before him in the Faith of the Promise of Christ, the Head of the Woman's Seed. Unto these Children of God, eternally distinguished from the Seed of the Serpent, who shall never see Light, *Abraham* was gathered, in the Dwelling-place of their Father, when he died. And, considering him as the Father of all the Faithful that came after him in the Belief of that Promise, *In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed*; and of all that believe the Performance of it in Christ, as the Gospel testifies; nothing could be fitter to express the Happiness of the departed Soul of an Heir of that Promise, before Christ ascended into Heaven, nothing could be fitter to represent the heavenly Felicity of such a Soul, than the Way of speaking that the Lord uses in the Parable concerning the rich Man and *Lazarus*: For there he represents *Lazarus*, as carried by the Angels, the Inhabitants of Heaven, into *Abraham's Bosom*, and there comforted, as a Son in the Bosom of his Father, partaking intimately with that Father in his Happiness, who was supposed by the Hearers of that Parable to be the happiest Soul with God. And, as the heavenly Bliss is represented by a Feast, *Lazarus* is represented in the Parable, as at that Feast with *Abraham*, and leaning on his Bosom; as *John*, the beloved Disciple, did on Jesus, at the *Paschal* Supper. But he sets it before the Thief on the Cross, in this Manner, *Thou shalt be WITH ME in paradise*; and now, when he is ascended from the Dead to his Throne on the right Hand of God, the heavenly Happiness of departed Saints is expressed by *being with Christ*; as he prays to his Father, *That they may be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me*. And so *Stephen*, the first Martyr after Christ's Resurrection, was encouraged at his Death by the Vision of the Glory of God in Heaven, and of *Jesus standing on the right Hand of God*, as ready to receive his departing Soul there; which he accordingly commended into his Hands, saying, *Lord Jesus, receive my spirit*.

The Spirits of just Men before Christ ascended, however happy they were in Heaven, God's Dwelling-place, were there in a State of Expectation, as Jesus Christ and all the Saints with him are now expecting till his Enemies be made his Footstool; for then they were waiting for the Performance of the Promise of Christ, in the Faith



Faith and Hope of which they sojourned as Strangers on Earth, desiring the heavenly Country: And they did not receive this Promise till they saw Christ alive from the Dead in Heaven. Thus *Abraham* was not perfected in receiving the Promise of the Seed in whom all the Nations of the Earth are blessed, till he saw Jesus in Heaven alive from the Dead, and beheld him receiving of the Father that Promise of the Holy Ghost, which he then shed forth on all his Saints in Heaven, as also upon Believers on the Earth, *Gentiles* as well as *Jews*. When *Abraham* saw this *Church of Nations* coming into Being, and forming into one Body in Christ its Head; and when he found himself, as a Member of it, partaking of the Promise of the Spirit, which is the Blessing of *Abraham*, the same which the *Gentiles* received through Faith: then he was perfected; *i. e.* as the Apostle explains it, he received the Promise, which he had not till then received. And this was not without Believers of all Nations, without Difference, sharing with him in the same Thing: So he, without them, was not made perfect. In like manner, *David* sojourned on Earth and died in the Faith and Hope of the Promise of Christ his Son, who was to reign on the right Hand of God, whose Kingdom was to be established before him after his Days were fulfilled. All his Salvation and Desire was in this Promise. But he did not receive it, and so was not perfected in the Apostle's Sense, till Jesus ascended to his Throne on the Father's right Hand, and sat there to rule in the midst of his Enemies, till they be his Footstool: Nor was he thus perfected by receiving the Promise, without Believers on Earth partaking with him as Fellow-subjects in the blessed Kingdom of his Lord. The first Christians, in this View of the Thing, which the Apostles gave them, and which is still plain in their Writings, could have no Thought of what is now alledged, That departed Saints are not admitted into Heaven till after the Day of Judgment, nor introduced there without the Prayers of the Living for them, from which also they receive Benefit in the mean Time. For they knew, that, by their Connexion with Jesus, they were Citizens of the heavenly *Jerusalem*; and so associated with the Spirits of just Men made perfect, and with the innumerable Company of Angels, in that City of the living God: For, tho' they did not believe that *David* ascended bodily into Heaven, without seeing Corruption in the Grave, as Jesus ascended, because a Part of the Evidence on which they believed Jesus to be the Christ foretold by *David*, lay upon this; yet they were well persuaded, that *David's* Soul, in the separate State, was in the same Situation with the Spirits of other just Men, which they firmly believed to be heavenly. And, if they looked on themselves as Fellow-citizens of Heaven, where they were conversing by Faith, while living



