WRITINGS OF JOHN CALVIN - VOLUME 1

by John Calvin

A collection of theological writings, sermons, and essays by John Calvin (Volume 1), compiled for study and devotional reading.

100 Chapters

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Chapter 2

01.00. A Defence Secret Providence God

A DEFENCE OF THE SECRET PROVIDENCE OF GOD: BY WHICH HE EXECUTES HIS ETERNAL DECREES BEING A REPLY TO THE "SLANDEROUS REPORTS" (Rom. iii. 8) OF A CERTAIN WORTHLESS CALUMNIATOR DIRECTED AGAINST THE SECRET PROVIDENCE OF GOD. By JOHN CALVIN.

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Chapter 3

01.0000. Translator's Preface

TRANSLATOR’S PREFACE TO

SECOND VOLUME.

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IT is an awful and deplorable fact that the adorable Redeemer and only Saviour of men is, according to the prophetic declaration of the Scripture concerning Him, "A stone of stumbling and rock of offence" (Isaiah 8:14; 1 Peter 2:8), wherever He comes in His Spirit, life and power. Equally lamentable are the sure consequences which follow the written or preached proclamation of the essential doctrines of His everlasting Gospel. Nor have any of those doctrines met with a greater degree of enmity, hatred and violent opposition from men, than the two all-high and glorious truths of His revealed Word which are now immediately before us—"THE ETERNAL PREDESTINATION OF GOD" and the "wonderful counsel and excellent working" (Isaiah 28:29) of "THE SECRET PROVIDENCE OF GOD," by which He works out, in His sovereign way, the decrees of His sovereign will. The former of these momentous doctrines forms the subject and object of the preceding Treatise, for a view of the nature of which, and of Calvin’s success in its unequalled execution, the reader is referred to the Preface, by which it is introduced to the English Church of Christ. The present Treatise of the same beloved Reformer of undying memory and of imperishable "high esteem, in love, for His works’ sake" (1 Thessalonians 5:13), is devoted to a discussion of that equally sublime and equally incomprehensible subject, "THE SECRET PROVIDENCE OF GOD." This unfathomable and incomprehensible deep Calvin enters with the same acute and powerful intellect which characterises the preceding Treatise, and with a holiness and reverence of spirit correspondently profound. He states, in all its fulness, the mysterious and inscrutable depth of the mind of God in the awe-filling dispensations of His "secret providence," and presents a noble, admirable and unanswerable DEFENCE of their sure justice, Divine holiness and infinite wisdom.

Neither of these glorious doctrines of the Bible has been declared, in any age or place, by the tongue or by the pen of the servants of God without exciting (as we have already stated) the hostile enmity and, more or less, violent opposition of men. It is no marvel, therefore, that Calvin, who was called to so prominent a ministration of them, should have met with a parallel amount of hatred, malignity and violence, in his day and generation, nor that he should therefore have been necessitated to employ as much time and toil in their public defence as in their public ministration.

Luther and Calvin, therefore, each bore his large and inevitable share of the "offence of the cross" (Galatians 5:11). But while Luther’s heavy share exceeded, perhaps, that of Calvin in the number, rage, hostility and mightiness of his adversaries; the enemies of Calvin surpassed those of Luther in hatred, malignity, misrepresentation, contumely, slander and violence. And these peculiarities of hostile and determined opposition were in exact accordance with the natures of the ministerial works of these two blessed and prominent servants of the Most High.

Luther’s mighty work lay in the exposure and demolition of the principles and authorities of churches and of kingdoms, and in the defiance of the power of popes, kings, princes and potentates of the earth. But the work of Calvin lay more directly with the hearts, principles and spirits of men ?filled with hatred against those very truths which he was expressly called of God to declare almost anew, with all the light and penetrating power of his ministry, to a truth-hating world.

Both these pre-eminent servants of God, however, "hidden in the hollow of His hand" (Isaiah 49:2), defended from without by His omnipotent power, and sustained within by the consolations of His Spirit, "finished the work which He gave them to do," and are now wearing in eternal glory the crowns "which the Lord, the righteous Judge, had laid up for them," from all eternity, as their sure reward (2 Timothy 4:7-8).

Those enemies of the loved and noble Swiss Reformer, who resisted his testimony concerning "The secret providence of God," were, if possible, more numerous, more hostile, more acrimonious and violent, and certainly more false, misrepresentative, scandalising and malignant, than those who resisted his witness concerning "The eternal predestination of God." Though these twin cardinal truths of the Bible ever stand, in all direct consequence, necessarily and inseparably connected, this excess of virulent hostility to the former glorious doctrine is strikingly manifest from the present attack of "a certain worthless calumniator," whose malicious and mendacious violence called forth that DEFENCE which forms the burden of the present Treatise. The method of defensive reply adopted by Calvin is characteristically plain, honest and satisfactory. He gives the articles of accusation (or slanders) in the order in which they were published by the calumniator, and he makes his replies to them consecutively in defence of the sovereignty and secrecy of "The Providence of God." But the reader is informed, by way of premonition, that the parenthesis? (that is, "Slander I., II., III., etc.") ?which are found in all the headings to the sections, are Calvin’s parenthetical comments, as it were, on the calumniator’s terms, "Article I., II., III.," etc., by which parenthesis in each case Calvin testifies that each article is the basest calumny! Who this prominent calumniator was is now unknown. It was very probably Servetus, to whose insidious designs and persecuting animosity Calvin himself makes so much allusion in the preceding Treatise. One thing is certain?and it is worthy our recollection?that this calumniator of Calvin, and of his doctrine and ministry, was a deadly enemy to the truth, and that he was as industrious in his researches for hostile materials, as subtle in his reasonings, and as indefatigable in his inventions of opposing arguments, as he was malicious and violent in his opposition. So that it may with much safety be concluded that the following sheets contain the most of, if not all, the strongest (or rather vilest) arguments which the utmost efforts of the rationalist, the sceptic, and the infidel can bring against those two essential doctrines of the revealed Word, which the two present Treatises so admirably state and defend. For "there is no discharge in this war" of the truth (Ecclesiastes 8:9). Wherever it is written or preached, conflicts, persecutions and sufferings for its sake by writers and by preachers must, with solemn certainty, be endured (2 Timothy 3:11; 2 Peter 2:2).

No! The "offence of the cross" of the Redeemer and of His truth has not "ceased" (Galatians 5:11), nor will it cease till time shall be no more. The same false accusations, slanders, misrepresentations, and perversions of the doctrines, principles and actions of the true servants of Christ (especially with reference to the two great doctrines of the everlasting Gospel now immediately under discussion). which have existed in all ages, in various forms of violence and

malignity, still prevail on every side.

Wherefore (to make a few condensed and concluding observations upon the completion and issue of this Second Volume) the excellency and usefulness of these Treatises of the beloved, able and immortal Calvin will be found, it is hoped, as originally designed by the translator to be threefold.

First, the clear and truthful statement of the sublime doctrines of God’s sovereign grace, sustained by the Scriptures and by the experience of the just, throughout the Treatises will be edifying and establishing, it is trusted, to all those members of the Church of Christ who can trace, with any degree of comfort, by the light and testimony of the Spirit and of the Word their "calling" of God. While the divine and powerful arguments, by which the scriptural statements are illustrated and confirmed, will strengthen the assurance of their salvation, by showing them that its security rests on the very nature and attributes of God as its "sure foundation." The blessed and beloved "poor" of God’s family, indeed, who form the greater portion of His heavenly household, may not feel themselves competent to follow the acute and deep Calvin throughout the extent of his arguments; yet some, even of them, may be able, in a profitable measure, to do so with admiration and thankfulness, to the strengthening of their faith and hope. For a "poor wise man" (Ecclesiastes 9:15), in whom dwells the Spirit of wisdom and of truth, has more mental power and judgment in such things than the world, and even the saints themselves, generally give him credit for. And though we are instructed to look around us, and to mark who they are that compose the generality of the disciples of Christ? "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called" (1 Corinthians 1:26) ?yet we have great cause to glorify God (as a certain "noble" disciple once observed) that the Word does not say not any noble, or wise, or learned, or educated, or intelligent, are called. Into the hands of some of these, therefore, who may be able to follow, understand and appreciate the divine and deep arguments of Calvin, these his Treatises may fall and, by the glad and thankful perusal of them, their minds may be informed and enlarged into the length, breadth and depth of that "sure foundation" on which their faith and hope repose for eternity. But secondly, Calvin speaks and writes in these Treatises not to the Church of Christ only, but also to the unregenerate, human-reasoning and profane world at large. He shows the world, as well as the Church of Christ, that the sublime doctrines of "the eternal predestination of God" and of "His secret providence" must, of consequent necessity, be true, not only from the declarations of the Holy Scripture, but from the very nature and attributes of the adorable God Himself. Wherefore, these volumes carry with them Calvin’s holy, masterly and unanswerable testimony to the whole English nation, wheresoever they may come; and this is what it was also intended by the translator they should do, and which it is hoped they will do, successfully, to the eternal profit of men and to the glory of God. Hence, these Treatises will arm the disciples of Christ with weapons for their defence of the truth, as well as feed them with "strong meat " for their enjoyment, nourishment and strength (Hebrews 5:14). Nor do we despair of these same volumes being made profitable to the ministers of Christ, especially to His younger servants, equipping them also with insubvertible arguments for the Truth’s defence, as well as enriching them with sound doctrine for its proclamation. And the present day is one of widely prevailing rationalism, scepticism and infidelity. The "wise," the "scribes," and "the disputers of this world," with their "doubtful disputations" and their "oppositions of science, falsely so-called" (1 Corinthians 1:20; 1 Timothy 6:20), abound in every direction. Against all this, and all these, Calvin furnishes, in the present Treatises, the twofold materials of Scripture and argument for erecting, in any place, at

any time, an impregnable tower in defence of the truth; while the same testimonies, as being heaven-commissioned, contain in them "the arrows of the Almighty," some of which may perhaps hit, with the sharpness of saving mercy, the hearts of a few of the enemies of the "King of kings," and bring them to His feet! (Psalms 45:5) In this twofold respect, indeed, Calvin has commanded a field, trodden a path, and pursued a "line of things" unoccupied by any minister of Christ with anything like the same prominence, ability and effect, either before his day or since he left earth for heaven. Many true servants of Christ have set forth, and still do set forth, the sublime doctrines of grace scripturally; but they are not gifted with mental powers to prove the necessity of their truth from the very nature of God Himself, and from the ever unchangeable and inseparable harmony of His eternal attributes, as Calvin did throughout his ministry, and as he has done in these his two admirable productions. No man has occupied this sphere, nor wrought in this line of ministerial labour, with anything approaching to competent ability since the sixteenth century?the glorious era of the Reformation. Nor has anyone appeared qualified to perform such service to God and His Church in the present century. In the last and the preceding centuries there were a Dr. Owen, a Dr. Gill, a Romaine, and perhaps a few others, who possessed the mental ability, the learning and the spiritual gifts for the task. But they had not the "calling" of God to that branch of His service. God did not set that "line of things" before them. The only man in the last century who stood at this post, with spiritual and mental endowments at all adequate to the work, was that talented servant of God, that accomplished scholar, that "burning and shining light" of the Church of England and of the Church of Christ?Toplady. His ministry, however, by the inscrutable will of the sovereign Disposer of all things, was as short as it was brilliant. He died at the lamented age of thirty-six, after a ten or twelve brief years' ministration, and left no successor his like, either in the Church of England or out of it. Nor has any equal to him, in rich experience of Divine truth, in the gifts of the Holy Spirit, or in sanctified mental talent, since appeared. Toplady did enter upon Calvin's peculiar twofold field, and his written testimonies on the stupendous doctrines now in question are an enduring treasure to the British Church of Christ and to her whole nation. The above remarks, intended merely to describe the nature and merits of the two present Treatises, will not, it is hoped, be deemed invidious or partial. They are designed to be solely explanatory of the state of the case in reference to these productions of the immortal Swiss Reformer. Even those distinguished one-in-a-century servants of God, Bunyan, equally immortal with Calvin, and that widely useful and highly-honoured "master in Israel," Huntington, were wholly incompetent to execute such works as these Treatises. Those great and good men were each of memorable value and profit to the Church of Christ in their respective centuries, and their bequeathed works and services will probably continue, especially those of the former, to the end of time; but neither of them could have occupied the field or performed the work of Calvin. No servant of God, however great or useful, could have done, or could now do, that, but one who, to a deep experience of Divine Truth and to commanding natural powers, should have added, or should now add, a sound classical, mathematical and logical mental training. And a servant of Christ, thus divinely, naturally and acquiredly qualified for his highest services, scarcely appears, we repeat, once in a century; nay, as the course of centuries has proved, in the bright and pre-eminent instances of Luther and Calvin, scarcely once in three centuries. That no one has stood forth in the present century, or can now be found, prepared of God with this threefold equipment of grace (1 Corinthians 15:10), nature and acquirement for his high service, both before the redeemed Church and before the more learned world, trained both at the feet of Christ and at the feet of Gamaliel (Luke 10:39; Acts

22:3), is a source of lamentation to all who are competent to form a right judgment. And thirdly, these Treatises, it is confidently believed (and this was a third motive for their translation and publication), will fully vindicate the doctrine and character of John Calvin, and unload his revered name (in the English mind at least) from that mountain of malignant obloquy and slander which has been heaped upon it, more or less, for these three centuries past. These, his own unequalled testimonies, will not only prove the might and invincibleness of his spiritual and mental powers, but will make equally manifest the holiness, the humbleness, and the adoration of his soul as one of "the redeemed from the earth," one of the "sealed" among men, as God’s own (Revelation 14:3; Revelation 7:4). Nor can the translator refrain from offering, ere he close these observations, his sincere expressions of gratitude to those "Brethren and Friends" who have come thus readily and liberally forward with their "gold and silver," on public grounds, not for themselves only, to insure the publication of these volumes, when no other means of their publicity was attainable. And in these his grateful acknowledgments, he is fully assured that he is joined by those few much interested friends by whose counselling and arranging aid the original "proposal" was put forth.

Should, then, these two Treatises of the truthful, faithful and able Calvin be so honoured as to be made of any sacred service in edifying the disciples of Christ, and building them up in their most holy faith; should they be found in any degree useful in equipping the friends of the Truth with armour for its effective defence; should they lend aid in silencing the clamours, shaming the slanders, refuting the doctrines, and defeating the designs of the enemies of God and of His revealed truth in the present day, or in future generations of the English Church of Christ; these feeble labours of their translation will have received the highest reward with which their author ever wished to be honoured.

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Chapter 4

01.01. Introduction by John Calvin

INTRODUCTION BY JOHN CALVIN TO HIS DEFENCE OF THE SECRET PROVIDENCE OF GOD.

_____ THE moment I think of speaking upon that Providence of God, by which He governs not only the vast machinery of the whole world and each smallest part of it, but also the hearts and the actions of men, a mighty and complex subject presents itself before me. But as I have already treated of the stupendous matter in a manner calculated, I hope, to satisfy, in a measure, all sound-minded and unprejudiced readers, I shall only touch it in a summary and passing manner upon the present occasion, adopting all possible brevity. Nor indeed can any splendour of speech be expected from me, nor any brilliancy of thought that shall correspond with the magnitude and excellency of the theme. I shall merely recapitulate, in a few bare words, those arguments which I have fully developed in my "Institutes" But if I shall see such need, I will now interweave with these arguments some further testimonies from the Holy Scripture. And I shall also, as I hope, so wash away, by a plain refutation, the designing and malignant cavils of Pighius* and his fellows,? that they shall not, in the least degree, hurt or hinder the minds of the godly. By Providence, we mean, not an unconcerned sitting of God in heaven, from which He merely observes the things that are done in the world; but that all-active and all-concerned seatedness on His throne above, by which He governs the world which He Himself hath made. So that God, as viewed in the glass of His Providence, is not only the Maker of all things in a moment, but the perpetual Ruler of all things which He hath created. That Providence, therefore, which we ascribe to God, pertains as much to His operating hands as to His observing eyes. When, therefore, God is said to rule the world by His Providence, we do not merely mean that He maintains and preserves that order of nature which He had originally purposed in Himself, but that He holds and continues a peculiar care of every single creature that He has created. And true and certain is the fact, that as it was the wonderful wisdom of God that originally made the world, and disposed it in its present beautiful order, so, unless the omnipotent power of God, ever present, sustained it thus created and disposed it, it could not continue in its designed order and form one hour. That the sun rises upon us day by day; that in a course so rapid his rays should be so tempered and his degrees so adjusted; that the order of the stars, so wonderfully arranged, should never be disturbed; that the vicissitudes of the seasons should recur so continuously; that the earth should open her bowels with such annual regularity for the nourishment of man; that the elements and their separate particles should not cease to perform their appointed functions; in a word, that the fecundity of nature should never be worn out nor fail?all this marvellous operation, co-operation and continuance, can surely never be thought to proceed from any other cause than from the directing hand of God! And what else is the 104th Psalm but a long and loud praise of this universal Providence! The apostle Paul lauds this same Divine Providence when he says, "For in Him we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 27:28). Wherefore, as the one only God has an essence peculiar to Himself, so that living principle of vegetation, by which all creatures subsist and without which they must soon perish, must be considered by faith a secret infusion of God.

But the knowledge of a general and universal Providence is vague and confused, unless we hold, at the same time, the belief, and indulge the contemplation, that God covers under the wings of His care each single one of His creatures. To teach us this glorious lesson was the object of Christ when He said, "That not a sparrow that is sold for half a farthing falls to the ground without the heavenly Father's knowledge" (Matthew 10:29). In considering this special Providence of God, however, by which He secretly broods over the care of each individual creature as the work of His hands, it will be necessary that we take a sacred view of the certain degrees and distinct peculiarities which it divinely embraces. As man is the noblest work of God, for whose "good" all things were created which the heavens and the earth contain, the Scripture sets forth the Providence of God as concerned principally in the care and government of the human race. Paul, in explanation of that passage, "Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn," observes, "Doth God take care of oxen?" implying that the providential care of God does not rest on them in particular as its peculiar sphere of action, but is more especially employed in the care of men. In this respect, as the course of the Divine Providence lies in the dealings of God with men as beings endowed with reason, its conduct assumes a surer light and a brighter glory. For marvellous are the judgments of God; at one time, in punishing the wicked; at another, in teaching the faithful patience and crucifying their flesh; at another, in purging out the wickednesses of the world; at another, in awakening the sleep and sloth of many; at another, in breaking down the arrogance of the proud; at another, in making the wisdom of the wise a laughing-stock; at another, in destroying the machinations of the malicious. On the other hand, the surpassing goodness of God is brightly displayed in succouring the distressed, in protecting and defending the cause of the innocent, and in coming to the assistance of those who are in despair of all help. Psalms 107:1-43 contains a beautiful and glorious description of the conduct of the Providence of God, which is manifested towards men. In that Psalm the prophet shows that those vicissitudes, which men generally consider violent floods of change, are not waves of trouble, rolling over men with blind impetuosity, as it were, but bright glasses wherein to behold the goodness, the wrath, or the justice of God! And at the close of this blessed Psalm, the penman of it draws the concluding inference that if the godly and the "wise" would duly "observe" these various changes in the world, they would gain understanding in the ways of God, and would find abundant cause for rejoicing. While the Psalmist also implies that the same contemplation, if exercised by the wicked, would stop their mouths, by giving them an awe-striking sight of the wonderful works of God! But here we must take a view of other and loftier steps of the Divine Providence. For though God thus shows Himself the Father and the Judge of the whole human race, yet, as the Church is His sanctuary in which He resides, He there manifests His presence by clearer and brighter proofs; He there shows Himself as the Father of His family, and condescends to grant a nearer view of Himself, if I may so speak. The Scripture is filled with testimonies of this, which declare that God keeps a more especial watch over the faithful: "The eyes of the Lord (saith David) are over the righteous" (Psalms 33:21); "He preserveth the souls of His saints" (Psalms 97:10); "For He careth for you," saith Peter (1 Peter 5:7); "Even the very hairs of your head are all numbered," saith the Lord Himself (Matthew 10:30). In a word, the Church is the great workroom of God, wherein, in a more especial manner, He displays His wonderful works; and it is the more immediate theatre of His glorious Providence. For this reason it is that God is said to have appointed angels, which are, as it were, His hands, to be guardians in a peculiar manner to His saints that believe in Him; that the angels also might have no separate position or office apart from the body of Christ, of which they

also are members. Therefore, that we may take a circumspective and comprehensive view of the whole Divine matter, our eyes must rest, first, on that general government of the whole world, by which all things are cherished and caused to vegetate, that the natural state of them all, collectively and individually, may remain and be preserved the same.

Secondly, our eyes must rest on the watchfulness of God, in ruling and guarding the single parts and particles of all these created things, which watchfulness is such that nothing occurs in them or concerning them, unknown or unnoticed. We must look, thirdly, at God’s more especial care of the human race, which is such that the life and death of men, the public destinies of kingdoms and of nations, and the private cases of individuals, and whatsoever men usually ascribe to fortune, are under His heavenly rule and disposal. And lastly, we must contemplate that peculiar protection by which God defends His Church, in which protection He more expressly manifests His presence and His power. The vast and multiform utility of this doctrine no words can adequately express. Nor will anyone profitably contemplate the Providence of God in the government of the world, as it is set before us in the Scriptures and seen by faith, but he who, feeling that he has to do so with his Maker and with the Creator of all things, first "bows the head" with that awe and reverence and with that humility which becomes one standing before such stupendous Majesty! For if man is ever wont to pay such honour to his fellow-men, as to judge of their works with candour and modesty, especially where anything seems somewhat obscure and difficult to comprehend at the moment; if man, in such cases, is the more anxious and diligent in inquiring into the truth, and would rather suspend his judgment than, by a hasty decision, do his fellow-man an injury; is it not, I ask, worse than madness, and something more than ferocity, to use a tenfold greater liberty with God, and to bring His stupendous works down to the scale of our puny judgment; to pronounce a precipitate opinion upon things infinitely sublime and wholly incomprehensible; to attempt to fathom His secret counsels; and, above all, to trifle with mysteries so deep and so profoundly adorable? This insolence has, indeed, stalked abroad in all ages, but has taken greater strides and made louder boasts in the present day than in any age or time preceding. Many infidels now-a-days, finding that they cannot tear God down from heaven (which, like the giants of old, they really attempt to do), strive mightily, at least, to force out of their own and all other men’s consciences every particle of religion and of true worship, by vomiting forth the foulest and basest blasphemies, thus betraying their profanity, and their rage against God and His truth. In the greater part of these characters the source of all the evil is evidently this: being persons of a light and fervid spirit, they first give indulgence to their own vain curiosity. Then, having no fixed aim or object before them, they give themselves up to utterly useless speculations. Upon the back of this comes an unbridled audacity, which instigates their tongues to speak with a rashness exactly commensurate with their impudence. Others, again, are the subjects of an evil state of spirit, different indeed, but just as mischievous. For, bewildering themselves in absurd dreams, they drown their minds in self-will, or desperation, or sloth. Now all these are the very wiles of the devil; and his object in adopting them is to involve the true, sound and holy doctrine in all sorts of "lying wonders" of inventions, by which means he would not only rob us of all its profitableness and fruit, but would also render it either contemptible, or hateful, or destructive. But whatsoever plans the devil may adopt, be it ours ever to steer clear of the perverted caution to which some have recourse, who, to meet such perils as these, find no shorter way than the obscuring or corrupting of that which the Scripture declares with alt possible and naked simplicity.

Now, a much more appropriate and effectual remedy for all these evils is to hold our minds under the constant consideration in what manner and to what end the Providence of God should be contemplated. The first end is, that it may keep us free from all presumptuous confidence and hold us fast in the fear of God, and also may stir us up to continual prayer. A second end is to bring us to rest upon God with still and peaceful minds, and to teach us to despise, in all courage and security, the dangers which surround us on every side and the numberless deaths which constantly threaten us from every quarter. Each of these great ends I will now, with all possible brevity, endeavour to explain. Those who imagine that there is any such a thing as fortune or chance, or who expect anything from their own industry, or plans, or labours, are carried hither and thither after every expedient, are driven in all directions, turn every stone (as they say), devise every new means, and gallop about like the horse in an open field. But with all this to do, there is no prayer, no fear of God!

He, however, who knows and feels that men and their counsels, and the issues of all things, are ruled and overruled by the Providence of God, will confess with trembling, as did the prophet Jeremiah: "I know, O Lord, that the way of man is not in himself: it is not, in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jeremiah 10:23). Bearing in mind also those words of Solomon?"A man's goings are of the Lord: how can a man, then, understand his own way?" (Proverbs 20:24) ?he will commit himself wholly unto God, and depend entirely upon Him. Where there is such a state of mind, prayers will ever follow, that God will begin and perfect every work which we undertake, while we thus rest on Him in all quietness, and on Him alone. Just in the same degree will he who dreams about the will of fortune give himself up to be driven about in fear by the devil and by the wicked, as by ferocious brute animals?as if they could do anything of themselves! And thus will such an one fret and fume with perpetual anxiety; and, looking at his life as hanging continually by a single thread, as it were, he will live in unending torment. He will scarcely be able to put forth one foot without despairing of his life or well-being. Whereas the faithful, having the all-ruling hand of God ever before them, will never hesitate to cast all their cares and concerns upon Him. And they will all the while rest assured that the devil and all wicked men, whatever tumults they may cause, are not only held of God by their feet in chains, but are compelled to do His pleasure, under which assurance they will pass their lives in security and peace. The two following distinctions will also throw a Divine light upon this sacred matter. The Providence of God is to be viewed with reference to all time past, as well as in connection with all time future. In contemplating the Divine Providence of the former, all power is to be ascribed to God in all things (whether viewed with their means [media], without their means [media], or contrary to their mediums [media]?that God ordains and appoints all things. The consideration of the time past should be thus: If anything has taken place successfully, and in fulfilment of a mortal man's wishes, let him not "sacrifice to his own drag" (as Habakkuk expresses it); nor let him speak of his own prudence, virtue or good fortune; nor give that praise to man, nor to any creature, which is due to God alone. But let him ever feel assured that God was the first cause and author of all his good, through what secondary medium soever it came. And in the case of all preceding adversities, let a man rest in the consolation that all took place according to the good pleasure of God; for by complaining and contending against God, I shall profit myself nothing, and shall bind myself in the chain of the guilt of impious obstinacy against my Maker. And let a man so entertain the memory of his past life, as to acknowledge, in all the punishments he has endured, the sins he has committed which caused them. With reference to the time future, the Providence of God is to be contemplated by all godly

minds thus: Let the minds of the godly be ever intently fixed on God’s promises and threatenings. For as soon as their minds turn aside from these, they are shut up against all instruction in the fear of God, and the progress of faith ceases. But he who shall always keep his eye fixed on the omnipotence of God, as seen in the glass of His Word, and shall rely on His promises therein also contained, will mount on the wings of faith above all the countless perils of the world. And then, bowing before the threatenings of God also beheld in His Word, he will humble himself under the sight of them as so many rods. When I spoke of the Providence of God being viewed with its mediums, my meaning was this: If anyone shall have assisted his fellow-man when sunk under an extremity of distress, the deliverance rendered by the hand of man is not a human, but a Divine deliverance. The sun rises day by day; but it is God that enlightens the earth by his rays. The earth brings forth her fruits; but it is God that giveth bread, and it is God that giveth strength by the nourishment of that bread. In a word, as all inferior and secondary causes, viewed in themselves, veil like so many curtains the glorious God from our sight (which they too frequently do), the eye of faith must be cast up far higher, that it may behold the hand of God working by all these His instruments. But in what manner the Providence of God can work, without any medium or instrument at all, Christ taught us by His own example, when He repelled the assaulting Tempter with this shield: "Man doth not live by bread only: but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God doth man live" (Matthew 4:4). For as the Redeemer knew that the power of God needed no external support whatever, so He knew that He could supply that strength without bread, which He is nevertheless mercifully pleased to supply by means of bread. And O! what glory is due to the Providence of God when viewed contrary to all means (media)! When I am persuaded that it is mightier than all obstacles that can oppose it! By this confidence alone I am conqueror of every fear or apprehension. Indeed, this is the very wrestling school in which God exercises and tries our faith. When so many obstacles present themselves before us which seem likely to prevent His designs (as we view them), how many creatures appear in a threatening form, above and below, in heaven and in earth! And what, in such case, is to be done? If our faith can but mount up to the Divine height of the power of God, it will combat and conquer with no great trouble all the means (media) which stand in its way, and which strive to prevent its victory. Whosoever, therefore, shall restrain himself within these bounds, and shall neither torture himself with perplexed speculations, nor make an excuse for indolence because he hears that God alone doeth all things such an one shall neither sink under despair, nor turn aside to frivolous reasonings, which are wholly unbecoming in the presence of the Majesty of God. But we must now examine this sacred subject still more narrowly. Whence arise contentions about the Providence of God? The Divine Providence itself, rightly considered and contemplated, as it ought to be, genders no contention. But human reason, when considering the works of God, finding itself blind, rushes into a quarrel with its Maker. But what marvel, if those counsels of God harmonise not with fleshly reason, which the angels, with uplift eyes, wonder at and adore! This depravity, however, is utterly intolerable, that we, who by nature are hardly gifted with worthiness to creep as worms on the earth, should approve of nothing but that which, as if lying on the ground, we can look down upon with our natural eyes. But in order that this Divine doctrine of the Providence of God may become profitable, it will be, we hope, a useful labour in us thus to calm the minds of the ignorant and inexperienced, and to refute the "slanders" of the wicked and profane. For these ends it will be desirable to consider, in the first place, that the will of God is the great cause of all things that are done in the whole world; and yet, that God is not the author of the evils that are done therein. But I

will not say, with Augustine?which, however, I readily acknowledge to have been truly said by him?"In sin or in evil, there is nothing positive." For this is an acuteness of argument which, to many, may not be satisfactory. I would rather assume another principle of argument, and say, "Those things which are vainly or unrighteously done by man are, rightly and righteously, the works of God!" And if this should appear to some, at first sight, to be paradoxical or self-contradictory, let not such be so fastidious or hasty as not to inquire, with me, into the Word of God, and see how the Divine matter stands as viewed in that glass. But again, that I may not defend anything with senseless pertinacity as belonging properly to God, which I have only ascribed to Him myself by my own opinion, let us hear what the Scripture really testifies, and let us form our definition of the works of God wholly from thence. As to all those things which God really directs by His counsel, but which, as generally viewed, seem to be fortuitous; concerning all such things the clear testimony of the Scripture runs thus, "The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord!" (Proverbs 16:33) In like manner, if a branch falling from a tree, or an axe slipping out of a man’s hand unawares, should fall upon the head of a passer-by and kill him, Moses testifies that God did this according to His Divine purpose (Deuteronomy 19:5), who willed that that man should be killed. Other Scripture testimonies to the same purport I here advisedly leave unadduced, because my intention is only to point at them with my finger on the present occasion. But since the Stoics found, on such arguments as these, their doctrine of necessity, the true doctrine of the will and purpose of God, is hateful to many, even to those who dare not condemn it as false. But this doctrine of Stoica1 necessity is an old calumny laid upon us, under the burden of which Augustine frequently complains that he was bowed down. It ought to have ceased long ere this. But certainly, for men professing any honesty, or candour, or faith, to lay such a reproach upon us is most unworthy of them, and most disgraceful.

What the vain imagination of the Stoics was is well known. They wove their doctrine of fate out of Gordias’ web of complex causes, in which, when they had entangled God Himself, they fabricated certain golden chains (as the fables have it) to bind the very God of heaven, and to make Him subject to inferior and secondary causes! The Stoics are imitated by the astrologers of the present day, who make their doctrine of fated necessity out of certain positions of the stars. We leave the Stoics, then, to their doctrine of fate, while we acknowledge the will of God to be the ruling cause of all things. But to take contingency out of the world altogether would be absurd. I omit to notice here those various distinctions which are made in the schools. That which I shall adduce shall be simple, in my judgment, and not strained; and also, that which shall be profitable for the conduct of life.

I would argue, then, in this manner: What God hath decreed must necessarily come to pass; yet so, that what does thus come to pass is not, in itself, really and naturally a necessity. We have a familiar illustration of this in the bones of Christ our Lord. The Scripture plainly testifies that Christ assumed a body in all things like unto ours. Wherefore, no man in his senses will hesitate to confess that the bones of Christ’s body were frangible like our own. There appears to me, however, to be another and a separate question involved in this matter: Whether any bone of Christ’s could be broken? For, according to God’s decree and Word, it was necessary that all the parts of His body should remain whole, unbroken and uninjured. Not that I am thus speaking and arguing because I wholly object to the received forms of expression, when men speak of necessity as being, in one sense, absolute, or when they speak of the necessity of the consequent or the

necessity of the consequence. But I speak thus, and argue thus, that no subtlety of reasoning might prevent the simplest reader from understanding and acknowledging the truth of what I testify. If, therefore, we consider the nature of the bones in the body of Christ, they were frangible, or capable of being broken. But if we look at the decree of God, which was fulfilled in its time, the bones of Christ's body were no more subject to fracture than the angels are subject to human sorrows. In this case, therefore, when we are required to look into the law and order of nature as appointed of God, I by no means reject the contingency involved, in my sense and meaning of such contingency.

We must here also carefully bear in mind that principle which I have before laid down, that when God displays His power through means (media) and secondary causes, that power of His is never to be separated from those means or inferior causes. It is the excess of a drunkard to say, "God has decreed all that is to come to pass, and that must come to pass; therefore, to interpose any care or study, or endeavour of ours, is superfluous and vain." But since God prescribes to us what we ought to do, and wills that we should be the instruments of the operation of His power, let us ever deem it unlawful in us to sunder those things which He hath joined together. For instance, God, "in the beginning," commanded the earth to bring forth every kind of herb and fruit without any human art or culture. But now He makes use of the hand of man as the instrument of His operation: If any one should boastingly desire to receive bread by merely opening his indolent mouth, because the blessing of God fructifies the earth, he would not only, by such a boast, trample underfoot the Providence of God, but would do away with it altogether. For he would separate and rend asunder those things which God has joined together by an inseparable connection.

Wherefore, with reference to the time future, since the events of things are, as yet, hidden and unknown, everyone ought to be as intent upon the performance of his duty as if nothing whatever had been decreed concerning the issue in each particular case. Or (to speak more properly) every man ought so to hope for success in all things which he undertakes at the command of God, as to be freely prepared to reconcile every contingency with the sure and certain Providence of God. The Lord, moreover, promises His blessing upon the work of our hands. By this promise each godly man will acknowledge himself to be appointed of God, an instrument of His glorious Providence. And such godly one, relying on this same promise, will gird himself with alacrity to his undertaking, and will be persuaded that he is not casting into the air labour in vain; but, resting on the Word of God, he will believe that God, by His secret counsel, will direct all his labour to the issue that shall be best. In a word, as the Providence of God, rightly considered, does not bind our hands, but free them for work, so it not only does not hinder prayer, but strengthens and confirms its earnestness. A like sobriety of mind ought to temper our judgments concerning the time past, and in reference to things which may have already taken place. There is no exhortation more conducive to patience than our hearing that nothing happens by chance; but that whatever takes place, is the fulfilment of that which has been decreed by "the good pleasure" of God. Meanwhile, it by no means follows that our own indolence, or rashness, or thoughtlessness, or some other fault, is not the immediate cause of any adversity under which we may be suffering. And though the causes of events are not always clearly seen, or understood, yet godly minds will not, even under such ignorance, cease to render unto God the praise of His wisdom and justice in every event that transpires.

Where, however, the counsels, the wills, the purposes, and the attempts of men intervene, a greater difficulty of argument and judgment presents itself to our thoughts, especially when we desire to show how the Providence of God reigns and rules in all such cases also; not only to prevent anything from being done otherwise than according to His will, but also that men may not even agitate anything in their deliberations but what He inspires. God gives indeed daily and marvellous proofs of His Providence where He gives full rein to the foolish counsels of men, and, seeming not to notice their great preparations, frustrates by the issue all their hopes. The Scripture also reveals another field, wherein God manifests His dominion and the mighty working of His hand?when He makes the wicked mad; when He strikes them with a bewildered giddiness, or deprives them of their senses, or stuns them with stupefaction; and when also He "takes away their spirit," strips them of their courage, and so fills them with fear, that they are death-struck by the fall of a leaf! Pighius, therefore, wants common consideration, when he would confine God within the narrow limits of His material creation; when he would make of God nothing more than a kind of wise manager, or a skilful general, who, well versed in military tactics foresees the plans of his enemies, and forms his counterplots, as remedies, according to circumstances. As if the Scripture did not plainly represent God as He "Who taketh the wise in their own craftiness," cutteth off the spirit of princes, and maketh their "knowledge foolishness"! It is, therefore, the grossest ignorance in Pighius, when he denies that when a man is killed designedly by his fellow man, he dies by the will and decree of God! He entertains this idea, I suppose, imagining that where the will of man is engaged, the will of God is not concerned! What is to become, then, of all those testimonies of the Scripture which declare that the swords of men are wielded by the hand of God? Were the sons of Eli killed without the will of man? Yet the praise is given to God; that it was He who righteously willed that they should be slain (1 Samuel 4:10-12). But that God continually rules the hands of men, that He sometimes binds them fast and at other times turns them this way and that to execute His eternal decrees, no one will call in question who has the least acquaintance whatever with the Scriptures. Nay, it is a fact, universally admitted by common sense, that whatsoever men undertake, the issue thereof is in the hand of God. But since even this knowledge in men is generally weak and unsettled through the dense darkness of the human mind, the Scripture has erected for us a loftier place of observation, by standing on which we may look around us and behold God so ruling and overruling all the works of men, as to bring them to the issue which Himself hath decreed. The sum and substance, however, of the whole Divine matter is this: Although men, like brute beasts confined by no chains, rush at random here and there, yet God by His secret bridle so holds and governs them, that they cannot move even one of their fingers without accomplishing the work of God much more than their own! But the faithful, who render unto Him their willing service, as do the angels, are to be considered, in a peculiar manner, the hands of God! I am now, however, speaking more immediately of those men whose purposes are anything but a desire to do the will of God, or to adopt any counsel consistent or in harmony with His counsel, or in accordance with His will. The wicked do indeed frequently glory in themselves at any accomplishment of their wishes. But the event at length proves that they were only fulfilling all the while that which had been ordained of God, and that, too, against their own will, while they knew nothing about it! Moreover, God Himself very frequently makes use of the wicked to punish the sins of men, especially of His own people. And sometimes He drags them by the neck, as it were, to make them the instruments of His goodness to men and saints. To adduce instances of the former marvellous dispensations of His Providence would be a labour too great

and too extensive for our present purpose. It would, however, be better perhaps just to touch with our finger a few examples. God having excited the Assyrian to make war on Judah, calls him the "rod of His anger," and declares that he was armed with the "staff of His indignation" for his weapon (Isaiah 10:5). But the same adorable God afterwards inveighs against his pride, and rebukes him for not acknowledging himself to be "an axe" and "a saw" waged and forged by another's (God's) hand (Isaiah 10:15). In this same manner those whom their own ambition, or cruelty, or avarice, urges on to violent deeds, are said to be "sanctified" of God to do His work, and to be His hired soldiers to accomplish His purposes. The Lord Himself, moreover, testifies that He calls such together by His "hiss" and by His "trumpet," to take up arms in His cause, to perform His decrees (Isaiah 10:26). That the way of God's goodness is prepared by the evil deeds of men one single portion of the writings of Moses will fully demonstrate. The conspiracy of the brethren of Joseph against him was more than wicked, perfidious and cruel, when they sold him to the Midianites. But Joseph himself transfers the cause of this selling him, though with a different motive, to God Himself! "Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life. So now, it was not you that sent me hither, but God" (Genesis 45:5, Genesis 45:8). It is evident, therefore, that though they did wickedly, God nevertheless did His work by their means, that they might find life in death. They, as far as their own intent was concerned, had killed their brother. But, out of that intent life (that is, provision for their natural life, and that of their whole family) shone upon them.

We may see the same working of God in Satan, the captain of all the wicked and the prince of all darkness and iniquities. God sends Satan to Ahab, with his own Divine command that he should be "a lying spirit in the mouth of all the king's prophets." Thus the impostor spirit becomes the minister of the wrath of God, to blind the wicked who would not be obedient to His truth. On the other hand, the apostle Paul calls the "thorn in the flesh" that was sent upon him, the "messenger of Satan to buffet him." Here the poison of Satan is made of God an antidote to cure the apostle's pride. Now, what kind of a physician, I pray you, is Satan in himself, who has never learned anything but to kill and to destroy? But God, who once commanded the light to shine out of darkness, can marvellously bring, if He pleases, salvation out of hell itself, and thus turn darkness itself into light. But what worketh Satan? In a certain sense, the work of God! That is, God, by holding Satan fast bound in obedience to His Providence, turns him whithersoever He will, and thus applies the great enemy's devices and attempts to the accomplishment of His own eternal purposes!

Now if the Scripture did not clearly express God's secondary or instrumental mode of operation, this knot would not, even then, be very difficult to untie. The other and more difficult question is, whether it is God that works in the hearts of men, directs all their counsels, and turns their wills this way and that, and prevents them from doing anything but that which He hath decreed they should do. We are not here inquiring whether or not God works all the godly and holy affections which are found in the hearts of His people, because that is, beyond all dispute, certain. The great question is, whether He holds also in the hand of His power all the depraved and impious affections of the wicked, and turns them hither and thither, that they might desire to do that which He hath decreed to accomplish by their means?

Most certainly, when Solomon declares that "the heart of the king is in the hand of God, and that, as the rivers of water, He turneth it whithersoever He will" (Proverbs 21:1), his intention is to shew,

generally, that not only the wills of kings but all their external actions are overruled by the will and disposal of God. Moses saith that the heart of Pharaoh was hardened by the Lord Himself. It is in vain here to flee to the common refuge of God's permission, as if God could be said to have done that which He only permitted to be done! And Moses positively affirms that the hardening of Pharaoh's heart was the work of God. Nor, indeed, is the cruelty of the heart of Pharaoh ascribed to the counsel of God in any other sense than when, elsewhere, He is said to have given unto His people favour in the eyes of the Egyptians. For who does not see that savage and ferocious beasts were tamed and made gentle by the power of God, when such men as the Egyptians were turned, on a sudden, to clemency? From what cause and to what end, then, can we say that Pharaoh evinced such inhuman cruelty, but because it pleased the Lord; partly, that He might thereby prove the patience of His people; and partly, that He might shew forth His own almighty power? In this same manner God is said to have "turned the heart of their enemies to hate His people" (Psalms 105:25). Nor does that passage at all alter the case, where it is said, that " Pharaoh hardened his heart at this time also" (Exodus 8:32), because we do not make it appear that the minds of men are impelled by any outward influence to do violently, nor do we impute to God the cause of their being hardened; as if cruel and hardhearted persons did not act spontaneously from their own malice, and become of themselves excited to obstinacy and presumption! What we maintain is, that when men act perversely, they do so (according to the testimony of the Scripture) by the ordaining purpose of God. This is also set forth in another part of the Scripture, where it is said that when the inhabitants of Gibeon set themselves in opposition to Israel, they did so according to the decree and purpose of God, who hardened their heart, as it is said, Joshua 11:20 : "For it was of the Lord to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle, that He might destroy them utterly." The very manner in which God thus works is also set forth in the Scripture. For in one place it testifies that God, being angry with the people, moved the heart of David to number the people (2 Samuel 24:1); but, in another place, it is said concerning this very same act of David, that the instigator of this pride in David was Satan, and that it was he who moved David to number the people (1 Chronicles 21:1). From which we see that Satan was the rod of God's wrath, and that God, by such means of devils and of men, impels the hearts of men whithersoever He will. This is still more expressly set forth in another part of the Word of God, where it is said that "an evil spirit from the Lord came upon Saul" (2 Samuel 16:23-24). Now Saul acted, indeed, from his own wickedness. He exercised the malice concealed within by a voluntary action. Nevertheless, it was Satan that urged him on; and that, not while God was a mere inactive observer, but while God willed it. Indeed, the evil spirit could not, with propriety, have been said to be "from the Lord," unless he had been the Lord's ordained minister, to execute His vengeance and to be, as it were, His executioner. Nor is Satan merely the minister of God's wrath by his instigating men's minds to evil passions and acts, but by effectually dragging them and leading them captive, at his will, into wicked actions.

It is in this same momentous sense that Paul speaks when he testifies that effectual error and "strong delusions" are sent on men, that they might believe a lie; because they would not obey the truth." Hence you see that Satan is not only "a lying spirit in the mouth of all the prophets," at the express command of God, but also that his impostures so ensnare the reprobate, that, being utterly deprived of their reason, they are, of necessity, dragged headlong into error. In this same manner also must we understand the apostle, when he says that those who were ungrateful to God "were delivered over to a reprobate mind," and "given up to vile and foul affections," that they

should work "that which is unseemly, and defile their own natural bodies one among another." Upon which Scripture Augustine remarks that these reprobate characters were not given up to the corrupt affections of their hearts by the mere permission of God as an unconcerned spectator, but by His righteous decree, because they had basely profaned His glory. In what manner this was done that same passage of the Scripture (2 Thessalonians 2:11) plainly declares: "God sent upon them strong delusion." Whence that which I have just stated is perfectly plain: that the internal affections of men are not less ruled by the hand of God than their external actions are preceded by His eternal decree; and. moreover, that God performs not by the hands of men the things which He has decreed. without first working in their hearts the very will which precedes the acts they are to perform. Wherefore, the sentiments of Augustine on these momentous points are to be fully received and maintained. "When God (says he) willeth that to be done which cannot be effected, in the course of the things of this world, without the wills of men. He at the same time inclines their hearts to will to do it, and also Himself does it, not only by aiding their hearts to desire to do it, but also by decreeing it, that they cannot but do it. Whereas these same persons had in their own minds no such purpose as 'to do that which the hand and the counsel of God had afore decreed to be done.'" Augustine, moreover, most wisely proposes that to be considered concerning the very seeds and principles of nature, upon the consideration of which so many are unwilling to enter; that that great diversity which is seen in the dispositions of men, and which is evidently implanted in them of God, affords a manifest evidence of that His secret operation, by which He moves and rules the hearts of all mankind. From all that has been said, we can at once gather how vain and fluctuating is that flimsy defence of the Divine justice which desires to make it appear that the evil things that are done, are so done, not by the will of God, but by His permission only. As far, indeed, as those evil things which men perpetrate with an evil mind are, in themselves, evil, I willingly confess (as I will immediately more fully explain) that they by no means please God. But for men to represent God as sitting unconcerned, and merely permitting those things to be done which the Scripture plainly declares to be done, not only by His will, but by His authority, is a mere way of escape from the truth, utterly frivolous and vain. Augustine did, indeed, sometimes give way to this popular method of speaking; but where he devotes himself more closely to the consideration of the matter, and examines it more thoroughly, he by no means suffers the permission to be substituted for the act of God. I will not cite verbatim all that the holy father says upon this subject in the Fifth Book of his Discussion of it, written against Julian. Let the production of one passage from it suffice on this occasion: "He who knoweth His own just judgments, doeth all these things by working in a marvellous and inexpressible manner, not only in the bodies, but in the hearts of men. He doth not make wills evil, but useth the wills of men already evil as He pleaseth; nor can He, of Himself, will anything that is evil." "Just in this same manner (continues Augustine) does the Scripture, if diligently considered, shew that not only the good wills of men, which God Himself has made good out of evil wills, but also the wills which He has made good by His grace are directed by Him to good actions and to the attainment of eternal life; and, moreover, that those wills of men which preserve the good order of things in the world, from age to age, as kings, and princes, and rulers, etc., are so under the power of God, that He inclines them whithersoever He will, either to confer kindnesses on these, or to inflict punishments on those, according to His will and pleasure." The holy father then adds: "Who does not tremble before these stupendous judgments of God, by which He does whatsoever He will even in the hearts of men, rendering unto them all the while according to their works!" And again: "It is fully evident,

from the testimonies of the Scripture, that God works in the hearts of men to incline their wills whithersoever He pleases, whether it be to confer good according to His mercy, or to inflict evil according to their deserts, and all according to His purpose and decree, which is sometimes manifest and sometimes hidden, but always just! For it ought ever to be deeply fixed in our hearts that there is no iniquity in God." But the reason why the decree of God is sometimes utterly hidden may be seen in the former part of his book, where, after he had frequently testified that the sins of men are often in themselves punishments which God justly inflicts upon them, on account of former sins which they have committed, he at length carries up his contemplation to that higher and still more hidden secret of God, namely, that God finds just materials in all men (except those whom He has chosen by His grace) for making them the executors of His wrath!

"As to all mortals beside (saith Augustine) who are not of this number of God's elect, but are of the common mass of mankind (from which mass these were also chosen), they are made the 'vessels of God's wrath,' and are born for the use and service of God's chosen! For God doth not create one of these 'vessels of His wrath' at random or by chance. And He knows full well every particle of good which He works by their means. One part of which good is that He creates in them the excellency of human nature, and adorns by their means, as kings, princes and magistrates, etc., the order of things in the world. But why God sometimes paralyzes the hearts of men with fear and dread, and sometimes enspirits them with courage; why He takes away the spirit of princes, and turns the counsels of the wise into foolishness; why He gifts some with the spirit of temperance, and makes others drunk with the spirit of confusion and madness; for these His marvellous judgments He sometimes manifests a plain and conspicuous reason. While it is equally evident that His secret counsel so rules over all men, that He turns the wills of whomsoever He pleases wheresoever He pleases." For human nature is common to all men, but not so Divine grace (as the same holy father in another part of his works also strikingly observes).

Taking, then, an honest and sober review of the whole of this high and Divine matter, the plain and indubitable conclusion will be that the will of God is the one principal and all-high cause of all things in heaven and earth! Our minds, therefore, ought ever to be bridled with the knowledge of this mighty fact, that they may not intemperately and unlawfully indulge in searching into the causes of things. That saying of Augustine, "The will of God is the necessity of all things," seems harsh when first heard. As does also that which he immediately adds by way of explanation; that "God so ordained all secondary causes, that by their means that might be effected for the sake of which they were ordained, but not necessarily so effected." But that "God ordained all primary and remote causes, that by them that might of necessity be effected which He had purposed to be effected by their causation." When the whole argument, however, is attentively investigated, its asperity soon vanishes. For that which the holy father elsewhere says, though expressed in different terms, is precisely the same in sentiment; nor does his argument contain anything which ought to offend: "God retains (saith he), hidden in Himself, the causes of some of His actions, which He has not intermingled with His created things. These causes He brings out to their effects, not by that operation of His Providence, by which He has appointed certain natures and their powers to be and to act, but by that operation by which He rules and directs as He will the creatures that He has made."

Herein, indeed, lies the grace by which those are saved who were lost. For what can be more true than that God, in the government of His creatures, retains hidden in Himself something more than

He has made visible in their nature? But of all the things that are done, the will of God is therefore rightly considered to be the first cause, because He so rules at His pleasure the natures of all things created by Him, that He directs all the counsels and actions of men to the end which He had Himself preordained. By this doctrine, as I have before justly observed, a rein is put upon our minds and spirits which ought to hold us within the bounds of modesty. For it is absurd, in the last degree, not to yield ourselves to that will of God which is high above all other causes, unless we can see (as we think) a plain reason for our so doing.

We should ever, indeed, bear in mind that which I have before said, that God doth nothing without the highest of reasons. But as the will of God is the surest rule of all righteousness, that will ought ever to he to us the principal reason, yea? if I may so speak? the reason of all reasons! For that humility of faith, which is the offspring of reverence for the Divine justice, is by no means a stupid thing, as many imagine. For who but the man that hath the persuasion deeply forced on his heart that God is just, and all His works righteous, will rest satisfied with His good pleasure alone? That Sarbonic dogma, therefore, in the promulgation of which the Papal theologians so much pride themselves, "that the power of God is absolute and tyrannical," I utterly abhor. For it would be easier to force away the light of the sun from his heat, or his heat from his fire, than to separate the power of God from His justice. Away, then, with all such monstrous speculations from godly minds, as that God can possibly do more, or otherwise, than He has done, or that He can do anything without the highest order and reason. For I do not receive that other dogma, "that God, as being free from all law Himself, may do anything without being subject to any blame for so doing." For whosoever makes God without law, robs Him of the greatest part of His glory, because he spoils Him of His rectitude and justice. Not that God is, indeed, subject to any law, excepting in as far as He is a law to Himself. But there is that inseparable connection and harmony between the power of God and His justice, that nothing can possibly be done by Him but what is moderate, legitimate, and according to the strictest rule of right. And most certainly, when the faithful speak of God as omnipotent, they acknowledge Him at the same time to he the Judge of the world, and always hold His power to be righteously tempered with equity and justice.

We have not yet, however, met the great objection of our adversaries: " If all things are done (say they) according to the will of God, and men can do or design nothing, but as He wills or ordains, God must be the author of all evils." That distinction which formerly prevailed in the schools, and is now everywhere current, is perfectly true, provided it be rightly understood? "that the evil of the punishment, but not the evil of the fault, proceeds from God." But some inexperienced ones, imagining that the matter in question can be settled in one short word, pass by in security the very point at issue, namely, "How God can be free from blame in that very deed which He Himself condemns in Satan and in the reprobate, and which He declares that men condemn in their fellow-men." For both evils are often seen in the same work, not in different works, namely, that the praise of the punishment must, of necessity, be ascribed to God, and the fault of the act to man. For instance, robbers carry off the cattle of the holy Job. The deed is cruel and disgraceful. Satan by this means drives the patriarch to desperation; a machination still more detestable. But Job declares another to be the author of it all! "The Lord gave (saith he), and the Lord hath taken away." Nor is Job wrong in attributing that to God which, in another sense, could be imputed to the robbers only. For the patriarch, as if beholding with uplift eyes the things that are decreed on the throne of God in heaven, confesses that the Lord took away by the hands of the robbers those

things which they could not have touched but by His authority and command. All this Job explains in the words which follow: "The Lord hath done whatsoever pleased Him." We hear that in this instance, the work of Satan was in common with that of God. We hear that nothing was done but by God's good pleasure. It may here be said, "How shall God be exempted from that fault of which Satan and his instruments are guilty?" Why, if a distinction be made between the works of men, derived from a consideration of their purpose and end in each particular case; and if the cruelty of that man is condemned who pierces the eyes of a crow or kills a crane, while the virtue of the judge is praised who cleanses his hands by the execution of the wicked person; shall the condition of God Himself be worse than that of man? Shall not His justice keep Him separate from the wicked actions of human or Satanic offenders? But let us adopt a similitude somewhat more close and applicable. That prince will ever be praised among men who shall, by a just and legitimate war, repel from his dominions violence, rapine and plunder. For this end he will hasten to arm thousands of soldiers, who will rush forward with cupidity to shed blood, to despoil the poor and helpless of their property, and to commit every act of licentiousness and violence, for which deeds of wickedness they certainly will not deserve praise. Two armies, in another part of the world, enter into the mighty battle. If you behold a prosperous issue of the skill of the general, under whose conduct and command the battle is fought, you absolve him from all blame, though he be but a mortal man, while you nevertheless condemn the soldiers who lend out their hands to murder their fellow-men for nefarious hire. Will you, then, rob God of the glory of His justice, because He sometimes doth His works by means of Satan? Yet so it is. And as the mists which the earth exhales sometimes obscure the brightness of the sun, and intercept its view from the sight of men, while the sun still really remains the same in all its brightness; so the vanity of men creates many vaporous impediments, as it were, which obstruct their sight of the equity of God, while that equity remains, nevertheless, as pure and perfect as ever! Yet these ignorant reasoners would involve God and the wicked in the same guilt, where the act of God, working by the wicked, is in such sense common to Him and them. But not so did David. When Shimei assaulted him with reproaches and stones, he did not stop at the man, but looked at the command of God: "Let him curse (said he), for God hath bidden him" (2 Samuel 16:6). And yet he does not rise up against God, but with all humility offers his back to the stripes, and says, "'Who shall then say, Wherefore hast Thou done so?" (2 Samuel 16:10). As he speaks also in the Psalms, "I was dumb, and opened not my mouth, because Thou didst it" (Psalms 39:9). For what one of the godly will not the majesty of God in a moment reduce to silence? And from what one of them will not the justice of God force the expression of praise and constrain him to break forth into that devoted exclamation of David) "So let him curse; because the Lord hath said unto him, Curse David. It may be that the Lord will look on mine affliction, and that the Lord will requite me good for His cursing this day" (2 Samuel 16:11-12).

Wherefore, when the wickedness of men proceeds thus from the Lord, and from a just cause, but from a cause unknown to us, although the first cause of all things be His will, that He is therefore the author of sin I most solemnly deny. Nevertheless, that difference of causes, on which I have before dwelt, is by no means to be forgotten?that one cause is proximate, another remote. The careful observance of this distinction is indispensable, that we may clearly understand how wide a difference there is, and how momentous a distinction between the just and equal Providence of God and turbulent impetuosities of men. Our adversaries load us with illiberal and disgraceful calumny, when they cast it in our teeth that we make God the author of sin, by maintaining that His

will is the cause of all things that are done. For when a man perpetrates anything unjustly, incited by ambition, or avarice, or lust, or any other depraved passion; if God, by His just but secret judgment, perform His works by means of such an one's hands, the mention of sin cannot be made with reference to God in those His righteous acts. It is perfidy, pride, cruelty, intemperance, envy, self-conceit, or some like depraved desire that constitutes sin in man. But no such desire can be found in God. Shimei attacks his king with brutal insolence. The sin is at once manifest. God uses such an instrument to effect the righteous humiliation of David. Such a rod it pleases God to use. But who will dare to charge God with sin in so doing? The Arabians and the Saboeans carry off their plunder from another man's substance. The sin of robbery is evident. God exercises the patience of His servant by the violence of the plunderers. Let the heroic confession of the patriarch, "Blessed be the name of the Lord," he heard rising from out the midst of these ravages, rather than the profane revilings of the wicked and the ignorant. In a word, such is God's manner of working by the sins of men, that when we come to deal with Him in the matter of His righteous judgments, His eternal purity wipes off in a moment every spot that the wicked reasoning of men may attempt to cast upon His glorious Majesty. And here the admonition of Augustine may be listened to with profit: "In point of oneness or agreement, there is sometimes a mighty difference between men and God in the matters of His righteous acts and judgments. As when, for instance, God wills righteously that which men will evilly, and when God righteously willeth not that which men evilly will not. And so again, in point of difference or contrariety, God and men do not ill agree. As when men will well that which God righteously doth not will, and when, also, men righteously do not will that which God righteously doth will; for example, the son may wish for the death of his father, that he may rush upon the inheritance. God also may will that this same father should die. God willed that Jerusalem should be utterly destroyed, that the temple should be profaned and demolished, and that the Jews should suffer every extreme of torment. The Idumaens were all the while longing for the same. In order that the same measure might be measured to a dire and ruthless man, who had spared no one, God wills that no help whatever should be brought to him; when pressed to destruction on every side, by inevitable necessity. His own son shall refuse him every duty of affection, nor shall he have the least desire to aid him in his desperate need. God willed that the sons of Eli should not listen to the counsels of their father, because He had determined to destroy them. The sons, on their part also, would not hear their father. Now there appears herein, at first sight a certain kind of harmony and agreement; but when we consider abstractedly the evil and the good involved, there is as much disagreement and contrariety as between fire and water. A husband shall wish for a longer life of a beloved wife whom God calls out of this world. Christ shuddered at, and prayed against, that death, which was a sacrifice of the sweetest odour unto God. Now the will of each, both of the husband and of Christ, although diverse from the will of God, at first appearance, was equally without blame. Wherefore, far be it from any man to drag God into a participation of sin, or guilt, or blame, whenever any apparent similitude between the plainly depraved passions of men and His secret counsel may present itself. Let that sentiment of Augustine be ever present to our minds: "Wherefore, by the mighty and marvellous working of God (which is so exquisitely perfect in the accomplishment of every purpose and bent of His will), that, in a wonderful and ineffable way, is not done without His will which is even done contrary to His will, because it could not have been done had He not permitted it to be done; and yet, He did not permit it without His will, but according to His will." And hereby is refuted either the ignorance or the wickedness of those who deny that the nature of the will of God can be

one and simple, if there be any other will ascribed to Him than that which is plainly and manifestly revealed by Him in His own law. Some also ask in derision. "If there be any will of God which is not revealed in His law, by what name is that will called? " But those men must be deprived of their senses, in whose opinion all those Scriptures signify nothing which speak with so much wonder and admiration of the profound "depth" of the judgments of God! When Paul exclaims, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments!" he most certainly teaches us, in all plainness, that the judgment of God was something more and deeper than that which is expressed by the simple words of Christ in that memorable ejaculation, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children. together as a hen gathereth her brood under her wings, but ye would not" (Matthew 23:37). And whereas God willed that the sons of Eli should not be obedient to their father, that Divine will differed, in appearance, from the precept of the law, which commands children to obey their parents. In a word, wherever the apostle sets forth the wonderful judgments of God, and the depth of His thoughts and ways, which are "past finding out," he is not speaking at all of the works of the law, which stand always plain before our eyes; he is rather magnifying that inaccessible light in which is hidden God’s secret counsel, which, being exalted far above the utmost stretch of the human mind, we are compelled to gaze upon with uplift eyes and to adore!

Someone will perhaps say, " If that light is inaccessible, why do you approach it?" I do not so approach it as to wish, by an insolent curiosity, to search into those things which God wills to keep deeply hidden in Himself; but that which the Scripture openly declares, I embrace with a sure faith and look upon with reverence. But you will say, "How can it be that God, who is ever consistent with Himself, and unchangeable even in the shadow of a turn, should yet will that which is contrary to that which He seems to be?" I reply, It is no matter of wonder that God, when speaking with men, should accommodate Himself to the limits of their comprehension. Who will affirm that God ever appeared to His servants, even in visions, such as He really is? For the brightness of His glory is such, that the sight of Him as He is, by our naked vision, would absorb and overwhelm all our senses in a moment. He has, therefore, ever so revealed Himself as men were able to bear the revelation. But whether God talks with us in the language of a child, or whether He conceals that which He knows to be beyond our comprehension? that there is anything in what He pleased to say, feigned or dissembled, I solemnly deny. Most true is that which the Psalm affirms, "Thou hatest all workers of iniquity (Psalms 5:5). Nor, indeed, does God there testify, by the mouth of David, anything else than that which He exemplifies in reality every day when He punishes men for their transgressions. Nor would He punish their sins if He did not hate those sins. You here see, then, that God is an avenger, from which we are fully assured that He is not an approver. But many are deceived in these sacred matters, not rightly considering that God willeth righteously those things which men do wickedly. "How will you explain this?" you may say. I reply, God abominates all adulterous and incestuous intercourse. Absalom defiles his father’s concubines in the sight of the people. Was this done, in every sense, contrary to the will of God? No! God had predicted, by His servant Nathan, that Absalom should do this (2 Samuel 12:11-12): "I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun

01.02. Section I.

ARTICLES Extracted from the Latin, as well as the French, Books of John Calvin on

PREDESTINATION.

ARTICLE I.

(THAT IS, CALUMNY I.) "GOD OF HIS PURE AND MERE WILL CREATED THE GREATEST PART OF THE WORLD TO PERDITION." This is the FIRST ARTICLE I shall produce. And now hear what arguments are brought by your adversaries against it.

CALUMNIATOR'S STATEMENTS AND OBSERVATIONS. Your opponents maintain that this article is contrary to nature, and contrary to the Scripture. With respect to nature, they affirm that every animal loves its own offspring. Now this nature is given of God, whence it follows that God also loves His own offspring; for God would not cause all animals to love their own offspring, unless He Himself loved His own offspring. And this position they prove in the following manner from Isaiah 66:9 : "Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth?" As if He had said, "That which I cause others to do, I also do myself. Now I cause others to bring forth; therefore I also bring forth." By a parity of reasoning, therefore, they derive this argument and its conclusion: God causes all animals to love their own offspring. Therefore He Himself also loves His own offspring. Now all men are the offspring of God. For God is the Father of Adam, from whom all men sprung. But to create men to perdition is not an act of love, but of hatred. Therefore, God did not create anyone to perdition. And, again, they argue: "Creation is a work of love, not of hatred. Therefore, God created all men in love, not in hatred." And again, "No beast is so cruel (to say nothing of man) that it would desire to create its young to misery. How much less, then, shall such a desire be found in God! Would not God in such a case of creation be less kind and merciful than the wolf which He has created?" Christ argues in this way: "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall God?" (Matthew 7:11) It is just thus that your adversaries argue. They say, If Calvin, though an evil man, yet would not wish to beget a child unto misery, how much less shall God desire to do so? These and like arguments your opponents bring forward with respect to nature. But with reference to the Scripture they reason thus: God saw that "all things" which He had made were "very good." Such therefore was man, whom also He had made "very good." But what if God created him to destruction? If such be the case, God created that which "was very good" to destruction and perdition, and therefore He must love to destroy! But that is a thing impious, even in thought. And again, they argue: God created one man and placed him in Paradise, which is a life of happiness. Therefore God created all men for a happy life, for all men were created in the one man. And if all men fell in Adam, it follows that all men stood in Adam, and also in the very condition in which Adam stood. And further, God says, "I would not the death of a sinner;" and again, it is written that God "willeth not that any should perish, but that all men should come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4). Farther, if God created the greatest part of the world to perdition, it follows that His anger is greater than His mercy, and it consequently follows also that His anger is shewn "unto the third and fourth

generation." Whereas, "it is evident, on the contrary, that His mercy extends "even unto the thousandth generation!"

REPLY OF JOHN CALVIN TO

ARTICLE I (THAT IS, CALUMNY I.) AND TO THE CALUMNIATOR'S OBSERVATIONS

THEREON. That on which you seize as your FIRST ARTICLE is, "that God, by His pure and mere will, created the greatest part of the world to perdition." Now, all this?"the greatest part of the world unto perdition" and "by His own pure and mere will"?is a perfect fiction, and a production from the workshop of your own brain. For although God did certainly decree from the beginning everything which should befall the race of man, yet such a manner of speech as the saying that the end or object of God's work of creation was destruction or perdition, is nowhere to be found in my writings. Just like an unclean hog, therefore, you root up with your foul snout all doctrine that is of sweet odour, hoping to find in it something filthy and offensive. In the next place, although my doctrine is that the will of God is the first and supreme cause of all things, yet I everywhere teach that wheresoever in His counsels and works the cause does not plainly appear, yet that there is a cause which lies hidden in Himself, and that according to it He has decreed nothing but that which is wise and holy and just. Therefore, with reference to the sentiments of the schoolmen concerning the absolute, or tyrannical, will of God, I not only repudiate, but abhor them all, because they separate the justice of God from His ruling power. Now see, then, thou unclean dog, how much thou hast gained, and how far thou hast advanced thy cause by this thy impudent barking. For myself, while I subject the whole human race to the will of God, I at the same time ever affirm that God never decrees anything but with the most righteous reason, which reason (though it may at the present time be unknown to us) will assuredly be revealed to us at the last day in all its infinite righteousness and Divine perfection.

You thrust in my face, and impudently upbraid me with, the "pure and mere will of God," which idea I, in a hundred or more passages of my books, utterly repudiate. Meantime, I freely acknowledge my doctrine to be this: that Adam fell, not only by the permission of God, but by His very secret counsel and decree; and that Adam drew all his posterity with himself, by his Fall, into eternal destruction. Both these positions, it seems, give you great offence, as being (according to your account) "contrary to nature, and to the Scripture." You attempt to prove it to be contrary to nature, because every animal naturally loves its own offspring; whence you argue that, therefore, God, who gave such a natural affection to brute beasts, ought not, certainly, less to love all men, seeing that they are His offspring. Your argument and thought are infinitely too coarse and low, and infinitely beneath the mightiness of the matter, when you demand of God, the eternal Author of nature, just what He right fully demands of the ox and the ass: which He has created. As if God Himself ought to be bound by the same laws as those which He has appointed for the creatures which He has made! That every animal might propagate its own kind, He has implanted in each animal the desire of that propagation. Go thou, then, and expostulate with God, and ask Him how it is that from all eternity He has remained content with Himself, and has retained His own native excellency and glory barren, as it were, and unpropagated! God ought certainly ever to be consistent with Himself. If thou, therefore, art to be our judge in the mighty and stupendous matter, God has violated the order by choosing rather to be without all offspring, than to exercise His

fruitfulness!

Moreover, as all brute beasts fight for their offspring, even unto death, how is it (according to your doctrine) that God permits His helpless offspring to be torn in pieces and devoured by tigers, and bears, and lions, and wolves? Is it because His hand is too short, so that He cannot stretch it down out of heaven for their defence! See you not how wide a field lies open to me, if I were inclined to expose and condemn all your idle and absurd reasonings! But I will content myself with dwelling on one point only, and let that suffice. Proofs of the love of God towards the whole human race exist innumerable, all which demonstrate the ingratitude of those who perish or come "to perdition." This fact, however, forms no reason whatever why God should not confine His especial or peculiar love to a few, whom He has, in infinite condescension, been pleased to choose out of the rest! When God was pleased to adopt unto Himself the family of Abraham, He thereby most plainly testified that He did not embrace the whole of mankind with an equal love. When, again, God rejected Esau, the elder, and chose Jacob, the younger brother, He gave a manifest and signal proof of His free love, of that love with which He loves none others than those whom He will! Moses declares aloud that one certain nation was beloved of God, while all nations beside were passed by and disregarded as to any peculiar love of God for them. The prophets everywhere testify that the Jews exceeded and surpassed all other nations in excellency and importance, for no other reason than because God freely loved them.

Again, Christ is not addressing the whole human race, nor indeed the whole Jewish nation, but God’s little chosen flock alone, when He says, and not in vain, "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12:32) By which Christ intimates that none experience the favour of God unto the hope of eternal life but those whom He has rendered acceptable and well-pleasing unto Himself by His only-begotten Son! But if you are determined to make God subject to the laws of nature, you must necessarily accuse and condemn Him of injustice, because, on account of the fault of one man we are all involved in the guilt and desert of eternal death. One man sinned, and we are all dragged to punishment. And not that only, but by the pollution of one we are all drawn into the contagion, and are born corrupt and infected with a deadly disease. What have you to say to this noble Teacher and Judge? Will you accuse the blessed God of cruelty, because He has thus precipitated all His offspring into ruin by the Fall of one man? For although Adam destroyed both himself and all his offspring, yet the corruption and the guilt of that Fall of one man must necessarily be ascribed to the secret counsel and decree of God! For the fault of one man could have had nothing to do with us, had not our heavenly Judge been pleased to consign us to eternal destruction on the account!

Now only reflect, for a moment, how craftily you apply those passages of the prophet Isaiah as a covering for your error (Isaiah 54:1; Isaiah 49:19-21, etc.). As it seemed beyond all belief that the Church of God, in her Babylonish captivity, being not only bereft of her children, but also barren in her power to produce more, should, by the recovery of her strength, become even more fruitful than she was before, God in these passages speaks, as it were, thus to her: "Am not I, by whose power women conceive and bring forth, able to raise up an offspring to thee also?" Because God speaks thus to His Church, you, under this pretext, would force Him to assume the affections of any kind of animal. And you daringly reason that, because God causes all animals to love their own offspring, He also loves all His own offspring, namely, the whole race of mankind. And suppose, for a moment, that I grant you this; it will not, therefore, at once follow that God loves His

own in the same manner as beasts love their own. And, in the next place, if God does love His own, it does not the less follow that He has a right to reject, as a just Judge, those to whom He had in vain shown His love and indulgence throughout their whole lives as the kindest Father. But you are ready to reply next, that "to create is a work of love, not of hatred; and that God therefore created in love, not in hatred." But you perceive not, that though all men are hateful to God in fallen Adam, yet that in their original creation the love of God shines in all its brightness. That argument, therefore, which you think is so very plausible, any other person, endowed with the most moderate judgment, and with common equity, acknowledges in a moment to be frivolous and vain. That which you next add, I do not consider it my duty so much to refute, as to cut down at once with the stroke of the sword. It is indeed evident that men are born to misery. But is the cause of this to be imputed to my writings? Whence arises this miserable condition of us all, that we are subject not only to temporal evils, but to eternal death? Does it not arise from the solemn fact that, by the Fall and fault of one man, God was pleased to cast us all under the common guilt? In this miserable ruin of the whole human race, therefore, it is not my opinion only that is plainly seen, but it is the work of God Himself that is so openly undeniably manifest.

Meantime, you hesitate not to vomit forth your profane and abhorrent opinion that God is worse than any wolf, who thus wills to create men to misery. Some men, be it remembered, are born blind, some deaf, some dumb, some of monstrous deformity. Now, if we are to go by your opinion as the judge in these sacred and deep matters, God is also cruel, because He afflicts His offspring with such evils as these, and that, too, before they have seen the light. But the day, be thou assured, will come when thou wilt heartily wish that thou hadst been blind, rather than thou hadst ever been so wonderfully sharp-sighted in thus penetrating into these secrets of the eternal God!

You accuse God of injustice; nay, you declare Him to be nothing above a monster, if He dares to decree anything, concerning men otherwise than we ourselves should determine concerning our own children. If so, how shall we account for God’s creating some dull of comprehension, others of greater incapacity, others quite idiots? Do you really think that the work of God’s creation, with reference to such imperfect mortals, was really according to the fables of some Jews about the Fauns and Satyrs? For they say that God was prevented from completing the form of these latter monsters by the intervention of the Sabbath, and therefore that they fell, half-made, from His hands. No! It rather becomes us to receive a deep and humbling lesson from such sad spectacles as these defective human beings, and not to commence a quarrel with the Maker of heaven and earth, from the conceptions of our own brain, concerning His works, or what, in our opinion, they ought to have been. When any idiot happens to meet me; I am admonished to reflect upon what God might have made me, had He been so pleased As many dull of comprehension and idiots as there are in the world, so many spectacles does God set before me in which to behold His power; not less a subject of awe than a subject of wonder. But as for you, you brawl against God Himself with all impiety and profanity, as "being less merciful than a wolf," because (according to your opinion) He has so little considered the good and happiness of His offspring! Now, before the saying of Christ?"that God, because He is good, acts more kindly towards His children than men do, who are evil" (Matthew 7:11)?can be called in to favour your opinions and arguments, you must prove that all men are equally the children of God. But it is evident that all men lost in Adam eternal life, and that, therefore, the adoption of God is an act of special grace; whence it will follow that all those are the rather hated of God who are thus estranged and alienated from Him. All the

testimonies of the Scripture which you cite are mere javelins, hurled at random by the hand of a madman, as where you quote that word, "And God saw everything that He had made, and behold it was very good" (Genesis 1:31). For from this text you conclude that man was also "very good." And from this you next infer that God was unjust in creating that which was "good" to perdition. In what sense, however, man was created upright by nature I have explained in many parts of my writings. Man certainly was not better than the devil was, before the latter lost his angelic uprightness. And now, suppose I were to cede to you for a moment that both men and apostate angels were created unto salvation, and yet that God, having respect to their future Fall, condemned both to eternal destruction, what would you gain from this concession to help you in supporting your arguments? God most certainly knew what would take place, both in men and in apostate angels, and He also decreed at the same time what He Himself would do. With reference to the doctrine of permission, we will speak of that hereafter in its place. But for the present, if you should be disposed to reply that the foreknowledge of God is not the cause of evils, I would only ask you this one question: If God foresaw the destruction both of man and of the devil before He created them, and did not, at the same time, decree their destruction, why did He not apply, betimes, an adequate remedy, which should prevent their Fall and their liability thereto? The devil, from the very beginning of the world, alienated himself from the hope of salvation. And man, as soon as he was created, destroyed both himself and his posterity with a deadly destruction. If, therefore, the preservation of both was in the hand of God, how was it that (if He had not decreed their destruction) He permitted their ruin? Nay, why did He not furnish each with at least some small degree of ability to stand? To what circuitous reasonings soever, therefore, you have recourse I shall be able to hold you fast to this principle, that although man was created weak and liable to fall, yet that this weakness contained in it a great blessing, because man’s Fall immediately afterwards taught him that nothing out of God is either safe, or secure, or enduring. Hence, therefore, it is made evident that all which you prate about men having been created unto salvation, is an argument mutilated and halt, and laid down without adequate consideration. For the truth is, that when I am confessing that there was nothing in man, when created, contrary to salvation, I am thereby and therein proving that salvation was predestinated for all men.

Let me repeat this same argument very briefly in other words. What I mean is, that if we argue on that perfection of nature with which Adam was gifted at his first creation, we may say that he was created unto salvation, because in that perfectness of his first created state there was found no cause of death. But if we carry the question up to God’s secret predestination, we are met by that deep abyss which ought at once to transport us into wonder and admiration. The fact is, that had you but been gifted with the least feeling of godly reverence, you would, in a moment, acknowledge that this is not a question concerning the completeness of man’s original perfection, but concerning the will of God and the decree of God. The state of the sacred case is as if the Holy Spirit had said to you, "Nothing of excellency was wanting in any of the creatures at their creation; but rather, all occasion was taken away from you, and from all like you, of contending against God." For how loudly soever you and yours may deny that there was any "good" in man being so created and conditioned, as that he should, by his immediate Fall, destroy himself and the whole world, yet God Himself declares that such a condition of things pleased Him! Therefore, it was most just and righteous. And that you may the more correctly understand Moses, he does not (remember!) declare how upright and perfect man was, but that he might stop the barkings of all dogs, like yourself, he teaches that the whole order of the Creation was so tempered of God, that

nothing more just or more perfect can be imagined. Wherefore, when Moses comes to speak of all the several works of God collectively, he says that "God saw everything that He had made, and behold it was very good" (Genesis 1:31). But Moses affirms no such thing concerning man, individually, specially and absolutely, in every sense. Having narrated man's creation also, the sacred historian concludes by saying, in words which apply generally to the whole creation, that all the things which God had made were "very good" in which words are doubtlessly to be comprehended, as in harmony with them, the words of Solomon also, where he affirms that the wicked were created "for the day of evil." "The Lord hath made all things for Himself; yea. even the wicked for the day of evil" (Proverbs 16:4).

Take, then, the sum of the whole matter to be this: though man, at his first creation, was in his newly created nature "good," yet this rectitude, which was weak, frail and liable to fall, militates not against, nor stands in contrariety with, the predestination of God, by which predestination it was that man perished by his sin and fault, though his nature was by creation pure. Nay, looking at, and arguing from, his primitive natural excellency, man was created in this view and sense to salvation. And yet, from this very line of argument, you vainly, absurdly and preposterously infer that man was created "good" that he might perish, though "good" or as a good man. Whereas, it is openly and undeniably manifest that he perished by his infirmity and sin; and, therefore, that he perished as one liable to righteous condemnation and destruction. And how these two propositions and positions agree and harmonise with each other we will show hereafter, as we have indeed shown again and again before.

Here you throw in the common objection "that God has no pleasure in the death of a sinner," as declared by the prophet Ezekiel (Ezekiel 33:11). But listen, I pray you, to that which, in the prophet, immediately follows, "Because God inviteth all men to repentance" (Ezekiel 18:30-32). To all such, therefore, as return into the way of life pardon is freely offered. But the next and principal thing to be considered herein is, whether or not that conversion or "returning" which God requires (Ezekiel 18:30) is in the power of man's free-will, or whether it be a peculiar and sovereign gift of God! Inasmuch, therefore, as all men are invited and exhorted by God to repentance, the prophet, on that ground. justly declareth that God "hath no pleasure in the death of a sinner." But why, it is that God doth not turn or convert all and alike men to Himself, equally, is a question the reply to which lies hidden in Himself. And as to your usual way of citing that passage of the apostle Paul, "That God would have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4), How vain a prop that is to put under your error to support it. I think I have shown with sufficient plainness already, and that repeatedly. For it is (so to speak) more certain than certainty itself that the apostle is not, in that passage, speaking of individuals at all, but of orders of men in their various civil and national vocations. He had just before commanded that the public prayers of the Church should be offered up for kings and others in authority, and for all who held magisterial offices, of what kind and degree soever they may be. But as nearly all those who were then armed with the sword of public justice were open and professed enemies to the Church, and as it might therefore seem to the Church singular or absurd that public prayers should be offered up for them, the apostle meets all objections, so very natural, by admonishing the Church to pray even for them also, and to supplicate God to extend His grace and favour even to them, for the Church's quiet, peace and safety.

There is, perhaps, a stronger colour in some of the words of Peter, which might have better suited your purposes, where he says that God is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9). And if there be anything in the first member of the passage that seems difficult of comprehension at first sight, it is made perfectly plain by the explanation which follows. For, in as far as God "willeth that all should come unto repentance," in so far He willeth that no one should perish; but, in order that they may thus be received of God, they must "come." But the Scripture everywhere affirms, that in order that they may "come," they must be prevented of God; that is, God must come first to them to draw them; for until they are drawn of God, they will remain where they are, given up to the obstinacy of the flesh. Now if there were one single particle of right judgment in you, you would, in a moment, acknowledge that there is a wide and wonderful difference between these two things?that the hearts of men are made of God "fleshly" out of "stony" hearts, and that it is thus that they are made to be displeased and dissatisfied with themselves, and are brought, as suppliants, to beg of God mercy and pardon; and that after they are thus changed, they are received into all grace.

Now God declares that both these things are of His pure goodness and mercy; that He gives us hearts that we may repent, and then pardons us graciously upon our repentance and supplication. For if God were not ready to receive us when we do truly implore His mercy, He would not say, "Turn ye unto Me, and I will turn unto you" (Zechariah 1:3). But if repentance were in the power of the free-will of man, Paul would not say, "If peradventure God will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth" (2 Timothy 2:26). Nay, if God Himself, who exhorts all men to repentance by His voice?if God Himself, I repeat, who thus exhorts, did not draw His elect by the secret operation of His Spirit, Jeremiah would not thus describe those who do return: "Turn Thou me, and I shall be turned; for Thou art the Lord my God. Surely after that I was turned, I repented" (Jeremiah 31:19). This solution of the matter (I repeat,) if there were any shame or modesty in so impudent a dog as thyself, ought to have been known to thee as existing in my writings in a hundred different places. And although thou mayest take it upon thyself to reject such a solution, it nevertheless stands supported and confirmed both by the apostle Paul and by the prophet Ezekiel. But how, and in what sense it is, that God willeth all men to be saved is a matter not here to be inquisitively discussed. One thing is certain, that these two things?salvation and the knowledge of the truth?are always inseparably joined together. Now, then, answer me, If God had willed that His truth should be known unto all men, how is it that, from the first preaching of the Gospel until now, so many nations exist unto whom His pure truth has never been sent by Him at all, and unto whom, therefore, it has never come? And, again, if such had been the will of God concerning all men, how is it that He never opened the eyes of all? For the internal illumination of the Spirit, with which God has condescended to bless so few, is indispensably necessary unto faith. And there is also another knot for thee to untie. Since no one but he who is drawn by the secret influence of the Spirit can approach unto God, how is it that God does not draw all men indiscriminately to Himself, if He really "willeth all men to be saved" (in the common meaning of the expression)?

It is, therefore, an evident conclusion, flowing from this discrimination which God makes, that there is, with Him, a secret reason why He shuts so many out from salvation. How it is, therefore, that the mercy of God is shown unto the thousandth generation thou wilt never (as long as the pride by which thou art inflated shall blind and blunt thy faculties) acknowledge. For no such mercy is

promised as that which shall utterly abolish the curse under which the whole race of Adam lieth; but such a mercy is promised as shall (where all naturally existing obstacles are removed) break forth and endure for ever, upon the most unworthy. In this manner it was that God passed by many of the children of Abraham when He chose the one of them, Isaac. So also, when the twin sons of Isaac were born, the same God willed that His mercy should rest on one of them only, namely, on Jacob. And again, although God shows forth proofs of His wrath in many, it nevertheless remaineth eternally true that He is "abundant in goodness" and "slow to anger"; and hence, in that very longsuffering with which He endures the reprobate, there shineth forth no dim refulgence of His great goodness. Only observe, therefore in what an effectual manner thy frivolous and captious objections, from which I can disengage myself in a moment, entangle, ensnare and imprison thyself! In order to make the mercy of God greater than His anger, you will have more to be chosen to salvation than to destruction. And suppose I should for a moment cede this to you, what greater glory will thereby be secured to God? None whatever. God will nevertheless be as unjust as ever to those few who are lost (if your calumnies are to be received and believed). Unless God love all His created offspring alike, you will still profanely and awfully pronounce Him to be less kind and merciful than a wolf! Nay, let there be but one only against whom God shall righteously exercise His wrath, how shall He escape or avoid the accusation of cruelty in your blind and unholy judgment! Farther still, you will not even allow, as exceptions from the impious and profane charges of cruelty in God, that there are gross provocations of His Divine wrath in the men themselves! But, comparing alone wrath with mercy, you merely contend for the magnitude of the one or the other. Just as if God, by choosing more to salvation than to destruction, would thereby, and thereby alone, prove Himself to be a merciful God! God, however, commends the greatness of His grace to us in a manner far different from this. He not only pardons so many, and such various sins, in His elect, but even contends with, and bears with, the obstinate malice of the reprobate, until it has filled up the measure of its iniquity (Matthew 23:32).

01.03. Section II.

ARTICLE II.

(THAT IS, CALUMNY II.)

GOD NOT ONLY PREDESTINATED EVEN ADAM TO DAMNATION, BUT TO THE CAUSES OF THAT DAMNATION ALSO, WHOSE FALL HE NOT ONLY FORESAW, BUT HE ALSO WILLED BY HIS SECRET AND ETERNAL DECREE AND ORDAINED THAT HE SHOULD FALL, WHICH FALL, THAT IT MIGHT, IN ITS TIME, TAKE PLACE, GOD PLACED BEFORE HIM THE APPLE, WHICH SHOULD CAUSE THAT FALL.

C A L U M N I A T O R'S OBSERVATIONS AND STATEMENTS ON

ARTICLE II. Your opponents say that this SECOND ARTICLE is the doctrine of the devil, and they demand of me, Calvin, that I would tell them where, in the Divine Scriptures, the substance contained in this Article is written?

REPLY OF JOHN CALVIN TO

ARTICLE II., &c., &c.

Under this SECOND ARTICLE you appear again exactly the same man as before. Now just produce the passage from my writings wherein I teach "that the apple was placed by God before Adam, that it might be the cause of his fall." This, in fact, is the very source of all your popularity?the drawing of a cloud of obscuration across the minds of the inexperienced, to prevent them from rising to the height of that truth which is removed out of the reach of the common understanding of the flesh and of the carnal mind. But not to wrangle about words, I willingly, and in a moment, confess that what I have written is this: "That the Fall of Adam was not by accident, nor by chance; but was ordained by the secret counsel of God." And this is the doctrine which you positively pronounce to be "the doctrine of the devil." You are, in your own eyes, I know, a judge of the highest authority, and therefore it is that, in your self-conceit, you imagine that you can, by five words of the foulest abuse, knock down that firm fabric of truth which I have erected, after which I have supported by the most impregnable arguments. You call upon me to produce a testimony from the Scriptures, from which it is manifest that Adam fell not, but by the secret decree of God. But had you read even a few pages of my writings with any attention, that sentiment of mine could not have escaped you which everywhere occurs in my books?that God governs all things by His secret counsel and decree. You ascribe a prescience to God after your own fashion, representing Him as sitting in heaven as an idle, inactive, unconcerned spectator of all things in the life of men. Whereas, God Himself, ever vindicating to Himself the right and the act of holding the helm of all things which are done in the whole world, never permits a separation of His prescience from His, power! Nor is this manner of reasoning mine only, but most certainly Augustine's also. "If (says that holy father) God foresaw that which He did not will to be done, God holds not the supreme

rule over all things. God, therefore, ordained that which should come to pass, because nothing could have been done had He not willed it to be done."

If you judge this to be absurd, you will be just as far off as before, and will fall back into the same confusion into which you fell by making my doctrine to be "the doctrine of the devil." For you ought to have applied that remedy for your evil case, which might have been ready at your hand. But that you did not this, nor could do it, is perfectly plain. You might have thought thus, "God foresaw the Fall of Adam. It was in His power to have prevented it if He would. But He did not will to do so. Why did He not will to do so? No other reason can be assigned for His not willing to do so than that His will had quite another bent, or inclination." But, if you will permit yourself to enter into a contention with God, you had better profanely accuse Him at once and condemn Him, for having so made man of constitutional frailty as to leave him liable to fall, and that into eternal ruin on the account! But you will reply that Adam fell by his own free-will. My reply to you in return is, that Adam had need of being gifted with that fortitude and constancy with which the elect of God are gifted whom God warns to "keep" sound and safe "from falling" (Jude 1:24).

Most certain it is that if fresh strength were not supplied to us from heaven every moment, such is our liability to fall, that we should perish a thousand times over. But God supplies all those whom He hath chosen with an invincible fortitude, by which they are so holden up as to "persevere unto the end." How was it, then, I again ask, that God did not bestow this same fortitude and perseverance on Adam, if He had willed that he should stand fast and in safety? Here, most assuredly, every mouth must be silent and dumb; or, all must confess with Solomon, that "God hath made all things for Himself; yea, even the wicked for the day of evil" (Proverbs 16:4). If this offend you as being an absurdity, think within yourself whether the Scriptures declare so often in vain that the judgments of God are "a great deep." If it were possible for us to measure the incomprehensible counsel of God by the standard of our own human capacity, Moses would have said in vain: "Secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever" (Deuteronomy 29:29).

You demand of me to cite the place in the Holy Scriptures by which I prove that God did not prevent the Fall of Adam, because His will was not to prevent it. Just as if that memorable reply of God to all such inquiries and inquirers did not contain in itself an all-sufficient proof: "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy." From which the apostle Paul at once concludes, and justly so, that God hath not mercy upon all, because He wills not to have mercy upon all. And most certainly these words, without the aid of any interpreter, plainly and loudly declare that God is not bound by any law that should compel Him to show mercy unto all men indiscriminately and alike; but that He is the Lord of His own will, to impart pardon to whom He will and to pass by others as He will. It is, moreover, certain that God was the same then as now, when the prophet said of Him, "He doeth according to His will" (Daniel 4:35). If, therefore, God permitted the Fall of Adam against His will (as you would have it), you will next say that He was overcome by Satan in the conflict; and thus you will make, like the Manichees, two ruling principles. But Paul, pleading also this great cause of God, compares Him (and that soberly and solemnly) to a potter, who could of his own will form of the same mass vessels of different kinds as he pleased. Now the apostle might have begun his argument had he been so led from sin. But he does not so. He commences the mighty subject by defending the free right of God from the very beginning of His glorious workmanship, even from His secret eternal and sovereign will. And where he afterwards adds, :That all were concluded

under unbelief," does he teach that this took place contrary to, or without, the will of God? Does he not, on the contrary, teach that God was the author of that state of unbelief? If you reply that all were condemned to unbelief as they deserved, the context will not admit even that interpretation, because Paul is there speaking of the secret judgments of God. And that solemn exclamation of his directly militates against such an interpretation, "O the depth!" etc. Wherefore, as God, from the beginning, predestinated Christ to succour those who were lost, so by His inconceivable and inestimable counsel He decreed a way by which He might manifest forth His glory by the Fall of Adam.

I willingly confess that where God is vindicating the free course of His mercy, He speaks of the whole human race generally, which had already perished in Adam; but this same view and consideration held good before Adam fell, that His will was then all-sufficient to show mercy when and as He pleased. Moreover, this His eternal will, though it depends on none and on nothing but Himself, nor has any prior cause to influence it, is nevertheless founded in the highest reason and in the highest equity. For though in the case of men they require a law to rein and restrain their intemperateness it is far otherwise with God. He is His own law?a law unto Himself! And His will is the highest rule of the highest equity.

01.04. Section III.

ARTICLE III.

(THAT IS, CALUMNY III.) THE SINS WHICH ARE COMMITTED, ARE COMMITTED NOT ONLY BY THE PERMISSION, BUT EVEN BY THE WILL OF GOD. FOR IT IS FRIVOLOUS TO MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE PERMISSION OF GOD AND THE WILL OF GOD, AS FAR AS SIN IS CONCERNED. THEY WHO ATTEMPT TO MAKE THIS DIFFERENCE MERELY ATTEMPT TO GAIN GOD OVER BY FLATTERY.

C A L U M N I A T O R'S OBSERVATIONS AND STATEMENTS ON

ARTICLE III.

Concerning the difference between the will and the permission of God tile arguments of your opponents are these: Calvin (they say) professes that he is a prophet of God; but we say that Calvin is a prophet of the devil. Now one of these assertions must be false; both parties cannot speak the truth. If Calvin is a prophet of God, we lie; but if Calvin is a prophet of the devil, then he lies, for he asserts that he is a prophet of God. But suppose (by the will of God!) that both positions are true; that is, if God wills that Calvin should say that he is a prophet of God, while we say that Calvin is a prophet of the devil; it follows that contradiction is a will which is impossible. For if God wills that which is falser He does not will that which is true. And again, if God wills that which is true, He does not will that which is false. From which it will follow that if God wills that the one party should speak the truth, it must be contrary to His will that the other party should lie. But the one party certainly does lie. Therefore, the one party lies by the permission, but not by the will, of God. Hence, the next consequence is that there is a difference even in God Himself, for there is a discrepancy between His permission and His will. Your adversaries adduce, moreover, many conspicuous examples of this discrepancy between the will of God and His permission, especially from Ezekiel 20:1-49, where God, after He had reproved His people very fully and severely for not obeying His commandments, at last concludes with these words: "Go ye; serve ye every one his idols, and hereafter also, if ye will not hearken unto Me" (Ezekiel 20:39). As if God had said, "I permit you to serve your own lusts, since ye will not obey My, precepts." And this, indeed, seems to be exactly the same as that which He had said in the former part of the same chapter: "Because they despise My statutes, therefore I gave them also statutes that were not good" (Ezekiel 20:24-25). Now God did not in reality, we are assured, give unto the Israelites statutes that were not, in themselves, good, for all the statutes of God are good. But because they despised the good precepts of God, He forsook them; and they being thus forsaken of God, fell away into evil statutes, just as that prodigal son, being forsaken by his father, or rather having forsaken his father, fell into luxury and every evil. Thus also Paul teaches that because men did not love the truth, God sent upon them strong delusions, that they might believe a lie. Of the same description also seems to be that passage of Amos 4:1-13 : "Go ye to Bethel, and transgress, for this liketh you" (Amos 4:4-5). So it is also in the present day (as in the case of thyself and thy disciples). As men would not obey God, who saith that He hateth sin, therefore God hath permitted spirits of

delusion such as yours to exist, who teach that God willeth sin, that they who would not obey the truth might be left to obey a lie. Your opponents adduce that passage from Zechariah, where God says He was angry with the nations that were at ease, because, when He was lightly angry with the Israelites, they helped forward the calamity; that is, they afflicted the Israelites more grievously than the anger of the Lord against them required or could endure. This was, therefore, done by the permission, not by the will, of God. They produce also a similar example from the prophet Obed, who reproves the people of Israel because they oppressed the people of Judah more heavily than the anger of the Lord required. They bring forward also the example of the prodigal son, concerning whom, if thou sayest that he ran into riotous living by the will of his father, it will be the greatest possible absurdity. The son, therefore, thus acted by the permission of the father. In the same way also thy opponents affirm that the wicked are prodigal sons of God, and that they sin, not by the will, but by the permission of God. They refer, moreover, to that saying of Christ, "And ye, will ye also go away?"

Christ most certainly did not will that they should go away, but He permitted them so to do. They argue, finally, from the nature of common sense, which dictates that there must be a difference between willing and permitting. And they affirm that it was according to common sense that Christ taught Divine things; and that if thou take away common sense from His teaching all His parables must fall at once, for it is by common sense that those parables are to be judged of and understood.

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REPLY OF JOHN CALVIN TO

ARTICLE III., AND TO CALUMNIATOR'S STATEMENTS. &C. This THIRD ARTICLE shows, equally with the preceding, how greedily and to what extent you feed on calumnies. If you did wish thus fiercely to gnaw my doctrine, why did you not, at least, cite my words honestly? In the vast cause now before us, I affirm that to make a difference between the permission and the will of God is, indeed, "frivolous." But you interpose a witty and clever argument as you imagine, though it is an empty sophism. If all things are done by the will of God, God (you assert) wills things which are contrary in nature and in principle, which is proved (you maintain) by saying that I really am a prophet of the devil, while I affirm that I am a true servant of God. This appearance of contradiction is that which dazzles and blinds your eyes. But God Himself, who well knoweth in Himself how it is that He willeth that same thing in one sense which is contrary to His will in another, pays no regard whatever to your dullness of understanding and stupidity. As of ten as God called forth the true prophets, He most certainly willed that they should contend zealously and earnestly in declaring the doctrine of the law. Upon this there secretly rose up false prophets, who strove to overthrow that doctrine. That there should be a conflict, therefore, between the true and false prophets was inevitable. But God did not therefore contend with or contradict Himself, though He willed that both these true and these false prophets should come forth. You obtrude upon me the long-suffering of God. But God, on the other hand, declares that no false prophets arise, but those whom He ordains to be such, either to prove the faith of His own people, or to blind the unbelieving. "If there arise among you a false prophet (saith Moses), your God proveth you by that prophet" (Deuteronomy 12:1, Deuteronomy 12:3). Now you, by a most perverse and preposterous

comment, transfer to some other that which Moses ascribes expressly to God. Therefore, either deny at once that God searches the hearts of His people, or else admit that which is the evident and indubitable truth: that false prophets are instruments of God, by which He proves, as by a touchstone, that of which He will have Himself acknowledged to be the author. But Ezekiel sets this forth still more clearly and remarkably: "And if the prophet be deceived when he hath spoken a thing, I the Lord have deceived that prophet, and I will stretch out My hand upon him, and will destroy him from the midst of My people Israel " (Ezekiel 14:9).

You would have us to rest content with the permission of God only. But God, by His prophet, asserts that His will and His hand are in the whole matter as the moving cause. Now just consider, then, which of the two is the more worthy to be believed, God, who by His Spirit, the only fountain of truth, thus, speaks concerning Himself; or you, prating about His hidden and unsearchable mysteries out of the worthless knowledge of your own carnal brain? What! when God calls in Satan for His purposes, as the instrument of His vengeance, and openly gives him commandment to go and deceive the prophets of Ahab, does this positive command differ nothing from a mere permission? The voice of God contains in it no ambiguity whatever, "Who (saith God) will go and deceive Ahab for me?" Nor does God command Satan in any obscure manner "Go thou and be a lying spirit in the mouths of all his prophets" (1 Kings 22:1-53). Now I wish to know from you whether the doing a thing is the same as the permitting it to be done? When David had secretly abused the wife of another man, God declares that He will cause all David’s wives to be dragged forth, to make an example of the same disgraceful sin openly in the sight of the sun. God does not say, "I will permit it to be done," but "I will do it." But you, in your wondrous defence of God (as you think), would aid Him by your fallacious help in thrusting forward your imaginary permission! How very differently does David think and act! He, while revolving in his mind the fearful judgment of God, exclaims. "I was dumb, because Thou didst it!" In like manner Job blesses God, and confesses that he was plundered by the robbers, not only through the permission, but by the will and act of God; for he plainly affirms "that it was the Lord who gave, and that it was the Lord who took away," what He had Himself given. If, upon your authority, giving and receiving are to be understood in the same way as willing and permitting, riches so considered are not blessings actually bestowed of God, but they fall into our hands at random by the permission of God. But if you and your foul band should continue thus to cry out against God until dooms-day, He will nevertheless, in due time, fully justify and vindicate Himself. But as for us, we will adore with all reverence those mysteries which so far surpass our comprehension, until the brightness of their full knowledge shall shine forth upon us in that day when He, who is now seen "through a glass darkly," shall be seen by us "face to face." "Then (saith Augustine) shall He be seen in the brightest light of understanding that which the godly now hold fast in faith. How sure, certain, immutable and all-efficacious, is the will of God! How many things He can do which He yet wills not to be done; but that He wills nothing which He cannot do!" With reference, however, to the present ARTICLE, I will answer you from the mouth of the same godly writer. "These (saith he) are the mighty works of the Lord; exquisitely perfect according to every bent of His will. And so perfect in exquisite wisdom, that when both the angelic and the human natures had sinned?that is, had done, not what God willed, but what each nature willed, even by a like will, in each creature?it came to pass that what God, as the Creator, willed not, He Himself accomplished according as He had willed; thus blessedly using, as the God of perfect goodness even evils to the damnation of those whom He had righteously predestinated unto punishment, and to the salvation of those

whom He had mercifully predestinated unto grace. For, as far as these transgressing natures were themselves concerned, they did that which God willed not but with respect to the Omnipotence of God, they could by no means have done what they did without it, nor without its concernment therein. For by the very act of their doing that which was contrary to the will of God, they were themselves thereby fulfilling the will of God. Wherefore. these mighty works of God, exquisitely perfect, according to every bent of His will, are such that, in a wonderful and ineffable way, that is not done without the will of God which is even done contrary to His will, because it could not be done at all, unless He permitted it to be done; and yet, He does not permit unwillingly, but willingly. Nor, as the God of goodness, would He permit a thing to be done evilly, unless, as the God of Omnipotence, He could work good even out of the evil done." As to the testimonies of the Scripture which you adduce, they have no more to do with the present mighty question and cause, than oil has to do with wine to make a mixture, or to dilute the one with the other. God, speaking to the Jews by the prophet Ezekiel, and addressing them as disobedient, says: "Go ye; worship every man his own idols." This, I openly profess, is not the voice of God commanding or exhorting, but of God rejecting an impious mixture of worship?a worship by which the Jews had profaned His sanctuary. Now what else can you conclude from this passage, but that God sometimes permits that to be which He disapproves and condemns? As if it were not evident to all that God sometimes commands and sometimes permits by the same forms of expression. God says in the Law, "Six days shalt thou labour." Here is a permission. For sanctifying every seventh day to Himself He leaves the other six free to men. In a manner somewhat different also He permitted of old divorce to the Jews, which He nevertheless by no means approved. In the present case, recorded by the prophet Ezekiel. He gives up the double-minded and the pertidious to idols, because He will not suffer His name to be polluted. But how is it that you have forgotten, here, that all this is wrought by the "Secret Providence of God," by which He ordains and turns to the accomplishment of His own purposes all the movements and tumults of the world, according to His own will? Moreover, corrupting vainly and ignorantly as you do that other passage (Ezekiel 20:24-25), you evince how everything sacred is disregarded by an impure and profane person like yourself. The words of God are, "Because they despised My statutes. I gave them precepts that were not good." Here you trifle by observing that when they were forsaken of God they fell into idolatry. But God undoubtedly means that the Jews were given over to the Chaldeans into slavery, and that the Chaldeans, who were idolaters, were oppressing them by their tyrannical laws. But our question now is, whether God merely permitted the Jews to be thus dragged into exile by the Chaldeans, or whether He used the latter as rods, chosen by Himself, wherewith to scourge the Jews for their sins? For if you will still make the doctrine of mere permission a pretext, you might as well commit all the prophets to the flames at once, who at one time declare that Satan was sent by God to deceive, and at another that the Chaldeans or Assyrians were sent by God to destroy; and who, at the same time, assert that God "hissed for" the Egyptians, that He might use their might in punishing His people, and at another that the Assyrians were His hired soldiers; that Nebuchadnezzar was His servant in plundering Egypt, and that the Assyrians were the "axe" in His hand and the "rods" of His anger in utterly devastating Judaea. I do not multiply, as I might do, kindred examples, lest I should exceed all moderate bounds of proof (Isaiah 10:5). Nor is your inebriated audacity the less manifest, where you would vainly make it appear that God’s sending "strong delusions" on the unbelieving, that they might believe a lie, means that He permits false teachers to exist; and that, as He permitted the prodigal son to fall into riotous living when he had

deserted his father, so He permits His prodigals to fall into error and delusion when they forsake Him. And when you spout forth all this folly, you imagine that your readers are so blind that they do not see things to be quite otherwise in the words of Paul, where he says, "God shall send upon them strong delusions, that they might believe a lie" (2 Thessalonians 2:11). But it is no marvel whatever that he should prate thus, at will and at random, who imagines that there are no judgments of God at all, or who does not know what the judgment means, or holds it in perfect contempt if he does. For no man who is not insane would say that a judge had no hand in the judgment of the wicked, or that he would sit down in unconcern and leave others to perform that duty which belonged properly to himself alone.

You attempt, however, by your barking, either to frighten me or to provoke me, when you say that by the permission of God spirits of error and delusion exist, who teach that God wills sin. But as this same reproach was cast in the teeth of the apostle Paul himself, why should I grieve or complain at being a partaker of the same reproach with him? You adduce a passage from the prophet Zechariah, where the nations are described as punishing God's people beyond the extent which His wrath required Are you, then, really such a simpleton as not to believe that there was protection enough in God to prevent this excess of His people's affliction by their enemies, and to have made their punishment less, had He been pleased, or had He willed so to do? You reply that the words of the prophet intimate this excess of punishment. But you must be twice or thrice dipped in stupidity, if you perceive not that God tries the patience of His people in a marvellous manner by the severest proofs, sometimes in one way and sometimes in another, and that He is often, at the same time, offended by the insolence of their enemies, where He sees them become too much elated with their victories, and when they insult and cruelly use the conquered. Nay, your foolish comments and reasonings fall to the ground of their own accord, directly militating against and mutually destroying each other. For the truth and fact must be, either that God positively commanded those profane nations, or He merely permitted them, to gently chastise His people. If you reply that He commanded them to do so, I then obtain the conclusion that, though these neighbouring enemies were, without cause, afflictive to the miserable exiles who dwelt with them, yet, that they would have been without blame if they had not exceeded due bounds in their cruel treatment of them as the conquered and as captives. For who would attribute that to them as iniquity which they had done at God's command? But you are labouring all the time to establish a difference between the permission of God and His command, thus making it appear that though God commanded their enemies to inflict punishment on His people, yet it was by His permission only that they exceeded all due bounds in the punishment they inflicted. In this same way of reasoning the Israelites also were deserving of censure, for they also afflicted their brethren of Judah more severely than the wrath of God against them (according to your reasoning) required. But your insanity blinds you so far as to cause you to assert that they would have been free from all guilt and blame if they had been moderate in their vexation of their brethren. For I have to bring you back again and again to this point: that the Israelites sinned, not only because (by the permission of God as thou imaginest) they exercised too great severity towards their brethren, but because they took up arms against them at all. You, however, hesitate not to declare that there was no sin in their commencing war against their brethren, because God was angry with the people of Judah, and Himself armed the Israelites, that they might execute His vengeance upon them at His own command. Whereas I maintain that the Israelites sinned in a twofold sense: first, because they had themselves no intent or desire to do the will of God, although they were really

the instruments of His vengeance; and secondly, because their atrocity itself proves that they were destitute of all sense of equity. Nay, at the very outset you betray your shameless ignorance in your pretending that men, as far as they are themselves concerned, err and fall by the permission of God. Whereas, such a representation of the sacred matter is impious and profane. It is making God to give permission to men to do evil in reference to their own actions, as considered in themselves; while the reality and truth are, that God severely prohibits and solemnly forbids the doing of anything that is contrary to His commands. But why God of His will permits men to do wrong; nay, why God by His secret decree gives men over to evil, whom He nevertheless commands to continue in the right way; it becomes our sobriety and modesty of mind to remain willingly ignorant. To search into this profound secret insolently as you do is rashness, audacity and madness!

How cleverly and appropriately you interpret that passage where Christ (as you make it appear) permits His disciples to go away (John 6:67), learn from the following reality of the case. When Christ, referring to those who had gone away, turns to His disciples and says to them, "Will ye also go away?" He is positively exhorting them to persevere and continue with Him. For, asking them in grief whether they also would go away, He puts, as it were, a gentle rein upon them to prevent them from falling away with apostates. And is this, I pray you, the manner in which you convert all such forms of speech as these into permissions? Common sense does, I acknowledge, at first sight, take to command to be one thing, and to permit to be another. But the fact is, that this difference, or this sameness, is not the real question at issue. The question between us is, whether God, in unconcern and inactivity, merely observes, as an uninterested, unconcerned and idle spectator, all the things that are done upon earth; or whether, from His all-high throne, He rules, overrules and governs by His Divine command, every single action of the sons of men? Or, if the term permission gives you so much satisfaction and pleasure, answer me this question: Does God permit things to be done willingly or unwillingly? That God permits unwillingly is positively denied by Psalms 115:3 : "The Lord hath done whatsoever He willed" (or, "whatsoever He hath pleased"). If, therefore, God permits willingly, to represent Him as sitting on His throne as a mere unconcerned and unengaged spectator, is utterly profane. Wherefore it follows that God determines and rules by His counsel whatsoever He wills to be done. But you are for bringing, with child’s talk, this sublime mystery of God down to the rule and measure of common sense! And as to your objecting and arguing, on the other hand, that Christ so taught all the Divine lessons of His teaching, as to accommodate Himself to the capacity of people of common sense; Christ Himself flatly denies this, and convicts you at once both of lying and of impudence in the matter. Hear you not Christ Himself declaring that He spoke in "parables," to the very end, that the common people, or people in general, "might hear, and yet not understand"? It is, indeed, quite true that the Holy Spirit does, for our sakes, everywhere speak in a certain manner, as a nurse would speak to children; but this is a widely different matter from representing, as you do, that common sense is a capable and competent judge of those profound doctrines, which exceed in their incomprehensibility the capacity of angels. Paul proclaims aloud that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them (1 Corinthians 2:14). He therefore admonishes all those to become fools, and to resign all their own wisdom, who would profit in the heavenly school. In a word, God everywhere vindicates to Himself as His own all true light of understanding. Indeed, both days and volumes would fail me, if I were to attempt the accumulation of those testimonies of Scripture which condemn common sense as perfect darkness, for they are

numberless, and they all declare that light can be obtained from heaven alone, and that whosoever would be wise in the things of God, and of his own salvation, must renounce all his own wisdom, how much human light soever it may contain. I will content myself, therefore, with one example only. God willed not that the doctrine of the Gospel should be preached unto the Gentiles, and He withheld it from them even until the coming of Christ. And therefore it is, that the apostle calls the Gospel "the mystery that was hidden from ages;" nay, that was unknown to the angels themselves in heaven (Colossians 1:26; 1 Peter 1:12).

Notwithstanding such testimonies as these, however, you will persist in thrusting upon us the sufficiency of common sense, which, by its own natural will and judgment, subverts this very doctrine of the apostle altogether. For you will grant nothing to be even probable, but that of which common sense may be the estimator, arbiter and judge. Whereas the prophet, when speaking of the secret Providence of God, exclaims, "O Lord, how great are Thy works! and Thy thoughts are very deep " (Psalms 92:5) But you, on the contrary, deny that anything is divine but that which you can measure by the rule of your own reason. What becomes, then, of the remonstrance of the apostle, when he is discussing the mighty question now before us? Why doth he make the appeal, "Nay but who art thou, O man?" And again, what meaneth his wonder and admiration, "O the depth!" "How unsearchable," etc., etc.? The apostle commands us to wonder and be astonished, because. whenever we come to the incomprehensible counsel of God, all mortal senses and powers fail before it. Whilst you, all the time, will admit nothing that you cannot see with your own natural eyes!

01.05. Section IV.

ARTICLE IV.

(THAT IS, CALUMNY IV.) "ALL THE CRIMES THAT ARE COMMITTED BY ANY MAN WHATSOEVER ARE, BY THE OPERATION OF GOD, GOOD AND JUST."

CALUMNIATOR'S OBSERVATIONS AND STATEMENTS ON

ARTICLE IV.

Against this FOURTH ARTICLE all your opponents utter aloud that passage of Isaiah 5:20 : "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil." Now, if sin is a good and righteous work of God, it follows that righteousness is an evil and unrighteous work of God, for righteousness is altogether contrary to sin. Again, if sin is righteous, it follows that unrighteousness is righteous, for sin is unrighteousness. Farther, if sin is a work of God, it must follow (your opponents argue) that God doeth that which is sinful.

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REPLY OF JOHN CALVIN TO

ARTICLE IV., AND TO CALUMNIATOR'S OBSERVATIONS, STATEMENTS, &c., &c. In the case of this FOURTH ARTICLE, also, you go on grossly lying as before, of which fact I would, at the outset, cautiously warn my readers, and for this reason, that they may form their judgments from the reality of the case rather than from your foul calumnies. Nor do I so much condemn your objections in themselves, as indignantly complain that by altering and perverting my words, you malignantly wrest what I did say, for the purpose of fanning the flame of hatred against my doctrine, which doctrine is far different from your false representations of it. You enter into a quarrel with me, as if I had said, "that sin was a just, or righteous, work of God," which doctrine, and the idea of it, I hold throughout my writings in the utmost detestation. Wherefore, the greater the cleverity of argument you imagine yourself to possess, the greater is your real puerility. You arrive in your argument on this mendaciously stated FOURTH ARTICLE, at the conclusion that righteousness is evil, and that unrighteousness is good; and that God, as the author and (as you awfully state) the doer of sin, is unjust in punishing that which is His own work. Whereas, all these monstrous profanities are the fabrications of your own brain! And all such enormities of profaneness I have ever most carefully, and with abhorrence, condemned and refuted in all my writings.

You yourself, however, will one day find, to your sorrow, how abhorrent a crime it is to trifle and lie in this manner concerning the secret mysteries of God! And that you may clearly understand that you are not dealing with me in this your war against the truth, but with the supreme judge of heaven Himself, whose tribunal, you may be assured, you can never escape, listen to that which Job testifies?and certainly under none other influence than the inspiration of the Holy Spirit?that the doings of Satan, and of the robbers who plundered him, were the works of God Himself. And

yet Job never, in the extremest idea, charges God with sin. No such most distant intimation is found in the patriarch. On the contrary, he blesses God’s holy name for what He had done by Satan and by these robbers (Job 1:21). So also when the brethren of the innocent Joseph sold him to the Ishmaelites, the deed was evidently a most wicked one. But when Joseph ascribes this to God as His work, so far is he from imputing sin to God, that he considers and lauds His infinite goodness, because that, by this very means, He had given nourishment to his father’s whole family (Genesis 45:1-28). Again, when Isaiah declares that the Assyrian is the "staff of God’s wrath" in His righteous hand, by which He was about to work that terrible slaughter by means of the same Assyrian (Isaiah 10:15), the prophet thereby makes God the author of that awful destruction, yet without the least imputation of sin to God, or the most distant idea of it. In like manner, when Jeremiah curses those who do the work of God negligently (Jeremiah 48:10), the prophet, by "the work of the Lord," means all that cruel destruction which their enemies wrought upon the Jews. Go then, therefore, and expostulate with the prophet, and declare to him that he has made God to commit sin. In a word, all who are in the least acquainted with the Scripture, know full well that a whole volume might be made of like passages of the Holy Scriptures, where God is made the author, as commander, of the evil and cruel deeds done by men and nations. But it is utterly vain to spend more words upon a subject so well known and self-evident. Was it not a signal manifestation of the grace of God when He spared not His own Son? Was it not an equally marvellous exhibition of grace in Christ when He delivered up Himself? Now wilt thou really here affirm, with thy foul and profane mouth, that God sinned in thus ordaining the deed of this crucifixion of His Son and in ordaining the men also who should do the deed? (Acts 4:28) Was God’s work of the offering up of His only begotten Son a sin in Him? O no! All godly persons very easily untie this knot, as Augustine does in the following clear and striking manner: ?

"When the Father gave up the Son, when the Lord gave up His own body, when Judas delivered up the Lord, how was it that, in this one same ’delivering up,’ God was righteous and man guilty? The reason was that, in this one same thing which God and man did, the motive was not the same from which God and man acted. Hence it is that Peter without hesitation declares that Pontius Pilate and Judas, and the other wicked people of the Jews, had done ’what God’s hand and His counsel had afore determined to be done’ (Acts 4:28), as Peter had just before said, ’Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God’ (Acts 2:23)." Now if you turn your back on the term "foreknowledge," the definitiveness of the terms, "determinate counse1," will floor you at once. Nor indeed does the former passage leave the least degree of ambiguity behind it, namely, that Pontius Pilate and the Jews, and the wicked people, did "whatsoever God’s hand and His counsel had before determined to be done." Now if your understanding cannot hold a mystery and a secret so deep as these, why do you not wonder and exclaim with the apostle Paul, "O the depth!" why do you daringly trample upon them as an infuriated madman? Had you been of a teachable mind, you would have found in my writings explications of this deep matter far more copious that I can here repeat. My present object is only to blunt the edge of your impudence, that it might not disturb the minds of the weak.

01.06. Section V.

ARTICLE V.

(THAT IS, CALUMNY V.) NO ADULTERY, THEFT, OR MURDER, IS COMMITTED WITHOUT THE INTERVENTION OF THE WILL OF GOD.

(" Institutes," chap. xiv. 44.) _____

ARTICLE VI.

(THAT IS, CALUMNY VI.) THE SCRIPTURE OPENLY TESTIFIES THAT EVIL DOINGS ARE DESIGNED, NOT ONLY BY THE WILL, BUT BY THE AUTHORITY, OF GOD.

CALUMNIATOR'S STATEMENTS AND OBSERVATIONS.

Against this FIFTH and SIXTH ARTICLE your opponents bring these and many other arguments. If (they say) God wills sin, God is the author of sin. And again, if God wills sin (they argue), it is not the devil that wills sin, for the devil is the mere servant of God. And they affirm that if God wills sin, He must be inferior to many men, for many men are unwilling to sin. Nay, the nearer any man approaches to the very law of nature, the less he will sin. Else, how is it that Paul says, "The good that I would, I do not; but the evil that I would not, that I do." If Paul wills sin by nature (as Calvin saith), how is it that Paul does not will what God wills? And how is it that Paul wills that good which God (according to Calvin) does not will? Finally, your opponents ask of you, what Scripture testifies that evil doings are designed of God, not only by His will, but by His authority?

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REPLY OF JOHN CALVIN TO ARTICLES V. AND VI., AND TO THE CALUMNIATOR'S STATEMENTS AND OBSERVATIONS THEREON. In the case of this FIFTH ARTICLE, it is not without the peculiar intervention of the providence of God that you have pretended to give the reference to the passage in my "Institutes," from which you falsely assert it is extracted. In this instance, readers will see that I state these things in these articles (that is, calumnies), which my adversaries bring against my doctrines, just as, and as faithfully as, if they themselves stated them.

Now seizing, as you do, upon this mutilated passage, do you not deserve that everyone who passes you should spit in your face? And though you do not attempt to offer any reference in the case of the SIXTH ARTICLE, yet your real audacity takes a wider leap still. Now tell me, did I, who in all my writings so reverently and solemnly declare that whenever and wherever sin is mentioned the Name of God should be kept in all solemnity wide out of the way; did I ever, or anywhere, assert that evil doings were perpetrated, not only by the design, but by the authority of God? Most certainly nothing can be uttered too powerful or too severe in condemnation of such monstrous blasphemy. I am willing to hear all that you or any men can say in its abhorrence. Let not my name, therefore, ever be associated with its horrible profanity.

How successful you are in deceiving fools I know not, but of one thing I am certain: that if anyone will just take the pains to compare your foul inventions with my genuine writings, your dishonesty and wickedness will leave you painted in your true and execrable colours. You profanely contend that if God loves sin, He must hate righteousness; and you utter many things in the same line of profanity. And why do you utter them, but that you might be forced at last to subscribe, under your own convictions, to my written doctrines? For not yesterday only, nor the day before yesterday, but for these many years past, I have written and spoken concerning Job thus: If in the spoliation of that patriarch by robbers, the work of God, and of Satan, and of the plunderers, were one and the same in the act abstractedly considered, how is it that God is clear of all that fault (as He sacredly is), of which fault Satan and the robbers are guilty? Why, it is thus: If, in the actions of men, an entire difference exists when the motives and ends of those actions are duly considered, so that the cruelty of that man is condemned who barbarously pierces the eyes of a crow, or the sacrilege of him who kills a crane (a bird held in so much religious veneration among the ancients), while the sentence of that judge is lauded who sanctifies his hands by putting to death a murderer; why should the position of God be held inferior to that of man? Why should not His infinite righteousness vindicate Him, and hold Him separate from a participation in the guilt of evil-doing men? Only let readers cursorily observe what I am now about to subjoin. Nay, let them carefully read the whole of that part of my "Institutes" where I am discoursing on the Providence of God, and he will, in a moment, see all thy cloudy-minded objections discussed, exposed, answered and refuted.

Let readers consider also, if they please, what I have written in my Commentary on Acts 2:1-47. Men (I have there shown), when they commit theft or murder, sin against God because they are thieves and murderers, and because, in their theft and in their murder, there is wicked design. But God, who makes sovereign use of their wickedness, stands in an infinitely different, and in an all-high position above all men, and acts, and things. And the objects and ends of God are infinitely different from, and higher than, those of men. God’s purpose is, by the wicked acts of men, to chastise some and to exercise the patience of others. Hence, in all these His uses of the evil doings of men, God never deviates in the remotest degree from His own nature; that is, from His own infinitely perfect rectitude. If, then, an evil deed is thus to be estimated according to its end and object, it is fully manifest that God is not, nor can be, the author of sin! The sum of the whole great matter is this: Since an evil will, in men, is the cause of all and every sin, God, in performing His righteous counsels by the hands of men, is so far from being involved in the same sin and fault with men, that in a marvellous manner He causes, by their means, the light of His glory to shine forth out of darkness. And, indeed, in that very book of mine, "On the Providence of God," which lighted up all these very flames of the deepest pits of hell against me, there will be found continually occurring the distinctive declaration that nothing is more impious or more preposterous than to drag God into a participation of sin or guilt with man, while He is performing His secret judgments by means of the hands of men and of the devil, because there is no affinity whatever between the motives and ends of God and those of men and devils. But there was published by me, more than twelve years ago, a book which clearly vindicates both me and my doctrine from all these foul calumnies, and which ought to preserve me free from all this present trouble also, if there were but one spark of honesty or humanity either in yourself or your fellows. But with reference to that mad and impious dream of the Libertines, concerning God being the author of sin, which fascinated so many, how fully I have refuted that horrible idea I will not now

boast. Most certainly I undertook to defend the cause of God therein purposely, and I proved with all possible clearness that God was not, in any sense, or degree, or manner whatever, the author of sin.

02.00. A Treatise on Relics

A Treatise on Relics By

John Calvin Translated from the French Original With An Introductory Dissertation On the Miraculous Images, as Well as Other Superstitions, of the Roman Catholic and Russo-Greek Churches. By the Late Count Valerian Krasinski, Author of “The Religious History of the Slavonic Nations,” etc.

Second Edition.

Edinburgh:

Johnstone, Hunter & Co.

1870

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List Of Works Published By Johnstone, Hunter, & Co., Edinburgh.

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02.00.2. PREFACE.

PREFACE. THE Treatise on Relics by the great Reformer of Geneva: is not so generally known as it deserves, though at the time of its publication it enjoyed a considerable popularity. The probable reason of this is, that the absurdity of the relics described in this Treatise has since the Reformation gradually become so obvious, that their exhibitors make as little noise as possible about their miraculous wares, whose virtues are no longer believed except by the most ignorant part of the population of countries wherein the education of the inferior classes is neglected. And, indeed, not only Protestants, but many enlightened Roman Catholics believed that all the miracles of relics, images, and other superstitions with which Christianity was infected during the times of mediaeval ignorance would be soon, by the progress of knowledge, consigned for ever to the oblivion of the dark ages, and only recorded in the history of the aberrations of the human mind, together with the superstitions of ancient Egypt, Greece, and Rome. Unfortunately these hopes have not been realized, and are still remaining amongst the pia desideria. The Roman Catholic reaction which commenced about half a century ago by works of a philosophical nature, adapted to the wants of the most intellectual classes of society, has, emboldened by success, gradually assumed a more and more material tendency, and at length begun to manifest itself by such results as the exhibition of the holy coat at Treves, which produced a great noise over all Germany, the apparition of the Virgin at La Salette, the winking Madonna of Rimini, and, what is perhaps more important than all, the solemn installation of the relics of St Theodosia at Amiens; whilst works of a description similar to the Life of St Francis of Assisi, by M. Chavin de Malan, and the Lives of the English Saints, which I have mentioned on page 113 and 115 of my Introduction, are produced by writers of considerable talent and learning. These are significant facts, and prove, at all events, that in spite of the progress of intellect and knowledge; which is the boast of our century, we seem to be fast returning to a state of things similar to the time when Calvin wrote his Treatise. I therefore believe that its reproduction in a new English translation will not be out of date. On the other side, the politico-religious system of aggression followed by Russia has now taken such a rapid development, that the dangers which threaten the liberties and civilization of Europe from that quarter have become more imminent than those which may be apprehended from the Roman Catholic reaction. Fortunately England and France have taken up arms against the impious crusade proclaimed by the Imperial Pope of Russia. I think that the term impious, which I am advisedly using on this occasion, is by no means exaggerated; because how can we otherwise designate the proceedings adopted by the Czar for exciting the religious fanaticism of the Russians, as, for instance, the letter of the Archbishop of Georgia, addressed to that of Moscow, and published in the official Gazette of St. Petersburg, stating on the authority of the Russian General, Prince Bagration Mukhranski, that during an engagement between the Russians and the Turks, which recently took place in Asia, the Blessed Virgin appeared in the air and frightened the Turks to such a degree that they took to flight! I have developed this subject in the last chapter of my Introduction, in order to show my readers the religious condition of the Russian people, because I think that without it a knowledge of the policy now followed by their Government cannot be well understood, or its consequences fully appreciated.

EDINBURGH, May 1854.

02.00.3. Preface To The Second Edition.

Preface To The Second Edition. The valuable Dissertation which forms such a fitting commentary upon John Calvin’s Treatise on Relics, was written by the late lamented author on the eve of the Crimean War, in 1854. It has been out of print for several years, but in these days of Popish assumption and claims to Infallibility, it has been thought that a new edition would prove acceptable, and be found useful in directing attention to the mummeries and absurdities engrafted on the True Christian Faith, by the false and corrupt Church of Rome.

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Chapter I. Origin Of The Worship Of Relics And Images In The Christian Church.

Hero-worship is innate to human nature, and it is founded on some of our noblest feelings,—gratitude, love, and admiration.—but which, like all other feelings, when uncontrolled by principle and reason, may easily degenerate into the wildest exaggerations, and lead to most dangerous consequences. It was by such an exaggeration of these noble feelings that Paganism filled the Olympus with gods and demigods,—elevating to this rank men who have often deserved the gratitude of their fellow-creatures, by some signal services rendered to the community, or their admiration, by having performed some deeds which required a more than usual degree of mental and physical powers. The same cause obtained for the Christian martyrs the gratitude and admiration of their fellow-Christians, and finally converted them into a kind of demigods. This was more particularly the case when the church began to be corrupted by her compromise with Paganism, which having been baptized without being converted, rapidly introduced into the Christian church, not only many of its rites and ceremonies, but even its polytheism, with this difference, that the divinities of Greece and Rome were replaced by Christian saints, many of whom received the offices of their Pagan predecessors. The church in the beginning tolerated these abuses, as a temporary evil, but was afterwards unable to remove them; and they became so strong, particularly during the prevailing ignorance of the middle ages, that the church ended by legalising, through her decrees, that at which she did nothing but wink at first. I shall endeavour to give my readers a rapid sketch of the rise, progress, and final establishment of the Pagan practices which not only continue to prevail in the Western as well as in the Eastern church, but have been of late, notwithstanding the boasted progress of intellect in our days, manifested in as bold as successful a manner.

Nothing, indeed, can be more deserving of our admiration than the conduct of the Christian martyrs, who cheerfully submitted to an ignominious death, inflicted by the most atrocious torments, rather than deny their faith even by the mere performance of an apparently insignificant rite of Paganism. Their persecutors were often affected by seeing examples of an heroic fortitude, such as they admired in a Scævola or a Regulus, displayed not only by men, but by women, and even children, and became converted to a faith which could inspire its confessors with such a devotion to its tenets. It has been justly said that the blood of the martyrs was the glory and the seed of the church, because the constancy of her confessors has, perhaps, given her more converts than the eloquence and learning of her doctors. It was, therefore, very natural that the memory of those noble champions of Christianity should be held in great veneration by their brethren in the faith. The bodies of the martyrs, or their remnants, were always, whenever it was possible, purchased from their judges or executioners, and decently buried by the Christians. The day on which the martyr had suffered was generally marked in the registers of his church, in order to commemorate this glorious event on its anniversaries. These commemorations usually

consisted in the eulogy of the martyr, delivered in an assembly of the church, for the edification of the faithful, the strengthening of the weak, and the stimulating of the lukewarm, by setting before them the noble example of the above-mentioned martyr. It was very natural that the objects of the commemoration received on such an occasion the greatest praises, not unfrequently expressed in the most exaggerated terms, but there was no question about invoking the aid or intercession of the confessors whose example was thus held out for the imitation of the church.

We know from the Acts that neither St Stephen, the first Christian martyr, nor St James, who was killed by Herod, were invoked in any manner by the apostolic church, because, had this been the case, the inspired writer of this first record of the ancient church would not have omitted such an important circumstance, having mentioned facts of much lesser consequence. Had such a practice been in conformity with the apostolic doctrine, it would have certainly been brought forward in the epistles of St Paul, or in those of other apostles. There is also sufficient evidence that the fathers of the primitive church knew nothing of the invocation, or any other kind of worship rendered to departed saints. The limits of this essay allow me not to adduce evidences of this fact, which may be abundantly drawn from the writings of those fathers, and I shall content myself with the following few but conclusive instances of this kind.

St Clement, bishop of Rome, who is supposed to have been instituted by St Paul, and to be the same of whom he speaks in his Epistle to the Php 4:3, addressed a letter to the Corinthians on account of certain dissensions by which their church was disturbed. He recommends to them, with great praises, the Epistles of St Paul, who had suffered martyrdom under Nero, but he does not say a word about invoking the aid or intercession of the martyr, who was the founder of their church, and which would have been most suitable on that occasion, if such a practice had already been admitted by the Christians of his time. On the contrary, he prays God for them, “because it is He who gives to the soul that invokes Him, faith, grace, peace, patience, and wisdom.” St Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, who lived in the second century, addressed a letter to the Philippians, but he says nothing in it to recommend the invocation of St Paul, who was the founder of their church, and as such would have been considered as its patron saint, had the worship of the saints been at that time already introduced amongst the Christians. The most important and positive proof that the primitive Christians, not only did not pay any adoration to the martyrs, but decidedly rejected it, is the epistle which was issued by the church of Smyrna after the martyrdom of its bishop, whom I have just mentioned. It states that the Pagans had, at the instigation of the Jews, closely watched the Christians, imagining that they would endeavour to carry away the ashes of Polycarp in order to worship him after his death, because these idolaters knew not that the Christians cannot abandon Jesus Christ, or worship any one else. “We worship,” says the same document, “Jesus Christ, who is the Son of God; but with regard to the martyrs, the disciples of Christ and imitators of his virtues, we love them, as they deserve it, on account of the unconquerable love which they had for their Master and King; and would to God that we should become their disciples and partakers of their zeal.”

I could multiply proofs of this kind without end, but I shall only observe, that even in the fourth century the orthodox Christians considered the worship of every created being as idolatry, because the opponents of the Arians, who considered Jesus Christ as created and not co-essential with God the Father, employed the following argument to combat this dogma:—“If you consider Jesus Christ a created being, you commit idolatry by worshipping him.”

Admiration is, however, akin to adoration, and it was no wonder that those whose memory was constantly praised, and frequently in the most exaggerated terms, gradually began to be considered as something more than simple mortals, and treated accordingly. It was also very natural that various objects which had belonged to the martyrs were carefully preserved as interesting mementoes, since it is continually done with persons who have acquired some kind of celebrity, and that this should be the case with their bodies, which have often been embalmed. It is, however, impossible, as Calvin has justly observed,5 to preserve such objects without honouring them in a certain manner, and this must soon degenerate into adoration. This was the origin of the worship of relics, which went on increasing in the same ratio as the purity of Christian doctrines was giving way to the superstitions of Paganism. The worship of images is intimately connected with that of the saints. They were rejected by the primitive Christians; but St Irenæus, who lived in the second century, relates that there was a sect of heretics, the Carpocratians, who worshipped, in the manner of Pagans, different images representing Jesus Christ, St Paul, and others. The Gnostics had also images; but the church rejected their use in a positive manner, and a Christian writer of the third century, Minutius Felix, says that “the Pagans reproached the Christians for having neither temples nor simulachres;” and I could quote many other evidences that the primitive Christians entertained a great horror against every kind of images, considering them as the work of demons.

It appears, however, that the use of pictures was creeping into the church already in the third century, because the council of Elvira in Spain, held in 305, especially forbids to have any picture in the Christian churches. These pictures were generally representations of some events, either of the New or of the Old Testament, and their object was to instruct the common and illiterate people in sacred history, whilst others were emblems, representing some ideas connected with the doctrines of Christianity. It was certainly a powerful means of producing an impression upon the senses and the imagination of the vulgar, who believe without reasoning, and admit without reflection; it was also the most easy way of converting rude and ignorant nations, because, looking constantly on the representations of some fact, people usually end by believing it. This iconographic teaching was, therefore, recommended by the rulers of the church, as being useful to the ignorant, who had only the understanding of eyes, and could not read writings. Such a practice was, however, fraught with the greatest danger, as experience has but too much proved. It was replacing intellect by sight.7 Instead of elevating man towards God, it was bringing down the Deity to the level of his finite intellect, and it could not but powerfully contribute to the rapid spread of a pagan anthropomorphism in the church.

There was also another cause which seems to have greatly contributed to the propagation of the abovementioned anthropomorphism amongst the Christians, namely, the contemplative life of the hermits, particularly of those who inhabited the burning deserts of Egypt. It has been observed of these monks, by Zimmerman, in his celebrated work on Solitude, that “men of extraordinary characters, and actuated by strange and uncommon passions, have shrunk from the pleasures of the world into joyless gloom and desolation. In savage and dreary deserts they have lived a solitary and destitute life, subjecting themselves to voluntary self-denials and mortifications almost incredible; sometimes exposed in nakedness to the chilling blasts of the winter cold, or the scorching breath of summer’s heat, till their brains, distempered by the joint operation of tortured senses and overstrained imagination, swarmed with the wildest and most frantic visions. The

same writer relates, on the authority of Sulpicius Severus, that an individual had been roving about Mount Sinai nearly during fifty years, entirely naked, and avoiding all intercourse with men. Once, however, being inquired about the motives of his strange conduct, he answered, that, “enjoying as he did the society of seraphim and cherubim, he felt aversion to intercourse with men.”

Many of these enthusiasts imagined, in their hallucinations, they had a direct intercourse with God himself, who, as well as the subordinate spirits, appeared to them in a human shape. The monks of Egypt were, indeed, the most zealous defenders of the corporeality of God. They violently hated Origines for his maintaining that He was spiritual. Theophilus, bishop of Alexandria, opposed this error; but the monks assembled in great force, with the intention of murdering him; and he escaped this danger by addressing them in the words which Jacob used to Esau, “I have seen thy face, as though I had seen the face of God.”—(Genesis 33:10) This compliment, which could be interpreted as an acknowledgment of a corporeal God, appeased the wrath of the monks, but they compelled Theophilus to anathematise the writings of Origines. The following anecdote is characteristic of the strong tendency of human nature towards anthropomorphism. An old monk, called Serapion, having been convinced by the arguments of a friend that it was an error to believe God corporeal, exclaimed, weeping, “Alas, my God was taken from me, and I do not know whom I am now worshipping!” I shall have, in the course of this essay, opportunities to show that the monks have always been the most zealous and efficient promoters of image-worship. The following rapid sketch of the introduction of image-worship into the Christian church, and of its consequences, has been drawn by a French living writer, whose religious views I do not share, but whose profound erudition, fairness, and sincerity, are deserving of the greatest praise:—

“The aversion of the first Christians to the images, inspired by the Pagan simulachres, made room, during the centuries which followed the period of the persecutions, to a feeling of an entirely different kind, and the images gradually gained their favour. Reappearing at the end of the fourth and during the course of the fifth centuries, simply as emblems, they soon became images, in the true acceptation of this word; and the respect which was entertained by the Christians for the persons and ideas represented by those images, was afterwards converted into a real worship. Representations of the sufferings which the Christians had endured for the sake of their religion, were at first exhibited to the people in order to stimulate by such a sight the faith of the masses, always lukewarm and indifferent. With regard to the images of divine persons of entirely immaterial beings, it must be remarked, that they did not originate from the most spiritualised and pure doctrines of the Christian society, but were rejected by the severe orthodoxy of the primitive church. These simulachres appear to have been spread at first by the Gnostics,—i.e., by those Christian sects which adopted the most of the beliefs of Persia and India. Thus it was a Christianity which was not purified by its contact with the school of Plato,—a Christianity which entirely rejected the Mosaic tradition, in order to attach itself to the most strange and attractive myths of Persia and India,—that gave birth to the images. And it was a return to the spiritualism of the first ages, and a revival of the spirit of aversion to what has a tendency of lowering Divinity to the narrow proportions of a human creature, that produced war against those images. But the manners and the beliefs had been changed. Whole nations had received Christianity, when it was already escorted by that idolatrous train of carved and painted images. Only those populations amongst whom the ancient traditions were preserved could favour this reaction. The clergy were, moreover, interested in maintaining one of their most powerful means of teaching. The long and

persevering efforts of the Iconoclasts proved therefore ineffective; and the Waldenses were not more fortunate. Wickliffe, the Hussites, and Carlostad, attacked the images; but it was reserved only to the Calvinists to establish in some parts of Europe the triumph of the ideas of the Iconoclasts. The shock was terrible. The Religionists frequently committed acts of a fanatical and senseless vandalism; and art had many losses to deplore. But the idolatrous tendency was struck at its very root; and Catholicism itself found, after the struggle, more purity and idealism in its own worship. The Reformed perceived afterwards the exaggeration of their principles; and though they continued to defend the entrance of their temples to the simulachres, condemned by God on Mount Sinai, they spared those which had been bequeathed by the less severe and more material faith of their fathers." The principal cause of the corruption of the Christian church, by the introduction of the Pagan ideas and practices alluded to above, was, however, chiefly the lamentable policy of compromise with Paganism which that church adopted soon after her sudden triumph by the conversion of Constantine. The object of this policy was to lead into her pale the Pagans as rapidly as possible; and, therefore, instead of making them enter by the strait gate, she widened it in such a manner, that the rush of Paganism had almost driven Christianity out of her pale. The example of the emperors, who, professing Christianity, were, or considered themselves to be, obliged, by the necessities of their position, to act on some occasions as Pagans, may have been not without influence on the church. I shall endeavour to develop this important subject in the following chapters; and, in order to remove every suspicion of partiality, I shall do it almost entirely on the authority of an eminent Roman Catholic writer of our day.

02.02. Chapter II. Compromise Of The Church With Paganism.

Chapter II. Compromise Of The Church With Paganism.

I have described, in the preceding chapter, the causes which made Christian worship gradually to deviate from its primitive purity, and to assume a character more adapted to the ideas of the heathen population,—numbers of whom were continually joining the church. It was, particularly since the time of Constantine, because its festivals, becoming every day more numerous, and its sanctuaries more solemn, spacious, and adorned with greater splendour,—its ceremonies more complicated,—its emblems more diversified,—offered to the Pagans an ample compensation for the artistic pomp of their ancient worship. “The frankincense,” says an eminent Roman Catholic writer of our time, “the flowers, the golden and silver vessels, the lamps, the crowns, the luminaries, the linen, the silk, the chaunts, the processions, the festivals, recurring at certain fixed days, passed from the vanquished altars to the triumphant one. Paganism tried to borrow from Christianity its dogmas and its morals; Christianity took from Paganism its ornaments.” Christianity would have become triumphant without these transformations. It would have done it later than it did, but its triumph would have been of a different kind from that which it has obtained by the assistance of these auxiliaries. “Christianity,” says the author quoted above, “retrograded; but it was this which made its force.” It would be more correct to say, that it advanced its external progress at the expence of its purity; it gained thus the favour of the crowd, but it was by other means that it obtained the approbation of the cultivated minds. The church made a compromise with Paganism in order to convert more easily its adherents,—forgetting the precepts of the apostle, to beware of philosophy and vain traditions, (Colossians 2:18) as well as to refuse profane and old wives’ fables, (1 Timothy 4:7) And it cannot be doubted that St Paul knew well that a toleration of these things would have rapidly extended the new churches, had the quantity of the converts been more important than the quality of their belief and morals. This subject has been amply developed by one of the most distinguished French writers of our day, who, belonging himself to the Roman Catholic Church, seeks to justify her conduct in this respect, though he admits with the greatest sincerity that she had introduced into her polity a large share of Pagan elements. I shall give my readers this curious piece of special pleading in favour of the line of policy which the church had followed on that occasion, as it forms a precious document, proving, in an unanswerable manner, the extent of Pagan rites and ideas contained in the Roman Catholic Church, particularly as it proceeds, not from an opponent of that church, but from a dutiful son of hers. The work from which I am making this extract is, moreover, considered as one of the master-pieces of modern French literature, and it was crowned by one of the most learned bodies of Europe—the Academie des Inscriptions et des Belles Lettres of Paris.

“The fundamental idea of Christianity,” says our author, “was a new, powerful idea, and independent of all those by which it had been preceded. However, the men by whom the Christian system was extended and developed, having been formed in the school of Paganism, could not resist the desire of connecting it with the former systems. St Justin, St Clement (of Alexandria), Athenagoras, Tatian, Origenes, Synesius, &c., considered Pagan philosophy as a preparation to

Christianity. It was, indeed, making a large concession to the spirit of the ancient times; but they believed that they could conceal its inconveniences by maintaining in all its purity the form of Christian worship, and rejecting with disdain the usages and ceremonies of polytheism. When Christianity became the dominant religion, its doctors perceived that they would be compelled to give way equally in respect to the external form of worship, and that they would not be sufficiently strong to constrain the multitude of Pagans, who were embracing Christianity with a kind of enthusiasm as unreasoning as it was of little duration, to forget a system of acts, ceremonies, and festivals, which had such an immense power over their ideas and manners. The church admitted, therefore, into her discipline, many usages evidently pagan. She undoubtedly has endeavoured to purify them, but she never could obliterate the impression of their original stamp.

“This new spirit of Christianity—this eclectism, which extended even to material things—has in modern times given rise to passionate discussions; these borrowings from the old religion were condemned, as having been suggested to the Christians of the fourth and fifth centuries by the remnants of that old love of idolatry which was lurking at the bottom of their hearts. It was easy for the modern reformers to condemn, by an unjust blame, the leaders of the church; they should, however, have acknowledged, that the principal interest of Christianity was to wrest from error the greatest number of its partisans, and that it was impossible to attain this object without providing for the obstinate adherents of the false gods an easy passage from the temple to the church. If we consider that, notwithstanding all these concessions, the ruin of Paganism was accomplished only by degrees and imperceptibly,—that during more than two centuries it was necessary to combat, over the whole of Europe, an error which, although continually overthrown, was incessantly rising again,—we shall understand that the conciliatory spirit of the leaders of the church was true wisdom.

“St John Chrysostom says, that the devil, having perceived that he could gain nothing with the Christians by pushing them in a direct way into idolatry, adopted for the purpose an indirect one. If the devil, that is to say, the pagan spirit, was changing its plan of attack, the church was also obliged to modify her system of defence, and not to affect an inflexibility which would have kept from her a great number of people whose irresolute conscience was fluctuating between falsehood and truth.

“Already, at the beginning of the fifth century, some haughty spirits, Christians who were making a display of the rigidity of their virtues, and who were raising an outcry against the profanation of holy things, began to preach a pretended reform; they were recalling the Christians to the apostolic doctrine; they demanded what they were calling a true Christianity. Vigilantius, a Spanish priest, sustained on this subject an animated contest with St Jerome. He opposed the worship of the saints and the custom of placing candles on their sepulchres; he condemned, as a source of scandal, the vigils in the basilics of the martyrs, and many other usages, which were, it is true, derived from the ancient worship. We may judge by the warmth with which St Jerome refuted the doctrines of this heresiarch of the importance which he attached to those usages. He foresaw that the mission of the Christian doctrine would be to adapt itself to the manners of all times, and to oppose them only when they would tend towards depravity. Far from desiring to deprive the Romans of certain ceremonial practices which were dear to them, and whose influence had nothing dangerous to the Christian dogmas, he openly took their part, and his conduct was approved by the whole church.

“If St Jerome and St Augustinus had shared the opinions of Vigilantius, would they have had the necessary power successfully to oppose the introduction of pagan usages into the ceremonies of the Christian church? I don’t believe that they would. After the fall of Rome, whole populations passed under the standards of Christianity, but they did it with their baggage of senseless beliefs and superstitious practices. The church could not repulse this crowd of self-styled Christians, and still less summon them immediately to abandon all their ancient errors; she therefore made concessions to circumstances, concessions which were not entirely voluntary. They may be considered as calculations full of wisdom on the part of the leaders of the church, as well as the consequence of that kind of irruption which was made at the beginning of the fifth century into the Christian society by populations, who, notwithstanding their abjuration, were Pagans by their manners, their tastes, their prejudices, and their ignorance.

“Let us now calculate the extent of these concessions, and examine whether it was right to say that they injured the purity of the Christian dogmas.

“The Romans had derived from their religion an excessive love of public festivals. They were unable to conceive a worship without the pompous apparel of ceremonies. They considered the long processions, the harmonious chaunts, the splendour of dresses, the light of tapers, the perfume of frankincense, as the essential part of religion. Christianity, far from opposing a disposition which required only to be directed with more wisdom, adopted a part of the ceremonial system of the ancient worship. It changed the object of its ceremonies, it cleansed them from their old impurities, but it preserved the days upon which many of them were celebrated, and the multitude found thus in the new religion, as much as in the old one, the means of satisfying its dominant passion.

“The neophytes felt for the pagan temples an involuntary respect. They could not pass at once from veneration to a contempt for the monuments of their ancestors’ piety; and in ascending the steps of the church, they were casting a longing look on those temples which a short time before had been resplendent with magnificence, but were now deserted. Christianity understood the power of this feeling, and desired to appropriate it to its own service; it consented, therefore, to establish the solemnities of its worship in the edifices which it had disdained for a long time. Its care not to offend pagan habits was such, that it often respected even the pagan names of those edifices. In short, its policy, which, since the times of Constantine, was always to facilitate the conversion of the Pagans, assumed, after the fall of Rome, a more decided character, and the system of useful concessions became general in all the churches of Europe; and it cannot be doubted that its results have been favourable to the propagation of Christian ideas.

“There is, moreover, a peculiar cause to which the rapid decline of the pagan doctrines in the west must be ascribed, and I shall endeavour to place this powerful cause in its true light, carefully avoiding mixing up with a subject of this importance all considerations foreign to the object of my researches.

“Nestorius, patriarch of Constantinople, after having defended a long time the true faith, strayed from it on a subject which proved a stumbling-stone to so many theologians—I mean, the nature of Jesus Christ. Nestorius distinguished in the Son of God two natures, a divine and a human one; and he maintained that the Virgin Mary was not the mother of God (Θεοτοκος), but the mother of the man (■νθρωποτοκος). This doctrine, which was a new and bolder form given to Arianism,

spread in the two empires, and gained a great number of partisans amongst the monasteries of Egypt. Many monks could not almost suffer that Jesus Christ should be acknowledged as God, and considered him only as an instrument of the Divinity, or a vessel which bore it (Θεοφορος).

“The celebrated St Cyrillus, bishop of Alexandria, wrote an epistle to those monks, in order to call them back to respect for the traditions established in the church, if not by the apostles—who, in speaking of the holy virgin, never made use of the expression, mother of God—at least by the fathers who succeeded them. The quarrel became general and violent; the Christians came to blows everywhere. Nestorius seemingly wished to draw back, being frightened by the storm which he had himself raised. ‘I have found,’ said he, ‘the church a prey to dissensions. Some call the holy virgin the mother of God; others only the mother of a man. In order to reunite them, I have called her the mother of Christ. Remain, therefore, at peace about this question, and be convinced that my sentiments on the true faith are always the same.’ But his obstinacy and the ardour of his partisans did not allow him to go beyond this false retraction. The necessity of a general council was felt, and the Emperor Theodosius II. ordered in 431 its convocation at Ephesus. On the 21st June 431, two hundred bishops condemned Nestorius, and declared that the Virgin Mary should be honoured as the mother of God. This decision was accepted, notwithstanding some vain protestations, by the universal church. The fathers of the council of Ephesus had no thought of introducing into the church a new dogma or worship. The Virgin Mary had always been considered by them as the mother of God, and they made now a solemn declaration of this belief, in order to reply to the attack of Nestorius, and to remove every incertitude about a dogma which had not hitherto been opposed. But these great assemblies of Christians, notwithstanding the particular motive of their meeting, were always produced by some general necessity which was felt by the Christian society, and the results of their decrees went often beyond the provisions of those by whom they were framed.

“Though I am far from believing that it is allowable to weigh in the scales of human reason the dogmas of Christianity, I do not think that it is prohibited to examine which of these dogmas has been the most instrumental in detaching the Pagans from their errors.

“We have several times penetrated, in the course of our researches, into the conscience of the leaders of Paganism, and we have always found that it was entirely under the influence of political views and interests. These interests, which so powerfully acted upon the politician’s mind, had but a feeble hold upon that of the inhabitants of the country. And, indeed, what interest could the agriculturists, the artisans, and the proletarians, have in maintaining the integrity of the Roman constitution, or in preserving the rights of the senate, as well as the privileges, honours, and riches of the aristocracy? Being destined, as they were under any religion whatever, for a life of labour and privation, they might choose between Christianity and Paganism, without having their choice actuated by any personal interest. It is therefore necessary to seek for another cause of that obstinate attachment which the lower classes of the town and country population showed for the practices of a worship whose existence was for a century reduced to such a miserable state.

“I shall not dwell on what has been said about the tyranny of habit, which is always more severe wherever minds are less enlightened. I shall indicate another cause of the obstinacy of the Pagans, which was founded at least upon an operation of the mind—upon a judgment—and was, consequently, more deserving of fixing the attention of the church than that respect of custom

against which the weapons of reason are powerless.

“The Christian dogmas, penetrating into a soul corrupted and weakened by idolatry, must have, in the first moment, filled it with a kind of terror. And, indeed, how was it possible that the Pagans, accustomed as they were to their profligate gods and goddesses, should not have trembled when they heard for the first time the voice of God, the just but inexorable rewarder of good and evil? Should not a solemn and grave worship, whose ceremonies were a constant and direct excitation to the practice of every virtue, appear an intolerable yoke to men who were accustomed to find in their sacred rites a legitimate occasion to indulge in every kind of debauchery? The fear of submitting their lives to the rule of a too rigid morality, and to bow their heads before a God whose greatness terrified them, kept for many years a multitude of Pagans from the church.

“If it has entered the designs of Providence to temper the severe dogmas of Christianity by the consecration of some mild, tender, and consoling ideas, and by the same adapted to the fragile human nature, it is evident that, whatever may have been their aim, they must have assisted in detaching the last Pagans from their errors. The worship of Mary, the mother of God, seems to have been the means which Providence has employed for completing Christianity.

“After the council of Ephesus the churches of the East and of the West offered the worship of the faithful to the Virgin Mary, who had victoriously issued from a violent attack. The nations were as if dazzled by the image of this divine mother, who united in her person the two most tender feelings of nature, the pudicity of the virgin and the love of the mother; an emblem of mildness, of resignation, and of all that is sublime in virtue; one who weeps with the afflicted, intercedes for the guilty, and never appears otherwise than as the messenger of pardon or of assistance. They accepted this new worship with an enthusiasm sometimes too great, because with many Christians it became the whole Christianity. The Pagans did not even try to defend their altars against the progress of the worship of the mother of God; they opened to Mary the temples which they kept closed to Jesus Christ, and confessed their defeat. It is true, that they often mixed with the worship of Mary those pagan ideas, those vain practices, those ridiculous superstitions, from which they seemed unable to detach themselves; but the church rejoiced, nevertheless, at their entering into her pale, because she well knew that it would be easy to her to purge of its alloy, with the help of time, a worship whose essence was purity itself. Thus, some prudent concessions, temporarily made to the pagan manners and the worship of Mary, were two elements of force which the church employed in order to conquer the resistance of the last Pagans,—a resistance which was feeble enough in Italy, but violent beyond the Alps.”

02.03. Chapter III. Position Of The First Christian Emperors Towards Paganism, ...

Chapter III. Position Of The First Christian Emperors Towards Paganism, And Their Policy In This Respect.

I have given in the preceding chapter a description, traced by one of the most learned Roman Catholic writers of our day, of the compromise between Christianity and Paganism, by which the church has endeavoured to establish her dominion over the adherents of the latter. I shall now try to give a rapid sketch of the circumstances which undoubtedly have influenced the church, to a considerable degree, in the adoption of a line of policy which, though it certainly has much contributed to the extension of her external dominion, has introduced into her pale those very errors and superstitions which it was her mission to destroy, and to deliver mankind from their baneful influence.

There is a widely-spread but erroneous opinion, that the conversion of Constantine was followed by an immediate destruction of Paganism in the Roman empire. This opinion originated from the incorrect statements of some ecclesiastical writers; but historical criticism has proved, beyond every doubt, that, even a century after the conversion of that monarch, Paganism was by no means extinct, and counted many adherents, even amongst the highest classes of Roman society. When Constantine proclaimed his conversion to the religion of the Cross, its adherents formed but a minority of the population of the Roman empire. The deficiency of their numbers was, however, compensated by their moral advantages; for they were united by the worship of the one true God, and ardently devoted to a religion which they had voluntarily embraced, and for which they had suffered so much. The Pagans were, on the contrary, disunited, and in a great measure indifferent to a religion whose doctrines were derided by the more enlightened of them, though, considering it as a political institution necessary for the maintenance of the empire, they often displayed great zeal in its defence. The Christians of that time may be compared to the Greeks when they combated the Persians on the field of Marathon and at Thermopylæ; but, alas! their victory under Constantine proved as fatal to the purity of their religion as that of the Greeks under Alexander to their political and military virtues. Both of them became corrupted by adopting the ideas and manners of their conquered adversaries.

Some writers have suspected that the conversion of Constantine was more due to political than religious motives; but though great and many were the faults of that monarch, his sincerity in embracing the Christian religion cannot be doubted, because it was a step more contrary than favourable to his political interests. The Christians formed, as I have said above, only a minority of the population of the empire, and particularly so in its western provinces. There was not a single Christian in the Roman senate; and the aristocracy of Rome, whose privileges and interests were intimately connected with the religious institutions of the empire, were most zealous in their defence. The municipal bodies of the principal cities were also blindly devoted to the national religion, whose existence was considered by many as inseparable from that of the empire itself;

and these bodies were generally the chief promoters of those terrible persecutions to which the Christians had been so many times subjected. The Pagan clergy, rich, powerful, and numerous, were ever zealous in exciting public hatred against the Christians; and the legions were chiefly commanded by those officers who had united with Galerius in compelling Diocletian to persecute the Christians. The capital of the empire was the particular stronghold of the ancient creed. “Rome,” says Beugnot, in the work from which I have so largely drawn, “was the cradle and the focus of the national belief. Many traditions, elevated to the rank of dogmas, were born within her pale, and impressed upon her a religious character, which still was vividly shining in the times of Constantine. The Pagans of the west considered Rome as the sacred city, the sanctuary of their hopes, the point towards which all their thoughts were to be directed; and the Greeks, in their usual exaggeration, acknowledged in her, not a part of the earth, but of heaven.”—(Libanii Epistolæ, epist. 1083, p. 816.) “The aristocracy, endowed with its many sacerdotal dignities, and dragging in its train a crowd of clients and freedmen, to whom it imparted its passions and its attachment to the error, furnished, by the help of its immense riches, the means of subsistence to a greedy, turbulent, and superstitious populace, amongst whom it could easily maintain the most odious prejudices against Christianity. The hope of acquiring a name, a fortune, or simply to take a part in the public distributions, attracted to that city from the provinces all those who had no condition, or, what is still worse, those who were dissatisfied with theirs. Italy, Spain, Africa, and Gallia sent to Rome the elite of their children, in order to be instructed in a school, the principal merit of whose professors was, an envious hatred of every new idea, and who had acquired a melancholy reputation during the persecutions of the Christians. The standard of Paganism was waving in full liberty on the walls of the Capitol. Public and private sacrifices, sacred games, and the consultation of the augurs, were prevailing to the utmost in that sink of all the superstitions. The name of Christ was cursed, and the speedy ruin of his worshippers announced, in every part of that place, whilst the glory of the gods was celebrated, and their assistance invoked. How cruel must have been the situation of the Christians, left in the midst of that city, where, at every step, a temple, an altar, a statue, and horrible blasphemies were revealing to them the ever active power of the Lie! They dared not either to found churches, to open schools, or even publicly to reply to what was spoken against them, at the theatres, at the forum, or at the baths: so that they seemed to exist at Rome only in order to give a greater eclat to the dominion of idolatry.”—(Vol. i., p. 75.) It was no wonder that such a religious disposition of Rome had placed it in a continual and strenuous opposition to Constantine, and his Christian successors; and this circumstance may be considered as an additional motive which induced Constantine to transfer the capital of the empire from Rome to Byzantium, though this measure may have been chiefly brought about by political considerations. In removing his residence to a more central point of the empire, he at the same time drew nearer to the eastern provinces, where Christianity had many devoted adherents. Constantinople became the capital of the Christian party, whence it gradually developed its sway over the other parts of the empire, but the Pagans maintained meanwhile their ground at Rome, in such a manner, that it seems to have been uninhabitable to the Christian emperors; because we see even those of them who ruled the western provinces fixing their residence either at Milan or Ravenna, and visiting only on some occasions the city of the Cæsars, which had become, since the foundation of Constantinople, the fortified camp of Paganism.30

Constantine proclaimed full religious liberty to all his subjects. This measure, dictated by a sound policy, and in perfect harmony with the true spirit of his new religion, was not, however, sufficient

to relieve him from the difficulties of his personal position, as he united in his person two characters diametrically opposed one to another. Being a Christian, he was at the same time, as the emperor of Rome, the head and the representant, not only of its political, but also of its religious institutions. This circumstance forced him into a double line of policy, which I shall describe in the words of M. Beugnot:—

“There were in Constantine, so to say, two persons,—the Christian and the emperor. If that monarch had not been endowed with a rare intellect, he would have, by confounding these two characters, raised in his way obstacles which he could not overcome. As a Christian, he showed everywhere his contempt for the vain superstitions of the ancient worship, and his enthusiasm for the new ideas. He conferred with the bishops; he assisted standing at their long homilies; he presided at the councils; he deeply meditated the mysteries of Christianity; and he struggled against the heresiarchs with the ardour of a Christian soldier and the grief of a profoundly convinced soul. As emperor, he submitted to the necessities of a difficult position, and conformed, in all grave matters, to the manners and beliefs which he did not feel sufficiently strong openly to shock. On endowing the purple, he became the heir of that long series of emperors who had all remained faithful to the worship of the father-land; and he wrapt himself, so to say, in the ancient traditions and recollections of pagan Rome; for it was an inheritance which he could not renounce, without danger to himself as well as to the empire.

“When we observe some actions of Constantine, evidently tinged with Paganism, we must consider less their external form than the relation in which they stood towards the constitution of Rome, which that emperor had no desire to destroy. We shall then become convinced that his conduct was the result of necessity, and not that of a crooked policy. As an individual, he was free; as an emperor, he was a slave; and his greatest merit, according to our opinion, was to have soundly judged the embarrassments of this situation. Animated as he was with a lively zeal for the truths of Christianity, it was very natural that he should employ the imperial power in order to break down all the obstacles to its progress. But this would have involved him in an open war with a nation, the majority of whom were composed of Pagans; and it is very likely that he would have succumbed in such a contest. He understood this; and it prevented him giving way to the entreaties, and even complaints, of over-zealous Christians.”—Vol. i., p. 88.

Constantine was, notwithstanding his conversion to Christianity, the supreme pontiff of pagan Rome. The title of this dignity was given him on the public monuments, and he performed its functions on several occasions; as, for instance, in 321, several years after his conversion, he wrote to Maximus, prefect of Rome, as follows:—

“If our palace or any public monument shall be struck by lightning, the auguries are to be consulted, [pg 037] according to the ancient rites (retento more veteris observantiæ), in order to know what this event indicates; and the accounts of these proceedings are immediately to be sent to us. Private individuals may make similar consultations, provided they abstain from secret sacrifices, which are particularly prohibited. With regard to the accounts stating that the amphitheatre was recently struck by lightning, and which thou hast sent to Heraclianus the tribune, and master of offices, know that they must be delivered to us.” This is undoubtedly a very strange document for a Christian monarch, who officially commands to consult the Pagan oracles, and, as its concluding words seem to imply, is anxious to maintain, on similar occasions, his rights as the

supreme pontiff of Paganism.

It was also in his quality of supreme pontiff that Constantine instituted, soon after his accession, the Francic games, for the commemoration of his victory over the Franks, and which were celebrated, during a considerable time, on the 18th of the kalends of August; and, in 321, the Sarmatic games, on the occasion of his victory over the Sarmatians, and celebrated on the 6th of the same month. These games were real Pagan ceremonies, and reprobated on this account by the Christian writers of that time.

I could quote other instances of a similar kind; but I shall conclude this subject by observing, that a medal has been preserved, upon which Constantine is represented in the dress of the supreme pontiff,—i.e., with a veil covering his head.

Constantine was, indeed, very anxious not to offend the Pagan party. In 319 he published a very severe law against the soothsayers; expressing, however, that this prohibition did not extend to the public consultations of the Haruspices, according to the established rites. And a short time afterwards he proclaimed another law on the same subject, in which he still more explicitly declares that he does not interfere with the rites of the Pagan worship.

It must be observed, that the Romans, as well as the Greeks, had two kinds of divination: the public, which were considered as legitimate; and the secret, which were generally forbidden. This last had been prohibited by some former emperors; and the laws of the Twelve Tables declared them punishable with death. Constantine seems to have been very anxious that his intention on this subject should not be mistaken; and he published in 321 an edict, by which he positively allows the practice of a certain kind of magic, by the following remarkable expressions:—

“It is right to repress and to punish, by laws justly severe, those who practise, or try to practise, the magical arts, and seek to seduce pure souls into profligacy; but those who employ this art in order to find remedies against diseases, or who, in the country, make use of it in order to prevent the snow, the wind, and the hail from destroying the crops, must not be prosecuted. Neither the welfare nor the reputation of any one are endangered by acts whose object is to insure to men the benefits of the divinity and the fruits of their labour.”—Codex Theodosianus, lib. ix., f. 16, apud Beugnot. This was, undoubtedly, a very large concession to the superstitions of Paganism made by a Christian monarch, and from which he was, perhaps, himself not entirely free. It is well known that Constantine, after his public declaration of Christianity, introduced the labarum, as a sign of the dominion of the new faith; but it was generally placed on his coins in the hands of the winged statue of the Pagan goddess of Victory. Besides these coins of Constantine, there are many others of the same monarch, having inscriptions in honour of Jupiter, Mars, and other Pagan divinities. The Pagan aristocracy of Rome seem to have been resolved to ignore the fact that the head of the empire had become a Christian, and to consider him, in spite of himself, as one of their own. Thus, after his death, the senate placed him, according to the usual custom, among the gods; and a calendar has been preserved where the festivals in honour of this strange divinity are indicated. The name of Divus is given to him on several coins; and, what is very odd, this Pagan god is represented on the above-mentioned medals holding in his hand the Christian sign of the labarum.

We thus see that Constantine, instead of persecuting the adherents of the national Paganism, was following a policy of compromise between the two characters united in his person, that of a Christian and of a Roman emperor. This did not, however, prevent him from heaping favours of every kind upon the Christian church,—favours which proved to her much more injurious than all the persecutions of the former emperors. And, indeed, the Christians, who had nobly stood the test of adversity, were not proof against the more dangerous trial of a sudden and unexpected prosperity. The first favour granted by Constantine to the Christians, and which he did even before his public confession of their faith, was the extension to their clergy of the exemption from various municipal charges enjoyed by the Pagan priests, on account of their being obliged to give at their expense certain public games. The Christian clergy were thus placed in a more favourable position than the Pagan priests, because, though admitted to equal immunities, they were not subjected to the same charges; and thus, for the first time, a bribe was offered for conversion to a religion which had hitherto generally exposed its disciples to persecution. “Numbers of people, actuated less by conviction than by the hope of a reward, were crowding from all parts to the churches, and the first favour granted to the Christians introduced amongst them guilty passions, to which they had hitherto remained strangers, and whose action was so rapid and so melancholy. The complaints of the municipal bodies, and the disorder which it was producing in the provincial administration, induced Constantine to put some restrictions on a favour which, being granted perhaps somewhat inconsiderately, did more harm than good to the interests of the Christian religion.”—Beugnot, vol. i., p. 78.

Constantine increased his favours to the Christians after he had publicly embraced their faith. “The ecclesiastical historians,” says the author whom I have just quoted, “enumerate with a feeling of pride the proofs of his generosity. They say, that the revenues of the empire were employed to erect everywhere magnificent churches, and to enrich the bishops. They cannot be, on this occasion, accused of exaggeration. Constantine introduced amongst the Christians a taste for riches and luxury; and the disappearance of their frugal and simple manners, which had been the glory of the church during the three preceding centuries, may be dated from his reign.”—Ibid., p. 87. The ecclesiastical historian Eusebius, a great admirer of Constantine, whose personal friend he was, admits himself, that the favours shown by that monarch to the church have not been always conducive to her purity. In short, the sudden triumph of the church under Constantine was one of the principal causes of her corruption, and the beginning of that compromise with Paganism, described in the preceding chapter. Paganism, though weakened through its abandonment by the head of the state, was by no means broken down at the time of Constantine’s death. Many of its zealous adherents were occupying the principal dignities of the state, as well as the most important civil and military offices; but its chief stronghold was Rome, where its partisans were so powerful, that the unfortunate dissensions which divided the Christians were publicly exposed to ridicule in the theatres of that city. The Arian writer Philostorgus says that Constantine was worshipped after his death, not as a saint, but as a god, by the orthodox Christians, who offered sacrifices to the statue of that monarch placed upon a column of porphyry, and addressed prayers to him as to God himself. It is impossible to ascertain whether examples of such mad extravagance had ever taken place amongst Christians or not; but the Western church has not bestowed upon his memory the honours of saintship, though she has been generally very lavish of them. Thus the first Christian emperor was canonised only by the Pagans. The sons of Constantine followed the religious policy of their father; and the facility with which his nephew,

Julian the Apostate, had restored Paganism to the rank of the dominant religion, twenty-four years after his death, proves how strong its party was even at that time. Julian's reign of eighteen months was too short to produce any considerable effect upon the religious parties into which the Roman empire was then divided. After his death, the imperial crown was offered by the army to Sallust, a Pagan general, who having refused it on account of his great age, it was bestowed upon Jovian, a Christian, who reigned only three months. The legions elected, after Jovian's death, Valentinian, who, though a sincere Christian, strictly maintained the religious liberty of his subjects; and the same policy was followed by his brother and colleague Valens, who governed the eastern part of the empire, and was an Arian. Valentinian's son and successor, Gratian, though educated by the celebrated poet Ausonius, who adhered to the ancient worship, was a zealous Christian. He published, immediately after his accession, an edict allowing perfect religious liberty to all his subjects, with the exception of the Manicheans and some other sects. He granted several new privileges to Christians, but he continued to conform for some time to the duties inherited from his Pagan predecessors, of which the most remarkable instance was, that he caused his father to be placed amongst the gods, according to the general custom followed at the death of the Roman emperors.

Though greatly enfeebled by the continual advance of Christianity, Paganism was still the established religion of the state. Its rites were still observed with their wonted solemnity, and its power was still so great at Rome, that a vestal virgin was executed in that city for the breach of her vow of chastity, subsequently to the reign of Gratian. These circumstances induced, probably, the above-mentioned emperor to respect the religious institutions of Rome during the first years of his reign, but (382), acting under the advice of St Ambrose, he confiscated the property belonging to the Pagan temples, and the incomes of which served for the maintenance of priests and the celebration of sacrifices. He abolished, at the same time, all the privileges and immunities of the Pagan priests, and ordered the altar and statue of the goddess of Victory to be removed from the hall of the senate, the presence of which gave to that assembly, though it already contained many Christian members, the character of a Pagan institution. The senate sent a deputation to Gallia, where Gratian was at that time, in order to remonstrate against these measures, and to present to him, at the same time, the insignia of the supreme pontificate of Rome, which none of his Christian predecessors had yet refused. But Gratian rejected these emblems of Paganism, saying that it was not meet for a Christian to accept them. This would have been probably followed by other more decided measures, had he not perished a short time afterwards in a rebellion. Theodosius the Great, whom Gratian had associated with him, adopted a decidedly hostile policy towards Paganism, and proclaimed a series of laws against it. Thus, in 381, he ordered that those Christians who returned to Paganism should forfeit the right of making wills; but as these apostasies continued, he ordered, in 383, that the apostates should not inherit any kind of property, either left by will or descended by natural order of succession, unless it were left by their parents or a brother. In 385 he proclaimed the penalty of death against all those who should inquire into futurity by consulting the entrails of the victims, or try to obtain the same object by execrable and magic consultations, which evidently referred to those secret divinations that had been prohibited by Constantine, as well as his Pagan predecessors. In the course of the year 391, he published a series of edicts, prohibiting under pain of death every immolation, and all other acts of idolatry under that of confiscation of the houses or lands where they had been performed.

Theodosius died in 395, but had his life been prolonged, he would probably have developed still farther his policy against Paganism, which was greatly weakened in the course of his reign. Many Pagan temples, particularly in the Eastern provinces, were destroyed during his reign by the Christians, acting without the orders of the emperor, but not punished by him for these acts of violence. He did not, however, constrain the Pagans to embrace Christianity; and, notwithstanding that he proclaimed several laws against their worship, he employed many of them even in the highest offices of the state. Notwithstanding the severe laws published by Theodosius against idolatry, Rome still contained a great number of pagan temples, and the polytheist party continued to be strong in the senate, as well as in the army, which is evident from the two following facts. When Alaric elected in 409 Attalus emperor of Rome, the new monarch distributed the first dignities of the state to Pagans, and restored the public solemnities of the ancient worship, in order to maintain himself on the throne by the support of the Pagan party; which proves that, though a century had already elapsed since the conversion of Constantine, this party was not yet considered quite insignificant. About the same time, Honorius having proclaimed a law which excluded from the offices of the imperial palace all those who did not profess his religion, was obliged to revoke it, because it gave offence to the Pagan officers of the army. Arcadius, who succeeded Theodosius on the throne of the Eastern empire, proclaimed, immediately after his accession in 398, that he would strictly enforce the laws of his father against Paganism, and he issued in the following year new and more severe ordinances of the same kind. The blow which may be said to have overturned Paganism in the Roman empire did not, however, come from its Christian monarchs, but from the same hand which destroyed its ancient capital, and inflicted upon the Western empire a mortal wound which it did not survive many years. The Goths, whom the energy and wise policy of Theodosius had maintained in their allegiance to the empire, being offended by Arcadius, revolted, and invaded his dominions under Alaric, in 396. They ravaged the provinces situated between the Adriatic and the Black Seas, and penetrated into Greece, where Paganism, notwithstanding all the enactments of Theodosius, was still prevailing to a very great extent. The principal cities of Greece were devastated by the Goths, who, recently converted to Arianism, and having no taste for arts, destroyed all the temples, statues, and other pagan monuments, with which they met. Athens escaped the fury of the invaders, but the celebrated temple of Eleusis, whose mysteries continued in full vigour in spite of all the laws which had been published against polytheism, was destroyed, whilst its priests either perished or fled. This catastrophe was so much felt by the adherents of the ancient worship in Greece, that many of them are said to have committed suicide from grief. “Since the defeat of Cheronea, and the capture of Corinth, the Greek nationality had never experienced a severer blow than the destruction of its temples and of its gods by Alaric,” says an eminent German writer of our day. It was, indeed, a mortal blow to a religion which maintained its sway by acting upon the senses and the imagination, as well as upon the feelings of national pride or vanity, because it destroyed all the means by which such feelings were produced. Alaric and his Goths seem to have been destined by Providence to precipitate the fall of Paganism at Rome, as well as in Greece, because the capture and sack of the eternal city by these barbarians, in 410, accelerated the ruin of its ancient worship more than all the laws proclaimed against it by the Christian emperors. The particulars of this terrible catastrophe have been amply described by Gibbon, and I shall only observe, that though Christians had suffered on that occasion as much as Pagans, the worship of the latter was struck at the very root of its existence by the complete ruin of the Roman

aristocracy, who, although frequently indifferent about the tenets of the national polytheism, supported it with all their influence as a political institution, which could not be abolished without injuring the most vital interests of their order. The decline of Paganism from that time was very rapid. It is true that we have sufficient historical evidence to show that pagan temples were still to be found at Rome after its sack by the Goths, and that many Pagans were employed, in the Western as well as in the Eastern empires, in some of the most important offices of the state; but their number was fast disappearing, and the exercise of their religion was generally confined to the domestic hearth, to the worship of the Lares and Penates. It seems to have been particularly prevalent amongst the rustic population of the provinces, and it was not entirely extinct in Italy even at the beginning of the sixth century; because the Goth, Theodoric the Great, who reigned over that country from 493 to 526, published an edict forbidding, under pain of death, to sacrifice according to the Pagan rites, as well as other superstitious practices remaining from the ancient polytheism.

I have given this sketch of the state of Paganism after the conversion of Constantine, and of the policy which was followed towards it by the first Christian emperors, because it seems to explain, at least to a certain degree, the manner in which Christianity was rapidly corrupted in the fourth and fifth centuries by the Pagan ideas and practices which I shall endeavour to trace in my next chapter.

02.04. Chapter IV. Infection Of The Christian Church By Pagan Ideas And Practices During ...

Chapter IV. Infection Of The Christian Church By Pagan Ideas And Practices During The Fourth And Fifth Centuries.

I have said that the council of Elvira, in Spain, held in 305, prohibited the use of images in the churches. Other canons of the same council show that even then Christians were but too prone to relapse into the practices and customs of Paganism; because they enact very severe ecclesiastical penances against those Christians who took part in the rites and festivals of the Pagan worship.

If such enactments were required to maintain the purity of Christian doctrine, at a time when its converts, instead of expecting any worldly advantages, were often exposed to severe persecution, and consequently had no other motives for embracing it than a mere conviction of its truth, how much more was this purity endangered when conversion to Christianity led to the favour of the sovereign, and when the church, instead of severely repressing the idolatrous propensities of her children, endeavoured to facilitate as much as possible the entrance of the Pagans into her pale! Let me add, that the mixture of Christianity with Paganism in various public acts of the first Christian emperors, which I have described in the preceding chapter, could not but contribute to the general confusion of ideas amongst those Christians whom the church was continually receiving into her pale, with all their pagan notions. I have described, in the second chapter of this essay, the policy of compromise adopted by the church after the conversion of Constantine. I shall now describe the consequences of this policy, by giving a sketch of the Christian society which it produced, and which has been drawn, on the authority of ecclesiastical writers, by the same author whose description and defence of that policy I have given in the above-mentioned chapter.

“Towards the beginning of the fifth century, the propagation of Christianity amongst the upper classes of Roman society met still with many obstacles; but the influential persons who had broken with the error, remained at least faithful to their new creed, and did not scandalise society by their apostasy. The senatorial families which had embraced Christianity gave, at Rome, the unfortunately too rare example of piety and of all the Christian virtues; the case was different with the converts belonging to the lower, and even the middle classes of Roman society. The corruption of manners had made rapid progress amongst them during the last fifty years of the fourth century; and things arrived at such a pass, that the choice of a religion was considered by the people as an act of the greatest indifference. The new religion was embraced from interest, from curiosity, or by fashion, and afterwards abandoned on the first occasion. It was, in fact, not indifference, because indifference induces people to remain in the religion in which they were born; it was a complete atheism, a revolting depravity, an openly-expressed contempt of all that is most sacred. How many times the church, which struggled, but in vain, against the progress of the evil, had occasion to lament the too easy recruits whom she was making amongst the inferior ranks of society! People disgracefully ignorant, without honour, without a shadow of piety, polluted

by their presence the assemblies of the faithful. They are those whom the fathers of the church designated by the name of the mali Christiani—ficti Christiani, and against whom their eloquent voices were often resounding. The heretics, the promoters of troubles and seditions, always counted upon those men, who seemed to enter the church only in order to disturb her by their turbulent spirit, or who consented to remain in the true faith only on condition of introducing into the usages of Christian worship, a crowd of superstitions whose influence was felt but too long; whilst the slightest sign of Paganism was sufficient to call back to it those servants of all the parties.

“It was then, unfortunately, a too common thing to see men who made a profession of passing, without any difficulty, from one religion to another, as many times as it was required by their interests. The principle of that inconceivable corruption in the bosom of a religion which was not yet completely developed, dated from a period anterior to that which we are describing. The councils and the emperors had struggled in vain against apostasy, which the multitude of heresies, and the vices of the times, had placed amongst legitimate actions.

“Theodosius began in 381 to punish the apostates by depriving them of the right to make wills. In 383, he modified this law in respect to the apostate catechumens; but the general principle maintained all the apostates absque jure Romano. Valentinian II. followed the example of his colleague, and applied the before-mentioned dispositions to those Christians who became Jews or Manicheans. We know, from a law of 391, that the nobility was infected by the general spirit of the age, because Valentinian enacted, by this law, that those nobles who became apostates were to be degraded in such a manner that they should not count even in vulgi ignobilis parte. In 396, Arcadius deprived again of the right to make wills those Christians qui se idolorum superstitione impia maculaverint. The political authorities, therefore, cannot be accused of having remained indifferent to the progress of the evil. We must now show how little power the laws had in a time like that which we are describing.

“One day, St Augustinus presented to the assembly of the Christians of Hippona, a man who was to become celebrated amongst renegades; born a Pagan, he embraced Christianity, but returned again to the idols, and exercised the lucrative profession of an astrologer; he now demanded to be readmitted into the church, that is to say, to change for the third time his religion. St Augustinus addressed, on that occasion, the above-mentioned assembly in the following manner:—

“ ‘This former Christian, terrified by the power of God, is now repenting. In the days of his faithfulness, he was enticed by the enemy, and became an astrologer; seduced and deceived himself, he was seducing and deceiving others; he uttered many lies against God, who gave men the power to do good, and to do no evil; he said that it was not the will of men which made men adulterers, but Venus; that it was Mars who rendered people murderers; that justice was not inspired by God, but by Jupiter; and he added to it many other sacrileges. How much money he has swindled from self-styled Christians! How many people have purchased the lie from him! But now, if we are to believe him, he hates the error, he laments the loss of many souls; and feeling himself caught by the demon, he returns toward God full of repentance. Let us believe, brethren, that it is fear which produces this change. What shall we say? perhaps we must not rejoice so much at the conversion of this pagan astrologer, because once being converted, he may seek to obtain the clerical office; he is penitent, brethren, and asks only for mercy. I recommend him to

your hearts, and to your eyes. Let your hearts love him, but let your eyes watch him. Mark him well; and wherever you shall meet him, show him to those of your brethren who are not present here. This will be an act of mercy, because we must fear that his seductive soul should change again, and recommence to do mischief. Watch him; know what he says, and where he goes, in order that your testimony may confirm us in the opinion that he is really converted. He was perishing, but now he is found again. He has brought with him the books which have burnt him, in order to throw them into the fire; he wishes to be refreshed by the flames which shall consume them. You must know, brethren, that he had knocked at the door of the church before Easter, but that the profession which he had followed, rendering him suspected of lies and fraud, he was kept back, but shortly afterwards received. We are afraid of leaving him exposed to new temptations. Pray to Christ for him.'

"Socrates speaks of a sophist of Constantinople, called Ecebolus, who conformed with a marvellous facility to all the changes of fortune which Christianity was undergoing. During the reign of Constantine, he affected the greatest zeal for the new belief; but when Julian became emperor, he resumed his ancient devotion to the gods of Paganism. After the death of that monarch, he gave great publicity to his repentance, and prostrated himself before the churches, crying to the Christians, 'Tread me under your feet, as the salt which has lost its savour!' Socrates adds:—'Ecebolus remained what he has always been,—i.e., a fickle and inconstant man.' St Augustinus could certainly say the same of his astrologer. Is it not surprising to find apostasy still prevalent at a time when no sensible man could believe in the restoration of the ancient worship? The appearance of Julian must have upset many a mind, shaken many a conscience, and given to the triumph of Christianity the character of a transitory event. But, at the end of the fourth century, it was impossible to abandon the church and return to the idols, except by a feeling which could not but excite profound pity. I therefore understand why St Augustinus had consented to plead with the Christians in favour of a wretch already charged with three apostasies: he wished, above all, to take from him the name of a Pagan, being convinced that whoever consented no longer to sacrifice to the false gods would finally belong to the true religion. A neophyte, restrained by the leaven of all the pagan passions, might remain more or less time on the threshold of the church, but sooner or later he was sure to cross it. The leaders of the church considered it always a favourable presumption when a citizen consented to call himself no longer a Pagan. This first victory appeared to them a sure presage of a true conversion; and they recommended to the Christians that they should not apply the dangerous epithet of Pagan to those of their brethren who had failed, but simply to call them sinners. They endeavoured, in short, to make them forget Paganism; and in order to attain this object, they even forbade to pronounce its name.

"The ancient worship was not only obstructing the development of Christianity by covert and insidious attacks, but it was also vitiating the discipline of the church, because its sway upon the manners of the converts was something more like a real tyranny than the natural remnant of its former influence. It is, indeed, surprising with what facility it introduced into the sanctuary of the true God its superstitious spirit, its relaxed morals, and its love of disorder. How little the church was then,—i.e., seventy years after the conversion of Constantine,—resembling what she ought to have been, or what she became afterwards! St Jerome had intended, towards the end of his life, to write an ecclesiastical history; but it was in order to show that the church, under the Christian emperors, went on continually declining. Divitiis major, virtutibus minor (Greater in wealth, smaller

in virtue), was the severe sentence which St Jerome must have pronounced with regret, but the justice of which is proved by all the historical documents of that period. This illustrious leader of Christianity, whose mind was more inclined to enthusiasm than dejection, frequently lost all energy, by reflecting on the deplorable condition of the church, declaring that he felt no longer any power to write. A sufficient number of historians have represented in vivid colours the excessive luxury of the bishops during that time, as well as the greediness, the ignorance, and the misconduct of the clergy; I shall therefore choose from this melancholy picture only those parts which refer to the history of Paganism.

“All the arts of divination remained still in the highest favour amongst Christians, even when the grave men of the Pagan party had been, for a long time, showing for these practices of idolatry either a conventional respect or an open contempt. They swore by the false gods,—they observed the fifth day, dedicated to Jupiter,—and they took a part in the sacred games, feasts, and festivals of the Pagans. Christian ceremonies did not preserve almost any thing of their ancient majesty. It was not a rare occurrence to hear pagan hymns chanted at Christian solemnities, or to see Christians dancing before their churches, according to the custom of Paganism. There was no more decency observed in the interior of those churches: people went there to speak about business, or to amuse themselves; the noise was so great, and the bursts of laughter so loud, that it was impossible to hear the reading of the Scriptures; the congregation quarrelled, fought, and sometimes interfered with the officiating priest, pressing him to end, or compelling him to sing, according to their taste. St Augustinus was therefore warranted in calling this so powerful influence of the ancient worship a persecution of the demon, more covert and insidious than that which the primitive church had suffered.

“All these scandalous facts are attested by the bishop of Hippona (St Augustinus) and by that of Milan (St Ambrose); it is therefore impossible to doubt their authenticity. It may, however, be said, that such a state of corruption was local, and peculiar to the churches of Africa and Milan; I must therefore produce new evidence, in order to show that the calamitous effect of the pagan manners was felt in all the provinces.

“St Gaudentius, bishop of Brescia, a contemporary of St Augustinus, vigorously combated idolatry in his diocese; and the following is an extract from one of his sermons:—

“ ‘You neophytes, who have been called to the feast of this salutary and mystical Easter, look how you preserve your souls from those aliments which have been defiled by the superstition of the Pagans. It is not enough for a true Christian to reject the poisoned food of the demons; he must also fly from all the abominations of the Pagans,—from all the frauds of the idolaters, as from venom ejected by the serpent of the devil. Idolatry is composed of poisonings, of enchantments, ligatures, presages, augurs, sorceries, as well as of all kinds of vain observances, and, moreover, of the festival called Parentales; by means of which idolatry is reanimating error; and indeed men, giving way to their gluttony, began to eat the viands which had been prepared for the dead; afterwards they were not afraid of celebrating in their honour sacrilegious sacrifices,—although it is difficult to believe that a duty towards their dead is discharged by those who, with a hand shaking from the effects of drunkenness, place tables on sepulchres, and say, with an unintelligible voice, The spirit is thirsty. I beseech you, take heed of these things, in case God should deliver to the flames of hell his contemners and enemies, who have refused to wear his yoke.’

“Who may wonder that such Christians allowed the pagan idols, temples, and altars to remain, and to be honoured on their estates, as is attested by the same bishop? St Augustinus, whom I am not tired of quoting, because no other doctor of that time expressed so vividly the true Christian ideas, lamented this monstrous worship, which was neither Paganism nor Christianity. ‘Many a man,’ says he, ‘who enters the church a Christian, leaves it a Pagan,’ However, far from despairing, he wrote to the virgin Felicia, ‘I advise thee not to be affected too much by these offences; they were predicted, in order that, when they should come, we might remember that they had been announced, and consequently not be hurt by them.’ But the Pagans, for whom this premature corruption of Christianity was not a predicted thing, rejoiced in contemplating the extent of its progress; they would not believe the duration of a worship which had so rapidly arrived at the period of its decline, and they were repeating in their delusion this celebrated saying, ‘Christians are only for awhile; they will afterwards perish, and the idols will return.’ ”—Beugnot, vol. ii. p. 97, et seq. This melancholy picture of Christian society, at the beginning of the fifth century, drawn by M. Beugnot, on the authority of the ecclesiastical writers, is, indeed, as gloomy as that of Roman society in general, which had been so graphically described about the same time by the pagan author Ammianus Marcellinus, and reproduced by Gibbon. It was very natural that such a corrupted soil should produce the rankest growth of superstition, and rapidly bring about that melancholy reaction which was not inaptly styled by Gibbon, “the revival of polytheism in the Christian church.” This wretched state of things was, as I have said before, chiefly due to that policy of compromise by which the leaders of the church sought to get as many Pagans as possible into her pale, and who consequently were baptised without being converted. This compromise with Paganism was often carried to great extremes; and the history of the conversion of Florence, which I have extracted from M. Beugnot’s work, gives one of the most striking instances of those unprincipled proceedings:—“Florence paid particular honours to the god Mars. It was not without regret that it abandoned the worship of this divinity. The time of its conversion had been assigned to the second or the third century, but the vagueness of this date deprives it of all authority. Yet, whatever may have been the century in which the conversion of Florence took place, it could not be a subject of edification and joy to the Christians. The traditions of that city predicted to it great calamities if the statue of Mars was either sullied, or put into a place unworthy of it. The Florentines stipulated, therefore, on accepting the new religion, that Mars should be respected. His statue was consequently neither broken nor sullied, but it was carefully taken from his temple, and placed on a pedestal near the river, which flows through the city. Many years after this, the new Christians feared and invoked that god who was dethroned only by halves. When almost all the pagan temples had fallen either by the stroke of time, or under the blows of the Christians, the heathen palladium of Florence stood still erect on the banks of the Arno; and, according to one of the most enlightened historians that Italy has produced during the middle ages (G. Villani, lib. i., cap. 60), the demon who had remained in the statue realised, in the thirteenth century, the old prediction of the Etruscans. Compromises of the kind which took place at Florence became very common during the fifth century, and when, at a later period, Christianity wished to annul them, it met with great obstacles.”—(Beugnot, vol. i., p. 286.) The Jews had been brought up in the knowledge of the true God, and their faith could not but be strengthened by the miracles with which their exodus from Egypt was accompanied, and yet a short absence of Moses from their camp was sufficient to make them call for gods that would go before them, and to induce them to worship an image evidently borrowed from the idolatry of those very Egyptians by whom they had

been so much oppressed. It was, therefore, no wonder that society, educated for many centuries under the influence of Paganism, were continually returning to their ancient rites, superstitions, and manners, though under a new name, and in a modified form. If we consider further, that such a man as Aaron had not sufficient strength to resist the senseless demands of the multitude, and even consented to mould an object for their idolatry, how could the leaders of the church oppose the pressure of Paganism, which they had incautiously admitted into her pale, and which, under the assumed name of Christianity, was establishing its dominion over the church? There was no inspired prophet amongst the Christians of that time, to restore the purity of their faith in the same manner as Moses did amongst the Jews, after his return from Mount Sinai. The Christian church was therefore left for centuries under the oppression of pagan superstitions, from which, as yet, only a small portion of her has been emancipated, though I firmly believe that she will be one day entirely restored to her pristine purity. This hope, however, is not founded upon the mere advance of human intellect, because, in spite of its boasted progress, it seems now to be powerless against the daily growing reaction of the above-mentioned superstitions, even in places whence they apparently had been banished for ever, but because Christianity is of a divine and not human origin.

There was no lack of opposition to this universal corruption of the church on the part of several true Christians, and there were undoubtedly many more instances of this noble conduct than those which have reached us, but the records of them were probably either lost in the lapse of ages, or destroyed by their opponents. I have already mentioned the prohibition of the use of images in the churches by the council of Elvira in 305. The council of Laodicea, held about 363, declared, in its seventy-fifth canon, “That Christians ought not to abandon the church, and retire elsewhere in order to invoke angels, and form private assemblies, because it is prohibited. If, therefore, any one is attached to this secret idolatry, let him be anathema, because he has left our Lord Jesus Christ, and has become an idolater.” It is therefore evident that this superstition, expressly prohibited by St Paul, Colossians 2:18, was then secretly practised in some private assemblies, though it was afterwards introduced into the Western as well as the Eastern church. The council of Carthage, held towards the end of the fourth century, condemned the abuse of the honours which were paid to the memory of the martyrs by the Christians of Africa, and ordered the bishops to repress them, if the thing might be done, but if it could not be done on account of the popular emotions, to warn at least the people. This proves how weak the bishops felt their authority to be against the prevailing superstitions amongst their flocks, and that they preferred suffering the latter to risking the former.

