all the councils and combinations of the enemy; he fees them in their train, and can blow them up in their own mine.

OF THE ETERNITY OF GOD.

THE next attribute is, 'God is eternal,' Pf. cx. 2. 'From everlasting to everlasting thou art God.' The schoolmen distinguish between aevum et eternum, to explain the notion of eternity. There is a three-fold being: 1st, Such a being as had a beginning, and shall have an end; so all senitive creatures, the beasts, fowls, fishes; these at death are destroyed, and return to dust; their being ends with their life. 2d, Such a being as had a beginning, but shall have no end, as the angels and fouls of men; they are eternal a parte post; they abide for ever. 3d, Such a being as is without beginning, and without ending, and that is proper only to God. He is nemper eximem, viz. from everlasting to everlasting: it is God's title, a jewel of his crown: (1.) He is called 'the King eternal,' 1 Tim. i. 17. (2.) Jehovah, a word that properly sets out God's eternity; a word so dreadful, that the Jews trembled to name or read it; therefore used another word, Adonai, Lord. Jehovah contains in it time past, present, and to come, Rev. i. 14. 'Which is, and which was, and which is to come;' it interprets the word Jehovah. (Which is) He subsists of himself, having a pure and independant being. (Which was) God only was before time. There is no searching into the records of eternity. (Which is to come) His kingdom hath no end: his crown hath no successor, Heb. i. 8. 'Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.' The doubling of the word ratifies the certainty of it, as the doubling of Pharaoh's dream did. I shall prove that God only could be eternal, without beginning. Angels could not; they are but creatures, though spirits; they were made; and therefore their beginning may be known; their antiquity may be searched into; if you ask when they were created? Some think before the world was; but not so: for what was before time was eternal: the angels' first rise and original reacheth no higher than the beginning of the world. It is thought by the learned, that the angels were made that day on which the heavens were made, Job xxxviii. 7. 'When the morning stars fang together, and all the Sons of God shouted for joy.' St. Hierom, Gregory, and venerable Bede, understand it of the angels, when God laid the foundation-stone of the world, the angels being then created, did sing the anthems of joy and praise; the angels could not be before time; for what was before time was eternal. It is only proper to God to be eternal, without begin-
ning: He is Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, Rev. i. 8. No creature can write itself Alpha, that is only a flower of the crown of heaven, Exod. iii. 14. 'I am that I am,' viz. He who exiês from and to eternity.

Use 1. Here is thunder and lightning to the wicked; God is eternal, therefore the torments of the wicked are eternal. God lives for ever; and as long as God lives he will be punishing the damned.—This, methinks, should be as the hand-writing upon the wall, Dan. v. 5. it should 'make their joints to be loosed,' &c. The sinner takes liberty to sin; he breaks God's laws, like a wild beast that breaks over the hedge, and leaps into forbidden pasture; he sins with greediness, Eph. iv. 19. as if he thought he could not sin fast enough. But remember, this is one of God's names, Eternal; and as long as God is eternal, he hath time enough to reckon with all his enemies. To make sinners tremble, let them think of these three things: the torments of the damned are without intermission, without mixture, and eternal.

1. Without intermission. Their pains shall be acute and sharp, and no relaxation; the fire shall not be slackened or abated, Rev. xiv. 11. 'They have no rest day nor night;' like one that hath his joints stretched continually on the rack, and hath no eafe: therefore the wrath of God is compared to a stream of brimstone, Isa. xxx. 33. Why to a stream? Because a stream runs without intermission; it runs, and doth not stop; so God's wrath runs like a stream, and pours out without any intermission. In the pains of this life, there is some abatement and intermission; the fever abates, after a fit of the fever, the patient hath some ease: but the pains of hell are intense and violent, in summus gradus; the damned soul never faith, I am now more at ease.

2. Without mixture. Hell is a place of pure justice. In this life, God in anger remembers mercy, he mixeth compassion with offending, Deut. xxxiii. 25. A sinner's shoe was of iron, but his foot was dipt in oil. Affliction is the iron-shoe, but mercy is mixed with it; here is the foot dipt in oil. But the torments of the damned have no mixture, Rev. xiv. 10. 'They shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture.' No mixture of mercy. How is the cup of wrath filled to be full of mixture, Psal. lxxxv. 8. 'They shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture.' No mixture of mercy. How is the cup of wrath filled to be full of mixture, Psal. lxxxv. 8. 'The wine is red, it is full of mixture;' yet in the Revelation it is said to be without mixture? It is full of mixture, that is, it is full of all the ingredients that may make it bitter; the worm, the fire, the curse of God, all these are bitter ingredients. It is a cup
mixed, yet it is without mixture, viz. there shall be nothing to afford the least comfort, no mixture of mercy; so it is a cup without mixture. In the sacrifice of jealousy, Numb. v. 15. there was no oil put to it; so, in the torments of the damned, there is no oil of mercy to abate their sufferings.