on the Earth; they also expected to be in Heaven when they died, there seeing that which they now believed.

In this Apostolical View of Things, we may be very certain, no Tradition could come from the Apostles or Christians of the first Age, for that sort of Correspondence with the Dead that *Tertullian* speaks of, and for which, he himself owns, there is no Rule that we shall find in the Scripture. The Faith he speaks of, is the same that received the Books of the *Sibyls*, and their Testimony concerning Jesus Christ, *Hades*, and the Judgment; and the Custom which confirmed this Tradition, and was observed by this Faith, had no Place among Christians, till after the Death of *Polycarp*. For it can never be fastened upon the Apostle *John*, by these Words of *Tertullian*, “ Tradition will be given you for the Author, Custom the “ Confirmer, and Faith the Observer:” Though it be asserted, that *Tertullian*, who lived within less than an hundred Years after the Death of St. *John*, professes, that his Generation had received it from that before them; and though they should believe this, who receive this new Translation of his Words, “ They stand upon the “ Bottom of Tradition, Custom confirms them, and one Genera- “ tion follows them upon the Credit of what went before.” Where had the Christian Religion been, if it had been left to stand upon Tradition, committed to such faithful Men!

### S E C T. III.

*Containing an Account of Hades, and likewise of the Place of a departed Soul.*

**H***Ades* is a Scripture-name, a *Greek* Word, by which the *Septuagint* renders the *Hebrew* *SHEOL*; for which our *English* Translation has sometimes the *Grave*, and sometimes *Hell*. It is no more the Name of any Place with Gates, than it is the Name of a voracious Monster with insatiable Appetite and wide extended Jaws. *Hades* is a Name for the State of the human Soul separate from its own Body, which commences at Death, when a Man expires. This State is the Consequent of Sin, by which Death entered into the World; and, without the Hope that comes by Christ, behoved to have been eternal and very dismal. The Entrance into this separate State, by leaving the Light of this World, and descending from the highest Elevations in Life, unto Death, wherein the King and the Beggar are equal, and both as low as they can be; even there is the Mouth of *Hades*; where they who are most elevated in this Life, are for most part the lowest: And indeed, without Christ, there is no Exaltation nor Happiness to be thought of in it. The Prospect of *Hades*, to *Adam* after he sinned, and before he had the Promise of Christ, must have been very dismal: For he



he behoved then to think of a Soul alienated from God, and conscious of the irreparable Loss of his Favour, wherein is Life, and, in this Case, ceasing for ever to act in the Body into which God inspired it, and having no more Enjoyment in it.

But the Revelation to fallen Man concerning Christ, has changed that first Prospect of *Hades*. For, in the *first* place, whereas it was originally the same for all Men appointed to die by *Adam's* Sin, that Revelation shews us two Sorts of Men in *Hades*, the Seed of the Woman and the Seed of the Serpent, the Just and the Unjust; who equally return to the Dust of Death, but are far from being equal in *Hades*. And, in the *next* place, that Revelation shews us, the State of the human Soul separate from the Body, which is called *Hades*, shall not be eternal; for there shall be a Resurrection of the Dead, both of the Just and Unjust: And, when every human Soul is again united to its own Body, there is an End of *Hades*. And yet further, while *Hades* remains, the Revelation concerning Christ changes the Prospect of it, both as to the Just and the Unjust who are in it: For, whatever Differences there may be among Men in this Life who go to *Hades*, there are only two Sorts of Men to be found in *Hades*, and who shall be brought out of it by the Power of Christ's Resurrection; the Seed of the Woman, who are just through their Head, the Son of God made of a Woman, through whom they are the Children of God; and the Seed of the Serpent, the Unjust, who are of their Father the Devil; the one to be saved from Death by the Power of his Resurrection, and the other to be punished in a second Death by that same Power. Now, Christ has changed the original Prospect of *Hades* to us, as to both these Sorts of human Souls in it.

