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LECTURE XIV.

The testimony of the Fathers opposed to the Calvinistic scheme of interpretation, 3°. On the nature of spiritual influence. The language of the Fathers incompatible with the Calvinistic doctrine of irresistible grace. 4°. On election and reprobation. What the Fathers understood by the terms, foreknown, elect, predestined, saints. Their exposition of passages of Scripture relating to this subject. Prophecy, according to them, an evidence of the Divine Foreknowledge, yet not so as to control the contingency of events. Tenets akin to the Calvinistic ascribed by Origen to the Valentiniens. His exposition of Rom. ix.

§ 3.

On the Nature of Spiritual Influence.

I HAVE already said that the language of the Fathers, however decisive on the subject of spiritual influence, and decisive we have seen it is, nevertheless does not represent that influence as irresistible, but simply as persuasive. There will be no need to enter into much detail upon this point. The freedom of the will, on which we have found all the Fathers so emphatic, is in itself incompatible with the Calvinistic doctrine of irresistible grace. Moreover, the terms in which the sentiments of the Fathers on the question before us are conveyed, as already cited, imply as much.¹ Still, if direct evidence to this effect be required, it is easy to produce it. Thus Irenæus: "It is not the light that fails when people put out their own eyes. But the light remaining as it was, they who have blinded themselves are in darkness through their own fault. Neither does the light force a man to be led by it of necessity,

¹ See *e. g.* those from Tertullian. *Deus præcepit Spiritum sanctum, utpote pro naturæ suæ bono tenerum et delicatum, tranquillitate, et quiete et pace tractare, non furore, non bile, non irâ, non dolore inquietare.*—*De Spectaculis*, c. xv. *Quæ est ergo Paracliti administratio nisi hæc, quod disciplina dirigitur, quod Scripturæ revelantur, quod intellectus reformatur, quod ad meliora proficitur?* —*De Virginibus Velandis*, c. i.

nor does *God constrain him against his will to receive his influence.*"¹ Again, "All which things discover the freedom of man's will, and the persuasive power of God, who exhorts us to obey him, turns us from unbelief, but still *does not force us.*"² And he afterwards makes it characteristic of brutes as distinguished from man, "to be dragged to what is good by necessity and force."³

Clemens Alexandrinus (to name one authority more on the same subject), after insisting on the gift or grace of God being necessary in order to make the Christian perfect, adds, that in imparting this gift, God is regulated by the desire man evinces to obtain it, still, however, having respect to the freedom of the will. "*For God does not compel, since force is hateful to God* : but he gives to those who seek ; supplies those who beg ; and opens to those who knock."⁴

§ 4.

On Election and Reprobation.

The same reason which rendered it unnecessary to enlarge very much on the last head, renders it equally so to dwell at great length on the doctrine of election and reprobation, as viewed by the Fathers : their unequivocal assertion of the freedom of the will applying alike to this, as to the doctrine of irresistible grace, and compatible with neither. However, as this question has long occupied, and still does occupy, so prominent a position in the field of theological controversy, I will produce a few quotations from the Fathers directly indicating their opinion on it.

Justin Martyr speaks often of "the foreknown" (*οἱ προεγνωσμένοι*), sometimes in the sense of future Christians, "All the other institutions of Moses I could enumerate, and point them out as types and symbols and declarations of things which

¹ Οὔτε τὸ φῶς ἐξασθενεῖ διὰ τοὺς ἑαυτοῖς τυφλώττοντας· ἀλλ' ἐκείνου μένοντος ὁποῖον καὶ ἔστιν, οἱ τυφλωθέντες παρὰ τὴν αἰτίαν τὴν ἑαυτῶν ἐν ἀορασίᾳ καθίστανται, μήτε τοῦ φωτὸς μετ' ἀνάγκης δουλαγωγούντος τινα, μήτε τοῦ Θεοῦ βιαζομένου, εἰ μὴ θέλοι τις κατασχεῖν αὐτοῦ τὴν τέχνην.—

Irenæus, IV. c. xxxix. § 3.