There were, however, Christians who opposed, in a bold and uncompromising manner, the pagan errors and abuses which had infected the church. St Epiphanius, archbishop of Salamis, in the fourth century, celebrated for his learning, and whose virtues St Jerome extols in the most glowing terms, explicitly condemned the worship of created beings, “because,” he observed, “the devil was creeping into men’s minds under the pretence of devotion and justice, and, consecrating human nature by divine honours, presented to their eyes various fine images, in order to separate the mind from the one God by an infamous adultery. Therefore, though those who are worshipped are dead, people adore their images, which never had any life in them.” He further remarked, “that there was not a prophet who would have suffered a man or a woman to be worshipped; that neither the prophet Elias, nor St John the beloved disciple of the Lord, nor St Thecla (who had

received the most extravagant praises from the fathers), were ever worshipped; and that, consequently, the virgin was neither to be invoked nor worshipped." "The old superstition," says he, "shall not have such power over us as to oblige us to abandon the living God, and worship his creature." The same St Epiphanius relates, in a letter addressed to John, bishop of Jerusalem, that having arrived during a journey at a village called Anablatta, he found in its church a veil suspended over the door, with a figure representing Christ or some saint. He was so indignant at this sight that he immediately tore the veil to pieces, and advised the wardens of that church to employ it as a shroud to bury a dead body. As the people of the place complained that the veil of their church was destroyed, without giving them in its place another, Epiphanius sent them one; but he exhorted in his letter the above-mentioned bishop of Jerusalem, in whose diocese Anablatta was situated, to order the priests of that place not to suspend any more such veils in the church of Christ, because they are contrary to our religion. The authenticity of this letter, which bears such strong evidence against the use of images in churches, was rejected by Bellarmine and the ecclesiastical historian Baronius, but it has been admitted by Petau and some of the ablest writers of the Roman Catholic Church. It was translated into Latin by St Jerome, and is found in all the collections of his works. The most celebrated opponent of the abuses with which the church had been already infected at that time was Vigilantius. His writings have not been preserved, and we know his opinions only from their refutation by St Jerome, and from which we may conclude that this reformer of the fifth century maintained the same doctrines which were afterwards defended by the Waldensians, Wycliffe, the Hussites, and which are now professed by the Protestant Christians. He was born at Calagorris in Gallia; he became a priest at Barcelona, and contracted in that place an intimate friendship with St Paulinus, afterwards bishop of Nola. Vigilantius went to Italy in order to see this friend of his, and having an intention to visit Palestine and Egypt, took from him an introduction to St Jerome. They became great friends with St Jerome, who was much pleased with the marks of approbation shown by Vigilantius during a sermon which he preached. He also acknowledges that he, as well as several others, would have died from starvation, if Vigilantius had not assisted them with his own and his friends' money; and he says, in his answer to Paulinus, "You will learn from the mouth of the holy priest, Vigilantius, with what affection I have received him." This affection disappeared, however, as soon as Jerome learned that Vigilantius had accused him in Egypt of being too partial to Origenes, and the holy priest became an impertinent, whose silly speeches he had observed during their first interview. He made use of several injurious expressions in speaking of the former object of his admiration, and which do not well accord with the gravity of his character, as, for instance, calling him often Dormitantius instead of Vigilantius. His indignation knew no bounds when he heard, in 404, that Vigilantius, who was then in Gallia, had attacked several practices which had crept into the church, and he dictated in one single night a vehement answer to the opinions of Vigilantius, who, according to this writer, taught as follows:— That the honours paid to the rotten bones and dust of the saints and martyrs, by adoring, kissing, wrapping them in silver, and enclosing them in vessels of gold, placing them in churches, and lighting wax candles before them, was idolatry. That the celibacy of the clergy was heresy, and their vows of chastity a seminary of lewdness. That to pray for the dead, or desire their prayers, was superstition, and that we can pray one for another only as long as we are alive. That the souls of the departed apostles and martyrs were at rest in some particular place, and could not leave it, in order to be present in various places, for hearing the prayers addressed to them. That the sepulchres of the martyrs should not be venerated; that vigils

held in churches should be abolished, with the exception of that at Easter; that to enter monastic life was to become useless to society,& c. &c. The answer of Jerome to the above-mentioned opinions of Vigilantius is a curious mixture of violence and casuistry. He declared his quondam friend and holy priest, Vigilantius, a greater monster than all those which nature had ever produced, the Centaurs, the Behemoths, the Syrens, the triple-bodied Gerion of Spain; that he was a most detestable heretic, venting foul blasphemies against the relics of the martyrs, who were working miracles everyday. “Go,” says he to Vigilantius, “into the churches of those martyrs, and thou shalt be cleansed from the evil spirit by which thou art now possessed, and feel thyself burning, not by those wax candles which offend thee, but by invisible flames, which will force that demon who talks within thee to confess that he is the same as that who had personated, perhaps a Mercury, a Bacchus, or some other of the heathen gods, amongst their followers,” &c. He is unable, however, to produce any other argument in support of the worship of relics than the example of those who had practised it. “Was it wrong,” he exclaims, “of the bishops of Rome to celebrate divine service on the graves containing the bones of St Peter and St Paul, which, according to Vigilantius, were nothing better than dust? The Emperor Constantius must then have committed a sacrilege by translating the holy relics of Andrew, Luke, and Timothy, to Constantinople; the Emperor Arcadius must be then also considered sacrilegious, as he has translated the bones of the blessed Samuel from Judea to Thrace; then all those bishops who consented to preserve mere dust in vessels of gold or wrapt in silk, were not only sacrilegious, but were fools; and, finally, that all these people must have been fools who went out to meet these relics, and received them with as much joy as if they were the prophet himself alive, because the procession which carried them was attended by crowds of people from Palestine to Chalcedon, singing the praises of Christ, whose servant Samuel was.”

There is no abuse in the world which cannot be justified, if the example of persons occupying a high station or that of great numbers is sufficient for it. The advocates of the adoration of relics in our own days may defend it by the fact that about half a million of people went in 1845 to worship the holy coat of Treves, and that still more recently great honours were paid to the relics of St Theodosia at Amiens, by a number of distinguished persons,—bishops, archbishops, and even cardinals. The autos da fé of the Spanish and Portuguese inquisitions could not be wrong, since kings, queens, and the most eminent persons of the state, approved them by their presence. Idolatry cannot be an error, since so many monarchs, statesmen, and learned men, had conformed to its rites; whilst, on the other side, the same reason may be pleaded for the penal laws of Ireland, and other enactments against the Roman Catholics, because they were established and maintained by so many parliaments. Jerome maintained that it was a calumny of Vigilantius to say that the Christians burnt candles in daylight, though he admitted that it was done by some men and women in order to honour the martyrs. He did not approve of it, because their zeal was without knowledge; but he thought that on account of their good intention, they would be rewarded according to their faith, like the woman who had anointed the feet of our Lord. He also tried to justify the use of candles by those passages of the Scriptures where an allusion was made to lamps and lights; as, for instance, the parable of the virgins, the expression of the Psalms 119:105, “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.” The rest of the arguments which St Jerome employs in refuting what he calls the errors and heresies of Vigilantius are of a similar nature to those which have been given above; and it is really astonishing to see that a man like this celebrated father, who is generally considered as one of the great luminaries of the

church, not only by Roman Catholics, but also by some Protestants, could descend to such miserable shifts, and indulge in such violent language as he did, in his answer to Vigilantius, which bears a strong mark of having been dictated more by his personal feelings against his former friend and benefactor, than by a conviction of the justice of the cause which he was defending on that occasion. It is, however, evident from the other writings of the same father of the church, that his imagination was much more powerful than his reasoning faculties, and that he had entirely forgotten the precept of St Paul, to “refuse profane and old wives’ fables”—(1 Timothy 4:7)—because no one has ever indulged in more absurd fables than this good father did, in his lives of St Hilarion and St Paul, two celebrated monks, and of which the following is a fair specimen:—

“A Christian citizen of Majuma, called Italicus, kept horses for racing, but was continually beaten by his rival, a pagan ducumvir of Gaza, who, by using certain charms and diabolical incantations, contrived always to damp the spirits of the Christian’s horses, and to give vigour to his own. Italicus applied, therefore, for help to St Hilarion, who, thinking that it was improper to make prayers for such a frivolous object, advised Italicus to sell his horses, and to give their price to the poor, for the salvation of his soul. Italicus represented, however, that he was discharging against his inclination the duties of a public office, and that as a Christian could not resort to magical means, he addressed himself to a servant of God, particularly as it was important to defeat the inhabitants of Gaza, who were known as enemies of Christ, and that it was not so much for his own interests as for those of the church that he wished to overcome his rival. Hilarion, convinced by these reasons, filled with water an earthen vessel, from which he usually drank, and delivered it to Italicus, who sprinkled with the water his horses, his chariots and charioteers, his stables, and even the barriers of the racing ground. The whole city was in a great excitement, the idolaters deriding the Christians, who loudly expressed their confidence of victory. The signal being given, the Christian’s horses flew with an extreme rapidity, and left those of his rival far behind. This miracle produced a very great effect upon the spectators, and many persons, including the beaten party, became converts to Christianity.” The above-mentioned work is filled with fables still more extravagant than the one which I have related, and which entirely throw into the shade the celebrated tales of Munchausen. Jerome complained that many people, whom, in his Christian meekness, he calls Scyllean dogs, were laughing at the stories related in those works, and which he begins by invoking the assistance of the Holy Ghost. Was it then a wonder that a Christianity, defended by such wretched superstitions, was frequently abandoned by individuals, who, comparing the Christian legends of the kind quoted above with the fictions of Pagan mythology, preferred the latter as being more poetical? and, indeed, we have instances of the ridicule which the Pagans attempted to throw upon Christianity, by comparing its saints with their own gods and demigods.

I must, however, return once more to Vigilantius. The Roman Catholic historian of the church, Baronius, who calls him “a horned beast, a fool, and furious, who had reached the last degree of folly and fury,” &c., &c., maintains that his heresy was solemnly condemned by the Pope Innocent I., whom the bishops of Gallia had addressed on this subject. He also says that the same heresy produced terrible consequences; because two years after Vigilantius had spread his doctrines, the Vandals and other barbarians invaded Gallia, and destroyed all his adherents. Admitting even with Baronius that Vigilantius was a damnable heretic, it cannot be denied that this learned historian

had a very strange notion of divine justice, because the barbarians alluded to above destroyed a great number of churches and relics, as well as those who prayed at their shrines, whilst Vigilantius died quietly, and, notwithstanding the assertion of Baronius, never was excluded from the communion of the church, or even condemned by her legal authorities.

We know from Vigilantius' opponents that his opinions were approved by many, and there can be no doubt that there was, not only in his days, but long after him, a good number of witnesses for the truth, who opposed the rapid spread of Pagan ideas and practices in the church. Thus, at the end of the sixth century, Serenus, bishop of Marseilles, removed all the images from his church, because the people worshipped them. This produced a great discontent amongst many people of his diocese, who appealed to Pope Gregory I. in favour of the images. The Pope advised a middle course, i.e., that the images should remain in the church, but that it should not be allowed to worship them. Serenus, however, who well knew that the one infallibly led to the other, refused to comply with the papal injunctions, upon which Gregory wrote to him again, saying that he praised his zeal in not suffering the worship of any thing that was made by the hand of man; but that images should not be destroyed, because pictures were used in churches to teach the ignorant by sight what they could not read in books,& c.

We therefore see that at the end of the sixth century, the celebrated Pope Gregory I., surnamed the Great, considered the worship of images as an abuse to be prohibited, but which was afterwards legalised by his successors, and an opposition to it declared heresy.

I could produce other evidences to show that the worship of images was condemned by many bishops and priests of the period which I have described, though they approved their use as a means of teaching the illiterate, or tolerated them as an unavoidable evil. The limits of this essay allow me not, however, to extend my researches on this subject, and I shall endeavour to give in the next chapter a rapid sketch of the violent reaction against the worship of images in the east by the iconoclast emperors, and of the more moderate, but no less decided, opposition to the same practice in the west by Charlemagne.

02.05. Chapter V. Reaction Against The Worship Of Images And Other Superstitious Practices ...

Chapter V. Reaction Against The Worship Of Images And Other Superstitious Practices By The Iconoclast Emperors Of The East. The worship of images, as well as other Pagan practices, introduced into the church during the fourth and fifth centuries, were prevailing in the east as much as in the west; and I have mentioned, that the monks, particularly those of Egypt, had greatly contributed to the introduction of anthropomorphism into the Christian church. A great blow to image-worship was given in the east by the rise and rapid progress of Mahometanism, whose followers, considering it as idolatry, destroyed many objects to which certain miraculous virtues had been ascribed, and they constantly taunted the Christians with their belief in such superstitions. The Jews addressed the same reproaches to the Christians; “yet,” as Gibbon has justly observed, “their servitude might curb their zeal and depreciate their authority; but the triumphant Mussulman, who reigned at Damascus, and threatened Constantinople, cast into the scale of reproach the accumulated weight of truth and victory.” And, indeed, there could not be a stronger argument against the efficacy of images than the rapid conquest by the Mahometans of many Christian cities which relied upon a miraculous defence by some images preserved in their churches. This circumstance could not but produce, in the minds of many thinking Christians, a conviction of the absurdity of image-worship, and the spread of such opinions must have been promoted by congregations who had preserved the purity of primitive worship, and of whom it appears that there were several still extant in the eighth century, as well as by the influence of Armenia, a country with which the eastern empire had frequent intercourse of a political and commercial nature, and whose church rejected at that time the worship of images. This party wanted only a leader and favourable circumstances in order publicly to assert their condemnation of the prevailing practice, which they considered as sinful idolatry. The accession of Leo III., the Isaurian, in 717, who, from an inferior condition, rose by his talents and military prowess to the imperial throne, gave to that party what they required, for he shared their opinions, and was a man of great energy and ability. The troubles of the state, which the valour and political wisdom of Leo saved from impending ruin, occupied too much the first years of that emperor’s reign to allow him to undertake a reform of the church. But in 727 he assembled a council of senators and bishops, and decided, with their consent, that all the images should be removed in the churches from the sanctuary and the altar, to a height where they might be seen, but not worshipped, by the congregation. It was, however, impossible to follow long this middle course, as the adherents of the images contrived to worship them in spite of their elevation, while their opponents taxed the emperor with want of zeal, holding out to him the example of the Jewish monarch, who had caused the brazen serpent to be broken. Leo therefore ordered all kinds of images to be destroyed; and though his edict met with some opposition, it was put into execution throughout the whole empire, with the exception of the Italian provinces, which, instigated by Pope Gregory II., a zealous defender of images, revolted against the emperor, and resisted all his efforts to regain his dominion over them. This monarch died in 741, after a not inglorious reign of twenty-four years,

and was succeeded on the throne by his son Constantine VIII., surnamed Copronymus. All the information which we possess about this monarch, as well as the other iconoclast emperors, is derived from historians violently opposed to their religious views. These writers represent Constantine VIII. as one of the greatest monsters that ever disgraced humanity, stained by every imaginable vice; and having exhausted all the usual terms of opprobrium, they invent some such ridiculous expressions as a “leopard generated by a lion, an aspic born from the seeds of a serpent, a flying dragon,” &c.; but they do not adduce in confirmation of these epithets any of those criminal acts which have disgraced the reigns of many Byzantine emperors, whose piety is extolled by the same writers. We know, moreover, by the evidence of those very historians who have bespattered with all those opprobrious terms the memory of Constantine, that he was a brave and skilful leader, who defeated the Arabs, the most formidable enemies of the empire, and restored several of its lost provinces, and that the country was prosperous under his reign of thirty-four years—741 to 775. The beginning of Constantine’s reign was disturbed by his own brother-in-law, Artabasdes, who, supported by the adherents of the images, competed for the imperial throne, but was defeated, and his party crushed. Constantine, desiring to abolish the abuse, which he regarded as idolatry, by a solemn decision of the church declared, in 753, his intention to convoke for this object a general council; and in order that the question at issue should be thoroughly sifted, he enjoined all the bishops of the empire to assemble local synods, and to examine the subject, previously to its being debated by the general council. This council, composed of three hundred and thirty-eight bishops, met at Constantinople in 754, and, after having deliberated for six months, decided that, conformably to Holy Writ and the testimony of the fathers, all images were to be removed from the churches, and whoever would dare to make an image, in order to place it in a church, to worship it, or to keep it concealed in his house, was, if a clerk, to be deposed, if a layman, to be anathematised. The council added, that those who adhered to the images were to be punished by the imperial authorities as enemies of the doctrine of the fathers, and breakers of the law of God. This decision was pronounced by the assembled bishops unanimously, and without a single dissentient voice, which had never been the case before. This assembly took the title of the Seventh Ecumenical Council, and the emperor ordered its decision to be put into execution throughout all his dominions. The images were removed from the churches, and those which were painted on the walls covered with whitewash. The principal opposition to the imperial order was offered by the monks, who were always the chief promoters of image-worship; and Constantine is accused of having repressed this opposition with a violence common to that barbarous age. He is said to have entertained the greatest hatred against these monks, calling them idolaters, and their dresses the dress of darkness—an opinion with which many persons will be found to chime, I think, even in our own time. Constantine died in 775, and was followed on the throne by his son, Leo IV., who inherited the religious views of his father; whilst his wife, Irene, a beautiful and talented, but ambitious and unprincipled woman, was a secret worshipper of images. Leo, who was of a weak constitution, died after a reign of five years, appointing Irene the guardian of his minor son Constantine, who was then ten years old. Irene governed the empire with great ability, but was too fond of power to surrender it to her son at his coming of age, and he tried to obtain by force what was due to him by right. The party of Irene proved, however, the stronger; and young Constantine was taken prisoner, and his mother caused him to be deprived of sight. Irene’s orders were executed in such an atrocious manner, that the unfortunate prince died in consequence. Irene governed the empire with great splendour, but her

first object was to restore the worship of images; and the machinations by which she accomplished this object have been so well related by Gibbon, that I cannot do better than copy his account of them:—

“Under the reign of Constantine VIII., the union of the civil and ecclesiastical power had overthrown the tree, without extirpating the root of superstition. The idols, for such they were now held, were secretly cherished by the order and the sex most prone to devotion; and the fond alliance of the monks and females obtained a final victory over the reason and authority of man. Leo IV. maintained with less rigour the religion of his father and grandfather, but his wife, the fair and ambitious Irene, had imbibed the zeal of the Athenians, the heirs of the idolatry rather than philosophy of their ancestors. During the life of her husband, these sentiments were inflamed by danger and dissimulation, and she could only labour to protect and promote some favourite monks, whom she drew from their caverns, and seated on the metropolitan thrones of the east. But as soon as she reigned in her own name, and in that of her son, Irene more seriously undertook the ruin of the iconoclasts, and the first step of her future persecution was a general edict for liberty of conscience. In the restoration of the monks, a thousand images were exposed to the public veneration; a thousand legends were invented of their sufferings and miracles. By the opportunities of death and removal, the episcopal seats were judiciously filled; the most eager competitors for celestial or earthly favour anticipated and flattered the judgment of their sovereign; and the promotion of her secretary Tarasius gave Irene the patriarch of Constantinople, and the command of the Oriental church. But the decrees of a general council could only be repealed by a similar assembly; the iconoclasts, whom she convened, were bold in possession, and averse to debate; and the feeble voice of the bishops was re-echoed by the more formidable clamour of the soldiers and the people of Constantinople. The delay and intrigues of a year, the separation of the disaffected troops, and the choice of Nice for a second orthodox synod, removed these obstacles; and the episcopal conscience was again, after the Greek fashion, in the hands of the prince.”—Gibbon’s Roman Empire, chap. xlix. This council, held in 786, restored the worship of images by the unanimous sentence of three hundred and fifty bishops. The acts of this synod have been preserved, and they are stated by Gibbon to be “a curious monument of superstition and ignorance, of falsehood and folly.” I am afraid that there is but too much truth in this severe judgment of Gibbon; and the following passage relating to the same council, which I have extracted, not from Gibbon, or any writer of the school to which he belonged, but from the celebrated Roman Catholic historian of the church, Abbé Fleury, will enable [pg 088] the reader to form his own judgment on this subject.

After describing the confession of faith signed by that council, which declared that the images of the saints are to be worshipped, because they remind us of those whom they represent, and make us participators in their merits, he says:—

“The last passages showed that God was making miracles by means of images; and in order to confirm it, a discourse, ascribed to St Athanasius, was read. It contained the account of a pretended miracle, which happened at Beryt, with an image of Christ, which, having been pierced by the Jews, emitted blood, which healed many sick persons. The fathers of the council were so much moved by this account that they shed tears. It is, however, certain, that this discourse is not by St Athanasius, and it is even very doubtful whether the story which it contains is true. Thus it appears that amongst all the bishops present at this council, there was not a single one versed in

the science of criticism, because many other false documents were produced in that assembly. This proves nothing against the decision of the council, because it is sufficiently supported by true documents. It only proves the ignorance of the times, as well as the necessity of knowing history, chronology, the difference of manners and styles, in order to discern real documents from spurious ones."

Thus, according to the authority of one of the most eminent writers of the Roman Catholic Church, the second Council of Nice, the first synod which has given an explicit and solemn sanction to one of the most important tenets of the Western and the Eastern churches, was composed of such ignorant and silly prelates, that an absurd fable, contained in a forged paper, could sway their minds and hearts in such a manner as to make them shed tears of emotion, and that there was not a single individual amongst these venerable fathers sufficiently informed to be able to discover a fabrication so gross that it did not escape the attention of scholars who lived many centuries afterwards.

Irene rigorously enforced the decrees of this council against the opponents of images; and that woman, guilty of the death of her own son, and suspected of that of her husband, is extolled by ecclesiastical writers as a most pious princess. A contemporary Greek writer, and a zealous defender of image-worship, the monk Theodore Studites, places her above Moses, and says that "she had delivered the people from the Egyptian bondage of impiety;" and the historian of the Roman Catholic Church, Baronius, justifies her conduct by the following argument: that the hands of the fathers were raised by a just command of God against their children, who followed strange gods, and that Moses had ordered them to consecrate themselves to the Lord, even every man upon his son, and upon his brother, Exodus 32:29, so that it was a high degree of piety to be cruel to one's own son; consequently Irene deserved on this account the first crown of paradise; and that if she had committed the murder of her son from motives of ambition, she would be worse than Agrippina, mother of Nero; but if she did it through zeal for religion, as it appears by the encomium which she had received from very holy men who lived at that time, she deserves to be praised for her piety.

Irene's piety, shown by the restoration of images, and the persecution of their opponents, was indeed so much appreciated by the church, that she received a place amongst the saints of the Greek calendar. She was, however, less fortunate in her worldly affairs; because she was deposed in 802 by Nicephorus, who occupied the imperial throne, and exiled to Lesbos, where she died in great poverty. He did not abolish the images, nor allow the persecution of their opponents; and the ecclesiastical writers represent him, on account of this liberal policy, as a perfect monster. Nicephorus perished in a battle against the Bulgarians in 811, and his successor Michael, who persecuted the iconoclasts, unable to maintain himself on the throne, retired into a convent, after a reign of about two years, and the imperial crown was assumed by Leo V., a native of Armenia, and one of the most eminent leaders of the army, which elevated him to this dignity.

Though all that we know about Leo V. is derived from authors zealously opposed to his religious views, yet, notwithstanding all their odium theologicum, they are obliged to admit that he was gallant in the field, and just and careful in the administration of civil affairs. Being the native of a country whose church still resisted the introduction of images, he was naturally adverse to their worship, and the manner in which he abolished it in his empire deserves a particular notice;

because, though related by his enemies, it proves that he was a sincere scriptural Christian.

According to their relation, Leo believed that the victories obtained by the barbarians, and other calamities to which the empire was exposed, were a visitation of God in punishment of the worship of images; that he demanded that a precept for adoring the images should be shown to him in the gospels, and as the thing was impossible, he rejected them as idols condemned by the Word of God. They also say, that the attention of Leo being once drawn to this passage of the prophet Isaiah, “To whom then will you liken God? or what likeness will you compare unto him? The workman melteth a graven image, and the goldsmith spreadeth it over with gold and casteth silver chains,” (Isaiah 49:18-19) this circumstance irritated him more than any thing else against the images. He communicated his sentiments to the patriarch, and requested him either to remove the images, or to show a reason why they were worshipped, since the Scriptures did not order it. The patriarch, who was an adherent of the images, tried to elude this demand by various sophisms, which, not having satisfied the emperor, he ordered divines of both parties to assemble in his palace, and represented to them that Moses, who had received the law, written with the hand of God, condemned, in the most explicit terms, those who adored the works of men’s hands; that it was idolatry to worship them, and great folly to attempt to confine the Infinite in a picture of the size of an ell. It is said that the defenders of the images refused to speak for the three following reasons:—1. That the canons prohibited to doubt what had been determined by the second Council of Nice; 2. That the clergy could not deliberate upon such matters in the imperial palace, but in a church; and, 3. That the emperor was not a competent judge on this occasion, because he was resolved to abolish the images. The emperor deposed the patriarch, who defended the images, replacing him by another who shared his own sentiments, and convened a council, which, with the exception of a few of its members, decided for the abolition of the images. The emperor ordered their removal, and sent several of their defenders into exile; he soon, however, allowed them to return, and only some few of the most zealous of them died in exile. The most celebrated of these sufferers was Theodore Studites; and as he has obtained on this account the honour of saintship, his opinions on the nature of images deserve a particular notice. He maintained that as the shadow cannot be separated from the body, as the rays of the sun are inseparable from that planet, so the images are inseparable from the subjects which they represent. He pretended that an image of Christ should be treated as if it were Christ himself, saying, “The image is nothing else than Christ himself, except the difference of their essence; therefore, the worship of the image is the worship of Jesus Christ.” He considered those who were removing images as “destroyers of the incarnation of Christ, because he does not exist if he cannot be painted. We renounce Christ if we reject his image; and refuse to worship him, if we refuse to adore his image.” This defence of image-worship is, I think, a faithful exposition of the anthropomorphistic ideas, which, as I have mentioned before, p. 9, had been chiefly generated by the morbid imagination of the Egyptian monks, and were supported by that numerous class, which formed the most zealous and efficient defenders of the images. Leo V. was murdered in a church in 820; and Michael II., surnamed the Stammerer, whom the conspirators placed on the throne, did not allow the images to be restored, though he was moderate in his religious views. He recalled the defenders of the images from exile, and seemed to steer a middle course between the enemies and the defenders of images, though he shared the opinions of the former. He was succeeded in 829 by his son, Theophilus,—a most decided opponent of images,—and whose valour and love of justice are acknowledged by his religious adversaries. He died in 841, leaving a minor son, Michael III., under the regency of his

wife, Theodora. This princess, whose personal character was irreproachable, governed the empire during thirteen years, with considerable wisdom; but being an adherent of images, she restored their worship, which has since that time continued in the Greek Church in perhaps even a more exaggerated form than in the Roman Catholic one, and which can be without any impropriety called iconolatry, since idolatry may be perhaps considered as an expression too strong for ears polite. The struggle between the iconoclasts and the iconolaters, of which I have given a mere outline, but which agitated the Eastern empire for nearly a century and a half, ending in the complete triumph of the latter, deserves the particular attention of all thinking Protestants; because it is virtually the same contest that has been waged for more than three centuries between Protestantism and Rome, and which seems now to assume a new phasis. I do not think that the ignorance of those times may be considered as the principal cause of the triumph of the iconolatric party, and that the spread of knowledge in our own day is a sufficient safeguard against the recurrence of a similar contingency. There was in the eighth and ninth centuries a considerable amount of learning at Constantinople, where the treasures of classical literature, many of which have since been lost, were preserved and studied. The Greeks of that time, though no doubt greatly inferior to the modern Europeans in physical science, were not so in metaphysics and letters, whilst the gospel could be read by all the educated classes in its original tongue, which was the official, literary, and ecclesiastical language of the Eastern empire. The Byzantine art was, moreover, very inferior to that of modern Europe, and could not produce, except on some coarse and rustic intellects, that bewitching effect, which the works of great modern painters and sculptors often produce upon many refined and imaginative minds. It has been justly remarked, by an accomplished writer of our day, that “the all-emancipating press is occasionally neutralised by the soul-subduing miracles of art.” The Roman Catholic Church perfectly understands this soul-subduing power of art, and the following is the exposition of her views on this subject by one of her own writers, whom I have already quoted on a similar subject.

“That pictures and images in churches are particularly serviceable in informing the minds of the humbler classes, and for such a purpose possess a superiority over words themselves, is certain.

“Segnius irritant animos demissa per aurem, Quam quæ sunt oculis subjecta fldelibus et quæ

Ipse sibi tradit spectator.”

—Horace de Arte Poetica, v. 180.

“What’s through the ear conveyed will never find Its way with so much quickness to the mind, As that, when faithful eyes are messengers, Unto himself the fixed spectator bears.”

“The remark of a heathen poet is corroborated by the observations of the most celebrated amongst ancient and modern Christian writers. So persuaded was St Paulinus of Nola, fourteen hundred years ago, of the efficacy possessed by paintings for conveying useful lessons of instruction, that he adorned with a variety of sacred subjects the walls of a church which he erected, and dedicated to God in honour of St Felix.

“Prudentius assures us how much his devotion was enkindled, as he gazed upon the sufferings of martyrs, so feelingly depicted around their tombs and in their churches. On his way to Rome, about the year 405, the poet paid a visit to the shrine of St Cassianus, at Forum Cornelii, the modern Imola, where the body of that Christian hero reposed, under a splendid altar, over which

were represented, in an expressive picture, all the sufferings of his cruel martyrdom. So moved was Prudentius, that he threw himself upon the pavement, kissed the altar with religious reverence, and numbering up with many a tear those wounds that sin had inflicted upon his soul, concluded by exhorting every one to unite with himself in intrusting their petitions for the divine clemency to the solicitude of the holy martyr Cassianus, who will not only hear our request, but will afford us the benefit of his patronage." The anecdote of Prudentius evidently proves that what originally had been intended for the instruction of the people, may very easily become an object of their adoration. If a man of a superior education, like Prudentius, could be carried away by his feelings in such a manner as to address his prayers to a dead man, how much greater must be the effect of images upon less cultivated minds! and I have related, on the authority of the great Roman Catholic historian, Fleury, that the fathers of the second Council of Nice, who, according to the same authority, were a very ignorant set, shed tears at the sight of an image represented in an absurd and fictitious story.

Such are the effects produced in teaching religion by means of images. There can be no doubt about the truth of the observations contained in the lines of Horace, which the author of "Hierurgia" quotes in defence of images; but these observations refer to the theatre, and it appears to me that the application of purely scenic precepts to the house of God is something very like converting divine service into a comedy. The limits of this essay allow me not to discuss the chances of an iconolatric reaction in our days. I shall only observe, that in several countries where the iconoclasts of the Reformation had gained a predominant position, they were entirely crushed by the iconolatric reaction, and that a fond alliance of females and monks, supported by the ruling powers of the state, achieved in these parts as great a victory as that which it obtained in the east under Irene and Theodora, not only over the reason of man, but even over the authority of the Word of God; and I believe that the only human means of preventing similar contingencies are free institutions, which allow the fullest liberty of discussion in regard to all religious opinions.

I have said before, that the Pope opposed the abolition of images proclaimed by the Emperor Leo III., and that this opposition was shared by the imperial provinces of Italy, which revolted on that occasion against their sovereign, and separated from the Byzantine empire. It was therefore natural that the second Council of Nice, which restored the worship of images, should obtain the approbation of Pope Hadrian I.; but his desire to impose the enactments of that council upon the churches of the West met with a decided opposition on the part of Charlemagne. This great monarch, who is so celebrated by his efforts to convert the Pagan Saxons, prosecuted with all the barbarity of his age, and whom the church has placed amongst her saints, was so offended by the enactments of the second Council of Nice in favour of the worship of images, that he composed, or what is more probable, ordered to be composed in his name, a book against that worship, and sent it to Pope Hadrian I., as an exposition of his own sentiments, as well as of those of his bishops, on the subject in question. This work, though written in violent language, contains many very rational views about images, and unanswerable arguments against all kinds of adoration offered to them. The substance of this celebrated protest is as follows:—

Charlemagne says, that there is no harm in having images in a church, provided they are not worshipped; and that the Greeks had fallen into two extremes, one of which was to destroy the images, as had been ordained by the Council of Constantinople, under Constantine Copronymus, and the other to worship them, as was decided by the second Council of Nice under Irene. He

censures much more severely this latter extreme than the former, because those who destroyed images had merely acted with levity and ignorance, whilst it was a wicked and profane action to worship them. He compared the first to such as mix water with wine, and the others to those who infuse a deadly poison into it; in short, there could be no comparison between the two cases. He marks, with great precision, the different kinds of worship offered to the images, rejecting all of them. The second Council of Nice decided that this worship should consist of kisses and genuflexions, as well as of burning incense and wax candles before them. All these practices are condemned by Charlemagne, as so many acts of worship offered to a created being. He addresses the defenders of the worship of images in the following manner:—

“You who establish the purity of your faith upon images, go, if you like, and fall upon your knees and burn incense before them; but with regard to ourselves we shall seek the precepts of God in his Holy Writ. Light luminaries before your pictures, whilst we shall read the Scriptures. Venerate, if you like, colours; but we shall worship divine mysteries. Enjoy the agreeable sight of your pictures; but we shall find our delight in the Word of God. Seek after figures which cannot either see, or hear, or taste; but we shall diligently seek after the law of God, which is irreprehensible.” He further says:—“I see images which have such inscriptions, as for instance St Paul, and I ask, therefore, those who are involved in this great error, why they do call images holy (sanctus), and why they do not say, conformably to the tradition of the fathers, that these are images of the saints? Let them say in what consists the sanctity of the images? Is it in the wood which had been brought from a forest in order to make them? Is it in the colours with which they are painted, and which are often composed of impure substances? Is it in the wax, which gets dirty?” He taunts the worshippers of images, pointing out an abuse which even now is as inevitable as it was then. “If,” says he, “two pictures perfectly alike, but of which one is meant for the Virgin and the other for Venus, are presented to you, you will inquire which of them is the image of the Virgin and which is that of Venus, because you cannot distinguish them. The painter will call one of these pictures the image of the Virgin, and it will be immediately put up in a high place, honoured, and kissed; whilst the other, representing Venus, will be thrown away with horror. These two pictures are, however, made by the same hand, with the same brush, with the same colours; they have the same features, and the whole difference between them lies in their inscriptions. Why is the one received and the other rejected? It is not on account of the sanctity which one of them has, and the other has not; it is, then, on account of its inscription; and yet certain letters attached to a picture cannot give it a sanctity which it otherwise had not.” This work was published for the first time in 1549, by Tillet, Roman Catholic bishop of Meaux in France, though under an assumed name, and it has been reprinted several times. Its authenticity, which had been at first impugned by some Roman Catholic writers, was finally established beyond every dispute, and acknowledged by the most eminent writers of the Roman Catholic Church, such as Mabillon, Sirmond,& c. It is a very remarkable production, for it most positively rejects every kind of worship offered to images, without making any difference between Latria and Dulia, and I think that its republication might be of considerable service at the present time. The Pope sent a long letter in answer to the protest of Charlemagne, which did not, however, satisfy that monarch, because he convened in 794 a council at Frankfort, at which he presided himself. This synod, composed of three hundred bishops of France, Germany, and Spain, and at which two legates of the Pope were present, condemned the enactment of the second Council of Nice respecting the worship of images. This decree of the Council of Frankfort is very important, because it not only condemned the worship of images, but it

virtually rejected the infallibility of the Popes, as well as of the General Councils, since it condemned what they had established. The opposition to the worship of images continued amongst the Western churches for some time after the death of Charlemagne. Thus an assembly of the French clergy, held at Paris in 825, condemned the decree of the second Council of Nice as decidedly as it was done by the work of Charlemagne and the Council of Frankfort. Claudius, bishop of Turin, who lived about that time, opposed the worship of images, which he removed from his churches, calling those idolaters who adhered to this practice; he also condemned the adoration of relics, of the figure of the cross, &c.; and he was not inaptly called, on this account, by the Jesuit historian Maimbourg, the first Protestant minister.

There are other traces of a similar opposition during the ninth century, but it seems to have entirely disappeared in the tenth, and it was again renewed by the Albigenses in the eleventh century. Their history, however, is foreign to the object of the present essay; and I shall endeavour to give in my next chapter a short sketch of the legends of the saints, composed during the middle ages.

02.06. Chapter VI. Origin And Development Of The Pious Legends, Or Lives Of Saints, ...

Chapter VI. Origin And Development Of The Pious Legends, Or Lives Of Saints, During The Middle Ages. A collection of the lives of the saints of the Roman Catholic calendar has been accomplished by the Jesuits, and is well known as that of the Bollandists, from the name of its first originator Bollandus. It extends to fifty-three huge folios, though it has reached only to the middle of October, each day having a number of saints assigned to it for commemoration. It contains, among a mass of the greatest absurdities, a good deal of valuable information relating to the history of the middle ages, particularly in respect to the customs and prevailing ideas of that period. A great, if not the greatest part of the saints whose lives are described in that collection have never existed, except in the imagination of their biographers; and the best proof of this is that the learned Benedictine monk, Dom Ruinart, an intimate friend and collaborator of the celebrated Mabillon, has reduced the acts of martyrs, whom he considers as true, to one moderate quarto, though the same work contains a refutation of the Protestant Dodwell, who maintained that the number of the primitive martyrs had been greatly exaggerated by their historians. The Christian church was already, at an early period of her existence, disturbed by a great number of forgeries, relating to the history and doctrine of our Lord and his disciples; but the spirit in which they were written, so contrary to that of the true Gospel, and the gross absurdities which they contain, were convincing proofs of the apocryphal character of those writings, which, consequently, were rejected as such from the canon of Scripture. If the church could not escape such abuses at a time when she was not yet infected by Pagan ideas and practices, she became still more exposed to them after the abovementioned corruptions, and when, as has already been said, the Christian society was invaded by whole populations, who, notwithstanding their abjuration of heathenism, were Pagans in their manners, their tastes, their prejudices, and their ignorance. There were, moreover, very great difficulties in obtaining authentic information about the lives of the martyrs. I have said, that their memory was usually preserved in the churches to which they had belonged. This was, however, entirely a local affair, and though the report of such events had undoubtedly circulated amongst other Christian congregations, there was no general register of martyrs preserved by the whole church, which had no central point of union. The means of communication between various places were, moreover, at that time very imperfect, and this difficulty was increased by the persecutions to which the primitive churches were often exposed. These persecutions dispersed many churches, destroying their registers and other documents belonging to them, whilst even a much greater number of them experienced a similar calamity from the barbarian nations who successively invaded the Roman empire. The accounts of the sufferings and death of the martyrs rest, therefore, with the exception of some comparatively few well-authenticated cases, upon the authority of vague and uncertain traditions. These traditions were generally collected and put in writing only centuries after the time when the event to which they relate had, or is supposed to have taken place. It was therefore no wonder that the subjects of many such accounts are purely imaginary. The nature of the generality of these legends, or

lives of martyrs and other saints, may be judged of best from the following opinion expressed on this subject by a Roman Catholic clergyman of unsuspected orthodoxy:—

“What shall I say of those saints of whose life we don’t know either the beginning or the progress,—of those saints to whom so many praises are given, though nobody knows anything about their end? Who may pray to them to intercede for him, when it is impossible to know what degree of credit they enjoy with God? We shall be obliged, indeed, to consider the most part of the acts of martyrs, which are now produced with so much confidence, as so many fables, and reject them as nothing better than romances. It is true that their lives are written, like that of St Ovidius, St Felicissimus, and St Victor! But, O God! what lives! what libels! lives deserving a place in the Index of the Prohibited Books, since they are filled with falsehoods, vain conjectures, or, to say the least, are ascribing to unknown and apocryphal saints the true acts of the most illustrious martyrs. Such things cannot but bring about a great confusion in the history of the church, not to say in religion itself. It is in this manner that the actions of St Felicissimus, who is generally believed to have been a deacon to St Sixtus, are ascribed to a new Felicissimus; and the virtues of St Victor of Milan are now given to a new Victor, who has been recently brought to Paris. As regards the life of St Ovidius, is there anything in it more than words and words? and can we find in it anything solid? This little book speaks of a leaden plate upon which the senatorial dignity and the year of this saint’s martyrdom are inscribed. Why is not this inscription given? Why is not at least the precise date of his martyrdom named? It is said that St Ovidius suffered towards the end of the second century; is this the manner of fixing the year of his death? No, no; the ancients did not mark the time in such a manner; they did not take an uncertain century for the certain epoch of a year. I am much afraid that this inscription is by no means so authentic as people wish to persuade us. But there was found in his grave a little glass vessel; a palm is engraved upon his sepulchre; and his skull has the appearance of being pierced with a lance. Well, these marks may prove that St Ovidius was a martyr; but are they sufficient to establish the truth of his life, such as it has been published?”

I would, however, observe, that many writers of the lives of saints, without excepting those who are considered legitimate, have rendered themselves guilty of something worse than the plagiarism of which the learned Mabillon complains in the passage given above. They may be accused of having blasphemously parodied the Scriptures, and particularly the Gospels, by ascribing many of the miracles recorded in the Bible to the subjects of their biographies. M. Maury, the French savant whom I have already quoted, has traced a great number of miracles ascribed to various saints, which are nothing but imitations of this kind. This sacrilegious plagiarism is not confined to the middle ages, but has been practised in modern times, as is evident from the two following miracles ascribed to the celebrated Jesuit saint, Francis Xavier, who died in 1552. It is said that during his residence in Japan a woman of his acquaintance lost her daughter, after having sought in vain during her illness for St Francis, who was absent on some journey. At his return the bereaved mother fell at his feet, and said, weeping, like Martha to our Saviour, “Lord, if thou hadst been here, my daughter had not died,”—(John 11:21) The saint, moved by the entreaties of the mother, ordered her to open the grave of her daughter, and restored her to life. Another time the same saint said to a father whose daughter had died, in the same manner as Jesus Christ said to the centurion whose servant was sick, “Go thy way; thy daughter is healed.” Had these miracles been performed in our part of the world, they would have converted crowds of

Protestants, and thus greatly advanced the principal object of the order to which St Francis Xavier belonged; but the air of Europe seems to have been unfavourable for such wonderful experiments, since [pg 110] the good saint was obliged to betake himself to Japan in order successfully to perform them.

It is true that the legend writers make no attempt at concealing these imitations, but, on the contrary, insist upon the likeness of the miracles performed by their saint to those of our Saviour, as a proof of the high degree of sanctity attained by the former. No saint, however, of the Roman Catholic or Græco-Russian calendar had so many miracles ascribed to him, particularly of the kind mentioned above, as St Francis of Assisi, the celebrated founder of the mendicant monks, and who, considering the immense influence which his disciples have exercised on the Catholic world, was perhaps one of the most extraordinary characters which the middle ages produced.

It has been frequently observed, that genius is akin to madness, and that the partition by which the two are separated is so thin that it occasionally becomes quite imperceptible. Such a condition of the human mind has perhaps never been exemplified in a more striking manner than by the life of this famous saint, which presents a strange mixture of the noblest acts of charity and self-devotion, the wildest freaks of a madman, and of genial conceptions worthy of the most eminent statesman and philosopher. The best proof of his genius is the great influence which the order instituted by him has exercised during several centuries in many countries, and which even now has not yet lost its vitality. It must also be admitted, that neither St Francis nor his disciples can be charged with any of those atrocities by which the life of his contemporary St Dominic, of bloody memory, the founder of the inquisition, and the preacher of the crusade against the Albigenses, as well as the annals of his order, are stained. Neither can it be denied that Francis, as well as his followers, have on many occasions mitigated the barbarity of their age. His immense popularity is, however, as I think, chiefly due to the circumstance that his order, principally destined to act upon the lower classes, was recruited from the most numerous and most ignorant part of the population; and is it necessary to observe that the less men are educated, the more they are prone to credulity and exaggeration? Much learning was not required for the admission to this democratic order, and its ranks were increased by the creation of a class whose members remained in the world, binding themselves only to the observation of some devotional practices and moral precepts. All this contributed to spread the order of St Francis, to which both sexes are admitted, with a marvellous rapidity over many countries; at the same time its members were extolling the virtues and supposed miracles of their founder in the most exaggerated and often ludicrous manner, of which the following anecdote may serve as a specimen:—A Franciscan monk, who was one day preaching about the merits of the founder of his order, began his sermon in the following manner: “Where shall I place the great St Francis? Amongst the saints? This is not enough for his merits. Amongst the angels? no, ’tis not enough. Amongst the archangels? ’tis not enough. Amongst the seraphims? ’tis not enough. Amongst the cherubims? ’tis not enough.” He was, however, on a sudden released, by one of his hearers, from his perplexity about a proper location for his saint, who, rising from his seat, said, “Reverend father, as I see that you cannot find for St Francis a proper place in heaven, I shall give up to him mine on this bench;” which having said, he left the church. The story does not say whether this good monk was satisfied with the place so unexpectedly offered to his saint, or where he would have stopped without this timely interruption; but we know, from many other cases, that St Francis was compared by his disciples to our

Saviour. Thus, in a work published by the Father Bartholomeus of Pisa, and entitled “The Golden Book of the Conformities of the Life of St Francis with that of Jesus Christ,” the author maintains that the birth of St Francis was announced by prophets; that he had twelve disciples, one of whom, called John Capella, was rejected by him, like Judas Iscariot by our Lord; that he had been tempted by the devil, but without success; that he was transfigured; that he had suffered the same passion as our Saviour, though he never was subject to any persecution or ill-usage, but died quietly, in 1218, amidst his devoted admirers. Other writers pushed even farther the blasphemous comparison, boasting that St Francis had performed many more miracles than our Lord, because Christ changed water into wine but once, whilst St Francis did it thrice; and that instead of the few miraculous cures mentioned in the Gospels, St Francis and his disciples had opened the eyes of more than a thousand blind, cured more than a thousand lame, and restored to life more than a thousand dead. The greatest miracle, however, that has ever been wrought by St Francis has taken place in our own days, and its authenticity admits of no doubt whatever. It is a life of this famous saint, published by M. Chavin de Malan; and my readers may form an adequate idea of its contents by the following extract from an admirable article in the “Edinburgh Review” for July 1847:—“Though amongst the most passionate and uncompromising devotees of the Church of Rome, M. Chavin de Malan also is in one sense a Protestant. He protests against any exercise of human reason in examining any dogma which that church inculcates, or any fact which she alleges. The most merciless of her cruelties affect him with no indignation, the silliest of her prodigies with no shame, the basest of her superstitions with no contempt. Her veriest dotage is venerable in his eyes. Even the atrocities of Innocent III. seem to this all-extolling eulogist but to augment the triumph and the glories of his reign. If the soul of the confessor of Simon de Montfort, retaining all the passions and all the prejudices of that era, should transmigrate into a doctor of the Sorbonne, conversant with the arts and literature of our own times, the result might be the production of such an ecclesiastical history as that of which we have here a specimen,—elaborate in research, glowing in style, vivid in portraiture, utterly reckless and indiscriminate in belief, extravagant up to the very verge of idolatry in applause, and familiar far beyond the verge of indecorum with the most awful topics and objects of the Christian faith.”—(Pp. 1, 2.)

Now, I ask my reader whether the publication of such a work, in the year of grace 1845, at Paris, is not a perfect miracle, and undoubtedly much more genuine than all those which it describes?

We live indeed in an age of wonders, physical as well as moral, and neither of them have escaped the all-powerful influence of the great moving spring of our time, and the principal cause of its rapid advance,—i.e., competition. England, which is foremost in many, and not behind in any, inventions and discoveries of the day, has maintained her rank, and even perhaps gone ahead, in the production of such moral miracles as that of which I have given a specimen above. And, indeed, the lives of the English saints, published in the years 1844 and 1845, in the capital of this Protestant country, may fearlessly challenge a comparison with the work of M. Chavin de Malan. They are, moreover, ascribed to a clergyman of the Church of England, who, though he has since gone over to Rome, was at that time receiving the wages of the Protestant Establishment of this country as one of its servants and defenders. The few following extracts from this curious work will enable my readers to judge whether I have over-estimated the capabilities of this work for a successful competition with its French rival:—

“Many of these (legends) are so well fitted to illustrate certain principles which should be borne in mind in considering mediæval miracles, that they deserve some attention. Not that any thing here said is intended to prove that the stories of miracles, said to be wrought in the middle ages, are true. Men will always believe or disbelieve their truth, in proportion as they are disposed to admit or reject the antecedent probability of the existence of a perpetual church, endowed with unfailing divine powers. And the reason of this is plain. Ecclesiastical miracles presuppose Catholic faith, just as Scripture miracles, and Scripture itself, presuppose the existence of God. Men, therefore, who disbelieve the faith, will of course disbelieve the story of the miracles, which, if it is not appealed to as a proof of the faith, at least takes it for granted. For instance, the real reason for rejecting the account of the vision which appeared to St Waltheof in the holy Eucharist, must be disbelief of the Catholic doctrine.” The miracle alluded to above, and which cannot be rejected without disbelief in the Catholic doctrine, is as follows:—“On Christmas-day, when the convent was celebrating the nativity of our Lord, as the friar was elevating the host, in the blessed sacrifice of the mass, he saw in his hand a child fairer than the children of men, having on his head a crown of gold studded with jewels. His eyes beamed with light, and his face was more radiant than the whitest snow; and so ineffably sweet was his countenance, that the friar kissed the feet and the hands of the heavenly child. After this the divine vision disappeared, and Waltheof found in his hands the consecrated water.” The whole collection is full of similar stories, some of which are really outrageous; as, for instance, that which it relates about St Augustine, the great apostle of England. This saint was, during his peregrinations about the country, received with great honours in the north of England; “but,” says the work in question, “very different from this are the accounts of his travels in Dorsetshire. While there, we hear of his having come to one village, where he was received with every species of insult. The wretched people, not content with heaping abusive words upon the holy visitors, assailed them with missiles, in which work, the place being probably a sea-port, the sellers of fish are related to have been peculiarly active. Hands, too, were laid upon the archbishop and his company. Finding all efforts useless, the godly company shook the dust from their feet, and withdrew. The inhabitants are said to have suffered the penalty of their impieties, even to distant generations. All the children born from that time bore and transmitted the traces of their parents’ sins in the shape of a loathsome deformity.” The writer who relates this story had not the courage or the honesty of M. Chavin de Malan to tell that the insult offered to the holy visitors consisted in attaching tails of fish to their robes, and that the loathsome deformity, with which the children of the perpetrators of that insult were born during many generations, was a tail.

Absurd as this monkish story is, it is nevertheless characteristic of the spirit of the sacerdotal pride and vindictiveness which would punish a silly joke, by which the dignity of the priestly order was offended, with a heavy calamity, entailed upon the innocent descendants of its perpetrators through many generations; and yet the fables of this modern mythology cannot be, according to our author, rejected without disbelief of the Catholic doctrine. This is not, however, his personal opinion; and he has only asserted, in a more decisive manner than it has been done for a considerable time, a principle which the Roman Catholic Church cannot disavow, though it may place her in an embarrassing position; and as an illustration of this, I shall give the following anecdote:—

Under the reign of Frederic II., a Prussian soldier stole a costly ornament from an image of the Virgin, which enjoyed a great reputation for its miraculous powers. The theft being discovered, the culprit pleaded in his defence that, having addressed a fervent prayer to the above-mentioned image for help in his poverty, it gave him this ornament to relieve him from his distress. This affair was reported to the king, who, being much amused by the soldier's device, required the Roman Catholic bishop in whose diocese this theft was committed to give a positive opinion whether the image in question could work miracles of this kind or not? The bishop could not, without showing disbelief in the Catholic doctrine, deny the possibility of the miracle, and was therefore obliged to give an affirmative reply. The king, therefore, pardoned the soldier, on condition of never accepting presents from this or any other image or saint whatever. The author of this essay, though a firm believer in the existence of God and the truth of the Scriptures, has not the advantage of being inspired with faith in the Catholic doctrine; he therefore will continue his researches in the same manner as before.

Many legends originated from misunderstanding the emblematic character of some pictures. Thus the celebrated Spanish lady saint and authoress, St Theresa, was, on account of her eloquent and impassioned effusions of love addressed to the Deity, painted by a Spanish artist having her heart pierced with an arrow, in allusion to the words of the Psalmist, "For thine arrows stick fast in me," &c.—(Psalms 38:2) She died quietly in her convent towards the end of the sixteenth century, and though the particulars of her life and death are generally known, there were some legend writers who related that she died a martyr, pierced by an arrow. If such confusion of ideas could happen in a time when literature and science had made considerable progress, and when the art of printing was already universally known, how much more frequently such things must have occurred during the prevailing ignorance of the middle ages! And, indeed, there are many wild legends which have originated from a similar source, and of which the most celebrated is that of St Denis, which has been also related of other saints. This martyr, supposed to have been beheaded, was represented holding his head in his hand, as an emblem of the manner of his death. The writer of his legend took this emblem for the representation of a real fact, and loosening the reins of his imagination, related that the saint, after having been beheaded, took up his head, kissed it, and walked away with it.

It is a general tendency of a gross and unenlightened mind to materialise the most abstract and spiritual ideas, and then what is simply an allegory becomes with him a reality. It was this tendency which, during the mediæval ignorance, gave often a literal sense to what is only typical, and it was carried so far that even the parables of our Lord were constructed into real stories. Thus, Lazarus was a poor saint who lived in great want, and was made after his death the patron of beggars and lepers. The parable of the prodigal son has furnished materials for many a legend; and to crown all these pious parodies, a monk has shown to the well-known Eastern traveller Hasselquist, the very spot upon which the good Samaritan assisted the wounded man, who had been left unheeded by the priest and the Levite. Future rewards and punishments, heaven and hell, were also represented in a grossly material manner, that gave rise to many absurd legends, generally invented with the object of supporting the pretensions of the church, to have the power of sending at pleasure the souls of the departed to either of these places.

I have already spoken of the effects which the solitary and ascetic life of the early monks produced upon their imagination. The same thing took place amongst the recluses of the convents, but

particularly nunneries. “The imaginations of women,” says a celebrated author whom I have already quoted, “as their feelings are more keen and exquisite, are more susceptible and ungovernable than those of men; more obnoxious to the injurious influence of solitude; more easily won upon by the arts of delusion, and inflamed by the contagion of the passions.” Hence we may account for the rapidity with which in orphan houses, cloisters, and other institutions, where numbers of the sex are intimately connected with each other, the sickness, humour, habits, of one, if conspicuous and distinguished, become those of all. I remember to have read in a medical writer of considerable merit, that in a French convent of nuns, of more than common magnitude, one of the sisters was seized with a strange impulse to mew like a cat, in which singular propensity she was shortly imitated by several other sisters, and finally, without a solitary exception, by the whole convent, who all joined at regular periods in a general mew that lasted several hours. The neighbourhood heard, with more astonishment than edification, the daily return of this celestial symphony, which was silenced, after many ineffectual measures, by terrifying the modesty of the sex with the menace, that, on any future repetition of their concert, a body of soldiers, pretended to be stationed at the gates of the monastery, would be called in to inflict upon them a discipline at once shameful and severe.

“Among all the epidemic fancies of the sex I have found upon record, none equals that related by Cardan to have displayed itself in the fifteenth century,—which forcibly illustrates what has been remarked of the intuitive contagion by which fantastic affection is propagated among women. A nun in a certain German convent was urged by an unaccountable impulse to bite all her companions; and her strange caprice gradually spread to others, till the whole body was infected by the same fury. Nor did the evil confine itself within these limits: the report of this strange mania travelled from one province to another, and every where conveyed with it the infectious folly, from cloister to cloister, through the German empire; from thence extending itself on each side to Holland and Italy, the nuns at length worried one another from Rome to Amsterdam.

“Numberless instances might be quoted to demonstrate the force with which the strangest and most wild propensities fasten themselves on the imagination, and conquer and tyrannise over the will, when the soul is debarred from a free intercourse with its species, and left too uninterruptedly to its own unbridled musings. But those which we have related may be sufficient to show the danger into which he runs who delivers himself unconditionally to the custody of solitude, and does not arm himself against its faithless hospitality. Shut up in a barren and monotonous leisure, without studies to occupy curiosity, without objects to amuse the senses, or to interest and to attract the affections to any thing human, fancy will escape into the worlds of chimerical existence, there to seek amusement and exercise. How fondly does it then embrace and cherish angelical visions, or infernal phantoms, prodigies, or miracles! or should its reveries take another direction, with what increasing eagerness and confidence do its hopes hunt after the delusions of alchemy, the fictions of philosophy, and the delirium of metaphysics! In cases where the mind is less capacious, and its stores less copious, it will attach itself to some absurd notion, the child of its languid and exhausted powers; and bestowing its fondest confidence on this darling of its dotage, will abandon reason and outrage common sense.”

I have given this lengthened extract from Zimmerman, because I think it satisfactorily explains those mystic visions as well as infernal phantoms, with which the mediæval legends and chronicles, generally composed by monks, abound, and which are often unjustly ascribed to fraud

and wilful deception. Medical science, as well as all the branches of natural philosophy, being then in a very imperfect condition, such phenomena as those of nuns mewing like cats or biting like dogs, which are mentioned by Zimmerman, were not explained as nervous diseases, but ascribed to the possession of evil spirits; and I frankly confess that I am by no means sure, that if cases like those mentioned above were to happen in our enlightened age, there would not be found many good folks ascribing them to a similar agency. It must be also remembered that, if notwithstanding the extreme rapidity and regularity of communications in our own time, reports of various events are often exaggerated and even completely altered in passing from one place to another; how much more must it have been the case during the time of such defective communication as existed previous to the invention of printing and the introduction of the post! It was therefore no wonder if occurrences of such an extraordinary nature as those alluded to were immensely magnified by report, and if it had, at least in many places, converted the mewing and biting nuns into as many cats and dogs. It is, moreover, now generally admitted that what is called mesmerism, but whose real nature science has not yet explained, was known and practised during the middle ages, as well as in remote antiquity, and that many thaumaturgic operations, described by the mediæval legends, as well as by ancient writers, were produced by means of this still mysterious agency.

I have dwelt perhaps too long on this subject, because I am afraid that the observations relating to it are not confined to a distant period, but may become but too often applicable to our own times. And, indeed, when we reflect on the rapid increase of convents and nunneries, particularly in this country, and that notwithstanding the present state of civilization these establishments must be filled chiefly by individuals whose imaginations are stronger than their reasoning powers, there can be little doubt that they may again become the stage of those extraordinary manifestations, the cause of which had been too exclusively ascribed to mediæval darkness. It cannot be doubted, that designing individuals of both sexes, possessed of superior talents and knowledge, but particularly endowed with a strong will, may exercise not only an undue influence, but even an absolute power over the inmates of the above-mentioned monastic establishments; and that a skilful application of mesmerism may efficiently promote such unlawful ends.

Many local superstitious remains of Paganism,—as, for instance, miraculous powers ascribed to certain wells, stones, caverns,—stories about various kinds of fairies, &c.—have furnished ample materials to the mediæval legend writers, who arranged them according to their own views. They generally retained the miraculous part of the story, frequently embellishing it by their own additions, but substituting the agency of the Christian saint, the hero of their tale, for that of the Pagan deity, to whom it had originally been ascribed. It was thus that the localities considered by the Pagans as possessed of some supernatural properties, and resorted to by them on this account, were converted into places of Christian pilgrimages, with the only difference that the Pagan genius loci was baptised with the name of a Christian saint, whose existence can often be no more proved than that of his heathen predecessor. Many hagiographers seem to have indulged their humour as much as their fancy in composing these legends, which appears from such ludicrous stories as, for instance, that of St Fechin, whose piety was so fervent that when he was bathing in cold water it became almost boiling hot. This warm-hearted or hot-headed saint is said to have belonged to the Emerald isle, though, considering that his ardent piety was so very much like a manifestation of the perfervidum Scotorum ingenium, in a somewhat exaggerated form, I am

much inclined to believe him a native of the north country. There are many instances of such humorous miracles, but I shall quote only that of Laurenthios, a famous Greek saint, and worker of miracles. Having one day some business with the Patriarch of Constantinople, he was kept waiting in the prelate's ante-chamber, and feeling very warm he wanted to take off his cloak. But as there was not any piece of furniture in the room, nor even a peg on its walls, St Laurenthios, embarrassed what to do with his cloak, threw it upon a ray of the sun, which was entering the room through a hole in the shutter, and which immediately acquired the firmness of a rope, so that the saint's cloak remained hanging upon it. It must not, however, be believed that the hot sun and fervid imagination of Greece were absolutely requisite for the performance of such wonderful tricks; for we have sufficient legendary evidence to prove that they were successfully reproduced under the less brilliant sky of Germany and France, because St Goar of Treves suspended his cap, and St Aicadrus, abbot of Jumieges, his gloves upon the same piece of furniture that had been used by St Laurenthios to hang his cloak, though probably, considering that the sun is not so powerful in those countries as it is at Constantinople, the western saints did not venture to try its rays with such a heavy load, as had been successfully done by their eastern colleague.

Some miracles were invented in order to inculcate implicit obedience to the ecclesiastical authorities, which is considered by the Roman Catholic Church as one of, if not the most important virtue to be practised by her children. Thus it is related that when the Spanish Dominican monk, St Vincent Ferrerius, celebrated for the great number of his miracles, was one day walking along a street in Barcelona, a mason, falling from a high roof, called for his assistance. The saint answered that he could not perform a miracle without the permission of his superior, but that he would go and ask for it. The mason remained, therefore, suspended in the air until St Vincent, returning with the permission, got him safely down on the ground.

It must be admitted, that many saints, whose lives are disfigured by absurd stories of their miracles, were men of great piety, adorned with the noblest virtues, and who gave proofs of the most exalted charity and self-devotion. Unfortunately the honours of saintship have been often bestowed upon such sanguinary monsters as St Dominic, whose shrine would be the most appropriately placed in a temple where human sacrifices are offered, or upon madmen who have outraged every feeling of humanity. Thus it is related that St Alexius left his home on the day of his wedding, and, having exchanged his clothes for the rags of a beggar, adopted his mode of life. After some time, when his appearance had become so wretched that he could no longer be recognised by his friends, he returned to his parental house, asking for shelter. He obtained a place under the staircase, and lived there by alms for seventeen years, continually witnessing the distress and lamentations of his wife, mother, and aged father about his loss, and was recognised only after his death by a book of prayers which had been given him by his mother. And it was for this unfeeling and even cruel treatment of his own family that he was canonised! It is supposed, however, that all this story is but a fiction, and, for the sake of humanity, I sincerely hope that it is so. The limits of this essay allow me not farther to extend my researches about the legends of mediæval saints, and their miracles; and I shall try to give in my next chapter a short analysis of several practices which the Roman Catholic as well as the Græco-Russian Church have retained from Paganism.

02.07. Chapter VII. Analysis Of The Pagan Rites And Practices Which Have Been Retained By ...

Chapter VII. Analysis Of The Pagan Rites And Practices Which Have Been Retained By The Roman Catholic As Well As The Græco-Russian Church.

I have given the opinion of an eminent Roman Catholic modern author (Chateaubriand) about the introduction of Pagan usages into the Christian worship, and a long extract from another no less distinguished Roman Catholic writer of our day, describing the cause of this corruption. The Roman Catholic writers of this country do not, however, treat this subject with the same sincerity as the illustrious author of the “Genie du Christianisme,” and the learned French Academician from whose work I have so largely drawn; but they try hard to deny that many usages of their church bear the stamp of Paganism. This is particularly the case with the author of “Hierurgia,” a work which I have already quoted, and which may be considered as the fairest expression of what the Roman Catholic Church teaches on the subject in question. Thus the use of images in churches is represented as being authorised by Scripture, by the following curious arguments:—

“The practice of employing images as ornaments and memorials to decorate the temple of the Lord is in a most especial manner approved by the Word of God himself. Moses was commanded to place two cherubim upon the ark, and to set up a brazen figure of the fiery serpent, that those of the murmuring Israelites who had been bitten might recover from the poison of their wounds by looking on the image. In the description of Solomon’s temple, we read of that prince, not only that he made in the oracle two cherubim of olive tree, of ten cubits in height, but that ‘all the walls of the temple round about he carved with divers figures and carvings.’

“In the first book of Paralipomenon (Chronicles) we observe that when David imposed his injunction upon Solomon to realise his intention of building a house to the Lord, he delivered to him a description of the porch and temple, and concluded by thus assuring him: ‘All these things came to me written by the hand of the Lord, that I may understand the works of the pattern.’

“The isolated fact that images were not only directed by the Almighty God to be placed in the Mosaic tabernacle, and in the more sumptuous temple of Jerusalem, but that he himself exhibited the pattern of them, will be alone sufficient to authorise the practice of the Catholic Church in regard to a similar observance.”—(Hierurgia, p. 371.)

All this may be briefly answered. There was no representation of the Jewish patriarchs or saints either in the tabernacle or in the temple of Solomon, as is the case with the Christian saints in the Roman Catholic and Græco-Russian Churches; and the brazen serpent, to which the author alludes, was broken into pieces by order of King Hezekiah as soon as the Israelites began to worship it. The author tries to prove, with considerable learning and ingenuity, that the primitive Christians ornamented their churches with images, and I have already given, his explanation of the Council of Elvira; but his assertions are completely disproved by every direct evidence which we have about the places of worship of those Christians. I have already quoted, p. 7, the testimony

of Minutius Felix, that the Christians had no kind of simulachres in their temples, as well as the indignation of St Epiphanius at an attempt to introduce them into the churches, and for which there would have been no occasion if it had been an established custom. The most important part of his defence of the use of images is, however, the paragraph entitled, “No virtue resident in images themselves,” containing what follows:—

“Not only are Catholics not exposed to such dangers (i.e., idolatry), but they are expressly prohibited by the church (Concilium Tridentinum, sess. xxv.) to believe that there is any divinity or virtue resident in images for which they should be reverenced, or that any thing is to be asked of them, or any confidence placed in them, but that the honour given should be referred to those whom they represent; and so particular are their religious instructors in impressing this truth upon the minds of their congregations, that if a Catholic child, who had learned its first catechism, were asked if it were permitted to pray to images, the child would answer, ‘No, by no means; for they have no life nor sense to help us;’ and the pastor who discovered any one rendering any portion of the respect which belongs to God alone to a crucifix or to a picture, would have no hesitation in breaking the one and tearing the other into shreds, and throwing the fragments into the flames, in imitation of Ezechias, who broke the brazen serpent on account of the superstitious reverence which the Israelites manifested towards it.”—(Hierurgia, p. 382.)

It is perfectly true that the Council of Trent has declared that the images of Christ, of the virgin, and of other saints, are to be honoured and venerated, not because it is believed that there is any divinity or virtue inherent in them, or that any thing is to be asked of them, or any confidence placed in images, as had been done by Pagans, who put their trust in idols (Psalms 135:15-18), but that “the honour given should be referred to those whom they represent, so that by the images which we kiss, before which we uncover our heads, or prostrate ourselves (procumbimus), we worship Christ and the saints whose likeness those images represent.” But if there is “no divinity or virtue resident in images,” as is declared by the Council of Trent, what is to become of all those miraculous images which are the subject of pilgrimage in so many Roman Catholic countries, and the existence of whose miraculous powers has been solemnly acknowledged by the highest ecclesiastical authorities? I shall not attempt to enumerate those miraculous images, because their number is legion, but I shall only ask the rev. doctor whether he considers the image of the virgin of Loretto, which is the object of so many pilgrimages, and to which so many miracles are ascribed, as having some virtue resident in it or not? and would he break it in pieces on account of the miraculous powers ascribed to it? Is he prepared to act in such a manner with the celebrated Bambino of Rome? and are the miraculous powers ascribed to it, as well as to the virgin of Loretto, and other images of this kind, a reality or an imposture? and, finally, what will he do with the winking Madonna of Rimini, which has lately made so much noise, and which, instead of being broken to pieces or torn to shreds by the priests or the bishop of the place, has been approved by ecclesiastical authority? I can assure the rev. doctor, that by breaking into pieces the miraculous images, carved as well as painted, he will break down many barriers which now separate the Protestant Christians from those who belong to his own church. I am, however, afraid that he will find many difficulties in attempting such a thing; and I must remind him, that in quoting the above-mentioned canon of the Council of Trent, he forgot an essential part of it, which greatly modifies the declaration that there is no divinity or virtue resident in images, saying, “That the holy synod ordains that no one be allowed to place, or cause to be placed, any unusual image in any

place or church, howsoever exempted, except that the image be approved by the bishop: also, that no new miracles are to be acknowledged or new relics recognised, unless the said bishop has taken cognizance and approved thereof, who, as soon as he has obtained certain information in regard to these matters, shall, after having taken the advice of theologians and of other pious men, act therein as he shall judge to be consonant with truth and piety."—(Sess. xxviii., &c.) The real meaning of the above-mentioned canon of the Council of Trent is therefore, I think, that there is no divinity or virtue resident in the images which are not authorised by the bishop to work miracles, and that unlicensed images are not allowed to have any such divinity or virtue in them, but that such unusual carved or painted images, as those which I have mentioned above, having obtained the required authorization, may work as many miracles as they please, or as their worshippers will believe.

It has been observed by a writer, who certainly cannot be accused of violent opinions, the learned and pious Melancthon, "that it was impious and idolatrous to address statues or bones, and to suppose that either the Divinity or the saints were attached to a certain place or to a certain statue more than to other places; and that there was no difference between the prayers which are addressed to the Virgin of Aix la Chapelle, or to that of Ratisbon, and the Pagan invocations of the Ephesian Diana, or the Platean Juno, or any other statue." To these observations I shall only add those of M. Beugnot, which I have given, on the marvellous facility with which the worship of the virgin, established by the Council of Ephesus, 431, has superseded that of the Pagan deities in many countries.

There is scarcely any ceremony in the Western as well as in the Eastern church, the origin of which cannot be traced to the Pagan worship. I shall limit my observations on this subject to the three following objects, which constitute the most important elements in the divine service performed in those churches, namely,—1. The consecrated water; 2. Lamps and candles; and, 3. Incense; giving the Roman Catholic explanation of their origin, as well as that which I believe to be true. With regard to the consecrated water, it is described by the author of "Hierurgia" in the following manner:—

"The ordinance of Almighty God, promulgated by the lips of Moses, concerning the water of separation, and the mode of sprinkling it, are minutely noticed in the nineteenth chapter of the book of Numbers. In the book of Exodus, we read that the Lord issued the following declarations to Moses:—'Thou shalt make a brazen laver, with its foot, to wash in; and thou shalt set it between the tabernacle of the testimony and the altar. And the water being put into it, Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and feet in it when they are going into the tabernacle of the testimony, and when they are to come to the altar to offer incense on it to the Lord.'—(Exodus 30:18-20)

"That it was a practice with the Jews, not only peculiar to the members of the priesthood, but observed amongst the people, for each individual to wash his hands before he presumed to pray, is a well-attested fact. The church adopted this as well as several other Jewish ceremonies, which she engrafted on her ritual; and St Paul apparently borrows from such ablution the metaphor which he employs while thus admonishing his disciple Timothy:—'I will that men pray in every place, lifting up pure hands.'—(1 Timothy 2:8) That in the early ages the faithful used to wash their hands at the threshold of the church before they entered, is expressly mentioned by a number of writers." As to the use of holy water being of apostolic origin, he says:—

“The introduction of holy or blessed water must be referred to the times of the apostles. That it was the custom, in the very first ages of the church, not only to deposit vessels of water at the entrance of those places where the Christians assembled for the celebration of divine worship, but also to have vases containing water mingled with salt, both of which had been separated from common use, and blessed by the prayers and invocations of the priest, is certain. A particular mention of it is made in the constitution of the apostles; and the pontiff Alexander, the first of that name, but the sixth in succession from St Peter, whose chair he mounted in the year 109, issued a decree by which the use of holy water was permitted to the faithful in their houses.”—(Hierurgia, pp. 461-463.)

It is rather a strange thing for Christians to imitate the religious rites of the Jews, whose ceremonial law,—“which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation” (Hebrews 9:10),—was abolished by the New Testament. However, if this is to be done, why is not the holy water adopted by the Roman Catholic Church prepared in the same manner, and used for the same object, as the Jewish water of separation, described in Numbers 19:1-22, but, on the contrary, composed in the same manner, and employed for the same purpose, as the lustral water of the Pagans? The fact is, that it has been borrowed from the Pagan worship and not from the Jewish ceremonial law, the truth of which is honestly acknowledged by the Jesuit La Cerda, who, in a note on the following passage of Virgil,—

“Idem ter socios pura circumtulit unda, Spargens rore levi, et ramo felicis olivæ, Lustravitque viros”

—Æneid, lib. vi. 229— says, “Hence was derived the custom of the holy church to provide purifying or holy water at the entrance of their churches.” The same custom was observed in the Pagan temples, at the entrance of which there was a vase containing the holy or lustral water, for the people to sprinkle themselves with, just as is now done at the entrance of the Roman Catholic churches. The author of “Hierurgia” mentions, as quoted above, that Pope Alexander I. authorised, in the beginning of the second century, the use of holy water; and yet Justin Martyr, who wrote about that time, says “that it was invented by demons, in imitation of the true baptism signified by the prophets, that their votaries might also have their pretended purification by water.” And the Emperor Julian, in order to vex the Christians, caused the victuals in the markets to be sprinkled with holy water, with the intention of either starving them or compelling them to eat what they considered as impure. To these evidences of the abomination in which the primitive Christians held the Pagan rite of sprinkling with holy water, I may add the following anecdote, characteristic of the intensity of this feeling:— When Julian the Apostate was one day going to sacrifice in the temple of Fortune, accompanied by the usual train of the emperors, the Pagan priests, standing on both sides of the temple gate, sprinkled those who were entering it with the lustral or holy water in order to purify them according to the rites of their worship. A Christian tribune, or superior officer of the imperial guards (scutarii), who, being on duty, preceded the monarch, received some drops of this holy water on his chlamys or coat, which made him so indignant, that, notwithstanding the presence of the emperor, he struck the priest who had thus sprinkled him, exclaiming that he did not purify but pollute him. Julian ordered the arrest of the officer who had thus insulted the rites of his religion, giving him the choice either to sacrifice to the gods or to leave the army. The bold Christian chose the latter, but was soon restored to his rank on account of his great military talents, and raised, after the death of Julian and the short reign of Jovian, to the imperial throne as

Valentinian I. This monarch was, however, by no means a bigot; on the contrary, we have the unsuspected testimony of the contemporary Pagan writer Ammianus Marcellinus that he maintained a strict impartiality between the Christians and Pagans, and did not trouble any one on account of his religion. He even regulated and confirmed, by a law in 391, the privileges of the Pagan clergy in a more favourable manner than had been done by many of his predecessors; and yet this monarch, who treated his Pagan subjects with such an extreme liberality, committed, when a private individual, an act of violence against their worship which exposed him to considerable danger. This, I think, is a strong proof of the horror which the Christians felt for a rite which constitutes now an indispensable part of the service in the Western as well as in the Eastern churches, and is most profusely used by them. With regard to the candles and lamps, which form a no less important and indispensable part of the worship adopted by the above-mentioned churches, the author of “Hierurgia” defends their use in the following manner:—

After having described the candlesticks employed in the Jewish temple, he says:—“But without referring to the ceremonial of the Jewish temple, we have an authority for the employment of light in the functions of religion presented to us in the Apocalypse. In Revelation 1:1-20 of that mystic book, St John particularly mentions the golden candlesticks which he beheld in his prophetic vision in the isle of Patmos. By commentators on the sacred Scripture, it is generally supposed that the Evangelist, in his book of the Apocalypse, adopted the imagery with which he represents his mystic revelations from the ceremonial observed in his days by the church for offering up the mass, or eucharistic sacrifice of the Lamb of God, Christ Jesus.

“That the use of lights was adopted by the church, especially at the celebration of the sacred mysteries, as early as the times of the apostles, may likewise, with much probability, be inferred from that passage in their Acts which records the preaching and miracles of St Paul at Troas:—‘And on the first day of the week, when we were assembled to break bread, Paul discoursed with them, being to depart on the morrow, and he continued his speech until midnight. And there were a great number of lamps in the upper chamber where we were assembled.’—(Acts 20:7-8) That the many lamps, so particularly noticed in this passage, were not suspended merely for the purpose of illuminating, during the night-time, this upper chamber, in which the faithful had assembled on the first day of the week to break bread, but also to increase the solemnity of that function and betoken a spiritual joy, may be lawfully inferred from every thing we know about the manners of the ancient Jews, from whom the church borrowed the use of lights in celebrating her various rites and festivals.”—(Hierurgia, p. 372.)

It is really difficult seriously to answer such extraordinary suppositions as that the seven candlesticks, expressly mentioned as types of the seven churches, should be an allusion to the physical lights used in the worship of those churches, and not to the moral and spiritual light which they were spreading amongst Jews and Gentiles. Such an explanation appears to me nothing better than that tendency to materialise the most abstract and spiritual ideas to which I have alluded above. With regard to the passage in the Acts 20:7-8, which says that there were a great number of lamps in the upper chamber where St Paul was preaching, I think that this circumstance might have been considered as a religious rite if the apostle had been preaching at noon; but as it is expressly said that he did it at night, nothing can be more simple than the lighting of the upper chamber with lamps. It was also very natural that there should be many of them, because as St Paul was undoubtedly often referring to the Scriptures, his hearers, or at least many of them, being

either real Jews or Hellenists, must have been continually looking to copies of the Bible in order to verify his quotation. It was, therefore, necessary to have the room well lighted, and consequently to employ many lamps. It is, indeed, curious to see to what far-fetched suppositions a writer of so much learning and ingenuity as Dr Rock is obliged to recur, in order to defend a purely Pagan rite which has been adopted by his church, giving the simplest and clearest things a non-natural sense, similar to that which some Romanising clergymen have been giving to the precepts of a church which they were betraying whilst in her service and pay. The same author maintains that lights were employed from primitive times at divine service, saying:—

“The custom of employing lights, in the earlier ages of the church, during the celebration of the eucharist; and other religious offices, is authenticated by those venerable records of primitive discipline which are usually denominated Apostolic Canons.”—(Hierurgia, p. 393.) Now, what is the authenticity of these canons? The author himself gives us the best answer to it, saying:—

“Though these canons be apocryphal, and by consequence not genuine, inasmuch as they were neither committed to writing by the apostles themselves, nor penned by St Clement, to whom some authors have attributed them; still, however, this does not prevent them from being true and authentic, since they embody the traditions descended from the apostles and the apostolic fathers, and bear a faithful testimony that the discipline which prevailed during the first and second centuries was established by the apostles.”—(P. 394.)

I shall not enter into a discussion about the value of evidence furnished by a work which is acknowledged to be apocryphal, and not to have been written by those to whom its defenders had ascribed its authorship; but I shall only remark, that one of the most eminent fathers of the church, the learned Lactantius, who flourished in the fourth century, and consequently long after the time when the Apostolic Canons are supposed to have been composed, takes a very different view from them in regard to this practice, because he positively says, in attacking the use of lights by the Pagans, they light up candles to God as if he lived in the dark, and do they not deserve to pass for madmen who offer lamps to the Author and Giver of light? And is it probable that he could approve of a practice in the Christian church which he condemns in the Pagan?

And, indeed, can there be any thing more heathenish than the custom of burning lights before images or relics, which is nothing else than sacrifices which the Pagans offered to their idols?

I have described above, the manner in which St Jerome defended the use of lights in the churches against Vigilantius. This defence of St Jerome is adduced by our author in a rather extraordinary manner.

“It happens not unfrequently that those very calumnies which have been propagated, and the attacks which were so furiously directed by the enemies of our holy faith in ancient times, against certain practices of discipline then followed by the church, are the most triumphant testimonies which can be adduced at the present day, both to establish the venerable origin of such observances, and to warrant a continuation of them. In the present instance, the remark is strikingly observable; for the strictures which Vigilantius passed in the fourth age, on the use of lights in churches, as well as on the shrines of the martyrs, and the energetic refutation of St Jerome of the charge of superstition preferred against such a pious usage by that apostate, may be noticed as an irrefragable argument, in the nineteenth century, to establish the remote antiquity

of this religious custom. After mentioning as a fact of public notoriety, and in a manner which defied contradiction, that the Christians, at the time when he was actually writing, which was about the year 376, were accustomed to illumine their churches during mid-day with a profusion of wax tapers, Vigilantius proceeds to turn such a devotion into ridicule. But he met with a learned and victorious opponent, who, while he vindicated this practice of the church against the objection of her enemy, took occasion to assign those reasons which induced her to adopt it. That holy father observes:—'Throughout all the churches of the East, whenever the Gospel is to be recited, they bring forth lights, though it be at noon-day; not certainly to shine among darkness, but to manifest some sign of joy, that under the type of corporeal light may be indicated that light of which we read in the Psalms, "Thy word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path." ' "—(Hierurgia, p. 298.)

Now, I would observe to the learned doctor, that St Jerome, in answering Vigilantius, maintained, as I have shown above, that it was calumny to say that the Christians burnt candles in the daylight, and that it was done only by some people, whose zeal was without knowledge. Consequently, the church which has adopted this practice shows, according to the authority of that "holy and learned father," that her zeal is without knowledge. With regard to the argument in support of the abovementioned practices given by St Jerome, and reproduced by our author, that the Eastern churches make use of lights, I admit that it is unanswerable, because it is an undoubted fact that the Græco-Russian Church makes an immense consumption of wax candles, chiefly burnt before the images, and it remains for me only to congratulate the advocates of this practice on the support which they derive from such an imperative authority as that of the Græco-Russian Church.

It remains for me now only to say a few words about the incense, which forms a constituent part of the service of the Roman Catholic and Græco-Russian Churches, as much as the holy water and lights, and which is defended by the author of "Hierurgia" in the following manner. After having described the use of incense in the Jewish temples, he says—

"It was from this religious custom of employing incense in the ancient temple, that the royal prophet drew that beautiful simile of his, when he petitioned that his prayers might ascend before the Lord like incense. It was while 'all the multitude were praying without at the hour of incense, that there appeared to Zachary an angel of the Lord, standing at the right of the altar of incense,'—(Luke 1:10-11). That the oriental nations attached a meaning not only of personal reverence, but also of religious homage to an offering of incense, is demonstrable from the instance of the magi, who, having fallen down to adore the newborn Jesus, and recognise his divinity, presented him with gold, and myrrh, and frankincense. That he might be more intelligible to those who read his book of the Apocalypse, it is very probable that St John adapted his language to the ceremonial of the liturgy then followed by the Christians in celebrating the eucharistic sacrifice, at the period the evangelist was committing to writing his mysterious revelations. In depicting, therefore, the scene which took place in the sanctuary of heaven, where he was given to behold in vision the mystic sacrifice of the Lamb, we are warranted to suppose that he borrowed the imagery, and selected several of his expressions, from the ritual then actually in use, and has in consequence bequeathed to us an outline of the ceremonial which the church employed in the apostolic ages of offering up the unbloody sacrifice of the same divine Lamb of God, Christ Jesus, in her sanctuary upon earth. Now, St John particularly notices how the 'angel came and stood before the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given him much incense, that he should offer of the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which is before the throne

of God; and the smoke of the incense of the prayers of the saints ascended up before God, from the hand of the angel.'—Apocal. viii. 3-5."—(Hierurgia, p. 518.) To this explanation of the use of incense in the churches, I may answer by the same observation which I have made, on a similar defence of the use of lights, namely, that it is a strange materialization of spiritual ideas by embodying into a tangible shape what is simply typical, and which is not warranted by any direct evidence. Such far-fetched and fanciful conjectures cannot be refuted by serious arguments; but as regards the Jewish origin of the use of incense, as well as of many other ceremonies common to the Roman Catholic and Greek Churches, I shall give the observation of the celebrated Dr Middleton, on an answer made by a Roman Catholic to his well-known Letter from Rome, and who, defending the ceremonies of his Church in nearly the same manner as the author of "Hierurgia," says, "That Dr Middleton was mistaken in thinking every ceremony used by the heathens to be heathenish, since the greatest part of them were borrowed from the worship of the true God, in imitation of which the devil affected to have his temples, altars, priests, and sacrifices, and all other things which were used in the true worship." This he applied to the case of incense, lamps, holy water, and processions, adding, "that if Middleton had been as well read in the Scriptures as he seemed to be in the heathen poets, he would have found the use of all these in the temple of God, and that by God's appointment."

"I shall not dispute with him," says Middleton, "about the origin of these rites, whether they were first instituted by Moses, or were of prior use and antiquity amongst the Egyptians. The Scriptures favour the last, which our Spenser strongly asserts, and their Calmet and Huetius allow; but should we grant him all that he can infer from his argument, what will he gain by it? Were not all those beggarly elements wiped away by the spiritual worship of the Gospel? Were they not all annulled, on account of their weakness and unprofitableness, by the more perfect revelation of Jesus Christ?—(Galatians 4:9, Hebrews 7:18) If, then, I should acknowledge my mistake, and recall my words, and instead of Pagan, call them Jewish ceremonies, would not the use of Jewish rites be abominable still in a Christian church, where they are expressly abolished and prohibited by God himself?

"But to pursue his argument a little farther. While the Mosaic worship subsisted by divine appointment in Jerusalem, the devil likewise, as he tells us, had temples and ceremonies of the same kind, in order to draw votaries to his idolatrous worship, which, after the abolition of the Jewish service, was carried on still with great pomp and splendour, and above all places, in Rome, the principal seat of his worldly empire. Now, it is certain that in the early times of the Gospel, the Christians of Rome were celebrated for their zealous adherence to the faith of Christ, as it was delivered to them by the apostles, pure from every mixture either of Jewish or heathenish superstition, till, after a succession of ages, as they began gradually to deviate from that apostolic simplicity, they introduced at different times into the church the particular ceremonies in question. Whence, then, can we think it probable that they should borrow them from the Jewish or the Pagan ritual? From a temple remote, despised and demolished by the Romans themselves, or from temples and altars perpetually in their view, and subsisting in their streets, in which their ancestors and fellow-citizens have constantly worshipped? The question can hardly admit any dispute; the humour of the people, as well as the interest of a corrupted priesthood, would invite them to adopt such rites as were native to the soil, and found upon the place, and which long experience had shown to be useful to the acquisition both of wealth and power. Thus, by the most

candid construction of this author's reasoning, we must necessarily call their ceremonies Jewish, or by pushing it to its full length, shall be obliged to call them devilish.

"He observes that I begin my charge with the use of incense as the most notorious proof of their Paganism, and like an artful rhetorician, place my strongest argument in the front. Yet he knows I have assigned a different reason for offering that the first; because it is the first thing that strikes the sense, and surprises a stranger upon his entrance into their churches. But it shall be my strongest proof, if he will have it so, since he has brought nothing, I am sure, to weaken the force of it. He tells us that there was an altar of incense in the temple of Jerusalem, and is surprised, therefore, how I can call it heathenish; yet it is evident, from the nature of that institution, that it was never designed to be perpetual, and that during its continuance, God would have never approved any other altar, either in Jerusalem or any where else. But let him answer directly to this plain question: Was there ever a temple in the world, not strictly heathenish, in which there were several altars, all smoking with incense, within our view, and at one and the same time? It is certain that he must answer in the negative; yet it is as certain that there were many such temples in Pagan Rome, and are as many in Christian Rome; and since there never was an example of it, but what was Paganish, before the time of Popery, how is it possible that it could be derived to them from any other source? or when we see so exact a resemblance in the copy, how can there be any doubt about the original?

"What he alleges, therefore, in favour of incense is nothing to the purpose: 'That it was used in the Jewish, and is of great antiquity in the Christian churches, and that it is mentioned with honour in the Scriptures,' which frequently compare it to prayer, and speak of its sweet odours ascending up to God, &c., which figurative expressions, he says, 'would never have been borrowed by sacred penmen from heathenish superstition;' as if such allusions were less proper, or the thing itself less sweet, for its being applied to the purposes of idolatry, as it constantly was in the time of the same penmen, and, according to their own accounts, on the altars of Baal, and the other heathen idols: and when Jeremiah rebukes the people of Judah for burning incense to the queen of heaven (Jeremiah 44:17), one can hardly help imagining that he is prophetically pointing out the worship paid now to the virgin, to whom they actually burn incense at this day under that very title.

"But if it be a just ground for retaining a practice in the Christian church, because it was enjoined to the Jews, what will our Catholic say for those usages which were actually prohibited to the Jews, and never practised by any but by the heathens and papists? All the Egyptian priests, as Herodotus informs us, had their heads shaved, and kept continually bald. Thus the Emperor Commodus, that he might be admitted into that order, got himself shaved, and carried the god Anubis in procession. And it was on this account, most probably, that the Jewish priests were commanded not to shave their heads, nor to make any baldness upon them.—(Leviticus 21:5, Ezekiel 44:20). Yet this Pagan rasure, or tonsure, as they choose to call it, on the crown of the head, has long been the distinguishing mark of the Romish priesthood. It was on the same account, we may imagine, that the Jewish priests were forbidden to make any cuttings in their flesh (Leviticus 19:28, Leviticus 21:5), since that was likewise the common practice of certain priests and devotees among the heathens, in order to acquire the fame of a more exalted sanctity. Yet the same discipline, as I have shown in my Letter, is constantly practised at Rome in some of their solemn seasons and processions, in imitation of these Pagan enthusiasts, as if they searched the Scriptures to learn, not so much what was enjoined by true religion, as what had

been useful at any time in a false one, to delude the multitude, and support an imposture."—(Middleton's Miscellaneous Works, vol. v., p. 11, et seq.) The same author justly observes, that "under the Pagan emperors the use of incense for any purpose of religion was thought so contrary to the obligations of Christianity, that in their persecutions, the very method of trying and converting a Christian was by requiring him only to throw the least grain of it into the censer or on the altar."

"Under the Christian emperors, on the other hand, it was looked upon as a rite so peculiarly heathenish, that the very places or houses where it could be proved to have been done, were, by a law of Theodosius, confiscated to the government."—(Ibid., p. 95.)

I shall conclude this essay by a short sketch of the superstitious practices prevailing in the Græco-Russian Church, which will be the subject of my next and last chapter.

02.08. Chapter VIII. Image-Worship And Other Superstitious Practices Of The Graeco-Russian ...

Chapter VIII. Image-Worship And Other Superstitious Practices Of The Graeco-Russian Church. The Græco-Russian Church is perhaps the most important element of the politico-religious complications in which Europe is at present involved. It is, moreover, not a fortuitous cause of these complications, but has been growing during centuries, until it has reached its present magnitude, though its action upon Turkey may have been prematurely brought into play by accidental circumstances. It comprehends within its pale about 50,000,000 of souls, whilst it exercises an immense influence upon 13,000,000 of Turkish, and a considerable one upon more than 3,000,000 of Austrian subjects, professing the tenets of that church, though governed by separate hierarchies. To this number must be added the population of the kingdom of Greece, amounting to about 1,000,000: so that the whole of the followers of the Eastern Church may be computed in round numbers at 66,000,000 or 67,000,000 of souls. The Russian Church differs from other Greek churches, not in her tenets, but in her government. From the establishment of Christianity in Russia, towards the end of the tenth century, to the capture of Constantinople by the Turks in 1453, the Russian Church was governed by a metropolitan, consecrated by the Patriarch of Constantinople. After this event, the metropolitans were consecrated by the Russian bishops till 1588, when a patriarch of Russia was instituted by that of Constantinople, who had arrived at Moscow, in order to obtain pecuniary assistance for his church. The patriarch enjoyed considerable influence, which modified in some respects the despotic authority of the Czar. It was Peter the Great who abolished this dignity in 1702, after the death of the Patriarch Adrian, and declared himself the head of the Russian Church.

He introduced several regulations to restrict the power of the clergy, and to improve their education. It appears that the violent reforms by which that monarch tried to introduce the civilization of western Europe amongst his subjects, had produced an intellectual movement in their church, but which, not squaring with the views of the imperial reformer, was violently suppressed by him. Thus, in 1713, a physician called Demetrius Tveritinoff, and some other persons, began to attack the worship of images, and to explain the sacrament of communion in the same sense as has been done by Calvin.

These reformers were anathematised by the order of the Czar, and one of them was executed in 1714. Next year, 1715, a Russian priest, called Thomas, probably a disciple of the above-mentioned reformers, began publicly to inveigh against the worship of saints and other practices of his church, and went even so far as to break the images placed in the churches. He was burnt alive, and nothing more was heard afterwards of such reformers. The Russian clergy regained their influence under the reign of the Empress Elizabeth, 1742-62, a weak-minded, bigoted woman, who was continually making pilgrimages to the shrines of various Russian saints and miraculous images, displaying on those occasions such a splendour and such munificence to the objects of her devotion, that the finances of her state were injured by it. Elizabeth’s nephew

and successor, Peter III., Duke of Holstein, who, for the sake of the throne, had passed from the Lutheran communion to the Greek Church, entertained the greatest contempt for his new religion. This half-crazy, unfortunate prince, instead of trying to reform the Russian Church by promoting a superior information amongst her clergy, offended the religious prejudices of his subjects by an open disregard of the ordinances of that church, and his projects of violent reforms. He not only did away with all the fasts at his court, but he wished to abolish them throughout all his empire, to remove the images and candles from the churches, and, finally, that the clergy should shave their beards and dress like the Lutheran pastors. He also confiscated the landed property of the church. Catherine II., who observed with the greatest diligence those religious rites which her husband treated with such contempt, and who greatly owed to this conduct her elevation to the throne, confirmed, however, the confiscation of the church estates, assigning salaries to the clergy and convents who had been supported by that property. She made use of the influence of the Græco-Russian Church for the promotion of her political schemes in Poland and in Turkey; yet, as her religious opinions were those of the school of Voltaire and Diderot, which believed that Christianity would soon cease to have any hold upon the human mind, she seems not to have been fully aware of that immense increase of power at home and influence abroad which a skilful action upon the religious feelings of the followers of that church may give to the Russian monarchs. This policy has been formed into a complete system by the present Emperor, and it was in consequence of it that several millions of the inhabitants of the ancient Polish provinces, who belonged to the Greek United Church, i.e., who had acknowledged the supremacy of the Pope by accepting the union concluded at Florence in 1438, were forced to give up that union, and to pass from the spiritual dominion of the Pope to that of the Czar. This wholesale conversion was necessarily accompanied with a good deal of persecution. Those clergymen who had refused to adopt the imperial ukase for their rule of conscience were banished to Siberia, and many other acts of oppression were committed on that occasion, but of which only the case of the nuns of Minsk has produced a sensation in western Europe. The same system of religious centralization has also been applied to the Protestant peasantry of the Baltic provinces, many of whom were seduced by various means to join the Russian Church; and this policy continues to be vigorously prosecuted in the same quarter, as may be seen by the following extract from the Berlin Gazette of Voss, reprinted in the Allgemeine Zeitung of the 12th March of this year, 1854:—

“Emissaries travelling about the country succeeded by every kind of cunning, and by holding out prospects of gain and other advantages, to convert people from Lutheranism to the Greek Church. All the children, under seventeen years must follow the religion of their father as soon as he has entered the orthodox church. Whoever has received the anointment can no longer return to his former creed, and those who would try to persuade him to do it would be severely punished. It is even forbidden to the Protestant clergy to warn their congregations from going over to the Greek Church by drawing their attention to the difference which exists between the two religions. A great number of Greek churches have been built in the Baltic provinces, and already, in 1845, it was ordered that the converts to the Greek Church should be admitted into every town; that those peasants who would leave their places of residence in order to join a Greek congregation should be allowed by their landowners to do so; and, finally, that the landowners and Protestant clergymen who would oppose in any way the conversion to the Greek Church of their peasantry and congregations, should be visited with severe penalties. These penalties, directed against those who would attempt to induce any one, either by speeches or writings, to pass from the

Greek Church to any other communion, have been specified in a new criminal code. They prescribe for certain cases of such a proselytism corporal chastisement, the knout, and transportation to Siberia." It is also well known that the Protestant missionaries, who had been labouring in various parts of the Russian empire for the conversion of Mahometans and heathens, have been prohibited from continuing their pious exertions. And yet, strange to say, there is a not uninfluential party in Prussia, which, pretending to be zealously Protestant, supports with all its might the politico-religious policy of Russia, and is as hostile to Protestant England as it is favourable to the power which is persecuting Protestantism in its dominions. On the other hand, it is curious to observe in this country some persons of that High Church party which affects to repudiate the name of Protestant, and with whom churchianity seems to have more weight than Christianity, showing an inclination to unite with the Græco-Russian Church; and I have seen a pamphlet, ascribed to a clergyman of the Scotch Episcopal Church, positively recommending such a union, and containing the formulary of a petition to be addressed by the Episcopalians of Great Britain to the most holy Synod of St Petersburg, praying for admission into the communion of its church. I would, however, observe to these exaggerated Anglo-catholics, who chiefly object to the ecclesiastical establishment of England on account of its being a State Church, that the Russian Church is still more so, and that the most holy synod which administers that church, though composed of prelates and other clergymen, can do nothing without the assent of its lay member, the imperial procurator, and that a colonel of hussars was lately intrusted with this important function. The Greek Church being opposed to Rome, some Protestants sought to conclude a union with her in the sixteenth century; and the Lutheran divines of Tubingen had for this purpose a correspondence with the Patriarch of Constantinople, between the years 1575 and 1581, but which did not lead to any result, as the Patriarch insisted upon their simply joining his church. The Protestants of Poland attempted in 1599 a union with the Greek Church of their country, and the delegates of both parties met for this purpose at Vilna; their object was, however, frustrated by the same cause which rendered nugatory the efforts that had been made by the divines of Tubingen for this purpose, the Greek Church insisting upon their entire submission to her authority. It is true that some learned ecclesiastics of the Græco-Russian Church are supposed to entertain Protestant opinions, but this is entirely personal, and has no influence whatever on the systematic policy of their Church, which hates Rome as a rival, but Protestantism as a revolutionary principle. One of the ablest and most zealous defenders of the Roman Catholic Church in our times, and whom a long residence in Russia had made thoroughly acquainted with her church, Count Joseph Demaistre, is of opinion that this church must finally give way to the influence of Protestantism; and I think that this might be really the case if the Russian Church enjoyed perfect liberty of discussion, which she is very far at present from possessing. I believe, however, that such a contingency is very possible with those Eastern churches that are not under the dominion of Russia, if they were once entirely liberated from Russian influence and brought into contact with Protestant learning. Such a revolution would be most dangerous, not only to the external influence of Russia, but even to her despotism at home, because a Protestant movement amongst the Greek churches of Turkey would sever every connection between them and Russia, and very likely extend to the last-named country. It is therefore most probable, as has been observed by the celebrated explorer of Nineveh, Layard, that the movement alluded to above, which has recently begun to spread amongst the Armenian churches of Turkey, was not without influence on the mission of Prince Menschikoff and its consequences.

I have said above that the mutual position of the Græco-Russian and Roman Catholic Churches towards one another is that of two rivals. The dogmatic difference between them turns upon some abstruse tenets, which are generally little understood by the great mass of their followers, whilst the essential ground of divergence, the real question at issue, is, whether the headship of the church is to be vested in the Pope, in the Patriarch of Constantinople, or in the Czar. The Pope has allowed that portion of the Greek Church which submitted to his supremacy at the council of Florence in 1438, to retain its ritual and discipline, with some insignificant modifications. The Roman Catholic Church considers the Græco-Russian one in about the same light as she is regarded herself by that of England. She acknowledges her to be a church, though a schismatic one, whose sacraments and ordination are valid, so that a Greek or Russian priest becomes, on signing the union of Florence, a clergyman of the Roman Catholic Church exactly as is the case in the Anglican Church with a Roman Catholic priest who renounces the pope. The Græco-Russian Church does not, however, return the compliment to the Roman Catholic one, any more than the Catholic does it to that of England; because a Roman Catholic priest who enters the Græco-Russian Church not only loses his sacerdotal character, just as is the case with an Anglican clergyman who goes over to the communion of Rome, but he must be even baptised anew, as is done with Christians of every denomination who join that church, whether Jews or Gentiles. The system of reaction which the Roman Catholic Church has been pursuing for many years, with a consistency, perseverance, and zeal worthy of a better cause, and not without considerable success, has created just alarm in the minds of many friends of religious and civil liberty. This feeling is but too well warranted by the open hostility which the promoters of that reaction, having thrown away the mask of liberalism, are manifesting to the above-mentioned liberties. I shall, moreover, add, that the political complications in which Europe is now involved may be taken advantage of by the reactionary party in order to advance its schemes, whilst the public attention, particularly of this country, will be absorbed by the events of the present war; and therefore I think that all true Protestants should, instead of relaxing, increase their vigilance, in respect to the movements of the ecclesiastical reactionists. But the dangers which threaten from that quarter are, at least in this country, of a purely moral character, though they are doing much mischief in families, and may throw some obstruction into the legislative action of the government. They must therefore be combated with moral and intellectual means,—with spiritual, and not carnal weapons,—and they may be completely annihilated by a vigorous and skilful application of such means. The Pope of Rome, though claiming a spiritual authority over many countries, cannot maintain himself in his own temporal dominion without the assistance of foreign powers, and is obliged to court the favour of secular potentates, instead of commanding them, as had been done by his predecessors. The case is quite different with the Imperial Pope of Russia, who commands a million of bayonets, and whose authority is supported, not by canon, but by cannon law, and not by bulls, but by bullets. The material force which he has at his disposal is immensely strengthened by his spiritual authority over the ignorant masses of the Russian population, upon whose religious feelings he may act with great facility, because his orders to the clergy are as blindly obeyed as his commands to the army; and it is with the object of extending and consolidating this authority over all his subjects without exception that those measures of persecution and seduction against the Roman Catholics and Protestants, which I have mentioned above, have been adopted. The probable consequence of this religious centralization, and the condition of the church whose exclusive dominion it is sought to establish in Russia, have been sketched in the following graphic

manner by an accomplished German writer, who, having resided many years in Russia, and being thoroughly acquainted with the language of that country, may be considered as one of the most competent judges on this subject:—

“He who, with attentive ear and eye, travels through the wide empire of the Czar, surrounding three parts of the world with its snares, and then traces the sum of his contemplations, will tremble in thought at the destiny which the Colossus of nations has yet to fulfil. He who doubts of the impending fulfilment of this destiny knows not history, and knows not Russia.

“However different in origin and interest the strangely mixed hordes may be which constitute this giant realm, there exists one mighty bond which holds them all together,—the Byzantine Church. Whoever remains out of it will soon be forced into it; and ere the coming century begins, all the inhabitants of Russia will be of one faith.

“Already that great net, whose meshes the Neva and the Volga, the Don and the Dnieper, the Kyros and Araxes, form, inclose a preponderating Christian population, in whose midst the scattered Islamitish race, the descendants of the Golden Horde, are lost like drops in the ocean. What a marvellous disposition of things, that the Russian empire, whose governing principle is the diametrically opposite of the Christian law, should be the very one to make of Christianity the corner, the keystone of its might! And a no less marvellous disposition of things is it that the Czar, in whatever direction he stretches his far-grasping arms, should find Christian points of support whereon to knit the threads of fate for the followers of Islam, artfully scattered by him—that he should find Armenians at the foot of Ararat, and Georgians at the foot of Caucasus!

“But of what kind is this Christianity, that masses together so many millions of human beings into one great whole, and uses them as moving springs to the manifestations of a power that will sooner or later give the old world a new transformation?

“Follow me for a moment into the Russian motherland, and throw a flying glance at the religious state of things prevailing there.

“See that poor soldier, who, tired and hungry from his long march, is just performing his sacred exercises, ere he takes his meal and seeks repose.

“He draws a little image of the virgin from his pocket, spits on it, and wipes it with his coat sleeve: then he sets it down on the ground, kneels before it, and crosses himself, and kisses it in pious devotion.

“Or enter with me on a Sunday one of the gloomy image-adorned Russian churches. If the dress of those present is not already sufficient to indicate their difference of station, you may readily distinguish them by the manner in which each person makes the sign of the cross. Consider first that man of rank, as he stands before a miracle-working image of a Kazanshian mother of God, bows slightly before it, and crosses himself notably. Translated into our vernacular the language of this personage’s face would run in something like the following strain:—‘I know that all this is a pious farce, but one must give no offence to the people, else all respect would be lost. Would the people continue to toil for us, if they were to lose their trust in the assurances we cause to be made to them of the joys of heaven?’

“Now look at that caftan-clad fat merchant, as, with crafty glance and confident step, he makes up to the priest to get his soul freed from the trafficking sins of the past week.

“He knows the priest, and is sure that a good piece of money will meet with a good reception from him; that is why he goes so carelessly, in the consciousness of being able to settle in the lump the whole of his sinful account; and when the absolution is over, he takes his position in front of the miraculous image, and makes so prodigious a sign of the cross, that before this act all the remaining scruples of his soul must vanish away.

“Consider, in fine, that poor countryman, who steals in humbly at the door, and gazes slyly round him in the incense-beclouded spaces. The pomp and the splendour are too much for the poor fellow.

“ ‘God,’ he thinks, ‘but what a gracious lord the Emperor is, that he causes such fine churches to be built for us poor devils! God bless the Emperor!’ And then he slips timidly up to some image where the golden ground and the dark colours form the most glaring contrast, and throws himself down before it, and crosses the floor with his forehead, so that his long hair falls right over his face, and thus he wearies himself with prostrations and enormous crossings, until he can do no more for exhaustion. For the poorer the man in Russia, the larger the cross he signs and wears.” This description of the religious state of the Russian people, given by a writer who is not very partial to their country, may be perhaps suspected of exaggeration, or considered as being too much of a caricature; I shall therefore give my readers the observations which have been made on the same subject by another German author, Baron Haxthausen, a great admirer of Russia, who travelled over that country in 1843, under the patronage of the Emperor, in order to study the state of its agriculture and industry, as well as the social condition of the working-classes.

“A foreigner is struck,” says the Baron, “by the deep devotion and the strict observance of the ordinances and customs of the church shown by Russians of rank and superior education. I had already, at Moscow, an opportunity of seeing it. Prince T., a young, elegant Muscovite dandy, conducted me about the churches of the Kremlin, and almost in every one of them he knelt down before some particularly venerated object,—as the coffin of a saint, the image of a Madonna,—and touched the ground with his forehead, and devoutly kissed the object in question. I observed the same thing at Yaroslaf. Madame Bariatynski (the wife of the governor) and another lady conducted me about the churches of that city, and as soon as we entered one of them, both these ladies approached an image of the Virgin, fell down before it, without any regard to their dresses, touched with their foreheads the ground, and kissed the image, making signs of the cross; and these were ladies belonging to the highest society, and of the most refined manners. Madame Bariatynski had been a lady of the court, and the ornament of the first drawing-rooms of St Petersburg. Her mind is uncommonly cultivated, and she has a thorough knowledge of French and German literature; and, indeed, when we were walking to see these churches, along the banks of the Volga, she discussed, in an animated and ingenious manner, the matchless beauty of Goethe’s songs, and recited from memory his Fisherman. Even in the strictest Roman Catholic countries, as, for instance, Bavaria, Belgium, Rome, Munster, such public demonstrations of piety are not to be met, except in some exceedingly rare cases, with women, but never with men. The educated classes have in this respect separated from the lower ones. Even people who are very devout consider such excessive manifestations of piety as not quite decent, nay, though they dare

not confess it, they are in some measure ashamed of them. In Russia the case is different. There are perhaps as many freethinkers, and even atheists, as in western Europe, but even they submit, at least in public, and when they are in their own country, unconditionally, and almost involuntarily, to the customs of their church. In this respect, no difference whatever may be observed between the highest and the commonest Russian; the unity of the national church and of the national worship predominates everywhere."

It is almost superfluous to observe that a church which has such a hold on the national mind of Russia must be a powerful engine in the hands of her Imperial Pope, whose political authority is thus immensely strengthened by the influence of religion. But I think it will be, perhaps, not uninteresting to my readers to compare this baptised idolatry of the modern Russians with that which had been practised by their unbaptised ancestors about a thousand years ago, and the following account of which is given by Ibn Foslan, an Arabian traveller of the tenth century, who saw Russian merchants in the country of the Bulgars, a Mahometan nation who lived on the banks of the Volga, and the ruins of whose capital may be seen not far from the town of Kazan:—

"As soon as their (Russian) vessels arrive at the anchoring place, every one of them goes on shore, taking with him bread, meat, milk, onions, and intoxicating liquors, and repairs to a high wooden post, which has the likeness of a human face carved upon it, standing surrounded with small statues of a similar description, and some high ones erected behind it. He prostrates himself before this wooden figure, and says, 'O Lord, I have arrived from a distant country; I have brought with me so and so many girls, so and so many sable skins;' and when he has enumerated all his merchandise, he lays before the idol the things which he has brought with him, and continues his prayer, saying, 'Here is a present which I have brought thee, and I wish thou wouldst send me a customer who has plenty of gold and silver, who will not bargain with me, but purchase all that I have to sell at my own price.' When his commerce does not prosper, he brings new presents to the idol, and when he meets with some new difficulties he makes gifts also to the small statues, but when he is successful he offers oxen and sheep."

Kissing constitutes the principal part of the Russian worship of images and relics, and is most liberally bestowed on those objects of adoration, whilst I believe that the Roman Catholic Madonnas maintain a more dignified state, and do not allow such familiarities to their worshippers, unless on some particular occasions or to some privileged persons. The Emperor himself sets the example of this pious osculation, a striking instance of which occurred in the summer of last year, 1853, under circumstances which deserve a particular notice.

I have said above, that several millions of the followers of the Greek United Church had been forced by the present emperor to transfer their spiritual allegiance from the Pope to himself. Several of their churches contain miraculous images of the Virgin, of more or less repute, and which were obliged to share the fate of their worshippers, and to become schismatics as much as the latter. Their vested rights have not been, however, injured in any way by this revolution, because they continue to be worshipped, and to work miracles as they did before, or, what is the same thing, they are fully authorised to do so. The Russian government followed on this occasion its usual line of policy, which is to promote those who have joined it, forsaking their former party; and thus one of the most distinguished of these miracle-working converts, the Madonna of Pochayoff, a little town in Wolhynia, was transferred from her provincial station to Warsaw, and

placed there in a newly built Russian cathedral, probably with the object of inducing the Roman Catholic inhabitants of that capital to imitate an example set to them in such a high quarter, and to acknowledge the spiritual authority of the Czar as much as they are obliged to submit to his temporal dominion. When the emperor was going last year to Olmutz, in order to persuade the Austrian court to support his policy in Turkey, he passed through Warsaw, and repairing, immediately after his arrival in that city, to the Russian cathedral, kissed the above-mentioned miraculous image of the Madonna of Pochayoff with such fervour that it produced quite a sensation upon all those who were present, and was noticed in the newspapers as a proof of the autocrat's piety. Yet whether this Madonna, notwithstanding her outward conversion to the Græco-Russian Church, remains a Romanist at heart, or whether, for some other reason, she could or would not support the views of her imperial worshipper, the result of the Czar's voyage to Olmutz proved that the caresses which he had bestowed upon the Madonna in question were love's labours lost. It may be also observed, that the emperor himself seems not to have been quite sure of the effects of his pious addresses to the now schismatic Madonna of Pochayoff, because it is well known that this man, who, as I have said above, p. 161, had torn from the spiritual authority of the Pope, by a violent persecution, many millions of souls, knelt during his visit to Olmutz, with all the marks of deep devotion, at a Roman Catholic high mass; whilst the Prince of Prussia, who was also present on that occasion, stood by without taking a hypocritical part in a worship which was contrary to his religion. This image-kissing propensity of the Russians was the cause of a tragical event during the plague at Moscow in 1771. It usually happens during a public calamity that rumours of a wild and absurd nature are circulated amongst the ignorant part of the population, and it was thus that, when the pestilence was raging in the above-mentioned capital, a report was spread that an image of the Virgin, placed at the entrance of a church, had the power of preventing infection. Thousands of people repaired to the miraculous image, and endless processions were wending along the streets towards the same object of adoration, which was overloaded with rich offerings by its worshippers, and adorned with costly jewels. As was to be expected, this superstitious practice, instead of preventing the infection, powerfully contributed to its increase; because the kisses which the crowd lavishly bestowed on the miraculous image could not but propagate the disease. The Archbishop of Moscow, Ambrose, an enlightened prelate, in order to stop this mischief, removed the image from the place where it had been exposed into the interior of the church; but this wise measure produced a violent riot, and an infuriated mob rushed into the sanctuary and murdered the venerable old man at the foot of the altar, where he was officiating, dressed in his pontificals.

It is probably the same image of which Bodenstedt, whose account of the Russian Church I have quoted above, relates the following anecdote. After having spoken of the usurpations of Russia beyond the Caucasus, under pretence of protecting the Christian population of those parts, he says:—

"The Russian policy, which conceals its grasping claws under the cloak of religion, may be not inaptly compared to a lady well known at Moscow, who, to the great edification of the bystanders, kissed the miraculous Madonna, situated close to the Kremlin, with so much fervour, that the most costly diamond of the jewels with which this image is covered remained in her mouth." And he adds, in a note, "The thing was afterwards discovered, and the writer of this was himself present when this lady, the wife of a Russian general, was obliged publicly to crave the forgiveness of the

image for this act of desecration. It is said that when this noble lady was judicially examined about this affair, she pleaded in her defence that having loved and worshipped the image in question devoutly during many years, she believed herself entitled to a little souvenir from the Madonna." The Russian lady of rank seems not to have been so ingenious as the Prussian soldier, whose story I have related on p. 118. And it must be remarked that the Russian images expose their worshippers to the temptations of mammon much more than the Roman Catholic ones; because, whilst the latter are often valuable as objects of art, the former have usually silver or golden garments, often set with precious stones, which entirely cover the painting except the face, generally by no means a model of beauty. The gifts which the Russians bestow on their images are immense, and the most [pg 181] celebrated place for the accumulation of such treasures is the convent of Troitza, or Trinity, situated about fifty English miles from Moscow, and considered as a kind of national sanctuary of Russia.111 Baron Haxthausen, whom I have quoted on p. 173, says that the value of sacred vases and ornaments accumulated in that place surpasses all that may be seen of this kind any where else, without even excepting Rome and Loretto; and he thinks that the quantity of pearls contained in those ornaments is perhaps greater than is to be found in the whole of Europe.112 The grave of St Sergius, the founder of that convent in the fourteenth century, is adorned with gold and precious stones, and the silver canopy over it is said to weigh 1200 pounds. The most remarkable object contained in that convent is, however, the image of that saint which accompanied Peter the Great during all his campaigns, and on which are inscribed the names of all the battles and stormings of towns at which it had been present. I do not know whether this image had a part in other expeditions of the Russian army, but I have read this year in the newspapers that when a division of grenadiers was passing through Moscow, on their way to Turkey, the Archbishop of that capital addressed them, firing their zeal for the religious war in which they [pg 182] were going to take part, and after having blessed them with the image of St Sergius, the same to which I alluded above, gave it them as a companion of their expedition. The allied troops must therefore be prepared to encounter that bellicose saint somewhere on the Danube, unless he has been ordered to the shores of the Baltic for the defence of the capital. The custom of taking with them images considered as miraculous, during a campaign, was followed by the generals of the Greek empire on many occasions. Thus it is related by a Byzantine writer,113 that in 590 Philippicus, a general of the Emperor Mauritius, when going to engage the Persians in battle, took an image which was not made by the hands of man, and carried it about the ranks of his army, in order to purify his soldiers, and that he gained, after this ceremony, a complete victory. It must, however, be remarked that when Philippicus was replaced by another general, called Priscus, the latter, relying too much on the protection of the image which was not made by the hands of man, diminished the rations of the soldiers, and gave them other causes of offence; they revolted, and when Priscus, in order to subdue the riot, paraded the image in question, the mutineers threw stones at it. I don't know exactly how this business ended, but it is said that the Greek generals usually liked to have an image of the kind alluded to, in order to appease [pg 183] their troops in cases of mutiny and discontent; and I believe that, considering the gross ignorance and superstition of the Russian soldiers, the image of St Sergius may do good service in similar cases, and for which these soldiers have but too many reasons. The Greek emperors also sometimes provided with miraculous images the ambassadors who were sent on important missions. I don't know whether the Russian diplomacy, which has performed so many wonders, has ever had recourse to the assistance of such images, or to that of any supernatural agency.

The miraculous images of the Græco-Russian Church are generally considered as not made by the hands of man, whilst those of the Roman Catholic Church are usually believed to be painted by St Luke. The most celebrated Madonnas of Russia, as those of Kazan, Korennaya, Akhtyrka, &c., are believed to have dropt from heaven, in the same manner as the Diana of Ephesus, and other Greek idols of repute. They are called yavlenneeye icony, i.e., revealed images, and their number is considerable, though all of them do not enjoy an equal reputation for miraculous powers. The number of images of various descriptions is, I think, much greater in Russia than in any other country, and they are called by the common people, not images, icony, but gods, boghi; and many of their worshippers are so ignorant, that they take every kind of picture or [pg 184] engraving for the boghi, and devoutly cross themselves before them. A German officer of engineers, in the Russian service, related to the author that he had a Russian servant, a young lad of a very devout disposition, who pasted every engraving which he could lay hold on, upon the wall over his bed, in order to address his prayers to them. This officer once missed some plates, containing mathematical figures, which had dropt from a book of geometry, and he found afterwards that his pious servant, having picked them up, gave them a place in his pantheon. If this strange divinity had been found amongst the objects worshipped by that poor lad by some very profound foreign traveller, unacquainted with the Russian people, it is more than probable that he would have taken it for a mystical object of adoration, and written a learned dissertation to explain its emblematic sense.

Every household in Russia has its own little sanctuary, consisting of one or more images, ornamented according to the means of the owner, and placed in a corner opposite to the principal door. Every one who enters the room makes a sign of the cross, bowing to these penates, the place under whose shrine is considered as the seat of honour, reserved at meals for the father of the family, or the most respected guest. The Russians are great exclusives in respect to their images, and every believer has at least one of [pg 185] them stuck on the wall near his sleeping place, for his especial use and comfort; whilst people who are continually moving about, as carriers, pedlars, soldiers,& c., have their pocket divinities with them; and the description of the devotional exercises of a Russian soldier, given on p. 171, is by no means a caricature. This exclusiveness was much greater before the reforms introduced by the Patriarch Nicon in the seventeenth century than it is at present.114 Contemporary travellers relate that people brought into the churches their own images, trying to get for them on the walls of the church the place which they considered the best; and thus it often happened that these images, being placed opposite to the altar, people in praying to them turned their backs to the officiating priest, which generally produced great confusion, and disturbed the performance of divine service. There was a very great competition amongst those people in ornamenting their images as showily as possible; and as the sanctity of an image was increased, according to the opinion of those baptised idolaters, in proportion to the richness of its ornaments, it often happened [pg 186] that a poor man, who could not afford to trim up smartly his own image, addressed his prayers to that of his richer neighbour. Such an adoration, however, was considered as contraband; and when the lawful owner of the image caught one of those pious interlopers, he not only sharply rebuked him, but frequently gave him a sound thrashing, saying that he did not go to the expense of decorating his image that another should obtain its favours.115

Scandalous scenes of this description have been abolished in the established church by the reforms of the Patriarch Nicon, alluded to above, but something very like it may still be witnessed in the churches of the Raskolniks, who have separated from the established church on account of those reforms. These people often bring their own images to the churches to pray before them, and it frequently happens amongst the boys who worship in this way, that some of them, perceiving that their neighbour has a finer image than their own, they steal it from him, substituting that which belongs to them. This produces quarrels and fighting amongst these boys, who reproach one another, saying, You So-and-so, you have stolen my fine image which cost my father two roubles, and left me this wretched one, which is not worth fifty copecs, i.e., half a rouble. These scenes [pg 187] would be ludicrous if they were not positively blasphemous, because these images are called on such occasions, as is always done, by the name of gods, boghi.

It has been observed by some travellers in Russia that the image-dealers of that country do not sell their wares, but, by a kind of legal fiction, exchange them for a certain sum, and that consequently they are disposed of at a fixed price. This is, however, not the case, and the image-dealers of Russia make no exception to the other merchants of that country, who generally ask for their goods the treble of their value, and a reasonable price can only be obtained by hard bargaining. Only consecrated images, i.e., those which have been sprinkled by a priest with holy water, cannot be, I think, made an object of traffic. The orthodox Russians have no less veneration for fine churches than for splendidly adorned images, and the well-known German dramatic writer Kotzebue gives in the relation of his forced voyage to Siberia,116 under the Emperor Paul, a characteristic trait of this disposition. The titulary counsellor117 Shchekatikhin, who conducted him to the place of his exile, Kurghan, in the south of Siberia, showed a great reverence to all the churches which they passed by. Whenever they passed a fine church [pg 188] constructed of solid masonry, he doffed his cap and crossed himself most fervently, whilst he treated very cavalierly all those which were built of wood, making a hardly perceptible sign of the cross in their honour. This national propensity to treat respectfully the great and disdainfully the little, of which M. Shchekatikhin's piety was such a characteristic exemplification, has been, in its application to churches, described by the great admirer of Russia, Baron Haxthausen, whose account of the devotional practices observed by the upper classes of that country I have given above, p. 173, in the following manner:—

"We saw, in most part of the villages on our road, fine new churches built of stone or brick; but in one of them, called Novaya, I saw for the first time an old wooden church, built of logs, and covered with boards and shingles, such as they generally had been every where in Russia. These wooden churches continually disappear, being replaced by those constructed of masonry. The Russian peasantry consider it a particular honour to have in their village a church of stone or brick. To leave a village with a church of stone in order to settle in a place which has but a wooden one, is considered as a degradation, and the inhabitants of the former would hardly intermarry with those of the latter. The villages which have only a wooden church, therefore, do all that they can in order to rise to an [pg 189] equal grade with those who have one of stone or brick. This shows how the pride of rank pervades the mind of the Russians in every form of life, and in every class of the population. In cases of this kind, no promotion but only a sum of money is required in order to obtain the desired rank. It may be purchased by constructing a church of stone or brick. Such a church costs ten, twenty, or thirty thousand silver roubles (six roubles equal to one pound); but

nothing is more easy than to get this sum. A dozen of stout fellows disperse in various directions, to collect by begging the sum required for the construction of the projected church, which is done without any expense, as the collectors are hospitably received in every house. As soon as the necessary sum is obtained, the village petitions the government for a plan and for an architect, because the plan of every such church must be approved at St Petersburg. Thus, in a few years, a fine church is built, constructed in the modern style, and the rank of the village rises in its own and in its neighbours' opinion.

"Such things cannot be done in Western Europe, partly because an active religious feeling amongst the people disappears more and more,118 and partly on [pg 190] account of the great fluctuation of their ideas, and want of stability in their opinions. With the Russian it is quite otherwise. This nation has no political ideas: but two sentiments pervade its whole being—a common feeling of nationality, and a fervent attachment to the national church. Whenever these two feelings take hold of the Russian's mind, he is ready willingly to sacrifice without a moment's hesitation his life and property."119

It is these two national feelings that the Emperor Nicholas is now trying to excite to the utmost pitch, and there can be little doubt that if he succeeds in his object there will be a hard struggle between barbarity and civilization, though the final triumph of the latter, to the advantage not only of the victors, but also of the vanquished, cannot be doubted for a moment. I must, however, return to Baron Haxthausen, who continues his account of the Russian village churches, saying,—

"It must not be forgotten, in order to understand how such large collections for a church of some obscure village, and made for the most part amongst the peasants, are obtained, that giving is as much in the Russian character as taking. Nowhere property hangs upon such loose threads and changes hands with such rapidity as in Russia. To-day rich, to-morrow poor. People earn and squander away almost simultaneously; they cheat and are cheated; [pg 191] they steal with one hand, and give away with the other. The common Russian sets not his heart on any kind of property; he loses with perfect equanimity what he had just earned, in the hope of getting it again to-morrow.

"The Russian is, moreover, naturally good-hearted, charitable, and liberal. A shopkeeper who had perhaps just cheated his neighbour of the value of 20 copecs, without feeling any qualms of conscience on the subject, will give one moment after it a rouble for the construction of a church in some village to which he is a perfect stranger."120

Thus, what Cicero said of Catiline, Sui profusus alieni cupiens, is applicable, not only to individuals, but also to nations, whose actions are swayed by feeling without being regulated by principle. It is almost superfluous to observe that a nation thus disposed, and with whom superstitious practices have a greater weight than religious principles, may be easily precipitated into the most violent and dangerous courses, which to accomplish seems now to be the object of the Emperor of Russia. The Græco-Russian Church has an immense number of relics of saints, to which all that Calvin has said of those of the Roman Catholic Church is applicable. I have given, in a note to his treatise on this subject, an account of St Anthony's relics in Russia, as a counterpart to those which the same saint possesses [pg 192] in western Europe. There are, indeed, many relics to the exclusive possession of which both these churches lay an equal claim, each of them representing her own as the only genuine, and that of her rival as a spurious one. The most

celebrated of these disputed relics is the holy coat of Treves, and that of Moscow. It is well known what a noise the former of these produced in 1844, when an immense number of pilgrims came to worship it; and it is pretended that it had been found by the Empress Helena, with the true cross, and presented by her to the town of Treves. The coat of Moscow was given as a present to the Czar by a Shah of Persia, and its genuineness was established by a Russian archbishop, who asserted that, when he passed through Georgia on his return from Jerusalem, he saw in a church of that country a golden box placed upon a column, and which, as it was told to him, contained the coat without a seam of our Lord. This statement was corroborated by an eastern monk, then at Moscow, who related that it was generally believed in Palestine, that when the soldiers cast lots for the possession of that coat, it fell to the part of one of them, who, being a native of Georgia, took it with him to his native land. These statements were sufficient to establish the authenticity of the relic, which consequently was licensed to work miracles and worked them.121

[pg 193] The most celebrated collection of relics in Russia is found in the town of Kioff, on the Dnieper, and where the bodies of many hundreds of saints are deposited in a kind of crypt called Piechary, i.e., caverns. The chronicles relate that the digging of this sacred cavern was commenced in the eleventh century by two monks called Anthony and Theodosius, who had come from the Mount Athos, for their own and their disciples' abode. It was gradually extended, but the living established themselves afterwards in a convent above ground, leaving to the dead the part under it. This statement is considered to be authentic, but the numerous bodies of the saints with which the long subterranean galleries of that cavern are filled, have never been satisfactorily accounted for. It is the opinion of many, that the nature of the soil is so dry, that, absorbing all the moisture, it keeps the dead bodies which are deposited there in a more or less perfect state of preservation; and it is said that an enlightened archbishop of Kioff proved it by a successful experiment, putting into that place the bodies of two women, who had been confined as prisoners in a nunnery for their many vices. Be it as it may, Kioff is the resort of an immense number of pilgrims, who arrive from all parts of Russia, to worship the bodies of the saints, and the riches accumulated by their pious donations at that place are only second to those of Troitza (p. 181).

[pg 194] The shrines of Jerusalem, which attract crowds of pilgrims from all parts of the Christian world, had been for a long time a subject of dispute between the Latins and the Greeks, and it is well known that the politico-religious complications in which Europe is at present involved have arisen from the claims of Russia relating to those shrines. It will, therefore, I think, be not uninteresting to my readers to see the devout manner in which these shrines are worshipped by the pilgrims of the Græco-Russian Church; and I subjoin the two following accounts of this subject, written at an interval of a century and a half, in order that my readers may be able to judge for themselves whether the progress of civilization during this period has had much influence on the pilgrims alluded to above. The first of these accounts is an extract from the diary of an English clergyman, the Rev. Henry Maundrell, a Fellow of Exeter College, Oxford, and chaplain to the English factory at Aleppo, who visited Jerusalem in the year 1697:—

"Saturday, April 3d.—We went about mid-day to see the function of the holy fire. This is a ceremony kept by the Greeks and Armenians, upon a persuasion that every Easter Eve there is a miraculous flame descends from heaven into the Holy Sepulchre, and kindles all the lamps and candles there, as the sacrifice was burnt at the prayer of Elijah.—(1 Kings xviii.)

[pg 195]

“Coming to the church of the Holy Sepulchre, we found it crowded with a numerous and distracted mob, making a hideous clamour, very unfit for that sacred place, and better becoming bacchanals than Christians. Getting, with some struggle, through this crowd, we went up into the gallery, on that side of the church next the Latin convent, whence we could discern all that passed in this religious frenzy.

“They began their disorders by running round the Holy Sepulchre with all their might and swiftness, crying out as they went, ‘Huia!’ which signifies ‘This is he,’ or, ‘This is it,’ an expression by which they assert the verity of the Christian religion. After they had by their vertiginous circulations and clamours turned their heads, and inflamed their madness, they began to act the most antic tricks and postures, in a thousand shapes of distraction. Sometimes they dragged one another along the floor, all around the sepulchre; sometimes they set one man upright on another’s shoulders, and in this posture marched round; sometimes they turned men with their heels upwards, and hurried them about in such an indecent manner as to expose their nudities; sometimes they tumbled round the sepulchre, after the manner of tumblers on the stage. In a word, nothing can be imagined more rude or extravagant than what was acted upon this occasion.

“In this tumultuous frantic humour they continued from twelve to four of the clock, the reason of which [pg 196] delay was because of a suit that was then in debate before the cadi betwixt the Greeks and Armenians, the former endeavouring to exclude the latter from having any share in this miracle. Both parties having expended (as I was informed) five thousand dollars between them in this foolish controversy, the cadi at last gave sentence that they should enter the Holy Sepulchre together, as had been usual at former times. Sentence being thus given, at four of the clock both nations went on with their ceremony. The Greeks first set out in a procession round the Holy Sepulchre, and immediately at their heels followed the Armenians. In this order they compassed the Holy Sepulchre thrice, having produced all their gallantry of standards, streamers, crucifixes, and embroidered habits on this occasion.

“Toward the end of this procession, there was a pigeon came fluttering into the cupola over the sepulchre, at the sight of which there was a greater shout and clamour than before. This bird, the Latins told us, was purposely let fly by the Greeks to deceive the people into an opinion that it was a visible descent of the Holy Ghost.

“The procession being over, the suffragan of the Greek patriarch (he being himself at Constantinople), and the principal Armenian bishop, approached to the door of the sepulchre, and cutting the string with which it was fastened and sealed, entered in, shutting the door after them, all the candles and lamps [pg 197] within having been before extinguished in the presence of the Turks and other witnesses. The exclamations were doubled as the miracle drew nearer its accomplishment, and the people pressed with such vehemence towards the door of the Sepulchre, that it was not in the power of the Turks set to guard it with the severest checks to keep them off. The cause of their pressing in this manner is the great desire they have to light their candles at the holy flame, as soon as it is first brought out of the Sepulchre, it being esteemed the most sacred and pure, as coming immediately from heaven.

“The two miracle-mongers had not been above a minute in the Holy Sepulchre when the glimmering of the holy fire was seen, or imagined to appear, through some chinks of the door, and certainly Bedlam itself never saw such an unruly transport as was produced in the mob at this sight. Immediately after came out the two priests, with blazing torches in their hands, which they held up at the door of the Sepulchre, while the people thronged about with inexpressible ardour, every one striving to obtain a part of the first and purest flame. The Turks in the meantime, with huge clubs, laid on them without mercy; but all this could not repel them, the excess of their transport making them insensible of pain. Those that got the fire applied it immediately to their beards, faces, and bosoms, pretending that it would not burn like an earthly flame; but I plainly [pg 198] saw none of them could endure this experiment long enough to make good that pretension.

“So many hands being employed, you may be sure it could not be long before innumerable tapers were lighted. The whole church, galleries and every place, seemed instantly to be in a flame, and with this illumination the ceremony ended.

“It must be owned that those two within the sepulchre performed their part with great quickness and dexterity; but the behaviour of the rabble without very much discredited the miracle. The Latins take a great deal of pains to expose this ceremony as a most shameful imposture, and a scandal to the Christian religion, perhaps out of envy that others should be masters of so gainful a business; but the Greeks and Armenians pin their faith upon it, and make their pilgrimages chiefly upon this motive; and it is the deplorable unhappiness of their priests, that having acted the cheat so long already, they are forced now to stand to it, for fear of endangering the apostasy of their people.

“Going out of the church after the event was over, we saw several people gathered about the stone of unction, who, having got a good store of candles lighted with the holy fire, were employed in daubing pieces of linen with the wicks of them and the melting wax, which pieces of linen were designed for winding sheets; and it is the opinion of these poor people that if they can but have the happiness to be [pg 199] buried in a shroud smutted with this celestial fire, it will certainly secure them from the flames of hell.”—(P. 127, et seq., eighth edition, 1810.)

Many people may, however, believe that scenes of such an outrageous description as that witnessed by Maundrell might have happened in his time, viz., 1697, but that their repetition is quite impossible in our own enlightened age. The following account of the same scenes by Mr Calman, whose veracity is attested by a high authority, and who had an opportunity of seeing it only a few years ago, which has been reproduced in a little, and now particularly interesting book, “The Shrines of the Holy Land,”122 may enable my readers to judge of the influence which the boasted march of intellect has produced on the Græco-Russian pilgrims, who assemble every Easter at Jerusalem.

“To notice all that was passing,” says Mr Calman, “within the church of the Holy Sepulchre during the space of twenty-four hours, would be next to impossible, because it was one continuation of shameless madness and rioting, which would have been a disgrace to Greenwich and Smithfield. Only suppose for a moment the mighty edifice crowded to excess with fanatic pilgrims of all the Eastern Churches, who, instead of lifting pure hands to God, without wrath and quarrelling, are led, by the petty jealousy about precedency which they should maintain in the [pg 200] order of their processions, into tumults and fighting, which can only be quelled by the scourge and whip of

the followers of the false prophet.

“Suppose, farther, those thousands of devotees running from one extreme to the other, from the extreme of savage irritation to that of savage enjoyment, of mutual revellings and feastings, like Israel of old, who, when they made the golden calf, were eating and drinking, and rising to play. Suppose troops of men stripped half naked, to facilitate their actions, running, trotting, jumping, galloping to and fro, the breadth and length of the church, walking on their hands with their feet aloft in the air, mounting on one another’s shoulders, some in a riding and some in a standing position, and by the slightest push are all sent to the ground in one confused heap, which made one fear for their safety.

“Suppose, farther, many of the pilgrims dressed in fur caps, like the Polish Jews, whom they feigned to represent, and whom the mob met with all manner of insult, hurrying them through the church as criminals who had been condemned, amid loud execrations and shouts of laughter, which indicated that Israel is still a derision amongst these heathens, by whom they are still counted as sheep for the slaughter.

“About two o’clock on Saturday afternoon, the preparations for the miraculous fire commenced. The multitude, who had been hitherto in a state of [pg 201] frenzy and madness, became a little more quiet, but it proved a quiet that precedes a thunderstorm. Bishops and priests, in full canonicals, then issued forth from their respective quarters, with flags and banners, crucifixes and crosses, lighted candles and smoking censers, to join or rather to lead a procession, which moved thrice round the church, invoking every picture, altar, and relic in their way to aid them in obtaining the miraculous fire.

“The procession then returned to the place from whence it started, and two grey-headed bishops, the one of the Greek and the other of the Armenian Church, were hurled by the soldiers through the crowd, into the apartment which communicated with that of the Holy Sepulchre, where they locked themselves in; there the marvellous fire was to make its first appearance, and from thence issue through the small circular windows and the door, for the use of the multitude. The eyes of all—men, women, and children—were now directed towards the Holy Sepulchre with an anxious expression, awaiting the issue of their expectation. The mixed multitude, each in his or her own language, were pouring forth their clamorous prayers to the Virgin and the saints to intercede for them on behalf of the object for which they were assembled, and the same were tenfold increased by the fanatic gestures and the waving of the garments by the priests of their respective communions, who were interested in the holy fire, and [pg 202] who were watching by the above-mentioned door and circular windows, with torches in their hands, ready to receive the virgin flame of the heavenly fire, and carry it to their flocks.

“In about twenty minutes from the time the bishops locked themselves in the apartment of the Holy Sepulchre, the miraculous fire made its appearance through the door and the two small windows, as expected. The priests were the first who lighted their torches, and they set out on a gallop in the direction of their lay brethren; but some of these errandless and profitless messengers had the misfortune to be knocked down by the crowd, and had their firebrands wrested out of their hands, but some were more fortunate, and safely reached their destination, around whom the people flocked like bees, to have their candles lighted. Others, however, were not satisfied at having the holy fire second hand, but rushed furiously towards the Holy Sepulchre, regardless of their own

safety, and that of those who obstructed their way, though it has frequently happened that persons have been trampled to death on such occasions.

“Those who were in the galleries let down their candles by cords, and drew them up when they had succeeded in their purpose. In a few minutes thousands of flames were ascending, the smoke and the heat of which rendered the church like the bottomless pit. To satisfy themselves, as well as to convince [pg 203] the Latins, the pilgrims, women as well as men, shamefully exposed their bare bosoms to the action of the flame of their lighted candles, to make their adversaries believe the miraculous fire differs from an ordinary one in being perfectly harmless.

“The two bishops, who a little while before locked themselves in the apartment of the Holy Sepulchre, now sallied forth out of it. When the whole multitude had their candles lighted, the bishops were caught by the crowd, lifted upon their shoulders, and carried to their chapels, amidst loud and triumphant acclamations. They soon, however, reappeared at the head of a similar procession to the one before, as a pretended thank-offering to the Almighty for the miraculous fire vouchsafed.”—(P. 121, et seq.)

It appears, by comparing these two narratives of one and the same thing, though separated by a distance of a hundred and fifty years, that the only difference which will be found between them is, that in the time of Maundrell, 1697, the miraculous fire was produced in about one minute’s time, whilst the performance of the same trick required twenty when it was observed by Mr Calman. And, indeed, it has been justly observed by both these writers, that the exhibitors of the miraculous fire, having continued so long to practise this imposture, cannot leave it off without ruining their authority and influence over those whom they have thus been cheating for many centuries. This circumstance has [pg 204] been most pointedly expressed by the author of the work from which I have extracted Mr Calman’s description of this pious, or rather impious, fraud, and who says:—

“Had it been an occasional miracle, as time had rolled on, and truth had more and more illuminated the human mind, the practice might have been gradually discontinued. As the priests had grown more honest, and the people more enlightened, they might have mutually consigned these pious frauds to the oblivion of the darker ages; and if the blush of shame had risen up at the memories of the past, the world would have respected them the more for their honesty of purpose.

“But an annual miracle, always o

Chapter 23

02.09. Calvin's Treatise On Relics, With Notes By The Translator.

Calvin’s Treatise On Relics, With Notes By The Translator.

St Augustinus complains, in his work entitled “The Labour of Monks,” that certain people were, even in his time, exercising a dishonest trade, hawking about relics of martyrs, and he adds the following significant words, “should they really be relics of martyrs,” from which we may infer, that even then abuses and deceits were practised, by making simple folks believe that bones, picked up any where, were bones of saints. Since the origin of this abuse is so ancient, there can be no doubt that it has greatly increased during a long interval of years, particularly as the world has been much corrupted since that age, and has continued to deteriorate until it has arrived at its present condition.

Now, the origin and root of this evil has been, that, instead of discerning Jesus Christ in his Word, his Sacraments, and his Spiritual Graces, the world has, according to its custom, amused itself with his [pg 218] clothes, shirts, and sheets, leaving thus the principal to follow the accessory.

It did the same thing with the apostles, martyrs, and other saints, and, instead of observing their lives in order to imitate their examples, it directed all its attention to the preservation and admiration of their bones, shirts, sashes, caps, and other similar trash.

I know well that there is a certain appearance of real devotion and zeal in the allegation, that the relics of Jesus Christ are preserved on account of the honour which is rendered to him, and in order the better to preserve his memory. But it is necessary to consider what St Paul says, that every service of God invented by man, whatever appearance of wisdom it may have, is nothing better than vanity and foolishness, if it has no other foundation than our own devising. Moreover, it is necessary to set the profit derived from it against the dangers with which it is fraught, and it will thus be found that, to have relics is a useless and frivolous thing, which will most probably gradually lead towards idolatry, because they cannot be handled and looked upon without being honoured, and in doing this men will very soon render them the honour which is due to Jesus Christ. In short, the desire for relics is never without superstition, and what is worse, it is usually the parent of idolatry. Every one admits that the reason why our Lord concealed the body of Moses, was that the people of Israel should not be guilty of [pg 219] worshipping it. Now, we may conclude that the act to be avoided with regard to the body of Moses must be equally shunned with regard to the bodies of all other saints, and for the same reason—because it is sin. But let us leave the saints, and consider what St Paul says of Jesus Christ himself, for he protests that he knew him not according to the flesh, but only after his resurrection, signifying by these words, that all that is carnal in Jesus Christ must be forgotten and put aside, and that we should employ and direct our whole affections to seek and possess him according to the spirit. Consequently the pretence that it is a good thing to have some memorials either of himself or of the saints, to stimulate our piety, is nothing but a cloak for indulging our foolish cravings which have no reasonable foundation; and should even this reason appear insufficient, it is openly repugnant to what the Holy Ghost has declared by the mouth of St Paul, and what can be said more?

It is of no use to discuss the point whether it is right or wrong to have relics merely to keep them as precious objects, without worshipping them, because experience proves that this is never the case.

It is true that St Ambrose, in speaking of Helena, the mother of the Emperor Constantine the Great, who sought with great trouble and expense for the cross of our Lord, says that she did not worship the wood, but the Lord who was suspended upon it. But it is a very rare thing, that a heart disposed [pg 220] to value any relics whatever should not become to a certain degree polluted by some superstition.

I admit that people do not arrive at once at open idolatry, but they gradually advance from one abuse to another until they fall into this extremity, and, indeed, those who call themselves Christians have, in this respect, idolatrised as much as Pagans ever did. They have prostrated themselves, and knelt before relics, just as if they were worshipping God; they have burnt candles before them in sign of homage; they have placed their confidence in them, and have prayed to them, as if the virtue and the grace of God had entered into them. Now, if idolatry be nothing else than the transfer elsewhere of the honour which is due to God, can it be denied that this is idolatry? This cannot be excused by pretending that it was only the improper zeal of some idiots or foolish women, for it was a general custom approved by those who had the government of the church, and who had even placed the bones of the dead and other relics on the high altar, in the greatest and most prominent places, in order that they should be worshipped with more certainty.

It is thus that the foolish fancy which people had at first for collecting relics, ended in this open abomination,—they not only turned from God, in order to amuse themselves with vain and corruptible things, but even went on to the execrable sacrilege of worshipping dead and insensible creatures, instead of the [pg 221] one living God. Now, as one evil never comes alone but is always followed by another, it thus happened that where people were seeking for relics, either of Jesus Christ or the saints, they became so blind that whatever name was imposed upon any rubbish presented to them, they received it without any examination or judgment; thus the bones of an ass or dog, which any hawker gave out to be the bones of a martyr, were devoutly received without any difficulty. This was the case with all of them, as will be shown hereafter. For my own part, I have no doubt that this has been a great punishment inflicted by God. Because, as the world was craving after relics, and turning them to a wicked and superstitious use, it was very likely that God would permit one lie to follow another; for this is the way in which he punishes the dishonour done to his name, when the glory due to him is transferred elsewhere. Indeed, the only reason why there are so many false and imaginary relics is, that God has permitted the world to be doubly deceived and fallen, since it has so loved deceit and lies. The first Christians left the bodies of the saints in their graves, obeying the universal sentence, that all flesh is dust, and to dust it must return, and did not attempt their resurrection before the appointed time by raising them in pomp and state. This example has not been followed by their successors; on the contrary, the bodies of the faithful, [pg 222] in opposition to the command of God, have been disinterred in order to be glorified, when they ought to have remained in their places of repose awaiting the last judgment.

They were worshipped; every kind of honour was shown to them, and people put their trust in such things. And what was the consequence of all this? The devil, perceiving man’s folly, was not

satisfied with having led the world into one deception, but added to it another, by giving the name of relics of saints to the most profane things. And God punished the credulous by depriving them of all power of reasoning rightly, so that they accepted without inquiry all that was presented to them, making no distinction between white or black.

It is not my intention now to discuss the abominable abuse of the relics of our Lord, as well as of the saints, at this present time, in the most part of Christendom. This subject alone would require a separate volume; for it is a well-known fact that the most part of the relics which are displayed every where are false, and have been put forward by impostors who have most impudently deceived the poor world. I have merely mentioned this subject, to give people an opportunity of thinking it over, and of being upon their guard. It happens sometimes that we carelessly approve of a thing without taking the necessary time to examine what it really is, and we are thus deceived for want of [pg 223] warning; but when we are warned, we begin to think, and become quite astonished at our believing so easily such an improbability. This is precisely what has taken place with the subject in question. People were told, “This is the body of such a saint; these are his shoes, those are his stockings;” and they believed it to be so, for want of timely caution. But when I shall have clearly proved the fraud which has been committed, all those who have sense and reason will open their eyes and begin to reflect upon what has never before entered their thoughts. The limits of my little volume forbid me from entering but upon a small part of what I would wish to perform, for it would be necessary to ascertain the relics possessed by every place in order to compare them with each other. It would then be seen that every apostle had more than four bodies,128 and each saint at least two or three, and so on. In short, if all the relics were collected into one heap, the only astonishment would be that such a silly and clumsy imposition could have blinded the whole earth. As every, even the smallest Catholic church has a heap of bones and other small rubbish, what would it be if all those things which are contained in two or three thousand bishoprics, twenty or thirty thousand abbeys, more than forty thousand convents, and so many parish churches and chapels, were collected [pg 224] into one mass?129 The best thing would be not merely to name, but to visit them. In this town (Geneva) there was formerly, it is said, an arm of St Anthony; it was kissed and worshipped as long as it remained in its shrine; but when it was turned out and examined, it was found to be the bone of a stag. There was on the high altar the brain of St Peter; so long as it rested in its shrine, nobody ever doubted its genuineness, for it would have been blasphemy to do so; but when it was subjected to a close inspection, it proved to be a piece of pumice-stone. I could quote many instances of this kind; but these will be sufficient to give an idea of the quantity of precious rubbish there would have been found if a thorough and universal investigation of all the relics of Europe had ever taken place. Many of those who look at relics close their eyes from superstition, so that in regarding these they see nothing; that is to say, they dare not properly gaze at and consider what they properly may be. Thus many who boast of having seen the whole body of St Claude, or of any other saint, have never had the courage to raise their eyes and to ascertain what it really was. The same thing may be said of the head of Mary Magdalene, which is shown near Marseilles, with eyes of paste or wax. It is valued as much as if it were God himself who had descended from heaven; but if it were examined, [pg 225] the imposition would be clearly detected.130 It would be desirable to have an accurate knowledge of all the trifles which in different places are taken for relics, or at least a register of them, in order to show how many of them are false; but since it is impossible to obtain this, I should like to have at least an inventory of relics contained in ten or twelve such towns as Paris, Toulouse, Poitiers,

Rheims, &c. If I had nothing more than this, it would form a very curious collection. Indeed, it is a wish I am constantly entertaining to get such a precious repertory. However, as this is too difficult, I thought it would be as well to publish the following little warning, to awaken those who are asleep, and to make them consider what may be the state of the entire church if there is so much to condemn in a very small portion of it;—I mean, when people find so much deception in the relics I shall name, and which are far from being the thousandth part of those that are exhibited in various parts of the world, what must they think of the remainder? moreover, if those which had been considered as the most authentic proved to be fraudulent inventions, what can be thought of the more doubtful ones? Would to God that Christian princes thought a little on this subject! for it is their duty not to allow their subjects to be deceived, not only by false doctrine, but also by such manifest impositions. [pg 226] They will indeed incur a heavy responsibility for allowing God to be thus mocked when they could prevent it.

I hope, however, that this little treatise will be of general service, by inducing people to think on the subject; for, if we could have the register of all the relics that are to be found in the world, men would clearly see how much they had been blinded, and what darkness and folly overspread the earth.

Let us begin with Jesus Christ, about whose blood there have been fierce disputations; for many maintained that he had no blood except of a miraculous kind; nevertheless the natural blood is exhibited in more than a hundred places. They show at Rochelle a few drops of it, which, as they say, was collected by Nicodemus in his glove. In some places they have phials full of it, as, for instance, at Mantua and elsewhere; in other parts they have cups filled with it, as in the Church of St Eustache at Rome. They did not rest satisfied with simple blood; it was considered necessary to have it mixed with water as it flowed out of his side when pierced on the cross. This is preserved in the Church of St John of the Lateran at Rome.

Now, I appeal to the judgment of every one whether it is not an evident lie to maintain that the blood of Jesus Christ was found, after a lapse of seven or eight hundred years, to be distributed over [pg 227] the whole world, especially as the ancient church makes no mention of it?

Then come the things which have touched the body of our Lord. Firstly, the manger in which he was placed at his birth is shown in the Church of Madonna Maggiore at Rome. In St Paul’s Church there are preserved the swaddling clothes in which he was wrapped, though there are pieces of these clothes at Salvatierra in Spain. His cradle is also at Rome, as well as the shirt his mother made for him. At the Church of St James, in the same city, is shown the altar upon which he was placed at his presentation in the temple, as if there had been many altars, according to the fashion of the Popish churches, where any number of them may be erected. This is what they show relating to the time of Christ’s childhood.

It is, indeed, not worth while seriously to discuss whence they obtained all this trash, so long a time after the death of Jesus Christ. That man must be of little mind who cannot see the folly of it. There is no mention of these things in the Gospels, and they were never heard of in the times of the apostles. About fifty years after the death of Jesus Christ, Jerusalem was destroyed. Many ancient doctors have written since, mentioning fully the occurrences of their time, even to the cross and nails found by Helena, but these absurdities are not [pg 228] alluded to. But what is more, these things were not brought forward at Rome during the days of St Gregory, as may be seen

from his writings; whilst after his death Rome was several times taken, pillaged, and almost destroyed.

Now, what other conclusion can be drawn from these considerations but that all these were inventions for deceiving silly folks? This has even been confessed by some monks and priests, who call them pious frauds, i.e., honest deceits for exciting the devotion of the people.

After these come the relics belonging to the period from the childhood to the death of Jesus Christ, such as the water pots in which Christ changed water into wine at the marriage feast of Cana in Galilee.

One would naturally inquire how they were preserved for so long a time? for it is necessary to bear in mind that they were not discovered until eight hundred or a thousand years after the performance of the miracle.

I cannot tell all the places where these water pots are shown; I only know that they can be seen at Pisa, Ravenna, Cluny, Antwerp, and Salvatierra in Spain.131

[pg 229] At Orleans they have even the wine which was obtained by that miracle, and once a-year the priests there give to those who bring offerings a small spoonful, saying that they shall taste of the very wine made by our Lord at the marriage feast, and its quantity never decreases, the cup being always refilled. I do not know of what date are his shoes, which are preserved in a place at Rome called Sancta Sanctorum, or whether he had worn them in his childhood or manhood; but this is of little moment, for what I have already mentioned sufficiently shows the gross imposition of producing now the shoes of Jesus Christ, which were not possessed by the apostles in their time.

Now, let us proceed to the last supper which Christ had with his apostles. The table is at St John of the Lateran at Rome; some bread made for that occasion at Salvatierra in Spain; and the knife with which the paschal lamb was carved is at Tréves. Now, it is necessary to observe that Christ made that supper in a borrowed room, and on going from thence he left the table, which was not removed by the apostles. Jerusalem was soon afterwards destroyed. How, then, could the table be found after a lapse of eight hundred years?

Moreover, in the early ages tables were made of quite a different shape to those of our days, for people then took their repasts in a lying, not in a sitting posture—a circumstance expressly mentioned [pg 230] in the Gospels. The deceit is therefore quite manifest, without more being added to prove it. The cup in which Christ gave the sacrament of his blood to the apostles is shown at Notre Dame de l'Isle, near Lyons; and there is another in a convent of Augustine monks in the Albigéois;—which is the true one? Charles Sigonius, a celebrated historian of our times, says, in his fourth book on Italy, that Baldwin, second king of Jerusalem, captured in 1101, with the assistance of the Genoese, the town of Cesarea in Syria, and amongst the spoils taken by his allies was a vessel or cup of emerald, which was considered to have been made use of by Jesus Christ at his last supper. "Therefore,"—these are his own words,—"this cup is even now devoutly preserved in the town of Genoa."

According to this account, our Lord must have had a splendid service on that occasion; for there would be as little propriety in drinking from such a costly vessel without having the rest of the service of a similar description, as there is in some Popish pictures where the Virgin Mary is

represented as a woman with her hair hanging over her shoulders, dressed in a gown of cloth of gold, and riding on a donkey which Joseph leads by the halter. We recommend our readers to consider well the Gospel texts relating to this subject. The case of the dish upon which the paschal lamb [pg 231] was placed is still worse, for it is to be found at Rome, at Genoa, and at Arles. If these holy relics be genuine, the customs of that time must have been quite different from ours, because, instead of changing viands as we now do, the dishes were changed for the same food! The same may be said of the towel with which Jesus Christ wiped the feet of the apostles, after having washed them; there is one at Rome at the Lateran, one at Aix-la-Chapelle, and one at St Corneille of Compiegne, with the print of the foot of Judas. Some of these must be false. But we will leave the contending parties to fight out their own battles, until one of them shall establish the reality of his case. It appears to me, however, that trying to make people believe that a towel which Jesus Christ had left in the place where it was used, had in several hundred years afterwards found its way into Germany and Italy, is nothing better than a gross imposture.

I nearly forgot to mention the bread with which five thousand persons were miraculously fed in the desert, and of which a bit is shown at Rome, and another piece at Salvatierra in Spain. The Scripture says that a portion of manna was preserved in remembrance of God having miraculously fed his people in the desert; but the Gospel does not say a word respecting the preservation of the fragments of the five loaves for a similar purpose; [pg 232] the subject is not mentioned in any ancient history, nor does any ecclesiastical writer speak of it. It is therefore very easily perceived that the above-mentioned pieces of bread are of modern manufacture. The principal relics of our Lord are, however, those relating to his passion and death. And the first of them is the cross. I know that it is considered to be a certain fact that it was found by Helena, the mother of the Emperor Constantine; and I know also that some ancient doctors have written about the manner in which the discovery was certified that it was the true cross upon which our Lord had suffered. I think, however, that it was a foolish curiosity, and a silly and inconsiderate devotion, which prompted Helena to seek for that cross. But let us take for granted that it was a laudable act, and that our Lord had declared by a miracle that it was the real cross, and let us consider only the state of the case in our own time.

It is maintained undoubtingly that the cross found by Helena is still at Jerusalem, though this is contradicted by ecclesiastical history, which relates that Helena took a piece of it, and sent it to her son the emperor, who set it upon a column of porphyry, in the centre of a public place or square, whilst the other portion of it was enclosed by her in a silver case, and intrusted to the keeping of the Bishop of Jerusalem; consequently, either the [pg 233] before-mentioned statement or this historical record must be false.

Now let us consider how many relics of the true cross there are in the world. An account of those merely with which I am acquainted would fill a whole volume, for there is not a church, from a cathedral to the most miserable abbey or parish church, that does not contain a piece. Large splinters of it are preserved in various places, as for instance in the Holy Chapel at Paris, whilst at Rome they show a crucifix of considerable size made entirely, they say, from this wood. In short, if we were to collect all these pieces of the true cross exhibited in various parts, they would form a whole ship’s cargo. The Gospel testifies that the cross could be borne by one single individual; how glaring, then, is the audacity now to pretend to display more relics of wood than three hundred men could carry! As an explanation of this, they have invented the tale, that whatever quantity of

wood may be cut off this true cross, its size never decreases. This is, however, such a clumsy and silly imposture, that the most superstitious may see through it. The most absurd stories are also told respecting the manner in which various pieces of the cross were conveyed to the places where they are now shown; thus, for instance, we are informed that they were brought by angels, or had fallen from heaven. By these means they seduce [pg 234] ignorant people into idolatry, for they are not satisfied with deceiving the credulous, by affirming that pieces of common wood are portions of the true cross, but they pretend that it should be worshipped, which is a diabolical doctrine, expressly reproved by St Ambrose as a Pagan superstition.

After the cross comes the inscription, “Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews,” which was placed upon it by order of Pilate. The town of Toulouse claims the possession of this relic, but this is contradicted by Rome, where it is shown in the Church of the Holy Cross. If these relics were properly examined, it would be seen that the claims of both parties are equally absurd.

There is a still greater contradiction concerning the nails of the cross. I shall name those with which I am acquainted, and I think even a child could see how the devil has been mocking the world by depriving it of the power of discernment on this point. If the ancient writers, such as the ecclesiastical historian Theodorite, tell the truth (Historia Tripartita, lib. ii.), Helena caused one of the nails to be set in the helmet of her son Constantine, and two others in the bridle of his horse. St Ambrose, however, relates this differently, saying that one of the nails was set in the crown of Constantine, a second was converted into a bridle-bit for his horse, and the third was retained by Helena. Thus we see that twelve hundred years ago there was a difference of [pg 235] opinion on this subject, and how can we tell what has become of the nails since that time? Now, they boast at Milan that they possess the nail which was in Constantine’s bridle; this claim is, however, opposed by the town of Carpentras. St Ambrose does not say that the nail was attached to the bridle, but that the bit was made from it,—a circumstance which does not agree with the claims of Milan or Carpentras. There is, moreover, one nail in the Church of St Helena at Rome, and another in that of the Holy Cross in the same city; there is a nail at Sienna, and another at Venice. Germany possesses two, at Cologne and Tréves. In France there is one in the Holy Chapel at Paris, another in the same city at the church of the Carmelites, a third is at St Denis, a fourth at Bruges, a fifth at the abbey of Tenaille in the Saintonge, a sixth at Draguignau, the whole number making fourteen shown in different towns and countries.132 Each place exhibiting these nails produces certain proofs to establish the genuineness of its relic, but all these claims may be placed on a par as equally absurd.

Then follows the iron spear with which our Saviour’s side was pierced. It could be but one, and yet by some extraordinary process it seems to have been multiplied into four; for there is one at Rome, one at the Holy Chapel at Paris, one at the [pg 236] abbey of Tenaille in Saintonge, and one at Selve, near Bourdeaux. With regard to the crown of thorns, one must believe that the slips of which it was plaited had been planted, and had produced an abundant growth, for otherwise it is impossible to understand how it could have increased so much. A third part of this crown is preserved at the Holy Chapel at Paris, three thorns at the Church of the Holy Cross, and a number of them at St Eustache in the same city; there are a good many of the thorns at Sienna, one at Vicenza, four at Bourges, three at Besançon, three at Port Royal, and I do not know how many at Salvatierra in Spain, two at St James of Compostella, three at Albi, and one at least in the following places:—Toulouse, Macon, Charroux in Poitiers; at Cleri, St Flour, St Maximim in

Provence, in the abbey of La Salle at St Martin of Noyon, &c.133

It must be observed, that the early church has made no mention of this crown, consequently the root that produced all these relics must have grown a long time after the passion of our Lord. With regard to the coat, woven throughout without a seam, for which the soldiers at the cross cast lots, there is one to be seen at Argenteuil near Paris, and another at Tréves in Germany.

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It is now time to treat of the “sudary,” about which relic they have displayed their folly even more than in the affair of the holy coat; for besides the sudary of Veronica, which is shown in the Church of St Peter at Rome, it is the boast of several towns that they each possess one, as for instance Carcassone, Nice, Aix-la-Chapelle, Tréves, Besançon, without reckoning the fragments to be seen in various places.134

Now, I ask whether those persons were not bereft of their senses who could take long pilgrimages, at much expense and fatigue, in order to see sheets, of the reality of which there were no reasons to believe, but many to doubt; for whoever admitted the reality of one of these sudaries shown in so many places, must have considered the rest as wicked impostures set up to deceive the public by the pretence that they were each the real sheet in which Christ’s body had been wrapped. But it is not only that the exhibitors of this one and the same relic give each other mutually the lie, they are (what is far more important) positively contradicted by the Gospel. The evangelists who speak of all the women who followed our Lord to the place of crucifixion, make not the least mention of that Veronica who wiped his face with a kerchief. It was in truth a most marvellous and remarkable event, worthy of being [pg 238] recorded, that the face of Jesus Christ was then miraculously imprinted upon the cloth, a much more important thing to mention than the mere circumstance that certain women had followed Jesus Christ to the place of crucifixion without meeting with any miracle; and, indeed, had such a miracle taken place, we might consider the evangelists wanting in judgment in not relating the most important facts. The same observations are applicable to the tale of the sheet in which the body of our Lord was wrapped. How is it possible that those sacred historians, who carefully related all the miracles that took place at Christ’s death, should have omitted to mention one so remarkable as the likeness of the body of our Lord remaining on its wrapping sheet? This fact undoubtedly deserved to be recorded. St John, in his Gospel, relates even how St Peter, having entered the sepulchre, saw the linen clothes lying on one side, and the napkin that was about his head on the other; but he does not say that there was a miraculous impression of our Lord’s figure upon these clothes, and it is not to be imagined that he would have omitted to mention such a work of God if there had been any thing of this kind. Another point to be observed is, that the evangelists do not mention that either of the disciples or the faithful women who came to the sepulchre had removed the clothes in question, but, on the contrary, their account seems to imply that they were left [pg 239] there. Now, the sepulchre was guarded by soldiers, and consequently the clothes were in their power. Is it possible that they would have permitted the disciples to take them away as relics, since these very men had been bribed by the Pharisees to perjure themselves by saying that the disciples had stolen the body of our Lord? I shall conclude with a convincing proof of the audacity of the Papists. Wherever the holy sudary is exhibited, they show a large sheet with the full-length likeness of a human body on it. Now, St John’s Gospel, chapter nineteenth, says that Christ was buried according to the manner of the

Jews; and what was their custom? This may be known by their present custom on such occasions, as well as from their books, which describe the ancient ceremony of interment, which was to wrap the body in a sheet, to the shoulders, and to cover the head with a separate cloth. This is precisely how the evangelist described it, saying, that St Peter saw on one side the clothes with which the body had been wrapped, and on the other the napkin from about his head. In short, either St John is a liar, or all those who boast of possessing the holy sudary are convicted of falsehood and deceit.135

[pg 240] In the Church of St John of the Lateran at Rome, they show the reed which the soldiers, mocking Christ in the house of Pilate, placed in his hand, [pg 241] and with which they afterwards smote him on the head. In the Church of the Holy Cross at Rome they show the sponge which was filled with vinegar, and given him to drink during his passion. Now, I would ask, how were these things obtained? They must have been formerly in the hands of infidels. Could they have delivered them up to the apostles to be made relics of? or did they preserve them themselves for future times?

What a sacrilege to make use of the name of Jesus Christ in order to invent such absurd fables! And what can we think of the pieces of silver received by Judas for betraying our Saviour? The Gospel says that he returned this money to the chief [pg 242] priests, who bought with it the potter's field for a burial-place for strangers. By what means were these pieces of silver obtained from the seller of that field? It would be too absurd to maintain that this was done by the disciples of Jesus Christ; and if we are told that they were found a long time afterwards, it will be still less probable, as this money must have passed through many hands. It is therefore necessary to prove, that either the person who sold his field did so for the purpose of obtaining the silver pieces in order to make relics of them; or that he afterwards sold them to the faithful. Nothing of this kind has ever been mentioned by the primitive church.136 To the same class of impositions belong the steps of Pilate's tribunal, which are exhibited in the Church of St John of the Lateran, as well as the column to which Christ was fastened during the flagellation, shown in the Church of St Prasedo in the same city, besides two other pillars, round which he was conducted on his way to Calvary. From whence these columns were taken it is impossible to conjecture. I only know that the Gospel, in relating that Jesus Christ was scourged, does not mention that he was fastened to a column or post. It really appears as if these impostors had no [pg 243] other aim than to promulgate the most fallacious statements, and, indeed, they carried this to such a degree of extravagance, that they were not ashamed to make a relic of the tail of the ass upon which our Lord entered into Jerusalem, which they show at Genoa.137 One really cannot tell which is most wonderful,—the folly and credulity of those who devoutly receive such mockeries, or the boldness of those who put them forth.

It may be said that it is not likely all these relics should be preserved without some sort of correct history being kept of them. To this I reply that such evident falsehoods can never bear the slightest resemblance to truth, how much soever their claims may be supported by the names of Constantine, Louis IX., or of some popes; for they will never be able to prove that Christ was crucified with fourteen nails, or that a whole hedge was used to plait his crown of thorns,—that the iron of the spear with which his side was pierced had given birth to three other similar pieces of iron,—that his coat was multiplied threefold,—and that from his single sudarium a number of others have issued, or that Jesus Christ was buried in a manner different from that described in

the Gospels.

Now, if I were to show a piece of lead, saying, “This piece of gold was given me by a certain [pg 244] prince,” I should be considered a madman, and my words would not transmute the lead into gold.

Thus it is precisely when people say, “This thing was sent over by Godfrey de Bouillon after his conquest of Judea.” Our reason shows us that this is an evident lie. Are we then to be so much imposed upon by words as to resist the evidence of our senses?

Moreover, in order to show how much reliance may be placed on the statements which are given about these relics, we must remark that those considered the principal and most authentic at Rome have been, according to those accounts, brought thither by Vespasian and Titus. Now, this is such a clumsy fabrication,—they might just as well tell us that the Turks went to Jerusalem in order to carry off the true cross to Constantinople!

Vespasian conquered and ravaged a part of Judea before he was elected emperor, and his son Titus completed that conquest by the capture and destruction of Jerusalem. They were both Pagans, and had no more regard for Christ than if he had never existed on earth. Consequently to maintain that Vespasian and Titus carried off the above-mentioned relics to Rome, is even a more flagrant falsehood than the stories about Godfrey of Bouillon and St Louis.

Moreover, it is well known that the times of St Louis were very superstitious. That monarch would [pg 245] have accepted as a relic, and worshipped, any thing that was represented to him as having belonged to the Holy Virgin; and, indeed, King Louis and other crusaders sacrificed their bodies and their goods, as well as a great portion of their country’s substance, merely to bring back with them heaps of foolish trifles, having been taught to consider them as the most precious jewels of the world.

It must be here mentioned, that in Greece, Asia Minor, and other eastern countries, people show, with full assurance, counterpart old rubbish, which those poor idolaters imagine they possess in their own country. How are we to judge between the two contending parties? One party says that these relics were brought from the East; but the Christians now inhabiting those lands maintain that the same relics are still in their possession, and they laugh at our pretensions. How can it be decided betwixt right and wrong without an inquiry, which will never take place? Methinks the best plan is to let the dispute rest as it is, without caring for either side of the question. The last relics pertaining to Jesus Christ are those which relate to the time after his resurrection,—as, for instance, a piece of broiled fish which St Peter presented to him on the sea-shore. This fish must have been strongly spiced, and prepared in some extraordinary manner, to be preserved for so long a period. But, seriously, is it likely that the [pg 246] apostles would have made a relic of a portion of the fish which they had prepared for their dinner? Indeed, I think that whoever will not perceive this to be an open mockery of God, deserves not to be reasoned with.

There is also the miraculous blood which has flowed from several hosts,—as, for instance, in the Churches of St Jean-en-Greve at Paris, at St Jean d’Angeli at Dijon, and in many other places. They show even the penknife with which the host at Paris was pierced by a Jew, and which the poor Parisians hold in as much reverence as the host itself. For this they were well blamed by a Roman Catholic priest, who declared them to be worse than the Jews, for worshipping the knife

with which the precious body of Christ was pierced. I think we may apply this observation to the nails, the spear, and the thorns; and consequently those who worship those instruments used at our Lord's crucifixion are more wicked than the Jews who employed them for that purpose.

There are many other relics belonging to this period of our Lord's history, but it would be tedious to enumerate them all. We shall therefore pass them over, and say a few words respecting his images,—not the common ones made by painters and carvers, but those considered as actual relics, and held in particular veneration. Some of these images are believed to have been made in a miraculous [pg 247] manner, like those shown at Rome in the Church of the blessed Virgin, in Portici, at St John of the Lateran, at Lucca, and other places, and which they pretend were painted by angels. I think it would be ridiculous to undertake a serious refutation of these absurdities, the profession of angels not being that of painters, and our Lord Jesus Christ desired to be known and remembered otherwise than by carnal images.

Eusebius, it is true, relates, in his Ecclesiastical History, that our Lord sent the likeness of his face to King Abgarus;138 but the authenticity of this account has no better proof than that of a fairy tale; yet, supposing it were true, how came this likeness to be found at Rome (out of Abgarus' possession), where people boast to have it now? Eusebius does not mention where it was in his time, but he merely relates the story as having happened a long time before he wrote; we must therefore suppose that this image reappeared after a lapse of many centuries, and came from Edessa to Rome.

They have forged not only images of Christ's body, but also copies of the cross. Thus they pretend at Brescia to have the identical cross which appeared to the Emperor Constantine. This claim [pg 248] is, however, stoutly opposed by the town of Constance, whose inhabitants maintain that the above-mentioned cross is preserved in their town, and not at Brescia. But let us leave the contending parties to settle this point between themselves, though it would be easy enough to show the absurdity of their pretensions, because the cross which, according to some writers, appeared to Constantine, was not a material cross, but simply a vision.

There are several carved images, as well as paintings, of Jesus Christ to which many miracles are attributed. Thus the beard grows on the crucifixes of Salvatierra and Orange, and other images are said to shed tears. These things are too absurd for serious refutation, and yet the deluded world is so infatuated that the majority put as much faith in these as in the Gospels. The Blessed Virgin.—The belief that the body of the Virgin was not interred on earth, but was taken to heaven, has deprived them of all pretext for manufacturing any relics of her remains, which otherwise might have been sufficiently abundant to fill a whole churchyard;139 yet in order to have at least [pg 249] something belonging to her, they sought to indemnify themselves for the absence of other relics with the possession of her hair and her milk. The hair is shown in several churches at Rome, and at Salvatierra in Spain, at Maçon, St Flour, Cluny, Nevers, and in many other towns. With regard to the milk, there is not perhaps a town, a convent, or nunnery, where it is not shown in large or small quantities. Indeed, had the Virgin been a wet-nurse her whole life, or a dairy, she could not have produced more than is shown as hers in various parts.140 How they obtained all this milk they do not say, and it is superfluous here to remark that there is no foundation in the Gospels for these foolish and blasphemous extravagances. The Virgin's wardrobe has produced an abundant store of relics. There is a shirt of hers at Chartres, which has been fully celebrated as an idol, and there

is another at Aix-la-Chapelle.

I do not know how these things could have been obtained, for it is certain that the Apostles and first Christians were not such triflers as to amuse themselves in this way. It is, however, sufficient for us to consider the shape of these articles of dress, in [pg 250] order clearly to see the impudence of their exhibitors. The shirt at Aix-la-Chapelle is a long clerical surplice, shown hanging to a pole, and if the Blessed Virgin had been a giantess, she would still have felt much inconvenience in wearing so large a garment. In the same church they preserve the shoes of St Joseph, which could only fit the foot of a little child or a dwarf. The proverb says that liars need good memories, so as not to contradict their own sayings. This rule was not followed out at Aix-la-Chapelle, otherwise care would have been taken to maintain a better proportion of size between the shoes of the husband and the shirt of the wife. And yet these relics, so devoid of all appearance of truth, are devoutly kissed and venerated by crowds!

I know of only two of her head-dresses; one is at the abbey of St Maximian at Treves, and the other is at Lisio in Italy. They may be considered quite as genuine as the Virgin's girdle at Prato and at Montserrat, as her slipper at St Jaqueme, and as her shoe at St Flour.

Now, those who are at all conversant with this subject well know that it was not the custom of the primitive church to collect shoes and stockings, &c., for relics, and also that for five hundred years after the death of the Virgin Mary there was never any talk of such things. It really seems as if these well-known facts would be sufficient to prove the absurdity of all these relics of the Virgin; but her worshippers, not [pg 251] merely satisfied with the articles I have just enumerated, endeavour to ascribe to her a love of dress and finery. A comb of hers is shown in the church of St Martin at Rome, and another in that of St Jean-le-Grand at Besançon, besides others that may be shown elsewhere. Now, if this be not a mockery of the Virgin, I do not know what that word implies. They have not forgotten her wedding-ring, which is shown at Perusa. As it is now the custom for a husband to present his bride with a ring at the marriage ceremony, they imagined it to be so in the time of the Virgin, and in her country, consequently, they show a splendid ring as the one used at her wedding, forgetting the state of poverty in which she lived.

Rome possesses four of her gowns, in the churches of St John of the Lateran, St Barbara, St Maria supra Minervam, and St Blasius; whilst at Salvatierra they boast of having fragments of a gown belonging to her.

I have forgotten the names of other towns where similar relics are shown.141

It is sufficient to examine the materials of these vestments in order to see the falsehood of their claims, for their exhibitors give to the Virgin the same sort of robes with which they dress up her images.

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It remains now to speak of her images—not of the common ones, of which there are so many everywhere, but of those which are distinguished from the rest by some particular claims. Thus at Rome there are four, which they pretend were painted by St Luke the evangelist. The principal one is in the church of St Augustine, which they say St Luke had painted for his own use; he always carried it about his person, and it was buried with him. Now, is it not a downright blasphemy to turn

thus a holy evangelist into a perfect idolater? And what reason had they for believing that St Luke was a painter? St Paul calls him a physician. I do not know from whence they obtained this notion; but supposing it was so, is it possible to admit that he would have painted the Virgin for the same purpose as the Pagans did a Jupiter, a Venus, or any other idol?

It was not the custom of the primitive Christians to have images, and it only became so a long while afterwards, when the Church was corrupted by superstition. Moreover, the whole world is filled with representations of the Blessed Virgin, which are said to have been painted by the same evangelist.142

I shall not say any thing about St Joseph, whose shoes at Aix-la-Chapelle I have already mentioned, [pg 253] and whose other similar relics are preserved in many places.143

ST MICHAEL.

It may be supposed that I am joking when I speak of the relics of an angel, considering how absurd and ridiculous it is to do so, yet, although the hypocrites certainly know this well, they have made use of the name of St Michael to delude the ignorant and foolish; for they show at Carcassone his falchion, which looks like a child's dagger, and his shield, which is no larger than the knob of a bridle. Is it possible for man or woman to exist who can believe such mockery?144 It is indeed a blasphemy, under a garb of devotion, against God and his angels. The exhibitors of the above-mentioned relics endeavour to support their imposture by the testimony of Scripture that the archangel Michael combated with Satan; but if he was conquered by the sword, it would at least have been one of a different size and calibre than the toy to which I have alluded. People must, however, be very silly to believe that the war waged by angels and the faithful against the devil is a carnal [pg 254] encounter, fought with material weapons. But as I said before, at the commencement of this treatise, the world has rightly deserved to be led astray into such absurdities, for having lusted after idols, and worshipped them instead of the living God.

ST JOHN THE BAPTIST.

Proceeding in due order, we must now treat of St John the Baptist, who, according to the evangelical history—i.e., God's Word of Truth—was, after being beheaded, buried by his disciples. Theodoret, the eminent chronicler of the Church, relates that his grave was at Sebaste, a town in Syria, and that some time after his burial the grave was opened by the Pagans, who burnt his bones and scattered their ashes in the air. Eusebius adds, however, that some men from Jerusalem, who were present on the occasion, secretly took a little of these ashes and carried them to Antioch, where they were buried in a wall by Athanasius. With regard to his head, Sosomen, another chronicler, relates that it was carried to Constantinople by the Emperor Theodosius; therefore, according to these ancient historians, the whole body of John the Baptist was burnt with the exception of his head, and the ashes were all lost excepting the small portion secretly taken away by the hermits of [pg 255] Jerusalem. Now, let us see what remains of the head are extant. The face is shown at Amiens, and the mask which is there exhibited has a mark above the eye, caused, they say, by the thrust of a knife, made by Herodias. Amiens' claim to this relic is, however, disputed by the inhabitants of St John d'Angeli, who show another face of St John. With regard to the rest of the head, its top, from the forehead to the back part, was at Rhodes, and I suppose must now be at Malta, at least the knights boast that the Turks had

restored it to them. The back of the head is at St John's Church at Nemours, the brains at Nogent le Rotrou, a part of the head is at St Jean Maximin, a jaw is at Besançon, a portion of a jaw is at St John of the Lateran, and a part of the ear at St Flour in Auvergne. All this does not prevent Salvatierra from possessing the forehead and hair; at Noyon they have a lock of the hair, which is considered to be very authentic, as well as that at Lucca, and many other places.

Yet in order to complete this collection, we must go to the monastery of St Sylvester at Rome, where the whole and real head of St John the Baptist will be shown to us.

Poets tell us a legend about a king of Spain who had three heads; if our manufacturers of relics could say the same of St John the Baptist, it would greatly assist their lies; but as such a fable [pg 256] does not exist, how are they to get out of this dilemma?145

I shall not press them too hard by inquiring how could this head be so divided and distributed, or how have they procured it from Constantinople? I shall merely observe, that either St John must have been a miracle, or that those who possess so many parts of his head are a set of the most audacious cheats.

What is more than this, they boast at Sienna of possessing an arm of that saint, which is contrary, as we have already said, to the statements of all the ancient historians; and yet this fraud is not only suffered, but even approved of, for in the kingdom of Antichrist nothing is too bad which can serve to keep people in a state of superstition.

Another fable has been invented respecting St John the Baptist. When his body was burnt, they say that the finger with which he had pointed out our Lord Jesus Christ had remained whole and uninjured by the fire. Now this story may easily be refuted by the ancient historians, because Eusebius and Theodoret distinctly state that the body had already become a skeleton when the Pagans burnt [pg 257] it; and they certainly would not have omitted the relation of such a miracle in their histories if there had been any foundation for it, having been but too eager to narrate such events even as are quite frivolous. But supposing that this miracle had really taken place, let us seek where this finger is now to be found. There is one at Besançon in the Church of St John the Great, a second at Toulouse, a third at Lyons, a fourth at Florence, and a fifth at St Jean des Aventures, near Maçon. Now I request my readers to examine this subject, and to judge for themselves whether they can believe, that whilst St John's finger, which, according to their own tradition, is the only remainder of his body, is at Florence, five other fingers can be found in sundry other places, or, in short, that six are one, and one is six. I speak, however, only of those that have come to my knowledge; but I make no doubt, if a careful inquiry were made, that one might discover half a dozen more of St John's fingers, and many pieces of his head, besides those I have enumerated.146

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There are many relics of another kind shown as having belonged to St John the Baptist; as, for instance, one of his shoes is preserved in the Church of the Carthusians at Paris. It was stolen about twelve years ago; but it was very soon replaced by that sort of miracle never likely to cease so long as there are shoemakers in the world. At St John of the Lateran, at Rome, they boast of having his haircloth mentioned in the Gospels. The Gospel speaks of his raiment of camel's hair, but they endeavour to convert it into a horse-hair garment.147

They have also at the same church the altar before which he prayed in the desert, as if altars were in those days erected on every occasion and in every place. I wonder, indeed, that they have not ascribed to him the saying of the mass. At Avignon they show the sword with which he was beheaded, and at Aix-la-Chapelle the sheet which was spread under him at that time. Is it not absurd to suppose that the executioner would spread a sheet under one whom he was about to kill? But admitting that this should be the case, how have they obtained these two objects? Is it likely [pg 259] that the man who put him to death, whether a soldier or executioner, should have given away his sword and the sheet we have mentioned, in order to be converted into relics?

ST PETER AND ST PAUL.

It is now time to speak of the apostles, and I shall begin with St Peter and St Paul. Their bodies are at Rome; one part of them in the church of St Peter, and the other in that of St Paul. We are told that St Sylvester weighed their bodies in order to divide them into equal parts. Both their heads are preserved also at Rome in St John of the Lateran. Besides the two bodies we have just mentioned, many of their bones are to be found elsewhere, as at Poitiers they have St Peter's jaw and beard. At Treves there are several bones of the two apostles. At Argenton in Berri they have St Paul's shoulder, and in almost every church dedicated to these apostles there will be found some of their relics. At the commencement of this treatise I mentioned that St Peter's brains, which were shown in this town (Geneva), were found on examination to be a piece of pumice stone, and I have no doubt that many of the bones considered to belong to these two apostles would turn out to be the bones of some animal. At Salvatierra they have St Peter's slipper. I do [pg 260] not know what shape it is, or of what material it is made; but I conclude it to be similar to the slippers of the same apostle shown at Poitiers, and which are made of satin embroidered with gold. It would seem as if they had made him thus smart after his death as a compensation for the poverty which he suffered during his lifetime. Their bishops look now so showy in their pontificals, that no doubt it would be thought derogatory to the apostles' dignity if they were not dressed out in the same style. They take, therefore, figures which they gild and ornament all over, and name them as St Peter or St Paul, forgetting that it is well known what was the condition of these apostles whilst in this life, and that they wore the raiments of the poor.

They show also at Rome St Peter's episcopal chair and his chasuble, as if the bishops of that age had thrones to sit upon. The bishops then were engaged in teaching, consoling, and exhorting their flocks both in public and private, setting them an example of true humility, but not teaching them to set up idols, as is done by those of our day. With regard to his chasuble, I must say that it was not then the custom to put on disguises, for farces were not at that time performed in the churches as they are now. Thus, to prove that St Peter had a chasuble, it is necessary to show in the first place that he had played the mountebank, as the priests do now whenever they intend to serve God.

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It is, however, no wonder that they have given him a chasuble since they have assigned an altar to him, there being no more truthful foundation for the one than for the other. It is well known what kind of mass was said at that time. The apostles simply celebrated the Lord's Supper, and this requires no altar; but as to the celebration of the mass, it was then not heard of, nor was it practised for a long time afterwards.148 It is, therefore, evident that those who invented all these

relics never expected contradiction, or they would not have devised such audacious falsehoods. The authenticity of St Peter's altar at Rome (which I have just mentioned) is denied by Pisa, that town pretending to possess the real one. The least objectionable of St Peter's relics is undoubtedly his staff, it being most probable that he had made use of one during his travels, but unfortunately there are two of them at Cologne and Treves, each town claiming exclusive possession of the identical one.149

[pg 262] THE OTHER APOSTLES.

We shall speak of the rest of the apostles together, in order to get quicker over the matter, and we will relate, in the first place, where their whole bodies are to be found, that our readers, by comparison, may be able to form their own opinions on the subject. All know that the town of Toulouse boasts of possessing the bodies of six, namely, St James the Major (brother of St John), St Andrew, St James the Minor, St Philip, St Simeon, and St Jude. At Padua they have the body of St Matthias, at Salerno that of St Matthew, at Orconna that of St Thomas, in the kingdom of Naples that of St Bartholomew.

Now, let us reckon up those apostles who possess two or three bodies. St Andrew has a duplicate at Amalfi, St Philip and St James the Minor both have duplicates at Rome, ad sanctos Apostolos, St Simeon and St Jude the same in St Peter's Church. St Bartholomew enjoys an equal privilege at Rome, in the church bearing his name. Here we have enumerated six of them, each provided with two bodies, and St Bartholomew has an additional skin into the bargain, which is shown at Pisa.150 St Matthew, however, outrivals them all, for besides the [pg 263] body at Padua, which we have before mentioned, he has another at Rome in the church of St Maria Maggiore, a third at Treves, and an additional arm at Rome.151

It is true that the bits and scraps of St Andrew's body, scattered in various places, counterbalance, in some measure, the superiority of St Matthias; for he has at Rome, in St Peter's Church, a head, and a shoulder in that of St Chrysostom, an arm at St Esprit, a rib at St Eustache, I do not know how many bones at St Blaise, and a foot at Aix in Provence.

Now, as St Bartholomew has left his skin at Pisa, so he has left there a hand; at Treves he has also some bones, of which I forget the number; at Frejus a finger, and at Rome there are other of his bones; so that, after all, he is not the poorest of the apostles, others not having such a number of relics. St Matthew and St Thomas are the poorest of all. The first has only, besides his body at Salerno, which we have mentioned, some bones at Treves, an arm in the church of St Maria at Rome, and in that of St Nicolas his head; though it may be that other of his [pg 264] relics may have escaped my knowledge, which would be no wonder, for who is not confused with this ocean of impostures?152 As they pretend, in their tales, that the body of St John the Evangelist disappeared immediately after it was deposited in the grave, so they cannot produce any of his bones, and they therefore sought for a compensation amongst his clothing, &c. Thus they show at Bologna the cup from which he was forced to drink poison by order of the Emperor Domitian. Probably owing to some wonderful process of alchemy, the same cup exists also in the church of St John of the Lateran at Rome.

They have also his coat, and the chain with which he was bound when brought from Ephesus to Rome, as well as the oratory at which he used to pray when in prison.153

ST ANNA.

We must now hurry on, or we shall never quit this labyrinth. We will, therefore, only briefly mention the relics of those saints who were our Lord's contemporaries, and then proceed to those of the martyrs, [pg 265]& c., leaving our readers to form their own conclusions from these brief sketches.

St Anne, the mother of the Blessed Virgin, has a whole body at Apt in Provence, and another at Notre Dame de l'Isle at Lyons. She has a head at Treves also, a second at Duren near Cologne, and a third at a town called after her name in Thuringhia. I shall not speak of her other relics shown in more than a hundred different places. I remember that I myself kissed one of her relics, kept at the abbey of Orcamps near Noyon, on the occasion of a grand festival held in its honour.

LAZARUS, MARY MAGDALENE, ETC.

Lazarus has, to my knowledge, three bodies, at Marseilles, Autun, and Avalon. A protracted lawsuit took place between the two last-named towns concerning the validity of their respective claims to the possession of the real body of this saint. Yet after an immense expense, both parties may be said to have gained their suit, for neither forfeited its title to ownership. With regard to Mary Magdalene, she owns but two bodies, one at Auxerre, and another of very great celebrity, with its head detached, at St Maximin, in Provence. Of their numerous relics scattered over the world I shall not speak. I would merely inquire whether [pg 266] Lazarus and his sisters ever went to preach in France; for those who have read the accounts given by ancient historians of those times cannot fail to be convinced of the folly of this fable.154 ST LONGINUS, AND THE THREE WISE MEN, OR KINGS. The individual who pierced the side of our Lord on the cross has been canonised under the name of St Longinus, and after having thus baptized him, they have bestowed upon him two bodies, one of which is at Mantua, and the other at Notre Dame de l'Isle at Lyons.155 The same has been done with the wise men who came to worship our Lord at the nativity. In the first place they settled their number, telling us that there were three. Now the Gospel does not mention [pg 267] how many were present, and some eminent ecclesiastical writers have maintained their number to have been fourteen, as mentioned for instance in that imperfect commentary on St Matthew which is ascribed to Chrysostom.

Moreover, the Gospel calls them wise men, but they have elevated them to the dignity of kings, without bestowing on them, however, either kingdoms or subjects. Finally, they have been baptized under the names of Balthazar, Melchior, and Gaspar. Now, supposing we concede to them these fables, frivolous as they are, it is certain that the wise men returned to the east, for the Gospel informs us of this, and we may conclude that they died in their native land, there being no reason for thinking otherwise. Now, who transferred their bodies to the west, for the purpose of preserving them as relics? It would be quite ridiculous, however, for me to attempt seriously to refute such a palpable imposture. Let Cologne and Milan, both of which towns pretend to possess relics of these wise men, or kings, decide this question between themselves.156

ST DIONYSIUS.

St Dionysius is considered to be one of the most celebrated of ancient martyrs, as a disciple of the [pg 268] apostles, and as the Evangelist of France. Occupying such high rank, it is therefore very natural that his relics should be so liberally dispersed; his whole bodies are, however, only preserved at the Abbey of St Dénis in France, and at Ratisbon in Germany. About a century ago

Ratisbon instituted a lawsuit at Rome to prove that the body in its possession was truly that of the saint, and the justice of the claim was established by a decision of the Papal Court, delivered in the presence of the French Ambassador. And yet, any one so bold as to dare to assert at St Dénis that theirs was not the real body would run the risk of being stoned for blasphemy; whilst those who oppose the claim of Ratisbon are considered as heretics, rebellious to the decision of the Holy See.157

ST STEPHEN. The whole body of St Stephen is at Rome, his head is at Arles, and his bones are in more than three hundred places; and the Papists, as if to show themselves to be the partisans of those who murdered him, have canonized the stones with which he was killed.

It may be asked how these stones were obtained, but to my mind this would be a foolish question, as [pg 269] stones may be picked up anywhere, without incurring any trouble or expense in their transport. These stones are shown at Florence, at the convent of the Augustine monks at Arles, and at Vigan in Languedoc, &c.

Whoever will close his eyes and allow his understanding to be set aside, may believe that these are the identical stones with which St Stephen suffered martyrdom, but whoever will exert his reason a little cannot but laugh at this imposition. The Carmelite monks of Poitiers discovered some of these stones only fourteen years ago, to which they ascribed the virtue of assisting women in the pains of travail; but the Dominican monks, from whom a rib of St Margarita which possessed the same virtue had been stolen, were very indignant, and raised a great outcry at the deception practised by the Carmelites, but the latter gained the body by firmly maintaining their rights. THE HOLY INNOCENTS.

It was not at first my intention to mention the Holy Innocents, for if I were to enumerate a whole army of their relics, it might always be said to me in reply that history is not contradicted by that, as their number has never been mentioned to us. I shall not dwell, therefore, upon their multitude, merely observing that they are to be found in every part of [pg 270] the world. I would ask, however, how it came to pass that their graves were discovered so long after their massacre, since they were not considered as saints when their murder by Herod took place? And then, how were these numerous bodies conveyed to the many places where they are now to be seen? To these questions but one answer can be given—“All this occurred five or six hundred years after their death.” How can any but idiots believe such things? But supposing even that some of their bodies had really been discovered, how came so large a number of them to be transported to France, Italy, and Germany, and to be distributed amongst so many towns situated so far apart? This can only be a wholesale deception.

ST GERVASIUS AND ST PROTASIUS. The sepulchres of these two saints were discovered at Milan in the time of St Ambrose, as testified by him. This fact is confirmed also by the evidence of St Jerome, St Augustine, and several others; consequently Milan maintains its possession of the real bodies of these saints. Nevertheless, they are likewise to be seen at Brissach in Germany, and in the Church of St Peter at Besançon, besides an immense number of different parts of their bodies scattered [pg 271] throughout the land, so that each of them must have had at least four bodies.

ST SEBASTIAN. This saint, from the wonderful power his remains possessed of curing the plague, was put into requisition and more sought after than many of his brother saints, and no doubt this popularity was the cause of his body being quadrupled. One body is in the church of St Lawrence at Rome; a second is at Soissons; the third at Piligny, near Nantes, and the fourth at his birth-place, near Narbonne. Besides these, he has two heads at St Peter's at Rome, and at the Dominican church at Toulouse. The heads are, however, empty, if we are to believe the Franciscan monks of Angers, as they pretend to possess the saint's brains. The Dominicans of Angers possess one of his arms, another is at St Sternin, at Toulouse, a third at Case Dieu in Auvergne, and a fourth at Montbrisson. We will pass over the small fragments of his body, which may be seen in so many churches. They did not rest satisfied with this multiplication of his body and separate limbs, but they converted into relics the arrows with which he was killed. One of these is shown at Lambesc in Provence, another is in the Augustine convent at Poitiers, and there are many others in different towns.

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ST ANTHONY. A similar reason has bestowed on St Anthony the advantage of multiplication of his remains, he being considered as an irrascible saint, burning up all those who incur his displeasure; and this belief caused him to be dreaded and reverenced. Fear creating devotion, and producing also a universal desire to possess his relics, on account of the profits and advantages to be derived therefrom, Arles therefore had a long and severe contest with Vienne (in France) respecting the validity of the bodies of this saint possessed by each of these towns. The issue was the same as in other similar disputes, i.e., matters remained in the same state of confusion as before; for if the truth had been established, both parties would have lost their cause.

Besides these two bodies, St Anthony has a knee in the Church of the Augustines at Albi, and several other limbs at Bourg, Maçon, Ouroux, Chalons, Besançon, &c.

Such are the advantages of being an object of dread and fear, otherwise this saint might possibly have been permitted to remain quietly in his grave.158

[pg 273] ST PETRONILLA—ST HELENA—ST URSULA—AND THE ELEVEN THOUSAND VIRGINS.

I must not forget to mention St Petronilla, St Peter's daughter, who has a whole body at Rome, in the church dedicated to her father, besides other relics in that of St Barbara. This does not, however, prevent her from owning another body in the Dominican convent at Mans, which is greatly venerated for the virtue it possesses of curing fevers. St Helena has not been so liberally provided for. Besides her body at Venice, she has but an extra head in the Church of St Gereon at Cologne.159 St Ursula beats her hollow in this respect; for she has a whole body at St Jean d'Angely, and a head into the bargain at Cologne, besides three separate limbs, and various fragments at Mans, Tours, and Bergerat. The companions of this saint are called the eleven thousand virgins, and although this is a respectable number, yet it is still too small, considering that the remains of these virgins are to be seen everywhere; for besides [pg 274] there being about one hundred cart-loads of their bones at Cologne, there is hardly a town where one or more churches have not some relics of these numerous saints.160

If I was to enumerate all the minor saints I should enter a labyrinth without possibility of egress. I shall, therefore, rest satisfied with giving a few examples, leaving my readers to judge from these of the rest. For instance, there are two churches at Poitiers, one attached to the convent of Selle, and the other dedicated to the saint in question, between which a great dispute has been going on as to the possession of the real body of St Hilarion. The lawsuit upon this point has been suspended for an indefinite time, and meanwhile the idolaters worship two bodies of one and the same individual.

St Honoratus has a body at Arles, and another at the island of Lerins, near Antibes.