For, first, as to the Seed of the Woman, whom *Adam* called *the Living*, in distinction from the Serpent's Seed, when he gave to the Woman the Name of *the Mother of all Living*, and upon whom the Sentence of Death goes no further than, *returning to the Dust*; Christ shews them in *Hades*, happy as *Adam* was in Paradise before Sin entered, by which he was banished from it. Now, his Life in Paradise, without which no Enjoyment there could have any thing of a blefsful Relish to him, consisted in loving the Lord his God with all his Heart, Soul and Mind, and in his lively peaceful Consciousness of his Creator's Love and Favour. This made him an innocent Man, which he could not be with the least Air of Alienation from God, and happy with the Happiness proper to Man, in distinction from the Beasts in Paradise. There was some faint Representation of this, in the Life that the Nation of *Israel* enjoyed in the promised Land, the Land of *Canaan*, while they were obedient to the Letter of their Law, and cleaved to their God in opposition to all Idols: For that which made them happy in the Possession



session and Enjoyment of all the good Things of that Land, was, that they looked on them as Testimonies of the peculiar Love and Favour of their God, who gave them that good Land, and assured them of a pleasant Life in it, in cleaving to him; as, on the other hand, that which made them miserable under the Sword, Famine, and Pestilence, or the violent or untimely Death threatened in their Law, was, that they behoved to look on these Things as the Signs of the Displeasure and Wrath of their God against them. And so we find the Happiness of Paradise, and that of *Canaan's* Land, made an Emblem of the Happiness we expect by Jesus Christ; who, as Man, was once in Misery, by the hiding of the Father's Face from him; for the Sins of his People, and is now most blessed for ever, by the brightest Light of his Countenance lifted up upon him: For this is the Misery, and this is the Happiness, proper to the Soul of Man, as he stands distinguished from all other Animals. Now, as Man, being once alienated from God, and having lost the Sense of his Favour, can never be restored to the divine Favour, and regain the Sense of it, wherein Happiness lies, but only through Jesus Christ the Righteous, the Son of God, in whom the Father is well pleased, and in whom alone God appears in that View wherein a Sinner can be engaged to love him; Men are restored to the Favour of God, only in the Way of believing in him. We pass from Death to Life, in believing, and being justified by Faith, *i. e.* not by what we do, but by what we believe Christ has done, we have Peace with God, and rejoice in hope of his Glory: We love God, as he appears gracious and just in reconciling us to himself, when Enemies, by the Death of his Son; and we joy in God, through Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the Reconciliation. But, after all, while we are in the Trial of Faith, and fighting the Fight of Faith, which is as long as this Life lasts, our Love to God, as reconciled in Christ, is not pure, and unmixed with any Alienation, nor is our Sense of the divine Favour through Christ, unclouded altogether, as *Adam's* Love to God, and Consciousness of his Favour, was in Paradise, before his Sin for which he was ejected: And so we cannot be, in this Sense, in Paradise while we live. But, that Day we expire, Christ shews Believers in him they shall be in Paradise. And surely they who believe, that true Christians, who shall be found alive at the coming of Christ, shall then be, in a Moment, in the twinkling of an Eye, changed both in Soul and Body, so as to be in that Instant fit to inherit the Kingdom of God, can have no Difficulty about a believing Soul's being thus in Paradise that very Day it is separated from the Body. And, if the Soul of the Thief was in Paradise instantly upon its Separation, no Man that believes in Christ can be excluded. Now, taking Paradise in this View, we may think how *Adam's* Prospect of *Hades* might be changed