² IV. c. xxxvii. § 3.

³ § 6.

⁴ Οὐ γὰρ ἀναγκάζει ὁ Θεός, βία γὰρ ἐχθρὸν Θεῷ, ἀλλὰ τοῖς ζητοῦσι πορίζει, καὶ τοῖς αἰτοῦσι παρέχει, καὶ τοῖς κρούουσιν ἀνοίγει.— Clem. Alex. Quis dives salvetur, § x. p. 940.

were to happen to Christ, of persons who were foreknown as about to believe in him, and of acts which were to be done by Christ himself :”¹ sometimes in the sense of good persons who were to be saved ; not, however, because they were A or B, but because they were virtuous : “ But that God, the Father of all things, was to take up Christ to heaven after his resurrection from the dead, and to keep him there till he should have smitten down the evil spirits that hate him, and the *number of good and virtuous foreknown* to him should be wholly completed, for whose sakes he has not yet brought on the conflagration of the world, learn from the words of the prophet David ;”² “ the foreknown ” here used in the same manner as the “ elect ” in our Burial Service, in which we pray that God would “ shortly accomplish the number of his elect, and hasten his kingdom.” As again Justin also speaks of those respecting whom it was foreknown that they would be wicked, and suffer punishment, “ not, however, through any fault of God’s, but through their own fault ;”³ the salvation of the parties foreknown *ex prævisis meritis*, the condemnation *ex prævisis delictis*.

Irenæus is of the same mind. “ The Father,” says he, “ revealed himself to *all*, by making his Word visible to all ; and the Word again manifested the Father and the Son to all, by being himself seen of all. Wherefore the judgment of God is just towards all, who though they have seen alike do not alike believe.”⁴ And again, “ As at the first, by the first man all were brought into bondage by the debt of death, so at the last, by the last man, *all* who had been his disciples from the beginning of time, cleansed and purified from mortality, come to the life of God. For he who washed only the feet of his disciples, sanctified and made clean the whole body. . . . For it was not for those only who believed in him in the days of Tiberius Cæsar that Christ came, nor for those only that are now alive, that the Father was making provision, but for *all men whatever* who from the beginning by virtue in their generations feared and loved God, carried themselves justly and charitably towards their neighbours, and desired to see Christ and to hear his voice.”⁵ Again,

¹ Justin Martyr, Dial. § 42. And see also § 70.

² Apol. I. § 45.

³ Dial. § 140.

⁴ Irenæus, IV. c. vi. § 5.

⁵ c. xxii. §§ 1, 2.

Irenæus finds a type of the dispensation of grace in the proceedings with regard to the fleece of Gideon; on which *only* there was dew at first, whilst all the earth besides was dry; but presently it was so ordered, that the fleece only was dry, and there was dew on all the ground: whereby was signified in a figure, that whilst the chosen people, who once enjoyed the Holy Spirit, were bereaved of it, "the Lord committed it to the Church, imparting it to the whole world."¹ It is remarkable, too, that St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, which has furnished the Calvinist with so many of his arguments for the doctrine of election and reprobation, is actually singled out by Irenæus as the very ground on which he contends for the doctrine of man's liberty of choice to do good or evil; and of God's consequent right to assign him his reward accordingly.² There is, however, one passage in Irenæus, and I think only one, which might at first sight seem to favour the Calvinistic notion of election. He is combating the idea of the transmigration of souls, which some of the heretics, it seemed, entertained; and having observed that God is not needy or in difficulties, so as not to be able to supply its proper soul to each body, he continues, "wherefore when the number which he has of himself predetermined, is completed, all who are *put down for life* will rise again with their own bodies, their own souls, and their own spirits, the same in which they have pleased God: and they who *deserve* punishment will depart to it; they, too, having their own bodies, souls, and spirits, the same in which they fell away from the grace of God; and both the one and the other will cease to beget or to be begotten, to marry or to be given in marriage, in order that the *number of mankind measured according to the predestination of God* being filled up, may harmonize with the plan of the Father."³ Here, however, we have simply the sentiment expressed by Justin repeated; namely, that when the number of souls which God has decreed in his secret counsels to be created or saved, shall have been made up, no more will be produced; a position perfectly consistent with a free offer of salvation to all.