[pg 275] St Giles has a body at Toulouse, and a second in a town bearing his name in Languedoc.

I could quote an infinite number of similar cases. I think that the exhibitors of these relics should at least have made some arrangement amongst themselves the better to conceal their barefaced impostures. Something of this sort was managed between the canons of Trêves and those of Liége about St Lambert's head. They compounded, for a sum of money, not to show publicly the head in their possession, in order to avoid the natural surprise of the public at the same relic being seen in two different towns situated so near to each other. But, as I have already remarked at the commencement of this treatise, the inventors of these frauds never imagined any one could be found bold enough to speak out and expose their deceptions.

It may be asked, how it came to pass that these manufacturers of relics, having collected and forged without any reason all that their imaginations could fancy in any way, could have omitted subjects pertaining to the Old Testament? The only reply I can give to this query is, that they looked with contempt on those subjects, from which they did not anticipate any considerable gain.

Still they have not entirely despised them, for they pretend to have the bones of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the church of St Maria supra Minervam, at Rome. They also boast of possessing, at St John [pg 276] of the Lateran, the ark of alliance, with Aaron's rod, though the same rod is also at the Holy Chapel in Paris, whilst some pieces of it are preserved at Salvatierra. Moreover, at Bordeaux they maintain that St Martial's rod, which is exhibited in the church of St Severin, is no other than that of Aaron. It seems, indeed, that they would wish with this rod to perform another miracle; formerly it was turned into a serpent, whereas now they would convert it into three different rods! It is very likely that they may have other relics of objects mentioned in the Old Testament, but the few we have here alluded to show that they have treated them much in the same style as those belonging to Christian times.

I now beg to remind my readers of what I mentioned at the beginning of this work, that I have had no commissioners for visiting the numerous churches of the different countries enumerated by me, nor must my description be taken for a register or inventory of all that can be discovered respecting relics. I have mentioned about half-a-dozen towns in Germany, but three in Spain I think, about fifteen in Italy, and between thirty and forty in France, and even of these few examples I have not related all that I might concerning them. Now, let us only imagine what a mass might be raised out of all the relics which are to be seen in Christendom, if they were collected and arranged together in proper order. I speak, however, only of those countries which [pg 277] we know and frequent; for it is most important to observe that all the relics belonging to Christ and the apostles which are displayed in the west are also to be seen in Greece, Asia, and all other

countries where Christian Churches are in existence. Now, what are we to say when the Eastern Christians assert their claims?

If we contradict them, alleging on our part that the body of such a saint was brought to Europe by merchants, that of another by monks, that of a third by a bishop, that a part of the crown of thorns was sent to a king of France by an emperor of Constantinople, and another part was carried off in time of war, and so on of every object of the kind, they would shake their heads, and laugh at us! How are such differences to be settled? In every doubtful case we can only judge by conjecture, and, in following this out, the adherents of the Eastern Churches are sure of success, because their claims are more probable than those of their opponents. It is indeed a difficult point for the defenders of relics to settle.

Finally, I beseech and exhort, in the name of God, all my readers to listen to the truth now clearly displayed before them, and to believe that, by God's especial providence, those who have endeavoured thus to lead mankind astray have been rendered so blind and careless as to neglect a proper concealment of their deceptions, but that, like Midianites having their eyes put out, they run one against another, for [pg 278] we all know that they quarrel amongst themselves, and mutually injure each other. Whoever is not wilfully prejudiced against all reason must certainly be convinced that the worship of relics, whether true or false, is an abominable idolatry; yet should not this even be the case with him, he must nevertheless perceive the evident imposture, and whatever may have been his former devotion to relics, he must lose all courage in kissing such objects, and become entirely disgusted with them.

I repeat what I said at the commencement of this treatise, that it would be most important to abolish from amongst us Christians this pagan superstition of canonising relics, either of Christ or of his saints, in order to make idols of them; for this is a defilement and an impurity which should never be suffered in the Church. We have already proved that it is so by arguments, and also from the evidence of Scripture. Let those who are not yet satisfied look to the practices of the ancient fathers, and conform to their examples. There are many holy patriarchs, many prophets, many holy kings, and other saints mentioned in the Old Testament. God ordained at that time the observance of more ceremonies than are needed now. Even funerals were performed then with more display than at present, in order to represent symbolically the glorious resurrection, especially as it had not then been so clearly revealed by the Word of God as it is to ourselves.

[pg 279] Do we ever read in that book that these saints were taken from their sepulchres as idols? Was Abraham, the father of the faithful, ever thus raised? Was Sarah ever removed from her grave? Were they not left in peace, with the remains of all other saints? But what is more conclusive, was not the body of Moses concealed by God's will, in such a manner that it never has been or can be discovered? Has not the devil contended concerning it with the angels, as St Jude says? Now, what was our Lord's reason for removing that body from the sight of men, and why should the devil desire to have it exhibited to them? It is generally admitted that God wished to put away from his people of Israel all temptation to commit idolatry, and that Satan desired its introduction amongst them.

It may be said, however, that the Israelites were inclined to superstition. I ask, how stands the case now with ourselves? Is there not, without comparison, more perversity in this respect amongst Christians than there ever was amongst the Jews of old?

Let us call to mind the practice of the early church. It is true that the first Christians were always anxious to get possession of the bodies of the martyrs, lest they might be devoured by beasts or birds of prey, and decently to bury them, as we read was the case with the bodies of St John the Baptist and St Stephen. This solicitude was shown, however, in order to inter them in their graves, and there to leave [pg 280] them until the day of the resurrection; but they did not expose these remains to the sight of men for their adoration. The unfortunate custom of canonising saints was not introduced into the Church until it had become perverted and profaned, partly by the folly and cupidity of its prelates and pastors, and partly because they were unable to restrain this innovation, as people were seeking to deceive themselves by giving their hearts to puerile follies, instead of to the true worship of God. If we wish, in a direct manner, to correct this abuse, it is necessary to abolish entirely what has been so badly commenced and established against all reason. But if it is impossible to arrive at once at such a clear comprehension of this abuse, let people at least have their eyes opened to discern what the relics are which are presented for their adoration. This is indeed no difficulty for those who will only exercise their reason, for amongst the numerous evident impostures we have here mentioned, where may we find one real relic of which we may feel certain that it is such as is represented?

Moreover, all those that I have enumerated are nothing comparatively to the remainder yet untold by me. Even whilst this treatise is in the press, I have been informed of many relics not mentioned in it; and if a general visitation of all existing relics were possible, a hundredfold more discoveries would be made.

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I remember when I was a little boy what took place in our parish. On the festival day of St Stephen, the images of the tyrants who stoned him (for they are thus called by the common people) were adorned as much as that of the saint himself. Many women, seeing these tyrants thus decked out, mistook them for the saint’s companions, and offered the homage of candles to each of them. Mistakes of this kind must frequently happen to the worshippers of relics, for there is such confusion amongst them that it is quite impossible to worship the bones of a martyr without danger of rendering such honours by mistake to the bones of some brigand or thief, or even to those of a horse, a dog, or a donkey. And it is equally impossible to adore the ring, the comb, the girdle of the Virgin Mary, without the risk of adoring instead objects which may have belonged to some abandoned person.

Now, those who fall into this error must do so willingly, as no one can from henceforth plead ignorance on the subject as their excuse.161

02.10. Postscript.

Postscript. The following extract from the Ecclesiastical Gazette of Vienna has been reproduced in an Extraordinary Supplement of the Allgemeine Zeitung, of Augsburg, for the 11th May 1854. I subjoin a translation of it in a postscript, as an additional evidence of the persecution to which the Greek Church united with Rome has been subjected in Russia, and which I mentioned on page 161 of this work:—

“Spies appointed for this especial purpose transmitted, in their reports to the Government, lists of such individuals as were suspected to be Catholics at heart; and if all the exaggerated accounts which had been made of the Spanish Inquisition were true, they would be thrown into the shade by the proceedings that were adopted against the above-mentioned individuals. And indeed it is an averred fact, that many of them fell a victim to starvation, blows, and other cruel treatment. The Catholic inhabitants of Worodzkow were forced with stripes, by the Governor [pg 283] and his satellites, to sign a voluntary petition, expressing their ardent wish to be received into the pale of the orthodox Russian Church. The names of those who could not write were signed by others, and whoever showed the slightest manifestation of his desire to remain a Catholic, after having performed this voluntary act, was treated as one guilty of high treason. The same proceedings as at Worodzkow were adopted in a hundred other places, whose voluntary petitions were obtained with bloody stripes of the knout. The unfortunate petitioners were, in order to perform this operation, dragged from their homes, sometimes to a distance of 18 or 20 versts (1-½ verst to an English mile), and those who steadfastly refused to sign were treated by the Russian papas with the utmost cruelty and indignity. They were put into irons, barred up in cold prisons without any fire, starved, thrown into large tubs filled with an icy and stinking water, and most mercilessly beaten, so that many, in order to escape from such torments, signed the voluntary petition, with hearts as bleeding as their bodies. Many succumbed under these fearful persecutions, which were not much inferior to that which the Christians had suffered under the reign of Diocletian. The Papa Stratanovich extorted the signatures made by the feverishly agitated hands of the clerical victims, whilst his lay associate, Waimainich Zokalinski, performed the same [pg 284] charitable office to other unfortunate individuals. Some of these miserable persons were reduced by starvation and every kind of ill-treatment to such a condition, that they were almost unconscious of what they did in signing the voluntary petitions for the reception into the pale of the Russian Church, all of which were obtained by more or less similar means.

“It appears from a great mass of documentary evidence, containing the names of localities and persons, that the proselytism of 1841 was carried out in the following manner:—Military authorities, and Russian papas or priests, visited Catholic villages, and having called together the Catholic peasantry and landowners of the neighbourhood, declared that they must join the Russian Church, throwing into prison those who resisted the summons. In the most part of cases, a petition for this object was signed by some hired wretches in the name of all the community, of whom many often knew nothing about this business, but when they behaved as Catholics, they were punished, as guilty of high treason.” The Allgemeine Zeitung states, in giving this extract from

the Ecclesiastical Gazette of Vienna, that this periodical contains many well-authenticated cases of religious persecution against the Roman Catholics of Russia; and I have little doubt that if the Protestants of Western Europe had taken as much pains to ascertain and denounce the persecution of their [pg 285] brethren in the Baltic provinces of Russia, which I have mentioned on p. 162, as is done, be it said to their great honour, by the Roman Catholics, they would find many acts of persecution directed against the above-mentioned Protestants, as flagrant as those which have just been described

Chapter 25

03.01. A Treatise on the Sacraments

A TREATISE ON THE SACRAMENTS OF

BAPTISM AND THE LORD’S SUPPER. BY JOHN CALVIN.

EDINBURGH:

JOHN JOHNSTONE, HUNTER SQUARE, (SUCCESSOR TO WAUGH AND INNES;) JAMES NISBET AND CO., LONDON.

MDCCCXXXVII.

03.02. the Sacraments

A TREATISE ON THE SACRAMENTS.

1. The Definition of a Sacrament. — Beside the preaching of the Gospel, another help of like sort is in the sacraments; of which to have some certain doctrine taught, is much behoveful for us, whereby we may learn both to what end they were ordained, and what is now the use of them. First, it is meet to consider what is a sacrament. It seemeth to me that this shall be a plain and proper definition, if we say that it is an outward sign, wherewith the Lord sealeth to our consciences the promises of his good will toward us, to sustain the weakness of our faith; and we again, on our behalfs, do testify our godliness toward him, as well before him and the angels, as before men. We may also with more briefness define it otherwise, as to call it a testimony of God's favor toward us, confirmed by an outward sign, with a mutual testifying of our godliness toward him. Whethersoever you choose of these definitions, it differeth nothing in sense from that definition of Augustine, which teacheth that a sacrament is a visible sign of a holy thing, or a visible form of invisible grace; but it doth better and more certainly express the thing itself. For whereas in that briefness there is some darkness, wherein many of the unskilfuller sort are deceived: I thought good in more words to give a fuller sentence, that there should remain no doubt.

2. The Ancient use of the Word Sacrament. — For what reason the old writers used this word in that sense, it is not hard to see. For so oft as the old translator would render in Latin this Greek word mysterion, mystery, specially when divine matters were treated of, he translated it sacrament. So to the Ephesians, that he might make known unto us the sacrament of his will. Ephesians 1:9; Ephesians 3:2. Again, if yet ye have heard the distribution of the grace of God, which is given me to youward, because, according to revelation, the sacrament was made known to me. To the Colossians, the mystery which hath been hidden from ages and generations^ but now is manifested to his saints, to whom the Lord would make known the riclies of this sacrament, &c. Colossians 1:26. Again, to Timothy, a great sacrament of godliness: God is openly showed in the flesh. 1 Timothy 3:16. He would not say a secret, least he should seem to say somewhat "under the greatness of the things. Therefore, he hath put sacrament instead of secret, but of a holy thing. In that signification it is sometimes found among the ecclesiastical writers. And it is well enough known, that those which in Latin are called sacraments, in Greek are mysteries; which expressing of one thing in two several words endeth all contention. And hereby it came to pass, that it was drawn to those signs which had a reverend representation of high and spiritual things. Which Augustine also noteth in one place. It were long, saith he, to dispute of the diversity of signs, which, when they pertain to divine things, are called sacraments. (Epi. 5 ad Marcel.)

3. Sacraments ordained of God as Seals of his Promises, not that they but we, stood in need of confirmation by such means. — Now, of this definition which we have set, we understand that sacrament is never without a promise going before it, but rather is adjoined as a certain addition annexed to it, to this end, that it should confirm and seal the promise itself, and make it more approved unto us, yea, after a certain manner ratified. Which mean the Lord foreseeth to be

needful, first for our ignorance and dullness, and then for our weakness; and yet, to speak properly, not so much to confirm his holy word, as to stablish us in the faith thereof. For the truth of God is by itself sound and certain enough, and cannot, from any other where, receive better confirmation than from itself. But our faith, as it is small and weak, unless it be stayed on every side, and be by all means upholden, is by and by shaken, wavereth, staggereth, yea, and fainteth. And herein, verily, the merciful Lord, according to his great tender kindness, tempereth himself to our capacity; that, whereas we are natural men, who always creeping upon the ground, and sticking fast in the flesh, do not think, nor so much as conceive, any spiritual thing, he vouchsafeth even by these earthly elements to guide us unto himself, and in the flesh itself to set forth a min-or of spiritual good things. For if we were unbodily, as Chrysostome saith, he would have given us the very same things naked and unbodily. (Hom. 60. ad popul.) Now, because we have souls put within bodies, he giveth spiritual things under visible things. Not because there are such gifts planted in the natures of the things which are set forth to us in the sacraments, but because they were signed by God to this signification.

4. With the Sacraments the Word of Promise to be joined not as they join it in the Church of Rome, but as Christ did and taught his Disciples after him to do. — And this is it which they commonly say, that a sacrament consisteth of the word and the outward sign. For we must understand the word to be, not that which being whispered without meaning and faith, only with noise as it were with a magical enchantment, hath power to consecrate the element; but which being preached, maketh us lo understand what the visible sign meaneth. Therefore, that which was usually done under the tyranny of the Pope, was not without a great profaning of the mysteries. For they thought it enough, if the priest, while the people stood amazedly gazing at it without understanding, did mumble up the form of consecration. Yea, they of set purpose provided this, that no whit of doctrine should thereof come to the people; for they spake all things in Latin before unlearned men. Afterward superstition brake out so far, that they believed that the consecration was not formally made, unless it were with a hoarse whispering sound which few might hear, yet Augustine teacheth far otherwise of the sacramental word. Let the word, saith he, be added to the element, and there shall be made a sacrament. (Hom. in John 13:1-38.) For whence cometh this so great strength to the water, to touch the body and wash the soul, but by the word making it? not because it is spoken, but because it is believed. For in the very word itself, the sound which passeth is one thing, and the power which abideth is another. This is the word of faith which we preach, saith the apostle, Romans 10:8. Whereupon in the Acts of the Apostles it is said, by faith cleansing their hearts. Acts 15:9. And Peter the apostle said, by faith, so baptism also saveth us; not the putting away of the filthiness of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience. 1 Peter 3:21. This is the word of faith which we preach, by which, without doubt, that it may be able to cleanse, baptism is also hallowed. You see how it requireth preaching whereupon faith may grow. And we need not to labor much in proof hereof, forasmuch as it is clear what Christ did, what he commanded us to do, what the apostles followed, what the purer Church observed. Yea, even from the beginning of the world it is known, that so oft as God offered any sign to the holy fathers, there was added an inseparable knot of doctrine, without which our senses should be made amazed with bare beholding. Therefore, when we hear mention made of the sacramental word, let us understand the promise, which being with a loud voice preached of the minister, may lead the people thither as it were by the hand, whither the sign tendeth and directeth us.

5. A Sophistical Dilemma to exclude the use of Sacraments. — Neither are some to be heard who labor to fight against, this, with a double horned argument rather subtle than sound. Either, say they, we know, or we know not, that the Word of God, which goeth before the sacrament, is the true will of God. If we know it, then we learn no new thing of the sacrament which followeth after. If we know it not, then neither will the sacrament teach it, whose whole force standeth in the word. Whereunto let this briefly be for an answer, that the seals which are annexed to patents and other public instruments, taken by themselves are nothing, forasmuch as they should be annexed in vain if the parchment had nothing written in it; yet they do not therefore not confirm and seal that which is written when they are added to writings. Neither can they say that this similitude is lately feigned by us, which Paul himself used, calling circumcision a seal, where he purposely laboreth to prove, that circumcision was not righteousness to Abraham, but a sealing of that covenant, by faith whereof he had already been justified before. Romans 4:11. And what, I beseech you, is there that may much offend any man, if we teach that the promise is sealed with sacraments, when of the promises themselves, it is evident that one is confirmed with another? For as every one is manifester, so is it more fit to uphold faith. But the sacraments do both bring most clear promises, and have this peculiar more than the word, that they lively represent them to us as it were painted out in a table. Neither ought that distinction anything to move us, which is wont to be objected between sacraments and seals of patents; that whereas both consist of carnal elements of this world, those cannot suffice, or be meet to seal the promises of God, which are spiritual and everlasting, as these are wont to be annexed to, for sealing of the grants of princes concerning fading and frail things. For a faithful man, when the sacraments are present before his eyes, remaineth not in that fleshly sight, but by those degrees of proportion, which I have spoken of, he riseth up with godly consideration to the high mysteries which lie hidden in te sacraments.

6. Sacraments as Seals, Pictures, Pillars, Glasses. — And since the Lord calleth his promises, covenants. Genesis 6:18; Genesis 9:9; Genesis 17:21, and his sacraments seals of his covenants; a similitude may well be brought from the covenants of men. What effect can the killing of a sow have, if words were not used, yea, unless they went before r for swine are many times killed without any mere inward or higher mystery? What can the giving of a man’s right hand do, since oftentimes hands are matched with enmity? But when words have gone before, by such signs the laws of covenants are established though they were first conceived, made, and decreed in words. Therefore sacraments are exercises which make the credit of the Word of God more certain unto us: and because we are carnal, they are delivered under carnal things, that so they should instruct us according to the dullness of our capacity, and guide us by the hand as schoolmasters guide children. For this reason Augustine calleth a sacrament a visible word, because it representeth the promises of God, as it were, painted in a picture, and setteth them before our sight curiously expressed and as in an image. Other similitudes also may be brought, whereby sacraments may be more plainly set out, as if we call them pillars of our faith. For a building standeth and resteth upon the foundation, yet by setting pillars under it is more surely established; so faith resteth upon the Word of God, as upon a foundation; but when the sacraments are added it stayeth yet more soundly upon them as upon pillars. Or if we call them looking-glasses, in which we may behold the riches of the grace of God, which he giveth us. For, as we have already said, he doth, in them, manifestly show himself to us, so much as is given to our dullness to know, and he doth more expressly testify his good will and love toward us than by his Word.

7. Sacraments though Administered to the Wicked are testimonies, nevertheless of the goodwill of God, and effectual to augment Faith. — Neither do they reason justly, when they labor to prove hereby that they are not testimonies of the grace of God, because they are also given to the wicked, who yet do not thereby feel God more favorable to them, but rather procure to themselves more grievous condemnation. For, by the same argument, neither should the Gospel, which is heard and despised by many, be the testimony of the grace of God, nor yet Christ himself, who was seen and known of many, of whom very few received him. The like we may also see in patents. For a great part of the multitude laugh at and scorn that authentic seal, though they know that it proceeded from the prince to seal his will withal. Some regard it not as a thing not pertaining to them.

Some also abhor it. So that considering this equal relation to both, the same similitude which I have above used, ought more and more to be liked. Therefore, it is certain that the Lord doth offer unto us mercy and a pledge of his grace both in his holy word and in the sacraments; but the same is not received but by them who receive the Word and sacraments with sure faith; like as Christ is offered by the Father unto the salvation of all, yet he is not acknowledge and received by all. Augustine, in one place, intending to declare the same, said that the effectualness of the Word is showed forth in the sacrament, not because it is spoken, but because it is believed. Therefore Paul, when he speaketh to the faithful, so treateth of sacraments that he includeth the communion of Christ in them, as when he saith. Galatians 3:27, all ye that are baptized, have put on Christ. Again, 1 Corinthians 12:13, we are all one body and one spirit who are baptized in Christ. But when he speaketh of the wrong use of sacraments, he giveth no more to it than to cold and useless figures. Whereby he signifieth that, though the wicked and hypocrites with their perverseness of either oppress, darken, or hinder the effect of the grace' of God in the sacraments, yet that hindereth not but that where and so oft as it pleaseth God, they may both bring a true testimony of the communicating of Christ, and the Spirit of God himself may deliver and perform that which they promise. We determine, therefore, that sacraments are truly called testimonies of the grace of God, and as it were certain seals of the good will which he beareth towards us; which by sealing it unto us, do, by this means, sustain, nourish, confirm, and increase our faith. As for the reasons which some are wont to object against this sentence, they are too trifling and weak. They say that if our faith be good, it cannot be made better: for they say that it is no faith, but which without shaking steadfastly, and without withdrawing, resteth upon the mercy of God. It had been better for such to pray with the apostles, Luke 17:5, that the Lord would increase their faith, than carelessly to pretend such a perfection of faith, which never any of the sons of men have obtained, nor shall obtain in this life. Let them answer what manner of faith they think that he had who said, Mark 9:24, I believe. Lord, help my unbelief. For even that faith, though it was but a begun faith, was a good faith, and might be made better when unbelief was taken away. But they are confuted by no stronger arguments than their own conscience. For if they confess themselves sinners, (which whether they will or no, they cannot deny,) they must needs impute the same to the imperfection of their faith.

8. Though we believe with all our hearts and though it be the Work of the Holy Ghost, to begin, maintain, and perfect Faith, yet the Sacraments are not hereby proved ineffectual to increase Faith. — But, say they, Acts 8:37, Philip answered the eunuch, that he might be baptized, if he believed with all his heart. What place hath the confirmation of baptism here, where faith filleth the

whole heart? Again, I ask them whether they do not feel a good part of their heart void of faith: whether they do not daily acknowledge new increases. The heathen man groaned that he waxed old with learning. Therefore we Christians are very miserable, if we wax old and profit nothing, whose faith ought to go forward by all degrees of ages, till it grow into a perfect man. Ephesians 4:15. Therefore, in this place to believe with all the heart, is not perfectly to believe Christ, but only from the heart and with a sincere mind to embrace him; not to be with him, but with full fervent affection to hunger," and thirst, and sigh toward him. This is the manner of the Scripture to say that it is done with the whole heart, which it means to be done sincerely and heartily. Of this sort are these sayings: Psalms 119:10; Psalms 111:1; Psalms 138:1. I have with all my heart sought thee. I will confess to thee with all my heart, and such other. As on the other side, where it rebuketh guileful and deceitful men, it useth to reproach them with a double. Psalms 12:2. Then they say further, that if faith be increased by sacraments, the Holy Ghost is given in vain, whose strength and work it is to begin, maintain, and perfect faith. I grant, indeed, that faith is the proper and whole work of the Holy Ghost, by whom being enlightened we know God and the treasure of his goodness, and without whose light our mind is so blind, that it can see nothing so senseless, that it can smell nothing of spiritual things. But for one benefit of God which they set forth, we consider three. For, first, the Lord teacheth and instructeth us with his Word; then he strengtheneth us with the sacraments: last of all, he shineth into our minds with the light of his Holy Spirit, and openeth an entry for the Word and sacraments into our hearts, which otherwise should but strike our ears, and be present before our eyes, and not move the inward parts.

9. How the Sacraments are said to confirm Faith. — Wherefore, as touching the confirmation and increase of faith, I would have the reader warned (which I think I have already in plain words expressed) that I do assign that ministry to the sacraments, not as though I thought that there is always in them I know not what secret force, by which of themselves they are able to, further or confirm faith, but because they are ordained by the Lord to this end, that they should serve to the stablishing and increasing of faith. But then only they truly perform their office, when that inward schoolmaster and spirit comes along with them, by whose power only both the h. an is pierced, and the affections moved, and the entry is set open for the sacraments into our souls. If he be absent, sacraments can do no more to our minds, than if the brightness of the sun should shine upon blind eyes, or a voice sound to deaf ears. Therefore I make such a division between the spirit and sacraments, that the power of working may remain with the spirit, and to the "sacraments, be left only the ministration, yea, and the same empty and trifling without the working of the spirit; but of much effectualness, when he inwardly worketh and putteth forth his force. Now it is plain in what manner, according to this sentence, a godly mind is confirmed in the faith by the sacraments, that is to say, as the eyes see by the brightness of the sun, and the ears hear by the sound of the voice; of which the eyes should not perceive any light, unless they had a sight in themselves that might naturally be enlightened, and the ears should in vain be knocked at with any crying whatsoever it were, unless they were naturally made fit to hear. But if it be true, which ought at once to be determined among us, that what the sight worketh in our eyes to seeing of the light, what the hearing worketh in oar ears to the perceiving of a voice, the same is the work of the Holy Ghost in our hearts, both to the conceiving, sustaining, cherishing and stablishing of faith; then both these things likewise follow, that the sacraments do not at all profit without the power of the Holy Ghost, and that nothing hinders but that in hearts already taught by that schoolmaster, they may make faith both stronger, and increase it more. Only there is this difference, that the power of

hearing and seeing is naturally set in our ears and eyes; hut Christ, beside the measure of nature, doth by special grace worketh same in our minds.

10. By this doctrine concerning the force of the Sacraments nothing is taken from the Power of the Holy Ghost. Whereby those objections, also, which trouble some men, are dissolved; that if we ascribe to creatures either the increase or confirmation of faith, there is wrong done to the Spirit of God, whom we ought to acknowledge the only author thereof. For we neither take from him either the praise of confirming or increasing it; but we rather affirm, when we say that he increaseth and confirmeth faith, we mean nothing else but with his inward enlightening to prepare our minds to receive that confirming which is set forth by the sacraments. But if it be yet too darkly spoken, it shall be made very clear by a similitude which I will bring. If thou purpose with words to persuade a man to do any thing, thou wilt search out all the reasons, whereby he may be drawn to thy opinion, and may be, in a manner, subdued to obey thy council. But thou hast not hitherto prevailed, unless he likewise have a piercing and sliarp judgment, whereby he may weigh what pith is in thy reasons, and also have a tractable wit and ready to hearken to teaching. Finally, unless he have conceived such an opinion of thy faithfulness and wisdom, as maybe to him like a certain fore-judgment to cause him to subscribe. For there are many stubborn heads, which a man can never bow with any reasons: and, also, where credit is suspected, where authority is despised, little good is done even with those who are willing to learn. On the other side, if all those things concur, they will certainly bring the hearer, to whom thou givest counsel, to obey the same, which otherwise he would have laughed to scorn. The same work, also, the Spirit worketh in us. For, lest the Word should beat our ears in vain, — lest the sacraments should strike our eyes in vain, he showeth us that it is God who speaketh therein, softeneth the stubbornness of our heart, and frameth it to the obedience which is due to the Word of the Lord. Finally, he conveyeth those outward words and sacraments from the ears into the soul. Therefore, both the Word and the sacraments confirm our faith, when they set before our eyes the good will of the heavenly Father towards us, by which knowledge the steadfastness of our faith standeth fast, and the strength of it increaseth: the Spirit confirmeth it, when engraving the same confirmation in our minds, he maketh it effectual. In the meantime, the Father of lights cannot be forbidden, but as he enlighteneth the bodily eyes with the beams of the sun, so he may enlighten our minds with sacraments, as with a brightness set mean between.

11. Ashy the Sacraments, so also by the Word, Faith is sown, increased and brought to ripeness through the forcible operation of the Spirit. — Which property the Lord taught was in his outward word, when, in the parable, he calleth it seed. Matthew 13:4. For as seed, if it fall upon a desert and untilled piece of ground, will die; but if it be thrown upon arable land well manured and tilled, it will bring forth frait with very good increase; so the Word of God, if it light upon a stiff neck, it will grow barren as that which is sown upon sand; but if it light upon a soul manured with the hand of the heavenly Spirit, it will be very fruitful. But if the reason of seed and of the word be like; as we say that from seed com both springeth, increaseth, and groweth up to ripeness, why may we not say that faith taketh from the Word of God both beginning, increase, and perfection? Paul very well expresseth both these things in sundry places. For, when he puts the Corinthians in remembrance how effectually God used his labor, he glorieth that he hath the ministry of the Spirit, as though the power of the Holy Ghost were, with an inseparable knot, joined with his preaching, to enlighten and thoroughly move the mind. 2 Corinthians 2:4. But, in another place, when he intends to

admonish them, of what force the Word of God is of itself being, preached by man, he compareth the ministers to husbandmen, who, when they have bestowed their labor and travail in tilling the earth have no more to do. 1 Corinthians 3:6. But what profit should tilling, sowing, and watering yield, unless that which is sown receive life by heavenly benefit? Therefore, he concludeth, that both he that planteth and he that watereth are nothing; but that all things are to be ascribed to God, who alone giveth the increase. Therefore, the apostles, in their preaching, utter the power of the Spirit, so far as God useth the instruments ordained by himself to set forth his spiritual grace. Yet we must keep still that distinction, and remember what man is able to do by himself, and what is proper to God.

12. When Sacraments are removed to take away men's confidence in those things which were thereby confirmed, this shows them to be means whereby Faith groweth, yet so that no power proper unto God be transcribed from him to them — Sacraments are such confirmations of our faith, that many times when the Lord intends to take away the confidence of the things that are by him promised in the sacraments, he taketh away the sacraments themselves. When he spoileth and thrusteth away Adam from the gift of immortality, he saith, Genesis 3:3, Let him not eat of the fruit of life, lest he live for ever. What saith he? Could that fruit restore to Adam his incorruption, from which he is now fallen? No. But this is all one as if he had said: Lest he should enjoy a vain confidence if he keep still the sign of my promise, let that be taken away from him which might bring him some hope of immortality. After this manner, when the apostle exhorteth the Ephesians, Ephesians 2:12, to remember that they were strangers from the covenants, aliens from the fellowship of Israel, without God, and without Christ, he saith that they were not partakers of circumcision. Whereby he doth (by figure of transnomination) signify that they were excluded from the promise itself, who had not received the sign of the promise. To their other objection, that the glory of God is conveyed to creatures, to whom so much power is ascribed, and that thereby it is so far diminished, we have in readiness to answer that we set no power in creatures. Only this we say, that God useth such means and instruments as he seeth expedient; that all things may serve his glory, forasmuch as lie is Lord and Judge of all. Therefore, as by bread and other nourishment he feedeth our body; as by the sun he enlighteneth the world; as by the fire he warmeth; yet neither bread, the sun, nor fire, are any thing but so far as by those instruments he distributes his blessings unto us: so spiritually he nourisheth faith by the sacraments, whose only office is to set his promises before our eyes to be looked upon, and to be pledges unto us of them. And as it is our duty to place no confidence in the creatures, which by the liberality and bounty of God are ordained to our use, and by the ministry whereof he giveth us his gifts, nor to have them in admiration, and praise them as causes of our good; so neither ought our confidence to rest finally in the sacraments, nor the glory of God to be transferred unto them; but forsaking all things, our faith and confession ought to rise up to Him the author both of the sacraments and of all things.

13. The word Sacrament translated from the military to the Christian profession; the power which Sacraments have in augmenting Faith not thereby disapproved. — Whereas some bring an argument out of the very word sacrament, it is not good. A sacrament, say they, though it hath, among allowed authors, many significations, yet it hath but one which agreeth with the signs; that is, whereby it signifieth that solemn oath which the soldier maketh to his captain when he entereth into the profession of a soldier. For as by that oath of warfare, new soldiers pledge their faith to the captain, and profess to be his soldiers, so by our signs we profess Christ our captain, and testify

that we serve under his banner. They add similitudes to make the matter more plain. As a gown made the Romans known from the Greeks who wore cloaks; as the very ranks of men at Rome were discerned by their several signs; the degree of senators from the degree of knights, by a purple coat and picked shoes; again, a knight from a commoner, by a ring; so we bear our signs that may make us known from profane men. But by the things above said, it is evident that the old writers, who gave to the signs the name of sacraments, had no regard how this word was used among Latin writers, but for their own purpose feigned this new signification, whereby they signified Only holy signs. But if we will search the matter more deeply, it may seem that they have with the same relation applied this word to such a signification, wherewith they have removed the name of faith to that sense wherein it is now used. For whereas faith is a truth in performing promises, yet they have called faith an assurance, or sure persuasion which is had of the truth itself. Likewise, whereas a sacrament is the soldier's part whereby he voweth himself to his captain, they have made it the captain's part, whereby he receiveth soldiers into rooms of service. For by the sacrament the Lord doth promise that he will be our God, and that we shall be his people. But we pass over such subtilties, as I think I have proved with plain enough arguments, that they had respect to nothing else but to signify that these are signs of holy and spiritual things. We receive indeed the similitudes which they bring of outward tokens; but we allow not that that which is the last point in the sacraments, is by them set for the chief and only thing. But this is the first point that they should serve our faith before God; the latter point that they should testify our confession before men. According to this latter consideration those similitudes have place. But in the meantime, let that first point remain: because otherwise (as we have already proved) the mysteries should be but cold, unless they we're helps to our faith, and additions to doctrine ordained to the same use and end.

14. As by some too little so by others too much force is ascribed unto Sacraments. — Again, we must be warned that as these men weaken the force, and utterly overthrow the use of sacraments; so, on the contrary, there are some who feign to sacraments I know not what secret virtues, which are no where read to be put in them by God. By which error the simple and unlearned are dangerously deceived, while they are taught to seek the gifts of God where they cannot be found, and are by little and little drawn away from God, to embrace mere vanity instead of his verity. For the sophistical schools have taught with one consent, that the sacraments of the new law, that is to say, those which are now in use in the Christian Church, justify and give grace, if we do not stop it by some deadly sin. It cannot be expressed how pernicious and pestilent this opinion is, and so much the more, because many ages heretofore, to the great loss of the Church, it hath prevailed in a great part of the world. Truly it is utterly devilish. For when it promiseth righteousness without faith, it driveth souls headlong into destruction. Then because it fetcheth the cause of righteousness from the sacraments, it bindeth the miserable minds of men, already bending naturally too much to the earth, with this superstition that they rather rest in the sight of a bodily thing than of God himself. Which two things I would to God we had not so proved in experience, so they need not any long proof. But what is a sacrament taken without faith, but the most certain destruction of the Church? For as nothing is to be looked for there from without the promise, and the promise doth no less threaten wrath to the unfaithful, than it offereth grace to the faithful; he is deceived who thinketh that there is any more given him by the sacraments, than that which, being offered by the Word of God, he receiveth by faith. Whence another thing also is gathered, that the affiance of salvation dependeth not upon the partaking of the sacrament, as though justification

consisted therein, which we know to be reposed in Christ only, and to be communicated unto us, no less by the preaching of the Gospel, than by the sealing of the sacrament; and without that it cannot stand. So true is that which Augustine also writeth, (Lib. 4 de qucost. vet. testament) that invisible sanctification may be without a visible sign, and again, that a visible sign may be without true sanctification. For (as he also writeth, in another place. Lib. 5, de. bap. cont, Donat. cap. 14,) men do put on Christ sometimes by the receiving of a sacrament, sometimes by the sanctification of life. And that first point may be common both to good and evil; but the other is proper to the good and godly.

15. Hidden grace not always joined with the visible sign of the Sacraments — Hence cometh that distinction, if it be well understood, which the same Augustine hath often observed between a sacrament and the thing of the sacrament. For it not only signifieth that the figure and truth are there contained, but that they are not so joined together but that they may be separated; and that even in the very conjoining the thing must always be discerned from the sign, that we give not to the one that which belongeth to the other. He speaketh of the separation, when he writeth that the sacraments work in the elect only that which they figure. Again, when he writeth thus of the Jews; when the sacraments were common to all, the grace was not common, which is the power of the sacraments. So now, also, the washing of regeneration is common to all; but the grace itself, whereby the members of Christ are regenerate with their head, is not common to all. A gain, in another place of the Supper of the Lord, we, also, at this day, receive visible meat. But the sacrament is one thing, and the power of the sacrament another thing. What is this, that many receive of the altar and die, and in receiving to die? For the Lord's morsel was poison to Judas, not because he received a bad thing, but because, he being evil, received a good thing evilly. A little after; the sacrament of this thing, that is of the unity of the body and blood of Christ, is somewhat prepared on the Lord's table daily, somewhere by certain distances of days; and thereof is received into life by some, and into destruction by some. But the thing itself, whereof it is a sacrament, is received into life by all men, but unto destruction by one man, whoever is partaker of it. And a little before he had said, he shall not die who eateth; but he who pertaineth to the power of the sacrament, pot to the visible sacrament; who eateth within, not without; who eateth with the heart, not be who presseth with his tooth. Thus, you hear everywhere, that a sacrament is so separated from his own truth by the unworthiness of the receiver, that there remaineth nothing but a vain and unprofitable figure. But that thou mayest not have a sign void of truth, but the thing with the sign, thou must conceive, by faith, the word which is there enclosed. So bow much thou shalt, by the sacraments, profit in communicating of Christ, so much profit shalt thou take of them.

16. Christ the substance of all Sacraments and the only cause of righteousness; the Sacraments effectual means to nourish the knowledge of Christ, though the wicked lacking faith not nourished by them. — if this be somewhat dark because of the shortness, I will set it out in more words. I say that Christ is the matter, or (if thou wilt) the substance of all sacraments; for as much as in him they have all their perfection, and do promise nothing without him. So much less tolerable is the error of Peter Lombard, who doth expressly make them causes of righteousness and salvation, whereof they are only parts. Therefore, bidding all causes farewell, which man's wit doth imagine to itself, we ought to stay in this one cause. Therefore, how much we are by their ministry helped to the nourishing, confirming, and increasing of the true knowledge of Christ in us, and to the possessing of him more fully, and to the enjoying of his riches, so much effectualness they have

with us. But that is done when with true faith we receive that which is there offered. Do the wicked then (wilt thou say) bring to pass by their unthankfulness, that the ordinances of God are void and turn to nothing? I answer, that what I have said, is not so to be taken, as though the efficacy and truth of the sacrament did depend upon the state or will of him that receiveth it. For that which God hath ordained remaineth stedfast and keepeth still its nature, however men vary. But since it is one thing to offer, and another to receive, nothing hinders but that the sign hallowed by the Word of God may be indeed that which it is called, and keep its own force, and yet that there come thereby no profit to an evil doer and wicked man. But Augustine doth in few words well solve this question. If (saith he) thou receivest carnally, it ceaseth not to be spiritual, but it is not so to thee. But as Augustine hath in the aforesaid places showed that a sacrament is a thing of no worth, if it be separated from the truth thereof, so in another place he giveth warning that even in the very conjoining there needeth a distinction, lest we rest too much in the outward sign. As (saith he) to follow the letter, and to take the signs in instead of the things, is a point of servile weakness; so to expc ad the signs unprofitably is a point of evil wandering eiTor. He nameth two faults which are here to be avoided, the one when we so take the signs as though they were given in vain, and when with abasing or diminishing their secret significations by our enviousness we bring to pass that they bring us no profit at all. The other, when in not raising our minds beyond the visible sign, we give to the sacraments the praise of all those good things which are not given us but by Christ only, and that by the Holy Ghost, who maketh us partakers of Christ himself; and indeed by the help of the outward signs, which if they allure us to Christ, when they are wrested in another way, the whole profit of them is unworthily overthrown.

17. Christ set forth as ly the Word, so hy the Sacraments neither available without faith, to whom they are available, in them they work not by secret included force; grace cometh with the Sacraments, not from the Sacraments, hut from God. — Wherefore let this remain certain, that there is no other use of the sacraments than of the Word of God; which is to offer and set forth Christ unto us, and in him the treasures of heavenly grace, but they avail or profit nothing except when received by faith; even as wine, oil, or any other liquor, though you pour it on largely, yet it will run by and perish, unless the vessel’s mouth be open to receive it, and the vessel though it be wet round about the side will, nevertheless, remain void and empty within. Beside this we must beware, lest those things which have been written by the old writers, somewhat too vain gloriously to amplify the dignity of sacraments, which lead us away into an error near this: namely, that we should think that there is some secret power knit and fastened to the sacraments, that they can of themselves give us the graces of the Holy Ghost, as wine is given in the cup; whereas only this office is appointed to them by God, to testify and establish to us the good will of God towards us, and profit no further unless the Holy Ghost join himself to them, who can open our minds and hearts, and make us partakers of this testimony, wherein also clearly appear divers and several graces of God. For the sacraments, as we have above touched, are that thing to us of God, which to men are messengers of joyful things, or earnests in confirming of bargains, which do not of themselves give any grace, but tell and show us, and (as they are earnests and tokens) do ratify unto us those things that are given us by the liberality of God. The Holy Ghost (whom the sacraments do not in common, without difference, bring to all men, but whom the Lord peculiarly giveth to them that are his) is he that bringeth the graces of God with him, who giveth to the sacraments place in us, who maketh them to bring forth fruit. But though we do not deny that God himself, with the power of his Spirit, is present with his own institution, lest the ministration which

he hath ordained of the sacraments should be fruitless and vain: yet we affirm that the inward grace of the Spirit, as it is separated from the outward ministry, so ought to be separately weighed and considered. God, therefore, truly performeth indeed whatsoever he promiseth and figureth in signs; neither doth the signs want their effect, that the author of them may be proved true and faithful. The question here is only whether God worketh by his own and by inward power, as they call it, or resigneth his office to outward signs. But we affirm, that whatever instruments he use, his original working is nothing hindered thereby. When this is taught, concerning the sacraments, both their dignity is honorably set out, and their use is plainly showed, and their profitableness is abundantly reported, and the best mean in all these things is retained, that neither any thing is attributed to them which ought not, nor again any thing taken from them which is not proper to be taken from them. In the meantime, that feigned device is taken away, whereby the cause of justification and power of the Holy Ghost, is enclosed in elements as in vessels or wagons, and that principal force which bath been omitted of others, is expressly set out. Here, also, it is to be noted, that God inwardly worketh that which the minister figureth and testifieth by outward action; lest that be given to a mortal man which God claimeth to himself alone. The same thing, also, doth Augustine wisely touch. How, saith he, doth both Moses sanctify and God; not Moses for God, but Moses with visible sacraments by his ministry, and God with invisible grace by his Holy Spirit; where, also, is the whole fruit of visible sacraments. For without this sanctification of invisible grace, what do those visible sacraments profit?

18. Things sometimes natural and sometimes miraculously used for sacraments. — The name of sacrament, as we have hitherto treated of the nature of it, doth generally contain all the signs that ever God gave to men, to certify and assure them of the truth of his promises. Those he sometimes willed to remain in natural things, sometimes he delivered them in miracles. Of the first kind, these are examples, as when he gave Adam and Eve the tree of life as an earnest of immortality, that they might assure themselves of it, so long as they did eat of the fruit thereof. Genesis 2:17; Genesis 3:3. And when he set the rainbow for a monument to Noah and his posterity, that he would no more, from thenceforth, destroy the earth by the overflowing of water. Genesis 9:13. These Adam and Noah had for sacraments. Not that the tree did give them immortality, which it could not give to itself; nor that the bow (which is but a striking back of a sunbeam upon the clouds against it) was of force to hold in the waters: but because they had a mark graven in them by the Word of God, that they should be examples and seals of his covenant. And the tree was a tree before, and the bow a bow. When they were written upon with the Word of God, then a new form was put into them, that they should begin to be that which they were not before. That no man may think these things spoken without cause, the bow itself is at this day also a witness of that covenant which God made with Noah; which bow, so oft as we behold, we read this promise of God written in it, that the earth shall never be destroyed with overflowing of waters. Therefore if any foolish philosopher, to mock the simplicity of our faith, do affirm that such variety of colors do naturally arise from reflected beams and a cloud set against them; let us grant it indeed, but let us laugh to scorn this senseless folly, who doth not acknowledge God the Lord and governor of nature; who at his pleasure useth all the elements to the service of his own glory. If he had imprinted svioh tokens in the sun, the stars, the earth, stones, and such like, they should all have been sacraments to us. Why are not uncoined and coined silver both of one value, since they are both one metal? because the one hath nothing but what it is natural; when it is struck with a common mark, it is made money, and receiveth a new value. And shall not God be able to mark

his creatures with his word, that they may be made sacraments, which before were naked elements? Of the second kind these were examples, when he showed to Abraham a light in a smoking oven, Genesis 15:17; when he watereth the fleece with dew, the earth remaining dry; again he watered the earth, the fleece being untouched, to promise victory to Gideon, Judges 6:37; when he drew the shadow, of the dial ten degrees backward, to promise safety to Hezekiah, 2 Kings 20:9, and Isaiah 38:7. These things, when they were done to relieve and confirm the weakness of their faith, were then also sacraments.

19. Sacraments on God's behalf testimonies of Grace; on ours, notes and marks of profession. — But our present purpose is, to discourse peculiarly of those sacraments, which the Lord appointed to be ordinary in his Church to nourish his worshippers and servants into one faith and the confession of one faith. For, to use the words of Augustine, men can be settled together into no name of religion either true or false, unless they be bound together with some fellowship of visible signs and sacraments. Since, therefore, the most good father foresaw this necessity, he did from the beginning ordain certain exercises of godliness for his servants, which, afterwards, Satan, by turning them to wicked and superstitious worshippings, hath many ways depraved and corrupted. Hence came those solemn professions of the Gentiles into their holy orders, and other bastard usages; which, though they were full of error and superstition, yet they also were therewith a proof that men could not, in profession of religion, be without such outward signs. But because they were neither grounded upon the Word of God, nor were referred to that truth whereunto all signs ought to be directed, they are unworthy to be spoken of where mention is made of the holy signs which are ordained by God, and have not swerved from their foundation, that is, that they should be helps to true godliness. They consist not of bare signs, as were the bow and the tree, but upon ceremonies, or rather the signs that are here given are ceremonies. But as it is above said, that they are on the Lord's behalf testimonies of grace and salvation, so they are again, on our behalf, marks of profession, by which we openly swear to the name of God, for our parts binding our faith unto him. Therefore, Chrysostome in one place fitly calleth them covenantings, whereby God bindeth himself in league with us, and we are bound to purity and holiness of life, because there is made a mutual form of covenanting between God and us. For as the Lord therein proraiseth that he will cancel and blot out whatever guilt and penalty we have contracted by offending, and doth reconcile us to himself in his only begotten Son: so we again, on our behalf, by this profession bind ourselves unto him to follow godliness and innocency; so that a man may rightly say that such sacraments are ceremonies by which God will exercise his people first to the nourishing, stirring up, and strengthening of faith inwardly than to the testifying of religion before men.

20. Sacraments before Christy and after, and the scope of both — And these sacraments also were different, after the divers order of time, according to the distribution whereby it pleaseth the Lord to show himself after this or that manner to men. For to Abraham and his posterity circumcision was commanded. Genesis 17:10, whereunto afterward purifyings and sacrifices, and other ceremonies were added by the law of Moses. Leviticus 10:1-20 :These were the sacraments of the Jews until the coming of Christ, at whose coming those being abrogate, two sacraments were ordained, which the Christian Church now useth, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord. Matthew 28:19, and Matthew 26:26. I speak of those that were ordained for the use of the whole church. As for the laying on of bands, whereby the ministers of the church are entered into their office, as I do not unwillingly suffer it to be called a sacrament, Song of Solomon 1:1-17 do not

reckon it among the ordinary sacraments. As for the rest which are commonly called sacraments, what they are to be accounted, we shall see by and by. Howbeit, the old sacraments also had respect to the same mark whereunto ours tend, that is, direct, and in a manner lead us by the hand to Christ, or rather as images to represent him, and show him forth to he known. For as we have already taught, that they are certain seals wherewith the promises of God are sealed; and where it is most certain that there was never any promise offered of God to men but in Christ; that they may teach us of some promise of God, they must needs show Christ. Whereuuto pertaineth that heavenly pattern of the tabernacle and of the worshipping in the law, which was given to Moses in the Mount. One only difference there is, that those did shadow out Christ being promised, when he was yet looked for; these do testify him already given and delivered.

21. The intent of Circumcision, Purifyings, and Sacrifices of the Law. — When these things shall all be particularly, and each one separately declared, they will be made much plainer. Circumcision was to the Jews a sign, whereby they were put in mind, that whatsoever cometh of the seed of man, that is to say, the whole nature of man is corrupt, and hath need of pruning. Moreover, it was a teaching and token of remembrance, whereby they should confirm themselves in the promise given to Abraham concerning that blessed seed, in whom all the nations of the earth were to be blessed, Genesis 22:18; from whom they had their own blessing to be looked for. Now, that healthful seed (as we are taught of Paul, Galatians 3:16,) was Christ, in whom alone they hoped that they should recover that which they had lost in Adam. Wherefore circumcision was to them the same thing which Paul saith that it was to Abraham, namely, the seal of the righteousness of faith; that is to say, the seal whereby they should be more certainly assured that their faith, wherewith they looked for that seed, should be accounted to them of God for righteousness. Romans 4:11. But we shall on a more proper occasion, in another place, go through with the comparison of circumcision and baptism. Baptisings and purifyings did set before their eyes their own uncleanness, filthiness, and pollution, wherewith they were defiled in their own nature; but they promised another washing, whereby all their filthinesses should be wiped and washed away. Hebrews 9:1. And this washing was Christ, with whose blood being washed, we bring his cleanness into the sight of God, that it may hide all our defilings, 1 John 1:7; Revelation 1:5. Their sacrifices did accuse them of wickedness, and also taught that it was necessary that there should be some satisfaction which should be paid to the judgment of God. That for this there should be some one chief bishop, a mediator between God and men, which should satisfy God by shedding of blood and by offering of a sacrifice, which should suffice for the forgiveness of sins. This chief priest was Christ; he himself shed his own blood; he himself was the sacrifice, for he offered himself obedient to his father unto death, by which obedience he took away the disobedience of man, who had provoked the displeasure of God. Hebrews 4:14, and Hebrews 5:5, and Hebrews 9:11; Php 2:8; Romans 5:19.

22. The Sacraments of the New Testament, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord, wherein Christ shineth more clearly than in the Sacraments of the Old. — As for our sacraments, they do so much more clearly present Christ unto us, as he was more nearly showed to men, since he hath been truly delivered of his father such as he had been promised. For baptism testifieth unto us that we are cleansed and washed, the supper of thanksgiving testifieth that we are redeemed. In water is figured washing, in blood satisfaction. These two things are found in Christ, which (as John saith) came in water and blood; that is to say, that he might cleanse and redeem; Of which thing the

Spirit of God also is a witness. Yea, there are three witness in one, water, blood, and spirit. 1 John 5:6. In water and blood we have a testimony of cleansing and redeeming; but the Spirit, the principal witness, bringeth unto us assured credit of such witnessing. This high mystery hath notably well been showed us in the cross of Christ, when water and blood flowed out of his holy side, John 19:34; which side, for that cause, Augustine justly called the fountain of our sacraments, of which yet we must treat somewhat more at large. There is no doubt, but that more plentiful grace also of the Spirit doth here show forth itself if you compare time with time. For that pertaineth to the glory of the kingdom of Christ, as we gather out of many places, but specially out of the seventh chapter of John In which sense we must take, that saying of Paul, Colossians 2:17, that under the law were shadows, but in Christ is the body. Neither is it his meaning to spoil the testimonies of grace of their power, in which God's will was in the old time to prove himself to the fathers a true speaker, even as at this day he doth to us in baptism ai; 1 in the holy supper. But his purpose was only by way of comparison, to magnify that which was given us, lest any should think it marvellous that the ceremonies of the law were abolished by the coming of Christ.

23. Too great a difference made by Schoolmen between the Sacraments of the Lord and ours. — But that doctrine of the schoolmen (as I may also briefly touch this by the way) is utterly to be hissed out, whereby there is made so great a difference between the sacraments of the old and new law, as though those did nothing but shadow out the grace of God, and these do presently give it. For the apostle speaketh no less honorably of those than of these, when he teacheth that the fathers did eat the same spiritual meat which we eat, and expoundeth that same meat to be Christ. 1 Corinthians 10:3. Who dare make that an empty sign, which delivered to the Jews a true communion of Christ? And the ground of the cause which the apostle there handleth, doth plainly fight on our side. And, that no man trusting upon a cold knowledge of Christ, and empty title of Christianity, and outward token, should presume to despise the judgment of God; he showeth forth examples of God's severity to be seen in the Jews, that we might know, that the same pains which they have suffered hang over us if we follow the same faults. Now that the comparison may be fit, it behoved that he should show that there is no inequality between us and them in those good things whereof he did forbid us to boast falsely. Therefore, first he maketh us equal in the sacraments, and leaveth us not so much as any small piece of prerogative, that might encourage us to hope of escaping unpunished. Neither, verily, is it lawful to give any more to our baptism, than he in another place giveth to circumcision, when he calleth it the seal of the righteousness of faith. Romans 4:11. Whatever, therefore, is at this day given us in our sacraments, the same thing the Jews formerly received in theirs, that is to say, Christ with his spiritual riches. What power our sacraments have, the same they also felt in theirs, that is to say, that they were to them seals of God's good will toward them into the hope of eternal salvation. If they had been skilful expositors of the Epistle to the Hebrews, they would not have been so blinded. But when they read there, that sins were not cleansed by the ceremonies of the law, yea, that the old shadows had no availing force to righteousness, Hebrews 10:1, they, neglecting the comparison which is there handled, while they took hold of this one thing, that the law of itself did nothing profit the followers of it, thought simply that the figures were void of truth. But the apostle's meaning is to bring the ceremonial law to nothing until it come to Christ, on whom alone dependeth all the effectualness of it.

24. That is spoken in Scripture to diminish the esteem of Circumcision, the same, in like occasion and sense, might as well be said of Baptism. — But they will object those things which are read in Paul concerning the circumcision of the letter, that it is in no estimation with God, that it giveth nothing that is vain. For such sayings seem to place it far beneath baptism. Not so. For the very same might be said of baptism. And also the same is said, first by Paul himself, where he showeth that God regardeth not the outward washing whereby we enter into profession of religion, unless the mind within be both cleansed and continued pure to the end. 1 Corinthians 10:5. Again by Peter, when he testifieth that the truth of baptism standeth not in the outward washing, but in the witnessing of a good conscience. 1 Peter 3:21. But he seemeth also, in another place, Colossians 2:11, utterly to despise the circumcision made with hands, when he compareth it with the circumcision of Christ. I answer, that even in this place nothing is abated of the dignity of it. Paul there disputeth against them, who required it as necessary when it was now abrogate. Therefore he wameth the believers, that leaving the old shadows they should stand fast in the truth. These masters, saith be, instantly call upon you, that your bodies may be circumcised. But ye are spiritually circumcised, according to the soul and body. Ye have therefore the deliverance of the thing indeed, which is much better than the shadow. A man who, take exception to the contrary, and say that the figure is not therefore to be despised because they had the thing indeed; forasmuch as the putting off of the old man, of which he there speaks, was also among the fathers, to whom yet outward circumcision had not been superfluous. He preventeth this objection, when he by and by addeth, that the Colossians were buried with Christ by baptism. Whereby he signifieth, that at this day baptism is the same to Christians which circumcision was to the old people; and therefore that circumcision cannot be enjoined to Christians without wrong done to Christ.

25. The Sacraments of the Law shadows not in respect of their working; but in regard of their comanned of signifying that which is hidden, spoken of as things of small account, not simply, but when Christ is separated from them. — But that which followeth, and which I now alleged, is harder to assoil, that all the Jewish ceremonies were shadows of things to come, and that in Christ is the body; but the most hard of all, is that which is treated in many chapters of the Epistle to the Hebrews, that the blood of beasts attained not to consciences; that the law had a shadow of good things to come, not an image of things; that the followers of it obtained no perfection by tlie ceremonies of Moses and such others. I go back to that which I have already touched, that Paul doth not therefore make the ceremonies shadowish, because they had nothing sound in them, but because the fulfilling of them was, after a certain manner, in suspense until the delivering of Christ. Again, I say, that this is to be understood not of the effectualness, but rather of the manner of signifying. For till Christ was manifested in the flesh, all the signs shadowed him out as absent; howsoever he did inwardly utter to the faithful the presence of his power and of himself. But this we ought chiefly to mark, that in all those places Paul doth not speak simply, but by way of contention. Because he strove with the false apostles, who would have godliness to consist in the ceremonies only, without any respect of Christ; to confute them, it is sufficient only to treat what value ceremonies are of by themselves. This mark, also, the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews followed. Let us therefore remember that Paul here disputed of ceremonies, not as they are taken in their own and natural signification, but as they are wrested to a false and wrongful exposition; not of the lawful use of them, but of the abuse of superstition. What marvel is it, therefore, if ceremonies being separated from Christ are unclothed of all force? For all signs, whatsoever they

be, are brought to nought when the thing signified is taken away. So when Christ had to do with them who thought that manna was nothing else but meat for the belly, John 6:27, he applieth his speech to their gross opinion, and saith that he rainistereth better meat, which may feed souls to hope of immortality. But if you require a plainer solution, the sum of all tendeth to this: First, that all those ceremonies which were in the law of Moses, are vanishing things and of no value, unless they be directed to Christ. Secondly, that they had such a respect to Christ, that when he at length was manifestly showed in the flesh, they had their fulfilling. Finally, that it behoved that they should be taken away by bis coming, even as a shadow vanisheth away in the clear light of the sun. But because, I yet defer any longer discourse of that matter to that place where I have purposed to compare baptism with circumcision, therefore, I do now more sparingly touch it.

26. In what sense the fathers have so much extolled the Sacraments of the New Testament above the Old. — Perhaps, also, those extravagant praises of sacraments, which are read in old writers concerning our signs, deceive those miserable sophisters. As this of Augustine: That the sacraments of the old law did only promise the Savior, but ours give salvation. When they observed not that these and such other forms of speaking were spoken, they also published their excessive doctrines, but in a clean contrary sense from the writings of the old fathers. For Augustine meant no other thing in that place, than' as the same Augustine writeth in another place: That the sacraments of the law of Moses did foretell of Christ, but ours speak of him present. And against Faustus. That those were promises of things to be fulfilled, these were tokens of things fulfilled; as if he should say, that those figured him when he was looked for, but ours show him as it were present, which bath been already delivered. Moreover, he speaketh of the manner of signifying, as also he showeth in another place. The law, saith he, and the prophets had sacraments, foretelling of a thing to come; but the sacraments of our time testify that that is already come, which those did declare was to come., But what he thought of the thing and effectualness, he expoundeth in many places, as when he saith, that the sacraments of the Jews were in signs different; but in the thing signified, equal with ours, different in the visible form, but equal in spiritual power. Again, in divers signs is all one faith, so in divers signs as in divers words; because words change their sounds by times, and truly words are nothing but signs. The fathers did drink the same spiritual drink, but they drunk not the same bodily drink. Observe therefore the faith remaining one, the signs varied. To them the rock was Christ, to us that is Christ which is set upon the altar. And they, drink for a great sacrament the water flowing out of the rock; what we drink the faithful know. If thou consider the visibly form, they drunk another thing; if a sensible signification, they drunk the same spiritual drink. In another place, in the mystery, the same is their meat and drink which is ours; but the same in signification, not in form, because Christ was figured to them in the rock and showed to us in the flesh. Howbeit in this behalf also we grant that there is some difference. For both sacraments testify that the fatherly good will of God and the graces of the Holy Ghost are offered us in Christ; but our sacraments testify it more clearly and brightly. In both is a delivering of Christ; but in these more plenteous and fuller, namely, as that difference of the Old and New Testament beareth, of which we have treated before. And this is it that the same Augustine meant, (whom we more often cite as the best and faithfullest witness of all the old writers,) where he teacheth that when Christ was revealed, sacraments were ordained in number fewer, in signification higher, in force more excellent. Of this, also, it is expedient that the readers be briefly warned, that whatever the sophisters have triflingly taught concerning the work wrought, is not only false, but disagreeth with the nature of the sacraments which God hath ordained, that

believers being void and needy of all good things, should bring nothing thither but beggary. Whence it followeth, that in receiving them, these men do nothing whereby they may deserve praise, that in doing (which in this their respect is merely passive) no work can be ascribed unto them.

03.03. On Baptism

ON BAPTISM.

1. The first use of Baptism to he a token of our cleansing, and, therefore, not a mark of recognisance and a sign of profession only, as some would have it. — Baptism is a sign of entering, whereby we are received into the fellowship of the Church; that beeen grafted into Christ, we may be reckoned among the children of God. Now it was given us by God for this end, (which I have taught to be common to all the mysteries,) first, that it should serve to our faith with him, and to our confession before men. We will orderly declare the manner of both purposes. Baptism bringeth three things to our faith, which also must be separately treated of. This is the first which the Lord setteth out unto us, that it should be a token and proof of our cleansing; or (to express my mind better) it is like a certain sealed charter, whereby he confirmeth that all our sins are so erased, cancelled and blotted out, that they may never come in his sight, nor be rehearsed, nor be imputed. For he hath appointed that all they who believe should be baptized into forgiveness of sins. Therefore, they who thought that baptism is nothing else but a mark and token whereby we profess our religion before men, as soldiers bear the conusance of their captain for a mark of their profession, weigh not that which was the chief thing in baptism. That is this, tliat we should receive it with this promise, that whosoever believe and are baptized, shall be saved. Mark 16:16.

2. Our cleansing not made by Baptism as by a cause, but manifested by it as by a Sign. — In this sense is to be understood which Paul writeth, that the church is sanctified by Christ her spouse, and cleansed with the washing of water in the word of life. Ephesians 5:26. Yet in another place, that we are saved according to his mercy by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost. Titus 3:5. And that which Peter writeth that baptism saveth us, 1 Peter 3:21. Paul's will was not to signify, that our washing and salvation is perfectly made by water, or that water containeth in itself the power to cleanse, regenerate, and renew. Neither did Peter mean the cause of salvation, but only the knowledge and certainty of such gifts to be received in this sacrament, which is evidently enough expressed in the words themselves. For Paul joineth together the word of life, and baptism of water; as if he had said, that by the Gospel the message of washing and sanctifying is brought us, that by baptism such message is sealed. And Peter immediately addeth, that baptism is not the putting away of the filthiness of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience before God, which is of faith. Yea, baptism promiseth us no other cleansing, but by the sprinkling of the blood of Christ, which is figured by water, for its likeness of cleansing and washing. Who therefore can say that we are cleansed by this water, which certainly testifieth that the blood of Christ is our true and only washing? so that there cannot be brought a surer reason to confute their blind error who refer all things to the power of water, than from the signification of baptism itself, which doth withdraw us as well from that visible element which is set before our eyes, as from all other means, that it may bind our minds to Christ alone.

3. Baptism a confirmation of the washing out of all sin, and not only of sins past^ before we he baptized. — Neither is it to be thought that baptism is applied only to the time past, that for new

offences, into which we fall after baptism, we must seek new remedies of cleansing, in I know not what other sacraments, as though the force of baptism were worn out of use. By this error it came to pass in old time, that some would not be baptized but when in the uttermost peril of life, and at the last gasp, that so they may obtain pardon of their whole life. Against which wayward subtle provision the old bishops so often inveigh in their writings. But thus we ought to think, that at what time soever we are baptized, we are at once washed and cleansed for all our life. Therefore, so oft as we fall, we must go back to the remembrance of baptism, and therewith we must arm our mind, that it may be always certain and assured of the forgiveness of sin. For though, when it is once administered, it seemeth to be past, yet, by later sins, it is not abolished. For the purity of Christ is therein offered us; that always flouiisheth, is oppressed with no spots, but overwhelmeth and wipeth away all our filthiness; yet ought we not to take from this a liberty to sin in time to come, (as verily we are not hereby armed to such holdness) but this doctrine is given only to them, who when they have sinned, do groan, wearied and oppressed under their sins, that they may rise up and comfort themselves, lest they should fall into confusion and despair. So Paul saith, Romans 3:25, that Christ was made to us a propitiator, unto the forgiveness of faults going before. Wherein he denieth not that therein is obtained perpetual and continual forgiveness of sins even unto death; but he meaneth that it was given by the Father only to poor sinners, who, wounded with the searing iron of conscience, do sigh for the physician. To these the mercy of God is offered. They, who by escaping of punishment, do bunt for matter and liberty to sin, do but provoke to themselves the wrath and judgment of God.

4. The force nf Baptism as well as Repentance extended throughout our whole life. — I know indeed that it is commonly thought otherwise; that by the benefit of repentance and of the keys we do after baptism obtain forgiveness, which, at our first regeneration, is given us only by baptism. But they who devise this err herein, because they do not remember that the power of the keys, whereof they speak, is so joined with baptism that it ought not to be separated. The sinner receiveth forgiveness by the ministry of the Church, namely, not without the preaching of the Gospel. But what manner of preaching is that? That we are cleansed from sins by the blood of Christ. But what sign and testimony is there of that washing, but baptism? We see, therefore, how that absolution is referred to baptism. And this error hath bred us the feigned sacrament of penance; of which I have touched somewhat before, and the residue I will make an end • of in place fit for it. But it is no wonder if men who, according to the grossness of their wit, were beyond measure tied to outward things, have in this behalf also betrayed that fault, that not content with the pure institution of God, they thrust in new helps feigned by themselves. As though baptism itself were not a sacrament of repentance. But if repentance be commended to us for our whole life, the force of baptism ought to be extended as far. Wherefore, there is no doubt but all the godly, through their whole life, so oft as they are vexed with knowledge in conscience of their own sins, dare call themselves back to the remembrance of baptism, that they may confirm themselves in the confidence of that only and continual washing which we have in the hlood of Christ.

5. A second use of Baptism to show us our mortification and newness of life — It bringeth, also, another fruit, because it showeth us our mortification in Christ, and new life in him. For, as the apostle saith, we are baptized into his death, being buried together with him into death, that we may walk in newness of life. Romans 6:3. By which words he doth not only exhort us to follow him, (as though he said that we are by baptism put in mind, that after a certain example of the death of

Christ, we should die to our lusts; and after the example of his resurrection, we should be raised up to righteousness.) but he fetcheth the matter much deeper, that is to say, that by baptism Christ hath made us partakers of his death, that we may be grafted into it. And as the graff receiveth substance and nourishment from the root into which it is grafted, both they that receive baptism with such faith as they ought, do truly feel the power of the death of Christ in the mortifying of their flesh; and also they feel the effect of his resurrection in the quickening of the Spirit. Hence he gathereth matter of exhortation; that if we be Christians, we ought to be dead to sin, and to live to righteousness. Colossians 2:12. This self-same argument he useth in another place that we are circumcised, and have put off the old man, since we have been buried in Christ by baptism. Titus 3:6. And in this sense, in the same place which we have before alleged, he called it the washing of regeneration and of renewing. Therefore, the free forgiveness of sins, and imputation of righteousness, is first promised us, and then the grace of the Holy Ghost, which may reform us into newness of life.

6. A third use of Baptism to signify our ingrafting into Christ, and partaking of his graces. — Last of all our faith receiveth this benefit by baptism, that it certainly testifieth unto us, that we are not only grafted into the death and life of Christ, but that we are so united to Christ himself that we are partakers of all his good things. Therefore, be hath dedicated and hallowed baptism in his own body, Matthew 3:13, that he might have it in common with us, as a most strong bond of the unity and fellowship which he vouchsafed to enter into with us, thus Paul proveth thereby that we are the children of God, because 'we we have put on Christ in baptism. Galatians 3:27. So we see that the fulfilling of baptism is in Christ, whom also for this reason we call the proper object of baptism. Therefore, it is no marvel if it be reported that the apostles baptized into his name. Acts 8:16, and Acts 19:5, who yet were commanded to baptize into the name of the Father also, and of the Holy Ghost. Matthew 28:19. For whatever gifts of God are set forth in baptism, are found in Christ alone. And yet it cannot be, but that he who baptizeth into Christ doth therewithal call upon the name of the Father and of the Holy Ghost. For we are therefore cleansed with his blood, because the merciful Father according to his incomparable kindness, willing to receive us into favor, hath set him as a mediator in the midst to procure us favor with him. But regeneration we only obtain, by his death and resurrection, if being sanctified by the Spirit we are endued with a new and spiritual nature. Whereof both of our cleansing and regeneration we obtain and after a certain manner distinctly perceive the cause in the Father, the matter in the Son, and the effect in the Holy Ghost. So John first baptized, so afterwards the apostles, with the baptism of repentance into the forgiveness of sin, meaning by this word repentance, such regeneration, and by forgiveness of sins, washing.

7. The Baptism of John, the same with that which the Apostles ministered, howsoever the old writers, Chrysostome and Augustine, separate the one from the other. — Whereby also it is made most certain, that the ministry of John was altogether the same which was afterward committed to the apostles. For the different hands wherewith it is ministered, make not the baptism different; but the same doctrine show« eth it to be the same baptism. John and the apostles agreed in one doctrine; both baptized into repentance, both into the forgiveness of sins, both into the name of Christ, from whom flowed repentance and forgiveness of sins. Acts 2:28. John said that He was the lamb of God, by whom the sins of the world should be taken away, John 1:29, where he made him the sacrifice acceptable to the Father, the propitiator of righteousness, the author of salvation.

What could the apostles add to this confession? Wherefore let it trouble no man, that the old writers labor to separate the one from the other, whose voice we ought not so much to esteem that it should shake the certainty of the Scripture. For who will rather hearken to Chrysostome denying that forgiveness of sins was comprehended in the baptism of John, than to Luke on the contrary affirming that John preached the baptism of repentance into the forgiveness of sin? Luke 3:3. Neither is that subtlety of Augustine to be received, that in the baptism of John sins were forgiven id hope, but in the baptism of Christ they are forgiven indeed. Whereas the evangelist plainly testifieth, that John in his baptism promised the forgiveness of sins, Luke 3:16, what need we abate this title of commandment, when no necessity compelleth us unto it? But if any may seek for a difference out of the Word of God, he will find no other but this, that John baptized into him that was to come, the apostles into him that had already presented himself.

8. The Baptizing not different, because the graces of the Spirit were various, which followed the ministry of John; and of Christ's apostles, yea, even of the apostles before and after Christ's ascension,— As for this, that more abundant graces of the Spirit, were poured out since the resurrection of Christ, it maketh nothing to establish a diversity of baptism. For the baptism which the apostle administered, while he was yet conversant in earth, was called his; yet it had no larger plentifulness of the Spirit, than the baptism of John Yea, even after his ascension, the Spirit was not given to the Samaritans above the common measure of the faithful before the ascension, although they were baptized into the name of Jesus, till Peter and John were sent unto them to lay their hands upon them. This only thing, as I think, deceived the old writers, that they said that the baptism of John was but a preparation to the baptism of Christ, because they read. Acts 8:14, that they were baptized again by Paul, who had once received the baptism of John But how much they were herein deceived, shall els6whei'e b6 plainly declared in place fit for it. ^yhat is it, therefore, that John said, that he baptized indeed with water, but that Christ should come who should baptize with the Holy Ghost, and with fire? Matthew 3:11. This may in few words be cleared. For he meant not to put a difference between the one baptism and the other, but he compared his own person with the person of Christ, saying, that himself was a minister of water, but that Christ was the giver of the Holy Ghost, and should declare his power by a visible miracle the same day that he should send the Holy Ghost to the apostles in the likeness of fiery tongues. Acts 2:8. What could the apostles boast of more than this? What more could they, also, that baptize at this day? For they are only ministers of the outward sign, and Christ is the author of the inward grace: as the old writers themselves everywhere teach, and especially Augustine, whose principal argument against the Donatists is this, that what man soever he be that baptizeth, yet only Christ is ruler of it.

9. The grace of mortification and purification assured unto us hj Baptism, shadowed to the people of Israel darkly under other figures. — These things which we have spoken, both of mortification and of washing, are shadowed out in the people of Israel, whom, for the same cause, the apostle saith to have been baptized in the cloud and in the sea. Mortifying was figured, when the Lord delivering them out of the hand of Pharaoh, and from crwel bondage, made for them a way through the Red Sea, and drowned Pharaoh himself and the Egyptians their enemies, that followed them hard at their backs, and were even in their necks to overtake them. 1 Corinthians 10:2. For after the same manner, also, he promiseth to ns in baptism, and, by a sign given, showeth us that we are by his power brought forth and delivered out of the thraldom of Egypt, that is to say, out of the bondage of sin; that our Pharaoh is drowned, that is to say, the devil, although

even so, also, he ceaseth not to exercise and weary us. But as that Egyptian was not thrown down into the bottom of the sea, but being overthrown on the shore, did yet, with terrible sight, make the Israelites afraid, but could not hurt them; so this our enemy yet indeed threateneth, showeth his weapons, is felt, but cannot overcome. In the cloud was a sign of cleansing. For as then the Lord covered them with a cloud cast over them, and gave them refreshing cold, lest they should faint and pine away with too cruel, burning of the sun. Numbers 9:14, so in baptism we acknowledge ourselves covered and defended with the blood of Christ, lest the severity of God, which is indeed an intolerable flame, should lie upon us. But although this mystery was then dark and known to few; yet, because there is no other way to obtain salvation, but in those two benefits, God would not take away the sign of them both from the old fathers, whom he had adopted to be heirs.

10. Faithful men by Baptism not rid of original sin but certified first that condemnation whereunto the corruption of their nature hath made them subject, is done away. Now it is clear, how false that is which some have lately taught, and wherein some yet continue, that by baptism we are loosed and delivered from original sin, and from the corruption which was from Adam spread abroad into his whole posterity, and that we are restored into the same righteousness and pureness of nature, which Adam should have obtained, if he had stood fast in the same uprightness wherein he was first created. For such kind of teachers never understood what was original sin, nor what was original righteousness, nor what was the grace of baptism. But we have already proved, that original sin is the perverseness and corruption of our nature, which first maketh us guilty of the wrath of God, and then, also bringeth forth works in us, which the Scripture calleth the works of the flesh. Galatians 5:19. Therefore these two points are distinctly to be marked, namely, that we being in all parts of our nature defiled and corrupted, are already for such corruption only, holden worthily condemned and convicted before God, to whom nothing is acceptable but righteousness, innocency, and cleanness. Yea, and very infants themselves bring their own damnation with them from their mother’s womb. Who, although they have not yet brought forth the fruits of their iniquity, yet have the seed thereof enclosed within them. Yea, their whole nature is a certain seed of sin, therefore it cannot but be hateful and abominable to God. The faithful are certified by baptism that this damnation is taken away, and driven from them; forasmuch, as we have already said, the Lord doth by this sign promise us that full and perfect forgiveness is granted both of the fault which should have been imputed to us, and of the pain which we should have suffered for the fault; they take hold also of righteousness, but such as the people of God may obtain in this life, that is to say by imputation only, because the Lord of his own mercy taketh them for righteous and innocent.

11. Secondly, that the works of the flesh shall not hear rule and have dominion over them. — The other point is, that this perverseness never ceaseth in us, but continually bringeth forth new fruits, namely those works of the flesh which we have before described; no otherwise than a burning furnace continually bloweth out flame and sparkles, or as a spring incessantly casteth out water. For lust never utterly dieth nor is quenched in men, until being by death delivered out of the body of death, they have utterly put off themselves. Baptism, indeed, promiseth us that our Pharaoh is drowned, and the mortification of sin; yet not so that it is no more, or may no more trouble us, but only that it may not overcome us. For so long as we live inclosed within this prison of our body, the remnants of sin shall dwell in us; but if we hold fast by faith the promise given us of God in baptism, they shall not bear rule nor reign. But let no man deceive himself; let no man flatter himself in his own evil, when he feareth that sin always dwelleth in us. These things are not

spoken to this end, that they should carelessly sleep upon their sins, who are otherwise too much inclined to sin; but only, that they should not faint and be discouraged, who are tickled and pricked of their flesh. Let them rather think that they are yet in the way, and let them believe that they have much profited, when they feel that there is daily somewhat diminished of their lust, till they have attained thither whither they travail, namely, to the last death of their flesh, which shall be ended in the dying of this mortal life. In the meantime, let them not cease both to strive valiantly, and to encourage them to go forward and to stir them up to full victory. For this also ought more to whet on their endeavors, that they see that after they have long labored, they have yet no small business remaining. This we ought to hold; we are baptized into the mortifying of our flesh, which is begun by baptism in us, which we daily follow; but it shall be made perfect when we shall remove out of this life to the Lord.

12. Baptism, according to St. Paul, the earnest of our regeneration,, the weakness of our nature hereunto, and the greatness of our comfort notwithstanding this weakness.— Here we say no other thing than the Apostle Paul in the seventh chapter to the Romans most clearly setteth out. For after that he had disputed of free righteousness, because some wicked men did thereof gather, that we might live after our own lust, because we should not be acceptable to God by the deservings of works; he addeth, that all they that are clothed with the righteousness of Christ are therewith regenerate in spirit, and that of his regeneration we have an earnest in baptism. Hereupon he exhorteth the faithful, that they suffer not sin to have dominion in their members. Now because he knew that there is always some weakness in the faithful; that they should not therefore be discouraged, he adjoineth a comfort, that they are not under the law. Ilom. 6:14. Because, again it might seem, that Christians might grow insolent, because they are not under the yoke of the law, he treateth what manner of abrogating thai is, and therewithal what is the use of the law, which question he bad now the second time discussed. The sum is, that we are delivered from the rigor of the law, that we should cleave to Christ; but that the office of the law is, that we being convinced of our perverseness, should confess our own weakness and misery. How forasmuch as that perverseness of nature doth not so easily appear in a profane man, who followeth his own lust without fear of God; he setteth an example in a man regenerate, namely, in himself. He saith, therefore, that he hath a continual wrestling with the remnants of his flesh, and that he is holden bound with miserable bondage, that he cannot consecrate himself wholly to the obedience of the law of God. Therefore, he is compelled with groaning to cry out, O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me out of this body subject to death! Romans 7:24. If the children of God be holden captive in prison so long as they live, they must needs be much carefully grieved with thinking upon their own peril, unless this fear be met withal. Therefore, he adjoineth to this use a comfort, that there is no more damnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. Where he teacheth, that they whom the Lord hath once received into favor, engrafted into the communion of his Christ, hath, by baptism, admitted into the fellowship of his church, while they continue in the faith of Christ, although they be besieged of sin, yea, and carry sin about with them, yet are acquitted from guiltiness and condemnation. If this be the simple and natural exposition of Paul, there is no cause why we should seem to teach any new unwonted thing.

13. Baptism the Badge of our Profession. — But baptism so serveth our confession before men. For it is a mark whereby we openly profess that we should be accounted among the people of God, whereby we testify that we agree with all Christians unto the worshipping of one God and into

one religion: Finally, whereby we openly affirm our faith, that not only our hearts should breathedout the praise of God, but also our tongues, and all the members of our body should sound it out with such utterances as they are able. For so, as we ought, all our things are employed to the service of the glory of God, whereof nothing ought to be void, and others may by our example be stirred up to the same endeavors. Hereunto Paul had respect, when he asked the Corinthians whether they had not been baptized into the name of Christ, 1 Corinthians 1:1, meaning, verily, that even in this that they were baptized into his name, they avowed themselves unto him, swore to his name, and bound their faith to him before men, that they could no more confess any other but Christ alone, unless they would forsake the confession which they had made in baptism.

14. The Author of Baptism is also the worker of grace spiritual therein figured, not enclosed. — Now, since it is declared what our Lord had regard unto in the institution of baptism, it is plain to judge what is the way for us to use and receive it. For so far as it is given to the raising, nourishing, and confirming of our faith, it is to be taken as from the hand of the author himself; we ought to hold it certain and fully persuaded, that it is he who speaketh to us by the sign, that it is he who cleanseth us, washeth us, and putteth away the remembrance of our sins, that it is he who maketh us partakers of his death, who taketh away from Satan his kingdom, who feebleth the forces of our lusts, yea, who groweth into one with us, that being clothed with him, we may be reckoned the children of God; that these things, I say, lie doth inwardly so truly and certainly perform to our soul, as we certainly see our body outwardly to be washed, dipped, and clothed. For this either relation, or similitude, is the most sure rule of sacraments; that in bodily things we should behold spiritual things, as if they were presently set before our eyes, forasmuch as it hath pleased the Lord to represent them by such figures; not for that such benefits are bound and enclosed in the sacrament, that they should be given us by the force thereof, but only because the Lord doth by this token testify his will unto us, that is, that he will give us all these things. Neither doth he only feed our eyes with a naked sight, but he bringeth us to the thing present, and together fulfilleth that which it figureth.

13. Cornelius and Paul, by Baptism, not endued with Grace, hut assured that they were endued through Faith, without which JBaptism doth but testify our unthankfulness. — Hereof let Cornelius, the captain, be an example, who was baptized, having before received forgiveness of sins and visible graces of the Holy Ghost, Acts 10:48; seeking not by baptism a larger forgiveness, but a more certain exercising of faith, yea, an increase of confidence by a pledge. Peradventure some man will object: why, therefore, did Ananias say to Paul, that he should wash away his sins by baptism, Acts 9:17, if sins are not washed away by the power of baptism itself? I answer, We are said to receive, to obtain, to get that which, so far as concerneth the feeling of our faith, is given us of the Lord, whether he do then first testify it, or being testified, doth more and certainlier confirm it. This, therefore, only was the meaning of Ananias; that thou mayest be assured Paul that thy sins are forgiven thee, be baptized. For the Lord doth in baptism promise forgiveness of sins; receive this, and be out of care. Howbeit I mean not to diminish the force of baptism, but that the thing and the truth is present with the sign, so far as God worketh by outward means. But of this sacrament, as of all others, we obtain nothing but so much as we receive by faith. If we want faith, it shall be for a witness of our unthankfulness, whereby we may be declared guilty before God, because we have not believed the promise there given. But so far as it is a sign of our confession, we ought by

it to testify that assurance is in the mercy of God, and our cleanness is in the forgiveness of sins, which is gotten us by Jesus Christ; and that by it vie enter into the Church of Christ, that we may with one consent of faith and charity live of one mind with all the faithful. This last point did Paul mean, when he saith that we are all baptized into one Spirit, that we may be one body. 1 Corinthians 12:13.

16. Nothing added unto, or taken from Baptism by their worthiness or unworthiness which are ministers of it, and therefore rebaptization not to be received. — Now, if this be true which we determine, that a sacrament is not to be weighed according to his hand of whom it is ministered, but as of the very hand of God from whom, without doubt, it proceeded; whereupon we may gather, that nothing is added to it, nor taken from it, by the worthiness of him by whose hand it is delivered. And even as among men, if a letter be sent, so that the hand and the seal be well known, it maketh no matter who or what manner of man be the carrier; so it ought to suffice to know the hand and seal of the Lord in his sacraments, by what carrier soever they be brought. Hereby the Donatists are very well confuted, who measured the force and value of the sacrament by the worthiness of the minister. Such at this day are our Carabaptists, who deny that we are rightly baptized, because we were baptized by wicked men and idolaters in the Popish kingdom; therefore they furiously call upon us to be baptized again. Against whose follies we shall be armed with a reason strong enough, if we think that we were professed by baptism, not into the name of any man, but into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, Matthew 28:19; and that therefore it is not the baptism of man, but of God, of whomsoever it be ministered. Although they were never so much ignorant or despisers of God and all godliness, who baptized us, yet they did not baptize us into the fellowship of their own ignorance or sacrilege, but into the faith of Jesus Christ; because they called not upon their own name, but the name of God, nor baptized us into any other name. Now, if it were the baptism of God, it hath, verily, enclosed in it a promise of the forgiveness of sins, the mortifying of the flesh, the spiritual quickening, and the partaking of Christ. So it nothing hindered the Jews to have been circumcised of unclean priests and apostates, neither was the sign therefore void, that it needeth to be done of new; but it was sufficient to return to the natural beginning. Where they object that baptism ought to be celebrate in the assemblies of the godly, that proveth not, that that which is faulty in part should destroy the whole force thereof. For when we teach what ought to be done, that baptism may be pure and void of all defiling, we do not abolish the ordinance of God, although idolaters corrupt it. For when, in old time, circumcision was corrupted with many superstitions, yet it ceased not to be taken for a sign of grace; neither did Josiah and Hezekiah, when they gathered out of all Israel them that had departed from God, call them to a second circumcision.

17. Baptism not made void by their remaining a long time in blindness that are baptized. — Now, whereas they ask us, what faith of ours hath yet followed baptism in certain years past, that they thereby might prove that baptism is void when it is not sanctified unto us, but by the word of promise received by faith: to this question we answer, that we indeed being blind and unbelieving, did for a long time not hold fast the promise given us in baptism; yet the promise itself, for as much as it was of God, continued always stayed, steadfast, and true. Although all men be liars and faithbreakers, yet God ceaseth not to be true; although all men be lost, yet Christ remaineth salvation. We confess, therefore, that baptism, for that time, profited us nothing at all; for as much as in it the promise offered us, without which baptism is nothing, lay nothing regarded. Now since,

by the grace of God, we have begun to wax wiser, we accuse our own blindness and hardness of heart, who have so long been unthankful to his so great goodness. Romans 3:3. But we believe that the promise itself is not vanished away; but rather thus we consider, God by baptism promiseth the forgiveness of sins, and since he hath promised it, he will undoubtedly perform it to all that believe it. That promise was offered us in baptism; by faith, therefore, let us embrace it. It hath indeed long been buried from us because of infidelity, now, therefore, let us receive it by faith. Wherefore, where the Lord calleth the Jewish people to repentance, he giveth them no commandment of a second circumcision, who being (as we have said) circumcised with a wicked and ungodly hand, lived a certain time entangled with the same wickedness. But he earnestly calleth upon the turning of the heart only. Because, howsoever the covenant was broken of them, yet the sign of the covenant, by the ordinance of the Lord, remained always steadfast and inviolable. Therefore, with the condition of repentance only, they were restored into the covenant which the Lord had once made with them in circumcision, which yet being received by the hand of a leaguebreaker priest, so much as in them lay they had defiled again, and the effect whereof they had quenched.

18. They whom John had Baptized, not rebaptized by Paul— But they think that they shake a fiery dart at us, when they allege that Paul rebaptized them which were once baptized with the baptism of John Acts 19:3. For if by our own confession, the baptism of John was altogether the same that ours is now; even as they having been before perversely instructed, when they were taught the true faith, they were again baptized into it; so that baptism, which was without true doctrine, is to be taken for nothing, and we ought to be newly baptized again into the true religion, wherein we are now just instructed. Some think that there was some ill affected man to John, who had entered them with their first baptism rather to a vain superstition. Of which thing to gather a conjecture hereupon, because they confessed themselves to be utterly ignorant of the Holy Ghost Whereas John verily should never have sent away from himself scholars so untaught. But neither is it likely that the Jews, although they had been baptized at all, were destitute of all knowledge of the Holy Ghost, which is famously spoken of by so many testimonies of Scripture. Whereas, therefore, they answer that they know not whether there be any Holy Ghost, it is to be understood as if they had said that they have not yet heard whether the graces of the Spirit, of which Paul asked them, were given to the disciples of Christ. But I grant that that was the true baptism of John, and all ore and the selfsame with the baptism of Christ; but I deny that they were baptized again. What, then, mean these words, they were baptized in the name of Jesus? Some do expound it, that they were but instructed of Paul with true doctrine. But I had rather understand it more simply to be the baptism of the Holy Ghost, that is to say, that the visible graces of the Spirit were given them by the laying on of hands; which to be expressed by the name of baptism, is no new thing. As on the day of Pentecost, it is said that the apostles remembered the words of the Lord, concerning the baptism of fire and of the Spirit. Acts 1:6. And Peter saith that the same came to his remembrance, when he saw those graces poured out upon Cornelius, and his household, and kindred. Neither is that contrary which is afterwards adjoined; when he had laid his hands on them, the Holy Ghost came down upon them. For Luke doth not tell of two divers things, but followeth the manner of telling commonly used among the Hebrews, who do first propound the sum of the matter, and then do set it out more at large. Which every man may perceive by the very framing together of the words. For he saith, When they heard these things, they were baptized in the name of Jesus. And when Paul laid his hands on them, the Holy Ghost came down upon them. In this latter sentence

we see what manner of baptism that was. If ignorance do so corrupt a former baptism, that it must be amended with a second baptism; the apostles should have been rebaptized first of all, who, in whole three years after their baptism, had scarcely tasted any small parcel of purer doctrine. And now, among us, what rivers might suffice to renew so many washings, as there are ignorances, by the mercy of the Lord, daily amended in us?

19. Accessory inventions of men added unto Christ's institution of baptism. — The force, dignity, profit, and end of the mystery, if I be not deceived, ought, by this time, to be plain enough. So much as concerneth the outward sign, I would to God the natural institution of Christ had prevailed so much as was meet, to restrain the boldness of men. For as though it were a contemptible thing to be baptized with water, according to the precept of Christ, there is invented blessing, or rather enchanting, to defile the true hallowing of the water. Afterwards was added a taper with chresme; but the blowing seemeth to open the gate to baptism. But although I am not ignorant how ancient is the beginning of this added pack; yet it is lawful, both for me and all the godly, to refuse whatsoever things men have presumed to add to the ordinance of Christ. When Satan saw that, by he foolish light credit of the world, at the very beginnings of the Gospel his deceits were easily received, he brake forth into grosser mockeries. Hereupon spittle, and like trifles, were openly brought in with unbridled liberty to the reproach of baptism. By which experiences let us learn, that nothing is either holier, or better, or safer, than to be content with the authority of Christ .alone. How much better, therefore, was it, leaving stage-like pomps, which dazzle the eyes of the simple, and dull their minds, so oft as any was to be baptized, that he should be presented to the assembly of the faithful, and be offered to God, the whole church looking on as a witness, and praying over him; that the confession of faith should be rehearsed, wherewith he that is to be catechized should be instructed; the promises should be declared which are contained in baptism; that the instructed should be baptized in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost; at length that he be sent away with prayers and thanksgiving. S is nothing omitted that might make to the matter, an 1 that the only ceremony which proceeded from God, the author thereof, should most clearly shine, being not overwhelmed with any foreign filthiness. But whether he be wholly dipped who is baptized, and that thrice or once, or whether he be but sprinkled with water only poured upon him, it maketh very little matter; but that ought to be at liberty to churches according to the diversity of countries. Howbeit, the very word of baptizing signifieth to dip, and it is certain that the manner of dipping was used of the old church.

20. Baptism not to he administered by private men, — This also pertaineth to the purpose, to know that it is done amiss if private men take upon themselves the administration of baptism. For as well the distribution of this as the supper is a part of the ecclesiastical ministry. For Christ did not command women, nor yet every sort of men, that they should baptize; but whom he had ordained his apostles, to them he gave .this .commandment. And when he commanded his disciples to do that in the ministration of the supper which they had seen him do, when he executed the office of a right distributor; he would, without doubt, that they should therein follow his example. As for this that in many ages past, yea, and in a manner at the very beginning of the church, it hath been received in use, that laymen might baptize in peril of death, if the minister were not present in time. I see not with how strong a reason it may be defended. The very old fathers themselves, which either held or suffered this manner, were not sure whether it were well done. For Augustine seemeth to have this doubt, when he saith, (Lib. contra, epi. parm. 2. cap. 13,) although a layman

compelled by necessity do give baptism, I cannot tell whether a man may godlily say that it ought to be reiterate. For if it be done when no necessity compelleth, it is the usurping of another man's office; but if necessity enforceth, it is either none or a venial sin. Moreover, of women it was decreed without any exception in the council at Carthage, that they should not presume to baptize at all. But there is danger, lest if he who is sick should die without baptism, he should be deprived of the grace of regeneration. Not so, God pronounceth that he adopteth our infants to be his own, before they are born, when he promiseth that he will be a God to us and to our seed after us. In this word is contained their salvation. Neither shall any man dare to be so reproachful against God, to deny that his promise is of itself sufficient to work the effect thereof. How much harm that doctrine being evil expounded, that baptism is of necessity to salvation, hath brought in, few do mark, and therefore they take less heed themselves. For where this opinion is grown in force, that all are lost to whom it hath not happened to be washed with water, our state is worse than the state of the old people, as though the grace of God were now more narrowly strengthened than it was under the law. For Christ shall be thought to be come, not to fulfill the promises, but to abolish them; forasmuch as the promise which then was of itself effectual enough to give health before the eighth day, now should not be of force without help of the sign.

21. Women not authorised to Baptize. — But how the custom was before that Augustine was born, first is gathered of Tertullian, that it is not permitted to a woman to speak in the church, nor to teach, nor to baptize, nor to offer, that she should not claim to herself the execution of any man's office, much less of the priest's. (Lib. cont. Pere. 1.) Of the same thing Epiphanius is a substantial witness, where he reproacheth Marcion, that he gave women liberty to baptize. Neither am I ignorant of their answer who think otherwise, that is, that common use much differeth from extraordinary remedy, when extreme necessity enforceth; but when he pronouncing that it is a mockery to give women liberty to baptize, excepteth nothing, it sufficiently appeareth that he condemneth this corruption, so that it is by no color excusable. Also in the third book, where teaching that it was not permitted even to the Holy Mother of Christ, he addeth no restraint.

22. Zipporah no precedent for women s taking upon them to baptize. — The example of Zipporah is unseasonably alleged. For whereas the angel of God was appeased, after that she, taking a stone, circumcised her son, thereupon it was wrongfully gathered that her doing was allowed of God. Otherwise it ought to be said, that the worshipping which the nations that were brought out of Assyria raised up, pleased God, but by other strong reasons it is proved, that that which a foolish woman did, is wrongfully drawn to an example of imitation. If I should say that it is a certain singular case, which ought not to be made an example, and especially that since it is no where read that in old time there was given to the priests a special commandment to circumcise, the order of circumcision and baptism is unlike; this should be strong enough to confute them. For the words of Christ are plain; Matthew 28:19, Go ye, teach all nations and baptize. When he ordained the self-same men publishers of the Gospel, and ministers of baptism; and none, as the apostle witnesseth, doth take honor upon himself in the church, but he that is called as Aaron, Hebrews 5:4, whosoever without lawful calling baptizeth, he rusheth into another man's office. Even in the smallest things, as in meat and drink, whatsoever we enterprize with a doubtful conscience, Paul openly crieth out to be sin. Romans 14:23. Therefore, in women's baptizing is much more grievously sin, where it is evident that they brake the rule appointed by Christ, forasmuch as we know that it is unlawful to pluck asunder those things that God conjoineth. But all this I pass over.

Only I would have the readers to note, that Zipporah's purpose was not to do any service to God. Seeing her son to be in danger, she grudged, and murmured, and not without stomaching threw the foreskin upon the ground, she so taunted her husband, that she was also angry with God. Finally, it is plain that all this came of a furiousness of mind, because she murmured against God and her husband, for that she was compelled to shed the blood of her son. Moreover, if she had in all other things behaved herself well, yet herein is an inexcusable rash presumption that she circumcised her son, her husband being present, not any private man, but Moses, the principal prophet of God, than whom there never rose any greater in Israel; which was no more lawful for her to do, than it is at this day for women in the sight of the bishop. But this controversy shall by and by be easily taken away by this principle, that infants are not debarred from the kingdom of heaven where it happeneth to depart out of this present life before that it be granted them to be dipped in water. But it is already proved that no small wrong is done to the covenant of God, if we do not rest in it, as though it were weak of itself; whereas the effect thereof dependeth neither upon baptism, nor upon any additions. There is afterward added to it a sacrament; i.e. a seal, not that it bringeth effectualness to the promise of God as to a thing weak of itself, but only confirmeth it to us. Whereupon followeth, that the children of the faithful are not therefore baptized, that they may then first be made the children of God, which before were & angers from the Church, but rather that they are therefore received by a solemn sign into the Church, because by the benefit of the promise they did already belong to the body of Christ. Therefore, if in omitting the sign there be neither slothfulness, nor contempt, nor negligence, we are free from all danger. It is, therefore, much more holy, to give this reverence to the ordinance of God, that we seek sacraments from no where else, than where the Lord hath left them. When we may not have them of the Church, the grace of God is not so bound to them but that we may obtain them by faith out of the Word of the Lord. THAT THE BAPTISM OF INFANTS DOTH VERY WELL AGREE WITH THE INSTITUTION OF CHRIST AND THE NATURE OF THE SIGN.

1. The Baptizing of Infants not devised and received only by rashness of men without warrant from God himself. — But forasmuch as in this age, certain frantic spirits have raised up sore troubles in the church for the baptism of infants, and do not yet cease to turmoil, I cannot choose but join here an addition to restrain their furiousness. If, peradveuture, it shall seem to some man to be very much too long, let him, I beseech him, weigh with himself, that we ought so much to esteem the pureness of doctrine in a most great matter, together with the peace of the church, that nothing ought to be loathsomely received, which may avail to procure them both. Beside that, I so study to frame this discourse, that it shall be of no small importance to the clearer declaration of the mystery of baptism. They assail the baptism of infants with an argument, indeed, favorable in show, saying, that it is grounded upon no institution of Christ, but that it was brought in only by the boldness of men, and perverse curiousness, and then afterward with fond easiness rashly received in use. For a sacrament, unless it rest upon a certain foundation of the Word of God, hangeth but by a thread. But what if, when the matter is well considered, it shall appear that the Lord's holy ordinance is falsely and unjustly charged with such a slander? Let us, therefore, search out the first beginning of it. And if it shall appear that it was by the rashness of men only, then bidding it farewell, let us measure the true observation of baptism by the will of God only. But if it shall be proved that it is not destitute of this certain authority, we must beware lest in pinching the holy ordinances of God, we be also slanderous against the author himself.

2. The right consideration of Baptism grounded upon the promise and spiritual mystery thereof, not upon the outward ceremony alone. — First, it is a doctrine well enough known, and confessed among all the godly, that the right consideration of the signs, consisteth not only in the outward ceremonies, but principally dependeth upon the promise, and upon the spiritual mysteries, for figuring whereof the Lord ordaineth the ceremonies themselves. Therefore, he that will perfectly learn of what value baptism is, to what end it tendeth, finally, what it is; let him not stay his thought upon the element and bodily fight; but rather let him raise it up to the promises of God which are therein offered us, and to the inward secrets which are therein represented unto us. He that knoweth these things hath attained the sound truth of baptism, and the whole substance thereof, as 1 may so call it; and thereby also he shall be taught, what is the reason, and what is the use of the outward sprinkling. Again, he that contemptuously passing over these, shall have his raind wholly fastened and bound to the visible ceremony, shall understand neither the force nor property of baptism, nor yet so much as this, what the water meaneth, or what use it hath. Which sentence is proved with so many and so clear testimonies of Scripture, that we need not at this present to tarry long about it. Therefore it remaineth now, that we seek out of the promises given in baptism, what is the force and nature of it. The Scripture showeth, that the cleansing of sins, which we obtain of the blood of Christ, is here first showed; then the mortifying of the flesh, which standeth upon the partaking of his death, by which the faithful are regenerate into newness of life, yea, and into the fellowship of Christ. To this sum may be referred whatsoever is taught in the Scriptures concerning baptism; saving that beside this it is a sign to testify religion before men.

3. The use of Circumcision under the Law. — But forasmuch as before the institution of baptism, the people of God had circumcision instead thereof; let us see in what these two signs differ the one from the other, and in what likeness they agree together. Whereupon may appear what is the relation of the one to the other. Where the Lord gave circumcision to Abraham to be kept, he telleth him before, that he would be God to him and to his seed, adding that with him is the flowing store and sufficience of all things, that Abraham should account that his hand should be to him a spring of all good things. In which words the promise of eternal life is contained, as Christ expoundeth it, bringing an argument from hence to prove the immortality of the faithful and the resurrection. For God, saith he, is not the God of the dead, but of the living. Matthew 22:32. Luke 20:38. Wherefore, Paul also showing to the Ephesians from what destruction the Lord had delivered them, gathereth by this that they had not been admitted into the covenant of circumcision, that they were without Christ, without God, without hope, strangers from the covenants of the promise, Ephesians 2:12; all which things the covenant itself contained. But the first access to God, the first entry to immortal life, is the forgiveness of sins. Whereupon is gathered, that this forgiveness answereth to the promise of baptism concerning our cleansing. Afterward the Lord taketh covenant of Abraham that he should walk before him in pureness and innocency of heart which belongeth to mortifying or regeneration. And that no man should doubt, that circumcision is a sign of mortifying, Moses in another place doth more plainly declare it, when lie exhorteth the people of Israel, to circumcise the uncircumcised skin of the heart, because they were separate chosen to be the people of God out of all the nations of the earth. Deuteronomy 10:16. As God, where he adopteth the posterity of Abraham to be his people, commandeth them to he circumcised; so Moses pronounceth that the hearts ought be circumcised, declaring, verily, what is the truth of this circumcision. Then that no man should endeavor toward it by his own strength, he teacheth that they need the grace of God. Deuteronomy 30:6. All these things are so

often repeated of the prophets, that I need not to heap into this place many testimonies which do each where offer themselves. We have proved, therefore, that in circumcision a spiritual promise was uttered to the fathers, such as in baptism is given; forasmuch as it figured to them the forgiveness of sins, and the mortifying of the flesh. Moreover as we have taught that Christ is the foundation of baptism, in whom both these things remain; so it is evident that he is also of circumcision. For he is promised to Abraham, and in the blessing of all nations, to the sealing of which grace the sign of circumcision is added.

4. The argument and difference between Circumcision and Baptism. — Now, we may easily see, what there is like in these two signs, or what there is differing. The promises, whereupon we have declared that the power of the signs consisteth, is all one in both, namely, of the fatherly favor of God, of the forgiveness of sins, of life everlasting. Then, the thing figured also is all one and the same, namely, regeneration. The foundation whereupon the fulfilling of these things standeth, is all one in both. Wherefore, there is no difference in the inward mystery, whereby the whole force and property of the sacraments is to be worked. The unlikeliness that remaineth, lieth in the outward ceremony, which is the smallest portion, whereas the chiefest part dependeth upon the promise and the thing signified. Therefore we may determine, that whatsoever agreeth with circumcision, doth also belong to baptism, except the difference of the visible ceremony. To this relation and comparison, the apostle's rule leadeth us by the hand, whereby we are commanded to examine all exposition of Scripture by the proportion of faith. Romans 12:3. And truly the truth doth in this behalf almost offer itself to be felt. For as circumcision, because it was a certain token to the Jews, whereby they were certified that they were chosen to be the people and household of God, and they again, on their behalf, professed that they yielded themselves to God, was their first entry into the Church; so now, also, we by baptism enter into profession of God, that we may be reckoned among his people, and mutually swear to his name. Whereby it appeareth out of controversy, that baptism is come into the place of circumcision, that it may have the same office with us.

5. Infants being partakers of the spiritual Grace, may not he denied the outward sign of Baptism, more than Jewish children Circumcision. — Now, if we list to search out, whether baptism be lawfully communicate to infants, shall we not say that he doth too much play the fool, yea dote, which will rest only upon the element of water and the outward observation, but cannot abide to bend his mind to the spiritual mystery? Whereof if there be any consideration had, it shall, without doubt, certainly appear that baptism is rightfully given to infants, as the thing that is due unto them. For the Lord, in old time, did not vouchsafe to admit them to circumcision, but that he made them partakers of all those things which were then signified by circumcision. Otherwise, he should with mere deceits have mocked his people, if he had fed them with deceitful signs, which is horrible even to be heard of. For he pronounceth expressly, that the circumcision of a little infant should be instead of a seal, to seal the promise of the covenant. But if the covenant remain unbroken and steadfast, it doth at this day no less belong to the children of Christians, than under the Old Testament it pertained to the infants of the Jews. But if they be partakers of the thing signified, why shall they be debarred from the sign? If they have the truth, why shall they be put back from the figure? Although the outward sign cleave fast together with the word in the sacrament, so that they cannot be plucked in sunder; yet if they be separately considered, whether of them, I pray you, shall we esteem of more value? Truly, since we see that the sign seeth the word, we must say that it is under it, and must set it in the inferior place. Since, therefore, the word of baptism is extended

to infants, why shall the sign, that is to say, the addition annexed to the word, be debarred from them? This one reason, if there were no more, were abundantly enough to confute all them that will speak to the contrary. That which is objected, that there was a day certainly set for circumcision, is altogether but a shift. We grant that we are not now bound to certain days like the Jews; but when the Lord, howsoever he certainly appointeth no day, yet declareth that he is pleased that infants should, with a solemn formal usage, be received into his covenant; what seek we more?

6. The children of Christian parents being holy seed as Abrahams were, as necessarily the one bound to be Baptized as the other to be Circumcised. — Howbeit the Scripture openeth unto us yet a certainer knowledge of the truth. For it is most evident, that the covenant which the Lord once made with Abraham, is at this day no less in force to Christians, than it was in old time to the Jewish people; yea, and that this word hath no less respect to Christians than it then had respect to the Jews. Unless, perhaps, we think, that Christ hath by his coming diminished, or cat short, the grace of his father. Which saying, is not without abominable blasphemy. Wherefore, as even the children of the Jews were called a holy seed, because being made heirs of the same covenant, they were made differing from the children of the ungodly; for the same reason, even yet also the children of Christians are accounted holy, yea, although they be the issue but of one faithful parent; and (as the apostle witnesseth, 1 Corinthians 7:14,) they differ from the unclean seed of idolaters. Now, when the Lord, immediately after the covenant made with Abraham, commanded the same to be sealed in infants with an outward sacrament. Genesis 17:12, what cause will Christians allege why they should not at this day testify and seal the same in their children? Neither let any man object against me, that the Lord commanded his covenant to be confirmed with no other sign than of circumcision, which is long ago taken away. For we have in readiness to answer, that for the time of the Old-Testament, he ordained circumcision to confirm his covenant; but circumcision being taken away, yet always remaineth the same manner of confirming, which we have common with the Jews. Wherefore we must always diligently consider what i-s common to both, and what they have distinct from us. The covenant is common, the cause of confirming it is common. Only the manner of confirming is diverse, because circumcision was that to them, in place whereof baptism hath succeeded among us. Otherwise, if the testimony whereby the Jews were assured of the salvation of their seed be taken away from us, it should be brought to pass by the coming of Christ, that the grace of God should be darker and less approved by testimonies to us than it was before to the Jews. If that cannot be said without extreme slander of Christ, by whom the infinite goodness of the Father bath more clearly and liberally than ever heretofore been poured forth upon the earth, and declared to men, we must needs giant, that it is at the least, not more pinchingly to be suppressed, nor to be set forth with less testimony, than it was under the dark shadows of the law.

7. Infants embraced, prayed fully, termed the heirs of the kingdom of heaven by our Savior Christ, and therefore not to be excluded from Baptism. — Wherefore the Lord Jesus, minding to show a token whereby the world might understand that he was come rather to enlarge than to limit the mercy of God, gently embraced children offered unto him, rebuking the disciples who went about to forbid them to come to him; forasmuch as they did lead those, to whom the kingdom of heaven belongeth, away from him by whom alone the entry is open into heaven. But (will some man say) what like thing hath baptism with this embracing of Christ? For neither is it reported that he

baptized them, but that he received them, embraced them, and wished them well. Therefore, if we list to follow his example, let us help infants with prayer, but not baptize them. But let us weigh the doings of Christ somewhat more heedfully than such kind of men do. For neither is this to be lightly passed over, that Christ commandeth infants to be brought unto him, adding a reason why, — because of such is the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 19:14. And afterward he witnesseth his will with deed, when embracing them, he commendeth them to his Father with his prayer and blessing. If it be meet that infants be brought to Christ, why is it not also meet that they be received to baptism, the sign of our communion and fellowship with Christ? If the kingdom of heaven be theirs, why shall the sign be denied them, whereby there is, as it were, an entry opened into the Church, that being admitted into it, they may be numbered among the heirs of the heavenly kingdom? How unjust shall we be, if we drive away them whom Christ calleth unto him? If we spoil them whom he garnisheth with his gifts? If we shut out them whom he willingly receiveth? But if we will examine how much that which Christ there did differeth from baptism, yet of how much greater price shall we have baptism, (whereby we testify that infants are contained in the covenant of God,) than receiving, embracing, laying on of hands, and prayer, whereby Christ himself being present, declareth that they both are his, and are sanctified of him? By the other cavillations, whereby they labor to mock out this place, they do nothing but bewray their own ignorance. For they gather an argument of this which Christ saith: Let little ones come to me, that they were in age good big ones which were already able to go. But they are called of the evangelists, ηιερηε, and ραιδια, by which words the Greeks do signify babes yet hanging on the breasts. Therefore, this word (to come) is simply set for (to have access.) Lo, what snares they are compelled to make, who are grown hard against the truth. Now, where they say, that the kingdom of heaven is not given to them, but to such as be like them, because it is said to be of such, not of them; that is no sounder than the rest. For if that be granted, what manner of reason shall the reason of Christ be, whereby he meaneth to show, that infants in age are not strangers from him? When he commandeth that infants be suffered to have access unto him, nothing is plainer, than that very infancy indeed is there spoken of. And that this should not seem an absurdity, he by and by addeth, of such is the kingdom of heaven. But if it must needs be that infants be comprehended herein, it must be plain, that by this word (such) are meant very infants themselves, and such as are like them.

8. Though it be not expressly mentioned in Scripture what infants were Baptized by the Apostles, yet when they are reported to have Baptized families, we have no reason to think that the Children in such families were not Baptized; no writer so old that maketh not the Baptism of infants as ancient as the Apostles' times — Now, there is no man that seeth not that baptism of infants was not framed by roan, which is upholden by so great approving of Scripture. Neither do they colorably enough play the fool, which object that it is no where found, that any one infant was baptized by the hands of the apostles. For although it be not expressly by name rehearsed of the evangelists, yet because again they are not excluded so oft as mention happeneth to be made of the baptizing of any household, who, unless he be mad, can reason thereupon that they were not baptized? If such arguments were of any force, women should be forbidden to partake of the Lord's Supper, whom we read not to have been received unto it in the time of the apostles. But here we are content with the rule of faith. For when we consider what the institution of the supper requireth, thereby, also, we may easily judge to whom the use thereof ought to be communicated. which we observe also in baptism. For when we mark to what end it was ordained, we evidently see, that it belongeth no less to infants than to elder folks. Therefore they cannot be deprived of it,

hut that the will of the Author must be manifestly defrauded. But whereas they spread abroad among the simple people, that there passed a long row of years after the resurrection of Christ, in which the baptism of infants was unknown, therein they most foully do misstate. For there is no writer so old, that doth not certainly refer the beginning ther of to the time of the apostles.

9. The fruit that cometh by Baptism both to children presented, and to such also as present them thereunto. — Now remaineth that we briefly show, what fruit cometh of this observation, both to the faithful which present their children to the Church to be baptized, and also to the infants themselves that are baptized with the holy water; that no man should despise it as unprofitable or idle. But if it come in any man's mind, upon this pretence to mock at the baptism of infants, scorneth the commandment of circumcision given by the Lord. For what will they bring forth to impugn the baptism of infants, which may not also be thrown bark against circumcision? So the Lord taketh vengeance of their arrogance, who do, by and by, condemn that which they comprehend not with the sense of their own flesh. Bat God furnisheth us with other armours, whereby their foolishness may be beaten flat. For this his holy institution, by which we feel our faith to be helpen with singular comfort, deserteth not to be called superfluous. For God's sign, communicated to a child, doth, as it were by an imprinted seal, confirm the promise given to the godly parent, and declareth that it is ratified, that the Lord will be God not only to him but also to his seed, and will continually show his good-will and grace, not to him only, but also to his posterity, even to the thousandth generation. Where, when the great kindness of God uttereth itself, first it yieldeth most largely to advance his glory, and overspreadeth godly hearts with singular gladness, because they are therewithal more earnestly moved to love again so godly a father, whom they see to have care of their posterity for their sakes. Neither do I regard, if any man take exception, and say that the promise ought to suffice to confirm the salvation of our children; forasmuch as it hath pleased God otherwise, who, as he knoweth out weakness, willed in this behalf, so much to bear tenderly with it. Therefore, let them that embrace the promise of God's mercy to be extended to their children, think that it is their duty to ofifer them to the church to be signed with the sign of mercy, and thereby to encourage themselves to a more assured confidence, because they do, with present eye, behold the covenant of the Lord graven in the bodies of their children. Again, the children receive some benefit of their baptism, that being engrafted into the body of the church, they are somewhat the more commended to the other members. Then when they are grown to riper age, they are not slenderly stirred up to earnest endeavor to worship God, of whom they have been received into his children by a solemn sign of adoption, before that they could by age acknowledge him for their Father. Finally, that same condemnation ought greatly to make us afraid, that God will take vengeance of it, if any man despise to mark his son with the sign of the covenant, Genesis 17:14, because by such contempt the grace offered is refused, and as it were foresworn.

10. The difference which the enemies of Baptism ministered unto children do put between the thing signified by Baptism and Circumcision, overthroweth them, their difference between the one and the other covenant most false. — Now let us examine the arguments, whereby certain furious men do not cease to assail this holy institution of God. First, because they see that they be exceedingly near driven and hard strained with the likeness of baptism and circumcision, they labor to pluck in sunder these two signs with great difference, that the one should not seem to have any thing common with the other. For they say that both divers things are signified, and that

the covenant is altogether divers, and that the naming of the children is not all one. But while they go about to prove that first point, they allege that circumcision was a figure of mortification and not of baptism. Which verily we do most willingly grant them. For it maketh very well for our side. Neither do we use any other proof of our sentence, than that baptism and circumcision are signs of mortification. Hereupon we determine that baptism is set in the place of circumcision, that it should represent unto us the same thing which in old time it signified to the Jews. In affirming the difference of the covenant, with how barbarous boldness do they turmoil and corrupt the Scripture and that not in one place alone, but so as they leave nothing safe or whole? For they paint unto us the Jews so to be carnal that they are liker beasts than men; with whom forsooth the covenant made proceedeth not beyond the temporal life to whom the promises given do rest in present and bodily good things. If this doctrine take place, what remaineth but that the nation of the Jews were, for a time, filled with the benefits of God, no otherwise than as they fat a herd of swine in a sty, that at length they should perish with eternal damnation. For so soon as we allege circumcision and the promises annexed unto it, they answer that circumcision was a literal sign, and the promises thereof were carnal.

11. Promises spiritual and heavenly, not earthly and carnal, only made to the fathers in the Old Testament. — Truly, if circumcision was a literal sign, there is no otherwise to be thought of baptism. For the apostle in the second chapter to the Colossians maketh the one no more spiritual than the other. For he saith that we are circumcised in Christ, with a circumcision not made with hands, putting away the body of sin that dwelleth in our flesh; which he calleth the circumcision of Christ. Colossians 2:11. Afterward, for declaration of that saying, he adjoineth, that we are buried with Christ by baptism. What meaneth he by these words, but that the fulfilling and truth of baptism, is also the truth and fulfilling of circumcision, because they figure both one thing? For he laboreth to show that baptism is the same to Christians, which circumcision had been before to the Jews. But forasmuch as we have now evidently declared that the promises of both the signs, and the mysteries that are represented in them, do agree together, we will for this present tarry no longer upon them. Only I will put the faithful in mind, that though I hold my peace, they should weigh with themselves whether it be taken for an earthly and literal sign, under which nothing is contained but spiritual and heavenly. , But that they should not mislead the simple, we will by the way confute one objection wherewith they color this most shameless misrepresentation. It is most certain that the principal promises, wherein were contained the covenant which in the Old Testament God established with the Israelites, were spiritual and tended to eternal life; and then again, that they were received of the fathers spiritually, as it was meet, that they might thereof receive affiance of the life to come, whereunto they longed with the whole affection of their heart. But, in the mean time, we deny not but that he witnessed his good-will toward them with earthly and carnal benefits; by which also we say that the same promise of spiritual things was confirmed. As when he promised everlasting blessedness to his servant Abraham, that he might set before his eyes a manifest token of his favor, he addeth another proraise concerning the possession of the land of Canaan. Genesis 15:1; Genesis 15:18. After this manner we understand all the earthly promises that are given to the Jewish nation, that the spiritual promise, as the head whereunto they are directed, should always have the chief place. But since I have more largely treated of these things in the difference of the New and Old Testaments, therefore now I do the more slightly touch upon them here.

12. The supposed difference which the adversaries of Infant Baptism do put between the ancient Circumcised, and the new Baptized seed of Abraham. — In the naming of the children they find this difference, that in the Old Testament they were called the children of Abraham, who issued of his seed, but that now they are called by that name, who follow his faith; and that, therefore, that carnal infancy, which was by circumcision grafted into the fellowship of the covenant, figured the infants of the New Testament, which are regenerate by the Word of God to immortal life. In which words we behold indeed, a small sparkle of truth; but herein these light spirits grievously offend, that when they catch hold of that which first cometh to their hand, when they should go further and compare many things together, they stand stiffly upon one word. Whereby it cannot otherwise be but that they must sometime be deceived who rest upon the sound knowledge of nothing. We grant, indeed, that the carnal seed of Abraham did, for a time, hold the place of the spiritual seed which is by faith grafted into him. For we are called his children, howsoever there is no natural kindred between him and us. But if they mean, as they plainly show that they do, that there was never spiritual blessings promised to the carnal seed of Abraham, herein they are much deceived. Wherefore we must level to a better mark, whereunto we are directed by the most certain guiding of the Scripture. The Lord, therefore, promised to Abraham that he should have a seed, wherein all nations of the earth shall be blessed; and therewithal assureth him, that he would be a God to him and Iris seed. Whosoever do, by faith, receive Christ, the author of blessing, are heirs of this promise, and therefore, are called the children of Abraham. Galatians 4:28; Romans 4:12.

13. The dignity of Abrahams children circumcised and uncircumcised, equal. — But although, since the resurrection of Christ, the bounds of the kingdom of God have begun to be far and wide enlarged into all nations without difference, that according to the saying of Christ, faithful ones should be gathered from every part to sit down in the heavenly glory with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Matthew 8:11, yet he had many ages before, extended that same so great mercy to the Jews. And, because, passing over all other, he had chosen out that nation only in which be would restrain his grace for a time, called them his peculiar possession, and his purchased people. Exodus 19:5. For testifying of such liberality, circumcision was given, by the sign whereof the Jews might be taught that God is to them the author of salvation; by which knowledge their minds were raised into hope of eternal life. For what shall he want, whom God hath once received into his charge? Wherefore, the apostle, meaning to prove that the Gentiles were the children of Abraham as well as the Jews, speaketh in this manner. Romans 4:10. Abraham, saith he, was justified by faith in uncircumcision. Afterward he received the sign of circumcision, the seal of the righteousness of faith, that he should be the father of all the faithful, both of uncircumcision and of circumcision, not of them that glory of circumcision only, but of them that follow to the faith which our father Abraham had in uncircumcision. Do not we see that both sorts are made equal in dignity? For during the time appointed by the decree of God, he ^vas the father of circumcision. When the wall being broken down, as the apostle writeth in another place, by which the Jews were severed from the Gentiles, the entry was made open to them also into the kingdom of God, he was made their father, and that without the sign of circumcision, because they have baptism instead of circumcision. But where he expressly, by name, denieth that Abraham is father to them who are of circumcision only, that same was spoken to abate the pride of certain, who, omitting the care of godliness, did boast themselves only of ceremonies. After which manner, at this day also, their vanity may be confuted who seek in baptism nothing but water.

14. The carnal and spiritual seed of Abraham heretofore, with the estimation due to them both. — But another place of the apostle out of the ninth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans shall be alleged to the contrary, where he teacheth that they who are of the flesh, are not the children of Abraham; but they only are counted as seed, who are the children of promise. For he seemeth to signify, that the carnal kindred of Abraham is nothing, which yet we do set some degree. But it is more diligently to be marked, what matter the apostle there treateth of. For, meaning to show to the Jews how much the goodness of God was not bound to the seed of Abraham, yea, how it nothing availeth of itself, he bringeth forth Israel and Esau for example to prove it; whom being refused, as if they were strangers, although they were according to the flesh the natural offspring of Abraham, the blessing rested in Isaac and Jacob. Whereupon is gathered that which he afterwards affirmeth, that salvation dependeth on the mercy of God, which he extendeth to whom it pleaseth him; and that there is no cause why the Jews should stand in their own conceit, or boast upon the name of the covenant, unless they keep the law of the covenant, that is to say, obey the word. Again, when he had thrown them down from vain confidence of their kindred, yet because on the other side he saw that the covenant which was once made of God with the posterity of Abraham, could in no wise be made void, in the eleventh chapter, he argueth that the carnal kindred is not to be spoiled of his due dignity; by the beneficial mean whereof he teacheth that the Jews are the first and natural heirs of the Gospel, but in respect that by their unthankfulness, they were forsaken as unworthy; yet so that the heavenly blessing is not utterly removed from their nation. For which reason, how much soever they were stubborn and covenant-breakers, nevertheless he calleth them holy, so much honor he giveth to the holy generation, with whom God had vouchsafed to make his holy covenant, but calleth us, if we be compared with them, as it were after born, yea, or the untimely born children of Abraham, and that by adoption, not by nature; as if a twig broken off from his natural tree, should be graffed into a strange stock. Therefore, that they should not be defrauded of their prerogative, it behoveth that the Gospel should be first preached to them; for they are in the household of God as it were the first begotten children. Wherefore this honor was to be given them, until they refused it being offered them, and by their unthankfulness brought to pass that it was carried away to the Gentiles. Neither yet, with how great obstinacy soever they continue to make war against the Gospel, ought they to be despised of us; if we consider that for the promises' sake, the blessing of God doth yet still remain among them; as verily the apostle testifieth that it shall never utterly depart from thence, because the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. Romans 11:29.

15. The like difference between the one and the other now in the Christian Church, — Behold of what force is the promise given to the posterity of Abraham, and with what balance it is to be weighed. Wherefore, although in discerning the heirs of the kingdom from bastards and strangers, we doubt not that the election of God only ruleth with free right of government; yet we also therewithal perceive, that it pleased him peculiarly to embrace the seed of Abraham with his mercy, and that the same mercy might be the more surely witnessed, to seal it with circumcision. No\v altogether like state is there of the Christian Church. For as Paul there reasoneth that the Jews are sanctified of their parents; so in another place he teacheth, that the children of Christians receive the same sanctification of their parents. 1 Corinthians 7:14. Whereupon is gathered, that they are worthily severed from the rest, which on the other side are condemned of uncleanness. Now who can doubt, but that it is most false which they do thereupon conclude, that say, that the infants which, in old time, were circumcised, did only figure spiritual infancy, which ariseth of the

regeneration of the Word of God. For Paul doth not so subtlety play the philosopher, where he writeth that Christ is the minister of circumcision, to fulfill the promises which had been made to the fathers, Romans 15:8, as if he had said thus: Forasmuch as the covenant made with Abraham hath respect to his seed, Christ to perform and discharge the promise once made by his Father, came to salvation to the nation of the Jews. See you not how also after the resurrection of Christ, he judgeth that the promise of the covenant is lo be fulfilled not only by way of allegory, but as the very words do sound to the carnal seed of Abraham. To the same intent serveth that which Peter, in the second chapter of the Acts, declareth to the Jews, Acts 2:39, that the benefit of the Gospel is due to them and their seed by right of the covenant, and in the chapter next following, he calleth them the children of the testament, that is to say heirs. Acts 3:25. From which, also, not much disaccordeth the other place of the apostle above alleged, where he accounteth and setteth circumcision imprinted in infants, for a testimony of that communion which they have with Christ. Ephesians 2:21. But if we hearken to their trifles, what shall be wrought by that promise, whereby the Lord, in the second article of his law undertaketh to his servants, that he will be favourable to their seed even to the thousandth generation. Shall we here flee to allegories? But that were too trifling a shift. Or shall we say this is abolished? But so the law should be destroyed, which Christ came rather to establish, so far as it turneth us to good unto life. Let it, therefore, be out of controversy, that God is so good and liberal to his, that for their sakes, he will save also their children, whom they shall beget, to be numbered among his people.

16. Absurd differences between Baptism and Circumcision to exclude children from the one, though from the other they were not excluded. — Moreover, the differences which they go about to put between baptism and circumcision are not only worthy to be laughed at, and void of all color of reason, but also disagreeing with themselves. For when they have affirmed that baptism hath relation to the first day of the spiritual battle, but circumcision to the eighth, when mortification is already ended, by and by forgetting the same, they turn their song, and call circumcision a figure of the flesh to be mortified, but baptism they call burial, into which none are to be put till they be already dead. What dotages of frantic men, can with so great lightness leap into sundry diversities? For, in the first sentence. Baptism must go before circumcision; by the other it is thrust back into the latter place. Yet is it no new example, that the wits of men be so tossed up and down, when instead of the most certain Word of God they worship whatsoever they have dreamed. We, therefore, say that that former differences a mere dream. If they listed to expound byway of allegory upon the eighth day, yet it agreed not in that manner. It were much fitter, according to the opinion of the old writers, to refer the number of eight to the resurrection which was done on the eighth day, whereupon we know that the newness of life dependeth; or to the whole course of this present life, wherein mortification ought always to go forward, till when life is ended, mortification itself may also be ended. Howbeit God may seem to have minded to provide for the tenderness of age, in deferring circumcision to the eighth day, because the wound should have been more dangerous to the children new born and yet fed from their mother. How much stronger is that, that we being dead before, are buried by baptism; when the Scripture expressly crieth to the contrary that we are buried into death to this intent, that we should die, and from thenceforth should endeavor to this mortification? Now, by a like method of arguing, they maintain that women ought not to be baptized, if baptism must be framed like to circumcision. For if it be most certain that the sanctifying of the seed of Israel was testified by the sign of circumcision; thereby also it is undoubted, that it was given to sanctify both males and females. But the bodies of male children

only were marked with it, which might by nature be marked; yet so that women were by them after a certain manner companions and partners of circumcision. Therefore sending far away such follies of theirs, let us stick fast in the likeness of baptism and circumcision, which we most largely see to agree in the inward mystery, in the promises, in use, in effectualness.

17. Children s want of understanding no reason to keep them from being Baptized, which is the seal of that sanctity whereof they are capable. — They think, also, that they bring forth a most strong reason why children are to be debarred from baptism, when they allege that they are not yet for age able to understand the mystery there signified. That is spiritual regeneration, which cannot be in the first infancy. Therefore they gather, that they are to be taken for no other than the children of Adam, till they are grown to age meet for a second birth. But the truth of God eachwhere speaketh against all these things. For if they are to be left among the children of Adam, then they are left in death; forasmuch as in Adam we can do nothing but die. But, contrariwise, Christ commandeth them to be brought unto him. Why so? because he is life. Therefore that be may give life to them, he maketh them partakers of himself, when, in the meantime, these fellows driving them far away do adjudge them to death. For if they say, for a shift, that infants do not therefore perish if their be accounted the children of Adam, their error is abundantly confuted by witness of the Scripture. For, whereas it pronounceth that all do die in Adam, 1 Corinthians 15:22, it followeth that there remaineth no hope of life but in Christ. Therefore that we may be made heirs of life, we must communicate with him: Ephesians 2:5. Again, when it is written in another place, that by nature we are subject to the wrath of God, and conceived in sin, Psalms 51:5, whereunto damnation perpetually cleaveth, we must depart out of our own nature, before that the entry be open to us into the kingdom of God. And what can be more plainly spoken, than that flesh and blood cannot possess the kingdom of God? 1 Corinthians 15:50. Therefore let all be done away whatsoever is ours, (which shall not be done without regeneration,) then we shall see this possession of the kingdom. Finally, if Christ say truly, when he reporteth that he is life, John 11:25; John 14:6, it is necessary that we be grafted into him, that we may be delivered out of the bondage of death. But, say they, how are infants regenerate, who are not endued with knowledge neither of good nor of evil? But we answer, that the work of God is not yet no work at all, although it be not subject to our capacity. Moreover, it is not doubtful that the infants who are to be saved (as verily of that age some are saved) are before regenerate of the Lord. For if they bring with them from their mother’s womb the corruption naturally planted in them, they must be purged thereof before that they be admitted into the kingdom of God, whereinto nothing entereth that is defiled or spotted. Revelation 21:27. If they are born sinners, as both David and Paul affirm, Ephesians 2:3, Psalms 51:5, either they remain out of favour and hateful to God, or they must needs be justified. And what seek we more, when the Judge himself openly affirmeth that the entry into heavenly life is open to none but to them that are born again? John 3:3. And to put such carpers to silence, he showed an example in John the Baptist, whom he sanctified in his mother’s womb, what he was able to do in the rest; Neither do they any thing prevail by the shift wherewith they here mock, that that was but once done; whereupon it doth not of necessity follow that the Lord is wont commonly to do so with infants. For neither do we reason after that manner, only our purpose is to show, that the power of God is by them unjustly and enviously limited within those narrow bounds within which it suffereth not itself to be bound. Their other by-shift is even of as great weight. They allege, that by the usual manner of the Scripture, this word (from the womb) is as much in effect, as if it were said, from childhood. But we may clearly see, that the angel, when he declared the same to

Zachariah, meant another thing; that is, that it which was not yet born, should be filled with the Holy Ghost. Luke 1:15. Let us not therefore attempt to appoint a law to God, but that he may sanctify whom it pleaseth him, as he sanctified this child, forasmuch as his power is nothing diminished.

18. Christ in his infancy sanctified, to show that Christian infants are capable of sanctity, — And truly Christ was therefore sanctified from his first infancy, that he might sanctify in himself his elect out of every age without difference. For as, to do away the fault of disobedience which had been committed in our flesh, he hath put on the same flesh upon himself, that he might in it, for us, and in our stead, perform perfect obedience; so he was conceived of the Holy Ghost, that having the holiness thereof fully poured into him in the flesh which he had taken upon him, he might pour forth the same into us. If we have in Christ a most perfect pattern of all the graces which God continually showeth to his children, verily, in this behalf also, he shall be a proof unto us, that the age of infancy it not so far unfit for sanctification. But howsoever it be, yet this we hold out of controversy, that none of the elect are called out of this present life, who is not first made holy and regenerate by the Spirit of God. Whereas they object to the contrary, that in the Scriptures, the Spirit acknowledgeth no other regeneration but of incorruptible seed, that is, of the Word of God, 1 Peter 1:23; they do wrongfully expound that saying of Peter, wherein he comprehendeth only the faithful who had been taught only by preaching of the Gospel. To such, indeed, we grant that the Word of the Lord is the only seed of spiritual regeneration; but we deny that it ought thereupon to be gathered, that infants cannot be regenerate by the power of God, which is to him as easy and ready as to us it is incomprehensible and wonderful. Moreover, it should not be safe enough for us to take this away from the Lord, that he may not be able to show himself to be known to them by whatsoever way he will.

19. No absurdity that infants have some spark of that heavenly light here, whereof in heaven the full brightness doth shine unto them though they die in their infancy.— But faith, say they, is by hearing, whereof they have not yet gotten the use, neither can they be able to know God, whom Moses teacheth to be destitute of the knowledge both of good and evil. But they consider not that the apostle, when he maketh hearing the beginning of faith, describeth only the ordinary distribution of the Lord, and disposition which he useth to keep in calling them that are his; but appointeth not to him a perpetual rule, that he may not use any other way. Which way, verily, he hath used in the calling of many, to whom he hath given the true knowledge of himself by an inward manner, by the enlightening of tlie Spirit, without any preaching used for mean thereof. But whereas they think it shall be a great absurdity if any knowledge of God be given to infants, from whom Moses taketh away the understanding of good and evil, Deuteronomy 1:39, I beseech them to answer me, what danger is there if they be said to receive some part of that grace, whereof a little after they shall enjoy the full plentifulness. For if the fulness of life standeth in the perfect knowledge of God, when many of them, whom in their very first infancy death by and by taketh away, do pass into eternal life, truly they are received to behold the immediate presence of God. Whom therefore the Lord will enlighten with the full brightness of his light, why may be not presently also, if it so please him, send out to shine upon them some small sparkle thereof; especially if he do not first unclothe them of ignorance before that he take them out of the prison of the flesh? Not that 1 mean rashly to affirm that they are endued with the same faith which we feel in ourselves, or have altogether like knowledge of faith, (which I had rather leave in suspense,) but

somewhat to restrain their foolish arrogance, who, according as their mouth is puffed up with fulness, do boldly deny or affirm they care not what.

20. Infants not excluded from Baptism more than from Circumcision, for want of Faith and Repentance. — But that they may yet stand more strongly in this point, they add, that baptism is a sacrament of repentance and faith, wherefore, since neither of these can befall in tender infancy, we ought to beware lest if they be admitted to the communion of baptism, the signification of it be made void and vain. But these darts are thrown rather against God than against us. For it is most evident by many testimonies of Scripture, that circumcision also was a sign of repentance. Moreover, it is called of Paul the seal of the righteousness of faith. Romans 4:11. Let therefore a reason be required of God himself, why he commanded it to be marked in the bodies of infants. For since baptism and circumcision are both in one case, they can give nothing to the one but that they must also therewithal grant the same to the other. If they look back to their wonted starling point, that then by the age of infancy were figured spiritual infants, the way is already stopped up against them. We say, therefore, since God hath communicated to infants circumcision, a sacrament of repentance and faith, it seeth no absurdity if they be made partakers of baptism, unless they list openly to rage against the ordinance of God. But both in all the doings of God, and in this selfsame doing also, shineth wisdom and righteousness enough to beat down the backbitings of the wicked. For though infants, at the same instant that they were circumcised, did not comprehend in understanding what that sign meant, yet they were truly circumcised into the mortification of their corrupt and defiled nature, in which mortification they should afterward exercise themselves when they were grown to riper age. Finally, it is very easy to assoil this objection, with saying that they are baptized unto repentance and faith to come, which although they be not formed in them, yet, by secret working of the Spirit, the seed of both lie dormant in them. With this answer, at once is overthrown whatever they wrest against us which they have fetched out of the signification of baptism. Of which sort is that title wherewith it is commended of Paul, where he calleth it the washing of regeneration and renewing. Titus 3:5. Whereupon they gather, that it is to be given to none but to such a one as is able to conceive those things. But we on the contrary side may answer, that neither was circumcision, which betokened regeneration, to be given to any other but to them that were regenerate. And so also we condemn the ordinance of God. Wherefore, (as we have already touched in divers places,) whatsoever arguments do tend to the shaking of circumcision, they have no force in the assailing of baptism. Neither do they escape, if they admit that we ought to take that for determined and certain, which standeth upon the authority of God, although there appear no reason of it; but that this reverence is not due to the baptism of infants, nor to such other things which are not commended unto us by the express word of God, since they are still fast holden with this double argument. For the commandment of God concerning infants to be circumcised, was either lawful and subject to no cavils, or worthy to be found fault with. If there were no inconvenience nor absurdity in the commandment of circumcision, neither can there any absurdity be noted in observing the baptism of infants.

21. No necessity that the understanding should go before the receiving of the holy mystery of Baptism — As for the spot of absurdity which in this place they go about to lay upon it, we thus wipe it away. Whom the Lord hath vouchsafed to elect, if having received the sign of regeneration, they depart out of this present life before that they be come to riper age; he reneweth them with the power of his Spirit incomprehensible to us, in such manner as he alone foreseeth to be

expedient. If they chance to grow up to age, whereby they may be taught the truth of baptism, they shall hereby be the more enkindled to the endeavor of renewing the token, whereof they shall learn to have been given them from their first infancy, that they should exercise themselves in it throughout the whole course of their life. To the same intent ought that to be applied which Paul teacheth in two places, that by baptism we are buried together with Christ, Romans 6:4; Colossians 2:12. For he doth not mean thereby, that he who is to be baptized, must be already first buried together with Christ, but simply declareth what doctrine is contained under baptism, yea, and that to them that are already baptized; so that very madmen would not affirm by this place that it goeth before baptism. After this manner, Moses and the prophets did put the people in mind what circumcision meant, wherewith yet they had been marked while they were infants. Of the same effect, also, is that which he writeth to the Galatians, that they when they were baptized did put on Christ. Galatians 3:27. To what end? Verily, that they should from thenceforth live unto Christ, because they had not lived before. And although in the older sort the receiving of the sign ought to follow the understanding of the mystery, yet it shall be by and by declared, that infants ought to be otherwise esteemed and accounted of. And no otherwise ought we to judge of that place in Peter, in which they think that they have a strong handle, when he saith that it is not a washing to wipe away the filthiness of the body, but the answer of a good conscience before God by the resurrection of Christ. 1 Peter 3:21. They, indeed, do gather thereby, that nothing is left to the baptism of infants, but that it should be a vain smoke; — from which this truth is far distant. But they often offend in this error, that they will have the thing in order of time to go always before the sign. For the truth of circumcision also consisted of the same witness of a good conscience. If it ought of necessity to have gone before, infants should never have been circumcised by the commandment of God. But he showing, that the answer of a good conscience was contained under the truth of circumcision, and yet therewithal also commanding infants to be circumcised, doth in that point sufficiently declare, that circumcision is applied to the time to come. Wherefore there is no more present efficacy to be required in baptism of infants, than that it should confirm and establish the covenant made by the Lord with them. The rest of the signification of that sacrament, shall afterward follow at such time as God himself foreseeth.

22. Baptism of infants proved by allegations brought to disprove it, as that it is ministered to the forgiveness of sins, that the Church is therewith cleansed of the Lord in the Word of Life, that thereby we are engrafted into our body of Christ. — Now, I think there is no man that doth not clearly see that all such reasons of theirs are mere misconstruings of Scripture. As for the rest that are of a near kind to these, we will lightly run through them by the way. They object that baptism is given unto the forgiveness of sins; which, when it is granted, will largely make for defense of our sentence. For, since we are born sinners, we do, even from our mother’s womb, need forgiveness and pardon. Now, seeing the Lord doth not cut off, but rather assure to that age the hope of mercy, why should we take from them the sign which is much inferior to the thing itself? Wherefore that which they go about to throw against us, we thus throw back against themselves; infants have remission of sins given them, therefore they ought not to have the sign taken from them. They allege also this, out of the Epistle to the Ephesians, Ephesians 5:26, that the church is cleansed of the Lord, with the washing of water in the Word of life. Than which there could be nothing alleged more fit to overthrow this error; for thereupon groweth an easy proof of our side. If the Lord will have that washing, wherewith be cleanseth his church, to be testified by baptism; it seemeth not right that it should want the testimony of it in infants, which are rightfully accounted part of the

church, forasmuch as they be called heirs of the heavenly kingdom. For Paul speaketh of the whole church, where he saith that it was cleansed with the baptism of water. 1 Corinthians 12:13. Likewise of this, that in another place he saith that we are by baptism grafted into the body of Christ, we gather that infants, whom he reckoneth among Christ's members, ought to be baptized, lest they be plucked away from his body. Behold with what violence, as with so many engines, they assault the fortresses of our faith.

23. The apostles in not baptizing any come unto years of discretion without repentance and profession made of their faith, meant not hereby to teach that none should be baptized hut only such as were of years to do this. — Then they come down to the practice and example of the time of the apostles, wherein none is found to have been admitted to baptism, but he who hath before professed faith and repentance. For where Peter was asked of them that were minded to repent, what was needful to be done, he counseled them first to repent and then to be baptized into the forgiveness of sins. Acts 2:37. Likewise Philip, when the eunuch required to be baptized, answered that he might be baptized if he believed with all his heart. Acts 7:37. Hereby they think that they may conclude that it is not lawful that baptism be granted to any, but where faith and repentance go before; truly if we yield to this reason, the first of these two places where is no mention made of faith, will prove that repentance alone sufficeth; and the other place, wherein repentance is not required, will prove that faith only is enough. I think they will answer that the one place is helpen with the other, and therefore must be joined together. I say, likewise, that other places must be laid together, which make somewhat to the undoing of this knot; forasmuch as there be many sentences in Scripture, the understanding whereof dependeth upon the circumstances of the place. As this presently is an example. For they to whom Peter and Philip spake these things were of. age sufficient to have practice of repentance and to conceive faith. We earnestly deny that such ought to be baptized, until after perceiving of their con. version and faith, at least so far as it may be searched out by the judgment of men. But, that infants ought to be accounted in another number, it is more than evident enough. For, in old time, if any man did join himself into communion of religion with Israel, it behooves that he should first be taught the covenant of the Lord, and instructed in the law, before that he were marked with circumcision, because in birth he was a stranger from the people of Israel, with whom the covenant had been made with circumcision established.

24. As Abrahams faith went before circumcision, hut in his seed circumcision before faith, so it is with baptism in Christian men and children. — As also the Lord, when be adopteth Abraham to himself, doth not begin at circumcision, hiding, in the meantime, what he meaneth by that sign; but first he declareth what covenant he intendeth to make with him, and then, after faith given to the promise, he maketh him partaker of the sacrament. Why doth, in Abraham, the sacrament follow faith, and in Isaac, his son, it goeth before all understanding? Genesis 15:1; Genesis 17:16. Because it is meet that he, who being in full grown age is received into fellowship of the covenant, from which he had been hitherto a stranger, should first learn the conditions thereof; but an infant, begotten of him, needed not so, which by right of inheritance, according to the form of the promise, is even from his mother's womb contained in the covenant. Or (that the matter may be more clearly and briefly showed) if the children of the faithful, without the help of understanding, are partakers of the covenant, there is no cause why they should be debarred from the sign for this that they cannot swear to the form of the covenant. This, verily, is the reason why in some places

God affirmeth that the infants which are issued of the Israelites, are begotten and born to him. Genesis 16:10; Genesis 22:17. For, without doubt, he esteemeth as his children, the children of them to whose seed be promiseth that he will be a Father. But he who is unfaithful, issued of godly parents, till he be by faith united to God, is judged a stranger from the communion of the covenant. Therefore, it is no wonder if he be not partaker of the sign, the signification whereof should be deceitful and void in him. To this effect Paul also writeth, that the Gentiles, so long as they were drowned in their idolatry, were out of the testament. Ephesians 2:12. With this short sum, as I think, the whole matter may be clearly opened; that they who, in grown age, embrace the faith of Christ, forasmuch as they were hitherto strangers from the covenant, are not to be marked with . baptism, unless faith and repentance come between, which only can open them the entry into the fellowship of the covenant; but the infants that are issued of Christians, as they are received of God into the inheritance of the covenant, so soon as they are born, so ought to be received to baptise. Hereunto must that be applied which the evangelist speaketh of, that they were baptized of John who confessed their sins. Matthew 3:6. Which example, at this day, also, we think meet to be kept. For if a Turk offer himself to baptism, he should not be rashly baptized of us, namely, not till after confession, whereby he may satisfy the church.

25. The words of Christ concerning birth of water and the spirit, nothing less than a proof that actual regeneration must presently always concur with Baptism. — Moreover they bring forth the words of \Christ, which are rehearsed in John 3:5, whereby they think that a. present regeneration is required in baptism. Unless a man he born again of water and the Spirit, be cannot enter into the kingdom of God. Lo, say they, how baptism is by the Lord's own mouth called regeneration. Then therefore whom it is more than enough known to be unable to receive regeneration, by what color do we admit to baptism which cannot be without regeneration? First, they are deceived in this that they think in this place mention is made of baptism, because they bear the name of water. For after that Christ had declared to Nicodemus the corruption of nature, and taught him, that men must be born of new, because Nicodemus dreamed of a bodily new birth, he there showed the manner how God doth regenerate us, namely by water and the Spirit; as though he should say by the Spirit which in cleansing and watering faithful souls, doth the office of water. Therefore, take water and the Spirit simply for the Spirit, which is water. Neither is this a new form of speech, for it altogether agreeth with the same which is in the third chapter of Matthew; he that followeth me, it is he that baptizeth in the Holy Ghost and fire. Matthew 3:11. Therefore, as to baptize in the Holy Ghost and fire, is to give the Holy Ghost, which hath the office and nature of fire; so to be born again of water and the Spirit, is nothing else but to receive that power of the Holy Spirit which doth the same thing in the soul that, water doth in the body. I know that others do otherwise expound it; but I am out of doubt that this is the natural meaning, because the purpose of Christ is no other but to teach that all they must put off their own nature who aspire to the heavenly kingdom. Howbeit, if we list to cavil unsavorily as they do, it were easy for us, when we have granted, as they would have it, to infer upon them that baptism is before faith and repentance; forasmuch as in the words of Christ it goeth before the spirit. It is certain that this is understood of Spiritual gifts, which, if it come after baptism, I have obtained what I require. But leaving cavils, we must hold fast the plain exposition, which I have brought, that no man, till he has been renewed with living water, that is, with the Spirit, can enter into the kingdom of God. 26. All unbaptized not to he adjudged to eternal death. — Now, hereby also it is evident, that their feigned invention is to be hissed out, who adjudge all the unbaptized to eternal death. Therefore, let us, according to their request, imagine

baptism to be ministered to none but to them that are grown in age; what will they say, shall become of a child who is rightly and well instructed with the introductions of godliness, if, when the day of baptizing is at hand, he happen to be taken away with sudden death beside all men's hope? The Lord's promise is clear, that whosoever hath believed in the Son, shall not see death, nor shall come into judgment, but is already passed from death into life; and it is nowhere found that he ever damned him that was not yet baptized. 1 would not be so understood as though I meant that baptism might freely be despised, by which despising I affirm that the Lord's covenant is defiled, so much less can I abide to excuse it, only it is enough for me to prove, that it is not so necessary, that he should be immediately thought to be lost, from whom power is taken away to obtain it. But if we agree to their feigned advice, we should damn all them without exception, whom any chance withholdeth from baptism, with how great faith soever, by which Christ himself is possessed, otherwise they are endued. Moreover, they make all infants guilty of eternal death, to whom they deny baptism, which by their own confession is necessary to salvation. Now let them look how trimly they agree with the words of Christ, by which the kingdom of heaven is adjudged to that age. Matthew 19:14. But, to grant them every thing so much as pertaineth to the understanding of this place, yet they shall gather nothing thereof, unless they overthrow the former doctrine which we have stablished concerning the regeneration of infants.

27. The Baptism of infants not disproved by the commandment which Christ gave to teach and baptize, nor by the premise of salvation which he maketh to every one that believeth and is baptized.— But they glory that they have the strongest hold of all in the very institution of baptism, which they fetch out of the last chapter of Matthew, Matthew 28:19, where Christ sending forth his apostles to all nations, giving them the first commandment to teach them, and the second to baptize them. Then also out of the last of Mark, they adjoin this, Mark 16:16, he that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved. Whatseek we further, say they, when the Lord's own words do openly sound, that we must first teach ere we baptize, and do assign to baptism the second state after faith? Of which order the Lord also showed an example in himself, who would be baptized not till the thirtieth year. But in how many ways do they both entangle themselves, and betray their own ignorance! For herein they now more than childishly err, that they fetch the first institution of baptism from thence, which Christ had from the beginning of his preaching given in charge to his apostles to minister. Therefore, there is no cause why they should affirm that the law and rule of baptism ia to be fetched out of these places, as though they contained the first institution thereof. But to bear with them for this fault, yet how strong is this manner of reasoning? Truly if I listed to dally with them, there is not a little lurking hole, but a most wide field offereth itself open for us to escape them. For when they stick so fast to the order of words, that they gather that because it is said, go, preach and baptize, Luke 3:23. Again, he that believeth and is baptized, Mark 16:16, therefore they must preach before that they baptize, and believe before that they require baptism; why may not we again answer them with saying that we must baptize before that we must teach the keeping of those things that Christ hath commanded, namely, since it said, baptize ye, teaching them to keep whatsoever things 1 have commanded you? which same things we have noted in that saying of Christ which hath been even now alleged conceiving the regeneration of water and the Spirit. For if it be so understood, as they would have it, verily in that place baptism must be before spiritual regeneration, because it is named in the first place. For Christ doth teach that we must be regenerate, not of the Spirit and water, but of water and the Spirit.

28. The Gospel by Christ's appointment, to he preached to men of capacity, and they to believe before they be baptized; but not infants therefore to be unbaptized till they come unto years of ability to hear and believe. — Now this invincible reason, whereupon they bear themselves so bold, seemeth to be somewhat shaken; but because truth hath defense enough in simplicity, I will not escape away with such light arguments. Therefore, let them take with them a full answer. Christ, in this place, giveth the chief commandment concerning the preaching of the Gospel, whereunto he adjoineth the ministry of baptism as an addition annexed to it. Again, he speaketh none otherwise of baptism, but in so far as the ministration of it is under the office of teaching. For Christ sendeth the apostles to publish the Gospel to all the nations of the world, that they should from each where, with the doctrine of salvation, gather together into his kingdom men that before were lost. But whom, or what manner of men? It is certain that there is no mention but of them that are able to receive teaching. Afterward he addeth that such, when they are instructed, ought to be baptized, adjoining a promise, that they who believe and are baptized shall be saved. Is there in all that so much as one syllable of infants. What form, therefore, of reasoning shall this be wherewith they assail us; they who are of grown age, must first be instructed, that they may believe ere they be baptized; therefore, it is unlawful to make baptism common to infants? Although they would burst themselves, they shall prove nothing else by this place but that the Gospel must be preached to them that are of a capacity able to hear it, before that they be baptized, forasmuch as he there speaketh of such only. Let them hereof if they can, make a stop to debar infants from baptism.

29. Children no more excluded from Baptism, by commandment given, that no men should he baptized before they believe, than from merely by the Apostle s injunction, that none should eat that labor eth not. — But that even blind men also may, with groping, find out their deceits, I will point them out with a very clear similitude. If any man cavil that infants ought to have meat taken from them, upon this pretence that the apostle suffereth none to eat but them that labor, shall he not be worthy that all men should despise him? Why so? Because he, without difference, draweth that to all men, which was spoken of one kind and one certain age of men. No whit better is their handling in this present cause. For that which every man seeth to belong to one age alone, they draw to infants, that this age also may be subject to the rule which was made for none but them that were more grown in years. As for the example of Christ it nothing upholdeth their side; he was not baptized before he was thirty years old. That is indeed true; but there is a reason thereof ready to be shown; because be then purposed by his preaching to lay a sound foundation of baptism, or rather to establish the foundation which had before been laid of John Therefore, when he intended along with his doctrine, to institute baptism, to procure the greater authority to his institution, he sanctified it with his own body, and that in such fitness of time as was most convenient, namely, when he began his preaching. Finally, they shall gather nothing else hereof, but that baptism took its origin and beginning at the preaching of the Gospel. If they list to appoint the thirtieth year, why do they not keep it, but do receive every one to baptism as he hath in their judgment sufficiently profited? yea, and Servetus, one of their masters, when he stiffly required this time, yet began at the twenty-first year of his age to boast himself to be a prophet. As though he were to be suffered that taketh on himself the place of a teacher in the church, before that he be a member of the church.

30. The Scripture showeth reason why the Lord's Supper should not be given unto infants, but with Baptism, none — At the last they object, that there is no greater cause why baptism should be

given to infants, than the Lord's Supper, which yet is not granted them. As though the Scripture and not every way express a large difference. The same was indeed usually done in the old church, as it appeareth by Cyprian and Augustine; but that manner is properly grown out of use. For if we consider the nature and property of baptism, it is truly an entry into the church, and as it were a form of admission, whereby we are numbered among the people of God, a sign of our spiritual regeneration by which we are born again into the children of God; whereas on the other side the supper is given to them that are more grown in age, who, having passed tender infancy, are now able to bear strong meat. Which difference is very evidently showed in the Scripture. For there the Lord, so much as pertaineth to baptism, maketh no choice of ages. But he doth not likewise give the supper to all to take part of it, but only to them who are fit to discern the body and blood of the Lord, to examine their own conscience, to declare the Lord's death, to weigh the power thereof. Would we have any thing plainer than that which the apostle teacheth, when he exhorteth that every man should prove and examine himself, and then eat of this bread and drink of this cup? Therefore examination must go before, which should in vain be looked for of infants. Again, he that eateth unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. 1 Corinthians 11:29. If none can partake worthily but they that can well discern the holiness of the Lord's body, why should we give to our tender children, poison instead of lively food? What is that commandment of the Lord, — Ye shall do it in remembrance of me? What is that other which the apostle deriveth from the same, — So oft as ye shall eat of this bread, ye shall declare the Lord's death till he come? What remembrance, I beseech you, shall we require at our infants of the thing which they never attained with understanding, what preaching of the cross of Christ, the force and benefit whereof they do not yet comprehend in mind? None of these things is prescribed in baptism. Therefore, between these two signs is great difference, which we note also in like signs in the Old Testament, circumcision which IS known to answer to our baptism, was appointed for infants. But the passover, into whose place the supper hath now succeeded, did not receive all manner of guests without difference, but was rightly eaten of them only that might by age inquire of the signification of it. If these men had remaining one crumb of sound brain, would they be blind to a thing so clear and manifest?

31. Twenty arguments of Servetus against Baptism of children answered. — Although it grieveth me to load the readers with a heap of trifles, yet it shall be worth the pains briefly to wipe away such light reasons as Servetus not the least of the Anabaptists, yea, the great glory of that company, thought himself to bring when he prepared himself to conflict. 1. He allegeth that Christ's signs as they are perfect, so do require that the receivers be perfect or able to conceive perfection. But the solution is easy; that the perfection of baptism, which extendeth even to death, is wrongfully restrained to one point of time. I say yet further, that perfection is foolishly required in man at the first day, whereunto baptism allureth us all our life long, by continual degrees. 2. He objecteth that Christ's signs were ordained for remembrance, that every man should remember that he was buried together with Christ. I answer that that which he hath feigned of his own head, needeth no confutation; yea, that which he draweth to baptism, Paul's words show to be proper to the holy supper, that every man should examine himself, but of baptism there is nowhere any such thing. Whereupon we gather that they are rightly baptized who for their smallness of age, are not yet able to receive examination. 3. Whereas he, thirdly, allegeth that all they abide in death who believe not the Son of God, and that the wrath of God abideth upon them, John 3:36; and therefore, that infants which cannot believe, lie in their damnation; I answer that Christ there

speaketh not of the general guiltiness wherewith all the posterity of Adam are enwrapped, but only threateneth the despisers of the Gospel, which do proudly and stubbornly refuse the grace offered them. But this nothing pertaineth to infants. Also I set a contrary reason against them; that whomsoever Christ blesseth, he is discharged from the curse of Adam and the wrath of God; since, therefore, it is known that infants are blessed of him, it followeth, that they are discharged from death. Then he falsely cited that which is nowhere read, that whosoever is born of the Spirit heareth the voice of the Spirit, which, although we grant to be written, yet shall prove nothing else but that the faithful are framed to obedience, according as the Spirit worketh in them. But that which is spoken of a certain number, it is faulty to draw indifferently to all. 4. Fourthly, he objecteth, because that goeth before which is natural, 1 Corinthians 15:46, we must tarry ripe time for baptism, which is spiritual. But although I grant that all the posterity of Adam, begotten of the flesh, from the very womb bear their own damnation, yet I deny that that withstandeth but that God may presently bring remedy. For neither shall Servetus prove that there were many years appointed by God before the spiritualness of life did begin. As Paul testifieth, although they who are born of the faithful are by nature damned; yet by supernatural grace they are saved. 1 Corinthians 7:14-15. Then he bringeth forth an allegory, that David going up into the tower of Zion, did lead neither blind men nor lame men with him, but strong soldiers. 2 Samuel 5:8. But what if I set a parable against it, wherein God calleth to the heavenly banquet blind men and lame men, Luke 14:21, how will Servetus unmnd himself out of this knot? I ask, also, whether lame and maimed men had not first been soldiers with David. But it is superfluous to tarry longer upon this reason, which the readers shall find by the holy history to be made of mere falsehood. 6. There followeth another allegory, that the apostles were fishers of men, not of little children. Matthew 4:19. But I ask, what that saying of Christ meaneth, that into the net of the Gospel are gathered all kinds of fishes. Matthew 13:47. But because I like not to play with allegories, I answer that when the office of teacliing was enjoined to the apostles, yet they were not forbidden from baptizing of infants. Howbeit I would yet know, when the evangelist nameth them Anthropous, men, (in which word is comprehended all mankind without exception) why they should deny infants to be men. 7. Seventhly, he allegeth, that since spiritual things agree with spiritual, 1 Corinthians 2:13, infants who are not spiritual are also not meet for baptism. But, first, it is plainly evident how wrongfully they wrest the place of Paul. There is treated of doctrine; when the Corinthians did too much stand in their own conceit for vain sharpness of wit, Paul rebuketh their sluggishness, for that they were yet to be instructed in the first introduction of heavenly wisdom. Who can thereof gather that baptism is to be denied to infants, whom being begotten of the flesh, God doth, by free adoption, make holy to himself? Whereas he saith, that they must be fed with spiritual meat, if they be new men, the solution is easy, that by baptism they are admitted into the flock of Christ, and that the sign of adoption sufficeth them, till, being grown to age, they are able to bear strong meat; that, therefore, the time of examination which God expressly requireth in the holy supper, must be taiTied for. Afterward he objecteth that Christ calleth all his to the holy supper. But it is certain enough that he admitteth none but them that are already prepared to celebrate the remembrance of his death. Whereupon followeth that infants whom he vouchsafeth to embrace, do stay in a separate and proper degree by themselves till they grow to age, and yet are not strangers. 8. Whereas he saith, that it is monstrous that a man after that he is born, should not eat i I answer, that souls are otherwise fed than by the outward eating of the supper; and that, therefore, Christ is nevertheless meat to infants, although they abstain from the sign. But of baptism the case is otherwise, by which only

the gate into the church is opened to them. 9. Again, he objecteth that a good steward distributeth meat to the household in due time. Matthew 24:45. Which although I willingly grant, yet by what right will he appoint unto us the certain time of baptism, that he may prove that it is not given to infants out of time.10. Moreover he bringeth in that commandment of Christ to the apostles, that they should make haste into the harvest, while the 6elds wax white. John 4:35. Verily, Christ meaneth this only, that the apostles seeing the fruit of their labor present, should the more cheerfully prepare themselves to teach. Who shall therefore gather that the only time of harvest is the ripe time for baptism? 11. His eleventh reason is, that in the first church, Christians and disciples were all one, Acts 11:26, but we see now that he foolishly reasoneth from the part to the whole. Disciples are called men of full age, who had been already thoroughly taught, and had professed Christ; as it behoved that the Jews under the law should he the disciples of Moses; yet no man shall thereof rightly gather, that infants were strangers whom the Lord hath testified to be of his own household. 12. Besides these, he allegeth that all Christians are brethren, in which number infants are not unto us, so long as we debar them from the supper. But I retcin to that principle, that none are heirs of the kingdom of heaven, but they that are the members of Christ; then, that the embracing of Christ was a true token of the adoption, whereby infants are joined in common with full grown men, and that they, abstaining for a time from the supper forbiddeth not but that they pertain to the body of the church. Neither did the thief that was converted on the cross, cease to be brother to the godly, although he never came to the supper. 13. Afterward he addeth, that none is made our brother but by the spirit of adoption, which is given only by the hearing of faith. I answer, that he still falleth back into the same deceitful argument, because he wiredrawetb that to infants which was spoken only of grown men. Paul teacheth there that this is God’s ordinary manner of calling to bring his elect to the faith, when he stirreth up to them faithful teachers, by whose ministry and labor he reachetli his hand to them. Who’ dare thereby appoint a law to him, but that he may by some other secret way graff infants into Christ? 14. Where he objecteth that Cornelius was baptized after he had received the Holy Ghost, Acts 10:44, how wrongfully he doth out of one example gather a general rule, appeareth by the eunuch and the Samaritans, Acts 8:16, in whom the Lord kept a contrary order, that baptism went before the gifts of the Holy Ghost. 15. The fifteenth reason is more than foolish. He saith that we are by regeneration made gods, and that they be gods to whom the Word of God is spoken, John 10:35, which accordeth not to children that be infants. Whereas he feigneth a godhead to the faithful, that is one of his dotages, which pertaineth not to this present place to examine. But to wrest the place of the Psalm to so contrary a sense, is a point of desperate shamelessness. Christ saith, that kings and magistrates are called of the prophets gods, because they bear an office appointed them of God. But that which, concerning the special commandment of government, is directed to certain men, this handsome expositor draweth to the doctrine of the Gospel, that he may banish infants out of the church. 16. Again he objecteth, that infants cannot be accounted new men, because they are not begotten by the word. But I do now again repeat that which I have often said, that to regenerate us, doctrine is the incorruptible seed, if we be fit to receive it; but when by reason of age tnere is not yet in us aptness to learn, God keepeth his decrees of regenerating. 17. Afterward he cometh back to his allegories, that in the law a sheep and a goat were not offered in sacrifice so soon as they came out of the womb. If I listed to draw figures to this purpose, I could readily object against them, that all first begotten things were consecrate to God so soon as they had opened the womb, then that a lamb must be killed at a year’s age. Exodus 13:2; Exodus 12:5. Whereupon

followeth that manly strength is not to be tarried for, but rather that the new and yet tender issues are chosen of God for sacrifices. 18. Furthermore, he affirmeth that none can come to Christ but they that have been prepared of John, as though John's office were not enduring but for a time. But to omit this, truly that same preparation was not in thfe children whom Christ embraced and blessed. Wherefore let him go with his false principle. 19. At length he calleth for patrons Trismegistus and the Sibylles, to prove that holy washings pertain not but lo them that are of grown age. Lo, how honorably he thinketh of the baptism of Christ, which he reduceth to the ceremonies of the Gentiles, that it may be no otherwise ministered than pleaseth Trismegistus. But we more esteem the authority of God, whom it hath pleased to make infants holy to himself, and to admit them with the holy sign, the force whereof they did not yet by age understand. Neither do we count it lawful to borrow out of the cleansings of the Gentiles any thing that may charge in our baptism the everlasting and inviolable law of God, which he hath stablished concerning circumcision. Last of all, he maketh this argument; that if it be lawful to baptize infants without understanding, then baptism may irreverently and in sport be ministered to boys when they play. But in this matter let him quarrel with God, by whose commandment circumcision was common to infants before that they had attained understanding. Was it therefore a matter of sport, or subject to the follies of children, that they might overthrow the holy ordinance of God? But it is no wonder that these reprobate spirits, as though they were vexed with a phrensy, do thrust in all the grossest absurdities for defense of their errors, because God doth with such giddiness justly take vengeance of their pride and stubbornness. Verily I trust I have made plain with how feeble succors Servetus hath helpen his silly brethren the Anabaptists.

32. The drift of Satan in stirring up contention about the Baptism of infants. — Now, 1 think it will be doubtful to no sober man, how rashly they trouble the Church of Christ, that move brawls and contentions against the baptism of infants. But it is profitable to consider, what Satan goeth about with this so great subtlety, even to take away from us the singular fruit of affiance and spiritual joy which is to be gathered hereof, and to diminish as much also the glory of the goodness of God. For how sweet is it to godly minds, to be certified not only by word, but also by sight to be seen with eyes, that they obtain so much favor with the heavenly Father, that he hath also care of their posterity? For here it is to be seen, how he taketh upon him the person of a most provident father of household toward us, which even after our death doth not lay away liis carefulness of us, but provideth and foreseeth for our children. Ought we not here, after the example of David, with all our heart to leap up unto thanksgiving, that by such show of his goodness his name may be sanctified? This, verily, Satan intendeth, in assailing with so great armies the baptism of infants, namely, that this testifying of the grace of God being taken away, the promise which by it is present before our eyes, may at length by little and little vanish away. Whereupon should grow not only a wicked unthankfulness toward the mercy of God, but also a certain slothfulness in instructing our children to godliness. For by this spur we are not a little pricked forward, to bring them up in the earnest fear of God and in the keeping of his law, when we consider, that even immediately from their birth, he taketh and acknowledgeth them for his children. Wherefore, unless we list enviously to darken the bountifalness of God, let us offer to him our children, to whom he giveth a place among them that are of his family and household, that is to say, the members of the church.

03.04. On the Lord's Supper.

ON THE LORD’S SUPPER.

1. The Sacrament of the Supper of Christ instituted to testify that our souls are not only once made alive, but continually kept and nourished by Christ as by food. — After that God hath once received us into his family, and not only to take us as his servants, but as his children; that he may fulfill the office of a most good father, and careful for his issue, he taketh also upon him to nourish us throughout the whole course of our life. And not contented therewith, it pleased him by a pledge given, to assure us of this continual liberality. To this end, therefore, he hath given his church another sacrament by the hand of his only begotten Son, namely, a spiritual banquet, wherein Christ testifieth himself to be the quickening bread, wherewith our souls are fed to true and blessed immortality. But forasmuch as the knowledge of so great a mystery is very necessary, and according to the greatness thereof, requireth a diligent declaration; and Satan, that ho might bereave the church of this inestimable treasure, hath long ago spread mists, and since that time darkness, to obscure the light of it, and then hath stirred strifes and battles, that might estrange the minds of the simple from tasting of this holy food. After giving a summary adapted to the capacity of the unlearned, I will undo those knots wherewith Satan hath endeavored to snare the world. First, bread and wine are signs, which represent unto us the invisible food which we receive of the flesh and blood of Christ. For, as in baptism, God again begetting us, doth graff us into the fellowship of his church, and by adoption doth make us his own; so we have said that he performeth the office of a provident father of household in this, that he continually ministereth us meat, that he sustaineth and preserveth us in that life whereunto he hath by his word begotten us. Now, the only meat of our soul is Christ, and therefore the heavenly Father calleth us to him, that being refreshed with common partaking of him, we may from time to time gather lively force, until we attain to heavenly immortality. But forasmuch as this mystery of the secret uniting of Christ with the godly is by nature impossible to be comprehended, he giveth the figure and image thereof in visible signs most fit for our small capacity; yea, as it were by earnest and tokens given, he maketh it so assured unto us as if it were seen with our eyes, because this so familiar a similitude entereth even to the grossest minds, that souls are so fed with Christ, as bread and wine do sustain the bodily life. Now, therefore, we have it declared to what end this mystical blessing tendeth, namely, to assure us, that the body of the Lord was so once oflfered for us, that we now eat it, and in eating it, do feel in us the effectual working of that only sacri6ce that his blood was so once shed for us, that it is unto us continual drink. And so sound the words of the promise there adjoined, — “Take eat, this is my body, which is delivered for you." The body, therefore, which was once offered up for our salvation, we are commanded to take and eat; that when we see ourselves to be made partakers of this, we may certainly determine, that the power of his death, which bringeth life, shall be effectual in ns.

Whereupon, also, he calleth the cup the covenant in his blood. For after a certain manner it reneweth, or rather continueth, the covenant which he hath once established with his blood, so much as pertaineth to the confirming of our faith, so oft as he reacheth unto us that holy blood to

be tasted of. Matthew 26:26, and Mark 14:22; Luke 22:19; 1 Corinthians 11:24.

2. The exchange which Christ hath made by taking that upon him which was ours, and communicating that which is His to us, confirmed by this sacrament. A great fruit, verily, of affiance and sweetness may godly souls gather of this sacrament, because they have a witness, that we are grown together into one body with Christ, so that whatsoever is his we may calf ours. Hereupon followeth, that we may boldly promise unto ourselves that everlasting life is ours, whereof he is heir; and that the kingdom of heaven, whereunto he is now entered, can no more fall away from us than from him: again, that we cannot now be condemned for our sins, from the guiltiness whereof he hath acquitted us, when he willed them to be imputed to himself as if they w-ere his own. This is the marvelous exchange, which of his immeasurable bountifulness he hath made with us; that he being made with us the Son of Man, hath made us with him the sons of God; that by his coming down into earth, he hath made for us a way to go up into heaven; that putting upon him our mortality, he hath given us his immortality; that taking on him our weakness, he hath strengthened us with his power; that taking our poverty to himself, he hath conveyed his riches to us; that taking to him the weight of our unrighteousness, wherewith we were oppressed, he hath clothed us with his righteousness.

3. Christ truly given and made ours in this sacrament, the whole pith whereof in a manner standeth herein, that for us the body and blood of Christ were offered, which we receive represented under bread and wine to teach that they are to the soul the same which these visible creatures are to the body. — Of all these things we have so full a witnessing in this sacrament, that we must certainly determine, that Christ is truly given us, as if Christ himself were set present before our eyes, and handled with our hands. For this word can neither lie to us, nor mock us. Take, eat, drink, this is my body, which is delivered for you, this is the blood which is into the forgiveness of sins. Whereas he commandeth to take, he signifieth that it is ours. Whereas he commandeth to eat, he signifieth that he is made one substance with us. Whereas he saith of the body that it is delivered for us, of the blood that is shed for us, therein he teacheth that both are not so much his as ours; because he took and laid away both, not for his behoof, but to our salvation. And truly it is to be diligently marked, that the chief, and in a manner, whole pith of the sacrament standeth in these words, — Which is delivered for you, which is shed for you. For otherwise it should not much profit us, that the body and blood of our Lord are now distributed, unless they had been once given forth for our redemption and salvation. Therefore, they are represented under bread and wine, that we should learn that they are not only ours, but also ordained for the nourishment of spiritual life. This is it that we before said, that from the corporal things which are showed forth in the sacraments, we are by a certain proportional relation guided to spiritual things. So when bread is given us for a sign of the body of Christ, we ought thereby to conceive this similitude; as bread nourisheth, sustaineth and maintaineth the life of our body, so the body of Christ is the only meat to quicken and give life to our soul. When we see wine set forth for a sign of his blood, we must call to mind what uses wine is of to the body, that we may consider that the same are brought to us spiritually by the blood of Christ; those uses are to cherish, to refresh, to strengthen, to make merry. For if we sufficiently weigh, what the delivering of this holy body, what the shedding of this holy blood, hath profited us, we shall plainly perceive that these things which are spoken of bread and wine, according to such proportional relation, do very well accord with them toward us, when they are communicated unto us.

4. The highest consideration in this Sacrament is of the promise whereby Christ hath testified his flesh to he meat, and his blood to he drink indeed. — Therefore the chief parts of the sacrament are not simply and without higher consideration, to reach to us the body of Christ; but rather that same promise, whereby he testifieth that his flesh is verily meat, and his blood is drink, with which we are fed into eternal life; whereby he affirmeth himself to be the bread of life, of which whosoever eateth, he shall live for ever; to seal, I say, and confirm that promise; and for bringing the same to pass, to send us to the cross of Christ, where that promise hath been truly performed, and in all points fulfilled. For we do not well and healthfully eat Christ as crucified, but when we do, with lively feeling, conceive the effectualness of his death. For whereas he calleth himself the bread of life, he doth not borrow the name of the sacrament, as some do wrongfully expound it; but because he was given as such of the Father, and performed himself such, when, being made partaker of. our human mortality, he made us partners of his divine immortality; when, offering himself for sacrifice, he took our accursedness upon himself, that he might fill us with blessing; when, with his death, he devoured and swallowed up death; when, in his resurrection, he raised up this our corruptible flesh, which lie had put on, to glory and incorruption.

5. The Sacrament maketh not Christ to be the bread of life but testifieth unto us that he is so to such as receive him in the due estimation of those mysteries whereby he is received, to receive him to eat his flesh and to drink his blood, an effect of belief, and a thing to be distinguished from faith. — It remaineth that by application all these blessings may come to us. That is done, both by the Gospel, and more clearly by the holy supper, where both he offereth himself to us with all his good things, and we receive him by faith. Wherefore the sacrament maketh not that Christ first beginneth to be the bread of life; but when it bringeth into remembrance that he was made the bread of life, which we continually eat, and when it giveth unto us the taste and savor of that bread, then it maketh us to feel the strength of that bread. For it promiseth us, that whatsoever Christ did or suffered, the same was done to give life to us. Then, that this giving of life is everlasting, by which we may without end be nourished, sustained, and preserved in life. For as Christ should not have been to us the bread of life, unless he had been born and had died for us, unless he had risen again for us; so now he should not be the same unless the effectualness and fruit of his birth, death, and resurrection, were an everlasting and immortal thing. All which Christ hath very well expressed in these words. “ The bread which I will give, is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." By which words, without doubt, he signifieth that his body should therefore be to us for bread, to the spiritual life of the soul, because it should be given forth to death for our salvation; and that it is delivered to us to eat of it, when, by faith, he maketh us partakers of it. Once, therefore, he gave it that he might be made bread, when he gave forth himself to be crucified for the redemption of the world; daily he giveth it, when, by the word of the Gospel, he offereth it to us to be received, so far as" it was crucified; where he sealeth that deliverance with the holy mystery of the supper; where he inwardly fulfilleth that which he outwardly betokeneth. Now herein we must beware of two faults, lest doing too much in abasing the signs, we seem to pluck them from their mysteries to which they are in a manner fast knit; or that being immeasurable in advancing the same, we seem, in the meantime, somewhat to darken the mysteries themselves. That Christ is the bread of life, wherewith the faithful are nourished into eternal salvation, there is no man but granteth, unless he be altogether without religion. But this point is not likewise agreed upon among all men, what is the manner of partaking of him. For there be that in one word define, that to eat the flesh of Christ and to drink his blood, is nothing else but to believe in Christ himself. But I think

that Christ meant some more certain and higher thing, in that notable sermon where he commendeth to us the eating of his flesh, namely, that we are quickened by the true partaking of him; which, also, he therefore expressed by the words of eating and drinking, lest any man should think that the life which we receive of him is conceived by bare knowledge only. For as not the sight but the eating of bread sufficeth the body for nourishment, so it behoveth that the soul be truly and thoroughly made partaker of Christ, that by the power of him it may be quickened into a spiritual life. But, in the meantime, we confess that there is no other eating but of faith, as there can no other be imagined. But this is the difference between my words and theirs, that with them to eat is only to believe; but I say that the flesh of Christ is eaten with believing, because by faith he is made ours, and I say that eating is the fruit and effect of faith. Or, if you will have it plainer, with them eating is faith; and I think it rather to follow faith. In words verily the difference is but small; but in the thing itself pot small. For though the apostle teacheth that Christ dwelleth in our hearts by faith, Ephesians 3:17, yet no man will expound this dwelling to be faith; but all men do perceive there is expressed a singular effect of faith, for that by it the faithful do obtain to have Christ dwelling in them. After this manner the Lord meant, in calling himself the bread of life, John 6:51, not only to teach that in the faith of his death and resurrection, salvation is reposed for us; but also, that by tnie partaking of himself it is brought to pass, that his life passeth into us, and becometh ours; like as bread, when it is taken for food, ministereth liveliness to the body.

6. The meaning of Saint Augustine and Saint Chrysostome when they speak of the participation of the body of Christ. — Neither did Augustine, whom they bring in for their patron, in any other meaning write that we eat by believing, than to show that this eating is of faith, not of the mouth. Which I also deny not; but yet therewithal I add, that we do by faith embrace Christ, not appearing afar off, but making himself one with us, that he may be our head, and we his members. Yet do not I utterly disallow that manner of speaking; but only I deny it to be a full declaration, if they mean to define what it is to eat the flesh of Christ. Otherwise I see that Augustine hath oft used this form of speech; as when he saith in the third book of Christian doctrine, unless ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man; this a figure teaching that we must comnmnicate with the passion of the Lord, and must sweetly and profitably lay up in remembrance that for us his flesh was crucified and wounded. Again, when he saith that the three thousand men that were converted at Peter’s sermon, Acts 2:41, did drink the blood of Christ by believing, which they had shed by cruel dealing. {Hom, in Job 31:1-40; Job 40:1-24.) But in many other places he honorably setteth out that benefit of faith, that by it our souls are no less refreshed with the communicating of the flesh of Christ, than our bodies are with the bread which they eat. And the same is it which in a certain place Chrysostome writeth, that Christ doth not only by faith, but also really make us his body. Hom. 60. For he meaneth not tliat we do from any other where than from faith, obtain such a benefit; but this only he meaneth to exclude that none when he heareth faith to be named, should conceive a naked imagination. As for them that will have the supper to be only a mark of outward profession, I do now pass them over, because I think that I have sufficiently confuted their error, when I treated of sacraments in general. Only this thing, let the readers mark, that when the cup is called the covenant in the blood, Luke 22:20, there is a promise expressed that may be of force to confirm faith. Whereupon followeth, that unless we have respect to God, and embrace that which he offereth, we do not rightly use the holy supper.

7. They strain the communion of Christ too narrowly who make it nothing but the participation of his Spirit only. — Moreover they also do not satisfy, who acknowledging that we have some communion with Christ, when they mean to express it, do make us partakers only of the Spirit, without making any mention of flesh and blood. As though all those things were spoken of nothing, that his flesh is verily meat, that his blood is verily drink; that none hath life, but he that eateth that flesh, and drinketh that blood; and such other sayings that belong to the same end. Wherefore if it be certain that the full communicating of Christ proceedeth beyond their description, as it is too narrowly strained, I will now go about to sum up in few words, how large it is, and how far it extendeth itself, before that I speak of the contrary fault of excess. For I shall have a longer disputation with the excessive teachers, who, when according to their own grossness they frame a manner of eating and drinking full of absurdity, do also transfigure Christ stripped out of this flesh into a fantasy; if yet a man may with any words comprehend so great a mystery, which I see that I cannot sufficiently comprehend with mind; and therefore I do willingly confess it, that no man should measure the highness thereof, by the small proportion of my childishness. But rather I exhort the readers, that they do not restrain the sense of their minds within these two narrow bounds; but endeavor to rise up much higher than they can by my guiding. For I myself, so oft as I speak of this thing when I have labored to say all, think that I have yet said but little in respect of the worthiness thereof. And although the mind can do more in thinking than the tongue in expressing, yet with the greatness of the thing, the mind also is surmounted and overwhelmed. Finally, therefore, nothing remaineth, but that I must break forth into admiration of that mystery, which neither the mind can suffice to think of, nor the tongue to declare. Yet after such a manner as I can, I will set forth the sum of my sentence; which as I nothing doubt to be true, so I trust that it will not be disallowed of godly hearts.

8. Christ from the beginning the fountain of life, by taking our flesh maketh it of powers being fed on the sustenance that nourisheth on to immortality. — First of all, we are taught out of the Scripture, that Christ was from the beginning that life-bringing word of the Father, the fountain and original of life, from whence all things ever received their life. Wherefore John sometimes calleth him the Word of life, and sometimes writeth that life was in him; meaning that he even then, flowing into all creatures, poured into them the power of breathing and living. Yet the same John addeth afterward, that the life was then and not till then openly showed, when the Son of God taking upon Him our flesh gave himself to be seen with eyes, and felt with bands. For though he did before also spread abroad his power into the creatures; yet because man, being by sin estranged from God, having lost the communion of life, saw on every side death hanging over him; it behoved that he should be received into the communion of that word, that he might recover hope of immortality. For how small a confidence mayest thou conceive thereof, if thou hear that the Word of God indeed, from which thou art most far removed, containeth in itself the fullness of life, but in thyself and round about thee nothing offereth itself and is present before thine eyes but death? But since that fountain of life began to dwell in our flesh, it lieth not afar off hidden from us, but presently delivereth itself to be partaken of by us. Yea, and it maketh the very flesh, wherein it resteth, to be of power to bring life to us, that by partaking thereof, we may be fed to immortality. I am, saith lie, the bread of life, that am come down from heaven. And the bread which I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. John 6:48; John 6:58. In which words he teacheth not only that he is life, in respect that he is the eternal Word of God which came down to us from heaven, but that in coming down be poured the same power into the flesh which he did put

on, that from thence the communicating of life might flow forth unto us. Hereupon also these things now follow, that his flesh is verily meat, and his blood is verily drink; with which sustenances the faithful are nourished into eternal life. Herein therefore consisteth singular comfort to the godly, that now they find life in their own flesh. For so they do not only with easy passage attain unto it, but have it of itself laid abroad for them and offering itself unto them. Only let them hold open the bosom of their heart that they may embrace it, being present, and they shall obtain it.

9. The flesh of Christ being (though not of itself) an unwasted fountain from whence life floweth; he that will live must (f necessity he partaker thereof and have fellowship with it, — But although the flesh of Christ have not so great power of itself, that it can give life to us, which both in its first estate was subject to mortality, and now being endued with immortality, liveth not by itself; yet it is rightfully called life-bringing, which is filled with fullness of life to pour it into us. In which meaning I do with Cyril expound that saying of Christ: — As the Father bath life in himself, so he hath also given to the Son to have life in himself. John 5:26. For there he properly speaketh of his gifts, not which he from the beginning possessed with the Father, but with which lie was garnished in the same flesh in which he appeared. Therefore he showeth that in his manhood also dwelleth the fullness of life, that whosoever partaketh of his flesh and blood, may therewithal also enjoy the partaking of life. Of what sort that is, we may declare by a familiar example. For as out of a fountain water is sometimes drunk, sometimes is drawn, sometimes by furrows is conveyed to the watering of grounds, which yet of itself doth not overflow into so many uses, but from the very spring itself with which everlasting flowing yieldeth and ministereth unto it from time to time new abundance; so the flesh of Christ is like a rich and unwasted fountain, which poureth into us the life springing from the Godhead into itself. Now who seeth not that the communion of the flesh and blood of Christ is necessary to all that aspire to heavenly life? Hereunto tendeth that saying of the apostle, that the church is the body of Christ and the fulfilling of it; and that he is the head out of which the whole body coupled and knit together by joints maketh increase of the body; that our bodies are the members of Christ. All which things we understand to be impossible to be brought to pass, but when he wholly cleaves to us in spirit and body. But that most near fellowship whereby we are coupled with his flesh, he hath yet set out with a more glorious title, when he said that we are members of his body, and are of his bones and of his flesh. At the last to declare it to be a matter greater than all words, he concludeth his saying with an exclamation: This is (saith he) a great mystery. Ephesians 5:30. Therefore it should be a point of extreme madness to acknowledge no communion of the faithful with the flesh and blood of the Lord, when the apostle declareth it to U so great, that he had rather wonder at it than express it.

10. The body and blood of Christ truly given, and not bare and naked figures thereof, in this Sacrament.— Let the sum be, that our souls are so fed with the flesh and blood of Christ, as bread and wine do maintain and sustain the bodily life. For otherwise the proportional relation of the sign should not agree, unless souls did find their food in Christ. Which cannot be done, unless Christ do truly grow into one with us, and refresh us with the eating of his flesh and drinking of his blood. But although it seem incredible, that in so great distance of places the flesh of Christ reacheth to us, that it may be meat to us; let us remember how much the secret power of the Spirit surmounteth above all our senses, and how foolish it is to go about to measure his unmeasurableness by our measure. That, therefore, which our mind comprehendeth not, let our faith conceive, that the Spirit truly knitteth in one those things that are severed in places. Now that same holy communicating of

his body and blood, whereby Christ poureth his life into us, even as if he had pierced it into our bones and marrows, he, m the supper, also testifieth and sealeth; and that not with setting before us a vain or void sign, but bringing forth there the effectual working of his Spirit, whereby he fulfilleth that which he proraiseth. And verily ho there offereth and delivereth the thing signified to all them that sit at that spiritual banquet, although it be received with fruit by the faithful only, which receive so great bountifulness with true faith and thankfulness of mind. After which manner the apostle said, that the bread which we break is the communion of the body of Christ; and that the cup which we hallow with the word and prayers to that purpose, is the communion of his blood. 2 Corinthians 10:16. Neither is there any cause why any man should object that it is a figurative speech, by which the name of the thing signified is given to the sign. I grant verily that the breaking of the bread is a sign, not the thing itself. But this being admitted, yet we shall rightly gather of the deliverance of the sign, that the thing itself is delivered. For unless a man will call God a deceiver, he can never be so bold as to say that he setteth before us an empty sign. Therefore if, by the breaking of bread, the Lord doth truly represent the partaking of his body, it ought to be out of doubt that he truly performeth and delivereth it. And this rule is always to be holden of the godly, that so oft as they see the signs ordained of the Lord, they certainly think and persuade themselves that the truth of the thing signified is there present. For to what purpose should the Lord deliver into thy hand the sign of his body, but to assure thee of the true partaking of it? If it be true that a visible sign is given us, to seal the gift of an invisible thing; when we receive the sign of the body, let us no less certainly believe that the body itself also is given us.

11. Christ himself by faith, even his body and bloody truly participated in this Sacrament. — I say, therefore, (which both hath been always received in the church, and all they teach at this day that think right) that the holy mystery of the supper consisteth of two things; that is to say of the bodily signs, which being set before our eyes do represent unto us invisible things according to the capacity of our weakness; and of spiritual truth, which is by those signs both figured and delivered. Of what sort that is, when I mean to show it familiarly, I use to set three things: the signification; the matter which dependeth on the signification; the virtue or eflfect which followeth of both. The signification consisteth in the promises, which are after a certain manner, wrapped together with a sign. The matter or substance I call Christ, with his death and resurrection. By effect, 1 understand the redemption, righteousness, sanctification, and eternal life, and whatsoever other benefits Christ bringeth us. Now, although all these things have respect to faith, yet I leave no place to this cavil; as though when I say that Christ is received by faith, I would have him conceived with understanding only and imagination. For the promises offer him, not that we should stick fast in the sight alone and in bare knowledge, but that we should enjoy the true communicating of him. And truly I see not how any man may have confidence that he hath redemption and righteousness in the cross of Christ, and life in his death, but principally standing upon the true communion of Christ himself. For those good things should not come to us unless Christ first made himself ours. I say, therefore, that in the mystery of the supper, by the signs of bread and wine, Christ is truly delivered to us, yea, and his body and blood, in which he hath fulfilled all obedience for purchasing of righteousness to us; namely, that first we should grow together into one body with him; and then being made partakers of his substance, we may also feel his power in the communicating of all his good things.

12. A local presence of the body of Christ not needful unto this that we may enjoy the partaking of that which the Spirit of Christ performeth without such grossness. — Now I come down to the excessive mixtures which superstition hath brought in. For herein Satan hath played with marvelous subtlety, that withdrawing the minds of men from heaven, he might fill them with perverse error, as though Christ were fastened to the element of bread. And, first, we must not dream of such a presence of Christ in the sacrament, as the craftsmen of the court of Rome have feigned; as though the body of Christ were made present with presence of place, to be handled with hands, to be bruised with teeth, and swallowed with mouth. For this form of recantation Pope Nicholas endited to Berengarius, to be a witness of his repentance; namely, with words so far monstrous, that the author of the gloss crieth out that there is danger, if the readers do not wisely take heed to themselves, lest they suck out of them an heresy worse than was that of Berenganus. In the second distinction, in the chapter beginning thus, — Jego Berengarius. But Peter Lombard, although he labor much in excusing the absurdity, yet more inclineth to the contrary sentence. For, as we do not doubt that it hath limits according to the perpetual nature of the body of men, and is holden in heaven, into which it was once received, until he return to judgment; so to draw it back, under these corruptible elements, or to imagine it present every where, we account it to be utterly unlawful. Neither, verily, is it so needful to this that we may enjoy the partaking of it; forasmuch as the Lord giveth us this benefit by his Spirit, that we may be made one with him in body, spirit, and soul. The bond, therefore, of this union is the Spirit of Christ, by the uniting whereof we are coupled together, and, as it were, a certain conduit, by which, whatsoever Christ himself both is and hath, is conveyed to us. (Chryso. Ser. de Spiritu. Sancto.) For if we behold the sun shining forth with his beams upon the earth, after a certain manner, to cast forth his substance unto it to engender, nourish, and quicken the fruits thereof, why should the extending of the beams of the Spirit of Christ be inferior to convey the communion of his flesh and blood into us? Wherefore the Scripture, when it speaketh of our partaking with Christ, referreth the whole virtue thereof to the Spirit. Yet, instead of many, one place shall be sufficient. For Paul, in the eighth chapter to the Romans, saith that Christ dwelleth in us no otherwise than by his Spirit: whereby yet he taketh not away that communion of his flesh and blood, of which we now speak, but teacheth that the Spirit alone worketh that we possess whole Christ, and have him dwelling in us,

13. The manner of presence which the Schoolmen have devised in this Sacrament. — The schoolmen, deterred by a horror of so barbarous ungodliness, have expressed themselves more modestly. Yet they also do nothing but mock with subtler deceits. They grant that Christ is not contained there by way of circumscription, nor after a bodily manner; but afterward they invent a way, which neither themselves do understand, nor can they declare to others; yet it is such as leadeth to this point that Christ must be sought in the form of bread as they call it. For what is it? When they say that the substance of bread is turned into Christ, do they not fasten him to the whiteness which they there leave? But, say they, he is so contained in the sacrament, that he abideth in heaven, and we determine no other presence but of habitude. But whatsoever words they bring in, to cloak it with a deceitful color, this is the end of all, that is by consecration made Christ, which before was bread; that, from thenceforth, Christ lieth hid under that color of bread. Which, also, they are not ashamed in plain words to express. For these be the words of Lombard: (Lib. 4. dist.) that the body of Christ, which in itself is visible, when the consecration is ended, lieth hidden and is covered under the form of bread. So the form of that bread is nothing else but a visor, that taketh away the sight of the flesh from the eyes. Neither need we many conjectures to

find what snares they minded to lay with these words, since the thing itself plainly speaketh it. For it is to be seen with how great superstition, in certain ages past, not only the common sort of men, but also the very chief of them have been holden, and, at this day, are holden in popish churches. For having little care of true faith (by which alone we both come into the fellowship of Christ, and do cleave together with him) so that they have a carnal presence of him, which they have framed beside the word, they think that they have him present enough. Therefore, in sum, we see that this hath been gotten by this cunning subtilty that bread was taken of God.

14. Transubstantiation destitute of antiquity to defend it. — From hence proceedeth that same feigned transubstantiation, for which at this day they fight more earnestly than for all the other articles of their faith. For the first builders of that local presence could not unwind themselves from this doubt how the body of Christ should be mingled with the substance of bread, but that by many absurdities did thrust themselves in place. Therefore they were driven of necessity to flee to this invention, that there is made a turning of bread into the body; not that the body is properly made of the bread, but because Christ, that he might hide himself under the form, bringeth the substance to nothing. But it is marvelous that they fell to so great ignorance, yea, senseless dullness, that not only with Scripture, but also the consent of the old church fighting against it, they brought abroad that monster. I grant, indeed, that some of the old writers sometimes used the name of turning; not for that they would destroy the substance in the outward signs, but that they might teach that the bread dedicate to the mystery differeth far from common bread and is now other. But each where they all plainly declare, that the holy supper consisteth of two parts, an earthly part, and a heavenly; and the earthly part, they do without controversy expound to be bread and wine. Truly, whatsoever they babble, it is plain, that in confirming of this doctrine, they want the defence of antiquity, which they oftentimes presume to set against the evident word of God. For it is not so long ago since it was invented; it was verily unknown, not only to those better ages, in which the purer doctrine of religion yet flourished, but also even when that same pureness was much defiled. There is none of the old writers that do not in express words confess that the holy signs in the supper are bread and wine; although, as we have said, they sometimes set it out with divers titles, to advance the dignity of the mystery. For, whereas they say that in the consecration is made of a secret turning, that now it is another thing than bread and wine; I have, even now, given warning that they do not thereby mean that the things themselves are brought to naught, but that they are now to be otherwise esteemed than common meats, which are appointed only to feed the belly; forasmuch as in them is delivered to us the spiritual meat and drink of the soul. This we also deny not. If, say these men, there be a turning, it must needs be that there is, or one thing made another thing. If they mean that there is something made which before was not, I agree with them. If' they will draw it to that iii their own imagination, let them answer me what change they think to be made in baptism. For herein the fathers also do determine a marvelous turning, when they say that of a corruptible element is made a spiritual washing of soul, yet none of them deny that water remaineth. But, say they, there is no such thing in baptism, as is that in the supper, “This is my body." As though the question were of those words, which have a meaning plain enough; and not rather of that word of turning, which ought to signify no more in the supper than in baptism. Therefore, farewell they with these snares of syllables, whereby they do nothing else but bewray their own hungryness. For otherwise the signification would not agree together, unless the truth which is there figured, had a lively image in the outward sign. Christ’s will was by the outward sign to testify that his flesh is meat. If he did set before us only an empty imaginative form of bread, not

true bread, which were the correlation of similitude which should lead us from the visible thing to the invisible? For, that all things may agree together, the signification shall extend no further, but that we be fed with the form of the flesh of Christ. As if in baptism the form of water should deceive our eyes, it should not be to us a certain pledge of our washing; yea, by that deceitful show there should be given us an occasion of wavering. Therefore, the nature of the sacrament is overthrown, unless in the manner of signifying the earthly sign answer to the heavenly thing. And, therefore, we loose the truth of this mystery, unless true bread represent to us the true body of Christ. I repeat it again; since the supper is nothing else than a visible testifying of that promise which is in the sixth chapter of John, namely, that Christ is the bread of life, which came down from heaven; there must be visible bread used for a mean whereby that same spiritual bread may be figured; unless we are willing to loose all the fruit which in this behalf God tenderly granteth to sustain our weakness. Now by what reason should Paul gather, that all we are one body and one bread, 1 Corinthians 10:17, who do together partake of one bread, if there remained only an imaginative form, and not rather a natural truth of bread?