changed upon his hearing and believing the Revelation concerning the Seed of the Woman, and being recovered to a friendly Correspondence with God through that. He saw the Sentence of Death proceeding no further than returning to the Dust, as to the Seed of the Woman, whom he now thought of as the Living, reconciled to God and intitled to Life by the Sufferings of their Head, the Son of God, made of a Woman; and so he might have a Prospect of the separate State of these Souls, when their Bodies returned to the Dust, as very happy in the Perfection of that friendly Correspondence with God, reconciled as a Father to them, which had some Beginning in this Life. The View of a Soul, perfected in Love to God as a Father in Christ, and perfectly conscious of his redeeming Love and Favour through Christ, in its State of Separation, is vastly different from the former View of a Soul alienated from God, and sensible of the Loss of his Favour for ever, and in that Case separated from the Body: For he behoved to consider the Souls of the Woman's Seed, in the separate State, as rather happier than he had been in Paradise.

But Christ has also changed to us the original Prospect of *Hades*, as to the Unjust, the Seed of the Serpent: For they are to be brought out of it in the *Resurrection of Damnation*; and so their Spirits are represented in that State as in a Prison, from which they are to be brought forth to that Judgment, and the second Death, and wherein they are, mean time, in Torment; not only miserable in the Want of the divine Favour and Countenance, lost by *Adam's* Sin to all his Posterity, but further, by a Consciousness of his Displeasure and Wrath, due to their own Deeds done in the Body, which is to be fully manifested in that Resurrection of Damnation. Thus *Peter* represents the Spirits of them who some time were disobedient to Christ's preaching to them by his Spirit in the Days of *Noah*, as now in Prison; even as he says, the Angels that sinned, are delivered into Chains of Darkness to be reserved unto Judgment.

Now, if we would think of a Place of Torment, or a Place of Happiness, for a Soul in the separate State, a Soul united with its own Body can be in that Place, enjoying or suffering in the Body, as *Enoch* and *Elias* may be placed where the Spirits of just Men are supposed to be placed. But that Place cannot be *Hades*; because no Spirit of a Man, in its own Body, can be in *Hades*: It goes to *Hades* when it leaves the Body, and is not left in *Hades* when it returns to the Body. So that, when we think of any Place of Happiness or of Torment, we are then thinking of something else than merely *Hades*: For, in whatsoever Part of the bodily Creation we place a departed Soul, it shall be still in *Hades*, while it is not united to its own Body. And indeed we can have no Notion of the Place, or the Motion of a naked Soul; for we cannot think of these, without



without thinking of Bodies, or Portions of Matter, contiguous to one another, and changing their Situations toward one another. And though we know not how the human Soul is connected with its own Body; yet we are sure it is so, and that it was originally inspired by God, into that Frame which he formed of the Dust from the Ground; and being thus made for acting in connexion with it, we find it acting so with it, that it would be hard to conceive it acting, even thinking at all, in Separation from it, without any manner of Connexion with any thing of Body or Matter at all: And therefore the Apostle says, *We are not willing to be unclothed; but, being divested of this earthly Tabernacle, and clothed with our habitation which is of heaven, we shall not be found naked.* Thus, when we think of a Soul in connexion with Body or Matter wherewith it acts, which the Apostle signifies by its being clothed with it, and dwelling in it, then we conceive it to be in the Place where that Body is wherewith it is so clothed; so that, while it is connected with the earthly Tabernacle, it is placed on the Earth, and lives there where that Clothing is; and when, being detached from that, it is clothed with the heavenly Habitation, it is then placed in Heaven, and lives there where that Clothing is wherewith it is clothed: For, when a Man expires, though we have no Thought of the Motion or Place of his Soul, as quite naked, or utterly detached from all Body or Matter; yet, when we think of that Soul, as inspired by God into any kind of Body, or Portion of Matter, we can then think, that the Soul is there living, where we conceive that to be into which he inspires it, when a Man expires. Thus, when we are taught that the third Heaven is God's Dwelling-place, we are taught to conceive him there dwelling in that glorious inaccessible Light, which cannot be looked on by Eyes of Flesh, and which had some faint Resemblance, in his dwelling in that visible Light and bodily Glory, that shone in the Cloud between the Cherubim, on the Throne in the Tabernacle and Temple; even that Glory of the Lord which the Children of *Israel* saw, in the Wilderness, appearing in the Cloud: And where the Brightness of that purest heavenly Light and Glory, wherewith he clothes himself, shines in Heaven, there he dwells; there is the Throne of God, and the Glory of God, whereof *Stephen* had the Vision, with the Son of Man, *Jesus*, on his right Hand. In his House are many Mansions with *Jesus*; and in those Mansions he places the Souls of his Children, while they are absent from their own Bodies; which shall also in due Time be glorified with that same heavenly Glory wherewith the Body of the Son of Man, now made heavenly, is glorified on the right Hand of God. If then we think of Paradise as a Place, that Place must be no other than Heaven; as the Felicity of Paradise is plainly made a Type of the heavenly Felicity: And the promised Land of *Canaan*