Tertullian is as explicit on this question as the Fathers

¹ Quem ipsum iterum dedit ecclesie, in omnem terram mittens de cœlis Pa-ractetum.—Irenæus, III. c. xvii. § 3.

² IV. c. xxxvii. § 1.

³ II. c. xxxiii. § 5.

before him. Thus, in his treatise "De Cultu Fœminarum,"¹ the predestined are the future body of Christians. "Ye, too, have had use enough of riches and luxuries; ye gathered fruit enough of the gifts with which ye are endowed, before the doctrines of salvation became known to you. We are they on whom the ends of the world are come. We are they who were *destined of God* for the last times, before the world was. Therefore by chastening and emasculating the world, so to speak, we are taught of the Lord." Elsewhere he expresses the Christians by the word "saints;" "fœminæ sanctæ" in his vocabulary being evidently equivalent to Christian women in general, as contrasted with heathen²; his advice respecting marriage, though addressed to his wife in contemplation of her widowhood, being intended for all Christian women whatever. In his treatise against Marcion,³ who disparages the Deity by various arguments drawn from the existence of evil, he says, "God, by now desiring that man should be restored to life, gives proof that *he never was appointed unto death*; for he would rather have the repentance than the death of the sinner. Wherefore, as God imparted to man a state of life, so did man draw upon himself a state of death." "God," he tells us in the same treatise,⁴ "hardened Pharaoh's heart; but then he had *deserved* his ruin to be thus prepared for him, because he had denied God, and repeatedly rejected his messengers." In a similar spirit he interprets St. Matthew xiii. 15. "For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them;" saying,⁵ "For they had *deserved* to have their senses which would have ministered to their salvation thus blunted, because they only loved God with their lips, whilst their hearts were far from him." And in another place of the same tract (for the character of the heresy he was opposing in it causes it to be prolific in passages to my present purpose) he writes, Marcion accuses the Deity of fickleness with respect to persons, rejecting those whom he had approved, and of im-

¹ Tertullian, De Cultu Fœminarum, II. c. ix.

² Ad Uxorem, II. c. i.

³ Adversus Marcionem, II. c. viii.

⁴ c. xiv.

⁵ Hanc enim obtusationem salutarium sensuum meruerant, etc.—III. c. vi.

providence, approving those whom he had rejected. But replies Tertullian,¹ "Saul was chosen when he had not yet despised the prophet Samuel; and Solomon was rejected, but it was when he had become enslaved to strange women, and to Moabitish and Sidonian idols. What would the Marcionites have the Creator do to escape their censure? *Should he condemn beforehand for offences hereafter to be committed, those who are at present acting well?* Surely it would not be the part of a good God to condemn beforehand those who do not yet deserve condemnation." And the absolute repugnance to the doctrine of *assurance*—a doctrine so intimately connected with that of election and reprobation—which we elsewhere find in him, is a further argument that the passages I have already extracted from him bespeak his mind correctly. Decorating the person, argues Tertullian,² invites the appetite; produces, therefore, temptation to the party; should consequently be avoided. "We ought to walk in the fulness of a substantial faith, that we may be secure in a good conscience, hoping that this may continue in us, but not presuming that it will. For he *who presumes has the less fear*: he who fears little has the less caution: he who has little caution is in the greatest danger. Fear is the foundation of safety; presumption is the preventive of fear. It is more profitable, therefore, for us to *hope* that we cannot transgress, than to *presume* that we cannot."