15. The visible elements in this Sacrament changed, not in respect of their nature, but of their use only. But they could never have been so foully beguiled with the deceits of Satan, but because they were already bewitched with this error, that the body of Christ enclosed under bread was by the bodily mouth sent down into the belly. The cause of so brutish imagination was, that consecration signified as" much among them as a magical enchantment. But this principle was unknown to them, that bread is a sacrament to none but to men, to whom the word is directed; like as the water of baptism is not changed in itself, but so soon as the promise is adjoined, it beginneth to be that to us which it was not before. This shall better appear by example of a like sacrament. The water springing out of the rock in the desert was to the fathers a token and sign of the same thing, which the wine doth figure to us in the supper. Exodus 17:6. For Paul teacheth that they drunk the same spiritual drink. 1 Corinthians 10:4. But it was a common watering for the beasts and cattle of the people. Whereupon it is easily gathered, that in earthly elements, when they are applied to a spiritual use, there is made no other turning but in respect of men, insomuch as they are to them seals of the promises. Moreover, since God’s purpose is, as I often repeat, as it were, by handsome chariots to lift us up to himself, they do by their frowardness wickedly disappoint the same, who do indeed call us to Christ, but to Christ lurking invisibly under bread. For it is not possible that the mind of man, disincumbering itself from the immeasurableness of places, should attain to Christ even above the heavens. That which nature denied them, they attempted to amend with a more hurtful remedy; that abiding in the earth, we should need no heavenly nearness of Christ. Lo, this is the necessity that compelled them to transfigure the body of Christ. In Bernard’s time, although a harder manner of speaking was grown in use, yet transubstantiation was not then known. And in all ages before that, this similitude did fly about in every man’s mouth, that there is with bread and wine a spiritual thing joined in this mystery. Of the words they answer as they think, very acutely; but bring nothing fit for this present cause. The rod of Moses, say they, being turned into a serpent, although it did get the name of a serpent, yet keepeth still the old name, and is called a rod. Exodus 4:3; Exodus 7:10. So in their opinion it is as probable, that although the bread pass into a new substance, it may be abusively and yet not unaptly called that which it appeareth to the eyes. But what likelihood or nearness find they between a clear miracle and the feigned illusion, of which no eye on earth is witness? The magicians had mocked with deceits, so that the Egyptians were persuaded that they excelled in

divine power to change creatures above the order of nature. Moses came forth, and driving away all their deceits, showed that the invincible power of God was on his side, because his own rod consumed all the rest. But forasmuch as that was a turning discernible with eyes, therefore, as we have said, it pertaineth nothing to this present cause; and a little time after, the rod visibly returned into his own form. Beside that, it is not known whether that sudden turning was of substance or no. Also the alluding to the rods of the magicians is to be considered, which the prophet therefore would not call serpents, lest he should seem to signify a turning where none was; because those deceivers had done nothing but cast a mist before the eyes of the beholders. What likeness, herewith, have these forms of speech. The bread which we break, so oft as ye shall eat this bread, thev communicated in breaking of bread, and such other? 1 Corinthians 10:16; 1 Corinthians 11:26; Acts 2:42. It is certain that their eyes were only deceived with the enchantment of the magicians, As concerning Moses, the matter is more doubtful, by whose hand it was no more hard for God to make of a rod a serpent, and again, of a serpent to make a rod, than to clothe angels with fleshly bodies, and by and by after to unclothe them. If the nature of this mystery were the same or like, there were some color for their solution. Let this, therefore, remain certain, that it is not truly nor litly promised us that in the supper the flesh of Christ is truly to us for meat, unless the true substance of the outward sign agree with it. And, as one error groweth of another, the place of Jeremiah is so foolishly wrested to prove transubstantiation, that it wearieth me to rehearse it. The prophet complaineth that wood is put in his bread; meaning that by the cruelty of his enemies, his bread was infected with bitterness. Jeremiah 11:19. As David with a like figure bewaileth that his meat was corrupted with gall, and his drink with vinegar. Psalms 119:21. These men will have it that the body of Christ was by way of allegory fastened to the cross. But some of the old fathers thought so. As though we ought not rather to pardon their ignorance, and to bury their shame, than to add shamelessness to compel them yet still to .fight like enemies with the natural meaning of the prophet. 16, The error of consubstantiation and the cause whereof it riseth, — Others who see that the proportional relation of the sign and the thing signified, cannot be overthrown, but that the truth of the mystery must fall, do confess that the bread of the supper is verily a substance of an earthly and. corruptible element, and suffereth no change in itself, but hath under itself the body of Christ enclosed. If they did so declare their meaning, that when the bread is delivered in the mystery, there is adjoined the delivering of the body, because the truth is inseparable from the sign, I would not much strive with them. But because they placing the body in the bread, do feign to it a being everywhere contrary to the nature thereof, and in adding under the bread, they will have it lie there hidden; it is necessary a little while to draw such subtleties out of their dens. For my mind is not as of set purpose to go through with all this point; but only that I may lay the foundations of the disputation which shall by and by follow in place fit for it. They will, therefore, have the body of Christ to be invisible and immeasurable, that it may be hid under the bread; because they think they do not otherwise communicate with him than by his descending into the bread; but they comprehend not the manner of descending, whereby he lifteth us upward to himself. They lay upon it all the colors that they can; but when they have said all, it sufficiently appeareth, that they stay upon the local presence of Christ. Whence cometh that? even because they can abide to conceive no other partaking of the flesh and blood, but which consisteth either of joining and touching of place, or of some gross inclosing.

17. The flesh of Christ by some, grossly extended as wide as heaven and earthy by others subtilely imagined to be because glorious, therefore free from the natural properties of things

corporal. — And that they may obstinately defend the error once rashly conceived, some of them stick not to say, that the flesh of Christ had never any other measurings, but so far and wide as heaven and earth is broad. Whereas he was born a child out of the womb, whereas he grew, whereas he was spread abroad on the cross, whereas he was enclosed in the sepulcher, the same was done by a certain dispensation, that he might be born and die, and perform the other duties of man. Whereas after his resurrection he was seen in his wonted form of body, whereas he was taken up to heaven, whereas last of all also, after his ascension, he was seen of Stephen and Paul; it was done by the same dispensation, that it might appear to the sight of men that he was made a king in Heaven. Acts 1:3-9, and Acts 7:55, and Acts 9:3. What is this else, but to raise up Marcion out of hell. For no man can doubt that the body of Christ was a fantasy or a fantastical thing, if he was of such state. Some slip away somewhat more subtilely, with saying that this body which is given in the sacrament is glorious and immortal; and that, therefore, it is no absurdity, if it be contained in many places, or in no place, or with no form, under the sacrament. But I ask what manner of body Christ gave to the disciples, the day before he suffered? do not the words sound that be gave the same mortal body, which was within a little after to be delivered? He had already before, say they, showed his glory to be seen to three of the disciples. Matthew 17:2. That is true indeed, biit his will was by that brightness to give them a taste of immortality for an hour. In the meantime, they shall not there find a double body, but that one body which Christ did bear, garnished with new glory. But when he distributed his body at his first supper, the time was now at hand when he, being stricken of God, and humbled, should lie without glory as a leprous man; so far is it off that he then would show forth the glory of his resurrection. Isaiah 53:4. And how great a window is here opened to Marcion, if the body of Christ was seen in one place mortal and base, and in another place was holden immortal and glorious? Howbeit, if their opinion take place, the same happeneth daily; because they are compelled to confess that the body of Christ being visible in itself, lieth hid invisibly under the sign of bread. And yet, they that throw out such monstrousness, are so not ashamed of their own shame, that they do, unprovoked, heinously rail at us, because we do not subscribe to them.

18. The body and blood of Christ though not fastened unto, yet spiritually delivered in the bread and wine of the holy Eucharist. — Now, if they list to fasten the body and blood of the Lord to bread and wine, the one shall of necessity be plucked asunder from the other. For as the bread is delivered separately from the cup, so the body united to the bread must needs be divided from the blood enclosed in the cup. For when they affirm that the body is in the bread and the blood in the cup; and the bread and wine are by spaces of place distant the one from the other; they can by no shift escape, but that the body must be severed from the blood. But whereas they are wont to allege, that by accompanyings; (as they believe) in the body is the blood, and likewise in the blood is the body, that verily is too trifling; forasmuch as the signs in which they are enclosed, are so severed. But if we be lifted up with our eyes and minds to heaven, that we seek Christ where in the glory of his kingdom; as the signs do allure us to him whole, so under the sign of bread, we shall be fed with his body, under the sign of wine we shall separately drink his blood, that at length we may enjoy him whole. For although be hath taken away His flesh from us, and in his body is ascended up into heaven, yet he sitteth at the right hand of the Father, that is to say, he reigneth in the power, and majesty, and glory of the Father. This kingdom is neither bounded with any spaces of place, nor compassed about with any measurings, but that Christ may show forth his might wheresoever it pleaseth him, both in heaven and in earth; but that he may show himself present

with power and strength; but that he may alway be at hand with them that are his, breathing his life into them, may live in them, strengthen them, quicken them, preserve them safe, even as if he were present in body; finally, but that he may feed them with his own body, the communion whereof he doth, by the power of his Spirit, pour into them. After this manner the body and blood of Christ is delivered to us in the sacrament.

19. The true manner of Christ's presence, and the substantial communicating of his body and blood in the Lord's Supper, made hateful to the world by the unjust judgments of men — But we must appoint such a presence of Christ in the supper, as may neither fasten him to the element of bread, nor shut him up in the bread, nor, by any means, compass him in, (for it is plain that all these things abate his heavenly glory;) finally, such as may neither take from him his own measure, nor diversely draw him in many places at once, nor feign to him such an unmeasurable greatness as is spread abroad throughout heaven and earth, for these things are plainly against the truth of the nature of manhood. Let us, we say, never suffer these two exceptions to be taken away from us. The one, that nothing be abated from the glory of Christ, which is alone, when he is brought under the corruptible elements of this world, or is bound to any earthly creatures. The other, that nothing be by feigning, applied to his body, that agreeth not with the nature of man; which is done, when it is either said to be infinite, or is set in many places at once. But these absurdities being taken away, I willingly receive whatsoever may avail to express the true and substantial communicating of the body and blood of the Lord, which communicating is delivered to the faithful under the holy signs of the supper; and so that they may be thought not to receive it by imagination only or understanding of mind, but to enjoy it indeed to the food of eternal life. Why this sentence is so hateful to the world, and all defense taken away from it by the unjust judgments of many, there is no cause at all, but for that the devil hath, with horrible bewitching, madded their minds. Truly that which we teach, doth in all points very well agree with the Scriptures; it containeth neither any absurdity, nor darkness, nor doubtfulness; it is not against true godliness and sound edification; finally, it hath nothing in it that may offend, saving that in certain ages past, when that ignorance and barbarousness of Bophiters reigned in the church, so clear light and open truth hath been unworthily oppressed. Yet because Satan, at this day, also laboreth, by troublesome spirits, to spot it with all the slanders and reproaches that he can, and bendeth himself to no other thing with greater endeavor; it is profitable the more diligently to defend and rescue it.

20. The words of Christ's institution in word held indeed perverted and forsaken by the authors as well of transubstantiation as consubstantiation, — Now before that we go any further, we must treat of the very institution of Christ; specially because this is the most plausible objection that our adversaries have, that we depart from the words of Christ. Therefore, that we may be discharged of the false cause of malice wherewith they burden us, our fittest beginning shall be at the exposition of the words. Three evangelists and Paul rehearse, that Christ took bread; when he had given thanks he brake it, gave it to his disciples and said, Take, eat, this is my body which is delivered or broken for you. Of the cup Matthew and Mark say thus: This cup is the blood of the New Testament, which shall be shed for many unto forgiveness of sins. Matthew 26:26; Mark 14:22. But Paul and Luke say thus: This cup is the New Testament in my blood. Luke 22:17; 1 Corinthians 11:24. The patrons of transubstantiation will have by the pronoun (this) the form of bread to be signified, because the consecration is made in the whole contents of the sentence,

and there is no substance that can be shown by it. But if they are holden with religious care of the words, because Christ testified that that which he reached into the disciples' hands, was his body; truly this their device, that that which was bread is now the body, is most far from the proper meaning of them. That which Christ took into his hands and gave the Apostles, he affirmeth to be his body; but he took bread; who therefore cannot understand that bread is yet showed? and therefore there is no greater absurdity, than to remove that to the form, which is spoken of the bread. Others, when they expound this word (is) for (to be transubstantiate,) do flee to a more forced and violently protested loss. Therefore there is no cause why they should pretend that they are moved with reverence of words. For this was unheard of among all nations and languages, that the word (is) should be taken in this sense, namely for to be turned into another thing. As for them that leave bread in the supper, and affirm that there is the body of Christ, they much differ among themselves. They who speak more modestly, although they precisely exact the letter of these words, "This is my body," yet afterward swerve from their preciseness, and say that it is as much in effect as that the body of Christ is with bread, in bread, and under bread. Of the matter itself which they affirm, we have already touched somewhat, and we shall by and by have occasion yet to speak more. Now 1 dispute only of the words, by which they say they are restrained that they cannot admit bread to be called the body because it is a sign of the body. But if they shun all figures, why do they leap away from the plain showing of Christ, to their own manners of speaking far differing from it? For there is great difference between this, that bread is the body, and this, that the body is with bread. But because they saw it to be impossible, that this simple proposition might stand, that bread is the body, they have attempted to escape away by those forms of speech, as it were by crooked turnings. Some more bold stick not to affirm that even in proper speaking, bread is the body, and by this means they truly prove themselves to be literal men. If it be objected, that therefore the bread is Christ, and is God; this verily they will deny, because it is not expressed in the words of Christ. But they shall nothing prevail by denying it; forasmuch as all do agree that whole Christ is offered us in the supper. But it is an intolerable blasphemy, that it be without figure spoken of a frail and corruptible element, that it is Christ. Now I ask of them, whether these two propositions be both of one effect, Christ is the Son of God, and bread is the body of Christ. If they grant that they are diverse, (which we will force them to grant whether they will or no,) then let them answer whence cometh the difference? I think they will bring no other but that the bread is after the sacramental manner called the body. Whereupon followeth, that Christ's words are not subject to the common rule, nor ought to be tried by grammar. Also I ask of the precise and stiff requirers of the letter, where Luke and Paul do call the cup the testament in the blood, Luke 22:20; 1 Corinthians 11:25, Whether they do not express the same thing which they did in the first part, where they call bread the body? Truly the same religion was in the one part of the mystery that was in the other; and because shortness is dark, longer speech doth better open the meaning. So oft therefore as they shall affirm by one word, that the bread is the body, I will out of more words bring a fit exposition, that it is the testament in the body. For wl)y? Shall we need to seek a more faithful or surer expositor than Paul and Luke? Neither yet do 1 tend hereunto to diminish any thing of that communicating of the body of Christ which I have confessed; only my purpose is to confute that foolish waywardness whereby they do so hatefully brawl about words. I understand, by the authority of Paul and Luke, that the bread is the body of Christ, because it is the covenant in the body. If they fight against this, they have war not with me, but with the Spirit of God. Howsoever they cry out that they are touched with reverence of the

words of Christ, whereby they do not figuratively understand those things that are plainly spoken; yet this is not a pretence rightful enough, why they should so refuse all the reasons which we object to the contrary. In the meantime, as I have already given warning, it is convenient to learn, what manner of thing this is, the testament in the body and blood of Christ; because the covenant established with the sacrifice of death, should otherwise not profit us, unless there were adjoined that secret communicating whereby we grow into one with Christ.

21. Figurative speech usual, and unto signs the names of things signified given when sacramental mysteries are treated of, which thing St. Augustine plainly teacheth. It remaineth, therefore, that for the affinity which the things signified have with their signs, we confess that the self-same name of the thing was given to the sign; figuratively, indeed, but not without a most fit proportional agreement. I leave allegories and parables, lest any man should quarrel that I seek starting holes, and wander out of the present purpose. I say that this is a speech by figure of transnomination which is commonly used in the Scripture, when mysteries are treated of. For neither can you otherwise understand that which is said; that circumcision is a covenant; that the Lamb is the passover; that the sacrifices of the law are expiations; finally, that the rock, out of which water flowed in the desert, was Christ, unless you take it to be spoken by way of transferring of names. Neither are names transferred only from the higher name to the lower; but, contrariwise, the name of the visible sign is also given to the thing signified; as when it is said that God appeared to Moses in the bush, Exodus 3:6, when the ark of the covenant is called God, and the face of God, Psalm 134:8; and Psalms 42:3, and the dove is called the Holy Ghost. Matthew 3:16. For though the sign differ in substance from the thing signified; because this is spiritual and heavenly, and that is corporal and visible; yet because it doth not only figure the thing which it is holily appointed to represent, as a naked and empty token, but doth also truly deliver it indeed: why may not the name of the thing rightly accord with it? If signs devised by men, which are rather images of things absent, than marks of things present, which self-same absent things, they do oftentimes deceitfully shadow, are yet sometimes garnished with the titles of the things; then those things that are ordained of God, do by much greater reason borrow the name of those things, of which they always both bear a sure and not deceitful signification, and have the truth adjoined with them. There is, therefore, so great likeness and nearness of the one to the other, that it is easy to draw their names to and fro. Therefore, let our adversaries cease to heap unsavoury scoffings against us, in calling us Tropists, because we expound the sacramental manner of speaking after the common use of the Scripture. For whereas the sacraments agree together in many things; in this transferring of names, they have all a certain community together. As, therefore, the apostle teacheth, that the stone out of which spiritual drink did spring to the Israelites, was Christ, 1 Corinthians 10:4, because it was a visible sign, under which that spiritual drink was truly indeed, but not discernibly to the eye perceived; so bread is at this day called the body of Christ, forasmuch as it is a sign whereby the Lord offereth to us the true eating of his body. Neither did Augustine otherwise think or speak lest any man should despise this as a new invention. (Epist. 23. ad Bonifac.) If, saith he, the sacraments bad not a certain likeness of those things whereof they are sacraments, they should not be sacraments at all. And of this likeness oftentimes they take the names of the things themselves. As, therefore, after a certain manner, the sacrament of the body of Christ, is the body of Christ; the sacrament of the blood of Christ, is the blood of Christ; so the sacrament of faith is faith. 1 here be in him many like places, which it were superfluous to heap together, since that one sufficeth; saving that the readers must be warned that the holy man

teacheth the same thing in the epistle to Euodius. But it is a trifling shift to say, that where Augustine teacheth, that when transferring is often and commonly used in mysteries, be maketh no mention of the supper; because if this shitt were received, we might not reason from the generality to the specialty, neither were this a good argument; every feeling creature hath power of moving, there ore an ox and a horse hath power of moving. Howbeit long disputation hereof is in another place ended by. The words of the same holy man, where he saith, that Christ slicked not to call it his body, when he gave the sign of his body. Against Adimantus the Manichean, in the twelfth chapter, and, in another place, upon the third psalm. Marvelous, saith he, is the patience of Christ, that he received Judas to the banquet, wherein he committed and delivered to his disciples the figure of his body and blood.

22. The force of the substantive verb in the words of consecration.— But to some precise man, being blind to all the rest, do stand only upon this word (this is my body) as though it severed this mystery from all other, the solution is easy. They say that the vehemence of the substantive verb (is) is so great that it admitteth no figure. Which, if we grant to them; even in the words of Paul is read the substantive verb, where he calleth bread the communicating of the body of Christ. 1 Corinthians 10:16. But the communicating is another thing than the body itself. Yea, commonly where sacraments are treated of, we find the same used. As, this shall be to you a covenant with me. Genesis 17:13. This lamb shall be to you a passover. Exodus 12:43. To rehearse no more; when Paul saith that the rock was Christ, 1 Corinthians 10:4, why do they take the substantive verb in that place to be of less vehemence than in the speech of Christ? Let them also answer, where John saith, the Holy Ghost was not yet, because Jesus was not yet glorified, John 7:39, of what force the substantive verb is in that place? For if they abide fastened to their rule, the eternal essence of the Holy Ghost shall be destroyed, as though it took beginning at the ascension of Christ. Finally, let them answer, what meaneth that saying of Paul, that baptism is the washing of regeneration and renewing. Titus 3:5, when it is evidently unprofitable to many. But nothing is stronger to confute them, than that saying of Paul, that the church is Christ. 1 Corinthians 12:12. For bringing a similitude of the body of man, he addeth, so is Christ; in which place he understandeth the only begotten Son of God, not in himself, but in his members. Hereby I think I have obtained, that to sound witted and uncorrupted men the slanders of our enemies are loathsome, when they spread abroad, that we withdraw credit from the words of Christ; which we do no less obediently embrace than they, and do weigh them with more godly reverence. Yea, their negligent carelessness showeth that they do not greatly care what Christ meant, so that it give them a buckler to defend their obstinacy; like as our earnest searching ought to be a witness how much we esteem the authority of Christ. They odiously spread abroad, that natural sense of man withholdeth us from believing that which Christ hath uttered with his own holy mouth; but how maliciously they burden us with this slander, I have a great part already made plain, and hereafter it shall more clearly appear. Therefore nothing withholdeth us from believing Christ when he speaketh, nor from obeying so soon as he doth but with a beck will this or that. Only this is the question, whether it unlawful to inquire of the natural meaning.

23. The words and syllables of Christ’s speech not so precisely to be stood upon, that all exposition be rejected which being sound and sober bringeth light, but no discredit unto the speaker. — These good masters, that they may seem well fettered, do forbid men to depart, be it never so little from the letter. But I, on the other side, when the Scripture nameth God a warlike

man, because I see that without figurative translation it is too rough a manner of speaking, do not doubt that it is a comparison taken from men. And truly upon no other pretence in the old time the Anthropomorphites, troubled the true teaching fathers, but that catching fast hold of these sayings, the eyes of God do see, it went up to his ears, his hand stretched out, the earth his footstool, they cried out that God had his body taken from him, which the Scripture assigneth unto him. If this law be received, outrageous barbarousness shall overwhelm the whole light of faith. For what monsters of absurdities may not frantic men pick out, if it be granted them to allege every small title to establish their opinions? That which they object, that it is not likely, that when Christ prepared for his apostles a singular comfort in adversities, he did then speak in a riddle or darkly, maketh of our side. For if it had not come in the minds of the apostles that bread was figuratively called the body, because it was the sign of the body, they had without doubt been troubled with so monstrous a thing. Almost at the same moment John reporteth that they did stick in perplexity at every the least difficulties. They who strive among themselves, how Christ will go to the Father, and do move the question, how he will go out of the world; they who understand nothing of those things that are spoken concerning the heavenly Father, till they see him; how would they have been so easy to believe that which all reason refuseth, that Christ sitteth at the table in their sight, and is enclosed invisible under bread? Whereas, therefore, they in eating the bread without doubting, testified their consent; hereby appeareth that they took Christ's words in the same sense that we do, because they remembered that which ought not to seem strange in mysteries, that the name of the thing signified is transferred to the sign. Therefore it was to the disciples, as it is to us, a certain and clear comfort, entangled with no riddle. Neither is their any other cause why some should depart from our exposition, but because the enchantment of the devil hath blinded them, namely that they should feign darkness to themselves, where the exposition of an apt figure offereth itself. Moreover, if we precisely stand upon the words, Christ should wrongfully have spoken in one place severally another thing concerning the bread than he speaketh of the cup. He calleth the bread his body, he calleth the wine his blood; either it shall be a confused vain repetition, or it shall be such a separation as shall divide the body from the blood. Yea it shall as truly be said of the cup, this is ray body, as of the bread itself, and it may likewise interchangeably ba said, that the bread is the blood, if they answer 'hat we must consider to what end or use the signs were ordained; I grant it indeed; but in the meantime they shall not extricate themselves, but that their error must draw this absurdity with it, that the bread is the blood, and the wine is the body. Now I know not what this meaneth, when they grant the bread and the body to be divers things, yet do affirm that the one is spoken of the other properly and without any figure; as, if a man should say that a garment is indeed a thing differing from a man, and yet that it is properly called a man. In the meanwhile, as though their victory consisted in obstinacy and railing, they say that Christ is accused of lyiiig> if an exposition be sought of the words. Now it shall he easy for us to show to the readers how unjust wrong these catchers of syllables do to us, when they fill the simple with this opinion, that we withdraw credit from the words of Christ, which we have proved to be furiously perverted and confounded by them, but to be faithfully and rightly expounded by us.

24. The unmeasurable power of God not at all diminished by them who refuse the doctrine of consubstantiation — But the slander of this lie cannot be utterly purged, till another crime be wiped away. For they spread abroad, that we are so addicted to natural reason, that we give no more to the power of God, than the order of nature suffereth and common sense teacheth. From so malicious slanders I appeal to the very doctrine itself which 1 have declared; which doth clearly

enough sliow, that I do not measure this mystery by the proportion of man's reason, nor make it subject to the laws of nature. I beseech you, have we learned out of natural philosophy, that Christ doth so from heaven feed our souls and bodies with his flesh, as our bodies are nourished with bread and wine? Whence cometh this power to flesh that it may give life? All men will say that it is not done naturally. It will not please man's reason, that the flesh of Christ reacheth to us, that it may be food unto us. Finally, whosoever hath tasted of our doctrine, shall be ravished into admiration of the secret power of God. But these good men that are so zealous of it, forge to themselves a miracle, which being taken away, God himself vanisheth with his power. I desire to have the readers once again warned, that they diligently weigh what our doctrine bringeth, whether it depend upon common sense, or with the wings of faith, surmounting the world, climbeth up beyond it into the heavens. We say that Christ as well with the outward sign as with his Spirit, descended to us, that he may truly quicken our souls with the substance of his flesh and of his blood. In these few words he that perceiveth not to be contained many miracles, is more than senseless; forasmuch as there is nothing more beside nature, than that souls should borrow spiritual and heavenly life, of the flesh which took her beginning of the earth, and which was subject to death. Nothing is more incredible, than that things distant and asunder by the whole space of heaven and earth, should in so great distance of places not only be conjoined, but also united, that souls may receive food of the flesh of Christ. Therefore, let wayward men cease to procure hatred to us, by a filthy slander, as though we did enviously restrain any thing of the immeasurable power of God. For they do either too foolishly err, or too maliciously lie. For it is not here in question what God could, but what he would. We affirm that to be done which pleased him. But it pleased him, that Christ should be made like to his brethren in all things, except sin. Hebrews 4:15. What manner of thing is our flesh? Is it not such as consisteth of the certain measure of it, as is contained in place, as is touched, as is seen. And why, say they, may not God make, that the self-same flesh may occupy many and divers places, may be contained in one place, maybe without measure and form? Thou mad man, why requirest thou of the power of God to make flesh at the same time to be and not to be flesh? Like as if thou shouldest instantly require him to make at the same time the light to be both light and darkness. But he willeth light to be light, darkness to be darkness, flesh to be flesh. He shall indeed, when it pleaseth him, turn darkness into light, and light into darkness, but when thou requirest that light and darkness may not differ, what doest thou else but pervert the order of the wisdom of God? Therefore flesh must be flesh; and Spirit Spirit, every thmg in such law and condition as God hath created it. But such is the condition of flesh, that it must be in one, yea, and that a certain place, and consist of her measure and of her form. With this condition Christ took flesh upon him, to which, as Augustine witnesseth, he hath indeed given incorruption and glory, but he hath not taken from it nature and truth. (Ep. ad Dard.)

25. They that make Christ to lurk invisible under bread, are neither thereunto led by the tvords of Christ, nor assisted therein by God's almightiness. —They answer, that they have the word, whereby the will of God is made plain; namely, if it be granted them to banish out of thp church the gift of exposition, which may bring light to the word, I grant that they have the word; but such as in old time the Anthropomorphites had, when they made God having a body, such as Marcion and the Manichees had, when they feigned the body of Christ to be either heavenly or fantastical. For they alleged for testimonies, the first Adam was of the earth, earthly, the second Adam is of heaven, heavenly, 1 Corinthians 15:47; again, Christ abased himself, taking upon him the form of

a servant, and was found in likeness as a man. Php 2:7. But the gross eaters think that there is no power of God, unless with the monster forged in their brains, the whole order of nature be overthrown; which is rather to limit God, when we covet with our feigned inventions to prove what he can do. For out of what word have they taken that the body of Christ is visible in heayen, but lurketh invisible in earth under innumerable little pieces of bread? They will say that necessity requireth this that the body of Christ should be given in the supper. Verily, because it pleased them to gather a fleshly eating out of the words of Christ; they being carried away by their own prejudice, were driven of necessity to coin this subtlety, which the whole Scriptures crieth out against. But that any thing is by us diminished of the power of God, is so false that by our doctrine the praise of it is very honorably set out. But forasmuch as they always accuse us, that we defraud God of his honor, when we refuse that which, according to common sense, is hard to be believed, although it have been promised by the mouth of Christ; I make again the same answer that I made even now, that in the mysteries of faith we do not ask counsel of common sense, but with quiet willingness to learn, and with the spirit of meekness, which James commendeth, we receive the doctrine come from heaven. James 1:21. But in that when they perniciously err, I deny not that we follow a profitable moderation. They hearing the words of Christ, this is my body, imagine a miracle most far from his mind. But when out of this feigned invention arise foul absurdities, because they have already, with headlong haste, put snares upon themselves, they plunge themselves into the bottomless depth of the almightiness of God, that by this mean they may quench the light of truth. Hereupon cometh that proud preciseness. We will not know how Christ lieth hid under the bread, holding ourselves contented with this saying of his. This is my body. But we, as we do in the whole Scripture, do with no less obedience than care, study to obtain a sound understanding of this place; neither do we with preposterous heat rashly and without choice catch hold of that which first presenteth itself into our minds; but using diligent study upon it, we embrace the meaning which the Spirit of God ministereth; and standing thereupon we do from aloft despise whatsoever earthly wisdom is set against it. Yea, we hold our minds captive that they may not be bold so much as with one little word to carp against it; and do humble them, that they may not dare to rise up against it. Hereupon sprung up the exposition of the words of Christ, which to be by the continual usage of the Scripture common to all sacraments, all they that have been thought but meanly exercised therein, do know. Neither do we, after the example of the holy virgin, think it lawful for us, in a hard matter to inquire how it may be done. Luke 1:34.

26. Christ proved by Scripture not to he on earth according to the presence of the flesh, hut only by majesty, providence, and grace. — But because nothing shall more avail to confirm the faith of the godly, than when they have learned that the doctrine which we have taught is taken out of the Word of God, and standeth upon the authority thereof; I will make this also evident with as great briefness as 1 can. The body of Christ, since the time that it rose again, not Aristotle but the Holy Ghost teacheth to be limited, and that it is comprehended in heaven until the last day. Neither am I ignorant that they boldly mock out those places that are alleged for this purpose. So oft as Christ saith that he will depart, leaving the world, John 14:2; John 14:2 S, they answer that that departing is nothing else but a changing of moral estate. But after this manner, Christ should not set the Holy Ghost in this place to supply, as they call it, the want of his absence; forasmuch as he doth not succeed into this place, nor Christ himself doth descend again out of the heavenly glory to take upon him the state of mortal life. Truly the coming of the Holy Ghost, and the ascending of Christ are things set as contrary; therefore it cannot be that Christ should, according to the flesh, dwell

with us after the same manner that he sendeth his Spirit. Moreover, he in plain words exprf'sseth, that he will not be always with his disciples in the world. Matthew 26:11. This saying also they think that they do sufficiently wipe away, as though Christ said that he will not always be poor and miserable, or subject to the necessities of this frail life. But the circumstance of the place crieth plainly to the contrary, because there it is not treated of poverty and need, or of the miserable state of earthly life, but of worship and honor. The anointing pleased not the disciples, because they thought it to be a superfluous and unprofitable cost, and near unto riotous excess,therefore, they had rather that the price thereof, which they thought to be ill wasted, had been bestowed upon the poor. Christ answereth that he shall not always be present that he may be worshipped with such honor. And no otherwise did Augustine expound it, (Tract, in John. 50,) whose words are these which are nothing doubtful. When Christ said, ye shall not always have me, he spake of the presence of his body. For according to his majesty, according to his providence, according to his unspeakable and invisible grace, this was fulfilled which he said, Behold, I am with you even to the ending of the world. Matthew 28:20. But according to the flesh which the word took unto him, according to this that he was born of the virgin, according to this that he was taken of the Jews, that he was fastened to the tree, that he was taken down from the cross, that he was wrapped in linen clothes, that he was laid in the grave, that he was manifestly showed in the resurrection, this was fulfilled, Ye shall not always have me with you. Why so? Because he was conversant according to the presence of his body forty days with his disciples, and while they accompanied him in seeing, not in following, he ascended. He is not here; for he sitteth there at the right hand of the Father. And yet he is here, because he is not gone away in presence of Majesty. Otherwise, according to the presence of majesty we have Christ always; and according to the presence of the flesh it is rightly said, But me ye shall not always have. For according to the presence of the flesh, the church had him a few days; now she holdeth him by faith but seeth him not with eyes. Where, that I may note this also briefly, he maketh him present to us three ways, by majesty, providence, and unspeakable grace, under which I comprehend this marvelous communion of his body and blood; if so that we understand it to be done by the power of the Holy Ghost, not by that feigned' inclosing of his body under the element. For our Lord hath testified, that he hath flesh and hones which may be felt and seen. And to go away and ascend do not signify to make a show of one ascending and going away, but to do indeed that which the words sound. Shall we then, will some man say, assign to Christ some certain coast of heaven? But I answer with' Augustine, that this is a most curious and superfluous question, if so that yet we believe that he is in heaven. {Lib. deide sym cap. IV.)

27. Ascending sophistically expounded to he nothing else but conveyance out of sight — But what doth the name of ascending so oft repeated mean? doth it not signify a removing from one place to another? They deny it, because after their opinion, by height is only signified majesty of empire. But what meaneth the very manner of ascending? was he not insight of his disciples looking on, lifted up on high. Acts 1:9. Do not the evangelists plainly declare that he was taken up into heaven. Mark 16:19. These witty sophisters do answer, that with a cloud set between him and them, he was conveyed out of their sight, that the faithful might learn that from thenceforth he should not be visible in the world. As though, to make credit of his invisible presence, he ought not rather to vanish away in a moment, or as though the cloud ought not rather to compass him before that he stirred his foot. But when he is carried up on high into the air, and with a cloud cast underneath him, teacheth that he is no more to be sought in the earth; we safely gather, that now he hath his

dwelling-place in the heavens; as Paul also affirmeth, Php 3:20, and from thence he biddeth us to look for him. After this manner the angels warned the disciples, that they in vain gazed up into heaven; because Jesus who is taken up into heaven, shall so come as they have seen him go up. Here also the adversaries of sound doctrine stall away with a pleasant shift as they think, saying that he shall then come visibly, who never went out of the earth, but that he abideth invisibly with them that are his. As though the angels did there signify a double presence, and do not simply make the disciples witnesses of his going up seeing it with their eyes, that no doubting might remain; even as if they had said, he, your own eyes beholding it, being taken up into heaven, that claimed to himself the heavenly empire; it remaineth that ye patiently abide in expectation till he come again the judge of the world; because he is now entered into heaven, not that he may alone possess it, but that he may gather together with him you and all the godly.

28. Augustine wrested and abused by the maintainers of consubstantiation — But forasmuch as the defenders of this bastard doctrine are not ashamed to garnish it with the consenting voices of the old writers, and especially of Augustine, I will in few words declare how perversely they go about it. For whereas their testimonies have been gathered together of learned and godly men, I will not do a thing already done; let him that will, seek them out of their works. I will not heap together, neither out of Augustine himself, all that might make to the purpose; but will be content to show, by a few, that he is without controversy whole on our side. As for this, that our adversaries to wrest him from us; do allege that it is commonly read in his books, that the flesh and blood of Christ is distributed in the supper, namely, the sacrifice once offered in the cross, (Ad Bonifac. Epist. 25,) it is but trifling; since he also calleth it either thanksgiving or the sacrament of the body. But in what sense he useth the words of flesh and blood, we need not to seek with loner compassing about; forasmuch as he declareth himself, saying that sacraments take their names ot the likeness of the things which they signify; and that, therefore, after a certain manner, the sacrament of the body is the body. Wherewith accordeth another place which is well enough known, the Lord hesitated not to say, this is my body, when he gave the sign of it. (Contra Adama.) Again, they object, that Augustine writeth expressly, that the body of Christ falleth to the ground, and entereth into the mouth; even in the same sense, that he affirmeth it to be consumed because he joineth them both together. Neither doth that make to the contrary, which he saith, that when the mystery is ended, the bread is consumed, (Mam. Lib. 12,) because he had a little before said, since these things are known to men, forasmuch as they are done by men, they may have honor as things, but as marvelous things they may not. {Lib. 5 de trm. c.) And to no other end tendeth that which our adversaries do too unadvisedly draw to themselves; that Christ did, after a certain manner, bear himself in his own hands, when he reacheth the mystical bread to the disciples. For by interlacing this adverb of “likeness, after a certain manner, he sufficiently declareth, that he was not truly nor really enclosed under the bread. And no wonder, since in another place he plainly affirmeth, that bodies, if spaces of places be taken from them, shall be nowhere, they shall not be at all. (in Psalms 33:1-22.) It is a poor cavil to say that in that place it is not spoken of the supper, in which God uttereth special power, because the question was moved concerning the flesh of Christ, and the holy man of set purpose answering, saith, Christ gave immortality to his flesh, but took not nature from it. After this form it is not to be thought that he is each where spread abroad; for we must beware that we do uot so affirm the godhead of the man, that we take away the truth of the body. And it followeth not, that that which is in God must be each where as God is. There is a reason by and by added, for one person is God and man, and both are one Christ; as God he is

everywhere; as man he is in heaven. (Epis Ad Dardan) What a negligence had it been, not to except the mystery of the supper, being a thing so earnest and weighty, if there had been in it any thing against the doctrine which he treated of. And yet, if a man do heedfully read that which followeth within a little after, he shall rind that under that general doctrine, the supper is also comprehended, that Christ the only begotten Son of God, and the same the Son of Man, is each where whole present as God, that he is in the temple of God, that is in the church, God, as it were, there dwelling, and in some certain place of heaven by reason of the measure of his true body. We see how, to the uniting of Christ with the church, he doth not draw his body out of heaven; which surely he would have done, if the body of Christ were not truly meat to us unless it were inclosed under bread. In another place, defining how the faithful do now possess Christ. Thou hast him, saith he, by the sign of the cross, by the sacrament of baptism, by the meat and drink of the altar. (Tract. 30. in Joh.) How rightly he reckoneth a superstitious usage among the signs of the presence of Christ, I do not now dispute, hut he that compareth the presence of the flesh to the sign of the cross, sufficiently showeth that he feigneth not a two bodied Christ, that the same. He, may lurk hidden under the bread, who sitteth visible in heaven. If this need plainer declaration, it is, by and by, after added in the same place, that according to the presence of majesty, we always have Christ; that according to the presence of the flesh, it is rightly said, “Me ye shall not always have." Matthew 26:11. They answer, that this is also added, that according to an unspeakable and invisible grace, it is fulfilled which is said of him, I am with you, even unto the end of the world. Matthew 28:20. But that is nothing for their advantage; because this is at length restrained to his majesty, which is ever in comparison set against the body, and his flesh by express name is made different from his grace and power. As in another place the same comparison of contraries is read in him, that Christ by bodily presence left the disciples, that by spiritual presence he may be still with them; where it is plain that the substance of the flesh is distinguished from the power of the Spirit, which conjoineth us with Christ, though we be otherwise far severed by distance of places. The same manner of speaking he oftentimes useth, when he sailh, he is to come again to the quick and the dead with bodily presence, according to the rule of faith and sound doctrine. For with spiritual presence he was also to come to them, and to abide with the whole church in the world until the ending of the world. Therefore, this speech is directed to the believers whom he had already begun to save with bodily presence, and whom he was to leave with bodily absence; that he might with his Father save them with spiritual presence. To take bodily for visible is but trifling; since he setteth also the body in comparison against the divine power; and adding (to save with the Father,) he clearly expresseth that he doth pour abroad his grace from heaven to us by his Spirit.

29. The body of Christ by glory not made invisible, which fancy, concerning Christ, hath no manner of ground in Scripture. — And since they put so much confidence in this lurking hole of invisible presence, go to, let us see how well they hide themselves in it. First, they shall not bring forth one syllable out of the Scriptures, whereby they may prove that Christ is invisible; but that they take that for confessed which no man that hath his sound judgment will grant them, that the body of Christ cannot otherwise be given in the supper but being covered with the visor of bread. And this is the point about which they strive with us, so far is it off from having the place of a principle. And when they so babble, they are compelled to make a double body of Christ; because after their opinion it is in itself visible in heaven, but invisible in the supper after a special manner of dispensation. But how easily this agreeth, it is easy to judge both by other places of Scripture, and

by the witness of Peter. Peter saith, that Christ must be holden or contained in heaven, till he come again. Acts 3:21, These men teach that he is every where, but without form. They take exception, and say, that it is unjust dealing to make the nature of a glorified body subject to the laws of common nature. But this answer draweth with it that doting error of Servetus, (which is worthily to be abhorred of all the godly,) that the body was swallowed up of the Godhead. I do not say that they think so. But if this be reckoned among the peculiarities of a glorified body, to fill all things after an invisible manner, it is evident that the bodily substance is destroyed, and that there is left no difference of the Godhead and the nature of man. Again, if the body of Christ be of so many fashions and divers, that it is seen in one place, and is invisible in another; where is the very nature of a body which consisteth of his measured propositions? and where is unity? Much more rightly doth Tertullian say, who affirmeth that the body of Christ was a true and natural body, because in the mystery of the supper the figure of it is set before us for a pledge and assurance of the spiritual life. And verily Christ said of his glorified body', see and feel, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones. Luke 24:39. Lo, by Christ's own mouth the truth of the flesh is proved, because it can be felt and seen; take away these things, then it shall cease to be flesh. They still flee to their den of dispensation which they have framed to themselves. But it is our part so to embrace that which Christ absolutely pronounceth, that that which he meaneth to affirm may be of force with us without exception. He proveth himself to be no spirit, because he is visible in his flesh. Let that be taken away which he claimeth ns proper to the nature of his body; must they not be fain to coin a new definition of a body? Now wherever they turn themselves about, their feigned dispensation hath no place in that place of Paul, where he saith, that we look for a Savior from heaven who shall fashion our vile body like unto his glorious body. Php 3:21. For we may not hope for a like fashioning in those qualities which they feign to Christ, that every one should have an invisible and immeasurable body. Neither shall there be found any man so dull witted, whom they may make to believe so great an absurdity. Let them not, therefore, ascribe this gift to Christ's glorified body, to be at once in many places, and to be contained in no space. Finally, let them either openly deny the resurrection of the flesh, or let them grant that Christ being clothed with heavenly glory, did not put off liis flesh, who shall make us in our flesh, fellows and partners of the same glory, when we shall have the resurrection common with him. For what doth the Scripture teach more plainly, than that as Christ did put on our true flesh when he was born of the virgin, and suffered in our true flesh, when he satisfied for us; so he received again all the same true flesh in rising again, and carried it up to heaven? For this is to us the hope of our resurrection, and ascending into heaven, that Christ is risen again and ascended; and (as Tertuliian saith) he carried the earnest of our resurrection into the heavens with him. Now how weak and frail should that hope be unless this our real flesh had been raised up with Christ and entered into the kingdom of heaven? But this is the proper truth of a body, to be contained in space, to consist of its measured proportions, to have its form. Therefore away with this foolish device, which doth fasten both the minds of men and Christ to the bread. For to what purpose serveth the secret presence under bread, but that they who desire to have Christ united to them, may rest in that sign? But the Lord himself willed us to withdraw not only our eyes, but all our senses from the earth, forbidding himself to be touched of the women until he had gone up to his Father. When he seeth Mary with godly zeal of reverence to make haste to kiss his feet. John 20:17, there is no cause why he should disallow and forbid this touching till he should be taken up into heaven, but because he will be sought nowhere else. Whereas they object that he was afterwards seen of Stephen, Acts 7:55, the solution is easy; for

neither was it therefore necessary that Christ should change place, who could give to the eyes of his servant such clearness of sight as might pierce through the heavens. The same also is to be said of Paul, Acts 9:4. Whereas they object that Christ came out of the sepulcher it being shut. Matthew 28:6, and entered in among the disciples, the doors being shut, John 20:19, that maketh never a whit more for the maintenance of this error; for as the water like a fast pavement made a way to Christ walking upon the lake, Matthew 14:25, so it is no wonder, if at his coming the hardness of the stone yielded itself, Howbeit it is more probable, that by his commandment the stone was removed, and by and by after passage given him returned into its place. And to enter, the doors being shut, is not as much in effect as to pierce through the whole substance, but by divine power to open an entry for himself, that he suddenly stood among the disciples. Verily after a marvelous manner, when the doors was last locked. That which they allege out of Luke, that Christ suddenly vanished away from the eyes of the disciples with whom he went to Emmaus, Luke 24:31, profiteth them nothing, and maketh for us. For that he might take away the sight of himself from them, he was not made invisible, bat only went out of sight. As when he went in journey together with them (as the same Luke witnesseth, Luke 24:16,) he did not put on a new face, that he might not be known, but held their eyes. But these fellows do not only transform Christ, that he may be conversant on earth, but in divers places they make him divers and unlike himself. Finally, in so trifling they do not by one word indeed, but by a circumstance, make of the flesh of Christ a Spirit; and not contented therewith, they put upon it altogether contrary qualities. Whereupon of necessity followeth that it is double.

30. Though the invisibility of the body of Christ were granted yet the immeasurableness thereof which being denied taketh away the presence of Christ in or under the bread, was both condemned in the heresy of Eutyches, and hath in Scripture no color of proof — Now, although we grant them that which they pray of the invisible presence, the immeasurableness shall not be yet proved, without which they shall in vain attempt to enclose Christ under bread, unless the body of Christ may be every where at once, without any compass of place, it shall not be likely that he lieth hidden under bread in the supper. By which necessity they brought in the monstrous being every where. But it is showed by strong and plain witnesses of Scripture, that it was limited about by the measure of tihe body of a man; and then that by his ascending he hath made it plain that he is not in all places, but that when be passeth into one place he leaveth the other that he was in before. Neither is the promise which they allege, to be drawn to the body, I am with you unto the end of the world. Matthew 28:20. First, the continual union cannot stand, unless Christ dwell in us corporally without the use of the supper. Therefore there is no just cause why they should 80 sharply brawl about the words of Christ, that they may in the supper enclose Christ under bread. Again, the text itself proveth, that Christ speaketh nothing less than of his flesh, but promiseth to his disciples invincible help, whereby he may defend and sustain them against all the assaults of Satan and the world. For when he enjoined them a hard charge; lest they should doubt to take it in hand, or should fearfully execute it, he strengtheneth them with affiance of his presence; as if he had said, that his succor should not fail them, which should be impossible to be overcome. Unless they listed to confound all things, ought they not to make distinction of the manner of presence. And verily some had rather with great shame to utter their ignorance, than to yield never so little of their error. I speak not of the Papists, whose doctrine is more tolerable, or at the least more shamefast. But contentiousness so carrieth some away, that they say that by reason of the natures united in Christ, wheresoever the Godhead of Christ is, there is also his flesh, which

cannot be separated from his Godhead. As though that same uniting have compounded of those two. natures, I know not what mean thing which was neither God nor man. So indeed did Eutyches, and after him Servetus. But it is plainly gathered out of the Scripture, that the one only person of Christ doth so consist of two natures, that either of them hath still her own property remaining safe. And that Eutyches was rightfully condemned, they will be ashamed to deny; it is a wonder that they mark not the cause of his condemning, that taking away the difference between the natures, enforcing the unity of person, he made of God raan, and of man God. What madness therefore is it, rather to mingle heaven and earth together, than not to draw the body of Christ out of the heavenly sanctuary? For whereas they bring for themselves these testimonies: None is gone up to heaven but he that is come down, the Son of Man, who is in heaven. John 3:13. Again, the Son, who is the bosom < ' the Fatlier, he shall declare him, John 1:18; it is a point of like senseless dullness, to despise the communicating of properties which was in old time not without cause invented of the holy fathers. Truly, when the Lord of glory is said to be crucified, 1 Corinthians 2:8, Paul doth not mean that he suffered any thing in his Godhead; but because the same Christ, who being an abject and despised in the flesh did suffer, was both God and Lord of glory. After this manner also the Son of Man was in heaven; because the self-same Christ, who according to the flesh did dwell the Son of Man in earth, was God in heaven. In which sort he is said to have descended from the said place according to his Godhead; not that the Godhead did forsake heaven to hide itself in the prison of the body, but because although it filled all things, yet in the very manhood of Christ it dwelt bodily, that is to say, naturally, and after a certain unspeakable manner. It is a comnion distinction in schools, which I am not ashamed to rehearse: that although whole Christ be every where, yet not the whole that is in him is every where. And I would to God the schoolmen themselves had well weighed the import of this saying; for so should the unsavoury invention of the fleshly presence of Christ have been met withal. Therefore our mediator, since he is whole every where, is always at hand with his, and in the supper, after a special manner, maketh himself present; but yet so that whole he is present, not the whole that he is; because, as it is said, in his flesh he is contained in heaven till he appear to judgment.

31. Christ present in the supper, though he descend not to present his body invisible in bread. — But they are far deceived, who conceive no presence of the flesh of Christ in the supper, unless it be made present in bread. For so they leave nothing to the secret working of the Spirit, which uniteth Christ himself unto us, they think not Christ present, unless he come down to us. As though if he did lift us up to him, we should not as well enjoy his presence. Therefore, the question is only of the manner; because they place Christ in the bread, but we think it not lawful for us to pluck him out of heaven. Let the readers judge which is the lightest. Only let this cavil be driven away, that Christ is taken away from his supper, unless he be hidden under the cover of bread. For since this mystery is heavenly, there is no need to draw Christ into the earth, that he may be joined to us.

32. The manner of the presence of Christ in the Sacrament incomprehensible, inexplicable. — Now, if any man do ask me of the manner, I will not be ashamed to confess, that it is a higher secret than that it can be either comprehended with my wit, or uttered with my words; and to speak it more plainly, I rather feel it, than I can understand it. Therefore I do herein, without controversy, embrace the truth of God, in which I may safely rest. He pronounceth that his flesh is the meat of my soul, and his blood is the drink. With such food I offer my soul to him to be fed. In his holy supper he commandeth me, under the signs of bread and wine, to take, eat, and drink, his body

and blood. I doubt not, but that both he doth truly deliver them, and I do receive them. Only I refuse the absurdities, which appear to be either unworthy of the heavenly majesty of Christ, or disagreeing from the truth of his nature of manhood; forasmuch as they must also figbt with the Word of God, which also teacheth that Christ was so taken up into the glory of the heavenly kingdom that it lifteth him above all estate of the world, Luke 24:26, and no less diligently setteth forth in his human nature those things that are properly belonging to his true manhood. Neither ought this to seem incredible, or not consonant to reason, because as the whole kingdom of Christ is spiritual, so whatsoever he doth with his church, ought not to be reduced to the reason of this world. Or, that I may use the words of Augustine, this mystery, as others are, is done by men, but from God; in earth, but from heaven. (Iren. lib. 4. ca. 34.) Such, I say, is the presence of the body, as the nature of the sacrament requireth; which we say here to excel with so great force, and great effectualness, that it not only bringeth to our minds undoubted trust of eternal life, but also assureth us of the immortality of our flesh. For it is now quickened of his immortal flesh, and after a certain manner communicateth of his immortality. They who are earned above this with their excessive speeches, do nothing but with such entanglements darken the simple and plain truth. 'If any be not yet satisfied, I would have him here a while to consider with me, that we now speak of a sacrament, all the parts whereof ought to be referred to faith. But we do no less daintily and plentifully feed faith with this partaking of the body which we have declared, than they that pluck Christ himself out of heaven. In the meantime, I plainly confess, that I refuse that mixture of the flesh of Christ with our soul, or the pouring out of it such as they teach; because it sufficeth us, that Christ doth, out of the substance of his flesh, breathe life into our souls, yea, doth pour into us his own life, although the very flesh of Christ doth not enter into us. Moreover, there is no doubt that the proportion of faith, whereby Paul willeth us to examine all exposition of Scripture, Romans 12:3, doth, in this behalf, very well agree with me. As for them that speak against so evident a truth, let them look after what rule of faith they fashion themselves. He that doth not confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is not of God. 1 John 4:3. These men, although they cloak it, or mark it not, do spoil him of his flesh.

33. Our communicating of Christ in the Sacrament, spiritual, not carnal; such as receiveth Christ himself not the effects of his grace only, otherwise sacramental than Lombard, and after him others have dreamed, who think his flesh eaten without taste, without faith Of communicating the same is to be likewise thought, which they acknowledge not unless they devour the flesh of Christ under bread. But there is no small wrong done to the Holy Ghost, unless we believe that it is brought to pass by his incomprehensible power, that we communicate with the flesh ar.d blood of Christ. Yea, if the force of the mystery, such as it is taught of us, and as it was known to the old church from four hundred years ago, were weighed according to the worthiness of it, there was enough and more whereupon we might be satisfied; the gate had been shut against many foul errors, out of which have been kindled many horrible dissensions wherewith both in old time and in our age the church hath been miserably vexed, while curious men do enforce an excessive manner of presence, which the Scripture never showeth. And they turmoil about a thing foolishly and rashly conceived, as if the inclosing of Christ under bread were the whole of godliness. It principally behoved to know, how the body of Christ, as it was once delivered for us, is made ours; how we are made partakers of his blood that was shed; because this is to possess whole Christ crucified, that we may enjoy all his good things. Now these things, in which was so great importance, being omitted, yea neglected, and in a manner buried, this only crabbed question

pleaseth them, how the body of Christ lieth hid under bread or under the form of bread. They falsely spread abroad that whatsoever we teach concerning spiritual eating, is contrary to the true and real eating, as they call it; because we have respect to nothing but to the manner, which among them is carnal, while they enclose Christ in bread; but to us it is spiritual, because the secret power of the Spirit is the bond of our union with Christ. No truer is that other objection, that we touch only the fruit or effect which the faithful take of the eating of the flesh of Christ. For we have said before, that Christ himself is the substance of the supper; and that thereupon followeth the effect, that by the sacrifice of his death we are cleansed from sins, by his blood we are washed, by his resurrection we are raised up into hope of the heavenly life. But the foolish imagination whereof Lombard was the author, hath perverted their minds, while they think that the eating of the flesh of Christ is the sacrament. For this saith he: The sacrament and not the thing are the forms of bread and wine; the sacrament and the thing are the flesh and blood of Christ; the thing and the sacrament is the mystical flesh. (Zivi. 4. Dist. 8.) Again, within a little after: The thing signified and contained, is the proper flesh of Christ; the thing signified and not contained, is his mystical body. Whereas he raaketh difference between the flesh of Christ, and the effectual power of nourishing, wherewith it is endued, I agree; but whereas he feigneth it lo be a sacrament, yea and contained under bread, it is an error not to be suffered. Hereupon hath grown the false exposition of sacramental eating, because they have thought that wicked men also and evil doers do eat the flesh of Christ, how much soever they are strangers from him. But the flesh of Christ itself in the mystery of the supper is no less a spiritual thing than eternal salvation. Whereupon we gather, that whosoever are void of the Spirit of Christ, can no more eat the flesh of Christ, than they can drink wine wherewith is joined no taste. Truly Christ is too heinously torn in sunder, when that dead body, and which hath no lively strength, is given forth in common to unbelievers; and his express words are directly against it. Whosoever eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I in him. John 6:56. They answer that in that place is not treated of the sacramental eating, which I grant, so that they will not now and then stumble against the same stone, Saying that the flesh itself is eaten without fruit. ')ut I would know of them, how long they hold it when they have eaten it? Here, in my judgment, they shall have no way to get out. But they object that nothing can be withdrawn or fail of the promises of God by the unthankfulness of men. I grant, indeed, and I say that the force of the mystery remaineth whole, howsoever wicked men do, as much as in them lieth, endeavor to make it void. Yet it is one thing to be offered. and another thing to be received. Christ reacheth this spiritual meat and offereth this spiritual drink to all men, some do greedily eat of it, some do loathingly refuse it; shall these men, refusing, make the meat and the drink to loose their nature? They will say that their opinion is assisted by this similitude, namely, that that flesh of Christ, though it be unsavory, is nevertheless his flesh. But I deny that it can be eaten without the eyes of faith; or (if we list rather to speak as Augustine doth) I say that men bear away no more of this sacrament, than they gather with the vessel of faith. So nothing abated from the sacrament, yea, the truth and effectualness thereof remaineth undiminished, although the wicked depart empty from the outward partaking of it. If they again object that this word, “This is my body," is diminished, if the wicked receive corruptible bread and nothing else, we have a solution ready, that God will not be known true in the receiving itself, but in the steadfastness of his own goodness, when he is ready to give, yea, liberally offereth to the unworthy that which they refuse. And this is the fullness of the sacrament, which the whole world cannot break, that the flesli and blood of Christ is no less given to the unworthy than to the chosen faithful ones of God; but

therewithal it is true, that as water lighting upon a bard stone, falleth away, because there is no entry open into the stone, so the wicked do with their hardness drive back the grace of God that it cannot pierce into them. Moreover, that Christ should be received without faith, is no more agreeing with reason, than seed to bud in the fire. Whereas they ask, how Christ is come to damnation to some, unless they receive him unworthily, it is a very cold question: forasmuch as we nowhere read that men do procure death to themselves by unworthily receiving Christ, but rather by refusing him. Neither doth Christ's parable help them, where he saith that seed groweth up among thorns, and afterward being choked is burned, Matthew 13:7, because he there treateth of what value the faith is which endureth but for a time, which they do not think to be necessary to the eating of Christ's liesh and drinking of his blood, that in this behalf do make Judas equal with Peter. But rather by the same parable their error is confuted, where Christ saith that some seed falleth in the highway, other some upon stones, and neither of them taketh root. Whereupon followeth that to the unbelievers their own hardness is a let that Christ attaineth not to them. Whosoever desireth to have our salvation assisted by this mystery, shall find nothing fitter, than that the faithful being led to the very fountain, should draw life out of the Son of God. But the dignity of it is honorably enough set out, when we keep in mind that it is a help whereby we are grafted into the body of Christ, or being graffed do more and more grow together, till he do fully make himself one with us in the heavenly life. They object that Paul ought not to have made them guilty of the body and blood of Christ, 1 Corinthians 11:29, unless they were partakers of them. But I answer that they are not therefore condemned because they have eaten them, but only because they have profaned the mystery, in treading under feet the pledge of the holy union with God, which they ought reverently to receive.

34. Now because Augustine among the old writers chiefly hath affirmed that article of doctrine, that nothing is abated from the sacraments, nor is the grace which they figure made void by the infidelity or naughtiness of men; it shall be profitable to prove clearly by his own words, how unfitly and perversely they do draw that to this present cause, who cast the body of Christ to dogs to eat. The sacramental eating, after their opinion, is that whereby the wicked receive the body and blood of Christ without the power of the Spirit, or any effect of grace. Augustine, contrariwise, weighing wisely those words, "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, shall not die for ever," saith, namely, the power of the sacrament, not only the visible sacrament; and verily within, not without; be that eateth it with heart, not he that presseth it with tooth. {Horn, in John. 26.) Whereupon at length he concludeth that the sacrament of this thing, that is to say, of the unity of the body and blood of Christ, is set before men in the supper of the Lord, to some unto life, to some unto destruction; but the thing itself whereof it is a sacrament, to all men unto life, to none unto destruction, whosoever be partakers of it. John 6:54. That none should here cavil, that the thing is called not the body, but the grace of the Spirit which may be severed from the body, the contrary comparison between these two words of admonition visible and invisible driveth away all these mists; for under the first of them cannot be comprehended the body of Christ. Whereupon followeth that the unbelievers do communicate only of the visible sign. And that all doubting may be better taken away, after that he had said that this bread requireth the hunger of the inward man, he addeth: Moses, and Aaron, and Phineas, and many other that did eat manna, pleased God. Exodus 16:14, Why so? because the spiritual meat they spiritually understood, spiritually hungered, spiritually tasted, that they might be spiritually filled. For we also at this day have received spiritual meat; but the sacrament is one thing, and the power of the sacrament is another.

A little after; and by this he that abideth not in Christ, and in whom Christ abideth not, without doubt neither eateth spiritually his flesh, nor drinketh his blood, though carnally and visibly he presseth with his teeth the sign of the body and blood. We hear again that the visible sign is set in comparison as contrary to spiritual eating. Whereby that error is confuted, that the body of Christ invisible is indeed eaten sacramentally, though not spiritually. Wee hear also that nothing is granted to profane and unclean men beside the visible receiving of the sign. Hereupon cometh his famous saying, that the other disciples did eat the bread, the Lord; but Judas did eat the bread of the Lord; (Hom. in John. 59,) wherein he plainly excludeth the unbelievers from the partaking of the body and blood. Neither tendeth it to any other end which he saith in another place. (Horn. 62,) what marvellest thou, if to Judas was given the bread of Christ, by which lie might be made bond to the devil; when thou seest on the contrary side that to Paul was given the angel of the devil, by whom he might be made perfect in Christ? 2 Corinthians 12:7, he saith verily in another place, (Lib. 5. de. bap. cont. Dona.) that the bread of the supper was the body of Christ to them to whom Paul said, he that eateth unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself; 1 Corinthians 11:29, and that they have not therefore nothing, because they have received naughtily. But in what sense, he declareth more fully in another place. For taking in hand purposely to define how the wicked and evil doers, who profess the Christian faith with mouth but with deeds do deny it, do eat the body of Christ, (and that against the opinion of some who thought that they did not eat sacramentally only but in very deed.) But neither (saith he) ought it to be said that they eat the body of Christ, because they are not to be reckoned among the members of Christ. For (to speak nothing of the rest) they cannot together be the members of Christ, and the members of a harlot. Finally, where himself saith, he that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I in him, John 6:56, he showeth that it is not sacramentally but in very deed to eat the body of Christ. For this is to abide in Christ, that Christ may abide in him. For he so said this as though he had said, he that abideth not in me, and in whom I abide not, let him not say or think that he doth eat my body, or drink my blood. Let the readers weigh the things set as contraries in the comparison to eat, sacramentally, and in very deed; and there shall remain no doubt. He confirmeth the same, no less plainly in these words: prepare not your jaws, but your heart. Hereupon is this supper commended. Lo we believe in Christ, when we receive by faith; in receiving we know what to think. We receive a little and are fatted in heart. Therefore not that which is seen, but that which is believed, doth feed. Here also that which the wicked receive, he restraineth to the visible sign; and teacheth that Christ is no otherwise received than by faith. So also in another place; (Cont. Faust, lib. 13. cap. 16,) pronouncing expressly that the good and the evil do communicate together in the signs he excludeth the evil from the true eating of the flesh of Christ. For if they received the thing itself, he would not utterly have left that unspoken which was more fit for his matter. Also in another place, (Ser. 2. de verb. Apost.) treating of the eating and the fruit thereof, he concludeth thus: then shall the body and blood of Christ be life to every man, if that which in the sacrament is visibly received, be in the truth itself spiritually eaten, spiritually drunk. Therefore whosoever make unbelievers partakers of the flesh and blood of Christ, that they may agree with Augustine, let them show us the visible body of Christ, forasmuch as by his judgment, the whole truth is spiritual. And it is certainly gathered out of his words, that the sacramental eating, when unbelief closeth up the entry to truth, is as much in effect as visible or outward eating. If the body of Christ might be eaten truly and yet not spiritually, what should that mean which he saith in another place? (In Psalms 98:1-9) Ye shall not eat this body which ye see, and drink the blood which they shall shed

that shall crucify me. I have commanded a certain sacrament unto you, being spiritually understood it shall quicken you. Verily he would not deny but that the same body which Christ offered for sacrifice, is delivered in the supper; but he did set out the manner of eating; namely, that being received into heavenly glory, by the secret power of the Spirit, it breatheth life into us. 1 grant indeed that there is oftentimes found in him this manner of speaking, that the body of Christ is eaten of the unbelievers; but he expoundeth himself, adding, in sacrament. And in another place, he describeth spiritual eating, in which our bitings consume not grace. And lest mine adversaries should say, that I fight with them by a heap of places, I would know of them how they can unwind themselves from one saying of his, where he saith that sacraments do work in the elect only that which they figure. Truly they dare not deny but that the bread in the supper figureth the body of Christ. Whereupon followeth that the reprobate are debated from the partaking of it. That Cyril also thought no otherwise, these words do declare. (In 6. Joan. cap. 17.) As if a man upon molten wax do pour other wax, he wholly tempered the one wax with the other; so it is necessary if any man receive the flesh and blood of the Lord that he be joined with him, that Christ may be found in him and he in Christ. By these words I think it is evident, that they are bereaved of the true and real eating, that do but sacramentally eat the body of Christ, which cannot be severed from his power; and that therefore faileth not the faith of the promises of God, which ceaseth not to rain from heaven, although the stones and rocks receive not the liquor of the rain.

35. Adoration of Christ in the Sacrament unwarranted. — This knowledge shall also easily draw us away from the carnal worshipping which some have, with perverse rashness, erected in the sacrament; because they reasoned with themselves in this manner: if it be the body, then both the soul and the godhead are together with the body, which now cannot be separated; therefore Christ is there to be worshipped. First, if their accompanying which they pretend be denied them, what will they do? For how much soever they cry out upon an absurdity, if the body be severed from the soul and the godhead; yet what sound witted and sober man can persuade himself that the body of Christ is Christ; they think themselves indeed sufficient to prove it with their logical arguments. But since Christ speaketh distinctly of his body and blood, but describeth not the manner of presence, how will they of a doubtful thing gather certainly that which they would? What then? If their consciences chance to be exercised with any more grievous feeling, shall not they, by and by, with their logical arguments, be dissolved and melt? namely, when they shall see themselves destitute of the certain word of God, upon which alone our souls do stand fast, when they are called to account, and without which they faint at every first moment; when they shall call to mind that the doctrine and examples of the apostles are against them, and that themselves alone are to themselves the author of it. To such motions shall be added other not small prickings. What? Shall it be a matter of no importance to worship God in this form, where nothing was prescribed unto us? When it concerned the true worship of God, ought they, with so great lightness, to have attempted that of which there is nowhere read any one word? But if they had, with such humbleness as they ought, holden all their thoughts under the Word of God, they would truly have hearkened to that which he said, take, eat, drink, and would have obeyed this commandment, wherein he biddeth the sacrament to be received, not to be worshipped. But they who, as it is commanded of God, do receive it without worshipping, are assured that they do not swerve from God’s commandment; than which assuredness there is nothing better when we take any work in hand. They have the example of the apostles, whom we read not to have fallen down flat and worshipped it, but even as they were sitting to have received it and eaten it. They have the use of

the apostolic church, wherein Luke reporteth that the faithful did communicate, not in worshipping, but in the breaking of bread. Acts 2:42. They have the apostles' doctrine, wherewith Paul instructed the church of the Corinthians, professing that he had received of the Lord that which he delivered. 1 Corinthians 11:1-34.

36. Adoration of the Sacrament of Christ's body superstitious, condemned in effect by the Council of Nice, by the use of the Old Church, and by Scripture — And these things verily tend to this end, that the godly reader should weigh how perilous it is in so high matters to wander from the simple word of God to the dreams of our own brain. But those things that are above said, ought to deliver us from all doubt in this behalf. For that good souls may therein rightly take hold of Christ, they must needs be lifted up to heaven. If this be the office of a sacrament, to help the mind of man which otherwise is weak, that it may rise upward to reach the height of spiritual mysteries, then they who are holden down in the outward sign do stray from the right way of seeking Christ. What then? Shall we deny that it is a superstitious worshipping, when men do throw themselves down before bread, to worship Christ therein? Doubtless the Nicene Synod meant to meet with this mischief, when it forbade us to be humbly attentive to the signs set before us. (Sursum corda.) And for no other cause was it in old time ordained, that before the consecration the people should with a loud voice be put in mind to have their hearts lifted upward. The Scripture itself also, beside that it diligently declareth unto us the ascension of Christ, whereby he conveyed away the presence of his body from our sight and conversation; to shake away from us all carnal thinking of him, so oft as it maketh mention of him, commandeth us to have our minds raised upward, and to seek him in heaven sitting at the right hand of the Father. Colossians 3:1-2. According to this rule he was rather to be spiritually worshipped in heavenly glory, than this so perilous a kind of worshipping to be devised, full of carnal and gross opinion of God. Wherefore they that have invented the worshipping of the sacrament, have not only dreamed it of themselves beside the Scripture, in which no mention of it can be showed, which yet should not have been overpassed if it had been acceptable to God, but also all the Scripture crying out against it, they have framed to themselves a god after the will of their own lust, leaving the living God. For what is idolatry, if this be not, to worship the gifts instead of the giver himself? Wherein they have doubly offended; for both the honor taken from God was conveyed to a creature; and he himself also dishonored in the defiling and profaning of his benefit, when of his holy sacrament is made a cursed idol. But let us contrariwise, lest we fall into the same pit, thoroughly settle our ears, eyes, hearts, minds, and tongues, in the holy doctrine of God. For that is the school of the Holy Ghost, the best schoolmaster, in which such profit is attained, that nothing need more to be gotten from any where else, but we willingly ought to be ignorant of whatsoever is not taught in it.

37. Christ in the Sacrament offered and given by promise unto them, not who behold and adore, hut who eat and give thanks; this Sacrament being instituted for the participation of Christ by faith and the profession of our grateful remembrance as two special uses. — But now, as superstition, when it hath once passed the right bounds, maketh no end of sinning, they fell a great way further. For they have devised ceremonies altogether foreign to the institution of the supper, to this end only, that they might give divine honors to the sign. We yield, say they, this worship to Christ. First, if this were done in the supper, I would say that that worshipping only is lawful, which resteth not in the sign, but is directed to Christ sitting in heaven. But now by what pretence do they boast that they worship Christ in that bread, when they have no promise thereof? They consecrate an host,

as they call it, which they may carry about in pomp, which they may show forth in a common gazing to be looked upon, worshipped, and called upon. I ask by what power they think it to be rightly consecrate. Verily, they will bring forth those words, This is my body. But I will object to the contrary, that it was therewithal said. Take and eat. Neither will I do that of nothing. For when a promise is joined to a commandment, 1 say that the promise is so contained under the commandment, that being separated it becomes no promise at all. This shall be made plainer by a like example. God gave a commandment, when he said, call upon me; he added a promise, I will hear thee. Jeremiah 33:33. If any man calling upon Peter and Paul, do glory upon this promise, will not all men cry out that he doth wrongfully? And what other thing, I pray, do they who leaving the commandment concerning eating, do catch hold of a maimed promise, This is my body, to abuse it to strange ceremonies from the institution of Christ? Let us therefore remember that this promise is given to them who keep the commandment joined with it; but that they are destitute of all the word, who remove the sacrament to any other way. We have heretofore treated how the mystery of the holy supper serveth our faith before God. But forasmuch as the Lord doth here not only bring into our remembrance so great largeness of his bounty, as we have before showed, but doth, as it were, from hand to hand bring it forth, and stirreth us to acknowledge it, he doth therewithal warn us that we be not unthankful to so plentiful liberality; but rather that we would publish it with such praises as it is meet, and advance it with thanksgiving. Therefore, when he delivered the institution of the sacrament itself to the apostles, he taught them that they should do it in remembrance of him. Luke 22:19. Which Paul expoundeth to declare the Lord's death. 1 Corinthians 11:26. This is, publicly and altogether with one mouth openly to confess, that all our affiance of life and salvation is reposed in the death of the Lord, that we may glorify him with our confession, and may by our example exhort others to give glory to him. Here again it appeareth whereunto the aim of this sacrament is directed, namely, to exercise us in the remembrance of the death of Christ. For, this that we are commanded to declare the Lord's death till he come to judge, is nothing else but that we should publish that with confession of mouth, which our faith hath acknowledged in the sacrament, that is, that the death of Christ is our life. This is the second use of the sacrament, which pertaineth to outward confession.

38. A third use of this Sacrament in stirring up unto unity and love. — Thirdly, the Lord also willed it to be to us instead of an exhortation, than which none other can more vehemently encourage and inflame us both to pureness and holiness of life, arid also to charity, peace, and agreement. For the Lord doth therein so communicate his body to us, that he is made thoroughly one with us, and we with him. Now since he hath but one body, whereof he maketh us all partakers, it is necessary that all we also be by such partaking made one body. Which unity the bread which is delivered in the sacrament, representeth; which as it is made of many grains in such sort mingled together, that one cannot be discerned from another, after the same manner we also ought to be conjoined and knit together with so great agreement of minds that no disagreement or division come between us. This I had rather to be expressed with Paul's words: The cup of blessing, saith he, which we bless is the communicating of the blood of Christ; and the bread of blessing which we break, is the partaking of the body of Christ, therefore we are all one body that partake of one bread. 1 Corinthians 10:16. We shall have very well profited in the sacrament, if this thought so shall be imprinted and engraven in our minds, that none of the brethren can be hurt, despised, refused, abused,, or any wise be offended by us, but that therewithal we do also in so doing, hurt, despise, and abuse Christ with our injurious dealings; that we cannot disagree with our brethren

but that we must therewithal disagree with Christ; that Christ cannot be loved of us, but that he must be loved in our brethren; that what care we have of our own body, such, also, we ought to have of our brethren which are members of our body; as no part of our body is touched with any feeling of grief, which is not spread abroad into all the other parts, so we must not suffer our brother to be grieved with any evil whereof we should not also be touched with compassion. Therefore Augustine, not without cause, so oft calleth this sacrament that bond of charity. For what sharper spur could be put to us, to stir up mutual charity among us, than when Christ giving himself to us, doth not only allure us with his own example, that we should mutually dedicate and deliver ourselves one to another; but in so much as he maketh himself common to all, he maketh all us also one in himself?

39. This Sacrament severed from the Word nothing but a dumb show. — But hereby is that very well confirmed which I have said in another place, that the true ministration of the sacrament standeth not without the Word. For whatsoever profit cometh to us of the supper, requireth the Word; whether we be to be confirmed in faith, or to be exercised in confession, or to be stirred up to duty, prayer is needful. Therefore nothing can be more disorderly done in the supper, than if it be turned to a dumb action; this hath been done under the tyranny of the Pope. For they would have the whole force of consecration to depend upon the intent of the priest, as though this nothing pertained to the people, to whom it most of all behoved that the mystery should be declared. But thereupon hath grown this error, that they marked not that those promises wherewith the consecration is made, are directed not to the elements themselves, but to them that receive them. But Christ speaketh not to the bread, that it may be made his body, but commandeth his disciples to eat, and proraiseth to them the communicating of his body and blood. And no other order doth Paul teach than that together with the bread and the cup, the promises should be offered to the faithful. Thus it is truly. We ought not to imagine any magical enchantment, that it be sufficient to have mumbled up the words', as though the elements did hear them; but let us understand that those words are a lively preaching, which may edify the hearers, which may inwardly pierce into their minds, which may be imprinted and settled in their hearts, which may show forth effectualness in the fulfilling of that which it promiseth; by these reasons it clearly appeareth that the laying up of the sacrament, which many do earnestly require, that it may be extraordinarily distributed to the sick, is unprofitable; for either they shall receive it without rehearsing of the institution of Christ, or the minister shall, together with the sign, join the true declaration of the mystery. In silence is abuse and fault. If the promises be rehearsed, and the mystery declared, that they who shall receive it may receive it with profit, there is no cause why we should doubt that this is the true consecration. To what end, then, will that other consecration come, the force whereof cometh not so far as to the sick men? But they that do so, have the example of the old church. I grant this, but in so great a matter, and in which we err not without great danger, nothing is safer than to follow the truth itself.

40. The danger of unworthily receiving this Sacrament. — Now, as we see that this holy bread of the supper of the Lord is spiritual meat, no less sweet and delicate than healthful to the godly "worshippers of God, by the taste whereof they feel that Chiist is their life, whom it raiseth up to thanksgiving, to whom it is an exhortation to mutual charity among themselves; so on the other side it is turned into a most noisome poison to all them whose faith it doth not nourish and confirm, and whom it doth not stir up to confession of praise and to charity. For as bodily meat, when it

findeth a stomach possessed with evil humors, being itself also thereby made evil and corrupted, doth rather hurt than nourish, so this spiritual meat, if it light upon a soul defiled with malice and naughtiness, throweth it down headlong with greater fall; verily not by the fault of the meat itself, but because to defiled and unbelieving men nothing is clean, Titus 1:1-16, though otherwise it be never so much sanctified by the blessing of the Lord. For (as Paul saith) they that eat and drink unworthily are guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, and do eat and drink judgment to themselves, not discerning the body of the Lord. 2 Corinthians 11:29. For such kind of men as without any sparkle of faith, without any zeal of charity, do thrust themselves forth like swine to take the supper of the Lord, do not discern the body of the Lord. For in so much as they do not believe that that body is their life, they do, as much as in them lieth, dishonor it, spoiling it of all the dignity thereof, and finally, in so receiving it they profane and defile it. But in so much as being estranged and disagreeing from their brethren, they dare mingle the holy sign of the body of Christ with their disagreements, it is no thanks to them that the body of Christ is not rent in sunder, and limb by limb torn in pieces. And so they are justly held guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, which they do with ungodliness, full of sacrilege, so foully defile. Therefore by this unworthy eating, they take to themselves damnation. For whereas they have no faith reposed in Christ, yet receiving the sacrament they profess that there is salvation for them nowhere else than in him, and do forswear all other affiance. Wherefore they themselves are accusers to themselves, they themselves pronounce witness against themselves, and they themselves seal their own damnation. Again, when they being with hatred and ill will divided and drawn in sunder from their brethren, that is from the members of Christ, have no part in Christ; yet they do testify that this is the only salvation to communicate with Christ, and to be made one with him. For this cause Paul commandeth, that a man prove himself, before that he eat of this bread or drink of this cup. 1 Corinthians 11:28. Whereby (as I expound it) he meant that every man should descend into himself, and weigh with him? If, whether he do, with inward affiance of heart, rest upon the salvation which Christ hath purchased; whether he acknowledge it with confession of mouth; then whether he do, with desirous endeavor of innocency and holiness, aspire to the following of Christ; whether, after his example, he be ready to give himself to his brethren, and to communicate himself to them with whom he hath Christ common to him; whether, as be himself is accounted of Christ, he do likewise on his behalf take all his brethren for members of his own body; whether he covet to cherish, defend, and help them as his own members. Not for that these duties, both of faith and charity, can now be perfect in us, but because we ought to endeavor this, and with all our desires to long toward it, that we may daily more and more increase our faith begun.

41. Consciences tormented by that worthiness of receiving which is taught in the Church of Rome. — Commonly when they go about to prepare men to such worthiness of eating, they have in a cruel manner tormented and vexed poor consciences; and yet they brought never a whit of all those things that might serve to the purpose. They said that those did eat worthily who were in a state of grace. To be in a state of grace they expounded to be pure and cleansed from all sin. By which doctrine all the men that ever have at any time been or now are in the earth, were debarred from the use of the sacrament. For if we go about thus to fetch our worthiness from ourselves, we are utterly undone; only despair and damnable ruin abideth us. Though we endeavor with our whole strength, we shall not the more prevail, but that then at least we shall be most unworthy, when Ave have most of all labored about seeking of worthiness. To heal this sore, they have devised a way to attain worthiness; that, as much as in us lieth, making examination, and requiring

of ourselves account of all our actions, we should with contrition, confession, and satisfaction, cleanse our unworthiness, which way of cleansing, what manner of thing it is, we have already showed there where was a more convenient place to speak of it. So much as serveth for our present purpose, I say that these are two vanishing comforts to dismayed and discouraged consciences, and such as are struck with horror of their sin. For if the Lord by special forbidding admitteth none to the partaking of the supper but the righteous and innocent, there needeth no small attention that may make a man assured of his own righteousness which he heareth to be required of God. But whereby is this assuredness confirmed unto us, that they are discharged before God, who have done so much as in them lay? But although it were so, yet when shall it be that a man may be bold to assure himself that he hath done as much as in him lay? So when there is made no certain assurance of our worthiness, the entry shall always remain shut by that horrible forbidding, whereby is pronounced that they eat and drink judgment to themselves, who eat and drink unworthily.

42. The medicinable virtue of this Sacrament unto men weakened with the consciousness of their own unworthiness. — Now it is easy to judge what manner of doctrine this is which reigneth in the papacy, and from what author it proceeded, which with the outrageous rigor thereof, bereaveth and spoileth miserable sinners and such as are tormented with fear and sorrow of the comfort of this sacrament, in which yet all the sweet delicates of the Gospel were set before them. Surely the devil could by no readier way destroy men, than by making them so senseless, that they could not perceive the taste and savor of such food, wherewith it was the "will of the most good heavenly Father to feed them. Lest, therefore, we run into such a headlong precipice, let us remember that this holy banquet is medicine to the sick, comfort to sinners, a liberal gift to the poor; which brings no profit to the healthy, righteous, and rich, if any such could be found. For whereas in it Christ is given us for meat, we understand that without him we pine, starve, and faint, like as famine destroyeth the lively strength of the body. Again, whereas he is given us for life; we understand that without him we are in ourselves utterly dead. Wherefore this is the worthiness both the only and the best that we can bring to God, if we offer to him our own vileness, and, as I may so call it, unworthiness, that of his mercy he may make us worthy of him; if we despair in ourselves, that we may be comforted in him; if we humble ourselves, that we may be exalted in him; if we accuse ourselves, that we may be justified of him; moreover, if we aspire to that unity which he commendeth to us in his supper, and as he maketh us all one in himself, so we should all desire to be of one soul, one heart, one tongue. If we have these things thoroughly well weighed and considered, such thoughts, although they shake us, yet shall never overthrow us. As how should we, being needy and naked of all good things, we defiled with filthiness of sins, we half dead, eat the body of the Lord worthily? We will rather think that we being poor come to the liberal giver, we sick, to the physician, we sinners, to the author of righteousness, finally, we dead men, to him that giveth life; that that worthiness which is commanded of God, consisteth chiefly of faith, which reposeth all things in Christ and nothing in us; and next of charity, and the self-same charity which is enough to offer imperfect to God, that he may increase it to better, forasmuch as it cannot be given perfect. Some other agreeing with us in this, that the worthiness itself consisteth in faith and charity; yet, in the measure of worthiness, have gone far out of the way, requiring a perfection of faith, whereunto nothing may be added, and a charity equal with that which Christ hath showed toward us. But hereby they do no otherwise than those before, drive all men away from coming to this holy supper. For if their sentence should take place, no man should receive but unworthily,

forasmuch as all, without exception, should be holden guilty and convicted of their imperfection. And truly it were a point of too amazing stupidity, I will not say foolishness, to require such perfection in the sacrament, as may make the sacrament void and superfluous; which was not ordained for the perfect, but for the weak and feeble to awake, to stir up, to prick forward and exercise the affection of faith and charity, and to correct the default of either of them.

43. The liberty granted unto men and their wanton folly showed m ceremonies annexed to the administration of this Sacrament. — But so much as concerneth the outward form of action, whether the faithful receive it in their hand or no, whether they divide it, or every one eat that which is given him; whether they put again the cup in the hand of the deacon, or deliver it to the next; whether the bread be leavened or unleavened; whether the wine be red or white, it maketh no matter. These things are indifferent and left to the liberties of the church. Howbeit, it is certain, that the usage of the old church was, that every one should take it into his hand. And Christ said, “Divide it among you." Luke 22:17. The histories report that it was leavened and common bread before the time of Alexander, bishop of Rome, who first delighted in unleavened bread. But for what reason I see not, unless it were with a new sight to draw the eyes of the common people to wondering at it, rather than to instruct their minds with good religion. I adjure all them that are touched with any thought and zeal of godliness, to tell whether they do not evidently see, both how much more brightly the glory of God shineth herein, and how much more abundant sweetness of spiritual comfort Cometh to the faithful, than in these cold and playlike trifles, which are of no other use but to deceive the sense of the amazed people. This they call the holding of people in religion, when being made foolish and senseless with superstition, it is drawn whither they list. If any man will defend such invention by antiquity, I myself am not ignorant how ancient is the use of chresin, and blowing in baptism. How nigh to the age of the apostles, the supper of the Lord was infected with foolish inventions, but this verily is the frowardness of man’s boldness, who cannot withhold itself, but that it must alway play and be wanton in the mysteries of God. But let us remember that God doth so highly esteem the obedience of his word, that he willeth us in it to judge both his angels and the whole world. Now, bidding farewell to so great a heap of ceremonies, it might thus have been most comelily ministered, if it were oft, and at least every week, set before the church, but that first they should begin with public prayers, then a sermon should be made, then the minister, having bread and wine set upon the table, should rehearse the institution of the supper, and then should declare the promises that are in it left unto us; and therewithal should excommunicate all them that, by the Lord’s forbidding, are debarred from it; afterward they should pray that with what liberality the Lord hath given us this holy food, be would instruct and frame us also with the same faith, and thankfulness of mind to receive it, and that forasmuch as we are not of ourselves, he would, of his mercy, make us worthy of such a banquet; that then either psalms should be sung, or somewhat read, and the faithful should, in seemly order, communicate of the holy banquet, the ministers breaking the bread and giving it to the people; that when the supper is ended, exhortation should be made to pure faith, and confession of faith, to charity, and to manners meet for Christians; last of all, that giving of thanks should be rehearsed, and praises be sung to God, which being ended, the congregation should be let go in peace.

44. The often receiving of this Sacrament. — These things that we have hitherto spoken of this sacrament do largely show, that it was not therefore ordained that it should be received once a-year, and that superficially for manner’s sake, as now commonly the custom is, but that it should

be in often use to all Christians, that with often remembrance they should repeat the passion of Christ; by which remembrance they might sustain and strengthen their faith, and exhort them to sing confession of praise to God, and to publish his goodness. Finally, by which they might nourish mutual charity, and testify it among themselves, whereof they saw the knot in the unity of the body of Christ. For so oft as we communicate of the sign of the body of the Lord, we do, as by a token given and received, interchangeably bind ourselves one to another unto all duties of love, that none of us do any thing whereby he may offend his brother, nor omit any thing whereby he may help him, when need requireth and ability alloweth. That such was the use of the apostolic church, Luke rehearseth in the Acts, when he saith, that the faithful were continuing in the doctrine of the apostles, in communicating, in breaking of bread, and m prayers. Acts 2:42. So it was altogether meet to be done, that there should be no assembly of the church without the word, prayers, partaking of the supper, and alms. That this order was also institute among the Corinthians, we may also sufficiently gather of Paul, and it is certain that in many ages afterwards it was in use For thereupon came those old canons, which they father upon Anacletus and Calixtus, that when the consecration is done, all should communicate, that u-ill not be without the doors of the church. And it is read in those old canons, which they call the canons of the apostles, that they who continue not unto the end, and do not receive the holy communion, must be corrected as men that move unquietness to the church. Also in the council at Antioch, it was decreed that they who enter into the church, and hear the scriptures, and do abstain from the communion, should be removed from the church till they have amended this fault. Which, although in the first council at Toletum, it was either somewhat qualified, or at least set forth in milder words; vet it is there also decreed, that they who, when they have heard the sermon, are found never to communicate, should be wanied; if, after waining, they abstain, they should be debarred from it.

45. The first beginning of slackness to communicate.— Verily, by these ordinances the holy men meant to retain and maintain the often use of the communion', which often use they had received from the apostles themselves, which they saw to be most wholesome for the faithful, and by little and little, by the negligence of the common people, to grow out of use. Augustine testifieth of his own time. (Levi, cap. Johan. tract 26.) The sacrament, saith he, of this thing, of the unity of the Lord's body, is somewhere daily, somewhere by certain distances of the days, prepared unto the Lord's table, and is there received at the table, to some unto life, to other some unto destruction. And, in the first epistle to Januarius, some do daily communicate of the body and blood of tlie Lord; some receive it at certain days; in some places there is no day let pass wherein it is not offered; in some other places only upon the Saturday and the Sunday, and in some other places never but on the Sunday. But, forasmuch as the common people were, as we have said, somewhat slack, the holy men did call earnestly upon them with sharp rebukings, lest they should seem to wink at such slothfulness. Such an example is in Chrysostome, upon the Epistle to the Ephesians. (In cap. I. Hom. 16. 12.) It is not said unto him that dishonoreth the banquet, wherefore didst thou sit down? but, wherefore didst thou come in? Whosoever is not partaker of the mysteries, he is wicked and shameless, for that he standeth here present. I beseech you, if any be called to a banquet, washeth his hands, sitteth down, seemeth to prepare himself to eat, and then doth taste of nothing, shall he not shame both the banquet, and the maker of the banquet? So thou standing among them, that with prayer do prepare themselves to receive the holy meat, hast, even in this that thou hast not gone away, confessed that thou art one of the number of them, at the last thou dost not partake; had it not been better that thou hadst not been present? Thou wilt say I am

unworthy. Therefore neither wast thou worthy of the communion of prayer, which is a preparing to the receiving of the holy mystery.

46. The custom of yearly once receiving perverse. — And truly this custom, which commandeth to communicate yearly only, is a most certain invention of the devil, by whose ministry soever it was brought in. They say that Zepherinus was author of that decree, which it is not likely to have been, such as we now have it. For he, by his ordinance, did, peradventure, not after the worst manner provide for the church, as the limes then were. For it is no doubt but that then the holy supper was set before the faithful, so oft as they came together in assembly, neither is it any doubt hut that a good part of them did communicate. But when it scarcely at any time happened that all did 1 communicate together, and whereas it is necessary that they who were mingled with profane men and idolaters, should, by some outward sign, testify their faith, the holy man, for order and policy's sake, appointed that day, wherein the whole people of Christians should, by partaking of the Lord's Supper, utter a confession of their faith. The ordinance of Zepherinus being otherwise good, hath been evil wrested of them that came after, when a certain law was made of one communicating yearly; whereby it is come to pass, that almost all men, when they have once communicate, as though they had sufficiently discharged themselves for all the rest of the year, sleep soundly on both ears. It ought to have been far otherwise done. Every week at the least the Lord's table should be set before the assembly of the Christians; the promises should be declared, which might feed us spiritually at it; none should indeed be compelled by necessity, but all should be exhorted and pricked forward; the sluggishness, also, of the slothful should be rebuked. All should by heaps, as hungry men, come together to such dainties. Not without rightful cause, therefore, at the beginning I complained, that by the craft of the devil this custom was thrust in, which, when it appointeth one certain day of the year, maketh men slothful for all the rest of the year. We see, indeed, that this perverse abuse was crept in even in the time of Chrysostome; but we may also therewithal see how much it displeased him. For he complaineth with grievous words in the same place which I even now alleged, that there is so great inequality of this matter, that often in some times of the year, they came not even when they were clean, but at Easter they came, even when they were unclean. Then he crieth out, O custom! O presumption! Then in vain is the daily offering used; in vain we stand at the altar; there is none that partaketh together with us. So far is it off, that he allowed it by his authority adjoined to it.

47. An ordinance to take away half this Sacrament from the people. — Out of the same shop proceeded also another ordinance, which hath stolen away, or violently taken away the half of the supper from the better number of the people of God, namely, the sign of the blood, which being denied to lay and profane men, (for with such titles forsooth they set out God's inheritance,) became a peculiar possession to shaven and anointed men. It is the commandment of the eternal God, that all should drink, which commandment man dare discontinue and repel with a new and contrary law, commanding that not all should drink. And that these law-makers should not seem to fight without reason against their God, they pretend perils that might happen if this holy cup were commonly given to all, as though those dangers had not been foreseen and marked of the eternal wisdom of God. And then subtilely, forsooth, they reason, that the one is enough for both. For if, say they, it be the body, it is whole Christ, which cannot now be severed from his body. Therefore by accompanying, the body containeth the blood. Lo, how our wit agreeth with God, when it hath never so little begun with loose reins to be wanton and wild. The Lord showing bread, saith that it

is his body; when he showeth the cup, he calleth it his blood. The boldness of man s reason crieth out contariwise, that the bread is the blood, and the wine is the body, as though the Lord had for no cause severed his body from his blood both in words and in signs; or as though it had ever been heard spoken, that the body or blood of Christ is called God and man. Verily, if he had meant to signify his whole self, he might have said, It is I, as he is wont to speak in the Scriptures, and not. This is my body, this is my blood. But he, willing to help our weakness, did set the cup separate from the bread, to teach that he sufficeth no less for drink than for meat. Now, let one part be taken away, then we shall have but the one-half of the nourishments in him. Therefore, although it be true which they pretend, that the blood is in the bread by way of accompanying, and agin, the body in the cup, yet they defraud godly souls of the confirmation of faith which Christ delivereth us as necessary. Therefore, bidding their subtileties farewell, we must hold fast the profit which is by the ordinance of Christ in the two earnests.

48. Cavillous allegations for defence of the holy communion.— I know indeed that the ministers of Satan do here cavil, as it is an ordinary thing with them to make mockery of the Scriptures. First, they allege, that of one bare doing ought not to be gathered a rule whereby the church should be bound to perpetual observance. But it is false to say that it was but a bare doings; for Christ did not only deliver the cup, but also duly institute that his apostles should in time to come do the same. For they are the words of a commander, drink ye all of this cup. And Paul so rehearseth that it was a deed, that be also commendeth it for a certain rule. Another starting hole is, that the apostles alone were received of Christ to the partakings of this supper whom he had already chosen and taken into the order of the sacrificing priests. But I would have them answer me to five questions from which they shall not be able to escape, but that they shall be easily convinced of their lies. First, by what oracle have they their solution revealed, being so inconsistent with the Word of God? The Scripture reckoneth twelve that sat with Jesus; but it doth not so obscure the dignity of Christ that it calleth them sacrificing priests, of which name we will speak hereafter in place fit for it. Though he gave the sacrament then to the twelve, yet he commanded that they should do the same, namely, that they should so distribute it among them. Secondly, why in that better age, from the apostles almost a thousand years, were all without exception made partakers of both the signs? was the old church ignorant what guests Christ had received to the supper? It were a point of most desperate shamelessness, here to stick and dally in granting it to be true. There remain the ecclesiastical history, there remain the books of the old writers, which minister evident testimonies of this matter. The flesh, saith Tertullian, is fed with the body and blood of Christ, that the soul may be fatted with feeding upon God. (Lib. de reasrect. Carni) How, said Ambrose to Theodosius, wilt thou receive with such hands the holy body of the Lord? With what boldness wilt thou with thy mouth partake of the cup of the precious blood? (Theod. te. 3. ca. 8. Eucharistia.) and Jerome saith: The priests who make the thanksgiving, and do distribute the blood of the Lord to the people. (Hier. in 2. Mai.) Chrysostome, not as in the old law the priest did eat part, and the people part; but one body is set before all, and one cup. Those things that pertain to the thanksgiving are all common between the priest and the people. (Chrys, in. 2. Corinthians cap. 8. Eucharistia.) The self-same thing doth Augustine testify in many places.

49. The custom of ministering the cup to the people not abrogated as long as there continued any drop of pureness in the church. — But why dispute I about a thing most known? Let all the Greek and Latin writers be read over; such testimonies shall eachwhere offer themselves. Neither was

this custom grown out of use, while there remained one drop of pureness in the church. Gregory, whom you may rightly say to have been the last bishop of Rome, teacheth that it was kept in his last time. What is the blood of the lamb, ye have now learned, not by hearing, but by drinking. His blood is poured into the mouths of the faithful. Yea it yet endured four hundred years after his death, when all things were grown out of kind. For neither was that taken only for an usage, but also for an inviolable law. For then was in force the reverence of God's institution, and they doubted not that it was sacrilege, to sever those things which the Lord had conjoined. For thus saith Gelasius: (De consecr. dist. 2. cap. coinper.) We have found, that some receiving only the portion of the holy body, do abstain from the cup. Let them without doubt, because they seem to be bound with I wot not what superstition, either receive the sacraments whole, or be debarred from them whole. For the dividing of this mystery is not committed without great sacrilege. Those reasons of Cyprian were heard, which truly ought to move a Christian mind. (Ser. 5 de lap.) How, saith he, do we teach or provoke them to shed their blood in the confessing of Christ, if we deny his blood to them that shall fight? Or how do we make them fit for the cup of martyrdom, if we do not first in the church by the right of communion admit them to drink the cup of the Lord? Whereas the canonists do restrain that decree of Gelasius to the priests, that is so childish a cavil that it need not be confuted.

50. Three other reasons why the people should communicate in both kinds. — Thirdly, why did he simply say of the bread, that they should eat: but of the cup, that they should all drink? even as if he had meant of set purpose to meet with the craft of Satan. Fourthly, if, as they would have it, the Lord vouchsafed to admit to his supper only sacrificing priests, what man ever durst call to the partaking of it, strangers whom the Lord had excluded? yea, and to be partaking of that gift, the power whereof was not in their hands, without any commandment of him who only could give it. Yea, upon confidence of what warrant do they use at this day, to distribute to. the common people the sign of the body of Christ, if they have neither commandment nor example of the Lord? Fifthly, did Paul lie, when he said to the Corinthians, that he had received of the Lord that which he had delivered to them? For afterward he declareth the thing that he delivered, that all the faithful without difference should communicate of both the signs. If Paul received of the Lord, that all should be admitted without difference; let them look of whom they have received who who drive away almost all the people of God; because they cannot now pretend God to be the author of it, with whom there is not yea and nay. And yet still for cloaking of such abominations they dare pretend the name of the church, and with such pretence defend it. A though either these Antichrists were the church, which so easily tread under foot, scatter abroad, and destroy the doctrine and institution of Christ; or the apostolic church were not the church in which the whole force of religion flourished.

04.00 An Inventory of Relics

An Admonition Showing the Advantages

Which Christendom Might Derive from An Inventory of Relics

HISTORICAL NOTE In this unusual work Calvin uses all his French wit to expose the disease of "idolomania" and by merciless satire to produce a piece of writing with telling effect on the popular mind.

ADMONITION IN WHICH IT IS SHOWN HOW ADVANTAGEOUS IT WOULD BE FOR CHRISTENDOM THAT THE BODIES AND RELICS OF SAINTS WERE REDUCED TO A KIND OF INVENTORY, INCLUDING THOSE WHICH ARE SAID TO EXIST, AS WELL IN ITALY AS IN FRANCE, GERMANY, SPAIN, AND OTHER COUNTRIES.

AUGUSTINE, in his work, entitled, On the Labor of Monks, complaining of certain itinerant impostors, who, as early as his day, plied a vile and sordid traffic, by carrying the relics of martyrs about from place to place, adds, "If; indeed, they are relics of martyrs." By this expression, he intimates the prevalence, even in his day, of abuses and impostures, by which the ignorant populace were cheated into the belief, that bones gathered here and there were those of saints. While the origin of the imposture is thus ancient, there cannot be a doubt that in the long period which has since elapsed, it has exceedingly increased, considering, especially, that the world has since been strangely corrupted, and has never ceased to become worse, till it has reached the extreme wherein we now behold it. But the first abuse, and, as it were, beginning of the evil, was, that when Christ ought to have been sought in his Word, sacraments, and spiritual influences, the world, after its wont, clung to his garments, vests, and swaddling-clothes; and thus overlooking the principal matter, followed only its accessory. The same course was pursued in regard to apostles, martyrs, and other saints. For when the duty was to meditate diligently on their lives, and engage in imitating them, men made it their whole study to contemplate and lay up, as it were in a treasury, their bones, shirts, girdles, caps, and similar trifles.

I am not unaware that in this there is a semblance of pious zeal, the allegation being, that the relics of Christ are kept on account of the reverence which is felt for himself, and in order that the remembrance of him may take a firmer hold of the mind. And the same thing is alleged with regard to the saints. But attention should be paid to what Paul says, viz., that all divine worship of man’s devising, having no better and surer foundation than his own opinion, be its semblance of wisdom what it may, is mere vanity and folly. Besides, any advantage, supposed to be derived from it, ought to be contrasted with the danger. In this way it would be discovered, that the possession of such relics was of little use, or was altogether superfluous and frivolous, whereas, on the other hand, it was most difficult, or rather impossible, that men should not thereby degenerate into idolatry. For they cannot look upon them, or handle them, without veneration; and there being no limit to this, the honour due to Christ is forthwith paid to them. In short, a longing for relics is never free from superstition, nay, what is worse, it is the parent of idolatry, with which it is very generally

conjoined.

All admit, without dispute, that God carried away the body of Moses from human sight, lest the Jewish nation should fall into the abuse of worshipping it. What was done in the case of one ought to be extended to all, since the reason equally applies. But not to speak of saints, let us see what Paul says of Christ himself. He declares, that after the resurrection of Christ he knew him no more after the flesh, intimating by these words, that every thing carnal which belonged to Christ should be consigned to oblivion and discarded, in order that we may make it our whole study and endeavor to seek and possess him in spirit. Now, therefore, when men talk of it as a grand thing to possess some memorial of Christ and his saints, what else is it than to seek an empty cloak with which to hide some foolish desire that has no foundation in reason? But even should there seem to be a sufficient reason for it, yet, seeing it is so clearly repugnant to the mind of the Holy Spirit, as declared by the mouth of Paul, what more do we require? But it is not at all necessary to enter into a long discussion of the point, whether or not it is a good thing to have relics merely for preservation, and not for worship for, as we have said, experience teaches that the one is never separated from the other. Ambrose, indeed, speaking of Helena, (the mother of Constantine,) who had at great labor and expense procured the cross of our Lord, says, that she did not adore the wood, but only the Lord, who had hung upon it. But it is most rare for persons to be at all devoted to relics, without being also polluted by some degree of superstition. I admit that they do not, at the very outset, break out into open idolatry, but that gradually, from one fallacy to another, they move along their downward path, until they at last rush headlong. Indeed, people, calling themselves Christian, have gone to such lengths as to exhibit the madness of idolatry in a degree equal to that of the heathen of old. For they have prostrated themselves, and bent the knee before relics as before God, lighting torches and tapers as in solemn worship, putting confidence in them, and fleeing to them as if they possessed a divine power and grace. If idolatry is just to transfer the honour of God to others, can we deny that this is idolatry? It is no excuse to say it is done through the excessive zeal of rude and ignorant men or old women. The extravagance is of wider extent. It has everywhere prevailed, and been approved even by those who sit holding the reins of government in the Church. Nay, the bones of the dead, and all other sorts of relies, have been placed over the principal altars in the high and lofty place to be adored with greater reverence. See how what was at first a foolish curiosity for preserving and treasuring up relics, has at length degenerated into such abomination, that men have not only turned away from God, in order to cleave to things vain and perishing, but even with execrable sacrilege to adore things void of sense, instead of Him who liveth, and is blessed for evermore. But as evil leads on to evil, another unhappy consequence was, that vile objects, out of number, and altogether devoid of sense and beauty, were received as relics of Christ and the Saints. So blind was the world, that, under whatever name the vain toys were presented, they were at once received without examination and selection as genuine. In this way, men made no difficulty in hugging any ass' or dog's bones which any trifler chose to bring forward as the bones of martyrs. The same thing, as we will afterwards show, happened in other cases, and, I doubt not, by just punishment from God. For when the world, inflamed, as it were, with a kind of rage, longed after relics, that they might pervert them to superstition, it might have been anticipated that God would permit lie to follow upon lie. For in this way is He wont to avenge insult offered to his name, when the glory due only to Himself is transferred to others. Wherefore, the true explanation of the fact, that so many spurious relics exist, is just that when men were delighting in lies, God permitted them to fall into a double error.

The duty of Christians was, to leave the bodies of saints in their tombs in obedience to the universal sentence by which it is declared, that man is dust, and to dust will return; not to raise them up in sumptuousness and splendor, as if they were fabricating a premature resurrection. This duty, however, was not at all understood; but, on the contrary, against the decree of God, the bodies of the faithful were dug up and exalted in splendor, when they ought to have rested in the grave as in a bed till the last day. They were sought after and confided in, and even worshipped; in short, every mark of reverence was paid to them. And what was the result? The devil perceiving the infatuation, thought it not enough to deceive men in one way, but added also the imposture of inscribing the names of relies on things altogether profane; while God, in just vengeance, deprived them of all thought and discernment, so that, without any investigation, whether the thing was white or black, they received indiscriminately whatever was offered to them. At present, indeed, it is not my design to show what abomination there is in abusing the relics both of Christ and the Saints, in the way in which it has hitherto been done, and is common even in the present day in the greater part of Christendom, for the subject would require a volume to itself. But as it is clear that a great majority of the relics which are exhibited are spurious, being brought forward by certain deceivers, who have impudently imposed on the meanest of the people, it has occurred to me to mention some things which may furnish men of sense with an occasion of thought and reflection. For often, when preoccupied by error or opinion, we approve inconsiderately, without taking time to examine and form a right judgment, and in this way our thoughtlessness deceives us. But, when put on our guard, we begin to attend, our wonder is, how we could have been so giddy and easy in believing what had no appearance of truth. This is exactly what has happened in the present case. For men not being at all on their guard, but being preoccupied by a false opinion, when it is said, "there is the body of such a saint, there are his shoes, there his sandals," easily persuade themselves that it is so. But when I shall have called attention to frauds which cannot be now denied, every man, of even the least prudence, will open his eyes, and employ his mind in considering what had never occurred to himself. But in this short treatise, I am not able to accomplish what I particularly desire, for it would be necessary to obtain catalogues from all quarters, that it might be known what relics are said to exist in every separate place, so that they might be compared with each other. In this way it would be made manifest that every Apostle has more than four bodies, and every Saint two or three. The same thing would appear in other instances; in short, when the whole heap was collected, there is no man who would not be amazed at seeing how ridiculously the whole world have been blinded. The way in which I considered the matter with myself was this:—since there is no catholic church so small as not to have an infinity of bones and such like frivolities, what would it be if we were to pile up the whole multitude contained in three or four thousand dioceses, in twenty or thirty thousand abbacies, forty thousand monasteries, nay more, in the whole multitude of parishes and chapels? Still the best thing would be to see the things, and not merely to give their names, for, indeed, they are not all known by name. It was said, that in this city there was an arm of St. Anthony. While enclosed in its case, all kissed and worshipped it, but when brought forward into view, it proved to be a nameless part of a stag. On a certain great altar lay part of the brain of St. Peter. So long as it was in its case no man doubted—for it would have been blasphemy not to credit the name,—but when the nest was shaken up, and observed more accurately, it turned out to be a pumice-stone. I might give many similar examples, but these will suffice to show what rubbish would be brought to light, if all the relics throughout Europe were carefully visited, provided it were done with pradence and

discrimination. For some persons, when certain relies are exhibited, close their eyes from superstition, and so seeing, see not. I mean, they dare not examine in earnest, so as carefully to ascertain what they are. Thus many who give out that they have seen the entire body of Claud, or some other saint, never ventured to raise their eyes so as to see what it was. But any one who had the liberty of a private inspection, and would dare to use it, would speak very differently. The same may be said of the head of the Magdalene which is shown at Marseilles with a bit of pitch or wax attached to the eye. It is treasured up like some god that has dropt from heaven, but were it examined, the cheat would easily be detected.

It were to be wished, then, that we had certain information concerning all the foolish articles which, in different quarters, are regarded as relics, or, at least, that we had a regular catalogne of them, that it might appear how many are spurious. But since that cannot be, I could wish at least to obtain an inventory from ten or twelve cities, such as Paris, Tholouse, Rheims, Poictiers. For in them alone strange hives as of bees, or at least very curious manufactures, would be seen. Often do I earnestly wish I could obtain such an inventory. But as this would be too difficult for me to accomplish, I at last thought it would be better just to give this brief admonition, by which I might stir up the drowsy, to think what the whole must be when so much imposition is detected in a few. My meaning is; if in the relic chests, which I shall name, though forming not a thousandth part of the whole which are shown, so much imposition appears, what judgment should be formed of the residue? Moreover, if it appears that those which are deemed most genuine are spurious, what should be thought of the doubtful? Would that Christian princes would give some little attention to this. It is part of their office not to allow their miserable subjects to be not only led astray by false doctimes, but also openly imposed upon, in being persuaded, according to the byword, that "bladders are lanterns;" for they will have to account to God for their dissimulation in conniving at these things while they see them, and they will be made to feel that it was, indecol, a most heinous offense to allow God to be held in derision, when they could have prevented it. However, I hope that this little book will be of use to all, and suggest to each, in his own place, the propriety of considering, as the title of this treatise intimates, viz., that if all the relics of Christendom were described, it would be manifest that all men have hitherto been blind, that great darkness has brooded over the whole globe, and the greatest stupidity been universally displayed.

Let us begin then with Christ. As his natural body could not be possessed, (though some have found an easy way of fabricating miraculous bodies for him, in whatever numbers, and with whatever frequency they please,) instead of it they have collected six hundred frivolities to compensate for its absence. They have not even allowed the body of Christ to escape entirely, but have managed to retain a portion. For, besides teeth and hair, the monks of Charrox give out that they have the prepuce, that is, the pellicle cut off in his circumcision. And how, pray, did this pellicle come to them? The Evangelist Luke relates that the Lord was circuincised, but it is nowhere said that the skin was preserved for relics. All ancient histories are silent respecting it, and for the space of five hundred years this subject was not once broached in the Christian Church. Where was it lying hid all the time, and how did it so suddenly burst into notice? Moreover, how came it to travel so far as Charrox? But as a proof of its genuineness, they say that some drops of blood fell from it. They, indeed, say this, but they should prove it. It is plainly a mere absurdity. But were we to grant that this pellicle was preserved, and so might be there or elsewhere, what shall we say of the prepuce which is shown at Rome, in the church of Joannes

Lateranensis? As it is certain there was only one, it cannot possibly be both at Rome and Charrox. Thus the falsehood becomes manifest.

Next comes the blood, about which there have been great disputes. For very many have maintained, that no blood of Christ exists, except what is miraculous. And yet his natural blood is exhibited in more than a hundred places; in some of them, as at Rochelle in Aunis, in a few drops which Nicodemus is said to have received in his handkerchief; in others, in full phials, as at Mantua. At Billom in Auvergne, it is shown in a crystal vase, in the form of a liquid, while, at a village in the same neighborhood, and in other places, it is coagulated. Elsewhere, as in the church of Eustathins at Rome, it is poured from full goblets. Nor was it enough to have pure blood; they must needs also have it mingled with water, as it flowed from our Saviour's side when it was pierced on the cross. This ware is found at Rome in the church of Joannes Lateranensis. I leave every man to judge what certainty can be had on such a subject, and whether it be not a manifest falsehood to say that the blood of Christ has been found seven or eight hundred years after his death, and in such quantities as to be diffused over the whole world, and this without any mention of it whatever in the ancient Church.

Next come certain things which were in contact with the body of our Lord, or, at least, things which could be collected, and in the absence of his body be converted into relics, so as to keep it in remembrance. First, There is shown at Rome, in the church of the elder Mary, the manger in which he was laid at his birth, and in the church of St. Paul, the linen in which he was swaddled, although some portion of it is said to be in the church of St. Salvator in Spain. There also is shown his cradle, together with the shirt which his mother, Mary, put upon him. Likewise at Rome, in the church of St. James, is the altar on which he was placed on his being presented in the temple—as if various altars had then existed, as under the Papacy, where they are erected at pleasure. In this matter, the lie appears without disguise.

These are the pretended relics which belong to the period of our Saviour's childhood. It cannot be necessary gravely to discuss the question, how these articles were discovered, so long after our Saviour's death. No man is dull enough not to see that the whole affair is sheer madness. The Evangelical History says not a word of these things, nor were they ever heard of in the days of the apostles. About fifty years after the death of Christ, Jerusalem was pillaged and overthrown. Since then, numerous ancient Doctors have written and made mention of the things which existed in their day—in particular, of the cross and nails which Helena found. But of these paltry trifles there is not a word. Nay, even in the time of Gregory, as is evident from his writings, not one of them existed at Rome. After his death, Rome was repeatedly taken, pillaged, and almost utterly destroyed. If these considerations are duly weighed, what else can be said but that all these relics were devised for the purpose of imposing on ignorant people? And, indeed, the favorers of a false religion, both priests and monks, confess this, giving them the name of "pious frauds," as if by their means the people were incited to piety. A second class of relics belongs to the intervening period between our Saviour's childhood and his death. Among them is the pillar on which Christ leaned when disputing in the temple, together with eleven similar pillars belonging to the Temple of Solomon. But who revealed to them that Christ when disputing leaned on a pillar? The Evangelist, in giving an account of the disputation, does not even allude to it. Nor is it likely that the preachers' place was granted to him, when, as is manifest, he possessed no reputation or authority. Besides, even if he did lean on a pillar, how, I ask, do they know that this was the one? Again, where did

they find the twelve pillars which they say belonged to Solomon's Temple?

Then they have the waterpots in which our Saviour turned the water into wine, when he was present at the marriage in Cana of Galilee. I would fain know who was their custodier all the time, and afterwards made presents of them. For it is always to be observed, that they did not make their appearance till eight hundred or a thousand years after the miracle was performed. I am not acquainted with all the places where these are shown. I know, however, that they have them at Ilavenna, Pisa, Clugny, Angers, and in the church of St. Salvator in Spain. But not to dwell on this, it is easy to prove the imposture by merely taking a look at them. For some have only the capacity of a gallon measure, a little more or less, while others could contain eight firkins. Let these be reconciled with each other if it be possible, and then I will let them have their waterpots without dispute. But not contented with the pots, they have thought proper to have the liquor also. For at Orleans they give out that they are in possession of some of the wine; they say it belonged to the Architriclinus, (the master of the feast.) The people think this Architriclinus is the bridegroom's name, and they are still kept in their ignorance. Once a-year they give the smallest possible tasting on the tip of the tongue to those who are pleased to bring some offering, and they are told that they are quaffing the wine which the Lord made at the feast. Nor is the quantity ever diminished; only the cup requires now and then to be filled up. I am not aware of the size of his shoes which are said to exist at Rome in the place which they call the Holy of Holies, and whether he used them when he was a boy, or after manhood; but it is all alike. For the observations I have already made are sufficient to show how impudent it is at this time of day to pass oft; as belonging to Christ, shoes of which the Apostles had never heard.

Let us now come to relics of the last Supper, which Christ celebrated with the Apostles. The table is at Rome, in the church of Joannes Lateranensis, some of the bread in that of St. Salvator in Spain, while the knife with which the Paschal Lamb was cut up is at Treves. Be it observed, Christ celebrated the Supper in a hired room, and, of course, on quitting it, left the table behind. Nor do we read that it was carried off by the Apostles. Some years after, as we have said, Jerusalem was destroyed. What semblance of probability is there, that that table was found out seven or eight hundred years after? Besides, tables were at that time quite different in shape from those now in use. For at meals, the custom was not to sit, but to recline; this is clearly shown in the gospel. There is here, therefore, a manifest falsehood. What more? At the church of Mary Insulane, near Lyons, is shown the cup which contained the Sacrament of his blood which he gave to the Apostles to drink. It is also to be seen in the Vivarais in a certain monastery of Angustins. Which are we to believe? But the case is still worse with the dish in which the Pasehal Lamb was placed. For it is at Rome, and at Genoa, and at Arles. Perhaps the custom of that time was different from ours. For as in the present day, a variety of meats are put into one dish; so there must then have been various dishes for one meat, if credit is to be given to these holy relics. Can falsehood be more clearly proved? The same thing occurs in the case of the linen towel with which our Saviour wiped the feet of the Apostles, after he had washed them. There is one at Rome, in the church of Joannes Lateranensis, and another at Acqs in Germany, in the church of Cornelius, with the mark of Judas' foot upon it; one or other of these must he spurious. What, then, shall our judgment be? Let us have them to debate the matter among themselves, until one shall have made out something like a case. Meanwhile, let us hold it a mere imposition to attempt to persuade men that a towel, which our Saviour left in the house in which he celebrated the Supper, took its flight to

Italy or Germany, five or six hundred years after the destruction of Jerusalem. I have omitted to mention the bread on which the five thousand were miraculously fed in the wilderness. A piece of it is shown at Rome, in the church of Maria Nova, and a smaller piece in that of St Salvator in Spain. Scripture relates, that a portion of the manna was reserved as a memorial of the great miracle by which God fed the Israelites in the desert. But though there are five relics of the loaves, the Evangelist does not relate that any of them was preserved for such a purpose; nor is the thing mentioned by any ancient history, or by any of the ancient Doctors of the Church. It is easy, therefore, to conclude, that that which is now shown is of a more recent batch. We must come to the same conclusion, concerning the branch which is in the church of St. Salvator in Spain. They say it is the one which Christ carried when he entered Jerusalem, on the feast of the Passover, or, as they call it, Floridos. But it is no where said in the gospel that Christ carried a branch; the whole, therefore, is manifest fiction. The same rank must be assigned to other relics which are exhibited at the same place, namely, the earth on which our Saviour's feet rested when he raised Lazarus. Who, pray, marked the place so carefully, as to be able, after the destruction of Jerusalem, by which everything in Judea was changed, accurately to point out the very spot?

We come now to the principal relics of our Lord, viz., those connected with his sufferings and death. And, first, let us consider the case of the cross on which he was suspended. I know it is regarded as a certain fact, that Helena, the mother of the Emperor Constantine, discovered it. And I am not ignorant of what ancient Doctors have written, to prove that it undoubtedly was the cross on which our Saviour was crucified. Let all those have their due credit, though it was vain curiosity, or ill-judged religious zeal, that caused Helena to make the search for it. But assuming that her exertions to find out the cross are worthy of all praise, and that our Lord himself, after it was found, miraculously declared that it was truly his Cross, let us see how the matter is to be viewed with reference to our own times. The cross which Helena found is said to be still at Jerusalem. And no one calls this in question, though it is plainly inconsistent with ecclesiastical history, which relates that Helena sent part of it to the emperor her son, by whom it was placed on a pillar of porphyry at Constantinople; and that she inclosed the remainder in a silver chest, which she gave to the Bishop of Jerusalem for preservation. Therefore, we must either accuse the history of falsehood, or the things told of the true cross in the present day are utterly vain and frivolous.

Again, let us consider how many fragments of it are scattered up and down over the whole globe. A mere enumeration of those of which I have a catalogue would certainly fill a goodly volume. There is no town, however small, which has not some morsel of it, and this not only in the principal cathedral church of the district, but also in parish churches. There is no abbey so poor as not to have a specimen. In some places, larger fragments exist, as at Paris, in the Holy Chapel, at Poictiers, and at Rome, where a crucifix of tolerable size is said to have been entirely made out of it. In fine, if all the pieces which could be found were collected into a heap, they would form a good shipload, though the gospel testifies, that a single individual was able to carry it. What effrontery, then, thus to fill the whole world with fragments, which it would take more than three hundred men to carry? But they have fallen upon an explanation, and it is, that how much soever may be cut from it, it never grows less. But this device is too foolish and absurd for the superstitious themselves not easily to see through it. I leave it to all men to consider what certainty can be had as to the genuineness of all the pieces of wood which are worshipped in all the different places as the true cross. Whence certain fragments were brought, and by what way and means, I omit to

say; some affirming that they were brought to them by angels, others that they drop from heaven. Those of Poictiers say, that the piece which they have was stolen by a maidservant of Helena, and carried off; and that she having afterwards fled, brought it, in the course of her wanderings, into that district. They also add to the story that she was lame. Such are the illustrious grounds on which they stimulate the wretched populace to idolatry. And not contented with imposing on the rude and ignorant, by displaying a piece of common wood as the wood of the cross, they have declared it every way worthy of adoration. The doctrine is altogether devilish, and Ambrose expressly condemns it as heathen superstition.

Next after the cross comes the title which Pilate ordered to be affixed to it, and on which he wrote, "JESUS OF NAZARETH, KING OF THE JEWS." But we must know the time, place, and manner, of its being found. It will be said that Socrates, the Ecclesiastical Historian, makes mention of it. This I admit. But he says nothing as to what became of it, and hence his testimony is of no great weight. Besides, that inscription having been written hastily, and on the spur of the moment, after our Saviour had been actually crucified, it is most irrational to suppose that it was a picture painted skillfully as for display. Were only one exhibited, it might deservedly be deemed false and fictitious, but when the people of Tholouse say that they have it, and those of Rome contradict them, and show it iii the church of Santa Croce, they convict each other of falsehood. Let them, therefore, debate the matter among themselves as long as they please; in the end, if all things are duly examined, both will be proved false.

There is a still greater controversy as to the nails. I will mention those of which I have heard, and from them the merest child will judge how grossly the devil had deluded mankind, after having deprived them of all sense and reason, and so made them incapable of exercising any discernment in the matter. If ancient writers, and especially Theodoret, the historian of the ancient Church, say is true, Helena ordered one to be fixed in her son’s helmet, and the other two to be fitted to his horse’s bridle. Yet Ambrose does not express an unqualified assent. For he says, that one was fixed in the crown of Constantine, that his horsebit was made of the second, and that Helena kept the third to herself. We thus see, that twelve hundred years ago there was a controversy as to what became of the nails. What certainty, then, can we now have? The Milanese boast of having the one which was fitted to the horse’s bridle, while the inhabitants of Carpentras interpose, and claim it for themselves. But Ambrose does not say at all that it was fitted to the bit, but that it was made into a bit, an account which cannot by any possibility agree with what is affirmed by the inhabitants of Milan and of Carpeutras. There are also two nails at Rome, one in the church of St. Helena, and another in that of Santa Croce. Then there is one at Sienna, another at Venice, two in Germany, viz. at Cologne, in the church of the Three Manes, and at Treves. In France, there is one in the Holy Chapel, another in the possession of the Carmelites, another at the church of St. Denis, in the Isle of France, another at Bourges, another in the Abbey of Ciseaux, and another at Draguignan. Here we have them to the number of fourteen. Moreover, each place seems confident of the sufficiency of the proof in its favor. One thing certainly I will concede, that all the claims are equally good, and hence nothing is simpler than to pass the same sentence upon all, namely, to account them all, in spite of their boasting, to be spurious. There is no other way of unraveling the matter. The next thing in order is the soldier’s spear. This ought to be one only, but perhaps, from having felt the fire of some alchemist, it has increased and multiplied. For four have come to light, besides those which exist in different places, of which I have not the

names. There is one at Rome, another in the Holy Chapel at Paris, a third at Saintonge in the monastery of Ciseaux, a fourth at Selve, near Bourdeaux. Which of these, then, is to be selected as the true one? The easier course will he to turn them all adrift, and leave them as they are. But granting that there is one, I would fain know where it was found. As no ancient histories, or other writings, mention it, it must be of modern manufacture. In regard to the crown of thorns, it would seem that its twigs had been planted that they might grow again. Otherwise I know not how it could have attained to such a size. First, a third part of it is at Paris, in the Holy Chapel, and then at Rome there are three thorns in Santa Croce, and some portion also in St. Eustathius. At Sienna, I know not how many thorns, at Vineennes one, at Bourges five, at Besan~on, in the church of St. John, three, and as many at Koningsberg. At the church of St. Salvator, in Spain, are several, but how many I know not; at Compostella, in the church of St. Jago, two; in Vivarais, three; also at Toulouse, Mascon, Charrox in Poicton, St. Clair, Sanflor, San Maximinin Provence, in the monastery of Selles, and also in the church of St. Martin at Noyon, each place having a single thorn. But if diligent search were made, the number might be increased fourfold. It is most evident that there must here be falsehood and imposition. How will the truth be ascertained? It ought, moreover, to be observed, that in the ancient Church it was never known what had become of that crown. Hence it is easy to conclude, that the first twig of that now shown grew many years after our Saviour's death.

Next comes the purple robe in which Pilate clothed Christ in derision, because he had called himself a king. It was a costly robe not to be carelessly cast away. Nor is it to be supposed, that, after the mockery of Christ was over, Pilate Of his servants did cast it away. I should like to know who the merchant was that purchased it from Pilate to preserve it for relics. To give some color to their fiction, they show some drops of blood upon it, as if; forsooth, the villains who put it on the shoulders of Christ in mockery had afterwards chosen to destroy it. I know not whether any thing under the same name is found elsewhere. The coat, woven from the top to the bottom, and without seam, as it seemed better adapted to stimulate the piety of the unlearned, has produced a considerable number of others. For one is exhibited at Argenteuil, a village in the suburbs of Paris, and another at Treves. But if the Bull which is in the church of St. Salvator in Spain says true, Christians have, from inconsiderate zeal, sinned more heinously than those wicked soldiers who did not dare to divide it. Christians have not feared to tear it in pieces, for purposes of adoration. But what will the Turk say, who, while he derides the madness, declares that it is with him ? It is unnecessary, however, to go to law with the Turks about it, as they will have enough to do in settling the quarrel among themselves. Meanwhile, we have a good excuse for not giving credit to any of them; for we must not favor either party before hearing the cause. This were a violation of equity. Nay, if they wish to be believed, they must first reconcile themselves with the Evangelists. The matter stands thus—The garment for which lots were east was the tunic, which the Greeks call [ ] I would have men carefully consider the form of the one which is at Strasburgh or at Treves. They will find that the one at Strasburgh resembles the robe used at mass, and to which they give the name of chasuble. And, therefore, though they were to put out men's eyes, the imposture might still be detected, being such as may be felt by the hand. To conclude this article, I wish to propose a simple question. Scripture declares that the soldiers parted our Saviour's vesture among them; and it is most certain that they did so for their own private advantage. Will they now then tell me what Christian it was who bought of the soldiers the tunic and other vestments, which are exhibited, for instance, at Rome, in the church of St. Eustathius, and in other places? How

came the Evangelists to forget the circumstance? for it was absurd to tell us that the soldiers parted the vesture among them, without also telling who it was that redeemed it out of the hands of the soldiers, in order that it might be preserved for relics. Moreover, how came the ancient writers to be so unkind as never to say one word on the subject? In solving these questions, they had better choose a day when men are devoid of sense, intelligence, and judgment. But they have not stopped here. In addition to the robe, they have thought proper also to have the dice employed in casting the lots. One of these is at Treves, another at St. Salvator's in Spain. In this they have characteristically displayed their childishness. The lots to which the Evangelists refer were those which were usually taken out of a hat or urn, as in the present day when a king is elected by ballot, or in the common game called Biancha. In short, everybody knows how lots are cast when lands or heritages are divided. But those asses have imagined that the lot was like our one for playing at dice, though that thing was not then in existence, at least in the shape in which we now have it. For, in place of the dots which are upon our dice, they had certain fignres, such as Venus, or a dog, which they designated by their proper names. Let them now go and kiss their relics, on the testimony of men, thus stupid, and thus absurd in their lies.

We must now consider the napkin, as to which they have still more openly betrayed their impudence and stupidity. For, besides the napkin of Veronica, which is exibited at St Peter's, and the robe which the Virgin Mary is said to have wrapped round our Saviour, and which is shown in the church of Joannes Lateranensis, and also in the Augustin monastery at Carcassone, they have also the napkin in which our Saviour's head was wrapped in the sepulchre. This is exhibited at the same place There are, at least, six cities more which boast of having this very napkin, as the one at Nice, which was brought from Cambray, also those at Acqs in Germany, at Macstricht, at Besancon, and also at Vindon in Limoges, also in a certain town in Lorraine, on the borders of Alsace; besides portions of it which are scattered up and down in different places, as at St. Salvator's in Spain, and in a monastery of Augustins in the Vivarais. I say nothing of that complete napkin, which exists in a certain numiery at Rome, as the Pope has expressly prohibited the exhibition of it. Must not men, I ask, have been exceedingly infatuated, to travel so far, at great expense, and with greater trouble, to see a bit of cloth, as to which not the least certainty could be had, or rather as to which they must, of necessity, have had their doubts? For whosoever believes that this napkin exists in one particular place, brings a charge of falsehood against all the others which boast that they possess it. For instance, he who believes that the piece of cloth which was at Cambray is the genuine napkin, condemns those of Besancon, of Acqs, of Vindon, of Maestrieht, and of Rome, as guilty of falsehood and of wickedness, inasmuch as they stimulate the people to idolatry, and impose upon them, by making them believe that a bit of common cloth is the linen which wrapped our Saviour's body in the tomb.

Let us now attend to the testimony which the Gospel gives on the subject; for it were little that they merely convicted each other of falsehood, if the Holy Spirit did not oppose them, and openly condemn all of them to a man. First, it is very strange that the Evangelists make no mention of Veronica, who is said to have wiped our Saviour's face with a napkin, though they speak of all the women who accompanied our Saviour to the cross. The circumstance would have been remarkable, and well worthy of a place in their narrative, had our Saviour's face been miraculously imprinted on a napkin. On the other hand, it does not seem a matter of much importance that some women accompanied our Saviour to the cross, if nothing miraculous, in regard to them, was

performed. How comes it that the Evangelists relate things of little or of no great importance, and are silent as to the most important of all? For, had such a miracle been performed as is commonly intended, the Holy Spirit is chargeable either with forgetfulness or thoughtlessness, in having failed to select the matters which it was of most importance to relate. So much for their Veronica, as to whom all men may see how manifestly false every thing is which they would fain have generally believed. In regard to the linen clothes in which our Saviour's body .was wrapped, I would, in like manner, ask how it comes, that while the Evangelists carefully enumerate the miracles which took place at the death of Christ, and omit nothing which is pertinent to the history, this wondrous miracle so completely escaped them, that they say not a word about the impression of our Lord's body which was stamped on his graveclothes? The circumstance surely was as worthy of being mentioned as many others. John declares that Peter went into the sepulcher, and saw the linen clothes lying in a place by themselves, but he makes no mention of the miraculous impression. It cannot be supposed that he would have suppressed so wondrous a miracle, had it really been performed. But another doubt occurs. It is nowhere said by the Evangelists that the linen clothes were carried away out of the sepulcher by the disciples or the holy women. Though they do not speak in express terms, they rather insinuate that they left them there. Then the sepulcher was guarded by the soldiers, and of course the linen clothes remained in their power. Is it likely that they gave them to some pious individual for the purpose of being converted into relics; especially when it is considered that the Pharisees had bribed them to perjure themselves by declaring that the disciples had secretly stolen away the body? It is almost unnecessary to add, that the imposture may be completely detected merely by inspecting the impression which is exhibited. It is perfectly clear that it was painted by a human hand. I cannot cease wondering how those who framed the imposture were so dull of understanding as not to use more craft in the doing of it; and, still more, how others were so silly as to allow themselves to he blindfolded, and thereby unfitted to see through a matter so very transparent. Nay, it appears that they have painters at hand. For one napkin happening to be burned, another was forthwith produced. No doubt, it was affirmed to be the same that was shown before, but the picture was so fresh that there would have been no room for the falsehood, had not eyes been altogether wanting to perceive it. To conclude in one word, their impudence will be proved by an argument which cannot be gainsayed. In all the places where they pretend to have the graveclothes, they show a large piece of linen by which the whole body, including the head, was covered, and, accordingly, the figure exhibited is that of an entire body. But the Evangelist John relates that Christ was buried, "as is the manner of the Jews to bury." What that manner was may be learned, not only from the Jews, by whom it is still observed, but also from their books, which explain what the ancient practice was. It was this: The body was wrapped up by itself as far as the shoulders, and then the head by itself was bound round with a napkin, tied by the four corners, into a knot. And this is expressed by the Evangelist, when he says that Peter saw the linen clothes in which the body had been wrapped lying in one place, and the napkin which had been wrapped about the head lying in another. The term napkin may mean either a handkerchief employed to wipe the face, or it may mean a shawl, but never means a large piece of linen in which the whole body may be wrapped. I have, however, used the term in the sense which they improperly give to it. On the whole, either the Evangelist John must have given a false account, or every one of them must be convicted of falsehood, thus making it manifest that they have too impudently imposed on the unlearned.

I would never come to an end were I to go, one by one, over all the absurd articles which they have drawn into the service. At Rome, in the church of Joannes Lateran ensis, is shown the reed which was put into our Saviour's hand as a scepter, when he was mocked and scourged at Pilate's judgmentseat At the same place, in the church of Santa Croce, is shown the sponge which was offered to our Saviour containing vinegar mixed with gall. How, I ask, were those things recovered? They were in the hands of the wicked. Did they give them to the Apostles, that they might preserve them for relics? Or did they, themselves, lock them up that they might preserve them for some future period? What blasphemy, to abuse the name of Christ by employing it as a cloak for such driveling fables! The same account must be given of the money which Judas received to betray his Master. The Evangelist relates that it was returned by himself in the synagogue of the Pharisees, and was afterwards employed in the purchase of a field to bury strangers in. Who got back this money out of the hands of the seller of the field? It would be too ridiculous to say it was the disciples. Some more plausible account must be given. If they answer that it took place a long time after, the thing will be still less plausible, since in that case the pieces of silver must have passed through many hands, and been mingled with other pieces. They will, therefore, require to show that the owner of the field actually sold it with the intention of getting possession of these pieces of money, that he might be able to use them as relics, or to sell them over again to the faithful. Of this, however, there is no mention whatever in the ancient Church.

There is a similar fiction with regard to the steps of Pilate's judgment seat. These exist at Rome, in the church of Joannes Lateranensis, together with the holes into which they say that drops of blood fell from our Saviour's body. In like manner, in the church of Praxed is shown the pillar to which he was bound when he was scourged, and three other pillars in the church of Santa Croce, round which he was led when taken away to die. I know not how they came to dream of all these pillars. This much, at least, is certain, that they are the offspring of their own brain; for we read not a word of them in the whole Gospel history. We read, no doubt, that Christ was scourged; but that he was bound to a pillar is their own invention. It must be obvious, therefore, that these impostors have done nothing else than attempt to rear up a huge pile of lies. In doing this, they have carried their license to such a length that they have not hesitated to make a relic of the tail of the ass on which our Saviour rode, and which is exhibited at Genoa. But it is not so much their impudence that astonishes us as the infatuation and stupidity of men, in religiously embracing such absurdities.

Here, perhaps, some one will allege it to be improbable that the relics which I have now named would be exhibited with so much pomp if they were not able to show whence they came, and by whose hands they were received. I answer, in one word, that nothing like probability is employed to cloak these transparent lies. For how much soever they may shelter themselves under the name of Constantine, or King Louis, or some of the Popes, all this avails them not when they have to prove that fourteen nails were used in fixing our Saviour to the cross, that a whole hedge was plaited in making his crown of thorns, that the spear's point produced three other points, that his robe was so multiplied as to be converted into three, or that it changed its form so as to be metamorphosed into a robe for mass, to which it had not the least resemblance, or that one napkin produced as many other napkins as a hen does chickens, or that our Saviour was buried after a different fashion from that which the Evangelists relate. Were I to take a lump of lead, and pointing to it, to say, "This gold was given me by such a prince," I would deservedly be thought mad. At all

events, my assertion would make no change upon the color or the nature of the lead, so as to convert it into gold. In the same way, when it is said, "See what Godfrey of Boulogne sent into these quarters after he had subdued Judea," though the lie is obviously repugnant to reason, will we allow ourselves to take the account without using our eyes to see what lies plain before them? For to convince all men how little credit is due to the proofs which they adduce in support of their relics, it is to be observed, that the chief and most authentic of those which are seen at Rome are said to have been brought thither by Titus and Vespasian. This fiction is not a whit more ingenious than if it were said that the Grand Turk went to Jerusalem in order that he might bring the cross of Christ to Constantinople. Vespasian, before he became Emperor, subdued and laid waste a part of Judea. Afterwards, when he had obtained the empire, his son Titus, whom he had left in command, took Jerusalem. Now, both of them were heathens, and cared no more for Christ than if he had never been born. In the same way, we may judge whether, in alleging that Godfrey of Boulogne, or King Louis, brought these relics, they have not lied with equal effrontery as when they said it was Vespasian. Besides, let it be considered what kind of judgment was displayed by that king to whom they give the name of St. Louis, and by others like him. They had, no doubt, a semblance of religion, and a zeal, such as it was, for the propagation of the Christian name. But if the droppings of goats had been shown them, and they been told at the same time that they were the Virgin Mary’s beads, they would have worshipped them at once, without ever debating the matter, and would have sent ships to transport them to any place where they were to be set up and honored. It cannot be denied they wasted both their resources and their bodily strength, and also spent a goodly part of their revenues in bringing back a heap of indescribable trifles and toys, by which the minds of men were so fascinated as to regard them as most valuable jewels. To give a clearer illustration of the fact, I may observe, that throughout the whole of Greece, Asia Minor, and Mauritania, and the whole of those countries which go under the name of the Indies, all the antique relics which our idolaters imagine that they possess here are there exhibited with the greatest confidence. How are we to decide between these two parties? Our people say that the relics were brought away from those places. The Christians who are living there affirm that they still possess them, and deride our foolish boasting. How can the dispute be decided without investigation—investigation, however, which cannot, and never will, be made? The only remedy is to despise both, and leave the matter as it is, in status quo. The last class of relics belonging to Christ are those which relate to events subsequent to his resurrection; e.g. the piece of broiled fish which Peter offered to him when he appeared on the seashore. It must have been wondrously well salted if it has kept for such a long series of ages! But, jesting apart, is it supposable that the apostles made relics of what they had actually prepared for dinner? Whoever does not perceive that the whole matter is an open mockery of God, I must leave as unworthy of being farther addressed on the subject. Then we have the miraculous blood which has flowed from many of the hosts at mass; as at Paris, in the church of John Arenarius, and also in that of John the Angel; as also at Dijon, and many other places. And, in order to enlarge the heap, they have added the impious knife with which the host was stabbed at Paris by a certain Jew. This knife the Parisians regard with greater veneration than the host itself. When Doctor a’ Quercus, who held the cure of St. John Arenarius, found that the donations made to this host stood in his way, (his gains being diminished in proportion to what the knife received,) he indignantly exclaimed, that they were worse than the Jews, inasmuch as they were worshipping a knife which had been the instrument of violating the sacred body of Christ. I have adduced this instance, because the exclamation

would equally apply to the spear, the nails, and the crown of thorns; all who adore them being, in the opinion of Master a' Quercus, more impious than the Jews by whom Christ was crucified. In like manner are shown the prints of his feet in a place where he is said to have appeared to several individuals after his ascension, as at Rome, in the church of St. Lawrence, at the spot where he is said to have appeared to Peter, and foretold him that he was to suffer at Rome. Another of these footmarks is to be seen at Poictiers, in the church of Arabegend, another at Soissons, and another at Aries. I deny not that Christ could have left the mark of his foot upon a stone. I only deny the allegation of his having actually done so. In the absence of all proper proof, I maintain that the whole ought to be regarded as a mere fable. But the most admirable specimen of this description of relics is the impression of his hips, which is seen at Rheims, on a stone behind the altar, and is said to have been left at the time when our Saviour turned mason, in order that he might build the vestibule of that church. The blasphemy is so execrable, that I am almost ashamed to mention it. To proceed, let us now attend to what is said of images, I mean not those which are usually made by painters, sculptors, and artists—(the number of these is infinite;)—but of those which possess some special claim to respect, and are regarded as singular and precious, as being of the nature of relics. Of these there are two kinds; for some have been miraculously formed, as that which is shown at Rome, in the portico of the church of St. Mary. There is another also in the church of Joannes Lateranensis; and another, in which there is a picture of our Lord, said to have been taken at the time when he was twelve years old. There is also another at Lucca, which they say was painted by angels, and is called "The Holy Countenance." These follies are so absurd, that I would lose my pains, and feel I was absurdly wasting my time, were I to dwell upon them. It is sufficient, therefore, merely to have noticed them in passing; for everybody knows that painting is not at all an office which belongs to angels, and that the means by which our Lord wished to make himself known, and imprinted on our memory, was very different from lifeless images. Eusehius relates, in his Ecclesiastical History, that our Saviour sent his picture, painted to the life, to King Abgarus; and this is somewhat more certain than a fiction taken from the Chronicles of Milan. But though the fact were so, how came they to obtain it from King Abgarus? It is said to be at Rome; but Eusebius says not that it was in existence up to his day. He only speaks by hearsay, as of a thing which had occurred long before. Is it to be believed, that it was brought to light six or seven hundred years after; and, quitting Persia, traveled as far as Rome?

Pictures of the cross have been fabricated in the same way as those of our Saviour's person. It is given out at Brescia, that they have the very cross that appeared to Constantine. I will not dispute the matter with them; I only send them to the Cortonians, who firmly maintain that they possess it. Let them litigate the matter between themselves, and then let the one who gains his plea come forward, and we will give him his answer. Indeed, it is not difficult to find an answer that will convict them all of folly. For when some writers say that a cross appeared to Constantine, they mean not a material Cross, but the figure of a cross which was exhibited to him by a visible representation in the sky. Therefore, although the fact were true, it is clear that they have fallen into a very stupid blunder, and reared up their imposture without giving it the shadow of a foundation. But there is a second species of images which are regarded as relics, in consequence of certain services which they have performed. To this class of images belong crucifixes, on which the beard grows; for instance, one at Burgos in Spain, another in the church of St. Salvator, and another in that of Aurengia. Were I to dwell upon this for the purpose of demonstrating what folly, or rather brutish stupidity, it is to believe such a thing, I should make myself ridiculous. The whole matter is so

absurd in itself, that it cannot be at all necessary to spend time in refuting it, and yet the wretched populace are so dull, that the great majority of them think it just as certain as the gospel. With these, also, I class those crucifixes which have spoken, and of which there is a great multitude. But let us content ourselves with one, by way of example, viz., the one which is at St. Denis in France. It spoke, they say, when it testified that the Church was dedicated. Leaving others to consider how far the importance of the matter called for such utterance, I only ask how an image of the cross could have been in the Church at that time, when, according to the custom used at dedications, all the images are removed from the Church? How did it manage to steal away and conceal itself, so as not to be removed with the rest? We see how easy a matter they must suppose it is to deceive the world, since they care not how much they contradict themselves, but deem it enough to belch forth their lies with open mouth, giving themselves no concern about any objections that might be urged. Lastly, we have got tears also; one, for instance, at Vindon, another at Treves, in the church of St. Maximin, another at Orleans, in the church of Peter Puellare, besides many which are unknown to me. Some of these are said to be natural tears, as the one at St Maximin; for, according to their chronicle, our Lord let it fall when he was washing the disciples' feet. Others are miraculous, as if it were to be believed that crucifixes of wood had so much feeling in them that they could shed tears. But we must pardon them this fault; they were ashamed to think that their images could do less than had been done by those of the heathen. The heathen pretended that their idols occasionally wept, and these crucifixes, therefore, must receive the same right, and be put on an equal footing! With regard to the Virgin Mary, as they give out that her body is not on the earth, they are of course prevented from pretending to have her bones; were it otherwise, I can well believe they would have given her a body of such a size as would suffice to fill a thousand sarcophaguses. What is denied with reference to the whole body, they have endeavored to compensate by hair and milk. Some hairs are shown at Rome, in the church of Mary supra Minerva, at St. Salvator's in Spain, at Mascon, at Clugny, at Nocera, at Sanfior, at St James's, and many other places. As to the milk, it cannot be necessary to enumerate all the places where it is shown. Indeed, the task would be endless, for there is no town, however small, no monastery or nunnery, however insignificant, which does not possess it, some in less, and others in greater quantities; not that they would have been ashamed to have it in hogsheads, but they thought the lie might be more plausible if they had only a small quantity,—as much, for instance, as could be contained in a small gallipot or phial; for in this form it can be kept back from minute inspection. But had the breasts of the most Holy Virgin yielded a more copious supply than is given by a cow, or had she continued to nurse during her whole lifetime, she scarcely could have furnished the quantity which is exhibited. Again, I would fain know how that milk, which is at present almost everywhere exhibited, was collected, so as to be preserved until our time. We do not read of any person who had the curiosity to undertake the task. We read, indeed, that the shepherds worshipped Christ, and that the Magians presented gifts to him, but we nowhere read of her having given milk as a kind of return for their presents. Luke relates the prophecy which Simeon made to the Virgin; but he does not say that Simeon asked her to give him some milk. If the matter be only looked to, it will be unnecessary to offer any argument for the purpose of showing how utterly devoid of reason, and all appearance of probability, this wild dream is. It is strange how it never occurred to them to pare her nails, and get other things of that kind, when there was nothing else of the body they could get ; but perhaps it was impossible for them to mind every thing. The other relics of the Virgin, which they boast of having, form part of her wardrobe

and baggage. First, there is a shirt at Chartrain, which is a very celebrated object of idolatry, and there is another at Acqs in Germany. It is needless to ask where they found them; for it is most certain that the Apostles and other pious men were not so foolish as to occupy their minds with such frivolities. But let its form only be examined, and I will instantly succumb, if the imposture does not become visible even to the eye. At Acqs, where is one of the shirts we have mentioned, it is carried round in solemn state fastened to a pole, and is as long as a white surplice. Had the Virgin been of the race of the giants, I don't believe she would have had so long a shirt. To give more importance to the exhibition, they, at the same time, produce shoes belonging to St. Joseph, which would only fit a boy or a dwarf. There is an old proverb, "A liar should have a good memory." That proverb has been little attended to here; for so short has been their memory, that they have forgotten to attend to the measure of the husband's shoes and his wife's shirt. Now, let them run about, and, with the greatest veneration, kiss their relics which have not the least semblance of being genuine. I know of only two gowns, one at Treves, in the church of St. Maximin, and another at Lisia in Italy. I should like much to examine them, that it might be seen what kind of web they are made of and whether it is such as the Jews of that period were wont to weave. I should like also that the two gowus were compared together, to ascertain whether there is any similarity between them. At Bonne there is a certain scarf. Someone will ask me if I think it is fictitious. I answer, that I have the same opinion of it that I have of the two girdles, the one of which is at Prague, and the other at St. lago of Montserrat, and also of the slipper which is at St. James's, and the shoe at Sanfior. But if there were no other objection, every person not absolutely sunk in ignorance is aware that the pious had no such custom as that of collecting shoes and sandals, in order to make relics of them, and that for 500 years after the Virgin's decease not one of these things was ever heard of. What need, therefore, for farther discussion, as if the matter were at all doubtful?

Nay, they have even thought proper to calumniate the most holy Virgin, by representing her as excessively careful about decking her person, and combing her hair; for they show two combs that belonged to her. One of them is in St. Martin's at Rome, the other in St. John's at Besancon. It is probable there are a great many more in other places. If this is not to hold up the holy Virgin to derision, I know not what derision is. Moreover, they have not forgotten her marriage-ring, which is to be seen at Perugia. Because it is now customary with us for the husband at marriage to present his bride with a ring, they have imagined, without making more inquiry about the matter, that it was customary also at that time. What they have adopted for this purpose is a beautiful ring of great value, never thinking of the great poverty in which the Virgin spent her life. Of her wardrobe, part is seen at Rome, in the church of Joannes Lateranensis, of St. Barbara, of Mary supra Minerva, and part at Blois, and also at St. Salvator's in Spain; at least, they boast of having some fragments of them there. I have also heard other places mentioned, but they escape my memory. To detect the imposture, it were only necessary to inspect the texture of this clothing. They seem to have imagined it as easy for the Virgin to put herself in full dress, as it is for them to deck their idols, which they are ever and anon furnishing with new attire.

04.01. An Inventory of Relics cont'd

cont’d

It remains to speak of pictures—not pictures in general, but those which are specially celebrated for some singular quality. And, first, they pass off an imposture in the name of Luke, pretending that he painted four pictures of the Virgin, and that these are now at Rome. In the church of St. Mary the Immaculate one of them is shown at the altar, where it is hung up, as they say, in devotion to her, together with the ring which Joseph gave her on her espousals. Another is shown at Rome also, in the church of Mary Nova, and is said to have been painted by Luke at Troas, and brought thither by an angel. Another is in the church of St. Mary called Aracali, and is in the form of a cross. But at the church of St. Augustine they give out that they have the most remarkable of all; for if they are to be credited, it is one which Luke carried constantly about with him, and even wished to be put into his coffin when he died. What blasphemy, I ask, to convert a holy evangelist of God into an impious idolater? And what pretense have they for holding that Luke was a painter? Paul calls him a physician, but on what grounds they assign to him skill in painting I have not the least idea. Even if it were true that he practiced this art, it is not a whit more probable that he would have painted the Virgin than that he would have painted Jupiter or Venus, or any other idol. It certainly was not the practice at that period for Christians to have idols, nor was it introduced till long after, when the Church had been corrupted with superstition. Again, every corner of the globe is filled with pictures said to have been painted by Luke, as at Cambray, and many other places. And in what form? in such colors as one might be expected to employ in painting an abandoned woman. God hath so blinded them that they have shown no more consideration in this matter than the beasts that perish. However, it does not seem strange to me that they have attributed pictures of the Virgin to Luke, since they have practiced similar imposition in the name of Jeremiah. Evidence of their impudence in this respect may be seen at Puteus, a town of Auvergue. Now, I should have thought it time for miserable men to open their eyes, and see through a matter so transparent. I say nothing of Joseph, though some are said to have his shoes, as at Treves, in the monastery of Simeon, and others to have his sandals, while to others are reserved his bones. The specimens already given should be a sufficient exposure of the absurdity.

I must, however, add the case of the archangel Michael, and his attendance on the Virgin Mary. It will be thought I am in jest when I speak of the relics of an angel. Comedians and players have laughed at this, but monkish and priestly impostors have not, therefore, ceased to deceive the people in good earnest. For the inhabitants of Carcassone boast that they have relics belonging to him, as do also those of Tours, in their church of St. Julian. In the great church of St. Michael, which is frequented by crowds of pilgrims, they show his dagger, which looks very much like the one boys play with. They show also his shield, which in appearance exactly corresponds with the dagger, resembling the brass circles which are put upon horses’ harness. Assuredly there is no man and no old woman so dull as not to see how ridiculous those things are. But because the lies are covered with the veil of religion, the iniquity of thus deriding God and angels is not perceived. Some may here object the express declaration of Scripture, that Michael fought with the devil.

True; but if the devil were to be vanquished, it behooved to be with a stronger and a sharper sword than that one. Are they so brutish as to imagine that the war which both angels and believers wage with devils is carnal, and carried on with daggers and sharp weapons? But it is just as I have observed before: mankind have richly deserved, by their brutish stupidity, to be so deceived, while with perverse eagerness they have gone about in all directions collecting idols and images, to which they might give worship, instead of giving it to the living God. To proceed in order, we must now consider the case of John the Baptist, who, according to the account given in the Gospel, that is, according to the truth of God, after being beheaded, was buried by his disciples. Theodoret relates that his sepulcher, which was at Sebastia, a town of Syria, was some time afterwards opened by the heathen, who burned the body, and scattered the ashes to the wind. It is true, indeed, Eusebius adds, that some inhabitants of Jerusalem came and secretly carried off a portion, which they removed to Antioch, and which Athanasius afterwards inclosed within a wall. Sozomen wrote that the head was conveyed to Constantinople by the Emperor Theodosius. The testimony of ancient history, therefore, is, that the whole body was burned, with the exception of the head, and that all the bones and all the ashes were scattered, except a very small portion, which was carried off by some hermits of Jerusalem. Now, let us see how much is said to be extant. The people of Amiens say that they have the front part of the head; and in the skull exhibited by them a wound appears, which they say Herodias inflicted with a knife. The inhabitants of Joannes Angelicus contradict them, and show the very same part. But the remainder of the head, viz., that reaching from the forehead back to the neck, was formerly in Rhodes, and is now, I think, in Malta; at least the Templars did pretend that it was restored to them by the Turks. The back of the head is at Nevers, and the brain at Novium Rantroviensis. And yet, notwithstanding, part of the head is in the church of Joannes Morienus. Then his jaws are at Besancon, in the church of John the Elder. Another part is at Paris, in the church of Joannes Lateranensis, and the tip of the ear is at Sanflor, in Auvergne, while the forehead and the hair is in St. Salvator's, in Spain. At Noyon, also, is a certain portion, which is wont to be exhibited in great state. There is also a part, but I know not what, at Lueca. Is all this true? Go to Rome, and you will hear that the whole head of John is in the monastery of Sylvester. Poets feign that in Spain there once lived a king, named Geryon, who had three heads. If our fabricators of relics could say the same thing of John the Baptist, it would be a great help to their lies. But since there is no room for such a fable, to what excuse will they resort? I am unwilling to press them so far as to ask how his head was cut into such minute portions as to become capable of distribution in so many various places, or how they got it out of Constantinople. I only say that John must have been a monster, or that they are impudent impostors in exhibiting so many fragments of his head. But this is not the worst. For the people of Sienna say that they have got his arm, an allegation contradicted, as we have already observed, by all ancient history. Nevertheless, the imposture is tolerated, nay even approved; for in the kingdom of Antichrist nothing is thought wicked which tends to increase the superstition of the people. Besides, they have invented another fable, viz., that when his body was burned, the finger with which he pointed out Christ to his two disciples remained entire, and was not injured in the least. But this not only does not accord with ancient history, but may easily be confuted by it. For Eusebius and Theodoret relate that when the Gentiles seized the body it was all consumed to the very bones. Assuredly, had anything so miraculous happened with regard to the finger, they would not have omitted to mention it; for in other respects they are rather too fond of narrating such trifles. But supposing the fact to be as alleged, let us see for a little where this finger is to be

found. There is one at Besancon, in the church of John the Great, another at Tholouse, another at Lyons, another at Bourges, another at Florence, and another at the church of Fortuitus, near Maseon. All I would do here is to ask my readers not to harden themselves against evidence so clear and certain—not to close their eyes in such bright light, and allow themselves to be led astray, as it were, in the dark. If there were jugglers, who could so impose on our eyesight as to make it appear that there were six fingers on one hand, we would yet guard cautiously against imposture, and try to detect it. Here, however, there is nothing that even looks like a clever trick. The whole question is, whether we are to believe that the same one finger of John is at Florence, and in five other places, as at Lyons, Bourges, and other towns; or, to state the matter in fewer words, whether we are to believe that six fingers make no more than one finger, or that one finger makes six? I have mentioned only places that are known to me, but I doubt not that, if inquiry were made, as many more would be discovered, and that fragments of the head also would be found of bulk sufficient to make up the head of an ox. But that nothing might be omitted, they pretend that they have got his ashes also, some of them being at Genoa, and others at Rome, in the church of Joannes Lateranensis. The historical account is, that they were scattered to the winds. How does this agree with what is said, especially by the Genoese?

It now remains to consider certain articles which are a kind of accessories of the body, for instance, the shoe which is at Paris in the monastery of the Carthusians. It was stolen some twelve or fifteen years ago, but another forthwith made its appearance; and, indeed, so long as shoemakers exist there will be no want of such relics. They give out that in the church of Joannes Lateranensis at Rome they have got his girdle, of which there is no mention in Scripture. It is only said that he had his raiment of camel's hair. This raiment they choose to convert into a girdie. They say they have also in the same place the altar in which he said his prayers in the desert, as if at that time it had been the custom to erect altars in every place, and on every occasion. It is strange they do not also make him perform mass. At Avignon they have the sword with which his head was cut off; and at Acqs, in Germany, the linen cloth which was placed under him in the act of beheading him. How, I would fain know, was there so much kindness and civility in the executioner as to cover the bottom of the dungeon with a carpet at the time he was going to put the Baptist to an ignominious death? I would also like to know how these things happened to come into their hands. Is it probable that the executioner, whether he were a courtier or a common soldier, gave the linen cloth and his sword, that they might be converted into relics? As they wished to make the collection of relics so very perfect, they have blundered sadly in overlooking the knife with which Herodias is said to have wounded him in the eye, and likewise all the blood that must have been spilt, together with his tomb. But perhaps the mistake is in me. It is quite possible that these famous articles are exhibited in places I am not acquainted with.

Now let the Apostles come forward in order. Their number, however, may beget confusion; and, therefore, the better course will be to take Paul and Peter by themselves, and afterwards proceed to the rest. Their bodies are at Rome, half at St. Peter's, and half at St. Paul's, Sylvester having, it is said, weighed them to make sure of an equal division. The heads of both are in the church of Joannes Lateranensis, though in the same church there is a tooth of Peter existing separately by itself. Though these things are so, it does not prevent them from being in other places also, as at Poictiers, where they have Peter's cheekbone and his beard. At Treves they have many bones belonging to both, and at Argenton, in Berri, they have Paul's shoulder. But the thing is endless.

Wherever there are churches dedicated to them, they have their relics in abundance. If it be asked, what kind of relics? let them call to mind what kind of a one the brain of St. Peter was which I formerly mentioned, and which stood on the high altar of this city. As it turned out to be a pumice stone, so, on inquiry, it will be found, that many of the bones which arc attributed to these Apostles are those either of horses or dogs.

Then come the things belonging to the bodies, as accessories. For instance, there is a shoe at St. Salvator's in Spain, but of what form and material I am unable to say. But the probability is, that it is an article of a similar description to the shoes which they have at Poictiers, and which are made of polished leather, ornamented with gold. See how splendidly they have adorned him after death, to compensate for the poverty in which he passed his life! As the Bishops of the present day, in representing pontifical majesty, are so splendidly clothed, it would seem to derogate from the dignity of the Apostles, were not something of the same nature attributed to them. True! painters can draw pictures in what colors they please, decking them from top to toe in varied attire, and then give them the name of Peter and Paul, or any other name; but everybody knows the kind of clothing which they actually had in this world, and that it was no better than that which is usually worn by the poor. They have also at Rome the Episcopal chair in which Peter sat, together with the sacerdotal robe in which he used to say mass, as if Bishops had at that time sat on thrones. Their business rather was to teach, comfort, and exhort in public and private, and make themselves ensamples to the flock; not to show themselves to the people to be adored by them, as the prelates of our day are wont to do. With regard to the robe for mass, the custom of masking after the manner of players was not then introduced; for plays were not then acted in the Church as they are now. Wherefore, in order to prove that Peter was dressed in a missal robe, they must first show that when he worshipped God he performed the part of a player like the Popish priests. It was natural enough for them to give him a missal robe, as they had previously given him an altar; but there is no more plausibility in the one than in the other. What kind of masses was then celebrated is well known; for the Apostles in their time only celebrated the Lord's Supper, and for this no altar was necessary. That kind of monstrosity called a mass was altogether unknown, and continued to be unknown for long after. Hence it is clear, that these men, in fabricating their relics, must have supposed they were never to meet with an opponent; so shamelessly and extravagantly have they dared to lie. And yet they are not agreed among themselves as to that altar. For the Romans say that they have it, while the people of Pisa also show it in their suburb which faces the sea. But that they might lose no possible means of making profit, they have not forgotten the sword with which the ear of Malehus was cut off; as if it were some fair ornament worthy of being preserved as a relic. I have omitted to mention the staff which is shown at Paris in the church of St. Stephen a' Pierre, and which is in as high repute as the altar and missal robe, and just for as good a reason. As to the staff; there is somewhat more plausibility in it, as it is not unlikely he may have used a staff in traveling; but then they throw every thing into confusion, by not agreeing among themselves about it. For the inhabitants of Cologne, and likewise those of Treves, contend for the possession of it. While they accuse each other of falsehood, they furnish us with good grounds for not giving credit to either. As to the chain with which Peter was bound I say nothing. It is shown at Rome in the church which bears its name. Nor do I say anything of the pillar on which he was beheaded, and which is shown in the church of St. Anastasius. I only leave my readers to reflect how that chain must have been procured for the purpose of being converted into relics, and also whether, at that time, it was customary for executions to take place upon

pillars.

We will now consider the case of the other Apostles jointly, and will dispose of it in a very few words. And first, we will mention where the whole bodies are, that by comparing them together, it may be seen what certainty can be had in reference to the things said of them. Everybody knows that the inhabitants of Tholouse think that they have got six of these bodies, viz., those of James the Greater, Andrew, James the Less, Phillp, Simeon, and Jude. The body of Matthias is at Padua, that of Matthew, at Salerno, of Thomas, at Ortona, and of Bartholomew, at Naples, or somewhere in that district. Now, let us attend to those who have had two or three bodies. For Andrew has another body at Melfi, Philip and James the Less have each another body at the church of the Holy Apostles, and Simeon and Jude, in like manner, at the church of St. Peter. Bartholomew has also another in the church dedicated to him at Rome. So here are six who have each two bodies, and also by way of a supernumerary, Bartholomew's skin is shown at Pisa. Matthias, however, surpasses all the rest, for he has a second body at Rome, in the church of the Elder Mary, and a third one at Treves. Besides, he has another head, and another arm, existing separately by themselves. There are also fragments of Andrew existing at different places, and quite sufficient to make up half a body. For his head is at Rome, at the church of St. Peter, a shoulder in that of Grisgon, a rib in that of St. Eustathius, an arm in that of the Holy Spirit, and some other part in the church of St. Blaise. There is also a foot at Aix. Were all these joined together, and properly fitted, they would make up two quarters of the body. But as Bartholomew left his skin at Pisa, so also he has left one of his heads at Treves, and some other member, I know not what. He has also a finger at Frene, while some other relics of them exist also at Rome, in the church of St. Barbara. Thus, there is not only no want, but a superfluity in his case. The others are not so well supplied, yet each of them has somewhat to spare. For Philip has one foot at Rome, in the church of the Holy Apostles; also in the church of St. Barbara he has I know not what relics, besides these which he has at Treves. In these two last churches he has James for his companion; for James, in like manner, has a hand in the church of St. Peter, an arm in that of Grisgon, and another in that of the Holy Apostles. Matthew and Thomas have been left poorer than the rest. For the former has only one body, together with a few bones at Treves, and an arm at Rome, in the church of St. Marcelius, and a head in that of St. Nicholas, unless there be some which have escaped me. This is very likely; for how can one avoid losing one's self in such a labyrinth?

Finding in their legends that the body of the Evangelist John vanished as soon as it had been consigned to the earth, it has been impossible for them to produce his bones, but they have endeavored to compensate the matter in another way, by making a rush at all the articles connected with him. And the first thing which occurred to them is the cup out of which he drank poison after he was condemned by Domitian. But as two cities lay claim to it, we must either give implicit credit to what alchemists tell us of multiplication, or these people with their cup have played off a hoax on the world. There is one at Bonlogue, and another at Rome, in the church of Joannes Lateranensis. Next, they have laid hold of his tunic, and the chain with which he was bound when he was brought from Ephesus, together with the oratory in which he prayed while he was in prison. I should like to know, whether at this time he hired carpenters to make an oratory for him, and also what intimacy between Christians and his jailers enabled them to obtain the chain from them, and so give it a place among their relics. These things are too absurd even to amuse children. But the most extraordinary articles of all are the twelve apostolic combs, which are exhibited in the church

of Mary Insulan, near Lyons. I believe they were placed there at first with the intention of exhibiting them as combs which belonged to twelve peers of France, but their dignity afterwards having increased, they became apostolic. The other things must be briefly dispatched; for otherwise we should never be able to get out of this forest. We shall merely mention a few of the alleged relics of saints who lived in the days of our Saviour, and then mention a few of those of the ancient martyrs and others. In this way my readers will be able to judge for themselves. Anna, mother of the Virgin Mary, has one of her bodies at Apte in Provence, and another in the church of Mary Insulan at Lyons. Besides, she has one of her hands at Treves, another at Turin, and a third in a town of Thuringia, which takes its name from it. I say nothing of the fragments which exist in more than a hundred places. Among others, I remember having myself long ago, kissed a portion of it at Ursicampus, a monastery in the vicinity of Noyon, where it is held in great reverence. Lastly, another of her arms is in St. Paul's at Rome. Here, if it be possible, let some certainty be shown.

We now come to Lazarus, and his sister the Magdalene. He, as far as I know, has only three bodies; one at Marseilles, another at Austum, a third at Avallon. Between these towns there was a great controversy, but after large sums were expended on both sides, they left the matter as it was, each continuing to maintain its claims.

Magdalene being a female, it was necessary to make her inferior to her brother, and, therefore, she has only two bodies, one of which is at Vesoul, near Auxerre, and another, which is of greater renown, at San Maximin, a town of Provence, where also her head exists separately, together with what is called the Noli me tangere, which is a bit of wax, but is said to be the mark of a blow which our Saviour gave her in anger when she wished to touch him. I need not advert to the relics of her bones and hair, which are scattered over the world. Those who wish to know the certainty of all these things, should first inquire whether Lazarus, and his sisters Martha and Magdalene, ever came to France for the purpose of preaching the gospel. For if ancient history be read and examined with judgment, it will be seen that this is the most stupid of all fables, and has not the least shadow of plausibility. Yet the relics of Lazarus and Mary are the best authenticated relics of all. Be this as it may, was it not enough to pervert one body to idolatry, instead of proceeding, according to the common saying, to make three devils out of one? In like manner, they have given a place among their deities to him who pierced the side of our Lord when on the cross, and have called him Longinus, a puerile blunder certainly. This name in Greek signifies a spearman, but they have laid hold of it and converted it into the proper name of an individual. After thus naming him, they have given him two bodies, one of which is at Mantua, and the other at the church of Mary Insulan at Lyons. They have done the same with the Magians who came to worship Christ after his birth. And first they have fixed the number of them, maintaining that there were three only. The Gospel nowhere says how many there were, while some of the ancient doctors, for instance, the writer of an unfinished Commentary on Matthew, which is sometimes attributed to Chrysostom, affirms that there were fourteen. The Evangelist calls them Magians, that is, philosophers, but they have taken it upon them to give them royal dignity, though without kingdom or subjects. And lastly, they have given them names, calling the one Beithasar, the other Melehior, and the other Gaspar. However, if we may be permitted to interfere with their fables, it is most certain that these philosophers returned to the East. This the Scripture expressly declares; and there is no ground at all for any other belief than that they died there. Who was it that afterwards transferred them from those regions? Who knew them so well, that he could identify their bodies, for the purpose of being

converted into relies? But I desist. It is foolish to engage in refuting such absurdities. All I say is, that the inhabitants of Cologne and of Milan should be left to litigate among themselves as to which of the two is to possess them. Both claim them, and it is impossible that both can be right. When once they bring their lawsuit to a close, it will be time to see what should be done.

Among ancient martyrs, Dionysius is particularly celebrated; for he is held to be a disciple of the Apostles, and the first evangelist of the French. On this account relics of him are preserved in many places, while his body exists entire in two places only, viz., St. Denis and Ratisbon. Because the French claimed him exclusively to themselves, the people of Ratisbon raised an action against them at Rome about a hundred years ago, and the body was adjudged to them by a definitive sentence, while the Legate of France was personally present, and a very fine Bull to this effect was given to them. But should any person go to St. Denis, which is in the neighborhood of Paris, and deny that the body is there, he would be stoned. At the same time, should any one deny that it is at Ratisbon, he would be counted a heretic; for his denial would be rebellion against the Apostolic See. The prudent plan, therefore, will be not to meddle with their disputes. Let them tear out each other's eyes if they will; the utmost they will gain will be to prove that the whole matter is a lie. The body of Stephen they have so dissected, that, though it is entire at Rome, in the church which bears his name, the head is at Aries, and bones are in more than two hundred places; while, as if to show their approval of those who put him to death, they have consecrated even the stones by which he was murdered. It will, perhaps, be asked how they could be identified, where they were found, and out of whose hands they were recovered? I give this short reply, that it is a foolish question. There could be no difficulty in finding them, wherever stones are found, and the carriage is not costly, as at Florence, at Aries, in the monastery of the Augustins, and at Vigeon, in Aquitaine. Any one who chooses to shut his eyes, and deprive himself of all understanding, will believe that they are the very stones that stoned Stephen; while he, again, who will give some little heed to the matter, will laugh. But assuredly the Carmelites of Poictiers, within the last fourteen years, possessed one to which they assigned the office of assisting women in labor, and easing their pains. The Dominicans, from whom one, destined like a pearl for the same purpose, had been stolen, had a mighty quarrel with them, and bawled out imposture; but the Carmelites, by fighting stoutly, came off victorious.

I had almost determined to be silent concerning the Innocents, as they call them; for although I could muster something like an army of them, it might always be alleged that there is nothing in this contradictory to history, because their exact number has not been defined. Therefore, I will say nothing of their numbers. Only let it be observed, that there is not a region of the world where some of them are not said to exist. I would ask, however, in what manner, after so long an interval, their graves were discovered, more especially as they were not regarded as saints till Herod slew them. I would also ask, when were they brought hither? The only answer which can be given is, that it was five or six hundred years after their death. Any person, however ignorant and illiterate, may judge what the result will be if credit is given to such wild dreams. Moreover, even if these Innocents could have been discovered, how could such a number of their bodies have been imported into France, Germany, and Italy, so as to be distributed amongst cities so remote from each other? This imposture, therefore, I leave as clearly established. As Lawrence is included in the list of ancient martyrs, we will here assign a place to him. I do not know, indeed, that his body is in more than one place, viz., at Rome, in the church which bears his name; but there is a

separate vase filled with his ashes, and likewise two jugs, the one filled with his blood, and the other with his fat. Moreover, an arm and bones are in the church which bears the name of Palisperna, and other relics in the church of St. Sylvester. But were all the bones collected which are in France alone, I have no doubt that two complete bodies might be formed out of them. There also is the gridiron on which he was roasted, although Palisperna, which we have mentioned, boasts of having a fragment of it. In regard to the gridiron I could pardon them; but there are other more notable relics as to which it were unlawful to be silent, I mean the coals which are shown at the church of St. Eustathius, and the towel with which an angel is said to have wiped his body. Since they have idled away their time in devising dreams of this nature to impose upon the world, let those who read this Admonition take time for due consideration, and, by so doing, consult for themselves, and guard against being so imposed upon in future. Of the same manufacture is the dalmatic, which is also shown at Rome, in the church of St. Barbara. Having heard that Lawrence was a deacon, they imagined that he decked himself in a vesture similar to that which metamorphoses their deacons when they play their part in the mass. But the office of deacon in the ancient Church was a very different thing from what it now is in the Papacy. Deacons were then elected to take charge of the poor and distribute alms, not to be a kind of stageplayers, and, consequently, had no need whatever of dalmatics or similar maskings. To Lawrence we will join Gervasius and Protasius, whose tomb existed at Milan in the days of Ambrose, as he himself testifies, and likewise Jerome, Augustine, and many others. Accordingly, the Milanese even now lay claim to their bodies, which are nevertheless at Brissac, in Germany, and at Besancon, in the church of St. Peter, besides an endless number of fragments scattered up and down in various churches of the world. Each of them must, therefore, have had at least three or four bodies, or we must discard the bones which now falsely pass under their name. In assigning to Sebastian the office of curing the plague, their object was to bring him into high esteem, and so make him be more eagerly sought after. The consequence has been, that his one body has been multiplied into four bodies, one of which is at Rome, in the church of St. Lawrence, a second at Soissons, a third at Pilignum, in Brittany, and a fourth near Narbonne, the place of his birth. He has, moreover, two heads—one at Rome, in the church of St. Peter, and another at Toulouse, in the possession of the Dominicans. Both heads, however, are empty, if credit is to be given to the Franciscans of Angers, who give out that they have his brain. Nay, these Dominicans have also an arm. There is also another at Toulouse, in the church of Saturninus, another at Casede, in Auvergne, another at Brissac, in Germany, beside minute fragments which exist in various churches. When all these things have been well considered, let any one guess where the body of Sebastian really is. Not contented, however, with these, they have made relics of the arrows with which he was pierced. One of them is shown at Lambese, in Provence, another at Poictiers, while others are scattered up and down in various places. The whole makes it plain that they had taken it for granted that they were never to be called to account for their impostures. The same multiplication of relics has prevailed in the case of Anthony. By pretending that he is passionate and mischievous, and inflames those who may have given him offense, they have made him an object of dread; from this dread has arisen a superstitious desire to possess his body, and so have a security against harm. Accordingly, the city of Aries had a keen and tedious litigation on the subject with the monks of St. Anthony at Vienne. The result was just that which usually takes place in controversies of this description; that is, the whole matter still remains in darkness. Indeed, had any thing been actually proved on the subject, and the truth been made manifest, it would not have been to the advantage

of either party. To these two bodies they have added a knee, which is in the Vivarais, in the possession of the Augustins; besides various members which exist at Bourges, Mascon, Dijon, Chalons, Ovron, and Besancon, and others, which are everywhere hawked about by traveling impostors. Of these the number is not small. See what it is to get a name for doing mischief. But for this, that good saint would still be in his tomb, or, at least, concealed in some corner.

I have omitted St. Petronilla, Peter's daughter, whose entire body is in the church dedicated to her father, besides some separate remains in the church of Saint Barbara; nevertheless, another body is in the possession of the people of La Maine, in the monastery of the Dominicans, and is held in the very highest repute, because alleged to cure fever. As there were various saints of the name of Susanna, I cannot say whether they have thought proper to give two bodies to any one of them. There is one body of a Susanna at Rome, in the church which bears her name, and there is another at Toulouse. Helen has not been so highly favored. The Venetians have the body, but in addition to it, she has not gained any superfluous part, with the exception of another head which exists at Cologne in the church of Grisgon. In this respect St. Ursula has the advantage of her. For, first, she has her body in the church of St. John the Angel; then she has one head at Cologne, and part of another with the Dominicans of La Maine, as also the Dominicans of Tours, and at Bergers. Of her companions, to whom they give the name of the Eleven Thousand Virgins, whatever may be thought, it must, at least, be admitted, that by feigning them to be so numerous, they have enabled themselves to lie with greater freedom. Beside the bones which are at Cologne, and which would be quite sufficient to load an hundred wagons, there is scarcely a city in Europe which does not possess them as the ornament of one or more of their churches. Were I to take a survey of the common herd of saints, I should get entangled in a forest out of which I should never be able to escape. It will be sufficient, therefore, to adduce some specimens, from which a judgment may be formed in regard to the rest. There are two churches in Poictou which contend for the body of Hilary, viz., the cathedral church dedicated to him, and that of the Monks at Selle. The controversy is at present awaiting the visitation which is to take place. In the interval, the idolaters will be forced to worship two bodies as those of the same individual; whereas true believers, feeling no anxiety whatever about his body, will allow it to rest, be it where it may. The body of St. Honoratus is at Aries, and is also in the Island of Lerins near Antiboul.Aegidius has one of his bodies at Toulouse, and another in a town at Aquitaine, which is named after him. William is in a monastery of Aquitaine, which is called St. William in the Desert, and also in a town of Holstein, which is called Ecrichum, where also his head exists separately, although he has also another head in the suburb of Tours, among the Williamites. What shall I say of Symphorianus, whose body and bones exist in so many places? Also of Lupus, which is at Auxerre, at Sienna, at Lyons, and which they have also pretended to be at Geneva? What likewise shall I say of Ferreolus, whose whole body is at Uzes in Aquitaine, and also at Brioude in Auvergne? Not to betray their lies so openly, they ought, at least, to enter into an arrangement, as the monks of Treves have done, as to their dispute with those of Lodi about the head of Lambert. They have agreed as to the offerings, by compounding, for a certain sum of money, with this condition, however, that the body possessed by the former shall not be publicly exhibited, lest suspicion might be excited by both being seen in two cities so near each other. Thus it is, as I mentioned before at the outset; they never supposed that any observer would appear who would ever dare to open his lips in exposure of such impudence. But any one may ask, how have these fabricators of relics omitted the many notable things connected with the Old Dispensation, since,without any

regard to reason, they have heaped up all that ever came into their mind, and, as it were with a breath, called into existence whatever they pleased? To this question I can give no other answer than that they did not think it worth their while, because they had no prospect of deriving much advantage from such relics ; and yet they have not forgotten them entirely, for at Rome they gave out that they have the bones of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the church of Mary supra Minerva. They also boast that in the church of Joannes Lateranensis they have the ark of the covenant and Aaron's rod within it. The same rod, however, is at Paris in the Holy Chapel, while some fragment of it also is in St. Salvator's in Spain. I omit the inhabitants of Bourdeaux, who maintain that the rod of St. Martial, which is exhibited in the church of Severinus, is the identical rod of Aaron. It would seem that they had wished to perform a new miracle as in rivalship of God; for whereas He, by his power, turned the rod into a serpent, so they have now turned it into three rods. Very probably they have many other toys of the same description, but let it suffice merely to have mentioned this, in order to make it manifest that they have been as honest here as in other matters.

Now, I would entreat my readers to remember what I said at the outset, viz., that I have not searchers at hand to examine the sacraria of all the regions which I have here mentioned. Wherefore, what I have said of relics must not be taken as if it were a perfect inventory of all the things which might be discovered. I have mentioned only six German cities, or thereabouts, three, as far as I know, of Spain, fifteen of Italy, and between thirty or forty of France; nor am I even acquainted with all the relics that are in them. Let every one, therefore, consider with himself what a farrago there would be if we saw the multitude of relics existing throughout the world described in order, or only in the regions which are known to us, or in which we live. For it is to be particularly observed, that all the relics of Christ and the Apostles exhibited in Europe exist also in Greece, Asia, and other countries where Christian churches are found. Now, I ask, when the Christians of the Eastern Church say that all these things which we pretend to have are in their possession, what decision can we come to upon the subject? If, in answer to them, we aver that this body was brought thither by merchants—that one by monks—and that other by a bishop—that part of the crown of thorns was sent by the Emperor of Constantinople to the King of France—that another was obtained in war—and so on of each, they will laugh and shake their heads. How will the controversy be decided? In doubtful matters we must trust to conjecture, and, therefore, in this respect, they will always get the better of us. For what they produce in their behalf is much more probable than what we can produce in ours. Those who defend relics have certainly a very difficult knot to loose. To draw to a conclusion, I beseech my readers, in the name of God, to give heed to the truth while it lies plainly before them, and recognize how Divine Providence has wonderfully provided, that those who thus wished to mislead the meanest of the people have been so blind that they never thought of using a cloak for their lies, but moving blindfolded, like the Midianites, have set about slaughtering one another. As we see how they are still warring among themselves, and charging each other with falsehood, every man, who is not obstinately determined against the truth, though he may not yet clearly perceive that the worship of any relics, of whatever kind they be, whether genuine or spurious, is execrable idolatry, yet seeing how clear their falsehood is, will have no desire to kiss them any more, and whatever reverence they may have previously inspired, will cease to have any relish for them. The best thing, indeed, would be, as I mentioned at the outset, if; among us who profess the name of Christ, this heathenish custom were abolished, whether they be relics of Christ or of the saints. In as much as they do degenerate into idols, the pollution and defilement which they occasion ought not on any account to be tolerated in the

Church. This we have already demonstrated, both by argument and by the testimony of Scripture. If any one is not satisfied with this, let him look to the manner and practice of the ancient fathers, and conform to their example. Many patriarchs, prophets, kings, and other faithful worshippers, existed under the Old Testament. More ceremonies were then appointed by God than it becomes us to observe in the present day. Nay, even burial itself required more show than it now does, because by its figures it represented the resurrection, which was not so clearly revealed to them as it has been to us. But do we read that the saints were ever dug out of their graves, in order that they might be converted into a kind of puppets for children? Was Abraham, the father of all the faithful, thus carried in state, or was Sarah, a princess in the Church of God, taken out of her coffin? Were they not left in quiet along with the other saints, and was not the body of Moses so concealed, by the express will of God, that it never could be discovered? Did not Satan, as Jude tells us, contend for it with the angels? The Lord then withdrew it from the sight of men, and the devil tried to bring it back. God confessedly took it away, in order that it might not become an occasion of idolatry to the Jewish people; and the devil would have brought it back, that he might make it an occasion of idolatry. But that people, it will perhaps be said, was prone to superstition and what, pray, are we ? Is there not in this respect greater perversity among Christians than there was among the Jews? And what do we find to have been the practice of the ancient Church? The faithful, it is true, always exerted themselves to rescue the bodies of martyrs, and prevent their being torn by wild beasts and ravenous birds, so as to secure for them an honorable burial. This they did in the case of John the Baptist and Stephen. They did it, however, for the purpose of committing them to the earth, that they might there rest till the resurrection—not that they might be brought forward into public view in order that all might prostrate themselves before them. This unhappy pomp of consecrating was never introduced into the Church until all things were subverted, and, as it were, profaned, partly by the stupidity or avarice of some prelates and pastors, and partly by the inability of others to withstand a practice which had already begun to prevail. Nay, even the people themselves courted deception, by giving their mind to mere frivolities rather than to the pure worship of God.

Wherefore, if a complete reformation of this corrupt practice is desired, it will be necessary to begin at the very foundation, and abolish a practice which was at first instituted improperly, and against all reason. But if any one is not able at one step to make such an advance towards true understanding, let him at least proceed gradually. And, in the first place, let him open his eyes, and exercise his judgment upon any relics which may be presented to him. No one inclined to make the attempt will find it at all difficult; for among the many transparent lies, such as those to which I have already adverted, where will any relics be found whose genuineness amounts to anything like certainty? Nay, at the very time when this little book was passing through the press, I was informed of a third prepuce, which I had not mentioned, and which is shown at Hildesheim. The number of similar follies is indeed infinite, and a careful inspection would discover more than it is possible to enumerate. Let every one, then, be on his guard, and not allow himself to be led along like an irrational animal, and as if he were incapable of discerning any way or path by which he might be guided safely. I recollect when I was a boy how they were wont to do with the images of our parish. When the feast of Stephen drew near, they adorned them all alike with garlands and necklaces, just decking the murderers who stoned Stephen in the same way as they decked Stephen himself. When the old women saw the murderers thus adorned, they imagined that they were Stephen’s companions. Accordingly, every one was presented with his candle. Nay, the

same honour was conferred on the devil who contended with Michael, and so on with the rest. And so completely are they all mixed up and huddled together, that it is impossible to have the bones of any martyr without running the risk of worshipping the bones of some thief or robber, or, it may be, the bones of a dog, or a horse, or an ass. Nor can the Virgin Mary's ring, or comb, or girdle, be venerated without the risk of venerating some part of the dress of a strumpet. Let every one, therefore, who is inclined, guard against this risk. Henceforth no man will be able to excuse himself by pretending ignorance.

05.00 Antidote

John Calvin Antidote

to the Sixth Session of the Council of Trent

on the Doctrine of Justification (1547)
http://web.archive.org/web/20030212203951/public.csusm.edu/public/guests/rsclark/Antidote.htm

05.01

The doctrine of man’s Justification would be easily explained, did not the false opinions by which the minds of men are preoccupied, spread darkness over the clear light. The principal cause of obscurity, however, is, that we are with the greatest difficulty induced to leave the glory of righteousness entire to God alone. For we always desire to be somewhat, and such is our folly, we even think we are. As this pride was innate in man from the first, so it opened a door for Satan to imbue them with many impious and vicious conceits with which we have this day to contend. And in all ages there have been sophists exercising their pen in extolling human righteousness, as they knew it would be popular. When by the singular kindness of God, the impiety of Pelagius was repudiated with the common consent of the ancient Church, they no longer dared to talk so pertly of human merit. They, however, devised a middle way, by which they might not give God the whole in justification, and yet give something. This is the moderation which the venerable Fathers adopt to correct the errors on Justification, which, they say, have arisen in our day. Such indeed is their mode of prefacing, that at the outset they breathe nothing but Christ; but when they come to the subject, far are they from leaving him what is his own. Nay, their definition at length contains nothing else than the trite dogma of the schools: that men are justified partly by the grace of God and partly by their own works; thus only showing themselves somewhat more modest than Pelagius was. This will easily be shown to be the fact. For under the second head, where they treat of Original Sin, they declare that free-will, though impaired in its powers and biassed, is not however extinguished. I will not dispute about a name, but since they contend that liberty has by no means been extinguished, they certainly understand that the human will has still some power left to choose good. For where death is not, there is at least some portion of life. They themselves remove all ambiguity when they call it impaired and blassed. Therefore, if we believe them, Original Sin has weakened us, so that the defect of our will is not pravity but weakness. For if the will were wholly depraved, its health would not only be impaired but lost until it were renewed. The latter, however, is uniformly the doctrine of Scripture. To omit innumerable passages where Paul discourses on the nature of the human race, he does not charge free-will with weakness, but declares all men to be useless, alienated from God, and enslaved to the tyranny of sin; so much so, that he says they are unfit to think a good thought. (Romans 3:12; 2 Corinthians 3:5.) We do not however deny, that a will, though bad, remains in man. For the fall of Adam did not take away the will, but made it a slave where it was free. It is not only prone to sin, but is made subject to sin. Of this subject we shall again speak by and bye. The third and fourth heads I do not touch. Towards the end of the fifth head they affirm that no transference to a state of grace takes place without Baptism, or a wish for it. Would it not have been better to say, that by the word and sacraments Christ is communicated, or, if they prefer so to speak, applied to us, than to make mention of baptism alone? But they have been pleased to exclude infants from the kingdom of God, who have been snatched away before they could be offered for baptism. As if nothing were meant when it is said that the children of believers are born holy. (1 Corinthians 7:14.) Nay, on what ground do we admit them to baptism unless that they are the heirs of promise? For did not the promise of life apply to them it would be a profanation of baptism to give it to them. But if God

has adopted them into his kingdom, how great injustice is done to his promise, as if it were not of itself sufficient for their salvation! A contrary opinion, I admit, has prevailed, but it is unjust to bury the truth of God under any human error, however ancient. The salvation of infants is included in the promise in which God declares to believers that he will be a God to them and to their seed. In this way he declared, that those deriving descent from Abraham were born to him. (Genesis 17:7) In virtue of this promise they are admitted to baptism, because they are considered members of the Church. Their salvation, therefore, has not its commencement in baptism, but being already founded on the word, is sealed by baptism. But these definition-mongers thrust forward the passage, "Unless a man be born of water and of the Spirit." (John 3:3.) First, assuming with them that water means baptism, who will concede to them that it moreover means a wish to receive baptism? But were I to say that the passage has a different meaning, and were I following some ancient expositors to take the term water for mortification, they would not, I presume, be so bitter as therefore to judge me heretical. I interpret it, however, as added by way of epithet to express the nature and power of the Spirit. Nor can they make out that water here means baptism, any more than that fire means some sacrament, when it is said, "In the Holy Spirit and fire." (Matthew 3:11.) See on what grounds they arrogate to themselves supreme authority in interpreting Scripture! In the sixth head, they assert that we are prepared by the grace of God for receiving Justification, but they assign to this grace the office of exciting and assisting, we ourselves freely co-operating; in other words, we are here treated with the inanities which the sophists are wont to babble in the schools. But I ask, Is it the same thing to excite a will, and aid it when in itself weak, as to form a new heart in man, so as to make him willing? Let them answer, then, whether creating a new heart, and making a heart of flesh out of a heart of stone, (both of which the Scripture declares that God does in us,) is nothing else than to supply what is wanting to a weak will. But if they are not moved by these passages, let them say whether he who makes us to be willing simply assists the will. Paul claims the whole work for God; they ascribe nothing to him but a little help. But for what do they join man as an associate with God? Because man, though he might repudiate it, freely accepts the grace of God and the illumination of the Holy Spirit. How greatly do they detract from the work of God as described by the Prophet! — "I will put my law," says he, "in your hearts, and make you to walk in my precepts." Jeremiah 32:39; Ezekiel 36:27; Hebrews 8:10; Hebrews 10:16. Is this the doctrine delivered by Augustine, when he says, "Men labor to find in our will some good thing of our own not given us of God; what they can find I know not?" (Aug. Lib. de Precator. Merit. et Remiss. 2.) Indeed, as he elsewhere says, "Were man left to his own will to remain under the help of God if he chooses, while God does not make him willing, among temptations so numerous and so great, the will would succumb from its own weakness. Succor, therefore, has been brought to the weakness of the human will by divine grace acting irresistibly and inseparably, that thus the will however weak might not fail." (Aug. de Corruptione et Gratia,) But the Neptunian fathers, in a new smithy, forge what was unknown to Augustine, viz., that the reception of grace is not of God, inasmuch as it is by the free movement of our own will we assent to God calling. This is repugnant to Scripture, which makes God the author of a good will. It is one thing for the will to be moved by God to obey if it pleases, and another for it to be formed to be good. Moreover, God promises not to act so that we may be able to will well, but to make us will well. Nay, he goes farther when he says, "I will make you to walk;" as was carefully observed by Augustine. The same thing is affirmed by Paul when he teaches, that, "it is God that worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure." The hallucination of these Fathers is in dreaming that

we are offered a movement which leaves us an intermediate choice, while they never think of that effectual working by which the heart of man is renewed from pravity to rectitude. But this effectual working of the Holy Spirit is described in the thirty-second chapter of Jeremiah, where he thus speaks in the name of God, "I will put the fear of my name into their hearts, that they decline not from my commandments." In short, their error lies in making no distinction between the grace of Regeneration, which now comes to the succor of our wretchedness, and the first; grace which had been given to Adam. This Augustine carefully expounds. "Through Christ the Mediator," he says, "God makes those who were wicked to be good for ever after. The first man had not that grace by which he could never wish to be bad; for the help given him was of that nature that he might abandon it when he would, and remain in it if he would, but it was not such as to make him willing. The grace of the second Adam is more powerful. It makes us will, will so strongly and love so ardently, that by the will of the spirit we overcome the will of the flesh lusting against it." A little farther on he says, "Through this grace of God in receiving good and persevering therein, there is in us a power not only to be able to do what we will, but to will what we are able." (Aug. Lib. ad Bonif. 2, c. 8.) Although the subject is too long to be despatched thus briefly, I feel confident that my statement, though short, will suffice with readers of sense to refute these fancies. But they pretend that they have also the support of Scripture. For when it is said, "Turn thou me, O Lord, and I shall be turned," (Jeremiah 31:18,) they infer that there is a preventing grace given to men: and, on the other hand, out of the words, "Turn ye unto me, and I will turn unto you," they extract the power of free-will. I am aware that Augustine uses this distinction, but it is in a very different sense: For he distinctly declares, and that in numerous passages, that the grace of God so works in us as to make us willing or unwilling, whence he concludes that man does no good thing which God does not do in him. (Aug. Lib. ad Bonif. 3, c. 8.) What then, you will ask, does Augustine mean when he speaks of the freedom of the will? Just what he so often repeats, that men are not forced by the grace of God against their will, but ruled voluntarily, so as to obey and follow of their own accord, and this because their will from being bad is turned to good. Hence he says, "We therefore will, but God works in us also to will. We work, but God causes us also to work." Again, "The good which we possess not without our own will we should never possess unless he worked in us also to will." Again, "It is certain that we will when we are willing, but he makes us to be willing. It is certain that we do when we do, but he makes us to do by affording most effectual strength to the will." (Aug. Lib. 2:de Bon. Persev. cap. 13; Lib. 2:23, de Graf. et Liber. Arbit.) The whole may be thus summed up — Their error consists in sharing the work between God and ourselves, so as to transfer to ourselves the obedience of a pious will in assenting to divine grace, whereas this is the proper work of God himself. But they insist on the words of the Prophet, that in requiring conversion from us he addresses free-will, which he would do in vain (that is, in their opinion) unless free-will were something. I admit that expressions of this kind would be absurd if there were not some will in man, but I do not therefore concede that the free faculty of obeying may be thence inferred. Those venerable Fathers must be the merest of novices if they form their estimate of what man is able to do from the commandments given him, seeing that God requires of us what is above our strength for the very purpose of convincing us of our imbecility, and divesting us of all pride. Let us remember, therefore, that will in man is one thing, and the free choice of good and evil another: for freedom of choice having been taken away after the fall of the first man, will alone was left; but so completely captive under the tyranny of sin, that it is only inclined to evil.

