

**THE PENITENTIAL DISCIPLINE OF THE
PRIMITIVE CHURCH FOR THE FIRST 400
YEARS AFTER CHRIST: TOGETHER
WITH ITS DECLENSION FROM THE FIFTH
CENTURY, DOWNWARDS TO ITS PRESENT
STATE, IMPARTIALLY REPRESENTED**

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The penitential discipline of the primitive church for the first 400 years after Christ: together with its declension from the fifth century, downwards to its present state, impartially represented by Nathaniel Marshall

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NATHANIEL MARSHALL

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THE
PENITENTIAL DISCIPLINE

OF THE

PRIMITIVE CHURCH,

FOR THE

FIRST FOUR HUNDRED YEARS AFTER CHRIST;

TOGETHER WITH

ITS DECLENSION

FROM THE FIFTH CENTURY, DOWNWARDS TO ITS PRESENT STATE :

Impartially Represented.

BY

NATHANIEL MARSHALL, D.D.

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By a Presbyter of the Church of ENGLAND.

O Mirabilem sacrosanctæ Antiquitatis pietatem & Religionem! Quotus enim quisque in hoc rerum senio & propè occasu, plurimis & gravissimis noxis vel unam lachrymulam arcanò secum expendit! At unius delicti conscientiam sanctissimâ illâ in Antiquitate, solidum triennium, etiam verò quadriennium, inspectante Ecclesiâ, propalamque lugebant; non elugebant quippe, sed hanc sibi viam ad luctum atque ad Pœnitentiam muniebant. O veteris Disciplinae sanctitatem mirabilem, quæ culpas sic amputabat, ut reliquum Corpus integrum & ab omni labe castum tueretur! *Albaspin. de veterib. Ecclesiæ ritib. Lib. 2. Observat. 22.*

L O N D O N,

Printed for W. TAYLOR at the *Ship* in *Pater-Noster-Row*, and H. CLEMENTS at the *Half-Moon* in *St. Paul's Church-Yard*. MDCCLXIV.

EDITOR'S PREFACE.

THE following treatise was published anonymously in 1714. Dr. Marshall, however, in his preface to his translation of St. Cyprian, acknowledges it in the following words: "Perhaps it will be expected from me to apologize for my frequent references in the course of this work to a treatise which I published some time ago without a name to it, concerning 'the Penitential Discipline of the Primitive Church:' now my true and only reason for thus referring to it, was to save the trouble of enlarging farther upon subjects which are there properly handled, and which could not so well be deduced to their proper length, within the necessary brevity of notes."—(Pref. p. 20.)

Of the circumstances of Dr. Marshall's life but little is known. It appears from the Register of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, that "Nathaniel Marshall, of the County of Middlesex, was entered a pensioner of that house, July 8th, 1696. That he was admitted to the degree of LL.B. in 1702, and to that

of D.D. in 1717, by royal mandate ;" but no other mention is to be found of him in that College. The various preferments which he held appear in the title-pages of his several works.

In 1712, he preached before the Sons of the Clergy. In January, 1715, he was lecturer at Aldermanbury, and Curate of Kentish Town: when at the recommendation of the Princess of Wales, who was pleased with his preaching, he was appointed to be one of the King's Chaplains, "whose favourable regard," as his widow says, in her Preface to his Sermons published after his death, and dedicated to the Queen, "he had the honour to enjoy." In 1717, he brought out his "Translation of St. Cyprian;" his "Defence of the Constitution in Church and State," and his "Earnest Exhortation," at which time he was Rector of the united parishes of St. Vedast's, Foster-Lane, and St. Michael-le-Querne. In 1721, he published "A Sermon preached on January 30th." He appears afterwards to have had the Lectureship of St. Lawrence, Jewry, and St. Martin's, Ironmonger-Lane, and died, February 6th, 1730-1, Canon of Windsor.

He was buried at St. Pancras, leaving eight children, the eldest of whom was, at the time of his death, Rector of St. John the Evangelist.

In the course of the same year, his widow Margaret published by subscription fifty of his miscellaneous Sermons in three volumes, octavo, with a Dedication to the Queen; and a fourth volume appeared in 1750.

Dr. Marshall enjoyed the friendship of Dr. John Rogers (the Author of "The Visible Church"), whose funeral sermon he preached; and of Brett, who acknowledges, that Marshall, in his *Doctrine of the Primitive Church*, had set him right in some opinions he had put forth in his *Doctrine of Remission of Sins and Absolution*, published in 1712.

The present edition has been accurately reprinted from the original edition, with all the quotations carefully verified.

[Cf. Nichols' *Bowyer*, vol. i. pp. 141, 153, 481; vol. iii. 616.]