Clemens Alexandrinus presents himself to us next, and offers the same testimony on this important question, as the other primitive writers who have gone before him. He, too, regards "the elect" as the whole body of Christians. It had been objected to the Christians that if God had any regard for them he would not expose them, as he did, to persecution and violent death. To this Clemens makes answer, that no

¹ Adlegitur Saul, sed nondum despector prophetæ Samuelis. Rejicitur Salomon, sed jam a mulieribus alienis possessus, et idolis Moabitarum et Sidoniorum mancipatus. Quid faceret Creator, ne a Marcionitis reprehenderetur? Bene adhuc agentes prædamnaret jam propter futura delicta? sed Dei boni non erat, nondum merentes prædamnare.—Adversus Marcionem, II. c. xxiii.

² Debemus quidem ita sancte et totâ

fidei substantiâ incedere, ut confessæ et securæ simus de conscientia nostrâ optantes perseverare id in nobis, non tamen præsumentes. Nam qui præsumit, minus veretur, minus præcavet, plus periclitatur. Timor fundamentum salutis est, præsumptio impedimentum timoris. Utilius ergo, si speremus non posse delinquere, quam si præsumamus non posse, etc.—De Cultu Fœminarum, II. c. ii.

real injury is done them in a removal by a quick migration to God; and moreover, that “unless the Christians were generally looked upon as bad men, all mankind would come to the truth; rush into the right way; and *there would be no election at all*. Whereas their faith being set as the light of the world, puts infidelity to rebuke.”¹ I do not quote the passage for the value of the argument, but for the indication it affords of the meaning of the term “elect.” And accordingly these are they whom God is described as foreseeing before their birth; he knowing what shall be, just as well as what is.² The “predestinate” Clemens understands in the same sense; and actually, in speaking of them, alludes to the Epistle to the Romans as confirming his views, and to the eighth chapter of it; apparently unconscious of any such doctrine being in it as that extracted from it by the Calvinist.³ “He who positively assumed for our sake a body that could suffer, cannot be indifferent towards us out of apathy or self-indulgence. Surely he cares for all men, as befits one who is himself Lord of all. For he is a Saviour—not à Saviour of some, and no Saviour of others, but he dispenses his benefits in proportion as every one is prepared for them, both to Greeks and barbarians, to the *predestined out of either race*, called according to his own time, faithful, elect. Neither can he, who hath *called all alike*, and assigns peculiar rewards to such as have peculiar faith, be jealous of any.” Elsewhere, in numerous places, he represents salvation as within the reach of all. Thus, having alluded to the reproach levelled against the hypocrites in the text which designates them “a generation of vipers,” he adds, “yet if any even of these serpents is willing to repent, and to follow the Word, he becomes a man of God.”⁴ And in the Pædagogogue, “‘Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you’ . . . for God hath communicated with our race, imparting to us spontaneously his own, and supplying his own Word to all mankind alike, doing all things for all men.”⁵ And in his “*Quis dives salvetur*,” he is at pains to vindicate the Deity from being supposed to be exclusive. “I think, then,” says he, “I

¹ Clem. Alex. Stromat. IV. § xi. p. 599.

² VII. § vii. p. 853.

³ VII. § ii. p. 832.

⁴ Cohortatio ad Græcos, § x. pp. 82, 83.

⁵ Pædag. II. c. xiii. p. 242.

have redeemed my promise, and have shown that the Saviour has by no means excluded the rich on account of their wealth and ample possessions, nor has fixed any gulf between them and salvation, if only they are able and willing to submit their lives to God's commandments, and set these before all temporal concerns, and look to the Lord with a steady eye, as men look to the nod of a skilful pilot, marking what he wishes, what he commands, what signal he gives his crew, what port he makes for."¹ But if Clemens thus causes it to appear that he cannot bear God's mercy to be circumscribed with respect to one class, we must feel satisfied that he would be equally loath to deny it to any other.