Moreover, not to dwell longer here, I say that the doctrine here delivered by the Fathers of Trent is at open war with our Savior's words, "Whosoever hath heard of the Father, cometh unto me." (John 6:45.) For as Augustine wisely observes, it hence follows, that no man hears and learns of God without at the same time believing on Christ; and that the motion of the Holy Spirit is so efficacious that it always begets faith. They, on the contrary, place it in the option of man to listen to the inspiration of God, if he will! It is impossible to reconcile the two things — that all who have learned of God believe in Christ, and that the inspiration of God is not effectual and complete unless men of themselves assent to it. We have the Son of God, who is never at variance with himself, for the author of the former. To whom shall we ascribe the latter, which is utterly contrary to it, but to the father of lies?

After treating, under the seventh head, of The Mode of Preparation, so frigidly that every one but a savories Papist must feel ashamed of such senselessness, they at length, under the eighth head, when they come to define, set out with cautioning us against supposing that the justification of man consists in faith alone. The verbal question is, What is Justification? They deny that it is merely the forgiveness of sins, and insist that it includes both renovation and sanctification. Let us see whether this is true. Paul's words are, "David describeth the blessedness of the man to whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven." (Romans 4:6; Psalms 32:1.) If, from this passage of David, Paul duly extracts a definition of gratuitous righteousness, it follows that it consists in the forgiveness of sins. Paul interprets thus — David calls him righteous to whom God imputeth righteousness by not imputing sin, and the same Apostle, without appealing to the testimony of another, elsewhere says, "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing unto men their trespasses." Immediately after, he adds, "He made him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might be the righteousness of God in him." (2 Corinthians 5:19.) Can anything be clearer than that we are regarded as righteous in the sight of God, because our sins have been expiated by Christ, and no longer hold us under liability?

There is no room for the vulgar quibble that Paul is speaking of the beginning of Justification; for in both places he is showing, not how men who had hitherto been unbelievers begin to be righteous, but how they retain the righteousness which they have once procured during the whole course of life; for David speaks of himself after he had been adopted among the children of God; and Paul asserts that this is the perpetual message which is daily heard in the Church. In the same sense also he says, "Moses describeth the righteousness of the law, that he who doeth these things shall live in them, (Leviticus 18:5;) but the righteousness of faith thus speaketh, He that believeth," etc. (Romans 10:5). We thus see that the righteousness of faith, which by no means consists of works, is opposed to the righteousness of the law, which so consists. The words have the same meaning as those which, as Luke tells us, Paul used to the people of Antioch, "By this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins, and every one who believeth in him is justified from all the things from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." (Acts 13:38.) For justification is added to forgiveness of sins by way of interpretation, and without doubt means acquittal. It is denied to the works of the law; and that it may be gratuitous, it is said to be obtained by faith. What! can the justification of the publican have any other meaning (Luke 17) than the imputation of righteousness, when he was freely accepted of God? And since the dispute is concerning the propriety of a word, when Christ is declared by Paul to be our righteousness and sanctification, a

distinction is certainly drawn between these two things, though the Fathers of Trent confound them. For if there is a twofold grace, inasmuch as Christ both justifies and sanctifies us, righteousness does not include under it renovation of life. When it is said, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? — It is God that justifieth" — it is impossible to understand anything else than gratuitous acceptance.

I would be unwilling to dispute about a word, did not the whole case depend upon it. But when they say that a man is justified, when he is again formed for the obedience of God, they subvert the whole argument of Paul, "If righteousness is by the law, faith is nullified, and the promise abolished." (Romans 4:14.) For he means, that not an individual among mankind will be found in whom the promise of salvation may be accomplished, if it involves the condition of innocence; and that faith, if it is propped up by works, will instantly fall. This is true; because, so long as we look at what we are in ourselves, we must tremble in the sight of God, so far from having a firm and unshaken confidence of eternal life. I speak of the regenerate; for how far from righteousness is that newness of life which is begun here below?

It is not to be denied, however, that the two things, Justification and Sanctification, are constantly conjoined and cohere; but from this it is erroneously inferred that they are one and the same. For example: — The light of the sun, though never unaccompanied with heat, is not to be considered heat. Where is the man so undiscerning as not to distinguish the one from the other? We acknowledge, then, that as soon as any one is justified, renewal also necessarily follows: and there is no dispute as to whether or not Christ sanctifies all whom he justifies. It were to rend the gospel, and divide Christ himself, to attempt to separate the righteousness which we obtain by faith from repentance. The whole dispute is as to The Cause of Justification. The Fathers of Trent pretend that it is twofold, as if we were justified partly by forgiveness of sins and partly by spiritual regeneration; or, to express their view in other words, as if our righteousness were composed partly of imputation, partly of quality. I maintain that it is one, and simple, and is wholly included in the gratuitous acceptance of God. I besides hold that it is without us, because we are righteous in Christ only. Let them produce evidence from Scripture, if they have any, to convince us of their doctrine. I, while I have the whole Scripture supporting me, will now be satisfied with this one reason, viz., that when mention is made of the righteousness of works, the law and the gospel place it in the perfect obedience of the law; and as that nowhere appears, they leave us no alternative but to flee to Christ alone, that we may be regarded as righteous in him, not being so in ourselves. Will they produce to us one passage which declares that begun newness of life is approved by God as righteousness either in whole or in part? But if they are devoid of authority, why may we not be permitted to repudiate the figment of partial justification which they here obtrude?

Moreover, how frivolous and nugatory the division of causes enumerated by them is, I omit to show, except that I neither can nor ought to let pass the very great absurdity of calling Baptism alone the instrumental cause. What then will become of the gospel? Will it not even be allowed to occupy the smallest corner? But baptism is the sacrament of faith. Who denies it? Yet, when all has been said, it must still be granted me that it is nothing else than an appendage of the gospel. They, therefore, act preposterously in assigning it the first place, and act just as any one who should call a mason's trowel the instrumental cause of a house! Unquestionably, whosoever postponing the gospel enumerates baptism among the causes of salvation, by so doing gives

proof that he knows not what baptism is, what its force, its office, or its use. What else I wish to say of the formal cause will be said on the tenth Canon. Here I wish only to advert to what belongs to the present place. For they again affirm that we are truly righteous, and not merely counted so. I, on the contrary, while I admit that we are never received into the favor of God without being at the same time regenerated to holiness of life, contend that it is false to say that any part of righteousness (justification) consists in quality, or in the habit which resides in us, and that we are righteous (justified) only by gratuitous acceptance. For when the Apostle teaches that "by the obedience of one many were made righteous," (Romans 6:19) he sufficiently shows, if I mistake not, that the righteousness wanting in ourselves is borrowed elsewhere. And in the first chapter to the Ephesians, where he says that we are adopted to the predestination of sons of God, that we might be accepted in the Beloved, he comprehends the whole of our righteousness. For however small the portion attributed to our work, to that extent faith will waver, and our whole salvation be endangered. Wherefore, let us learn with the Apostle to lay aside our own righteousness, which is of the law, as a noxious impediment, that we may lay hold of that which is of the faith of Jesus Christ. (Php 3:9.) Of what nature this is we have abundantly shown; and Paul intimates in a single sentence in the third chapter to the Galatians, that the righteousness of the law, because it consists of works, has no congruity with the righteousness of faith. But what can you do with men like these? For after they have enumerated many causes of Justification, forgetting that they were treating of the cause of justification, they infer that righteousness partly consists of works, because no man is reconciled to God by Christ without the Spirit of regeneration. How gross the delusion! It is just as if they were to say, that forgiveness of sins cannot be dissevered from repentance, and therefore repentance is a part of it. The only point in dispute is, how we are deemed righteous in the sight of God, and where our faith, by which alone we obtain righteousness, ought to seek it? Though they should repeat a thousand times, that we cannot share in the merit of Christ’s passion, without being at the same time regenerated by his Spirit, they will not make it cease to be a fundamental principle; that God is propitious to us because he was appeased by the death of Christ; and that we are counted righteous in his sight, because by that sacrifice our transgressions were expiated. "We have propitiation," says Paul, "through faith in the blood of Christ." (Romans 3:25; Romans 5:11.) In fine, when the cause is inquired into, of what use is it to obtrude an inseparable accident? Let them cease then to sport with trifles, or trifle with quibbles such as — man receives faith, and along with it hope and love; therefore it is not faith alone that justifies. Because if eyes are given us, and along with them ears and feet and hands, we cannot therefore say that we either hear with our feet or walk with our hands, or handle with our eyes. Of the erroneous application of a passage of Paul I shall speak elsewhere.

Next follows their approbation of the worse than worthless distinction between an informal and a formed Faith. The venerable Fathers, indeed, are ashamed to use the very terms, but while they stammer out that man is not united to Christ by faith alone, unless hope and charity are added, they are certainly dreaming of that faith, devoid of charity, which is commonly called by the sophists informal. They thus betray their gross incapacity. For if the doctrine of Paul is true, that "Christ dwells in our hearts by faith," (Ephesians 3:17) they can no more separate faith from charity than Christ from his Spirit. If "our hearts are purified by faith," as Peter affirms, (Acts 15:9,) if "whosoever believeth hath eternal life," as our Savior so often declares, (John 3:16; John 5:24; John 6:40; John 20:31,) if the inheritance of eternal life is obtained by faith, (Romans 5:14,) faith is something very different from all forms of dead persuasion. They deny that we are made living

members of Christ by faith. How much better Augustine, who calls faith the life of the soul, as the soul is the life of the body? (Aug. in Joan. c. 11,) although Augustine is not so much the authority to be quoted here as Paul, who acknowledges that he lives by the faith of Christ. (Galatians 2:20.) They should perhaps be pardoned this error, because they talk about faith as they might do of fabulous islands, (for who among them knows by the slightest experience what faith is?) were it not that they drag the miserable world along with them in the same ignorance to destruction!

Let us remember that the nature of Faith is to be estimated from Christ. For that which God offers to us in Christ we receive only by faith. Hence, whatever Christ is to us is transferred to faith, which makes us capable of receiving both Christ and all his blessings. There would be no truth in the words of John, that faith is the victory by which we overcome the world, (1 John 5:4,) did it not ingraft us into Christ, (John 16:33,) who is the only conqueror of the world. It is worth while to remark their stupidity. When they quote the passage of Paul, "Faith which worketh by love," (Galatians 5:6) they do not see that they are cutting their own throats. For if love is the fruit and effect of faith, who sees not that the informal faith which they have fabricated is a vain figment? It is very odd for the daughter thus to kill the mother! But I must remind my readers that that passage is irrelevantly introduced into a question about Justification, since Paul is not there considering in what respect faith or charity avails to justify a man, but what is Christian perfection; as when he elsewhere says, "If a man be in Christ he is a new creature." (2 Corinthians 5:17)

It were long and troublesome to note every blunder, but there is one too important to be omitted. They add, "that when catechumens ask faith from the Church, the answer is, "If you will enter into life, keep the commandments.'" (Matthew 19:17.) Wo to their catechumens, if so hard a condition is laid upon them! For what else is this but to lay them under an eternal curse, since they acknowledge with Paul, that all are under the curse who are subject to the law? (Galatians 3:10.) But they have the authority of Christ! I wish they would observe to what intent Christ thus spake. This can only be ascertained from the context, and the character of the persons. He to whom Christ replies had asked, What must I do to have eternal life? Assuredly, whosoever wishes to merit life by works, has a rule prescribed to him by the law, "This do, and thou shalt live." But attention must be paid to the object of this as intimated by Paul, viz., that man experiencing his powers, or rather convinced of his powerlessness, may lay aside his pride, and flee all naked to Christ. There is no room for the righteousness of faith until we have discovered that it is in vain that salvation is promised us by the law. But that which the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God performed by his own Son, by expiating our sins through the sacrifice of his death, so that his righteousness is fulfilled in us. But so preposterous are the Fathers of Trent, that while it is the office of Moses to lead us by the hand to Christ, (Galatians 3:24,) they lead us away from the grace of Christ to Moses.

Lest they should not be liberal enough in preaching up the powers of man, they again repeat, under this head, that the Spirit of God acts in us according to the proper disposedness and co-operation of each. What disposedness, pray, will the Spirit of God find in stony hearts? Are they not ashamed to feign a disposedness, when the Spirit himself uniformly declares in Scripture that all things are contrary? For the commencement of grace is to make those willing who were unwilling, and therefore repugnant; so that faith, as well in its beginnings as its increase, even to its final perfection, is the gift of God; and the preparation for receiving grace is the free election of God, as Augustine says, (Lib. 1:de Praedest., Sanct. c. 9-11.) And the words of Paul are clear,

"God hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings, according as he hath chosen us in Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will." (Ephesians 1:3.) By these words he certainly restrains us, while receiving so great a blessing from God, from glorying in the decision of our will, as Augustine again says. (Ibid. c. 8.) This which man ought to receive as at the hands of God, is he to oppose to him as a merit of his own? For whence is there a first disposition, unless because we are the sheep of Christ! And who dare presume so far as to say he makes himself a sheep? Accordingly, when Luke speaks of effectual calling, he tells us that not those who were disposed of themselves, but those who were pre-ordained to eternal life, believed. (Acts 13:48.) And Paul acquaints us whence a right disposition is, when he teaches that the good works in which we walk were prepared by God. (Ephesians 2:10.) Let us hear Augustine, whose doctrine is very different, rather than those babblers. "After the fall of man," he says, (Lib. 2: de Bono Persev., c. 9,) "God was pleased that man's approach to him should be the effect only of his grace, and that man's not withdrawing from him should also be the effect only of his grace." For it is he himself who promises that he will give us a heart that we may understand, and ears that we may hear. Wherefore it is His grace alone which makes the difference, as Paul reminds us. Let me conclude by again using the words of Augustine, "The human will obtains not grace by freedom, but freedom by grace, and in order that it may persevere, delectable perpetuity and insuperable fortitude," (Lib. de Corrupt. et Grat. c. 8.) In the ninth chapter, while they desire to show some signs of modesty, they rather betray their effrontery. Seeing that the doctrine of Scripture was obviously repugnant to their decrees, they, to prevent this from being suspected, first explain what it is for a man to be justified by faith, saying, that faith is the beginning of salvation, and the foundation of justification. As if they had disentangled themselves by this solution, they immediately fly off to another — that the Apostle teaches that we are justified freely, because all the things which precede justification, whether faith or works, do not merit it. Did they think they are engaged in a serious matter, would they perform it as giddily as if they were playing at see-saw? I say nothing of their disregard of the judgments of mankind, as if they had expected to put out the eyes of all by such a sacred dogma as this — Faith justifies, since it begins justification. First, this comment is repugnant to common sense. For what can be more childish than to restrict the whole effect to the mere act of beginning? But let us see for a little whether the words of Paul allow themselves to be so easily wrested. "The gospel," he says, (Romans 1:16) "is the, power of God to every one believing unto salvation; for therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith." Who sees not that here the beginning and the end are alike included? Were it otherwise, it would have been said, from "faith to works," as they would finish what faith begins. To the same effect is the testimony of Habakkuk, "The just shall live by fairly." (Habakkuk 2:4.) This would be improperly said did not faith perpetuate life. In the person of Abraham the chief mirror of justification is held forth. Let us see, then, at what time faith is declared to have been imputed to him for righteousness. (Genesis 15:6; Galatians 3:6.) He was certainly not a novice, but having left his country, had for several years followed the Lord, so that he was no common exemplar of holiness and all virtue. Faith therefore does not open up an access to him to righteousness, in order that his justification may afterwards be completed elsewhere. And Paul at length concludes that we stand in the grace which we have obtained by faith. (Romans 5:2.) As far as a fixed and immovable station is from a transient passage, so far are they in this dogma of theirs from the meaning of Paul. To collect all the passages of Scripture were tedious and superfluous. From these few, I presume, it is already super-abundantly clear, that the completion, not less than the commencement of justification, must

be ascribed to faith. The second branch is, that Justification is said by Paul to be gratuitous, because no merit precedes it. What then? When Paul also exclaims that all glorying of the flesh is excluded by the law of faith, is he looking only to the merits of past life, and does he not rather remind us that men justified by faith have nothing in which they can glory to the very end of life? For when he asserts after David that righteousness is imputed without works, he declares what is the perpetual state of believers. (Romans 3:27; Romans 4:2.) In like manner David exclaims, that himself and all the other children of God are blessed by the remission of sins, not for one day, but for the whole of life. (Psalms 32:1.) Nor does Peter, in the Acts, speak of the justification of a single day, when he says, "We believe that through the grace of Jesus Christ we are saved, as did also our fathers." (Acts 15:11.) The question under discussion was, whether observance of the law was to be exacted of the Gentiles. He says it ought not, because there is no other salvation in the Christian Church than through the grace of Christ, and there never was any other. (Acts 4:12.) And justly; for, as Paul says, the promise will not be secure unless it depends on the grace of God and on faith. (Romans 4:16.) Will they pretend that he is here, too, speaking of preceding merits? Nay, he declares that the greatest saints can have no assurance of salvation, unless it repose on the grace of Christ. He therefore abolishes faith who does not retain his as the only righteousness, which exists even until death.

We are justified freely, they say, because no works which precede justification merit it. But when Paul takes away all ground of glorying from Abraham, on the ground that faith was imputed to him for righteousness, he immediately subjoins by way of proof — where works are, there a due reward is paid, whereas what is given to faith is gratuitous. Let us observe that he is, speaking of the holy Patriarch. Paul affirms, that at the time when he renounced the world to devote himself entirely to God, he was not justified by any works. If these spurious Fathers object, that it was then only he began to be justified, the quibble is plainly refuted by the context of the Sacred History. He had for many years exercised himself in daily prayer to God, and he had constantly followed the call of God, wherein was contained the promise of eternal life. Must they not therefore be thrice blind who see no gratuitous righteousness of God, except in the very vestibule, and think that the merit of works pervades the edifice? But it is proper to attend to the gloss by which they attempt to cloak this gross impiety, viz., that in this way they satisfy the Apostle’s sentiment, "If it be of grace, then it is no more of works." (Romans 11:5) But Paul ascribes it to Divine grace that a remnant is left, and that they are miraculously preserved by God from the danger of eternal destruction, even unto the end. Far, therefore, is he from restricting it to so small a portion, i.e., to the beginning alone.

It was indeed an absurd dream, but they are still more grossly absurd when they give it as their opinion, that none of all the things which precede Justification, whether faith or works, merit it. What works antecedent to Justification are they here imagining? What kind of order is this in which the fruit is antecedent in time to the root? In one word, that pious readers may understand how great progress has been made in securing purity of doctrine, the monks dunned into the ears of the reverend Fathers, whose part was to nod assent, this old song, that good works which precede justification are not meritorious of eternal salvation, but preparatory only. If any works precede faith, they should also be taken into account. But there is no merit, because there are no works; for if men inquire into their works, they will find only evil works.

Posterity will scarcely believe that the Papacy had fallen into such a stupor as to imagine the possibility of any work antecedent to justification, even though they denied it to be meritorious of so great a blessing! For what can come from man until he is born again by the Spirit of God? Very different is the reasoning of Paul. He exhorts the Ephesians to remember (Ephesians 2) that they were saved by grace, not by themselves nor by their own works. He subjoins a proof, not the one which these insane Fathers use, that no works which precede suffice, but the one which I have adduced, that we are possessed of no works but those which God hath prepared, because we are his workmanship created unto a holy and pious life. Faith, moreover, precedes justification, but in such a sense, that in respect of God, it follows. What they say of faith might perhaps hold true, were faith itself, which puts us in possession of righteousness, our own. But seeing that it too is the free gift of God, the exception which they introduce is superfluous. Scripture, indeed, removes all doubt on another ground, when it opposes faith to works, to prevent its being classed among merits. Faith brings nothing of our own to God, but receives what God spontaneously offers us. Hence it is that faith, however imperfect, nevertheless possesses a perfect righteousness, because it has respect to nothing but the gratuitous goodness of God. In the tenth chapter, they inveigh against what they call The Vain Confidence of Heretics. This consists, according to their definition, in our holding it as certain that our sins are forgiven, and resting in this certainty. But if such certainty makes heretics, where will be the happiness which David extols? (Psalm 32) Nay, where will be the peace of which Paul discourses in the fifth chapter to the Romans, if we rest in anything but the good-will of God? How, moreover, have we God propitious, but just because he enters not into judgment with us? They acknowledge that sins are never forgiven for Christ’s sake, except freely, but leaving it in suspense to whom and when they are forgiven, they rob all consciences of calm placid confidence. Where, then, is that boldness of which Paul elsewhere speaks, (Ephesians 3:12,) that access with confidence to the Father through faith in Christ? Not contented with the term confidence, he furnishes us with boldness, which is certainly something more than certainty. And what shall we say to his own occasional use of the term certainty? (Romans 8:37.) This certainty he founds upon nothing but a mere persuasion of the free love of God. Nay, they overthrow all true prayer to God, when they keep pious minds suspended by fear which alone shuts the door of access against us. "He who doubts," says James, (James 1:6) "is like a wave of the sea driven by the wind." Let not such think that they shall obtain anything of the Lord. "Let him who would pray effectually not doubt." Attend to the antithesis between faith and doubt, plainly intimating that faith is. destroyed as soon as certainty is taken away. But that the whole of their theology may be more manifest to my readers, let them weigh the words which follow under the same head. It ought not to be asserted, they say, that those who have been truly justified ought to entertain an unhesitating doubt that they are justified. If it be so, let them teach how plhrofori>a (full assurance) can be reconciled with doubt. For Paul makes it the perpetual attendant of faith. I say nothing as to their laying down as a kind of axiom what Paul regards as a monstrous absurdity. "If the inheritance is by the law," he says, (Romans 4:14,) "faith is made void." He argues that there will be no certainty of faith if it depends on human works — a dependence which he hesitates not to pronounce most absurd. And justly; seeing he immediately infers from it that the promise also is abolished.

I am ashamed to debate the matter, as if it were doubtful, with men who call themselves Christians. The doctrine of Scripture is clear. "We know," says John, (1 John 4:6,) "that we are the children of God." And he afterwards explains whence this knowledge arises, viz., from the Spirit

which he hath given us. In like manner Paul, too, reminds us, (1 Corinthians 2:12) "That we have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit which is of God, that we may know the things which are given us of God." Elsewhere it is said still more explicitly, "We have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." (Romans 8:15.) Hence that access with confidence and boldness which we mentioned a little ago. And, indeed, they are ignorant of the whole nature of faith who mingle doubt with it. Were Paul in doubt, he would not exult over death, and write as he does in the eighth of the Romans, when he boasts of being so certain of the love of God that nothing can turn him from the persuasion. This is clear from his words. And he assigns the cause, "Because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given to us." By this he intimates that our conscience, resting in the testimony of the Holy Spirit, boldly glories in the presence of God, in the hope of eternal life. But it is not strange that this certainty, which the Spirit of God seals on the hearts of the godly, is unknown to sophists. Our Savior foretold that so it would be. "Not the world, but you alone in whom he abideth, will know him." (John 14:17.) It is not strange that those who, having discarded the foundation of faith, lean rather on their works, should waver to and fro. For it is a most true saying of Augustine, (in Psalm 88,) "As the promise is sure, not according to our merits, but according to his grace, no man ought to speak with trepidation of that of which he cannot doubt."

They think, however, that they ingeniously obviate all objections when they recommend a general persuasion of the grace of Christ. They prohibit any doubt as to the efficacy of Christ’s death. But where do they wish it to be placed In the air, so as to be only in confused imagination. For they allow none to apply grace to themselves with the firm assurance of faith, as if we had to no purpose received such promises as these, "Behold your king cometh;" "Ye are the heirs of promise;" "The Father is pleased in thee;" "The righteousness of God is unto all and upon all them that believe." (Matthew 21:5; Zechariah 9:9; Acts 2:39; Luke 12:32; Romans 3:22.) Surely, if they admit that by faith we apprehend what God offers to us, Christ is not set before me and others, merely that we may believe him to have been the Redeemer of Abraham, but that every one may appropriate the salvation which he procured. And how improper is it to assert that "no man can know with certainty of faith that he has obtained the grace of God." Paul and John recognize none as the children of God but those who know it. Of what knowledge can we understand them to speak, but that which they have learned by the teaching of the Holy Spirit? Admirably says Bernard, (Sermon 5 in Dedicat. Temp.,) "Faith must here come to our aid; here truth must lend us succor; that that which lies hid in the heart of the Father respecting us may be revealed by the Spirit, or the Spirit may persuade our hearts that we are the children of God; and persuade by calling and justifying us freely by faith." But if Paul, when he exhorts the Corinthians to prove themselves whether they be in the faith, (2 Corinthians 13:5,) pronounces all reprobate who do not know Christ dwelling in them, why should I hesitate to pronounce them twice reprobate, who, not allowing the Church to enter on any such proof, abolish all certainty concerning the grace of God?

Under the eleventh, head, when they describe Increase of Righteousness, they not only confound the free imputation of righteousness with the merit of works, but almost exterminate it. Their words are, "Believers increase in righteousness by good works, through the observance of the commandments of God and the Church, and are thence more justified." They ought at least to use the exception of Augustine. (De Civit. 19 c. 27.) "The righteousness of believers, while they live in

the world, consists more in the forgiveness of sins than the perfection of virtues." He teaches that no dependence at all is to be placed on righteousness of works, which he names with contempt. For he declares that the only hope of all the godly who groan under the weakness of the flesh is, that they have a mediator, Christ Jesus, who is the propitiation for their sins. (Lib. ad Bonif., 5 c. 5.) On the contrary, the Fathers of Trent; or rather the hireling monks, who, as a kind of Latin pipers, compose for them whatever tune they please, doing their utmost to call their disciples away from the view of grace, blind them by a false confidence in works. We, indeed, willingly acknowledge, that believers ought to make daily increase in good works, and that the good works wherewith they are adorned by God, are sometimes distinguished by the name of righteousness. But since the whole value of works is derived from no other fountain than that of gratuitous acceptance, how absurd were it to make the former overthrow the latter! Why do they not remember what they learned when boys at school, that what is subordinate is not contrary? I say that it is owing to free imputation that we are considered righteous before God; I say that from this also another benefit proceeds, viz., that our works have the name of righteousness, though they are far from having the reality of righteousness. In short, I affirm, that not by our own merit but by faith alone, are both our persons and works justified; and that the justification of works depends on the justification of the person, as the effect on the cause. Therefore, it is necessary that the righteousness of faith alone so precede in order, and be so pre-eminent in degree, that nothing can go before it or obscure it.

Hence it is a most iniquitous perversion to substitute some kind of meritorious for a gratuitous righteousness, as if God after justifying us once freely in a single moment, left us to procure righteousness for ourselves by the observance of the law during the whole of life. As to the observance of the Divine Commandments, they must, whether they will or not, confess this much, that all mortals are very far from accomplishing it perfectly. Let them now answer, and say whether any part of it whatever be righteousness, or a part of righteousness? They will strenuously maintain the latter. But it is repugnant to Scripture, which gives this honor to none but perfect obedience. "The man who doeth these things shall live in them;" "Cursed is he that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them." (Galatians 3:10.) Again, "He who fails in one point is guilty of all." (James 2:10.) There is no man who does not acknowledge, without one word from me, that we are all subject to the curse while we keep halting at the observance of the law, and that righteousness, since works cannot procure it, must be borrowed from some other quarter of the commandments of the Church, which they mix up with those of God, we shall speak elsewhere. My readers, however, must be informed in passing, that no kind of impiety is here omitted. Who can excuse their profanity in not hesitating to claim a power of justifying for their own inventions? Never did even Pelagius attempt this. He attempted to fascinate miserable men by the impious persuasion that they could, by the observance of the Divine law, acquire righteousness for themselves; but. to attribute this merit to human laws never entered his mind. It is execrable blasphemy against God for any mortal to give way to such presumption as to award eternal life to the observance of his own traditions. But whither shall I turn? It is a Sacred Council that speaks, and it cannot err in the interpretation of Scripture. And they have passages of Scripture, the first out of Ecclesiasticus, "Fear not to be justified even until death." I believe there is one way of getting myself out of the difficulty. Let my readers look at the passage, and they will find that the worthy Fathers have impudently corrupted it; for the writer says, "Be not forbidden, i.e., prevented until death," although it ought rather to be rendered defer not; for this the Greek word means. He is inveighing against the slothfulness of those who put off their conversion to God. What was thus

spoken of the commencement, these religious Fathers, not only in gross ignorance, but open malice, apply to progress. In the passage of James there is more plausibility. (James 2:24.) But any one who has read our writings knows well enough that James gives them no support, inasmuch as he uses justification to signify, not the cause of righteousness, but the proof of it. This plainly appears from the context. But they become more ridiculous when they infer that a man is justified by good works because the Church prays for increase of faith, hope, and charity. Who, if he is not too old to be a child, is not frightened at this thunder?

Under the twelfth head they renew the old anathema: Let none say that the Commandments of God are impossible to be observed by a justified man. It serves no purpose to dispute about the term impossible. It is enough for me, and should be enough for all who are pious, and not at all contentious, that no man ever lived who satisfied the law of God, and that none ever can be found. What! shall we accuse the Holy Spirit of falsehood, when he charges all men with the guilt of transgression, not those of our age only, but all who shall ever exist to the end of the world? "There is not a man upon earth," saith Solomon, "who sinneth not." (1 Kings 8:46.) And David had said, "In thy sight shall no man living be justified." (Psalms 143:2.) If it be possible to find any one who can fulfill the law, let the Holy Spirit retract. But far from us be the devilish pride of making the eternal Author of truth a liar. Nay, even Paul’s argument would fail: "It is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law. Therefore, whosoever are under the law are under curse." (Galatians 3:10.) It will be easy to object, that the law can be fulfilled. But the Apostle assumes as an acknowledged principle what these men stigmatize with anathema. Accordingly in another place, when deploring the bondage in which himself, in common with all saints, was held, he could find no other remedy than that of being freed from the body. (Romans 7:24.) The Pelagians annoyed Augustine with the same quibble. He admits that God may, if he pleases, raise men to this pitch of perfection, but that he never had, and never would, because the Scriptures teach otherwise. I go farther, and assert, that what the Scriptures declare never shall be, is impossible; although, if we are to debate about a word, the very thing was expressed by Peter, (Acts 15.) when he spoke of the yoke of the law as that which none of their fathers could bear. It is an error to suppose that this refers only to ceremonies: for what so very arduous was there in ceremonies as to make all human strength fail under the burden of them? He undoubtedly means that all mankind from the beginning were, and still are, unequal to the observance of the law, and that therefore nothing remains but to flee to the grace of Christ, which, loosing us from the yoke of the law, keeps us as it were under free custody. And it is to be observed that he is speaking of the regenerate, lest the Fathers of Trent quibble, and say that he spoke of the weakness of the flesh when the assistance of the Spirit is wanting. For he affirms that prophets and patriarchs, and pious kings, however aided by the Spirit of God, were unable to bear the yoke of the law, and declares, without ambiguity, that the observance of the law was impossible. But they also produce Scripture as a witness on the other side: for John says, that "his commandments are not grievous." (1 John 5:3.) I admit it, provided you exclude not the doctrine of the remission of sins, which he places before all the commandments. If it be not grievous to perform the law, you will find me several men without sin to make God a liar; as is said also by John. (1 John 1:8.) But these fools consider not that the facility of which John speaks depends on this, that the saints have a remedy in readiness to supply their defects — they flee for pardon. Hence, too, it is that Christ’s yoke is easy and his burden light, because the saints feel an alacrity in their liberty while they feel themselves no longer under the law. Paul applies to them this best

stimulus of exhortation. (Romans 6:12.) And David also teaches, "With thee is forgiveness, that thou mayest be feared." (Psalms 130:4.) Take that hope of pardon from me, and the least commandment of the law will be a heavier load than AEtna. But what is this to idle monks, who have here touched with the little finger that observance of the commandments of the facility of which they so confidently prattle. Nay, they openly betray their irreligion by this one dogma. How? This admirable Apostle laments that he is held captive from inability to obey the law as is meet, and he cries out that the disease cannot be cured till death cure it. (Romans 7:23.) These sturdy doctors superdiously smile, and sing out that such complaints are causeless, because Christ's burden is light. They afterwards add, "The disciples of Christ love him, and those who love him do his commandments." (John 14:23.) This is all true. But where is the perfect love of Christ — love, I mean, with the whole heart, and mind, and strength? There only where the flesh lusteth not against the spirit, and therefore not in the world at all. The disciples of Christ love him with sincere and earnest affection of heart, and according to the measure of their love keep his commandments. But how small is this compared with that strict perfection in which there is no deficiency?

Let readers of sense now attend to the consistency of the dicta of these Fathers. After boldly asserting that the Law can be fulfilled by believers, they admit that even the most holy sometimes fall into light and daily sins. First I ask, whether there be any sin, however light, that is not inconsistent with the observance of the law? For what vicious thought will creep into the mind of man if it be wholly occupied with the love of God? The law is not satisfied unless God is loved with the whole heart. That men do not therefore cease to be righteous I admit. But why so, but just because they are blessed to whom sin is not imputed? If they insist on 117 Hence, too, it is that Christ's yoke is easy and his burden light, because the saints feel an alacrity in their liberty while they feel themselves no longer under the law. Paul applies to them this best stimulus of exhortation. (Romans 6:12.) And David also teaches, "With thee is forgiveness, that thou mayest be feared." (Psalms 130:4.) Take that hope of pardon from me, and the least commandment of the law will be a heavier load than AEtna. But what is this to idle monks, who have here touched with the little finger that observance of the commandments of the facility of which they so confidently prattle. Nay, they openly betray their irreligion by this one dogma. How? This admirable Apostle laments that he is held captive from inability to obey the law as is meet, and he cries out that the disease cannot be cured till death cure it. (Romans 7:23.) These sturdy doctors superdiously smile, and sing out that such complaints are causeless, because Christ's burden is light. They afterwards add, "The disciples of Christ love him, and those who love him do his commandments." (John 14:23.) This is all true. But where is the perfect love of Christ — love, I mean, with the whole heart, and mind, and strength? There only where the flesh lusteth not against the spirit, and therefore not in the world at all. The disciples of Christ love him with sincere and earnest affection of heart, and according to the measure of their love keep his commandments. But how small is this compared with that strict perfection in which there is no deficiency? Let readers of sense now attend to the consistency of the dicta of these Fathers. After boldly asserting that the Law can be fulfilled by believers, they admit that even the most holy sometimes fall into light and daily sins. First I ask, whether there be any sin, however light, that is not inconsistent with the observance of the law? For what vicious thought will creep into the mind of man if it be wholly occupied with the love of God? The law is not satisfied unless God is loved with the whole heart. That men do not therefore cease to be righteous I admit. But why so, but just

because they are blessed to whom sin is not imputed? If they insist on being righteous by works, on which their consciences can repose in the sight of God, they, in the first place, subvert faith, and do an insufferable wrong to the grace of God; and, in the second place, they bring no support to their impious doctrine as to possible observance of the law. If they consider what they call lighter lapses as nothing, the dreadful sentence of the Supreme Judge thunders forth, "He who shall despise one of these least commandments shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven." Although I should like to know what sins they call light, (for so they speak by way of extenuation,) and why they say that the righteous fall into them sometimes rather than constantly, or ever and anon; for scarcely a moment passes in which we do not contract some new guilt. In their eyes all kinds of concupiscence which prompt us to evil are light sins, and also all kinds of temptations which urge us to blasphemy against God. Be this as it may, they are here placed in a manifest dilemma.

What afterwards follows under the same head is no more applicable than if one were to attempt to prove from the movement of the feet that the hands do not feel. They gather some exhortations to a pious life. What, pray, will they force out of these except what may be learned a hundred times better, and with very different effect, from our writings and discourses, and even daily conversation, viz., that "we are not called to uncleanness but to holiness," that "the mercy of God hath appeared, that denying the lusts of the flesh, we may live piously and holily in the world," that "we have risen with Christ to set our affections on things above:" (1 Thessalonians 4:7; Titus 2:11; Colossians 3:12.) But they seem to think they have done some great thing when they infer that it is in vain for those who are unwilling to be partakers of the sufferings of Christ, to glory in the heavenly inheritance. How much better we explain the matter let our readers judge. There is one difference, however: we teach that we are to share in the sufferings of Christ in order that we may attain to the fellowship of his blessed resurrection; (Romans 8:17;) we do not separate Christ from himself. They erroneously infer what does not at all follow — that men by suffering merit eternal life, and that part of their righteousness consisting therein, they do not depend entirely on the grace of God. But they are still more absurd in their conclusion. For they infer that all are enemies to the Christian religion who teach that the righteous sin in every good work, at least venially. I should like to know what logic taught them to draw such an inference as this: "So run that you may obtain the reward" — ergo, In the good works of saints there is nothing that deserves blame. Must not men be thrice stupid when such fellows can persuade them that such follies proceeded from the Holy Spirit? But, passing this absurdity, let us look at the substance.

They must of necessity admit that works are to be judged from the internal affection of mind from which they emanate, and the end at which they aim, rather than from the external mask under which they appear to men: for God looketh on the heart, as was said to Samuel, and his eyes behold the truth, as Jeremiah reminds us. It is too plain, however, that we are never animated and actuated by a perfect love to God in obeying His just commands. Various passions withdraw us from our course, so that we scarcely walk when God enjoins us to hasten on with the greatest speed; we are scarcely lukewarm when we ought to be all ardor. Though from self-deception we are not sensible of this defect, God sees and judges: in his sight the stars are dim, and the sun shineth not. In short, the seventh chapter of the Romans disposes of this controversy. There Paul, in his own person and that of all the godly, confesses that he is far from perfection, even when his will is at its best. Wherefore let a man flatter himself as he may, the best work that ever was, if

brought by God to judgment, will be found stained by some blemish. But these works are approved by God. Who denies it? We only maintain that they cannot please without pardon. But what is it that God pardons except sin? Hence it follows that there is nothing so very censurable in saying, that all good works whatever, if judged with strict rigor, are more deserving of eternal damnation than of the reward of life; for wherever sin, in however slight a degree, is found, no man of sound judgment will deny that there too the materials of death are found. Owing, however, to the boundless mercy of God, works have a recompense in heaven, though, they not only merited nothing of the kind, but would have the reward of eternal death were not the impurity with which they are otherwise defiled wiped away by Christ. I have moreover shown in many places how absurd the reasoning is which infers dignity or merit from the use of the term reward. The reason is obvious. The very recompense which the sophists assert to be founded on merit, depends on gratuitous acceptance.

Under the thirteenth head. if they only did what the title professes, I would give them my subscription. But since, while professing to obviate rashness and presumption, they make it their whole study to efface from the minds of the pious all confidence in their election, I am forced to oppose them, because they are plainly opposed by Scripture. For to what end does Paul discourse at such length in the first chapter to the Ephesians, on the eternal election of God, unless to persuade them that they were chosen by it unto eternal life? And there is no need of conjecture; for he repeatedly enjoins the Ephesians to hold it fixed in their minds, that they have been called and made partakers of the gospel, because they were elected in Christ before the foundation of the world. Likewise in the eighth chapter to the Romans, he expressly conjoins the doctrine of election with the assurance of faith.

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I acknowledge, indeed, and we are all careful to teach, that nothing is more pernicious than to inquire into the secret council of God, with the view of thereby obtaining a knowledge of our election — that this is a whirlpool in which we shall be swallowed up stud lost. But seeing that our Heavenly Father holds forth in Christ a mirror of our eternal adoption, no man truly holds what has been given us by Christ save he who feels assured that Christ himself has been given him by the Father, that he may not perish. What! are the following passages mere verbiage? "The Father who has placed us under the protection and faith of his Son is greater than all." "The Son will not allow anything to be lost." (John 6:39; John 10:28.) These things are said that all who are the sons of God may trust in such a guardian of their salvation, and feel safe in the midst of danger; nay, when beset with infinite perils, may trust that their salvation is secure because in the hand of God. But they affirm, that it is impossible to know whom God has chosen except by special revelation. I admit it. And, accordingly, Paul says that we have not received the spirit of this world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we may know the things which are given us of God. The gift he elsewhere interprets as meaning the adoption, by which we are classed among his children, and which he holds to be so certain that we may with loud voice glory in it. But I am not unaware of what they intend by special revelation. I, however, mean that which our Heavenly Father specially deigns to bestow on his own children. Nor is this any fancy of my own. The words of Paul are well known, "Those things which are hidden from human sense God hath revealed unto us by his Spirit, who also searcheth the deepest things of God." Again, "Who hath known the mind of God, or who hath been his counselor? But we have the mind of Christ." On the whole, then, we see that what the venerable Fathers call rash and damnable presumption, is nothing but that holy confidence in our adoption revealed unto us by Christ, to which God everywhere encourages his people. Under the fourteenth head they prohibit any one from feeling absolutely certain that God will bestow upon him the gift of Final Perseverance, and yet they do not disapprove of entertaining the strongest hope of it in God. But let them first show us by what kind of cement they can glue together things so opposed to each other as the strongest hope and a doubtful expectation. For certainly, he whose expectation of eternal life is not founded on absolute certainty, must be agitated by various, doubts. This is not the kind of hope which Paul describes, when he says that he is certainly persuaded that neither life nor death, nor things present, nor things to come, will dissolve the love with which God embraces him in Christ. He would not speak thus did not the certainty of Christian hope reach beyond the last hour of life. And what language do the promises speak? The Spirit not only declares that the just lives by faith, but that he shall live. (Habakkuk 2:4.) Thus far must hope reach. Paul even shows this when]he describes hope as patiently waiting for things which are yet concealed.

But, it may be said, they do not take away hope, but only absolute certainty. What! is there any expression of doubt or uncertainty when Paul boldly asserts that a crown of righteousness is laid up for him? (1 Timothy 4:8.) Is there anything conditional in the words, when he declares that an earnest of our adoption has been given us, so that we can dare with loud voice to call God our

Father? They take refuge in the frivolous quibble out of which I have already driven them, viz., that Paul had this by special revelation. But he claims nothing so special for himself as not to share it with all believers, when in their name as much as his own, he boldly exults over death and life, the present and the future. Nor does John claim for himself alone that knowledge in which he glories, when he says, "We know that we shall be like God, for we shall see him as he is." (1 John 3:2.) Nor Paul, when he says, "We glory in hope of the glory of God;" and again, "We know that when this earthly tabernacle falls, a mansion is prepared for us in heaven." (Romans 5:2; 2 Corinthians 5:1.)

They make a gloss of what is said in the tenth chapter of First Corinthians, "Let him who standeth take heed lest he fall." Of this there is a twofold solution. Paul there only checks carnal arrogance, which has nothing to do with the assurance of hope; nor does he address believers only, but all of the Gentiles who had assumed the name of Christ, among whom there might be many puffed up with vain confidence. For the comparison which is there made between Jews and Gentiles, is not confined to the elect only, but comprehends all who belonged to the Church by name. I will be satisfied, however, with this one reply, as it is quite sufficient, viz., that the fear enjoined is not that which in the smallest degree impairs the certainty of faith or hope, but only that which keeps us solicitous in the fear of God. The regenerate are not yet in glory, but only in the hope of glory, and much of the contest still remains. Hence did they infer that torpor must be shaken off, and no overweening security indulged, there is no man of sense who would not subscribe to them. But when they employ the passage as a battering-ram to shake the firmness of our hope, and drive us headlong, their conduct is on no account to be tolerated. In qualifying Paul’s sentiment, and making it mean that the work of salvation which God has begun will be perfected in us only if we are not wanting to his grace, they act very ignorantly, not observing that one part of grace consists in having God present with us so as to prevent our being wanting to his grace. This doctrine ought not to give occasion to sloth; it ought only to make them recognize what they have received of God, and what they expect from him. I could like, if I durst, to pass many things without affixing a stigma to them. But what can I do? There is scarcely one line which does not contain some notable error or give indications of dishonest dealing. On the fifteenth head, where they treat of recovery after the fall, they say that Jerome gave an appropriate definition of repentance, when he called it the second plank after shipwreck. Were I disposed to criticize the dictum of Jerome, I would ask why he calls it the second plank, and not the third or fourth? for how few are there who do not during life make more than one shipwreck. Nay: what man was ever found whom the grace of God has not rescued from daily shipwrecks? But I have no business with Jerome at present. The Fathers of Trent do not treat of Repentance, but of the Sacrament of Penitence, which they pretend to have been instituted by Christ. When? When he said, Receive ye the Holy Spirit; whose sins ye remit, they shall be remitted. (John 20:22.) First, because Christ gave the Apostles this authority, is it therefore a sacrament? Where is the sign? where the form? Secondly, who knows not that this office was assigned to the Apostles that they might perform it towards strangers? How asinine the Fathers must be to allow the absurd trifling of a dreaming monk thus to pass without opposition! Christ confirms the testimony which the Apostles were to bear to the world concerning the remission of sins. Such is the message which is conveyed by the gospel, and that, too, ‘Lo those who are not yet chosen into the Church. Some babbler among the monks who rule the Council having never perhaps looked at the passage, certainly never pondered it, read out his own commentary that there a formula is prescribed by which those who had fallen after baptism were to

be restored to a state of grace. The stupid Fathers nodded assent. The passage itself, however, proclaims that it was Shamelessly wrested. They infer that the penitence of a Christian man after a lapse, is very different from baptismal penitence: as if Christ had only referred to one species, and not expressly required, as the twenty-fourth chapter of Luke informs us, that repentance as well as remission of sins should be preached in his name. They go farther, and say, that this Penitence with which they trifle consists not only in contrition of heart, but the confession of the mouth and the satisfaction of works: although not to appear unmerciful, they mitigate the rigor of their law when they allow' themselves to be appeased by a wish to confess. Why should I begin a long discussion here? The point is the remission of sins: which is the knowledge of salvation. (Luke 1:77.) God promises it to us free in the blood, of Christ: of auricular confession he says not a word. These new lawgivers tie down forgiveness to a formula of confession, contrary to the command of God, and assert that it is redeemed by satisfaction. What will remain for miserable consciences, if they are forced to abandon the word of God and acquiesce in the decrees of men?

I am desirous to be assured of my salvation. I am shown in the word of God a simple way, which will lead me straight to the entire and tranquil possession of this great boon. I will say no more. Men come and lay hands on me, and tie me down to a necessity of confession from which Christ frees me. They lay upon me the burden of satisfaction, ordering me to provide at my own hand that which Christ shows me is to be sought from his blood alone. Can I long doubt what it is expedient to do? Nay, away with all hesitation, when attempts are made to lead us away from the only author of our salvation. Search as they may, not a syllable will be found by which Christ orders us to confess our sins into a human ear. All the promises relating to the remission of sins make not the smallest mention of such a thing. The law was wholly unknown to the Apostles. Throughout the Eastern Church it was scarcely ever used. Nay, the observance was everywhere free for more than a thousand years, till Innocent III., with a few of his horned crew, entangled the Christian people in this net, which the Fathers of Trent would now make fast;. What I say is abundantly testified by ancient history. Our books are filled with proofs. None of them are unknown to those who dictated this famous formula to the Council; and yet so impudent are they, that they would persuade us by one word that the door of salvation is closed, and can only be opened by the key of a fictitious confession. But who will grant them a license to restrict the promises of Christ, by imposing any condition they please?

I do not say at present how cruel an executioner to torture and excruciate consciences is that law of Innocent which they anew promulgate; how many it has driven headlong to despair; what a narcotic of hypocrisy it has been to lull others asleep; how many monstrous iniquities have sprung from it! Nay, let us even imagine, as they themselves falsely give out, that some advantage flows from it: it is nothing to the purpose. The question is asked, How are those who have fallen from divine grace restored to it? Scripture everywhere shows the method, but makes no reference to confession, which was long afterwards coined in human brains. What effrontery! to preclude access to the hope of obtaining pardon, unless the confession which they have been pleased to prescribe precedes. The question relates to repentance. Its whole force and nature are so frequently, so copiously, so clearly depicted by the Holy Spirit in the law, the Prophets, and the Gospel, that no doctrine is more lucidly explained. Of confession, such as they pretend, there is throughout a profound silence. Who, then, will believe them 'when they affirm that no repentance is genuine without that appendage, nay, unless it be included in it? It is enough for me to know the

two following things — first, that they devise a Repentance altogether different from that which is recommended to us in Scripture; and secondly, that they enact a condition for obtaining the remission of sins, from which he, to whom alone the power of remitting belongs, wished us to be free. The latter is just as if they were forbidding God to promise salvation without their permission, or at least were opposing his performance of the promise of salvation which he has given. For they do not permit him to pardon our sins, unless it be on the condition of our performing an observance which they alone make binding. With regard to Satisfaction, they think they make a subtle distinction when they collect the dregs of the vile comments of the sophists, — that not eternal punishment, indeed, but temporal, is to be compensated by satisfaction. Who knew not that such was the prattle of the sophists? And yet, when they pretend that eternal punishment, together with guilt, is remitted to us by confession, or the wish to confess, what else do they mean than that we merit by works what God promises to give freely? But let us now see the force of the distinction. When the Prophets mention the gratuitous remission of sins, it is true they usually refer to its other effect, viz., that God would be appeased, and no longer avenge the sins of his people or visit them with his rod. Whoever is moderately versed in Scripture will acknowledge the strict accuracy of my statement, that the punishments which we deserved are mitigated, loosed, in fine, abolished, because God pardons us, not for any merit of our own, as if he were appeased by compensation, but because he is moved solely by his own mercy. The Babylonish captivity was a temporal punishment. Its termination in seventy years, when the Israelites deserved it much longer, God ascribes to his own free mercy. Whenever the chastisements which God had threatened are withdrawn, it is uniformly represented as the result of gratuitous reconciliation. It is certainly a relaxation of temporal punishment which God promises in these words, "Not on your account will I do it, but for my name’s sake." And Isaiah, when he states, that the satisfaction or price of our peace was laid upon Christ, reminds us that we have not only been freed from punishment by his interposition, but that he bore on our account all the pains by which God is wont to avenge or chastise our sins, in order that we may, however unworthy, enjoy all the blessings of the present life also. (Isaiah 48:9; Isaiah 53:5.) But God nevertheless still chastises believers. I admit it. But to what end? Is it that he, by inflicting punishment, may pay what is due to himself and his own justice? Not at all; but that he may humble them, by striking them with a dread of his anger, that he may produce in them an earnest feeling of repentance, and render them more cautious in future. But there are means by which they may avert these punishments; I mean, when they anticipate them of their own accord, there is no reason why God should as it were drag them violently. When is there occasion for the rod but just when voluntary correction is wanting? Accordingly, the Apostle tells us that those who shall have judged themselves shall not be judged by the Lord. (1 Corinthians 11:31.) But how preposterous to infer satisfaction from this? The greater part of believers have, by prayer, warded off the chastisement to which they had made themselves liable. Nay, even Ahab, when he humbles himself spontaneously, feels the hand of God fall lighter upon him. (1 Kings 21:29.) The deprecatory petitions which the saints employed are the most decisive witnesses to gratuitous satisfaction. But these Fathers, it seems, adduce nothing which they cannot prove by passages of Scripture; for Paul teaches, that the sorrow which is agreeable to God worketh: repentance unto salvation not to be repented of. (2 Corinthians 7:10.) What! does Paul here call us back to satisfaction? I hear no word of it. They are dishonestly deluding us. They do so still more in what follows, when they tell us that John must be understood to refer to the same penitence in saying, "Repent, and bring forth fruits meet for repentance." (

Luke 3:8.) But whom did John address in these terms? Was it not persons who offered themselves for baptism while not yet imbued with the faith of Christ? Somewhat different from this, and yet not less absurd, is their quotation from the second chapter of the Revelations, "Remember whence thou art fallen, and first do works;" whereas the proper reading is, "do the first works," or the former works. The writer exhorts the Ephesians to return to their former state of life. With what face is this stretched to satisfaction? When they so pertly called black white, did they think there would be no eyes to detect their fraud? Lysander once said to deputies who had spoken in a meeting of allies more imperiously than they ought, that they had need of a city which would be very indulgent to them. These masters would need a herd of oxen if they wish to have an audience which they can persuade to believe what they please. Let them go and boast of being guided immediately by the Holy Spirit, while they are palpable falsifiers of holy writ. To sum up the whole — Though believers ought to be constantly thinking of Repentance, these Holy Fathers imagine it to be an indescribable something of rare occurrence — though Scripture declares repentance to be a renewal of the whole man — though it points out its very source, fear excited by a true sense of the Divine judgment — though it enumerates its parts, self-denial, which consists in a hatred of sin and dissatisfaction with our own depravity, and renewal of life or regeneration of the spirit, which is nothing else than the restoration of the Divine image — though it carefully marks its effects, and explicitly defines its whole nature, — the venerable Fathers produce nothing but the flimsy inanities by which the doctrine of repentance has been corrupted under the Papacy. What was said by ecclesiastical writers concerning external discipline, which referred to the formal profession of repentance, they ignorantly wrest to the spiritual renovation which formed the subject of their discourse. Not to be tedious in reviewing each point, let any one compare their lucubrations with our writings, and he will find and acknowledge that they have turned light into darkness.

I have hitherto endeavored to censure without accusing; and impartial readers will observe, that I censure nothing unless compelled to do so. But there is not a sentence which does not extort more of it from me than I could wish. Of this nature is the assertion under the sixteenth head, that the grace of Justification is lost, not only by unbelief, but by any mortal sin. If they meant that we are ejected from the possession (enjoyment) of this great blessing by an evil conscience, I would not at all gainsay them, I mean as far as regards ourselves. For although God does not cast us off, yet an evil conscience is such a separation from him as excludes us from the enjoyment of a lively and justifying knowledge of his paternal love towards us. But they are preposterous, first, in recognizing no sin as mortal that is not gross and palpable:, whereas most inward sins wound the mind more grievously and even fatally; and, secondly, in not perceiving how a good conscience is the inseparable attendant of faith. Were it not so, how could it be said that our hearts are purified, by faith, that Christ dwells in our hearts by faith, that it is the victory by which we overcome the world, the shield for repelling the assaults of the devil, and that we are kept by faith through the power of God unto salvation? (Acts 15:9; Ephesians 3:17; 1 John 5:4; Ephesians 6:16; 1 Peter 5:9; 1 Peter 1:5.) There is no doubt, therefore, that faith is overwhelmed and buried in a man whenever he has been overcome by any temptation so as to abandon the fear of God. For the Spirit of holiness cannot be separated from faith any more than can Christ himself. I do not assert, however, that when we forsake the fear of the Lord faith is altogether extinguished in us. But as the fear of God is oppressed by depraved lusts, so I say that faith is stifled, and for the time exerts its power no more than if it were in a manner dead. The holy Fathers craftily endeavor to burrow

out a hole in which they may hide their impious dogma, that we are not justified by faith alone. Not succeeding in this they attempt another method.

We come now to the last head, which treats of The Merit of Works. Here there is no dispute between us as to the necessity of exhorting ‘believers to good works, and even stimulating them by holding forth a reward. What then? First, I differ from them in this, that they make eternal life the reward; for if God rewards works with eternal life, they will immediately make out that faith itself is the reward which is paid, whereas Scripture uniformly proclaims that it is the inheritance which falls to us by no other right than that of free adoption. But there is still greater ground for contradicting, when they are not ashamed to affirm that nothing is to prevent believers from satisfying the Law, at least in a degree proportioned to the present state, and meriting eternal life. Where then will be the blessedness of which David speaks, (Psalm 32,) and without which we are all thrice wretched? Wo to those miserable men who perceive not that he who has come nearest to perfection has not yet advanced half-way! All who have their conscience exercised feel the strict truth of Augustine’s sentiment, "The righteousness of saints in this life consists more in the forgiveness of sins than the perfection of virtues." (Lib. de Civit. Dei, 19 c. 27.) Still more accurate is another passage which I quoted, that; "so long as they groan under the infirmity of the flesh, the only hope left them is, that they have a mediator in Christ by whom they are reconciled to God." (Lib. ad Bon., 3. c. 5.)

It is not strange, however, that addle-pated monks who, having never experienced any struggle of conscience, and who, moreover, being intoxicated with ambition, or surfeiting and drunkenness, only desire to raise themselves in the estimation of their idol, should thus prate of the perfection of the Law. With the same confidence do they talk of a heaven for hire, while they themselves meanwhile continue engrossed with the present hire, after which they are always gaping. But in vain do they attempt to dazzle eyes not wholly blind with those fair colors which they afterwards employ when they prohibit any one from glorying or confiding in works, because they are the gifts of God. Not to mention that what they now confess to be gifts of God, they previously claimed in a greater degree for human ability, there are three errors in their decree which are not to be tolerated. Though they mention incidentally that the good works of the pious are meritorious by the merit of Christ, they omit the most necessary part, viz., that there is no work untainted with impurity, until it be washed away by the blood of Christ. Nay rather, they annex a false dignity to works, as if they could please without pardon. There is, indeed, a speciousness in the gloss that they all flow from the Spirit of Christ. But where will the absolute power of the Holy Spirit be found? Is it not distributed to every one in measure? (1 Corinthians 12:11.) They ought, therefore, to have observed, that it is always mixed with dross of ours which taints its purity. But while our inherent depravity renders every kind of work which proceeds from us vicious in the sight of God, the only thing left for our works is to recover the grace which they have not in themselves, by a gratuitous acceptance. This is done when works acknowledged to have no value in themselves borrow, and, as it were, beg their value from Christ.

It is, indeed, a gross and impious delusion, not to acknowledge that every work which proceeds from us has only one way of obtaining acceptance, viz., when all that was vicious in it is pardoned by paternal indulgence. Another delusion almost similar to this is their not reflecting, that even if we should have merited anything by any one work, the whole of the merit, be it what it may, is lost by contrary transgression. "He who offends in one point is guilty of all." (James 2:10) What reward

do you promise yourself when nothing is produced but liability to eternal death They are also in error when they do not flee to the only remedy, and assuming that there is some good thing in them, ask God of his goodness, to regard it with favor, by not imputing the evil things which far exceed it both in weight and number. The third error, however, is by far the worst, I mean their making assurance of salvation depend on the view of works. At one time, indeed, they prohibit us from trusting in ourselves, but when they again tell us to look to our works that we may have a sure hope of salvation, what grounds of hope, can we find in them? Do they not plainly place our whole trust in ourselves? Accordingly, they add a clause which is fit only for such a doctrine. It is, that in this life we carry on a warfare of doubtful issue, and cannot attain certainty, until God render to every one according to his works. By this they overthrow all confidence in our faith, or to use Paul's expression, make faith itself void. (Romans 4:14.) But Paul declares that he is not justified, because he is not conscious of anything in himself. (1 Corinthians 4:4.) This is true, and therefore, in order that our possession of righteousness may be stable and tranquil, our part is to omit all mention of works, and beseech our Judge not to enter into judgment with us. (Psalms 143:2.) We reach the haven of security only when God lays aside the character of Judge, and exhibits himself to us as a Father. And yet those swinish men are not ashamed to thunder out a cruel denunciation to terrify the simple, that no man is capable of receiving righteousness who does not firmly adhere to whatever they prescribe. What! has a new method of Justification lately appeared? Or rather, as salvation is one, do we not all come to it by one way? What will become of the Prophets and Apostles who gave no heed to such masters? Therefore, paying no regard to the Council of Trent, let us hold that fixed faith which the Prophets and Apostles, by the Spirit of Christ, delivered to us, knowing whence we have learned it. But the venerable Fathers, as if to make it impossible for any man to doubt that they are of the number of those whose mouth, as David exclaims, (Psalms 4:7) is full of cursing and bitterness, proceed, with truculent bluster, to send forth almost as many anathemas as there are individuals among them, and give these the plausible and honorable name of Canons! Yet that I may not seem to act maliciously, as if I had forgotten the moderation I have hitherto observed, I willingly subscribe to the three first. To the rest I will affix brief censures.

ANTIDOTE TO THE CANONS

OF THE COUNCIL OF TRENT. To Canons 1, 2, and 3:, I say, Amen.

CANON 4. This was answered above, when I explained how Free-will assents to God calling and exciting it. We certainly obey God with our will, but it is with a will which he has formed in us. Those, therefore, who ascribe any proper movement to free-will, apart from the grace of God, do nothing else than rend the Holy Spirit. Paul declares, not that a faculty of willing is given to us, but that the will itself is formed in us, (Php 2:13,) so that from none else but God is the assent or obedience of a right will. He acts within, holds our hearts, moves our hearts, and draws us by the inclinations which he has produced in us. So says Augustine. (Lib. de Corrupt. et Grat., c. 14.) What preparation can there be in a heart of iron, 'until by a wondrous change it begins to be a heart of flesh? This, as the Prophet declares, is entirely the work of God. The will of man will, indeed, dissent from God, so long as it continues contrary, but when it has been framed for obedience, the danger of dissenting is removed. But that the efficacy of divine grace is such, that all opposition is beaten down, and we who were unwilling are made obedient, it is not we who assent, but the Lord by the Prophet, when he promises that lie will make us to walk in his precepts; and Christ also, when he says, "Whosoever hath heard of my Father cometh unto me." (John

6:45.)

CANON 5.

Let us not raise a quarrel about a word. But as by Free-will they understand a faculty of choice perfectly free and unbiassed to either side:, those who affirm that this is merely to use a name without a substance, have the authority of Christ when he says, that they are free whom the Son makes free, and that all others are the slaves of sin. Freedom and slavery are certainly contrary to each other. As to the term itself, let them hear Augustine, who maintains that the human will is not free so long as it is subject to passions which vanquish and enthral it. (Epist. 144, ad Anastas.) Elsewhere he says, "The will being vanquished by the depravity into which it has fallen, nature is without freedom." (Hom. 3, in Joann.) Again, "Man making a bad use of free-will lost both himself and it." Again, "Man received great powers of free-will when he was created, but lost them by sinning. Foolish men consider not that in the term freewill freedom is implied. But if they are the slaves of sin, why do they boast of free-will? For of whom a man is overcome, to the same is he bound a slave." Nay, in another place he openly derides the name. "The will," says he, "is free, not freed — free to righteousness, the slave of sin! Why, then, do they so much inflame miserable men by reminding them of their slavery, but just that they might learn to flee to the deliverer?" (Aug. de Perfect. Justit. Lib. de Verb. Apost. Serm. 3; De Spiritu et Litera, c. 30; De Corrupt. et Grat., c. 13.)

CANON 6. As I abhor paradox, I readily repudiate the saying that the treachery of Judas is as properly the work of God as the calling of Paul. But they never will convince any man that God only acts permissively in the wicked, except it be one who is ignorant of the whole doctrine of Scripture. When it is said that the reprobate are set apart to execute the work of God; that his are the snares, swords, and axes which are directed by his hand; that his hiss arouses them to execute what his hand and counsel have decreed; that Christ was slain ‘by the Jews by the determinate counsel of God, (Isaiah 10:5; Ezekiel 17:20; Ezekiel 32:2; Psalms 17:13; Acts 2:4, Acts 2:23) the words are too strong to be evaded by the subterfuge of permission. Augustine interprets better. After quoting the passages of Scripture in which the Father is said to have delivered up the Son, and Christ to have delivered himself, he immediately adds, "What;, then, did Judas do but sin?" Nor can he be justly blamed for saying elsewhere, that "God worketh in the hearts of men to incline their wills as he pleaseth, whether to good, of his mercy, or to evil, according to their deservings, and that by his judgment, sometimes open, sometimes hidden, but always just;" for he immediately adds the qualification, that "the malice is not his." (De Verb. Dom. Serm. 63.) In like manner he had said a little before, "He does not command the wicked by ordering, in which case obedience would be laudable, but by his secret and just judgment he bends their will, already bad by their own depravity, to this misdeed or that." (Aug. de Gr. et Lib. Arb. c. 21.) For there is nothing here but what the Scriptures teach almost in the same words when they speak of inclining and turning, hardening and doing.

CANON 7.

Assuredly a bad tree can only produce bad fruit. But who will be so shameless as to deny that we are bad trees until we are ingrafted into Christ? Therefore, if any good fruit is praised in man, let the root of it be sought in faith, as Augustine admonishes, (in Psalm 31 Sermon 1.) There God so often declares that he regards not the outward appearance, but looketh on the heart. This is said

expressly by Jeremiah. (Jeremiah 5.) But what can be the cleanness or sincerity of a heart which Peter tells us is purified only by faith? (Acts 15:9.) Admirably, therefore, does Augustine say to Boniface, "Our religion distinguishes the just from the unjust, not by the law of works, but by the law of faith, without which the works which seem good turn to sin." He adds, "Therefore unbelievers sin in whatever they do, because they do not refer their doings to a lawful end." (Lit. ad Bonif., Lib. 3, c. 5.) He treats copiously of the same subject in his tract against Julian. Hence, also, in another place he describes theirs as a wandering course, inasmuch as the more active they are, the farther they are carried from the goal, and. the more therefore their condition becomes hopeless. At last he concludes, that "it is better to limp in the course than keep running out of it." (Praef. in Psalm 31.) And what more would we, have? Let them anathematize the Apostle, who declares that without faith it is impossible to please God! (Hebrews 11:6.) Let them anathematize Christ and Paul, who declare that all unbelievers are dead, and are raised from death by the gospel! (John 5; Ephesians 2:1.)

CANON 8.

I answer: AMEN. Nor do I think that the thing ever came into any man’s mind. For being such as is described by them, it comprehends true repentance and is conjoined with faith. On the subject of the servile fear of hell, which to some degree restrains unbelievers from rushing with such furious and headlong impetus into wicked courses, we are of the same sentiments as Augustine, whose words are, (Ad. Anast. Ep. 144,) "What man is found innocent before God, who, if fear were withdrawn, would do what God forbids? He is guilty in his will by wishing to do what cannot lawfully be done. As far as he is concerned, he would rather that there was no justice prohibiting and punishing sin. And hence, if he would rather that there was no justice, who can doubt that he would take it away if he could? How then is he righteous who is such an enemy to righteousness, that if power were given him he would take it away when commanding, and not bear it when threatening or judging? He, therefore, is the enemy of righteousness who does not sin, because he is afraid of punishment. And, indeed, when all the progress made is that the sinner curbed by terror murmurs against God, who can deny that by such contumacy he aggravates his sin?"

CANON 9. This Canon is very far from being canonical; for it joins things which are utterly at variance. They imagine that a man is justified by faith without any movement of his own will, as if it were not with the heart that a man believeth unto righteousness. Between them and us there is this difference, that they persuade themselves that the movement comes from the man himself, whereas we maintain that faith is voluntary, because God draws our wills to himself. Add, that when we say a man is justified by faith alone, we do not fancy a faith devoid of charity, but we mean that faith alone is the cause of justification.

CANON 10. Could these anathemas take effect, all who are not versed in the sophistical art would pay dearly for their simplicity. They formerly asserted in their decrees that the righteousness of God was the only formal cause of Justification; now they anathematize those who say that we are formally righteous by the obedience of Christ. But it is in another sense. I see it or scent it. But how few are there who will not be misled by the ambiguity? Although it may be that having met with the sentiment somewhere and not understood it, they boldly condemn it. For as it were impious to say that the righteousness of Christ is only an exemplar or type to us, so if any one were to teach that we are righteous formally, i.e., not by quality but by imputation, meaning that our righteousness is

in relation merely, there would be nothing worthy of censure. The adverb formally is used in both senses.

CANON 11.

I wish the reader to understand that as often as we mention Faith alone in this question, we are not thinking of a dead faith, which worketh not by love, but holding faith to be the only cause of justification. (Galatians 5:6; Romans 3:22.) It is therefore faith alone which justifies, and yet the faith which justifies is not alone: just as it is the heat alone of the sun which warms the earth, and yet in the sun it is not alone, because it is constantly conjoined with light. Wherefore we do not separate the whole grace of regeneration from faith, but claim the power and faculty of justifying entirely for faith, as we ought. And yet it is not us that these Tridentine Fathers anathematize so much as Paul, to whom we owe the definition that the righteousness of man consists in the forgiveness of sins. The words are in the fourth chapter to the Romans, "David speaketh of the blessedness of the man to whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are those whose iniquities are forgiven." (Psalms 32:1) We see that in Paul's view blessedness and righteousness mean the same thing. And where does he place both but solely in the remission of sins? His meaning is the same as in the fifth chapter of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing unto men their trespasses." For he immediately explains how that reconciliation comes to us: "We are ambassadors beseeching you as in the name of Christ. He made him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might be the righteousness of God in him." See how being reconciled to God by the sacrifice of Christ, we both are accounted and are righteous in him. But why quote one passage after another, while this is the doctrine uniformly inculcated by Prophets and Apostles?

It is worth while to observe how dexterously they accommodate Scripture to their purpose. They say that the love which is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit must not be excluded. Thus they corrupt one passage by another. The context shows that Paul does not there speak of our own love, but of the paternal love of God toward us; for he holds it forth as ground of consolation in all circumstances of adversity, that the Spirit suggests proof of the divine benevolence towards us. This swinish herd, on the contrary, twist it to mean, that we are not ashamed of hoping because we love God. And the moment they have given utterance to the words they insist on being regarded as oracles! With similar perversion they make justifying grace a habit, and deny that it proceeds from the free favor of God. The words of Scripture are clear as day against them. For when Paul says, that to believers reward is imputed not as of debt but of grace; and again, that the inheritance is of faith that it may be of grace, (Romans 4:4,) how is it possible in expounding it to give it any other meaning than that of free favor? What else is meant by a purpose of grace? One of the most striking passages is the first chapter to the Ephesians, where, going on word by word, he tells us that the Father hath made us acceptable to himself in the Son.

CANON 12. The venerable Fathers will not allow Justifying Faith to be defined as the confidence with which we embrace the mercy of God as forgiving sin for Christ's sake. But it pleases the Holy Spirit, who thus speaks by the mouth of Paul, "We are justified freely by the grace of God, through the redemption which is in Christ, whom God hath appointed a propitiation through faith in his blood for the remission of sins which are past." (Romans 3:24.) Nor is it possible to give a different exposition to what he afterwards says, viz., that "being justified by faith we have peace with God."

(Romans 5:1.) How so, but just that our consciences are never at ease until they rest in the mercy of God? This he distinctly expresses immediately after, when he adds the reason, that the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, as being the witness of our free adoption, and not the witness only, but also the earnest and seal. Again, "We have boldness and access with confidence through faith in him." For the same reason he calls the gospel, rather than the law, "the doctrine of faith." He moreover declares, that the gospel is "the message of reconciliation."

CANON 13.

That, however, is Paul's meaning when he concludes, that if Faith is made void the promise is abolished. (Romans 4:14.) That too is the meaning of the term plhrofori>a which Paul also sometimes uses. Accordingly he regards the eyes of our mind as not duly enlightened unless we perceive what is the hope of our inheritance. It is also sufficiently obvious from the above passages, that faith is not right unless we dare with tranquil minds to sist ourselves into the divine presence. For, as Bernard admirably expresses it, (Super Cantic. Sermon 16 c. 3, 10,) "If conscience is troubled, it will not be troubled out of measure, because it will remember the words of our Lord. Therein the infirm have firm rest and security." To the same effect are the words of Zechariah, "Each one will come to his own vine, and dwell safely under his own fig-tree, when the iniquity of the land shall have been forgiven."

CANON 14.

I see not why they should condemn the same thing twice, unless it be they were afraid that their first thunderbolt had fallen scatheless! But; though they should fulminate a hundred times they will not be able to prevail in the least degree against this clear truth of God. Christ says, "Son, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee." This sentence the horned Fathers abominate, whenever any one teaches that acquittal is completed by faith alone. And yet the pious reader ought to remember that we do not exclude repentance, which is altogether necessary, but mention faith only when the inquiry relates to the cause of acquittal. And justly do we so. For how can any one begin truly to fear God unless he is persuaded that God is propitious to him? And whence this persuasion but from confidence in acquittal?

CANON 15.

It is indeed true that to pry too minutely into this matter is hurtful, and therefore to be avoided; but that knowledge of Predestination which Paul[recommends dreads neither the stern trident of Neptune, nor all the blasts of AEolus, nor the thunders of the Cyclops, nor any violence of tempests. For he wishes the Ephesians to know and be assured that they have been made partakers of heavenly grace in Christ, as they had been chosen in him before the foundation of the world. (Ephesians 1:4.) Thus therefore it becomes all believers to be assured of their election, that they may learn to behold it in Christ as in a mirror. Nor is it to no purpose that Christ animates his followers by this consoling reflection — that not one of those whom the Father hath given him shall perish. (John 6:39.) What else, good Sirs, is a certain knowledge of our Predestination than that testimony of adoption which Scripture makes common to all the godly?

CANON 16. That I may not be forced often to repeat the same thing, what they here condemn is nothing else than what I have previously shown to have been delivered by the same oracles of the Holy Spirit.

CANON 17. The words of Luke are, "All who had been pre-ordained to life believed." (Acts 13:48.) He intimates whence it was that in one audience such a difference existed that some believed, and others persisted in their obstinacy. In like manner Paul asserts, that those are called whom God has previously chosen. (Romans 8:29.) Are not also the reprobate called? Not effectually. For there is this difference in the calling of God, that he invites all indiscriminately by his word, whereas he inwardly calls the elect alone, as Christ says, "All that the Father hath given me will come to me." (John 6:37.) In short, if any man is ignorant that the Spirit of regeneration is given to none but the regenerate, I know not what part of Scripture he holds.

CANON 18. Were Regeneration perfected in this life the observance of the law would be possible. But seeing that believers as long as they live here only perceive the goal at a distance, and with much difficulty keep panting towards it, where is the perfection of obedience, of which those men dream, to be found? But there is no wonder that they prate so boldly of things they know not. War is pleasant to those who never tried it.

CANON 19.

AMEN.

CANON 20.

While no sane man will strike off the yoke of God from the shoulders of believers, as if they behooved not to keep his Commandments, it must still be understood that assurance of salvation by no means depends on the observance of them. For the words of Paul always hold true, that the difference between the Law and the Gospel lies in this, that the latter does not like the former promise life under the condition of works, but from faith. What can be clearer than the antithesis — "The righteousness of the law is in this wise, The man who doeth these things shall live in them. But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh thus, Whoso believeth," etc. (Romans 10:5.) To the same effect is this other passage, "If the inheritance were of the law, faith would be made void and the promise abolished. Therefore it is of faith that in respect of grace the promise might be sure to every one that believeth." (Romans 4:14.) As to ecclesiastical laws, they must themselves see to them: we acknowledge one Legislator, to whom it belongs to deliver the rule of life, as from him we have life.

CANON 21. No one says so. The Fathers, therefore, are anathematizing their own figments, unless perhaps they are offended because we deny that Christ as a lawgiver delivered new laws to the world. That he did so they imagined foolishly. Neither did Moses testify in vain that the Law which he had brought was the way of life and death, (Deuteronomy 30:19;) and again, "This is the way, walk ye in it;" nor in vain do the Prophets and Apostles, whenever they discourse of the true and entire perfection of righteousness, call us back to the law; nor in vain did Christ reply to the Pharisee, "If thou wouldst enter into life, keep the commandments." (Matthew 19:17; Luke 18:20.) Accordingly, when Paul charges the law with weakness, he does not place the defect in its teaching, as if it could not bestow life but in our flesh. (Romans 7:8.)

CANON 22.

AMEN.

CANON 23.

We condemn those who affirm that a man once justified cannot sin, and likewise those who deny that the truly justified ever fall: those in like manner who assert that a man regenerated by the Spirit of God is able to abstain even from the least sins. These are the delirious dreams of fanatics, who either with devilish arrogance deceive, or with hypocrisy fascinate the minds of men, or plot to lead them to the precipice of despair. As to the special privilege of the Virgin Mary, when they produce the celestial diploma we shall believe what they say: for to what do they here give the name of the Church, but just to the Council of Clermont? Augustine was certainly a member of the Church, and though he in one passage chooses, in order to avoid obloquy, rather to be silent respecting the blessed Virgin, he uniformly, without making her an exception, describes the Whole race of Adam as involved in sin. Nay, he even almost in distinct terms classes her among sinners, when writing to Marcellinus, he says, They err greatly who hold that any of the saints except Christ require not to use this prayer, "Forgive us our debts." In so doing, they by no means please the saints whom they laud. Chrysostom and Ambrose, who suspect her of having been tempted by ambition, were members of the Church. All these things I mention for no other end but to let my readers understand that there is no figment so nugatory as not to be classed by these blockheads among the Articles of Faith.

CANON 24. That God visits the good works of the godly with reward, and to former adds new and ampler grace, we deny not. But whosoever asserts that works have the effect of increasing justification, understands neither what is the meaning of justification nor its cause. That we are regarded as righteous when we are accepted by God, has already been proved. From this acceptance, too, works derive whatever grace they had.

CANON 25.

Solomon is correct when he says that "the ways of a man seem right in his own eyes, but God weigheth the heart." (Proverbs 16:2.) For how comes it that the horned men of Trent pour forth this execration, but just because they try things by the false balance of their own opinion, not by the weights of God? In the judgment of God nothing is genuine and good, save what flows from perfect love to Him. If the heart of man is never reformed so far in this life, as not to labor under many defects, and to be distracted by various passions, and often fielded by worldly allurements, works must of necessity carry some taint along with them. There is no work, therefore, which is not sin, unless it acquires a value in consequence of a gratuitous estimate.

CANON 26.

Such boldness is not strange in men who have never felt any serious fear of the Divine judgment. Let them, if they will, expect eternal life for their good works; only let us on the authority of Paul hope for it from the grace of God. But it may be said that in thus speaking of grace they do not overthrow it. Although they leave the name of grace to a certain extent, yet so long as consciences in seeking out the cause of salvation look around for works, wo to them! If they waver with trepidation, they have fallen from the certainty of faith: and wo again if they dare to promise themselves any certainty, for they are inflated with devilish presumption! Let the saying of Paul then stand fast — that "the inheritance is not of the law but of faith, that the promise according to grace may be sure to every one that believeth." (Romans 4:14.)

CANON 27. As we acknowledge and feel that every sin, inasmuch as it is condemned by the law of God, is mortal, so the Holy Spirit teaches that all sins flow from unbelief, or, at least, from deficiency of faith. Eternal death is indeed the curse which God denounces against adulterers, thieves, and false witnesses; but wherever faith reigns it expels all sin, and so averts the Divine anger in the same way in which one extinguishes a fire by withdrawing the fuel.

CANON 28.

I deny not that, even during the most grievous lapses, some seed of Faith remains, though in a smothered state. However small it is, I admit that it partakes of the nature of true faith: I add, living faith, since otherwise no fruit could come from it. But since it does not appear for a time, nor exhibit itself by the usual signs, it is, in respect of our sense, as if it were dead. But nothing of this kind entered the minds of the Fathers or their dictatorial monks. All they wished was to establish their absurd dogma of an informal and a formal faith. Hence they maintain that faith to be true which is manifestly dead; as if faith could be the life of the soul, (as Augustine, in accordance with the uniform doctrine of Scripture, elegantly terms it,)and yet not be itself alive. To the same purpose they contend that men are Christians though they have no charity, and anathematize those who think otherwise; in other words, according to them, we anathematize the Holy Spirit if we deride a false profession of Christianity, and set it at naught. Paul pronounced them no Israelites who were not truly the children of Abraham. He moreover defines true Christianity as consisting in "the putting off of the old man;" and he declares that God is denied by those "who do not live godly."

CANON 29. The first article, along with its author, Novatus, we also execrate. As to the second, if the lapsed can only be reinstated in grace by the Sacrament of Penance, what will become of Peter, who, after his dreadful fall, had no access to the remedy which they require as of absolute necessity? Nay, what will become of the tens of thousands in those ages which know nothing of that Auricular Confession which they now represent as the gate of salvation? As to their glorying in the teaching of Christ and his Apostles, their effrontery is extreme, seeing it is clear, from their own historians, that for four hundred years there was no law on the subject of Confession. Therefore, if they would obtain credit for their wicked figments, it will be necessary for them not only to exterminate all the monuments of antiquity, but also to deprive mankind of all sense and judgment!

CANON 30.

They think that, after the guilt is remitted, the liability. to punishment remains, But Scripture everywhere describes, as the fruit of forgiven guilt, that God withdraws his chastisements, and, forgetting his wrath and revenge, blesses us. And when David proclaims those blessed "to whom the Lord imputeth not sin," he not only refers to the remission of guilt, but speaks chiefly of punishment. And what, pray, will be the end or limit, should God begin to exact punishment for sins which are both in number infinite and in weight so heavy, that the hundredth part would sink us to the lowest hell? It is easy indeed for Fathers intoxicated with devilish presumption to call for temporal punishment. To them scarcely anything short of murder is a sin; whoredom is a trivial mistake — the foulest lusts praiseworthy trials of virtue, a hidden wound of the conscience, a mere bagatelle. But to us, who, after long examination, feeling as it were confused and overwhelmed, are forced at length to break out into these words with David, "Who can understand his errors?" the mode of escape is not so easy. Still we deny not, that sometimes after the guilt is forgiven, God chastises us, but it is in the way of admonition and correction — not vengeance. Their idea that

punishment is exacted by the justice of God is therefore a profane fiction. All are not punished in the same way, nor in proportion to their faults; but just according as God knows the application of the rod to be necessary, in order that each, under the training of discipline, may act more wisely in future. The Fathers, however, here. demonstrate what industrious architects they are. Out of one little word they construct a labyrinth composed of a thousand labyrinths. The abyss which they say swallowed up all souls must surely be of immense extent. We see indeed that all the riches of the world are engulfed in it! They ought at least to have spent a little more labor in the construction. There is no mention of Purgatory at all in any part of Scripture. But, as Augustine says, (Ep. 157, ad Optat.,) when a matter naturally obscure cannot be comprehended by us, and Scripture does not come distinctly to our aid, human conjecture is presumptuous in giving any decision. What then must our conclusion be, but that these men act presumptuously in daring, out of their own brains, to make a fabric of that which has no foundation in the word of God? unless, perhaps, they would have us to receive their device of Purgatory as a kind of vaticination vented by ventriloquism; for there is nothing which serves so well to fill their bellies! But what of this? Purgatory cannot stand without destroying the whole truth of Scripture. The demonstration of this would be long, but it is clearly given in our writings. In short, when satisfactions are overthrown, Purgatory of necessity tumbles along with them.

CANON 31.

I acknowledge that he who is truly justified will not forget that a reward is laid up for him, but be incited by it as the best stimulus to well-doing. And yet he will not look to this alone; for seeing that God requires an ingenuous obedience from his children, he will not only repudiate slavish observance of this description, but utterly reject it. Accordingly, the Holy Spirit, in every part of Scripture, as well as in those words which he puts into the mouth of Paul in the first chapter of the Ephesians, assigns a very different motive to a pious and holy life.

CANON 32. By what right or in what sense the Good Works which the Spirit of Christ performs in us are called ours, Augustine briefly teaches when the draws an analogy from the Lord’s Prayer: saying, that the bread which we there ask is called "ours" on no other ground than simply that it is given to us. Accordingly, as the same writer elsewhere teaches, no man will embrace the gifts of Christ till he has forgotten his own merits. He sometimes gives the reason: because, what is called merit is naught else but the free gift of God. Let us therefore allow these Fathers to bawl out, that by separating merit from grace:, we are wickedly lacerating what is truly one. He who has learned from our former observations wherein it is that the merit of works consists, will not be greatly dismayed art the sound of the present anathema.

CANON 33. A very ingenious caution! no man is to see what every man sees! They almost go the length of making void both the glory of God and the grace of Christ. Meanwhile they hurl a dire execration at any one who presumes to think that they derogate in any respect from either. It is just as if a man were to murder another in the open market-place before the eyes of the public, and yet prohibit any one from believing that the murder thus manifest to all has been really committed. Moreover, the rats here turn informers against themselves, by holding out an anathema in terrorem against all who shall dare to perceive the impiety of which they themselves are conscious.

06.00 Articles of Sacred Theology

Articles Agreed Upon by the Faculty of Sacred Theology of Paris in reference to matters of faith at present controverted; with The Antidote

HISTORICAL NOTE In 1542 the doctors of theology in the University of Paris drew up a set of 25 articles defining what they held to be orthodox Roman beliefs, and prescribed them as binding upon lecturers and students alike. These were Calvin‘s old enemies, and he immediately wrote a witty and telling reply, publishing the articles with an ironical "proof" attached to each, and then adding a more positive exposition in counter-argument.

ARTICLES By THE THEOLOGICAL FACULTY OF PARIS. THE DEAN AND FACULTY OF THEOLOGY OF PARIS TO ALL THE FAITHFUL IN CHRIST,—SALVATION.

Perceiving that, through the altercation of Doctors and Preachers with regard to dogmatical points, the great body of the faithful are in accordance with what Paul writes to the Ephesians, "like children carried to and fro with every wind of doctrine," while it is our duty, as much as in us lies, to calm the contending billows of opinion ; and being abundantly persuaded of the most holy purpose of His Most Christian Majesty, it has seemed proper to set down briefly, in the following order, what, in reference to the Articles generally controverted, Doctors and Preachers ought to teach, and the rest of the faithful, with the whole Church, believe. This being a magisterial definition, it is to be observed, that proofs are not added, because to do so were to derogate from the ancient privileges of the School of Paris. But for the sake of certain persons of an over-curious temper, who, in the present day, will believe nothing that is not fully proved, I will, though it is superfluous, say something here in passing in confirmation, or in supplement of the decisions written above, and to be written below.

First, the place ought to have very great authority in the Church; and although our masters are deficient in proofs from Scripture, they compensate the defect by another authority which they have, viz., that of the Church which is equivalent to Scripture, or even (according to the Doctors) surpasses it in certainty. But that our masters, when congregated in one body, are the Church, is proved from hence, that they are like the ark of Noah, in as much as they form a multitude of all kinds of animals.

Secondly, since in the school of Pythagoras the authority of one man prevailed to such a degree that his ipse dixit sufficed for proof, how much more ought that which so many of our masters have together, and with one voice pronounced, to suffice? Especially seeing that, before coming to a decision, they chanted a low mass of the Holy Spirit, and that some were illuminated after having broken their fast, and others made zealous by the bile still reigning in the stomach.

ANTIDOTE. When the Apostle forbids us to be "like children who are carried about with every wind of doctrine," (Ephesians 4:13) he at the same time prescribes the method by which it may be avoided, viz., by all coming together in "the unity of the faith," which he defines to be the knowledge of the Son of God. Moreover, he elsewhere declares, that "faith cometh by the word of

God," (Romans 10:17) For which reason, he, in another place, also teaches that believers ought to be built "upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets," (Ephesians 2:20) And he exhorts the Colossians to continue in the faith grounded and settled, and not to be moved away from the hope of the gospel which they had heard, (Colossians 1:23) Hence, too, the Thessalonians are deservedly commended by Luke, (Acts 17:11) because, though they had with great readiness of mind embraced the doctrine of Paul, they, notwithstanding, brought it to the test of Scripture. Nor in any way could the doctrine of Paul, in another passage, viz., that our faith stands not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God, (1 Corinthians 2:4) be maintained, unless we depend solely on God; as it is written, "Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live "(Isaiah 55:3) And it is this which the Lord commands by Jeremiah, "He that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully," (Jeremiah 23:28) Likewise Peter, "if any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God," (1 Peter 4:11) Therefore, whenever any controversy arises, the proper course is not to settle or decide it by the will of man, but to set it at rest by the authority of God only. Paul gives intimation of this when he arms us against Satan with no other sword than the "word of God," (Ephesians 4:17) Christ also points out the same thing to us by his own example. When assailed by Satan, the only resistance which he opposed to him was passages of Scripture, (Matthew 4:4) Nor otherwise would the eulogium which Paul pronounces upon it be true, when he declares that it is profitable not only for doctrine and reproof, but for correction, (2 Timothy 3:16) Now, therefore, that the world is in tumult from contending opinions, this is the only remedy that we must use. We must, I say, flee to Scripture, or, as Isaiah calls it, (Isaiah 8:20) "to the law and to the testimony," as a sacred anchor, that, in accordance with the Apostles precept, "we may be like minded one toward another," but still "according to Christ Jesus," (Romans 15:5) In the admirable words of Augustine,—"When an obscure matter is under dispute, no aid being offered by clear and certain passages of sacred Scripture, human presumption, which gains nothing by leaning to either side, ought to restrain itself," (Lib. ii. De Peccator. Merit. et Remiss. in fin.) Therefore, in the controverted questions of the present day, let us follow the counsel which, according to Theodoret, (Lib. i. 'list Eccles. cap. 7,) Constantine gave to the Bishops at the Council of Nice—let us seek their determination from the pure oracles of God.

ARTICLE I. OF BAPTISM.

We must believe, with sure and firm faith, that to all, even infants, Baptism is necessary for salvation, and that by means of it the grace of the Holy Spirit is given.

PROOF.—Because otherwise there would be no efficacy in the baptism given by women, which is founded expressly on the belief that baptism is one of the essentials of salvation, though the Council of Carthage declared, without any exception, that women must not presume to baptize. Nay, what is stronger, Doctors still debate, as a difficult question, whether an infant, at the point of death, (in periculo mortis,) if water is not at hand, ought to be plunged into a well rather than commended to God, to wait the event; whereas, if baptism is not essential to salvation, the act would be a murder deserving of death. There are also other questions, as to whether, in the absence of ordinary water, an infant ought to be baptized with lotion, or with artificial or distilled waters, rather than left as it is till water be procured; also, whether, in a case of necessity, it be not true baptism to spit in the face! All these questions would not only be superfluous, but foolish also, did we not hold this principle.

ANTIDOTE TO ARTICLE I. That in baptism remission of sins, as well as the grace of the Holy Spirit, is offered and exhibited to us, all the pious confess. They also acknowledge that infants have need of it, not as a necessary help to salvation, but as a seal divinely appointed to seal upon them the gift of adoption. For Paul teaches that the children of believers arc born holy, (1 Corinthians 7:14) And, indeed, baptism would not be at all suitable to them if their salvation were not already included in this promise,—"I will be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee." For they do not become the sons of God through baptism; but because, in virtue of the promise, they are heirs of adoption, therefore the Church admits them to baptism. And as of old, when the children of the Israelites died before the eighth day, they suffered not by wanting the sacrament of circumcision, so now, provided there is no contumacy or negligence on the part of the parents, the simple promise by which the children of believers are from the womb adopted into the fellowship of the Church suffices for their salvation. For injury is done to Christ if we imagine that the grace of God is impaired by his advent. But God once gave the name of sons to all who should be born of Israel, (Ezekiel 18:4) Nor do we read that John was baptized, though he was the minister of baptism to others. We ought, therefore, to hold that, as in Abraham, the father of the faithful, the righteousness of faith preceded circumcision, so in the children of the faithful, in the present day, the gift of adoption is prior to baptism. According to the words of the promise, "I will be a God to thy seed," (Genesis 17:7) Baptism, however, is a confirmation of this gift, and a help to our faith.

ARTICLE II. OF FREE WILL. With the same firmness of faith must it be held, that in man there is a free will with which he can do good or evil, and by means of which, were he even in mortal sin, he is able, with the help of God, to rise again to grace.

PROOF.—Because our masters have so determined, after Aristotle and all the philosophers, who place reason in man as mistress instead of the Holy Spirit. And this, moreover, is founded on an invincible reason—that otherwise there would be no merit, merit being a work elicited from the power of free will with the concurring grace of God. And were will not effective of volition, the order of things moving and things moved could not well stand. Besides, we should not be co-operators with God in working out our salvation, did not the motion and action of the will concur with the assistance of grace. For when the Lutherans say that cooperation itself is the gift of God, because the will is reformed so as to consent to God, and when they adduce, in their support, Scripture, and the express words of Augustine, who says, in the beginning of his book, "De Dono Perseverantiae," that God gives his people grace to adhere to him perseveringly —also in his took, "De Correptione et Gratia," where he says, that there is given to us the grace by which we not only can, but also will, and that effectually; and again, that believers are actuated incessantly and insuperably by the grace of God—the reply is easy, that the determination of the Faculty is superior to the opinion of one Doctor, according to the expression, "Eyes see more than eye." In like manner, when in opposition to the fundamental principle which I have laid down, viz., that merit is the effect of the power of free will, they adduce another saying of Augustine, that grace is all the merit of the saints—the solution is, that Augustine did not know how our masters were to speak in solving the point.

ANTIDOTE TO ARTICLE II.

Since the Spirit of God declares that every imagination of man’s heart from infancy is evil, (Genesis 6:5; Genesis 8:21) that there is none righteous, none that understandeth, none that

seeketh after God, (Psalms 14:3) but that all are useless, corrupt, void of the fear of God, full of fraud, bitterness, and all kinds of iniquity, and have fallen short of the glory of God, (Romans 3:10) since he proclaims that the carnal mind is enmity against God, and does not even leave us the power of thinking a good thought, (Romans 8:6; 2 Corinthians 3:5) we maintain with Augustine, that man, by making a bad use of free will, lost both himself and it, (Lib. iii. ad Bonifac.) Again, that the will being overcome by the corruption into which it fell, nature has no liberty, (Homil. in Joan. 53.) Again, that no will is free which is subject to lusts which conquer and enchain it. Likewise, with Ambrose, (De Fuga Seculi,) that neither our heart nor our thoughts are in our own power. In like manner, since God declares that it is his own work to renew the heart, out of stone to make it flesh, to write his law on the heart, and put it in the inward parts, to make us to walk in his precepts, to give both good will and the result of it, to put the fear of his name into our hearts, that we may never withdraw from it; in fine, to finish the work which he has begun in us until the day of Christ, (Psalms 51:12; Ezekiel 34:26; Jeremiah 31:33; Php 2:13; Jeremiah 32:39; Ezekiel 11:19; Php 1:6) we again conclude with Augustine, that the children of God are actuated by his Spirit to do whatever is to be done. Also, that they are drawn by him, so as out of unwilling to be made willing. Also, that since the fall it is owing only to the grace of God that man draws near to him, and that it is owing only to the same grace that he does not recede from him, (De Dono Pers. c. 7.) Also, that we know not that any good thing which is our own can be found in our will. Also, because, by the magnitude of the first sin, we lost the free will of believing in God and living piously, it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, not because we ought not to will and to run, but because God effects both, (Lib. ii. De Pecc. Mer. et Remiss., cap. 15.) Also with St Cyprian, that we ought to glory in nothing, since nothing is ours, (Epist. 107, ad Vital.) ARTICLE III. OF PENITENCE.

It is not less certain that to adults, and those having the use of reason, after the commission of mortal sin, penitence is necessary; which penitence consists in contrition, and in sacramental confession, to be made audibly to a priest, and likewise in satisfaction.

PROOF.—It is to be noted that the Lutherans do not speak doctrinally of penitence, when they say that it is a turning unto God, which springs from hatred and displeasure at sin and love of righteousness; also, that man ought to renounce his own will that he may be governed by God. Also, that he ought to be humbled by perceiving the wrath of God and the terrors of death. For contrition is sufficient for mortal sins, in this sense, that to each single sin a single act of contrition is commensurate. In regard to confession, it is to be observed that the matter is of divine, but the form is of positive law; on this point not only the Lutherans err, but also the Canonists, who hold that the law of confession is merely positive. But the matter is proved to be of divine obligation by this, that James says, " Confess one to another." This is the raw material; for, were it not brought into form ab extra, it would follow that priests ought to confess to laics, since " one another" means reciprocally; or that laics would not be capable of confessing, because then they could not bear the confession of others, but the form was superadded by Pope Innocent, viz., that the confession should be made to one’s own priest. This is the magisterial distinction adopted by all Schools. But the necessity of giving satisfaction to God is thus proved—without it there would be no place for what is said of works of supererogation, and, moreover, what the School holds with regard to remission of the fault, and retention of the penance, would be false. And so the Lutherans would make out their point, that there is nothing we can do which we owe not to God; also that we are reconciled to God freely through the satisfaction of Christ. But we ought never to concede this to

them, because, as will be seen farther on, it drags too long a tail after it, and, in fact, would leave no room for purgatory.

ANTIDOTE TO ARTICLE III. The Spirit of God calls us to repentance every where, in the law, the prophets, and the gospel; at the same time, he also defines what he understands by the term, when he orders us to be renewed in our hearts, to be circumcised to the Lord, to be washed, and to cease from wicked pursuits, to loose the bond of iniquity bound within us, to rend our hearts and not our garments, to put off the old man, to renounce our own desires, and be renewed in the image of God; besides enumerating, as the fruits of repentance, acts of charity, and the exercises of a pious and holy life, (Ezekiel 18:31; Jeremiah 4:4; Isaiah 1:13; Isaiah 58:6; Joel 2:13; Romans 6:6; Colossians 3:10; Ephesians 4:22; Colossians 3:14) Of confession to be made in the ear of a priest there is nowhere any mention. Of satisfaction still less. Nay, it is even certain, that before Innocent the Third, no necessity of confession was imposed on the Christian people; for his decree, made at the Lateran Council, is extant, (Can. Omnis utriusque sexus.) Therefore, for about twelve hundred years the Christian Church had no knowledge of the dogma, that to repentance auricular confession was essentially requisite. And the words of Chrysostom are clear : " I do not say that you must confess to your fellow servant; let it be to the Lord," (Rom. ii. in Psal. 4.) Again, "It is not necessary to confess before witnesses. Let a searching out of sins be made in thought: let the decision be without a witness: let God alone see thee confessing," (Serm. de Paenit. et Confess.) Again, "I call thee not into the view of men. Show thy wounds to God, the best physician, that he may cure them," (Horn. v. Contra Anomae, Horn. iv. de Lazaro.) I do not, indeed, deny, that the practice of confessing is very ancient. But I say that it was free, as Sozomen relates in his Ecclesiastical History, where he also attests that it was abolished at Constantinople, because a certain matron, under the pretext of confessing had been caught with a deacon, (Trip. Hist., Lib. ix.) But that a few only confessed is apparent from his mentioning that only one presbyter was allotted to the office in each bishopric. Whence it may easily be inferred, that the practice had arisen from the solemnity used in public repentance. But public repentance does not refer to God in the forum of conscience, but looks to the judgment of the Church, that the sinner may, by some sign, declare before man what his mind is before God. In regard to satisfaction, the Scripture claims, out and out, for Christ this honour, that he is an expiator for sin, that the chastisement of our peace was upon him, that through his name only is obtained forgiveness of sins, (1 John 2:2; Isaiah 57:5; Acts 10:43) In regard to ourselves, it is completed gratuitously and without works, since Paul declares it to be our high privilege, that sins are not imputed to us. At time same time, we disapprove not of the satisfaction which the Church exacts of sinners in token of repentance.

ARTICLE IV. OF JUSTIFICATION BY WORKS.

Moreover, a sinner is not justified by faith alone, but also by good works, which are so necessary, that without them no adult can obtain life.

PROOF.—First, by a philosophic reason; righteousness is a quality, and therefore no man is righteous out of himself, but on account of the quality of his works. Again, the ratio of part to part is the same as that of whole to whole. But perfect obedience of the law is righteousness. Therefore, partial obedience is a portion of righteousness. But when the Lutherans place the righteousness of faith in the predicament of a relation, saying that we are righteous merely because God accepts us

in Christ, according to what Paul teaches the Ephesians, they act contrary to the whole system of philosophy. Again, when they deny that the principle of proportion between the whole and the part applies to this subject, because God promises the reward to none but those who fulfil his law, pronouncing those cursed who offend in any one point, I answer, that one who denies first principles is not to be argued with. Again, we have another demonstration in our favour. The law of contraries is the same; but we are condemned on account of bad works; therefore we are justified on account of good works. When the Lutherans reply, that one single bad work suffices for condemnation, but that a perfect righteousness is requisite for salvation, I answer, that it is sufficient for us to be in part justified by works as above. For when Paul says, "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life," we must supply, in the second member of the sentence, "with the merit of works." Another demonstration is, that reward and merit are correlative terms : But God promises a reward for good works : Therefore, works merit eternal life, and consequently justify. When the Lutherans ridicule this argument, saying that works are rewarded by God, because they are accepted by Him after He has justified man freely, that, therefore, the reward depends on the gratuitous acceptance, and must be subordinate to the righteousness of faith, as the effect to its cause,-I answer, that my mode of arguing was always used, and that, therefore, from long custom, it must be held authoritative, that if God rewards works, works therefore justify.

ANTIDOTE TO ARTICLE IV. The words of Paul are these: "If they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise is of none effect."—"Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed," (Romans 4:14, Romans 4:16) He had previously said that "the righteousness of God without the law was manifested through the faith of Christ, in all, and upon all them that believe," (Romans 3:21) Likewise, that "all have come short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace," (Romans 3:22-23) Now, connect this with what he afterwards writes, "If by grace, then it is no more of works; if of works, then it is no more of grace," (Romans 11:6) The reason is, as he teaches in another place, "To him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt," (Romans 4:4) He repeats the same sentiment to the Ephesians, "By grace are ye saved."—"Not of works, lest any man should boast," (Ephesians 2:8-9) What he means by these words he expounds to the Romans, saying, "Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered," (Romans 4:6-7) Likewise, "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them."—"For he hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him," (2 Corinthians 5:19, 2 Corinthians 5:21) We see how he teaches that God justifies men by forgiving their sins. Whence, too, Zacharias terms it, "the knowledge of salvation," (Luke 1:77) The common mode of interpreting all these passages, with reference to the ceremonial law, is mere trifling; for he everywhere contrasts the proper righteousness of man with the righteousness of faith, as in the Epistle to the Romans, "Going about to establish their own righteousness, they have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." And he subjoins the reason; for the law saith, "The man which doeth those things shall live by them," (Romans 10:3, Romans 10:5) Also, in the Epistle to the Galatians, he uses this argument, "The just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith : but, The man that doeth them shall live in them. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us," that the promise made to us in Abraham might be fulfilled through faith, (Galatians 3:12-13) In like manner to the Philippians, "Not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but the

righteousness which is of God, by faith in Christ," (Php 3:9) We conclude, therefore, with Augustine, that not according to our merits, but according to the mercy of God, the promise of salvation is sure, (August. in Ps. 88. Tract I.) Likewise, with Bernard, that the mercies of the Lord are all our merit, (Bernard, Serm. vi.;) or, to speak more clearly, we conclude with Basil the Great, (Basi4 Serm. de Hurnil.,) that there is perfect and entire glorying in God, when we acknowledge that we are void of any righteousness of our own, and are justified solely by faith in Christ; as Paul glories, despising his own righteousness, in order that all pride and haughtiness may cease, while man is left without any ground of boasting.

ARTICLE V. OF THE TRANSUBSTANTIATION OF THE

BREAD INTO BODY.

Every Christian is bound to believe, that, in the consecration of the Eucharist, the bread and wine are converted into the true body and blood of Christ, the species of bread and wine only remaining, under which is really contained the body of Christ, which was born of the Virgin, and suffered on the cross.

PROOF.—Because such is the authoritative decision of a General Council which was held by Hildebrand, alias Gregory the Seventh. But when the Lutherans ridicule the act of Gregory, bringing forward one Cardinal Breno, his contemporary, who says, that he appointed a fast of three days, and ordered a solemn procession to be made, that he might have a sign from heaven to certiorate him, and yet, without any revelation from heaven, decided that that of which he was uncertain was to be held as an article of faith, I answer, that that Cardinal was envious of the Pope, and, therefore, wrote with a bad intention. Besides, Ambrose teaches this doctrine in his book, De Sacramentis. For, when the Lutherans say that that book is childish, and unworthy of Ambrose, and when Erasmus also demonstrates this by many reasons, I answer, it is enough that the name of Ambrose was long stamped upon it, and that the Master of Sentences, whose quotations ought to be held authentic, alleges it to be genuine. When the Lutherans adduce Scripture in their favour, there is an easy solution (by analogy) from the rod of Moses. It is more difficult to obviate the passages which they allege from the Fathers, if it be not enough that the Fathers spoke before the determination of the Council, but that now it is no longer lawful so to speak. Understand, however, that should the Sacrament chance to be gnawed by worms or moths, or corrupted in any other way, in that case, the substance of bread must have miraculously returned.

ANTIDOTE TO ARTICLE V. The nature of a Sacrament is to exhibit an invisible truth under a visible sign. But should the sign be fallacious, what are we to think of the thing signified by it? The correspondence of the thing with its sign is indicated by Paul, in the following words:—"We being many, are one bread; for we are all partakers of that one bread," (1 Corinthians 10:17) Therefore, that we may learn from the Supper that the flesh of Christ is the food of our soul, it is necessary that the bread be there set forth as an image of the reality; as Paul also says, "The bread which we break is the communion of the body of Christ," (1 Corinthians 10:17) But if what appears there is only an empty appearance of bread, and not the substance, the power and efficacy of the Sacrament are gone. In this way, too, the holy Fathers spoke: Irenaeus:—As that which is bread of the earth, on receiving its call from God, is no longer common bread, but Eucharist, consisting of two things, an earthly and a heavenly, (Lib. iv., advers Valent.) And a canon of the Council of Nice

is as follows:—Let us not be grovellingly intent on the bread and cup set before us, but, with a mind elevated by faith, let us, at that holy table, contemplate the Lamb of God. Cyprian:—When the Lord gives the name of his body to bread, composed of the union of many particles, he indicates, that our people, whose sins he bore, are united. And when he calls wine, squeezed out from bunches of grapes, his body, he intimates that our flock, likewise, are joined together by the admixture of a united multitude, (in Epist. ad Maynum.) So also, Fulgentius calls it the sacrament of the bread and cup, (Fulg. ad Mony.) In fine, as Augustine says, If the sacraments had no resemblance to the things which they signify, they would certainly not be sacraments, (Epist. 23, ad Bonif.) Whence, too, some of the Fathers called it bread sanctified in the body of Christ. But of what nature the exhibition of our Lord's body is, we may learn from Augustine, whose words are, "Doubt not that the man Christ is now there, whence he will come in the same visible form and substance with which he was seen to ascend. To that form and substance he undoubtedly gave immortality, but did not destroy its nature. For we must beware, not so to raise the divinity of the man, as to destroy the reality of the body," (in Epist. ad Dard. 7.) The meaning is, not that we are to think an empty symbol is offered to us, but that if we wish to receive Christ as he is truly given to us, we must raise our hearts upwards.

ARTICLE VI. OF THE SACRIFICE OF THE MASS. The sacrifice of the Mass is, according to the institution of Christ, available for the living and the dead.

PROOF.—Because Christ says, "This do." But to do is to sacrifice, according to the passage in Virgil, "When I will do with a calf in place of corn, do you yourself come." As to which signification, see Macrobius. But when the Lutherans deride that subtlety, because Christ spoke with the Apostles in the common Hebrew or Syriac tongue, and the Evangelists wrote in Greek, answer, that the common Latin translation outweighs them. And it is well known that the sense of Scripture must be sought from the determination of the Church. But of the value of sacrifice for the living and the dead we have proof from experience. For many visions have appeared to certain holy monks when asleep, telling them that by means of masses souls had been delivered from Purgatory. Nay, Saint Gregory redeemed the soul of Trajan from the infernal regions.

ANTIDOTE TO ARTICLE VI. The institution of Christ is, "Take and eat," Matthew 26:26; Mark 14:22) but not offer. Therefore, sacrifice is not conformable to the institution of Christ, but is plainly repugnant to it. Besides, it is evident from Scripture that it is the peculiar and proper office of Christ to offer himself; as an apostle says, that by one offering he has for ever perfected those that are sanctified. Also, "that once, in the end of the world, hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." Also, that after this sanctification, there remains no more oblation, (Hebrews 9:26; Hebrews 10:12) For to this end also was he consecrated a priest after the order of Melchisedec, without successor or colleague, (Hebrews 5:6; Hebrews 7:21) Christ, therefore, is robbed of the honour of the priesthood, when the right of offering is transferred to others. Lastly, no man ought to assume this honour unless called by God, as an apostle testifies. But we read of none having been called but Christ. On the other hand, since the promise is destined for those only who communicate in the sacrament, by what right can it belong to the dead?

ARTICLE VII. OF COMMUNION IN ONE KIND. To laics, Communion under both kinds is not necessary for salvation; and of old, for certain and just causes, it was rightly enacted by the Church that they should communicate only in one kind, viz. bread.

PROOF.—Because there is a danger that the wine might be spilled. But when the Lutherans ask whether the Church was wiser than Christ, in foreseeing an inconvenience for which Christ had not well provided, I answer, that Christ foresaw it well, but was silent, because he wished to try the wisdom of the Church in this matter. There is also another inconvenience. The body of the Lord ought to be preserved in the ciborium to be given to the sick. But if the blood were preserved it would become vinegar, and so, on account of the corruption, would no longer be blood. Nay, the Lutherans would deride us, saying, Is it not very plain that it is wine? And so this would be against the doctrine of transubstantiation. Thirdly, There is this reason, that priests should have some privilege, in order to keep down the pride of the laity. Fourthly, There is force in the argument drawn from concomitance, let the Lutherans prate as they may about our obligation to follow and observe the dispensation of Christ, which he instituted in adaptation to our infirmity. Also, there would be still another danger if the blood were given to be drunk. The taste might beget in the laity a suspicion that it was still wine. And thence many scandals would arise. But if it be argued that the Church has no power to supersede the precepts of Christ, I answer, that the word "drink" ought to be taken in the sense of exhorting, so that it will be a counsel and not a precept. There is another reason which I dare scarcely allege, though it well deserves to be produced. There are some abstemious persons who do not drink wine, and who, however, are not to be deprived of the other species. I deferred producing this reason, because the Lutherans scoff, saying, that if our doctrine is true it is no longer wine, but blood.

ANTIDOTE TO ARTICLE VII. The command of Christ is, "Drink ye all of it," (Matthew 26:27) Nay, after he had simply said of the bread, "Take, eat," when he came to the cup he expressly ordered all to drink. Paul declares that he delivered this to the Corinthians as he had received of the Lord, (1 Corinthians 11:23) The argument which is wont to be derived from concomitance has here no place. For it behoves us to consider not only what Christ gives, but also in what manner, or (if you will) regard must be had to the mode in which the Lord wishes us to communicate with himself. Therefore, as he gives us his body under the bread, so also he gives his blood under the cup. Hence, nothing remains for us but to obey his command by taking from his hands the symbols which he stretches forth to us, that we may enjoy the reality. We being corporeal, he, as Chrysostom reminds us, (Hom. 60, ad Popul.,) in adaptation to our capacity, dispenses spiritual things to us under the form of visible. This rite was observed in the Church above a thousand years, as the writings of all the Fathers testify. "The flesh," says Tertullian, (De Resur. Carnis.,) "is fed with the body and blood of Christ, that the soul may be filled with God." And Theodoret relates the words of Ambrose to the Emperor Theodosius, (Lib. iii. Ecelesiast. Hist. c. 8.) " How, with such hands, will you take up the sacred body of the Lord? how will you dare to lift the cup of precious blood to your lips?" Jerome says, (in Soph.,) "The priests who perform the Eucharist, and distribute to the people the blood of the Lord." Also Chrysostom, (hi 2 ad Cor. c. 9,) "The priest did not, as in the old law, eat part, and give part to the people; but all things which belong to the Eucharist are common to the priest and the people. One body is set before all, and one cup." But there is no controversy as to the observance, which all admit to have been of this description. And that, in the opinion of all, it behoves to be so observed, is evident from the decree of Gelasius, who orders that those who abstain from the cup be kept back from the whole sacrament; for, says he, the division of this mystery is not without great sacrilege, (Can. Comperimus de Consec. Dist. 2.) And Cyprian strenuously contends (Epist. 2 de Lapsis) that this sacrilege ought by no means to be allowed.

ARTICLE VIII. OF THE POWER OF CONSECRATING.

Moreover, to priests only, ordained according to the ritual of the Church, has Christ given the power of consecrating the true body of Christ, and of absolving from sin in the forum of penitence.

PROOF.—Because the bishop, in giving ordination, pronounces these words, "We give thee the power of consecrating, and of offering to God expiatory sacrifices." But it is asked, what ritual of the Church our masters mean, since the ceremonies which we use were not in existence among the Apostles, or their contemporaries. To this I answer, that the privilege was given to them by special dispensation. But if any one rejoins concerning their successors, who also, for many years, were neither anointed nor ordained after our way and manner, I say, that the whole of that time ought to be left in doubt, and well deserves to be so, because as yet nothing was concluded concerning transubstantiation.

ANTIDOTE TO ARTICLE VIII.

We acknowledge that priests are stewards of the mysteries of God, (1 Corinthians 4:1) and, therefore, legitimate dispensers of the Supper; but priests ordained after the ritual of Christ and the Apostles, and also of the ancient Church, in which merely imposition of hands was used, without anointing and other follies, (Acts 13:3) In ordination the thing chiefly to be looked at is the end, and the office to which priests are destined, (1 Timothy 4:14; 2 Timothy 1:6) Priests ought, moreover, to be appointed according to the command of God, and the rule of Scripture, not to sacrifice, but to govern the Church, and feed the flock with the word of the Lord, and administer the sacraments. As to the power of absolution, the true doctrine is, that the ministry of reconciliation has been given to true pastors, in order that by their doctrine, i.e., the preaching of the gospel, they may absolve men from their sins by bringing them back into favour with God. This, however, is not affixed to their persons, but to the word, and has, therefore, been given to the word rather than to the men, in order that the remission of grace, by whomsoever proffered, may procure complete absolution in the forum of conscience. For though it is said especially to the Apostles, "Whose sins soever ye remit, they are remitted unto them," (John 20:23) yet, that the keys are given to the whole Church, is. acknowledged by the holy Fathers; in particular, by Cyprian and Augustine, to whom the others assent. (De Simpl. Praelator. Hom. 50 et 124, in Joan.; hem, De Doctr. Christ. Lib. i. e. 18.) For remission of sins in Christ, by whomsoever it is announced, is true absolution.

ARTICLE IX. OF INTENTION TO CONSECRATE.

It is certain that priests, even if they be wicked and in mortal sin, consecrate the true body of Christ, if, indeed, they intend to consecrate it.

PROOF.—Since otherwise the caution would be superfluous, nay irrational, that the sacrament ought to be adored with implicit faith, that is, under this condition, if the priest, when celebrating mass, had an intention of consecrating, an intention not only habitual, but, at the moment, existing in the very act. But in opposition, it is said, that in this way a priest might annihilate a sacrament. To this I answer, that there is no sacrament when there is no intention. SECOND PROOF.—Because it would be superfluous, nay even foolish, for the Doctors to discuss such questions as these, If there are a hundred hosts and one, and the priest intends to consecrate the hundred only, what would then be the result? Would not one of them remain bread? Moreover, which of them all would, in that case, be set aside as bread? or rather, whether, as the intention

was allusive, ought it not to be in like manner inefficacious in all, and will it not be necessary to begin anew? But as to what the Lutherans say about the duty of pronouncing the words distinctly, and with a loud voice, there is nothing in it, because it is more accordant with the dignity of the mystery to repeat them in a low voice.

ANTIDOTE TO ARTICLE IX.

Christ does not say to one, If you wish you shall have my body, and give it to others, but he addresses all alike, when he promises that he will give his body; the promise being directed to those to whom it is said, "Take, eat," (Matthew 26:1-75 et alibi.) Therefore, it is not in the power of any wicked man whatever, nor even in that of the devil, to make this promise fruitless. And to this the expressions of the Fathers refer, when they say that nothing is detracted from the sacrament, and that none of its virtue is lost, whoever be the minister; (Augustine in all his writings against the Donatists, et alibi.) We conclude, therefore, that nothing is more absurd than to leave it at the determination, or rather at the caprice, of a wicked minister to deprive the Church of the benefits of Christ as oft as he shall think fit. Nor, indeed, is it less absurd to pretend that priests have the power of consecrating whenever they please, though it should be contrary to the institution of Christ; for the promise is subordinate to the command to which it is annexed. Therefore, those only have the body of Christ who celebrate the sacrament according to the rule laid down by him. And hence we conclude, that the consecration is frivolous, and of no value, when the priest dares to consecrate for himself alone, apart from others; for, "This is my body," are not words of magical incantation, but contain a promise subservient to the action instituted by Christ. Whence, too, it is evident that they act improperly when they mutter in a low whisper, instead of pronouncing, as they ought, openly, and with a clear voice. This is obvious from the context, "Take, eat; this is my body." For which reason, Augustine calls the word of consecration the word of faith, which is preached, (Hom. in Joan. 80.) ARTICLE X. OF CONFIRMATION AND UNCTION.

Confirmation and extreme unction are two sacraments instituted by Christ; by means of these the grace of the Holy Spirit is given.

PROOF.—For otherwise the Aurelian Council would blaspheme, when it says, (Refert. de Consecrat., cap. 5, c. Utjcjunii,) that no man can be a complete Christian who has not been chrisned by Episcopal consecration. Also, Pope Melchiades would blaspheme, when he says that by baptism we are regenerated to life, by confirmation armed for the fight; and much more so, when he says that this sacrament is to be reverenced and held in greater veneration than that of baptism. But another peremptory proof is, that nought is done in the Church with greater pomp and solemnity than the consecration of the holy chrism. Whence it appears, that as well extreme unction as confirmation ought to be held in the highest honour, and ought not to be brought into doubt, as if they were of human invention.

ANTIDOTE TO ARTICLE X.

We read that the Apostles, by the laying on of hands, conferred visible influences of the Spirit, (Acts 19:6) But experience demonstrates that this was a temporary gift. Nay, the most ancient writers declare that it ceased immediately after the death of the Apostles. We admit that their successors retained the ceremony of haying on of hands when the young made a confession of their faith. But this was not done in order that it might be regarded as a sacrament instituted by

Christ; for Augustine affirms that it is nothing else than prayer, (Lib. iii. De Bapt. Cont. Donat. e. 16.) The same account is to be given of extreme unction; for we know that it was the symbol of a temporary gift, which did not last long after the Apostles. The Apostles, in the name of the Lord, anointed those to whom they exhibited the power of the Holy Spirit, as present in the gift of healing, (Mark 6:13) James bids this be done, (James 5:14) But now where is the healing, when men half dead are anointed just as they are breathing their last? Those who now use the symbols without the reality are not imitators, but apes of the Apostles.

ARTICLE XI. OF THE MIRACLES OF THE SAINTS. Nor can we doubt that the saints, both during this mortal life, and living in Paradise, work miracles.

PROOF.—For it is apparent how the most blessed Virgin raises up infants, that they may be buried in sacred ground, when they would otherwise have their sepulchre with dogs. But when the Lutherans say, that one of the modes in which God punishes the idolatry of the world is, when the devil does miracles under the name of the saints, and, in support of this view, adduce Jerome, who relates that the Egyptians were cured of the bite of serpents, at the tomb of Jeremiah, whom they worshipped as a god, (in Proae. Prophet.,) I answer, that we do not worship the saints as gods, because we adore them only with the adoration of dulia. There is also another stronger proof from antiquity. For it was always so done, e.g., in the time of Ambrose, a blind man received his sight at the tombs of Gervasius and Protasius. But when the Lutherans reply, out of Augustine, that this was done to confirm true faith, and not in favour of superstition, I answer, that true faith is to worship the saints, and visit their churches, as will appear from what follows.

ANTIDOTE TO ARTICLE XI.

We know from the Scriptures what the power of miracles is, and to what end they ought to be referred, viz., to confirm the doctrine of the gospel, as it is said in Mark, (Mark 16:20) "The Lord working with them, and confirming the word, with signs following." Also by Luke, in the Acts, (Acts 14:3) the Lord "gave testimony to the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands." The legitimate use of miracles, accordingly, is, (Romans 15:19) to receive them as seals of the doctrine of the gospel, and in that way make them subservient to the glory, not of men and angels, but of God only, as Peter said, (Acts 3:12, Acts 3:16) "Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk "—"The name of Jesus, through faith in his name, hath made this man strong." And when Christ foretold that the reign of Antichrist would be established by miracles, (Matthew 24:24) and Paul (2 Thessalonians 2:9) repeated this prophecy of Christ; we conclude, with Augustine, that God put us on our guard against wonder-workers, (so he terms them,) who, by a pretence of miracles, lead the world away from the unity of the faith, (Homil. in Joan. 13.) But a twofold caution must here be observed. For Satan deludes men by numerous impostures, and God even allows many signs to be wrought to punish men for their ingratitude, as Paul testifies, (2 Thessalonians 2:9) and, after Paul, Augustine, De Unitate Ecclesiae, e. 119.

ARTICLE XII. OF WORSHIPFING SAINTS.

It is a holy act, and especially acceptable to God, to pray to the blessed mother of God and the saints, who are in heaven, that they may be our advocates and intercessors with God.

PROOF.—What would the saints do in heaven, if they did not pray for us? But if they pray, they are, therefore, to be prayed to. The Lutherans deny this consequence. But it is proved by this, that the saints resemble God. Now, God wishes to be worshipped by us; and, therefore, so do the saints. But when the Lutherans say, ironically, that we make the saints very long-eared, the answer is easy. They see the things which are done in the world, by means of the reflected light which they receive from the irradiation of God. A second proof is, that all the Pagans have always had lesser gods for their intercessors. But it is not reasonable that Christians should have fewer privileges than Gentiles. And, hence, it was a mode of correcting their error, when the honour which they gave to their idols was transferred to the saints; as when a Pope changed the name of a temple which was called Pantheon, and called it Pantagius. And, in like manner, on many festival days, Christians, in contempt of the Heathen, get drunk in honour of the saints.

ANTIDOTE TO ARTICLE XII.

Scripture requires faith in prayer, (Mark 11:24) And Paul expressly adds, that this faith is by the word of God, (Romans 10:17) And James forbids us to hesitate in our prayers, (James 1:6) Now, therefore, if we wish to obey the word of God, we must invoke God only in the name of Christ. For God assures us this is the spiritual worship of his name, and sets forth his Son as the only Mediator; under whose intercession Paul teaches that we have ready access to God, with Confidence, (Psalms 50:15; Psalms 90:15; Joel 2:32; Jeremiah 29:12; 1 Timothy 2:5) And another apostle exhorts us to approach the throne of grace, trusting to him as our Advocate, (1 John 2:1) Since, therefore, no command exists, enjoining us to seek the intercession of the saints, and no promise is anywhere found, we conclude that this species of prayer is repugnant to the Scripture rule. Besides, neither prophets nor apostles have left us any example of such prayer. Now, let every pious person consider with himself, how perilous it is to attempt a new kind of prayer, not only without sanction from the word of God, but without example. But when the Spirit bids us pray one for another, it is as an exercise of mutual charity in this life, as it is evident from all the passages. But we see how greatly God everywhere abominates Baalim, by which name was meant advocates to whose aid men looked, (4cr. ix. 13; xi. 13; Hosea 2:8) Lastly, in addition to this, no man can assert that the ears of the saints are so long that our prayers can reach them. The idea seems little accordant with reason.

ARTICLE XIII. OF VENERATION OF SAINTS.

Wherefore, the saints, leading a life of blessedness with Christ, are not only to be imitated, but also venerated and prayed to.

PROOF.—If there is any truth in the brocard, that common error makes law, veneration of the saints is sufficiently proved; yet, because the Lutherans reply, that in this way the glory of God is transferred to the saints, always keep in mind the distinction of the School, that we worship them only with the worship of dulia.

ANTIDOTE TO ARTICLE XIII. Of prayer we have already spoken. And no other veneration of saints is recommended to us in Scripture, but that which is universally due to believers, according to Psalms 15:1-5 and Psalms 139:1-24; and is to be rendered to them according to the measure of grace. Of the saints, therefore, in proportion as each of them excels in divine gifts, or has been placed by the Lord in a higher rank, we must both feel and speak honourably. But to render

worship to them, as the generality are wont to do, is profane superstition, and savours more of the madness of the Gentiles than of what becomes the Church of God. Nay, it is plainly repugnant to the precept, "Thou shalt worship the Lord, and him only shalt thou serve," (Deuteronomy 6:13; Matthew 4:10) ARTICLE XIV. OF PILGRIMAGES. And for this reason, it is a religious act devoutly to visit the places dedicated to them.

PROOF.—It would be great ingratitude if less honour were paid to the saints than to the idols of the Gentiles; to some of whose temples singular and pre-eminent devotion was paid, as to that of Apollo at Delphi, and Proserpine at Enna in Cilicia. Then, too, it can be proved to be probable that saints are especially present in the places where their sepulchres and remains are, or where they are more highly honoured.

ANTIDOTE TO ARTICLE XIV.

Christ abolished all distinction of places, when he said "The hour cometh, when not at this mountain, or Jerusalem, but everywhere shall the true worshippers worship God in spirit and in truth," (John 4:21, John 4:23) For he does not there speak of the preposterous zeal of a few, but shows in what respect we differ from the fathers under the Old Testament. With this sentiment, that of Paul corresponds, "I will, therefore, that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands," (1 Timothy 2:8) Those, therefore, revive Judaism, who attach a new sanctity to places, deeming it a part of piety to visit this place or that; indeed, this superstition is worse than Judaism, because Jerusalem was the appointed place of worship. But those men, after the example of idolators, erect for themselves groves and fanes at pleasure. Again, the Son of God was worshipped at Jerusalem, but they consecrate temples to men.

ARTICLE XV. SAINTS MAY BE DULY INVOKED, BEFORE

INVOKING GOD.

If any one in a church, or out of a church, has recourse in his prayer, in the first instance, to the blessed Virgin, or any of the saints, he sins not.

PROOF.—First, from the common proverb, that God is not known among the saints. Second, a superstitious devotion, though it be inordinate, may well be excused through ecstacy.

ANTIDOTE TO ARTICLE XV.

If it is not lawful at all to have recourse to saints in prayer, it is vain to dispute whether it is to be done first or last. But since Christ is proposed to us as the only Mediator, through whom we ought to approach God, those who, passing him by, or postponing him, betake themselves to the saints, have no excuse for their depravity. Solomon, in the solemn dedication of the temple, thus explains its use, "I have built an house for the name of the Lord God of Israel," (1 Kings 8:20) while, without the temple, all the faithful exclaim, " Some trust in chariots, and some in horses; but we will remember the name of the Lord our God," (Psalms 20:7) ARTICLE XVI. OF THE WORSHIP OF THE CROSS AND OF IMAGES. Nor can it in any way be doubted, that, in supplicating Christ and the saints, it is a good and pious work to bend the knee before an image of the cross, and blessed Mary, and the saints.

PROOF.—That crucifixes and images of the saints ought to be worshipped with genuflexion, is proved by the authority of the last Council of Nice. For although Gregory admits that Serenus, Bishop of Marseilles, did well in forbidding the adoration of them, yet the Council which afterwards followed might infringe on this, as posterior derogate from prior decrees. It is proved, secondly, by reason. For if relics and garments are honoured in memory of saints, the reason is not less applicable to images. The former is justified by common use. The third proof is drawn from analogy, viz., because the people venerate the statues of princes, and even heathen princes. The fourth proof is from miracles; for many images of saints have smiled or wept at the devotion of those praying to them. Some have even spoken. The fifth proof is from the experience of our own sensations. For, in praying before an image, we are more inflamed to devotion, our zeal being excited by its very aspect. The sixth proof is, because it behoved us thus to correct the error of the Gentiles, who bent the knee before their idols, as we now do before the images of the saints.

ANTIDOTE TO ARTICLE XVI.

Concerning images and statues the command of God is, "Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them," (Exodus 20:5) Moreover, to bend the knee is the very thing which is signified by the word adoring, (Deuteronomy 5:9) And from the writings of the Gentiles, their opinion appears plainly to have been, that they prayed to the heavenly gods when they turned toward their images. Augustine even relates the excuses which the idolators of his time were wont to frame, (in Psalms 113:1-9) For the vulgar said, that they did not worship the visible object, but the deity which dwelt in it invisibly. But those who had what he terms a more purified religion, said that they worshipped neither the statue nor the demon, but that in the corporeal image they beheld a sign of the reality which they ought to worship. The same may be seen in Eusebius and Lactantius. Since, then, those who, in the present day, prostrate themselves before statues, differ in no respect from old idolators, we conclude from the word of God, and the opinion of ancient fathers, that this practice is openly condemned. And what Augustine says (in Psalms 113:1-9) is certainly true, that no one prays or worships beholding an image, without thinking that he is heard by it. For he says, the effect produced, and in a manner extorted by the figure of the members, is, that the mind, living in a body, thinks that the body, which it sees very like its own, has sensation. Hence, when they are placed on an eminence to be seen by those who pray to them, though they want life and sense, yet, by their resemblance to living members and senses, they affect weak minds, so as to seem to live and breathe. For this reason, it was formerly decreed, that there should be no painting in churches, and that nothing which is worshipped or adored should be depicted on walls. Accordingly, Ambrose, speaking of Helena, says, (Orat. Nat. in Fancre Theodo.) "She found the inscription, she adored the king, certainly not the wood, for this is the heathen error, and the vanity of the wicked."

ARTICLE XVII. OF PURGATORY.

Besides, it is to be firmly believed, and not at all doubted, that there is a purgatory, the soul is detained in which are aided by prayer, fasting, alms, and other good works, so as to be more quickly freed from suffering.

PROOF.—Because many holy monks and devout matrons have had various apparitions, when souls have said so; as may be seen at length in the Dialogues of Gregory, aye, throughout. But if the Lutherans do, as they say, account such things as nothing, or as the phantasies of a

disordered brain, or spectres and impostures with which Satan deceives men, I answer, that they are authenticated by the authority of Gregory, who was a Pope. The second proof is the long prescription. For all the Churches are founded, or at least enriched, with annual donations, on an idea of purgatory. Nay, even the Pagans had a knowledge of it, as appears from their poets, and especially from Ovid. Indeed, if satisfaction is to be made for sins done in this mortal life, it follows that he who is prevented by death must satisfy in another world, and, consequently, that there is a place destined for paying the debts undischarged. It is proved also from natural philosophy; because souls which have attracted ponderous humour from a gross natural body, could not fly off instantly to heaven, unless they were previously desiccated by fire. But when our masters assert that we ought to believe firmly, and without any doubt, a thing which has only an appearance of probability, they have in this followed the rule of law, "Dubious belief is unbelief." It is better, however, to say, that the thing is indubitable. For, grant that the reasons which are adduced are doubtful, still the supervening authority of the Church makes them certain. However, it being once fixed that there is a purgatory, the other thing follows infallibly, viz., that the wretched souls which arc there tormented are to be aided by sacrifices of the living, and it must be held, that the mass for the dead, which supposes that souls can be aided by such sacrifices, was not instituted without reason. Accordingly, kind mother Church, when she found nothing in Scripture, chose to abuse the Psalms and passages out of the book of Job, and many parts of time prophets, rather than leave miserable souls without relief.

ANTIDOTE TO ARTICLE XVII. Of purgatory there is not one word in Scripture, and Augustine, who in this matter yields to custom, acknowledges that this opinion is supported by no passage of Scripture, unless it be the history concerning time oblation of Judas Maccabeus, although the fact of its not being canonical and of certain authority, both he himself confesses, and Jerome teaches, and universal consent confirms. For the passage, which is wont to be cited, from the First Epistle to the Corinthians he himself expounds otherwise, as all men of sense see it ought to be otherwise expounded, (1 Corinthians 3:13) For as the words, wood, hay, and stubble, are metaphorical, so, without doubt, the word fire is used metaphorically for the trial of the Spirit, under which human doctrines perish, whereas divine truth is proved like gold. But though Augustine allowed himself, as I said, to be ruled by custom, so as not to deny a purgatory, (August. Ench. ad Laur. c. 68,) he does not venture to make any positive assertion with regard to it. Nay, he even speaks doubtingly, saying, that it is not incredible, and that its existence may be made a question. Besides, he is not at all consistent with himself; since , in another place, he teaches that souls, when they leave the world, meet with different receptions, the good enjoying delight, while the bad are tormented, (Idem, in cod. lib. cap. seq.;) and, moreover, that the rest which is given immediately after death, every one receives the moment he dies, provided he is worthy of it, (Ilomil. in Joan. 49.) But since it is not in the power of any man to determine concerning the souls of the dead, nothing is safer in judging of their state than to hear God himself, who has the power over their state, speaking of it. Scripture then testifying, "That blessed are the dead who die in the Lord," (Revelation 14:13) "for they rest from their labours," teaching that they receive consolation, (Luke 16:25) that they live with Christ, and enjoy the presence of God, (Php 1:23; 2 Corinthians 5:8) let us take our stand on this doctrine, as to which there is no room for controversy. But the structure of purgatory has just as much solidity as any thing can have which is, in regard to things unknown, fabricated by the brain of man, without the word of God. Assuredly, the prayers by which they usually try to aid souls not being supported by any precept of God, or by any promise, have not that foundation of faith

which Paul requires in the prayers of the faithful, (Romans 10:14) Nothing is more carefully enjoined upon us in Scripture, than to exercise all the offices of charity towards the living. Of assisting the dead there is no mention. In addition to this, there is not a single example extant, though Scripture mentions the burials of many individuals, and even relates time obsequies of some of them at great length, (History of the Old Testament, espcially the Books of Moses and the Books of Kings.)Moreover, it is not credible that Scripture, when giving those minute details, omitted that which would have been of principal moment.

ARTICLE XVIII. OF THE CHURCH AND ITS AUTHORITY.

Every Christian is bound firmly to believe, that there is on earth one universal visible Church, incapable of erring in faith and manners, and which, in things which relate to faith and manners, all the faithful are bound to obey.

PROOF.—Because the Church can be seen. For the Hierarchy is the infallible sign of the Church. Now, the Hierarchy is at all times visible. Therefore, the Church also is visible. But that the Church cannot be separated from the Hierarchy, I assume is one of the principles of faith. A second proof is from perpetual succession. But perpetual succession, from the days of the Apostles, is known from the catalogue of Popes which Platina gives. For, thought Doctors differ, as to the second in succession from Peter, some setting down Clement, others Linus, this being an error in the individual, does not hinder certainty in time generality. The election of Pope Joan is a greater difficulty; for it appears that then some interruption took place. But granting that she then occupied the see on the failure of a male, the same thing is to be said of a time of schism, as when Gregory, not John, and Peter, were antipopes, and, in like manner, when Amadeus was elected on the deposition of Eugenius by a General Council, and afterwards abdicated because Eugenius proved more powerful. in this way a perpetual order of succession will remain. The second branch of the proposition, viz., that the Church cannot err in faith and manners, is proved with difficulty in the visible Church; yet it ought to be a sufficient proof, that whatever the Roman Church has determined is authoritative. But it is proved still better by the fact, that the Church is immediately directed by the Holy Spirit. Now, the Holy Spirit cannot err. Therefore, consequently, neither can the Church. The third proof is from the following article; for since it is to herself that the Church looks in determining all things, nothing would be certain in faith if our doubts were not resolved by her infallibility. Even now, if we had not this for an invincible shield , we should have been vanquished a hundred times by the Lutherans, as they have in their favour an appearance of truth, and press us with strong arguments.

06.01 Articles of Sacred Theology cont'd

cont’d ANTIDOTE TO ARTICLE XVIII. That there is an universal Church, that there has been, from the beginning of the world, and will be even to the end , we all acknowledge. The appearance by which it may be recognised is the question. We place it in the word of God, or, (if any one would so put it,) since Christ is her head , we maintain that, as a man is recognised by his face, so she is to be beheld in Christ: as it is written, "Where the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together," (Matthew 24:28) Again, "There will be one sheepfold, and one Shepherd," (John 10:16) But as the pure preaching of the gospel is not always exhibited, neither is the face of Christ always conspicuous, (1 Corinthians 11:19) Thence we infer that the Church is not always discernible by the eyes of men, as the examples of many ages testify. For in the time of the prophets, the multitude of the wicked so prevailed, that the true Church was oppressed; so also in the time of Christ, we see that the little flock of God was hidden from men, while the ungodly usurped to themselves the name of Church. But what will those, who have eves so clear that they boast the Church is always visible to them, make of Elijah, who thought that he alone remained of the Church? (1 Kings 19:10) In this, indeed, he was mistaken, but it is a proof that the Church of God may be equally concealed from us, especially since we know, from the prophecy of Paul, that defection was predicted, (2 Thessalonians 2:3) Let us hold , then , that the Church is seen where Christ appears, and where his word is heard; as it is written, "My sheep hear my voice," (John 10:27) but that at the instant when the true doctrine was buried, the Church vanished from the eyes of men. This Church, we acknowledge with Paul, to be the pillar and ground of the truth, (1 Timothy 3:1-16)because she is the guardian of sound doctrine, and by her ministry propagates it to posterity, that it may not perish from the world. For, seeing she is the spouse of Christ, it is meet that she he subject to him. And, as Paul declares, (Ephesians 5:24; 2 Corinthians 11:2-3) her chastity consists in not being led away from the simplicity of Christ. She errs not, because she follows the truth of God for her rule; but if she recedes from this truth , she ceases to be a spouse, and becomes an adulteress. Let those who tie down the Church to power in its ordinary sense, and to other external pomp, hear what Hilary says on that subject: "We do wrong in venerating the Church of God in roofs and edifices. Is it doubtful that in these Antichrist will sit? Safer to me are mountains , and woods, and lakes, amid dungeons, and whirlpools ; for in these, either hidden or immersed, did prophets prophesy."

ARTICLE XIX. That to the visible Church belong definitions in doctrine. If any controversy or doubt arises with regard to any thing in the Scriptures, it belongs to the foresaid Church to define and determine.

PROOF.—Horrible confusion would arise, if the Church had not the power of pronouncing a definitive sentence on disputed doctrines, as in the present day the Lutherans would fain have a voice in the Chapter, and would boast the word of the Lord, did we not oppose to them this reply, which has no exception,-That it belongs to the Church to determine ultimately, without contradiction. In no other way could we shut their mouth. Then we ought to know that Scripture is like a nose of wax, because it can be bent hither and thither. But the determination of the Church is

fixed and stable. For if the heretics choose to cavil at one, the next day another more stringent can be adopted.

ANTIDOTE TO ARTICLE XIX. A definite rule, as far as regards particular Churches, is prescribed to us by Paul, when he says, (1 Corinthians 14:29) "Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the others judge. If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace." If any dissension arise among the Churches, we acknowledge that the legitimate method of establishing concord, which has always been observed, is for the pastors to assemble, and define from the word of God what is to be followed. But if we are to hold the determinations of the visible Church for oracles, it was the visible Church which Micah stood alone in resisting, (1 Kings 22:10) It was also the visible Church which said, "Come and let us devise devices against Jeremiah; for the law shall not perish from the priest, nor the counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet," (Jeremiah 18:18) In short, in the time of Christ, the visible Church was represented by the high priest and his council, (John 18:28) For their hierarchy was much better founded, and was confirmed by a surer testimony than that on which those who in the present day usurp the title of Church plume themselves. Those, therefore, who will have their definition of the visible Church to be received indiscriminately, and without exception, lay the faithful under the necessity of denying Christ, abandoning the truth of God, and oftentimes adhering to impiety.

ARTICLE XX. OF THE ARTICLES OF FAITH DELIVERED

BY THE CHURCH.

It is certain that many things are to be believed which are not expressly and specially delivered in the sacred Scriptures, but which are necessarily to be received from the Church by tradition.

PROOF.—From the inconvenience or absurdity of holding otherwise. For without this it would almost be necessary to make the world anew: since not a hundredth part of those things which we firmly hold, and which are received amongst us , without any doubt, can be proved expressly from the Scriptures, but being elicited, after a long process, by the subtle deductions of the Doctors, maintain their certainty. It is proved, also, from probability. For it must be believed, that though the apostles were filled with the Holy Spirit, and had a command to instruct the Church perfectly, they were yet willing to leave something to their successors, that they might not, by anticipating them in all timings, clip their wings too much. It is proved, likewise, from analogy. For, as in jurisprudence, there is a law written, and a law unwritten, so ought there to be in theology.

ANTIDOTE TO ARTICLE XX.

"God," says an apostle, (Hebrews 1:1) "who, at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things." But what kind of expectation the Israelitish people had of the doctrine of Christ, appears from the expression of the woman of Samaria, "When the Messiah is come, he will tell us all things," (John 4:25) We ought, therefore, to stand fast in the doctrine in which we know that all the fullness of heavenly wisdom is included. On this very ground does Augustine decide, that nothing not delivered in the Scriptures is necessary to salvation, (Lib. ii. De Pecc. Mer. et Remiss. cap. ult.) For, if it were necessary to be known, God would not have omitted it. There is also a remarkable sentence of Chrysostom, (De Sanct. et Ador. in Spiritu,) "As Christ declares that he spoke not of himself, because he spoke from the law and the prophets; so,

if any thing beside the gospel is obtruded upon us under the name of the Spirit, let us not believe it. For as Christ is the fulfilment of the Law and the Prophets, so is the Spirit the fulfilment of the Gospel" On the whole, since the certainty of faith should be sought from none but God only, we conclude that true faith is founded only on the Scriptures which proceeded from him, since therein he has been pleased to teach not partially, but fully, whatever he wished us to know, and knew to be useful.

ARTICLE XXI. OF THE POWER OF EXCOMMUNICATION. With the same full conviction of its truth ought it to be received, that the power of excommunicating is immediately and of divine right granted to the Church of Christ, and that, on that account, ecclesiastical censures are to be greatly feared.

There are many minute questions among the Doctors, Whether, in exercising the power of excommunication, the key of knowledge and discernment is required? But do you say expressly-it being fixed that the Church cannot err, this power is plenary? This, too, seems to have been the meaning of our masters, who speak thus without drawing any distinction. But if it is asked, Whether he who has been excommunicated unjustly , has been excommunicated by the power of Christ? say it is enough that it is in his name.

ANTIDOTE TO ARTICLE XXI. As the power of excommunicating has been committed to the Church, so the due mode of using it has been prescribed. First, Let judgment be given only from the mouth of the Lord, (Matthew 2:7) Secondly, Let edification be studied, not destruction, (2 Corinthians 10:8) If it is done otherwise, the well-known sentiment of Gregory applies, "he who abuses the power committed to him deserves to lose his privilege" But we speak of the external form of the Church. For the true Church, as it is governed by the Spirit of Christ, will never, in judging, recede from the rule of his word. But , as it often happens, that those who are invested with ordinary power in the Church exercise tyranny instead of legitimate judgment, this distinction is to be carefully observed. Otherwise, Christ would in vain say to the apostles, "They will cast you out of their synagogues." We need not fear, therefore, at being excommunicated from any society from which God and his truth are exiled. But we ought not only to fear, but to guard with special care, against being excommunicated from that Church which has for its bond of unity the pure doctrine of God; for there is no salvation out of her communion, (Isaiah 2:3; Joel 2:32; Ezekiel 13:8) ARTICLE XXII. OF THE AUTHORITY OF COUNCILS.

It is certain that a General Council, lawfully convened, representing the whole Church, cannot err in its determination of faith and practice.

PROOF.—A General Council, always, and without exception, represents the Church, which otherwise would not be visible. But remember, it must be a Council in which the Pope presides. For though, in the Council of Nice, the legates of Saint Sylvester had not the first place, but the fourth, that was owing to the rudeness of the times-the Church not being fully constituted. But if any one objects the Council of Basle, say that it ought not to have any authority, as Eugenius had recalled his mandate, and withdrawn from the Cardinal of the Holy Cross his right to preside. But when our masters speak of a lawful assembly, it is to be observed, that for the lawfully assembling of a Council, it is sufficient that the legal forms and solemnities be duly observed. For should any one begin to dispute whether or not the prelates who sit there have a right intention, and whither or not they are learned, and whether or not they have a knowledge of sacred literature. and whether

or not they are disposed to obey sound doctrine , the process would be endless.

ANTIDOTE TO ARTICLE XXII.

Christ promises that he will be in the midst of those who are assembled, provided it be in his name, (Matthew 18:20) Therefore, faith is not to be placed in all kinds of councils indifferently, but in such only as shall appear to have been assembled in the name of Christ. The prophets exclaim, "From the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely," (Jeremiah 6:13) Again, "His watchmen are blind; they are all ignorant," (Isaiah 56:10) Again, "There is a conspiracy of her prophets in the midst thereof." "Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things," (Ezekiel 22:25-26) Since the Israelitish Church, which was the true Church of God, was liable to this misfortune, why should not the same thing happen to us? Nay, the apostles even announced that it would be so. "But there were false prophets among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you," (2 Peter 2:1) Our conclusion then is, that a council, that has been assembled in the name of Christ, is governed by the Holy Spirit, and is under his guidance led into truth. But those councils over which Christ does not preside are governed by their own sense, and so can do nothing but err, and lead into error. We maintain, moreover, that in some councils, though guided at the outset by the Spirit of God, the will of the flesh creeps in and turns them aside from the truth. For it is in Christ alone that the fullness of the Spirit dwells, and to each man grace is given in measure, (John 1:16; 1 Corinthians 12:5, 1 Corinthians 12:27; Ephesians 4:7) ARTICLE XXIII. OF THE PRIMACY OF THE ROMAN SEE. Nor is it less certain that in the Church militant there is, by divine right, a Supreme Pontiff whom all Christians are bound to obey, and who, indeed, has the power of granting indulgences.

PROOF.—It was said to Peter, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock," &c. But when the Lutherans say that Peter is there praised as one among the number of the faithful, and that the Rock, which ought to be the foundation of the Church, is Christ, since Peter, in as much as he denied Christ, would not have been a good foundation, and, according to Paul, no other foundation can any man lay than that which is laid, viz., Christ, never yield this to them. For, seeing there is a different interpretation in favour of the Roman see, the well known rule of law is, that favours ought to be liberally interpreted. The Lutherans have also another answer, viz., that, supposing Christ gave the primacy to Peter, it does not follow that he gave it to his successors, unless, indeed, they are all to be also called Satans, it having been said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan." Their argument is, that those who succeed to the one title succeed equally to the other. But answer, that, by the rule of law, odious terms are to be strictly interpreted. Or, give another explanation, viz., that in the first instance Christ spoke to Peter as a future or incipient Pope, in the second spoke to him as a private individual.

They argue besides in this way; why did Peter confer the inheritance of the primacy on the Roman see rather than on that of Antioch, since he was bishop in both? Answer, that the place acquires dignity from his having died in it, especially from its being the place where the blood of martyrs, which is dear in the sight of the Lord, was shed, according to the Antiphone which is sung on his festival. They also object, why did not James and John acquire for the Churches in which they presided the second and third degree of primacy and dignity, in the same way as Peter acquired the first at Rome, since Paul says that those three were considered pillars? To this answer, that if others were not sufficiently zealous or magnanimous in maintaining their right, it does not follow

that this ought to prejudice Rome. Therefore, Jerusalem and Ephesus, on account of their negligence or false shame, were deservedly put into the background. But Rome, which stood stoutly up for her honour, deserved to remain first.

They also use ridicule, saying, that if Rome ought to be the prime see, because Peter preached and died there, for the same reason the desert ought to have been the prime see to the ancient people, for there Moses, the prince of the prophets, both preached and died; likewise Aaron, the first high priest, there exercised his office until death. Nay, they maintain, that Jerusalem ought rather to take precedence of Rome and all other cities, for there our Lord fulfilled his ministry, and there died. But answer, that under the old dispensation, the succession to the priesthood was a personal , but is now a real right, and goes with the place. As to Christ, solve the difficulty thus: that he did not choose to found a primacy in his own person, for he himself says, I came not to be ministered unto, but to minister. Still, however, they object, that even if there had been a primacy at Rome, it could endure only so long as the Church remained there, and as long as the Pope was a bishop. But they deny that there now is a Church there, because there is the greatest confusion, and they deny that the Pope is a bishop, because he does nothing episcopal. But tell them that this objection is not to be admitted, because the thing is impossible; for it is written, "I have prayed for thee, Peter, that thy faith fail not."

ANTIDOTE TO ARTICLE XXIII.

Scripture often mentions Christ the universal Head, but no where mentions the Pope. And when Paul pourtrays the Church, he does not make it the universal bishopric of one, but says that Christ governs the Church by his ministers. And yet the passage especially required that one should be named as over the others, if that were the fact, (Ephesians 1:22; Ephesians 4:15; Ephesians 5:2; Colossians 1:15; Colossians 2:20) In commendation of unity, he mentions one Lord, one faith , one baptism, (Ephesians 4:11) Why does he not add one Pope, the ministerial head? Moreover, the hierarchy, which, as the flatterers of the Pope pretend, consists chiefly in the primacy of the Roman see, is there professedly described. Why, then, does he omit what would have been most appropriate to the subject? He elsewhere says,(Galatians 2:8) that his office of apostle towards the Gentiles was equal to that which Peter received towards the Jews. Whence we infer two things-that Peter was not his head, and that the apostleship of Peter does not properly extend to us. He there also relates that he had entered into fellowship with Peter, but not to acknowledge him as superior. And Peter himself, when he writes to pastors, does not command with authority, but makes them his colleagues, and exhorts them in an affable manner, as is usual among equals, (1 Peter 1:5) When he is accused of having gone in to the Gentiles, though this accusation was unfounded, yet by clearing himself before the Church, he professes subjection, (Acts 11:4) And being justly reprimanded by Paul, he does not claim exemption, but obediently suffers himself to be corrected. Being ordered by his colleagues to go to Samaria with John, he obeys the order.

Let us, therefore, hold fast what Paul says, (Ephesians 4:15) that Christ is the head, "from whom the whole body, fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." For he there places all men, without a single exception, in time body, and leaves the name and honour of head to Christ alone. Besides, to each of the members he attributes a certain measure and a definite and limited function, in order that the supreme power of

government may reside with Christ alone.

Cyprian, too, when he describes the unity of the Church, says, (De Unitate Ecclesiae, cap. ii.) "There is one bishopric, a part of which is held as a whole by each bishop, just as there are many rays, yet one light, and many branches in a tree, yet only one trunk fixed by its root ; and as several streams flow from one fountain, and being more than one seem divided, yet notwithstanding of the apparent numerical diffusion through the copiousness of the discharge, unity is preserved entire in the source; so also the Church, pervaded with time light of the Lord, sends its rays over the whole world, yet it is but one light which is everywhere diffused; it extends its branches, it pours out its refluent streams over the entire globe; still there is but one head, and one original."

We see how he makes the bishopric of Christ alone universal, and teaches that portions of it are held by his ministers. For this reason it was forbidden by the Council of Carthage, (cap. 47,) to give to any one the name of chief of the priests, or prime bishop, or more than bishop of the prime see. And Gregory execrates the name of universal bishop as profane, nay, blasphemous, and the forerunner of antichrist, terming it an invention of the devil, (Epist. 76, ad Maur., Augustin. Epist. 78, ad Const., Augustin. sequenti ad Enodium.) Cyprian does not honour the Roman bishop with any other appellation than that of brother and co-bishop and colleague. In writing to Stephen, the Roman bishop, he not only makes him the equal of himself and others, but even addresses him in harsher terms, accusing him of arrogance and ignorance. Nay, even Jerome, a Roman presbyter, hesitates not to make that see subordinate. If, says he, (Epist. ad Anion.) the question of authority is raised, the world is greater than a city. Why talk to me of the custom of one city? Why, against the laws of the Church, vindicate the few, from whom superciliousness has sprung? Wherever there is a bishop, whether at Rome, or Eugubium, or Constantinople, or Rhegium, there is the same merit, and the same priesthood. The power of riches, and the humbleness of poverty, do not make one bishop superior, and another inferior Lastly, were every thing else conceded to the Romans, he cannot be the chief of the bishops who is no bishop at all.

ARTICLE XXIV. Of HUMAN CONSTITUTIONS.

Ecclesiastical constitutions, such as those concerning fasting, the choice of food, abstinence front flesh, and many others, truly oblige in the forum of conscience, even to the exclusion of all offence.

PROOF FIRST, from similitude, or from example. For the Rabbis of the Jews also say that the precepts of the wise ought to be observed as the laws of God are, and this without doubt. PROOF SECOND , from reason. For the Church is the substitute of Christ, and represents his person; therefore, it should be able to do as much as Christ can. PROOF THIRD, from authority, because it is said, "The scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat; and whatever things they say unto you do." But when the Lutherans reply, that this is said of the law which the Pharisees taught when they were in that seat, and adduce, in confirmation, the order elsewhere given us to beware of their leaven, that is, their doctrine, and also the exposition of Augustine, where he asks, What else does the Lord mean than that they hear the voice of the pastor through the medium of hirelings? For sitting in the chair, they teach the law of the Lord; therefore, God teaches by them. But if they choose to teach what is their own, refuse to hear, refuse to do : To all this answer, that it is impossible that the Church can teach anything else than the will of God, because it is directed by the Holy Spirit. There is also another proof from authority. For it is said, "Obey those who are set

over you." But when the Lutherans say that this ought to be restricted conformably to the rule which Peter lays down to those who have rule, viz., not to exercise dominion over the heritage; and also, to the rule which Paul says that he observed among the Corinthians, not lording it over their faith, there is nothing in the objection. For , even if those who preside issue improper orders, still those under them are hound to obey. Then, we ought always to return to the principle-because they are the Church, they cannot err in determinations of practice. Finally, there is a proof from utility. For it is scandalous to make great changes. And Solomon forbids us to remove the ancient landmarks which our fathers placed. But the greater part of the observances by which the world is governed in the present day are traditions of the Church, and, therefore, it would neither be convenient nor useful to cause so much confusion by changing every timing. Add, that they contribute to decency and comeliness of conduct. If anyone say that they do not by this bind consciences, I answer, that this is done accidentally, in consequence of their ratification. For the Church intended this, and the people consented.

ANTIDOTE TO ARTICLE XXIV.

"There is one Lawgiver," says James, (James 4:12) "who can save and destroy." And the reason for this is twofold; because the will of God is to us a perfect rule of righteousness and holiness, and he alone possesses authority over souls-an authority which he resigns to none. Therefore, the Lord everywhere urges obedience, and obedience to himself alone. Hence those expressions, "Obedience is better than sacrifice," (1 Samuel 15:22) Likewise, "Whatever I command you, that observe and do. You will not add ought or diminish." Likewise, "Let not everyone do what seemeth to him good, but do only what I command you." Likewise, "Did I ever command your fathers to offer sacrifices to me ?" and not this rather, "Hearing, hear my voice," (1 Samuel 15:22; Deuteronomy 12:5, Deuteronomy 12:32; Deuteronomy 4:2; Jeremiah 7:22) Paul declares it unlawful to bind the conscience by any human laws. "Stand fast," says he, (Galatians 5:1) "in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free, and be not again entangled with the yoke of bondage." He elsewhere gives the reason, (Colossians 2:23) For even those things which have a show of wisdom are frivolous and vain, if they are according to the precepts and traditions of men. In like manner, he declares, when he treats of marriage, that he is unwilling to lay a snare for believers, (1 Cor. v. 35.) Therefore, the spiritual kingdom of Christ is violated, and his authority over souls infringed, when men usurp the right of binding consciences by their own laws. Besides, it is abomination in the sight of God to frame to him a worship which he does not require, or to embrace one devised by man without the sanction of his word, as Isaiah testifies, (Isaiah 29:13) when for this cause he denounces dreadful judgments from God upon the people, because they worshipped him with the commandments of men. Also, we have the well-known declaration of Christ, "In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men," (Matthew 15:9) As to the choice of meats, we have the doctrine of Paul, "Let no man judge you in meat or in drink," (Colossians 2:16) Also, "The kingdom of Christ is not meat and drink," (Romans 14:17) We have also the declaration of Christ, "That which entereth into the mouth defileth not the man," (Matthew 15:11) And in another passage Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, predicts that impostors would arise, prohibiting the use of meats, which God had created, and also of holy matrimony, (1 Timothy 4:3) It is impossible to listen to the quibble, that, in the former passages, Paul is disputing with the Jews, and that this prophecy is directed against the Tatians and their followers. For if God has abolished the distinction of meats which he had introduced into the law,

and has subjected all meats indifferently to the power of men, who can now assume to himself the right of making new laws, by which the liberty allowed by God is taken away? if Augustine, even in his day, justly complained that the Church, which God in his mercy wished to be free, was so burdened, that the condition of the Jews was more tolerable, in what terms shall we deplore the bondage which now exists?

ARTICLE XXV. OF VOWS, AND THEIR OBLIGATION. In the same forum of conscience, vows are obligatory, although they be monastic, such as perpetual continence, poverty, and obedience.

PROVED, First, by the true stanza, "Words bind men, ropes the horns of bulls." For, (arguing from the less to the greater,) if we keep our promises to men, how much more to God? But when the Lutherans object that a contract is not completed without the consent of both parties; also, that pactions against law are not valid: answer, that whatever is done with a good intention is pleasing to God. And if anyone vows with a bad intention, yet, on account of the honour due to vows, it is the same as if he had vowed with a good intention. This holds especially in the monastic vow on ac count of the dignity of the profession, because, as St Thomas says, it is like a second baptism.

When, in regard to perpetual continence, the Lutherans adduce another argument, viz., that no man is bound to observe it, unless it be given him from above: answer, that, according to the Doctors, a vow does not cease to be obligatory, because the faculty of performance is defective. But they ask, Which of the two is better for a monk or a priest-to marry, or to commit fornication? And, moreover, they produce the authority of Cyprian, who, in his eleventh Epistle, says of sacred virgins or nuns, that if they will not or cannot persevere, it is better for them to marry than to fall into the fire by indulgence. But a contrary reason prevails, according to the determination of the Canonists also, on account of the contumacy, and more direct infringement of the vow. It is proved, moreover, that vows are obligatory, from their being dispensed with and loosed. The Pope could not dispense with vows, were it not for the power of the keys, and hence it follows that they bind the conscience. The only remaining doubt arises from its being said by our masters, "although they be monastic," the expression seeming to imply, that monastic vows are less obligatory than others. But, observe that this was set down on account of the difficulty of observance, a difficulty which, but for this curb, might tempt monks to draw back.

ANTIDOTE TO ARTICLE XXV. In vows three things are to be attended to: First, Whether the thing vowed is in our power; Secondly, Whether the purpose of the vow is right ; Thirdly, Whether what we vow is in itself pleasing to God. When these, or any one of these, is wanting, we conclude that vows are fruitless and of no avail. Moreover, Scripture tells us that perpetual continence is not in every man’s power; for Christ declares, that all do not receive this word, (Matthew 19:11) And Paul, speaking of this very gift, and so giving us to understand that it is a special gift not granted to all, reminds us, (1 Corinthians 7:7) that the gifts of God are distributed. And, therefore, he enjoins all who burn to seek their remedy in marriage. "Whosoever," says he, "cannot contain, let him marry. Likewise, to avoid fornication, let every one have his own wife." But that in vowing monastical obedience, the end is vicious, is plain from a single expression of Paul, in which he condemns all that is voluntary modes of worship which men institute at their own hand. For this is the term which he uses in the Epistle to the Colossians, and which the translator has rendered by superstition. But when monks thus vow obedience to their superiors, they just worship God by human fictions. We maintain that the poverty which they vow is not only not acceptable to God, but

is utterly displeasing to Him. For God orders every man to live by his own labour; and Paul says, (1 Thessalonians 3:10) "He who does not work should not eat." And he calls it a disorderly life for any man to live in idleness by another's sweat, commanding that such be excommunicated. Then the voluntary poverty which God recommends to us is, that he who is rich should, by bestowing his goods to relieve the wants of the brethren, make himself poor after the example of Christ. So Paul tells us, (2 Corinthians 8:9) But the poverty which the monks profess is one by which, though idle, they never hunger, but devour the goods of the poor, and deprive themselves of the power of well-doing. On the whole, we conclude, First, That vows conceived by superstition are of no value, and have no power to bind the conscience; Secondly, That vows rashly made from a foolish confidence in the flesh, ought to be speedily renounced, before God punishes their obstinate arrogance. THE NEW STATUTES OF THE FACULTY. The Faculty of Theology prohibits the Masters of Arts and Bachelors of their own body and others, desirous, now or in future, to take a theological degree, from maintaining, on any account, in sermons or lectures, or from otherwise teaching counter to the above mentioned articles. On the contrary, when the subject and opportunity offer, they must announce them sincerely, and declare them openly to the people. Moreover, the Faculty has decreed that each Master and Bachelor shall confirm them by his subscription. And since it is not safe to nourish the disorderly and contentious, like wolves in the flock, the Faculty has resolved that all who shall refuse to obey this decree, or who shall teach, or in future preach, propositions contrary to those aforesaid, shall be expelled for ever from their body. But as, from a love of contradiction, and of departure from the customs of our ancestors, very many, studious of change and novelties in doctrine, neglect the laudable custom of imploring the grace of the Holy Spirit through the intercession of the blessed Virgin, we warn them not to be so averse to the angelical salutation which the gospel has prescribed to us, nor, as many are wont, when the name of the Lord our Saviour occurs, preposterously to disdain to use the name of Jesus, contenting themselves with calling him the Christ, (ie Christ,) especially seeing that, as Peter testifies, there is no other name given under heaven among men by which we can be saved. In like manner, when mention is incidentally made of the divine apostles and prophets, and holy doctors, let them not, as they are wont, designate them, without any title of honour, Paul, James, Matthew, Peter, Jerome, Augustine, nor consider it a grievance to prefix the word saint, calling them Saint Peter, Saint Paul, &c. And, lastly, let them not neglect to commend the souls of the dead to the prayers of the people. 10th March, Anno Domini 1542. The Faculty of Theology, convened on oath in the College of Sorbonne, to consider the preceding Articles, approved of said Articles in the form in which they are written.

Signed by order of his Lordship the Dean, and of the Faculty.

FOURNIER CUM PARAPHO.

ANTIDOTE THE NEW STATUTES.

Isaiah prohibits all the disciples of God from saying, "conspiracy," as often as the multitude have conspired, (Isaiah 8:12) By this he intimates that we are not to obey or consent to any counsels of the wicked. Let us, therefore, follow what he afterwards enjoins, i.e, let us sanctify the Lord of Hosts, adhering to him with fear, that he may be our sanctification. Whosoever tempts us to withdraw from this fear, let him be to us anathema. And, like the blind man who received sight, let us not be afraid of being expelled from the synagogue of the wicked, since Christ will meet with us,

and receive us into the fellowship of his body. It were better to die a hundred times, than to pollute our hands with a nefarious subscription abjuring the truth of God. For the Sorbonnists, who so often make mention of their herd, (gregis,) have here proved, that they are a herd of swine. That invocation of the Virgin, which they have hitherto used in seeking the grace of the Spirit, who sees not to be execrable blasphemy? to say nothing of those titles full of anathema, by which, while they would honour the Virgin, they most grievously insult her, calling her "the Queen of Heaven, and Treasury of Grace." We hear how Christ tells us, that he will send the Spirit of truth from the Father, and bids us ask in his own name, (John 14:26; John 15:26) This, therefore, is the right rule of asking, and the sure method of obtaining. But to flee to the Virgin, passing by Christ, and in prayer to address her instead of God, who sees not to be a profane practice? It is assuredly altogether alien from the Word of God. Nay, there is extant a Canon of the fourth Council of Carthage, forbidding the invocation of saints at the altar. Here, also, they (the Sorbonne) give a still clearer manifestation of their absurdity, when they say that this salutation is prescribed to us by the gospel. It is true, Gabriel was sent, as Luke relates, to salute the Virgin in these terms; but are we Gabriel? When was this ever commanded to us? What access have we to the Virgin, for the purpose of holding conference with her? Besides, why use the salutation at the time when they implore the influence of the Spirit, unless to pervert it into a form of prayer? As to the name of Christ, how can ears so assinine be so delicate, as to be offended at modes of expression which the Holy Spirit employs? The name of Christ occurs every where in the Scriptures. All the writers of the Church used it; but it is not relished by our masters. And that they may not want a pretext, they bring forward that magical device of the Jews, as if the salvation of the Church were included in two syllables. Since they rave so absurdly about the name of Christ, it is not strange that they are so fastidious as to the names of saints. But by what reason, or what example, do they impose it as a law upon preachers to commend the souls of the dead to the people? Many homilies of the ancients are extant, and from them it will be seen that nothing of the kind was ever done in the ancient Church. Accordingly we see that they take the usual course of tyrants. When unable any longer to support their domination by moderate measures, they have recourse to truculence and barbarian ferocity. But what, on the other hand, does the Lord declare, "Take counsel together, and it shall come to nought; speak the word, and it shall not stand," (Isaiah 8:10) For "there is no wisdom, nor understanding, nor counsel, against the Lord," (Proverbs 21:30)

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07.05. 1545 - (Intro)

CATECHISM OF THE CHURCH OF GENEVA, BEING A FORM OF INSTRUCTION FOR CHILDREN THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST.

DEDICATION.

JOHN CALVIN TO THE FAITHFUL MINISTERS OF CHRIST THROUGHOUT EAST FRIESLAND, WHO PREACH THE PURE DOCTRINE OF THE GOSPEL.

Seeing it becomes us to endeavor by all means that unity of faith, which is so highly commended by Paul, shine forth among as, to this end chiefly ought the formal profession of faith which accompanies our common baptism to have reference. Hence it were to be wished, not only that a perpetual consent in the doctrine of piety should appear among all, but also that one Catechsim were common to all the Churches. But as, from many causes, it will scarcely ever obtain otherwise than that each Church shall have its own Catechism, we should not strive too keenly to prevent this; provided, however, that the variety in the mode of teaching is such, that we are all directed to one Christ, in whose truth being united together, we may grow up into one body and one spirit, and with the same mouth also proclaim whatever belongs to the sum of faith. Catechists not intent on this end, besides fatally injuring the Church, by sowing the materials of dissension in religion, also introduce an impious profanation of baptism. For where can any longer be the utility of baptism unless this remain as its foundation — that we all agree in one faith?

Wherefore, those who publish Catechisms ought to be the more carefully on their guard, by producing anything rashly, they may not for the present only, but in regard to posterity also, do grievous harm to piety, and inflict a deadly wound on the Church. This much I wished to premise, as a declaration to my readers, that I myself too, as became me, have made it my anxious care not to deliver any thing in this Catechism of mine that is not agreeable to the doctrine received among all the pious. This declaration will not be found vain by those who will read with candor and sound judgment. I trust I have succeeded at least so far that my labor, though it should not satisfy, will be acceptable to all good men, as being in their opinion useful. In writing it in Latin, though some perhaps will not approve of the design, have been influenced by many reasons, all of which it is of no use to detail at present. I shall only select such as seem. to me sufficient to obviate censure.

First, In this confused and divided state of Christendom, I judge it useful that there should be public testimonies, whereby churches which, though widely separated by space, agree in the doctrine of Christ, may mutually recognize each other. For besides that this. tends not a little to mutual confirmation, what is more to be desired than that mutual congratulations should pass between them, and that they should devoutly commend each other to the Lord? With this view, bishops were wont in old time, when as yet consent in faith existed and flourished among all, to send Synodal Epistles beyond sea, by which, as a kind of badges, they might maintain sacred communion among the churches. How much more necessary is it now, in this fearful devastation of the Christian world, that the few churches which duly worship God, and they too scattered and

hedged round on all sides by the profane synagogues of Antichrist, should mutually give and receive this token of holy union, that they may thereby be incited to that fraternal embrace of which I have spoken? But if this is so necessary in the present day, what shall our feelings be concerning posterity, about which I am so anxious, that I scarcely dare to think? Unless God miraculously send help from heaven, I cannot avoid seeing that the world is threatened with the extremity of barbarism. I wish our children may not shortly feel, that this has been rather a true prophecy than a conjecture. The more, therefore, must we labor to gather together, by our writings, whatever remains of the Church shall continue, or even emerge, after our death. Writings of a different class will show what were our views on all subjects in religion, but the agreement which our churches had in doctrine cannot be seen with clearer evidence than from catechisms. For therein will appear, not only what one man or other once taught, but with what rudiments learned and unlearned alike amongst us, were constantly imbued from childhood, all the faithful holding them as their formal symbol of Christian communion. This was indeed my principal reason. for. publishing this Catechism. A second reason, which had no little weight with me, was, because I heard that it was desired by very many who hoped it would not be unworthy of perusal. Whether they are right or wrong in so judging is not mine to decide, but it became me to yield to their wish. Nay, necessity was almost laid upon me, and ! could not with impunity decline it. For having seven years before published a brief summary of religion, under the name of a Catechism, I feared that if I did not bring forward this one, I should cause (a thing ! wished not) that the former should on the other hand be excluded. Therefore if I wished to consult the public good, it behooved me to take care that this one which I preferred should occupy the ground.

Besides, I deem it of good example to testify to the world, that we who aim at the restitution of the Church, are everywhere faithfully exerting ourselves, in order that, at least, the use of the Catechism which was abolished some centuries ago under the Papacy, may now resume its lost rights. For neither can this holy custom be sufficiently commended for its utility, nor can the :Papists be sufficiently condemned for the flagrant corruption, by which they not only set it aside, by converting it into puerile trifles, but also basely abuse it to purposes of impure and impious superstition. That spurious Confirmation, which they have substituted in its stead, they deck out like a harlot, with great splendor of ceremonies, and gorgeous shows without number; nay, in their wish to adorn it, they speak of it in terms of execrable blasphemy, when they give out that it is a sacrament of greater dignity than baptism, and call those only half Christians who have not been besmeared with their oil. Meanwhile, the whole proceeding consists of nothing but theatrical gesticulations, or rather the wanton sporting of apes, without any skill in imitation. To you, my very dear brethren in the Lord, I have chosen to inscribe this work, because some of your body, besides informing me that you love me, and that the most of you take delight in my writings, also expressly requested me by letter to undertake this labor for their sake. Independently of this, it would have been reason sufficient, that what I learned of you long ago, from the statement of grave and pious men, had bound me to you with my whole soul. I now ask what I am confident you will of your own accord do — have the goodness to consult for the utility of this token of my goodwill towards you! Farewell May the Lordincrease you more and more in the spirit of wisdom, prudence, zeal, and fortitude, to the edification of his Church.

GENEVA, 2D DECEMBER, 1545. TO THE READER.

It has ever been the practice of the Church, and one carefully attended to, to see that children should be duly instructed in the Christian religion. That this might be done more conveniently, not only were schools opened in old time, and individuals enjoined properly to teach their families, but it was a received public custom and practice, to question children in the churches on each of the heads, which should be common and well known to all Christians. To secure this being done in order, there was written out a formula, which was called a Catechism or Institute. Thereafter the devil miserably rending the Church of God, and bringing upon it fearful ruin, (of which the marks are still too visible in the greater part of the world,) overthrew this sacred policy, and left nothing behind but certain trifles, which only beget superstition, without any fruit of edification. Of this description is that confirmation, as they call it, full of gesticulations which, worse than ridiculous, are fitted only for apes, and have no foundation to rest upon. What we now bring forward, therefore, is nothing else than the use of things which from ancient times were observed by Christians, and the true worshippers of God, and which never were laid aside until the Church was wholly corrupted.

Chapter 37

07.06. 1545 - (Part 1) - Faith

CATECHISM OF THE CHURCH OF GENEVA. OF FAITH What is the chief end of human life? To know God by whom men were created.

What reason have you for saying so?

Because he created us and placed us in this world to be glorified in us. And it is indeed right that our life, of which himself is the beginning, should be devoted to his glory.

What is the highest good of man? The very same thing.

Why do you hold that to be the highest good?

Because without it our condition is worse than that of the brutes.

Hence, then, we clearly see that nothing worse can happen to a man than not to live to God.

It is so.

What is the true and right knowledge of God? When he is so known that due honor is paid to him.

What is the method, of honoring him duly? To place our whole confidence in him; to study to serve him during our whole life by obeying his will; to call upon him in all our necessities, seeking salvation and every good thing that can be desired in him; lastly, to acknowledge him both with heart and lips, as the sole Author of all blessings. To consider these points in their order, and explain them more fully — What is the first head in this division of yours? To place our whole confidence in God.

How shall we do so? When we know him to be Almighty and perfectly good. Is this enough?

Far from it.

Wherefore?

Because, we are unworthy that he should exert his power in helping us, and show how good he is by saving us.

What more then is needful? That each of us should set it down in his mind that God loves him, and is willing to be a Father, and the author of salvation to him. But whence will this appear? From his word, in which he explains his mercy to us in Christ, and testifies of his love towards us.

Then the foundation and beginning of confidence in God is to know him in Christ?

Entirely so.

I should now wish you to tell me in a few words, what the sum of this knowledge is?

It is contained in the Confession of Faith, or rather Formula of Confession, which all Christians have in common. It is commonly called the Apostles' Creed, because from the beginning of the Church it was ever received among all the pious, and because it either fell from the lips of the Apostles, or was faithfully gathered out of their writings.

Repeat it.

I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate,. was crucified, dead, and buried: he descended into hell; the third day he arose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty, from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy Catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen. To understand each point more thoroughly, into how many parts shall we divide this confession?

Into four leading ones.

Mention them to me. The first relates to God the Father; the second to his Son Jesus Christ, which also embraces the whole sum of man's redemption; the third to the Holy Spirit; the fourth to the Church, and the Divine blessings conferred upon her.

Since there is no God bat one, why do you here mention three, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?

Because in the one essence of God, it behooves us to look on God the Father as the beginning and origin, and the first cause of all things; next the Son, who is his eternal Wisdom; and, lastly, the Holy Spirit, as his energy diffused indeed over all things, but still perpetually resident in himself.

You mean then that there is no absurdity in holding that these three persons are in one Godhead, and God is not therefore divided?

Just so.

Now repeat the first part.

"I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth."

Why do you call him Father?

Primarily with reference to Christ who is his eternal Wisdom, begotten of him before all time, and being sent into this world was declared to be his Son. We infer, however, that as God is the Father of Jesus Christ, he is our Father also. In what sense do you give him the name of Almighty? Not as having a power which he does not exercise, but as having all things under his power and hand; governing the world by his Providence, determining all things by his will, ruling all creatures as seems to him good.

You do not then suppose an indolent power in God, but consider it such that his hand is always engaged in working, so that nothing is done except through Him, and by his decree.

It is so.

Why do you add "Creator of heaven and earth?" As he has manifested himself to us by works, (Romans 1:20,) in these too we ought to seek him. Our mind cannot take in his essence. The world itself is, therefore, a kind of mirror in which we may view him in so far as it concerns us to know. Do you not understand by "heaven and earth" all creatures whatever that exist?

Yes, verily; under these two names all are included, because they are either heavenly or earthly. But why do you call God a Creator merely, while it is much more excellent to defend and preserve creatures in their state, than to have once made them? This term does not imply that God created his works at once, and then threw off' the care of them. It should rather be understood, that as the world was once made by God, so it is now preserved by him, and that the earth and all other things endure just :in as far as they are sustained by his energy, and as it were his hand. Besides, seeing that he has all things under his hand, it follows, that he is the chief ruler and Lord of all. Therefore, by his being "Creator of heaven and earth," we must understand that it is he alone who by wisdom, goodness, and power, guides the whole course and order of nature,: who at once sends rain and drought, hail and other storms, as well as calm, who of his kindness fertilizes the earth, and on the contrary, by withholding his hand, makes it barren: from whom come health and disease; to whose power all things are subject, and whose nod they obey. But what shall we say of wicked men and devils? Shall we say that they too are under him?

Although he does not govern them by his Spirit, he however curbs them by his power as a bridle, so that they cannot even move unless in so far as he permits them. Nay, he even makes them the ministers of his will, so that unwilling and against their own intention, they are forced to execute what to him seems good.

What good redounds to you from the knowledge of this fact?

Very much. It would go ill with us could devils and wicked men do any thing without the will of God, and our minds could never be very tranquil while thinking we were exposed to their caprice. Then only do we rest safely when we know that they are curbed by the will of God, and as it were kept in confinement, so that they cannot do any thing unless by hispermission: the, more especially that God has engaged to be our guardian, and the prince of our salvation.

Let us now come to the second part.

It is that we believe "in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord."

What does it chiefly comprehend? That the Son of God is our Savior, and it at the same time explains the method by which he has redeemed us from death, and purchased life.

What is the meaning of the name Jesus which you give to him?

It has the same meaning as the Greek word Swthr (Sorer.) The Latins have no proper name by which its force may be well expressed. Hence the term Savior (Salvator) was commonly received. Moreover, the angel gave this appellation to the Sort of God, by the order of God himself. (Matthew 1:21.) Is this more than if men had given it?

Certainly. For :since God wills that he be called so, he must absolutely be so.

What, next, is the force of the name Christ? By this epithet, his office is still better expressed — for it signifies that he was anointed by the Father to be a King, Priest, and Prophet.

How do you know that?

First, Because Scripture applies anointing to these three uses; secondly, Because it often attributes the three things which we have mentioned to Christ. But with what kind of oil was he anointed? Not with visible oil as was used in consecrating ancient kings, priests, and prophets, but one more excellent, namely, the grace of the Holy Spirit, which is the thing meant by that outward anointing. But what is the nature of this kingdom of his which you mention?

Spiritual, contained in the word and Spirit of God, which carry with them righteousness and life.

What of the priesthood:?

It is the office and prerogative of appearing in the presence of God to obtain grace, and of appeasing his wrath by the offering of a sacrifice which is acceptable to him. In what sense do you call Christ a Prophet?

Because on coming into the world he declared himself an ambassador to men, and an interpreter, and that for the purpose of putting an end to all revelations and prophecies by giving a full exposition of his Father's will. But do you derive any benefit from this?

Nay, all these things have no end but our good. For the Father hath bestowed them on Christ that he may communicate them to us, and all of us thus receive out of his fullness.

State this to me somewhat more fully.

He was filled with the Holy Spirit, and loaded with a perfect abundance of all his gifts, that he may impart them to us, — that is, to each according to the measure which the Father knows to be suited to us. Thus from him, as the only fountain, we draw whatever spiritual blessings we possess.

What does his kingdom bestow upon us? By means of it, obtaining liberty of conscience to live piously and holily, and, being provided with his spiritual riches, we are also armed with power sufficient to overcome the perpetual enemies of our souls — sin, the world, the devil, and the flesh. To what is the Office of priest conducive?

First, by means of it he is the mediator who reconciles us to the Father; and, secondly, access is given us to the Father, so that we too can come with boldness into his presence, and offer him the sacrifice of ourselves, and our all. In this way he makes us, as it were, his colleagues in the priesthood.

There is still prophecy. As it is an office of teaching bestowed on the Son of God in regard to his own servants, the end is that he may enlighten them by the true knowledge of the Father, instruct them in truth, and make them household disciples of God.

All that you have said then comes to this, that the name of Christ comprehends three offices which the Father hath bestowed on the Son, that he may transfuse the virtue and fruit of them into his people?

It is so.

Why do you call him the only Son of God, seeing that God designs to bestow this appellation upon us all? That we are the sons of God we have not from nature, but from adoption and grace only, in other words, because God puts us in that place, (John 1:1 ;) but the Lord Jesus who was begotten of the substance of the Father, and is of one essence with the Father, (Ephesians 1:3,) is by the best title called the only Son of God, because he alone is his Son by nature, (Hebrews 1:1.)

You mean then, that this honor is proper to him, as being due to him by right of nature, whereas it is communicated to us by gratuitous favor, as being his members?

Exactly. Hence with a view to this communication he is called the First-born among many brethren. (Romans 8:29.) In what sense do you understand him to be "our Lord?"

Inasmuch as he was appointed by the Father to have us under his power, to administer the kingdom of God in heaven and on earth, and to be the Head of men and angels. (Colossians 1:15, Colossians 1:18.) What is meant by what follows?

It shows the manner in which the Son was anointed by the Father to be our Savior — namely, that having assumed our nature, he performed all things necessary to our salvation as here enumerated.

What mean you by the two sentences — "Conceived of the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary?" That he was formed in the womb of the virgin, of her substance, to be the true seed of David, as had been foretold by the Prophets, and that this was effected by the miraculous and secret agency of the Spirit without human connection. (Psalms 132:11; Matthew 1:1; Luke 1:32.) Was it of consequence then that he should assume our nature?

Very much so; because it was necessary that the disobedience committed by man against God should be expiated also in human nature. Nor could he in any other way be our Mediator to make reconciliation between God and man. (Romans 3:24; 1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 4:15; Hebrews 5:7.) You say that Christ behooved to become man, that he might, as it were, in our person accomplish the work of salvation? So I think. For we must borrow of him whatever is wanting in ourselves: and this cannot be done in any other way. But why was that effected by the Holy Spirit, and not by the common and usual form of generation? As the seed of man is entirely corrupt, it was necessary that the operation of the Holy Spirit should interfere in the generation of the Son of God, that he might not be affected by this contagion, but endued with the most perfect purity.

Hence then we learn that he who sanctifies us is free from every stain, and was possessed of purity, so to speak, from the original womb, so that he was wholly sacred to God, being unpolluted by any taint of the human race? That is my understanding.

How is he our Lord?

He was appointed by the Father to rule us, and having obtained the empire and dominion of God both in heaven and on earth, to be recognizedas the head of angels and good men. (Ephesians 1:21; Colossians 1:18.) Why do you leap at once from his birth to his death, passing over the whole history of his life?

Because nothing is treated of here but what so properly belongs to our salvation, as in a manner to contain the substance of it.

Why do you not say in one word simply "was dead," (died,) but also add the name of the governor under whom he suffered? That has respect not ,rely to the credit of the statement, but also to let us know that his death was connected with condemnation.

Explain this more clearly.

He died to discharge the penalty due by us, and in this way exempt us from it. But as we all being sinners were obnoxious to the judgment of God, he, that he might act as our substitute, was pleased to be sisted in presence of an earthly judge, and condemned by his mouth, that we might be acquitted before the celestial tribunal of God. But Pilate pronounces him innocent, and therefore does not condemn him as a malefactor. (Matthew 27:24.)

It is necessary to attend to both things. The judge bears testimony to his innocence, to prove that he suffered not for his own misdeeds but ours, and he is formally condemned by the sentence of the same judge, to make it plain that he endured the sentence which he deserved as our surety, that thus he might free us from guilt.

Well answered. Were he a sinner he would not be a fit surety to pay the penalty of another’s sin; and yet that his condemnation might obtain our acquittal, he behooved to be classed among transgressors?

I understand so. Is there any greater importance in his having been crucified than if he hath suffered any other kind of death?

Very much greasier, as Paul also reminds us, (Galatians 3:13,) when he says, that he hung upon a tree to take our curse upon himself and free us from it. For that kind of death was doomed to execration. (Deuteronomy 21:23.) What? Is not an affront put upon the Son of God when it is said that even before God he was subjected to the curse? By no means; since by undergoing he abolished it, and yet meanwhile he ceased not to be blessed in order that he might visit us with his blessing.

Go on.

Since death was the punishment imposed on man because of sin, the Son of God endured it, and by enduring overcame it. But to make it more manifest that he underwent a real death, he chose to be placed in the tomb like other men. But nothing seems to be derived, to us from this victory, since we still die? That is no obstacle. Nor to, believers is death now any thing else than a passage to a better life.

Hence it follows that death is no longer to be dreaded as if it were a fearful thing, but we should with intrepid mind follow Christ our leader, who as he did not perish in death, will not suffer us to perish?

Thus should we act.

It is immediately added, "he descended into hell." What does this mean? That he not only endured common death, which is the separation of the soul from the body, but also the pains of death, as

Peter calls them. (Acts 2:24.) By this expression I understand the fearful agonies by which his soul was pierced.

Give me the cause and the manner of this. As in order to satisfy for sinners he sisted himself before the tribunal of God, it was necessary that he should suffer excruciating agony ofconscience, as if he had been forsaken of God, nay as it were, had God hostile to him. He was in this agony when he exclaimed, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46.) Was his Father then offended with him? By no means. But lie exercised this severity against him in fulfillment of what had been foretold by Isaiah, that "he was smitten by the hand of God for our sins and wounded for our transgressions." (Isaiah 53:4-5.) But seeing he is God, how could he be seized with any such dread, as if he were forsaken of God?

We must hold that it was in respect to the feelings of his human nature that he was reduced to this necessity: and that this might be, his divinity for a little while was concealed, that is, did not put forth its might.

How, on the other hand, is it possible that Christ, who is the salvation of the world, should have been subjected to this doom?

He did not endure it so as to remain under it. For though he was seized with the terrors I have mentioned, he was not overwhelmed. Rather wrestling with the power of hell he subdued and crushed it.

Hence we infer that the torture of conscience which he bore differs from that which excruciates sinners when pursued by the hands of an angry God. For what was temporary in him is perpetual in them, and what was in him only the prick: of a sting, is. in them a mortal sword, which, so to speak, wounds the heart.

It is so. The Son of God when beset by this anguish, ceased, not to hope in the Father. But sinners condemned by the justice of God, rush into despair, murmur against him, and even break forth into open blasphemies. May we hence infer what benefit believers receive from the death of Christ?

Easily. And, first, we see that it is a sacrifice by which he expiated our sins before God, and so having appeased the wrath of God, restored us to his favor. Secondly, That his blood is a laver by which our souls arecleansed from all stains. Lastly,. That the remembrance of our sins was effaced so as never to come into the view of God, and that thus the handwriting which established our guilt was blotted out and canceled. Does it not gain us any other advantage besides?

Yes, indeed. For by its benefit, if we are members of Christ, our old man is crucified, and the body of sin is destroyed, so that the lusts of a depraved flesh no longer reign in us.

Proceed with the other articles. The next is, "On the third day he rose again from the dead." By this he declared himself the conqueror of sin and death. By his resurrection he swallowed up death, broke the fetters of the devil, and annihilated all his power.

How manifold are the benefits resulting to us from the resurrection?

Threefold. For by it righteousness was acquired for us; it is also a sure pledge to us of our immortality; and even now by virtue of it we are raised to newness of life, that by living purely and

holily we may obey the will of God.

Let us follow out the rest.

"He ascended into heaven." Did he ascend so that he is no more on the earth?

He did. For after he had performed all the things which the Father had given him to do, and which were for our salvation, there was no need of his continuing longer on earth.

What good do we obtain from this ascension? The benefit is twofold. For inasmuch as Christ entered heaven in our name, just as he had come down to earth on our account, he also opened up an access for us, so that the door, previously shut because of sin, is now open. Secondly, he appears in the presence of God as our advocate and intercessor. But did Christ in going to heaven withdraw from us, so that he has now ceased to be with us? Not at all. On the contrary, he has engaged to be with us even to the end of the world. (Matthew 28:20.) When we say he dwells with us, must we understand that he is bodily present?

No. The case of the body which was received into heaven is one thing; that of the virtue which is everywhere diffused is another. (Luke 24:51; Acts 1:11.) In what sense do you. say that he "sitteth on the right hand of the Father?"

These words mean that the Father bestowed upon him the dominion of heaven and earth, so that he governs all things. (Matthew 28:18.) But what is meant by "right hand," and what by "sitteth?"

It is a similitude taken from princes, who are wont to place those on their right hand whom they make their vicegerents.

You therefore mean nothing more than Paul says, namely, that Christ has been appointed head of the Church, and raised above all principalities, has obtained a name which is above every name. (Ephesians 1:22; Php 2:9.) It is as you say.

Let us pass on.

"From thence he will come to judge the quick and the dead." The meaning of these words is, that he will come openly from heaven to judge the world, just as he was seen to ascend. (Acts 1:11.) As the day of judgment is not to be before the end of the world, how do you say that some men will then be alive, seeing it is appointed unto all men once to die? (Hebrews 9:27.)

Paul answers this question when he says, that those who then survive will undergo a sudden change, so that the corruption of the flesh beingabolished, they will put on in-corruption. (1 Corinthians 15:51; 1 Thessalonians 4:17.)

You understand then that this change will be like death; that there will be an abolition of the first nature, and the beginning of a new nature? That is my meaning. Does it give any delight to our conscience that Christ will one day be the judge of the world?

Indeed singular delight. For we know assuredly that he will come only for our salvation.

We should not then tremble at this judgment, so as to let it fill us with dismay?

No, indeed; since we shall only stand at the tribunal of a judge who is also our advocate, and who has taken us under his faith and protection.

Let us come now to the third part.

It relates to faith in the Holy Spirit.

What do we learn by it? The object is to let us know that God, as he hath redeemed and saved us by his Son, will also by his Spirit make us capable of this redemption and salvation.

How? As we have purification in the blood of Christ, so our consciences must be sprinkled by it in order to be washed. (1 Peter 1:2; 1 John 1:7.) This requires a clearer explanation.

I mean that the Spirit of God, while he dwells in our hearts, makes us feel the virtue of Christ. (Romans 8:11.) For when our minds conceive the benefits of Christ, it is owing to the illumination of the Holy Spirit; to his persuasion it is owing that they are sealed in our hearts. (Ephesians 1:13.) In short, he alone makes room in us for them. Heregenerates us and makes us to be new creatures. Accordingly, whatever gifts are offered us in Christ, we receive by the agency of the Spirit.

Let us proceed.

Next comes the fourth part, in which we confess that we believe in one Holy Catholic Church.

What is the Church? The body and society of believers whom God hath predestined to eternal life. Is it necessary to believe this article also?

Yes, verily, if we would not make the death of Christ without effect, and set at nought all that has hitherto been said. For the one effect resulting from all is, that there is Church.

You mean then that we only treated of the cause of salvation, and showed the foundation of it when we explained that by the merits and intercession of Christ, we are taken into favor by God, and that this grace is confirmed in us by virtue of the Spirit. Now, however, we are explaining the effect, of all these things, that by facts our faith may be made more firm?

It is so. In what sense do you call the Church holy?

All whom God has chosen he justifies, and forms to holiness and innocence of life, (Romans 8:30,) that his glory may be displayed in them. And this is what Paul means when he says that Christ sanctified the Church which he redeemed, that it might be a glorious Church, free from all blemish. (Ephesians 5:25.) What is meant by the epithet Catholic or Universal? By it we are taught, that as all believers have one head, so they must all be united into one body, that the Church diffused over the whole worm may be one — not more. (Ephesians 4:15; 1 Corinthians 12:12.) And what is the purport of what immediately follows concerning the communion of saints? That is put down to express more clearly the unity which exists among the members of the Church. It is at the same time intimated, that whatever benefits God bestows upon the Church, have a view to the common good of all; seeing they all have communion with each other. But is this holiness which you attribute to the Church already perfect? Not yet, that is as long as she has her warfare in this world. For she always labors under infirmities, and will never be entirely purged of the remains of vice, until she adheres completely to Christ her head, by whom she is sanctified. Can this Church

be known in any other way than when she is believed by faith?

There is indeed also a visible Church of God, which he has described to us by certain signs and marks, but here we are properly speaking of the assemblage of those whom he has adopted to salvation, by his secret election. This is neither at all times visible to the eye nor discernible by signs.

What comes next?

I believe in "the forgiveness of sins."

What meaning do you give to the word forgiveness? That God of his free goodness forgives and pardons the sins of believers that they may not be brought to judgment, and that the penalty may not be exacted from them.

Hence it follows, that it is not at all by our own satisfaction we merit the pardon of sins, which we obtain from the Lord? That is true; for Christ alone gave the satisfaction by paying the penalty.

Why do you subjoin forgiveness of sins to the Church?

Because no man obtains it without being previously united to the people of God, maintaining unity with the body of Christ perseveringly to the end, and thereby attesting that he is a true member of the Church. In this way you conclude that out of the Church is nought but ruin and damnation?

Certainly. Those who make a departure from the body of Christ, and rend its unity by faction, are cut off from all hope of salvation during the time they remain in this schism, be it however short.

Repeat the remainder.

I believe in "the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting." To what end is this article set down in the Confession of Faith? To remind us that our happiness is not situated on the earth. The utility and use of this knowledge is twofold. First, we are taught by it that we are to live in this world as foreigners, continually thinking of departure, and not allowing our hearts to be entangled by earthly thoughts. Secondly, however the fruit of the grace of Christ bestowed upon us may escape our notice, and be hidden from our eyes, we must not despond, but patiently wait for the day of revelation. In what order will this resurrection take place?

