day, on the morning of the first day of the week he returned unto life again, and thereby consecrated the weekly revolution of that first day to a religious observation until his coming again. And thus I believe the third day he rose again from the dead.

ARTICLE VI.

He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty.

THIS Article hath received no variation, but only in the addition of the name of God, and the attribute Almighty; the ancients using it briefly thus, He ascended into heaven, sitteth at the right hand of the Father. It containeth two distinct parts; one transient, the other permanent; one as the way, the other as the end: the first is Christ's ascension, the second is his session.

In the ascension of Christ these words of the Creed propound to us three considerations and no more: the first of the person, He; the second of the action, ascended; the third of the termination, into heaven. Now the person being perfectly the same which we have considered in the precedent Articles, he will afford no different speculation but only in conjunction with this particular action. Wherefore I conceive these three things necessary and sufficient for the illustration of Christ's ascension: first, to shew that the promised Messias was to ascend into heaven; secondly, to prove that our Jesus, whom we believe to be the true Messias, did really and truly ascend thither; thirdly, to declare what that heaven is, into which he did ascend.

That the promised Messias should ascend into heaven, hath been represented typically, and declared prophetically. The high priest under the Law was an express type of the Messias and his priestly office; the atonement which he made was the representation of the propitiation in Christ for the sins of the

world: for the making this atonement, the high priest was appointed once every year to enter into the holy of holies, and
Lev. xvi. 2. no offender. For the Lord said unto Moses, Speak unto Aaron thy
brother, that he come not at all times into the holy place within the
veil before the mercy-seat, which is upon the ark, that he die not.
None entered into that holy place but the high priest alone; and
he himself could enter thither but once in the year; and
thereby shewed that the High Priest of the good things to come,
by a greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, was
to enter into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for
us. The Jews did all believe that the tabernacle did signify this
world, and the holy of holies the highest heavens; wherefore
as the high priest did slay the sacrifice, and with the blood thereof did pass through the rest of the tabernacle, and with
that blood enter into the holy of holies; so was the Messiah
here to offer himself, and being slain to pass through all the
courts of this world below, and with his blood to enter into the
highest heavens, the most glorious seat of the majesty of God.
Thus Christ's ascension was represented typically.

The same ascension was also declared prophetically, as we 270
read in the Prophet David. Thou hast ascended up on high, thou
hast led captivity captive, thou hast received gifts for men: which
phrase on high, in the language of David signifying heaven,

He ascended into heaven.

could be applied properly to no other conqueror but the Messias;
not to Moses, not to David, not to Joshua, not to any but the
Christ; who was to conquer sin, and death, and hell, and trium-
phing over them, to ascend unto the highest heaven, and
thence to send the precious and glorious gifts of the Spirit unto
the sons of men. The prophecy of Micah did foretell as much,
even in the opinion and confession of the Jews themselves, by
those words, The breaker is come up before them: they have broken
up and have passed through the gate, and are gone out by it; and
their King shall pass before them, and the Lord on the head of
them. And thus Christ's ascension was declared prophetically
as well as typically; which was our first consideration.

Secondly, whatsoever was thus represented and foretold of
the promised Messias, was truly and really performed by our
Jesus. That only-begotten and eternal Son of God, who by his
Divinity was present in the heavens while he was on earth, did,
by a local translation of his human nature, really and truly
ascend from this earth below on which he lived, into the heavens
above, or rather above all the heavens, in the same body and
the soul with which he lived and died and rose again.

The ascent of Christ into heaven was not metaphorical or
figurative, as if there were no more to be understood by it, but
only that he obtained a more heavenly and glorious state or

Chaldee again, in the
same manner in this place. Thou hast ascended on high, the Chaldee
Paraphrase translates it: As he ascended on high, the plant of
the Prophet Moses; or there is a plain contradiction in that interpretation; for
if it were meant of Moses, it cannot be the
firmament; if it were the firmament, it cannot be understood of Moses,
for he never ascended thither.

31 This Breaker up is by the confusion
of the Jews the title of the Messias.
So the author of Sefer Achkath Rochel
in his description of the coming of the
Messias maketh use of this place. And
the same appears farther by that say-
ing of Moses Haddarshan in Bereshit
Rabbah, chapter 39. When shall we rejoice
when the foot of the Shechinah shall stand
upon the mount of Olives: and again,
When shall we rejoice when the
Shechinah shall be vested in the
head of the Messias? When shall
we rejoice when the captivites shall
ascend from hell, and Shechinah in the
head, as it is written. (Mie. xii. 13) Their
King shall pass before them, and the Lord in
the head of them.

* [The reputed author of the Achkath Rochel is Machir: his argument on
Mie. xii. 13 may be seen translated into Latin in A. Hulsius Theol. Jud. pp. 143-5.
The exposition of Gen. xli. 9 ascribed to Moses Haddarshan is taken from Maimon
Pugio Fidei, p. 68; and that on Gen. xliii. 18 from the same place. — R. F. S. J.]
condition after his resurrection. For whatsoever alteration was made in the body of Christ when he rose, whatsoever glorious qualities it was invested with thereby, that was not his ascension, as appeareth by those words which he spake to Mary, "John xx. 17. Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father. " Although John iii. 13. he had said before to Nicodemus, No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven; which words imply that he had then ascended: yet even those concern not this ascension. For that was therefore only true, because the Son of man, not yet conceived in the Virgin's womb, was not in heaven, and after his conception by virtue of the hypostatical union was in heaven; from whence, speaking after the manner of men, he might well say, that he had ascended into heaven; because whatsoever was first on earth and then in heaven, we say, ascended into heaven. 271 Wherefore, beside that grounded upon the hypostatical union, beside that glorious condition upon his resurrection, there was yet another, and that more proper ascension: for after he had both those ways ascended, it was still true that he had not yet ascended to his Father.

Now this kind of ascension, by which Christ had not yet ascended when he spake to Mary after his resurrection, was not long after to be performed; for at the same time he said John xx. 17. unto Mary, Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father. And when this ascension was performed, it appeared manifestly to be a true local translation of the Son of man, as man, from these parts of the world below into the heavens above, by which that body which was before locally present here on earth, and was not so then present in heaven, became substantially present in heaven, and no longer locally present in earth. For when he had spoken unto the Disciples, and blessed them, laying his hands upon them, and so was corporally present with them, even while he blessed them he parted Acts i. 9-10. from them, and while they beheld, he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight, and so he was carried up into heaven, while they looked steadfastly towards heaven as he went up. This was a visible departure, as it is described, a real removing of that body of Christ which was before present with the Apostles; and that body living after the resurrection, by virtue of that soul which was united to it: and therefore the Son of God according to his humanity was truly and really translated from these parts below unto the heavens above, which is a proper local ascension.

Thus was Christ's ascension visibly performed in the presence and sight of the Apostles, for the confirmation of the reality and the certainty thereof. They did not see him when he rose, but they saw him when he ascended; because an eyewitness was not necessary unto the act of his resurrection, but it was necessary unto the act of his ascension. It was sufficient that Christ shewed himself to the Apostles alive after his passion; for Acts i. 3. being they knew him before to be dead, and now saw him alive, they were thereby assured that he rose again: for whatsoever was a proof of his life after death, was a demonstration of his resurrection. But being the Apostles were not to see our Saviour in heaven, being the session was not to be visible to them on earth, therefore it was necessary they should be eye witnesses of the act, who were not with the same eyes to behold the effect.

Beside the eyewitness of the Apostles, there was added the testimony of the angels; those blessed spirits which ministered before, and saw the face of God in heaven, and came down from thence, did know that Christ ascended up from hence unto that place from whence they came: and because the eyes of the Apostles could not follow him so far, the inhabitants of that place did come to testify of his reception; for behold two men Acts i. 10. stood by them in white apparel, which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven. We must therefore acknowledge and confess against all the wild heresies of old, that the eternal

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28 The various heresies in the primitive times, concerning the humanity of Christ ascended into heaven, are briefly touched by Tertullian: "Ut et illi erubescant, qui admissionem carnem in coelia vacuam sensu, ut vaginam exempto Christo sedero: aut qui carnem et animam taindendam, aut tamquammodo animam, carnem vero non jan. De Carne Christi, cap. 24. [p. 326 B.] Of which
Son of God, who died and rose again, did with the same body and soul, with which he rose and rose, ascend up to heaven; which was the second particular considerable in this Article.