was



was in like manner given to *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*, as a Figure of the better Country, *i. e.* the heavenly; in the Expectation of which, they sojourned in the Land of Promise as Strangers on the Earth. And, when the Apostle speaks of Paradise as a Place, he makes it the same with the third Heaven, where the Soul of a Man may be out of its own Body, and so in *Hades*; and where it may also be in its own Body, and so not in *Hades*; even as well as *Moses*, in *Hades*, and *Elias*, never in it, were both together with Jesus on the Mount where he was transfigured, having therein a Pledge or Earnest of the Glory of Heaven, that he should enter into after his Sufferings.

As for a Place of Torment for a Soul in *Hades*, or in Separation from its own Body, we cannot think of it without considering the Soul in connexion with some Portion of Matter wherewith it acts, and whereby it receives Impressions like as in the Body. Thus, when the Soul of the rich Man in the Parable is represented to us in *Hades*, as being in a Place of Torment, he appears in that Place as having like bodily Organs, acting by these, and affected in them by bodily Torments: For still we have no Way to think of the Place of a Spirit having no Connexion with any thing of Body or of Matter. And therefore the Heathens, when they would think of Souls separate from their Bodies, as in any Place or in Motion, were forced to think of Shades.

#### S E C T. IV.

*Concerning the rest of the Uses Epiphanius finds for Prayers for the Dead, with his Answers to other Objections of Acrius.*

**T**HE next Way wherein *Epiphanius* says Prayers for the Dead are useful, is, That they are profitable to Sinners when dead, as the Living profit by Prayers, although they do not cut off the whole Fault. Though they do not blot out all their Sins, yet they serve to expiate some of those which they committed in this Life.

By this, it would seem, he distinguishes Sinners, who are profited by Prayers in the separate State, from the Saints; while he would have these Sinners, who are thus distinguished, benefited in the Matter of Remission by the Prayers of the Living. And this Way of thinking cannot be reckoned quite unsuitable to the fourth Century, when they had not yet fully settled Purgatory, or a Middle-state, for a middle Sort of Souls, betwixt the Saints in Heaven and the Wicked in Hell, but were fast moving toward it: For, though the Spring from whence downright Purgatory flowed, was opened in the End of the second Century; yet it came not quite out till after the Time of *Epiphanius*.

But,



But, when he condescends on the Use of Prayers for Sinners in the State of the Dead, as to the removing of Guilt, he must meet with the second Objection of *Aerius*, who pleads, 'That Prayers, supposing them thus profitable to the Dead, derogate from the Necessity of Piety in this Life; and, in place of that, one needs but procure Friends to pray for him, that he may not be a Sufferer in that State.'

And to this *Epiphanius* has nothing to answer, but, That these Prayers do not take away all the Guilt, or the Guilt of all their Sins, though they do profit, so far, in that Way.