Those who were formerly dead will recover their bodies, the same bodies as before, but endued with a new quality, that is, no longer liable to death or corruption. (1 Corinthians 15:53.) Those who survive God will miraculously raise up by a sudden change. But will this be common to the righteous and the wicked?

There will be one resurrection of all, but the condition will be different: some will rise to salvation and blessedness, others to death and extreme misery.

Why then is eternal life only here mentioned, and is there no mention of hell?

Because nothing is introduced here that does not tend to the consolation of pious minds; accordingly, only the rewards are enumerated which the Lord hath prepared for his servants, and nothing is added as to the doom of the wicked, whom we know to be aliens from the kingdom of God. As we understand the foundation on which faith ought to rest, it will be easy to extract from it

a true definition of faith.

It will. It may be defined — a sure and steadfast knowledge of the paternal goodwill of God toward us, as he declares in the gospel that for the sake of Christ he will be our Father and Savior. Do we conceive faith of ourselves, or do we receive it from God Scripture teaches that it is the special gift of God, and this experience confirms.

What experience do you mean? Our mind is too rude to be able to comprehend the spiritual wisdom of God which is revealed to us by faith, and our hearts are too prone; either to diffidence or to a perverse confidence in ourselves or creatures, to rest in God of their own accord. But the Holy Spirit by his illumination makes us capable of understanding those things which would otherwise far exceed our capacity, and forms us to a firm persuasion, by sealing the promises of salvation on our hearts.

What good accrues to us from this faith, when we have once obtained it?

It justifies us before God, and this justification makes us the heirs of everlasting life.

What! are not men justified by good works when they study to approve themselves to God, by living innocently and holily? Could any one be found so perfect, he might justly be deemed righteous, but as we are all sinners, guilty before God in many ways, we must seek elsewhere for a worthiness which may reconcile us to him. But are all the works of men so vile and valueless that they cannot merit favor with God?

First, all the works which proceed from us, so as properly to be called our own, are vicious, and therefore they can do nothing but displease God, and be rejected by him.

You say then that before we are born again and formed anew by the Spirit of God, we can do nothing but sin, just as a bad tree can only produce bad fruit? (Matthew 7:18.)

Altogether so. For whatever semblance works may have in the eyes of men:. they are nevertheless evil, as long as the heart to which God chiefly looks is depraved.

Hence you conclude, that we cannot by any merits anticipate God or call forth his beneficence; or rather that all the works which we try or engage in, subject us to his anger and condemnation?

I understand so; and therefore mere mercy, without any respect to works, (Titus 3:5,) embraces and accepts us freely in Christ, by attributing his righteousness to us as if it were our own, and not imputing our sins to us. In what way, then, do you say that we are justified by faith?

Because, while we embrace the promises of the gospel with sure heartfelt confidence, we in a manner obtain possession of the righteousness of which I speak. This then is your meaning — that as righteousness is offered to us by the gospel, so we receive it by faith?

It is so. But after we have once been embraced by God, are not the works which we do under the direction of his Holy Spirit accepted by him?

They please him, not however in virtue of their own worthiness, but as he liberally honors them with his favor. But seeing they proceed from the Holy Spirit, do they not merit favor?

They are always mixed up with some defilement from the weakness of the flesh, and thereby vitiated.

Whence then or how can it be that they please God?

It is faith alone which procures favor for them, as we rest with assured confidence on this — that God wills not to try them by his strict rule, but covering their defects and impurities as buried in the purity of Christ, he regards them in the same light as if they' were absolutely perfect. But can we infer from this that a Christian man is justified by works after he has been called by God, or that by the merit of works he makes himself loved by God, whose love is eternal life to us? By no means. We rather hold what is written — that no man can be justified in his sight, and we therefore pray, "Enter not into judgment with us." (Psalms 143:2) We are not therefore to think that the good works of believers are useless?

Certainly not. For not in vain does God promise them reward both in this life and in the future. But this reward springs from the free love of God as its source; for he first embraces us as sons, and then burying the remembrance of the vices which proceed from us, he visits us with his favor. But can this righteousness be separated from good works, so that he who has it; may be void of them? That cannot be. For when by faith we receive Christ as he is offered to us, he not only promises :us deliverance from death and reconciliation with God, but also the gift of the Holy Spirit, by which we are regenerated to newness of life; these things midst necessarily be conjoined so as not to divide ,Christ from himself.

Hence it follows that; faith is the root from which all good works spring, so far is it from taking us off from the study of them? So indeed it is; and hence the whole doctrine of the gospel is comprehended! under the two branches, faith and repentance.

What is repentance?

Dissatisfaction with and a hatred of sin and a love of righteousness, proceeding from the fear of God, which things lead to self-denial and mortification of the flesh, so that we give ourselves up to the guidance of the Spirit of God, and frame all the actions of our life to the obedience of the Divine will. But this second branch was in the division which was set down at first when you showed the method of duly worshipping God.

True; and it was at the same time added, that the true and legitimate rule for worshipping God is to obey his will.

Why so?

Because the only worship which he approves is not that which it may please us to devise, but that which he hath of his own authority prescribed.

07.07. 1545 - (Part 2) - The Law

OF THE LAW, THAT IS THE TEN COMMANDMENTS OF GOD.

What is the rule of life which he has given us? His law.

What does it contain?

It consists of two parts; the former of which contains four commandments, the latter six. Thus the whole law consists of ten commandments in all. Who is the author of this division?

God himself, who delivered it to Moses written on two tables, and afterwards declared that it was reduced into ten sentences. (Exodus 24:12; Exodus 32:15; Exodus 34:1; Deuteronomy 4:13; Deuteronomy 10:4.) What is the subject of the first table? The offices of piety towards God. Of the second?

How we are to act towards men, and what we owe them.

Repeat the first commandment or head.

Hear, O Israel, I am Jehovah thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage: thou shalt have no other gods before me.

Now explain the meaning of the words. At first he makes a kind of preface to the whole law. For when he calls himself Jehovah, he claims right and authority to command. Then in order to procure favor for his law, he adds, that he is our God. These words have the same force as if he had called himself our Preserver. Now as he bestows this favor upon us, it is meet that we should in our turn show ourselves to be an obedient people. But does not what he immediately subjoins, as to deliverance and breaking the yoke of Egyptian bondage, apply specially to the people of Israel, and to them alone?

I admit this as to the act itself, but there is another kind of deliverance which applies equally to all men. For he has delivered us all from the spiritual bondage of sin, and the tyranny of the devil.

Why does he mention that matter in a preface to his law? To remind us that we will be guilty of the greatest ingratitude if we do not devote ourselves entirely to obedience to him. And what does he require under this first head? That we maintain his honor entire and for himself alone, not transferring any part of it elsewhere.

What is the honor peculiar to him which it is unlawful to transfer elsewhere! To adore him, to put our confidence in him, to call upon him, in short to pay him all the deference suitable to his majesty.

Why is the clause added, "Before my face?" As nothing is so hidden as to escape him, and he is the discerner and judge of secret thoughts, it means that he requires not the honor of outward affection merely, but true heartfelt piety.

Let us pass to the second head.

Thou shalt not sculpture to thyself the image, or form any of those things which are either in heaven above or on the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth. Thou shalt not adore nor serve them. Does it entirely prohibit us from sculpturing or painting any resemblance?

No; it only forbids, us to make any resemblances for the sake of representing or worshipping God.

Why is it. unlawful to represent God by a visible shape?

S. Because there is no resemblance between him who is an eternal Spirit and incomprehensible, and a corporeal, corruptible, and lifeless figure. (Deuteronomy 4:15; Acts 17:29; Romans 1:23.) You think then that an insult is offered to his majesty when he is represented in this way?

Such is my belief.

What kind of worship is here condemned? When we turn to a statue or image intending to pray, we prostrate ourselves before it: when we pay honor to it by the bending of our knees, or other signs, as if God were there representing himself to us.

We are not to understand then that simply any kind of picture or sculpture is condemned by these words. We are only prohibited from making images for the purpose of seeking or worshipping God in them, or which is the same thing, for the purpose of worshipping them in honor of God, or abusing them in any way to superstition and idolatry.

True.

Now to what end shall we refer this head? As under the former head he declared that he alone should be worshipped and served, so he now shows what is the correct form of worship, that he may call us off from all superstition, and other vicious and carnal fictions.

Let us proceed.

He adds the sanction that he is Jehovah our God, a strong and jealous God, who avengeth the iniquity of the fathers upon the children of them who hate him, even to the third and fourth generation.

Why does he make mention of his strength?

He thereby intimates that he has power enough to vindicate his glory.

What does he intimate by the term jealousy? That he cannot bear an equal or associate. For as he has given himself to us out of his infinite goodness, so he would have us to be wholly his. And the chastity of our souls consists in being dedicated to him, and wholly cleaving to him, as on the other hand they are said to be polluted with idolatry, when they turn aside from him to superstition. In what sense is it said that he avengeth the iniquity of fathers on children? To strike the more terror into us, he not only threatens to inflict punishment on those who offend him, but that their offspring also will be cursed. But is it consistent with the justice of God to punish any one for another’s fault?

If we consider what the condition of mankind is, the question is answered. For by nature we are all liable to the curse, and we have nothing to complain of in God when he leaves us in this condition.

Then as he demonstrates his love for the righteous, by blessing their posterity, so he executes his vengeance against the wicked, by depriving their children of this blessing.

Go on. To allure us by attractive mildness, he promises that he will take pity on all who love him and observe his commands, to a thousand generations. Does he mean that the innocence of a pious man will be the salvation of all his posterity, however wicked? Not at all, but that he will exercise his benignity to believers to such a degree, that for their sakes he will show himself benign also to their children, by not only giving them prosperity in regard to the present life, but also sanctifying their souls, so as to give them a place among his flock.

M. But this does not always appear.

I admit it. For as he reserves to himself liberty to show mercy when he pleases to the children of the ungodly, so he has not so astricted his favor to the children of believers as not to repudiate at pleasure those of them whom he will. (Romans 9.) This, however, he so tempers as to show that his promise is not vain or fallacious. But why does he, here say a thousand generations, whereas, in the case of punishment, he mentions only three or four? To intimate that he is more inclined to kindness and beneficence than to severity. This he also declares, when he says that he is ready to pardon, but slow to wrath. (Exodus 34:6; Psalms 103:8; Psalms 145:8.) Now for the third commandment.

Thou shalt not take the name of Jehovah thy God in vain.

What is the meaning?

He forbids us to abuse the name of God, not only by perjury, but by swearing without necessity. Can the name of God be lawfully used in making oath

It may indeed, when used on a fit cause: first, in asserting the truth; and secondly, when the business is of such importance as to make it meet to swear, in maintaining mutual love and concord among men. But does it not go farther than to restrain oaths, by which the name of God is profaned, or his honor impaired? The mention of one species admonishes us in general, never to utter the name of God unless with fear and reverence, and for the purpose, of honoring it. For while it is thrice holy, we ought to guard, by all means, against seeming to hold it in contempt, or giving others occasion to contemn.

How is this to be done? By never speaking or thinking of God and his works without honor.

What follows A sanction, by which he declares that he shall not be guiltless who taketh his name in vain. As he, in another place, declares that he will punish the transgressors of his law, what more is contained here?

He hereby meant to intimate how much he values the glory of his name, and to make us more careful of it, when we see that vengeance is ready for any who may profane it.

Let us come to the fourth commandment.

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: But the seventh is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within

thy gates: For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it. Does he order us to labor on six days, that we may rest on the seventh? Not absolutely; but allowing man six days for labor, he excepts the seventh, that it may be devoted to rest. Does he interdict us from all kind of labor? This commandment has a separate and peculiar reason. As the observance of rest is part of the old ceremonies, it was abolished by the advent of Christ. Do you mean that this commandment properly refers to the Jews, and was therefore merely temporary I do, in as far as it is ceremonial.

What then? Is there any thing under it beyond ceremony?

It was given for three reasons.

State them to me. To figure spiritual rest; for the preservation of ecclesiastical polity; and for the relief of slaves.

What do you mean by spiritual rest When we keep holiday from our own works, that God may perform his own works in us.

What, moreover, is the method of thus keeping holiday? By crucifying our flesh, — that is, renouncing our own inclination, that we may be governed by the Spirit of God. Is it sufficient to do so on the seventh day?

Nay, continually. After we have once begun, we must continue during the whole course of life.

Why, then, is a certain day appointed to figure it?

There is no necessity that the reality should agree with the figure in every respect, provided it be suitable in so far as is required for the purpose of figuring. But why is the seventh day prescribed rather than any other day? In Scripture the number seven implies perfection. It is, therefore, apt for denoting perpetuity. It, at the same time, indicates that this spiritualrest is only begun in this life, and will not be perfect until we depart from this world. But what is meant when the Lord exhorts us to rest by his own example?

Having finished the creation of the world in six days: he dedicated the seventh to the contemplation of his works. The more strongly to stimulate us to this, he set before us his own example. For nothing is more desirable than to be formed after his image. But ought meditation on the works of God to be continual, or is it sufficient that one day out of seven be devoted to it?

It becomes us to be daily exercised in it, but because of our weakness, one day is specially appointed. And this is the polity which I mentioned.

What order, then, is to be observed on that day? That the people meet to hear the doctrine of Christ, to engage in public prayer, and make profession of their faith.

Now explain what you meant by saying that the Lord intended by this commandment to provide also for the relief of slaves. That some relaxation might be given to those under the power of others. Nay, this, too, tends to maintain a common polity. For when one day is devoted to rest, every one accustoms himself to labor during the other days.

Let us now see how far this command has reference to us. In regard to the ceremony, I hold that it was abolished, as the reality existed in Christ. (Colossians 2:17.)

How?

Because, by virtue of his death, our old man is crucified, and we are raised up to newness of life. (Romans 6:6.) What of the commandment then remains for us? Not to neglect the holy ordinances which contribute to the spiritual polity of the Church; especially to frequent sacred assemblies, to hear the word of God, to celebrate the sacraments, and engage in the regular prayers, as enjoined. But does the figure give us nothing more?

Yes, indeed. We must give heed to the thing meant by it; namely, that being engrafted into the body of Christ, and made his members, we cease from our own works, and so resign ourselves to the government of God.

Let us pass to the second table.

It begins, "Honor thy father and thy mother."

What meaning do you give to the word "honor?" That children be, with modesty and humility, respectful and obedient to parents, serving them reverentially, helping them in necessity, and exerting their labor for them. For in these three branches is included the honor which is due to parents.

Proceed. To the commandment, the promise is added, "That thy days may be prolonged on the land which the Lord thy God will give thee."

What is the meaning?

That, by the blessing of God, long life will be given to those who pay due honor to parents.

Seeing this life is so full of troubles, why does God promise the long continuance of it as a blessing?

How great soever the :miseries to which it is liable, yet there is a blessing from God upon believers, when he nourishes and preserves them here, were it only for this one reason, that it is a proof of his paternal favor. Does it follow conversely, that he who is snatched away from the world quickly, and before mature age, is cursed of God? By no means, Nay, rather it sometimes happens that the more a man is loved by God the more quickly is he removed out of this life. But in so acting, how does he fulfill his promise?

Whatever earthly good God promises we must receive under this condition, viz., in so far as is expedient for the good and salvation of our soul. For the arrangement would be very absurd if the care of the soul did not always take precedence.

What of those who are contumacious to parents?

They shall not only be punished at the last judgment, but here also God will take vengeance on their bodies, either by taking them hence in the middle of their days, or bringing them to an ignominious end, or in other manners. But does not the promise speak expressly of the land of Canaan?

It does so in as far as regards the Israelites, but the term ought to have a wider and more extensive meaning to us. For seeing that the, whole earth is the Lord's, whatever be the region we inhabit he assigns it to us for a possession. (Psalms 24:1; Psalms 85:5; Psalms 115:16.) Is there nothing more of the commandment remaining?

Though father and mother only are expressed, we must understand all who are over us, as the reason is the same.

What is the reason? That the Lord has raised them to a high degree of honor; for there is no authority whether of parents, or princes, or rulers of any description, no power, no honor, but by the decree of God, because it so pleases him to order the world.

Repeat the sixth commandment.

Thou shalt not kill. Does it forbid nothing but the perpetration of murder?

Yes, indeed. For seeing it is God who speaks, he here gives law not only to outward works, but also to the affections of the mind, and indeed to them chiefly.

You seem to insinuate that there is some kind of secret murder from which God here recalls us.

I do. For anger, and hatred, and any desire to hurt, is murder in the sight, of God. Is it enough if we do not hate any one? By no means. Since the Lord, by condemning hatred and restraining us from any harm by which our neighbor may be injured, shows at the same time that he requires us to love all men from the hebert, and study faithfully to defend and preserve them.

Now for the seventh commandment.

Thou shalt not commit adultery.

Explain what the substance of it is. That all kinds of fornication are cursed in the sight of God, and therefore as we would not provoke the anger of God against us we must carefully abstain from it. Does it require nothing besides?

Respect must always be had to the nature of the Lawgiver, who, we have said, not only regards the outward act, but looks more to the affections of the mind.

What more then does it comprehend?

Inasmuch as both our bodies and our souls are temples of the Holy Spirit, (1 Corinthians 3:16; 1 Corinthians 6:19,) we must observe a chaste purity with both, and accordingly be chaste not only by abstaining from outward flagitiousness, but also in heart, speech, bodily gesture, and action, (2 Corinthians 6:16 ;) in short, our body must be free from all lasciviousness, our mind from all lust, and no part of us be polluted by the defilements of unchastity.

Let us come to the eighth commandment.

Thou shalt not steal. Does it only prohibit the thefts which are punished by human laws, or does it go farther?

Under the name of theft, it comprehends all kinds of wicked acts of defrauding and circumventing by which we hunt after other men's goods. Here, therefore, we are forbidden either to seize upon

our neighbor’s goods by violence, or lay hands upon them by trick and cunning, or get possession of them by any other indirect means whatever. Is it enough to withhold your hand from the evil act, or is covetousness also here condemned?

We must ever return to this — that the law given, being spiritual, intends to check not only outward thefts, but all counsels and wishes which incommode others in any way; and especially covetousness itself, that we may not long to enrich ourselves at the expense of our brethren.

What then must be done to obey this commandment?

We must endeavor to let every man have his own in safety.

What is the ninth commandment?

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor. Does it prohibit perjury in court only, or any kind of lying against our neighbors?

Under one species the general doctrine is comprehended, that we are not to charge our neighbor falsely, nor by our evil speaking and detraction hurt his good name, or harm him in his goods. But why does it expressly mention public perjury? That it may inspire us with a greater abhorrence of this vice. For it insinuates that if a man accustom himself to evil speaking and calumny, the descent to perjury is rapid if an opportunity is given to defame his neigh-bor. Does it mean to keep us from evil speaking only, or also from false suspicion and unjust and uncharitable judgment?

It here condemns both, according to the view already stated. For whatever it is wrong to do before men, it is wrong to wish before God.

Explain then what it means in substance.

It enjoins us not to think ill of our neighbors, or be prone to defame them, but in the spirit of kindness and impartiality to think well of them as far as the truth will permit, and study to preserve their reputation entire.

Repeat the last commandment.

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbor’s.

Seeing that the whole law is spiritual, as you have so often said before, and the above commandments are set down not only to curb outward acts, but also correct the affections of the mind, what more is added here? The Lord meant to regulate and govern the will and affections by the other commandments, but here he imposes a law even on thoughts which carry some degree of covetousness along with them, and yet come not the length of a fixed purpose. Do you say that the least degrees of covetousness which creep in upon believers and enter their minds are sins, even though they resist rather than assent?

It is certainly clear that all vitious thoughts, even though consent is not added, proceed from the pravity of our nature. But I only say this — that this commandment condemns vicious desires which tickle and solicit the heart of man, without however drawing him on to a firm and deliberate act of will.

You understand then that the evil affections in which men acquiesce, and by which they allow themselves to be overcome, were prohibited before, but that the thing now required of us is such strict integrity thatour hearts are not to admit any perverse desire by which they may be stimulated to sin?

Exactly so. Can we now frame a short compendium of the whole law?

Very easily, since we can reduce it to two heads. The former is to love God with all our heart, and soul, and strength — the latter, to love our neighbors as ourselves.

What is comprehended under the love of God? To love him as God should be loved — that is, recognizing him as at once our Lord, and Father, and Preserver. Accordingly, to the love of God is joined reverence for him, a willingness to obey him, trust to be placed in him.

What do you understand by the whole heart, the whole soul, and the whole strength?

Such vehemence of zeal, that there be no place at all in us for any thoughts, desires, or pursuits, adverse to this love.

What is the meaning of the second head? As we are by nature so prone to love ourselves, that this feeling overcomes all others, so love to our neighbor ought to have such ascendency in us as to govern us in every respect, and be the rule of all our purposes and actions.

What do you understand by the term neighbor? Not only kindred and friends, or those connected with us by any necessary tie, but also those who are unknown to us, and even enemies. But what connection have they with us

They are connected by that tie by which God bound the whole human race together. This tie is sacred and inviolable, and no man’s depravity can abolish it.

You say, then, that if any man hate us, the blame is his own, and yet he is nevertheless our neighbor, and as such is to be regarded by us, because the divine arrangement by which this connection between us was ratified stands inviolable?

It is so.

Seeing that the law of God points out the form of duly worshipping him, must we not live according to its direction?

We must indeed. But we all labor under infirmity, owing to which no man fulfills, in every respect, what he ought.

Why then does God require a perfection which is beyond our ability?

He requires nothing which we are not bound to perform. But provided we strive after that form of living which is here prescribed, although we be wide of the mark, that is, of perfection, the Lord forgives us what is wanting. Do you speak of all men in general, or of believers only?

He who is not yet regenerated by the Spirit of God, is not fit to begin the least iota of the law. Besides, even were we to grant that any one is found to obey the law in any respect, we do not think: that he has performed his part before God. For the law pronounces all cursed who have not

fulfilled all the things contained in it. (Deuteronomy 27:26; Galatians 3:10.) Hence we must conclude, that as there are two classes of men, so the office of the law is twofold?

Exactly. For among unbelievers it does nothing more than shut them out from all excuse before God. And this is what Paul means when he calls it the ministry of death and condemnation. In regard to believers it has a very different use. (Romans 1:32; 2 Corinthians 3:6.)

What?

First, while they learn, from it that they cannot obtain righteousness by works, they are trained to humility, which is the true preparation for seeking salvation in Christ. Secondly, inasmuch as it requires of themmuch more than they are able to perform, it urges them to seek strength from the Lord, and at the same time reminds them of their perpetual guilt, that they may not presume to be proud. Lastly, it is a kind of curb, by which they are kept, in the fear of the Lord. (Romans 3:20; Galatians 2:16; Galatians 3:11; Galatians 4:5.)

Therefore, although in this earthly pilgrimage we never satisfy the law, we cannot judge that it is superfluous to require this strict perfection from us. For it shows the mark at which we ought to aim, the goal towards which we ought to press, that each of us, according to the measure of grace bestowed upon him, may endeavor to frame his life according to the highest rectitude, and, by constant study, continually advance more and more. That is my view. Have we not a perfect rule of righteousness in the law So much so, that God wishes nothing else from us than to follow it; and, on the other hand, repudiates and holds void whatever we undertake beyond its prescription. For the only sacrifice which he accepts is obedience. (1 Samuel 15:22.) To what end, then, the many admonitions, precepts, exhortations, which both Prophets and Apostles are continually employing? (Jeremiah 7:12.)

They are nothing but mere expositions of the law, which lead us by the hand to the obedience of the law, rather than lead us away from it. But he gives no command concerning the private case of each individual? When he orders us to render to every one his due, it is obvious to infer what the private part of each is in his own order and condition of life, and expositions of particular precepts, as has been said, lie scattered throughout Scripture. For what the Lord has summarily comprised here in a few words, is given with more fullness and detail elsewhere.

Chapter 39

07.08. 1545 - (Part 3) - Prayer

OF PRAYER As the second part of Divine Worship, which consists in service and obedience, has been sufficiently discussed, let us now proceed to the, third part.

We said it was revocation, by which we flee to God in any necessity. Do you think that he alone is to be invoked?

Certainly; for he requires this as the proper worship of his Divinity.

If it is so, how can we beseech men to assist us?

There is a great, difference between the two things. For when we invoke God, we testify that we expect no good from any other quarter, and that we place our whole defense in no other, and yet we ask the assistance of men, as far as he permits, and has bestowed on them the power of giving it.

You say, then, that in having recourse to the faith and help of men, there, is nothing that interferes with our invocation of God, seeing that our reliance is not fixed on them, and we beseech them on no other ground, than just because God, by furnishing them with the means of well-doing, has in a manner destined them to be the ministers of his beneficence, and is pleased by their hands to assist us, and draw out, on our account, the resources which he has deposited with them?

Such is my view. And, accordingly, whatever benefits we receive from them, we should regard as coming from God, as in truth it is he alone who bestows all these things upon us by their instrumentality. But are we not to feel grateful to men whenever they have conferred any kindness upon us. This the mere equity of nature and law of humanity dictates?

Certainly we are; and were it only for the reason that God honors them by sending to us, through their hands, as rivulets, the blessings which flow from the inexhaustible fountain of his liberality. In this way he lays us under obligation to them, and wishes us to acknowledge it. He, therefore, who does not show himself grateful to them by so doing, betrays his ingratitude to God. Are we hence at liberty to infer, that it is wrong to invoke angels and holy servants of the Lord who have departed this life?

We are not at liberty; for God does not assign to saints the office of assisting us. And in regard to angels, though he uses their labor for our salvation, he does not wish us to ask them for it.

You say, then, that whatever does not aptly and fitly square with the order instituted by God, is repugnant to his will?

I do. For it is a sure sign of unbelief not to be contented with the things which God gives to us. Then if we throw ourselves on the protection of angels or saints, when God calls us to himself alone, and transfer to them the confidence which ought wholly to be fixed upon God, we fall into idolatry, seeing we share with them that which God claimed entirely for himself;

Let us now consider the manner of prayer. Is it sufficient to pray with the tongue, or does prayer require also the mind and heart? The tongue, indeed, is not always necessary, but true prayer can never be without understanding and affection. By what argument will you prove this to me?

Since God is a Spirit, he requires men to give him the heart in all cases, and more especially in prayer, by which they hold communion with him. Wherefore he promises to be near to those only who call upon him in truth: on the other hand, he abominates and curses all who pray to him deceitfully, and not sincerely. (Psalms 145:18; Isaiah 29:13.) All prayers, then, conceived only by the tongue, will be vain and worthless? Not only so, but will be most displeasing to God.

What kind of feeling does God require in prayer

First, that we feel our want and misery, and that this feeling beget sorrow and anxiety in our minds. Secondly, that we be inflamed with an earnest and vehement desire to obtain grace from God. These things will also kindle in us an ardent longing to pray. Does this feeling flow from the temper natural to man, or does it proceed from the grace of God?

Here God must come to our aid. For we are altogether stupid in regard to both. (Romans 8:2, Romans 8:5.) It is the Spirit of God who excites in us groanings which cannot be uttered, and frames our minds to the desires which are requisite in prayer, as Paul says. (Galatians 4:6.) Is it the meaning of this doctrine, that we are to sit still, and, in a kind of vacillating state, wait for the motions of the Spirit, and not that each one is to urge himself to pray? By no means. The meaning rather is, that when believers feel themselves cold or sluggish, and somewhat indisposed to pray, they should forthwith flee to God, and beseech him to inflame them by the fiery darts of his Spirit, that they may be rendered fit to pray.

You do not, however, mean that there is to be no use of the tongue in prayer Not at all. For it often helps to sustain the mind, and keep it from being so easily drawn off from God. Besides, as it, more than other members, was created to display the glory of God, it is right that it be employed to this purpose, to the whole extent of its capacity. Moreover, vehemence of desire occasionally impels a man to break forth into utterance with the tongue without intending it.

If so, what profit have those who pray in a foreign tongue not understood by them?

It is nothing else than to sport with God. Christians, therefore, should have nothing to do with this hypocrisy. (1 Corinthians 14:15.) But when we pray do we do it fortuitously, uncertain of success, or ought we to feel assured that the Lord will hear us? The foundation of our prayer should always be, that the Lord will hear us, and that we shall obtain whatever we ask, in so far as is for our good. For this reason Paul tells us, that true prayer flows from faith. (Romans 10:14.) For no man will ever duly call upon him, without previously resting with firm reliance on his goodness.

What then will become of those who pray in doubt, and without fixing in their minds what profit they are to gain by praying, nay, are uncertain whether or not their prayers will be heard by God? Their prayers are vain and void, not being supported by any promise. For we are ordered to ask with sure faith, and the promise is added, that whatever we shall ask, believing, we shall receive. (Matthew 21:22; Mark 11:24; James 1:6.)

It remains to be seen wherein we have such great confidence, that while unworthy, on so many accounts, of appearing in the presence of God, we however dare to sist ourselves before him.

First, we have promises by which we must simply abide, without making any reference to our own worthiness. Secondly, if we are sons, God animates and instigates us by his Spirit, so that we doubt not to betake ourselves to him in a familiar manner, as to a father. As we are like worms, and are oppressed by the consciousness of our sins, God, in order that we may not tremble at his glorious majesty, sets forth Christ as a Mediator, through whom we obtain access, and have no doubt at all of obtaining favor. (Psalms 4:15; Psalms 91:15; Psalms 145:18; Isaiah 30:19; Isaiah 65:1; Jeremiah 29:12; Joel 2:32; Romans 8:25; Romans 10:13.) Do you understand that we are to pray to God only in the name of Christ?

I so understand. For :it is both so enjoined in distinct terms, and the promise is added, that he will by his intercession obtain what we ask. (1 Timothy 2:5; 1 John 2:1.)

He is not then to be accused of rashness or presumption, who, trusting to this Advocate, makes a familiar approach to God, and holds forth to God and to himself Christ as the only one through whom he is to be heard? (Hebrews 4:14.) By no means: For he who thus prays conceives his prayers as it were at the lips of Christ, seeing he knows, that by the intercession of Christ, his prayer is assisted and recommended. (Romans 8:15.)

Let us now consider what the prayers of believers ought to contain. Is it lawful to ask of God whatever comes into our mind, or is a certain rule to be observed?

It were a very preposterous method of prayer to indulge our own desires and the judgment of the flesh. We are too ignorant to be able to judge what is expedient for us, and we labor under an intemperance of desire, to which it is necessary that a bridle be applied.

What then requires to be done? The only thing remaining is for God himself to prescribe a proper form of prayer, that we may follow him while he leads us by the hand, and as it were sets words before us.

What rule has he prescribed? The doctrine on this subject is amply and copiously delivered in the Scriptures. But to give us a surer aim, he framed, and, as it were, dictated a form in which he has briefly comprehended and digested under a few heads whatever it is lawful, and in our interest to ask.

Repeat it. Our Lord Jesus Christ being asked by his disciples in what way they ought to pray, answered, when ye would pray, say ye, (Matthew 6:9; Luke 11:2,) "Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen." That we may the better understand what it contains, let us divide it into heads.

It contains six parts, of which the three first respect the glory of God alone as their proper end, without any reference to us: the other three relate to us and our interest. Are we then to ask God for any thing from which no benefit redounds to us?

He indeed of his infinite goodness so arranges all things that nothing tends to his glory without being also salutary to us. Therefore when his name is sanctified, he causes it to turn to our sanctification also; nor does his kingdom come without our being in a manner sharers in it. But in asking all these things, we ought to look only to his glory without thinking of advantage to

ourselves.

According to this view, three of these requests have a connection with our own good, and yet their only aim ought to be, that the name of God may be glorified.

It is so; and thus the; glory of God ought also to be considered in the other three, though they are properly intended to express desire for things which belong to our good and salvation.

Let us now proceed to an explanation of the words; and, first, Why is the name of Father, rather than any other, here given to God? As security of conscience is one of the most essential requisites for praying aright, God assumes this name, which suggests only the idea of pure kindness, that having thus banished all anxiety from our minds, he may invite us to make a familiar approach to him. Shall we then dare to go to him directly without hesitation as children to parents?

Wholly so: nay, with much surer confidence of obtaining what we ask. For as our Master reminds us, (Matthew 7:11,) If we being evil cannot however refuse good things to our children, nor bear to send [hem empty away, nor give them poison for bread, how much greater kindness is to be expected from our heavenly Father, who is not only supremely good, but goodness itself? May we not from this name also draw the inference which we mentioned at the outset, viz., that to be approved, all our prayers should be founded on the intercession of Christ? (John 15:7; Romans 8:15.) And indeed a most valid inference. For God regards us as sons, only in so far as we are members of Christ.74 Why do you call God :’ our Father" in common, rather than "my Father" in particular?

Each believer may indeed call him his own Father, but the Lord used the common epithet that he might accustom us to exercise charity in our prayers, and that we might not neglect others, by each caring only for himself.

What is meant by the additional clause, that God is in heaven?

It is just the same as if I were to call him exalted, mighty, incomprehensible. To what end this, and for what reason? In this way we are taught when we pray to him to raise our minds aloft, and not have any carnal or earthly thoughts of him, nor measure him by our own little standard, lest thinking too meanly of him, we should wish to bring him into subjection to our will, instead of learning to look up with fear and reverence to his glorious Majesty. It tends to excite and confirm our confidence in him, when he is proclaimed to be the Lord and Governor of heaven, ruling all things at his pleasure.

Repeat to me the substance of the first petition. By the name of God, Scripture denotes the knowledge and fame with which he is celebrated among men. We pray then that his glory’ may be promoted everywhere, and in all. But can any thing be added to his glory, or taken from it? In itself it neither increases nor is diminished. But we pray as is meet, that it may be illustrious among men — that in whatever God does, all his works may appear, as they are, glorious, that he himself may by all means be glorified.

What understand you by the kingdom of God in the second petition?

It consists chiefly of two branches — that he would govern the elect by his Spirit — that he would prostrate and destroy the reprobate who refuse to give themselves up to his service, thus making it

manifest that nothing is able to resist his might. In what sense do you pray that this kingdom may come? That the Lord would daily increase the numbers of the faithful — that he would ever and anon load them with new gifts of his Spirit, until he fill them completely: moreover, that he would render his truth more clear and conspicuous by dispelling the darkness of Satan, that he would abolish all iniquity, by advancing his own righteousness. Are not all these things done every day?

They are done so far:. that the kingdom of God may be said to be commenced. We pray, therefore, that it may constantly increase and be carried forward, until it attain its greatest height, which we only hope to take place on the last day on which God alone, after reducing all creatures to order, will be exalted and pre-eminent, and so be all in all. (1 Corinthians 15:28.) What mean you by asking that the will of God may be done? That all creatures may be subdued into obedience to him, and so depend on his nod, that nothing may be done except at his pleasure. Do you think then that any thing can be done against his will?

We not only pray that what he has decreed with himself may come to pass, but also that all contumacy being tamed and subjugated, he would subject all wills to his own, and frame them in obedience to it. Do we not by thus praying surrender our own wills?

Entirely: nor do we only pray that he would make void whatever desires of ours are at variance with his own will, but also that he would[form in us new minds and new hearts, so that we may wish nothing of ourselves, but rather that his Spirit may preside over our wishes, and bring them into perfect unison with God.

Why do you pray that this may be done on earth as it is in heaven? As the holy angels, who are his celestial creatures, have it as their only object to obey him in all things, to be always obedient to his word, and prepared voluntarily to do him service, we pray for such promptobedience in men, that each may give himself up entirely to him in voluntary subjection.

Let us now come to the second part. What mean you by the "daily" bread you ask for? In general every thing that tends to the preservation of the present life, not only food or clothing, but also all other helps by which the wants of outward life are sustained; that we may eat our bread in quiet, so far as the Lord knows it to be expedient. But why do you ask God to give what he orders us to provide by our own labor?

Though we are to labor, and even sweat in providing food, we are not nourished either by our own labor, or our own industry, or our own diligence, but by the blessing of God by which the labor of our hands, that would otherwise be in vain, prospers. Moreover we should understand, that even when abundance of food is supplied to our hand, and we eat it, we are not nourished by its substance, but by the virtue of God alone. It has not any inherent efficacy in its own nature, but God supplies it from heaven as the instrument of his own beneficence. (Deuteronomy 8:3; Matthew 4:4.) But by what right do you call it your bread when you ask God to give it?

Because by the kindness of God it becomes ours, though it; is by no means due to us. We are also reminded by this term to refrain from counting the bread of others, and to be contented with that which has come to us in a legitimate manner as from the hand of God.

Why do you add both "daily" and "this day?" By these two terms we are taught moderation and temperance, that our wishes may not exceed the measure of necessity. As this prayer ought to be

common to all, how can the rich, who have abundance at home, and have provision laid up for a long period, ask it to be given them for a day? The rich, equally with the poor, should remember that none of the things which they have will do them good, unless God grant them the use of them, and by his grace make the use fruitful and .efficacious. Wherefore while possessing all things, we have nothing except in so far as we every hour receive from the hand of God what is necessary and sufficient for us.

What does the fifth petition contain? That the Lord would pardon our sins. Can no mortal be found so righteous as not to require this pardon? Not one. When Christ gave this form of prayer, he designed it for the whole Church. Wherefore he who would exempt himself from this necessity, must leave the society of the faithful. And we have the testimony of Scripture, namely, that he who would contend before God to clear himself in one thing, will be found guilty in a thousand. (Job 9:3.) The only refuge left for all is in his mercy.

How do you think that sins are forgiven us? As the words of Christ express, namely, that they are debts which make us liable, to eternal death, until God of his mere liberality deliver us.

You say then that it :is by the free mercy of God that we obtain the pardon of sins?

Entirely so. For were the punishment of only one sin, and that the least, to be ransomed, we could not satisfy it. All then must be freely overlooked and forgiven.

What advantage accrues to us from this forgiveness?

We are accepted, just as if we were righteous and innocent, and at the same time our consciences are confirmed in a :full reliance on his paternal favor, assuring us of salvation. Does the appended condition, viz., that he would forgive us as we forgive our debtors, mean that we merit pardon from God by pardoning men who have in any way offended us? By no means. For in this way forgiveness would not be free nor founded alone on the satisfaction which Christ made for us on the cross. But as by forgetting the injuries done to ourselves, we, while imitating his goodness and clemency, demonstrate that we are in fact his children, God wishes us to confirm it by this pledge; and at the same time shows us, on the other hand, that if we do not show ourselves easy and ready to pardon, nothing else is to be expected of him than the highest inexorable rigor of severity. Do you say then that all who cannot from the heart forgive offenses are discarded by God and expunged from his list of children, so that they cannot hope for any place of pardon in heaven? So I think, in accordance with the words, "With what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again."

What comes next?

"Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." Do you include all this in one petition?

It is only one petition; for the latter clause is an explanation of the former.

What does it contain in substance? That the Lord would not permit us to rush or fall into sin — that he would not; leave us to be overcome by the devil and the desires of our flesh, which wage constant war with us — that he would rather furnish us with his strength to resist, sustain us by his hand, cover and fortify us by his protection, so that under his guardianship and tutelage we may dwell safely.

How is this done? When governed by his Spirit we are imbued with such a love and desire of righteousness, as to overcome the flesh, sin, and Satan; and, on the other hand, with such a hatred of sin as may keep us separated from the world in pure holiness. For our victory consists in the power of the Spirit. Have we need of this assistance? Who can dispense with it? The devil is perpetually hovering over us, and going about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. (1 Peter 5:8.) And let us consider what our weakness is. Nay, all would be over with us every single moment did not God equip us for battle with his own weapons, and strengthen us with his own hand.

What do you mean by the term Temptation? The tricks and fallacies of Satan, by which he is constantly attacking us, and would forthwith easily circumvent us, were we not aided by the help of God. For both our mind, from its native vanity, is liable to his wiles, and our will, which is always prone to evil, would immediately yield to him. But why do you pray God not to lead you into temptation, which seems to be the proper act of Satan, not of God? As God defends believers by his protection, that they may neither be oppressed by the wiles of Satan, nor overcome by sin, so those whom he means to punish he not only leaves destitute of his grace, but also delivers to the tyranny of Satan, strikes with blindness, and gives over to a reprobate mind, so that they are completely enslaved to sin and exposed to all the assaults of temptation.

What is meant by the clause which is added, "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever?"

We are here again reminded that our prayers must lean more on the power and goodness of God than on any confidence in ourselves. Besides, we are taught to close all our prayers with praise. Is it not lawful to ask any thing of God that is not comprehended in this form?

Although we are free to pray in other words, and in another manner, we ought, however, to hold that no prayer can please God which is not referable to this as the only rule of right Prayer.

Chapter 40

07.09. 1545 - (Part 4) - The Word and the Sacraments

IV. The Word and Sacraments 296. It is time to come to the fourth part of worship we are to render to God.

We said that this consists in acknowledging with the heart and confirming with the mouth that God is the author of all good, that thereby we may glorify Him.

297. Has He given us any rule for this?

All the praises and thanksgivings contained in Scripture ought to be our rule and guide.

298. Is there nothing regarding this in the Lord's Prayer?

Yes there is, for when we pray that His name may be hallowed, we pray that He may be glorified in all His works, as indeed He is--that He may be praised for His justice when He punishes, for His mercy when He pardons, and for His faithfulness when He fulfils His promises; in short, that there is nothing in which His glory does not shine forth. This is to ascribe to Him the praise for all blessing.

299. What shall we infer from all that we have said?

What truth itself tells us, and was stated at the outset, viz. that this is eternal life to know one true God the Father, and Jesus Christ whom He has sent (John 17:3)--to know Him, I say, in order that we may worship Him aright, that He may be not only our Master, but also our Father and Saviour, and we be in turn His children and servants, and a people dedicated to His glory.

300. How can we attain to such a blessedness? For this end God has left us His holy Word, which is, as it wee, an entry into His heavenly Kingdom.

301. Where do you find this Word?

It is comprised for us in the Holy Scriptures.

302. How are we to use it in order to profit by it? By receiving it with the full consent of our conscience, as truth come down from heaven, submitting ourselves to it in right obedience, loving it with a true affection by having it imprinted in our hearts, we may follow it entirely and conform ourselves to it.

303. Is all this within our own power?

None of it; but God works them in us in this way by His Holy Spirit.

304. But are we not to take trouble and be diligent, and zealously strive by hearing and reading its teaching, as it is declared to us?

Yes, indeed: first each one of us in particular ought to study it: and above all, we are frequently to attend the sermons in which this Word is expounded in the Assembly of the Christians.

305. Do you mean that it is not enough for people to read it privately at home, without altogether hearing its teaching in common? That is just what I mean, while God provides the way for it.

306. Why do you say that?

Because Jesus Christ has established this order in His Church (Ephesians 4:11), and He has declared this to be the only means of edifying and preserving it. Thus we must keep ourselves to it and not be wiser than our Master.

307. Is it necessary, then, that there should be pastors?

Yes; and that we should hear them, receiving the teaching of the Lord in humility by their mouth. Therefore whoever despises them and refuses to hear them, rejects Jesus Christ, and separates himself from the fellowship of the faithful (Matthew 10:40; Luke 10:16).

308. But is it enough to have been instructed by them once, or ought he to continue to do this?

It is little to have begun, unless you go on to persevere. We must continue to be disciples of Christ right to the end. But He has ordained the ministers of the Church to teach in His Name.

309. Is there no other means than the Word by which God communicates Himself to us? To the preaching of His Word He has conjoined the Sacraments.

310. What is a Sacrament? An outward attestation of the grace of God which, by a visible sign, represents spiritual things to imprint the promises of God more firmly in our hearts, and to make us more sure of them.

311. What? Does a visible and natural sign have this power to assure the conscience?

No, not of itself, but in so far as it is ordained of God for this end.

312. Seeing it is the proper office of the Holy Spirit to seal the promises of God in our hearts, how do you attribute this to the Sacraments?

There is a great difference between the one and the other. The Spirit of God in very truth is the only One who can touch and move our hearts, enlighten our minds, and assure our consciences; so that all this ought to be judged as His own work, that praise may be ascribed to Him alone. Nevertheless, the Lord Himself makes use of the Sacraments as inferior instruments according as it seems good to Him, without in any way detracting from the power of the Holy Spirit.

313. You think, then, that the efficacy of the Sacraments does not consist in the outward element, but proceeds entirely from the Spirit of God?

Yes; for the Lord is pleased to work by these instruments which He has instituted: without detracting from His own power.

314. And what moves God to do that? For the alleviation of our weaknesses. If we were spiritual by nature, like the angels, we could behold God and His graces. But as we are bound up with our bodies, it is needful for us that God should make use of figures to represent to us spiritual and heavenly things, for otherwise we could not comprehend them. At the same time, it is expedient for us to have all our senses exercised in His Holy promises, in order to confirm us in them.

315. Since God has introduced the Sacraments to meet our need, it would be arrogance and presumption to think that we could dispense with them.

Certainly: hence he who voluntarily abstains from using them thinks that he has no need of them, condemns Jesus Christ, rejects His grace, and quenches His Holy Spirit.

316. But what assurance of grace can the Sacraments give, seeing that good and bad both receive them?

Although the unbelievers and the wicked make of none effect the grace offered them through the Sacraments, yet it does not follow that the proper nature of the Sacraments is also made of non effect.

317. How, then, and when do the Sacraments produce this effect? When we receive them in faith, seeking Jesus Christ alone and His grace in them.

318. Why do you say that we must seek Jesus Christ in them?

I mean that we are not to be taken up with the earthly sign so as to seek our salvation in it, nor are we to imagine that it has a peculiar power enclosed within it. On the contrary, we are to employ the sign as a help, to lead us directly to the Lord Jesus, that we may find in Him our salvation and all our well-being.

319. Seeing that faith is required, why do you say that they are given to confirm us in faith, to assure us of the promises of God?

It is not sufficient for faith once to be generated in us. It must be nourished and sustained, that it may grow day by day and be increased within us. To nourish, strengthen, and increase it, God gives us the Sacraments. This is what Paul indicates when he says that they are used to seal the promises of God in our hearts (Romans 4:11).

320. But is it not a sign of unbelief when the promises of God are not firm enough for us, without support?

It is a sign of the smallness and weakness of faith, and such is indeed the faith of the children of God, who do not, however, cease to be faithful, although their faith is still imperfect. As long as we live in this world some elements of unfaithfulness remain in our flesh, and therefore we must always advance and grow in faith.

321. How many Sacraments are there in the Christian Church?

There are only two Sacraments common to all which the Lord Jesus has instituted for the whole company of the faithful.

322. What are they?

Baptism and the Holy Supper.

323. What likeness and difference is there between them?

Baptism is for us a kind of entrance into the Church of God, for it testifies that instead of our being strangers to Him, God receives us as members of His family. The Supper testifies that God as a

good Father carefully feeds and refreshes the members of His household.

324. That the meaning may be more clear to us, let us treat of them separately. First, what is the meaning of Baptism?

It consists of two parts. The Lord represents to us in it, first, the forgiveness of our sins (Ephesians 5:26-27) and, secondly, our regeneration or spiritual renewal (Romans 6:4).

325. What resemblance has water with these things in order to represent them? The forgiveness of sins is a kind of washing, by which our souls are cleansed from their defilements, just as the stains of the body are washed away by water.

326. What about the other part? The beginning of our regeneration and its end is our becoming new creatures, through the Spirit of God. Therefore the water is poured on the head as a sign of death, but in such a way that our resurrection is also represented, for instead of being drowned in water, what happens to us is only for a moment.

327. You do not mean that the water is a washing of the soul. By no means, for that pertains to the blood of Christ alone, which was shed in order to wipe away all our stains and render us pure and unpolluted before God (1 John 1:7; 1 Peter 1:19). This is fulfilled in us when our consciences are sprinkled by the Holy Spirit. But by the Sacrament that is sealed to us.

328. Do you think that the water is only a figure to us?

It is such a figure that the reality is conjoined with it, for God does not promise us anything in vain. Accordingly it is certain that in Baptism the forgiveness of sins is offered to us and we receive it.

329. Is this grace fulfilled indiscriminately in all?

No, for some make it of no effect by their perversity. Nevertheless, the Sacrament loses nothing of its nature, although none but believers feel its efficacy.

330. From what does regeneration get its power? From the death and resurrection of Christ. His death has had this effect, that through it our old Adam is crucified, and our evil nature is, as it were, buried, so that it no longer has the strength to rule over us. And the renewal of our life, in obedience to the righteousness of God, derives from the resurrection of Christ.

331. How is this grace applied to us in Baptism? In it we are clothed with Jesus Christ, and receive His Spirit, provided that we do not make ourselves unworthy of the promises given to us in it.

332. What is the proper use of Baptism on our part?

It consists in faith and in repentance. That is, assurance that we have our spiritual purity in Christ, and in feeling within us, and declaring to our neighbours by our works, that His Spirit dwells in us to mortify our natural desires and bring us to follow the Will of God.

333. If this is required, how is it that we baptize infants?

It is not said that faith and repentance should always precede the reception of the Sacrament, but they are only required from those who are capable of them. It is sufficient, then, if infants produce and manifest the fruit of their Baptism after they come to the age of discretion.

334. Can you show that there is nothing inconsistent in this?

Circumcision was also a Sacrament of repentance, as Moses and the prophets declare (Deuteronomy 10:16; Deuteronomy 30:6; Jeremiah 4:4); and was a Sacrament of faith, as St. Paul says (Romans 4:11-12). And yet God has not excluded little children from it.

335. But can you show that they are now admitted to Baptism for the same reason as in the case of circumcision?

Yes, for the promises which God anciently gave to His people of Israel are now extended to the whole world.

336. But does it follow from this that we are to use the sign also? That becomes evident when everything is considered. Jesus Christ has not made us partakers of His grace, which formerly had been bestowed on the people of Israel, in order to diminish it in us, or make it more obscure, but rather to manifest it and to bestow it upon us in increased abundance.

337. Do you reckon that if we denied Baptism to little infants, the grace of God would then be diminished by the coming of Christ?

Yes; for the sign of the bounty and mercy of God toward our children, which they had in ancient times, would be wanting in our case, the very sign which ministers so greatly to our consolation, and to confirm the promise already given in the Command.

338. You mean then that since God in ancient times declared Himself to be the Saviour of little infants, and wanted to have this promise sealed on their bodies by an external Sacrament, it is right that confirmation of it should not be less after the advent of Christ, since the same promise remains and indeed is more clearly attested by the Word and ratified in action.

Yes. And besides, since it is quite evident that the power and the substance of Baptism pertain to little children, to deny them the sign, which is inferior to the substance, would be to do them injury.

339. On what conditions should we baptize little children? As a sign and testimony that they are heirs of God’s blessing promised to the seed of the faithful, that when they come of age they are to acknowledge the truth of their Baptism, in order to derive benefit from it.

340. Let us speak of the Supper. And, first, what is its signification? Our Lord instituted it to assure us that by the communication of His body and blood, our souls are nourished, in the hope of eternal life.

341. But why does the Lord represent His body by the bread and His blood by the wine? To signify that as it is the particular virtue of bread to nourish our bodies, to refresh and sustain us in this mortal life, so it pertains to His body to act toward our souls, i.e., in nourishing and quickening them spiritually, so His blood is our joy, our refreshing and our spiritual strength.

342. Do you mean that we must truly communicate in the body and blood of the Lord?

I understand so. But since the whole affiance of our salvation rests in the obedience which He has rendered to God, His Father, in order that it may be imputed to us as if it were ours, we must possess Him: for His blessings are not ours, unless He gives Himself to us first.

343. But did He not give Himself to us when He exposed Himself to death, to reconcile us to God His Father, and deliver us from damnation? That is true; but it is not enough for us unless we receive Him, in order that we may feel in ourselves the fruit and the efficacy of His death and passion.

344. Is not the way to receive Him by faith?

Yes. Not only in believing that He died and rose again, in order to deliver us from eternal death, and acquire life for us, but also that He dwells in us, and conjoined with us in a union as the Head with the members, that by virtue of this conjunction He may make us partakers of all His grace.

345. Does this communion take place apart from the Supper alone?

Yes, indeed, we have it through the Gospel, as St. Paul declares (1 Corinthians 1:9): in that the Lord Jesus Christ promises us in it, that we are flesh of His flesh and bone of His bone (Ephesians 5:30), that He is that living bread which came down from heaven to nourish our souls (John 6:51), and that we are one with Him, as He is one with the Father (John 17:21).

346. What is the blessing that we have in the Sacrament, and what more does it minister to us? This communion is more abundantly confirmed in us, ratified as it were, for although Jesus Christ is truly communicated to us both by Baptism and by the Gospel, nevertheless this only in part, and not fully.

347. What then fully do we have through the sign of the bread? That the body of the Lord Jesus which was once offered to reconcile us to God, is now given to us, to certify to us that we have part in this reconciliation.

348. What do we have in the sign of the wine? That the Lord Jesus, who once shed His blood in payment and satisfaction for our offences, gives it to us to drink, that we may have no doubt at all of receiving its fruit.

349. According to your replies, the Supper takes us back to the death and passion of Jesus Christ, that we may communicate in its virtue?

Yes, for then the unique and perpetual sacrifice was offered for our redemption. Therefore there remains for us nought but to enjoy it.

350. The Supper, then, was not instituted in order to offer up the body of Jesus the Son to the Father?

No, for this office pertains to none but Him alone, since He is the eternal Priest (Hebrews 5:5). But He commands us only to receive His body, not to offer it (Matthew 26:26).

351. Why is there a double sign? Our Lord has appointed it for the sake of our weakness, in order to teach us that He is not only food to our souls, but drink also, so that we may seek our nourishment wholly and entirely in Him, and not elsewhere.

352. Should all men equally use the second sign, that is the chalice?

Yes, this is according to the commandment of Jesus Christ, against which nothing is to be attempted.

353. Do we have in the Supper simply the testimony of the things already mentioned, or are they truly given to us in it?

See that Jesus Christ is the Truth, there can be no doubt that the promises which He made at the Supper, are actually fulfilled in it, and that what He figures in it is made true. Thus in accordance with what He promises and represents in the Sacrament, I do not doubt that He makes us partakers of His very substance, in order to unite us with Himself in one life.

354. But how can this be, when the body of Jesus Christ is in heaven, and we are pilgrims on this earth? By the incomprehensible power of His Spirit, who conjoins things separated by distance.

355. You do not think, then, either that the body is enclosed in the bread, or the blood in the chalice?

No. On the contrary, in order to have the reality of the Sacraments, we must lift up our hearts on high to heaven, where Jesus Christ is in the glory of His Father, from whence we expect Him in our redemption, and do not seek Him in these corruptible elements.

356. You understand, then, that there are two things in this Sacrament, material bread and wine, which we see by the eye, handle by the hands, and perceive by the taste, and Jesus Christ by whom our souls are inwardly nourished?

Yes, but in such a way that we have in it also a testimony and a kind of pledge for the resurrection of our bodies, in that they are made partakers in the sign of life.

357. What is the right use of this Sacrament? That which St. Paul declares, namely that a man examine himself before he approach to it (1 Corinthians 11:28).

358. In what is he to examine himself?

Whether he is a true member of Jesus Christ.

359. By what sign can he know this?

If he has a true faith and repentance, if he loves his neighbour in true charity, and is not tainted by hatred or rancour or discord.

360. But is it necessary to have perfect faith and charity?

Both should be entire and unfeigned, but to have such a perfection, from which nothing is wanting, will not be found among men. Moreover the Supper would have been instituted in vain if no one could receive it unless he were entirely perfect.

361. Imperfection, then, does not prevent us from approaching it. On the contrary, the Supper would be of no use to us, if we were not imperfect. It is an aid and support for our weakness.

362. Do these two Sacraments not serve another end?

Yes, they do. They are also signs and marks of our profession. That is to say, by them we declare that we are of the people of God, and make confession of our Christianity.

363. How ought we to judge a man who never wishes to use it?

He could not be regarded as a Christian, for in so doing he refuses to confess himself as such, and tacitly, as it were, disavows Jesus Christ.

364. Is it sufficient to receive each once?

Baptism is only ordered to be received once, and may not lawfully be repeated. But this is not so with the Supper.

365. What is the reason for that? By Baptism God introduces and receives us into His Church. After He has received us, He signifies by the Supper that He wishes continually to nourish us.

366. To whom does it belong truly to baptize and administer the Supper? To those who are publicly charged to teach in the Church. For the preaching of the Word and the distribution of the Sacraments are things conjoined.

367. Is there any certain proof for this?

Yes, indeed. Our Lord specially charged His Apostles to baptize as well as to preach (Matthew 28:19). In regard to the Supper. He ordered all to follow His example. Moreover He performed the office of a minister in order to give it to others.

368. But ought pastors, who are appointed to dispense the Sacraments, to admit without discretion all who present themselves there? In regard to Baptism, as it is administered today only to infants, there is no need for discrimination; but in the Supper the minister ought to take heed not to give it to a man whom he recognizes to be entirely unworthy.

369. Why so?

Because it would pollute and dishonour the Sacrament.

370. But our Lord admitted Judas to the Supper, impious though he was? His iniquity was still hidden, and although our Lord knew it, yet it was not evident to all.

371. What then is to be done with hypocrites? The minister cannot exclude them as unworthy, but must wait until God has revealed their iniquity.

372. But what if he knows or has been warned that someone is unworthy? That would not be sufficient to exclude him, unless there were a legitimate investigation and decision of the Church.

373. Then there ought to be some order and polity regarding this.

Yes, if the Church is to be well ordered. Some persons must be appointed to watch out for the offences that may be committed. And they, with the authority of the Church, should refuse communion to those who are quite unfit, and to whom communion cannot be given without dishonouring God and scandalizing the faithful. OF THE WORD OF GOD.

The order already adopted by us requires that we now consider the fourth part of divine worship,

We said that this consists in acknowledging God as the author of all good, and in extolling his goodness, justice, wisdom, and power with praise and thanksgiving, that thus the glory of all good may remain entirely with him. Has he prescribed no :rule as to this part?

All the praises extant in Scripture ought to be our rule. Has the Lord's Prayer nothing' which applies here?

Yes. When we pray that his name may be hallowed, we pray that he may be duly glorified in his works — that he may be regarded, whether in pardoning sinners, as merciful; or in exercising vengeance, as just; or in performing his pro-raises, as true: in short, that whatever of his works we see may excite us to glorify him. This is indeed to ascribe to him the praise of all that is good.

What shall we infer from these heads which have hitherto been considered, by us?.

What truth itself teaches, and was stated at the outset, viz., that this is eternal life to know one true God the Father, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent, (John 17:3,) — to know him, I say, in order that we may pay due honor and worship to him, that he may be not only our Lord but also our Father and Savior, and we be in turn his children and servants, and accordingly devote our lives to the illustration of his glory.

How can we attain to such blessedness? For this end God has left us his holy word; for spiritual doctrine is a kind of door by which we enter his heavenly kingdom. Where are we to seek for this word? In the Holy Scriptures, in which it is contained.

How are you to use it in order to profit by it? By embracing it with entire heartfelt persuasion, as certain truth come down from heaven — by being docile, and subjecting our minds and wills in obedience to it — by loving it sincerely — by having it once for all engraven on our hearts, and there rooted so as to produce fruit in our life — finally, by being formed after its rule. Then shall it turn to our salvation, as it was intended. Are all these things put in our own power?

None of them at all; but every thing which I have mentioned it belongs to God only to effect in us by the gift of his Spirit. But are we not to use diligence, and zealously strive to profit in it by reading, hearing, and meditating?

Yea, verily: seeing that every one ought to exercise himself in the daily reading of it, and all should be especially careful to attend the sermons when the doctrine of salvation is expounded in the assembly of the faithful.

You affirm then that it is not enough for each to read privately at home, and that all ought to meet in common to hear the same doctrine?

They must meet when they can — that is, when an opportunity is given. Are you able to prove this to me? The will of God alone ought to be amply sufficient for proof; and the order which he hath recommended to his church is not what two or three only might observe, but all should obey in common. Moreover, he declares this to be the only method of edifying as well as preserving. This, then, should be a sacred and inviolable rule to us, and no one should think himself entitled to be wise above his Master. Is it necessary, then, that pastors should preside over churches?

Nay; it is necessary to hear them, and listen with fear and reverence to the doctrine of Christ as propounded from their lips. But is it enough for a Christian man to have been instructed by his pastor once, or ought he to observe this course during life?

It is little to have begun, unless you persevere. We must be the disciples of Christ to the end, or rather without end. But he has committed to the ministers of the Church the office of teaching in his name and stead. OF THE SACRAMENTS.

Is there no other medium, as it is called, than the Word by which God may communicate himself to us? To the preaching of the Word he has added the Sacraments.

What is a Sacrament? An outward attestation of the divine benevolence towards us, which, by a visible sign, figures spiritual grace, to seal the promises of God on our hearts, and thereby better confirm their truth to us. Is there such virtue in a visible sign that it can establish our consciences in a full assurance of salvation? This virtue it has not of itself, but by the will of God, because it was instituted for this end.

Seeing it is the proper office of the Holy Spirit to seal the promises of God on our minds, how do you attribute this to the sacraments?

There is a wide difference between him and them. To move and affect the heart, to enlighten the mind, to render the conscience sure and tranquil, truly belongs to the Spirit alone; so that it ought to be regarded as wholly his work, and be ascribed to him alone, that no other may have the praise; but this does not at all prevent God from employing the sacraments as secondary instruments, and applying them to what use he deems proper, without derogating in any respect from the agency of the Spirit.

You think, then. that the power and efficacy of a sacrament is not contained in the outward element, but flows entirely from the Spirit of God?

I think so; viz., that the Lord hath been pleased to exert his energy by his instruments, this being the purpose to which he destined them: this he does without detracting in any respect from the virtue of his Spirit. Can you give me a reason why he so acts? In this way he consults our weakness. If we were wholly spiritual, we might, like the angels, spiritually behold both him and his grace; but as we are surrounded with this body of clay, we need figures or mirrors to exhibit a view of spiritual and heavenly things in a kind of earthly manner; for we could not otherwise attain to them. At the same time, it is our interest to have all our senses exercised in the promises of God, that they may be the better confirmed to us.

If it is true that the sacraments were instituted by God to be helps to our necessity, is it not arrogance for any one to hold that he can dispense with them as unnecessary?

It certainly is; and hence, if any one of his own accord abstains from the use of them, as if he had no need of them, he contemns Christ, spurns his grace, and quenches the Spirit. But what confidence can there be in the sacraments as a means of establishing the conscience, and what certain security can be conceived from things which the good and bad use indiscriminately?

Although the wicked: so to speak, annihilate the gifts of God offered in the sacraments in so far as regards themselves, they do not thereby’ deprive the sacraments of their nature and virtue.

How, then, and when does the effect follow the use of the sacraments? When we receive them in faith, seeking Christ alone and his grace in them.

Why do you say that Christ is to be sought in them?

I mean that we are not to cleave to the visible signs so as to seek salvation from them, or imagine that the power of conferring grace is either fixed or included in them, but rather that the sign is to be used as a help, by which, when seeking salvation and complete felicity, we are pointed directly to Christ.

Seeing that faith is requisite for the use of them, how do you say that they are given us to confirm our faith, to make us more certain of the promises of God?

It is by no means sufficient that faith is once begun in us. It must be nourished continually, and increase more and more every day. To nourish, strengthen, and advance it, the Lord instituted the sacraments. This indeed Paul intimates, when he says that they have the effect of sealing the promises of God. (Romans 4:11.) But is it not an indication of unbelief not to have entire faith in the promises of God until they are confirmed to us from another source?

It certainly argues a weakness of faith under which the children of God labor. They do not, however, cease to be believers, though the faith with which they are endued is still small and imperfect; for as long as we continue in this world remains of distrust cleave to our flesh, and these there is no other way of shaking off than by making continual progress even unto the end. It is therefore always necessary to be going forward.

How many are the sacraments of the Christian Church?

There are only two, whose use is common among all believers.

What are they?

Baptism and the Holy Supper.

What likeness or difference is there between them?

Baptism is a kind! of entrance into the Church; for we have in it a testimony that we who are otherwise strangers and aliens, are received, into the family of God, so as to be counted of his household; on the other hand, the Supper attests that God exhibits himself to us by nourishing our souls. That the meaning of both may be more clear to us, let us treat of them separately. First, what is the meaning of Baptism?

It consists of two parts. For, first, Forgiveness of sins; and, secondly, Spiritual regeneration, is figured by it. (Ephesians 5:26; Romans 6:4) What resemblance has water with these things, so as to represent them?

Forgiveness of sins is a kind of washing, by which our souls are cleansed from their defilements, just as bodily stains are washed away by water.

What do you say of Regeneration?

Since the mortification of our nature is its beginning, and our becoming' new creatures its end, a figure of death is set before us when the water is poured upon the head, and the figure of a new life when instead of remaining immersed under water, we only enter it for a moment as a kind of grave, out of which we instantly emerge. Do you think that the water is a washing' of the soul? By

no means; for it were impious to snatch away this honor from the blood of Christ, which was shed in order to wipe away all our stains:, and render us pure and unpolluted in the sight of God. (1 Peter 1:19; 1 John 1:7.) And we receive the fruit of this cleansing when the Holy Spirit sprinkles our consciences with that sacred blood. Of this we have a seal in the Sacrament. But do you attribute nothing more to the water than that it is a figure of ablution?

I understand it to be a figure, but still so that the reality is annexed to it; for God does not disappoint us when he promises us his gifts. Accordingly, it is certain that both pardon of sins and newness of life are offered to us in baptism, and received by us. Is this grace bestowed on all indiscriminately?

Many precluding its entrance by their depravity, make it void to themselves. Hence the benefit extends to believers only, and yet the Sacmmeret loses nothing of its nature.

Whence is Regeneration derived? From the Death and Resurrection of Christ taken together. His death hath this efficacy, that by means of it our old man is crucified, and the vitiosity of our nature in a manner buried, so as no more to be in rigor in us. Our reformation to a new life, so as to obey the righteousness of God, is the result of the resurrection.

How are these blessings bestowed upon us by Baptism?

If we do not render the promises there offered unfruitful by rejecting them, we are clothed with Christ, and presented with his Spirit.

What must we do in order to use Baptism duly? The right use of Baptism consists in faith and repentance; that is, we must first hold with a firm heartfelt reliance that, being purified from all stains by the blood of Christ, we are pleasing to God: secondly, we must feel his Spirit dwelling in us, and declare this to others by our actions, and we must constantly exercise ourselves in aiming at the mortification of our flesh, and obedience to the righteousness of God.

If these things are requisite to the legitimate use of Baptism, how comes it that we baptize Infants?

It is not necessary that faith and repentance should always precede baptism. They are only required from those whose age makes them capable of both. It will be sufficient, then, if, after infants have grown up, they exhibit the power of their baptism. Can you demonstrate by reason that there is nothing absurd in this?

Yes; if it be conceded to me that our Lord instituted nothing at variance with reason. For while Moses and all the Prophets teach that circumcision was a sign of repentance, and was even as Paul declares the sacrament of faith, we see that infants were not excluded from it. (Deuteronomy 30:6; Jeremiah 4:4; Romans 4:11.) But are they now admitted to Baptism for the same reason that was valid in circumcision? The very same, seeing that the promises which God anciently gave to the people of Israel are now published through the whole world. But do you infer from thence that the sign also is to be used?

He who will duly ponder all things in both ordinances, will perceive this to follow. Christ in making us partakers of his grace, which had been formerly bestowed on Israel, did not condition, that it should either bemore obscure or in some respect less abundant. Nay, rather he shed it upon as both more clearly and more abundantly. Do you think that if infants are denied baptism, some thing

is thereby deducted from the grace of God, and it must be said to have been diminished by the coming of Christ? That indeed is evident; for the sign being taken away, which tends very much to testify the mercy of God and confirm the promises, we should want an admirable consolation which those of ancient times enjoyed. Your view then is, that since God, under the Old Testament, in order to show himself the Father of infants, was pleased that the promise, of salvation should be engraven on their bodies by a visible sign, it were unbecoming to suppose that, since the advent of Christ, believers have less to confirm them, God having intended to give us in the present day the same promise which was anciently given to the Fathers, and exhibited in Christ a clearer specimen of his goodness. That is my view. Besides, while it is sufficiently clear that the force, and so to speak, the substance of Baptism are common to children, to deny them the sign, which is inferior to the substance, were manifest injustice. On what terms then are children to be baptized? To attest that they are heirs of the blessing promised to the seed of believers, and enable them to receive and produce the fruit of their Baptism, on acknowledging its reality after they have grown up.

Let us now pass to the Supper. And, first, I should like to know from you what its meaning is.

It was instituted by Christ in order that by the communication of his body and. blood, he might teach and assure us that our souls are being trained in the hope of eternal life. But why is the body of our Lord figured by bread, and his blood by wine?

We are hence taught that such virtue as bread has in nourishing our bodies to sustain the present life, the same has the body of our Lordspiritually to nourish our souls. As by wine the hearts of men are gladdened, their strength recruited, and the whole man strengthened, so by the blood of our Lord the same benefits are received by our souls. Do we therefore eat the body and blood of the Lord?

I understand so. For as our whole reliance for salvation depends on him, in order that the obedience which he yielded to the Father may be imputed to us just as if it were ours, it is necessary that he be possessed by us; for the only way in which he communicates his blessings to us is by making himself ours. But did he not give himself when he exposed himself to death, that he might redeem us from the sentence of death, and reconcile us to God? That is indeed true; but it is not enough for us unless we now receive him, that thus the efficacy and fruit of his death may reach us. Does not the manner of receiving consist in faith?

I admit it does. But I at the same time add, that this is done when we not only believe float he died in order to free us from death, and was raised up that he might purchase life for us, but recognize that he dwells in us, and that we are united to him by a union the same in kind as that which unites the members to the head, that by virtue of this union we may become partakers of all his blessings. Do we obtain this communion by the Supper alone?

No, indeed. For by the gospel also, as Paul declares, Christ is communicated to us. And Paul justly declares this, seeing we are there told that we are flesh of his flesh and bones of his bones — that he is the living bread which came down from heaven to nourish our souls — that we are one with him as he is one with the Father, etc. (1 Corinthians 1:6; Ephesians 5:30; John 6:51; John 17:21.) What more do we obtain from the sacrament, or what other benefit does it confer upon us? The communion of which I spoke is thereby confirmed and increased; for although Christ is

exhibited to us both in baptism and in the gospel, we do not however receive him entire, but in part only.

What then have we in the symbol of bread? As the body of Christ was once sacrificed for us to reconcile us to God, so now also is it given to us, that we may certainly know that reconciliation belongs to us.

What in the symbol of wine? That as Christ once shed his blood for the satisfaction of our sins, and as the price of our redemption, so he now also gives it to us to drink, that we may feel the benefit which should thence accrue to us.

According to these two answers, the holy Supper of the Lord refers us to his death, that we may communicate in its virtue?

Wholly so; for that the one perpetual sacrifice, sufficient for our salvation, was performed. Hence nothing more remains for us but to enjoy it. The Supper then was not instituted in order to offer up to God the body of his Son? By no means. He, himself alone, as priest for ever, has this privilege; and so his words express when he says, "Take, eat." He there commands us not to offer his body, but only to eat it. (Hebrews 5:10; Matthew 26:26.) Why do we use two signs?

Therein the Lord consulted our weakness, teaching us in a more familiar manner that he is not only food to our souls, but drink also, so that we are not to seek any part of spiritual life anywhere else than in him alone.

Ought all without exception to use both alike? So the commandment of Christ bears: and to derogate from it in any way, by attempting anything contrary to it, is wicked. Have we in the Supper only a figure of the benefits which you have mentioned, or are they there exhibited to us in reality?

Seeing that our Lord Jesus Christ is truth itself, there cannot, be a doubt that he at the same time fulfills the promises which he there gives us, andadds the reality to the figures. Wherefore I doubt not that as he testifies by words and signs, so he also makes us partakers of his substance, that thus we may have one life with him. But how can this be, when the body of Christ is in heaven, and we are still pilgrims on the earth? This he accomplishes by the secret and miraculous agency of his Spirit, to whom it is not difficult to unite things otherwise disjoined by a distant space.

You do not imagine then, either that the body is inclosed in the bread or the blood in the wine?

Neither is inclosed. My understanding rather is, that in order to obtain the reality of the signs, our minds must be raised to heaven, where Christ is, and from whence we expect him as Judge and Redeemer, and that it is improper and vain to seek him in these earthly elements. To collect the substance of what you have said, you maintain that there are two things in the Supper, viz., bread and wine, which are seen by the eyes, handled by the hands, and perceived by the taste, and Christ by whom our souls are inwardly fed as with their own proper ailment?

True; and so much so that the resurrection of the body also is there confirmed to us by a kind of pledge, since the body also shares in the symbol of life.

What is the right and legitimate use of this Sacrament? That which Paul points out, "Let a man examine himself," before he approach to it. (1 Corinthians 11:28.) Into what is he to inquire in this examination?

Whether he be a true member of Christ. By what evidence may he come to know this?

If he is endued with faith and repentance, if he entertains sincere love for his neighbor, if he has his mind pure from all hatred and malice. Do you require that a man’s faith and charity should both be perfect?

Both should be entire and free from all hypocrisy, but it were vain to demand an absolute perfection to which nothing should be wanting, seeing that none such will ever be found in man.

Then the imperfection under which we still labor does not forbid our approach? On the contrary, were we perfect, the Supper would no longer be of any use to us. It should be a help to aid our weakness, and a support to our imperfection. Is no other end besides proposed by these two Sacraments?

They are also martyrs and as it were badges of our profession. For by the use of them we profess our faith before men, and testify our consent in the religion of Christ. Were any one to despise the use of them, in what light should it be regarded? As an indirect denial of Christ. Assuredly such a person, inasmuch as he deigns not to confess himself a Christian, deserves not to be classed among Christians. Is it enough to receive both once in a lifetime?

It is enough so to receive baptism, which may not be repeated. It is different with the Supper.

What is the difference? By baptism the Lord adopts us and brings us into his Church, so as thereafter to regard us as part of his household. After he has admitted us among the number of his people, he testifies by the Supper that he takes a continual interest in nourishing us. Does the administration both of baptism and of the Supper belong indiscriminately to all? By no means. It is confined to those to whom the office of teaching has been committed. For the two things, viz., to feed the Church with thedoctrine of piety and administer the sacrament, are united together by an indissoluble tie. Can you prove this to me by the testimony of Scripture?

Christ gave special commandment to the Apostles to baptize. In the celebration of the Supper he ordered us to follow his example. And the Evangelists relate that he himself in dispensing it, performed the office of a public minister. (Matthew 28:19; Luke 22:19.) But ought pastors, to whom the dispensing of it has been committed, to admit all indiscriminately without selection? In regard to baptism, as it is now bestowed only on infants, there is no room for discrimination; but in the Supper the minister ought to take heed not to give it to any one who is clearly unworthy of receiving it.

Why so?

Because it cannot be done without insulting and profaning the Sacrament. But did not Christ admit Judas, impious though he was, to the Communion?

I admit it; as his impicity was still secret. For though it was not unknown to Christ, it had not come to light or the knowledge of men. (Matthew 26:25.) What then can be done with hypocrites? The

pastor cannot keep them back as unworthy, but must wait till such time as he shall reveal their iniquity, and make it manifest to all. But if he knows or has been warned that an individual is unworthy?

Even that would not be sufficient to keep him back from communicating, unless in addition to it there was a legitimate investigation and decision of the Church.

It is of importance, then, that there should be a certain order of government established in churches?

It is: they cannot otherwise be well managed or duly constituted. The method is for elders to be chosen to preside as censors of manners, to guard watchfully against offenses, and exclude from communion all whom they recognize to be unfit for it, and who could not be admitted without profaning the Sacrament.

Chapter 41

07.10. 1560 - (Part 1) - Faith

A Reformulated Catechism taken from the Geneva Catechism circa 1560 A Dialogue between the Minister and the child. by John Calvin

I. Faith 1. Minister. What is the chief end of human life? To know God.

2. Why do you say that?

Because He created us and placed us in this world to be glorified in us. And it is indeed right that our life, of which He Himself is the beginning, should be devoted to His glory.

3. What is the sovereign good of man? The same thing.

4. Why do you hold that to be the sovereign good?

Because without it our condition is more miserable than that of brute-beasts.

5. Hence, then, we see that nothing worse can happen to a man than to live without God.

It is so.

6. What is the true and right knowledge of God? When we know Him in order that we may honour Him.

7. How do we honour Him aright?

We put our reliance on Him, by serving Him in obedience to His will, by calling upon Him in all our need, seeking salvation and every good thing in Him, and acknowledging with heart and mouth that all our good proceeds from Him.

8. To consider these things in order, and explain them more fully---what is the first point? To rely upon God.

9. How can we do that?

First by knowing Him as almighty and perfectly good.

10. Is this enough?

No.

11. Why?

Because we are unworthy that He should show His power in helping us, or employ His goodness toward us.

12. What more then is required? That we be certain that He loves us, and desires to be our Father, and Saviour.

13. How do we know that? By His Word, in which He declares His mercy to us in Christ, and assures us of His love toward us.

14. Then the foundation for true reliance upon God is to know Him in Jesus Christ [John 17:3]? That is true.

15. What then briefly is the substance of this knowledge?

It is contained in the Confession of Faith used by all Christians. It is commonly called the Apostles' Creed, because it is a summary of the true faith which has always been held in Christ's Church, and was derived from the pure doctrine of the Apostles.

16. Recite it.

17. In order to expound this confession in detail, into how many parts do we divide it?

Into four principal parts.

18. What are they? The first is about God the Father; the second about His Son Jesus Christ, which also includes the whole history of our redemption; the third is about the Holy Spirit; the fourth is about the Church, and the gracious gifts of God conferred on her.

19. Since there is but one God, why do you mention the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who are three?

Because in the one essence of God, we have to look on the Father as the beginning and origin, and the first cause of all things; then the Son, who is Eternal Wisdom; and the Holy Spirit who is His virtue and power shed abroad over all creatures, but still perpetually resident in Himself.

20. You mean then that there is no objection to our understanding that these three persons are distinctly in one Godhead, that therefore God in not therefore divided?

Just so.

21. Now repeat the first part.

"I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth."

22. Why do you call Him Father?

It is with reference to Christ who is His eternal Word, begotten of Him before time, and being sent into this world was demonstrated and declared to be His Son. But since God is the Father of Jesus Christ, it follows that He is our Father also.

23. In what sense do you mean that He is Almighty? That does not mean that He has a power which He does not exercise, but that He disposes all things by His Providence, governs the world by His will, ruling all as it seems good to Him.

24. You mean that the power of God is not idle, but consider rather that His hand is always engaged in working, so that nothing is done except through Him, with His permission and His decree.

It is so.

25. Why do you add that He is Creator of heaven and earth?

Because He has manifested Himself to us by works [Psa 104; Romans 1:20] we ought to seek Him in them. Our mind cannot comprehend His essence. But the world is for us like a mirror in which we may contemplate Him in so far as it is expedient for us to know Him.

26. Do you not understand by "heaven and earth" all other creatures?

Yes indeed; under these two words all are included, because they are all heavenly and earthly.

27. But why do you call God a Creator only, seeing that it is much more to uphold and preserve creatures in their state, than to have once created them? This term does not signify that God brought His works into being at a single stroke, and then left them without a care for them. We ought rather to understand, that as the world was made by God in the beginning, so now it is preserved by Him in its estate, so that the heavens, the earth and all creatures do no continue in their being apart from this power. Besides, seeing that He holds all things in His hand, it follows that the government and lordship over them belongs to Him. Therefore, in that He is Creator of heaven and earth, it is His to rule the whole order of nature by His goodness and power and wisdom. It is He who sends rain and drought, hail, tempest and fair weather, fruitfulness and barrenness, health and sickness. In short, all things are under His command, to serve Him as it seems good to Him.

28. But what about wicked men and devils? Are they also subject to Him?

Although He does not guide them by His Holy Spirit, nevertheless He curbs them by His power, so that they cannot budge unless He permits them. He even constrains them to execute His will, although it is against their own intention and purpose.

29. What good do you derive from the knowledge of this fact?

Very Much. It would go ill with us if devils and wicked men had power to do anything in spite of the will of God. Moreover we could never be at rest in our minds if we were exposed to them in danger, but when we know that they are curbed by the will of God, so that they can do nothing without His permission, then we may rest and breathe again, for God has promised to protect and defend us.

30. Let us now come to the second part.

"And in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord", etc.

31. What briefly does it comprehend? That we acknowledge the Son of God as our Saviour, and the means by which He has redeemed us from death, and acquired salvation.

32. What is the meaning of the name Jesus which you give to Him?

It means Saviour, and was given to Him by the angel at the command of God (Matthew 1:21).

33. Is this of more importance than if men had given it?

Oh, yes. For since God wills that He be called so, He must be so in truth.

34. What, next, is meant by the name of Christ? By this title His office is still better expressed---for it signifies that He was appointed by the Father to be ordained King, Priest, and Prophet.

35. How do you know that?

Because according to the Scripture, anointing is used for these three things. Also, because they are attributed to Him many times.

36. But with what kind of oil was He anointed? Not with visible oil as was used for ancient kings, priests, and prophets, but this anointing was by the grace of the Holy Spirit, who is the reality signified by that outward anointing made in time past (Isaiah 61:1, Psalms 45:7).

37. But what is this Kingdom of which you speak?

It is spiritual, and consists in the Word and Spirit of God, and includes righteousness and life.

38. What of the priesthood?

It is the office and prerogative of presenting Himself before God to obtain grace and favour, and appease His wrath in offering a sacrifice which is acceptable to Him.

39. In what sense do you call Christ a Prophet?

Because on coming down into the world (Isaiah 7:14) He was the sovereign messenger and ambassador of God His Father, to give full exposition of God's will toward the world and so put an end to all prophecies and revelations (Hebrews 1:2).

40. But do you derive any benefit from this?

All this is for our good. For Jesus Christ has received all these gifts in order that He may communicate them to us, and that all of us may receive out of His fullness.

41. Expound this to me more fully.

He received the Holy Spirit in full perfection with all His graces, that He may lavish them upon us and distribute them, each according to the measure and portion which the Father knows to be expedient (Ephesians 4:7). Thus we may draw from Him as from a fountain all the spiritual blessings we possess.

42. What does His Kingdom minister to us? By it, we are set at liberty in our conscience and are filled with His spiritual riches in order to live in righteousness and holiness, and we are also armed with power to overcome the devil, the flesh, and the world---the enemies of our souls.

43. What about His priesthood?

First, by means of it He is the Mediator who reconciles us to God His Father; and secondly, through Him we have access to present ourselves to God, and offer Him ourselves in sacrifice with all that belongs to us. And in this way we are companions of His priesthood.

44. There remains His Prophetic Office.

Since this office was given to the Lord Jesus to be the Master and Teacher of His own, its end is to bring us the true knowledge of the Father and of His Truth, so that we may be scholars in the

household of God.

45. You would conclude, then, that the title of Christ includes three offices which God has given His Son, in order to communicate virtue and fruit to His faithful people? That is so.

46. Why do you call Him the only Son of God, seeing that God calls us all His children?

We are children of God not by nature, but only by adoption and by grace, in that God wills to regard us as such (Ephesians 1:5). But the Lord Jesus who was begotten of the substance of His Father, and is of one essence with Him, is rightly called the only Son of God (John 1:14; Hebrews 1:2) for there is no other who is God's Son by nature.

47. You mean to say, then, that this honour is proper to Him alone, and belongs to Him by nature, but is communicated to us through a gracious gift, in that we are His numbers. That is so. Hence in regard to this communication He is called elsewhere "the First-born among many brethren" (Romans 8:29; Colossians 1:15).

48. How is He "our Lord"?

Because He is appointed by the Father to have us under His government, to administer the Kingdom and the Lordship of God in heaven and on earth, and to be the Head of men and believers (Ephesians 5:23; Colossians 1:18).

49. What is meant by what follows?

It declares how the Son of God was anointed by the Father to be our Saviour. That is to say, He assumed human flesh, and accomplished all things necessary to our salvation, as enunciated here.

50. What do you mean by the two clauses, "Conceived of the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary"? That He was formed in womb of the Virgin Mary, of her proper substance, to be the seed of David, as had been foretold (Psalms 132:11), and yet that this was wrought by the miraculous operation of the Holy Spirit, without the cooperation of a man (Matthew 1:18; Luke 1:35).

51. Was it then required that He should put on our very flesh?

Yes, because it was necessary that the disobedience committed by man against God should be redressed in human nature. And moreover He could not otherwise be our Mediator to reconcile us to God His Father (1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 4:15).

52. You say that Christ had to become man, to fulfill the office of Saviour, as in our very person.

Yes, indeed. For we must recover in Him all that we lack in ourselves, and this cannot be done in any other way.

53. But why was that effected by the Holy Spirit, and not by the work of man according to the order of nature? As the seed of man is in itself corrupt, it was necessary that the power of the Holy Spirit should intervene in this conception, in order to preserve our Lord from all corruption, and to fill Him with holiness.

54. Thus we are shown that He who is to sanctify others was free from every stain, and from His mother's womb He was consecrated to God in purity from the very beginning, in order that He may not be subject to the universal corruption of the human race. So I understand it.

55. Why do you go immediately from His birth to His death, passing over the whole history of His life?

Because nothing is said here about what belongs properly to the substance of our redemption.

56. Why is it not said simply and in a word that He died while Pontius Pilate is spike of, under whom He suffered? That is not only to make us certain of the history, but is also meant to signify that His death involved condemnation.

57. How is that?

He died to suffer the punishment due to us, and thus to deliver us from it. However, because we were guilty before the judgment of God as evil-doers, in order to represent us in person He was pleased to appear before the tribunal of an earthly judge, and to be condemned by his mouth, that we might be acquitted before the throne of the celestial Judge.

58. But Pilate pronounced Him innocent, and therefore did not condemn Him as if He were worthy of death (Matthew 27:24; Luke 23:14).

Both were involved. He was justified by the testimony of the judge, to show that He did not suffer for His own unworthiness but for ours and yet He was solemnly condemned by the sentence of the same judge, to show that He is truly our surety, receiving condemnation for us in order to acquit us from it.

59. That is well said, for if He had been a sinner He could not have suffered death for others; and yet in order that His condemnation might be our deliverance, He had to be reckoned among transgressors (Isaiah 53:12).

I understand so.

60. Is there greater importance in His having been crucified than if He had been put death in another way?

Yes, as Paul also shows us when he says that He hanged on a tree to take our curse upon Himself and acquit us of it (Galatians 3:13). For that kind of death was accursed of God (Deuteronomy 21:23).

61. What? Is it not to dishonour the Lord Jesus, to say He was subjected to the curse, and that before God? By no means, for in taking it upon Himself He abolished it, by His power, yet in such a way that He did not cease to be blessed throughout in order that He might fill us with His blessing.

62. Explain the rest.

Since death was the curse on man as a result of sin, Jesus Christ has endured it, and in enduring it overcame it. And to show that He underwent a real death, He chose to be placed in the tomb like other men.

63. But nothing seems to redound to us from this victory, since we do not cease to die. That is no obstacle. The death of believers is nothing else than a way of entering into a better life.

64. Hence it follows that we ought no longer to dread death as if it were a fearful thing, but we should willingly follow Jesus Christ our Head and Captain, who precedes us, not in order to let us perish, but in order to save us. That is so.

65. What is the meaning of the additional clause: "He descended into hell"? That He not only suffered natural death, which is the separation of the body from the soul, but also that His soul was pierced with amazing anguish, which St. Peter calls the pains of death (Acts 2:24).

66. Why and how did that happen to Him?

Because He presented Himself to God in order to make satisfaction in the name of sinners, it was necessary that He should suffer fearful distress of conscience, as if He had been forsaken by God, and even as if God had become hostile to Him. It was in this extremity that He cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34).

67. Was His Father then opposed to Him?

No. But He had to be afflicted in this way in fulfillment of what had been foretold by Isaiah, that "he was smitten by the hand of God for our sins and wounded for our transgressions" (Isaiah 53:5; 1 Peter 2:24).

68. But since He is God Himself, how could He be in such dread, as if He were forsaken by God?

We must hold that it was according to His human nature that He was in that extremity: and that in order to allow this, His Deity held itself back a little, as if concealed, that is, did not how its power.

69. How is it possible that Jesus Christ, who is the salvation of the world, should have been under such damnation?

He was not to remain under it. For though He experienced the horror we have spoken of, He was by no means oppressed by it. On the contrary, He battled with the power of hell, to break and destroy it.

70. Thus we see the difference between the torment which He suffered and that which sinners experience when God punishes them in His wrath. For what He suffered for a time in Himself is perpetual in the others, and what was only a needle to sting Him is to them a sword to deliver a mortal wound.

It is so, for Jesus Christ, even in the midst of such distress, did not cease to hope in God. But sinners whom God condemns rush into despair, defy, and even blaspheme Him.

71. May we not gather from this what fruit we receive from the death of Jesus Christ?

Yes, indeed. And, first, we see that it is a sacrifice by which He has made satisfaction for us before the judgment of God, and so has appeased the wrath of God and reconciled us to Him. Secondly, that His blood is the laver by which our souls are cleansed from all stains. Finally, that by this death our sins are effaced, so as never to be remembered before God, and thus the debt which was against us is abolished.

72. Do we not have any other benefit from it?

Yes, we do. If we are true members of Christ, our old man is crucified, our flesh is mortified, so that evil desires no longer reign in us.

73. Expound the next article. This is: "On the third day He rose again from the dead." By this He declared Himself the conqueror of death and sin, for by His resurrection He swallowed up death, broke the fetters of the devil, and destroyed all his powers (1 Peter 3:22).

74. In how many ways does this resurrection benefit us?

First, by it righteousness was fully acquired for us. Secondly, it is also a sure pledge to us that we shall rise again one day in immortal glory (1 Corinthians 15:20-23). Thirdly, if we truly participate in His resurrection, even now we are raised in newness of life, to serve God and to live a holy life according to His pleasure (Romans 6:4).

75. Continue.

"He ascended into heaven."

76. Did He ascend in such a way that He is no longer on earth?

Yes. For after He had performed all that He was enjoined by the Father, and was required for our salvation, there was no need for Him to remain on earth.

77. What benefit do we obtain from this ascension? The benefit is twofold. For inasmuch as Jesus Christ entered heaven in our name, as He had descended for our sake, He has given us an entry, and assured us that the door, previously shut because of sin, is now open for us (Romans 6:8-11). Secondly, He appears before the face of the Father as our Intercessor and Advocate (Hebrews 7:25).

78. But did Christ in going to heaven withdraw from us, in such a way that He has now ceased to be with us?

No. On the contrary, He has promised that He will be with us to the end (Matthew 28:20).

79. Is it in bodily presence that He remains with us?

No, for it is one thing to speak of His body which was taken up into heaven, and another to speak of His power, which is spread abroad everywhere (Luke 24:51; Acts 2:33).

80. How do you understand that He "sitteth on the right hand of the Father?

It means that He has received the dominion of heaven and earth, so that He reigns and rules over all (Matthew 28:18).

81. But what is meant by "right hand", and by "sitteth"?

It is a similitude taken from earthly princes, who are wont to place on their right hand those whom they make their lieutenants to govern in their name.

82. You do not mean anything more then than Paul when he says that Christ had been appointed Head of the Church, and raised above all principality, has secured a Name which is above every

name (Ephesians 1:22; Ephesians 4:15; Php 2:9). That is so.

83. Continue.

"From thence He will come to judge the quick and the dead." That is to say, He will appear again from heaven in judgment, as He was seen to ascend (Acts 1:11).

84. As the judgment is not to be before the end of the world, how do you say that some men will then be alive, and thus will be dead, seeing it is appointed to al men once to die? (Hebrews 9:27-28).

Paul answers this question when he says, that those who then survive will suddenly be changed so that their corruption will be abolished, and their bodies will put on incorruption (1 Corinthians 15:52; 1 Thessalonians 4:17).

85. You understand then that this change will be for them like a death, for it will abolish their first nature, and raise them up in a new state. That is it.

86. Does the fact that Christ is to come gain to judge the world bring us any consolation?

Yes, indeed. For we are certain that He will appear only for our salvation.

87. We should not then fear the last judgment, and have a horror of it?

No, since we are not to come before any other judge then He who is our Advocate, and who has taken our cause in hand to defend us.

88. Let us come now to the third part. This is faith in the Holy Spirit.

89. What do we gain by it? The knowledge that as God has redeemed and saved us by Jesus Christ, He will also make us partakers of this redemption and salvation, through His Holy Spirit.

90. How? As the blood of Christ is our cleansing, the Holy Spirit must sprinkle our consciences with it that they may be cleansed (1 Peter 1:19).

91. This requires a clearer explanation.

I mean that the Holy Spirit, while He dwells in our hearts, makes us feel the virtue of our Lord Jesus (Romans 5:5). For He enlightens us to know His benefits; He seals and imprints them in our souls, and makes room for them in us (Ephesians 1:13). He regenerates us and makes us new creatures, so that through Him we receive all the blessings and gifts which are offered to us in Jesus Christ.

92. What follows? The fourth part, where it is said that we believe in the Catholic Church.

93. What is the Catholic Church? The community of the faithful which God has ordained and elected to eternal life.

94. Is it necessary to believe this article?

Yes, indeed, unless we want to make the death of Christ of none effect, and all that has already been said. The fruit that proceeds from it is the Church.

95. You mean then that up to this point we have spoken of the cause and foundation of salvation, how God has received us in love through the mediation of Jesus, and has confirmed this grace in us through His Holy Spirit. But now the effect and fulfillment of all this is explained in order to give us greater certainty.

It is so.

96. In what sense do you call the Church holy?

All whom God has chosen He justifies, and reforms to holiness and innocence, that His glory may be reflected in them (Romans 8:30). And so Jesus Christ sanctified the Church which He redeemed, that it might be glorious and without blemish (Ephesians 5:25-27).

97. What is meant by the word Catholic or Universal?

It is meant to signify, that there is only one Head of the faithful, so they must all be united in one body, so that there are not several churches but one only, which is extended throughout the whole world (Ephesians 4:15; 1 Corinthians 12:12 and 1 Corinthians 12:27).

98. And what is the meaning of what follows concerning the communion of saints? That is added to express more clearly the unity which exists among the members of the Church. Moreover by this we are given to understand, that all the benefits that the Lord gives to the Church, are for the good and salvation of every Church, because they all have communion together.

99. But is this holiness which you attribute to the Church already perfect? Not as long as she battles in this world, for elements of imperfection always remain and will never be entirely removed, until she is united completely to Jesus Christ her Head, by whom she is sanctified.

100. Can this Church be known in any other way than by believing in her?

There is indeed the visible Church of God, for the recognition of which He has certain signs, but here we speak properly of the fellowship of those whom He has elected to salvation which cannot be seen plainly by the eye.

101. What comes next?

I believe in "the forgiveness of sins".

102. What do you understand by this word "forgiveness"? That God by His pure goodness forgives and pardons the sins of believers, so that they are not brought to account before His judgment, in order to be punished.

103. Hence it follows that it is not at all through our own satisfaction that we desire to have God’s pardon? That is true; for the Lord Jesus has made payment and born the punishment. We on our part could not make any recompense to God, but may only receive pardon for all our misdeeds through the pure generosity of God.

104. Why do you insert this article after the Church?

Because no man obtains pardon for his sins without being previously incorporated into the people of God, persevering in unity and communion with the Body of Christ in such a way as to be a true

member of the Church.

105. And so outside the Church there is nothing but damnation and death?

Certainly, for all those who separate themselves from the community of the faithful to form a sect on its own, have no hope of salvation so long as they are in schism.

106. What follows?

I believe in "the resurrection of the flesh and the life everlasting".

107. Why is this article inserted? To show us that our happiness is not situated on the earth. This serves a two-fold end. We are to learn to pass through this world as though it were a foreign country, treating lightly all earthly things and declining to set our hearts on them. Secondly, we are not to lose courage, no matter how much we fail to perceive as yet the fruit of the grace which the Lord has wrought for us in Jesus Christ, but wait patiently until the time of revelation.

108. How will this resurrection take place?

Those who were formerly dead will resume their bodies, but with another quality; that is, they will no longer be subject to death or corruption, even although their substance will remain the same. Those who will survive God will miraculously raise up through a sudden change, as it is said (1 Corinthians 15:52).

109. Will this resurrection not be common to the evil and the good?

Yes indeed, but not in the same way. Some will rise to salvation and joy, others to condemnation and death (John 5:29; Matthew 25:46).

110. Why then is eternal life only spoken of here, and hell not at all?

Because nothing is set down in this summary that does not tend to the consolation of faithful consciences. It relates to us only the benefits which God performs for His servants. Accordingly no mention is made of the wicked, who are excluded from His Kingdom.

111. Since we have the foundation on which faith is laid, we should be quite able to gather from it what true faith is.

Yes, indeed, It is a sure and steadfast knowledge of the love of God toward us, according as He declares in His gospel that He is our Father and Saviour (through the mediation of Jesus Christ).

112. Can we have this by ourselves, or does it come from God?

Scripture teaches that it is the singular gift of the Holy Spirit, and experience also demonstrates it.

113. How so? Our mind is too weak to comprehend the spiritual wisdom of God which is revealed to us by faith, and our hearts are too prone either to defiance or to a perverse confidence in ourselves or creaturely things. But the Holy Spirit enlightens us to make us capable of understanding what would otherwise be incomprehensible to us, and fortifies us in certitude, sealing and imprinting the promises of salvation on our hearts.

114. What good comes to us from this faith, when we have it?

It justifies us before God, and makes us obtain eternal life.

115. How so? Is not man justified by good works in a holy life and in conformity to God?

If any one be found so perfect, he might well be deemed righteous, but since we are all poor sinners, we must look elsewhere for a worthiness in which to make answer before the judgment of God.

116. But are all our works so reprobate that they cannot merit grace before God?

First, all that we do of ourselves, by our own nature, is vicious, and therefore cannot please God. He condemns them all.

117. You say then that before God has received us in His grace, we can nothing but sin, just as a bad tree cannot but produce bad fruit? (Matthew 7:17).

It is so. For even if our works appear beautiful outwardly, yet they are evil, since the heart, to which God looks, is perverted.

118. Hence you conclude, that we cannot by our merits anticipate God, and so induce Him to be kind to us, but on the contrary that we do nothing but provoke Him to be against us?

Yes. And therefore I say: merely through His goodness, without any regard to our works, He is pleased to accept us freely in Jesus Christ, imputing His righteousness to us, and does not impute our sins to us (Titus 3:5-7).

119. What do you mean then by saying that a man is justified by faith? That in believing the promises of the gospel and in receiving them in true affiance of the heart, we enter into this righteousness.

120. You mean then that as God offers righteousness to us by the gospel, so it is by faith that we receive it?

Yes.

121. But after God has once received us, are the works which we do by His grace, not pleasing to Him?

Yes, they are, in that He generously accepts them, not however in virtue of their own worthiness.

122. How is that? Are they not accepted as worthy, seeing that they proceed from the Holy Spirit?

No. For there is always some weakness in them, the weakness of our flesh, through which they are defiled.

123. By what means, the, are they made acceptable?

It is by faith. That is to say, that a person is assured in his conscience that God will not examine him harshly, but covering his defects and impurities by the purity of Jesus Christ, He will regard him as perfect.

124. But can we say from this that a Christian man is justified by works after God has called him, or that through them he merits the love of God, and so obtains eternal life?

No. On the contrary, it is said that no man living will be justified in His sight (Psalms 143:2). Therefore we have to pray that He will not enter into judgment with us, nor call us to account.

125. You do not mean therefore that the good works of believers are useless?

No. For God promises to reward them fully, both in this world and in Paradise. But this comes from His gratuitous love toward us: moreover He buries all our faults, so as never to remember them.

126. But can we believe that we are justified, without doing good works? That is impossible. For to believe in Jesus Christ is to receive Him as He has given Himself to us. He promises not only to deliver us from death and restore us to favour with God His Father, through the merit of His innocence, but also to regenerate us by His Spirit, that we may be enabled to live in holiness.

127. Faith, then, not only does not make us careless of good works, but is the root from which they are produced.

It is so, and for this reason, the doctrine of the Gospel is comprehended in these two points, faith and repentance.

128. What is repentance?

Dissatisfaction with and a hatred of evil and a love good proceeding from the fear of God, and inducing us to mortify our flesh, so that we may be governed and led by the Holy Spirit, in the service of God.

129. But this second point we have mentioned concerning the Christian life.

Yes, and we said that the true and legitimate service of God is to obey His will.

130. Why?

Because He will not be served according to our own imagination, but in the way that pleases Him.

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II. The Law 131. What rule has He given us by which we may direct our life? His law.

132. What does it contain?

It is divided into two parts: the first contains four commandments, the other six. Thus there are ten in all.

133. Who made this division?

God Himself, who delivered it to Moses written on two table, and declared that it was reduced into ten words. (Exodus 32:15; Exodus 34:29; Deuteronomy 4:13; Deuteronomy 10:1).

134. What is the content of the first table? The Way of the true worship of God.

135. And the second?

How we are to live with our neighbours, and what we owe them.

136. Repeat the first commandment.

Hear, O Israel, I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage: thou shalt have no other gods before Me (Exodus 20:2-3; Deuteronomy 5:6-7).

137. Explain the meaning. At first He makes a kind of preface for the whole law. For in calling Himself the Eternal and the Creator of the world, He claims authority to command. Then He declares that He is our God, in order that we may esteem His doctrine. For if He is our Saviour, that is good reason why we should be an obedient people to Him.

138. But is not that which He says after the deliverance from the land of Egypt, addressed particularly to the people of Israel?

Yes, it does refer to the physical deliverance of Israel, but it also applies to us all in a general way, in that He has delivered our souls from the spiritual captivity of sin, and the tyranny of the devil.

139. Why does He mention this at the beginning of His law? To remind us how much we are bound to obey His good pleasure, and what gratitude it should be on our part if we do the contrary.

140. And what does He require briefly in this first commandment? That we reserve for Him alone the honour that belongs to Him, and do not transfer it elsewhere.

141. What is the honour due Him? To adore Him alone, to call upon Him, to have our affiance in Him, and all similar things due to His majesty.

142. Why is it said "Before my face"?

Since He who sees and knows all is the judge of the secret thoughts of men, it means that He wants to be worshiped as God, not only by outward confession, but also in pure trust and affection

of heart.

143. Turn to the second Commandment.

Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, nor any form that is in heaven above, or on the earth beneath, or in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not do honour to them.

144. Does He entirely forbid us to make any image?

No, but He forbids us to make any image with which to represent God, or to worship Him.

145. Why is it unlawful to represent God visibly?

Because there is no resemblance between Him who is eternal Spirit and incomprehensible, and corporal, dead, corruptible and visible matter (Deuteronomy 4:15; Isaiah 40:7; Romans 1:23; Acts 17:24-25).

146. You think then that it does dishonour to His majesty to represent Him in this way?

Yes.

147. What kind of worship is here condemned? When we come before an image intending to pray, or bow our knee before it; or to make any other sign of reverence, as if God were there showing Himself to us.

148. This does not mean that all sculpture or painting is universally forbidden, but only all images used in the service of God, or in worshiping Him in visible things, or indeed for any abuse of them in idolatry of any kind whatsoever. That is so.

149. Now to what end shall we refer this commandment? With the first commandment, God declared that He alone, and no one beside Him, should be worshiped: so now He shows us the correct form of worship, in order that He may draw us away from all superstitions, and carnal ceremonies.

150. Let us proceed.

He adds a warning that He is the Eternal, our God, strong and jealous, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children of them who hate Him, to the third and fourth generation.

151. Why does He make mention of His might? To indicate that He has power to maintain His glory.

152. What is meant by jealousy? That He cannot allow an associate. For as He has given Himself to us out of His infinite goodness, so He would have us to be entirely His. And this is the chastity of our souls, to be consecrated and dedicated to Him. On the other hand it is a spiritual whoredom for us to turn away from Him to any superstition.

153. How is this to be understood, that He punishes the sin of the fathers on their children? To give us a greater fear of Him. He says not only that He will inflict punishment on those who offend Him, but that their offspring also will be cursed after them.

154. But is it not contrary to the justice of God to punish someone for others?

If we consider the condition of the human race, the question is answered. For by nature we are all cursed, and we cannot complain of God when He leaves us in this condition. Moreover as He manifests His grace and love toward His servants in blessing their children, so this is a testimony to His punishment of the wicked, when He leaves their seed accursed.

155. What more does He say? To incite us by gentleness, He says that He will have mercy on all who love Him and observe His commandments, to a thousand generations.

156. Does He mean that the obedience of a faithful man will save the whole of his race, even if they are still wicked?

No, but that He will extend His goodness toward the faithful to such an extent, that in love for them He will make Himself know to their children, not only to prosper them according to the flesh, but to sanctify them by His Spirit, that He might make them obedient to His will.

157. But this is not always so.

No. For as the Lord reserves for Himself the freedom to show mercy to the children of the ungodly, so on the other hand He retains the power to elect or reject in the generation of the faithful as it seems good to Him (Romans 9:15-22). However, He does this in such a way that men may acknowledge that this promise is not vain or fallacious (Romans 2:6-10).

158. Why does He mention here a thousand generations, and in regard to punishment, mention only three or four? To signify that it is His nature to exercise kindness and gentleness much more than strictness or severity, as He testifies, when He says that He is ready to show mercy, but slow to anger (Exodus 34:6-7; Psalms 103:8).

159. Let us come to the third commandment.

Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.

160. What does this mean?

He forbids us to abuse the name of God, not only in perjury, but also in superfluous and idle swearing.

161. Can the name of God we used lawfully in oaths?

Yes, when they are necessary, i.e., in order to uphold the truth, when it requires it, and in maintaining love and concord among us.

162. Does He reprove no other oaths, then those which are a dishonour to God? In this one case He gives us a general instruction never to utter the name of God except with fear and humility in order to glorify it. For since it is holy and honourable, we ought to guard against taking the Name of God in such a way that we appear to hold it in contempt, or give others occasion to vilify it.

163. How is this to be done? By never thinking or speaking of God and His works without honour and reverence.

164. What follows? A warning, that He will not hold him guiltless, who takes His name in vain.

165. Since elsewhere He gives a general warning that He will punish all transgressors, what is the advantage of this warning?

He wants to declare how highly He regards the glory of His name, explicitly mentioning that He will not suffer anyone to despise it, so that we may be all the more careful to hold it in reverence.

166. Let us come to the fourth commandment.

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Sis days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the Lord made haven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day, and hallowed it.

167. Does He order us to labour six days a week that may rest on the seventh? Not precisely, but in allowing us to labour for six days, He excepts the seventh, on which it is not right to be engaged in work.

168. Does He thus forbid us all work one day a week? This commandment has a particular reason, for the observance of rest is part of the ceremonies of the ancient Law, which was abolished at the coming of Jesus Christ.

169. Do you mean that this commandment properly belongs to the Jews, and that it was given for the time of the Old Testament?

I do, in so far as it is ceremonial.

170. How is that? Is there anything else in it besides the ceremony?

It was given for three reasons.

171. What are they? To represent spiritual rest, in aid of ecclesiastical polity, and for the relief of servants.

172. What is this spiritual rest?

It is to cease from our own works, that the Lord may work in us.

173. How is that done? By mortifying our flesh, that is, renouncing our own nature, so that God may govern us by His Spirit.

174. Is this to be done only one day a week? This is to be done continually. After we have once begun, we must continue all our life.

175. Why, then, is a certain day appointed to represent this?

It is not required that the representation should be altogether identical with the truth, but it is sufficient that there should be some resemblance.

176. But why is the seventh day appointed rather than any other day? The number seven implies perfection in Scripture. Thus it is suited to denote perpetuity. It reminds us also that our spiritual rest is only begun in this life, and will not be perfect until we depart from this world.

177. But what is meant when our Lord asserts that we must rest as He did?

After having created all His works in six days, He dedicated the seventh to the contemplation of His works. And in order better to induce us to do this, He set before us His own example. For nothing is so desirable as to be conformed to Him.

178. Must we meditate continually on the works of God, or is it sufficient on one day out of seven?

We must do it every hour, but because of our weakness, one day is specially appointed. And this is the polity of which I spoke.

179. What order, then, is to be observed on that day? That the people meet to hear the doctrine of God, to engage in common prayer, and bear witness to their faith and religion.

180. What do you mean by saying that this commandment is also given to provide for the relief of servants? To give some relaxation to those who are under the power of others. And likewise, this tends to maintain a common polity. For everyone accustoms himself to labour for the rest of the time, when there is one day for rest.

181. Let us now see how this commandment addresses itself to us. As for the ceremony, it was abolished, for we have the accomplishment of it in Christ Jesus.

182. How? Our old man is crucified, through the power of His death, and through His resurrection we are raised up to newness of life (Romans 6:6).

183. What else is there here for us? That we observe the order constituted in the Church, to hear the Word of God, to engage in public prayers and in the Sacraments, and that we do not contravene the spiritual order among the faithful.

184. And does the figure give us any further benefit?

Yes, indeed. It should lead us to the truth, namely, that being true members of Christ, we should cease from our own works, and put ourselves under His government.

185. Let us come to the second table.

It begins, "Honour thy father and thy mother."

186. What do you mean by "honour"? That children be humble and obedient toward their parents, doing them honour and reverence, helping them and being at their command, as they are bound.

187. Proceed further.

God adds a promise to the commandment, "That thy days may be prolonged on the land which the Lord thy God will give thee."

188. What does that mean? That God will give long life to those who honour their father and mother as they ought.

189. Seeing this life is full of misery, why does God promise man as a favour that he will live long?

However miserable it may be, life on earth is a blessing from God to the faithful, if only for this reason, that in it God testifies to His fatherly love in supporting them in it.

190. Does it follow conversely, that the man who dies prematurely is cursed of God? By no means. Rather does it sometimes happen that the Lord withdraws from this world more quickly those whom He loves most.

191. In so doing, how does He fulfill His promise?

All that God promises us in earthly blessings, we must receive under this condition, viz. that it is expedient for our spiritual salvation. For it would be poor indeed if that did not precedence.

192. What of those who are rebellious against their father and mother? Not only will God punish them at the last judgment, but here also God will exercise judgment on their bodies, it may be by letting them die before their time, or ignominiously, or in some other way.

193. Does He not speak expressly of the land of Canaan in this promise?

Yes, so far as the children of Israel are concerned, but the term ought to have a more general meaning for us. For seeing that the earth is the Lord's, whatever be the country we inhabit, He assigns it to us for our habitation (Psalms 24:1; Psalms 89:12; Psalms 115:16).

194. Is that all there is to the commandment?

Though father and mother only are mentioned, nevertheless all superiors are intended, as the reason is the same.

195. What is the reason? That God has given them pre-eminence; for there is no authority whether of parents, or princes, or of any others who are over us, but what God has ordained (Romans 13:1).

196. Repeat the sixth commandment.

Thou shalt not kill.

197. Does it forbid nothing but murder?

Yes, indeed. For seeing it is God who speaks, He gives us law not only for outward deeds, but primarily for the affections of our heart.

198. You mean then that there is some kind of inward murder which God forbids to us?

I do: hatred and rancour, and desire to do evil to our neighbor.

199. Is it sufficient for us not to hate or to bear ill will?

No, for in condemning hatred God signifies that He requires us to love our neighbours and seek their salvation, and all this with true affection and without simulation.

200. State the seventh commandment.

Thou shalt not commit adultery.

201. What is the essence of this? That all fornication is cursed by God, and therefore we must abstain from it if we do not want to provoke His anger against us.

202. Does it not require anything else?

We must always regard the nature of the Lawgiver, who does not halt at the outward act, but requires the affection of the heart.

203. What more then does it mean?

Since our bodies and our souls are temples of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 3:16, 1 Corinthians 6:15; 2 Corinthians 6:16), we must preserve them in uprightness. And so we must be chaste not only in deed, but also in desire, word and gesture. Accordingly no part of us is to be polluted with unchastity.

204. Let us come to the eighth commandment.

Thou shalt not steal.

205. Is it only meant to prohibit the thefts which are punished by justice, or does it extend further?

It refers to all civil traffic and unscrupulous means of acquiring our neighbour's good, whether by violence, or fraud, or in any other kind of way that God has not allowed.

206. Is it enough to abstain from evil deeds, or is covetousness also included here?

We must ever return to this, that the Lawgiver is spiritual, that He does not speak simply of outward thefts, but all schemes, wishes and plans to enrich ourselves at the expense of our neighbour.

207. What are to do then?

We must do our duty in preserving for every man his own.

208. What is the ninth commandment?

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

209. Does it forbid perjury in court, or any kind of lying against our neighbour? In mentioning this one case it gives a general instruction, that we are not to speak evil of our neighbour falsely, nor by our slanders and lies are we do him harm in his possessions, or in his reputations.

210. But why does He expressly mention public perjury? That He may give us a greater abhorrence of this vice of evil speaking and slander, telling us that if a man accustom himself to slandering and defaming his neighbour, he will soon descend to perjury in court.

211. Does He only forbid evil speaking, or does He also include evil thinking?

Both of them, for the reason already stated. For whatever it is wrong to do before men, it is wrong to wish before God.

212. The summarize its meaning.

He enjoins us not to be inclined to misjudge and defame our neighbours, but rather to esteem them highly, as far as the truth will permit, and to preserve their good reputation in our speech.

213. Let us come to the last commandment.

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour’s.

214. Seeing that the whole law is spiritual, as you have so often said before, and the other commandments are not only to order outward acts, but also the affections of the heart, what more is added here? The Lord wished by the other commandments to rule our affections and will, but here He imposes a law also on our thoughts which though charged with covetousness and desire, yet stop short of an active intention.

215. Do you mean that the least temptation that enters into the thought of a believer is sin, even though he resists it and does not consent to it?

It is certain that all evil thoughts proceed from the infirmity of our flesh, even though we do not consent to them. But I say that this commandment speaks of concupiscence which tickles and pierces the heart of man, without bringing him to a deliberate purpose.

216. You say then that the evil affections which involve a definite act of will or resolution are already condemned, but now the Lord requires of us such integrity, that no wicked desire may enter our hearts, to solicit and incite them to evil. That is right.

217. Can we now give a short summary of the whole law?

We can, reducing it to two articles---the first of which is that we are to love God with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our strength; the second that we love our neighbours as ourselves.

218. What is meant by the love of God? To love Him as God is to have and hold Him as Lord, Saviour and Father, and this requires reverence, honour, faith, and obedience along with love.

219. What does "with all our heart" signify, and "with all our soul, and with all our strength?

Such a zeal and such a vehemence, that there is in us no desire, no will, no intention and no thought, contrary to this love.

220. What is the meaning of the second article? As we are by nature prone to love ourselves, that this affection overcomes all others, so love to our neighbour should be so predominant in our hearts, as to direct and govern us, and be the rule of all our thoughts and actions.

221. What do you understand by "our neighbours"? Not only our parents and friends, or those acquainted with us, but also those who are unknown to us, and even our enemies.

222. But what connection do they have with us? That which God has placed among all men on earth, and is so inviolable, that it cannot be abolished by the malice of any man.

223. You say, then, that if any man hate us, the blame is his own, and yet according to the order of God, he does not cease to be our neighbour, and we are to regard him as such?

It is so.

224. Seeing that the law of God comprises the form of worshiping Him aright, should not the Christian man live according to its command?

Yes indeed. But there is some infirmity in us, so that no man acquits himself perfectly in it.

225. Why then does the Lord require a perfection which is beyond our ability?

He requires nothing which we are not bound to perform. Nevertheless, provided we take care to conform our life to what we are told here, although we are very far from reaching perfection, the Lord does not impute our faults to us.

226. Do you speak of all men in general, or of believers only?

He who is not yet regenerated by the Spirit of God cannot begin to do the least of the commandments. Moreover, even if a person could be found who had fulfilled some part of the law, he would not acquit himself before God, for our Lord pronounces that all those who have not fulfilled all the things contained in it, will be accursed (Deuteronomy 27:26; Galatians 3:10).

227. Hence we must conclude that the law has a two-fold office, in accordance with the fact that there are two classes of men.

Yes, in regard to unbelievers it seems but to convict and make them inexcusable before God (Romans 3:3). And this is what Paul says, that it is the ministry of death, and condemnation (2 Corinthians 3:6, 2 Corinthians 3:9). In regard to believers, it has a very different use.

228. What?

First, in that it shows them that they cannot justify themselves by their works, it humbles them and disposes them to seek their salvation in Jesus Christ (Romans 3:3). Secondly, inasmuch as it requires of them much more than they are able to perform, it admonishes them to pray unto the Lord, that He may give them strength and power (Galatians 4:6), and at the same time reminds them of their perpetual quilt, that they may not presume to be proud. Thirdly it is a kind of bridle, by which they are kept in the fear of God.

229. We say then that although during this mortal life we will never fulfill the Law, such perfection is not required of us in vain, for it shows us the mark at which we ought to aim, that each of us, according to the grace God has bestowed on him, may strive continually to press toward it, and to advance day by day. That is as I understand it.

230. Do we not have perfect rule of goodness in the Law?

Yes, and therefore God demands nothing from us, but to follow it; and, on the other hand, repudiates and rejects all that a man undertakes to do beyond what it contains. The only sacrifice He requires is obedience (1 Samuel 15:22; Jeremiah 7:21-23).

231. What is the purpose then of all the admonitions, reproofs, commandments, and exhortations made both by Prophets and Apostles?

They are nothing else than declarations of the Law, leading us into obedience to it rather than turning us away from it.

232. But nothing is said about particular vocations? When it is said that we are to render to every one his due, we may well infer what the duty of each is in his own vocation. Moreover as we have already said, this is expounded for us in the whole of Scripture, for what the Lord has set down in

this summary, He treats of there, and with much fuller teaching.

07.12. 1560 - (Part 3) - Prayer

III. Prayer

233. Since we have spoken sufficiently of the service of God, which is the second part of His worship, let us now speak of the third part.

We said it was the invocation of God in all our needs.

234. Do you think that He alone is to be invoked?

Yes, for He requires this as the worship proper to His Deity.

235. If it is so, in what way is it legitimate for us to ask the aid of men?

There is a great difference between these two things. For we call upon God to protest that we expect no good but from Him, and that we have no refuge elsewhere, and yet we ask the assistance of men, as far as He permits, and has given them the power and means of helping us.

236. You mean that when we seek the succour of men, there is nothing to prevent our calling upon God alone, seeing that we do not put our reliance on them, and do not seek their aid except in so far as God has ordained them to be ministers and dispensers of His blessings, in order to assist us. That is true. And indeed, every benefit that comes to us we should take as coming from God Himself, as in truth it is He who sends it to us by their hands.

237. Nevertheless, should we not give thanks to men for the kindness which they do to us?

Certainly, if only for the reason that God honours them by communicating His blessings to us through their hands, for in this way He lays us under obligation to Him, and wishes us to be mindful of them.

238. Can we not conclude from this that it is wrong to invoke angels, and saints who have departed from this world?

Yes, indeed; for God has not assigned to saints this office of aiding and assisting us. And in regard to angels, though He employs their ministry for our salvation, nevertheless He does not wish us to invoke them, nor to address ourselves to them.

239. You say, then, that all that conflicts with the order instituted by the Lord, contravenes His will?

Yes, for it is a sure sign of infidelity if we are not contented with what the Lord gives to us. Moreover, if instead of having a refuge in God alone, in obedience to His command, we have recourse to them, putting something of our reliance on them, we fall into idolatry, seeing we transfer to them that which God has reserved for Himself.

240. Let us now speak of the way of prayer to God. Is it sufficient to pray with the tongue, or does prayer require also the spirit and the heart? The tongue is not always necessary, but there must be

understanding and affection.

241. How will you prove that?

Since God is Spirit, He always requires the heart, and especially in prayer, in which we enter into communication with Him, wherefore He promises to be near to those only who call upon Him in truth (Psalms 145:18). On the other hand, He curses all who pray to Him in hypocrisy, and without affection (Isaiah 29:13-14).

242. All prayers, then, made only with the mouth are vain? Not only vain, but also displeasing to God.

243. What kind of affection should we have in prayer?

First, that we feel our misery and poverty, and that this feeling should beget sorrow and anguish in us. Secondly, that we have an earnest desire to obtain grace from God. This desire will also kindle our hearts, and engender in us an ardent longing to pray.

244. Does this derive from our nature, or from the grace of God?

Here God must come to our aid, for we are too dull, but the Spirit of God helps us with groanings that cannot be uttered, and forms in our hearts the affection and zeal that God requires, as Paul says (Romans 8:26; Galatians 4:6).

245. Does this mean that we have not to incite and urge ourselves to pray? By no means. On the contrary, when we do not feel such a disposition within us we should beseech the Lord to put it into us, so as to make us capable and fit to pray as we ought.

246. You do not, however, mean that the tongue is quite useless in prayer? Not at all, for sometimes it helps the mind, sustaining and keeping it from being drawn away from God so easily. Besides, since more than all the other members it was formed to the glory of God, it is very reasonable that it should be employed by all means for this purpose. Moreover, the zeal of the heart by its own ardour and vehemence often constrains the tongue to speak quite spontaneously.

247. If so, what about prayer in an unknown tongue?

It is a mockery of God, and a perverse hypocrisy (1 Corinthians 14:14).

248. But when we pray to God, is it a venture in which we do not know whether we will succeed or not? Or ought we to be certain that our praying will be heard? The ground of our prayers should always be, that they will received by God, and that we shall obtain what we request as far is it is expedient for us. And therefore St. Paul says that true prayer comes from faith (Romans 10:14). For if we have no reliance upon the goodness of God, it will be impossible for us to call upon Him in truth.

249. And what of those who doubt, not knowing if God hears or not? Their prayers are utterly void, since they have no promise, for He says that whatever we ask, believing, we shall receive (Matthew 21:22; Mark 11:24).

250. It remains to learn how and in whose name we can have the boldness to present ourselves before God, seeing that we are so unworthy in ourselves.

First we have promises on which we must rest, without considering our worthiness (Psalms 50:15; Psalms 91:3; Psalms 145:18; Isaiah 30:15; Isaiah 65:24; Jeremiah 29:12; Joel 3:5). Secondly, if we are children of God, He induces and urges us by His Holy Spirit to betake ourselves to Him familiarly, as to our Father (Matthew 9:2, Matthew 9:22; etc.). And lest we, who are poor worms of the earth, and miserable sinners, should be afraid to appear before His glorious majesty, He gives us our Lord Jesus Christ as a Mediator (1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 4:16; 1 John 2:1), that through Him we may have access and have no doubt of finding grace.

251. Do you understand that we are to call upon God only, in the Name of Jesus Christ?

I understand so, for we have an express commandment about this. And in it we are promised that by His intercession our requests will be heard (John 14:13).

252. It is not, then, temerity or foolish presumption on our part, if we presume to address God personally, seeing that we have Jesus Christ for our Advocate, and if we set Him before us, that God may for His sake be gracious to us and accept us?

No, for we pray as it were by His mouth, since He gives us entrance and audience, and intercedes for us (Romans 8:34).

253. Let us now speak of the substance of our prayers. Can we ask for all that comes into our mind, or is there a certain rule to be observed about it?

If we followed our fantasy, our prayers would be very badly ordered. We are so ignorant that we cannot judge what it is good to ask: Moreover, all our desires are so intemperate that it is necessary that we should not give them a loose rein.

254. What is to be done, then? That God Himself should instruct us, according to what He knows to be expedient; that we do nothing but follow Him, as if He were leading us by the hand.

255. What instructions has He given?

He has given us ample instructions throughout Scripture; but that we may address ourselves the better to a definite end, He has given us a form in which He has briefly comprehended everything that is legitimate and expedient for us to pray for.

256. Repeat it. Our Lord Jesus Christ, being asked by His Disciples to teach them how to pray, answered that they should pray thus (Matthew 6:9-13; Luke 11:1-4):"Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed by thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen."

257. To make it easier to understand, tell me how many sentences it contains.

Six, of which the first three concern the glory of God alone, without any reference to ourselves; the other three are for us, and concern our blessing and profit.

258. Are we then to ask God for anything from which no benefit redounds to us?

It is true that God, by His infinite goodness, so arranges and orders things, that nothing tends to the glory of His Name without being also salutary to us. Therefore, when His name is sanctified, He turns it to our sanctification; when His Kingdom comes, we are, in a way, sharers in it. But in desiring and asking all these things, we ought to have regard only for His glory, without thinking of ourselves, or seeking our own profit.

259. According to what you say, the first three of these requests are expedient for us, and yet they ought not to be made with any other intention that of desiring that God may be glorified.

It is so. And similarly, although the last three requests are appointed as prayers for what is expedient to us, yet even in them we ought to seek the glory of God, so that it may be the end of all our desires.

260. Let us come to the exposition. And before we go any further, why is God called our Father, rather than by some other name?

Since it is essential that our consciences have a steadfast assurance, when we pray, our God gives Himself a name. which suggests only gentleness and kindness, in order to take away from us all doubt and anxiety, and to give us boldness in coming to Him personally.

261. Shall we then dare to go to God familiarly, as a child to his father?

Yes, in fact with greater assurance of obtaining what we ask. For if we, being evil, cannot refuse our children bread and meat, when they ask, how much less will our heavenly Father, who is not only good, but sovereign goodness itself (Matthew 7:11).

262. Can we not prove from this very Name, what has been said, viz. that prayer should be grounded on the intercession of Jesus Christ?

Yes, certainly. For God does not acknowledge us as His children, except in so far as we are members of His Son.

263. Why do you not call God your God, but call Him our Father together?

Each believer may indeed call Him his own Father, but in this formula Jesus Christ instructs us to pray together, to remind us that in our prayers we are to exercise charity towards our neighbours, and not only to care for ourselves.

264. What is meant by the clause "who art in heaven"?

It is just the same as if I were to call Him exalted, mighty, incomprehensible.

265. To what end, and for what reason? That when we call upon Him, we may learn to lift our thoughts on high, and not to have any carnal or earthly thoughts of Him, not to measure Him by our apprehension, nor to subject Him to our will, but to adore His glorious Majesty in humility. It teaches us also to have more reliance on Him, since He is Governor and Master of all.

266. Now expound the first petition. The Name of God is His renown, with which He is celebrated among men. We pray then that His glory may be exalted above all, and in all things.

267. Do you think that His glory can increase or decrease? Not in itself. But this means that it may be manifested, as it ought to be, that all the works which God performs may appear glorious, as indeed they are, so that He Himself may be glorified in every way.

268. What do you understand by the Kingdom of God in the second petition?

It consists principally of two things: that He leads His own, and governs them by His Spirit, and on the other hand casts down and confounds the reprobate who refuse to subject themselves to His rule, and so makes it clear that there is no power which can resist His power.

269. In what sense do you pray that this Kingdom may come? That day by day the Lord may increase the numbers of the faithful, that day by day He may increasingly bestow His graces upon them, until He has filled them completely; moreover, that He cause His truth to shine more and more and manifest His justice, so that Satan and the powers of darkness may be put to confusion, and all iniquity be destroyed and abolished.

270. Is that not taking place today?

Yes indeed---in part, but we pray that it may continually increase and advance, until at last it comes to its perfection in the day of judgment, in which God alone will be exalted, and ever creature will be humbled before His Majesty, and He will be all in all (1 Corinthians 15:28).

271. What do you mean by asking that the will of God may be done? That all creatures may be brought under obedience to Him, and so that everything may be done according to His good will.

272. Do you mean that nothing can be done contrary to His will?

We ask not only that He may bring all things to pass, as He has determined in His counsel, but also that, putting down all rebellion, He may bring all wills to conform to His own.

273. In so doing, do we not renounce our own wills?

We do, not only that He may overthrow our desires, which are at variance with His own good will, bringing them all to nought, but also that He may create in us new spirits and new hearts, so that we may will nothing of ourselves, but rather that His Spirit may will in us, and bring us into full agreement with Him.

274. Why do you add "on earth as it is in heaven"?

Since His heavenly creatures or His angels have it as their own object to obey Him, promptly without opposition, we desire that the same thing may be done on earth, that is, that all men may yield themselves in voluntary obedience.

275. Let us come to the second part. What mean you by "the daily bread" you ask for? In general, everything that we need for our body, not only food and clothing, but all that God knows to be expedient for us, that we may be able to eat our bread in peace.

276. But why do you ask God to give you your food, when He orders us to win it, by working with our hands?

Though He commands us to work for our living, nevertheless it is not our labour, industry, and diligence, that provide us with food, but the blessing of God alone, which makes the labour of our hands to prosper. Moreover we ought to understand that it is not meat that nourishes us, although we have it owing to His command, but the power of the Lord alone who uses it as His instrument (Deuteronomy 8:3, Deuteronomy 8:17).

277. Why do you call it yours, when you ask God to give it to you?

Because of the kindness of God it becomes ours, though it is by no means due to us. We are also reminded by this not to desire the bread of others, but only that which we acquire by legitimate means, according to the ordinance of God.

278. Why do you say "daily" and "this day"? That we may learn to be content, and not to covet more than our need requires.

279. Since this prayer is common to all, how can the rich, who have an abundance of good things, provide for a long time, ask for bread each day? The rich, as well as the poor, should understand that none of the things profit them, unless the Lord grant them the use of them, and by His grace make it profitable to them. Thus in having we have nothing, unless He gives it to us.

280. What does the fifth petition contain? That it pleases God to pardon our sins.

281. Is any man living so righteous, that He does not need to make this petition?

No, for the Lord Jesus gave this form of prayer to His Apostles for His Church. Wherefore he who would exempt himself from this, must renounce the community of Christians. And indeed Scripture testifies to us that even the most perfect man seeking to justify himself before God in a single matter, will be found guilty in a thousand (Job 9:3). Thus the only refuge we may have is in His mercy.

282. How do you think that such remission is granted to us? As the words of Jesus Christ used declare: because our sins are debts, making us liable to eternal death, we pray that God will pardon us out of His sheer kindness.

283. You mean, them, that it is by the gratuitous goodness of God that we obtain remission of sins?

Yes, for we can offer no satisfaction for the smallest sin we commit, if God does no exercise His sheer kindness toward us in forgiving us them all.

284. What gain and profit do we receive, when God pardons our sins?

We are acceptable to Him, just as if we were righteous and innocent, and our consciences are assured of His paternal love, from which comes salvation and life.

285. When you pray that He may forgive us as we forgive our debtors, do you mean that in pardoning men we merit pardon from God? By no means, for then pardon would not be by grace, and would not be founded, as it ought to be, on the satisfaction which Jesus Christ made for us in His death. But since by forgetting the injuries done to ourselves, we follow His gentleness and clemency, and so demonstrate that we are His children, God has given us this as a sign in

confirmation that we are His children. On the other hand, He indicates to us that we cannot expect anything at His judgment but utter severity and extreme rigour, if we are not ready to pardon and show mercy to others who are guilty toward us.

286. Do you think, then, God refuses to have as His children those who cannot forget the offenses committed against them, so that they cannot hope to be partakers of His grace?

Yes. And He intends that all men may know that with what measure they mete to their neighbours, it shall be measured to them.

287. What follows?

"Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

288. Do you treat this as one petition?

Yes, for the second part is an explanation of the first part.

289. What is the substance of it? That God does not allow us to fall to evil, or permit us to be overcome by the devil, and the lustful desires of our flesh, which strive against us (Romans 7:23), but He gives us strength to resist, sustains us by His hand, takes us into His safe keeping, to defend and lead us.

290. How is this done? When He governs us by His Spirit, to make us love the good, and hate the evil, follow justice, and flee from sin. By the power of His Spirit, we may overcome the devil, sin and the flesh.

291. Do we stand in need of this?

Yes, for the devil continually watches for us, like a roaring lion ready to devour us (1 Peter 5:8). We are so feeble and frail that he would immediately overcome us, if God did not fortify us, that we might be victorious over him.

292. What does the word "temptation" signify? The wiles and assaults of the devil, which he uses to attack us, seeing that our natural judgment is prone to be deceived and to deceive us, and our will is always ready to addict itself to evil rather than to good.

293. But why do you pray God not to lead you into evil, when this is the proper office of Satan the devil? As God by His mercy preserves the faithful, and does not permit the devil to seduce them, or sin to overcome them, so those whom He means to punish He not only abandons, and deprives of His grace, but also yields to the devil to be subjected to his tyranny, blinds them and delivers them over to a reprobate mind.

294. What is intended by the addition, "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever"? To remind us again that our prayers are altogether grounded on the power and goodness of God, and not on ourselves, for we are not worthy to open our mouth in prayer; and also that we may learn to close our prayers in His praise.

295. Is it lawful to ask anything else, not mentioned here?

Although we are free to use other words, and another form and manner, yet not prayer will ever please God which does not correspond to this as the only rule of right prayer.

Chapter 44

07.13. 1560 - (Part 4) - The Word and Sacraments

IV. The Word and Sacraments 296. It is time to come to the fourth part of worship we are to render to God.

We said that this consists in acknowledging with the heart and confirming with the mouth that God is the author of all good, that thereby we may glorify Him.

297. Has He given us any rule for this?

All the praises and thanksgivings contained in Scripture ought to be our rule and guide.

298. Is there nothing regarding this in the Lord's Prayer?

Yes there is, for when we pray that His name may be hallowed, we pray that He may be glorified in all His works, as indeed He is--that He may be praised for His justice when He punishes, for His mercy when He pardons, and for His faithfulness when He fulfils His promises; in short, that there is nothing in which His glory does not shine forth. This is to ascribe to Him the praise for all blessing.

299. What shall we infer from all that we have said?

What truth itself tells us, and was stated at the outset, viz. that this is eternal life to know one true God the Father, and Jesus Christ whom He has sent (John 17:3)--to know Him, I say, in order that we may worship Him aright, that He may be not only our Master, but also our Father and Saviour, and we be in turn His children and servants, and a people dedicated to His glory.

300. How can we attain to such a blessedness? For this end God has left us His holy Word, which is, as it wee, an entry into His heavenly Kingdom.

301. Where do you find this Word?

It is comprised for us in the Holy Scriptures.

302. How are we to use it in order to profit by it? By receiving it with the full consent of our conscience, as truth come down from heaven, submitting ourselves to it in right obedience, loving it with a true affection by having it imprinted in our hearts, we may follow it entirely and conform ourselves to it.

303. Is all this within our own power?

None of it; but God works them in us in this way by His Holy Spirit.

304. But are we not to take trouble and be diligent, and zealously strive by hearing and reading its teaching, as it is declared to us?

Yes, indeed: first each one of us in particular ought to study it: and above all, we are frequently to attend the sermons in which this Word is expounded in the Assembly of the Christians.

305. Do you mean that it is not enough for people to read it privately at home, without altogether hearing its teaching in common? That is just what I mean, while God provides the way for it.

306. Why do you say that?

Because Jesus Christ has established this order in His Church (Ephesians 4:11), and He has declared this to be the only means of edifying and preserving it. Thus we must keep ourselves to it and not be wiser than our Master.

307. Is it necessary, then, that there should be pastors?

Yes; and that we should hear them, receiving the teaching of the Lord in humility by their mouth. Therefore whoever despises them and refuses to hear them, rejects Jesus Christ, and separates himself from the fellowship of the faithful (Matthew 10:40; Luke 10:16).

308. But is it enough to have been instructed by them once, or ought he to continue to do this?

It is little to have begun, unless you go on to persevere. We must continue to be disciples of Christ right to the end. But He has ordained the ministers of the Church to teach in His Name.

309. Is there no other means than the Word by which God communicates Himself to us? To the preaching of His Word He has conjoined the Sacraments.

310. What is a Sacrament? An outward attestation of the grace of God which, by a visible sign, represents spiritual things to imprint the promises of God more firmly in our hearts, and to make us more sure of them.

311. What? Does a visible and natural sign have this power to assure the conscience?

No, not of itself, but in so far as it is ordained of God for this end.

312. Seeing it is the proper office of the Holy Spirit to seal the promises of God in our hearts, how do you attribute this to the Sacraments?

There is a great difference between the one and the other. The Spirit of God in very truth is the only One who can touch and move our hearts, enlighten our minds, and assure our consciences; so that all this ought to be judged as His own work, that praise may be ascribed to Him alone. Nevertheless, the Lord Himself makes use of the Sacraments as inferior instruments according as it seems good to Him, without in any way detracting from the power of the Holy Spirit.

313. You think, then, that the efficacy of the Sacraments does not consist in the outward element, but proceeds entirely from the Spirit of God?

Yes; for the Lord is pleased to work by these instruments which He has instituted: without detracting from His own power.

314. And what moves God to do that? For the alleviation of our weaknesses. If we were spiritual by nature, like the angels, we could behold God and His graces. But as we are bound up with our bodies, it is needful for us that God should make use of figures to represent to us spiritual and heavenly things, for otherwise we could not comprehend them. At the same time, it is expedient for us to have all our senses exercised in His Holy promises, in order to confirm us in them.

315. Since God has introduced the Sacraments to meet our need, it would be arrogance and presumption to think that we could dispense with them.

Certainly: hence he who voluntarily abstains from using them thinks that he has no need of them, condemns Jesus Christ, rejects His grace, and quenches His Holy Spirit.

316. But what assurance of grace can the Sacraments give, seeing that good and bad both receive them?

Although the unbelievers and the wicked make of none effect the grace offered them through the Sacraments, yet it does not follow that the proper nature of the Sacraments is also made of non effect.

317. How, then, and when do the Sacraments produce this effect? When we receive them in faith, seeking Jesus Christ alone and His grace in them.

318. Why do you say that we must seek Jesus Christ in them?

I mean that we are not to be taken up with the earthly sign so as to seek our salvation in it, nor are we to imagine that it has a peculiar power enclosed within it. On the contrary, we are to employ the sign as a help, to lead us directly to the Lord Jesus, that we may find in Him our salvation and all our well-being.

319. Seeing that faith is required, why do you say that they are given to confirm us in faith, to assure us of the promises of God?

It is not sufficient for faith once to be generated in us. It must be nourished and sustained, that it may grow day by day and be increased within us. To nourish, strengthen, and increase it, God gives us the Sacraments. This is what Paul indicates when he says that they are used to seal the promises of God in our hearts (Romans 4:11).

320. But is it not a sign of unbelief when the promises of God are not firm enough for us, without support?

It is a sign of the smallness and weakness of faith, and such is indeed the faith of the children of God, who do not, however, cease to be faithful, although their faith is still imperfect. As long as we live in this world some elements of unfaithfulness remain in our flesh, and therefore we must always advance and grow in faith.

321. How many Sacraments are there in the Christian Church?

There are only two Sacraments common to all which the Lord Jesus has instituted for the whole company of the faithful.

322. What are they?

Baptism and the Holy Supper.

323. What likeness and difference is there between them?

Baptism is for us a kind of entrance into the Church of God, for it testifies that instead of our being strangers to Him, God receives us as members of His family. The Supper testifies that God as a

good Father carefully feeds and refreshes the members of His household.

324. That the meaning may be more clear to us, let us treat of them separately. First, what is the meaning of Baptism?

It consists of two parts. The Lord represents to us in it, first, the forgiveness of our sins (Ephesians 5:26-27) and, secondly, our regeneration or spiritual renewal (Romans 6:4).

325. What resemblance has water with these things in order to represent them? The forgiveness of sins is a kind of washing, by which our souls are cleansed from their defilements, just as the stains of the body are washed away by water.

326. What about the other part? The beginning of our regeneration and its end is our becoming new creatures, through the Spirit of God. Therefore the water is poured on the head as a sign of death, but in such a way that our resurrection is also represented, for instead of being drowned in water, what happens to us is only for a moment.

327. You do not mean that the water is a washing of the soul. By no means, for that pertains to the blood of Christ alone, which was shed in order to wipe away all our stains and render us pure and unpolluted before God (1 John 1:7; 1 Peter 1:19). This is fulfilled in us when our consciences are sprinkled by the Holy Spirit. But by the Sacrament that is sealed to us.

328. Do you think that the water is only a figure to us?

It is such a figure that the reality is conjoined with it, for God does not promise us anything in vain. Accordingly it is certain that in Baptism the forgiveness of sins is offered to us and we receive it.

329. Is this grace fulfilled indiscriminately in all?

No, for some make it of no effect by their perversity. Nevertheless, the Sacrament loses nothing of its nature, although none but believers feel its efficacy.

330. From what does regeneration get its power? From the death and resurrection of Christ. His death has had this effect, that through it our old Adam is crucified, and our evil nature is, as it were, buried, so that it no longer has the strength to rule over us. And the renewal of our life, in obedience to the righteousness of God, derives from the resurrection of Christ.

331. How is this grace applied to us in Baptism? In it we are clothed with Jesus Christ, and receive His Spirit, provided that we do not make ourselves unworthy of the promises given to us in it.

332. What is the proper use of Baptism on our part?

It consists in faith and in repentance. That is, assurance that we have our spiritual purity in Christ, and in feeling within us, and declaring to our neighbours by our works, that His Spirit dwells in us to mortify our natural desires and bring us to follow the Will of God.

333. If this is required, how is it that we baptize infants?

It is not said that faith and repentance should always precede the reception of the Sacrament, but they are only required from those who are capable of them. It is sufficient, then, if infants produce and manifest the fruit of their Baptism after they come to the age of discretion.

334. Can you show that there is nothing inconsistent in this?

Circumcision was also a Sacrament of repentance, as Moses and the prophets declare (Deuteronomy 10:16; Deuteronomy 30:6; Jeremiah 4:4); and was a Sacrament of faith, as St. Paul says (Romans 4:11-12). And yet God has not excluded little children from it.

335. But can you show that they are now admitted to Baptism for the same reason as in the case of circumcision?

Yes, for the promises which God anciently gave to His people of Israel are now extended to the whole world.

336. But does it follow from this that we are to use the sign also? That becomes evident when everything is considered. Jesus Christ has not made us partakers of His grace, which formerly had been bestowed on the people of Israel, in order to diminish it in us, or make it more obscure, but rather to manifest it and to bestow it upon us in increased abundance.

337. Do you reckon that if we denied Baptism to little infants, the grace of God would then be diminished by the coming of Christ?

Yes; for the sign of the bounty and mercy of God toward our children, which they had in ancient times, would be wanting in our case, the very sign which ministers so greatly to our consolation, and to confirm the promise already given in the Command.

338. You mean then that since God in ancient times declared Himself to be the Saviour of little infants, and wanted to have this promise sealed on their bodies by an external Sacrament, it is right that confirmation of it should not be less after the advent of Christ, since the same promise remains and indeed is more clearly attested by the Word and ratified in action.

Yes. And besides, since it is quite evident that the power and the substance of Baptism pertain to little children, to deny them the sign, which is inferior to the substance, would be to do them injury.

339. On what conditions should we baptize little children? As a sign and testimony that they are heirs of God’s blessing promised to the seed of the faithful, that when they come of age they are to acknowledge the truth of their Baptism, in order to derive benefit from it.

340. Let us speak of the Supper. And, first, what is its signification? Our Lord instituted it to assure us that by the communication of His body and blood, our souls are nourished, in the hope of eternal life.

341. But why does the Lord represent His body by the bread and His blood by the wine? To signify that as it is the particular virtue of bread to nourish our bodies, to refresh and sustain us in this mortal life, so it pertains to His body to act toward our souls, i.e., in nourishing and quickening them spiritually, so His blood is our joy, our refreshing and our spiritual strength.

342. Do you mean that we must truly communicate in the body and blood of the Lord?

I understand so. But since the whole affiance of our salvation rests in the obedience which He has rendered to God, His Father, in order that it may be imputed to us as if it were ours, we must possess Him: for His blessings are not ours, unless He gives Himself to us first.

343. But did He not give Himself to us when He exposed Himself to death, to reconcile us to God His Father, and deliver us from damnation? That is true; but it is not enough for us unless we receive Him, in order that we may feel in ourselves the fruit and the efficacy of His death and passion.

344. Is not the way to receive Him by faith?

Yes. Not only in believing that He died and rose again, in order to deliver us from eternal death, and acquire life for us, but also that He dwells in us, and conjoined with us in a union as the Head with the members, that by virtue of this conjunction He may make us partakers of all His grace.

345. Does this communion take place apart from the Supper alone?

Yes, indeed, we have it through the Gospel, as St. Paul declares (I Cor. 1:9): in that the Lord Jesus Christ promises us in it, that we are flesh of His flesh and bone of His bone (Ephesians 5:30), that He is that living bread which came down from heaven to nourish our souls (John 6:51), and that we are one with Him, as He is one with the Father (John 17:21).

346. What is the blessing that we have in the Sacrament, and what more does it minister to us? This communion is more abundantly confirmed in us, ratified as it were, for although Jesus Christ is truly communicated to us both by Baptism and by the Gospel, nevertheless this only in part, and not fully.

347. What then fully do we have through the sign of the bread? That the body of the Lord Jesus which was once offered to reconcile us to God, is now given to us, to certify to us that we have part in this reconciliation.

348. What do we have in the sign of the wine? That the Lord Jesus, who once shed His blood in payment and satisfaction for our offences, gives it to us to drink, that we may have no doubt at all of receiving its fruit.

349. According to your replies, the Supper takes us back to the death and passion of Jesus Christ, that we may communicate in its virtue?

Yes, for then the unique and perpetual sacrifice was offered for our redemption. Therefore there remains for us nought but to enjoy it.

350. The Supper, then, was not instituted in order to offer up the body of Jesus the Son to the Father?

No, for this office pertains to none but Him alone, since He is the eternal Priest (Hebrews 5:5). But He commands us only to receive His body, not to offer it (Matthew 26:26).

351. Why is there a double sign? Our Lord has appointed it for the sake of our weakness, in order to teach us that He is not only food to our souls, but drink also, so that we may seek our nourishment wholly and entirely in Him, and not elsewhere.

352. Should all men equally use the second sign, that is the chalice?

Yes, this is according to the commandment of Jesus Christ, against which nothing is to be attempted.

353. Do we have in the Supper simply the testimony of the things already mentioned, or are they truly given to us in it?

See that Jesus Christ is the Truth, there can be no doubt that the promises which He made at the Supper, are actually fulfilled in it, and that what He figures in it is made true. Thus in accordance with what He promises and represents in the Sacrament, I do not doubt that He makes us partakers of His very substance, in order to unite us with Himself in one life.

354. But how can this be, when the body of Jesus Christ is in heaven, and we are pilgrims on this earth? By the incomprehensible power of His Spirit, who conjoins things separated by distance.

355. You do not think, then, either that the body is enclosed in the bread, or the blood in the chalice?

No. On the contrary, in order to have the reality of the Sacraments, we must lift up our hearts on high to heaven, where Jesus Christ is in the glory of His Father, from whence we expect Him in our redemption, and do not seek Him in these corruptible elements.

356. You understand, then, that there are two things in this Sacrament, material bread and wine, which we see by the eye, handle by the hands, and perceive by the taste, and Jesus Christ by whom our souls are inwardly nourished?

Yes, but in such a way that we have in it also a testimony and a kind of pledge for the resurrection of our bodies, in that they are made partakers in the sign of life.

357. What is the right use of this Sacrament? That which St. Paul declares, namely that a man examine himself before he approach to it (1 Corinthians 11:28).

358. In what is he to examine himself?

Whether he is a true member of Jesus Christ.

359. By what sign can he know this?

If he has a true faith and repentance, if he loves his neighbour in true charity, and is not tainted by hatred or rancour or discord.

360. But is it necessary to have perfect faith and charity?

Both should be entire and unfeigned, but to have such a perfection, from which nothing is wanting, will not be found among men. Moreover the Supper would have been instituted in vain if no one could receive it unless he were entirely perfect.

361. Imperfection, then, does not prevent us from approaching it. On the contrary, the Supper would be of no use to us, if we were not imperfect. It is an aid and support for our weakness.

362. Do these two Sacraments not serve another end?

Yes, they do. They are also signs and marks of our profession. That is to say, by them we declare that we are of the people of God, and make confession of our Christianity.

363. How ought we to judge a man who never wishes to use it?

He could not be regarded as a Christian, for in so doing he refuses to confess himself as such, and tacitly, as it were, disavows Jesus Christ.

364. Is it sufficient to receive each once?

Baptism is only ordered to be received once, and may not lawfully be repeated. But this is not so with the Supper.

365. What is the reason for that? By Baptism God introduces and receives us into His Church. After He has received us, He signifies by the Supper that He wishes continually to nourish us.

366. To whom does it belong truly to baptize and administer the Supper? To those who are publicly charged to teach in the Church. For the preaching of the Word and the distribution of the Sacraments are things conjoined.

367. Is there any certain proof for this?

Yes, indeed. Our Lord specially charged His Apostles to baptize as well as to preach (Matthew 28:19). In regard to the Supper. He ordered all to follow His example. Moreover He performed the office of a minister in order to give it to others.

368. But ought pastors, who are appointed to dispense the Sacraments, to admit without discretion all who present themselves there? In regard to Baptism, as it is administered today only to infants, there is no need for discrimination; but in the Supper the minister ought to take heed not to give it to a man whom he recognizes to be entirely unworthy.

369. Why so?

Because it would pollute and dishonour the Sacrament.

370. But our Lord admitted Judas to the Supper, impious though he was? His iniquity was still hidden, and although our Lord knew it, yet it was not evident to all.

371. What then is to be done with hypocrites? The minister cannot exclude them as unworthy, but must wait until God has revealed their iniquity.

372. But what if he knows or has been warned that someone is unworthy? That would not be sufficient to exclude him, unless there were a legitimate investigation and decision of the Church.

373. Then there ought to be some order and polity regarding this.

Yes, if the Church is to be well ordered. Some persons must be appointed to watch out for the offences that may be committed. And they, with the authority of the Church, should refuse communion to those who are quite unfit, and to whom communion cannot be given without dishonouring God and scandalizing the faithful.

08.00. Institutes of the Christian Religion

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08.01. Book 1.

Argument The First Book treats of the knowledge of God the Creator. But as it is in the creation of man that the divine perfections are best displayed, so man also is made the subject of discourse. Thus the whole book divides itself into two principal heads - the former relating to the knowledge of God, and the latter to the knowledge of man. In the first chapter, these are considered jointly; and in each of the following chapters, separately: occasionally, however, intermingled with other matters which refer to one or other of the heads; e.g., the discussions concerning Scripture and images, falling under the former head, and the other three concerning the creation of the world, the holy angels and devils, falling under the latter. The last point discussed, viz., the method of the divine government, relates to both. With regard to the former head, viz., the knowledge of God, it is shown, in the first place, what the kind of knowledge is which God requires, Chap. 2. And, in the second place (Chap. 3-9), where this knowledge must be sought, namely, not in man: because, although naturally implanted in the human mind, it is stifled, partly by ignorance, partly by evil intent, Chap. 3 and 4; not in the frame of the world: because, although it shines most clearly there, we are so stupid that these manifestations, however perspicuous, pass away without any beneficial result, Chap. 5; but in Scripture (Chap. 6), which is treated of, Chap. 7-9. In the third place, it is shown what the character of God is, Chap. 10. In the fourth place, how impious it is to give a visible form to God (here images, the worship of them, and its origin, are considered), Chap. 11. In the fifth place, it is shown that God is to be solely and wholly worshipped, Chap. 12. Lastly, Chap. 13 treats of the unity of the divine essence, and the distinction of three persons. With regard to the latter head, viz., the knowledge of man, first, Chap. 14 treats of the creation of the world, and of good and bad angels (these all having reference to man). And then Chap. 15, taking up the subject of man himself, examines his nature and his powers. The better to illustrate the nature both of God and man, the three remaining Chapters, viz., 16-18, proceed to treat of the general government of the world, and particularly of human actions, in opposition to fortune and fate, explaining both the doctrine and its use. In conclusion, it is shown, that though God employs the instrumentality of the wicked, he is pure from sin and from taint of every kind.

08.01. 1541 - (Part 1) - Faith

The Geneva Catechism (1541)

Calvin introduces his catechism, writing, "It has always been a matter which the Church has held in singular commendation, to see that little children should be instructed in Christian doctrine. That this might be done, not only were schools opened in early times, and people enjoined to teach their families well, but it was also a public practice, to examine children in the churches on articles of faith common to all Christians. That this might be carried out in order, a formulary was used which was called a Catechism. ... What we set before you, therefore, is nothing else than the use of things which from ancient times were observed among Christians, and which has never been neglected except when the Church has been wholly corrupted."

Catechism Dialogue between the Minister and the child by John Calvin

I. Faith 1. Minister. What is the chief end of human life?

Child. To know God.

2. Why do you say that?

Because He created us and placed us in this world to be glorified in us. And it is indeed right that our life, of which He Himself is the beginning, should be devoted to His glory.

3. What is the sovereign good of man? The same thing.

4. Why do you hold that to be the sovereign good?

Because without it our condition is more miserable than that of brute-beasts.

5. Hence, then, we see that nothing worse can happen to a man than to live without God.

It is so.

6. What is the true and right knowledge of God? When we know Him in order that we may honour Him.

7. How do we honour Him aright?

We put our reliance on Him, by serving Him in obedience to His will, by calling upon Him in all our need, seeking salvation and every good thing in Him, and acknowledging with heart and mouth that all our good proceeds from Him.

8. To consider these things in order, and explain them more fully---what is the first point? To rely upon God.

9. How can we do that?

First by knowing Him as almighty and perfectly good.

10. Is this enough?

No.

11. Why?

Because we are unworthy that He should show His power in helping us, or employ His goodness toward us.

12. What more then is required? That we be certain that He loves us, and desires to be our Father, and Saviour.

13. How do we know that? By His Word, in which He declares His mercy to us in Christ, and assures us of His love toward us.

14. Then the foundation for true reliance upon God is to know Him in Jesus Christ [John 17:3]? That is true.

15. What then briefly is the substance of this knowledge?

It is contained in the Confession of Faith used by all Christians. It is commonly called the Apostles' Creed, because it is a summary of the true faith which has always been held in Christ's Church, and was derived from the pure doctrine of the Apostles.

16. Recite it.

17. In order to expound this confession in detail, into how many parts do we divide it?

Into four principal parts.

18. What are they? The first is about God the Father; the second about His Son Jesus Christ, which also includes the whole history of our redemption; the third is about the Holy Spirit; the fourth is about the Church, and the gracious gifts of God conferred on her.

19. Since there is but one God, why do you mention the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who are three?

Because in the one essence of God, we have to look on the Father as the beginning and origin, and the first cause of all things; then the Son, who is Eternal Wisdom; and the Holy Spirit who is His virtue and power shed abroad over all creatures, but still perpetually resident in Himself.

20. You mean then that there is no objection to our understanding that these three persons are distinctly in one Godhead, that therefore God in not therefore divided?

Just so.

21. Now repeat the first part.

"I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth."

22. Why do you call Him Father?

It is with reference to Christ who is His eternal Word, begotten of Him before time, and being sent into this world was demonstrated and declared to be His Son. But since God is the Father of Jesus

Christ, it follows that He is our Father also.

23. In what sense do you mean that He is Almighty? That does not mean that He has a power which He does not exercise, but that He disposes all things by His Providence, governs the world by His will, ruling all as it seems good to Him.

24. You mean that the power of God is not idle, but consider rather that His hand is always engaged in working, so that nothing is done except through Him, with His permission and His decree.

It is so.

25. Why do you add that He is Creator of heaven and earth?

Because He has manifested Himself to us by works [Ps. 104; Romans 1:20] we ought to seek Him in them. Our mind cannot comprehend His essence. But the world is for us like a mirror in which we may contemplate Him in so far as it is expedient for us to know Him.

26. Do you not understand by "heaven and earth" all other creatures?

Yes indeed; under these two words all are included, because they are all heavenly and earthly.

27. But why do you call God a Creator only, seeing that it is much more to uphold and preserve creatures in their state, than to have once created them? This term does not signify that God brought His works into being at a single stroke, and then left them without a care for them. We ought rather to understand, that as the world was made by God in the beginning, so now it is preserved by Him in its estate, so that the heavens, the earth and all creatures do no continue in their being apart from this power. Besides, seeing that He holds all things in His hand, it follows that the government and lordship over them belongs to Him. Therefore, in that He is Creator of heaven and earth, it is His to rule the whole order of nature by His goodness and power and wisdom. It is He who sends rain and drought, hail, tempest and fair weather, fruitfulness and barrenness, health and sickness. In short, all things are under His command, to serve Him as it seems good to Him.

28. But what about wicked men and devils? Are they also subject to Him?

Although He does not guide them by His Holy Spirit, nevertheless He curbs them by His power, so that they cannot budge unless He permits them. He even constrains them to execute His will, although it is against their own intention and purpose.

29. What good do you derive from the knowledge of this fact?

Very Much. It would go ill with us if devils and wicked men had power to do anything in spite of the will of God. Moreover we could never be at rest in our minds if we were exposed to them in danger, but when we know that they are curbed by the will of God, so that they can do nothing without His permission, then we may rest and breathe again, for God has promised to protect and defend us.

30. Let us now come to the second part.

"And in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord", etc.

31. What briefly does it comprehend? That we acknowledge the Son of God as our Saviour, and the means by which He has redeemed us from death, and acquired salvation.

32. What is the meaning of the name Jesus which you give to Him?

It means Saviour, and was given to Him by the angel at the command of God (Matthew 1:21).

33. Is this of more importance than if men had given it?

Oh, yes. For since God wills that He be called so, He must be so in truth.

34. What, next, is meant by the name of Christ? By this title His office is still better expressed---for it signifies that He was appointed by the Father to be ordained King, Priest, and Prophet.

35. How do you know that?

Because according to the Scripture, anointing is used for these three things. Also, because they are attributed to Him many times.

36. But with what kind of oil was He anointed? Not with visible oil as was used for ancient kings, priests, and prophets, but this anointing was by the grace of the Holy Spirit, who is the reality signified by that outward anointing made in time past (Isaiah 61:1, Psalms 45:7).

37. But what is this Kingdom of which you speak?

It is spiritual, and consists in the Word and Spirit of God, and includes righteousness and life.

38. What of the priesthood?

It is the office and prerogative of presenting Himself before God to obtain grace and favour, and appease His wrath in offering a sacrifice which is acceptable to Him.

39. In what sense do you call Christ a Prophet?

Because on coming down into the world (Isaiah 7:14) He was the sovereign messenger and ambassador of God His Father, to give full exposition of God’s will toward the world and so put an end to all prophecies and revelations (Hebrews 1:2).

40. But do you derive any benefit from this?

All this is for our good. For Jesus Christ has received all these gifts in order that He may communicate them to us, and that all of us may receive out of His fullness.

41. Expound this to me more fully.

He received the Holy Spirit in full perfection with all His graces, that He may lavish them upon us and distribute them, each according to the measure and portion which the Father knows to be expedient (Ephesians 4:7). Thus we may draw from Him as from a fountain all the spiritual blessings we possess.

42. What does His Kingdom minister to us? By it, we are set at liberty in our conscience and are filled with His spiritual riches in order to live in righteousness and holiness, and we are also armed with power to overcome the devil, the flesh, and the world---the enemies of our souls.

43. What about His priesthood?

First, by means of it He is the Mediator who reconciles us to God His Father; and secondly, through Him we have access to present ourselves to God, and offer Him ourselves in sacrifice with all that belongs to us. And in this way we are companions of His priesthood.

44. There remains His Prophetic Office.

Since this office was given to the Lord Jesus to be the Master and Teacher of His own, its end is to bring us the true knowledge of the Father and of His Truth, so that we may be scholars in the household of God.

45. You would conclude, then, that the title of Christ includes three offices which God has given His Son, in order to communicate virtue and fruit to His faithful people? That is so.

46. Why do you call Him the only Son of God, seeing that God calls us all His children?

We are children of God not by nature, but only by adoption and by grace, in that God wills to regard us as such (Ephesians 1:5). But the Lord Jesus who was begotten of the substance of His Father, and is of one essence with Him, is rightly called the only Son of God (John 1:14; Hebrews 1:2) for there is no other who is God’s Son by nature.

47. You mean to say, then, that this honour is proper to Him alone, and belongs to Him by nature, but is communicated to us through a gracious gift, in that we are His numbers. That is so. Hence in regard to this communication He is called elsewhere "the First-born among many brethren" (Romans 8:29; Colossians 1:15).

48. How is He "our Lord"?

Because He is appointed by the Father to have us under His government, to administer the Kingdom and the Lordship of God in heaven and on earth, and to be the Head of men and believers (Ephesians 5:23; Colossians 1:18).

49. What is meant by what follows?

It declares how the Son of God was anointed by the Father to be our Saviour. That is to say, He assumed human flesh, and accomplished all things necessary to our salvation, as enunciated here.

50. What do you mean by the two clauses, "Conceived of the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary"? That He was formed in womb of the Virgin Mary, of her proper substance, to be the seed of David, as had been foretold (Psalms 132:11), and yet that this was wrought by the miraculous operation of the Holy Spirit, without the cooperation of a man (Matthew 1:18; Luke 1:35).

51. Was it then required that He should put on our very flesh?

Yes, because it was necessary that the disobedience committed by man against God should be redressed in human nature. And moreover He could not otherwise be our Mediator to reconcile us to God His Father (1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 4:15).

52. You say that Christ had to become man, to fulfill the office of Saviour, as in our very person.

Yes, indeed. For we must recover in Him all that we lack in ourselves, and this cannot be done in any other way.

53. But why was that effected by the Holy Spirit, and not by the work of man according to the order of nature? As the seed of man is in itself corrupt, it was necessary that the power of the Holy Spirit should intervene in this conception, in order to preserve our Lord from all corruption, and to fill Him with holiness.

54. Thus we are shown that He who is to sanctify others was free from every stain, and from His mother's womb He was consecrated to God in purity from the very beginning, in order that He may not be subject to the universal corruption of the human race. So I understand it.

55. Why do you go immediately from His birth to His death, passing over the whole history of His life?

Because nothing is said here about what belongs properly to the substance of our redemption.

56. Why is it not said simply and in a word that He died while Pontius Pilate is spike of, under whom He suffered? That is not only to make us certain of the history, but is also meant to signify that His death involved condemnation.

57. How is that?

He died to suffer the punishment due to us, and thus to deliver us from it. However, because we were guilty before the judgment of God as evil-doers, in order to represent us in person He was pleased to appear before the tribunal of an earthly judge, and to be condemned by his mouth, that we might be acquitted before the throne of the celestial Judge.

58. But Pilate pronounced Him innocent, and therefore did not condemn Him as if He were worthy of death (Matthew 27:24; Luke 23:14).

Both were involved. He was justified by the testimony of the judge, to show that He did not suffer for His own unworthiness but for ours and yet He was solemnly condemned by the sentence of the same judge, to show that He is truly our surety, receiving condemnation for us in order to acquit us from it.

59. That is well said, for if He had been a sinner He could not have suffered death for others; and yet in order that His condemnation might be our deliverance, He had to be reckoned among transgressors (Isaiah 53:12).

I understand so.

60. Is there greater importance in His having been crucified than if He had been put death in another way?

Yes, as Paul also shows us when he says that He hanged on a tree to take our curse upon Himself and acquit us of it (Galatians 3:13). For that kind of death was accursed of God (Deuteronomy 21:23).

61. What? Is it not to dishonour the Lord Jesus, to say He was subjected to the curse, and that before God? By no means, for in taking it upon Himself He abolished it, by His power, yet in such a

way that He did not cease to be blessed throughout in order that He might fill us with His blessing.

62. Explain the rest.

Since death was the curse on man as a result of sin, Jesus Christ has endured it, and in enduring it overcame it. And to show that He underwent a real death, He chose to be placed in the tomb like other men.

63. But nothing seems to redound to us from this victory, since we do not cease to die. That is no obstacle. The death of believers is nothing else than a way of entering into a better life.

64. Hence it follows that we ought no longer to dread death as if it were a fearful thing, but we should willingly follow Jesus Christ our Head and Captain, who precedes us, not in order to let us perish, but in order to save us. That is so.

65. What is the meaning of the additional clause: "He descended into hell"? That He not only suffered natural death, which is the separation of the body from the soul, but also that His soul was pierced with amazing anguish, which St. Peter calls the pains of death (Acts 2:24).

66. Why and how did that happen to Him?

Because He presented Himself to God in order to make satisfaction in the name of sinners, it was necessary that He should suffer fearful distress of conscience, as if He had been forsaken by God, and even as if God had become hostile to Him. It was in this extremity that He cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34).

67. Was His Father then opposed to Him?

No. But He had to be afflicted in this way in fulfillment of what had been foretold by Isaiah, that "he was smitten by the hand of God for our sins and wounded for our transgressions" (Isaiah 53:5; 1 Peter 2:24).

68. But since He is God Himself, how could He be in such dread, as if He were forsaken by God?

We must hold that it was according to His human nature that He was in that extremity: and that in order to allow this, His Deity held itself back a little, as if concealed, that is, did not how its power.

69. How is it possible that Jesus Christ, who is the salvation of the world, should have been under such damnation?

He was not to remain under it. For though He experienced the horror we have spoken of, He was by no means oppressed by it. On the contrary, He battled with the power of hell, to break and destroy it.

70. Thus we see the difference between the torment which He suffered and that which sinners experience when God punishes them in His wrath. For what He suffered for a time in Himself is perpetual in the others, and what was only a needle to sting Him is to them a sword to deliver a mortal wound.

It is so, for Jesus Christ, even in the midst of such distress, did not cease to hope in God. But sinners whom God condemns rush into despair, defy, and even blaspheme Him.

71. May we not gather from this what fruit we receive from the death of Jesus Christ?

Yes, indeed. And, first, we see that it is a sacrifice by which He has made satisfaction for us before the judgment of God, and so has appeased the wrath of God and reconciled us to Him. Secondly, that His blood is the laver by which our souls are cleansed from all stains. Finally, that by this death our sins are effaced, so as never to be remembered before God, and thus the debt which was against us is abolished.

72. Do we not have any other benefit from it?

Yes, we do. If we are true members of Christ, our old man is crucified, our flesh is mortified, so that evil desires no longer reign in us.

73. Expound the next article.| This is: "On the third day He rose again from the dead." By this He declared Himself the conqueror of death and sin, for by His resurrection He swallowed up death, broke the fetters of the devil, and destroyed all his powers (1 Peter 3:22).

74. In how many ways does this resurrection benefit us?

First, by it righteousness was fully acquired for us. Secondly, it is also a sure pledge to us that we shall rise again one day in immortal glory (1 Corinthians 15:20-23). Thirdly, if we truly participate in His resurrection, even now we are raised in newness of life, to serve God and to live a holy life according to His pleasure (Romans 6:4).

75. Continue.

"He ascended into heaven."

76. Did He ascend in such a way that He is no longer on earth?

Yes. For after He had performed all that He was enjoined by the Father, and was required for our salvation, there was no need for Him to remain on earth.

77. What benefit do we obtain from this ascension? The benefit is twofold. For inasmuch as Jesus Christ entered heaven in our name, as He had descended for our sake, He has given us an entry, and assured us that the door, previously shut because of sin, is now open for us (Romans 6:8-11). Secondly, He appears before the face of the Father as our Intercessor and Advocate (Hebrews 7:25).

78. But did Christ in going to heaven withdraw from us, in such a way that He has now ceased to be with us?

No. On the contrary, He has promised that He will be with us to the end (Matthew 28:20).

79. Is it in bodily presence that He remains with us?

No, for it is one thing to speak of His body which was taken up into heaven, and another to speak of His power, which is spread abroad everywhere (Luke 24:51; Acts 2:33).

80. How do you understand that He "sitteth on the right hand of the Father?

It means that He has received the dominion of heaven and earth, so that He reigns and rules over all (Matthew 28:18).

81. But what is meant by "right hand", and by "sitteth"?

It is a similitude taken from earthly princes, who are wont to place on their right hand those whom they make their lieutenants to govern in their name.

82. You do not mean anything more then than Paul when he says that Christ had been appointed Head of the Church, and raised above all principality, has secured a Name which is above every name (Ephesians 1:22; Ephesians 4:15; Php 2:9). That is so.

83. Continue.

"From thence He will come to judge the quick and the dead." That is to say, He will appear again from heaven in judgment, as He was seen to ascend (Acts 1:11).

84. As the judgment is not to be before the end of the world, how do you say that some men will then be alive, and thus will be dead, seeing it is appointed to al men once to die? (Hebrews 9:27-28).

Paul answers this question when he says, that those who then survive will suddenly be changed so that their corruption will be abolished, and their bodies will put on incorruption (1 Corinthians 15:52; 1 Thessalonians 4:17).

85. You understand then that this change will be for them like a death, for it will abolish their first nature, and raise them up in a new state. That is it.

86. Does the fact that Christ is to come gain to judge the world bring us any consolation?

Yes, indeed. For we are certain that He will appear only for our salvation.

87. We should not then fear the last judgment, and have a horror of it?

No, since we are not to come before any other judge then He who is our Advocate, and who has taken our cause in hand to defend us.

88. Let us come now to the third part. This is faith in the Holy Spirit.

89. What do we gain by it? The knowledge that as God has redeemed and saved us by Jesus Christ, He will also make us partakers of this redemption and salvation, through His Holy Spirit.

90. How? As the blood of Christ is our cleansing, the Holy Spirit must sprinkle our consciences with it that they may be cleansed (1 Peter 1:19).

91. This requires a clearer explanation.

I mean that the Holy Spirit, while He dwells in our hearts, makes us feel the virtue of our Lord Jesus (Romans 5:5). For He enlightens us to know His benefits; He seals and imprints them in our souls, and makes room for them in us (Ephesians 1:13). He regenerates us and makes us new creatures, so that through Him we receive all the blessings and gifts which are offered to us in Jesus Christ.

92. What follows? The fourth part, where it is said that we believe in the Catholic Church.

93. What is the Catholic Church? The community of the faithful which God has ordained and elected to eternal life.

94. Is it necessary to believe this article?

Yes, indeed, unless we want to make the death of Christ of none effect, and all that has already been said. The fruit that proceeds from it is the Church.

95. You mean then that up to this point we have spoken of the cause and foundation of salvation, how God has received us in love through the mediation of Jesus, and has confirmed this grace in us through His Holy Spirit. But now the effect and fulfillment of all this is explained in order to give us greater certainty.

It is so.

96. In what sense do you call the Church holy?

All whom God has chosen He justifies, and reforms to holiness and innocence, that His glory may be reflected in them (Romans 8:30). And so Jesus Christ sanctified the Church which He redeemed, that it might be glorious and without blemish (Ephesians 5:25-27).

97. What is meant by the word Catholic or Universal?

It is meant to signify, that there is only one Head of the faithful, so they must all be united in one body, so that there are not several churches but one only, which is extended throughout the whole world (Ephesians 4:15; 1 Corinthians 12:12 and 1 Corinthians 12:27).

98. And what is the meaning of what follows concerning the communion of saints? That is added to express more clearly the unity which exists among the members of the Church. Moreover by this we are given to understand, that all the benefits that the Lord gives to the Church, are for the good and salvation of every Church, because they all have communion together.

99. But is this holiness which you attribute to the Church already perfect? Not as long as she battles in this world, for elements of imperfection always remain and will never be entirely removed, until she is united completely to Jesus Christ her Head, by whom she is sanctified.

100. Can this Church be known in any other way than by believing in her?

There is indeed the visible Church of God, for the recognition of which He has certain signs, but here we speak properly of the fellowship of those whom He has elected to salvation which cannot be seen plainly by the eye.

101. What comes next?

I believe in "the forgiveness of sins".

102. What do you understand by this word "forgiveness"? That God by His pure goodness forgives and pardons the sins of believers, so that they are not brought to account before His judgment, in order to be punished.

103. Hence it follows that it is not at all through our own satisfaction that we desire to have God's pardon? That is true; for the Lord Jesus has made payment and born the punishment. We on our part could not make any recompense to God, but may only receive pardon for all our misdeeds through the pure generosity of God.

104. Why do you insert this article after the Church?

Because no man obtains pardon for his sins without being previously incorporated into the people of God, persevering in unity and communion with the Body of Christ in such a way as to be a true member of the Church.

105. And so outside the Church there is nothing but damnation and death?

Certainly, for all those who separate themselves from the community of the faithful to form a sect on its own, have no hope of salvation so long as they are in schism.

106. What follows?

I believe in "the resurrection of the flesh and the life everlasting".

107. Why is this article inserted? To show us that our happiness is not situated on the earth. This serves a two-fold end. We are to learn to pass through this world as though it were a foreign country, treating lightly all earthly things and declining to set our hearts on them. Secondly, we are not to lose courage, no matter how much we fail to perceive as yet the fruit of the grace which the Lord has wrought for us in Jesus Christ, but wait patiently until the time of revelation.

108. How will this resurrection take place?

Those who were formerly dead will resume their bodies, but with another quality; that is, they will no longer be subject to death or corruption, even although their substance will remain the same. Those who will survive God will miraculously raise up through a sudden change, as it is said (1 Corinthians 15:52).

109. Will this resurrection not be common to the evil and the good?

Yes indeed, but not in the same way. Some will rise to salvation and joy, others to condemnation and death (John 5:29; Matthew 25:46).

110. Why then is eternal life only spoken of here, and hell not at all?

Because nothing is set down in this summary that does not tend to the consolation of faithful consciences. It relates to us only the benefits which God performs for His servants. Accordingly no mention is made of the wicked, who are excluded from His Kingdom.

111. Since we have the foundation on which faith is laid, we should be quite able to gather from it what true faith is.

Yes, indeed, It is a sure and steadfast knowledge of the love of God toward us, according as He declares in His gospel that He is our Father and Saviour (through the mediation of Jesus Christ).

112. Can we have this by ourselves, or does it come from God?

Scripture teaches that it is the singular gift of the Holy Spirit, and experience also demonstrates it.

113. How so? Our mind is too weak to comprehend the spiritual wisdom of God which is revealed to us by faith, and our hearts are too prone either to defiance or to a perverse confidence in ourselves or creaturely things. But the Holy Spirit enlightens us to make us capable of understanding what would otherwise be incomprehensible to us, and fortifies us in certitude, sealing and imprinting the promises of salvation on our hearts.

114. What good comes to us from this faith, when we have it?

It justifies us before God, and makes us obtain eternal life.

115. How so? Is not man justified by good works in a holy life and in conformity to God?

If any one be found so perfect, he might well be deemed righteous, but since we are all poor sinners, we must look elsewhere for a worthiness in which to make answer before the judgment of God.

116. But are all our works so reprobate that they cannot merit grace before God?

First, all that we do of ourselves, by our own nature, is vicious, and therefore cannot please God. He condemns them all.

117. You say then that before God has received us in His grace, we can nothing but sin, just as a bad tree cannot but produce bad fruit? (Matthew 7:17).

It is so. For even if our works appear beautiful outwardly, yet they are evil, since the heart, to which God looks, is perverted.

118. Hence you conclude, that we cannot by our merits anticipate God, and so induce Him to be kind to us, but on the contrary that we do nothing but provoke Him to be against us?

Yes. And therefore I say: merely through His goodness, without any regard to our works, He is pleased to accept us freely in Jesus Christ, imputing His righteousness to us, and does not impute our sins to us (Titus 3:5-7).

119. What do you mean then by saying that a man is justified by faith? That in believing the promises of the gospel and in receiving them in true affiance of the heart, we enter into this righteousness.

120. You mean then that as God offers righteousness to us by the gospel, so it is by faith that we receive it?

Yes.

121. But after God has once received us, are the works which we do by His grace, not pleasing to Him?

Yes, they are, in that He generously accepts them, not however in virtue of their own worthiness.

122. How is that? Are they not accepted as worthy, seeing that they proceed from the Holy Spirit?

No. For there is always some weakness in them, the weakness of our flesh, through which they are defiled.

123. By what means, the, are they made acceptable?

It is by faith. That is to say, that a person is assured in his conscience that God will not examine him harshly, but covering his defects and impurities by the purity of Jesus Christ, He will regard him as perfect.

124. But can we say from this that a Christian man is justified by works after God has called him, or that through them he merits the love of God, and so obtains eternal life?

No. On the contrary, it is said that no man living will be justified in His sight (Psalms 143:2). Therefore we have to pray that He will not enter into judgment with us, nor call us to account.

125. You do not mean therefore that the good works of believers are useless?

No. For God promises to reward them fully, both in this world and in Paradise. But this comes from His gratuitous love toward us: moreover He buries all our faults, so as never to remember them.

126. But can we believe that we are justified, without doing good works? That is impossible. For to believe in Jesus Christ is to receive Him as He has given Himself to us. He promises not only to deliver us from death and restore us to favour with God His Father, through the merit of His innocence, but also to regenerate us by His Spirit, that we may be enabled to live in holiness.

127. Faith, then, not only does not make us careless of good works, but is the root from which they are produced.

It is so, and for this reason, the doctrine of the Gospel is comprehended in these two points, faith and repentance.

128. What is repentance?

Dissatisfaction with and a hatred of evil and a love good proceeding from the fear of God, and inducing us to mortify our flesh, so that we may be governed and led by the Holy Spirit, in the service of God.

129. But this second point we have mentioned concerning the Christian life.

Yes, and we said that the true and legitimate service of God is to obey His will.

130. Why?

Because He will not be served according to our own imagination, but in the way that pleases Him.

08.01.01. Chapter 1

Chapter 1. The knowledge of God and of ourselves mutually connected. Nature of the connection.

Sections 1. The sum of true wisdom, viz., the knowledge of God and of ourselves. Effects of the latter.

2. Effects of the knowledge of God, in humbling our pride, unveiling our hypocrisy, demonstrating the absolute perfections of God, and our own utter helplessness.

3. Effects of the knowledge of God illustrated by the examples, 1. of holy patriarchs; 2. of holy angels; 3. of the sun and moon.

1. Our wisdom, in so far as it ought to be deemed true and solid Wisdom, consists almost entirely of two parts: the knowledge of God and of ourselves. But as these are connected together by many ties, it is not easy to determine which of the two precedes and gives birth to the other. For, in the first place, no man can survey himself without forthwith turning his thoughts towards the God in whom he lives and moves; because it is perfectly obvious, that the endowments which we possess cannot possibly be from ourselves; nay, that our very being is nothing else than subsistence in God alone. In the second place, those blessings which unceasingly distil to us from heaven, are like streams conducting us to the fountain. Here, again, the infinitude of good which resides in God becomes more apparent from our poverty. In particular, the miserable ruin into which the revolt of the first man has plunged us, compels us to turn our eyes upwards; not only that while hungry and famishing we may thence ask what we want, but being aroused by fear may learn humility. For as there exists in man something like a world of misery, and ever since we were stript of the divine attire our naked shame discloses an immense series of disgraceful properties every man, being stung by the consciousness of his own unhappiness, in this way necessarily obtains at least some knowledge of God. Thus, our feeling of ignorance, vanity, want, weakness, in short, depravity and corruption, reminds us (see Calvin on John 4:10), that in the Lord, and none but He, dwell the true light of wisdom, solid virtue, exuberant goodness. We are accordingly urged by our own evil things to consider the good things of God; and, indeed, we cannot aspire to Him in earnest until we have begun to be displeased with ourselves. For what man is not disposed to rest in himself? Who, in fact, does not thus rest, so long as he is unknown to himself; that is, so long as he is contented with his own endowments, and unconscious or unmindful of his misery? Every person, therefore, on coming to the knowledge of himself, is not only urged to seek God, but is also led as by the hand to find him.

2. On the other hand, it is evident that man never attains to a true self-knowledge until he have previously contemplated the face of God, and come down after such contemplation to look into himself. For (such is our innate pride) we always seem to ourselves just, and upright, and wise, and holy, until we are convinced, by clear evidence, of our injustice, vileness, folly, and impurity. Convinced, however, we are not, if we look to ourselves only, and not to the Lord also - He being the only standard by the application of which this conviction can be produced. For, since we are all

naturally prone to hypocrisy, any empty semblance of righteousness is quite enough to satisfy us instead of righteousness itself. And since nothing appears within us or around us that is not tainted with very great impurity, so long as we keep our mind within the confines of human pollution, anything which is in some small degree less defiled delights us as if it were most pure just as an eye, to which nothing but black had been previously presented, deems an object of a whitish, or even of a brownish hue, to be perfectly white. Nay, the bodily sense may furnish a still stronger illustration of the extent to which we are deluded in estimating the powers of the mind. If, at mid-day, we either look down to the ground, or on the surrounding objects which lie open to our view, we think ourselves endued with a very strong and piercing eyesight; but when we look up to the sun, and gaze at it unveiled, the sight which did excellently well for the earth is instantly so dazzled and confounded by the refulgence, as to oblige us to confess that our acuteness in discerning terrestrial objects is mere dimness when applied to the sun. Thus too, it happens in estimating our spiritual qualities. So long as we do not look beyond the earth, we are quite pleased with our own righteousness, wisdom, and virtue; we address ourselves in the most flattering terms, and seem only less than demigods. But should we once begin to raise our thoughts to God, and reflect what kind of Being he is, and how absolute the perfection of that righteousness, and wisdom, and virtue, to which, as a standard, we are bound to be conformed, what formerly delighted us by its false show of righteousness will become polluted with the greatest iniquity; what strangely imposed upon us under the name of wisdom will disgust by its extreme folly; and what presented the appearance of virtuous energy will be condemned as the most miserable impotence. So far are those qualities in us, which seem most perfect, from corresponding to the divine purity.

3. Hence that dread and amazement with which as Scripture uniformly relates, holy men were struck and overwhelmed whenever they beheld the presence of God. When we see those who previously stood firm and secure so quaking with terror, that the fear of death takes hold of them, nay, they are, in a manner, swallowed up and annihilated, the inference to be drawn is that men are never duly touched and impressed with a conviction of their insignificance, until they have contrasted themselves with the majesty of God. Frequent examples of this consternation occur both in the Book of Judges and the Prophetical Writings; so much so, that it was a common expression among the people of God, “We shall die, for we have seen the Lord.” Hence the Book of Job, also, in humbling men under a conviction of their folly, feebleness, and pollution, always derives its chief argument from descriptions of the Divine wisdom, virtue, and purity. Nor without cause: for we see Abraham the readier to acknowledge himself but dust and ashes the nearer he approaches to behold the glory of the Lord, and Elijah unable to wait with unveiled face for His approach; so dreadful is the sight. And what can man do, man who is but rottenness and a worm, when even the Cherubim themselves must veil their faces in very terror? To this, undoubtedly, the Prophet Isaiah refers, when he says (Isaiah 24:23), “The moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of Hosts shall reign;” i. e., when he shall exhibit his refulgence, and give a nearer view of it, the brightest objects will, in comparison, be covered with darkness. But though the knowledge of God and the knowledge of ourselves are bound together by a mutual tie, due arrangement requires that we treat of the former in the first place, and then descend to the latter.

08.01.02. Chapter 2

Chapter 2. What it is to know God. Tendency of this knowledge.

Sections 1. The knowledge of God the Creator defined. The substance of this knowledge, and the use to be made of it.

2. Further illustration of the use, together with a necessary reproof of vain curiosity, and refutation of the Epicureans. The character of God as it appears to the pious mind, contrasted with the absurd views of the Epicureans. Religion defined.

1. By the knowledge of God, I understand that by which we not only conceive that there is some God, but also apprehend what it is for our interest, and conducive to his glory, what, in short, it is befitting to know concerning him. For, properly speaking, we cannot say that God is known where there is no religion or piety. I am not now referring to that species of knowledge by which men, in themselves lost and under curse, apprehend God as a Redeemer in Christ the Mediator. I speak only of that simple and primitive knowledge, to which the mere course of nature would have conducted us, had Adam stood upright. For although no man will now, in the present ruin of the human race, perceive God to be either a father, or the author of salvation, or propitious in any respect, until Christ interpose to make our peace; still it is one thing to perceive that God our Maker supports us by his power, rules us by his providence, fosters us by his goodness, and visits us with all kinds of blessings, and another thing to embrace the grace of reconciliation offered to us in Christ. Since, then, the Lord first appears, as well in the creation of the world as in the general doctrine of Scripture, simply as a Creator, and afterwards as a Redeemer in Christ, a twofold knowledge of him hence arises: of these the former is now to be considered, the latter will afterwards follow in its order. But although our mind cannot conceive of God, without rendering some worship to him, it will not, however, be sufficient simply to hold that he is the only being whom all ought to worship and adore, unless we are also persuaded that he is the fountain of all goodness, and that we must seek everything in him, and in none but him. My meaning is: we must be persuaded not only that as he once formed the world, so he sustains it by his boundless power, governs it by his wisdom, preserves it by his goodness, in particular, rules the human race with justice and judgement, bears with them in mercy, shields them by his protection; but also that not a particle of light, or wisdom, or justice, or power, or rectitude, or genuine truth, will anywhere be found, which does not flow from him, and of which he is not the cause; in this way we must learn to expect and ask all things from him, and thankfully ascribe to him whatever we receive. For this sense of the divine perfections is the proper master to teach us piety, out of which religion springs. By piety I mean that union of reverence and love to God which the knowledge of his benefits inspires. For, until men feel that they owe everything to God, that they are cherished by his paternal care, and that he is the author of all their blessings, so that nought is to be looked for away from him, they will never submit to him in voluntary obedience; nay, unless they place their entire happiness in him, they will never yield up their whole selves to him in truth and sincerity.

2. Those, therefore, who, in considering this question, propose to inquire what the essence of God is, only delude us with frigid speculations, it being much more our interest to know what kind of being God is, and what things are agreeable to his nature. For, of what use is it to join Epicures in acknowledging some God who has cast off the care of the world, and only delights himself in ease? What avails it, in short, to know a God with whom we have nothing to do? The effect of our knowledge rather ought to be, first, to teach us reverence and fear; and, secondly, to induce us, under its guidance and teaching, to ask every good thing from him, and, when it is received, ascribe it to him. For how can the idea of God enter your mind without instantly giving rise to the thought, that since you are his workmanship, you are bound, by the very law of creation, to submit to his authority? - that your life is due to him? - that whatever you do ought to have reference to him? If so, it undoubtedly follows that your life is sadly corrupted, if it is not framed in obedience to him, since his will ought to be the law of our lives. On the other hand, your idea of his nature is not clear unless you acknowledge him to be the origin and fountain of all goodness. Hence would arise both confidence in him, and a desire of cleaving to him, did not the depravity of the human mind lead it away from the proper course of investigation.

For, first of all, the pious mind does not devise for itself any kind of God, but looks alone to the one true God; nor does it feign for him any character it pleases, but is contented to have him in the character in which he manifests himself always guarding, with the utmost diligences against transgressing his will, and wandering, with daring presumptions from the right path. He by whom God is thus known perceiving how he governs all things, confides in him as his guardian and protector, and casts himself entirely upon his faithfulness, perceiving him to be the source of every blessing, if he is in any strait or feels any want, he instantly recurs to his protection and trusts to his aid - persuaded that he is good and merciful, he reclines upon him with sure confidence, and doubts not that, in the divine clemency, a remedy will be provided for his every time of need - acknowledging him as his Father and his Lords he considers himself bound to have respect to his authority in all things, to reverence his majesty aim at the advancement of his glory, and obey his commands, regarding him as a just judge, armed with severity to punish crimes, he keeps the judgement-seat always in his view. Standing in awe of it, he curbs himself, and fears to provoke his anger. Nevertheless, he is not so terrified by an apprehension of judgement as to wish he could withdraw himself, even if the means of escape lay before him; nays he embraces him not less as the avenger of wickedness than as the rewarder of the righteous; because he perceives that it equally appertains to his glory to store up punishment for the one, and eternal life for the other. Besides, it is not the mere fear of punishment that restrains him from sin. Loving and revering God as his father, honouring and obeying him as his master, although there were no hell, he would revolt at the very idea of offending him.

Such is pure and genuine religion, namely, confidence in God coupled with serious fear - fear, which both includes in it willing reverence, and brings along with it such legitimate worship as is prescribed by the law. And it ought to be more carefully considered that all men promiscuously do homage to God, but very few truly reverence him. On all hands there is abundance of ostentatious ceremonies, but sincerity of heart is rare.

08.01.03. Chapter 3

Chapter 3. The knowledge of God naturally implanted in the human mind.

Sections

1. The knowledge of God being manifested to all makes the reprobate without excuse. Universal belief and acknowledgement of the existence of God.

2. Objection - that religion and the belief of a Deity are the inventions of crafty politicians. Refutation of the objection. This universal belief confirmed by the examples of wicked men and Atheists.

3. Confirmed also by the vain endeavours of the wicked to banish all fear of God from their minds. Conclusion, that the knowledge of God is naturally implanted in the human mind.

1. That there exists in the human minds and indeed by natural instinct, some sense of Deity, we hold to be beyond dispute, since God himself, to prevent any man from pretending ignorance, has endued all men with some idea of his Godhead, the memory of which he constantly renews and occasionally enlarges, that all to a man being aware that there is a God, and that he is their Maker, may be condemned by their own conscience when they neither worship him nor consecrate their lives to his service. Certainly, if there is any quarter where it may be supposed that God is unknown, the most likely for such an instance to exist is among the dullest tribes farthest removed from civilisation. But, as a heathen tells us, there is no nation so barbarous, no race so brutish, as not to be imbued with the conviction that there is a God. Even those who, in other respects, seem to differ least from the lower animals, constantly retain some sense of religion; so thoroughly has this common conviction possessed the mind, so firmly is it stamped on the breasts of all men. Since, then, there never has been, from the very first, any quarter of the globe, any city, any household even, without religion, this amounts to a tacit confession, that a sense of Deity is inscribed on every heart. Nay, even idolatry is ample evidence of this fact. For we know how reluctant man is to lower himself, in order to set other creatures above him. Therefore, when he chooses to worship wood and stone rather than be thought to have no God, it is evident how very strong this impression of a Deity must be; since it is more difficult to obliterate it from the mind of man, than to break down the feelings of his nature - these certainly being broken down, when, in opposition to his natural haughtiness, he spontaneously humbles himself before the meanest object as an act of reverence to God.

2. It is most absurd, therefore, to maintain, as some do, that religion was devised by the cunning and craft of a few individuals, as a means of keeping the body of the people in due subjection, while there was nothing which those very individuals, while teaching others to worship God, less believed than the existence of a God. I readily acknowledge, that designing men have introduced a vast number of fictions into religion, with the view of inspiring the populace with reverence or striking them with terror, and thereby rendering them more obsequious; but they never could have succeeded in this, had the minds of men not been previously imbued with that uniform belief in

God, from which, as from its seed, the religious propensity springs. And it is altogether incredible that those who, in the matter of religion, cunningly imposed on their ruder neighbours, were altogether devoid of a knowledge of God. For though in old times there were some, and in the present day not a few are found, who deny the being of a God, yet, whether they will or not, they occasionally feel the truth which they are desirous not to know. We do not read of any man who broke out into more unbridled and audacious contempt of the Deity than C. Caligula, and yet none showed greater dread when any indication of divine wrath was manifested. Thus, however unwilling, he shook with terror before the God whom he professedly studied to condemn. You may every day see the same thing happening to his modern imitators. The most audacious despiser of God is most easily disturbed, trembling at the sound of a falling leaf. How so, unless in vindication of the divine majesty, which smites their consciences the more strongly the more they endeavour to flee from it. They all, indeed, look out for hiding-places where they may conceal themselves from the presence of the Lord, and again efface it from their mind; but after all their efforts they remain caught within the net. Though the conviction may occasionally seem to vanish for a moment, it immediately returns, and rushes in with new impetuosity, so that any interval of relief from the gnawing of conscience is not unlike the slumber of the intoxicated or the insane, who have no quiet rest in sleep, but are continually haunted with dire horrific dreams. Even the wicked themselves, therefore, are an example of the fact that some idea of God always exists in every human mind.