Thirdly, being the name of heaven admitted divers exceptions 272 in the sacred Scriptures, it will be necessary to inquire what is the true notion of it in this Article, and what was the proper termination of Christ's ascension. In some sense it might be truly said Christ was in heaven before the cloud took him out of the Apostles' sight; for the clouds themselves are called the clouds of heaven: but that heaven is the first; and our Saviour certainly ascended at least as far as St. Paul was taught up, that Heb. iv. 14. is, into the third heaven; for we have a great High Priest that is passed through the heavens 35. And needs must he pass through Heb. vii. 26. the heavens, because he was made higher than the heavens; for Eph. iv. 10. he that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens. When therefore Christ is said to have ascended into heaven, we must take that word as signifying as much as the heaven of heavens; and so Christ is ascended through and Heb. vi. 19. above the heavens, and yet is still in heaven: for he is entered into that within the veil, there is his passage through the heavens: Heb. xii. 22. into the holy place, even into heaven itself, to appear in the presence of God, this is the heaven of heaven. For thus said the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool; and as Christ descended unto the footstool of his Father in his humiliation, so he ascended unto the throne of his Father in his exaltation. This was the place of which our Saviour spake to his Disciples, What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before? Had he been there before in body, it had been no such wonder that he should have ascended thither again; but that his body should ascend unto that place where the majesty of God was most resplendent; that the flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone should be seated far above all angels and archangels, all principalities and powers, even at the right hand of God; this was that which Christ propounded as worthy of their greatest admiration. Whatsoever heaven then is higher than all the rest which are called heavens; whatsoever sanctuary is holier than all which are called holies; whatsoever place is of greatest dignity in all those courts above, into that place did he ascend, where in the splendour of his Deity he was before he took upon him our humanity.

As therefore when we say Christ ascended, we understand a literal and local ascent, not of his Divinity (which possesseth all places, and therefore being everywhere is not subject to the imperfection of removing any whither), but of his humanity, which was so in one place that it was not in another: so when we say the place into which he ascended was heaven, and from the expositions of the Apostles must understand thereby the heaven of heavens, or the highest heaven, it followeth that we believe the body with the soul of Christ to have passed far above all those celestial bodies which we see, and to look upon that opinion as a low conceit which left his body in the sun 36.

It was necessary to profess this Article of Christ's ascension:

26 The Socinians and Hermains taught that the body of Christ ascended no farther than the sun, in which it was deposited; of whom Philasterius, and out of him St. Augustin thus: 'Nec est Sal. vol. iii. nem in carnis sedere ad dexteram Patriæ, sed caæsus erat cum eis, et commune in sole posuisse, accipiant a deo, qui deo, Haer. xiv. sacrae sacris sacris, non. 5. [vol. i. pp. 381 D, 382 B.] Of which opinion Gregory Nazianzen is to be understood that Epistle before cited,- in the ἐν τοις διακονεῖται καθεστάσεις μετακομισίων αὐτοῦ. Haer. ix. [vol. viii. p. 20 D.] The same opinion Gregory Nazianzen attributed to the Manichæans; Ποῦ γὰρ τὸ σῶμα αὐτοῦ, εἰ μὴ μετὰ τοῦ προσωποῦ, συνέγει τὸ καθαρόν, τὸ ἐν τοῖς διακονεῖται καθεστάσεις μετακομισίων διά τοῦ αὐτοῦ σώματος, φυλακετώσας ἐκ τῆς ἐξουσίας παροικοῦσα. This was the old heresy of Hermogenes, as is related by Theodoræ: Othon. [ὁ ἑρμογένης] τοῦ Καζαίου τὸ οὐμα πρὸς τὸ ἐν τοῖς διακονεῖται καθεστάσεις, τὸν ἐν δικαίωσι καὶ τὰς διακοςίας εἰς τὴν ἐν αὐτῶν ἀνακομισίαν. Haer. Fab. lib. i. cap. 19. [vol. iv. p. 707 D.]
first, for the confirmation and augmentation of our faith. Our faith is thereby confirmed, in that we believe in him who is received unto the Father, and therefore certainly came from the Father: his Father sent him, and we have received the message from him, and are assured that it is the same message which he was sent to deliver, because he is so highly rewarded by him that sent him for delivering it. Our faith is thereby exalted and augmented, as being the evidence of things not seen. The further the object is removed from us, the more of faith hath that act which embracest it: Christ said unto Thomas, Because thou hast seen me thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed: and that blessedness by his ascension he hath left to the whole Church. Thus Christ ascended is the ground and glory of our faith; and by virtue of his being in heaven, our belief is both encouraged and commended; for his ascent is the cause, and his absence the crown of our faith: because he ascended, we the more believe; and because we believe in him who hath ascended, our faith is the more accepted.

Secondly, it is necessary to believe the ascension of Christ for the corroboration of our hope. We could never expect our dust and ashes should ascend the heavens; but being our nature hath gone before in him, we can now hope to follow after him. He is our Head, and where that is, the members may expect admission: for in so great and intimate an union there is no fear of separation or exclusion: there are many mansions in his Father's house. And when he spake of ascending thither, he said expressly to his Disciples, I go to prepare a place for you, and will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also. The first-fruits of our nature are

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Head, which is the ground of our hope; by him hereafter, as by the cause conferring, when hope shall be swallowed up into fruition.

Thirdly, the profession of faith in Christ ascended, is neces-
Matt.xvi.21. sary for the exaltation of our affections. For where our treasure
John xil. is, there will our hearts be also. If I be lifted up from the earth,
32. I will draw all men unto me, saith our Saviour; and if those
words were true of his crucifixion, how powerful ought they to
2 Kings ii. be in reference to his ascension? When the Lord would take up
1, 2. Elijah into heaven, Elias saith unto him, As the Lord liveth, and
as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee: when Christ is ascended
Col. iii. 1. up on high, we must follow him with the wings of our medita-
5, 3. tions, and with the chariots of our affections. If we be risen
with Christ, we must seek those things which are above, where
Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. If we be dead, and our
life hid in Christ with God, we must set our affection on things
above, not on things on the earth. Christ is ascended into heaven
to teach us, that we are strangers and pilgrims here, as all our
fathers were, and that another country belongs unto us: from
1Pet. ii.11. whence we as strangers and pilgrims should learn to abstain
Phil. iii.19. from fleshly lusts; and not mind earthly things; as knowing that
70. we are citizens of heaven, from whence we look for our Saviour, the
Eph. ii. 19. Lord Jesus, yea fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household
of God. We should trample upon our sins, and subdue the lusts
of the flesh, that our conversation may be correspondent to our
Saviour's condition; that where the eyes of the Apostles were
forced to leave him, thither our thoughts may follow him.

Fourthly, the ascension of Christ is a necessary Article of the
Creed in respect of those great effects which immediately were
to follow it, and did absolutely depend upon it. The blessed
Apostles had never preached the Gospel, had they not been
endued with power from above; but none of that power had
they received, if the Holy Ghost in a miraculous manner had
not ascended: and the Holy Ghost had not come down, except
our Saviour had ascended first. For he himself, when he was
to depart from his Disciples, grounded the necessity of his
John xvi. 7. departure upon the certainty of this truth, saying, If I go not
away, the Comforter will not come unto you: but if I depart, I
will send him unto you. Now if all the infallibility of those
truths, which we as Christians believe, depend upon the certain
information which the Apostles had, and those Apostles appear
to be no way infallible till the cloven tongues had sat upon
them, it was first absolutely necessary that the Holy Ghost
should so descend. Again, being it was impossible that the
Spirit of God in that manner should come down, until the Son
of God had ascended into heaven; being it was not fit that the
second Advocate should officiate on earth, till the first Advocate
275 had entered upon his office in heaven; therefore in respect of
this great work the Son of God must necessarily ascend, and in
reference to that necessity we may well be obliged to confess
that ascension.

Upon these considerations we may easily conclude what every
Christian is obliged to confess in those words of our Creed, he
ascended into heaven: for thereby he is understood to express
thus much; I am fully persuaded, that the only-begotten and
eternal Son of God, after he rose from the dead, did with the
same soul and body with which he rose, by a true and local
translation convey himself from the earth on which he lived,
through all the regions of the air, through all the celestial orbs,
until he came unto the heaven of heavens, the most glorious
presence of the majesty of God. And thus I believe in Jesus
Christ who ascended into heaven.

And sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty.

THIS second part of the Article containeth two particulars;
the session of the Son, and the description of the Father: the
first sheweth that Christ upon his ascension is set down at the
right hand of God; the second assures us that the God, at
whose right hand Christ is set down, is the Father Almighty.

For the explication of Christ's session, three things will be
necessary; first, to prove that the promised Messias was to sit
at the right hand of God; secondly, to shew that our Jesus,
whom we believe to be the true Messias, is set down at the
right hand of God; thirdly, to find what is the importance of
that phrase, and in what propriety of expression it belongs to
Christ.

That the promised Messias was to sit at the right hand of
God, was both pre-typified and foretold. Joseph, who was
betrayed and sold by his brethren, was an express type of Christ;
and though in many things he represented the Messias, yet in
none more than in this, that being taken out of the prison he
was exalted to the supreme power of Egypt. For thus Pharaoh
prophecy cannot belong to him who made the Psalm, therefore they which attribute the prediction to Abraham tell us the Psalm was penned by his steward Eliezer: they which expound it of David say that one of his musicians was author of it.

But first, it is most certain that David was the penman of this Psalm; the title speaks as much, which is, _A Psalm of David:_ from whence it followeth that the prediction did not belong to him, because it was spoken to his Lord. Nor could it indeed belong to any of the rest which the Jews imagine, because neither Abraham nor Ezechias nor Zorobabel could be the Lord of David, much less the people of Israel, (to whom some of the Jews referred it,) who were not the lords but the subjects of that David. Beside, he which is said to _sit at the right hand of God,_ is also said to be a _Priest for ever after the Ps. cx. 4._ order of Melchizedek: but neither Abraham nor Ezechias, nor any which the Jews have mentioned, was ever any priest of God. Again, our Saviour urged this Scripture against the Pharisees, _saying, What think ye of Christ? whose Son is he? Matt. xxii._ They say unto him, _The Son of David._ He saith unto them, _How then doth David in Spirit call him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord, how is he his Son? and no man was able to answer him a word._

From whence it is evident that the Jews of old, even the Pharisees, the most
accurate and skilful amongst them, did interpret this Psalm of the Messias; for if they had conceived the prophecy belonged either to Abraham or David, or any of the rest since mentioned by the Jews, they might very well, and questionless would have answered our Saviour, that this belonged not to the Son of David. It was therefore the general opinion of the Church of the Jews before our Saviour, and of divers Rabbins since his death, that this prediction did concern the kingdom of Christ. And thus the session of the Messias at the right hand of God was not only represented typically, but foretold prophetically: which is our first consideration.

Secondly, we affirm that our Jesus, whom we worship as the true Messias, according unto that particular prediction, when he ascended up on high, did sit down at the right hand of God. 277 His ascension was the way to his session, and his session the end of his ascension; as the Evangelist expresseth it, He was received up into heaven, and set on the right hand of God; or as the Apostle, God raised Christ from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places. There could be no such session without an ascension: and David is not ascended into the heavens; but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, let all the blind and wilful Jews be convinced of this truth, that God hath not set at his own right hand, neither Abraham or David, neither Ezechias or Zorobabel, but hath made that same Jesus whom they have crucified both Lord and Christ.

This was an honour never given, never promised to any man but the Messias: the glorious spirits stand about the throne of God, but never any of them set down at the right hand of God.

For to which of his angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool? But Christ was so assured of this honour, that before the council of the chief priests and the elders of the people, when he foresaw his death contrived, and his cross prepared, even then he expressed the confidence of his expectation, saying, Hereafter shall the Son of Luke xxii. man sit on the right hand of the power of God. And thus our Jesus, whom we worship as the true promised Messias, is gone (Pett.iii. 22.) into heaven, and is on the right hand of God. Which was our second consideration.

Our next inquiry is, what may be the utmost importance of that phrase, and how it is applicable unto Christ. The phrase consists of two parts, and both to be taken metaphorically: first, therefore, we must consider what is the right hand of God, in the language of the Scriptures; secondly, what it is to sit down at that right hand. God being a spirit can have no material or corporeal parts; and consequently as he hath no body, so in a proper sense can he have no hands at all: but because God is pleased to descend to our capacity, and not only to speak by the mouths of men, but also after the manner of men, he expresseth that which is in him by some analogy with that which belongs to us. The hands of men are those organical parts which are most active, and executive of our power; by those the strength of our body is expressed, and most of our natural and artificial actions are performed by them. From whence the power of God, and the exertion or execution of that power, is signified by the hand of God. Moreover being by a general custom of the world the right hand is more used than the left, and by that general use acquireth a greater firmitude and strength, therefore the right hand of God signifieth the exceeding great and infinite power of God.

Again, because the most honourable place amongst men is the right hand, (as when Bathsheba went unto king Solomon, he sat down on his throne, and caused a seat to be set for the king's left.

22 Succedunt brachia et validi lacertorum tori. validis ad operandum manus, et proscribunt digitis habiles ad tenendum. Hinc aptior usus operandi, hinc scribendi elegantia, et ille eplanatus scribendae velocitatem scribendi, quo divino vocae expimintur oracula. Manus est quae cibum ori ministrat: manus est quae praecclariae enitet factis, que cancellariae divinae gratiae sacraria inferioris alaribus, per quos offerimus et sumnu sacra menta coelestis: manus est que operatur pariter atque dispensat divina mysteria, cujus vocabulo non desigнатus est as Dei Filius declaratur, dicente David, Deus Domini exaltavit me. Manus est que fecit omnia, sancti dixit Deus omnipotentus, Nonne manus mea fecit hae omnia? S. Ambros. Hymn. lib. vi. c. 9. [3:69. vol. v. p. 140 B.]

50 As in the Midrash Tilletim, Psalm xviii. 36. "Aram Tiberiadei," so it is written, "Aram Tiberiadei." R. Joden, in the name of Rabbi Chama saith that in the time to come God shall place Messias the king at his right hand, as it is written (Psalm cx. 1.,), The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand. So Moses Hadadshar on Gen. xviii. 1., Hereafter God holy and blessed shall set the king Messias on his right hand, as it is written (Psalm cx. 1.,) The Lord said, 80. [Martini Pugio Fidelis, p. 381.]
mother, and she sits on his right hand; therefore the right hand of God signifies the glorious majesty of God.

Thirdly, Because the gifts of men are given and received by the hands of men, and every perfect gift comes from the Father of lights, therefore the right hand of God is the place of celestial happiness and perfect felicity; according to that of the Psalmist.

Now as to the first acceptance of the right hand of God, Christ is said to sit down at the right hand of the Father in regard of that absolute power and dominion which he hath obtained in heaven; from whence it is expressly said, Hereafter ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power.

As to the second acceptance, Christ is said to sit on the right hand of God in regard of that honour, glory, and majesty, which he hath obtained there; wherefore it is said, When he had by himself purged our sins, he sate down on the right hand of the Majesty on high: and again, We have an High Priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens.

In reference to the third acceptance, Christ is said to sit on the right hand of God, because now after all the labours and sorrows of this world, after his stripes and buffetings, after a painful and shameful death, he resteth above in unspeakable joy and everlasting felicity.

As for the other part of the phrase, that is, his session, we must not look upon it as determining any posture of his body in the heavens, correspondent to the inclination and curvation of our limbs: for we read in the Scriptures a more general term, which signifies only his being in heaven, without any expression of the particular manner of his presence. So St. Paul, Who is in Rom. viii. even at the right hand of God; and St. Peter, Who is gone into heavens, and is at the right hand of God. Beside, we find him expressed in another position than that of session: for Stephen looking steadfastly into heaven, saw the glory of God, and Jesus Acts vii. standing on the right hand of God; and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God. He appeared standing unto Stephen, whom we express sitting in our Creed; but this is rather a difference of the occasion, than a diversity of position. He appeared standing to Stephen, as ready to assist him, as ready to plead for him, as ready to receive him: and he is oftener expressed sitting, not for any positional variation, but for the variety of his effects and operation.