Did this Father, called a Saint, believe that Sin is expiated, or Remission of Guilt procured, by any thing but the Blood of Christ, shed for Remission, and once offered; or that the Remission of Sins by that, is not full? Did he suppose there is any Condemnation to them that are in Christ, to be yet taken off, after they die in the Lord, by the Prayers of the Living? Or did he imagine, that, after Death, the last Enemy, God chastises his Children, as he does in this World unto Death, by any Chastisements, to be removed from them in the separate State through the Prayers of sinful Mortals? Or did he believe, that the Dead who are not in Christ, can, by any Prayers, after dying in that State of Condemnation, be delivered from the least Part of that Condemnation? If this was his Doctrine, one may be bold to say, it was highly impious. And, certainly, they who seek not the whole Remission of their Sins by Christ's Blood only, in this Life, but, where their own Righteousness must be found lacking at Death, hope to have the Deficiency made up by Prayers to be put up for them after Death, must be impious, if any of Mankind be so. As these Prayers therefore open a Door to them who are willing to evade coming to God by Christ for the Remission of Sins, and making that sure in this Life, *Aerius* had Reason to charge them with derogating from the Necessity of Piety in this Life.

But *Epiphanius* finds yet *another* Use for these Prayers. He says, they are useful to distinguish Christ from all the Saints; because he alone is worshipped \*. As he is for mentioning Sinners who are dead

\* Cyril of Jerusalem, in Catech. Myst. V. says, "Then we also make mention of those who have fallen asleep before us, first the Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, and Martyrs, that God, through their Prayers and Supplications, would receive our Petitions; then, for our holy Fathers and Bishops who have gone before us; and, in general, for all who have departed from among us; believing it to be a great Benefit to their Souls for whom Prayer is made whilst the holy and tremendous Sacrifice lies before God." And a late Patron of Prayers for



dead in the Prayers, to implore the Mercy of God for them; so he is for mentioning the righteous Men, that Jesus Christ may be distinguished from all his Creatures, and that we may learn to give to him the Worship that is due to him only; being persuaded that we ought not to equal mortal Men to the Lord, whatsoever Righteousness and Holiness they have.

By this it would seem that *Epiphanius* did not acknowledge the Worship of Saints; as neither did they of *Smyrna*, who began the Affair of the Anniversaries of Saints, by setting apart the Day of *Polycarp's* Martyrdom, to be religiously observed to the Honour of his Memory: For here *Epiphanius* makes it inconsistent to pray for them, and to worship them. And it seems neither he, nor they who began their Anniversaries, knew, that setting apart a Day to be religiously observed to the Honour of any Person, is doing religious Honour or Worship to that Person. And so is consecrating a Place, as they of *Smyrna* did *Polycarp's* Burial-place; which the Lord prevented as to *Moses*.

And by this it also appears, that *Epiphanius* meant more by praying for the Dead, than praying for Christ's Appearing, and his Kingdom, and the Resurrection of the Just; which *Aerius* never denied: For, in that Sense, even Christ, who is worshipped, is some way prayed for; for he is expecting till his Enemies be made his Footstool, and till the last Enemy, Death, be destroyed; and, while we see not yet all Things put under him, we pray for his coming, we pray that his Enemies may be made his Footstool, and that all Things may be put under him, as an Addition to the Glory and Honour of that same Jesus, whom we see already crowned with Glory and Honour. So that we cannot say it is absolutely inconsistent, to pray for one, and to pray to him.