3. All men of sound judgement will therefore hold, that a sense of Deity is indelibly engraven on the human heart. And that this belief is naturally engendered in all, and thoroughly fixed as it were in our very bones, is strikingly attested by the contumacy of the wicked, who, though they struggle furiously, are unable to extricate themselves from the fear of God. Though Diagoras, and others of like stamps make themselves merry with whatever has been believed in all ages concerning religion, and Dionysus scoffs at the judgement of heaven, it is but a Sardonian grin; for the worm of conscience, keener than burning steel, is gnawing them within. I do not say with Cicero, that errors wear out by age, and that religion increases and grows better day by day. For the world (as will be shortly seen) labours as much as it can to shake off all knowledge of God, and corrupts his worship in innumerable ways. I only say, that, when the stupid hardness of heart, which the wicked eagerly court as a means of despising God, becomes enfeebled, the sense of Deity, which of all things they wished most to be extinguished, is still in vigour, and now and then breaks forth. Whence we infer, that this is not a doctrine which is first learned at school, but one as to which every man is, from the womb, his own master; one which nature herself allows no individual to forget, though many, with all their might, strive to do so. Moreover, if all are born and live for the express purpose of learning to know God, and if the knowledge of God, in so far as it fails to produce this effect, is fleeting and vain, it is clear that all those who do not direct the whole thoughts and actions of their lives to this end fail to fulfil the law of their being. This did not escape the observation even of philosophers. For it is the very thing which Plato meant (in Phoed. et Theact.) when he taught, as he often does, that the chief good of the soul consists in resemblance to God; i.e., when, by means of knowing him, she is wholly transformed into him. Thus Gryllus, also, in Plutarch (lib. guod bruta anim. ratione utantur), reasons most skilfully, when he affirms that, if once religion is banished from the lives of men, they not only in no respect excel, but are, in many respects, much more wretched than the brutes, since, being exposed to so many forms of evil, they continually drag on a troubled and restless existence: that the only thing, therefore, which

makes them superior is the worship of God, through which alone they aspire to immortality.

08.01.04. Chapter 4.

Chapter 4. The knowledge of God stifled or corrupted, ignorantly or maliciously.

Sections

1. The knowledge of God suppressed by ignorance, many falling away into superstition. Such persons, however, inexcusable, because their error is accompanied with pride and stubbornness.

2. Stubbornness the companion of impiety.

3. No pretext can justify superstition. This proved, first, from reason; and, secondly, from Scripture.

4. The wicked never willingly come into the presence of God. Hence their hypocrisy. Hence, too, their sense of Deity leads to no good result.

1. But though experience testifies that a seed of religion is divinely sown in all, scarcely one in a hundred is found who cherishes it in his heart, and not one in whom it grows to maturity so far is it from yielding fruit in its season. Moreover, while some lose themselves in superstitious observances, and others, of set purpose, wickedly revolt from God, the result is, that, in reward to the true knowledge of him, all are so degenerate, that in no part of the world can genuine godliness be found. In saying that some fall away into superstition, I mean not to insinuate that their excessive absurdity frees them from guilt; for the blindness under which they labour is almost invariably accompanied with vain pride and stubbornness. Mingled vanity and pride appear in this, that when miserable men do seek after God, instead of ascending higher than themselves as they ought to do, they measure him by their own carnal stupidity, and neglecting solid inquiry, fly off to indulge their curiosity in vain speculation. Hence, they do not conceive of him in the character in which he is manifested, but imagine him to be whatever their own rashness has devised. This abyss standing open, they cannot move one footstep without rushing headlong to destruction. With such an idea of God, nothing which they may attempt to offer in the way of worship or obedience can have any value in his sight, because it is not him they worship, but, instead of him, the dream and figment of their own heart. This corrupt procedure is admirably described by Paul, when he says, that “thinking to be wise, they became fools” (Romans 1:22). He had previously said that “they became vain in their imaginations,” but lest any should suppose them blameless, he afterwards adds that they were deservedly blinded, because, not contented with sober inquiry, because, arrogating to themselves more than they have any title to do, they of their own accord court darkness, nay, bewitch themselves with perverse, empty show. Hence it is that their folly, the result not only of vain curiosity, but of licentious desire and overweening confidence in the pursuit of forbidden knowledge, cannot be excused.

2. The expression of David (Psalms 14:1, Psalms 53:1), “The fool has said in his heart, There is no God,” is primarily applied to those who, as will shortly farther appear, stifle the light of nature, and intentionally stupefy themselves. We see many, after they have become hardened in a daring course of sin, madly banishing all remembrance of God, though spontaneously suggested to them

from within, by natural sense. To show how detestable this madness is, the Psalmist introduces them as distinctly denying that there is a God, because although they do not disown his essence, they rob him of his justice and providence, and represent him as sitting idly in heaven. Nothing being less accordant with the nature of God than to cast off the government of the world, leaving it to chance, and so to wink at the crimes of men that they may wanton with impunity in evil courses; it follows, that every man who indulges in security, after extinguishing all fear of divine judgement, virtually denies that there is a God. As a just punishment of the wicked, after they have closed their own eyes, God makes their hearts dull and heavy, and hence, seeing, they see not. David, indeed, is the best interpreter of his own meaning, when he says elsewhere, the wicked has “no fear of God before his eyes” (Psalms 36:1); and, again, “He has said in his heart, God has forgotten; he hideth his face; he will never see it.” Thus although they are forced to acknowledge that there is some God, they, however, rob him of his glory by denying his power. For, as Paul declares, “If we believe not, he abideth faithful, he cannot deny himself” (2 Timothy 2:13; so those who feign to themselves a dead and dumb idol, are truly said to deny God. It is, moreover, to be observed, that though they struggle with their own convictions, and would fain not only banish God from their minds, but from heaven also, their stupefaction is never so complete as to secure them from being occasionally dragged before the divine tribunal. Still, as no fear restrains them from rushing violently in the face of God, so long as they are hurried on by that blind impulse, it cannot be denied that their prevailing state of mind in regard to him is brutish oblivion.

3. In this way, the vain pretext which many employ to clothe their superstition is overthrown. They deem it enough that they have some kind of zeal for religion, how preposterous soever it may be, not observing that true religion must be conformable to the will of God as its unerring standard; that he can never deny himself, and is no spectra or phantom, to be metamorphosed at each individual’s caprice. It is easy to see how superstition, with its false glosses, mocks God, while it tries to please him. Usually fastening merely on things on which he has declared he sets no value, it either contemptuously overlooks, or even undisguisedly rejects, the things which he expressly enjoins, or in which we are assured that he takes pleasure. Those, therefore, who set up a fictitious worship, merely worship and adore their own delirious fancies; indeed, they would never dare so to trifle with God, had they not previously fashioned him after their own childish conceits. Hence that vague and wandering opinion of Deity is declared by an apostle to be ignorance of God: “Howbeit, then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods.” And he elsewhere declares, that the Ephesians were “without God” (Ephesians 2:12) at the time when they wandered without any correct knowledge of him. It makes little difference, at least in this respect, whether you hold the existence of one God, or a plurality of gods, since, in both cases alike, by departing from the true God, you have nothing left but an execrable idol. It remains, therefore, to conclude with Lactantius (Instit. Div. lib i. 2, 6), “No religion is genuine that is not in accordance with truth.”

4. To this fault they add a second, viz., that when they do think of God it is against their will; never approaching him without being dragged into his presence, and when there, instead of the voluntary fear flowing from reverence of the divine majesty, feeling only that forced and servile fear which divine judgement extorts judgement which, from the impossibility of escape, they are compelled to dread, but which, while they dread, they at the same time also hate. To impiety, and to it alone, the saying of Statius properly applies: “Fear first brought gods into the world” (Theb. lib.

i). Those whose inclinations are at variance with the justice of God, knowing that his tribunal has been erected for the punishment of transgression, earnestly wish that that tribunal were overthrown. Under the influence of this feeling they are actually warring against God, justice being one of his essential attributes. Perceiving that they are always within reach of his power, that resistance and evasion are alike impossible, they fear and tremble. Accordingly, to avoid the appearance of condemning a majesty by which all are overawed, they have recourse to some species of religious observance, never ceasing meanwhile to defile themselves with every kind of vice, and add crime to crime, until they have broken the holy law of the Lord in every one of its requirements, and set his whole righteousness at nought; at all events, they are not so restrained by their semblance of fear as not to luxuriate and take pleasure in iniquity, choosing rather to indulge their carnal propensities than to curb them with the bridle of the Holy Spirit. But since this shadow of religion (it scarcely even deserves to be called a shadow) is false and vain, it is easy to infer how much this confused knowledge of God differs from that piety which is instilled into the breasts of believers, and from which alone true religion springs. And yet hypocrites would fain, by means of tortuous windings, make a show of being near to God at the very time they are fleeing from him. For while the whole life ought to be one perpetual course of obedience, they rebel without fear in almost all their actions, and seek to appease him with a few paltry sacrifices; while they ought to serve him with integrity of heart and holiness of life, they endeavour to procure his favour by means of frivolous devices and punctilios of no value. Nay, they take greater license in their grovelling indulgences, because they imagine that they can fulfil their duty to him by preposterous expiations; in short, while their confidence ought to have been fixed upon him, they put him aside, and rest in themselves or the creatures. At length they bewilder themselves in such a maze of error, that the darkness of ignorance obscures, and ultimately extinguishes, those sparks which were designed to show them the glory of God. Still, however, the conviction that there is some Deity continues to exist, like a plant which can never be completely eradicated, though so corrupt, that it is only capable of producing the worst of fruit. Nay, we have still stronger evidence of the proposition for which I now contend, viz., that a sense of Deity is naturally engraven on the human heart, in the fact, that the very reprobate are forced to acknowledge it. When at their ease, they can jest about God, and talk pertly and loquaciously in disparagement of his power; but should despair, from any cause, overtake them, it will stimulate them to seek him, and dictate ejaculatory prayers, proving that they were not entirely ignorant of God, but had perversely suppressed feelings which ought to have been earlier manifested.

08.01.05. Chapter 5.

Chapter 5. The knowledge of God conspicuous in the creation, and continual government of the world. This chapter consists of two parts:

1. The former, which occupies the first ten sections, divides all the works of God into two great classes, and elucidates the knowledge of God as displayed in each class. The one class is treated of in the first six, and the other in the four following sections:

2. The latter part of the chapter shows, that, in consequence of the extreme stupidity of men, those manifestations of God, however perspicuous, lead to no useful result. This latter part, which commences at the eleventh section, is continued to the end of the chapter.

Sections 1. The invisible and incomprehensible essence of God, to a certain extent, made visible in his works.

2. This declared by the first class of works, viz., the admirable motions of the heavens and the earth, the symmetry of the human body, and the connection of its parts; in short, the various objects which are presented to every eye.

3. This more especially manifested in the structure of the human body.

4. The shameful ingratitude of disregarding God, who, in such a variety of ways, is manifested within us. The still more shameful ingratitude of contemplating the endowments of the soul, without ascending to Him who gave them. No objection can be founded on any supposed organism in the soul.

5. The powers and actions of the soul, a proof of its separate existence from the body. Proofs of the soul’s immortality. Objection that the whole world is quickened by one soul. Reply to the objection. Its impiety.

6. Conclusion from what has been said, viz., that the omnipotence, eternity, and goodness of God, may be learned from the first class of works, i. e., those which are in accordance with the ordinary course of nature.

7. The second class of works, viz., those above the ordinary course of nature, afford clear evidence of the perfections of God, especially his goodness, justice, and mercy.

8. Also his providence, power, and wisdom.

9. Proofs and illustrations of the divine Majesty. The use of them, viz., the acquisition of divine knowledge in combination with true piety.

10. The tendency of the knowledge of God to inspire the righteous with the hope of future life, and remind the wicked of the punishments reserved for them. Its tendency, moreover, to keep alive in the hearts of the righteous a sense of the divine goodness.

11. The second part of the chapter, which describes the stupidity both of learned and unlearned, in ascribing the whole order of things, and the admirable arrangements of divine Providence, to fortune.

12. Hence Polytheism, with all its abominations, and the endless and irreconcilable opinions of the philosophers concerning God.

13. All guilty of revolt from God, corrupting pure religion, either by following general custom, or the impious consent of antiquity.

14. Though irradiated by the wondrous glories of creation, we cease not to follow our own ways.

15. Our conduct altogether inexcusable, the dullness of perception being attributable to ourselves, while we are fully reminded of the true path, both by the structure and the government of the world.

1. Since the perfection of blessedness consists in the knowledge of God, he has been pleased, in order that none might be excluded from the means of obtaining felicity, not only to deposit in our minds that seed of religion of which we have already spoken, but so to manifest his perfections in the whole structure of the universe, and daily place himself in our view, that we cannot open our eyes without being compelled to behold him. His essence, indeed, is incomprehensible, utterly transcending all human thought; but on each of his works his glory is engraven in characters so bright, so distinct, and so illustrious, that none, however dull and illiterate, can plead ignorance as their excuse. Hence, with perfect truth, the Psalmist exclaims, “He covereth himself with light as with a garment” (Psalms 104:2); as if he had said, that God for the first time was arrayed in visible attire when, in the creation of the world, he displayed those glorious banners, on which, to whatever side we turn, we behold his perfections visibly portrayed. In the same place, the Psalmist aptly compares the expanded heavens to his royal tent, and says, “He layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters, maketh the clouds his chariot, and walketh upon the wings of the wind,” sending forth the winds and lightnings as his swift messengers. And because the glory of his power and wisdom is more refulgent in the firmament, it is frequently designated as his palace. And, first, wherever you turn your eyes, there is no portion of the world, however minute, that does not exhibit at least some sparks of beauty; while it is impossible to contemplate the vast and beautiful fabric as it extends around, without being overwhelmed by the immense weight of glory. Hence, the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews elegantly describes the visible worlds as images of the invisible (Hebrews 11:3), the elegant structure of the world serving us as a kind of mirror, in which we may behold God, though otherwise invisible. For the same reason, the Psalmist attributes language to celestial objects, a language which all nations understand (Psalms 19:1), the manifestation of the Godhead being too clear to escape the notice of any people, however obtuse. The apostle Paul, stating this still more clearly, says, “That which may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has showed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead” (Romans 1:20).

2. In attestation of his wondrous wisdom, both the heavens and the earth present us with innumerable proofs not only those more recondite proofs which astronomy, medicine, and all the natural sciences, are designed to illustrate, but proofs which force themselves on the notice of the most illiterate peasant, who cannot open his eyes without beholding them. It is true, indeed, that

those who are more or less intimately acquainted with those liberal studies are thereby assisted and enabled to obtain a deeper insight into the secret workings of divine wisdom. No man, however, though he be ignorant of these, is incapacitated for discerning such proofs of creative wisdom as may well cause him to break forth in admiration of the Creator. To investigate the motions of the heavenly bodies, to determine their positions, measure their distances, and ascertain their properties, demands skill, and a more careful examination; and where these are so employed, as the Providence of God is thereby more fully unfolded, so it is reasonable to suppose that the mind takes a loftier flight, and obtains brighter views of his glory. Still, none who have the use of their eyes can be ignorant of the divine skill manifested so conspicuously in the endless variety, yet distinct and well ordered array, of the heavenly host; and, therefore, it is plain that the Lord has furnished every man with abundant proofs of his wisdom. The same is true in regard to the structure of the human frame. To determine the connection of its parts, its symmetry and beauty, with the skill of a Galen (Lib. De Usu Partium), requires singular acuteness; and yet all men acknowledge that the human body bears on its face such proofs of ingenious contrivance as are sufficient to proclaim the admirable wisdom of its Maker.

3. Hence certain of the philosophers have not improperly called man a microcosm (miniature world), as being a rare specimen of divine power, wisdom, and goodness, and containing within himself wonders sufficient to occupy our minds, if we are willing so to employ them. Paul, accordingly, after reminding the Athenians that they “might feel after God and find him,” immediately adds, that “he is not far from every one of us” (Acts 17:27); every man having within himself undoubted evidence of the heavenly grace by which he lives, and moves, and has his being. But if, in order to apprehend God, it is unnecessary to go farther than ourselves, what excuse can there be for the sloth of any man who will not take the trouble of descending into himself that he may find Him? For the same reason, too, David, after briefly celebrating the wonderful name and glory of God, as everywhere displayed, immediately exclaims, “What is man, that thou art mindful of him?” and again, “Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast ordained strength” (Psalms 8:2, Psalms 8:4). Thus he declares not only that the human race are a bright mirror of the Creator’s works, but that infants hanging on their mothers’ breasts have tongues eloquent enough to proclaim his glory without the aid of other orators. Accordingly, he hesitates not to bring them forward as fully instructed to refute the madness of those who, from devilish pride, would fain extinguish the name of God. Hence, too, the passage which Paul quotes from Aratus, “We are his offspring” (Acts 17:28), the excellent gifts with which he has endued us attesting that he is our Father. In the same way also, from natural instinct, and, as it were, at the dictation of experience, heathen poets called him the father of men. No one, indeed, will voluntarily and willingly devote himself to the service of God unless he has previously tasted his paternal love, and been thereby allured to love and reverence Him.

4. But herein appears the shameful ingratitude of men. Though they have in their own persons a factory where innumerable operations of God are carried on, and a magazine stored with treasures of inestimable value - instead of bursting forth in his praise, as they are bound to do, they, on the contrary, are the more inflated and swelled with pride. They feel how wonderfully God is working in them, and their own experience tells them of the vast variety of gifts which they owe to his liberality. Whether they will or not, they cannot but know that these are proofs of his Godhead, and yet they inwardly suppress them. They have no occasion to go farther than

themselves, provided they do not, by appropriating as their own that which has been given them from heaven, put out the light intended to exhibit God clearly to their minds. At this day, however, the earth sustains on her bosom many monster minds - minds which are not afraid to employ the seed of Deity deposited in human nature as a means of suppressing the name of God. Can any thing be more detestable than this madness in man, who, finding God a hundred times both in his body and his soul, makes his excellence in this respect a pretext for denying that there is a God? He will not say that chance has made him differ from the brutes that perish; but, substituting nature as the architect of the universe, he suppresses the name of God. The swift motions of the soul, its noble faculties and rare endowments, bespeak the agency of God in a manner which would make the suppression of it impossible, did not the Epicureans, like so many Cyclops, use it as a vantageground, from which to wage more audacious war with God. Are so many treasures of heavenly wisdom employed in the guidance of such a worm as man, and shall the whole universe be denied the same privilege? To hold that there are organs in the soul corresponding to each of its faculties, is so far from obscuring the glory of God, that it rather illustrates it. Let Epicurus tell what concourse of atoms, cooking meat and drink, can form one portion into refuse and another portion into blood, and make all the members separately perform their office as carefully as if they were so many souls acting with common consent in the superintendence of one body.

5. But my business at present is not with that stye: I wish rather to deal with those who, led away by absurd subtleties, are inclined, by giving an indirect turn to the frigid doctrine of Aristotle, to employ it for the purpose both of disproving the immortality of the soul, and robbing God of his rights. Under the pretext that the faculties of the soul are organised, they chain it to the body as if it were incapable of a separate existence, while they endeavour as much as in them lies, by pronouncing eulogiums on nature, to suppress the name of God. But there is no ground for maintaining that the powers of the soul are confined to the performance of bodily functions. What has the body to do with your measuring the heavens, counting the number of the stars, ascertaining their magnitudes, their relative distances, the rate at which they move, and the orbits which they describe? I deny not that Astronomy has its use; all I mean to show is, that these lofty investigations are not conducted by organised symmetry, but by the faculties of the soul itself apart altogether from the body. The single example I have given will suggest many others to the reader. The swift and versatile movements of the soul in glancing from heaven to earth, connecting the future with the past, retaining the remembrance of former years, nay, forming creations of its own - its skill, moreover, in making astonishing discoveries, and inventing so many wonderful arts, are sure indications of the agency of God in man. What shall we say of its activity when the body is asleep, its many revolving thoughts, its many useful suggestions, its many solid arguments, nay, its presentiment of things yet to come? What shall we say but that man bears about with him a stamp of immortality which can never be effaced? But how is it possible for man to be divine, and yet not acknowledge his Creator? Shall we, by means of a power of judging implanted in our breast, distinguish between justice and injustice, and yet there be no judge in heaven? Shall some remains of intelligence continue with us in sleep, and yet no God keep watch in heaven? Shall we be deemed the inventors of so many arts and useful properties that God may be defrauded of his praise, though experience tells us plainly enough, that whatever we possess is dispensed to us in unequal measures by another hand? The talk of certain persons concerning a secret inspiration quickening the whole world, is not only silly, but altogether profane. Such persons are delighted with the following celebrated passage of Virgil:

Know, first, that heaven, and earth's compacted frame, And flowing waters, and the starry flame, And both the radiant lights, one common soul Inspires and feeds - and animates the whole. This active mind, infused through all the space, Unites and mingles with the mighty mass:

Hence, men and beasts the breath of life obtain, And birds of air, and monsters of the main.

Th' ethereal vigour is in all the same, And every soul is filled with equal flame. The meaning of all this is, that the world, which was made to display the glory of God, is its own creator. For the same poet has, in another place, adopted a view common to both Greeks and Latins:

Hence to the bee some sages have assigned A portion of the God, and heavenly mind; For God goes forth, and spreads throughout the whole, Heaven, earth, and sea, the universal soul;

Each, at its birth, from him all beings share, Both man and brute, the breath of vital air; To him return, and, loosed from earthly chain, Fly whence they sprung, and rest in God again;

Spurn at the grave, and, fearless of decay, Dwell in high heaven, art star th' ethereal way.

Here we see how far that jejune speculation, of a universal mind animating and invigorating the world, is fitted to beget and foster piety in our minds. We have a still clearer proof of this in the profane verses which the licentious Lucretius has written as a deduction from the same principle. The plain object is to form an unsubstantial deity, and thereby banish the true God whom we ought to fear and worship. I admit, indeed that the expressions "Nature is God," may be piously used, if dictated by a pious mind; but as it is inaccurate and harsh (Nature being more properly the order which has been established by God), in matters which are so very important, and in regard to which special reverence is due, it does harm to confound the Deity with the inferior operations of his hands.

6. Let each of us, therefore, in contemplating his own nature, remember that there is one God who governs all natures, and, in governing, wishes us to have respect to himself, to make him the object of our faith, worship, and adoration. Nothing, indeed, can be more preposterous than to enjoy those noble endowments which bespeak the divine presence within us, and to neglect him who, of his own good pleasure, bestows them upon us. In regard to his power, how glorious the manifestations by which he urges us to the contemplation of himself; unless, indeed, we pretend not to know whose energy it is that by a word sustains the boundless fabric of the universe - at one time making heaven reverberate with thunder, sending forth the scorching lightning, and setting the whole atmosphere in a blaze; at another, causing the raging tempests to blow, and forthwith, in one moment, when it so pleases him, making a perfect calm; keeping the sea, which seems constantly threatening the earth with devastation, suspended as it were in air; at one time, lashing it into fury by the impetuosity of the winds; at another, appeasing its rage, and stilling all its waves. Here we might refer to those glowing descriptions of divine power, as illustrated by natural events, which occur throughout Scripture; but more especially in the book of Job, and the prophecies of Isaiah. These, however, I purposely omit, because a better opportunity of introducing them will be found when I come to treat of the Scriptural account of the creation. (Infra, chap. 14 sec. 1, 2, 20, sq). I only wish to observe here, that this method of investigating the divine perfections, by tracing the lineaments of his countenance as shadowed forth in the firmament and on the earth, is common both to those within and to those without the pale of the Church. From the power of God we are naturally led to consider his eternity since that from which all other things derive their origin

must necessarily be selfexistent and eternal. Moreover, if it be asked what cause induced him to create all things at first, and now inclines him to preserve them, we shall find that there could be no other cause than his own goodness. But if this is the only cause, nothing more should be required to draw forth our love towards him; every creature, as the Psalmist reminds us, participating in his mercy. “His tender mercies are over all his works” (Psalms 145:9).

7. In the second class of God’s works, namely those which are above the ordinary course of nature, the evidence of his perfections are in every respect equally clear. For in conducting the affairs of men, he so arranges the course of his providence, as daily to declare, by the clearest manifestations, that though all are in innumerable ways the partakers of his bounty, the righteous are the special objects of his favour, the wicked and profane the special objects of his severity. It is impossible to doubt his punishment of crimes; while at the same time he, in no unequivocal manner, declares that he is the protector, and even the avenger of innocence, by shedding blessings on the good, helping their necessities, soothing and solacing their griefs, relieving their sufferings, and in all ways providing for their safety. And though he often permits the guilty to exult for a time with impunity, and the innocent to be driven to and fro in adversity, nay, even to be wickedly and iniquitously oppressed, this ought not to produce any uncertainty as to the uniform justice of all his procedure. Nay, an opposite inference should be drawn. When any one crime calls forth visible manifestations of his anger, it must be because he hates all crimes; and, on the other hand, his leaving many crimes unpunished, only proves that there is a judgement in reserve, when the punishment now delayed shall be inflicted. In like manner, how richly does he supply us with the means of contemplating his mercy when, as frequently happens, he continues to visit miserable sinners with unwearied kindness, until he subdues their depravity, and woos them back with more than a parent’s fondness?

8. To this purpose the Psalmist (Psalms 107:1-43) mentioning how God, in a wondrous manner, often brings sudden and unexpected succour to the miserable when almost on the brink of despair, whether in protecting them when they stray in deserts, and at length leading them back into the right path, or supplying them with food when famishing for want, or delivering them when captive from iron fetters and foul dungeons, or conducting them safe into harbour after shipwreck, or bringing them back from the gates of death by curing their diseases, or, after burning up the fields with heat and drought, fertilising them with the river of his grace, or exalting the meanest of the people, and casting down the mighty from their lofty seats - the Psalmist, after bringing forward examples of this description, infers that those things which men call fortuitous events, are so many proofs of divine providence, and more especially of paternal clemency, furnishing ground of joy to the righteous, and at the same time stopping the mouths of the ungodly. But as the greater part of mankind, enslaved by error, walk blindfold in this glorious theatre, he exclaims that it is a rare and singular wisdom to meditate carefully on these works of God, which many, who seem most sharp-sighted in other respects, behold without profit. It is indeed true, that the brightest manifestation of divine glory finds not one genuine spectator among a hundred. Still, neither his power nor his wisdom is shrouded in darkness. His power is strikingly displayed when the rage of the wicked, to all appearance irresistible, is crushed in a single moment; their arrogance subdued, their strongest bulwarks overthrown, their armour dashed to pieces, their strength broken, their schemes defeated without an effort, and audacity which set itself above the heavens is precipitated to the lowest depths of the earth. On the other hand, the poor are raised up out of the

dust, and the needy lifted out of the dung hill (Psalms 113:7), the oppressed and afflicted are rescued in extremity, the despairing animated with hope, the unarmed defeat the armed, the few the many, the weak the strong. The excellence of the divine wisdom is manifested in distributing everything in due season, confounding the wisdom of the world, and taking the wise in their own craftiness (1 Corinthians 3:19); in short, conducting all things in perfect accordance with reason.

9. We see there is no need of a long and laborious train of argument in order to obtain proofs which illustrate and assert the Divine Majesty. The few which we have merely touched, show them to be so immediately within our reach in every quarter, that we can trace them with the eye, or point to them with the finger. And here we must observe again (see chap. 2 sec. 2), that the knowledge of God which we are invited to cultivate is not that which, resting satisfied with empty speculation, only flutters in the brain, but a knowledge which will prove substantial and fruitful wherever it is duly perceived, and rooted in the heart. The Lord is manifested by his perfections. When we feel their power within us, and are conscious of their benefits, the knowledge must impress us much more vividly than if we merely imagined a God whose presence we never felt. Hence it is obvious, that in seeking God, the most direct path and the fittest method is, not to attempt with presumptuous curiosity to pry into his essence, which is rather to be adored than minutely discussed, but to contemplate him in his works, by which he draws near, becomes familiar, and in a manner communicates himself to us. To this the Apostle referred when he said, that we need not go far in search of him (Acts 17:27), because, by the continual working of his power, he dwells in every one of us. Accordingly, David (Psalms 145:1-21), after acknowledging that his greatness is unsearchable, proceeds to enumerate his works, declaring that his greatness will thereby be unfolded. It therefore becomes us also diligently to prosecute that investigation of God which so enraptures the soul with admiration as, at the same time, to make an efficacious impression on it. And, as Augustine expresses it (in Psalms 144:1-15), since we are unable to comprehend Him, and are, as it were, overpowered by his greatness, our proper course is to contemplate his works, and so refresh ourselves with his goodness.

10. By the knowledge thus acquired, we ought not only to be stimulated to worship God, but also aroused and elevated to the hope of future life. For, observing that the manifestations which the Lord gives both of his mercy and severity are only begun and incomplete, we ought to infer that these are doubtless only a prelude to higher manifestations, of which the full display is reserved for another state. Conversely, when we see the righteous brought into affliction by the ungodly, assailed with injuries, overwhelmed with calumnies, and lacerated by insult and contumely, while, on the contrary, the wicked flourish, prosper, acquire ease and honour, and all these with impunity, we ought forthwith to infer, that there will be a future life in which iniquity shall receive its punishment, and righteousness its reward. Moreover, when we observe that the Lord often lays his chastening rod on the righteous, we may the more surely conclude, that far less will the righteous ultimately escape the scourges of his anger. There is a well-known passage in Augustine (De Civitat. Dei, lib. 1 c. 8), “Were all sin now visited with open punishment, it might be thought that nothing was reserved for the final judgement; and, on the other hand, were no sin now openly punished, it might be supposed there was no divine providence.” It must be acknowledged, therefore, that in each of the works of God, and more especially in the whole of them taken together, the divine perfections are delineated as in a picture, and the whole human race thereby invited and allured to acquire the knowledge of God, and, in consequence of this knowledge, true

and complete felicity. Moreover, while his perfections are thus most vividly displayed, the only means of ascertaining their practical operation and tendency is to descend into ourselves, and consider how it is that the Lord there manifests his wisdom, power, and energy - how he there displays his justice, goodness, and mercy. For although David (Psalms 92:6) justly complains of the extreme infatuation of the ungodly in not pondering the deep counsels of God, as exhibited in the government of the human race, what he elsewhere says (Psalms 40:1-17) is most true, that the wonders of the divine wisdom in this respect are more in number than the hairs of our head. But I leave this topic at present, as it will be more fully considered afterwards in its own place (Book I. ch. 16, sec. 6-9).

11. Bright, however, as is the manifestation which God gives both of himself and his immortal kingdom in the mirror of his works, so great is our stupidity, so dull are we in regard to these bright manifestations, that we derive no benefit from them. For in regard to the fabric and admirable arrangement of the universe, how few of us are there who, in lifting our eyes to the heavens, or looking abroad on the various regions of the earth, ever think of the Creator? Do we not rather overlook Him, and sluggishly content ourselves with a view of his works? And then in regard to supernatural events, though these are occurring every day, how few are there who ascribe them to the ruling providence of God - how many who imagine that they are casual results produced by the blind evolutions of the wheel of chance? Even when under the guidance and direction of these events, we are in a manner forced to the contemplation of God (a circumstance which all must occasionally experience), and are thus led to form some impressions of Deity, we immediately fly off to carnal dreams and depraved fictions, and so by our vanity corrupt heavenly truth. This far, indeed, we differ from each other, in that every one appropriates to himself some peculiar error; but we are all alike in this, that we substitute monstrous fictions for the one living and true God - a disease not confined to obtuse and vulgar minds, but affecting the noblest, and those who, in other respects, are singularly acute. How lavishly in this respect have the whole body of philosophers betrayed their stupidity and want of sense? To say nothing of the others whose absurdities are of a still grosser description, how completely does Plato, the soberest and most religious of them all, lose himself in his round globe? What must be the case with the rest, when the leaders, who ought to have set them an example, commit such blunders, and labour under such hallucinations? In like manner, while the government of the world places the doctrine of providence beyond dispute, the practical result is the same as if it were believed that all things were carried hither and thither at the caprice of chance; so prone are we to vanity and error. I am still referring to the most distinguished of the philosophers, and not to the common herd, whose madness in profaning the truth of God exceeds all bounds.

12. Hence that immense flood of error with which the whole world is overflowed. Every individual mind being a kind of labyrinth, it is not wonderful, not only that each nation has adopted a variety of fictions, but that almost every man has had his own god. To the darkness of ignorance have been added presumption and wantonness, and hence there is scarcely an individual to be found without some idol or phantom as a substitute for Deity. Like water gushing forth from a large and copious spring, immense crowds of gods have issued from the human mind, every man giving himself full license, and devising some peculiar form of divinity, to meet his own views. It is unnecessary here to attempt a catalogue of the superstitions with which the world was overspread. The thing were endless; and the corruptions themselves, though not a word should be

said, furnish abundant evidence of the blindness of the human mind. I say nothing of the rude and illiterate vulgar; but among the philosophers who attempted, by reason and learning, to pierce the heavens, what shameful disagreement! The higher any one was endued with genius, and the more he was polished by science and art, the more specious was the colouring which he gave to his opinions. All these, however, if examined more closely, will be found to be vain show. The Stoics plumed themselves on their acuteness, when they said that the various names of God might be extracted from all the parts of nature, and yet that his unity was not thereby divided: as if we were not already too prone to vanity, and had no need of being presented with an endless multiplicity of gods, to lead us further and more grossly into error. The mystic theology of the Egyptians shows how sedulously they laboured to be thought rational on this subject. And, perhaps, at the first glance, some show of probability might deceive the simple and unwary; but never did any mortal devise a scheme by which religion was not foully corrupted. This endless variety and confusion emboldened the Epicureans, and other gross despisers of piety, to cut off all sense of God. For when they saw that the wisest contradicted each others they hesitated not to infer from their dissensions, and from the frivolous and absurd doctrines of each, that men foolishly, and to no purpose, brought torment upon themselves by searching for a God, there being none: and they thought this inference safe, because it was better at once to deny God altogether, than to feign uncertain gods, and thereafter engage in quarrels without end. They, indeed, argue absurdly, or rather weave a cloak for their impiety out of human ignorance; though ignorance surely cannot derogate from the prerogatives of God. But since all confess that there is no topic on which such difference exists, both among learned and unlearned, the proper inference is, that the human mind, which thus errs in inquiring after God, is dull and blind in heavenly mysteries. Some praise the answer of Simonides, who being asked by King Hero what God was, asked a day to consider. When the king next day repeated the question, he asked two days; and after repeatedly doubling the number of days, at length replied, “The longer I consider, the darker the subject appears.” He, no doubt, wisely suspended his opinion, when he did not see clearly: still his answer shows, that if men are only naturally taught, instead of having any distinct, solid, or certain knowledge, they fasten only on contradictory principles, and, in consequence, worship an unknown God.

13. Hence we must hold, that whosoever adulterates pure religion (and this must be the case with all who cling to their own views), make a departure from the one God. No doubt, they will allege that they have a different intention; but it is of little consequence what they intend or persuade themselves to believe, since the Holy Spirit pronounces all to be apostates, who, in the blindness of their minds, substitute demons in the place of God. For this reason Paul declares that the Ephesians were “without God” (Ephesians 2:12), until they had learned from the Gospel what it is to worship the true God. Nor must this be restricted to one people only, since, in another place, he declares in general, that all men “became vain in their imaginations,” after the majesty of the Creator was manifested to them in the structure of the world. Accordingly, in order to make way for the only true God, he condemns all the gods celebrated among the Gentiles as lying and false, leaving no Deity anywhere but in Mount Zion where the special knowledge of God was professed (Habakkuk 2:18, Habakkuk 2:20). Among the Gentiles in the time of Christ, the Samaritans undoubtedly made the nearest approach to true piety; yet we hear from his own mouth that they worshipped they knew not what (John 4:22); whence it follows that they were deluded by vain errors. In short, though all did not give way to gross vice, or rush headlong into open idolatry, there

was no pure and authentic religion founded merely on common belief. A few individuals may not have gone all insane lengths with the vulgar; still Paul's declaration remains true, that the wisdom of God was not apprehended by the princes of this world (1 Corinthians 2:8). But if the most distinguished wandered in darkness, what shall we say of the refuse? No wonder, therefore, that all worship of man's device is repudiated by the Holy Spirit as degenerate. Any opinion which man can form in heavenly mysteries, though it may not beget a long train of errors, is still the parent of error. And though nothing worse should happen, even this is no light sin - to worship an unknown God at random. Of this sin, however, we hear from our Saviour's own mouth (John 4:22), that all are guilty who have not been taught out of the law who the God is whom they ought to worship. Nay, even Socrates in Xenophon (lib. 1 Memorabilia), lauds the response of Apollo enjoining every man to worship the gods according to the rites of his country, and the particular practice of his own city. But what right have mortals thus to decide of their own authority in a matter which is far above the world; or who can so acquiesce in the will of his forefathers, or the decrees of the people, as unhesitatingly to receive a god at their hands? Every one will adhere to his own judgement, sooner than submit to the dictation of others. Since, therefore, in regulating the worship of God, the custom of a city, or the consent of antiquity, is a too feeble and fragile bond of piety; it remains that God himself must bear witness to himself from heaven.

14. In vain for us, therefore, does Creation exhibit so many bright lamps lighted up to show forth the glory of its Author. Though they beam upon us from every quarter, they are altogether insufficient of themselves to lead us into the right path. Some sparks, undoubtedly, they do throw out; but these are quenched before they can give forth a brighter effulgence. Wherefore, the apostle, in the very place where he says that the worlds are images of invisible things, adds that it is by faith we understand that they were framed by the word of God (Hebrews 11:3); thereby intimating that the invisible Godhead is indeed represented by such displays, but that we have no eyes to perceive it until they are enlightened through faith by internal revelation from God. When Paul says that that which may be known of God is manifested by the creation of the world, he does not mean such a manifestation as may be comprehended by the wit of man (Romans 1:19); on the contrary, he shows that it has no further effect than to render us inexcusable (Acts 17:27). And though he says, elsewhere, that we have not far to seek for God, inasmuch as he dwells within us, he shows, in another passage, to what extent this nearness to God is availing. God, says he, "in times past, suffered all nations to walk in their own ways. Nevertheless, he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness" (Acts 14:16, Acts 14:17). But though God is not left without a witness, while, with numberless varied acts of kindness, he woos men to the knowledge of himself, yet they cease not to follow their own ways, in other words, deadly errors.

15. But though we are deficient in natural powers which might enable us to rise to a pure and clear knowledge of God, still, as the dullness which prevents us is within, there is no room for excuse. We cannot plead ignorance, without being at the same time convicted by our own consciences both of sloth and ingratitude. It were, indeed, a strange defence for man to pretend that he has no ears to hear the truth, while dumb creatures have voices loud enough to declare it; to allege that he is unable to see that which creatures without eyes demonstrate, to excuse himself on the ground of weakness of mind, while all creatures without reason are able to teach. Wherefore, when we wander and go astray, we are justly shut out from every species of excuse, because all

things point to the right path. But while man must bear the guilt of corrupting the seed of divine knowledge so wondrously deposited in his mind, and preventing it from bearing good and genuine fruit, it is still most true that we are not sufficiently instructed by that bare and simple, but magnificent testimony which the creatures bear to the glory of their Creator. For no sooner do we, from a survey of the world, obtain some slight knowledge of Deity, than we pass by the true God, and set up in his stead the dream and phantom of our own brain, drawing away the praise of justice, wisdom, and goodness, from the fountain-head, and transferring it to some other quarter. Moreover, by the erroneous estimate we form, we either so obscure or pervert his daily works, as at once to rob them of their glory and the author of them of his just praise.

08.01.06. Chapter 06

Chapter 6. The need of Scripture, as a guide and teacher, in coming to God as a Creator.

Sections

1. God gives his elect a better help to the knowledge of himself, viz., the Holy Scriptures. This he did from the very first.

2. First, By oracles and visions, and the ministry of the Patriarchs. Secondly, By the promulgation of the Law, and the preaching of the Prophets. Why the doctrines of religion are committed to writing.

3. This view confirmed, 1. By the depravity of our nature making it necessary in every one who would know God to have recourse to the word; 2. From those passages of the Psalms in which God is introduced as reigning.

4. Another confirmation from certain direct statements in the Psalms. Lastly, From the words of our Saviour.

1. Therefore, though the effulgence which is presented to every eye, both in the heavens and on the earth, leaves the ingratitude of man without excuse, since God, in order to bring the whole human race under the same condemnation, holds forth to all, without exception, a mirror of his Deity in his works, another and better help must be given to guide us properly to God as a Creator. Not in vain, therefore, has he added the light of his Word in order that he might make himself known unto salvation, and bestowed the privilege on those whom he was pleased to bring into nearer and more familiar relation to himself. For, seeing how the minds of men were carried to and fro, and found no certain resting-place, he chose the Jews for a peculiar people, and then hedged them in that they might not, like others, go astray. And not in vain does he, by the same means, retain us in his knowledge, since but for this, even those who, in comparison of others, seem to stand strong, would quickly fall away. For as the aged, or those whose sight is defective, when any books however fair, is set before them, though they perceive that there is something written are scarcely able to make out two consecutive words, but, when aided by glasses, begin to read distinctly, so Scripture, gathering together the impressions of Deity, which, till then, lay confused in our minds, dissipates the darkness, and shows us the true God clearly. God therefore bestows a gift of singular value, when, for the instruction of the Church, he employs not dumb teachers merely, but opens his own sacred mouth; when he not only proclaims that some God must be worshipped, but at the same time declares that He is the God to whom worship is due; when he not only teaches his elect to have respect to God, but manifests himself as the God to whom this respect should be paid. The course which God followed towards his Church from the very first, was to supplement these common proofs by the addition of his Word, as a surer and more direct means of discovering himself. And there can be no doubt that it was by this help, Adam, Noah, Abraham, and the other patriarchs, attained to that familiar knowledge which, in a manner, distinguished them from unbelievers. I am not now speaking of the peculiar doctrines of faith by

which they were elevated to the hope of eternal blessedness. It was necessary, in passing from death unto life, that they should know God, not only as a Creator, but as a Redeemer also; and both kinds of knowledge they certainly did obtain from the Word. In point of order, however, the knowledge first given was that which made them acquainted with the God by whom the world was made and is governed. To this first knowledge was afterwards added the more intimate knowledge which alone quickens dead souls, and by which God is known not only as the Creator of the worlds and the sole author and disposer of all events, but also as a Redeemer, in the person of the Mediator. But as the fall and the corruption of nature have not yet been considered, I now postpone the consideration of the remedy (for which, see Book 2 Chronicles 6:1-42 &c). Let the reader then remember, that I am not now treating of the covenant by which God adopted the children of Abraham, or of that branch of doctrine by which, as founded in Christ, believers have, properly speaking, been in all ages separated from the profane heathen. I am only showing that it is necessary to apply to Scripture, in order to learn the sure marks which distinguish God, as the Creator of the world, from the whole herd of fictitious gods. We shall afterward, in due course, consider the work of Redemption. In the meantime, though we shall adduce many passages from the New Testament, and some also from the Law and the Prophets, in which express mention is made of Christ, the only object will be to show that God, the Maker of the world, is manifested to us in Scripture, and his true character expounded, so as to save us from wandering up and down, as in a labyrinth, in search of some doubtful deity.

2. Whether God revealed himself to the fathers by oracles and visions, or, by the instrumentality and ministry of men, suggested what they were to hand down to posterity, there cannot be a doubt that the certainty of what he taught them was firmly engraven on their hearts, so that they felt assured and knew that the things which they learnt came forth from God, who invariably accompanied his word with a sure testimony, infinitely superior to mere opinion. At length, in order that, while doctrine was continually enlarged, its truth might subsist in the world during all ages, it was his pleasure that the same oracles which he had deposited with the fathers should be consigned, as it were, to public records. With this view the law was promulgated, and prophets were afterwards added to be its interpreters. For though the uses of the law were manifold (Book 2 Chronicles 7:1-22; 2 Chronicles 8:1-18), and the special office assigned to Moses and all the prophets was to teach the method of reconciliation between God and man (whence Paul calls Christ “the end of the law,” Romans 10:4); still I repeat that, in addition to the proper doctrine of faith and repentance in which Christ is set forth as a Mediator, the Scriptures employ certain marks and tokens to distinguish the only wise and true God, considered as the Creator and Governor of the world, and thereby guard against his being confounded with the herd of false deities. Therefore, while it becomes man seriously to employ his eyes in considering the works of God, since a place has been assigned him in this most glorious theatre that he may be a spectator of them, his special duty is to give ear to the Word, that he may the better profit. Hence it is not strange that those who are born in darkness become more and more hardened in their stupidity; because the vast majority instead of confining themselves within due bounds by listening with docility to the Word, exult in their own vanity. If true religion is to beam upon us, our principle must be, that it is necessary to begin with heavenly teaching, and that it is impossible for any man to obtain even the minutest portion of right and sound doctrine without being a disciple of Scripture. Hence, the first step in true knowledge is taken, when we reverently embrace the testimony which God has been pleased therein to give of himself. For not only does faith, full and perfect faith, but

all correct knowledge of God, originate in obedience. And surely in this respect God has with singular Providence provided for mankind in all ages.

3. For if we reflect how prone the human mind is to lapse into forgetfulness of God, how readily inclined to every kind of error, how bent every now and then on devising new and fictitious religions, it will be easy to understand how necessary it was to make such a depository of doctrine as would secure it from either perishing by the neglect, vanishing away amid the errors, or being corrupted by the presumptuous audacity of men. It being thus manifest that God, foreseeing the inefficiency of his image imprinted on the fair form of the universe, has given the assistance of his Word to all whom he has ever been pleased to instruct effectually, we, too, must pursue this straight path, if we aspire in earnest to a genuine contemplation of God - we must go, I say, to the Word, where the character of God, drawn from his works is described accurately and to the life; these works being estimated, not by our depraved judgement, but by the standard of eternal truth. If, as I lately said, we turn aside from it, how great soever the speed with which we move, we shall never reach the goal, because we are off the course. We should consider that the brightness of the Divine countenance, which even an apostle declares to be inaccessible (1 Timothy 6:16), is a kind of labyrinth - a labyrinth to us inextricable, if the Word do not serve us as a thread to guide our path; and that it is better to limp in the way, than run with the greatest swiftness out of it. Hence the Psalmist, after repeatedly declaring (Psalms 93:1-5, Psalms 96:1-13, Psalms 97:1-12, Psalms 99:1-9, &c.) that superstition should be banished from the world in order that pure religion may flourish, introduces God as reigning; meaning by the term, not the power which he possesses and which he exerts in the government of universal nature, but the doctrine by which he maintains his due supremacy: because error never can be eradicated from the heart of man until the true knowledge of God has been implanted in it.

4. Accordingly, the same prophet, after mentioning that the heavens declare the glory of God, that the firmament sheweth forth the works of his hands, that the regular succession of day and night proclaim his Majesty, proceeds to make mention of the Word: “The law of the Lord,” says he, “is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes” (Psalms 19:1-9). For though the law has other uses besides (as to which, see Book 2 Chronicles 7:1-22, sec. 6, sec. 10, sec. 12), the general meaning is, that it is the proper school for training the children of God; the invitation given to all nations, to behold him in the heavens and earth, proving of no avail. The same view is taken in the Psalms 29:1-11, where the Psalmist, after discoursing on the dreadful voice of God, which, in thunder, wind, rain, whirlwind, and tempest, shakes the earth, makes the mountains tremble, and breaks the cedars, concludes by saying, “that in his temple does every one speak of his glory,” unbelievers being deaf to all God’s words when they echo in the air. In like manner another Psalm, after describing the raging billows of the sea, thus concludes, “Thy testimonies are very sure; holiness becometh thine house for ever” (Psalms 93:5). To the same effect are the words of our Saviour to the Samaritan woman, when he told her that her nation and all other nations worshipped they knew not what; and that the Jews alone gave worship to the true God (John 4:22). Since the human mind, through its weakness, was altogether unable to come to God if not aided and upheld by his sacred word, it necessarily followed that all mankind, the Jews excepted, inasmuch as they sought God without the Word, were labouring under vanity and error.

08.01.07. Chapter 07

Chapter 7. The testimony of the Spirit necessary to give full authority to Scripture. The impiety of pretending that the credibility of scripture depends on the judgement of the church.

Sections

1. The authority of Scripture derived not from men, but from the Spirit of God. Objection, That Scripture depends on the decision of the Church. Refutation, I. The truth of God would thus be subjected to the will of man. II. It is insulting to the Holy Spirit. III. It establishes a tyranny in the Church. IV. It forms a mass of errors. V. It subverts conscience. VI. It exposes our faith to the scoffs of the profane.

2. Another reply to the objection drawn from the words of the Apostle Paul. Solution of the difficulties started by opponents. A second objection refuted.

3. A third objection founded on a sentiment of Augustine considered.

4. Conclusion, That the authority of Scripture is founded on its being spoken by God. This confirmed by the conscience of the godly, and the consent of all men of the least candour. A fourth objection common in the mouths of the profane. Refutation.

5. Last and necessary conclusion, That the authority of Scripture is sealed on the hearts of believers by the testimony of the Holy Spirit. The certainty of this testimony. Confirmation of it from a passage of Isaiah, and the experience of believers. Also, from another passage of Isaiah 1:1-31. Before proceeding farther, it seems proper to make some observations on the authority of Scripture, in order that our minds may not only be prepared to receive it with reverence, but be divested of all doubt. When that which professes to be the Word of God is acknowledged to be so, no person, unless devoid of common sense and the feelings of a man, will have the desperate hardihood to refuse credit to the speaker. But since no daily responses are given from heaven, and the Scriptures are the only records in which God has been pleased to consign his truth to perpetual remembrance, the full authority which they ought to possess with the faithful is not recognised, unless they are believed to have come from heaven, as directly as if God had been heard giving utterance to them. This subject well deserves to be treated more at large, and pondered more accurately. But my readers will pardon me for having more regard to what my plan admits than to what the extent of this topic requires. A most pernicious error has very generally prevailed; viz., that Scripture is of importance only in so far as conceded to it by the suffrage of the Church; as if the eternal and inviolable truth of God could depend on the will of men. With great insult to the Holy Spirit, it is asked, who can assure us that the Scriptures proceeded from God; who guarantee that they have come down safe and unimpaired to our times; who persuade us that this book is to be received with reverence, and that one expunged from the list, did not the Church regulate all these things with certainty? On the determination of the Church, therefore, it is said, depend both the reverence which is due to Scripture, and the books which are to be admitted into the canon. Thus profane men, seeking, under the pretext of the Church, to introduce unbridled

tyranny, care not in what absurdities they entangle themselves and others, provided they extort from the simple this one acknowledgement, viz., that there is nothing which the Church cannot do. But what is to become of miserable consciences in quest of some solid assurance of eternal life, if all the promises with regard to it have no better support than man's judgement? On being told so, will they cease to doubt and tremble? On the other hand, to what jeers of the wicked is our faith subjected - into how great suspicion is it brought with all, if believed to have only a precarious authority lent to it by the good will of men?

2. These ravings are admirably refuted by a single expression of an apostle. Paul testifies that the Church is "built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets" (Ephesians 2:20). If the doctrine of the apostles and prophets is the foundation of the Church, the former must have had its certainty before the latter began to exist. Nor is there any room for the cavil, that though the Church derives her first beginning from thence, it still remains doubtful what writings are to be attributed to the apostles and prophets, until her judgement is interposed. For if the Christian Church was founded at first on the writings of the prophets, and the preaching of the apostles, that doctrine, wheresoever it may be found, was certainly ascertained and sanctioned antecedently to the Church, since, but for this, the Church herself never could have existed. Nothings therefore can be more absurd than the fiction, that the power of judging Scripture is in the Church, and that on her nod its certainty depends. When the Church receives it, and gives it the stamp of her authority, she does not make that authentic which was otherwise doubtful or controverted but, acknowledging it as the truth of God, she, as in duty bounds shows her reverence by an unhesitating assent. As to the question, How shall we be persuaded that it came from God without recurring to a decree of the Church? it is just the same as if it were asked, How shall we learn to distinguish light from darkness, white from black, sweet from bitter? Scripture bears upon the face of it as clear evidence of its truth, as white and black do of their colour, sweet and bitter of their taste.

3. I am aware it is usual to quote a sentence of Augustine in which he says that he would not believe the gospel, were he not moved by the authority of the Church (Aug. Cont. Epist. Fundament. c. 5). But it is easy to discover from the context, how inaccurate and unfair it is to give it such a meaning. He was reasoning against the Manichees, who insisted on being implicitly believed, alleging that they had the truth, though they did not show they had. But as they pretended to appeal to the gospel in support of Manes, he asks what they would do if they fell in with a man who did not even believe the gospel - what kind of argument they would use to bring him over to their opinion. He afterwards adds, "But I would not believe the gospel," &c.; meaning, that were he a stranger to the faith, the only thing which could induce him to embrace the gospel would be the authority of the Church. And is it any thing wonderful, that one who does not know Christ should pay respect to men?

Augustine, therefore, does not here say that the faith of the godly is founded on the authority of the Church; nor does he mean that the certainty of the gospel depends upon it; he merely says that unbelievers would have no certainty of the gospel, so as thereby to win Christ, were they not influenced by the consent of the Church. And he clearly shows this to be his meaning, by thus expressing himself a little before: "When I have praised my own creed, and ridiculed yours, who do you suppose is to judge between us; or what more is to be done than to quit those who, inviting us to certainty, afterwards command us to believe uncertainty, and follow those who invite us, in the first instance, to believe what we are not yet able to comprehend, that waxing stronger through

faith itself, we may become able to understand what eve believe - no longer men, but God himself internally strengthening and illuminating our minds?" These unquestionably are the words of Augustine (August. Cont. Epist. Fundament. cap. 4); and the obvious inference from them is, that this holy man had no intention to suspend our faith in Scripture on the nod or decision of the Church, but only to intimate (what we too admit to be true) that those who are not yet enlightened by the Spirit of God, become teachable by reverence for the Church, and thus submit to learn the faith of Christ from the gospel. In this way, though the authority of the Church leads us on, and prepares us to believe in the gospel, it is plain that Augustine would have the certainty of the godly to rest on a very different foundation. At the same time, I deny not that he often presses the Manichees with the consent of the whole Church, while arguing in support of the Scriptures, which they rejected. Hence he upbraids Faustus (lib. 32) for not submitting to evangelical truth - truth so well founded, so firmly established, so gloriously renowned, and handed down by sure succession from the days of the apostles. But he nowhere insinuates that the authority which we give to the Scriptures depends on the definitions or devices of men. He only brings forward the universal judgement of the Church, as a point most pertinent to the cause, and one, moreover, in which he had the advantage of his opponents. Any one who desires to see this more fully proved may read his short treatises De Utilitate Credendi (The Advantages of Believing), where it will be found that the only facility of believing which he recommends is that which affords an introduction, and forms a fit commencement to inquiry; while he declares that we ought not to be satisfied with opinion, but to strive after substantial truth.

4. It is necessary to attend to what I lately said, that our faith in doctrine is not established until we have a perfect conviction that God is its author. Hence, the highest proof of Scripture is uniformly taken from the character of him whose Word it is. The prophets and apostles boast not their own acuteness or any qualities which win credit to speakers, nor do they dwell on reasons; but they appeal to the sacred name of God, in order that the whole world may be compelled to submission. The next thing to be considered is, how it appears not probable merely, but certain, that the name of God is neither rashly nor cunningly pretended. If, then, we would consult most effectually for our consciences, and save them from being driven about in a whirl of uncertainty, from wavering, and even stumbling at the smallest obstacle, our conviction of the truth of Scripture must be derived from a higher source than human conjectures, judgements, or reasons; namely, the secret testimony of the Spirit. It is true, indeed, that if we choose to proceed in the way of arguments it is easy to establish, by evidence of various kinds, that if there is a God in heaven, the Law, the Prophecies, and the Gospel, proceeded from him. Nay, although learned men, and men of the greatest talent, should take the opposite side, summoning and ostentatiously displaying all the powers of their genius in the discussion; if they are not possessed of shameless effrontery, they will be compelled to confess that the Scripture exhibits clear evidence of its being spoken by God, and, consequently, of its containing his heavenly doctrine. We shall see a little farther on, that the volume of sacred Scripture very far surpasses all other writings. Nay, if we look at it with clear eyes, and unblessed judgement, it will forthwith present itself with a divine majesty which will subdue our presumptuous opposition, and force us to do it homage.

Still, however, it is preposterous to attempt, by discussion, to rear up a full faith in Scripture. True, were I called to contend with the craftiest despisers of God, I trust, though I am not possessed of the highest ability or eloquence, I should not find it difficult to stop their obstreperous mouths; I

could, without much ado, put down the boastings which they mutter in corners, were anything to be gained by refuting their cavils. But although we may maintain the sacred Word of God against gainsayers, it does not follow that we shall forthwith implant the certainty which faith requires in their hearts. Profane men think that religion rests only on opinion, and, therefore, that they may not believe foolishly, or on slight grounds, desire and insist to have it proved by reason that Moses and the prophets were divinely inspired. But I answer, that the testimony of the Spirit is superior to reason. For as God alone can properly bear witness to his own words, so these words will not obtain full credit in the hearts of men, until they are sealed by the inward testimony of the Spirit. The same Spirit, therefore, who spoke by the mouth of the prophets, must penetrate our hearts, in order to convince us that they faithfully delivered the message with which they were divinely entrusted. This connection is most aptly expressed by Isaiah in these words, “My Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed’s seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever” (Isaiah 59:21). Some worthy persons feel disconcerted, because, while the wicked murmur with impunity at the Word of God, they have not a clear proof at hand to silence them, forgetting that the Spirit is called an earnest and seal to confirm the faith of the godly, for this very reason, that, until he enlightens their minds, they are tossed to and fro in a sea of doubts.

5. Let it therefore be held as fixed, that those who are inwardly taught by the Holy Spirit acquiesce implicitly in Scripture; that Scripture carrying its own evidence along with it, deigns not to submit to proofs and arguments, but owes the full conviction with which we ought to receive it to the testimony of the Spirit. Enlightened by him, we no longer believe, either on our own judgement or that of others, that the Scriptures are from God; but, in a way superior to human judgement, feel perfectly assured - as much so as if we beheld the divine image visibly impressed on it - that it came to us, by the instrumentality of men, from the very mouth of God. We ask not for proofs or probabilities on which to rest our judgement, but we subject our intellect and judgement to it as too transcendent for us to estimate. This, however, we do, not in the manner in which some are wont to fasten on an unknown object, which, as soon as known, displeases, but because we have a thorough conviction that, in holding it, we hold unassailable truth; not like miserable men, whose minds are enslaved by superstition, but because we feel a divine energy living and breathing in it - an energy by which we are drawn and animated to obey it, willingly indeed, and knowingly, but more vividly and effectually than could be done by human will or knowledge. Hence, God most justly exclaims by the mouth of Isaiah, “Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen, that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he” (Isaiah 43:10).

Such, then, is a conviction which asks not for reasons; such, a knowledge which accords with the highest reason, namely knowledge in which the mind rests more firmly and securely than in any reasons; such in fine, the conviction which revelation from heaven alone can produce. I say nothing more than every believer experiences in himself, though my words fall far short of the reality. I do not dwell on this subject at present, because we will return to it again: only let us now understand that the only true faith is that which the Spirit of God seals on our hearts. Nay, the modest and teachable reader will find a sufficient reason in the promise contained in Isaiah, that all the children of the renovated Church “shall be taught of the Lord” (Isaiah 54:13). This singular privilege God bestows on his elect only, whom he separates from the rest of mankind. For what is the beginning of true doctrine but prompt alacrity to hear the Word of God? And God, by the mouth

of Moses, thus demands to be heard: “It is not in heavens that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear and do it? But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart” (Deuteronomy 30:12, Deuteronomy 30:14). God having been pleased to reserve the treasure of intelligence for his children, no wonder that so much ignorance and stupidity is seen in the generality of mankind. In the generality, I include even those specially chosen, until they are ingrafted into the body of the Church. Isaiah, moreover, while reminding us that the prophetical doctrine would prove incredible not only to strangers, but also to the Jews, who were desirous to be thought of the household of God, subjoins the reason, when he asks, “To whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?” (Isaiah 53:1). If at any time, then we are troubled at the small number of those who believe, let us, on the other hand, call to mind, that none comprehend the mysteries of God save those to whom it is given.

08.01.08. Chapter 08

Chapter 8. The credibility of Scripture sufficiently proved in so far as natural reason admits. This chapter consists of four parts. The first contains certain general proofs which may be easily gathered out of the writings both of the Old and New Testament, viz., the arrangement of the sacred volume, its dignity, truth, simplicity, efficacy, and majesty, sec. 1, 2. The second part contains special proofs taken from the Old Testament, viz., the antiquity of the books of Moses, their authority, his miracles and prophecies, sec. 3-7; also, the predictions of the other prophets and their wondrous harmony, sec. 8. There is subjoined a refutation of two objections to the books of Moses and the Prophets, sec. 9, 10. The third part exhibits proofs gathered out of the New Testament, e. g., the harmony of the Evangelists in their account of heavenly mysteries, the majesty of the writings of John, Peter, and Paul, the remarkable calling of the Apostles and conversion of Paul, sec. 11. The last part exhibits the proofs drawn from ecclesiastical history, the perpetual consent of the Church in receiving and preserving divine truth, the invincible force of the truth in defending itself, the agreement of the godly (though otherwise differing so much from one another), the pious profession of the same doctrine by many illustrious men; in fine, the more than human constancy of the martyrs, sec. 12, 13. This is followed by a conclusion of the particular topic discussed.

Sections

1. Secondary helps to establish the credibility of Scripture. I. The arrangement of the sacred volume. II. Its dignity. III. Its truth. IV. Its simplicity. V. Its efficacy.

2. The majesty conspicuous in the writings of the Prophets.

3. Special proofs from the Old Testament. I. The antiquity of the Books of Moses.

4. This antiquity contrasted with the dreams of the Egyptians. II. The majesty of the Books of Moses.

5. The miracles and prophecies of Moses. A profane objection refuted.

6. Another profane objection refuted.

7. The prophecies of Moses as to the sceptre not departing from Judah, and the calling of the Gentiles.

8. The predictions of other prophets. The destruction of Jerusalem; and the return from the Babylonish captivity. Harmony of the Prophets. The celebrated prophecy of Daniel 9:1-27. Objection against Moses and the Prophets. Answer to it.

10. Another objection and answer. Of the wondrous Providence of God in the preservation of the sacred books. The Greek Translation. The carefulness of the Jews.

11. Special proofs from the New Testament. I. The harmony of the Evangelists, and the sublime simplicity of their writings. II. The majesty of John, Paul, and Peter. III. The calling of the Apostles. IV. The conversion of Paul.

12. Proofs from Church history. I. Perpetual consent of the Church in receiving and preserving the truth. II. The invincible power of the truth itself. III. Agreement among the godly, notwithstanding of their many differences in other respects.

13. The constancy of the martyrs. Conclusion. Proofs of this description only of use after the certainty of Scripture has been established in the heart by the Holy Spirit.

1. In vain were the authority of Scripture fortified by argument, or supported by the consent of the Church, or confirmed by any other helps, if unaccompanied by an assurance higher and stronger than human judgement can give. Till this better foundation has been laid, the authority of Scripture remains in suspense. On the other hand, when recognising its exemption from the common rule, we receive it reverently, and according to its dignity, those proofs which were not so strong as to produce and rivet a full conviction in our minds, become most appropriate helps. For it is wonderful how much we are confirmed in our belief, when we more attentively consider how admirably the system of divine wisdom contained in it is arranged - how perfectly free the doctrine is from every thing that savours of earth - how beautifully it harmonises in all its parts - and how rich it is in all the other qualities which give an air of majesty to composition. Our hearts are still more firmly assured when we reflect that our admiration is elicited more by the dignity of the matter than by the graces of style. For it was not without an admirable arrangement of Providence, that the sublime mysteries of the kingdom of heaven have for the greater part been delivered with a contemptible meanness of words. Had they been adorned with a more splendid eloquence, the wicked might have cavilled, and alleged that this constituted all their force. But now, when an unpolished simplicity, almost bordering on rudeness, makes a deeper impression than the loftiest flights of oratory, what does it indicate if not that the Holy Scriptures are too mighty in the power of truth to need the rhetorician’s art?

Hence there was good ground for the Apostle’s declaration, that the faith of the Corinthians was founded not on “the wisdom of men,” but on “the power of God” (1 Corinthians 2:5), this speech and preaching among them having been “not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power” (1 Corinthians 2:5). For the truth is vindicated in opposition to every doubt, when, unsupported by foreign aid, it has its sole sufficiency in itself. How peculiarly this property belongs to Scripture appears from this, that no human writings, however skilfully composed, are at all capable of affecting us in a similar way. Read Demosthenes or Cicero, read Plato, Aristotle, or any other of that class: you will, I admit, feel wonderfully allured, pleased, moved, enchanted; but turn from them to the reading of the Sacred Volume, and whether you will or not, it will so affect you, so pierce your heart, so work its way into your very marrow, that, in comparison of the impression so produced, that of orators and philosophers will almost disappear; making it manifest that in the Sacred Volume there is a truth divine, a something which makes it immeasurably superior to all the gifts and graces attainable by man.

2. I confess, however, that in elegance and beauty, nay, splendour, the style of some of the prophets is not surpassed by the eloquence of heathen writers. By examples of this description, the Holy Spirit was pleased to show that it was not from want of eloquence he in other instances

used a rude and homely style. But whether you read David, Isaiah, and others of the same class, whose discourse flows sweet and pleasant; or Amos the herdsman, Jeremiah, and Zechariah, whose rougher idiom savours of rusticity; that majesty of the Spirit to which I adverted appears conspicuous in all. I am not unaware, that as Satan often apes God, that he may by a fallacious resemblance the better insinuate himself into the minds of the simple, so he craftily disseminated the impious errors with which he deceived miserable men in an uncouth and semi-barbarous style, and frequently employed obsolete forms of expression in order to cloak his impostures. None possessed of any moderate share of sense need be told how vain and vile such affectation is. But in regard to the Holy Scriptures, however petulant men may attempt to carp at them, they are replete with sentiments which it is clear that man never could have conceived. Let each of the prophets be examined, and not one will be found who does not rise far higher than human reach. Those who feel their works insipid must be absolutely devoid of taste.

3. As this subject has been treated at large by others, it will be sufficient here merely to touch on its leading points. In addition to the qualities already mentioned, great weight is due to the antiquity of Scripture (Euseb. Prepar. Evang. lib. 2 c. 1). Whatever fables Greek writers may retail concerning the Egyptian Theology, no monument of any religion exists which is not long posterior to the age of Moses. But Moses does not introduce a new Deity. He only sets forth that doctrine concerning the eternal God which the Israelites had received by tradition from their fathers, by whom it had been transmitted, as it were, from hand to hand, during a long series of ages. For what else does he do than lead them back to the covenant which had been made with Abraham? Had he referred to matters of which they had never heard, he never could have succeeded; but their deliverance from the bondage in which they were held must have been a fact of familiar and universal notoriety, the very mention of which must have immediately aroused the attention of all. It is, moreover, probable, that they were intimately acquainted with the whole period of four hundred years. Now, if Moses (who is so much earlier than all other writers) traces the tradition of his doctrine from so remote a period, it is obvious how far the Holy Scriptures must in point of antiquity surpass all other writings.

4. Some perhaps may choose to credit the Egyptians in carrying back their antiquity to a period of six thousand years before the world was created. But their garrulity, which even some profane authors have held up to derision, it cannot be necessary for me to refute. Josephus, however, in his work against Appion, produces important passages from very ancient writers, implying that the doctrine delivered in the law was celebrated among all nations from the remotest ages, though it was neither read nor accurately known. And then, in order that the malignant might have no ground for suspicion, and the ungodly no handle for cavil, God has provided, in the most effectual manner, against both dangers. When Moses relates the words which Jacob, under Divine inspiration, uttered concerning his posterity almost three hundred years before, how does he ennoble his own tribe? He stigmatises it with eternal infamy in the person of Levi. “Simon and Levi,” says he, “are brethren; instruments of cruelty are in their habitations. O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly mine honour be not thou united” (Genesis 49:5, Genesis 49:6). This stigma he certainly might have passed in silence, not only that he might spare his own ancestor, but also save both himself and his whole family from a portion of the disgrace. How can any suspicion attach to him, who, by voluntarily proclaiming that the first founder of his family was declared detestable by a Divine oracle, neither consults for his own private interest, nor declines to

incur obloquy among his tribe, who must have been offended by his statement of the fact? Again, when he relates the wicked murmuring of his brother Aaron, and his sister Miriam (Numbers 12:1), shall we say that he spoke his own natural feelings, or that he obeyed the command of the Holy Spirit? Moreover, when invested with supreme authority, why does he not bestow the office of High Priest on his sons, instead of consigning them to the lowest place? I only touch on a few points out of many; but the Law itself contains throughout numerous proofs, which fully vindicate the credibility of Moses, and place it beyond dispute, that he was in truth a messenger sent forth from God.

5. The many striking miracles which Moses relates are so many sanctions of the law delivered, and the doctrine propounded, by him. His being carried up into the mount in a cloud; his remaining there forty days separated from human society; his countenance glistening during the promulgation of the law, as with meridian effulgence; the lightnings which flashed on every side; the voices and thunderings which echoed in the air; the clang of the trumpet blown by no human mouth; his entrance into the tabernacle, while a cloud hid him from the view of the people; the miraculous vindication of his authority, by the fearful destruction of Korah, Nathan, and Abiram, and all their impious faction; the stream instantly gushing forth from the rock when struck with his rod; the manna which rained from heaven at his prayer; did not God by all these proclaim aloud that he was an undoubted prophet? If any one object that I am taking debatable points for granted, the cavil is easily answered. Moses published all these things in the assembly of the people. How, then, could he possibly impose on the very eye-witnesses of what was done? Is it conceivable that he would have come forward, and, while accusing the people of unbelief, obstinacy, ingratitude, and other crimes, have boasted that his doctrine had been confirmed in their own presence by miracles which they never saw?

6. For it is also worthy of remark, that the miracles which he relates are combined with disagreeable circumstances, which must have provoked opposition from the whole body of the people, if there had been the smallest ground for it. Hence it is obvious that they were induced to assent, merely because they had been previously convinced by their own experience. But because the fact was too clear to leave it free for heathen writers to deny that Moses did perform miracles, the father of lies suggested a calumny, and ascribed them to magic (Exodus 9:11). But with what probability is a charge of magic brought against him, who held it in such abhorrence, that he ordered every one who should consult soothsayers and magicians to be stoned? (Leviticus 20:6). Assuredly, no impostor deals in tricks, without studying to raise his reputation by amazing the common people. But what does Moses do? By crying out, that he and Aaron his brother are nothing (Exodus 16:7), that they merely execute what God has commanded, he clears himself from every approach to suspicion. Again, if the facts are considered in themselves, what kind of incantation could cause manna to rain from heaven every day, and in sufficient quantity to maintain a people, while any one, who gathered more than the appointed measure, saw his incredulity divinely punished by its turning to worms? To this we may add, that God then suffered his servant to be subjected to so many serious trials, that the ungodly cannot now gain anything by their glamour. When (as often happened) the people proudly and petulantly rose up against him, when individuals conspired, and attempted to overthrow him, how could any impostures have enabled him to elude their rage? The event plainly shows that by these means his doctrine was attested to all succeeding ages.

7. Moreover, it is impossible to deny that he was guided by a prophetic spirit in assigning the first place to the tribe of Judah in the person of Jacob, especially if we take into view the fact itself, as explained by the event. Suppose that Moses was the inventor of the prophecy, still, after he committed it to writing, four hundred years pass away, during which no mention is made of a sceptre in the tribe of Judah. After Saul is anointed, the kingly office seems fixed in the tribe of Benjamin (1 Samuel 11:15; 1 Samuel 16:13). When David is anointed by Samuel, what apparent ground is there for the transference? Who could have looked for a king out of the plebeian family of a herdsman? And out of seven brothers, who could have thought that the honour was destined for the youngest? And then by what means did he afterwards come within reach of the throne? Who dare say that his anointing was regulated by human art, or skill, or prudence, and was not rather the fulfilment of a divine prophecy? In like manner, do not the predictions, though obscure, of the admission of the Gentiles into the divine covenant, seeing they were not fulfilled till almost two thousand years after, make it palpable that Moses spoke under divine inspiration? I omit other predictions which so plainly betoken divine revelation, that all men of sound mind must see they were spoken by God. In short, his Song itself (Deuteronomy 32:1-52) is a bright mirror in which God is manifestly seen.

8. In the case of the other prophets the evidence is even clearer. I will only select a few examples, for it were too tedious to enumerate the whole. Isaiah, in his own day, when the kingdom of Judah was at peace, and had even some ground to confide in the protection of the Chaldeans, spoke of the destruction of the city and the captivity of the people (Isaiah 55:1). Supposing it not to be sufficient evidence of divine inspiration to foretell, many years before, events which, at the time, seemed fabulous, but which ultimately turned out to be true, whence shall it be said that the prophecies which he uttered concerning their return proceeded, if it was not from God? He names Cyrus, by whom the Chaldeans were to be subdued and the people restored to freedom. After the prophet thus spoke, more than a hundred years elapsed before Cyrus was born, that being nearly the period which elapsed between the death of the one and the birth of the other. It was impossible at that time to guess that some Cyrus would arise to make war on the Babylonians, and after subduing their powerful monarchy, put an end to the captivity of the children of Israel. Does not this simple, unadorned narrative plainly demonstrate that what Isaiah spoke was not the conjecture of man, but the undoubted oracle of God? Again, when Jeremiah, a considerable time before the people were led away, assigned seventy years as the period of captivity, and fixed their liberation and return, must not his tongue have been guided by the Spirit of God? What effrontery were it to deny that, by these evidences, the authority of the prophets is established, the very thing being fulfilled to which they appeal in support of their credibility! “Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare; before they spring forth I tell you of them” (Isaiah 42:9). I say nothing of the agreement between Jeremiah and Ezekiel, who, living so far apart, and yet prophesying at the same time, harmonise as completely in all they say as if they had mutually dictated the words to one another. What shall I say of Daniel? Did not he deliver prophecies embracing a future period of almost six hundred years, as if he had been writing of past events generally known? (Daniel 9:1-27, &c.). If the pious will duly meditate on these things, they will be sufficiently instructed to silence the cavils of the ungodly. The demonstration is too clear to be gainsaid.

9. I am aware of what is muttered in corners by certain miscreants, when they would display their acuteness in assailing divine truth. They ask, how do we know that Moses and the prophets wrote the books which now bear their names? Nay, they even dare to question whether there ever was a Moses. Were any one to question whether there ever was a Plato, or an Aristotle, or a Cicero, would not the rod or the whip be deemed the fit chastisement of such folly? The law of Moses has been wonderfully preserved, more by divine providence than by human care; and though, owing to the negligence of the priests, it lay for a short time buried - from the time when it was found by good King Josiah (2 Kings 22:8; 2 Chronicles 34:15) - it has continued in the hands of men, and been transmitted in unbroken succession from generation to generation. Nor, indeed, when Josiah brought it forth, was it as a book unknown or new, but one which had always been matter of notoriety, and was then in full remembrance. The original writing had been deposited in the temple, and a copy taken from it had been deposited in the royal archives (Deuteronomy 17:18, Deuteronomy 17:19); the only thing which had occurred was, that the priests had ceased to publish the law itself in due form, and the people also had neglected the wonted reading of it. I may add, that scarcely an age passed during which its authority was not confirmed and renewed. Were the books of Moses unknown to those who had the Psalms of David in their hands? To sum up the whole in one word, it is certain beyond dispute, that these writings passed down, if I may so express it, from hand to hand, being transmitted in an unbroken series from the fathers, who either with their own ears heard them spoken, or learned them from those who had, while the remembrance of them was fresh.

10. An objection taken from the history of the Maccabees (1Ma 1:57-58) to impugn the credibility of Scripture, is, on the contrary, fitted the best possible to confirm it. First, however, let us clear away the gloss which is put upon it: having done so, we shall turn the engine which they erect against us upon themselves. As Antiochus ordered all the books of Scripture to be burnt, it is asked, where did the copies we now have come from? I, in my turn, ask, In what workshop could they have been so quickly fabricated? It is certain that they were in existence the moment the persecution ceased, and that they were acknowledged without dispute by all the pious who had been educated in their doctrine, and were familiarly acquainted with them. Nay, while all the wicked so wantonly insulted the Jews as if they had leagued together for the purpose, not one ever dared to charge them with having introduced spurious books. Whatever, in their opinion, the Jewish religion might be, they acknowledged that Moses was the founder of it. What, then, do those babblers, but betray their snarling petulance in falsely alleging the spuriousness of books whose sacred antiquity is proved by the consent of all history? But not to spend labour in vain in refuting these vile calumnies, let us rather attend to the care which the Lord took to preserve his Word, when against all hope he rescued it from the truculence of a most cruel tyrant as from the midst of the flames - inspiring pious priests and others with such constancy that they hesitated not, though it should have been purchased at the expense of their lives, to transmit this treasure to posterity, and defeating the keenest search of prefects and their satellites. Who does not recognise it as a signal and miraculous work of God, that those sacred monuments which the ungodly persuaded themselves had utterly perished, immediately returned to resume their former rights, and, indeed, in greater honour? For the Greek translation appeared to disseminate them over the whole world. Nor does it seem so wonderful that God rescued the tables of his covenant from the sanguinary edicts of Antiochus, as that they remained safe and entire amid the manifold disasters by which the Jewish nation was occasionally crushed, devastated, and almost

exterminated. The Hebrew language was in no estimation, and almost unknown; and assuredly, had not God provided for religion, it must have utterly perished. For it is obvious from the prophetical writings of that age, how much the Jews, after their return from the captivity, had lost the genuine use of their native tongue. It is of importance to attend to this, because the comparison more clearly establishes the antiquity of the Law and the Prophets. And whom did God employ to preserve the doctrine of salvation contained in the Law and the Prophets, that Christ might manifest it in its own time? The Jews, the bitterest enemies of Christ; and hence Augustine justly calls them the librarians of the Christian Church, because they supplied us with books of which they themselves had not the use.

11. When we proceed to the New Testament, how solid are the pillars by which its truth is supported! Three evangelists give a narrative in a mean and humble style. The proud often eye this simplicity with disdain, because they attend not to the principal heads of doctrine; for from these they might easily infer that these evangelists treat of heavenly mysteries beyond the capacity of man. Those who have the least particle of candour must be ashamed of their fastidiousness when they read the first chapter of Luke. Even our Saviour's discourses, of which a summary is given by these three evangelists, ought to prevent every one from treating their writings with contempt. John, again, fulminating in majesty, strikes down more powerfully than any thunderbolt the petulance of those who refuse to submit to the obedience of faith. Let all those acute censors, whose highest pleasure it is to banish a reverential regard of Scripture from their own and other men's hearts, come forward; let them read the Gospel of John, and, willing or unwilling, they will find a thousand sentences which will at least arouse them from their sloth; nay, which will burn into their consciences as with a hot iron, and check their derision. The same thing may be said of Peter and Paul, whose writings, though the greater part read them blindfold, exhibit a heavenly majesty, which in a manner binds and rivets every reader. But one circumstance, sufficient of itself to exalt their doctrine above the world, is, that Matthew, who was formerly fixed down to his money-table, Peter and John, who were employed with their little boats, being all rude and illiterate, had never learned in any human school that which they delivered to others. Paul, moreover, who had not only been an avowed but a cruel and bloody foe, being changed into a new man, shows, by the sudden and unhoped-for change, that a heavenly power had compelled him to preach the doctrine which once he destroyed. Let those dogs deny that the Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles, or, if not, let them refuse credit to the history, still the very circumstances proclaim that the Holy Spirit must have been the teacher of those who, formerly contemptible among the people, all of a sudden began to discourse so magnificently of heavenly mysteries.

12. Add, moreover, that, for the best of reasons, the consent of the Church is not without its weight. For it is not to be accounted of no consequence, that, from the first publication of Scripture, so many ages have uniformly concurred in yielding obedience to it, and that, notwithstanding of the many extraordinary attempts which Satan and the whole world have made to oppress and overthrow it, or completely efface it from the memory of men, it has flourished like the palm tree and continued invincible. Though in old times there was scarcely a sophist or orator of any note who did not exert his powers against it, their efforts proved unavailing. The powers of the earth armed themselves for its destruction, but all their attempts vanished into smoke. When thus powerfully assailed on every side, how could it have resisted if it had trusted only to human aid?

Nay, its divine origin is more completely established by the fact, that when all human wishes were against it, it advanced by its own energy. Add that it was not a single city or a single nation that concurred in receiving and embracing it. Its authority was recognised as far and as wide as the world extends - various nations who had nothing else in common entering for this purpose into a holy league. Moreover, while we ought to attach the greatest weight to the agreement of minds so diversified, and in all other things so much at variance with each other - an agreement which a Divine Providence alone could have produced - it adds no small weight to the whole when we attend to the piety of those who thus agree; not of all of them indeed, but of those in whom as lights God was pleased that his Church should shine.

13. Again, with what confidence does it become us to subscribe to a doctrine attested and confirmed by the blood of so many saints? They, when once they had embraced it, hesitated not boldly and intrepidly, and even with great alacrity, to meet death in its defence. Being transmitted to us with such an earnest, who of us shall not receive it with firm and unshaken conviction? It is therefore no small proof of the authority of Scripture, that it was sealed with the blood of so many witnesses, especially when it is considered that in bearing testimony to the faith, they met death not with fanatical enthusiasm (as erring spirits are sometimes wont to do), but with a firm and constant, yet sober godly zeal. There are other reasons, neither few nor feeble, by which the dignity and majesty of the Scriptures may be not only proved to the pious, but also completely vindicated against the cavils of slanderers. These, however, cannot of themselves produce a firm faith in Scripture until our heavenly Father manifest his presence in it, and thereby secure implicit reverence for it. Then only, therefore, does Scripture suffice to give a saving knowledge of God when its certainty is founded on the inward persuasion of the Holy Spirit. Still the human testimonies which go to confirm it will not be without effect, if they are used in subordination to that chief and highest proof, as secondary helps to our weakness. But it is foolish to attempt to prove to infidels that the Scripture is the Word of God. This it cannot be known to be, except by faith. Justly, therefore, does Augustine remind us, that every man who would have any understanding in such high matters must previously possess piety and mental peace.

08.01.09. Chapter 09

Chapter 9. All the principles of piety subverted by fanatics, who substitute revelations for Scripture.

Sections

1. The temper and error of the Libertines, who take to themselves the name of spiritual, briefly described. Their refutation. 1. The Apostles and all true Christians have embraced the written Word. This confirmed by a passage in Isaiah; also by the example and words of Paul. 2. The Spirit of Christ seals the doctrine of the written Word on the minds of the godly.

2. Refutation continued. 3. The impositions of Satan cannot be detected without the aid of the written Word. First Objection. The Answer to it.

3. Second Objection from the words of Paul as to the letter and spirit. The Answer, with an explanation of Paul's meaning. How the Spirit and the written Word are indissolubly connected.

1. Those who, rejecting Scripture, imagine that they have some peculiar way of penetrating to God, are to be deemed not so much under the influence of error as madness. For certain giddy men have lately appeared, who, while they make a great display of the superiority of the Spirit, reject all reading of the Scriptures themselves, and deride the simplicity of those who only delight in what they call the dead and deadly letter. But I wish they would tell me what spirit it is whose inspiration raises them to such a sublime height that they dare despise the doctrine of Scripture as mean and childish. If they answer that it is the Spirit of Christ, their confidence is exceedingly ridiculous; since they will, I presume, admit that the apostles and other believers in the primitive Church were not illuminated by any other Spirit. None of these thereby learned to despise the word of God, but every one was imbued with greater reverence for it, as their writings most clearly testify. And, indeed, it had been so foretold by the mouth of Isaiah. For when he says, "My Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever," he does not tie down the ancient Church to external doctrine, as he were a mere teacher of elements; he rather shows that, under the reign of Christ, the true and full felicity of the new Church will consist in their being ruled not less by the Word than by the Spirit of God. Hence we infer that these miscreants are guilty of fearful sacrilege in tearing asunder what the prophet joins in indissoluble union. Add to this, that Paul, though carried up even to the third heaven, ceased not to profit by the doctrine of the law and the prophets, while, in like manner, he exhorts Timothy, a teacher of singular excellence, to give attention to reading (1 Timothy 4:13). And the eulogium which he pronounces on Scripture well deserves to be remembered, viz., that "it is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect" (2 Timothy 3:16). What an infatuation of the devil, therefore, to fancy that Scripture, which conducts the sons of God to the final goal, is of transient and temporary use? Again, I should like those people to tell me whether they have imbibed any other Spirit than that which Christ promised to his disciples. Though their madness is extreme, it will scarcely carry

them the length of making this their boast. But what kind of Spirit did our Saviour promise to send? One who should not speak of himself (John 16:13), but suggest and instil the truths which he himself had delivered through the word. Hence the office of the Spirit promised to us, is not to form new and unheard-of revelations, or to coin a new form of doctrine, by which we may be led away from the received doctrine of the gospel, but to seal on our minds the very doctrine which the gospel recommends.

2. Hence it is easy to understand that we must give diligent heed both to the reading and hearing of Scripture, if we would obtain any benefit from the Spirit of God (just as Peter praises those who attentively study the doctrine of the prophets (2 Peter 1:19), though it might have been thought to be superseded after the gospel light arose), and, on the contrary, that any spirit which passes by the wisdom of God's Word, and suggests any other doctrine, is deservedly suspected of vanity and falsehood. Since Satan transforms himself into an angel of light, what authority can the Spirit have with us if he be not ascertained by an infallible mark? And assuredly he is pointed out to us by the Lord with sufficient clearness; but these miserable men err as if bent on their own destruction, while they seek the Spirit from themselves rather than from Him. But they say that it is insulting to subject the Spirit, to whom all things are to be subject, to the Scripture: as if it were disgraceful to the Holy Spirit to maintain a perfect resemblance throughout, and be in all respects without variation consistent with himself. True, if he were subjected to a human, an angelical, or to any foreign standard, it might be thought that he was rendered subordinate, or, if you will, brought into bondage, but so long as he is compared with himself, and considered in himself, how can it be said that he is thereby injured? I admit that he is brought to a test, but the very test by which it has pleased him that his majesty should be confirmed. It ought to be enough for us when once we hear his voice; but lest Satan should insinuate himself under his name, he wishes us to recognise him by the image which he has stamped on the Scriptures. The author of the Scriptures cannot vary, and change his likeness. Such as he there appeared at first, such he will perpetually remain. There is nothing contumelious to him in this, unless we are to think it would be honourable for him to degenerate, and revolt against himself.

3. Their cavil about our cleaving to the dead letter carries with it the punishment which they deserve for despising Scripture. It is clear that Paul is there arguing against false apostles (2 Corinthians 3:6), who, by recommending the law without Christ, deprived the people of the benefit of the New Covenant, by which the Lord engages that he will write his law on the hearts of believers, and engrave it on their inward parts. The letter therefore is dead, and the law of the Lord kills its readers when it is dissevered from the grace of Christ, and only sounds in the ear without touching the heart. But if it is effectually impressed on the heart by the Spirit; if it exhibits Christ, it is the word of life converting the soul, and making wise the simple. Nay, in the very same passage, the apostle calls his own preaching the ministration of the Spirit (2 Corinthians 3:8), intimating that the Holy Spirit so cleaves to his own truth, as he has expressed it in Scripture, that he then only exerts and puts forth his strength when the word is received with due honour and respect.

There is nothing repugnant here to what was lately said (chap. 7) that we have no great certainty of the word itself, until it be confirmed by the testimony of the Spirit. For the Lord has so knit together the certainty of his word and his Spirit, that our minds are duly imbued with reverence for the word when the Spirit shining upon it enables us there to behold the face of God; and, on the other hand, we embrace the Spirit with no danger of delusion when we recognise him in his image,

that is, in his word. Thus, indeed, it is. God did not produce his word before men for the sake of sudden display, intending to abolish it the moment the Spirit should arrive; but he employed the same Spirit, by whose agency he had administered the word, to complete his work by the efficacious confirmation of the word. In this way Christ explained to the two disciples (Luke 24:27), not that they were to reject the Scriptures and trust to their own wisdom, but that they were to understand the Scriptures. In like manner, when Paul says to the Thessalonians, “Quench not the Spirit,” he does not carry them aloft to empty speculation apart from the word; he immediately adds, “Despise not prophesying” (1 Thessalonians 5:19, 1 Thessalonians 5:20). By this, doubtless, he intimates that the light of the Spirit is quenched the moment prophesying fall into contempt. How is this answered by those swelling enthusiasts, in whose idea the only true illumination consists, in carelessly laying aside, and bidding adieu to the Word of God, while, with no less confidence than folly, they fasten upon any dreaming notion which may have casually sprung up in their minds? Surely a very different sobriety becomes the children of God. As they feel that without the Spirit of God they are utterly devoid of the light of truth, so they are not ignorant that the word is the instrument by which the illumination of the Spirit is dispensed. They know of no other Spirit than the one who dwelt and spake in the apostles--the Spirit by whose oracles they are daily invited to the hearing of the word.

08.01.10. Chapter 10

Chapter 10. In Scripture, the true God opposed, exclusively, to all the gods of the heathen.

Sections 1. Explanation of the knowledge of God resumed. God as manifested in Scripture, the same as delineated in his works.

2. The attributes of God as described by Moses, David, and Jeremiah. Explanation of the attributes. Summary. Uses of this knowledge.

3. Scripture, in directing us to the true God, excludes the gods of the heathen, who, however, in some sense, held the unity of God.

1. We formerly observed that the knowledge of God, which, in other respects, is not obscurely exhibited in the frame of the world, and in all the creatures, is more clearly and familiarly explained by the word. It may now be proper to show, that in Scripture the Lord represents himself in the same character in which we have already seen that he is delineated in his works. A full discussion of this subject would occupy a large space. But it will here be sufficient to furnish a kind of index, by attending to which the pious reader may be enabled to understand what knowledge of God he ought chiefly to search for in Scripture, and be directed as to the mode of conducting the search. I am not now adverting to the peculiar covenant by which God distinguished the race of Abraham from the rest of the nations. For when by gratuitous adoption he admitted those who were enemies to the rank of sons, he even then acted in the character of a Redeemer. At present, however, we are employed in considering that knowledge which stops short at the creation of the world, without ascending to Christ the Mediator. But though it will soon be necessary to quote certain passages from the New Testament (proofs being there given both of the power of God the Creator, and of his providence in the preservation of what he originally created), I wish the reader to remember what my present purpose is, that he may not wander from the proper subject. Briefly, then, it will be sufficient for him at present to understand how God, the Creator of heaven and earth, governs the world which was made by him. In every part of Scripture we meet with descriptions of his paternal kindness and readiness to do good, and we also meet with examples of severity which show that he is the just punisher of the wicked, especially when they continue obstinate notwithstanding of all his forbearance.

2. There are certain passages which contain more vivid descriptions of the divine character, setting it before us as if his genuine countenance were visibly portrayed. Moses, indeed, seems to have intended briefly to comprehend whatever may be known of God by man, when he said, “The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children’s children, unto the third and to the fourth generation” (Exodus 34:6, Exodus 34:7). Here we may observe, firsts that his eternity and selfexistence are declared by his magnificent name twice repeated; and, secondly, that in the enumeration of his perfections, he is described not as he is in

himself, but in relation to us, in order that our acknowledgement of him may be more a vivid actual impression than empty visionary speculation. Moreover, the perfections thus enumerated are just those which we saw shining in the heavens, and on the earth - compassion, goodness, mercy, justice, judgement, and truth. For power and energy are comprehended under the name Jehovah. Similar epithets are employed by the prophets when they would fully declare his sacred name. Not to collect a great number of passages, it may suffice at present to refer to one Psalm (Psalms 145:1-21) in which a summary of the divine perfections is so carefully given that not one seems to have been omitted. Still, however, every perfection there set down may be contemplated in creation; and, hence, such as we feel him to be when experience is our guide, such he declares himself to be by his word. In Jeremiah, where God proclaims the character in which he would have us to acknowledge him, though the description is not so full, it is substantially the same. “Let him that glorieth,” says he, “glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving-kindness, judgement, and righteousness, in the earth” (Jeremiah 9:24). Assuredly, the attributes which it is most necessary for us to know are these three: Loving-kindness, on which alone our entire safety depends: Judgement, which is daily exercised on the wicked, and awaits them in a severer form, even for eternal destruction: Righteousness, by which the faithful are preserved, and most benignly cherished. The prophet declares, that when you understand these, you are amply furnished with the means of glorying in God. Nor is there here any omission of his truth, or power, or holiness, or goodness. For how could this knowledge of his loving-kindness, judgement, and righteousness, exist, if it were not founded on his inviolable truth? How, again, could it be believed that he governs the earth with judgement and righteousness, without presupposing his mighty power? Whence, too, his loving-kindness, but from his goodness? In fine, if all his ways are loving-kindness, judgement, and righteousness, his holiness also is thereby conspicuous. Moreover, the knowledge of God, which is set before us in the Scriptures, is designed for the same purpose as that which shines in creation, viz., that we may thereby learn to worship him with perfect integrity of heart and unfeigned obedience, and also to depend entirely on his goodness.

3. Here it may be proper to give a summary of the general doctrine. First, then, let the reader observe that the Scripture, in order to direct us to the true God, distinctly excludes and rejects all the gods of the heathen, because religion was universally adulterated in almost every age. It is true, indeed, that the name of one God was everywhere known and celebrated. For those who worshipped a multitude of gods, whenever they spoke the genuine language of nature, simply used the name god, as if they had thought one god sufficient. And this is shrewdly noticed by Justin Martyr, who, to the same effect, wrote a treatise, entitled, On the Monarchy of God, in which he shows, by a great variety of evidence, that the unity of God is engraven on the hearts of all. Tertullian also proves the same thing from the common forms of speech. But as all, without exception, have in the vanity of their minds rushed or been dragged into lying fictions, these impressions, as to the unity of God, whatever they may have naturally been, have had no further effect than to render men inexcusable. The wisest plainly discover the vague wanderings of their minds when they express a wish for any kind of Deity, and thus offer up their prayers to unknown gods. And then, in imagining a manifold nature in God, though their ideas concerning Jupiter, Mercury, Venus, Minerva, and others, were not so absurd as those of the rude vulgar, they were by no means free from the delusions of the devil. We have elsewhere observed, that however subtle the evasions devised by philosophers, they cannot do away with the charge of rebellion, in

that all of them have corrupted the truth of God. For this reason, Habakkuk (Habakkuk 2:20), after condemning all idols, orders men to seek God in his temple, that the faithful may acknowledge none but Him, who has manifested himself in his word.

08.01.11. Chapter 11

Chapter 11. Impiety of attributing a visible form to God. The setting up of idols a defection from the true God.

There are three leading divisions in this chapter. The first contains a refutation of those who ascribe a visible form to God (s. 1 and 2), with an answer to the objection of those who, because it is said that God manifested his presence by certain symbols, use it as a defence of their error (s. 3 and 4). Various arguments are afterwards adduced, disposing of the trite objection from Gregory's expression, that images are the books of the unlearned (s. 5-7). The second division of the chapter relates to the origin of idols or images, and the adoration of them, as approved by the Papists (s. 8-10). Their evasion refuted (s. 11). The third division treats of the use and abuse of images (s. 12). Whether it is expedient to have them in Christian Churches (s. 13). The concluding part contains a refutation of the second Council of Nice, which very absurdly contends for images in opposition to divine truth, and even to the disparagement of the Christian name.

Sections

1. God is opposed to idols, that all may know he is the only fit witness to himself. He expressly forbids any attempt to represent him by a bodily shape.

2. Reasons for this prohibition from Moses, Isaiah, and Paul. The complaint of a heathen. It should put the worshipers of idols to shame.

3. Consideration of an objection taken from various passages in Moses. The Cherubim and Seraphim show that images are not fit to represent divine mysteries. The Cherubim belonged to the tutelage of the Law.

4. The materials of which idols are made, abundantly refute the fiction of idolaters. Confirmation from Isaiah and others. Absurd precaution of the Greeks.

5. Objection: that images are the books of the unlearned. Objection answered, 1. Scripture declares images to be teachers of vanity and lies.

6. Answer continued, 2. Ancient Theologians condemn the formation and worship of idols.

7. Answer continued, 3. The use of images condemned by the luxury and meretricious ornaments given to them in Popish Churches. 4. The Church must be trained in true piety by another method.

8. The second division of the chapter. Origin of idols or images. Its rise shortly after the flood. Its continual progress.

9. Of the worship of images. Its nature. A pretext of idolaters refuted. Pretexts of the heathen. Genius of idolaters.

10. Evasion of the Papists. Their agreement with ancient idolaters.

11. Refutation of another evasion or sophism, viz., the distinction of dulia and latria.

12. Third division of the chapter, viz., the use and abuse of images.

13. Whether it is expedient to have images in Christian temples.

14. Absurd defence of the worship of images by the second so-called Council of Nice. Sophisms or perversions of Scripture in defence of images in churches.

15. Passages adduced in support of the worship of images.

16. The blasphemous expressions of some ancient idolaters approved by not a few of the more modern, both in word and deed.

1. As Scripture, in accommodation to the rude and gross intellect of man, usually speaks in popular terms, so whenever its object is to discriminate between the true God and false deities, it opposes him in particular to idols; not that it approves of what is taught more elegantly and subtilely by philosophers, but that it may the better expose the folly, nay, madness of the world in its inquiries after God, so long as every one clings to his own speculations. This exclusive definition, which we uniformly meet with in Scripture, annihilates every deity which men frame for themselves of their own accord - God himself being the only fit witness to himself. Meanwhile, seeing that this brutish stupidity has overspread the globe, men longing after visible forms of God, and so forming deities of wood and stone, silver and gold, or of any other dead and corruptible matter, we must hold it as a first principle, that as often as any form is assigned to God, his glory is corrupted by an impious lie. In the Law, accordingly, after God had claimed the glory of divinity for himself alone, when he comes to show what kind of worship he approves and rejects, he immediately adds, “Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the water under the earth” (Exodus 20:4). By these words he curbs any licentious attempt we might make to represent him by a visible shape, and briefly enumerates all the forms by which superstition had begun, even long before, to turn his truth into a lie. For we know that the Sun was worshipped by the Persian. As many stars as the foolish nations saw in the sky, so many gods they imagined them to be. Then to the Egyptians, every animal was a figure of God. The Greeks, again, plumed themselves on their superior wisdom in worshipping God under the human form (Maximum Tyrius Platonic. Serm. 38). But God makes no comparison between images, as if one were more, and another less befitting; he rejects, without exception, all shapes and pictures, and other symbols by which the superstitious imagine they can bring him near to them.

2. This may easily be inferred from the reasons which he annexes to his prohibition. First, it is said in the books of Moses (Deuteronomy 4:15), “Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves; for ye saw no manner of similitude in the day that the Lord spake unto you in Horeb, out of the midst of the fire, lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure,” &c. We see how plainly God declares against all figures, to make us aware that all longing after such visible shapes is rebellion against him. Of the prophets, it will be sufficient to mention Isaiah, who is the most copious on this subjects (Isaiah 40:18; Isaiah 41:7,Isaiah 41:29; Isaiah 45:9; Isaiah 46:5), in order to show how the majesty of God is defiled by an absurd and indecorous fiction, when he who is incorporeal is assimilated to corporeal matter; he who is invisible to a visible image; he who is a spirit to an inanimate object; and he who fills all space to a bit of paltry wood, or

stone, or gold. Paul, too, reasons in the same way, “Forasmuch, then, as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man’s device” (Acts 17:29). Hence it is manifest, that whatever statues are set up or pictures painted to represent God, are utterly displeasing to him, as a kind of insults to his majesty. And is it strange that the Holy Spirit thunders such responses from heaven, when he compels even blind and miserable idolaters to make a similar confession on the earth? Seneca’s complaint, as given by Augustine De Civit. Dei, c. 10, is well known. He says “The sacred immortal, and invisible gods they exhibit in the meanest and most ignoble materials, and dress them in the clothing of men and beasts; some confound the sexes, and form a compound out of different bodies, giving the name of deities to objects, which, if they were met alive, would be deemed monsters.” Hence, again, it is obvious, that the defenders of images resort to a paltry quibbling evasion, when they pretend that the Jews were forbidden to use them on account of their proneness to superstition; as if a prohibition which the Lord founds on his own eternal essences and the uniform course of nature, could be restricted to a single nation. Besides, when Paul refuted the error of giving a bodily shape to God, he was addressing not Jews, but Athenians.

3. It is true that the Lord occasionally manifested his presence by certain signs, so that he was said to be seen face to face; but all the signs he ever employed were in apt accordance with the scheme of doctrine, and, at the same time, gave plain intimation of his incomprehensible essence. For the cloud, and smoke, and flame, though they were symbols of heavenly glory (Deuteronomy 4:11), curbed men’s minds as with a bridle, that they might not attempt to penetrate farther. Therefore, even Moses (to whom, of all men, God manifested himself most familiarly) was not permitted though he prayed for it, to behold that face, but received for answer, that the refulgence was too great for man (Exodus 33:20). The Holy Spirit appeared under the form of a dove, but as it instantly vanished, who does not see that in this symbol of a moment, the faithful were admonished to regard the Spirit as invisible, to be contented with his power and grace, and not call for any external figure? God sometimes appeared in the form of a man, but this was in anticipation of the future revelation in Christ, and, therefore, did not give the Jews the least pretext for setting up a symbol of Deity under the human form. The mercy-seat, also (Exodus 25:17,Exodus 25:18,Exodus 25:21), where, under the Law, God exhibited the presence of his power, was so framed, as to intimate that God is best seen when the mind rises in admiration above itself: the Cherubim with outstretched wings shaded, and the veil covered it, while the remoteness of the place was in itself a sufficient concealment. It is therefore mere infatuation to attempt to defend images of God and the saints by the example of the Cherubim. For what, pray, did these figures mean, if not that images are unfit to represent the mysteries of God, since they were so formed as to cover the mercy-seat with their wings, thereby concealing the view of God, not only from the eye, but from every human sense, and curbing presumption? To this we may add, that the prophets depict the Seraphim, who are exhibited to us in vision, as having their faces veiled; thus intimating, that the refulgence of the divine glory is so great, that even the angels cannot gaze upon it directly, while the minute beams which sparkle in the face of angels are shrouded from our view. Moreover, all men of sound judgement acknowledge that the Cherubim in question belonged to the old tutelage of the law. It is absurd, therefore, to bring them forward as an example for our age. For that period of puerility, if I may so express it, to which such rudiments were adapted, has passed away. And surely it is disgraceful, that heathen writers should be more skilful interpreters of Scripture than the Papists. Juvenal (Sat. 14) holds up the Jews to derision for worshipping the

thin clouds and firmament. This he does perversely and impiously; still, in denying that any visible shape of Deity existed among them, he speaks more accurately than the Papists, who prate about there having been some visible image. In the fact that the people every now and then rushed forth with boiling haste in pursuit of idols, just like water gushing forth with violence from a copious spring, let us learn how prone our nature is to idolatry, that we may not, by throwing the whole blame of a common vice upon the Jews, be led away by vain and sinful enticements to sleep the sleep of death.

4. To the same effect are the words of the Psalmist (Psalms 115:4, Psalms 135:15), “Their idols are silver and gold, the works of men’s hands.” From the materials of which they are made, he infers that they are not gods, taking it for granted that every human device concerning God is a dull fiction. He mentions silver and gold rather than clay or stone, that neither splendour nor cost may procure reverence to idols. He then draws a general conclusion, that nothing is more unlikely than that gods should be formed of any kind of inanimate matter. Man is forced to confess that he is but the creature of a day (see Book 3 ch. 9 sec. 2), and yet would have the metal which he has deified to be regarded as God. Whence had idols their origin, but from the will of man? There was ground, therefore, for the sarcasm of the heathen poet (Hor. Sat. I. 8), “I was once the trunk of a fig-tree, a useless log, when the tradesman, uncertain whether he should make me a stool, &c., chose rather that I should be a god.” In other words, an earth-born creature, who breathes out his life almost every moment, is able by his own device to confer the name and honour of deity on a lifeless trunk. But as that Epicurean poet, in indulging his wit, had no regard for religion, without attending to his jeers or those of his fellows, let the rebuke of the prophet sting, nay, cut us to the heart, when he speaks of the extreme infatuation of those who take a piece of wood to kindle a fire to warm themselves, bake bread, roast or boil flesh, and out of the residue make a god, before which they prostrate themselves as suppliants (Isaiah 44:16). Hence, the same prophet, in another place, not only charges idolaters as guilty in the eye of the law, but upbraids them for not learning from the foundations of the earth, nothing being more incongruous than to reduce the immense and incomprehensible Deity to the stature of a few feet. And yet experience shows that this monstrous proceeding, though palpably repugnant to the order of nature, is natural to man. It is, moreover, to be observed, that by the mode of expression which is employed, every form of superstition is denounced. Being works of men, they have no authority from God (Isaiah 2:8, Isaiah 31:7; Hosea 14:3; Micah 5:13); and, therefore, it must be regarded as a fixed principle, that all modes of worship devised by man are detestable. The infatuation is placed in a still stronger light by the Psalmist (Psalms 115:8), when he shows how aid is implored from dead and senseless objects, by beings who have been endued with intelligence for the very purpose of enabling them to know that the whole universe is governed by Divine energy alone. But as the corruption of nature hurries away all mankind collectively and individually into this madness, the Spirit at length thunders forth a dreadful imprecation, “They that make them are like unto them, so is every one that trusteth in them.” And it is to be observed, that the thing forbidden is likeness, whether sculptured or otherwise. This disposes of the frivolous precaution taken by the Greek Church. They think they do admirably, because they have no sculptured shape of Deity, while none go greater lengths in the licentious use of pictures. The Lord, however, not only forbids any image of himself to be erected by a statuary, but to be formed by any artist whatever, because every such image is sinful and insulting to his majesty.

5. I am not ignorant, indeed, of the assertion, which is now more than threadbare, “that images are the books of the unlearned.” So said Gregory: a but the Holy Spirit goes a very different decision; and had Gregory got his lesson in this matter in the Spirit’s school, he never would have spoken as he did. For when Jeremiah declares that “the stock is a doctrine of vanities” (Jeremiah 10:8), and Habakkuk, “that the molten image” is “a teacher of lies,” the general doctrine to be inferred certainly is, that every thing respecting God which is learned from images is futile and false. If it is objected that the censure of the prophets is directed against those who perverted images to purposes of impious superstition, I admit it to be so; but I add (what must be obvious to all), that the prophets utterly condemn what the Papists hold to be an undoubted axiom, viz., that images are substitutes for books. For they contrast images with the true God, as if the two were of an opposite nature, and never could be made to agree. In the passages which I lately quoted, the conclusion drawn is, that seeing there is one true God whom the Jews worshipped, visible shapes made for the purpose of representing him are false and wicked fictions; and all, therefore, who have recourse to them for knowledge are miserably deceived. In short, were it not true that all such knowledge is fallacious and spurious, the prophets would not condemn it in such general terms. This at least I maintain, that when we teach that all human attempts to give a visible shape to God are vanity and lies, we do nothing more than state verbatim what the prophets taught.

6. Moreover, let Lactantius and Eusebius be read on this subject. These writers assume it as an indisputable fact, that all the beings whose images were erected were originally men. In like manner, Augustine distinctly declares, that it is unlawful not only to worship images, but to dedicate them. And in this he says no more than had been long before decreed by the Libertine Council, the thirty-sixth Canon of which is, “There must be no pictures used in churches: Let nothing which is adored or worshipped be painted on walls.” But the most memorable passage of all is that which Augustine quotes in another place from Varro, and in which he expressly concurs: “Those who first introduced images of the gods both took away fear and brought in error.” Were this merely the saying of Varro, it might perhaps be of little weight, though it might well make us ashamed, that a heathen, groping as it were in darkness, should have attained to such a degree of light, as to see that corporeal images are unworthy of the majesty of God, and that, because they diminish reverential fear and encourage error. The sentiment itself bears witness that it was uttered with no less truth than shrewdness. But Augustine, while he borrows it from Varro, adduces it as conveying his own opinion. At the outset, indeed, he declares that the first errors into which men fell concerning God did not originate with images, but increased with them, as if new fuel had been added. Afterwards, he explains how the fear of God was thereby extinguished or impaired, his presence being brought into contempt by foolish, and childish, and absurd representations. The truth of this latter remark I wish we did not so thoroughly experience. Whosoever, therefore, is desirous of being instructed in the true knowledge of God must apply to some other teacher than images.

7. Let Papists, then, if they have any sense of shame, henceforth desist from the futile plea, that images are the books of the unlearned - a plea so plainly refuted by innumerable passages of Scripture. And yet were I to admit the plea, it would not be a valid defence of their peculiar idols. It is well known what kind of monsters they obtrude upon us as divine. For what are the pictures or statues to which they append the names of saints, but exhibitions of the most shameless luxury or obscenity? Were any one to dress himself after their model, he would deserve the pillory. Indeed,

brothels exhibit their inmates more chastely and modestly dressed than churches do images intended to represent virgins. The dress of the martyrs is in no respect more becoming. Let Papists then have some little regard to decency in decking their idols, if they would give the least plausibility to the false allegation, that they are books of some kind of sanctity. But even then we shall answer, that this is not the method in which the Christian people should be taught in sacred places. Very different from these follies is the doctrine in which God would have them to be there instructed. His injunction is, that the doctrine common to all should there be set forth by the preaching of the Word, and the administration of the sacraments - a doctrine to which little heed can be given by those whose eyes are carried too and fro gazing at idols. And who are the unlearned, whose rudeness admits of being taught by images only? Just those whom the Lord acknowledges for his disciples; those whom he honours with a revelation of his celestial philosophy, and desires to be trained in the saving mysteries of his kingdom. I confess, indeed, as matters now are, there are not a few in the present day who cannot want such books. But, I ask, whence this stupidity, but just because they are defrauded of the only doctrine which was fit to instruct them? The simple reason why those who had the charge of churches resigned the office of teaching to idols was, because they themselves were dumb. Paul declares, that by the true preaching of the gospel Christ is portrayed and in a manner crucified before our eyes (Galatians 3:1). Of what use, then, were the erection in churches of so many crosses of wood and stone, silver and gold, if this doctrine were faithfully and honestly preached, viz., Christ died that he might bear our curse upon the tree, that he might expiate our sins by the sacrifice of his body, wash them in his blood, and, in short, reconcile us to God the Father? From this one doctrine the people would learn more than from a thousand crosses of wood and stone. As for crosses of gold and silver, it may be true that the avaricious give their eyes and minds to them more eagerly than to any heavenly instructor.

8. In regard to the origin of idols, the statement contained in the Book of Wisdom has been received with almost universal consent, viz., that they originated with those who bestowed this honour on the dead, from a superstitious regard to their memory. I admit that this perverse practice is of very high antiquity, and I deny not that it was a kind of torch by which the infatuated proneness of mankind to idolatry was kindled into a greater blaze. I do not, however, admit that it was the first origin of the practice. That idols were in use before the prevalence of that ambitious consecration of the images of the dead, frequently adverted to by profane writers, is evident from the words of Moses (Genesis 31:19). When he relates that Rachel stole her father’s images, he speaks of the use of idols as a common vice. Hence we may infer, that the human mind is, so to speak, a perpetual forge of idols. There was a kind of renewal of the world at the deluge, but before many years elapse, men are forging gods at will. There is reason to believe, that in the holy Patriarch’s lifetime his grandchildren were given to idolatry: so that he must with his own eyes, not without the deepest grief, have seen the earth polluted with idols - that earth whose iniquities God had lately purged with so fearful a judgement. For Joshua testifies (Joshua 24:2), that Torah and Nachor, even before the birth of Abraham, were the worshipers of false gods. The progeny of Shem having so speedily revolted, what are we to think of the posterity of Ham, who had been cursed long before in their father? Thus, indeed, it is. The human mind, stuffed as it is with presumptuous rashness, dares to imagine a god suited to its own capacity; as it labours under dullness, nay, is sunk in the grossest ignorance, it substitutes vanity and an empty phantom in the place of God. To these evils another is added. The god whom man has thus conceived inwardly

he attempts to embody outwardly. The mind, in this way, conceives the idol, and the hand gives it birth. That idolatry has its origin in the idea which men have, that God is not present with them unless his presence is carnally exhibited, appears from the example of the Israelites: “Up,” said they, “make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wet not what is become of him” (Exodus 22:1). They knew, indeed, that there was a God whose mighty power they had experienced in so many miracles, but they had no confidence of his being near to them, if they did not with their eyes behold a corporeal symbol of his presence, as an attestation to his actual government. They desired, therefore, to be assured by the image which went before them, that they were journeying under Divine guidance. And daily experience shows, that the flesh is always restless until it has obtained some figment like itself, with which it may vainly solace itself as a representation of God. In consequence of this blind passion men have, almost in all ages since the world began, set up signs on which they imagined that God was visibly depicted to their eyes.

9. After such a figment is formed, adoration forthwith ensues: for when once men imagined that they beheld God in images, they also worshipped him as being there. At length their eyes and minds becoming wholly engrossed by them, they began to grow more and more brutish, gazing and wondering as if some divinity were actually before them. It hence appears that men do not fall away to the worship of images until they have imbibed some idea of a grosser description: not that they actually believe them to be gods, but that the power of divinity somehow or other resides in them. Therefore, whether it be God or a creature that is imaged, the moment you fall prostrate before it in veneration, you are so far fascinated by superstition. For this reason, the Lord not only forbade the erection of statues to himself, but also the consecration of titles and stones which might be set up for adoration. For the same reason, also, the second commandment has an additional part concerning adoration. For as soon as a visible form is given to God, his power also is supposed to be annexed to it. So stupid are men, that wherever they figure God, there they fix him, and by necessary consequence proceed to adore him. It makes no difference whether they worship the idol simply, or God in the idol; it is always idolatry when divine honours are paid to an idol, be the colour what it may. And because God wills not to be worshipped superstitiously whatever is bestowed upon idols is so much robbed from him.

Let those attend to this who set about hunting for miserable pretexts in defence of the execrable idolatry in which for many past ages true religion has been buried and sunk. It is said that the images are not accounted gods. Nor were the Jews so utterly thoughtless as not to remember that there was a God whose hand led them out of Egypt before they made the calf. Indeed, Aaron saying, that these were the gods which had brought them out of Egypt, they intimated, in no ambiguous terms, that they wished to retain God, their deliverer, provided they saw him going before them in the calf. Nor are the heathen to be deemed to have been so stupid as not to understand that God was something else than wood and stone. For they changed the images at pleasure, but always retained the same gods in their minds; besides, they daily consecrated new images without thinking they were making new gods. Read the excuses which Augustine tells us were employed by the idolaters of his time (August. in Psalms 113:1-9). The vulgar, when accused, replied that they did not worship the visible object, but the Deity which dwelt in it invisibly. Those, again, who had what he calls a more refined religion, said, that they neither worshipped the image, nor any inhabiting Deity, but by means of the corporeal image beheld a symbol of that

which it was their duty to worship. What then? All idolaters whether Jewish or Gentile, were actuated in the very way which has been described. Not contented with spiritual understanding, they thought that images would give them a surer and nearer impression. When once this preposterous representation of God was adopted, there was no limit until, deluded every now and then by new impostures, they came to think that God exerted his power in images. Still the Jews were persuaded, that under such images they worshipped the eternal God, the one true Lord of heaven and earth; and the Gentiles, also, in worshipping their own false gods, supposed them to dwell in heaven.

10. It is an impudent falsehood to deny that the thing which was thus anciently done is also done in our day. For why do men prostrate themselves before images? Why, when in the act of praying, do they turn towards them as to the ears of God? It is indeed true, as Augustine says (in Psalms 113:1-9), that no person thus prays or worships, looking at an image, without being impressed with the idea that he is heard by it, or without hoping that what he wishes will be performed by it. Why are such distinctions made between different images of the same God, that while one is passed by, or receives only common honour, another is worshipped with the highest solemnities? Why do they fatigue themselves with votive pilgrimages to images while they have many similar ones at home? Why at the present time do they fight for them to blood and slaughter, as for their altars and hearths, showing more willingness to part with the one God than with their idols? And yet I am not now detailing the gross errors of the vulgar - errors almost infinite in number, and in possession of almost all hearts. I am only referring to what those profess who are most desirous to clear themselves of idolatry. They say, we do not call them our gods. Nor did either the Jews or Gentiles of old so call them; and yet the prophets never ceased to charge them with their adulteries with wood and stone for the very acts which are daily done by those who would be deemed Christians, namely, for worshipping God carnally in wood and stone.

11. I am not ignorant, however, and I have no wish to disguise the fact, that they endeavour to evade the charge by means of a more subtle distinction, which shall afterwards be fully considered (see infra, sec. 16, and chap. 12 sec. 2). The worship which they pay to their images they cloak with the name of eido4loduleia, and deny to be eido4lolatreia. So they speak, holding that the worship which they call dulia may, without insult to God, be paid to statues and pictures. Hence, they think themselves blameless if they are only the servants, and not the worshipers, of idols; as if it were not a lighter matter to worship than to serve. And yet, while they take refuge in a Greek term, they very childishly contradict themselves. For the Greek word latreuein having no other meaning than to worship, what they say is just the same as if they were to confess that they worship their images without worshipping them. They cannot object that I am quibbling upon words. The fact is, that they only betray their ignorance while they attempt to throw dust in the eyes of the simple. But how eloquent soever they may be, they will never prove by their eloquence that one and the same thing makes two. Let them show how the things differ if they would be thought different from ancient idolaters. For as a murderer or an adulterer will not escape conviction by giving some adventitious name to his crime, so it is absurd for them to expect that the subtle device of a name will exculpate them, if they, in fact, differ in nothing from idolaters whom they themselves are forced to condemn. But so far are they from proving that their case is different, that the source of the whole evil consists in a preposterous rivalship with them, while they with their minds devise, and with their hands execute, symbolical shapes of God.

12. I am not, however, so superstitious as to think that all visible representations of every kind are unlawful. But as sculpture and painting are gifts of God, what I insist for is, that both shall be used purely and lawfully - that gifts which the Lord has bestowed upon us, for his glory and our good, shall not be preposterously abused, nay, shall not be perverted to our destruction. We think it unlawful to give a visible shape to God, because God himself has forbidden it, and because it cannot be done without, in some degree, tarnishing his glory. And lest any should think that we are singular in this opinion, those acquainted with the productions of sound divines will find that they have always disapproved of it. If it be unlawful to make any corporeal representation of God, still more unlawful must it be to worship such a representation instead of God, or to worship God in it. The only things, therefore, which ought to be painted or sculptured, are things which can be presented to the eye; the majesty of God, which is far beyond the reach of any eye, must not be dishonored by unbecoming representations. Visible representations are of two classes, viz., historical, which give a representation of events, and pictorial, which merely exhibit bodily shapes and figures. The former are of some use for instruction or admonition. The latter, so far as I can see, are only fitted for amusement. And yet it is certain, that the latter are almost the only kind which have hitherto been exhibited in churches. Hence we may infer, that the exhibition was not the result of judicious selection, but of a foolish and inconsiderate longing. I say nothing as to the improper and unbecoming form in which they are presented, or the wanton license in which sculptors and painters have here indulged (a point to which I alluded a little ago, supra, sec. 7). I only say, that though they were otherwise faultless, they could not be of any utility in teaching.

13. But, without reference to the above distinction, let us here consider, whether it is expedient that churches should contain representations of any kind, whether of events or human forms. First, then, if we attach any weight to the authority of the ancient Church, let us remember, that for five hundred years, during which religion was in a more prosperous condition, and a purer doctrine flourished, Christian churches were completely free from visible representations (see Preface, and Book 4, ch. 9 sec. 9). Hence their first admission as an ornament to churches took place after the purity of the ministry had somewhat degenerated. I will not dispute as to the rationality of the grounds on which the first introduction of them proceeded, but if you compare the two periods, you will find that the latter had greatly declined from the purity of the times when images were unknown. What then? Are we to suppose that those holy fathers, if they had judged the thing to be useful and salutary, would have allowed the Church to be so long without it? Undoubtedly, because they saw very little or no advantage, and the greatest danger in it, they rather rejected it intentionally and on rational grounds, than omitted it through ignorance or carelessness. This is clearly attested by Augustine in these words (Ephesians 49. See also De Civit. Dei, lib 4 c. 31) “When images are thus placed aloft in seats of honour, to be beheld by those who are praying or sacrificing, though they have neither sense nor life, yet from appearing as if they had both, they affect weak minds just as if they lived and breathed,” &c. And again, in another passage (in Psalms 112:1-10) he says, “The effect produced, and in a manner extorted, by the bodily shape, is, that the mind, being itself in a body, imagines that a body which is so like its oven must be similarly affected,” &c. A little farther on he says, “Images are more capable of giving a wrong bent to an unhappy soul, from having mouth, eyes, ears, and feet, than of correcting it, as they neither speak, nor see, nor hear, nor walk.” This undoubtedly is the reason why John (1 John 5:21) enjoins us to beware, not only of the worship of idols, but also of idols themselves. And from the fearful infatuation under which the world has hitherto laboured, almost to the entire destruction of

piety, we know too well from experience that the moment images appear in churches, idolatry has as it were raised its banner; because the folly of manhood cannot moderate itself, but forthwith falls away to superstitious worship. Even were the danger less imminent, still, when I consider the proper end for which churches are erected, it appears to me more unbecoming their sacredness than I well can tell, to admit any other images than those living symbols which the Lord has consecrated by his own word: I mean Baptism and the Lord's Supper, with the other ceremonies. By these our eyes ought to be more steadily fixed, and more vividly impressed, than to require the aid of any images which the wit of man may devise. Such, then, is the incomparable blessing of images - a blessing, the want of which, if we believe the Papists, cannot possibly be compensated!

14. Enough, I believe, would have been said on this subject, were I not in a manner arrested by the Council of Nice; not the celebrated Council which Constantine the Great assembled, but one which was held eight hundred years ago by the orders and under the auspices of the Empress Irene. This Council decreed not only that images were to be used in churches, but also that they were to be worshipped. Every thing, therefore, that I have said, is in danger of suffering great prejudice from the authority of this Synod. To confess the truth, however, I am not so much moved by this consideration, as by a wish to make my readers aware of the lengths to which the infatuation has been carried by those who had a greater fondness for images than became Christians. But let us first dispose of this matter. Those who defend the use of images appeal to that Synod for support. But there is a refutation extant which bears the name of Charlemagne, and which is proved by its style to be a production of that period. It gives the opinions delivered by the bishops who were present, and the arguments by which they supported them. John, deputy of the Eastern Churches, said, "God created man in his own image," and thence inferred that images ought to be used. He also thought there was a recommendation of images in the following passage, "Show me thy face, for it is beautiful." Another, in order to prove that images ought to be placed on altars, quoted the passage, "No man, when he has lighted a candle, putteth it under a bushel." Another, to show the utility of looking at images, quoted a verse of the Psalms "The light of thy countenance, O Lord, has shone upon us." Another laid hold of this similitude: As the Patriarchs used the sacrifices of the Gentiles, so ought Christians to use the images of saints instead of the idols of the Gentiles. They also twisted to the same effect the words, "Lord, I have loved the beauty of thy house." But the most ingenious interpretation was the following, "As we have heard, so also have we seen;" therefore, God is known not merely by the hearing of the word, but also by the seeing of images. Bishop Theodore was equally acute: "God," says he, "is to be admired in his saints;" and it is elsewhere said, "To the saints who are on earth;" therefore this must refer to images. In short, their absurdities are so extreme that it is painful even to quote them.

15. When they treat of adoration, great stress is laid on the worship of Pharaoh, the staff of Joseph, and the inscription which Jacob set up. In this last case they not only pervert the meaning of Scripture, but quote what is nowhere to be found. Then the passages, "Worship at his footstool" - "Worship in his holy mountain" - "The rulers of the people will worship before thy face," seem to them very solid and apposite proofs. Were one, with the view of turning the defenders of images into ridicule, to put words into their mouths, could they be made to utter greater and grosser absurdities? But to put an end to all doubt on the subject of images, Theodosius Bishop of Mira confirms the propriety of worshipping them by the dreams of his archdeacon, which he adduces with as much gravity as if he were in possession of a response from heaven. Let the patrons of

images now go and urge us with the decree of this Synod, as if the venerable Fathers did not bring themselves into utter discredit by handling Scripture so childishly, or wresting it so shamefully and profanely.

16. I come now to monstrous impieties, which it is strange they ventured to utter, and twice strange that all men did not protest against with the utmost detestation. It is right to expose this frantic and flagitious extravagance, and thereby deprive the worship of images of that gloss of antiquity in which Papists seek to deck it. Theodosius Bishop of Amora fires oft an anathema at all who object to the worship of images. Another attributes all the calamities of Greece and the East to the crime of not having worshipped them. Of what punishment then are the Prophets, Apostles, and Martyrs worthy, in whose day no images existed? They afterwards add, that if the statue of the Emperor is met with odours and incense, much more are the images of saints entitled to the honour. Constantius, Bishop of Constantia in Cyprus, professes to embrace images with reverence, and declares that he will pay them the respect which is due to the ever blessed Trinity: every person refusing to do the same thing he anathematises and classes with Marcionites and Manichees. Lest you should think this the private opinion of an individual, they all assent. Nay, John the Eastern legate, carried still farther by his zeal, declares it would be better to allow a city to be filled with brothels than be denied the worship of images. At last it is resolved with one consent that the Samaritans are the worst of all heretics, and that the enemies of images are worse than the Samaritans. But that the play may not pass off without the accustomed Plaudite, the whole thus concludes, “Rejoice and exult, ye who, having the image of Christ, offer sacrifice to it.” Where is now the distinction of latria and dulia with which they would throw dust in all eyes, human and divine? The Council unreservedly relies as much on images as on the living God.

08.01.12. Chapter 12

Chapter 12. God distinguished from idols, that He may be the exclusive object of worship.

Sections

1. Scripture, in teaching that there is but one God, does not make a dispute about words, but attributes all honour and religious worship to him alone. This proved, 1st, By the etymology of the term. 2nd, By the testimony of God himself, when he declares that he is a jealous God, and will not allow himself to be confounded with any fictitious Deity.

2. The Papists in opposing this pure doctrine, gain nothing by their distinction of dulia and latria.

3. Passages of Scripture subversive of the Papistical distinction, and proving that religious worship is due to God alone. Perversions of Divine worship.

1. We said at the commencement of our work (chap. 2), that the knowledge of God consists not in frigid speculation, but carries worship along with it; and we touched by the way (chap. 5 sec. 6, 9, 10) on what will be more copiously treated in other places (Book 2, chap. 8), viz., how God is duly worshipped. Now I only briefly repeat, that whenever Scripture asserts the unity of God, it does not contend for a mere name, but also enjoins that nothing which belongs to Divinity be applied to any other; thus making it obvious in what respect pure religion differs from superstition. The Greek word eusebeia means “right worship;” for the Greeks, though groping in darkness, were always aware that a certain rule was to be observed, in order that God might not be worshipped absurdly. Cicero truly and shrewdly derives the name “religion” from relego, and yet the reason which he assigns is forced and farfetched, viz., that honest worshipers read and read again, and ponder what is true. I rather think the name is used in opposition to vagrant license - the greater part of mankind rashly taking up whatever first comes in their way, whereas piety, that it may stand with a firm step, confines itself within due bounds. In the same way superstition seems to take its name from its not being contented with the measure which reason prescribes, but accumulating a superfluous mass of vanities. But to say nothing more of words, it has been universally admitted in all ages, that religion is vitiated and perverted whenever false opinions are introduced into it, and hence it is inferred, that whatever is allowed to be done from inconsiderate zeal, cannot be defended by any pretext with which the superstitious may choose to cloak it. But although this confession is in every man’s mouth, a shameful stupidity is forthwith manifested, inasmuch as men neither cleave to the one God, nor use any selection in their worship, as we have already observed. But God, in vindicating his own right, first proclaims that he is a jealous God, and will be a stern avenger if he is confounded with any false god; and thereafter defines what due worship is, in order that the human race may be kept in obedience. Both of these he embraces in his Law when he first binds the faithful in allegiance to him as their only Lawgiver, and then prescribes a rule for worshipping him in accordance with his will. The Law, with its manifold uses and objects, I will consider in its own place; at present I only advert to this one, that it is designed as a bridle to curb men, and prevent them from turning aside to spurious worship. But it is necessary to attend to

the observation with which I set out, viz., that unless everything peculiar to divinity is confined to God alone, he is robbed of his honour, and his worship is violated.

It may be proper here more particularly to attend to the subtleties which superstition employs. In revolting to strange gods, it avoids the appearance of abandoning the Supreme God, or reducing him to the same rank with others. It gives him the highest place, but at the same time surrounds him with a tribe of minor deities, among whom it portions out his peculiar offices. In this way, though in a dissembling and crafty manner, the glory of the Godhead is dissected, and not allowed to remain entire. In the same way the people of old, both Jews and Gentiles, placed an immense crowd in subordination to the father and ruler of the gods, and gave them, according to their rank, to share with the supreme God in the government of heaven and earth. In the same way, too, for some ages past, departed saints have been exalted to partnership with God, to be worshipped, invoked, and lauded in his stead. And yet we do not even think that the majesty of God is obscured by this abomination, whereas it is in a great measure suppressed and extinguished - all that we retain being a frigid opinion of his supreme power. At the same time, being deluded by these entanglements, we go astray after divers gods.

2. The distinction of what is called dulia and latria was invented for the very purpose of permitting divine honours to be paid to angels and dead men with apparent impunity. For it is plain that the worship which Papists pay to saints differs in no respect from the worship of God: for this worship is paid without distinction; only when they are pressed they have recourse to the evasion, that what belongs to God is kept unimpaired, because they leave him latria. But since the question relates not to the word, but the thing, how can they be allowed to sport at will with a matter of the highest moment? But not to insist on this, the utmost they will obtain by their distinction is, that they give worship to God, and service to the others. For latreia in Greek has the same meaning as worship in Latin; whereas douleia properly means service, though the words are sometimes used in Scripture indiscriminately. But granting that the distinction is invariably preserved, the thing to be inquired into is the meaning of each. Douleia unquestionably means service, and latreia worship. But no man doubts that to serve is something higher than to worship. For it were often a hard thing to serve him whom you would not refuse to reverence. It is, therefore, an unjust division to assign the greater to the saints and leave the less to God. But several of the ancient fathers observed this distinction. What if they did, when all men see that it is not only improper, but utterly frivolous?

3. Laying aside subtleties, let us examine the thing. When Paul reminds the Galatians of what they were before they came to the knowledge of Gods he says that they “did service unto them which by nature are no gods” (Galatians 4:8). Because he does not say latria, was their superstition excusable? This superstition, to which he gives the name of dulia, he condemns as much as if he had given it the name of latria. When Christ repels Satan’s insulting proposal with the words, “It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve” (Matthew 4:10), there was no question of latria. For all that Satan asked was proskune4sis (obeisance). In like manners when John is rebuked by the angel for falling on his knees before him (Revelation 19:10; Revelation 22:8, Revelation 22:9), we ought not to suppose that John had so far forgotten himself as to have intended to transfer the honour due to God alone to an angel. But because it was impossible that a worship connected with religion should not savour somewhat of divine worship, he could not proskunein (do obeisance to) the angel without derogating from the glory of God. True, we often read that men were worshipped; but that was, if I may so speak, civil honour. The

case is different with religious honour, which, the moment it is conjoined with worship, carries profanation of the divine honour along with it. The same thing may be seen in the case of Cornelius (Acts 10:25). He had not made so little progress in piety as not to confine supreme worship to God alone. Therefore, when he prostrates himself before Peter, he certainly does it not with the intention of adoring him instead of God. Yet Peter sternly forbids him. And why, but just because men never distinguish so accurately between the worship of God and the creatures as not to transfer promiscuously to the creature that which belongs only to God. Therefore, if we would have one God, let us remember that we can never appropriate the minutest portion of his glory without retaining what is his due. Accordingly, when Zechariah discourses concerning the repairing of the Church, he distinctly says not only that there would be one God, but also that he would have only one name - the reason being, that he might have nothing in common with idols. The nature of the worship which God requires will be seen in its own place (Book 2, ch. 7 and 8). He has been pleased to prescribe in his Law what is lawful and right, and thus restrict men to a certain rule, lest any should allow themselves to devise a worship of their own. But as it is inexpedient to burden the reader by mixing up a variety of topics, I do not now dwell on this one. Let it suffice to remember, that whatever offices of piety are bestowed anywhere else than on God alone, are of the nature of sacrilege. First, superstition attached divine honours to the sun and stars, or to idols: afterwards ambition followed - ambition which, decking man in the spoils of God, dared to profane all that was sacred. And though the principle of worshipping a supreme Deity continued to be held, still the practice was to sacrifice promiscuously to genii and minor gods, or departed heroes: so prone is the descent to this vice of communicating to a crowd that which God strictly claims as his own peculiar right!

08.01.13A. Chapter 13. Part A

Chapter 13. The unity of the Divine Essence in three Persons taught, in Scripture, from the foundation of the world. This chapter consists of two parts. The former delivers the orthodox doctrine concerning the Holy Trinity. This occupies from sec. 1-21, and may be divided into four heads; the first, treating of the meaning of Person, including both the term and the thing meant by it, sec. 2-6; the second, proving the deity of the Son, sec. 7-13; the third, the deity of the Holy Spirit, sec. 14 and 15; and the fourth, explaining what is to be held concerning the Holy Trinity. The second part of the chapter refutes certain heresies which have arisen, particularly in our age, in opposition to this orthodox doctrine. This occupies from sec. 21 to the end.

Sections

1. Scripture, in teaching that the essence of God is immense and spiritual, refutes not only idolaters and the foolish wisdom of the world, but also the Manichees and Anthropomorphites. These latter briefly refuted.

2. In this one essence are three persons, yet so that neither is there a triple God, nor is the simple essence of God divided. Meaning of the word Person in this discussion. Three hypostases in God, or the essence of God.

3. Objection of those who, in this discussion, reject the use of the word Person. Answer 1. That it is not a foreign term, but is employed for the explanation of sacred mysteries.

4. Answer continued, 2. The orthodox compelled to use the terms, Trinity, Subsistence, and Person. Examples from the case of the Asians and Sabellians.

5. Answer continued, 3. The ancient Church, though differing somewhat in the explanation of these terms, agree in substance. Proofs from Hilary, Jerome, Augustine, in their use of the words Essence, Substance, Hypostasis. 4. Provided the orthodox meaning is retained, there should be no dispute about mere terms. But those who object to the terms usually favour the Arian and Sabellian heresy.

6. After the definition of the term follows a definition and explanation of the thing meant by it. The distinction of Persons.

7. Proofs of the eternal Deity of the Son. The Son the logos of the Eternal Father, and, therefore, the Son Eternal God. Objection. Reply.

8. Objection, that the logos began to be when the creating God spoke. Answer confirmed by Scripture and argument.

9. The Son called God and Jehovah. Other names of the Eternal Father applied to him in the Old Testament. He is, therefore, the Eternal God. Another objection refuted. Case of the Jews explained.

10. The angel who appeared to the fathers under the Law asserts that he is Jehovah. That angel was the logos of the Eternal Father. The Son being that logos is Eternal God. Impiety of Servetus refuted. Why the Son appeared in the form of an angel.

11. Passages from the New Testament in which the Son is acknowledged to be the Lord of Hosts, the Judge of the world, the God of glory, the Creator of the world, the Lord of angels, the King of the Church, the eternal logos, God blessed for ever, God manifest in the flesh, the equal of God, the true God and eternal life, the Lord and God of all believers. Therefore, the Eternal God.

12. Christ the Creator, Preserver, Redeemer, and Searcher of hearts. Therefore, the Eternal God.

13. Christ, by his own inherent power, wrought miracles, and bestowed the power of working them on others. Out of the Eternal God there is no salvation, no righteousness, no life. All these are in Christ. Christ, consequently, is the Eternal God. He in whom we believe and hope, to whom we pray, whom the Church acknowledges as the Saviour of the faithful, whom to know is life eternal, in whom the pious glory, and through whom eternal blessings are communicated, is the Eternal God. All these Christ is, and, therefore, he is God.

14. The Divinity of the Spirit proved. I. He is the Creator and Preserver of the world. II. He sent the Prophets. III. He quickeneth all things. IV. He is everywhere present. V. He renews the saints, and fits them for eternal life. VI. All the offices of Deity belong to him.

15. The Divinity of the Spirit continued. VII. He is called God. VIII. Blasphemy against him is not forgiven.

16. What view to be taken of the Trinity. The form of Christian baptism proves that there are three persons in one essence. The Arian and Macedonian heresies.

17. Of the distinction of Persons. They are distinct, but not divided. This proved.

18. Analogies taken from human affairs to be cautiously used. Due regard to be paid to those mentioned by Scripture.

19. How the Three Persons not only do not destroy, but constitute the most perfect unity.

20. Conclusion of this part of the chapter, and summary of the true doctrine concerning the unity of Essence and the Three Persons.

21. Refutation of Arian, Macedonian, and Anti-Trinitarian heresies. Caution to be observed.

22. The more modern Anti-Trinitarians, and especially Servetus, refuted.

23. Other Anti-Trinitarians refuted. No good objection that Christ is called the Son of God, since he is also called God. Impious absurdities of some heretics.

24. The name of God sometimes given to the Son absolutely as to the Father. Same as to other attributes. Objections refuted.

25. Objections further refuted. Caution to be used.

26. Previous refutations further explained.

27. Reply to certain passages produced from Irenaeus. The meaning of Irenaeus.

28. Reply to certain passages produced from Tertullian. The meaning of Tertullian.

29. Anti-Trinitarians refuted by ancient Christian writers; e. g., Justin, Hilary. Objections drawn from writings improperly attributed to Ignatius. Conclusion of the whole discussion concerning the Trinity.

1. The doctrine of Scripture concerning the immensity and the spirituality of the essence of God, should have the effect not only of dissipating the wild dreams of the vulgar, but also of refuting the subtleties of a profane philosophy. One of the ancients thought he spake shrewdly when he said that everything we see and everything we do not see is God (Senec. Praef. lib. 1 Quaest. Nat.). In this way he fancied that the Divinity was transfused into every separate portion of the world. But although God, in order to keep us within the bounds of soberness, treats sparingly of his essence, still, by the two attributes which I have mentioned, he at once suppresses all gross imaginations, and checks the audacity of the human mind. His immensity surely ought to deter us from measuring him by our sense, while his spiritual nature forbids us to indulge in carnal or earthly speculation concerning him. With the same view he frequently represents heaven as his dwelling-place. It is true, indeed, that as he is incomprehensible, he fills the earth also, but knowing that our minds are heavy and grovel on the earth, he raises us above the worlds that he may shake off our sluggishness and inactivity. And here we have a refutation of the error of the Manichees, who, by adopting two first principles, made the devil almost the equal of God. This, assuredly, was both to destroy his unity and restrict his immensity. Their attempt to pervert certain passages of Scripture proved their shameful ignorance, as the very nature of the error did their monstrous infatuation. The Anthropomorphites also, who dreamed of a corporeal God, because mouth, ears, eyes, hands, and feet, are often ascribed to him in Scripture, are easily refuted. For who is so devoid of intellect as not to understand that God, in so speaking, lisps with us as nurses are wont to do with little children? Such modes of expression, therefore, do not so much express what kind of a being God is, as accommodate the knowledge of him to our feebleness. In doing so, he must, of course, stoop far below his proper height.

2. But there is another special mark by which he designates himself, for the purpose of giving a more intimate knowledge of his nature. While he proclaims his unity, he distinctly sets it before us as existing in three persons. These we must hold, unless the bare and empty name of Deity merely is to flutter in our brain without any genuine knowledge. Moreover, lest any one should dream of a threefold God, or think that the simple essence is divided by the three Persons, we must here seek a brief and easy definition which may effectually guard us from error. But as some strongly inveigh against the term Person as being merely of human inventions let us first consider how far they have any ground for doing so. When the Apostle calls the Son of God “the express image of his person” (Hebrews 1:3), he undoubtedly does assign to the Father some subsistence in which he differs from the Son. For to hold with some interpreters that the term is equivalent to essence (as if Christ represented the substance of the Father like the impression of a seal upon wax), were not only harsh but absurd. For the essence of God being simple and undivided, and contained in himself entire, in full perfection, without partition or diminution, it is improper, nay, ridiculous, to call it his express image (charakte4r). But because the Father, though distinguished by his own peculiar properties, has expressed himself wholly in the Son, he is said with perfect

reason to have rendered his person (hypostasis) manifest in him. And this aptly accords with what is immediately added, viz., that he is “the brightness of his glory.” The fair inference from the Apostle’s words is, that there is a proper subsistence (hypostasis) of the Father, which shines refulgent in the Son. From this, again it is easy to infer that there is a subsistence (hypostasis) of the Son which distinguishes him from the Father. The same holds in the case of the Holy Spirit; for we will immediately prove both that he is God, and that he has a separate subsistence from the Father. This, moreover, is not a distinction of essence, which it were impious to multiply. If credit, then, is given to the Apostle’s testimony, it follows that there are three persons (hypostases) in God. The Latins having used the word Persona to express the same thing as the Greek hupostasis, it betrays excessive fastidiousness and even perverseness to quarrel with the term. The most literal translation would be subsistence. Many have used substance in the same sense. Nor, indeed, was the use of the term Person confined to the Latin Church. For the Greek Church in like manner, perhaps, for the purpose of testifying their consent, have taught that there are three proso4pa (aspects) in God. All these, however, whether Greeks or Latins, though differing as to the word, are perfectly agreed in substance.

3. Now, then, though heretics may snarl and the excessively fastidious carp at the word Person as inadmissible, in consequence of its human origin, since they cannot displace us from our position that three are named, each of whom is perfect God, and yet that there is no plurality of gods, it is most uncandid to attack the terms which do nothing more than explain what the Scriptures declare and sanction. “It were better,” they say, “to confine not only our meanings but our words within the bounds of Scripture, and not scatter about foreign terms to become the future seed-beds of brawls and dissensions. In this way, men grow tired of quarrels about words; the truth is lost in altercation, and charity melts away amid hateful strife.” If they call it a foreign term, because it cannot be pointed out in Scripture in so many syllables, they certainly impose an unjust law - a law which would condemn every interpretation of Scripture that is not composed of other words of Scripture. But if by foreign they mean that which, after being idly devised, is superstitiously defended - which tends more to strife than edification - which is used either out of place, or with no benefit which offends pious ears by its harshness, and leads them away from the simplicity of God’s Word, I embrace their soberness with all my heart. For I think we are bound to speak of God as reverently as we are bound to think of him. As our own thoughts respecting him are foolish, so our own language respecting him is absurd. Still, however, some medium must be observed. The unerring standard both of thinking and speaking must be derived from the Scriptures: by it all the thoughts of ours minds, and the words of our mouths, should he tested. But in regard to those parts of Scripture which, to our capacities, are dark and intricate, what forbids us to explain them in clearer terms - terms, however, kept in reverent and faithful subordination to Scripture truth, used sparingly and modestly, and not without occasion? Of this we are not without many examples. When it has been proved that the Church was impelled, by the strongest necessity, to use the words Trinity and Person, will not he who still inveighs against novelty of terms be deservedly suspected of taking offence at the light of truth, and of having no other ground for his invective, than that the truth is made plain and transparent?

4. Such novelty (if novelty it should be called) becomes most requisite, when the truth is to be maintained against calumniators who evade it by quibbling. Of this, we of the present day have too much experience in being constantly called upon to attack the enemies of pure and sound

doctrine. These slippery snakes escape by their swift and tortuous windings, if not strenuously pursued, and when caught, firmly held. Thus the early Christians, when harassed with the disputes which heresies produced, were forced to declare their sentiments in terms most scrupulously exact in order that no indirect subterfuges might remain to ungodly men, to whom ambiguity of expression was a kind of hiding-place. Arius confessed that Christ was God, and the Son of God; because the passages of Scripture to this effect were too clear to be resisted, and then, as if he had done well, pretended to concur with others. But, meanwhile, he ceased not to give out that Christ was created, and had a beginning like other creatures. To drag this man of wiles out of his lurking-places, the ancient Church took a further step, and declared that Christ is the eternal Son of the Father, and consubstantial with the Father. The impiety was fully disclosed when the Arians began to declare their hatred and utter detestation of the term homoousios. Had their first confession, viz., that Christ was God, been sincere and from the heart, they would not have denied that he was consubstantial with the Father. Who dare charge those ancient writers as men of strife and contention, for having debated so warmly, and disturbed the quiet of the Church for a single word? That little word distinguished between Christians of pure faith and the blasphemous Arians. Next Sabellius arose, who counted the names of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as almost nonentities; maintaining that they were not used to mark out some distinction, but that they were different attributes of God, like many others of a similar kind. When the matter was debated, he acknowledged his belief that the Father was God, the Son God, the Spirit God; but then he had the evasion ready, that he had said nothing more than if he had called God powerful, and just, and wise. Accordingly, he sung another note, viz., that the Father was the Son, and the Holy Spirit the Father, without order or distinction. The worthy doctors who then had the interests of piety at heart, in order to defeat it is man’s dishonesty, proclaimed that three subsistence were to be truly acknowledged in the one God. That they might protect themselves against tortuous craftiness by the simple open truth, they affirmed that a Trinity of Persons subsisted in the one God, or (which is the same thing) in the unity of God.

5. Where names have not been invented rashly, we must beware lest we become chargeable with arrogance and rashness in rejecting them. I wish, indeed, that such names were buried, provided all would concur in the belief that the Father, Son, and Spirit, are one God, and yet that the Son is not the Father, nor the Spirit the Son, but that each has his peculiar subsistence. I am not so minutely precise as to fight furiously for mere words. For I observe, that the writers of the ancient Church, while they uniformly spoke with great reverence on these matters, neither agreed with each other, nor were always consistent with themselves. How strange the formula used by Councils, and defended by Hilary! How extravagant the view which Augustine sometimes takes! How unlike the Greeks are to the Latins! But let one example of variance suffice. The Latins, in translating homoousios used consubstantialis (consubstantial), intimating that there was one substance of the Father and the Son, and thus using the word Substance for Essence. Hence Jerome, in his Letter to Damasus, says it is profane to affirm that there are three substances in God. But in Hilary you will find it said more than a hundred times that there are three substances in God. Then how greatly is Jerome perplexed with the word Hypostasis! He suspects some lurking poison, when it is said that there are three Hypostases in God. And he does not disguise his belief that the expression, though used in a pious sense, is improper; if, indeed, he was sincere in saying this, and did not rather designedly endeavour, by an unfounded calumny, to throw odium on the Eastern bishops whom he hated. He certainly shows little candour in asserting, that in all heathen

schools ousia is equivalent to Hypostasis - an assertion completely refuted by trite and common use.

More courtesy and moderation is shown by Augustine (De Trinity. lib. 5 c. 8 and 9), who, although he says that Hypostasis in this sense is new to Latin ears, is still so far from objecting to the ordinary use of the term by the Greeks, that he is even tolerant of the Latins, who had imitated the Greek phraseology. The purport of what Socrates says of the term, in the Sixth Book of the Tripartite History, is, that it had been improperly applied to this purpose by the unskilful. Hilary (De Trinitat. lib. 2) charges it upon the heretics as a great crime, that their misconduct had rendered it necessary to subject to the peril of human utterance things which ought to have been reverently confined within the mind, not disguising his opinion that those who do so, do what is unlawful, speak what is ineffable, and pry into what is forbidden. Shortly after, he apologises at great length for presuming to introduce new terms. For, after putting down the natural names of Father, Son, and Spirit, he adds, that all further inquiry transcends the significance of words, the discernment of sense, and the apprehension of intellect. And in another place (De Conciliis), he congratulates the Bishops of France in not having framed any other confession, but received, without alteration, the ancient and most simple confession received by all Churches from the days of the Apostles. Not unlike this is the apology of Augustine, that the term had been wrung from him by necessity from the poverty of human language in so high a matter: not that the reality could be thereby expressed, but that he might not pass on in silence without attempting to show how the Father, Son, and Spirit, are three. The modesty of these holy men should be an admonition to us not instantly to dip our pen in gall, and sternly denounce those who may be unwilling to swear to the terms which we have devised, provided they do not in this betray pride, or petulance, or unbecoming heat, but are willing to ponder the necessity which compels us so to speak, and may thus become gradually accustomed to a useful form of expression. Let men also studiously beware, that in opposing the Asians on the one hand, and the Sabellians on the other, and eagerly endeavouring to deprive both of any handle for cavil, they do not bring themselves under some suspicion of being the disciples of either Arius or Sabellius. Arius says that Christ is God, and then mutters that he was made and had a beginning. He says, that he is one with the Father; but secretly whispers in the ears of his party, made one, like other believers, though with special privilege. Say, he is consubstantial, and you immediately pluck the mask from this chameleon, though you add nothing to Scripture. Sabellius says that the Father, Son, and Spirit, indicate some distinction in God. Say, they are three, and he will bawl out that you are making three Gods. Say, that there is a Trinity of Persons in one Divine essence, you will only express in one word what the Scriptures say, and stop his empty prattle. Should any be so superstitiously precise as not to tolerate these terms, still do their worst, they will not be able to deny that when one is spoken of, a unity of substance must be understood, and when three in one essence, the persons in this Trinity are denoted. When this is confessed without equivocations we dwell not on words. But I was long ago made aware, and, indeed, on more than one occasion, that those who contend pertinaciously about words are tainted with some hidden poison; and, therefore, that it is more expedient to provoke them purposely, than to court their favour by speaking obscurely.

6. But to say nothing more of words, let us now attend to the thing signified. By person, then, I mean a subsistence in the Divine essence - a subsistence which, while related to the other two, is distinguished from them by incommunicable properties. By subsistence we wish something else to

be understood than essence. For if the Word were God simply and had not some property peculiar to himself, John could not have said correctly that he had always been with God. When he adds immediately after, that the Word was God, he calls us back to the one essence. But because he could not be with God without dwelling in the Father, hence arises that subsistence, which, though connected with the essence by an indissoluble tie, being incapable of separation, yet has a special mark by which it is distinguished from it. Now, I say that each of the three subsistences while related to the others is distinguished by its own properties. Here relation is distinctly expressed, because, when God is mentioned simply and indefinitely the name belongs not less to the Son and Spirit than to the Father. But whenever the Father is compared with the Son, the peculiar property of each distinguishes the one from the other. Again, whatever is proper to each I affirm to be incommunicable, because nothing can apply or be transferred to the Son which is attributed to the Father as a mark of distinction. I have no objections to adopt the definition of Tertullian, provided it is properly understood, “that there is in God a certain arrangement or economy, which makes no change on the unity of essence.” - Tertull. Lib. contra Praxeam.

7. Before proceeding farther, it will be necessary to prove the divinity of the Son and the Holy Spirit. Thereafter, we shall see how they differ from each other. When the Word of God is set before us in the Scriptures, it were certainly most absurd to imagine that it is only a fleeting and evanescent voice, which is sent out into the air, and comes forth beyond God himself, as was the case with the communications made to the patriarchs, and all the prophecies. The reference is rather to the wisdom ever dwelling with God, and by which all oracles and prophecies were inspired. For, as Peter testifies (1 Peter 1:11), the ancient prophets spake by the Spirit of Christ just as did the apostles, and all who after them were ministers of the heavenly doctrine. But as Christ was not yet manifested, we necessarily understand that the Word was begotten of the Father before all ages. But if that Spirit, whose organs the prophets were, belonged to the Word, the inference is irresistible, that the Word was truly God. And this is clearly enough shown by Moses in his account of the creation, where he places the Word as intermediate. For why does he distinctly narrate that God, in creating each of his works, said, Let there be this - let there be that, unless that the unsearchable glory of God might shine forth in his image? I know prattlers would easily evade this, by saying that Word is used for order or command; but the apostles are better expositors, when they tell us that the worlds were created by the Son, and that he sustains all things by his mighty word (Hebrews 1:2). For we here see that “word” is used for the nod or command of the Son, who is himself the eternal and essential Word of the Father. And no man of sane mind can have any doubt as to Solomon’s meaning, when he introduces Wisdom as begotten by God, and presiding at the creation of the world, and all other divine operations (Proverbs 8:22). For it were trifling and foolish to imagine any temporary command at a time when God was pleased to execute his fixed and eternal counsel, and something more still mysterious. To this our Saviour’s words refer, “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work” (John 5:17). In thus affirming, that from the foundation of the world he constantly worked with the Father, he gives a clearer explanation of what Moses simply touched. The meaning therefore is, that God spoke in such a manner as left the Word his peculiar part in the work, and thus made the operation common to both. But the clearest explanation is given by John, when he states that the Word - which was from the beginning, God and with God, was, together with God the Father, the maker of all things. For he both attributes a substantial and permanent essence to the Word, assigning to it a certain peculiarity, and distinctly showing how God spoke the world into being. Therefore, as all

revelations from heaven are duly designated by the title of the Word of God, so the highest place must be assigned to that substantial Word, the source of all inspiration, which, as being liable to no variation, remains for ever one and the same with God, and is God.

8. Here an outcry is made by certain men, who, while they dare not openly deny his divinity, secretly rob him of his eternity. For they contend that the Word only began to be when God opened his sacred mouth in the creation of the world. Thus, with excessive temerity, they imagine some change in the essence of God. For as the names of God, which have respect to external work, began to be ascribed to him from the existence of the work (as when he is called the Creator of heaven and earth), so piety does not recognise or admit any name which might indicate that a change had taken place in God himself. For if any thing adventitious took place, the saying of James would cease to be true, that “every good gift, and every perfect gift, is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning” (James 1:17). Nothing, therefore, is more intolerable than to fancy a beginning to that Word which was always God, and afterwards was the Creator of the world. But they think they argue acutely, in maintaining that Moses, when he says that God then spoke for the first time, must be held to intimate that till then no Word existed in him. This is the merest trifling. It does not surely follow, that because a thing begins to be manifested at a certain time, it never existed previously. I draw a very different conclusion. Since at the very moment when God said, “Let there be light,” the energy of the Word-was immediately exerted, it must have existed long before. If any inquire how long, he will find it was without beginning. No certain period of time is defined, when he himself says, “Now O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was” (John 17:5). Nor is this omitted by John: for before he descends to the creation of the world, he says, that “in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God.” We, therefore, again conclude, that the Word was eternally begotten by God, and dwelt with him from everlasting. In this way, his true essence, his eternity, and divinity, are established.

9. But though I am not now treating of the office of the Mediator, having deferred it till the subject of redemption is considered, yet because it ought to be clear and incontrovertible to all, that Christ is that Word become incarnate, this seems the most appropriate place to introduce those passages which assert the Divinity of Christ. When it is said in the forty-fifth Psalm, “Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever,” the Jews quibble that the name Elohim is applied to angels and sovereign powers. But no passage is to be found in Scripture, where an eternal throne is set up for a creature. For he is not called God simply, but also the eternal Ruler. Besides, the title is not conferred on any man, without some addition, as when it is said that Moses would be a God to Pharaoh (Exodus 7:1). Some read as if it were in the genitive case, but this is too insipid. I admit, that anything possessed of singular excellence is often called divine, but it is clear from the context, that this meaning here were harsh and forced, and totally inapplicable. But if their perverseness still refuses to yield, surely there is no obscurity in Isaiah, where Christ is introduced both us God, and as possessed of supreme powers one of the peculiar attributes of God, “His name shall be called the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6). Here, too, the Jews object, and invert the passage thus, This is the name by which the mighty God, the Everlasting Father, will call him; so that all which they leave to the Son is, “ Prince of Peace.” But why should so many epithets be here accumulated on God the Father, seeing the prophet’s design is to present the Messiah with certain distinguished properties which may induce us to put our faith in him? There can be no

doubt, therefore, that he who a little before was called Emmanuel, is here called the Mighty God. Moreover, there can be nothing clearer than the words of Jeremiah, “This is the name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS” (Jeremiah 23:6). For as the Jews themselves teach that the other names of God are mere epithets, whereas this, which they call the ineffable name, is substantive, and expresses his essence, we infer, that the only begotten Son is the eternal God, who elsewhere declares, “My glory will I not give to another” (Isaiah 42:8). An attempt is made to evade this from the fact, that this name is given by Moses to the altar which he built, and by Ezekiel to the New Jerusalem. But who sees not that the altar was erected as a memorial to show that God was the exalter of Moses, and that the name of God was applied to Jerusalem, merely to testify the Divine presence? For thus the prophet speaks, “The name of the city from that day shall be, The Lord is there” (Ezekiel 48:35). In the same way, “Moses built an altar, and called the name of it JEHOVAH-nissi” (Jehovah my exaltation). But it would seem the point is still more keenly disputed as to another passage in Jeremiah, where the same title is applied to Jerusalem in these words, “In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely; and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness.” But so far is this passage from being adverse to the truth which we defend, that it rather supports it. The prophet having formerly declared that Christ is the true Jehovah from whom righteousness flows, now declares that the Church would be made so sensible of this as to be able to glory in assuming his very name. In the former passage, therefore, the fountain and cause of righteousness is set down, in the latter, the effect is described.

10. But if this does not satisfy the Jews, I know not what cavils will enable them to evade the numerous passages in which Jehovah is said to have appeared in the form of an Angel (Judges 6:7 : Judges 13:16-23, &c). This Angel claims for himself the name of the Eternal God. Should it be alleged that this is done in respect of the office which he bears, the difficulty is by no means solved. No servant would rob God of his honour, by allowing sacrifice to be offered to himself. But the Angel, by refusing to eat bread, orders the sacrifice due to Jehovah to be offered to him. Thus the fact itself proves that he was truly Jehovah. Accordingly, Manoah and his wife infer from the sign, that they had seen not only an angel, but God. Hence Manoah’s exclamation, “We shall die; for we have seen the Lord.” When the woman replies, “If Jehovah had wished to slay us, he would not have received the sacrifice at our hand,” she acknowledges that he who is previously called an angel was certainly God. We may add, that the angel’s own reply removes all doubt, “Why do ye ask my name, which is wonderful?” Hence the impiety of Servetus was the more detestable, when he maintained that God was never manifested to Abraham and the Patriarchs, but that an angel was worshipped in his stead. The orthodox doctors of the Church have correctly and wisely expounded, that the Word of God was the supreme angel, who then began, as it were by anticipation, to perform the office of Mediator. For though he were not clothed with flesh, yet he descended as in an intermediate form, that he might have more familiar access to the faithful. This closer intercourse procured for him the name of the Angel; still, however, he retained the character which justly belonged to him - that of the God of ineffable glory. The same thing is intimated by Hosea, who, after mentioning the wrestling of Jacob with the angel, says, “Even the Lord God of hosts; the Lord is his memorial” (Hosea 12:5). Servetus again insinuates that God personated an angel; as if the prophet did not confirm what had been said by Moses, “Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name?” (Genesis 32:29, Genesis 32:30). And the confession of the holy Patriarch sufficiently declares that he was not a created angel, but one in whom the fulness of the

Godhead dwelt, when he says, “I have seen God face to face.” Hence also Paul’s statement, that Christ led the people in the wilderness (1 Corinthians 10:4. See also Calvin on Acts 7:30, and infra, chap. 14 sec. 9). Although the time of humiliation had not yet arrived, the eternal Word exhibited a type of the office which he was to fulfil. Again, if the first chapter of Zechariah (Zechariah 1:9) and the second (Zechariah 2:3) be candidly considered, it will be seen that the angel who sends the other angel is immediately after declared to be the Lord of hosts, and that supreme power is ascribed to him. I omit numberless passages in which our faith rests secure, though they may not have much weight with the Jews. For when it is said in Isaiah, “Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us; this is the Lord: we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation” (Isaiah 25:9), even the blind may see that the God referred to is he who again rises up for the deliverance of his people. And the emphatic description, twice repeated, precludes the idea that reference is made to any other than to Christ. Still clearer and stronger is the passage of Malachi, in which a promise is made that the messenger who was then expected would come to his own temple (Malachi 3:1). The temple certainly was dedicated to Almighty God only, and yet the prophet claims it for Christ. Hence it follows, that he is the God who was always worshipped by the Jews.

11. The New Testament teems with innumerable passages, and our object must therefore be, the selection of a few, rather than an accumulation of the whole. But though the Apostles spoke of him after his appearance in the flesh as Mediator, every passage which I adduce will be sufficient to prove his eternal Godhead. And the first thing deserving of special observation is that predictions concerning the eternal God are applied to Christ, as either already fulfilled in him, or to be fulfilled at some future period. Isaiah prophesies, that “the Lord of Hosts” shall be “for a stone of stumbling, and for a rock of offence” (Isaiah 8:14). Paul asserts that this prophecy was fulfilled in Christ (Romans 9:33), and, therefore, declares that Christ is that Lord of Hosts. In like manner, he says in another passage, “We shall all stand before the judgement-seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.” Since in Isaiah God predicts this of himself (Isaiah 45:23), and Christ exhibits the reality fulfilled in himself, it follows that he is the very God, whose glory cannot be given to another. It is clear also, that the passage from the Psalms (Psalms 68:19) which he quotes in the Epistle to the Ephesians, is applicable only to God, “When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive” (Ephesians 4:8). Understanding that such an ascension was shadowed forth when the Lord exerted his power, and gained a glorious victory over heathen nations, he intimates that what was thus shadowed was more fully manifested in Christ. So John testifies that it was the glory of the Son which was revealed to Isaiah in a vision (John 12:41; Isaiah 6:4), though Isaiah himself expressly says that what he saw was the Majesty of God. Again, there can be no doubt that those qualities which, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, are applied to the Son, are the brightest attributes of God, “Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth,” &c., and, “Let all the angels of God worship him” (Hebrews 1:10, Hebrews 1:6). And yet he does not pervert the passages in thus applying them to Christ, since Christ alone performed the things which these passages celebrate. It was he who arose and pitied Zion - he who claimed for himself dominion over all nations and islands. And why should John have hesitated to ascribe the Majesty of God to Christ, after saying in his preface that the Word was God? (John 1:14). Why should Paul have feared to place Christ on the judgement-seat of God (2 Corinthians 5:10), after he had so openly proclaimed his divinity, when he said that he was God over all, blessed for ever? And to show how consistent he is in this

respect, he elsewhere says that “God was manifest in the flesh” (1 Timothy 3:16). If he is God blessed for ever, he therefore it is to whom alone, as Paul affirms in another place, all glory and honour is due. Paul does not disguise this, but openly exclaims, that “being in the form of God (he) thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation” (Php 2:6). And lest the wicked should glamour and say that he was a kind of spurious God, John goes farther, and affirms, “This is the true God, and eternal life.” Though it ought to be enough for us that he is called God, especially by a witness who distinctly testifies that we have no more gods than one, Paul says, “Though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth (as there be gods many, and lords many), but to us there is but one God” (1 Corinthians 8:5, 1 Corinthians 8:6). When we hear from the same lips that God was manifest in the flesh, that God purchased the Church with his own blood, why do we dream of any second God, to whom he makes not the least allusion? And there is no room to doubt that all the godly entertained the same view. Thomas, by addressing him as his Lord and God, certainly professes that he was the only God whom he had ever adored (John 20:28).

12. The divinity of Christ, if judged by the works which are ascribed to him in Scripture, becomes still more evident. When he said of himself, “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work,” the Jews, though most dull in regard to his other sayings, perceived that he was laying claim to divine power. And, therefore, as John relates (John 5:17), they sought the more to kill him, because he not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was his Father, making himself equal with God. What, then, will be our stupidity if we do not perceive from the same passage that his divinity is plainly instructed? To govern the world by his power and providence, and regulate all things by an energy inherent in himself (this an Apostle ascribes to him, Hebrews 1:3), surely belongs to none but the Creator. Nor does he merely share the government of the world with the Father, but also each of the other offices, which cannot be communicated to creatures. The Lord proclaims by his prophets “I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake” (Isaiah 43:25). When, in accordance with this declaration, the Jews thought that injustice was done to God when Christ forgave sins, he not only asserted, in distinct terms, that this power belonged to him, but also proved it by a miracle (Matthew 9:6). We thus see that he possessed in himself not the ministry of forgiving sins, but the inherent power which the Lord declares he will not give to another. What! Is it not the province of God alone to penetrate and interrogate the secret thoughts of the heart? But Christ also had this power, and therefore we infer that Christ is God.

13. How clearly and transparently does this appear in his miracles? I admit that similar and equal miracles were performed by the prophets and apostles; but there is this very essential difference, that they dispensed the gifts of God as his ministers, whereas he exerted his own inherent might. Sometimes, indeed, he used prayer, that he might ascribe glory to the Father, but we see that for the most part his own proper power is displayed. And how should not he be the true author of miracles, who, of his own authority, commissions others to perform them? For the Evangelist relates that he gave power to the apostles to cast out devils, cure the lepers, raise the dead, &c. And they, by the mode in which they performed this ministry, showed plainly that their whole power was derived from Christ. “In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth,” says Peter (Acts 3:6), “rise up and walk.” It is not surprising, then, that Christ appealed to his miracles in order to subdue the unbelief of the Jews, inasmuch as these were performed by his own energy, and therefore bore the most ample testimony to his divinity.

Again, if out of God there is no salvation, no righteousness, no life, Christ, having all these in himself, is certainly God. Let no one object that life or salvation is transfused into him by God. For it is said not that he received, but that he himself is salvation. And if there is none good but God, how could a mere man be pure, how could he be, I say not good and just, but goodness and justice? Then what shall we say to the testimony of the Evangelist, that from the very beginning of the creation “in him was life, and this life was the light of men?” Trusting to such proofs, we can boldly put our hope and faith in him, though we know it is blasphemous impiety to confide in any creature. “Ye believe in God,” says he, “believe also in me” (John 14:1). And so Paul (Romans 10:11, and Romans 15:12) interprets two passages of Isaiah “Whose believeth in him shall not be confounded” (Isaiah 28:16); and, “In that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek” (Isaiah 11:10). But why adduce more passages of Scripture on this head, when we so often meet with the expression, “He that believeth in me has eternal life?”

Again, the prayer of faith is addressed to him - prayer, which specially belongs to the divine majesty, if anything so belongs. For the Prophet Joel says, “And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord (Jehovah) shall be delivered” (Joel 2:32). And another says, “The name of the Lord (Jehovah) is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it and is safe” (Proverbs 18:10). But the name of Christ is invoked for salvation, and therefore it follows that he is Jehovah. Moreover, we have an example of invocation in Stephen, when he said, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit;” and thereafter in the whole Church, when Ananias says in the same book, “Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he has done to thy saints at Jerusalem; and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name” (Acts 9:13, Acts 9:14). And to make it more clearly understood that in Christ dwelt the whole fulness of the Godhead bodily, the Apostle declares that the only doctrine which he professed to the Corinthians, the only doctrine which he taught, was the knowledge of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:2). Consider what kind of thing it is, and how great, that the name of the Son alone is preached to us, though God command us to glory only in the knowledge of himself (Jeremiah 9:24). Who will dare to maintain that he, whom to know forms our only ground of glorying, is a mere creature? To this we may add, that the salutations prefixed to the Epistles of Paul pray for the same blessings from the Son as from the Father. By this we are taught, not only that the blessings which our heavenly Father bestows come to us through his intercession, but that by a partnership in power, the Son himself is their author. This practical knowledge is doubtless surer and more solid than any idle speculation. For the pious soul has the best view of God, and may almost be said to handle him, when it feels that it is quickened, enlightened, saved, justified, and sanctified by him.

14. In asserting the divinity of the Spirit, the proof must be derived from the same sources. And it is by no means an obscure testimony which Moses bears in the history of the creation, when he says that the Spirit of God was expanded over the abyss or shapeless matter; for it shows not only that the beauty which the world displays is maintained by the invigorating power of the Spirit, but that even before this beauty existed the Spirit was at work cherishing the confused mass. Again, no cavils can explain away the force of what Isaiah says, “And now the Lord God, and his Spirit, has sent me” (Isaiah 48:16), thus ascribing a share in the sovereign power of sending the prophets to the Holy Spirit. (Calvin in Acts 20:28). In this his divine majesty is clear.

But, as I observed, the best proof to us is our familiar experience. For nothing can be more alien from a creature, than the office which the Scriptures ascribe to him, and which the pious actually feel him discharging - his being diffused over all space, sustaining, invigorating, and quickening all things, both in heaven and on the earth. The mere fact of his not being circumscribed by any limits raises him above the rank of creatures, while his transfusing vigour into all things, breathing into them being, life, and motion, is plainly divine. Again, if regeneration to incorruptible life is higher, and much more excellent than any present quickening, what must be thought of him by whose energy it is produced? Now, many passages of Scripture show that he is the author of regeneration, not by a borrowed, but by an intrinsic energy; and not only so, but that he is also the author of future immortality. In short, all the peculiar attributes of the Godhead are ascribed to him in the same way as to the Son. He searches the deep things of Gods and has no counsellor among the creatures; he bestows wisdom and the faculty of speech, though God declares to Moses (Exodus 4:11) that this is his own peculiar province. In like manner, by means of him we become partakers of the divine nature, so as in a manner to feel his quickening energy within us. Our justification is his work; from him is power, sanctification, truth, grace, and every good thought, since it is from the Spirit alone that all good gifts proceed. Particular attention is due to Paul's expression, that though there are diversities of gifts, "all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit" (1 Corinthians 12:11), he being not only the beginning or origin, but also the author; as is even more clearly expressed immediately after in these words "dividing to every man severally as he will." For were he not something subsisting in God, will and arbitrary disposal would never be ascribed to him. Most clearly, therefore does Paul ascribe divine power to the Spirit, and demonstrate that he dwells hypostatically in God.

15. Nor does the Scripture, in speaking of him, withhold the name of God. Paul infers that we are the temple of God, from the fact that "the Spirit of God dwelleth in us" (1 Corinthians 3:16; 1 Corinthians 6:19; and 2 Corinthians 6:16). Now it ought not to be slightly overlooked, that all the promises which God makes of choosing us to himself as a temple, receive their only fulfilment by his Spirit dwelling in us. Surely, as it is admirably expressed by Augustine (Ad Maximinum, Ephesians 66), "were we ordered to make a temple of wood and stone to the Spirit, inasmuch as such worship is due to God alone, it would be a clear proof of the Spirit's divinity; how much clearer a proof in that we are not to make a temple to him, but to be ourselves that temple." And the Apostle says at one time that we are the temple of God, and at another time, in the same sense, that we are the temple of the Holy Spirit. Peter, when he rebuked Ananias for having lied to the Holy Spirit, said, that he had not lied unto men, but unto God. And when Isaiah had introduced the Lord of Hosts as speaking, Paul says, it was the Holy Spirit that spoke (Acts 28:25, Acts 28:26). Nay, words uniformly said by the prophets to have been spoken by the Lord of Hosts, are by Christ and his apostles ascribed to the Holy Spirit. Hence it follows that the Spirit is the true Jehovah who dictated the prophecies. Again, when God complains that he was provoked to anger by the stubbornness of the people, in place of Him, Isaiah says that his Holy Spirit was grieved (Isaiah 63:10). Lastly, while blasphemy against the Spirit is not forgiven, either in the present life or that which is to come, whereas he who has blasphemed against the Son may obtain pardon, that majesty must certainly be divine which it is an inexpiable crime to offend or impair. I designedly omit several passages which the ancient fathers adduced. They thought it plausible to quote from David, "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath (Spirit) of his mouth" (Psalms 33:6), in order to prove that the world was not less the work of the

Holy Spirit than of the Son. But seeing it is usual in the Psalms to repeat the same thing twice, and in Isaiah the “spirit” (breath) of the mouth is equivalent to “word”, that proof was weak; and, accordingly, my wish has been to advert briefly to those proofs on which pious minds may securely rest.

08.01.13B. Chapter 13. Part B

Chapter 13. The unity of the Divine Essence in three Persons taught, in Scripture, from the foundation of the world.

Continued

16. But as God has manifested himself more clearly by the advent of Christ, so he has made himself more familiarly known in three persons. Of many proofs let this one suffice. Paul connects together these three, God, Faith, and Baptism, and reasons from the one to the other, viz., because there is one faith he infers that there is one God; and because there is one baptism he infers that there is one faith. Therefore, if by baptism we are initiated into the faith and worship of one God, we must of necessity believe that he into whose name we are baptised is the true God. And there cannot be a doubt that our Saviour wished to testify, by a solemn rehearsal, that the perfect light of faith is now exhibited, when he said, “Go and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19), since this is the same thing as to be baptised into the name of the one God, who has been fully manifested in the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. Hence it plainly appears, that the three persons, in whom alone God is known, subsist in the Divine essence. And since faith certainly ought not to look hither and thither, or run up and down after various objects, but to look, refer, and cleave to God alone, it is obvious that were there various kinds of faith, there behaved also to be various gods. Then, as the baptism of faith is a sacrament, its unity assures us of the unity of God. Hence also it is proved that it is lawful only to be baptised into one God, because we make a profession of faith in him in whose name we are baptised. What, then, is our Saviour’s meaning in commanding baptism to be administered in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, if it be not that we are to believe with one faith in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit? But is this any thing else than to declare that the Father, Son, and Spirit, are one God? Wherefore, since it must be held certain that there is one God, not more than one, we conclude that the Word and Spirit are of the very essence of God. Nothing could be more stupid than the trifling of the Arians, who, while acknowledging the divinity of the Son, denied his divine essence. Equally extravagant were the ravings of the Macedonians, who insisted that by the Spirit were only meant the gifts of grace poured out upon men. For as wisdom understanding, prudence, fortitude, and the fear of the Lord, proceed from the Spirit, so he is the one Spirit of wisdom, prudence, fortitude, and piety. He is not divided according to the distribution of his gifts, but, as the Apostle assures us (1 Corinthians 12:11), however they be divided, he remains one and the same.

17. On the other hand, the Scriptures demonstrate that there is some distinction between the Father and the Word, the Word and the Spirit; but the magnitude of the mystery reminds us of the great reverence and soberness which ought to he employed in discussing it. It seems to me, that nothing can be more admirable than the words of Gregory Nanzianzen: Ou fthano4 to ei noe4sai kai tois trisi perilampomai; ou fthano4 ta tria dielein kai eis to hen anaferomai (Greg. Nanzian. in Serm. de Sacro Baptis.). “I cannot think of the unity without being irradiated by the Trinity: I cannot

distinguish between the Trinity without being carried up to the unity." Therefore, let us beware of imagining such a Trinity of persons as will distract our thoughts, instead of bringing them instantly back to the unity. The words Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, certainly indicate a real distinction, not allowing us to suppose that they are merely epithets by which God is variously designated from his works. Still they indicate distinction only, not division. The passages we have already quoted show that the Son has a distinct subsistence from the Father, because the Word could not have been with God unless he were distinct from the Father; nor but for this could he have had his glory with the Father. In like manner, Christ distinguishes the Father from himself when he says that there is another who bears witness of him (John 5:32; John 8:16). To the same effect is it elsewhere said, that the Father made all things by the Word. This could not be, if he were not in some respect distinct from him. Besides, it was not the Father that descended to the earth, but he who came forth from the Father; nor was it the Father that died and rose again, but he whom the Father had sent. This distinction did not take its beginning at the incarnation: for it is clear that the only begotten Son previously existed in the bosom of the Father (John 1:18). For who will dare to affirm that the Son entered his Father's bosom for the first time, when he came down from heaven to assume human nature? Therefore, he was previously in the bosom of the Father, and had his glory with the Father. Christ intimates the distinction between the Holy Spirit and the Father, when he says that the Spirit proceedeth from the Father, and between the Holy Spirit and himself, when he speaks of him as another as he does when he declares that he will send another Comforter; and in many other passages besides (John 14:6; John 15:26; John 14:16).

18. I am not sure whether it is expedient to borrow analogies from human affairs to express the nature of this distinction. The ancient fathers sometimes do so, but they at the same time admits that what they bring forward as analogous is very widely different. And hence it is that I have a great dread of any thing like presumption here, lest some rash saying may furnish an occasion of calumny to the malicious, or of delusion to the unlearned. It were unbecoming, however, to say nothing of a distinction which we observe that the Scriptures have pointed out. This distinction is, that to the Father is attributed the beginning of action, the fountain and source of all things; to the Son, wisdom, counsel, and arrangement in action, while the energy and efficacy of action is assigned to the Spirit. Moreover, though the eternity of the Father is also the eternity of the Son and Spirit, since God never could be without his own wisdom and energy; and though in eternity there can be no room for first or last, still the distinction of order is not unmeaning or superfluous, the Father being considered first, next the Son from him, and then the Spirit from both. For the mind of every man naturally inclines to consider, first, God, secondly, the wisdom emerging from him, and, lastly, the energy by which he executes the purposes of his counsel. For this reason, the Son is said to be of the Father only; the Spirit of both the Father and the Son. This is done in many passages, but in none more clearly than in the eighth chapter to the Romans, where the same Spirit is called indiscriminately the Spirit of Christ, and the Spirit of him who raised up Christ from the dead. And not improperly. For Peter also testifies (1 Peter 1:21), that it was the Spirit of Christ which inspired the prophets, though the Scriptures so often say that it was the Spirit of God the Father.

19. Moreover, this distinction is so far from interfering with the most perfect unity of God, that the Son may thereby be proved to be one God with the Father, inasmuch as he constitutes one Spirit with him, and that the Spirit is not different from the Father and the Son, inasmuch as he is the

Spirit of the Father and the Son. In each hypostasis the whole nature is understood the only difference being that each has his own peculiar subsistence. The whole Father is in the Son, and the whole Son in the Father, as the Son himself also declares (John 14:10), “I am in the Father, and the Father in me;” nor do ecclesiastical writers admit that the one is separated from the other by any difference of essence. “By those names which denote distinctions” says Augustine “is meant the relation which they mutually bear to each other, not the very substance by which they are one.” In this way, the sentiments of the Fathers, which might sometimes appear to be at variance with each other, are to be reconciled. At one time they teach that the Father is the beginning of the Son, at another they assert that the Son has both divinity and essence from himself, and therefore is one beginning with the Father. The cause of this discrepancy is well and clearly explained by Augustine, when he says, “Christ, as to himself, is called God, as to the Father he is called Son.” And again, “The Father, as to himself, is called God, as to the Son he is called Father. He who, as to the Son, is called Father, is not Son; and he who, as to himself, is called Father, and he who, as to himself, is called Son, is the same God.” Therefore, when we speak of the Son simply, without reference to the Father, we truly and properly affirm that he is of himself, and, accordingly, call him the only beginning; but when we denote the relation which he bears to the Father, we correctly make the Father the beginning of the Son. Augustine’s fifth book on the Trinity is wholly devoted to the explanation of this subject. But it is far safer to rest contented with the relation as taught by him, than get bewildered in vain speculation by subtle prying into a sublime mystery.

20. Let those, then, who love soberness, and are contented with the measure of faith, briefly receive what is useful to be known. It is as follows: When we profess to believe in one God, by the name God is understood the one simple essence, comprehending three persons or hypostases; and, accordingly, whenever the name of God is used indefinitely, the Son and Spirit, not less than the Father, is meant. But when the Son is joined with the Father, relation comes into view, and so we distinguish between the Persons. But as the Personal subsistence carry an order with them, the principle and origin being in the Father, whenever mention is made of the Father and Son, or of the Father and Spirit together, the name of God is specially given to the Father. In this way the unity of essence is retained, and respect is had to the order, which, however derogates in no respect from the divinity of the Son and Spirit. And surely since we have already seen how the apostles declare the Son of God to have been He whom Moses and the prophets declared to be Jehovah, we must always arrive at a unity of essence. We, therefore, hold it detestable blasphemy to call the Son a different God from the Father, because the simple name God admits not of relation, nor can God, considered in himself, be said to be this or that. Then, that the name Jehovah, taken indefinitely, may be applied to Christ, is clear from the words of Paul, “For this thing I besought the Lord thrice.” After giving the answer, “My grace is sufficient for thee,” he subjoins, “that the power of Christ may rest upon me” (2 Corinthians 12:8, 2 Corinthians 12:9). For it is certain that the name of Lord (Kuriou) is there put for Jehovah, and, therefore, to restrict it to the person of the Mediator were puerile and frivolous, the words being used absolutely, and not with the view of comparing the Father and the Son. And we know that, in accordance with the received usage of the Greeks, the apostles uniformly substitute the word Kurios for Jehovah. Not to go far for an example, Paul besought the Lord in the same sense in which Peter quotes the passage of Joel, “Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Acts 2:21; Joel 2:28). Where this name is specially applied to the Son, there is a different ground for it, as will be

seen in its own place; at present it is sufficient to remember, that Paul, after praying to God absolutely, immediately subjoins the name of Christ. Thus, too, the Spirit is called God absolutely by Christ himself. For nothing prevents us from holding that he is the entire spiritual essence of God, in which are comprehended Father, Son, and Spirit. This is plain from Scripture. For as God is there called a Spirit, so the Holy Spirit also, in so far as he is a hypostasis of the whole essence, is said to be both of God and from God.

21. But since Satan, in order to pluck up our faith by the roots, has always provoked fierce disputes, partly concerning the divine essence of the Son and Spirit, and partly concerning the distinction of persons; since in almost every age he has stirred up impious spirits to vex the orthodox doctors on this head, and is attempting in the present day to kindle a new flame out of the old embers, it will be proper here to dispose of some of these perverse dreams. Hitherto our chief object has been to stretch out our hand for the guidance of such as are disposed to learn, not to war with the stubborn and contentious; but now the truth which was calmly demonstrated must be vindicated from the calumnies of the ungodly. Still, however it will be our principal study to provide a sure footing for those whose ears are open to the word of God. Here, if any where, in considering the hidden mysteries of Scripture, we should speculate soberly and with great moderation, cautiously guarding against allowing either our mind or our tongue to go a step beyond the confines of God's word. For how can the human minds which has not yet been able to ascertain of what the body of the sun consists, though it is daily presented to the eye, bring down the boundless essence of God to its little measure? Nay, how can it, under its own guidance, penetrate to a knowledge of the substance of God while unable to understand its own? Wherefore, let us willingly leave to God the knowledge of himself. In the words of Hilary (De Trinity. lib. 1), "He alone is a fit witness to himself who is known only by himself." This knowledge, then, if we would leave to God, we must conceive of him as he has made himself known, and in our inquiries make application to no other quarter than his word. On this subject we have five homilies of Chrysostom against the Anomoei (De Incomprehensit. Dei Natura), in which he endeavoured, but in vain, to check the presumption of the sophists, and curb their garrulity. They showed no more modesty here than they are wont to do in everything else. The very unhappy results of their temerity should be a warning to us to bring more docility than acumen to the discussion of this question, never to attempt to search after God anywhere but in his sacred word, and never to speak or think of him farther than we have it for our guide. But if the distinction of Father, Son, and Spirit, subsisting in the one Godhead (certainly a subject of great difficulty), gives more trouble and annoyance to some intellects than is meet, let us remember that the human mind enters a labyrinth whenever it indulges its curiosity, and thus submit to be guided by the divine oracles, how much soever the mystery may be beyond our reach.

22. It were tedious, and to no purpose toilsome, to form a catalogue of the errors by which, in regard to this branch of doctrine, the purity of the faith has been assailed. The greater part of heretics have with their gross deliriums made a general attack on the glory of God, deeming it enough if they could disturb and shake the unwary. From a few individuals numerous sects have sprung up, some of them rending the divine essence, and others confounding the distinction of Persons. But if we hold, what has already been demonstrated from Scripture, that the essence of the one God, pertaining to the Father, Son, and Spirit, is simple and indivisible, and again, that the Father differs in some special property from the Son, and the Son from the Spirit, the door will be

shut against Arius and Sabellius, as well as the other ancient authors of error. But as in our day have arisen certain frantic men, such as Servetus and others, who, by new devices, have thrown every thing into confusion, it may be worthwhile briefly to discuss their fallacies. The name of Trinity was so much disliked, nay detested, by Servetus, that he charged all whom he called Trinitarians with being Atheists. I say nothing of the insulting terms in which he thought proper to make his charges. The sum of his speculations was, that a threefold Deity is introduced wherever three Persons are said to exist in his essence, and that this Triad was imaginary, inasmuch as it was inconsistent with the unity of God. At the same time, he would have it that the Persons are certain external ideas which do not truly subsist in the Divine essence, but only figure God to us under this or that form: that at first, indeed, there was no distinction in God, because originally the Word was the same as the Spirit, but ever since Christ came forth God of God, another Spirit, also a God, had proceeded from him. But although he sometimes cloaks his absurdities in allegory, as when he says that the eternal Word of God was the Spirit of Christ with God, and the reflection of the idea, likewise that the Spirit was a shadow of Deity, he at last reduces the divinity of both to nothing; maintaining that, according to the mode of distribution, there is a part of God as well in the Son as in the Spirit, just as the same Spirit substantially is a portion of God in us, and also in wood and stone. His absurd babbling concerning the person of the mediator will be seen in its own place. The monstrous fiction that a Person is nothing else than a visible appearance of the glory of God, needs not a long refutation. For when John declares that before the world was created the Logos was God (John 1:1), he shows that he was something very different from an idea. But if even then, and from the remotest eternity, that Logos, who was God, was with the Father, and had his own distinct and peculiar glory with the Father (John 17:5), he certainly could not be an external or figurative splendour, but must necessarily have been a hypostasis which dwelt inherently in God himself. But although there is no mention made of the Spirit antecedent to the account of the creation, he is not there introduced as a shadow, but as the essential power of God, where Moses relates that the shapeless mass was unborn by him (Genesis 1:2). It is obvious that the eternal Spirit always existed in God, seeing he cherished and sustained the confused materials of heaven and earth before they possessed order or beauty. Assuredly he could not then be an image or representation of God, as Servetus dreams. But he is elsewhere forced to make a more open disclosure of his impiety when he says, that God by his eternal reason decreeing a Son to himself, in this way assumed a visible appearance. For if this be true, no other Divinity is left to Christ than is implied in his having been ordained a Son by God’s eternal decree. Moreover, those phantoms which Servetus substitutes for the hypostases he so transforms as to make new changes in God. But the most execrable heresy of all is his confounding both the Son and Spirit promiscuously with all the creatures. For he distinctly asserts, that there are parts and partitions in the essence of God, and that every such portion is God. This he does especially when he says, that the spirits of the faithful are co-eternal and consubstantial with God, although he elsewhere assigns a substantial divinity, not only to the soul of man, but to all created things.

23. This pool has bred another monster not unlike the former. For certain restless spirits, unwilling to share the disgrace and obloquy of the impiety of Servetus, have confessed that there were indeed three Persons, but added, as a reason, that the Father, who alone is truly and properly God, transfused his Divinity into the Son and Spirit when he formed them. Nor do they refrain from expressing themselves in such shocking terms as these: that the Father is essentially distinguished from the Son and Spirit by this; that he is the only essentiator. Their first pretext for

this is, that Christ is uniformly called the Son of God. From this they infer, that there is no proper God but the Father. But they forget, that although the name of God is common also to the Son, yet it is sometimes, by way of excellence, ascribed to the Father, as being the source and principle of Divinity; and this is done in order to mark the simple unity of essence. They object, that if the Son is truly God, he must be deemed the Son of a person: which is absurd. I answer, that both are true; namely, that he is the Son of God, because he is the Word, begotten of the Father before all ages; (for we are not now speaking of the Person of the Mediator), and yet, that for the purpose of explanation, regard must be had to the Person, so that the name God may not be understood in its absolute sense, but as equivalent to Father. For if we hold that there is no other God than the Fathers this rank is clearly denied to the Son. In every case where the Godhead is mentioned, we are by no means to admit that there is an antithesis between the Father and the Son, as if to the former only the name of God could competently be applied. For assuredly, the God who appeared to Isaiah was the one true God, and yet John declares that he was Christ (Isaiah 6:1-13; John 12:41). He who declared, by the mouth of Isaiah, that he was to be “for a stone of stumbling” to the Jews, was the one God; and yet Paul declares that he was Christ (Isaiah 8:14; Romans 9:33). He who proclaims by Isaiah, “Unto me every knee shall bow,” is the one God; yet Paul again explains that he is Christ (Isaiah 45:23; Romans 14:11). To this we may add the passages quoted by an Apostle, “Thou, Lord, hast laid the foundations of the earth;” “Let all the angels of God worship him” (Hebrews 1:10; Hebrews 10:6; Psalms 102:26; Psalms 97:7). All these apply to the one God; and yet the Apostle contends that they are the proper attributes of Christ. There is nothing in the cavil, that what properly applies to God is transferred to Christ, because he is the brightness of his glory. Since the name of Jehovah is everywhere applied to Christ, it follows that, in regard to Deity, he is of himself. For if he is Jehovah, it is impossible to deny that he is the same God who elsewhere proclaims by Isaiah, “I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God” (Isaiah 44:6). We would also do well to ponder the words of Jeremiah, “The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth and from under these heavens” (Jeremiah 10:11); whence it follows conversely, that He whose divinity Isaiah repeatedly proves from the creation of the world, is none other than the Son of God. And how is it possible that the Creator, who gives to all should not be of himself, but should borrow his essence from another? Whosoever says that the Son was essentiated by the Father, denies his selfexistence. Against this, however, the Holy Spirit protests, when he calls him Jehovah. On the supposition, then, that the whole essence is in the Father only, the essence becomes divisible, or is denied to the Son, who, being thus robbed of his essences will be only a titular God. If we are to believe these triflers, divine essence belongs to the Father only, on the ground that he is sole God, and essentiator of the Son. In this way, the divinity of the Son will be something abstracted from the essence of God, or the derivation of a part from the whole. On the same principle it must also be conceded, that the Spirit belongs to the Father only. For if the derivation is from the primary essence which is proper to none but the Father, the Spirit cannot justly be deemed the Spirit of the Son. This view, however, is refuted by the testimony of Paul, when he makes the Spirit common both to Christ and the Father. Moreover, if the Person of the Father is expunged from the Trinity, in what will he differ from the Son and Spirit, except in being the only God? They confess that Christ is God, and that he differs from the Father. If he differs, there must be some mark of distinction between them. Those who place it in the essence, manifestly reduce the true divinity of Christ to nothing, since divinity cannot exist without essence, and indeed without entire essence. The

Father certainly cannot differ from the Son, unless he have something peculiar to himself, and not common to him with the Son. What, then, do these men show as the mark of distinction? If it is in the essence, let them tell whether or not he communicated essence to the Son. This he could not do in part merely, for it were impious to think of a divided God. And besides, on this supposition, there would be a rending of the Divine essence. The whole entire essence must therefore be common to the Father and the Son; and if so, in respect of essence there is no distinction between them. If they reply that the Father, while essentiating, still remains the only God, being the possessor of the essence, then Christ will be a figurative God, one in name or semblance only, and not in reality, because no property can be more peculiar to God than essence, according to the words, “I AM has sent me unto you” (Exodus 3:4).

24. The assumption, that whenever God is mentioned absolutely, the Father only is meant, may be proved erroneous by many passages. Even in those which they quote in support of their views they betray a lamentable inconsistency because the name of Son occurs there by way of contrast, showing that the other name God is used relatively, and in that way confined to the person of the Father. Their objection may be disposed of in a single word. Were not the Father alone the true God, he would, say they, be his own Father. But there is nothing absurd in the name of God being specially applied, in respect of order and degree, to him who not only of himself begat his own wisdom, but is the God of the Mediator, as I will more fully show in its own place. For ever since Christ was manifested in the flesh he is called the Son of God, not only because begotten of the Father before all worlds he was the Eternal Word, but because he undertook the person and office of the Mediator that he might unite us to God. Seeing they are so bold in excluding the Son from the honour of God, I would fain know whether, when he declares that there is “none good but one, that is, God,” he deprives himself of goodness. I speak not of his human nature, lest perhaps they should object, that whatever goodness was in it was derived by gratuitous gift: I ask whether the Eternal Word of God is good, yes or no? If they say no, their impiety is manifest; if yes, they refute themselves. Christ’s seeming at the first glance to disclaim the name of good (Matthew 19:17), rather confirms our view. Goodness. being the special property of God alone, and yet being at the time applied to him in the ordinary way of salutation, his rejection of false honour intimates that the goodness in which he excels is Divine. Again, I ask whether, when Paul affirms. that God alone is “immortal,” “wise,” and “true” (1 Timothy 1:17), he reduces Christ to the rank of beings mortal, foolish, and false. Is not he immortal, who, from the beginning, had life so as to bestow immortality on angels? Is not he wise who is the eternal wisdom of God? Is not he true who is truth itself?