This phrase then to sit, prescinding from the corporal posture of session, may signify no more than habituation, possession, perambulation, and continuance; as the same word in the Hebrew

58 'Secundum consuetudinem nostram illi consecuam offeram, qui aliquo opere perfecto victor advenienst honoris gratia proemeretur, ut sedem. Ista ergo et homo Jesus Christus pasiones suae diabolum superans, resurrectione sua inferna renescens, tamquam perfecto opere ad sais violer adventans, audit a Deo Patre, Sede ad dextram meam.' Max. Taurin. Homil. 1. de Pentecoste. [p. 27 A.]

54 'Ad dextram intelligendum est sic dictum esse, in summa beatitudine, uti justitia et lex et quodaeum est.' S. August. de Fide et Symb. cap. 7. [p. 157 D.]


52 'Salus temporalis et carnis in sinistra est, salus atemn cum Angellis in dextra est. Ideo jam in ipsa immortalitate posuit Christus, dictur sedes ad dextram Dei. Non enim Deus habet in seipso dextram aut sinistram; sed dextra Dei dictur felicissima illa, qua quomodo ostendit oeucis non potest, talis nomen acceptum.' S. August. in Psal. cxxxvii. [t. 14. vol. iv. p. 1532 C.]


*This is not a genuine work of Augustin. Vol. iii. part ii. Append. p. 80 D.]
and Greek languages often signifies. 56. And, thus our Saviour is set down at the right hand of God in heaven; because he which dwelt with us before on earth, is now ascended up into heaven, and hath taken his mansion or habitation there; and so hath he seated himself, and dwelleth 57 in the highest heavens.

Again, the notion of sitting implicate rest, quietness, and indisturbance; according to that promise in the Promised, They shall sit every man under his fig-tree, and none shall make them afraid. So Christ is ascended into heaven, where resting from all pains and sorrows, he is seated free from all disturbance and opposition; God having placed him at his right hand, until he hath made his enemies his footstool.

Thridly, This sitting implicate yet more than quietness or continuance, even dominion, sovereignty, and majesty; 58 as when Solomon sate in the throne of his father, he reigned over Israel until the death of his father. And thus Christ is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. And St. Paul did well interpret those words of the Prophet, Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool, saying, He must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet.

56 ἠκολούθησεν αὐτῷ ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ. This is frequently used for permanent, and habitation; as Judges v. 17, ἠκολούθησεν αὐτῷ ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ. And as in the Psalms, Ps. ciii. 9, οὐκ ἐπλήγη ἐν σοὶ οὐδε ἡκαίος σοι. And as in the Hebrews: 'Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.'

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58 'Sedere quod dictur Deus, non membrorum positionem, sed juridicarum significat potentatem, quia illa majestas nuncuparet, semper digna dignis tribuendo; quamvis in extremo judicio multo manifestius inter homines unigeniti Filii Dei judicis vivorum atque mortuorum clarissims indubitata futura sit.' S. August. de Fide et Synb. cap. 7. 

280 The importance of the language being thus far improved, at last we find the substance of the doctrine, which is, that sitting at the right hand of God was our Mediator's solemn entry upon his regal office, as to the execution of that full dominion which was due unto him. For worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. Wherefore Christ after his death and resurrection, all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. For because he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, therefore God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth. And this obedience and
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Eph. i. 20, 21, 22. submission was and is due unto him, because God raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principalities and powers, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under his feet; and gave him to be the head over all things to the Church.

2 Sam. vii. 16. There was an express promise made by God to David, This house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee, thy throne shall be established for ever. This promise strictly and literally taken was but conditional: and the condition of the promise is elsewhere expressed, Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne. If thy children will keep my covenant and my testimony that I shall teach them, their children also shall sit upon thy throne for evermore. Notwithstanding this promise the kingdom of David was intercepted, nor was his family continued in the throne: part of the kingdom was first rent from his posterity, next the regality itself; and when it was restored, translated to another family: and yet we cannot say the promise was not made good, but only ceased in the obligation of a promise, because the condition was not performed. The posterity of David did not keep the covenant and testimony of their God, and therefore the throne of David was not by an uninterrupted lineal succession established to perpetuity.

But yet in a larger and better sense, after these intercisions, the throne of David was continued. When they had sinned, and lost their right unto the crown, the kingdom was to be given unto him who never sinned, and consequently could never lose it; and he being of the seed of David, in him the throne of David was without interruption or succession continued. Of Luke i. 32, 33, 34, 35. him did the angel Gabriel speak at his conception, The Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David, and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end. Thus the throne of Christ is called the throne of David, because it was promised unto David, and because the kingdom of David was a type, resemblance, and representation of it; inasmuch that Christ himself in respect of this kingdom is often called David, as particularly in that promise, I will set up one Shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their Shepherd. And I the Lord will be their God, and my servant David a Prince among them.

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Now as David was not only first designed, but also anointed by God, to be king over Israel, and yet had no possession of the crown; seven years he continued anointed by Samuel, and had no share in the kingdom; seven years after he continued anointed in Hebron; only king over the tribe of Judah; at last he was received by all the tribes, and so obtained full and absolute regal power over all Israel, and seated himself in the royal city of Jerusalem: so Christ was born King of the Jews, and the conjunction of his human nature with his Divine in the union of his person was a sufficient unction to his regal office, yet as the Son of man he exercised no such dominion, professing that his kingdom was not of this world; but after he rose from the dead, then as it were in Hebron with his own tribe he tells the Apostles, All power is given unto him; and by virtue thereof gives them injunctions; and at his ascension he enters into the Jerusalem above, and there sits down at the right hand of the throne of God, and so makes a solemn entry upon the full and entire dominion over all things; then could St. Peter say, Let all the house of Israel Acts ii. 36. know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.

The immediate effect of this regal power, the proper execution of this office, is the subduing of all his enemies; for he is set down on the right hand of God, from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. This was the ancient custom of the oriental conquerors, to tread upon the necks of their subdued enemies; as when Joshua had the five kings as his prisoners, he said unto the men of war which went with him, Come near, put your feet upon the necks of them. Thus to signify the absolute and total conquest of Christ, and the dreadful majesty of his throne, all his enemies are supposed to lie down before him, and he to set his feet upon them.

The enemies of Christ are of two kinds, either temporal or spiritual; the temporal enemies I call such as visibly and actually oppose him, and his Apostles, and all those which profess to believe in his name. Such especially and principally were the Jews, who rejected, persecuted, and crucified him; who after his resurrection scourged, stoned, and despitely used his Disciples; who tried all ways and means imaginable to hinder the propagation, and dishonour the profession of Christianity. A part of his regal office was to subdue these enemies, and he sat down on the right hand of God, that they might be
made his footstool: which they suddenly were according to his prediction. There be some standing here which shall not taste of death till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom. For within few years the temple, the city, and the whole polity of the Jews were destroyed for ever in a revenging manner by the hands of the Romans, which they made use of to crucify the Lord of life. The Romans themselves were the next enemies, who first complied with the Jews in Christ's crucifixion, and after in defence of their heathen deities endeavoured the extirpation of Christianity by successive persecutions. These were next to be made the footstool of the King of kings; and so they were when Rome, the regnant city, the head of that vast empire, was taken and sacked; when the Christians were preserved, and the heathens perished; when the worship of all their idols ceased, and the whole Roman empire marched under the banner of Christianity. In the same manner all those persons and nations whatsoever, which openly oppose and persecute the name of Christ, are enemies unto this King, to be in due time subdued under him, and when he calleth, to be slain.

The spiritual enemies of this King are of another nature; such as by an invisible way make opposition to Christ's dominion, as sin, Satan, death. Every one of these hath a kingdom of its own, set up and opposed to the kingdom of Christ. The Apostle hath taught us, that sin hath reigned unto death; and hath commanded us not to let it reign in our mortal bodies, that we should obey it in the lusts thereof. There is therefore a dominion and kingdom of sin set up against the throne of the immaculate Lamb. Satan would have been like the Most High, and being cast down from heaven, hath erected his throne below; he is the prince of this world: the spirit, which now worketh in the children of disobedience, is the prince of the power of the air; and thus the rulers of the darkness of this world oppose themselves to the true light of the world. Death also hath its dominion, and, as the Apostle speaks, reigned from Adam to Moses; even by one offence death reigned by one, and so set up a ruling and a regal power against the Prince of life.

