

it is that which has determined me to choose this subject for the present occasion.

Let us comprehend well, Gentlemen, the position which Evangelical Christian Theology occupies.

At the epoch of the Reformation, if I may so speak, three distinct eras had occurred in the history of the Church.

1. That of Evangelical Christianity, which, having its focus in the times of the Apostles, extended its rays throughout the first and second centuries of the Church.

2. That of Ecclesiastical Catholicism, which, commencing its existence in the third century, reigned till the seventh.

3. That of the Papacy, which reigned from the seventh to the fifteenth century.

Such were the three grand eras in the then past history of the Church ; let us see what characterized each one of them.

In the first period, the supreme authority was attributed to the revealed Word of God.

In the second, it was, according to some, ascribed to the Church as represented by its bishops.

In the third, to the Pope.

We acknowledge cheerfully that the second of these systems is much superior to the third ; but it is inferior to the first !

In fact, in the first of these systems it is GOD who rules.

In the second, it is MAN.

In the third, it is, to speak after the Apostle, " THAT WORKING OF SATAN, with all power, and signs and lying wonders," (2 Thess. ii. 9.)

The Reformation, in abandoning the Papacy, might have returned to the second of these systems, that is, to Ecclesiastical Catholicism ; or to the first, that is, to Evangelical Christianity.

In returning to the second, it would have made half