If we compare the several passages of Cyprian which bear on this subject, we shall come to the conclusion that his authority still ranges on the same side. In the epistle which he writes to Cornelius on the affair of Novatus, a paragraph occurs which, taken by itself, might seem to imply the contrary. "Touching the other brethren, whom to our sorrow he hath circumvented, we are striving to detach them from the side of this impostor, that they may escape the deadly snare of the seducer, and may again return to the Church, from which he justly earned it of God to be expelled; which persons, we have good hope, with God's help, and of his mercy, may retrace their steps. For none can perish except him who it is plain must perish, since the Lord says in his Gospel, 'Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up.'"² But then Cyprian adds a sentence which qualifies the apparent meaning of the previous words; "He who is not planted in the precepts and admonitions of God the Father, and he only, can depart from the Church:" the apostacy not depending on a decree of God, but on the precepts and admonitions of God never having taken root in the heart of the apostate; and accordingly Cyprian considers that a door was open to the return of all those who had been led astray by the heretic he is speaking of. This view is confirmed by many other places in Cyprian. Thus, in his treatise on Patience, after pressing the signal

¹ Quis dives salvetur, § xxvi. p. 950.

² Neque enim potest perire, nisi quem constat esse periturum, cum Dominus in evangelio suo dicat: Omnis plantatio, quam non plantavit Pater meus celestis,

eradicabitur. Qui plantatus non est in præceptis Dei Patris et monitis, solus poterit de ecclesiâ illâ discedere, &c.—Cyprian, Epist. xlix. § 4.

example of this virtue yielded by the Saviour, and recounting the several proofs of it which the circumstances of his life, and especially those of his Passion, afforded, he concludes, "And after all these things, he still receives his murderers, if they turn and come to him; and in his patience, mild and merciful to save, he *closes his Church against no one.*"¹ Again, in an Epistle to Fidus on Infant Baptism, he describes the freedom with which God's grace is vouchsafed to all without respect to persons, in a manner quite inconsistent with a belief in the Calvinistic doctrine of election and reprobation. "Moreover, holy Scripture teaches us that the Divine gift is assigned in an equal measure to all, whether infants or adults. For Elisha stretched himself on the widow's dead child in prayer so as to apply hand to hand, face to face, feet to feet. Now if this incident be considered in reference to the bodily size of the parties, the infant cannot be measured against the man. But a Divine and spiritual equality is expressed by it, as though all men, when they have been once made by God, are equal and alike; any subsequent difference, through the growth of the body, being assignable to nature and not to God. Unless, indeed, the grace which is given in Baptism is to be accounted greater or less, according to the age of the recipient. Whereas the Holy Spirit is not given by measure, but by the pity and indulgence of the Father is given in an equal degree to all. For as God does not accept the person, so neither does he accept the age, but shows himself a Father to all alike, with regard to their acquirement of celestial grace."² Once more, when speaking of the case of a confessor who had afterwards fallen away, he says, "Such a man must not flatter himself on his confession, as though he was *elected* to the glorious prize, seeing that this very circumstance only rendered him more worthy of punishment. For the *Lord elected even Judas amongst the Apostles*, and Judas afterwards betrayed the Lord. But the faith and constancy of the Apostles did not fail, because Judas fell away from them, a traitor. And so in this case, the sanctity and dignity of the confessors does not take damage, because the faith of

¹ Et post ista omnia, adhuc interfec-
tores suos, si conversi ad eum venerint,
suscipit; et patientiâ salutari ad con-
servandum benignus et patiens, eccle-

siam suam nemini claudit.—De Bono
Patientiæ, § viii.

² Epist. lix. § 3.

certain amongst them had been wrecked.”¹ The whole argument, both here and as it advances, is inconsistent with the Calvinistic doctrine of election. And finally, in the Epistle to Fortunatus, while at the request of that friend he endeavours to prepare the minds of the brethren for the persecution they might be called upon to encounter, by exhortations taken from Scripture, he reminds them in chapter vii., that being once delivered from the jaws of the devil, and from the snares of the world, they must not relapse, “for that no one who has put his hand to the plough, and looketh back, is fit for the kingdom of God;” and in chapter viii., that it is only by continuance in the faith that the crown can be won, for that “he that endureth to the end shall be saved:” with much more to the same purpose; the whole reasoning proceeding upon the assumption that no Divine decrees stood in the way of the success of the personal efforts he was recommending.