3. Without effusion, eternal. The pleasure of sin are but for a season, but the torments of the wicked are for ever. Sinners have a short feast, but a long reckoning. Origen erroneously thought, that after a thousand years the damned should be released out of their misery: but the worm, the fire, the prison are all eternal, Rev. xiv. 11. ‘The smoke of their torment ascendedeth for ever and ever.’ Pæna gehennales punint, non finiunt. Proper. Eternity is a sea without bottom and banks. After millions of years, there is not one minute in eternity wasted; and the damned must be ever burning, but never consuming, always dying, but never dead, Rev. ix. 6. ‘They shall seek death, but shall not find it.’ The fire of hell is such, as multitudes of tears will not quench it, length of time will not finish it; the vial of God's wrath will be always dropping upon a sinner. As long as God is eternal, he lives for ever to be avenged upon the wicked. O eternity! eternity! who can fathom it? Mariners have their plummets to measure the depths of the sea; but what line or plummet shall we use to fathom the depth of eternity? The breath of the Lord kindles the infernal lake, Isa. xxx. 33. and where shall we have engines or buckets to quench that fire; O eternity! if all the body of the earth and sea were turned to sand, and all the air up to the fiery heaven were nothing but sand, and a little bird should come every thousand year, and fetch away in her bill, but the tenth part of a grain of all that heap of sand, what a numberless number of years would be spent before that vast heap of sand would be fetched away? Yet if at the end of all that time, the sinner might come out of hell (tho' long) yet there would be some hope: but this word Ever, breaks the heart, ‘The smoke of their torment ascended up for ever and ever,’ What a terror is this to the wicked, enough to put them into a cold sweat, to think, as long as God is eternal, he lives for ever to be avenged upon sinners.

Q. Here a question may be moved, Why sin that is committed in a short time, should be punished eternally?

Any. We must hold with St. Agustine, ‘that God's judgments on the wicked, occult effe poiffunt, injusta effe non poiffunt, may be secret, but never unjust.’ The reason why sin committed in a short time is eternally punished, is because every sin is committed against an infinite essence, and no less than eternity of punishment can satisfy. Why is treason punished with confinacion and death, but because it is against the king's
person, which is sacred? much more that offence which is against
God's crown and dignity, is of an heinous and infinite nature,
and cannot be satisfied with less than eternal punishment.

Use 2. Of comfort to the godly: God is eternal therefore
lives for ever to reward the godly, Rom. ii. 7. 'To them who
seek for glory and honour, eternal life.' The people of God
here are in a suffering condition, Acts xx. 23. 'Bonds and
afflictions abide me.' The head being crowned with thorns,
the feet must not tread upon roses. The wicked are clad in pur-
ple, and fare deliciously, while the godly suffer. Goats climb
upon high mountains, while Christ's sheep are in the valley of
slaughter. But here is the comfort, God is eternal, and he
hath appointed eternal recom pense for the saints: in heaven
are fresh delights, sweetness without surfeit; and that which is
the crown and zenith of heaven's happiness, is, it is eternal,' 1
John ii. 15. Were there but the least suspicion that this glory
must cease, it would much eclipse, yeas imbitter it: but it is etern-
al. What angel can span eternity? 2 Cor. iv. 17. 'An etern-
al weight of glory.' The saints shall bathe themselves in the
rivers of divine pleasure: and these rivers can never be dried up;
Phil. xvi. 11. 'At thy right hand are pleasures for evermore.'
This is the Elah, the highest strain in the apostle's rhetoric, 1
Thee. iv. 17. 'Ever with the Lord.' There is peace without
trouble, ease without pain, glory without end, 'Ever with the
Lord.' Let this comfort the saints in all their troubles; their
sufferings are but short, but their reward is eternal. Eternity
makes heaven to be heaven; 'tis the diamond in the ring: O
blest day, that shall have no night! the sun light of glory
shall rise upon the soul, and never set! O blest spring, that
shall have no autumn, or fall of the leaf! the Roman Emperors
have three crowns set upon their heads, the first of iron, the se-
cond of silver, the third of gold: so the Lord sets three crowns
on his children, grace, comfort and glory; and this crown is
eternal, 1 Peter v. 4. 'Ye shall receive a crown of glory that
faopenh not away.' The wicked have a never-dying worm, and
the godly a never-fading crown. O how should this be a spur to
virtue! How willing should we be to work for God? Though
we had nothing here, God hath time enough to reward his peo-
ple: the crown of eternity shall be set upon their head.