For the destruction of these powers was Christ exalted to the right hand of God, and by his regal office doth he subdue and destroy them all. And yet this destruction is not so universal, but that sin, Satan, and death, shall still continue. It is true, he shall put down all rule and authority and power; but this amounts not so much to a total destruction, as to an absolute subjection: for as he is able, so will he subdue all things unto himself. The principal end of the regal office of the Mediator is the effectual redemption and actual salvation of all those whom God hath given him; and whosoever or whatsoever opposeth the salvation of these, is by that opposition constituted and become an enemy of Christ. And because this enmity is grounded upon that opposition, therefore so far as any thing opposeth the salvation of the sons of God, so far it is an enemy, and no farther: and consequently Christ, by sitting at the right hand of God, hath obtained full and absolute power utterly to destroy those three spiritual enemies, so far as they make this opposition; and farther than they do oppose they are not destroyed by him, but subdued to him: whatsoever hindereth and obstructeth the bringing of his own into his kingdom, for the demonstration of God's mercy, is abolished: but whatsoever may be yet subservient to the demonstration of his justice, is continued.

Christ then as King destroyeth the power of sin in all those which belong unto his kingdom, annihilating the guilt thereof by the virtue of his death, destroying the dominion thereof by his actual grace, and taking away the spot thereof by grace habitual. But in the reprobate and damned souls, the spot of sin remaineth in its perfect die, the dominion of sin continueth in its absolute power, the guilt of sin abideth in a perpetual obligation to eternal pains: but all this in subjection to his throne, the glory of which consisteth as well in punishing rebellion as rewarding loyalty.

Again, Christ sitting on the right hand of God destroyeth all the strength of Satan and the powers of hell: by virtue of his death perpetually represented to his Father, he destroyeth him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil. But the actual destruction of these powers of darkness hath reference only to the elect of God. In them he preventeth the snares, those he taketh out of the snare; in them he destroyeth the works, those he preserveth from the condemnation of the Devil. He freeth them from the prevailing power of Satan by his grace; he freeth them hereafter from all possibility of any infernal opposition by his glory. But still the reprobate and damned souls are continued slaves unto the powers of hell; and he which sitteth upon the throne delivereth them to the Devil and his
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angels, to be tormented with and by them for ever; and this power of Satan still is left as subservient to the demonstration of the Divine justice.

Thirdly, Christ sitting on the throne of God at last destroyeth 1 Cor. xv. 26. death itself: for the last enemy which shall be destroyed is death. But this destruction reacheth no farther than removing of all power to hinder the bringing of all such persons as are redeemed actually by Christ into the full possession of his heavenly kingdom.

Hos. iii. 4. He will ransom them from the power of the grave, he will redeem them from death. O death, he will be thy plague; O grave, he will be thy destruction. The trump shall sound, the graves shall open, the dead shall live, the bodies shall be framed again out of the dust, and the souls which left them shall be reunited to them, and all the sons of men shall return to life, and death shall be swallowed up in victory. The sons of God shall then be made completely happy both in soul and body, never again to be separated, but to inherit eternal life. Thus 2 Tim. i. 10. he who sitteth at the right hand of God hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light. But to the reprobate and damned persons, death is not destroyed but improved. They rise again indeed to life, and so the first death is evanished; but that life to which they rise is a second, and a far worse death. And thus Christ is set down at the right hand of God, that he might subdue all things to himself.

The regal power of Christ, as a branch of the Mediatorship, 1 Cor. xv. 25. is to continue till all those enemies be subdued. For he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet. But now we see not yet all things put under him. Therefore he must still continue there: and this necessity is grounded upon the promise of the Father, and the expectation of the Son. Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool, saith the Father; upon which words we may ground as well the continuation as the session. Upon this promise of the Father, the Son 13. Heb. x. 12. sate down at the right hand of God, from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. Being then the promise of God cannot be evacuated, being the expectation of Christ cannot be frustrated, it followeth, that our Mediator shall exercise the regal power at the right hand of God till all opposition shall be subdued.

When all the enemies of Christ shall be subdued, when all the chosen of God shall be actually brought into his kingdom, when those which refused him to rule over them shall be slain, that is, when the whole office of the Mediator shall be completed and fulfilled, then every branch of the execution shall cease. As therefore there shall no longer continue any act of the prophetical part to instruct us, nor any act of the priestly part to intercede for us, so there shall be no further act of this regal power of the Mediator necessary to defend and preserve us. The beatific vision shall succeed our information and instruction, a present fruition will prevent obliteration and intercession, and perfect security will need no actual defence and protection. As therefore the general notion of a Mediator ceaseth when all are made one, because a Mediator is not a Gal. iii. 20. Mediator of one; so every part or branch of that Mediatorship, as such, must also cease, because that unity is in all parts complete. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up 1 Cor. xv. the kingdom to God, even the Father, when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that hath put all things under him, that God may be all in all.

Now though the Mediatorship of Christ be then resigned, because the end thereof will then be performed; though the regal office as part of that Mediatorship be also resigned with the whole; yet we must not think that Christ shall cease to be a King, or lose any of the power and honour which before he had. The dominion which he hath was given him as a reward for what he suffered: and certainly the reward shall not cease when the work is done. He hath promised to make us kings and priests, which honour we expect in heaven, believing we shall reign with him for ever, and therefore for ever must believe in him. King. The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of the Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever, not only to the modified eternity of his Mediatorship, so long as there shall be need of regal power to subdue the enemies of God's elect; but also to the complete eternity of the duration of his humanity, which for the future is coeternal to his divinity.

284 Lest we should imagine that Christ should ever cease to be

King, or so interpret this Article, as if he were after the day of judgment to be removed from the right hand of God, the ancient Fathers added those words to the Nicene Creed, whose kingdom shall have no end, against the heresy which then arose, denying the eternity of the kingdom of Christ.

The profession of faith in Christ, as sitting on the right hand of God, is necessary; first, to mind us of our duty, which must needs consist in submission and obedience. The majesty of a king claimeth the loyalty of a subject; and if we acknowledge his authority, we must submit unto his power. Nor can there be a greater incitement to obedience, than the consideration of the nature of his government. Subject we must be, whether we will or no; and if willingly, then is our service perfect freedom; if unwillingly, then is our averseness everlasting misery. Enemies we all have been; under his feet we all shall be, either adopted or subdued. A double kingdom there is of Christ; one of power, in which all are under him; another of propriety, in which we belong to him: none of us can be excepted from the first; and happy are we, if by our obedience we show ourselves to have an interest in the second; for then that kingdom is not only Christ’s but ours.

Secondly, It is necessary to believe in Christ sitting on the right hand of God, that we might be assured of an auspicious protection under his gracious dominion. For God by his exaltation hath given our Saviour to be the head over all things to the Church; and therefore from him we may expect direction and preservation. There can be no illegality where Christ is the Lawgiver; there can be no danger from hostility where the Son of God is the Defender. The very name of Head hath the significiation not only of dominion but of union; and therefore while we look upon him at the right hand of God, we see

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The profession of faith in Christ, as sitting on the right hand of God, is necessary; first, to mind us of our duty, which must needs consist in submission and obedience. The majesty of a king claimeth the loyalty of a subject; and if we acknowledge his authority, we must submit unto his power. Nor can there be a greater incitement to obedience, than the consideration of the nature of his government. Subject we must be, whether we will or no; and if willingly, then is our service perfect freedom; if unwillingly, then is our averseness everlasting misery. Enemies we all have been; under his feet we all shall be, either adopted or subdued. A double kingdom there is of Christ; one of power, in which all are under him; another of propriety, in which we belong to him: none of us can be excepted from the first; and happy are we, if by our obedience we show ourselves to have an interest in the second; for then that kingdom is not only Christ’s but ours.

Secondly, It is necessary to believe in Christ sitting on the right hand of God, that we might be assured of an auspicious protection under his gracious dominion. For God by his exaltation hath given our Saviour to be the head over all things to the Church; and therefore from him we may expect direction and preservation. There can be no illegality where Christ is the Lawgiver; there can be no danger from hostility where the Son of God is the Defender. The very name of Head hath the significiation not only of dominion but of union; and therefore while we look upon him at the right hand of God, we see

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ourselves in heaven. This is the special promise which he hath made us since he sate down there, To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame and am set down with my Father in his throne. How should we rejoice, yea rather how should we fear and tremble at so great an honour!