Hippolytus discovers his sentiments by the typical meaning he assigns to the posture of Jesus on the cross, who, by stretching out his arms right and left, invited all who believed to come to him.²

Origen is perhaps the last man of all the Fathers to whom the Calvinist can appeal with success, whether upon the question before us, or on any other which is peculiar to him. So far from the exclusionist, he is almost always the latitudinarian. Accordingly, in the present case, we find him contending against the doctrine of necessity, and maintaining that Christ “came the Saviour of all men:”³ that “for the salvation of our race he at once gave himself up for the whole world, according as every one could receive him:”⁴ nay, that after a succession of existences in which the souls of men will sink or rise according to their behaviour in each preceding stage, all will be saved; for that as “all enemies are finally to be subjected to him, the salvation of them all is implied, and an ultimate restoration of the lost”⁵; though it should seem to be an abuse of Origen’s liberality to ascribe to him, as has

¹ De Unitate Ecclesiæ, §§ xxi. xxii.

² Ὅς ἐκτείνας τὰς ἁγίας χεῖρας ἐν ἁγίῳ ξύλῳ ἤπλωσε δύο πτέρυγας δεξιᾶν καὶ εὐώνυμον, προσκαλούμενος πάντας τοὺς εἰς αὐτὸν πιστεύοντας.—Hippolytus, De Christo et Antichristo, § lxi.

³ Origen, Contra Celsum, IV. § 4.

⁴ Τὸν ἐπὶ σωτηρίᾳ τοῦ γένους ἡμῶν παντὶ τῷ κόσμῳ ἀθρώως ἑαυτὸν ὄντα λόγον ὡς ἕκαστος χωρεῖ ἐπιδεδωκότα.—VIII. § 11.

⁵ De Principiis, III. c. γ. § 7.

been done, the doctrine that the devil himself is to be included in this amnesty—a notion which he rejects with abhorrence, as one which even a madman would not entertain.¹ We further discover him maintaining that prophecy, however it may and does prove God's foreknowledge, has no effect on the event, which would have been just the same, had there been no prophecy or no foreknowledge respecting it; that accordingly as the Psalm foretold of Judas, "he remembered not to show mercy, but persecuted the poor and needy man," it was in his own power to have remembered mercy, and it was in his own power to have forborne persecuting him whom he persecuted; and therefore that his condemnation was just: as in like manner the oracle having forewarned Laisus not to sow the furrow for children, for that so doing he should be slain by his child, he might have abstained and lived, and therefore that his death was of his own seeking.² Again, when commenting on the parable of the sower, he remarks, "And this same rock is the human soul hardened through neglect, and petrified through wickedness; for *no man's heart was created stony by God*, but it became so through sin."³ Thus the obduracy of the impenitent, according to Origen, is the effect of culpable negligence on their own part, and not of any Divine decrees. Nay, more, Origen actually ascribes it to the Valentinians, as an heretical opinion which the Church denounced, that some were *animal*, and some *spiritual*, some created to be saved, and some created to perish.⁴ And what is more yet, he expressly claims St. Paul, as Irenæus had done before him,⁵ as an advocate of his own views, even appealing to the ninth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, and explaining away such passages in it as seem to imply the contrary⁶; and, indeed, positively im-

¹ Quidam eorum qui libenter contentiones reperiunt, adscribunt nobis et nostræ doctrinæ blasphemiam, super quâ ipse viderint, quomodo illud audiant: Neque ebriosis, neque maledici regnum Dei possidebunt; licet patrem malitiæ et perditionis eorum qui de regno Dei ejicientur, dicant posse salvari, quod ne mente quidem quis captus dicere potest.—Epistola ad Amicos Alexandrinis, vol. i. p. 5.