Use 3. Of exhortation. 1. In general, study eternity. Our
thoughts should chiefly run upon eternity. We are all for the
prest, something that may delight the senses. If we could
have lived (as Augustine faith) a cumabulis mundi, from the in-
fancy of the world to the world's old age, what were this?
What is time, measured with eternity? As the earth is but a
small point to the heaven, so time is but, may scarce a minute
to eternity! And, then, what is this poor life which crumbles
OF THE ETERNITY OF GOD.

away so fast? O think of eternity! Annos aeternos in mente habe: Brethren, we are every day travelling to eternity; and whether we wake or sleep, we are going our journey; some of us are upon the borders of eternity. O study the shortness of life and length of eternity.


1. Think of God's eternity. He is the Ancient of days, who was before all time. There is a figurative description of God, Dan. vii. 9. "The Ancient of days did sit, whole garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool." His white garment, wherewith he was clothed, signified his majesty; his hair, like the pure wool, his holiness; and the Ancient of days, his eternity. The thoughts of God's eternity would make us have high adoring thoughts of God. We are apt to have mean, irreverent thoughts of him, Psal. i. 21. 'Thou thoughtest I was such an one as thyself;\(^1\) weak and mortal, but if we would think of God's eternity, when all power cealeth, he is King eternal, his crown flourisheth for ever, who can make us happy or miserable for ever, this would make us have adoring thoughts of God; Rev. iv. 10. 'The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat upon the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever; and cast their crowns before the throne.' The saints fall down, to signify by that humble posture, that they are not worthy to sit in God's presence. They fall down and they worship him that liveth for ever and ever; they do as it were kiss his feet, and they cast their crowns before the throne, they lay all their honour at his feet: thus they shew humble adoration to the eternal essence. Study God's eternity, it will make us adore where we cannot fathom.

2. Think of the soul's eternity. As God is eternal, so he hath made us eternal. We are never-dying creatures; we are shortly entering upon an eternal state, either of happiness or misery. Have serious thoughts of this: say, O my soul, which of these two eternities, is like to be thy portion? I must shortly depart hence, and whether then shall I go, to which of these eternities, either of glory or misery? The serious meditation of the eternal state we are to pass into, should work strongly with us.

1. Thoughts of eternal torments are a good antidote against sin, sin tempts with its pleasure; but, when we think of eternity, it may cool the intemperate heat of lust. Shall I, for the pleasure of sin for a season, endure eternal pain? Sin, like those locusts, Rev. ix. 7. seems to have on its head a crown like gold, but it hath in it a tail like a scorpion, ver. 10. and a stinging in its tail, and this sting can never be plucked out. Shall I venture eternal wrath? Is sin committed to sweet, as lying in hell for
GOD'S UNCHANGEABLENESS.

The next attribute is God's unchangeableness, Mal. iii. 6. 'I am Jehovah, I change not.' 1. God is unchangeable in his nature. 2. In his decree.

18. Unchangeable in his nature: 1. There is no eclipse of his brightness. 2. No period put to his being.

1. No eclipse of his brightness: his essence shines with a fixed luster, James i. 17. 'With whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning,' Pfal. cii. 27. 'Thou art the same.' All created things are full of vicissitudes: 1. Princes and emperors are subject to mutation. Sesostris, an Egyptian prince, having subdued divers kings in war, made them draw like horses in his chariot, as if he intended to turn them to eat grapes, as God did King Nebuchadnezzar. The crown hath many succelors. 2. Kingdoms have their eclipses and convulsions: what is become of the glory of Athens? The pomp of Troy? Jam freges est ubi Troja fuit. Kingdoms, though they have a head of gold, yet feet of clay. 3. The heavens change, Pfal. cii. 26. 'As a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed.'

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