Thirdly, The belief of Christ’s glorious session is most necessary in respect of the immediate consequence, which is his most gracious intercession. Our Saviour is ascended as the true Melchizedek, not only as the King of Salem, the Prince of Peace, but also as the Priest of the most high God; and whereas every priest, according to the Law of Moses, stood daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices which could never take away sins, this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sate down on the right hand of God. And now Christ being set down in that power and majesty, though the sacrifice be but once offered, yet the virtue of it is perpetually advanced by his session, which was founded on his passion: for he is entered into heaven itself; now to appear in the presence of God.

Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth: Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. For he which was accepted in his oblation, and therefore sate down on God’s right hand, to improve this acceptance continues his intercession; and having obtained all power by virtue of his humiliation, representeth them both in a most sweet communion; by an humble omnipotence, or omnipotent humility, appearing in the presence, and presenting his postulations at the throne of God.

Having thus explicated the session of our Saviour, we are next to consider the description of him at whose right hand he is set down; which seems to be delivered in the same terms with which the Creed did first begin, I believe in God the Father Almighty; and indeed, as to the expression of his essence, it is the same name of God; as to the setting forth his relation, it is the same name of Father; but as to the adjoining attribute, though it be the same word, it is not the same notion of almighty. What therefore we have spoken of the nature of God, and the person of the Father, is not here to be repeated, but supposed; for Christ is set down at the right hand of that God and of that Father, which we understand when we say, I believe in God the Father. But because there is a difference in the language of the Greeks between that word which is rendered almighty in the first Article, and that which is so and intercessions be made for all men, observe what is the nature of intercession: Pro interpellationibus autem quoscumque, omnem commendet lucum habet, et postulat: interpellabitur, si non pro nobis. Cuius intercessione, ut ait, non est aliquando interpellatus, quod coram habet, tertio dicitur, ut interpelletur. Deipara ad Philonem, quod. 2. epist. 2.

56 They also added, ‘in the bosom of the Father, was with us and the Father, and the Father.’ This is the same as: ‘Face to face with me and the Father.’ This is what they say. S. Chrysostom. Homil. 3. in Epist. ad Ephes. [ibid. § 3. p. 20 F.]

57 St. Austin discoursing upon that place of St. Paul, Tim. ii. 1. I exhort that, first of all, supplications, prayers,
rendered in the sixth; because that peculiarly signifieth authority of dominion, this more properly power in operation; therefore we have reserved this notion of omnipotence now to be explained.

In which, two things are observable; the propriety, and the universality; the propriety in the potency, the universality in the omnipotence; first, that he is a God of power; secondly, that he is a God of infinite power. The potency consisteth in a proper, innate, and natural force or activity, by which we are assured that God is able to act, work, and produce true and real effects, which do require a true and real power to their production: and in respect of this he is often described unto us under the notion of a mighty God. The omnipotence or infinity of this power consisteth in an ability to act, perform, and produce, whatsoever can be acted or produced, without any possibility of impediment or resistance: and in this respect he is represented to us as an almighty God. And therefore such an omnipotence we ascribe unto him: which is sufficiently deli-

Luke 37. vered in the Scriptures, first by the testimony of an angel, for with God nothing shall be impossible; secondly, by the testimony

Mark 27. of Christ himself, who said, With men it is impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible. Now he, to whom all things are possible, and to whom nothing is impossible, is truly and properly omnipotent. Thus whatsoever doth not in itself imply a repugnancy of being or subsisting, hath in reference to the power of God a possibility of production; and whatsoever in respect of the power of God hath an impossibility of production, must involve in itself a repugnancy or contradiction.

This truth, though confessed by the Heathens, hath yet been denied by some of them; but with such poor and insufficient arguments, that we shall need no more than an explication of the doctrine to refute their objections.

First, then, we must say God is omnipotent, because all power whatsoever is in any creature is derived from him; and well may he be termed Almighty, who is the fountain of all might. There is no activity in any agent, no influence of any cause, but what dependeth and proceedeth from the principal

287 Agent, or the first of causes. There is nothing in the whole circumference of the universe, but hath some kind of activity, and consequently some power to act; (for nothing can be done without a power to do it:) and as all their entities flow from the first of beings, so all their several and various powers flow from the first of powers: and as all their beings cannot be conceived to depend of any but an infinite Essence, so all those powers cannot proceed from any but an infinite Power.

Secondly, God may be called omnipotent, because there can be no resistance made to his power; no opposition to his will, no rescue from his hands. The Lord of hosts hath purposed, and Isa. xiv. 27. who shall disannul it? his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back? He doth according to his will in the army of heaven, Dan. iv. 35. and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or stay unto him, What doeth thou? According to the degrees of power in the agent and the resistant, is an action performed or hindered: if there be more degrees of power in the resistant than the agent, the action is prevented; if fewer, it may be retarded or debilitated, but not wholly hindered or suppressed. But if there be no degree of power in the resistant in reference to the agent, then is the action totally vigorous; quidem posse omnia. Namque nec sibi potest mortem consciscere, ei velit, quod hominidedit optimum in tantis vitae rebus: nec mortales exspectare donare, aut revocare defunctos: nec fauces, ut qui visist, non vixerit: qui homines geget, non gesset: nullumque habere in praeterita, praeter quem oblivionis: atque (ut facies quoque argumentum societatis hinc cum Deo copulate) ut his dena vidi, non sit, nec multa similibus significis, nisi qua declaratur band dubia naturae potentiae, idque esse, quod Deus vocamus. Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. ii. cap. 7. [c. 5.] Add unto these that objection of Elymas the sorcerer, recorded by Dionysius: Vatic. philos. Τὸν δὲ μάγον, Εἰ πατρίδοματ εὐγενὸς ὁ Θεός, κάθε λέγεται τι μὴ δύναμιν πρὸς νομίμως καθ’ θεολόγος; Λαοδηγεῖται δὲ τῷ δυνατον χρὴν, μὴ δύνασθαι τὸν Θεὸν λαθοῦντος ἐργαστήρα. De Divin. Nom. cap. 8. [p. 243 B.]


71 'Neque enim ob aliud versarer vocatur Omnipotens, nisi quoniam quidquid vult potest, nec voluntate cujusvis creature voluntatis omnipotentis impellitur effectus.' B. August. Enchir. ad Luc. de Fide, lcc. cap. 90. [c. 24. vol. vi. p. 231 G.]
and if in all the powers, beside that of God, there be not the least degree of any resistance, we must acknowledge that power of his, being above all opposition, to be infinite. As Jehosaphat said, In thine hand, O God, is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee? From hence there is no difficulty with God to perform any thing; no greater endeavour or activity to produce the greatest than the least of creatures; but an equal facility in reference unto all things; which cannot be imagined but by an infinite excess of power above and beyond all resistance.

Thirdly, God is yet more properly called omnipotent, because his own active power extendeth itself to all things; neither is there any thing imaginably possible which he cannot do. Thus when God several ways had declared his power unto Job, Job answered the Lord, and said, I know that thou canst do every thing. Now that must needs be infinite activity which answereth to all kinds of possibility. Thus the power of God is infinite extensively, in respect of its object, which is all things; for whatsoever effects there be of his power, yet still there can be more produced; intensively, in respect of the action, or perfection of the effect produced; for whatsoever addition of perfection is possible, is within the sphere of God's omnipotency. The object then of the power of God is whatsoever is simply and absolutely possible, whatsoever is in itself such as that it may be; and so possible every thing is, which doth not imply a contradiction. Again, whatsoever implieth a contradiction is impossible, and therefore is not within the object of the power of God, because impossibility is the contradiction of all power. For that is said to imply a contradiction, which if it were, it would necessarily follow that the same thing would be and not be. But it is impossible for the same thing both to be and not to be at the same time, and in the same respect; and therefore whatsoever implieth a contradiction is impossible. From whence it followeth, that it may be truly said, God cannot effect that which involveth a contradiction, but with no derogation from his power: and it may be as truly said, God can effect whatsoever involveth not a contradiction, which is the expression of an infinite power.

72 'Nisi omnipotens esset, non una endemque facilestsumma atque invia omnia potest.' S. August. de Trin. lib. facessit.' Fulgent. de Fide ad Petrum, iv. cap. 20. [s. n. vol. viii. p. 828 B.] cap. 3. [s. 23. p. 511.]