² Contra Celsum, II. § 20.

³ De Principiis, III. c. i. § 14.

⁴ Ἐστω δ' ἔτι καὶ τρίτον γένος τῶν ὀνομαζόντων ψυχικοῦς τινας, καὶ πνευματικοῦς ἑτέρουσ' οἶμαι δ' αὐτὸν λέγειν τοὺς ἀπὸ Οὐαλεντινίου. Καὶ τί τοῦτο πρὸς ἡμᾶς, τοὺς ἀπὸ τῆς ἐκκλησίας, κατηγοροῦντας τῶν εἰσαγόντων φύσεις ἐκ κατασκευῆς σωζομένας, ἢ ἐκ κατασκευῆς ἀπολλυμένας;—Contra Celsum, V. § 61. Compare De Principiis, II. c. ix. § 5.

⁵ See p. 498.

⁶ De Principiis, III. c. i. §§ 6, 7. 18. 20.

puting what would be now called the Calvinistic interpretation of it, to the heterodox or heretics.¹ And the meaning, which he thus assigns to this chapter, he confirms in his commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, which was of a date subsequent to the "De Principiis;" and there refers his readers to what he had said on the former occasion²; so that nothing can be more deliberate in this instance, at least, than his conclusions. Indeed, it may be added that this chapter of St. Paul, on which so much of the Predestinarian controversy is now made to rest, was never expounded by the Fathers for nearly four centuries with any direct reference to it.³ It is true that Origen⁴ is not content with neutralizing Romans ix. 21, "Hath not the potter power over the clay, to make one vessel unto honour and another unto dishonour?" by comparing it with 2 Tim. ii. 21, "If a man purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour," but proceeds to vindicate the justice of God by the theory (to which I have already alluded) that souls have pre-existed in other estates of being, and have been ushered by him into a succeeding estate, as vessels unto honour, or vessels unto dishonour, according to *their own* conduct in their previous scene of trial; still, a forced theory like this, only shows how repugnant to the Primitive Church the doctrines of fatalism were. Nor is it a less striking proof of the same fact, that Origen,⁵ in his comment on such a text as Genesis i. 14, should think it necessary to argue at very great length, that God has given no dominant influence to the planets, and that mankind are under no mechanical constraint.

¹ Ἀρξώμεθα τοίνυν ἀπὸ τῶν περὶ τοῦ Φαραῶ ἐιρημένων ὡς σκληρυνομένων ὑπὸ Θεοῦ, ἵνα μὴ ἐξαποστειλῆ τὸν λαόν· ᾧ συνεξαεσθήσεται ἅμα τὸ ἀποστολικόν· ἄρ' οὖν ὃν θέλει ὁ Θεὸς ἐλεεῖ· ὃν δὲ θέλει σκληρύνει. Καὶ ἐπιχρῶνται τοῦτοις τῶν ἑτεροδόξων τινές, σχεδὸν καὶ αὐτοὶ τὸ αὐτεξούσιον ἀναιροῦντες, διὰ τὸ φύσει εἰσάγειν ἀπολλυμένας, ἀνεπιδέκτους τοῦ σώζεσθαι, καὶ ἑτέρας σωζόμενας, ἀδυνάτως ἐχούσας πρὸς τὸ ἀπολέσθαι, κ.τ.λ.—§ 8.

² Comment. in Roman. vol. iv. p. 614.

³ Observandum 4°. Nonum caput ad Romanos, quod nunc fundus videtur totius doctrinæ de prædestinatione et reprobatione, non fuisse per quatuor pene sæcula ita expositum a SS. Patribus, ut ad hoc argumentum directe pertineret.—Bishop Pearson, Minor Theological Works, vol. i. p. 251.

⁴ Origen, De Principiis, III. c. i. § 20.

⁵ Comment. in Genes. vol. ii. p. 3.