None, perhaps, pretend to give that same Worship to any Saint that is due to the Lord Christ only, or to equal mere Men to him in Worship, howsoever holy they be: But, if we may be benefited by the Prayers of departed Saints; if their Prayers may be useful to us,

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*for the Dead among professed Protestants, makes this Reflexion upon the Words of his Forefather Cyril: "These two, viz. their Prayers for us, and ours for them, are undoubtedly two great Branches of the Communion of Saints." And, by comparing Cyril with Epiphanius, and both these Fathers with their latest Offspring in the Sibylline Faith, in what they profess upon this Use of Prayers for the Dead, we may perceive, they are not at all agreed among themselves, except it be in this one Thing, viz. That our praying to God, that he may receive our Prayers graciously, for the Merit of the Prayers of those departed Saints, or calling for the Help of their Prayers, is the very Opposite of worshipping them; and that this distinguishes them from Christ.*



## *No Prayers for the Dead.* Chap. IV.

as ours are said to be useful to them : may we not call for the same Benefit from them, that we bestow upon them; and so hold a mutual Correspondence with departed Saints, as we do with the living, and call this the Communion of dead and living Saints? Would it be an Indignity to human Nature, to suppose any Man capable of this Correspondence and Communion with departed Saints, that is pretended to by thousands of reasonable Men? But perhaps some may fear, that it would be an Indignity to the Priest that pours out the Prayers for the Dead over his unbloody Sacrifice, to suppose him as dependent upon the departed Saints, as they are upon him. And, if the *Roman* Church has erred, in not taking sufficient Care here of the Honour and Dignity of the Priesthood, we may say, that is a Matter wherein they have rarely erred; for, if they may be depended on in any thing, we may trust them in this.

Now, the last Argument of *Aerius* against these Prayers for the Dead, is, That they are not supported by the Authority of the Scripture: For this Heretick was free to deny every Thing in the Religion of his Day that he could not find supported by that Authority.

And *Epiphanius* does not so much as pretend, like some that have come after him, that there is any thing of a Foundation for these Prayers in the Scripture: But he appeals to the Tradition of the Elders, or of the Mother, the Church, whose Statutes cannot be dissolved, according to the Words of *Solomon*, *Hearken, my son, to the words of thy father, and do not reject the statutes of thy mother*; shewing by this, that the Father, *i. e.* God, and the Only Begotten, and the Spirit, hath taught both in the Scripture and without Scripture; and the holy Church, our Mother, has Statutes belonging to her, which are indissoluble, and cannot be abrogated. Nothing is greater or more admirable than those Laws; and all those who would oppose them, are self-convicted of an Error.

But *Aerius*, who denied what was not written, and thought that the Church must be subject in every thing to Christ, whose Laws are all written, could have no regard to this Mother of *Epiphanius*. He saw, in the Old Testament, a Mother espoused to God, as in a Marriage-covenant, only to be the Mother of his Children according to the Flesh; and, in the New Testament, this Mother turning out to be the earthly *Jerusalem* in Bondage with her Children under that Covenant which gendered to Bondage, and cast out with them, as *Hagar* and her Son were cast out of *Abraham's* House. She pretended to have Statutes of her own, beside the written ones, to which her Children shewed the greatest Respect; and, in their Zeal for them, persecuted the very Heir of God, which was the Cause of the Ejection. And for another Mother in her Place, in  
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the New Testament, *Aerius* could find none, but *Jerusalem* which is above, the Mother of all the free-born Children of God. But what earthly Mother is this of *Epiphanius*, that pretends to be the Spouse of Christ, and has Children subjected to Laws that she gives them, besides his written ones? It is to be feared, *Aerius* would not have stuck at saying, This is the Whore in the *Apocalypse*, that commits Fornication with the Kings of the Earth, is supported and adorned by them, and has many Children, not begot by Christ's Word, but by their Means; and not subject to Christ, but subject to her Laws and Statutes, made effectual by their Authority and Power. One may be clear to say, that, whatever *Aerius* was, he was not a Son of this Whore, to whose Statutes he shewed so much Disregard and Contempt, without appearing to be any way self-convicted of an Error in the Case. But *Epiphanius* revered her as his Mother, and accounted her Statutes grand and most admirable; And so he was her most affectionate and obedient Son.

*The End.*



*The following Books, writ by Mr. John Glas, Minister of the Congregational Church at Dundee, are to be had of Daniel Chisholm Bookbinder in Edinburgh.*

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