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Now an action may imply a contradiction two ways, either in respect of the object, or in respect of the agent. In respect of the object it may imply a contradiction immediately or consequentially. That doth imply a contradiction immediately, which plainly and in terms doth signify a repugnancy, and so destroys itself, as for the same thing to be and not to be, to have been and not to have been. And therefore it must be acknowledged that it is not in the power of God to make that not to have been, which hath already been: but that is no derogation to God's power, because not within the object of any power. And he may certainly have all power, who hath not that which belongeth to no power. Again, that doth imply a contradiction consequentially, which in appearance seemeth not to be impossible, but by necessary consequence, if admitted, leadeth infallibly to a contradiction. As that one body should be at the same time in two distinct places, speaks no repugnancy in terms; but yet by consequence it leads to that which is repugnant in itself; which is, that the same body is but one body, and not but one. Being then a covert and consequential contradiction is as much and as truly a contradiction as that which is open and immediate, it followeth that it is as impossible to be effected, and therefore comes not under the power of God.

That doth imply a contradiction in respect of the agent, which is repugnant to his essential perfection; for being every action floweth from the essence of the agent, whatsoever is totally repugnant to that essence must involve a contradiction as to the agent. Thus we may say, God cannot sleep, God cannot want, God cannot die: he cannot sleep, whose being is spiritual;
he cannot want, whose nature is all-sufficient; he cannot die, who is essentially and necessarily existent. Nor can that be a diminution of his omnipotence, the contrary whereof would be a proof of his impotence, a demonstration of his infirmity. Thus it is impossible for God to lie,76 to whom we say nothing is impossible; and he, who can do all things, cannot deny himself.77

Because a lie is repugnant to the perfection of veracity, which is essential unto God, as necessarily following from his infinite knowledge and infinite sanctity. We who are ignorant may be deceived, we who are sinful may deceive; but it is fall not potest. Dictur enim omnipotentam faciendo quod voluit, non patiendo quod non voluit; et si ei accideret, nequaquam esset omnipotens. Unde propertea quodam non potest, quia omnipotens est.78 S. Augustin. de Civit. Dei, lib. v. cap. 10. [vol. vii. p. 155 A.]


 sư Numquidnam mentitur Deus? Sed non mentitur, quia impossibile est mentiri Deum. Impossibile autem istud, numquidnam infraestatis est. Non utique. Nam quomodo omnia potest, si aliquid effecerit non possit. Quis ergo ei impossibile? Illud utique quod nature ejus contrarium est, non quod virtutis arduum. Impossibile, inquit, est ei mentiri; et impossibile est ei non infraestatis est, sed virtutis et majestatis; quia veritas non recipit mendacium, nec Dei virtus levitatis errorum. S. Ambros. Annot. in Num. [Epist. 50. 5. vol. ii. p. 993 B.]

Si volunt invente quod Omnipotentas non possit, habent prorsus, ego dicam, mentiri non potest. Cre- damus ergo quod potest, non credendo quod non potest. S. Augustin. de Civit. Dei, lib. xxii. cap. 25. [vol. vii. p. 603 A.]

This was the argument of Elymas the sorcerer before mentioned, to which Dionysius gives this answer; ‗Hē ēkou̱s h̆̄rho̱ne̱s éxesthai ἀληθείαν ἐτέλεσεν ἡ δὲ ἀλήθεια δὲ ἐστὶν, καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια ἐστὶν τοῦ ἀληθικοῦ. Εἰ τοῦτο, ἆλλον ἕναν τοῦ ἀληθικοῦ οὐκ ἐστὶ.‘ Auct. Servii ex. de Temp. cap. 1. [Augustin. Op. vol. v. p. 593 B. Epist. xxxiv. 76]

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repugnant to that nature to be deceived which is no way subject unto ignorance; it is contradictory to that essence to deceive, which is no way capable of sin. For as it is a plain contradiction to know all things, and to be ignorant of any thing; so is it to know all things, and to be deceived: as it is an evident contradiction to be infinitely holy, and to be sinful, so is it to be infinitely holy, and deceive. But it is impossible for any one to lie, who can neither deceive nor be deceived. Therefore it is a manifest contradiction to say that God can lie, and consequently it is no derogation from his omnipotence, that he cannot. Whatsoever then God cannot do, whatsoever is impossible to him, doth not any way of his attributes and perfections are as essential to him as his power; and as his power suffereth no resistance, so the rest of his perfections admit no repugnance. Well therefore may we conclude him absolutely omnipotent, who by being able to effect all things consistent with his perfections, sheweth infinite ability; and by not being able to do any thing repugnant to the same perfections, demonstrateth himself subject to no infirmity or imbecility.79 And in this manner we maintain God’s omnipotence, with the best and eldest, against the worst and latest of the heathen authors.80

79 Theodoret having proved that there were many things which fell not under the power of God, at last thus concludes: 'Pωλά τοῖς συγχαρήμασιν διώκων οὖν τὸν παντωδόν θεόν. — Ἀλλὰ τὸ μὴ ὑποθίμαι τοῖς τάξιν, ἀντίπροσωπῶς, ὅτι ἀντικείμενα τῇ ἀλήθεια, ἀντὶς ἀλήθειαν ἀδικουμένου, ὅτι ἀνθρωποῖς καὶ ἀνάρρητοις.' — Οἱ τούτων έκκλησε τοῦ θεοῦ φωνητήν καὶ δικάλον. Dioec. [c. 152 B.]

And Origines, cont. Cels. lib. iii. [c. 70. vol. i. p. 492 F.], gives this for the Christian’s general rule: Dunamei kai hulios pantes eis theos, theos didunam, theos eis theos, kai pantes eis theos, kai fain authe eis theos. And the words of Celsus, though ill intended, are yet very true: 'Alpha yhe [Theos] estin o pantos ton ton ten logon, othein oile oile te para logon othein othein te emfana lusaskata.' [c. 14. p. 598 B.] And so Origines in his answer confesses: 'Allois kai kai hulios othein othein te paralagous othein te emfana lusaskatai eis theos.' Cont. Cels. lib. v. [c. 24. p. 556 A.]

79 It was the constant opinion of the most ancient Heathens, as appeared by Homer, who expresseth it plainly; εἰς ἁλοντα δὲ τ’ ἀρχαῖαν 'Ἀνθρώποις γε θεοτοκοῖς θεός δέ τε πάντα δυνάμενος.' 'Ο θεός.' p. 352 B.

And the same sense is attributed to Lithos in a distich cited by his for Sto- brus; but may rather be thought to have been made by some of the Pytha- goreans. For this was the plain doc- trine of Pythagoras, who taught his scholars to believe miracles, and to doubt of nothing said to be done by the gods, because all things were possible to them: Μή γὰρ ἦν τοῖς μιᾷ δύναμις τούς θεοὺς, καὶ δύναμις τοῦ θεοῦ τοῖς μιᾷ δύναμις. ὡς ἤρχοντο τοῖς ποιημένοις ἀλλὰ πάντα δύναμις ἡ ἄρχει [being] τοῦ ἐν τοῖς ἐν [being] τοῖς ἐν [being] τοῖς ἐν [being] λόγοις. 'Εκ τοῦ μεν τοῦ λόγου λόγος δύναμις.' [c. 14. p. 598 B.]

And so Origines, in his answer confesses: 'Allois kai kai hulios othein othein te paralagous othein te emfana lusaskatai eis theos.' Cont. Cels. lib. v. [c. 24. p. 556 A.]
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Thus God is omnipotent, and God only. For if the power of all things beside God be the power of God, as derived from him, and subordinate unto him, and his own power from whence that is derived can be subordinate to none, then none can be omnipotent but God.

Again, we say, that God the Father is Almighty; but then we cannot say, that the Father only is Almighty: for the reason why we say the Father is Almighty, is because he is God; and therefore we cannot say that he only is Almighty, because it is not true that he only is God. Whosoever then is God, hath the same reason and foundation of omnipotency which the Father hath, and consequently is to be acknowledged properly and truly omnipotent as the Father is. But we have already shewed that, the Son of God is truly God; and shall hereafter shew that the Holy Ghost is also God, and that by the same nature by which the Father is God. The Father therefore is Almighty, because the Father is God; the Son Almighty, because the Son is God; and the Holy Ghost Almighty, because the Holy Ghost is God. The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are God by the same Divinity: therefore, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are omnipotent by the same Omnipotence. The Father then is not called Almighty by way of exclusion, but is here mentioned with that attribute peculiarly, because the power of God answereth particularly to the right hand of God, as being the right hand of power. The

gorae: Ἄδελπων ὁδών ἔλεγεν. So Peter Omiopontos, and Μοιητής Omiopontos, familiar to Virgil and the poets before and after him. These do far overweigh the authority in Plutarch, and that of Pliny, with the addition of Galen, who opposed it. The opinion of the philosophers to that of Moses expressly, and to our Saviour obliquely: Οὐ γὰρ ὅτι τὸ βουληθήναι τοσοῦτον γενέσθαι μὴν ἢν ἀνθρώποις ἢ ἢ τὸν πεῖραν ἐξαραξῆς ἐκλεῖσαν ἀνθρώπους ποιῆσαι, δοκοῦντες. Which seems to be opposed to those words of our Saviour’s, God is able to raise children unto Abraham out of these stones. Kαὶ τινὶ ἐπιτευ, καὶ ὅτι τὰς ἡμέρας δέχονται. The text of Virgil, and the Vaticanus, and Κυλικά πόνος ἔχειν, ἄραι τὸν ἔθελον, ἢ ἢ δόξον κεκαλύπτων τὸν γὰρ ὕποτι ἤει τὴν Ἐπετρεῖται νῦν ἄλλα ἡ δήμαρχος ἐγκατάστασα, καὶ τὸ ποιῆσαι μυγδονίων λέγω τὸν καθά, έκ τῶν νεκρῶν γενέσθαι τὸ θέλεσαι ποιήσθαι. De Tere Part. lib. xi. cap. 14. [vol. iv. p. 556 D.]


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Father therefore is here described by the notion of Almighty, to shew that Christ having ascended into heaven, and being set down at the right hand of God, is invested with a greater power than he exercised before: and that power which was then actually conferred upon him, acknowledged no bounds or limits; but all power in the ultimate extent of its infinity is given unto him, who is set down on the right hand of him who is God the Father; and, being so, is therefore truly and properly Almighty.

It is necessary to profess belief in God Almighty; first, because the acknowledgment of his omnipotence begeteth that fear and reverence, submission and obedience, which is due unto his infinite majesty. Our God is a great God, a mighty, and Deut. x. 17. a terrible; therefore terrible, because mighty. I will forewarn you, saith our Saviour, ye shall fear; fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him. Three times we are commanded to fear, and one only reason rendered, but sufficient for a thousand fears, the power of him who is able eternally to punish us. God gave a general command to Abraham, and with it a powerful persuasion to obedience, when he said unto him, I am the Almighty. Gen. xvii. 1. God, walk before me, and be thou perfect. It was a rational advice which the Apostle giveth us; Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time. And it is a proper incentive to the observation of the law of God, to consider that he is the one Lawgiver who is able to save and to Jan. iv. 12. destroy.

Secondly, The belief of God's omnipotence is absolutely necessary, because the foundation of our faith. All the miracles, which have been seen, were therefore wrought, that we might believe; and never miracle had been seen, if God were not omnipotent. The objects of our faith are beyond all natural and finite power; and did they not require an infinite activity, an assent unto them would not deserve the name of faith. If God were not Almighty, we should believe nothing; but being he is so, why who is said to be omnipotent; ae is observed by Servius upon that verse of Virgil; Juniper omnipotens, audacium aurosc cuncta. Ann. iv. 635. 'Hoc epithetum interdum ad gloriam

numinis pristoc, interdum ad causam dicentis. Namque hoc loco dicendo omnipotens, ostendit cum etiam his, qui per se minus valent, praebere posse virtutes.'
should we disbelieve any thing? what can God propound unto us, which we cannot assent unto, if we can believe that he is omnipotent?

Thirdly, It is not only necessary in matters of bare faith, and 291 notions of belief, but in respect of the active and operative reliance upon the promises of God. This was the particular confidence of Abraham the father of the faithful, who staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully persuaded that what he had promised he was able also to perform. The promises of God are therefore firm and sure, because he is both willing and able to perform them. We doubt or distrust the promises of men, either because we may fear they intend not to do what they have promised, or cannot do what they intend: in the first, we may suspect them, because they are subject to iniquity; in the second, because they are liable to infirmity. But being God is of infinite sanctity, he cannot intend by breaking his promises to deceive us: therefore if he be also of infinite power, he must be able to perform what he intended, and consequently we can have no reason to distrust his promises. From whence every good Christian may say with the Apostle, I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day. I am assured that if I be a sheep, and hear my Saviour's voice, the powers of darkness and the gates of hell can never prevail against me; for it was the voice of the Son of God, My Father which gave them me is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.

Lastly, The belief of God's omnipotency is necessary to give life to our devotions. We ask those things from heaven which none but God can give, and many of them such, as, if God himself were not Almighty, he could not effect. And therefore

This was the argument which the Pythagoreans used, who believed many miraculous actions, which others looked upon as fabulous; because they would disbelieve nothing which was referred to the divine power: and the reason of that was, because they thought all things possible to God, as we believed before.

Τὸν τοιούτον ἐλ (saith Iamblichus, having related several strange actions, either fabulous or miraculous) τῶν δοκούντων μολέων ἀποκατημονεύσω, ὡς μηδὲ ἀποκατημονεύσω, τὸντοιούτον ἐλ (saith Iamblichus, having related several strange actions, either fabulous or miraculous) τῶν δοκούντων μολέων ἀποκατημονεύσω, ὡς μηδὲ ἀποκατημονεύσω, οὐκ οἷς μὴν ἀποκατημονεύσω. And whereas others looked upon them as weak and simple people for giving credit to such fabulous relations, τῶν παρατηρεῖν τὰ τυχαῖα ὁδόν ἄντικες ἐνεργεῖς, ἀλλὰ τῶν ἀποκατημονεύσω. Ιουστ. de Vit. Pythag. cap. 28.

It is Dei promissa nulla est falsitas, quia in faciendi nulla omnipotenti est difficilis.' Fulgent. ad Monim. lib. i. cap. 12. [p. 10.]

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in that form of prayer which Christ hath taught us, we conclude all our petitions unto the Father with that acknowledgment, For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory. Nor can there Matt. vi. be a greater encouragement in the midst of all our temptations, than that we are invited to call upon him in the day of trouble, who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.

After this explication of our Saviour's session, we may conclude what every Christian ought, and may be supposed, to intend, when he maketh profession to believe that Christ is set on the right hand of God, the Father Almighty. For thereby he is conceived to declare thus much: I assent unto this as a most infallible and necessary truth, that Jesus Christ ascending into the highest heavens, after all the troubles and sufferings endured here for our redemption, did rest in everlasting happiness; he which upon earth had not a place to lay his head, did take up a perpetual habitation there, and sit down upon the throne of God, as a Judge, and as a King, according to his office of Mediator, unto the end of the world; according to that which he merited by his Mediatorship, to all eternity: which hand of God, the Father Almighty, signifieth an omnipotent power, able to do all things without any limitation, so they involve not a contradiction, either in themselves or in relation to his perfections. And thus I believe in Jesus Christ who sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.

ARTICLE VII.

This Article containeth in it four particular considerations, and no more: First, That Christ, who is gone from us, shall come again. Secondly, That the place from whence he shall then come, is the highest heaven, to which he first ascendeth,

Or from whence; the Latin sometimes inde, sometimes unde. And the Greek is οἷς, unde, both in the ancient MS. in Sir Robert Cotton's Library, and in the Creed of Marcellus. But οἷς, unde, in the later MS. in Bennet College Library. Others neither οἷς, nor unde, but υπὲρ, as Justin Martyr; 'ὅπερ ἐπιγεγράμμεν ὁ Χριστὸς ἐν θεοῦ σταυρωθησθαι, καὶ ἀναστασθαι, καὶ ἀναλυθῆναι εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν, καὶ πάνω παραγεγραμμένον χρηστὸν πάνω ἀπὸ τοῦ μαρτύρον μέχρις αὐτοῦ Ἀδήμ.' Dial. cum Tryph. § 132. [p. 274 E.] Others without unde or unde, only ventured, as the Nicene Creed, ἐγενέσθαι χρισμῷ, others υπὸ χρισμὸν ἐκ θαυματωμένου, and Fortunatus leaving unde in dedentes, hath only judicantur victus eorum.