I ask, moreover, whether they think Christ should be worshipped. If he claims justly, that every knee shall bow to him, it follows that he is the God who, in the law, forbade worship to be offered to any but himself. If they insist on applying to the Father only the words of Isaiah, “I am, and besides me there is none else” (Isaiah 44:6), I turn the passage against themselves, since we see that every property of God is attributed to Christ. There is no room for the cavil that Christ was exalted in the flesh in which he humbled himself, and in respect of which all power is given to him in heaven and on earth. For although the majesty of King and Judge extends to the whole person of the Mediator, yet had he not been God manifested in the flesh, he could not have been exalted to such a height without coming into collision with God. And the dispute is admirably settled by Paul, when he declares that he was equal with God before he humbled himself, and assumed the form of a servants (Php 2:6, Php 2:7). Moreover, how could such equality exist, if he were not that

God whose name is Jah and Jehovah, who rides upon the cherubim, is King of all the earth, and King of ages? Let them glamour as they may, Christ cannot be robbed of the honour described by Isaiah, “Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him” (Isaiah 25:9); for these words describe the advent of God the Redeemer, who was not only to bring back the people from Babylonish captivity, but restore the Church, and make her completely perfect. Nor does another cavil avail them, that Christ was God in his Father. For though we admit that, in respect of order and gradation, the beginning of divinity is in the Father, we hold it a detestable fiction to maintain that essence is proper to the Father alone, as if he were the deifier of the Son. On this view either the essence is manifold, or Christ is God only in name and imagination. If they grant that the Son is God, but only in subordination to the Father, the essence which in the Father is unformed and unbegotten will in him be formed and begotten. I know that many who would be thought wise deride us for extracting the distinction of persons from the words of Moses when he introduces God as saying, “Let us make man in our own image” (Genesis 1:26). Pious readers, however, see how frigidly and absurdly the colloquy were introduced by Moses, if there were not several persons in the Godhead. It is certain that those whom the Father addresses must have been untreated. But nothing is untreated except the one God. Now then, unless they concede that the power of creating was common to the Father, Son, and Spirit, and the power of commanding common, it will follow that God did not speak thus inwardly with himself, but addressed other extraneous architects. In fine, there is a single passage which will at once dispose of these two objections. The declaration of Christ that “God is a Spirit” (John 4:24), cannot be confined to the Father only, as if the Word were not of a spiritual nature. But if the name Spirit applies equally to the Son as to the Father, I infer that under the indefinite name of God the Son is included. He adds immediately after, that the only worshipers approved by the Father are those who worship him in spirit and in truth; and hence I also infer, that because Christ performs the office of teacher under a head, he applies the name God to the Father, not for the purpose of destroying his own Divinity, but for the purpose of raising us up to it as it were step by step.

25. The hallucination consists in dreaming of individuals, each of whom possesses a part of the essence. The Scriptures teach that there is essentially but one God, and, therefore, that the essence both of the Son and Spirit is unbegotten; but inasmuch as the Father is first in order, and of himself begat his own Wisdom, he, as we lately observed, is justly regarded as the principle and fountain of all the Godhead. Thus God, taken indefinitely, is unbegotten, and the Father, in respect of his person, is unbegotten. For it is absurd to imagine that our doctrine gives any ground for alleging that we establish a quaternion of gods. They falsely and calumniously ascribe to us the figment of their own brain, as if we virtually held that three persons emanate from one essence, whereas it is plain, from our writings, that we do not disjoin the persons from the essence, but interpose a distinction between the persons residing in it. If the persons were separated from the essence, there might be some plausibility in their argument; as in this way there would be a trinity of Gods, not of persons comprehended in one God. This affords an answer to their futile question - whether or not the essence concurs in forming the Trinity; as if we imagined that three Gods were derived from it. Their objection, that there would thus be a Trinity without a God, originates in the same absurdity. Although the essence does not contribute to the distinction, as if it were a part or member, the persons are not without it, or external to it; for the Father, if he were not God, could not be the Father; nor could the Son possibly be Son unless he were God. We say, then, that the Godhead is absolutely of itself. And hence also we hold that the Son, regarded as God, and

without reference to person, is also of himself; though we also say that, regarded as Son, he is of the Father. Thus his essence is without beginning, while his person has its beginning in God. And, indeed, the orthodox writers who in former times spoke of the Trinity, used this term only with reference to the Persons. To have included the essence in the distinction, would not only have been an absurd error, but gross impiety. For those who class the three thus - Essence, Son, and Spirit - plainly do away with the essence of the Son and Spirit; otherwise the parts being intermingled would merge into each other - a circumstance which would vitiate any distinction. In short, if God and Father were synonymous terms, the Father would be deifier in a sense which would leave the Son nothing but a shadow; and the Trinity would be nothing more than the union of one God with two creatures.

26. To the objection, that if Christ be properly God, he is improperly called the Son of God, it has been already answered, that when one person is compared with another, the name God is not used indefinitely, but is restricted to the Father, regarded as the beginning of the Godhead, not by essentiating, as fanatics absurdly express it, but in respect of order. In this sense are to be understood the words which Christ addressed to the Father, “This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent” (John 17:3). For speaking in the person of the Mediator, he holds a middle place between God and man; yet so that his majesty is not diminished thereby. For though he humbled (emptied) himself, he did not lose the glory which he had with the Father, though it was concealed from the world. So in the Epistle to the Hebrews (Hebrews 1:10; Hebrews 2:9), though the apostle confesses that Christ was made a little lower than the angels, he at the same time hesitates not to assert that he is the eternal God who founded the earth. We must hold, therefore, that as often as Christ, in the character of Mediator, addresses the Father, he, under the term God, includes his own divinity also. Thus, when he says to the apostles, “It is expedient for you that I go away,” “My Father is greater than I,” he does not attribute to himself a secondary divinity merely, as if in regard to eternal essence he were inferior to the Father; but having obtained celestial glory, he gathers together the faithful to share it with him. He places the Father in the higher degree, inasmuch as the full perfection of brightness conspicuous in heaven, differs from that measure of glory which he himself displayed when clothed in flesh. For the same reason Paul says, that Christ will restore “the kingdom to God, even the Father,” “that God may be all in all” (1 Corinthians 15:24, 1 Corinthians 15:28). Nothing can be more absurd than to deny the perpetuity of Christ’s divinity. But if he will never cease to be the Son of God, but will ever remain the same that he was from the beginning, it follows that under the name of Father the one divine essence common to both is comprehended. And assuredly Christ descended to us for the very purpose of raising us to the Father, and thereby, at the same time, raising us to himself, inasmuch as he is one with the Father. It is therefore erroneous and impious to confine the name of God to the Father, so as to deny it to the Son. Accordingly, John, declaring that he is the true God, has no idea of placing him beneath the Father in a subordinate rank of divinity. I wonder what these fabricators of new gods mean, when they confess that Christ is truly God, and yet exclude him from the godhead of the Father, as if there could be any true God but the one God, or as if transfused divinity were not a mere modern fiction.

27. In the many passages which they collect from Irenaeus, in which he maintains that the Father of Christ is the only eternal God of Israel, they betray shameful ignorance, or very great dishonesty. For they ought to have observed, that that holy man was contending against certain

frantic persons, who, denying that the Father of Christ was that God who had in old times spoken by Moses and the prophets, held that he was some phantom or other produced from the pollution of the world. His whole object, therefore, is to make it plain, that in the Scriptures no other God is announced but the Father of Christ; that it is wicked to imagine any other. Accordingly, there is nothing strange in his so often concluding that the God of Israel was no other than he who is celebrated by Christ and the apostles. Now, when a different heresy is to be resisted, we also say with truth, that the God who in old times appeared to the fathers, was no other than Christ. Moreover, if it is objected that he was the Father, we have the answer ready, that while we contend for the divinity of the Son, we by no means exclude the Father. When the reader attends to the purpose of Irenaeus, the dispute is at an end. Indeed, we have only to look to lib. 3 c. 6, where the pious writer insists on this one point, “that he who in Scripture is called God absolutely and indefinitely, is truly the only God; and that Christ is called God absolutely.” Let us remember (as appears from the whole work, and especially from lib. 2 c. 46), that the point under discussion was, that the name of Father is not applied enigmatically and parabolically to one who was not truly God. We may adds that in lib. 3 c. 9, he contends that the Son as well as the Father united was the God proclaimed by the prophets and apostles. He afterwards explains (lib. 3 c. 12) how Christ, who is Lord of all, and King and Judge, received power from him who is God of all, namely, in respect of the humiliation by which he humbled himself, even to the death of the cross. At the same time he shortly after affirms (lib. 3 c. 16), that the Son is the maker of heaven and earth, who delivered the law by the hand of Moses, and appeared to the fathers. Should any babbler now insist that, according to Irenaeus, the Father alone is the God of Israel, I will refer him to a passage in which Irenaeus distinctly says (lib. 3 c. 18, 23), that Christ is ever one and the same, and also applies to Christ the words of the prophecy of Habakkuk, “God cometh from the south.” To the same effect he says (lib. 4 c. 9), “Therefore, Christ himself, with the Father, is the God of the living.” And in the 12th chapter of the same book he explains that Abraham believed God, because Christ is the maker of heaven and earth, and very God.

28. With no more truth do they claim Tertullian as a patron. Though his style is sometimes rugged and obscure, he delivers the doctrine which we maintain in no ambiguous manner, namely, that while there is one God, his Word, however, is with dispensation or economy; that there is only one God in unity of substance; but that, nevertheless, by the mystery of dispensation, the unity is arranged into Trinity; that there are three, not in state, but in degree - not in substance, but in form - not in power, but in order. He says indeed that he holds the Son to be second to the Father; but he means that the only difference is by distinction. In one place he says the Son is visible; but after he has discoursed on both views, he declares that he is invisible regarded as the Word. In fine, by affirming that the Father is characterised by his own Person, he shows that he is very far from countenancing the fiction which we refute. And although he does not acknowledge any other God than the Father, yet, explaining himself in the immediate context, he shows that he does not speak exclusively in respect of the Son, because he denies that he is a different God from the Father; and, accordingly, that the one supremacy is not violated by the distinction of Person. And it is easy to collect his meaning from the whole tenor of his discourse. For he contends against Praxeas, that although God has three distinct Persons, yet there are not several gods, nor is unity divided. According to the fiction of Praxeas, Christ could not be God without being the Father also; and this is the reason why Tertullian dwells so much on the distinction. When he calls the Word and Spirit a portion of the whole, the expression, though harsh, may be allowed, since it does not refer to the

substance, but only (as Tertullian himself testifies) denotes arrangement and economy which applies to the persons only. Accordingly, he asks, “How many persons, Praxeas, do you think there are, but just as many as there are names for?” In the same way, he shortly after says, “That they may believe the Father and the Son, each in his own name and person.” These things, I think, sufficiently refute the effrontery of those who endeavour to blind the simple by pretending the authority of Tertullian.

29. Assuredly, whosoever will compare the writings of the ancient fathers with each other, will not find any thing in Irenaeus different from what is taught by those who come after him. Justin is one of the most ancient, and he agrees with us out and out. Let them object that, by him and others, the Father of Christ is called the one God. The same thing is taught by Hilary, who uses the still harsher expression, that Eternity is in the Father. Is it that he may withhold divine essence from the Son? His whole work is a defence of the doctrine which we maintain; and yet these men are not ashamed to produce some kind of mutilated excerpts for the purpose of persuading us that Hilary is a patron of their heresy. With regard to what they pretend as to Ignatius, if they would have it to be of the least importance, let them prove that the apostles enacted laws concerning Lent, and other corruptions. Nothing can be more nauseating, than the absurdities which have been published under the name of Ignatius; and therefore, the conduct of those who provide themselves with such masks for deception is the less entitled to toleration.

Moreover, the consent of the ancient fathers clearly appears from this, that in the Council of Nice, no attempt was made by Arius to cloak his heresy by the authority of any approved author; and no Greek or Latin writer apologises as dissenting from his predecessors. It cannot be necessary to observe how carefully Augustine, to whom all these miscreants are most violently opposed, examined all ancient writings, and how reverently he embraced the doctrine taught by them (August. lib. de Trinit. &c). He is most scrupulous in stating the grounds on which he is forced to differ from them, even in the minutest point. On this subject, too, if he finds any thing ambiguous or obscure in other writers, he does not disguise it. And he assumes it as an acknowledged fact, that the doctrine opposed by the Arians was received without dispute from the earliest antiquity. At the same time, he was not ignorant of what some others had previously taught. This is obvious from a single expression. When he says (De Doct. Christ. lib. 1.) that “unity is in the Father,” will they pretend that he then forgot himself? In another passage, he clears away every such charge, when he calls the Father the beginning of the Godhead, as being from none - thus wisely inferring that the name of God is specially ascribed to the Father, because, unless the beginning were from him, the simple unity of essence could not be maintained. I hope the pious reader will admit that I have now disposed of all the calumnies by which Satan has hitherto attempted to pervert or obscure the pure doctrine of faith. The whole substance of the doctrine has, I trust, been faithfully expounded, if my readers will set bounds to their curiosity, and not long more eagerly than they ought for perplexing disputation. I did not undertake to satisfy those who delight in speculate views, but I have not designedly omitted any thing which I thought adverse to me. At the same time, studying the edification of the Church, I have thought it better not to touch on various topics, which could have yielded little profit, while they must have needlessly burdened and fatigued the reader. For instance, what avails it to discuss, as Lombard does at length (lib. 1 dist. 9), Whether or not the Father always generates? This idea of continual generation becomes an absurd fiction from the moment it is seen, that from eternity there were three persons in one God.

08.01.14. Chapter 14

Chapter 14. In the creation of the world, and all things in it, the true God distinguished by certain marks from fictitious gods. In this chapter commences the second part of Book First, viz., the knowledge of man. Certain things premised.

I. The creation of the world generally (s. 1 and 2).

II. The subject of angels considered (s. 3-13).

III. Of bad angels or devils (s. 13-20); and, IV. The practical use to be made of the history of the creation (s. 20-22).

Sections

1. The mere fact of creation should lead us to acknowledge God, but to prevent our falling away to Gentile fictions, God has been pleased to furnish a history of the creation. An impious objection, Why the world was not created sooner? Answer to it. Shrewd saying of an old man.

2. For the same reason, the world was created, not in an instant, but in six days. The order of creation described, showing that Adam was not created until God had, with infinite goodness, made ample provision for him.

3. The doctrine concerning angels expounded. 1. That we may learn from them also to acknowledge God. 2. That we may be put on our guard against the errors of the worshippers of angels and the Manichees. Manicheeism refuted. Rule of piety.

4. The angels created by God. At what time and in what order it is inexpedient to inquire. The garrulity of the Pseudo-Dionysius.

5. The nature, offices, and various names of angels.

6. Angels the dispensers of the divine beneficence to us.

7. A kind of prefects over kingdoms and provinces, but specially the guardians of the elect. Not certain that every believer is under the charge of a single angel. Enough, that all angels watch over the safety of the Church.

8. The number and orders of angels not defined. Why angels said to be winged.

9. Angels are ministering spirits and spiritual essences.

10. The heathen error of placing angels on the throne of God refuted. 1. By passages of Scripture.

11. Refutation continued. 2. By inferences from other passages. Why God employs the ministry of angels.

12. Use of the doctrine of Scripture concerning the holy angels.

13. The doctrine concerning bad angels or devils reduced to four heads. 1. That we may guard against their wiles and assaults.

14. That we may be stimulated to exercises of piety. Why one angel in the singular number often spoken of.

15. The devil being described as the enemy of man, we should perpetually war against him.

16. The wickedness of the devil not by creation but by corruption. Vain and useless to inquire into the mode, time, and character of the fall of angels.

17. Though the devil is always opposed in will and endeavour to the will of God, he can do nothing without his permission and consent.

18. God so overrules wicked spirits as to permit them to try the faithful, and rule over the wicked.

19. The nature of bad angels. They are spiritual essences endued with sense and intelligence.

20. The latter part of the chapter briefly embracing the history of creation, and showing what it is of importance for us to know concerning God.

21. The special object of this knowledge is to prevent us, through ingratitude or thoughtlessness, from overlooking the perfections of God. Example of this primary knowledge.

22. Another object of this knowledge, viz., that perceiving how these things were created for our use, we may be excited to trust in God, pray to him, and love him.

1. Although Isaiah justly charges the worshipers of false gods with stupidity, in not learning from the foundations of the earth, and the circle of the heavens, who the true God is (Isaiah 40:21); yet so sluggish and grovelling is our intellect, that it was necessary he should be more clearly depicted, in order that the faithful might not fall away to Gentile fictions. The idea that God is the soul of the world, though the most tolerable that philosophers have suggested, is absurd; and, therefore, it was of importance to furnish us with a more intimate knowledge in order that we might not wander to and fro in uncertainty. Hence God was pleased that a history of the creation should exist - a history on which the faith of the Church might lean without seeking any other God than Him whom Moses sets forth as the Creator and Architect of the world. First, in that history, the period of time is marked so as to enable the faithful to ascend by an unbroken succession of years to the first origin of their race and of all things. This knowledge is of the highest use not only as an antidote to the monstrous fables which anciently prevailed both in Egypt and the other regions of the world, but also as a means of giving a clearer manifestation of the eternity of God as contrasted with the birth of creation, and thereby inspiring us with higher admiration. We must not be moved by the profane jeer, that it is strange how it did not sooner occur to the Deity to create the heavens and the earth, instead of idly allowing an infinite period to pass away, during which thousands of generations might have existed, while the present world is drawing to a close before it has completed its six thousandth year. Why God delayed so long it is neither fit nor lawful to inquire. Should the human mind presume to do it, it could only fail in the attempt, nor would it be useful for us to know what God, as a trial of the modesty of our faith, has been pleased purposely to conceal. It was a shrewd saying of a good old man, who when some one pertly asked in derision what God did before the world was created, answered he made a hell for the inquisitive

(August. Confess., lib. 11 c. 12). This reproof, not less weighty than severe, should repress the tickling wantonness which urges many to indulge in vicious and hurtful speculation. In fine, let us remember that that invisible God, whose wisdom, power, and justice, are incomprehensible, is set before us in the history of Moses as in a mirror, in which his living image is reflected. For as an eye, either dimmed by age or weakened by any other cause, sees nothing distinctly without the aid of glasses, so (such is our imbecility) if Scripture does not direct us in our inquiries after God, we immediately turn vain in our imaginations. Those who now indulge their petulance, and refuse to take warning, will learn, when too late, how much better it had been reverently to regard the secret counsels of God, than to belch forth blasphemies which pollute the face of heaven. Justly does Augustine complain that God is insulted whenever any higher reason than his will is demanded. (Lib. de Gent.) He also in another place wisely reminds us that it is just as improper to raise questions about infinite periods of time as about infinite space. (De Civit. Dei.) However wide the circuit of the heavens may be, it is of some definite extent. But should any one expostulate with God that vacant space remains exceeding creation by a hundred-fold, must not every pious mind detest the presumption? Similar is the madness of those who charge God with idleness in not having pleased them by creating the world countless ages sooner than he did create it. In their cupidity they affect to go beyond the world, as if the ample circumference of heaven and earth did not contain objects numerous and resplendent enough to absorb all our senses; as if, in the period of six thousand years, God had not furnished facts enough to exercise our minds in ceaseless meditation. Therefore, let us willingly remain hedged in by those boundaries within which God has been pleased to confine our persons, and, as it were, enclose our minds, so as to prevent them from losing themselves by wandering unrestrained.

2. With the same view Moses relates that the work of creation was accomplished not in one moment, but in six days. By this statement we are drawn away from fiction to the one God who thus divided his work into six days, that we may have no reluctance to devote our whole lives to the contemplation of it. For though our eyes, in what direction soever they turn, are forced to behold the works of God, we see how fleeting our attention is, and holy quickly pious thoughts, if any arise, vanish away. Here, too, objection is taken to these progressive steps as inconsistent with the power of God, until human reason is subdued to the obedience of faith, and learns to welcome the calm quiescence to which the sanctification of the seventh day invited us. In the very order of events, we ought diligently to ponder on the paternal goodness of God toward the human race, in not creating Adam until he had liberally enriched the earth with all good things. Had he placed him on an earth barren and unfurnished; had he given life before light, he might have seemed to pay little regard to his interest. But now that he has arranged the motions of the sun and stars for man’s use, has replenished the air, earth, and water, with living creatures, and produced all kinds of fruit in abundance for the supply of food, by performing the office of a provident and industrious head of a family, he has shown his wondrous goodness toward us. These subjects, which I only briefly touch, if more attentively pondered, will make it manifest that Moses was a sure witness and herald of the one only Creator. I do not repeat what I have already explained, viz., that mention is here made not of the bare essence of God, but that his eternal Wisdom and Spirit are also set before us, in order that we may not dream of any other God than Him who desires to be recognised in that express image.

3. But before I begin to treat more fully of the nature of man (chap. 15 and Book. 2 Chronicles 1:1-17), it will be proper to say something of angels. For although Moses, in accommodation to the ignorance of the generality of men, does not in the history of the creation make mention of any other works of God than those which meet our eye, yet, seeing he afterwards introduces angels as the ministers of God, we easily infer that he for whom they do service is their Creator. Hence, though Moses, speaking in popular language, did not at the very commencement enumerate the angels among the creatures of God, nothing prevents us from treating distinctly and explicitly of what is delivered by Scripture concerning them in other places. For if we desire to know God by his works, we surely cannot overlook this noble and illustrious specimen. We may add that this branch of doctrine is very necessary for the refutation of numerous errors. The minds of many are so struck with the excellence of angelic natures, that they would think them insulted in being subjected to the authority of God, and so made subordinate. Hence a fancied divinity has been assigned them. Manes, too, has arisen with his sect, fabricating to himself two principles - God and the devil, attributing the origin of good things to God, but assigning all bad natures to the devil as their author. Were this delirium to take possession of our minds, God would be denied his glory in the creation of the world. For, seeing there is nothing more peculiar to God than eternity and autousia, i. e. self-existence, or existence of himself, if I may so speak, do not those who attribute it to the devil in some degree invest him with the honour of divinity? And where is the omnipotence of God, if the devil has the power of executing whatever he pleases against the will, and notwithstanding of the opposition of God? But the only good ground which the Manichees have, viz., that it were impious to ascribe the creation of any thing bad to a good God, militates in no degree against the orthodox faith, since it is not admitted that there is any thing naturally bad throughout the universe; the depravity and wickedness whether of man or of the devil, and the sins thence resulting, being not from nature, but from the corruption of nature; nor, at first, did anything whatever exist that did not exhibit some manifestation of the divine wisdom and justice. To obviate such perverse imaginations, we must raise our minds higher than our eyes can penetrate. It was probably with this view that the Nicene Creed, in calling God the creator of all things, makes express mention of things invisible. My care, however, must be to keep within the bounds which piety prescribes, lest by indulging in speculations beyond my reach, I bewilder the reader, and lead him away from the simplicity of the faith. And since the Holy Spirit always instructs us in what is useful, but altogether omits, or only touches cursorily on matters which tend little to edification, of all such matters, it certainly is our duty to remain in willing ignorance.

4. Angels being the ministers appointed to execute the commands of God, must, of course, be admitted to be his creatures, but to stir up questions concerning the time or order in which they were created (see Lombard, lib. 2 dist. 2, sqq.), bespeaks more perverseness than industry. Moses relates that the heavens and the earth were finished, with all their host; what avails it anxiously to inquire at what time other more hidden celestial hosts than the stars and planets also began to be? Not to dwell on this, let us here remember that on the whole subject of religion one rule of modesty and soberness is to be observed, and it is this, in obscure matters not to speak or think, or even long to know, more than the Word of God has delivered. A second rule is, that in reading the Scriptures we should constantly direct our inquiries and meditations to those things which tend to edification, not indulge in curiosity, or in studying things of no use. And since the Lord has been pleased to instruct us, not in frivolous questions, but in solid piety, in the fear of his name, in true faith, and the duties of holiness, let us rest satisfied with such knowledge.

Wherefore, if we would be duly wise, we must renounce those vain babblings of idle men, concerning the nature, ranks, and number of angels, without any authority from the Word of God. I know that many fasten on these topics more eagerly, and take greater pleasure in them than in those relating to daily practice. But if we decline not to be the disciples of Christ, let us not decline to follow the method which he has prescribed. In this way, being contented with him for our master, we will not only refrain from, but even feel averse to, superfluous speculations which he discourages. None can deny that Dionysus (whoever he may have been) has many shrewd and subtle disquisitions in his Celestial Hierarchy, but on looking at them more closely, every one must see that they are merely idle talk. The duty of a Theologian, however, is not to tickle the ear, but confirm the conscience, by teaching what is true, certain, and useful. When you read the work of Dionysus, you would think that the man had come down from heaven, and was relating, not what he had learned, but what he had actually seen. Paul, however, though he was carried to the third heaven, so far from delivering any thing of the kind, positively declares, that it was not lawful for man to speak the secrets which he had seen. Bidding adieu, therefore, to that nugatory wisdom, let us endeavour to ascertain from the simple doctrine of Scripture what it is the Lord's pleasure that we should know concerning angels.

5. In Scripture, then, we uniformly read that angels are heavenly spirits, whose obedience and ministry God employs to execute all the purposes which he has decreed, and hence their name as being a kind of intermediate messengers to manifest his will to men. The names by which several of them are distinguished have reference to the same office. They are called hosts, because they surround their Prince as his court - adorn and display his majesty - like soldiers, have their eyes always turned to their leader's standard, and are so ready and prompt to execute his orders, that the moment he gives the nod, they prepare for, or rather are actually at work. In declaring the magnificence of the divine throne, similar representations are given by the prophets, and especially by Daniel, when he says, that when God stood up to judgement, "thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him" (Daniel 7:10). As by these means the Lord wonderfully exerts and declares the power and might of his hand, they are called virtues. Again, as his government of the world is exercised and administered by them, they are called at one time Principalities, at another Powers, at another Dominions (Colossians 1:16; Ephesians 1:21). Lastly, as the glory of God in some measure dwells in them, they are also termed Thrones; though as to this last designation I am unwilling to speak positively, as a different interpretation is equally, if not more congruous. To say nothing, therefore, of the name of Thrones, the former names are often employed by the Holy Spirit in commendation of the dignity of angelic service. Nor is it right to pass by unhonoured those instruments by whom God specially manifests the presence of his power. Nay, they are more than once called Gods, because the Deity is in some measure represented to us in their service, as in a mirror. I am rather inclined, however, to agree with ancient writers, that in those passages wherein it is stated that the angel of the Lord appeared to Abraham, Jacob, and Moses, Christ was that angel. Still it is true, that when mention is made of all the angels, they are frequently so designated. Nor ought this to seem strange. For if princes and rulers have this honour given them, because in their office they are vicegerents of God, the supreme King and Judge, with far greater reason may it be given to angels, in whom the brightness of the divine glory is much more conspicuously displayed.

6. But the point on which the Scriptures specially insist is that which tends most to our comfort, and to the confirmation of our faith, namely, that angels are the ministers and dispensers of the divine bounty towards us. Accordingly, we are told how they watch for our safety, how they undertake our defence, direct our path, and take heed that no evil befall us. There are whole passages which relate, in the first instance, to Christ, the Head of the Church, and after him to all believers. “He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.” Again, “The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.” By these passages the Lord shows that the protection of those whom he has undertaken to defend he has delegated to his angels. Accordingly, an angel of the Lord consoles Hagar in her flight, and bids her be reconciled to her mistress. Abraham promises to his servant that an angel will be the guide of his journey. Jacob, in blessing Ephraim and Manasseh, prays “The angel which redeemed me from all evil bless the lads.” So an angel was appointed to guard the camp of the Israelites; and as often as God was pleased to deliver Israel from the hands of his enemies, he stirred up avengers by the ministry of angels. Thus, in fine (not to mention more), angels ministered to Christ, and were present with him in all straits. To the women they announced his resurrection; to the disciples they foretold his glorious advent. In discharging the office of our protectors, they war against the devil and all our enemies, and execute vengeance upon those who afflict us. Thus we read that an angel of the Lord, to deliver Jerusalem from siege, slew one hundred and eighty-five thousand men in the camp of the king of Assyria in a single night.

7. Whether or not each believer has a single angel assigned to him for his defence, I dare not positively affirm. When Daniel introduces the angel of the Persian and the angel of the Greeks, he undoubtedly intimates that certain angels are appointed as a kind of presidents over kingdoms and provinces. Again, when Christ says that the angels of children always behold the face of his Father, he insinuates that there are certain angels to whom their safety has been entrusted. But I know not if it can be inferred from this, that each believer has his own angel. This, indeed, I hold for certain, that each of us is cared for, not by one angel merely, but that all with one consent watch for our safety. For it is said of all the angels collectively, that they rejoice “over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance.” It is also said, that the angels (meaning more than one) carried the soul of Lazarus into Abraham’s bosom. Nor was it to no purpose that Elisha showed his servant the many chariots of fire which were specially allotted him.

There is one passage which seems to intimate somewhat more clearly that each individual has a separate angel. When Peter, after his deliverance from prison, knocked at the door of the house where the brethren were assembled, being unable to think it could be himself, they said that it was his angel. This idea seems to have been suggested to them by a common belief that every believer has a single angel assigned to him. Here, however, it may be alleged, that there is nothing to prevent us from understanding it of any one of the angels to whom the Lord might have given the charge of Peter at that particular time, without implying that he was to be his, perpetual guardian, according to the vulgar imagination (see Calvin on Mark 5:9), that two angels a good and a bad, as a kind of genii, are assigned to each individual. After all, it is not worthwhile anxiously to investigate a point which does not greatly concern us. If any one does not think it enough to know that all the orders of the heavenly host are perpetually watching for his safety, I do

not see what he could gain by knowing that he has one angel as a special guardian. Those, again, who limit the care which God takes of each of us to a single angel, do great injury to themselves and to all the members of the Church, as if there were no value in those promises of auxiliary troops, who on every side encircling and defending us, embolden us to fight more manfully.

8. Those who presume to dogmatize on the ranks and numbers of angels, would do well to consider on what foundation they rest. As to their rank, I admit that Michael is described by David as a mighty Prince, and by Jude as an Archangel. Paul also tells us, that an archangel will blow the trumpet which is to summon the world to judgement. But how is it possible from such passages to ascertain the gradations of honour among the angels to determine the insignia, and assign the place and station of each? Even the two names, Michael and Gabriel, mentioned in Scripture, or a third, if you choose to add it from the history of Tobit, seem to intimate by their meaning that they are given to angels in accommodation to the weakness of our capacity, though I rather choose not to speak positively on the point. As to the number of angels, we learn from the mouth of our Saviour that there are many legions, and from Daniel that there are many myriads. Elisha's servant saw a multitude of chariots, and their vast number is declared by the fact, that they encamp round about those that fear the Lord. It is certain that spirits have no bodily shape, and yet Scripture, in accommodation to us, describes them under the form of winged Cherubim and Seraphim; not without cause, to assure us that when occasion requires, they will hasten to our aid with incredible swiftness, winging their way to us with the speed of lightning. Farther than this, in regard both to the ranks and numbers of angels, let us class them among those mysterious subjects, the full revelation of which is deferred to the last day, and accordingly refrain from inquiring too curiously, or talking presumptuously.

9. There is one point, however, which though called into doubt by certain restless individuals, we ought to hold for certain viz., that angels are ministering spirits (Hebrews 1:14); whose service God employs for the protection of his people, and by whose means he distributes his favours among men, and also executes other works. The Sadducees of old maintained, that by angels nothing more was meant than the movements which God impresses on men, or manifestations which he gives of his own power (Acts 23:8). But this dream is contradicted by so many passages of Scriptures that it seems strange how such gross ignorance could have had any countenance among the Jews. To say nothing of the passages I have already quoted, passages which refer to thousands and legions of angels, speak of them as rejoicing, as bearing up the faithful in their hands, carrying their souls to rest, beholding the face of their Father, and so forth: there are other passages which most clearly prove that they are real beings possessed of spiritual essence. Stephen and Paul say that the Law was enacted in the hands of angels. Our Saviour, moreover says that at the resurrection the elect will be like angels; that the day of judgement is known not even to the angels; that at that time he himself will come with the holy angels. However much such passages may be twisted, their meaning is plain. In like manner, when Paul beseeches Timothy to keep his precepts as before Christ and his elect angels, it is not qualities or inspirations without substance that he speaks of, but true spirits. And when it is said, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, that Christ was made more excellent than the angels, that the world was not made subject to them, that Christ assumed not their nature, but that of man, it is impossible to give a meaning to the passages without understanding that angels are blessed spirits, as to whom such comparisons may competently be made. The author of that Epistle declares the same thing when he places the

souls of believers and the holy angels together in the kingdom of heaven. Moreover, in the passages we have already quoted, the angels of children are said to behold the face of God, to defend us by their protection, to rejoice in our salvation, to admire the manifold grace of God in the Church, to be under Christ their head. To the same effect is their frequent appearance to the holy patriarchs in human form, their speaking, and consenting to be hospitably entertained. Christ, too, in consequence of the supremacy which he obtains as Mediator, is called the Angel (Malachi 3:1). It was thought proper to touch on this subject in passing, with the view of putting the simple upon their guard against the foolish and absurd imaginations which, suggested by Satan many centuries ago, are ever and anon starting up anew

10. It remains to give warning against the superstition which usually begins to creep in, when it is said that all blessings are ministered and dispensed to us by angels. For the human mind is apt immediately to think that there is no honour which they ought not to receive, and hence the peculiar offices of Christ and God are bestowed upon them. In this ways the glory of Christ was for several former ages greatly obscured, extravagant eulogiums being pronounced on angels without any authority from Scripture. Among the corruptions which we now oppose, there is scarcely any one of greater antiquity. Even Paul appears to have had a severe contest with some who so exalted angels as to make them almost the superiors of Christ. Hence he so anxiously urges in his Epistle to the Colossians (Colossians 1:16, Colossians 1:20), that Christ is not only superior to all angels, but that all the endowments which they possess are derived from him; thus warning us against forsaking him, by turning to those who are not sufficient for themselves, but must draw with us at a common fountain. As the refulgence of the Divine glory is manifested in them, there is nothing to which we are more prone than to prostrate ourselves before them in stupid adoration, and then ascribe to them the blessings which we owe to God alone. Even John confesses in the Apocalypse (Revelation 19:10; Revelation 22:8, Revelation 22:9), that this was his own case, but he immediately adds the answer which was given to him, “See thou do it not; I am thy fellow servant: worship God.”

11. This danger we will happily avoid, if we consider why it is that Gods instead of acting directly without their agency, is wont to employ it in manifesting his power, providing for the safety of his people, and imparting the gifts of his beneficence. This he certainly does not from necessity, as if he were unable to dispense with them. Whenever he pleases, he passes them by, and performs his own work by a single nod: so far are they from relieving him of any difficulty. Therefore, when he employs them it is as a help to our weakness, that nothing may be wanting to elevate our hopes or strengthen our confidence. It ought, indeed, to be sufficient for us that the Lord declares himself to be our protector. But when we see ourselves beset by so many perils, so many injuries, so many kinds of enemies, such is our frailty and effeminacy, that we might at times be filled with alarm, or driven to despair, did not the Lord proclaim his gracious presence by some means in accordance with our feeble capacities. For this reason, he not only promises to take care of us, but assures us that he has numberless attendants, to whom he has committed the charge of our safety, that whatever dangers may impend, so long as we are encircled by their protection and guardianship, we are placed beyond all hazard of evil. I admit that after we have a simple assurance of the divine protection, it is improper in us still to look round for help. But since for this our weakness the Lord is pleased, in his infinite goodness and indulgence, to provide, it would ill become us to overlook the favour. Of this we have an example in the servant of Elisha (2 Kings

6:17), who, seeing the mountain encompassed by the army of the Assyrians, and no means of escape, was completely overcome with terror, and thought it all over with himself and his master. Then Elisha prayed to God to open the eyes of the servant, who forthwith beheld the mountain filled with horses and chariots of fire; in other words, with a multitude of angels, to whom he and the prophet had been given in charge. Confirmed by the vision he received courage, and could boldly defy the enemy, whose appearance previously filled him with dismay.

12. Whatever, therefore, is said as to the ministry of angels, let us employ for the purpose of removing all distrust, and strengthening our confidence in God. Since the Lord has provided us with such protection, let us not be terrified at the multitude of our enemies as if they could prevail notwithstanding of his aid, but let us adopt the sentiment of Elisha, that more are for us than against us. How preposterous, therefore, is it to allow ourselves to be led away from God by angels who have been appointed for the very purpose of assuring us of his more immediate presence to help us? But we are so led away, if angels do not conduct us directly to him - making us look to him, invoke and celebrate him as our only defender - if they are not regarded merely as hands moving to our assistance just as he directs - if they do not direct us to Christ as the only Mediator on whom we must wholly depend and recline, looking towards him, and resting in him. Our minds ought to give thorough heed to what Jacob saw in his vision (Genesis 28:12), - angels descending to the earth to men, and again mounting up from men to heaven, by means of a ladder, at the head of which the Lord of Hosts was seated, intimating that it is solely by the intercession of Christ that the ministry of angels extends to us, as he himself declares, “Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man” (John 1:51). Accordingly, the servant of Abraham, though he had been commended to the guardianship of an angel (Genesis 24:7), does not therefore invoke that angel to be present with him, but trusting to the commendation, pours out his prayers before the Lord, and entreats him to show mercy to Abraham. As God does not make angels the ministers of his power and goodness, that he may share his glory with them, so he does not promise his assistance by their instrumentality, that we may divide our confidence between him and them. Away, then, with that Platonic philosophy of seeking access to God by means of angels and courting them with the view of making God more propitious (Plat. in Epinomide et Cratylo), - a philosophy which presumptuous and superstitious men attempted at first to introduce into our religion, and which they persist in even to this day.

13. The tendency of all that Scripture teaches concerning devils is to put us on our guard against their wiles and machinations, that we may provide ourselves with weapons strong enough to drive away the most formidable foes. For when Satan is called the god and ruler of this world, the strong man armed, the prince of the power of the air, the roaring lion, the object of all these descriptions is to make us more cautious and vigilant, and more prepared for the contest. This is sometimes stated in distinct terms. For Peter, after describing the devil as a roaring lion going about seeking whom he may devour, immediately adds the exhortation, “whom resist steadfast in the faith” (1 Peter 5:9). And Paul, after reminding us that we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places, immediately enjoins us to put on armour equal to so great and perilous a contest (Ephesians 6:12). Wherefore, let this be the use to which we turn all these statements. Being forewarned of the constant presence of an enemy the most daring, the most powerful, the

most crafty, the most indefatigable, the most completely equipped with all the engines and the most expert in the science of war, let us not allow ourselves to be overtaken by sloth or cowardice, but, on the contrary, with minds aroused and ever on the alert, let us stand ready to resist; and, knowing that this warfare is terminated only by death, let us study to persevere. Above all, fully conscious of our weakness and want of skill, let us invoke the help of God, and attempt nothing without trusting in him, since it is his alone to supply counsel, and strength, and courage, and arms.

14. That we may feel the more strongly urged to do so, the Scripture declares that the enemies who war against us are not one or two, or few in number, but a great host. Mary Magdalene is said to have been delivered from seven devils by which she was possessed; and our Saviour assures us that it is an ordinary circumstance, when a devil has been expelled, if access is again given to it, to take seven other spirits, more wicked than itself, and resume the vacant possession. Nay, one man is said to have been possessed by a whole legion. By this, then, we are taught that the number of enemies with whom we have to war is almost infinite, that we may not, from a contemptuous idea of the fewness of their numbers, be more remiss in the contest, or from imagining that an occasional truce is given us, indulge in sloth. In one Satan or devil being often mentioned in the singular number, the thing denoted is that domination of iniquity which is opposed to the reign of righteousness. For, as the Church and the communion of saints has Christ for its head, so the faction of the wicked and wickedness itself, is portrayed with its prince exercising supremacy. Hence the expression, “Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matthew 25:41).

15. One thing which ought to animate us to perpetual contest with the devil is, that he is everywhere called both our adversary and the adversary of God. For, if the glory of God is dear to us, as it ought to be, we ought to struggle with all our might against him who aims at the extinction of that glory. If we are animated with proper zeal to maintain the Kingdom of Christ, v. e must wage irreconcilable war with him who conspires its ruin. Again, if we have any anxiety about our own salvation, we ought to make no peace nor truce with him who is continually laying schemes for its destruction. But such is the character given to Satan in the third chapter of Genesis, where he is seen seducing man from his allegiance to God, that he may both deprive God of his due honour, and plunge man headlong in destruction. Such, too, is the description given of him in the Gospels (Matthew 13:28), where he is called the enemy, and is said to sow tares in order to corrupt the seed of eternal life. In one word, in all his actions we experience the truth of our Saviour’s description, that he was “a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth” (John 8:44). Truth he assails with lies, light he obscures with darkness. The minds of men he involves in error; he stirs up hatred, inflames strife and war, and all in order that he may overthrow the kingdom of God, and drown men in eternal perdition with himself. Hence it is evident that his whole nature is depraved, mischievous, and malignant. There must be extreme depravity in a mind bent on assailing the glory of God and the salvation of man. This is intimated by John in his Epistle, when he says that he “sinneth from the beginning” (1 John 3:8), implying that he is the author, leader, and contriver of all malice and wickedness.

16. But as the devil was created by God, we must remember that this malice which we attribute to his nature is not from creation, but from depravation. Every thing damnable in him he brought upon himself, by his revolt and fall. Of this Scripture reminds us, lest, by believing that he was so

created at first, we should ascribe to God what is most foreign to his nature. For this reason, Christ declares (John 8:44), that Satan, when he lies, “speaketh of his own,” and states the reason, “because he abode not in the truth.” By saying that he abode not in the truth, he certainly intimates that he once was in the truth, and by calling him the father of lies, he puts it out of his power to charge God with the depravity of which he was himself the cause. But although the expressions are brief and not very explicit, they are amply sufficient to vindicate the majesty of God from every calumny. And what more does it concern us to know of devils? Some murmur because the Scripture does not in various passages give a distinct and regular exposition of Satan’s fall, its cause, mode, date, and nature. But as these things are of no consequence to us, it was better, if not entirely to pass them in silence, at least only to touch lightly upon them. The Holy Spirit could not deign to feed curiosity with idle, unprofitable histories. We see it was the Lord’s purpose to deliver nothing in his sacred oracles which we might not learn for edification. Therefore, instead of dwelling on superfluous matters, let it be sufficient for us briefly to hold, with regard to the nature of devils, that at their first creation they were the angels of God, but by revolting they both ruined themselves, and became the instruments of perdition to others. As it was useful to know this much, it is clearly taught by Peter and Jude; “God,” they say, “spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness to be reserved unto judgement” (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 1:6). And Paul, by speaking of the elect angels, obviously draws a tacit contrast between them and reprobate angels.

17. With regard to the strife and war which Satan is said to wage with God, it must be understood with this qualification, that Satan cannot possibly do anything against the will and consent of God. For we read in the history of Job, that Satan appears in the presence of God to receive his commands, and dares not proceed to execute any enterprise until he is authorised. In the same way, when Ahab was to be deceived, he undertook to be a lying spirit in the mouth of all the prophets; and on being commissioned by the Lord, proceeds to do so. For this reason, also, the spirit which tormented Saul is said to be an evil spirit from the Lord, because he was, as it were, the scourge by which the misdeeds of the wicked king were punished. In another place it is said that the plagues of Egypt were inflicted by God through the instrumentality of wicked angels. In conformity with these particular examples, Paul declares generally that unbelievers are blinded by God, though he had previously described it as the doing of Satan. It is evident, therefore, that Satan is under the power of God, and is so ruled by his authority, that he must yield obedience to it. Moreover, though we say that Satan resists God, and does works at variance with His works, we at the same time maintain that this contrariety and opposition depend on the permission of God. I now speak not of Satan’s will and endeavour, but only of the result. For the disposition of the devil being wicked, he has no inclination whatever to obey the divine will, but, on the contrary, is wholly bent on contumacy and rebellion. This much, therefore, he has of himself, and his own iniquity, that he eagerly, and of set purpose, opposes God, aiming at those things which he deems most contrary to the will of God. But as God holds him bound and fettered by the curb of his power, he executes those things only for which permission has been given him, and thus, however unwilling, obeys his Creator, being forced, whenever he is required, to do Him service.

18. God thus turning the unclean spirits hither and thither at his pleasure, employs them in exercising believers by warring against them, assailing them with wiles, urging them with solicitations, pressing close upon them, disturbing, alarming, and occasionally wounding, but

never conquering or oppressing them; whereas they hold the wicked in thraldom, exercise dominion over their minds and bodies, and employ them as bond-slaves in all kinds of iniquity. Because believers are disturbed by such enemies, they are addressed in such exhortations as these: “Neither give place to the devil;” “Your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour; whom resist steadfast in the faith” (Ephesians 4:27; 1 Peter 5:8). Paul acknowledges that he was not exempt from this species of contest when he says, that for the purpose of subduing his pride, a messenger of Satan was sent to buffet him (2 Corinthians 12:7). This trial, therefore, is common to all the children of God. But as the promise of bruising Satan’s head (Genesis 3:15) applies alike to Christ and to all his members, I deny that believers can ever be oppressed or vanquished by him. They are often, indeed, thrown into alarm, but never so thoroughly as not to recover themselves. They fall by the violence of the blows, but they get up again; they are wounded, but not mortally. In fine, they labour on through the whole course of their lives, so as ultimately to gain the victory, though they meet with occasional defeats. We know how David, through the just anger of God, was left for a time to Satan, and by his instigation numbered the people (2 Samuel 24:1); nor without cause does Paul hold out a hope of pardon in case any should have become ensnared by the wiles of the devil (2 Timothy 2:26). Accordingly, he elsewhere shows that the promise above quoted commences in this life where the struggle is carried on, and that it is completed after the struggle is ended. His words are, “The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly” (Romans 16:20). In our Head, indeed, this victory was always perfect, because the prince of the world “had nothing” in him (John 14:30); but in us, who are his members, it is now partially obtained, and will be perfected when we shall have put off our mortal flesh, through which we are liable to infirmity, and shall have been filled with the energy of the Holy Spirit. In this way, when the kingdom of Christ is raised up and established, that of Satan falls, as our Lord himself expresses it, “I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven” (Luke 10:18). By these words, he confirmed the report which the apostles gave of the efficacy of their preaching. In like manner he says, “When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace. But when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils” (Luke 11:21, Luke 11:22). And to this end, Christ, by dying, overcame Satan, who had the power of death (Hebrews 2:14), and triumphed over all his hosts that they might not injure the Church, which otherwise would suffer from them every moment. For (such being our weakness, and such his raging fury), how could we withstand his manifold and unintermitted assaults for any period, however short, if we did not trust to the victory of our leader? God, therefore, does not allow Satan to have dominion over the souls of believers, but only gives over to his sway the impious and unbelieving, whom he deigns not to number among his flock. For the devil is said to have undisputed possession of this world until he is dispossessed by Christ. In like manner, he is said to blind all who do not believe the Gospel, and to do his own work in the children of disobedience. And justly; for all the wicked are vessels of wrath, and, accordingly, to whom should they be subjected but to the minister of the divine vengeance? In fine, they are said to be of their father the devil. For as believers are recognised to be the sons of God by bearing his image, so the wicked are properly regarded as the children of Satan, from having degenerated into his image.

19. Having above refuted that nugatory philosophy concerning the holy angels, which teaches that they are nothing but good motions or inspirations which God excites in the minds of men, we must here likewise refute those who foolishly allege that devils are nothing but bad affections or

perturbations suggested by our carnal nature. The brief refutation is to be found in passages of Scripture on this subject, passages neither few nor obscure. First, when they are called unclean spirits and apostate angels (Matthew 12:43; Jude 1:6), who have degenerated from their original, the very terms sufficiently declare that they are not motions or affections of the mind, but truly, as they are called, minds or spirits endued with sense and intellect. In like manner, when the children of God are contrasted by John, and also by our Saviour, with the children of the devil, would not the contrast be absurd if the term devil meant nothing more than evil inspirations? And John adds still more emphatically, that the devil sinneth from the beginning (1 John 3:8). In like manner, when Jude introduces the archangel Michael contending with the devil (Jude 1:9), he certainly contrasts a wicked and rebellious with a good angel. To this corresponds the account given in the Book of Job, that Satan appeared in the presence of God with the holy angels. But the clearest passages of all are those which make mention of the punishment which, from the judgement of God, they already begin to feel, and are to feel more especially at the resurrection, “What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?” (Matthew 8:29); and again, “Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matthew 25:41). Again, “If God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness to be reserved unto judgement,” &c. (2 Peter 2:4). How absurd the expressions, that devils are doomed to eternal punishment, that fire is prepared for them, that they are even now excruciated and tormented by the glory of Christ, if there were truly no devils at all? But as all discussion on this subject is superfluous for those who give credit to the Word of God, while little is gained by quoting Scripture to those empty speculators whom nothing but novelty can please, I believe I have already done enough for my purpose, which was to put the pious on their guard against the delirious dreams with which restless men harass themselves and the simple. The subject, however, deserved to be touched upon, lest any, by embracing that errors should imagine they have no enemy and thereby be more remiss or less cautious in resisting.

20. Meanwhile, being placed in this most beautiful theatre, let us not decline to take a pious delight in the clear and manifest works of God. For, as we have elsewhere observed, though not the chief, it is, in point of order, the first evidence of faiths to remember to which side soever we turn, that all which meets the eye is the work of God, and at the same time to meditate with pious care on the end which God had in view in creating it. Wherefore, in order that we may apprehend with true faith what it is necessary to know concerning God, it is of importance to attend to the history of the creation, as briefly recorded by Moses and afterwards more copiously illustrated by pious writers, more especially by Basil and Ambrose. From this history we learn that God, by the power of his Word and his Spirit, created the heavens and the earth out of nothing; that thereafter he produced things inanimate and animate of every kind, arranging an innumerable variety of objects in admirable order, giving each kind its proper nature, office, place, and station; at the same time, as all things were liable to corruption, providing for the perpetuation of each single species, cherishing some by secret methods, and, as it were, from time to time instilling new vigour into them, and bestowing on others a power of continuing their race, so preventing it from perishing at their own death. Heaven and earth being thus most richly adorned, and copiously supplied with all things, like a large and splendid mansion gorgeously constructed and exquisitely furnished, at length man was made - man, by the beauty of his person and his many noble endowments, the most glorious specimen of the works of God. But, as I have no intention to give the history of creation in detail, it is sufficient to have again thus briefly touched on it in passing. I have already

reminded my reader, that the best course for him is to derive his knowledge of the subject from Moses and others who have carefully and faithfully transmitted an account of the creation.

21. It is unnecessary to dwell at length on the end that should be aimed at in considering the works of God. The subject has been in a great measure explained elsewhere, and in so far as required by our present work, may now be disposed of in a few words. Undoubtedly were one to attempt to speak in due terms of the inestimable wisdom, power, justice, and goodness of God, in the formation of the world, no grace or splendour of diction could equal the greatness of the subject. Still there can be no doubt that the Lord would have us constantly occupied with such holy meditation, in order that, while we contemplate the immense treasures of wisdom and goodness exhibited in the creatures as in so many mirrors, we may not only run our eye over them with a hasty, and, as it were, evanescent glance, but dwell long upon them, seriously and faithfully turn them in our minds, and every now and then bring them to recollection. But as the present work is of a didactic nature, we cannot fittingly enter on topics which require lengthened discourse. Therefore, in order to be compendious, let the reader understand that he has a genuine apprehension of the character of God as the Creator of the world; first, if he attends to the general rule, never thoughtlessly or obliviously to overlook the glorious perfections which God displays in his creatures; and, secondly, if he makes a self application of what he sees, so as to fix it deeply on his heart. The former is exemplified when we consider how great the Architect must be who framed and ordered the multitude of the starry host so admirably, that it is impossible to imagine a more glorious sight, so stationing some, and fixing them to particular spots that they cannot move; giving a freer course to others yet setting limits to their wanderings; so tempering the movement of the whole as to measure out day and night, months, years, and seasons, and at the same time so regulating the inequality of days as to prevent every thing like confusion. The former course is, moreover, exemplified when we attend to his power in sustaining the vast mass, and guiding the swift revolutions of the heavenly bodies, &c. These few examples sufficiently explain what is meant by recognising the divine perfections in the creation of the world. Were we to attempt to go over the whole subject we should never come to a conclusion, there being as many miracles of divine power, as many striking evidences of wisdom and goodness, as there are classes of objects, nay, as there are individual objects, great or small, throughout the universe.

22. The other course which has a closer relation to faith remains to be considered, viz., that while we observe how God has destined all things for our good and salvation, we at the same time feel his power and grace, both in ourselves and in the great blessings which he has bestowed upon us; thence stirring up ourselves to confidence in him, to invocation, praise, and love. Moreover, as I lately observed, the Lord himself, by the very order of creation, has demonstrated that he created all things for the sake of man. Nor is it unimportant to observe, that he divided the formation of the world into six days, though it had been in no respect more difficult to complete the whole work, in all its parts, in one moment than by a gradual progression. But he was pleased to display his providence and paternal care towards us in this, that before he formed man, he provided whatever he foresaw would be useful and salutary to him. How ungrateful, then, were it to doubt whether we are cared for by this most excellent Parent, who we see cared for us even before we were born! How impious were it to tremble in distrust, lest we should one day be abandoned in our necessity by that kindness which, antecedent to our existence, displayed itself in a complete supply of all good things! Moreover, Moses tells us that everything which the world contains is liberally placed

at our disposal. This God certainly did not that he might delude us with an empty form of donation. Nothing, therefore, which concerns our safety will ever be wanting. To conclude, in one word; as often as we call God the Creator of heaven and earth, let us remember that the distribution of all the things which he created are in his hand and power, but that we are his sons, whom he has undertaken to nourish and bring up in allegiance to him, that we may expect the substance of all good from him alone, and have full hope that he will never suffer us to be in want of things necessary to salvation, so as to leave us dependent on some other source; that in everything we desire we may address our prayers to him, and, in every benefit we receive, acknowledge his hand, and give him thanks; that thus allured by his great goodness and beneficence, we may study with our whole heart to love and serve him.

08.01.15. Chapter 15

Chapter 15. State in which man was created. The faculties of the soul - The image of God - Free will - Original righteousness. This chapter is thus divided:

I. The necessary rules to be observed in considering the state of man before the fall being laid down, the point first considered is the creation of the body, and the lesson taught by its being formed out of the earth, and made alive, sec. 1.

II. The immortality of the human soul is proved by various solid arguments, sec. 2.

III. The image of God (the strongest proof of the soul's immortality) is considered, and various absurd fancies are refuted, sec. 3.

IV. Several errors which obscure the light of truth being dissipated, follows a philosophical and theological consideration of the faculties of the soul before the fall.

Sections

1. A twofold knowledge of God, viz., before the fall and after it. The former here considered. Particular rules or precautions to be observed in this discussion. What we are taught by a body formed ant of the dust, and tenanted by a spirit.

2. The immortality of the soul proved from, 1. The testimony of conscience. 2. The knowledge of God. 3. The noble faculties with which it is endued. 4. Its activity and wondrous fancies in sleep. 5. Innumerable passages of Scripture.

3. The image of God one of the strongest proofs of the immortality of the soul. What meant by this image. The dreams of Osiander concerning the image of God refuted. Whether any difference between "image" and "likeness." Another objection of Osiander refuted. The image of God conspicuous in the whole Adam.

4. The image of God is in the soul. Its nature may be learnt from its renewal by Christ. What comprehended under this renewal. What the image of God in man before the fall. In what things it now appears. When and where it will be seen in perfection.

5. The dreams of the Manichees and of Servetus, as to the origin of the soul, refuted. Also of Osiander, who denies that there is any image of God in man without essential righteousness.

6. The doctrine of philosophers as to the faculties of the soul generally discordant, doubtful, and obscure. The excellence of the soul described. Only one soul in each man. A brief review of the opinion of philosophers as to the faculties of the soul. What to be thought of this opinion.

7. The division of the faculties of the soul into intellect and will, more agreeable to Christian doctrine.

8. The power and office of the intellect and will in man before the fall. Man’s free will. This freedom lost by the fall - a fact unknown to philosophers. The delusion of Pelagians and Papists. Objection as to the fall of man when free, refuted.

1. We have now to speak of the creation of man, not only because of all the works of God it is the noblest, and most admirable specimen of his justice, wisdom, and goodness, but, as we observed at the outset, we cannot clearly and properly know God unless the knowledge of ourselves be added. This knowledge is twofold - relating, first, to the condition in which we were at first created; and, secondly to our condition such as it began to be immediately after Adam’s fall. For it would little avail us to know how we were created if we remained ignorant of the corruption and degradation of our nature in consequence of the fall. At present, however, we confine ourselves to a consideration of our nature in its original integrity. And, certainly, before we descend to the miserable condition into which man has fallen, it is of importance to consider what he was at first. For there is need of caution, lest we attend only to the natural ills of man, and thereby seem to ascribe them to the Author of nature; impiety deeming it a sufficient defence if it can pretend that everything vicious in it proceeded in some sense from God, and not hesitating, when accused, to plead against God, and throw the blame of its guilt upon Him. Those who would be thought to speak more reverently of the Deity catch at an excuse for their depravity from nature, not considering that they also, though more obscurely, bring a charge against God, on whom the dishonour would fall if anything vicious were proved to exist in nature. Seeing, therefore, that the flesh is continually on the alert for subterfuges, by which it imagines it can remove the blame of its own wickedness from itself to some other quarter, we must diligently guard against this depraved procedure, and accordingly treat of the calamity of the human race in such a way as may cut off every evasion, and vindicate the justice of God against all who would impugn it. We shall afterwards see, in its own place (Book 2 chap. 1, sec. 3), how far mankind now are from the purity originally conferred on Adam. And, first, it is to be observed, that when he was formed out of the dust of the ground a curb was laid on his pride - nothing being more absurd than that those should glory in their excellence who not only dwell in tabernacles of clay, but are themselves in part dust and ashes. But God having not only deigned to animate a vessel of clay, but to make it the habitation of an immortal spirit, Adam might well glory in the great liberality of his Maker.

2. Moreover, there can be no question that man consists of a body and a soul; meaning by soul, an immortal though created essence, which is his nobler part. Sometimes he is called a spirit. But though the two terms, while they are used together differ in their meaning, still, when spirit is used by itself it is equivalent to soul, as when Solomon speaking of death says, that the spirit returns to God who gave it (Ecclesiastes 12:7). And Christ, in commending his spirit to the Father, and Stephen his to Christ, simply mean, that when the soul is freed from the prison-house of the body, God becomes its perpetual keeper. Those who imagine that the soul is called a spirit because it is a breath or energy divinely infused into bodies, but devoid of essence, err too grossly, as is shown both by the nature of the thing, and the whole tenor of Scripture. It is true, indeed, that men cleaving too much to the earth are dull of apprehension, nay, being alienated from the Father of Lights, are so immersed in darkness as to imagine that they will not survive the grave; still the light is not so completely quenched in darkness that all sense of immortality is lost. Conscience, which, distinguishing, between good and evil, responds to the judgement of God, is an undoubted sign of an immortal spirit. How could motion devoid of essence penetrate to the judgement-seat of God,

and under a sense of guilt strike itself with terror? The body cannot be affected by any fear of spiritual punishment. This is competent only to the soul, which must therefore be endued with essence. Then the mere knowledge of a God sufficiently proves that souls which rise higher than the world must be immortal, it being impossible that any evanescent vigour could reach the very fountain of life. In fine, while the many noble faculties with which the human mind is endued proclaim that something divine is engraven on it, they are so many evidences of an immortal essence. For such sense as the lower animals possess goes not beyond the body, or at least not beyond the objects actually presented to it. But the swiftness with which the human mind glances from heaven to earth, scans the secrets of nature, and, after it has embraced all ages, with intellect and memory digests each in its proper order, and reads the future in the past, clearly demonstrates that there lurks in man a something separated from the body. We have intellect by which we are able to conceive of the invisible God and angels - a thing of which body is altogether incapable. We have ideas of rectitude, justice, and honesty - ideas which the bodily senses cannot reach. The seat of these ideas must therefore be a spirit. Nay, sleep itself, which stupefying the man, seems even to deprive him of life, is no obscure evidence of immortality; not only suggesting thoughts of things which never existed, but foreboding future events. I briefly touch on topics which even profane writers describe with a more splendid eloquence. For pious readers, a simple reference is sufficient. Were not the soul some kind of essence separated from the body, Scripture would not teach that we dwell in houses of clay, and at death remove from a tabernacle of flesh; that we put off that which is corruptible, in order that, at the last day, we may finally receive according to the deeds done in the body. These, and similar passages which everywhere occur, not only clearly distinguish the soul from the body, but by giving it the name of man, intimate that it is his principal part. Again, when Paul exhorts believers to cleanse themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and the spirit, he shows that there are two parts in which the taint of sin resides. Peter, also, in calling Christ the Shepherd and Bishop of souls, would have spoken absurdly if there were no souls towards which he might discharge such an office. Nor would there be any ground for what he says concerning the eternal salvation of souls, or for his injunction to purify our souls, or for his assertion that fleshly lusts war against the soul; neither could the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews say, that pastors watch as those who must give an account for our souls, if souls were devoid of essence. To the same effect Paul calls God to witness upon his soul, which could not be brought to trial before God if incapable of suffering punishment. This is still more clearly expressed by our Saviour, when he bids us fear him who, after he has killed the body, is able also to cast into hell fire. Again when the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews distinguishes the fathers of our flesh from God, who alone is the Father of our spirits, he could not have asserted the essence of the soul in clearer terms. Moreover, did not the soul, when freed from the fetters of the body, continue to exist, our Saviour would not have represented the soul of Lazarus as enjoying blessedness in Abraham s bosom, while, on the contrary, that of Dives was suffering dreadful torments. Paul assures us of the same thing when he says, that so long as we are present in the body, we are absent from the Lord. Not to dwell on a matter as to which there is little obscurity, I will only add, that Luke mentions among the errors of the Sadducees that they believed neither angel nor spirit.

3. A strong proof of this point may be gathered from its being said, that man was created in the image of God. For though the divine glory is displayed in man’s outward appearance, it cannot be doubted that the proper seat of the image is in the soul. I deny not, indeed, that external shape, in so far as it distinguishes and separates us from the lower animals, brings us nearer to God; nor

will I vehemently oppose any who may choose to include under the image of God that While the mute creation downward bend Their sight, and to their earthly mother tend, Man looks aloft, and with erected eyes, Beholds his own hereditary skies.

Only let it be understood, that the image of God which is beheld or made conspicuous by these external marks, is spiritual. For Osiander (whose writings exhibit a perverse ingenuity in futile devices), extending the image of God indiscriminately as well to the body as to the soul, confounds heaven with earth. He says, that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, placed their image in man, because, even though Adam had stood entire, Christ would still have become man. Thus, according to him, the body which was destined for Christ was a model and type of that corporeal figure which was then formed. But where does he find that Christ is an image of the Spirit? I admit, indeed, that in the person of the Mediator, the glory of the whole Godhead is displayed: but how can the eternal Word, who in order precedes the Spirit, be called his image? In short, the distinction between the Son and the Spirit is destroyed when the former is represented as the image of the latter. Moreover, I should like to know in what respect Christ in the flesh in which he was clothed resembles the Holy Spirit, and by what marks, or lineaments, the likeness is expressed. And since the expression, “Let us make man in our own image,” is used in the person of the Son also, it follows that he is the image of himself - a thing utterly absurd. Add that, according to the figment of Osiander, Adam was formed after the model or type of the man Christ. Hence Christ, in as much as he was to be clothed with flesh, was the idea according to which Adam was formed, whereas the Scriptures teach very differently, viz., that he was formed in the image of God. There is more plausibility in the imagination of those who interpret that Adam was created in the image of God, because it was conformable to Christ, who is the only image of God; but not even for this is there any solid foundation. The “image” and “likeness” has given rise to no small discussion; interpreters searching without cause for a difference between the two terms, since “likeness” is merely added by way of exposition. First, we know that repetitions are common in Hebrew, which often gives two words for one thing; And, secondly, there is no ambiguity in the thing itself, man being called the image of God because of his likeness to God. Hence there is an obvious absurdity in those who indulge in philosophical speculation as to these names, placing the Zelem, that is the image, in the substance of the soul, and the Demuth, that is the likeness, in its qualities, and so forth. God having determined to create man in his own image, to remove the obscurity which was in this terms adds, by way of explanation, in his likeness, as if he had said, that he would make man, in whom he would, as it were, image himself by means of the marks of resemblance impressed upon him. Accordingly, Moses, shortly after repeating the account, puts down the image of God twice, and makes no mention of the likeness. Osiander frivolously objects that it is not a part of the man, or the soul with its faculties, which is called the image of God, but the whole Adam, who received his name from the dust out of which he was taken. I call the objection frivolous, as all sound readers will judge. For though the whole man is called mortal, the soul is not therefore liable to death, nor when he is called a rational animal is reason or intelligence thereby attributed to the body. Hence, although the soul is not the man, there is no absurdity in holding that he is called the image of God in respect of the soul; though I retain the principle which I lately laid down, that the image of God extends to everything in which the nature of man surpasses that of all other species of animals. Accordingly, by this term is denoted the integrity with which Adam was endued when his intellect was clear, his affections subordinated to reason, all his senses duly regulated, and when he truly ascribed all his excellence to the admirable gifts of

his Maker. And though the primary seat of the divine image was in the mind and the heart, or in the soul and its powers, there was no part even of the body in which some rays of glory did not shine. It is certain that in every part of the world some lineaments of divine glory are beheld and hence we may infer, that when his image is placed in man, there is a kind of tacit antithesis, as it were, setting man apart from the crowd, and exalting him above all the other creatures. But it cannot be denied that the angels also were created in the likeness of God, since, as Christ declares (Matthew 22:30), our highest perfection will consist in being like them. But it is not without good cause that Moses commends the favour of God towards us by giving us this peculiar title, the more especially that he was only comparing man with the visible creation.

4. But our definition of the image seems not to be complete until it appears more clearly what the faculties are in which man excels, and in which he is to be regarded as a mirror of the divine glory. This, however, cannot be better known than from the remedy provided for the corruption of nature. It cannot be doubted that when Adam lost his first estate he became alienated from God. Wherefore, although we grant that the image of God was not utterly effaced and destroyed in him, it was, however, so corrupted, that any thing which remains is fearful deformity; and, therefore, our deliverance begins with that renovation which we obtain from Christ, who is, therefore, called the second Adam, because he restores us to true and substantial integrity. For although Paul, contrasting the quickening Spirit which believers receive from Christ, with the living soul which Adam was created (1 Corinthians 15:45), commends the richer measure of grace bestowed in regeneration, he does not, however, contradict the statement, that the end of regeneration is to form us anew in the image of God. Accordingly, he elsewhere shows that the new man is renewed after the image of him that created him (Colossians 3:19). To this corresponds another passage, “Put ye on the new man, who after God is created” (Ephesians 4:24). We must now see what particulars Paul comprehends under this renovation. In the first place, he mentions knowledge, and in the second, true righteousness and holiness. Hence we infer, that at the beginning the image of God was manifested by light of intellect, rectitude of heart, and the soundness of every part. For though I admit that the forms of expression are elliptical, this principle cannot be overthrown, viz., that the leading feature in the renovation of the divine image must also have held the highest place in its creation. To the same effect Paul elsewhere says, that beholding the glory of Christ with unveiled face, we are transformed into the same image. We now see how Christ is the most perfect image of God, into which we are so renewed as to bear the image of God in knowledge, purity, righteousness, and true holiness. This being established, the imagination of Osiander, as to bodily form, vanishes of its own accord. As to that passage of St Paul (1 Corinthians 11:7), in which the man alone to the express exclusion of the woman, is called the image and glory of God, it is evident from the context, that it merely refers to civil order. I presume it has already been sufficiently proved, that the image comprehends everything which has any relation to the spiritual and eternal life. The same thing, in different terms, is declared by St John when he says, that the light which was from the beginning, in the eternal Word of God, was the light of man (John 1:4). His object being to extol the singular grace of God in making man excel the other animals, he at the same time shows how he was formed in the image of God, that he may separate him from the common herd, as possessing not ordinary animal existence, but one which combines with it the light of intelligence. Therefore, as the image of God constitutes the entire excellence of human nature, as it shone in Adam before his fall, but was afterwards vitiated and almost destroyed, nothing remaining but a ruin, confused, mutilated, and tainted with impurity, so it

is now partly seen in the elect, in so far as they are regenerated by the Spirit. Its full lustre, however, will be displayed in heaven. But in order to know the particular properties in which it consists, it will be proper to treat of the faculties of the soul. For there is no solidity in Augustine's speculation, that the soul is a mirror of the Trinity, inasmuch as it comprehends within itself, intellect, will, and memory. Nor is there probability in the opinion of those who place likeness to God in the dominion bestowed upon man, as if he only resembled God in this, that he is appointed lord and master of all things. The likeness must be within, in himself. It must be something which is not external to him but is properly the internal good of the soul.

5. But before I proceed further, it is necessary to advert to the dream of the Manichees, which Servetus has attempted in our day to revive. Because it is said that God breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life (Genesis 2:7), they thought that the soul was a transmission of the substance of God; as if some portion of the boundless divinity had passed into man. It cannot take long time to show how many gross and foul absurdities this devilish error carries in its train. For if the soul of man is a portion transmitted from the essence of God, the divine nature must not only be liable to passion and change, but also to ignorance, evil desires, infirmity, and all kinds of vice. There is nothing more inconstant than man, contrary movements agitating and distracting his soul. He is ever and anon deluded by want of skill, and overcome by the slightest temptations; while every one feels that the soul itself is a receptacle for all kinds of pollution. All these things must be attributed to the divine nature, if we hold that the soul is of the essence of God, or a secret influx of divinity. Who does not shudder at a thing so monstrous? Paul, indeed, quoting from Aratus, tells us we are his offspring (Acts 17:28); not in substance, however, but in quality, in as much as he has adorned us with divine endowments. Meanwhile, to lacerate the essence of the Creator, in order to assign a portion to each individual, is the height of madness. It must, therefore, be held as certain, that souls, notwithstanding of their having the divine image engraven on them, are created just as angels are. Creation, however, is not a transfusion of essence, but a commencement of it out of nothing. Nor, though the spirit is given by God, and when it quits the flesh again returns to him, does it follow that it is a portion withdrawn from his essence. Here, too, Osiander, carried away by his illusions entangled himself in an impious error, by denying that the image of God could be in man without his essential righteousness; as if God were unable, by the mighty power of his Spirit, to render us conformable to himself, unless Christ were substantially transfused into us. Under whatever colour some attempt to gloss these delusions, they can never so blind the eyes of intelligent readers as to prevent them from discerning in them a revival of Manicheism. But from the words of Paul, when treating of the renewal of the image (2 Corinthians 3:18), the inference is obvious, that man was conformable to God, not by an influx of substance, but by the grace and virtue of the Spirit. He says, that by beholding the glory of Christ, we are transformed into the same image as by the Spirit of the Lord; and certainly the Spirit does not work in us so as to make us of the same substance with God.

6. It were vain to seek a definition of the soul from philosophers, not one of whom, with the exception of Plato, distinctly maintained its immortality. Others of the school of Socrates, indeed, lean the same way, but still without teaching distinctly a doctrine of which they were not fully persuaded. Plato, however, advanced still further, and regarded the soul as an image of God. Others so attach its powers and faculties to the present life, that they leave nothing external to the body. Moreover, having already shown from Scripture that the substance of the soul is incorporeal,

we must now add, that though it is not properly enclosed by space, it however occupies the body as a kind of habitation, not only animating all its parts, and rendering the organs fit and useful for their actions, but also holding the first place in regulating the conduct. This it does not merely in regard to the offices of a terrestrial life, but also in regard to the service of God. This, though not clearly seen in our corrupt state, yet the impress of its remains is seen in our very vices. For whence have men such a thirst for glory but from a sense of shame? And whence this sense of shame but from a respect for what is honourable? Of this, the first principle and source is a consciousness that they were born to cultivate righteousness - a consciousness akin to religion. But as man was undoubtedly created to meditate on the heavenly life, so it is certain that the knowledge of it was engraven on the soul. And, indeed, man would want the principal use of his understanding if he were unable to discern his felicity, the perfection of which consists in being united to God. Hence, the principal action of the soul is to aspire thither, and, accordingly, the more a man studies to approach to God, the more he proves himself to be endued with reason.

Though there is some plausibility in the opinion of those who maintain that man has more than one soul, namely, a sentient and a rational, yet as there is no soundness in their arguments, we must reject it, unless we would torment ourselves with things frivolous and useless. They tell us (see chap. 5 sec. 4), there is a great repugnance between organic movements and the rational part of the soul. As if reason also were not at variance with herself, and her counsels sometimes conflicting with each other like hostile armies. But since this disorder results from the depravation of nature, it is erroneous to infer that there are two souls, because the faculties do not accord so harmoniously as they ought. But I leave it to philosophers to discourse more subtilely of these faculties. For the edification of the pious, a simple definition will be sufficient. I admit, indeed, that what they ingeniously teach on the subject is true, and not only pleasant, but also useful to be known; nor do I forbid any who are inclined to prosecute the study. First, I admit that there are five senses, which Plato (in Theaeteto) prefers calling organs, by which all objects are brought into a common sensorium, as into a kind of receptacle: Next comes the imagination (phantasia), which distinguishes between the objects brought into the sensorium: Next, reason, to which the general power of judgement belongs: And, lastly, intellect, which contemplates with fixed and quiet look whatever reason discursively revolves. In like manner, to intellect, fancy, and reason, the three cognitive faculties of the soul, correspond three appetite faculties viz., will, whose office is to choose whatever reason and intellect propound; irascibility, which seizes on what is set before it by reason and fancy; and concupiscence, which lays hold of the objects presented by sense and fancy.

Though these things are true, or at least plausible, still, as I fear they are more fitted to entangle, by their obscurity, than to assist us, I think it best to omit them. If any one chooses to distribute the powers of the mind in a different manner, calling one appetive, which, though devoid of reason, yet obeys reason, if directed from a different quarter, and another intellectual, as being by itself participant of reason, I have no great objection. Nor am I disposed to quarrel with the view, that there are three principles of action, viz., sense, intellect, and appetite. But let us rather adopt a division adapted to all capacities - a thing which certainly is not to be obtained from philosophers. For they, when they would speak most plainly, divide the soul into appetite and intellect, but make both double. To the latter they sometimes give the name of contemplative, as being contented with mere knowledge and having no active powers (which circumstance makes Cicero designate it by

the name of intellect, ingenii) (De Fin. lib. 5). At other times they give it the name of practical, because it variously moves the will by the apprehension of good or evil. Under this class is included the art of living well and justly. The former viz., appetite, they divide into will and concupiscence, calling it boule4sis, so whenever the appetite, which they call horme4, obeys the reason. But when appetite, casting off the yoke of reason, runs to intemperance, they call it pathos. Thus they always presuppose in man a reason by which he is able to guide himself aright.

7. From this method of teaching we are forced somewhat to dissent. For philosophers, being unacquainted with the corruption of nature, which is the punishment of revolt, erroneously confound two states of man which are very different from each other. Let us therefore hold, for the purpose of the present work, that the soul consists of two parts, the intellect and the will (Book 2 chap. 2 sec. 2, sec. 12), - the office of the intellect being to distinguish between objects, according as they seem deserving of being approved or disapproved; and the office of the will, to choose and follow what the intellect declares to be good, to reject and shun what it declares to be bad (Plato, in Phaedro). We dwell not on the subtlety of Aristotle, that the mind has no motion of itself; but that the moving power is choice, which he also terms the appetite intellect. Not to lose ourselves in superfluous questions, let it be enough to know that the intellect is to us, as it were, the guide and ruler of the soul; that the will always follows its beck, and waits for its decision, in matters of desire. For which reason Aristotle truly taught, that in the appetite there is a pursuit and rejection corresponding in some degree to affirmation and negation in the intellect (Aristot. Ethic. lib. 6 sec. 2). Moreover, it will be seen in another place (Book 2 ch sec. 12-26), how surely the intellect governs the will. Here we only wish to observe, that the soul does not possess any faculty which may not be duly referred to one or other of these members. And in this way we comprehend sense under intellect. Others distinguish thus: They say that sense inclines to pleasure in the same way as the intellect to good; that hence the appetite of sense becomes concupiscence and lust, while the affection of the intellect becomes will. For the term appetite, which they prefer, I use that of will, as being more common.

8. Therefore, God has provided the soul of man with intellect, by which he might discern good from evil, just from unjust, and might know what to follow or to shun, reason going before with her lamp; whence philosophers, in reference to her directing power, have called her to Hebrews 4:1-16 gemonikon. To this he has joined will, to which choice belongs. Man excelled in these noble endowments in his primitive condition, when reason, intelligence, prudence, and judgement, not only sufficed for the government of his earthly life, but also enabled him to rise up to God and eternal happiness. Thereafter choice was added to direct the appetites, and temper all the organic motions; the will being thus perfectly submissive to the authority of reason. In this upright state, man possessed freedom of will, by which, if he chose, he was able to obtain eternal life. It were here unseasonable to introduce the question concerning the secret predestination of God, because we are not considering what might or might not happen, but what the nature of man truly was. Adam, therefore, might have stood if he chose, since it was only by his own will that he fell; but it was because his will was pliable in either directions and he had not received constancy to persevere, that he so easily fell. Still he had a free choice of good and evil; and not only so, but in the mind and will there was the highest rectitude, and all the organic parts were duly framed to obedience, until man corrupted its good properties, and destroyed himself. Hence the great darkness of philosophers who have looked for a complete building in a ruin, and fit arrangement in

disorder. The principle they set out with was, that man could not be a rational animal unless he had a free choice of good and evil. They also imagined that the distinction between virtue and vice was destroyed, if man did not of his own counsel arrange his life. So far well, had there been no change in man. This being unknown to them, it is not surprising that they throw every thing into confusion. But those who, while they profess to be the disciples of Christ, still seek for free-will in man, notwithstanding of his being lost and drowned in spiritual destruction, labour under manifold delusion, making a heterogeneous mixture of inspired doctrine and philosophical opinions, and so erring as to both. But it will be better to leave these things to their own place (see Book 2 chap. 2) At present it is necessary only to remember, that man, at his first creation, was very different from all his posterity; who, deriving their origin from him after he was corrupted, received a hereditary taint. At first every part of the soul was formed to rectitude. There was soundness of mind and freedom of will to choose the good. If any one objects that it was placed, as it were, in a slippery position, because its power was weak, I answer, that the degree conferred was sufficient to take away every excuse. For surely the Deity could not be tied down to this condition - to make man such, that he either could not or would not sin. Such a nature might have been more excellent; but to expostulate with God as if he had been bound to confer this nature on man, is more than unjust, seeing he had full right to determine how much or how little He would give. Why He did not sustain him by the virtue of perseverance is hidden in his counsel; it is ours to keep within the bounds of soberness. Man had received the power, if he had the will, but he had not the will which would have given the power; for this will would have been followed by perseverance. Still, after he had received so much, there is no excuse for his having spontaneously brought death upon himself. No necessity was laid upon God to give him more than that intermediate and even transient will, that out of man’s fall he might extract materials for his own glory.

08.01.16. Chapter 16

Chapter 16. The world, created by God, still cherished and protected by Him. Each and all of its parts governed by His providence. The divisions of this chapter are,

I. The doctrine of the special providence of God over all the creatures, singly and collectively, as opposed to the dreams of the Epicureans about fortune and fortuitous causes.

II. The fiction of the Sophists concerning the omnipotence of God, and the error of philosophers, as to a confused and equivocal government of the world, sec. 1-5. All animals, but especially mankind, from the peculiar superintendence exercised over them, are proofs, evidences, and examples of the providence of God, sec. 6, 7.

III. A consideration of fate, fortune, chance, contingence, and uncertain events (on which the matter here under discussion turns).

Sections

1. Even the wicked, under the guidance of carnal sense, acknowledge that God is the Creator. The godly acknowledge not this only, but that he is a most wise and powerful governor and preserver of all created objects. In so doing, they lean on the Word of God, some passages from which are produced.

2. Refutation of the Epicureans, who oppose fortune and fortuitous causes to Divine Providence, as taught in Scripture. The sun, a bright manifestation of Divine Providence.

3. Figment of the Sophists as to an indolent Providence refuted. Consideration of the Omnipotence as combined with the Providence of God. Double benefit resulting from a proper acknowledgement of the Divine Omnipotence. Cavils of Infidelity.

4. A definition of Providence refuting the erroneous dogmas of Philosophers. Dreams of the Epicureans and Peripatetics.

5. Special Providence of God asserted and proved by arguments founded on a consideration of the Divine Justice and Mercy. Proved also by passages of Scripture, relating to the sky, the earth, and animals.

6. Special Providence proved by passages relating to the human race, and the more especially that for its sake the world was created.

7. Special Providence proved, lastly, from examples taken from the history of the Israelites, of Jonah, Jacob, and from daily experience.

8. Erroneous views as to Providence refuted: I. The sect of the Stoics. II. The fortune and chance of the Heathen.

9. How things are said to be fortuitous to us, though done by the determinate counsel of God. Example. Error of separating contingency and event from the secret, but just, and most wise counsel of God. Two examples.

1. It were cold and lifeless to represent God as a momentary Creator, who completed his work once for all, and then left it. Here, especially, we must dissent from the profane, and maintain that the presence of the divine power is conspicuous, not less in the perpetual condition of the world then in its first creation. For, although even wicked men are forced, by the mere view of the earth and sky, to rise to the Creator, yet faith has a method of its own in assigning the whole praise of creation to God. To this effect is the passage of the Apostle already quoted that by faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God (Hebrews 11:3); because, without proceeding to his Providence, we cannot understand the full force of what is meant by God being the Creator, how much soever we may seem to comprehend it with our mind, and confess it with our tongue. The carnal mind, when once it has perceived the power of God in the creation, stops there, and, at the farthest, thinks and ponders on nothing else than the wisdom, power, and goodness displayed by the Author of such a work (matters which rise spontaneously, and force themselves on the notice even of the unwilling), or on some general agency on which the power of motion depends, exercised in preserving and governing it. In short, it imagines that all things are sufficiently sustained by the energy divinely infused into them at first. But faith must penetrate deeper. After learning that there is a Creator, it must forthwith infer that he is also a Governor and Preserver, and that, not by producing a kind of general motion in the machine of the globe as well as in each of its parts, but by a special providence sustaining, cherishing, superintending, all the things which he has made, to the very minutest, even to a sparrow. Thus David, after briefly premising that the world was created by God, immediately descends to the continual course of Providence, “By the word of the Lord were the heavens framed, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth;” immediately adding, “The Lord looketh from heaven, he beholdeth the children of men” (Psalms 33:6, Psalms 33:13, &c). He subjoins other things to the same effect. For although all do not reason so accurately, yet because it would not be credible that human affairs were superintended by God, unless he were the maker of the world, and no one could seriously believe that he is its Creator without feeling convinced that he takes care of his works; David with good reason, and in admirable order, leads us from the one to the other. In general, indeed, philosophers teach, and the human mind conceives, that all the parts of the world are invigorated by the secret inspiration of God. They do not, however reach the height to which David rises taking all the pious along with him, when he says, “These wait all upon thee, that thou mayest give them their meat in due season. That thou givest them they gather: thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good. Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled: thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust. Thou sendest forth thy Spirit, they are created, and thou renewest the face of the earth” (Psalms 104:27-30). Nay, though they subscribe to the sentiment of Paul, that in God “we live, and move, and have our being” (Acts 17:28), yet they are far from having a serious apprehension of the grace which he commends, because they have not the least relish for that special care in which alone the paternal favour of God is discerned.

2. That this distinction may be the more manifest, we must consider that the Providence of God, as taught in Scripture, is opposed to fortune and fortuitous causes. By an erroneous opinion prevailing in all ages, an opinion almost universally prevailing in our own day, viz., that all things

happen fortuitously, the true doctrine of Providence has not only been obscured, but almost buried. If one falls among robbers, or ravenous beasts; if a sudden gust of wind at sea causes shipwreck; if one is struck down by the fall of a house or a tree; if another, when wandering through desert paths, meets with deliverance; or, after being tossed by the waves, arrives in port, and makes some wondrous hair-breadth escape from death - all these occurrences, prosperous as well as adverse, carnal sense will attribute to fortune. But whose has learned from the mouth of Christ that all the hairs of his head are numbered (Matthew 10:30), will look farther for the cause, and hold that all events whatsoever are governed by the secret counsel of God. With regard to inanimate objects again we must hold that though each is possessed of its peculiar properties, yet all of them exert their force only in so far as directed by the immediate hand of God. Hence they are merely instruments, into which God constantly infuses what energy he sees meet, and turns and converts to any purpose at his pleasure. No created object makes a more wonderful or glorious display than the sun. For, besides illuminating the whole world with its brightness, how admirably does it foster and invigorate all animals by its heat, and fertilise the earth by its rays, warming the seeds of grain in its lap, and thereby calling forth the verdant blade! This it supports, increases, and strengthens with additional nurture, till it rises into the stalk; and still feeds it with perpetual moisture, till it comes into flower; and from flower to fruit, which it continues to ripen till it attains maturity. In like manner, by its warmth trees and vines bud, and put forth first their leaves, then their blossom, then their fruit. And the Lord, that he might claim the entire glory of these things as his own, was pleased that light should exist, and that the earth should be replenished with all kinds of herbs and fruits before he made the sun. No pious man, therefore, will make the sun either the necessary or principal cause of those things which existed before the creation of the sun, but only the instrument which God employs, because he so pleases; though he can lay it aside, and act equally well by himself: Again, when we read, that at the prayer of Joshua the sun was stayed in its course (Joshua 10:13); that as a favour to Hezekiah, its shadow receded ten degrees (2 Kings 20:11); by these miracles God declared that the sun does not daily rise and set by a blind instinct of nature, but is governed by Him in its course, that he may renew the remembrance of his paternal favour toward us. Nothing is more natural than for spring, in its turns to succeed winter, summer spring, and autumn summer; but in this series the variations are so great and so unequal as to make it very apparent that every single year, month, and day, is regulated by a new and special providence of God.

3. And truly God claims omnipotence to himself, and would have us to acknowledge it - not the vain, indolent, slumbering omnipotence which sophists feign, but vigilant, efficacious, energetic, and ever active - not an omnipotence which may only act as a general principle of confused motion, as in ordering a stream to keep within the channel once prescribed to it, but one which is intent on individual and special movements. God is deemed omnipotent, not because he can act though he may cease or be idle, or because by a general instinct he continues the order of nature previously appointed; but because, governing heaven and earth by his providence, he so overrules all things that nothing happens without his counsel. For when it is said in the Psalms, “He has done whatsoever he has pleased” (Psalms 115:3), the thing meant is his sure and deliberate purpose. It were insipid to interpret the Psalmist’s words in philosophic fashion, to mean that God is the primary agent, because the beginning and cause of all motion. This rather is the solace of the faithful, in their adversity, that every thing which they endure is by the ordination and command of God, that they are under his hand. But if the government of God thus extends to all

his works, it is a childish cavil to confine it to natural influx. Those moreover who confine the providence of God within narrow limits, as if he allowed all things to be borne along freely according to a perpetual law of nature, do not more defraud God of his glory than themselves of a most useful doctrine; for nothing were more wretched than man if he were exposed to all possible movements of the sky, the air, the earth, and the water. We may add, that by this view the singular goodness of God towards each individual is unbecomingly impaired. David exclaims (Psalms 8:2), that infants hanging at their mothers breasts are eloquent enough to celebrate the glory of God, because, from the very moment of their births they find an aliment prepared for them by heavenly care. Indeed, if we do not shut our eyes and senses to the fact, we must see that some mothers have full provision for their infants, and others almost none, according as it is the pleasure of God to nourish one child more liberally, and another more sparingly. Those who attribute due praise to the omnipotence of God thereby derive a double benefit. He to whom heaven and earth belong, and whose nod all creatures must obey, is fully able to reward the homage which they pay to him, and they can rest secure in the protection of Him to whose control everything that could do them harm is subject, by whose authority, Satan, with all his furies and engines, is curbed as with a bridle, and on whose will everything adverse to our safety depends. In this way, and in no other, can the immoderate and superstitious fears, excited by the dangers to which we are exposed, be calmed or subdued. I say superstitious fears. For such they are, as often as the dangers threatened by any created objects inspire us with such terror, that we tremble as if they had in themselves a power to hurt us, or could hurt at random or by chance; or as if we had not in God a sufficient protection against them. For example, Jeremiah forbids the children of God “ to be dismayed at the signs of heaven, as the heathen are dismayed at them” (Jeremiah 10:2). He does not, indeed, condemn every kind of fear. But as unbelievers transfer the government of the world from God to the stars, imagining that happiness or misery depends on their decrees or presages, and not on the Divine will, the consequence is, that their fear, which ought to have reference to him only, is diverted to stars and comets. Let him, therefore, who would beware of such unbelief, always bear in mind, that there is no random power, or agency, or motion in the creatures, who are so governed by the secret counsel of God, that nothing happens but what he has knowingly and willingly decreed.

4. First, then, let the reader remember that the providence we mean is not one by which the Deity, sitting idly in heaven, looks on at what is taking place in the world, but one by which he, as it were, holds the helms and overrules all events. Hence his providence extends not less to the hand than to the eye. When Abraham said to his son, God will provide (Genesis 22:8), he meant not merely to assert that the future event was foreknown to Gods but to resign the management of an unknown business to the will of Him whose province it is to bring perplexed and dubious matters to a happy result. Hence it appears that providence consists in action. What many talk of bare prescience is the merest trifling. Those do not err quite so grossly who attribute government to God, but still, as I have observed, a confused and promiscuous government which consists in giving an impulse and general movement to the machine of the globe and each of its parts, but does not specially direct the action of every creature. It is impossible, however, to tolerate this error. For, according to its abettors, there is nothing in this providence, which they call universal, to prevent all the creatures from being moved contingently, or to prevent man from turning himself in this direction or in that, according to the mere freedom of his own will. In this ways they make man a partner with God - God, by his energy, impressing man with the movement by which he can act,

agreeably to the nature conferred upon him while man voluntarily regulates his own actions. In short, their doctrine is, that the world, the affairs of men, and men themselves, are governed by the power, but not by the decree of God. I say nothing of the Epicureans (a pest with which the world has always been plagued), who dream of an inert and idle God, and others, not a whit sounder, who of old feigned that God rules the upper regions of the air, but leaves the inferior to Fortune. Against such evident madness even dumb creatures lift their voice. My intention now is, to refute an opinion which has very generally obtained - an opinion which, while it concedes to God some blind and equivocal movement, withholds what is of principal moment, viz., the disposing and directing of every thing to its proper end by incomprehensible wisdom. By withholding government, it makes God the ruler of the world in name only, not in reality. For what, I ask, is meant by government, if it be not to preside so as to regulate the destiny of that over which you preside? I do not, however, totally repudiate what is said of an universal providence, provided, on the other hand, it is conceded to me that the world is governed by God, not only because he maintains the order of nature appointed by him, but because he takes a special charge of every one of his works. It is true, indeed, that each species of created objects is moved by a secret instinct of nature, as if they obeyed the eternal command of God, and spontaneously followed the course which God at first appointed. And to this we may refer our Saviour's words, that he and his Father have always been at work from the beginning (John 5:17); also the words of Paul, that "in him we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17:28); also the words of the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, who, when wishing to prove the divinity of Christ, says, that he upholdeth "all things by the word of his power" (Hebrews 1:3). But some, under pretext of the general, hide and obscure the special providence, which is so surely and clearly taught in Scripture, that it is strange how any one can bring himself to doubt of it. And, indeed, those who interpose that disguise are themselves forced to modify their doctrine, by adding that many things are done by the special care of God. This, however, they erroneously confine to particular acts. The thing to be proved, therefore, is, that single events are so regulated by God, and all events so proceed from his determinate counsel, that nothing happens fortuitously.

5. Assuming that the beginning of motion belongs to God, but that all things move spontaneously or casually, according to the impulse which nature gives, the vicissitudes of day and nights summer and winter, will be the work of God; inasmuch as he, in assigning the office of each, appointed a certain law, namely, that they should always with uniform tenor observe the same course, day succeeding night, month succeeding month, and year succeeding year. But, as at one time, excessive heat, combined with drought, burns up the fields; at another time excessive rains rot the crops, while sudden devastation is produced by tempests and storms of hail, these will not be the works of God, unless in so far as rainy or fair weather, heat or cold, are produced by the concourse of the stars, and other natural causes. According to this view, there is no place left either for the paternal favour, or the judgements of God. If it is said that God fully manifests his beneficence to the human race, by furnishing heaven and earth with the ordinary power of producing food, the explanation is meagre and heathenish: as if the fertility of one year were not a special blessing, the penury and dearth of another a special punishment and curse from God. But as it would occupy too much time to enumerate all the arguments, let the authority of God himself suffice. In the Law and the Prophets he repeatedly declares, that as often as he waters the earth with dew and rain, he manifests his favour, that by his command the heaven becomes hard as iron, the crops are destroyed by mildew and other evils, that storms and hail, in devastating the

fields, are signs of sure and special vengeance. This being admitted, it is certain that not a drop of rain falls without the express command of God. David, indeed (Psalms 146:9), extols the general providence of God in supplying food to the young ravens that cry to him but when God himself threatens living creatures with famine, does he not plainly declare that they are all nourished by him, at one time with scanty, at another with more ample measure? It is childish, as I have already said, to confine this to particular acts, when Christ says, without reservation, that not a sparrow falls to the ground without the will of his Father (Matthew 10:29). Surely, if the flight of birds is regulated by the counsel of God, we must acknowledge with the prophet, that while he “dwelleth on high,” he “humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven and in the earth” (Psalms 113:5, Psalms 113:6).

6. But as we know that it was chiefly for the sake of mankind that the world was made, we must look to this as the end which God has in view in the government of it. The prophet Jeremiah exclaims, “O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps” (Jeremiah 10:23). Solomon again says, “Man’s goings are of the Lord: how can a man then understand his own way?” (Proverbs 20:24). Will it now be said that man is moved by God according to the bent of his nature, but that man himself gives the movement any direction he pleases? Were it truly so, man would have the full disposal of his own ways. To this it will perhaps be answered, that man can do nothing without the power of God. But the answer will not avail, since both Jeremiah and Solomon attribute to God not power only, but also election and decree. And Solomon, in another place, elegantly rebukes the rashness of men in fixing their plans without reference to God, as if they were not led by his hand. “The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the Lord” (Proverbs 16:1). It is a strange infatuation, surely for miserable men, who cannot even give utterance except in so far as God pleases, to begin to act without him! Scriptures moreover, the better to show that every thing done in the world is according to his decree, declares that the things which seem most fortuitous are subject to him. For what seems more attributable to chance than the branch which falls from a tree, and kills the passing traveller? But the Lord sees very differently, and declares that He delivered him into the hand of the slayer (Exodus 21:13). In like manners who does not attribute the lot to the blindness of Fortune? Not so the Lord, who claims the decision for himself (Proverbs 16:33). He says not, that by his power the lot is thrown into the lap, and taken out, but declares that the only thing which could be attributed to chance is from him. To the same effect are the words of Solomon, “The poor and the deceitful man meet together; the Lord lighteneth both their eyes” (Proverbs 29:13). For although rich and poor are mingled together in the world, in saying that the condition of each is divinely appointed, he reminds us that God, Who enlightens all, has his own eye always open, and thus exhorts the poor to patient endurance, seeing that those who are discontented with their lot endeavour to shake off a burden which God has imposed upon them. Thus, too, another prophet upbraids the profane, who ascribe it to human industry, or to fortune, that some grovel in the mire while others rise to honour. “Promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge: he putteth down ones and setteth up another” (Psalms 75:6, Psalms 75:7). Because God cannot divest himself of the office of judge, he infers that to his secret counsel it is owing that some are elevated, while others remain without honour.

7. Nay, I affirm in general, that particular events are evidences of the special providence of God. In the wilderness God caused a south wind to blow, and brought the people a plentiful supply of birds

(Exodus 19:13). When he desired that Jonah should be thrown into the sea, he sent forth a whirlwind. Those who deny that God holds the reins of government will say that this was contrary to ordinary practice, whereas I infer from it that no wind ever rises or rages without his special command. In no way could it be true that “he maketh the winds his messengers, and the flames of fire his ministers;” that “he maketh the clouds his chariot, and walketh upon the wings of the wind” (Psalms 104:3, Psalms 104:4), did he not at pleasure drive the clouds and winds and therein manifest the special presence of his power. In like manner, we are elsewhere taught, that whenever the sea is raised into a storm, its billows attest the special presence of God. “He commandeth and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves.” “He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still” (Psalms 107:25, Psalms 107:29) He also elsewhere declares, that he had smitten the people with blasting and mildew (Amos 4:9). Again while man naturally possesses the power of continuing his species, God describes it as a mark of his special favour, that while some continue childless, others are blessed with offspring: for the fruit of the womb is his gift. Hence the words of Jacob to Rachel, “Am I in God’s stead, who has withheld from thee the fruit of the womb?” (Genesis 30:2). To conclude in one word. Nothing in nature is more ordinary than that we should be nourished with bread. But the Spirit declares not only that the produce of the earth is God’s special gift, but “that man does not live by bread only” (Deuteronomy 8:3), because it is not mere fulness that nourishes him but the secret blessing of God. And hence, on the other hand, he threatens to take away “the stay and the staff, the whole stay of bread, and the whole stay of water” (Isaiah 3:1). Indeed, there could be no serious meaning in our prayer for daily bread, if God did not with paternal hand supply us with food. Accordingly, to convince the faithful that God, in feeding them, fulfils the office of the best of parents, the prophet reminds them that he “giveth food to all flesh” (Psalms 136:25). In fine, when we hear on the one hand, that “the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry,” and, on the other hand, that “the face of the Lord is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth” (Psalms 34:15, Psalms 34:16), let us be assured that all creatures above and below are ready at his service, that he may employ them in whatever way he pleases. Hence we infer, not only that the general providence of God, continuing the order of nature, extends over the creatures, but that by his wonderful counsel they are adapted to a certain and special purpose.

8. Those who would cast obloquy on this doctrine, calumniate it as the dogma of the Stoics concerning fate. The same charge was formerly brought against Augustine (lib. ad Bonifac. II, c. 6 et alibi). We are unwilling to dispute about words; but we do not admit the term Fate, both because it is of the class which Paul teaches us to shun, as profane novelties (1 Timothy 6:20), and also because it is attempted, by means of an odious term, to fix a stigma on the truth of God. But the dogma itself is falsely and maliciously imputed to us. For we do not with the Stoics imagine a necessity consisting of a perpetual chain of causes, and a kind of involved series contained in nature, but we hold that God is the disposer and ruler of all things - that from the remotest eternity, according to his own wisdom, he decreed what he was to do, and now by his power executes what he decreed. Hence we maintain, that by his providence, not heaven and earth and inanimate creatures only, but also the counsels and wills of men are so governed as to move exactly in the course which he has destined. What, then, you will say, does nothing happen fortuitously, nothing contingently? I answer, it was a true saying of Basil the Great, that Fortune and Chance are heathen terms; the meaning of which ought not to occupy pious minds. For if all success is blessing from God, and calamity and adversity are his curse, there is no place left in human affairs

for fortune and chance. We ought also to be moved by the words of Augustine (Retract. lib. 1 cap. 1), “In my writings against the Academics,” says he, “I regret having so often used the term Fortune; although I intended to denote by it not some goddess, but the fortuitous issue of events in external matters, whether good or evil. Hence, too, those words, Perhaps, Perchance, Fortuitously, which no religion forbids us to use, though everything must be referred to Divine Providence. Nor did I omit to observe this when I said, Although, perhaps, that which is vulgarly called Fortune, is also regulated by a hidden order, and what we call Chance is nothing else than that the reason and cause of which is secret. It is true, I so spoke, but I repent of having mentioned Fortune there as I did, when I see the very bad custom which men have of saying, not as they ought to do, ‘So God pleased,’ but, ‘So Fortune pleased.’” In short, Augustine everywhere teaches, that if anything is left to fortune, the world moves at random. And although he elsewhere declares (Quaestionum, lib. 83.) that all things are carried on, partly by the free will of man, and partly by the Providence of God, he shortly after shows clearly enough that his meaning was, that men also are ruled by Providence, when he assumes it as a principle, that there cannot be a greater absurdity than to hold that anything is done without the ordination of God; because it would happen at random. For which reason, he also excludes the contingency which depends on human will, maintaining a little further on, in clearer terms, that no cause must be sought for but the will of God. When he uses the term permission, the meaning which he attaches to it will best appear from a single passage (De Trinity. lib. 3 cap. 4), where he proves that the will of God is the supreme and primary cause of all things, because nothing happens without his order or permission. He certainly does not figure God sitting idly in a watch-tower, when he chooses to permit anything. The will which he represents as interposing is, if I may so express it, active (actualis), and but for this could not be regarded as a cause.

9. But since our sluggish minds rest far beneath the height of Divine Providence, we must have recourse to a distinction which may assist them in rising. I say then, that though all things are ordered by the counsel and certain arrangement of God, to us, however, they are fortuitous - not because we imagine that Fortune rules the world and mankind, and turns all things upside down at random (far be such a heartless thought from every Christian breast); but as the order, method, end, and necessity of events, are, for the most part, hidden in the counsel of God, though it is certain that they are produced by the will of God, they have the appearance of being fortuitous, such being the form under which they present themselves to us, whether considered in their own nature, or estimated according to our knowledge and judgement. Let us suppose, for example, that a merchant, after entering a forest in company with trust-worthy individuals, imprudently strays from his companions and wanders bewildered till he falls into a den of robbers and is murdered. His death was not only foreseen by the eye of God, but had been fixed by his decree. For it is said, not that he foresaw how far the life of each individual should extend, but that he determined and fixed the bounds which could not be passed (Job 14:5). Still, in relation to our capacity of discernment, all these things appear fortuitous. How will the Christian feel? Though he will consider that every circumstance which occurred in that person’s death was indeed in its nature fortuitous, he will have no doubt that the Providence of God overruled it and guided fortune to his own end. The same thing holds in the case of future contingencies. All future events being uncertain to us, seem in suspense as if ready to take either direction. Still, however, the impression remains seated in our hearts, that nothing will happen which the Lord has not provided. In this sense the term event is repeatedly used in Ecclesiastes, because, at the first glance, men

do not penetrate to the primary cause which lies concealed. And yet, what is taught in Scripture of the secret providence of God was never so completely effaced from the human heart, as that some sparks did not always shine in the darkness. Thus the soothsayers of the Philistine, though they waver in uncertainty, attribute the adverse event partly to God and partly to chance. If the ark, say they, “Goes up by the way of his own coast to Bethshemish, then he has done us this great evil; but if not, then we shall know that it is not his hand that smote us, it was a chance that happened to us.” (1 Samuel 6:9). Foolishly, indeed, when divination fails them they flee to fortune. Still we see them constrained, so as not to venture to regard their disaster as fortuitous. But the mode in which God, by the curb of his Providence, turns events in whatever direction he pleases, will appear from a remarkable example. At the very same moment when David was discovered in the wilderness of Maon, the Philistines make an inroad into the country, and Saul is forced to depart (1 Samuel 23:26, 1 Samuel 23:27). If God, in order to provide for the safety of his servant, threw this obstacle in the way of Saul, we surely cannot say, that though the Philistine took up arms contrary to human expectation, they did it by chance. What seems to us contingence, faith will recognise as the secret impulse of God. The reason is not always equally apparent, but we ought undoubtedly to hold that all the changes which take place in the world are produced by the secret agency of the hand of God. At the same time, that which God has determined, though it must come to pass, is not, however, precisely, or in its own nature, necessary. We have a familiar example in the case of our Saviour’s bones. As he assumed a body similar to ours, no sane man will deny that his bones were capable of being broken and yet it was impossible that they should be broken (John 19:33, John 19:36). Hence, again, we see that there was good ground for the distinction which the Schoolmen made between necessity, secundum quid, and necessity absolute, also between the necessity of consequent and of consequence. God made the bones of his Son frangible, though he exempted them from actual fracture; and thus, in reference to the necessity of his counsel, made that impossible which might have naturally taken place.

08.01.17. Chapter 17

Chapter 17. Use to be made of the doctrine of providence. This chapter may be conveniently divided into two parts:

I. A general explanation is given of the doctrine of Divine Providence, in so far as conducive to the solid instruction and consolation of the godly, sect. 1, and specially sect. 2-12. First, however, those are refuted who deny that the world is governed by the secret and incomprehensible counsel of God; those also who throw the blame of all wickedness upon God, and absurdly pretend that exercises of piety are useless, sect. 2-5. Thereafter is added a holy meditation on Divine Providence, which, in the case of prosperity, is painted to the life, sect. 6-11.

II. A solution of two objections from passages of Scripture, which attribute repentance to God, and speak of something like an abrogation of his decrees.

Sections

1. Summary of the doctrine of Divine Providence. 1. It embraces the future and the past. 2. It works by means, without means, and against means. 3. Mankind, and particularly the Church, the object of special care. 4. The mode of administration usually secret, but always just. This last point more fully considered.

2. The profane denial that the world is governed by the secret counsel of God, refuted by passages of Scripture. Salutary counsel.

3. This doctrine, as to the secret counsel of God in the government of the world, gives no countenance either to the impiety of those who throw the blame of their wickedness upon God, the petulance of those who reject means, or the error of those who neglect the duties of religion.

4. As regards future events, the doctrine of Divine Providence not inconsistent with deliberation on the part of man.

5. In regard to past events, it is absurd to argue that crimes ought not to be punished, because they are in accordance with the divine decrees. 1. The wicked resist the declared will of God. 2. They are condemned by conscience. 3. The essence and guilt of the crime is in themselves, though God uses them as instruments.

6. A holy meditation on Divine Providence. 1. All events happen by the ordination of God. 2. All things contribute to the advantage of the godly. 3. The hearts of men and all their endeavours are in the hand of God. 4. Providence watches for the safety of the righteous. 5. God has a special care of his elect.

7. Meditation on Providence continued. 6. God in various ways curbs and defeats the enemies of the Church. 7. He overrules all creatures, even Satan himself, for the good of his people.

8. Meditation on Providence continued. 8. He trains the godly to patience and moderation. Examples. Joseph, Job, and David. 9. He shakes off their lethargy, and urges them to repentance.

9. Meditation continued. 10. The right use of inferior causes explained. 11. When the godly become negligent or imprudent in the discharge of duty, Providence reminds them of their fault. 12. It condemns the iniquities of the wicked. 13. It produces a right consideration of the future, rendering the servants of God prudent, diligent, and active. 14. It causes them to resign themselves to the wisdom and omnipotence of God, and, at the same time, makes them diligent in their calling.

10. Meditation continued. 15. Though human life is beset with innumerable evils, the righteous, trusting to Divine Providence, feel perfectly secure.

11. The use of the foregoing meditation.

12. The second part of the chapter, disposing of two objections. 1. That Scripture represents God as changing his purpose, or repenting, and that, therefore, his Providence is not fixed. Answer to this first objection. Proof from Scripture that God cannot repent.

13. Why repentance attributed to God.

14. Second objection, that Scripture speaks of an annulment of the divine decrees. Objection answered. Answer confirmed by an example.

1. Moreover, such is the proneness of the human mind to indulge in vain subtleties, that it becomes almost impossible for those who do not see the sound and proper use of this doctrine, to avoid entangling themselves in perplexing difficulties. It will, therefore, be proper here to advert to the end which Scripture has in view in teaching that all things are divinely ordained. And it is to be observed, first, that the Providence of God is to be considered with reference both to the past and the future; and, secondly, that in overruling all things, it works at one time with means, at another without means, and at another against means. Lastly, the design of God is to show that He takes care of the whole human race, but is especially vigilant in governing the Church, which he favours with a closer inspection. Moreover, we must add, that although the paternal favour and beneficence, as well as the judicial severity of God, is often conspicuous in the whole course of his Providence, yet occasionally as the causes of events are concealed, the thought is apt to rise, that human affairs are whirled about by the blind impulse of Fortune, or our carnal nature inclines us to speak as if God were amusing himself by tossing men up and down like balls. It is true, indeed, that if with sedate and quiet minds we were disposed to learn, the issue would at length make it manifest, that the counsel of God was in accordance with the highest reason, that his purpose was either to train his people to patience, correct their depraved affections, tame their wantonness, inure them to self-denial, and arouse them from torpor; or, on the other hand, to cast down the proud, defeat the craftiness of the ungodly, and frustrate all their schemes. How much soever causes may escape our notice, we must feel assured that they are deposited with him, and accordingly exclaim with David, “Many, O Lord my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to us-ward: if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered” (Psalms 40:5). For while our adversities ought always to remind us of our sins, that the punishment may incline us to repentance, we see, moreover, how Christ declares there is something more in the secret counsel of his Father than to chastise every one as he

deserves. For he says of the man who was born blind, “Neither has this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him” (John 9:3). Here, where calamity takes precedence even of birth, our carnal sense murmurs as if God were unmerciful in thus afflicting those who have not offended. But Christ declares that, provided we had eyes clear enough, we should perceive that in this spectacle the glory of his Father is brightly displayed. We must use modesty, not as it were compelling God to render an account, but so revering his hidden judgements as to account his will the best of all reasons. When the sky is overcast with dense clouds, and a violent tempest arises, the darkness which is presented to our eye, and the thunder which strikes our ears, and stupefies all our senses with terror, make us imagine that every thing is thrown into confusion, though in the firmament itself all continues quiet and serene. In the same way, when the tumultuous aspect of human affairs unfits us for judging, we should still hold, that God, in the pure light of his justice and wisdom, keeps all these commotions in due subordination, and conducts them to their proper end. And certainly in this matter many display monstrous infatuation, presuming to subject the works of God to their calculation, and discuss his secret counsels, as well as to pass a precipitate judgement on things unknown, and that with greater license than on the doings of mortal men. What can be more preposterous than to show modesty toward our equals, and choose rather to suspend our judgement than incur the blame of rashness, while we petulantly insult the hidden judgements of God, judgements which it becomes us to look up to and revere.

2. No man, therefore, will duly and usefully ponder on the providence of God save he who recollects that he has to do with his own Maker, and the Maker of the world, and in the exercise of the humility which becomes him, manifests both fear and reverence. Hence it is, that in the present day so many dogs tear this doctrine with envenomed teeth, or, at least, assail it with their bark, refusing to give more license to God than their own reason dictates to themselves. With what petulance, too, are we assailed for not being contented with the precepts of the Law, in which the will of God is comprehended, and for maintaining that the world is governed by his secret counsels? As if our doctrine were the figment of our own brain, and were not distinctly declared by the Spirit, and repeated in innumerable forms of expression! Since some feeling of shame restrains them from daring to belch forth their blasphemies against heaven, that they may give the freer vent to their rage, they pretend to pick a quarrel with us. But if they refuse to admit that every event which happens in the world is governed by the incomprehensible counsel of God, let them explain to what effect Scripture declares, that “his judgements are a great deep” (Psalms 36:6). For when Moses exclaims that the will of God “is not in heaven that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us? Neither is it beyond the sea that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea and bring it unto us?” (Deuteronomy 30:12, Deuteronomy 30:13), because it was familiarly expounded in the law, it follows that there must be another hidden will which is compared to “a great deep.” It is of this will Paul exclaims, “O! the depths of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgements, and his ways past finding out! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counsellor?” (Romans 11:33, Romans 11:34). It is true, indeed, that in the law and the gospel are comprehended mysteries which far transcend the measure of our sense; but since God, to enable his people to understand those mysteries which he has deigned to reveal in his word, enlightens their minds with a spirit of understanding, they are now no longer a deep, but a path in which they can walk safely - a lamp to guide their feet - a light of life - a school of clear and certain truth. But the

admirable method of governing the world is justly called a deep, because, while it lies hid from us, it is to be reverently adored. Both views Moses has beautifully expressed in a few words. “Secret things,” saith he, “belong unto the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever” (Deuteronomy 29:29). We see how he enjoins us not only studiously to meditate on the law, but to look up with reverence to the secret Providence of God. The Book of Job also, in order to keep our minds humble, contains a description of this lofty theme. The author of the Book, after taking an ample survey of the universe, and discoursing magnificently on the works of God, at length adds, “Lo, these are parts of his ways: but how little a portion is heard of him?” (Job 26:14). For which reason he, in another passage, distinguishes between the wisdom which dwells in God, and the measure of wisdom which he has assigned to man (Job 28:21, Job 28:28). After discoursing of the secrets of nature, he says that wisdom “is hid from the eyes of all living;” that “God understandeth the way thereof.” Shortly after he adds, that it has been divulged that it might be investigated; for “unto man he said, Behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom.” To this the words of Augustine refer, “As we do not know all the things which God does respecting us in the best order, we ought, with good intention, to act according to the Law, and in some things be acted upon according to the Law, his Providence being a Law immutable” (August. Quest. lib. 83 c. 27). Therefore, since God claims to himself the right of governing the world, a right unknown to us, let it be our law of modesty and soberness to acquiesce in his supreme authority regarding his will as our only rule of justice, and the most perfect cause of all things - not that absolute will, indeed, of which sophists prate, when by a profane and impious divorce, they separate his justice from his power, but that universal overruling Providence from which nothing flows that is not right, though the reasons thereof may be concealed.

3. Those who have learned this modesty will neither murmur against God for adversity in time past, nor charge him with the blame of their own wickedness, as Homer’s Agamemnon does. Ego4 d’ ouk haitios eimi, alla Zeus kai moira. “Blame not me, but Jupiter and fate.” On the other hand, they will note like the youth in Plautus, destroy themselves in despairs as if hurried away by the Fates. “Unstable is the condition of affairs; instead of doing as they list, men only fulfil their fate: I will hie me to a rock, and there end my fortune with my life.” Nor will they, after the example of another, use the name of God as a cloak for their crimes. For in another comedy Lyconides thus expresses himself: “God was the impeller: I believe the gods wished it. Did they not wish it, it would not be done, I know.” They will rather inquire and learn from Scripture what is pleasing to God, and then, under the guidance of the Spirit, endeavour to attain it. Prepared to follow whithersoever God may call, they will show by their example that nothing is more useful than the knowledge of this doctrine, which perverse men undeservedly assail, because it is sometimes wickedly abused. The profane make such a bluster with their foolish puerilities, that they almost, according to the expression, confound heaven and earth. If the Lord has marked the moment of our death, it cannot be escaped - it is vain to toil and use precaution. Therefore, when one ventures not to travel on a road which he hears is infested by robbers; when another calls in the physician, and annoys himself with drugs, for the sake of his health; a third abstains from coarser food, that he may not injure a sickly constitution; and a fourth fears to dwell in a ruinous house; when all, in short, devise, and, with great eagerness of mind, strike out paths by which they may attain the objects of their desire; either these are all vain remedies, laid hold of to correct the will of God, or his certain decree does not fix the limits of life and death, health and sickness, peace and war, and other matters which men, according as they desire and hate, study by their own industry

to secure or avoid. Nay, these trifles even infer, that the prayers of the faithful must be perverse, not to say superfluous, since they entreat the Lord to make a provision for things which he has decreed from eternity. And then, imputing whatever happens to the providence of God, they connive at the man who is known to have expressly designed it. Has an assassin slain an honest citizen? He has, say they, executed the counsel of God. Has some one committed theft or adultery? The deed having been provided and ordained by the Lord, he is the minister of his providence. Has a son waited with indifference for the death of his parent, without trying any remedy? He could not oppose God, who had so predetermined from eternity. Thus all crimes receive the name of virtues, as being in accordance with divine ordination.

4. As regards future events, Solomon easily reconciles human deliberation with divine providence. For while he derides the stupidity of those who presume to undertake anything without God, as if they were not ruled by his hand, he elsewhere thus expresses himself: “A man’s heart deviseth his ways but the Lord directeth his steps” (Proverbs 16:9); intimating, that the eternal decrees of God by no means prevent us from proceeding, under his will, to provide for ourselves, and arrange all our affairs. And the reason for this is clear. For he who has fixed the boundaries of our life, has at the same time entrusted us with the care of it, provided us with the means of preserving it, forewarned us of the dangers to which we are exposed, and supplied cautions and remedies, that we may not be overwhelmed unawares. Now, our duty is clear, namely, since the Lord has committed to us the defence of our life, to defend it; since he offers assistance, to use it; since he forewarns us of danger, not to rush on heedless; since he supplies remedies, not to neglect them. But it is said, a danger that is not fatal will not hurt us, and one that is fatal cannot be resisted by any precaution. But what if dangers are not fatal, merely because the Lord has furnished you with the means of warding them off, and surmounting them? See how far your reasoning accords with the order of divine procedure: You infer that danger is not to be guarded against, because, if it is not fatal, you shall escape without precaution; whereas the Lord enjoins you to guard against its just because he wills it not to be fatal. These insane cavillers overlook what is plainly before their eyes, viz., that the Lord has furnished men with the artful of deliberation and caution, that they may employ them in subservience to his providence, in the preservation of their life; while, on the contrary, by neglect and sloth, they bring upon themselves the evils which he has annexed to them. How comes it that a provident man, while he consults for his safety, disentangles himself from impending evils; while a foolish man, through unadvised temerity, perishes, unless it be that prudence and folly are, in either case, instruments of divine dispensation? God has been pleased to conceal from us all future events that we may prepare for them as doubtful, and cease not to apply the provided remedies until they have either been overcome, or have proved too much for all our care. Hence, I formerly observed, that the Providence of God does not interpose simply; but, by employing means, assumes, as it were, a visible form.

5. By the same class of persons, past events are referred improperly and inconsiderately to simple providence. As all contingencies whatsoever depend on it, therefore, neither thefts nor adulteries, nor murders, are perpetrated without an interposition of the divine will. Why, then, they ask, should the thief be punished for robbing him whom the Lord chose to chastise with poverty? Why should the murderer be punished for slaying him whose life the Lord had terminated? If all such persons serve the will of God, why should they be punished? I deny that they serve the will of God. For we cannot say that he who is carried away by a wicked mind performs service on the order of God,

when he is only following his own malignant desires. He obeys God, who, being instructed in his will, hastens in the direction in which God calls him. But how are we so instructed unless by his word? The will declared by his word is, therefore, that which we must keep in view in acting, God requires of us nothing but what he enjoins. If we design anything contrary to his precept, it is not obedience, but contumacy and transgression. But if he did not will it, we could not do it. I admit this. But do we act wickedly for the purpose of yielding obedience to him? This, assuredly, he does not command. Nay, rather we rush on, not thinking of what he wishes, but so inflamed by our own passionate lust, that, with destined purpose, we strive against him. And in this way, while acting wickedly, we serve his righteous ordination, since in his boundless wisdom he well knows how to use bad instruments for good purposes. And see how absurd this mode of arguing is. They will have it that crimes ought not to be punished in their authors, because they are not committed without the dispensation of God. I concede more - that thieves and murderers, and other evil-doers, are instruments of Divine Providence, being employed by the Lord himself to execute the judgements which he has resolved to inflict. But I deny that this forms any excuse for their misdeeds. For how? Will they implicate God in the same iniquity with themselves, or will they cloak their depravity by his righteousness? They cannot exculpate themselves, for their own conscience condemns them: they cannot charge God, since they perceive the whole wickedness in themselves, and nothing in Him save the legitimate use of their wickedness. But it is said he works by their means. And whence, I pray, the fetid odour of a dead body, which has been unconfined and putrefied by the sun's heat? All see that it is excited by the rays of the sun, but no man therefore says that the fetid odour is in them. In the same way, while the matter and guilt of wickedness belongs to the wicked man, why should it be thought that God contracts any impurity in using it at pleasure as his instrument? Have done, then, with that dog-like petulance which may, indeed, bay from a distance at the justice of God, but cannot reach it!

6. These calumnies, or rather frenzied dreams, will easily be dispelled by a pure and holy meditation on Divine Providence, meditation such as piety enjoins, that we may thence derive the best and sweetest fruit. The Christian, then, being most fully persuaded, that all things come to pass by the dispensation of God, and that nothing happens fortuitously, will always direct his eye to him as the principal cause of events, at the same time paying due regard to inferior causes in their own place. Next, he will have no doubt that a special providence is awake for his preservation, and will not suffer anything to happen that will not turn to his good and safety. But as its business is first with men and then with the other creatures, he will feel assured that the providence of God reigns over both. In regard to men, good as well as bad, he will acknowledge that their counsels, wishes, aims and faculties are so under his hand, that he has full power to turn them in whatever direction, and constrain them as often as he pleases. The fact that a special providence watches over the safety of believers, is attested by a vast number of the clearest promises. "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved." "Casting all your care upon him: for he careth for you." "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." "He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of mine eye." "We have a strong city: salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks." "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee."

Nay, the chief aim of the historical books of Scripture is to show that the ways of his saints are so carefully guarded by the Lord, as to prevent them even from dashing their foot against a stone. Therefore, as we a little ago justly exploded the opinion of those who feign a universal providence, which does not condescend to take special care of every creature, so it is of the highest moment that we should specially recognise this care towards ourselves. Hence, our Saviour, after declaring that even a sparrow falls not to the ground without the will of his Father, immediately makes the application, that being more valuable than many sparrows, we ought to consider that God provides more carefully for us. He even extends this so far, as to assure us that the hairs of our head are all numbered. What more can we wish, if not even a hair of our head can fall, save in accordance with his will? I speak not merely of the human race in general. God having chosen the Church for his abode, there cannot be a doubt, that in governing it, he gives singular manifestations of his paternal care.

7. The servant of God being confirmed by these promises and examples, will add the passages which teach that all men are under his power, whether to conciliate their minds, or to curb their wickedness, and prevent it from doing harm. For it is the Lord who gives us favour, not only with those who wish us well, but also in the eyes of the Egyptians (Exodus 3:21), in various ways defeating the malice of our enemies. Sometimes he deprives them of all presence of mind, so that they cannot undertake anything soundly or soberly. In this ways he sends Satan to be a lie in the mouths of all the prophets in order to deceive Ahab (1 Kings 22:22), by the counsel of the young men he so infatuates Rehoboam, that his folly deprives him of his kingdom (1 Kings 12:10, 1 Kings 12:15). Sometimes when he leaves them in possession of intellect, he so fills them with terror and dismays that they can neither will nor plan the execution of what they had designed. Sometimes, too, after permitting them to attempt what lust and rage suggested, he opportunely interrupts them in their career, and allows them not to conclude what they had begun. Thus the counsel of Ahithophel, which would have been fatal to David, was defeated before its time (2 Samuel 17:7, 2 Samuel 17:14). Thus, for the good and safety of his people, he overrules all the creatures, even the devil himself who, we see, durst not attempt any thing against Job without his permission and command. This knowledge is necessarily followed by gratitude in prosperity, patience in adversity, and incredible security for the time to come. Every thing, therefore, which turns out prosperous and according to his wish, the Christian will ascribe entirely to God, whether he has experienced his beneficence through the instrumentality of men, or been aided by inanimate creatures. For he will thus consider with himself: Certainly it was the Lord that disposed the minds of these people in my favour, attaching them to me so as to make them the instruments of his kindness. In an abundant harvest he will think that it is the Lord who listens to the heaven, that the heaven may listen to the earth, and the earth herself to her own offspring; in other cases, he will have no doubt that he owes all his prosperity to the divine blessing, and, admonished by so many circumstances, will feel it impossible to be ungrateful.

8. If any thing adverse befalls him, he will forthwith raise his mind to God, whose hand is most effectual in impressing us with patience and placid moderation of mind. Had Joseph kept his thoughts fixed on the treachery of his brethren, he never could have resumed fraternal affection for them. But turning toward the Lord, he forgot the injury, and was so inclined to mildness and mercy, that he even voluntarily comforts his brethren, telling them, “Be not grieved nor angry with yourselves that ye sold me hither; for God did send me before you to preserve life.” “As for you, ye

thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good" (Genesis 45:5; Genesis 50:20). Had Job turned to the Chaldees, by whom he was plundered, he should instantly have been fired with revenge, but recognising the work of the Lord, he solaces himself with this most beautiful sentiment: "The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord" (Job 1:21). So when David was assailed by Shimei with stones and curses, had he immediately fixed his eyes on the man, he would have urged his people to retaliate the injury; but perceiving that he acts not without an impulse from the Lord, he rather calms them. "So let him curse," says he, "because the Lord has said unto him, Curse David." With the same bridle he elsewhere curbs the excess of his grief, "I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it" (Psalms 39:9). If there is no more effectual remedy for anger and impatience, he assuredly has not made little progress who has learned so to meditate on Divine Providence, as to be able always to bring his mind to this, The Lord willed it, it must therefore be borne; not only because it is unlawful to strive with him, but because he wills nothing that is not just and befitting. The whole comes to this. When unjustly assailed by men, overlooking their malice (which could only aggravate our grief, and whet our minds for vengeance), let us remember to ascend to God, and learn to hold it for certain, that whatever an enemy wickedly committed against us was permitted, and sent by his righteous dispensation. Paul, in order to suppress our desire to retaliate injuries, wisely reminds us that we wrestle not with flesh and blood, but with our spiritual enemy the devil, that we may prepare for the contest (Ephesians 6:12). But to calm all the impulses of passion, the most useful consideration is, that God arms the devil, as well as all the wicked, for conflict, and sits as umpire, that he may exercise our patience. But if the disasters and miseries which press us happen without the agency of men, let us call to mind the doctrine of the Law (Deuteronomy 28:1), that all prosperity has its source in the blessing of God, that all adversity is his curse. And let us tremble at the dreadful denunciation, "And if ye will not be reformed by these things, but will walk contrary unto me; then will I also walk contrary unto you" (Leviticus 26:23, Leviticus 26:24). These words condemn our torpor, when, according to our carnal sense, deeming that whatever happens in any way is fortuitous, we are neither animated by the kindness of God to worship him, nor by his scourge stimulated to repentance. And it is for this reason that Jeremiah (Lamentations 3:38), and Amos (Amos 3:6), expostulated bitterly with the Jews, for not believing that good as well as evil was produced by the command of God. To the same effect are the words in Isaiah, "I form the light and create darkness: I make peace and create evil. I the Lord do all these things" (Isaiah 45:7).

9. At the same time, the Christian will not overlook inferior causes. For, while he regards those by whom he is benefited as ministers of the divine goodness, he will not, therefore, pass them by, as if their kindness deserved no gratitude, but feeling sincerely obliged to them, will willingly confess the obligation, and endeavour, according to his ability, to return it. In fine, in the blessings which he receives, he will revere and extol God as the principal author, but will also honour men as his ministers, and perceive, as is the truth, that by the will of God he is under obligation to those, by whose hand God has been pleased to show him kindness. If he sustains any loss through negligence or imprudence, he will, indeed, believe that it was the Lord's will it should so be, but, at the same time, he will impute it to himself. If one for whom it was his duty to care, but whom he has treated with neglect, is carried off by disease, although aware that the person had reached a limit beyond which it was impossible to pass, he will not, therefore, extenuate his fault, but, as he had neglected to do his duty faithfully towards him, will feel as if he had perished by his guilty negligence. Far less where, in the case of theft or murder, fraud and preconceived malice have

existed, will he palliate it under the pretext of Divine Providence, but in the same crime will distinctly recognise the justice of God, and the iniquity of man, as each is separately manifested. But in future events, especially, will he take account of such inferior causes. If he is not left destitute of human aid, which he can employ for his safety, he will set it down as a divine blessing; but he will not, therefore, be remiss in taking measures, or slow in employing the help of those whom he sees possessed of the means of assisting him. Regarding all the aids which the creatures can lend him, as hands offered him by the Lord, he will avail himself of them as the legitimate instruments of Divine Providence. And as he is uncertain what the result of any business in which he engages is to be (save that he knows, that in all things the Lord will provide for his good), he will zealously aim at what he deems for the best, so far as his abilities enable him. In adopting his measures, he will not be carried away by his own impressions, but will commit and resign himself to the wisdom of God, that under his guidance he may be led into the right path. However, his confidence in external aid will not be such that the presence of it will make him feel secure, the absence of it fill him with dismay, as if he were destitute. His mind will always be fixed on the Providence of God alone, and no consideration of present circumstances will be allowed to withdraw him from the steady contemplation of it. Thus Joab, while he acknowledges that the issue of the battle is entirely in the hand of God, does not therefore become inactive, but strenuously proceeds with what belongs to his proper calling, “Be of good courage,” says he, “and let us play the men for our people, and for the cities of our God; and the Lord do that which seemeth him good” (2 Samuel 10:12). The same conviction keeping us free from rashness and false confidence, will stimulate us to constant prayer, while at the same time filling our minds with good hope, it will enable us to feel secure, and bid defiance to all the dangers by which we are surrounded.

10. Here we are forcibly reminded of the inestimable felicity of a pious mind. Innumerable are the ills which beset human life, and present death in as many different forms. Not to go beyond ourselves, since the body is a receptacle, nay the nurse, of a thousand diseases, a man cannot move without carrying along with him many forms of destruction. His life is in a manner interwoven with death. For what else can be said where heat and cold bring equal danger? Then, in what direction soever you turn, all surrounding objects not only may do harm, but almost openly threaten and seem to present immediate death. Go on board a ship, you are but a plank’s breadth from death. Mount a horse, the stumbling of a foot endangers your life. Walk along the streets, every tile upon the roofs is a source of danger. If a sharp instrument is in your own hand, or that of a friend, the possible harm is manifest. All the savage beasts you see are so many beings armed for your destruction. Even within a high walled garden, where everything ministers to delight, a serpent will sometimes lurk. Your house, constantly exposed to fire, threatens you with poverty by day, with destruction by night. Your fields, subject to hail, mildew, drought, and other injuries, denounce barrenness, and thereby famine. I say nothing of poison, treachery, robbery, some of which beset us at home, others follow us abroad. Amid these perils, must not man be very miserable, as one who, more dead than alive, with difficulty draws an anxious and feeble breath, just as if a drawn sword were constantly suspended over his neck? It may be said that these things happen seldom, at least not always, or to all, certainly never all at once. I admit it; but since we are reminded by the example of others, that they may also happen to us, and that our life is not an exception any more than theirs, it is impossible not to fear and dread as if they were to befall us. What can you imagine more grievous than such trepidation? Add that there is something like

an insult to God when it is said, that man, the noblest of the creatures, stands exposed to every blind and random stroke of fortune. Here, however, we were only referring to the misery which man should feel, were he placed under the dominion of chance.

11. But when once the light of Divine Providence has illumined the believer's soul, he is relieved and set free, not only from the extreme fear and anxiety which formerly oppressed him, but from all care. For as he justly shudders at the idea of chance, so he can confidently commit himself to God. This, I say, is his comfort, that his heavenly Father so embraces all things under his power - so governs them at will by his nod - so regulates them by his wisdom, that nothing takes place save according to his appointment; that received into his favour, and entrusted to the care of his angels neither fire, nor water, nor sword, can do him harm, except in so far as God their master is pleased to permit. For thus sings the Psalm, "Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust; his truth shall be thy shield and buckler. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday" &c. (Psalms 91:2-6). Hence the exulting confidence of the saints, "The Lord is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me? The Lord taketh my part with them that help me." "Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear." "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil." (Psalms 118:6; Psalms 27:3; Psalms 23:4).

How comes it, I ask, that their confidence never fails, but just that while the world apparently revolves at random, they know that God is every where at work, and feel assured that his work will be their safety? When assailed by the devil and wicked men, were they not confirmed by remembering and meditating on Providence, they should, of necessity, forthwith despond. But when they call to mind that the devil, and the whole train of the ungodly, are, in all directions, held in by the hand of God as with a bridle, so that they can neither conceive any mischief, nor plan what they have conceived, nor how much soever they may have planned, move a single finger to perpetrate, unless in so far as he permits, nay, unless in so far as he commands; that they are not only bound by his fetters, but are even forced to do him service - when the godly think of all these things they have ample sources of consolation. For, as it belongs to the lord to arm the fury of such foes and turn and destine it at pleasure, so it is his also to determine the measure and the end, so as to prevent them from breaking loose and wantoning as they list. Supported by this conviction, Paul, who had said in one place that his journey was hindered by Satan (1 Thessalonians 2:18), in another resolves, with the permission of God, to undertake it (1 Corinthians 16:7). If he had only said that Satan was the obstacle, he might have seemed to give him too much power, as if he were able even to overturn the counsels of God; but now, when he makes God the disposer, on whose permission all journies depend, he shows, that however Satan may contrive, he can accomplish nothing except in so far as He pleases to give the word. For the same reason, David, considering the various turns which human life undergoes as it rolls, and in a manner whirls around, retakes himself to this asylum, "My times are in thy hand" (Psalms 31:15). He might have said the course of life or time in the singular number, but by times he meant to express, that how unstable soever the condition of man may be, the vicissitudes which are ever and anon taking place are under divine regulation. Hence Rezin and the king of Israel, after they had joined their forces for the destruction of Israel, and seemed torches which had been kindled to destroy and

consume the land, are termed by the prophet “smoking fire brands.” They could only emit a little smoke (Isaiah 7:4). So Pharaoh, when he was an object of dread to all by his wealth and strength, and the multitude of his troops, is compared to the largest of beasts, while his troops are compared to fishes; and God declares that he will take both leader and army with his hooks, and drag them whither he pleases (Ezekiel 29:4). In one word, not to dwell longer on this, give heed, and you will at once perceive that ignorance of Providence is the greatest of all miseries, and the knowledge of it the highest happiness.

12. On the Providence of God, in so far as conducive to the solid instruction and consolation of believers (for, as to satisfying the curiosity of foolish men, it is a thing which cannot be done, and ought not to be attempted), enough would have been said, did not a few passages remain which seem to insinuate, contrary to the view which we have expounded, that the counsel of God is not firm and stable, but varies with the changes of sublunary affairs. First, in reference to the Providence of God, it is said that he repented of having made man (Genesis 6:6), and of having raised Saul to the kingdom (1 Samuel 15:11), and that he will repent of the evil which he had resolved to inflict on his people as soon as he shall have perceived some amendment in them (Jeremiah 18:8). Secondly, his decrees are sometimes said to be annulled. He had by Jonah proclaimed to the Ninevites, “Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown,” but, immediately on their repentance, he inclined to a more merciful sentence (Jonah 3:4-10). After he had, by the mouth of Isaiah, given Hezekiah intimation of his death, he was moved by his tears and prayers to defer it (Isaiah 38:15; 2 Kings 20:15). Hence many argue that God has not fixed human affairs by an eternal decree, but according to the merits of each individual, and as he deems right and just, disposes of each single year, and day, and hour. As to repentance, we must hold that it can no more exist in God than ignorance, or error, or impotence. If no man knowingly or willingly reduces himself to the necessity of repentance, we cannot attribute repentance to God without saying either that he knows not what is to happen, or that he cannot evade it, or that he rushes precipitately and inconsiderately into a resolution, and then forthwith regrets it. But so far is this from the meaning of the Holy Spirit, that in the very mention of repentance he declares that God is not influenced by any feeling of regret, that he is not a man that he should repent. And it is to be observed, that, in the same chapter, both things are so conjoined, that a comparison of the passages admirably removes the appearance of contradiction. When it is said that God repented of having made Saul king, the term change is used figuratively. Shortly after, it is added, “The Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent; for he is not a man, that he should repent” (1 Samuel 15:29). In these words, his immutability is plainly asserted without figure. Wherefore it is certain that, in administering human affairs, the ordination of God is perpetual and superior to every thing like repentance. That there might be no doubt of his constancy, even his enemies are forced to bear testimony to it. For, Balaam, even against his will, behaved to break forth into this exclamation, “God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: has he said, and shall he not do it? or has he spoken, and shall he not make it good?” (Numbers 23:19).

13. What then is meant by the term repentance? The very same that is meant by the other forms of expression, by which God is described to us humanly. Because our weakness cannot reach his height, any description which we receive of him must be lowered to our capacity in order to be intelligible. And the mode of lowering is to represent him not as he really is, but as we conceive of

him. Though he is incapable of every feeling of perturbation, he declares that he is angry with the wicked. Wherefore, as when we hear that God is angry, we ought not to imagine that there is any emotion in him, but ought rather to consider the mode of speech accommodated to our sense, God appearing to us like one inflamed and irritated whenever he exercises judgement, so we ought not to imagine any thing more under the term repentance than a change of action, men being wont to testify their dissatisfaction by such a change. Hence, because every change whatever among men is intended as a correction of what displeases, and the correction proceeds from repentance, the same term applied to God simply means that his procedure is changed. In the meantime, there is no inversion of his counsel or will, no change of his affection. What from eternity he had foreseen, approved, decreed, he prosecutes with unvarying uniformity, how sudden soever to the eye of man the variation may seem to be.

14. Nor does the Sacred History, while it relates that the destruction which had been proclaimed to the Ninevites was remitted, and the life of Hezekiah, after an intimation of death, prolonged, imply that the decrees of God were annulled. Those who think so labour under delusion as to the meaning of threatening, which, though they affirm simply, nevertheless contain in them a tacit condition dependent on the result. Why did the Lord send Jonah to the Ninevites to predict the overthrow of their city? Why did he by Isaiah give Hezekiah intimation of his death? He might have destroyed both them and him without a message to announce the disaster. He had something else in view than to give them a warning of death, which might let them see it at a distance before it came. It was because he did not wish them destroyed but reformed, and thereby saved from destruction. When Jonah prophesies that in forty days Nineveh will be overthrown, he does it in order to prevent the overthrow. When Hezekiah is forbidden to hope for longer life, it is that he may obtain longer life. Who does not now see that, by threatening of this kind, God wished to arouse those to repentance whom he terrified, that they might escape the judgement which their sins deserved? If this is so, the very nature of the case obliges us to supply a tacit condition in a simple denunciation. This is even confirmed by analogous cases. The Lord rebuking King Abimelech for having carried off the wife of Abraham, uses these words: “Behold, thou art but a dead man, for the woman which thou hast taken; for she is a man’s wife.” But, after Abimelech’s excuse, he thus speaks: “Restore the man his wife, for he is a prophet, and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live; and if thou restore her not, know thou that thou shalt surely die, thou and all that art thine” (Genesis 20:3, Genesis 20:7). You see that, by the first announcement, he makes a deep impression on his mind, that he may render him eager to give satisfaction, and that by the second he clearly explains his will. Since the other passages may be similarly explained, you must not infer from them that the Lord derogated in any respect from his former counsel, because he recalled what he had promulgated. When, by denouncing punishment, he admonishes to repentance those whom he wishes to spare, he paves the way for his eternal decree, instead of varying it one whit either in will or in language. The only difference is, that he does not express, in so many syllables, what is easily understood. The words of Isaiah must remain true, “The Lord of hosts has purposed, and who shall disannul it? And his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?” (Isaiah 14:27).

08.01.18. Chapter 18

Chapter 18. The instrumentality of the wicked employed by God, while He continues free from every taint. This last chapter of the First Book consists of three parts:

I. It having been said above that God bends all the reprobate, and even Satan himself, at his will, three objections are started. First, that this happens by the permission, not by the will of God. To this objection there is a twofold reply, the one, that angels and men, good and bad, do nothing but what is appointed by God; the second, that all movements are secretly directed to their end by the hidden inspiration of God, sec. 1, 2.

II. A second objection is, that there are two contrary wills in God, if by a secret counsel he decrees what he openly prohibits by his law. This objection refuted, sec. 3.

III. The third objection is, that God is made the author of all wickedness, when he is said not only to use the agency of the wicked, but also to govern their counsels and affections, and that therefore the wicked are unjustly punished. This objection refuted in the last section.

Sections

1. The carnal mind the source of the objections which are raised against the Providence of God. A primary objection, making a distinction between the permission and the will of God, refuted. Angels and men, good and bad, do nought but what has been decreed by God. This proved by examples.

2. All hidden movements directed to their end by the unseen but righteous instigation of God. Examples, with answers to objections.

3. These objections originate in a spirit of pride and blasphemy. Objection, that there must be two contrary wills in God, refuted. Why the one simple will of God seems to us as if it were manifold.

4. Objection, that God is the author of sin, refuted by examples. Augustine’s answer and admonition.

1. From other passages, in which God is said to draw or bend Satan himself, and all the reprobate, to his will, a more difficult question arises. For the carnal mind can scarcely comprehend how, when acting by their means, he contracts no taint from their impurity, nay, how, in a common operation, he is exempt from all guilt, and can justly condemn his own ministers. Hence a distinction has been invented between doing and permitting because to many it seemed altogether inexplicable how Satan and all the wicked are so under the hand and authority of God, that he directs their malice to whatever end he pleases, and employs their iniquities to execute his judgements. The modesty of those who are thus alarmed at the appearance of absurdity might perhaps be excused, did they not endeavour to vindicate the justice of God from every semblance of stigma by defending an untruth. It seems absurd that man should be blinded by the will and command of God, and yet be forthwith punished for his blindness. Hence, recourse is had to the

evasion that this is done only by the permission, and not also by the will of God. He himself, however, openly declaring that he does this, repudiates the evasion. That men do nothing save at the secret instigation of God, and do not discuss and deliberate on any thing but what he has previously decreed with himself and brings to pass by his secret direction, is proved by numberless clear passages of Scripture. What we formerly quoted from the Psalms, to the effect that he does whatever pleases him, certainly extends to all the actions of men. If God is the arbiter of peace and war, as is there said, and that without any exception, who will venture to say that men are borne along at random with a blind impulse, while He is unconscious or quiescent? But the matter will be made clearer by special examples. From Job 1:1-22 we learn that Satan appears in the presence of God to receive his orders, just as do the angels who obey spontaneously. The manner and the end are different, but still the fact is, that he cannot attempt anything without the will of God. But though afterwards his power to afflict the saint seems to be only a bare permission, yet as the sentiment is true, “The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; as it pleased the Lord, so it has been done,” we infer that God was the author of that trial of which Satan and wicked robbers were merely the instruments. Satan’s aim is to drive the saint to madness by despair. The Sabeans cruelly and wickedly make a sudden incursion to rob another of his goods. Job acknowledges that he was deprived of all his property, and brought to poverty, because such was the pleasure of God. Therefore, whatever men or Satan himself devise, God holds the helm, and makes all their efforts contribute to the execution of his judgements. God wills that the perfidious Ahab should be deceived; the devil offers his agency for that purpose, and is sent with a definite command to be a lying spirit in the mouth of all the prophets (1 Kings 22:20-22). If the blinding and infatuation of Ahab is a judgement from God, the fiction of bare permission is at an end; for it would be ridiculous for a judge only to permit, and not also to decree, what he wishes to be done at the very time that he commits the execution of it to his ministers. The Jews purposed to destroy Christ. Pilate and the soldiers indulged them in their fury; yet the disciples confess in solemn prayer that all the wicked did nothing but what the hand and counsel of God had decreed (Acts 4:28), just as Peter had previously said in his discourse, that Christ was delivered to death by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God (Acts 2:23); in other words, that God, to whom all things are known from the beginning, had determined what the Jews had executed. He repeats the same thing elsewhere, “Those things, which God before had showed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he has so fulfilled” (Acts 3:18). Absalom incestuously defiling his father’s bed, perpetrates a detestable crime. God, however, declares that it was his work; for the words are, “Thou midst it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun.” The cruelties of the Chaldeans in Judea are declared by Jeremiah to be the work of God. For which reason, Nebuchadnezzar is called the servant of God. God frequently exclaims, that by his hiss, by the clang of his trumpet, by his authority and command, the wicked are excited to war. He calls the Assyrian the rod of his anger, and the axe which he wields in his hand. The overthrow of the city and downfall of the temple, he calls his own work. David, not murmuring against God, but acknowledging him to be a just judge, confesses that the curses of Shimei are uttered by his orders. “The Lord,” says he, “has bidden him curse.” Often in sacred history whatever happens is said to proceed from the Lord, as the revolt of the ten tribes, the death of Eli’s sons, and very many others of a similar description. Those who have a tolerable acquaintance with the Scriptures see that, with a view to brevity, I am only producing a few out of many passages, from which it is perfectly clear that it is the merest trifling to substitute a bare

permission for the providence of God, as if he sat in a watch-tower waiting for fortuitous events, his judgements meanwhile depending on the will of man.

2. With regard to secret movements, what Solomon says of the heart of a king, that it is turned hither and thither, as God sees meet, certainly applies to the whole human race, and has the same force as if he had said, that whatever we conceive in our minds is directed to its end by the secret inspiration of God. And certainly, did he not work internally in the minds of men, it could not have been properly said, that he takes away the lip from the true, and prudence from the aged - takes away the heart from the princes of the earth, that they wander through devious paths. To the same effect, we often read that men are intimidated when He fills their hearts with terror. Thus David left the camp of Saul while none knew of its because a sleep from God had fallen upon all. But nothing can be clearer than the many passages which declare, that he blinds the minds of men, and smites them with giddiness, intoxicates them with a spirit of stupor, renders them infatuated, and hardens their hearts. Even these expressions many would confine to permissions as if, by deserting the reprobate, he allowed them to be blinded by Satan. But since the Holy Spirit distinctly says, that the blindness and infatuation are inflicted by the just judgement of God, the solution is altogether inadmissible. He is said to have hardened the heart of Pharaoh, to have hardened it yet more, and confirmed it. Some evade these forms of expression by a silly cavil, because Pharaoh is elsewhere said to have hardened his own heart, thus making his will the cause of hardening it; as if the two things did not perfectly agree with each other, though in different senses viz., that man, though acted upon by God, at the same time also acts. But I retort the objection on those who make it. If to harden means only bare permission, the contumacy will not properly belong to Pharaoh. Now, could any thing be more feeble and insipid than to interpret as if Pharaoh had only allowed himself to be hardened? We may add, that Scripture cuts off all handle for such cavils: “I,” saith the Lord, “will harden his heart” (Exodus 4:21). So also, Moses says of the inhabitants of the land of Canaan, that they went forth to battle because the Lord had hardened their hearts (Joshua 11:20). The same thing is repeated by another prophet, “He turned their hearts to hate his people” (Psalms 105:25). In like manner, in Isaiah, he says of the Assyrian, “I will send him against a hypocritical nation, and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge to take the spoil, and to take the prey” (Isaiah 10:6); not that he intends to teach wicked and obstinate man to obey spontaneously, but because he bends them to execute his judgements, just as if they carried their orders engraven on their minds. And hence it appears that they are impelled by the sure appointment of God. I admit, indeed, that God often acts in the reprobate by interposing the agency of Satan; but in such a manner, that Satan himself performs his part, just as he is impelled, and succeeds only in so far as he is permitted. The evil spirit that troubled Saul is said to be from the Lord (1 Samuel 16:14), to intimate that Saul’s madness was a just punishment from God. Satan is also said to blind the minds of those who believe not (2 Corinthians 4:4). But how so, unless that a spirit of error is sent from God himself, making those who refuse to obey the truth to believe a lie? According to the former view, it is said, “If the prophet be deceived when he has spoken a thing, I the Lord have deceived that prophet” (Ezekiel 14:9). According to the latter view, he is said to have given men over to a reprobate mind (Romans 1:28), because he is the special author of his own just vengeance; whereas Satan is only his minister (see Calv. in Psalms 141:4). But as in the Second Book (Chap. 4: sec. 3, 4), in discussing the question of man’s freedom, this subject will again be considered, the little that has now been said seems to be all that the occasion requires. The sum of the whole is this: since the will of God is

said to be the cause of all things, all the counsels and actions of men must be held to be governed by his providence; so that he not only exerts his power in the elect, who are guided by the Holy Spirit, but also forces the reprobate to do him service.

3. As I have hitherto stated only what is plainly and unambiguously taught in Scripture, those who hesitate not to stigmatise what is thus taught by the sacred oracles, had better beware what kind of censure they employ. If, under a pretence of ignorance, they seek the praise of modesty, what greater arrogance can be imagined than to utter one word in opposition to the authority of God - to say, for instance, “I think otherwise,” - “I would not have this subject touched?” But if they openly blaspheme, what will they gain by assaulting heaven? Such petulance, indeed, is not new. In all ages there have been wicked and profane men, who rabidly assailed this branch of doctrine. But what the Spirit declared of old by the mouth of David (Psalms 51:4), they will feel by experience to be true - God will overcome when he is judged. David indirectly rebukes the infatuation of those whose license is so unbridled, that from their grovelling spot of earth they not only plead against God, but arrogate to themselves the right of censuring him. At the same time, he briefly intimates that the blasphemies which they belch forth against heaven, instead of reaching God, only illustrate his justice, when the mists of their calumnies are dispersed. Even our faith, because founded on the sacred word of God, is superior to the whole world, and is able from its height to look down upon such mists. Their first objection - that if nothing happens without the will of God, he must have two contrary wills, decreeing by a secret counsel what he has openly forbidden in his law - is easily disposed of. But before I reply to it, I would again remind my readers, that this cavil is directed not against me, but against the Holy Spirit, who certainly dictated this confession to that holy man Job, “The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away,” when, after being plundered by robbers, he acknowledges that their injustice and mischief was a just chastisement from God. And what says the Scripture elsewhere? The sons of Eli “hearkened not unto the voice of their father, because the Lord would slay them” (1 Samuel 2:25). Another prophet also exclaims, “Our God is in the heavens: he has done whatsoever he has pleased” (Psalms 115:3). I have already shown clearly enough that God is the author of all those things which, according to these objectors, happen only by his inactive permission. He testifies that he creates light and darkness, forms good and evil (Isaiah 45:7); that no evil happens which he has not done (Amos 3:6). Let them tell me whether God exercises his judgements willingly or unwillingly. As Moses teaches that he who is accidentally killed by the blow of an axe, is delivered by God into the hand of him who smites him (Deuteronomy 19:5), so the Gospel, by the mouth of Luke, declares, that Herod and Pontius Pilate conspired “to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done” (Acts 4:28). And, in truth, if Christ was not crucified by the will of God, where is our redemption? Still, however, the will of God is not at variance with itself. It undergoes no change. He makes no pretence of not willing what he wills, but while in himself the will is one and undivided, to us it appears manifold, because, from the feebleness of our intellect, we cannot comprehend how, though after a different manner, he wills and wills not the very same thing. Paul terms the calling of the Gentiles a hidden mystery, and shortly after adds, that therein was manifested the manifold wisdom of God (Ephesians 3:10). Since, on account of the dullness of our sense, the wisdom of God seems manifold (or, as an old interpreter rendered it, multiform), are we, therefore, to dream of some variation in God, as if he either changed his counsel, or disagreed with himself? Nay, when we cannot comprehend how God can will that to be done which he forbids us to do, let us call to mind our imbecility, and remember that the light in which he dwells is

not without cause termed inaccessible (1 Timothy 6:16), because shrouded in darkness. Hence, all pious and modest men will readily acquiesce in the sentiment of Augustine: “Man sometimes with a good will wishes something which God does not will, as when a good son wishes his father to live, while God wills him to die. Again, it may happen that man with a bad will wishes what God wills righteously, as when a bad son wishes his father to die, and God also wills it. The former wishes what God wills not, the latter wishes what God also wills. And yet the filial affection of the former is more consonant to the good will of God, though willing differently, than the unnatural affection of the latter, though willing the same thing; so much does approbation or condemnation depend on what it is befitting in man, and what in God to will, and to what end the will of each has respect. For the things which God rightly wills, he accomplishes by the evil wills of bad men” (August. Enchirid. ad Laurent. cap. 101). He had said a little before (cap. 100) that the apostate angels, by their revolt, and all the reprobate, as far as they themselves were concerned, did what God willed not; but, in regard to his omnipotence, it was impossible for them to do so: for, while they act against the will of God, his will is accomplished in them. Hence he exclaims, “Great is the work of God, exquisite in all he wills! so that, in a manner wondrous and ineffable, that is not done without his will which is done contrary to it, because it could not be done if he did not permit; nor does he permit it unwillingly, but willingly; nor would He who is good permit evil to be done, were he not omnipotent to bring good out of evil” (Augustin. in Psalms 111:2).

4. In the same way is solved, or rather spontaneously vanishes, another objection, viz., If God not only uses the agency of the wicked, but also governs their counsels and affections, he is the author of all their sins; and, therefore, men, in executing what God has decreed, are unjustly condemned, because they are obeying his will. Here “will” is improperly confounded with precept, though it is obvious, from innumerable examples, that there is the greatest difference between them. When Absalom defiled his father’s bed, though God was pleased thus to avenge the adultery of David, he did not therefore enjoin an abandoned son to commit incest, unless, perhaps, in respect of David, as David himself says of Shimei’s curses. For, while he confesses that Shimei acts by the order of God, he by no means commends the obedience, as if that petulant dog had been yielding obedience to a divine command; but, recognising in his tongue the scourge of God, he submits patiently to be chastised. Thus we must hold, that while by means of the wicked God performs what he had secretly decreed, they are not excusable as if they were obeying his precept, which of set purpose they violate according to their lust.

How these things, which men do perversely, are of God, and are ruled by his secret providence, is strikingly shown in the election of King Jeroboam (1 Kings 12:20), in which the rashness and infatuation of the people are severely condemned for perverting the order sanctioned by God, and perfidiously revolting from the family of David. And yet we know it was God’s will that Jeroboam should be anointed. Hence the apparent contradiction in the words of Hosea (Hosea 8:4; Hosea 13:11), because, while God complained that that kingdom was erected without his knowledge, and against his will, he elsewhere declares, that he had given King Jeroboam in his anger. How shall we reconcile the two things - that Jeroboam’s reign was not of God, and yet God appointed him king? In this way: The people could not revolt from the family of David without shaking off a yoke divinely imposed on them, and yet God himself was not deprived of the power of thus punishing the ingratitude of Solomon. We, therefore, see how God, while not willing treachery, with another view justly wills the revolt; and hence Jeroboam, by unexpectedly receiving the sacred unction, is

urged to aspire to the kingdom. For this reason, the sacred history says, that God stirred up an enemy to deprive the son of Solomon of part of the kingdom (1 Kings 11:23). Let the reader diligently ponder both points: how, as it was the will of God that the people should be ruled by the hand of one king, their being rent into two parties was contrary to his will; and yet how this same will originated the revolt. For certainly, when Jeroboam, who had no such thought, is urged by the prophet verbally, and by the oil of unction, to hope for the kingdom, the thing was not done without the knowledge or against the will of God, who had expressly commanded it; and yet the rebellion of the people is justly condemned, because it was against the will of God that they revolted from the posterity of David. For this reason, it is afterwards added, that when Rehoboam haughtily spurned the prayers of the people, “the cause was from the Lord, that he might perform his saying, which the Lord spake by Ahijah” (1 Kings 12:15). See how sacred unity was violated against the will of God, while, at the same time, with his will the ten tribes were alienated from the son of Solomon. To this might be added another similar example, viz., the murder of the sons of Ahab, and the extermination of his whole progeny by the consent, or rather the active agency, of the people. Jehu says truly “There shall fall unto the earth nothing of the word of the Lord, which the Lord spake concerning the house of Ahab: for the Lord has done that which he spake by his servant Elijah” (2 Kings 10:10). And yet, with good reason, he upbraids the citizens of Samaria for having lent their assistance. “Ye be righteous: behold, I conspired against my master, and slew him, but who slew all these?”

If I mistake not, I have already shown clearly how the same act at once betrays the guilt of man, and manifests the righteousness of God. Modest minds will always be satisfied with Augustine’s answer, “Since the Father delivered up the Son, Christ his own body, and Judas his Master, how in such a case is God just, and man guilty, but just because in the one act which they did, the reasons for which they did it are different?” (August. Ephesians 48, ad Vincentium). If any are not perfectly satisfied with this explanation, viz., that there is no concurrence between God and man, when by His righteous impulse man does what he ought not to do, let them give heed to what Augustine elsewhere observes: “Who can refrain from trembling at those judgements when God does according to his pleasure even in the hearts of the wicked, at the same time rendering to them according to their deeds?” (De Grat. et lib. Orbit. ad Valent. c. 20). And certainly, in regard to the treachery of Judas, there is just as little ground to throw the blame of the crime upon God, because He was both pleased that his Son should be delivered up to death, and did deliver him, as to ascribe to Judas the praise of our redemption. Hence Augustine, in another place, truly observes, that when God makes his scrutiny, he looks not to what men could do, or to what they did, but to what they wished to do, thus taking account of their will and purpose. Those to whom this seems harsh had better consider how far their captiousness is entitled to any toleration, while, on the ground of its exceeding their capacity, they reject a matter which is clearly taught by Scripture, and complain of the enunciation of truths, which, if they were not useful to be known, God never would have ordered his prophets and apostles to teach. Our true wisdom is to embrace with meek docility, and without reservation, whatever the Holy Scriptures, have delivered. Those who indulge their petulance, a petulance manifestly directed against God, are undeserving of a longer refutation.

End of book one.

08.02. 1541 - (Part 2) - The Law

II. The Law 131. What rule has He given us by which we may direct our life? His law.

132. What does it contain?

It is divided into two parts: the first contains four commandments, the other six. Thus there are ten in all.

133. Who made this division?

God Himself, who delivered it to Moses written on two table, and declared that it was reduced into ten words. (Exodus 32:15; Exodus 34:29; Deuteronomy 4:13; Deuteronomy 10:1).

134. What is the content of the first table? The Way of the true worship of God.

135. And the second?

How we are to live with our neighbours, and what we owe them.

136. Repeat the first commandment.

Hear, O Israel, I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage: thou shalt have no other gods before Me (Exodus 20:2-3; Deuteronomy 5:6-7).

137. Explain the meaning. At first He makes a kind of preface for the whole law. For in calling Himself the Eternal and the Creator of the world, He claims authority to command. Then He declares that He is our God, in order that we may esteem His doctrine. For if He is our Saviour, that is good reason why we should be an obedient people to Him.

138. But is not that which He says after the deliverance from the land of Egypt, addressed particularly to the people of Israel?

Yes, it does refer to the physical deliverance of Israel, but it also applies to us all in a general way, in that He has delivered our souls from the spiritual captivity of sin, and the tyranny of the devil.

139. Why does He mention this at the beginning of His law? To remind us how much we are bound to obey His good pleasure, and what gratitude it should be on our part if we do the contrary.

140. And what does He require briefly in this first commandment? That we reserve for Him alone the honour that belongs to Him, and do not transfer it elsewhere.

141. What is the honour due Him? To adore Him alone, to call upon Him, to have our affiance in Him, and all similar things due to His majesty.

142. Why is it said "Before my face"?

Since He who sees and knows all is the judge of the secret thoughts of men, it means that He wants to be worshiped as God, not only by outward confession, but also in pure trust and affection

of heart.

143. Turn to the second Commandment.

Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, nor any form that is in heaven above, or on the earth beneath, or in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not do honour to them.

144. Does He entirely forbid us to make any image?

No, but He forbids us to make any image with which to represent God, or to worship Him.

145. Why is it unlawful to represent God visibly?

Because there is no resemblance between Him who is eternal Spirit and incomprehensible, and corporal, dead, corruptible and visible matter (Deuteronomy 4:15; Isaiah 40:7; Romans 1:23; Acts 17:24-25).

146. You think then that it does dishonour to His majesty to represent Him in this way?

Yes.

147. What kind of worship is here condemned? When we come before an image intending to pray, or bow our knee before it; or to make any other sign of reverence, as if God were there showing Himself to us.

148. This does not mean that all sculpture or painting is universally forbidden, but only all images used in the service of God, or in worshiping Him in visible things, or indeed for any abuse of them in idolatry of any kind whatsoever. That is so.

149. Now to what end shall we refer this commandment? With the first commandment, God declared that He alone, and no one beside Him, should be worshiped: so now He shows us the correct form of worship, in order that He may draw us away from all superstitions, and carnal ceremonies.

150. Let us proceed.

He adds a warning that He is the Eternal, our God, strong and jealous, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children of them who hate Him, to the third and fourth generation.

151. Why does He make mention of His might? To indicate that He has power to maintain His glory.

152. What is meant by jealousy? That He cannot allow an associate. For as He has given Himself to us out of His infinite goodness, so He would have us to be entirely His. And this is the chastity of our souls, to be consecrated and dedicated to Him. On the other hand it is a spiritual whoredom for us to turn away from Him to any superstition.

153. How is this to be understood, that He punishes the sin of the fathers on their children? To give us a greater fear of Him. He says not only that He will inflict punishment on those who offend Him, but that their offspring also will be cursed after them.

154. But is it not contrary to the justice of God to punish someone for others?

If we consider the condition of the human race, the question is answered. For by nature we are all cursed, and we cannot complain of God when He leaves us in this condition. Moreover as He manifests His grace and love toward His servants in blessing their children, so this is a testimony to His punishment of the wicked, when He leaves their seed accursed.

155. What more does He say? To incite us by gentleness, He says that He will have mercy on all who love Him and observe His commandments, to a thousand generations.

156. Does He mean that the obedience of a faithful man will save the whole of his race, even if they are still wicked?

No, but that He will extend His goodness toward the faithful to such an extent, that in love for them He will make Himself know to their children, not only to prosper them according to the flesh, but to sanctify them by His Spirit, that He might make them obedient to His will.

157. But this is not always so.

No. For as the Lord reserves for Himself the freedom to show mercy to the children of the ungodly, so on the other hand He retains the power to elect or reject in the generation of the faithful as it seems good to Him (Romans 9:15-22). However, He does this in such a way that men may acknowledge that this promise is not vain or fallacious (Romans 2:6-10).

158. Why does He mention here a thousand generations, and in regard to punishment, mention only three or four? To signify that it is His nature to exercise kindness and gentleness much more than strictness or severity, as He testifies, when He says that He is ready to show mercy, but slow to anger (Exodus 34:6-7; Psalms 103:8).

159. Let us come to the third commandment.

Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.

160. What does this mean?

He forbids us to abuse the name of God, not only in perjury, but also in superfluous and idle swearing.

161. Can the name of God we used lawfully in oaths?

Yes, when they are necessary, i.e., in order to uphold the truth, when it requires it, and in maintaining love and concord among us.

162. Does He reprove no other oaths, then those which are a dishonour to God? In this one case He gives us a general instruction never to utter the name of God except with fear and humility in order to glorify it. For since it is holy and honourable, we ought to guard against taking the Name of God in such a way that we appear to hold it in contempt, or give others occasion to vilify it.

163. How is this to be done? By never thinking or speaking of God and His works without honour and reverence.

164. What follows? A warning, that He will not hold him guiltless, who takes His name in vain.

165. Since elsewhere He gives a general warning that He will punish all transgressors, what is the advantage of this warning?

He wants to declare how highly He regards the glory of His name, explicitly mentioning that He will not suffer anyone to despise it, so that we may be all the more careful to hold it in reverence.

166. Let us come to the fourth commandment.

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Sis days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the Lord made haven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day, and hallowed it.

167. Does He order us to labour six days a week that may rest on the seventh? Not precisely, but in allowing us to labour for six days, He excepts the seventh, on which it is not right to be engaged in work.

168. Does He thus forbid us all work one day a week? This commandment has a particular reason, for the observance of rest is part of the ceremonies of the ancient Law, which was abolished at the coming of Jesus Christ.

169. Do you mean that this commandment properly belongs to the Jews, and that it was given for the time of the Old Testament?

I do, in so far as it is ceremonial.

170. How is that? Is there anything else in it besides the ceremony?

It was given for three reasons.

171. What are they? To represent spiritual rest, in aid of ecclesiastical polity, and for the relief of servants.

172. What is this spiritual rest?

It is to cease from our own works, that the Lord may work in us.

173. How is that done? By mortifying our flesh, that is, renouncing our own nature, so that God may govern us by His Spirit.

174. Is this to be done only one day a week? This is to be done continually. After we have once begun, we must continue all our life.

175. Why, then, is a certain day appointed to represent this?

It is not required that the representation should be altogether identical with the truth, but it is sufficient that there should be some resemblance.

176. But why is the seventh day appointed rather than any other day? The number seven implies perfection in Scripture. Thus it is suited to denote perpetuity. It reminds us also that our spiritual rest is only begun in this life, and will not be perfect until we depart from this world.

177. But what is meant when our Lord asserts that we must rest as He did?

After having created all His works in six days, He dedicated the seventh to the contemplation of His works. And in order better to induce us to do this, He set before us His own example. For nothing is so desirable as to be conformed to Him.

178. Must we meditate continually on the works of God, or is it sufficient on one day out of seven?

We must do it every hour, but because of our weakness, one day is specially appointed. And this is the polity of which I spoke.

179. What order, then, is to be observed on that day? That the people meet to hear the doctrine of God, to engage in common prayer, and bear witness to their faith and religion.

180. What do you mean by saying that this commandment is also given to provide for the relief of servants? To give some relaxation to those who are under the power of others. And likewise, this tends to maintain a common polity. For everyone accustoms himself to labour for the rest of the time, when there is one day for rest.

181. Let us now see how this commandment addresses itself to us. As for the ceremony, it was abolished, for we have the accomplishment of it in Christ Jesus.

182. How? Our old man is crucified, through the power of His death, and through His resurrection we are raised up to newness of life (Romans 6:6).

183. What else is there here for us? That we observe the order constituted in the Church, to hear the Word of God, to engage in public prayers and in the Sacraments, and that we do not contravene the spiritual order among the faithful.

184. And does the figure give us any further benefit?

Yes, indeed. It should lead us to the truth, namely, that being true members of Christ, we should cease from our own works, and put ourselves under His government.

185. Let us come to the second table.

It begins, "Honour thy father and thy mother."

186. What do you mean by "honour"? That children be humble and obedient toward their parents, doing them honour and reverence, helping them and being at their command, as they are bound.

187. Proceed further.

God adds a promise to the commandment, "That thy days may be prolonged on the land which the Lord thy God will give thee."

188. What does that mean? That God will give long life to those who honour their father and mother as they ought.

189. Seeing this life is full of misery, why does God promise man as a favour that he will live long?

However miserable it may be, life on earth is a blessing from God to the faithful, if only for this reason, that in it God testifies to His fatherly love in supporting them in it.

190. Does it follow conversely, that the man who dies prematurely is cursed of God? By no means. Rather does it sometimes happen that the Lord withdraws from this world more quickly those whom He loves most.

191. In so doing, how does He fulfill His promise?

All that God promises us in earthly blessings, we must receive under this condition, viz. that it is expedient for our spiritual salvation. For it would be poor indeed if that did not precedence.

192. What of those who are rebellious against their father and mother? Not only will God punish them at the last judgment, but here also God will exercise judgment on their bodies, it may be by letting them die before their time, or ignominiously, or in some other way.

193. Does He not speak expressly of the land of Canaan in this promise?

Yes, so far as the children of Israel are concerned, but the term ought to have a more general meaning for us. For seeing that the earth is the Lord's, whatever be the country we inhabit, He assigns it to us for our habitation (Psalms 24:1; Psalms 89:12; Psalms 115:16).

194. Is that all there is to the commandment?

Though father and mother only are mentioned, nevertheless all superiors are intended, as the reason is the same.

195. What is the reason? That God has given them pre-eminence; for there is no authority whether of parents, or princes, or of any others who are over us, but what God has ordained (Romans 13:1).

196. Repeat the sixth commandment.

Thou shalt not kill.

197. Does it forbid nothing but murder?

Yes, indeed. For seeing it is God who speaks, He gives us law not only for outward deeds, but primarily for the affections of our heart.

198. You mean then that there is some kind of inward murder which God forbids to us?

I do: hatred and rancour, and desire to do evil to our neighbor.

199. Is it sufficient for us not to hate or to bear ill will?

No, for in condemning hatred God signifies that He requires us to love our neighbours and seek their salvation, and all this with true affection and without simulation.

200. State the seventh commandment.

Thou shalt not commit adultery.

201. What is the essence of this? That all fornication is cursed by God, and therefore we must abstain from it if we do not want to provoke His anger against us.

202. Does it not require anything else?

We must always regard the nature of the Lawgiver, who does not halt at the outward act, but requires the affection of the heart.

203. What more then does it mean?

Since our bodies and our souls are temples of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 3:16, 1 Corinthians 6:15; 2 Corinthians 6:16), we must preserve them in uprightness. And so we must be chaste not only in deed, but also in desire, word and gesture. Accordingly no part of us is to be polluted with unchastity.

204. Let us come to the eighth commandment.

Thou shalt not steal.

205. Is it only meant to prohibit the thefts which are punished by justice, or does it extend further?

It refers to all civil traffic and unscrupulous means of acquiring our neighbour's good, whether by violence, or fraud, or in any other kind of way that God has not allowed.

206. Is it enough to abstain from evil deeds, or is covetousness also included here?

We must ever return to this, that the Lawgiver is spiritual, that He does not speak simply of outward thefts, but all schemes, wishes and plans to enrich ourselves at the expense of our neighbour.

207. What are to do then?

We must do our duty in preserving for every man his own.

208. What is the ninth commandment?

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

209. Does it forbid perjury in court, or any kind of lying against our neighbour? In mentioning this one case it gives a general instruction, that we are not to speak evil of our neighbour falsely, nor by our slanders and lies are we do him harm in his possessions, or in his reputations.

210. But why does He expressly mention public perjury? That He may give us a greater abhorrence of this vice of evil speaking and slander, telling us that if a man accustom himself to slandering and defaming his neighbour, he will soon descend to perjury in court.

211. Does He only forbid evil speaking, or does He also include evil thinking?

Both of them, for the reason already stated. For whatever it is wrong to do before men, it is wrong to wish before God.

212. The summarize its meaning.

He enjoins us not to be inclined to misjudge and defame our neighbours, but rather to esteem them highly, as far as the truth will permit, and to preserve their good reputation in our speech.

213. Let us come to the last commandment.

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour’s.

214. Seeing that the whole law is spiritual, as you have so often said before, and the other commandments are not only to order outward acts, but also the affections of the heart, what more is added here? The Lord wished by the other commandments to rule our affections and will, but here He imposes a law also on our thoughts which though charged with covetousness and desire, yet stop short of an active intention.

215. Do you mean that the least temptation that enters into the thought of a believer is sin, even though he resists it and does not consent to it?

It is certain that all evil thoughts proceed from the infirmity of our flesh, even though we do not consent to them. But I say that this commandment speaks of concupiscence which tickles and pierces the heart of man, without bringing him to a deliberate purpose.

216. You say then that the evil affections which involve a definite act of will or resolution are already condemned, but now the Lord requires of us such integrity, that no wicked desire may enter our hearts, to solicit and incite them to evil. That is right.

217. Can we now give a short summary of the whole law?

We can, reducing it to two articles---the first of which is that we are to love God with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our strength; the second that we love our neighbours as ourselves.

218. What is meant by the love of God? To love Him as God is to have and hold Him as Lord, Saviour and Father, and this requires reverence, honour, faith, and obedience along with love.

219. What does "with all our heart" signify, and "with all our soul, and with all our strength?

Such a zeal and such a vehemence, that there is in us no desire, no will, no intention and no thought, contrary to this love.

220. What is the meaning of the second article? As we are by nature prone to love ourselves, that this affection overcomes all others, so love to our neighbour should be so predominant in our hearts, as to direct and govern us, and be the rule of all our thoughts and actions.

221. What do you understand by "our neighbours"? Not only our parents and friends, or those acquainted with us, but also those who are unknown to us, and even our enemies.

222. But what connection do they have with us? That which God has placed among all men on earth, and is so inviolable, that it cannot be abolished by the malice of any man.

223. You say, then, that if any man hate us, the blame is his own, and yet according to the order of God, he does not cease to be our neighbour, and we are to regard him as such?

It is so.

224. Seeing that the law of God comprises the form of worshiping Him aright, should not the Christian man live according to its command?

Yes indeed. But there is some infirmity in us, so that no man acquits himself perfectly in it.

225. Why then does the Lord require a perfection which is beyond our ability?

He requires nothing which we are not bound to perform. Nevertheless, provided we take care to conform our life to what we are told here, although we are very far from reaching perfection, the Lord does not impute our faults to us.

226. Do you speak of all men in general, or of believers only?

He who is not yet regenerated by the Spirit of God cannot begin to do the least of the commandments. Moreover, even if a person could be found who had fulfilled some part of the law, he would not acquit himself before God, for our Lord pronounces that all those who have not fulfilled all the things contained in it, will be accursed (Deuteronomy 27:26; Galatians 3:10).

227. Hence we must conclude that the law has a two-fold office, in accordance with the fact that there are two classes of men.

Yes, in regard to unbelievers it seems but to convict and make them inexcusable before God (Romans 3:3). And this is what Paul says, that it is the ministry of death, and condemnation (2 Corinthians 3:6, 2 Corinthians 3:9). In regard to believers, it has a very different use.

228. What?

First, in that it shows them that they cannot justify themselves by their works, it humbles them and disposes them to seek their salvation in Jesus Christ (Romans 3:3). Secondly, inasmuch as it requires of them much more than they are able to perform, it admonishes them to pray unto the Lord, that He may give them strength and power (Galatians 4:6), and at the same time reminds them of their perpetual quilt, that they may not presume to be proud. Thirdly it is a kind of bridle, by which they are kept in the fear of God.

229. We say then that although during this mortal life we will never fulfill the Law, such perfection is not required of us in vain, for it shows us the mark at which we ought to aim, that each of us, according to the grace God has bestowed on him, may strive continually to press toward it, and to advance day by day. That is as I understand it.

230. Do we not have perfect rule of goodness in the Law?

Yes, and therefore God demands nothing from us, but to follow it; and, on the other hand, repudiates and rejects all that a man undertakes to do beyond what it contains. The only sacrifice He requires is obedience (1 Samuel 15:22; Jeremiah 7:21-23).

231. What is the purpose then of all the admonitions, reproofs, commandments, and exhortations made both by Prophets and Apostles?

They are nothing else than declarations of the Law, leading us into obedience to it rather than turning us away from it.

232. But nothing is said about particular vocations? When it is said that we are to render to every one his due, we may well infer what the duty of each is in his own vocation. Moreover as we have already said, this is expounded for us in the whole of Scripture, for what the Lord has set down in

this summary, He treats of there, and with much fuller teaching.

08.02.00. Book 2

Argument The First Part of the Apostles' Creed, viz., the knowledge of God the Creator, being disposed of, we now come to the Second Part, which relates to the knowledge of God as a Redeemer in Christ. The subjects treated of accordingly are, first, the Occasion of Redemption, viz., Adam's fall; and, secondly, Redemption itself. The first five chapters are devoted to the former subject, and the remainder to the latter.

Under the Occasion of Redemption, the Fall is considered not only in a general way, but also specially in its effects. Hence the first four chapters treat of original sin, free will, the corruption of human nature, and the operation of God in the heart. The fifth chapter contains a refutation of the arguments usually urged in support of free will. The subject of redemption may be reduced to five particular heads:

I. The character of him in whom salvation for lost man must be sought, Chap. 6.

II. How he was manifested to the world, namely, in a twofold manner. First, under the Law. Here the Decalogue is expounded, and some other points relating to the law discussed, Chap. 7 and 8. Secondly, under the Gospel. Here the resemblance and difference of the two dispensations are considered, Chap. 9, 10, 11.

III. What kind of person Christ was, and behaved to be, in order to perform the office of Mediator, viz., God and man in one person, Chap. 12, 13, 14.

IV. For what end he was sent into the world by the Father. Here Christ's prophetical, kingly, and priestly offices are considered, Chap. 15.

V. In what way, or by what successive steps, Christ fulfilled the office of our Redeemer, Chap. 16. Here are considered his crucifixion, death, burial, descent to hell, resurrection, ascension to heaven, and seat at the right hand of the Father, together with the practical use of the whole doctrine. Chapter 17 contains an answer to the question, Whether Christ is properly said to have merited the grace of God for us.

08.02.01. Chapter 01

Chapter 1. Through the fall and revolt of Adam, the whole human race made accursed and degenerate. Of original sin.

I. How necessary the knowledge of ourselves is, its nature, the danger of mistake, its leading parts, sect. 1, 2, 3.

II. The causes of Adam’s fearful fall, sect. 4.

III. The effects of the fall extending to Adam’s posterity, and all the creatures, sect. 5, to the end of the Chapter, where the nature, propagation, and effect of original sin are considered.

Sections

1. The knowledge of ourselves most necessary. To use it properly we must be divested of pride, and clothed with true humility, which will dispose us to consider our fall, and embrace the mercy of God in Christ.

2. Though there is plausibility in the sentiment which stimulates us to self-admiration, the only sound sentiment is that which inclines us to true humbleness of mind. Pretexts for pride. The miserable vanity of sinful man.

3. Different views taken by carnal wisdom and by conscience, which appeals to divine justice as its standard. The knowledge of ourselves, consisting of two parts, the former of which having already been discussed, the latter is here considered.

4. In considering this latter part, two points to be considered; 1. How it happened that Adam involved himself and the whole human race in this dreadful calamity. This the result not of sensual intemperance, but of infidelity (the source of other heinous sins), which led to revolt from God, from whom all true happiness must be derived. An enumeration of the other sins produced by the infidelity of the first man.

5. The second point to be considered is, the extent to which the contagious influence of the fall extends. It extends, 1. To all the creatures, though unoffending; and, 2. To the whole posterity of Adam. Hence hereditary corruption, or original sin, and the depravation of a nature which was previously pure and good. This depravation communicated to the whole posterity of Adam, but not in the way supposed by the Pelagians and Celestians.

6. Depravation communicated not merely by imitation, but by propagation. This proved, 1. From the contrast drawn between Adam and Christ. Confirmation from passages of Scripture; 2 From the general declaration that we are the children of wrath.

7. Objection, that if Adam’s sin is propagated to his posterity, the soul must be derived by transmission. Answer. Another objection, viz., that children cannot derive corruption from pious parents. Answer.

8. Definition of original sin. Two parts in the definition. Exposition of the latter part. Original sin exposes us to the wrath of God. It also produces in us the works of the flesh. Other definitions considered.

9. Exposition of the former part of the definition, viz., that hereditary depravity extends to all the faculties of the soul.

10. From the exposition of both parts of the definition it follows that God is not the author of sin, the whole human race being corrupted by an inherent viciousness.

11. This, however, is not from nature, but is an adventitious quality. Accordingly, the dream of the Manichees as to two principles vanishes.

1. It was not without reason that the ancient proverb so strongly recommended to man the knowledge of himself. For if it is deemed disgraceful to be ignorant of things pertaining to the business of life, much more disgraceful is selfignorance, in consequence of which we miserably deceive ourselves in matters of the highest moment, and so walk blindfold. But the more useful the precept is, the more careful we must be not to use it preposterously, as we see certain philosophers have done. For they, when exhorting man to know himself, state the motive to be, that he may not be ignorant of his own excellence and dignity. They wish him to see nothing in himself but what will fill him with vain confidence, and inflate him with pride. But self-knowledge consists in this, First, When reflecting on what God gave us at our creation, and still continues graciously to give, we perceive how great the excellence of our nature would have been had its integrity remained, and, at the same time, remember that we have nothing of our own, but depend entirely on God, from whom we hold at pleasure whatever he has seen it meet to bestow; secondly When viewing our miserable condition since Adam’s fall, all confidence and boasting are overthrown, we blush for shame, and feel truly humble. For as God at first formed us in his own image, that he might elevate our minds to the pursuit of virtue, and the contemplation of eternal life, so to prevent us from heartlessly burying those noble qualities which distinguish us from the lower animals, it is of importance to know that we were endued with reason and intelligence, in order that we might cultivate a holy and honourable life, and regard a blessed immortality as our destined aim. At the same time, it is impossible to think of our primeval dignity without being immediately reminded of the sad spectacle of our ignominy and corruption, ever since we fell from our original in the person of our first parent. In this way, we feel dissatisfied with ourselves, and become truly humble, while we are inflamed with new desires to seek after God, in whom each may regain those good qualities of which all are found to be utterly destitute.

2. In examining ourselves, the search which divine truth enjoins, and the knowledge which it demands, are such as may indispose us to every thing like confidence in our own powers, leave us devoid of all means of boasting, and so incline us to submission. This is the course which we must follow, if we would attain to the true goal, both in speculation and practice. I am not unaware how much more plausible the view is, which invites us rather to ponder on our good qualities, than to contemplate what must overwhelm us with shame - our miserable destitution and ignominy. There is nothing more acceptable to the human mind than flattery, and, accordingly, when told that its endowments are of a high order, it is apt to be excessively credulous. Hence it is not strange that the greater part of mankind have erred so egregiously in this matter. Owing to the innate self-love by which all are blinded, we most willingly persuade ourselves that we do not possess a

single quality which is deserving of hatred; and hence, independent of any countenance from without, general credit is given to the very foolish idea, that man is perfectly sufficient of himself for all the purposes of a good and happy life. If any are disposed to think more modestly, and concede somewhat to God, that they may not seem to arrogate every thing as their own, still, in making the division, they apportion matters so, that the chief ground of confidence and boasting always remains with themselves. Then, if a discourse is pronounced which flatters the pride spontaneously springing up in man's inmost heart, nothing seems more delightful. Accordingly, in every age, he who is most forward in extolling the excellence of human nature, is received with the loudest applause. But be this heralding of human excellence what it may, by teaching man to rest in himself, it does nothing more than fascinate by its sweetness, and, at the same time, so delude as to drown in perdition all who assent to it. For what avails it to proceed in vain confidence, to deliberate, resolve, plan, and attempt what we deem pertinent to the purpose, and, at the very outset, prove deficient and destitute both of sound intelligence and true virtue, though we still confidently persist till we rush headlong on destruction? But this is the best that can happen to those who put confidence in their own powers. Whosoever, therefore, gives heed to those teachers, who merely employ us in contemplating our good qualities, so far from making progress in self knowledge, will be plunged into the most pernicious ignorance.

3. While revealed truth concurs with the general consent of mankind in teaching that the second part of wisdom consists in self-knowledge, they differ greatly as to the method by which this knowledge is to be acquired. In the judgement of the flesh man deems his self-knowledge complete, when, with overweening confidence in his own intelligence and integrity, he takes courage, and spurs himself on to virtuous deeds, and when, declaring war upon vice, he uses his utmost endeavour to attain to the honourable and the fair. But he who tries himself by the standard of divine justice, finds nothing to inspire him with confidence; and hence, the more thorough his self-examination, the greater his despondency. Abandoning all dependence on himself, he feels that he is utterly incapable of duly regulating his conduct. It is not the will of God, however, that we should forget the primeval dignity which he bestowed on our first parents - a dignity which may well stimulate us to the pursuit of goodness and justice. It is impossible for us to think of our first original, or the end for which we were created, without being urged to meditate on immortality, and to seek the kingdom of God. But such meditation, so far from raising our spirits, rather casts them down, and makes us humble. For what is our original? One from which we have fallen. What the end of our creation? One from which we have altogether strayed, so that, weary of our miserable lot, we groan, and groaning sigh for a dignity now lost. When we say that man should see nothing in himself which can raise his spirits, our meaning is, that he possesses nothing on which he can proudly plume himself. Hence, in considering the knowledge which man ought to have of himself, it seems proper to divide it thus, First, to consider the end for which he was created, and the qualities - by no means contemptible qualities - with which he was endued, thus urging him to meditate on divine worship and the future life; and, secondly, to consider his faculties, or rather want of faculties - a want which, when perceived, will annihilate all his confidence, and cover him with confusion. The tendency of the former view is to teach him what his duty is, of the latter, to make him aware how far he is able to perform it. We shall treat of both in their proper order.

4. As the act which God punished so severely must have been not a trivial fault, but a heinous crime, it will be necessary to attend to the peculiar nature of the sin which produced Adam's fall,

and provoked God to inflict such fearful vengeance on the whole human race. The common idea of sensual intemperance is childish. The sum and substance of all virtues could not consist in abstinence from a single fruit amid a general abundance of every delicacy that could be desired, the earth, with happy fertility, yielding not only abundance, but also endless variety. We must, therefore, look deeper than sensual intemperance. The prohibition to touch the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was a trial of obedience, that Adam, by observing it, might prove his willing submission to the command of God. For the very term shows the end of the precept to have been to keep him contented with his lot, and not allow him arrogantly to aspire beyond it. The promise, which gave him hope of eternal life as long as he should eat of the tree of life, and, on the other hand, the fearful denunciation of death the moment he should taste of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, were meant to prove and exercise his faith. Hence it is not difficult to infer in what way Adam provoked the wrath of God. Augustine, indeed, is not far from the mark, when he says (in Psal. 19), that pride was the beginning of all evil, because, had not man's ambition carried him higher than he was permitted, he might have continued in his first estate. A further definition, however, must be derived from the kind of temptation which Moses describes. When, by the subtlety of the devil, the woman faithlessly abandoned the command of God, her fall obviously had its origin in disobedience. This Paul confirms, when he says, that, by the disobedience of one man, all were destroyed. At the same time, it is to be observed, that the first man revolted against the authority of God, not only in allowing himself to be ensnared by the wiles of the devil, but also by despising the truth, and turning aside to lies. Assuredly, when the word of God is despised, all reverence for Him is gone. His majesty cannot be duly honoured among us, nor his worship maintained in its integrity, unless we hang as it were upon his lips. Hence infidelity was at the root of the revolt. From infidelity, again, sprang ambition and pride, together with ingratitude; because Adam, by longing for more than was allotted him, manifested contempt for the great liberality with which God had enriched him. It was surely monstrous impiety that a son of earth should deem it little to have been made in the likeness, unless he were also made the equal of God. If the apostasy by which man withdraws from the authority of his Maker, nay, petulantly shakes off his allegiance to him, is a foul and execrable crime, it is in vain to extenuate the sin of Adam. Nor was it simple apostasy. It was accompanied with foul insult to God, the guilty pair assenting to Satan's calumnies when he charged God with malice, envy, and falsehood. In fine, infidelity opened the door to ambition, and ambition was the parent of rebellion, man casting off the fear of God, and giving free vent to his lust. Hence, Bernard truly says, that, in the present day, a door of salvation is opened to us when we receive the gospel with our ears, just as by the same entrance, when thrown open to Satan, death was admitted. Never would Adam have dared to show any repugnance to the command of God if he had not been incredulous as to his word. The strongest curb to keep all his affections under due restraint, would have been the belief that nothing was better than to cultivate righteousness by obeying the commands of God, and that the highest possible felicity was to be loved by him. Man, therefore, when carried away by the blasphemies of Satan, did his very utmost to annihilate the whole glory of God.

5. As Adam's spiritual life would have consisted in remaining united and bound to his Maker, so estrangement from him was the death of his soul. Nor is it strange that he who perverted the whole order of nature in heaven and earth deteriorated his race by his revolt. "The whole creation groaneth," saith St. Paul, "being made subject to vanity, not willingly" (Romans 8:20, Romans 8:22). If the reason is asked, there cannot be a doubt that creation bears part of the punishment

deserved by man, for whose use all other creatures were made. Therefore, since through man's fault a curse has extended above and below, over all the regions of the world, there is nothing unreasonable in its extending to all his offspring. After the heavenly image in man was effaced, he not only was himself punished by a withdrawal of the ornaments in which he had been arrayed, viz., wisdom, virtue, justice, truth, and holiness, and by the substitution in their place of those dire pests, blindness, impotence, vanity, impurity, and unrighteousness, but he involved his posterity also, and plunged them in the same wretchedness. This is the hereditary corruption to which early Christian writers gave the name of Original Sin, meaning by the term the depravation of a nature formerly good and pure. The subject gave rise to much discussion, there being nothing more remote from common apprehension, than that the fault of one should render all guilty, and so become a common sin. This seems to be the reason why the oldest doctors of the church only glance obscurely at the point, or, at least, do not explain it so clearly as it required. This timidity, however, could not prevent the rise of a Pelagius with his profane fiction - that Adam sinned only to his own hurt, but did no hurt to his posterity. Satan, by thus craftily hiding the disease, tried to render it incurable. But when it was clearly proved from Scripture that the sin of the first man passed to all his posterity, recourse was had to the cavil, that it passed by imitation, and not by propagation. The orthodoxy, therefore, and more especially Augustine, laboured to show, that we are not corrupted by acquired wickedness, but bring an innate corruption from the very womb. It was the greatest impudence to deny this. But no man will wonder at the presumption of the Pelagians and Celestians, who has learned from the writings of that holy man how extreme the effrontery of these heretics was. Surely there is no ambiguity in David's confession, "I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Psalms 51:5). His object in the passage is not to throw blame on his parents; but the better to commend the goodness of God towards him, he properly reiterates the confession of impurity from his very birth. As it is clear, that there was no peculiarity in David's case, it follows that it is only an instance of the common lot of the whole human race. All of us, therefore, descending from an impure seed, come into the world tainted with the contagion of sin. Nay, before we behold the light of the sun we are in God's sight defiled and polluted. "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one," says the Book of Job (Job 14:4).

6. We thus see that the impurity of parents is transmitted to their children, so that all, without exception, are originally depraved. The commencement of this depravity will not be found until we ascend to the first parent of all as the fountain head. We must, therefore, hold it for certain, that, in regard to human nature, Adam was not merely a progenitor, but, as it were, a root, and that, accordingly, by his corruption, the whole human race was deservedly vitiated. This is plain from the contrast which the Apostle draws between Adam and Christ, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned; even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 5:19-21). To what quibble will the Pelagians here recur? That the sin of Adam was propagated by imitation! Is the righteousness of Christ then available to us only in so far as it is an example held forth for our imitation? Can any man tolerate such blasphemy? But if, out of all controversy, the righteousness of Christ, and thereby life, is ours by communication, it follows that both of these were lost in Adam that they might be recovered in Christ, whereas sin and death were brought in by Adam, that they might be abolished in Christ. There is no obscurity in the words, "As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall

many be made righteous." Accordingly, the relation subsisting between the two is this, As Adam, by his ruin, involved and ruined us, so Christ, by his grace, restored us to salvation. In this clear light of truth I cannot see any need of a longer or more laborious proof. Thus, too, in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, when Paul would confirm believers in the confident hope of the resurrection, he shows that the life is recovered in Christ which was lost in Adam (1 Corinthians 15:22). Having already declared that all died in Adam, he now also openly testifies, that all are imbued with the taint of sin. Condemnation, indeed, could not reach those who are altogether free from blame. But his meaning cannot be made clearer than from the other member of the sentence, in which he shows that the hope of life is restored in Christ. Every one knows that the only mode in which this is done is, when by a wondrous communication Christ transfuses into us the power of his own righteousness, as it is elsewhere said, "The Spirit is life because of righteousness" (Romans 8:10). Therefore, the only explanation which can be given of the expression, "in Adam all died," is, that he by sinning not only brought disaster and ruin upon himself, but also plunged our nature into like destruction; and that not only in one fault, in a matter not pertaining to us, but by the corruption into which he himself fell, he infected his whole seed. Paul never could have said that all are "by nature the children of wrath" (Ephesians 2:3), if they had not been cursed from the womb. And it is obvious that the nature there referred to is not nature such as God created, but as vitiated in Adam; for it would have been most incongruous to make God the author of death. Adam, therefore, when he corrupted himself, transmitted the contagion to all his posterity. For a heavenly Judge, even our Saviour himself, declares that all are by birth vicious and depraved, when he says that "that which is born of the flesh is fleshy" (John 3:6), and that therefore the gate of life is closed against all until they have been regenerated.

7. To the understanding of this subject, there is no necessity for an anxious discussion (which in no small degree perplexed the ancient doctors), as to whether the soul of the child comes by transmission from the soul of the parent. It should be enough for us to know that Adam was made the depository of the endowments which God was pleased to bestow on human nature, and that, therefore, when he lost what he had received, he lost not only for himself but for us all. Why feel any anxiety about the transmission of the soul, when we know that the qualities which Adam lost he received for us not less than for himself, that they were not gifts to a single man, but attributes of the whole human race? There is nothing absurd, therefore, in the view, that when he was divested, his nature was left naked and destitute that he having been defiled by sin, the pollution extends to all his seed. Thus, from a corrupt root corrupt branches proceeding, transmit their corruption to the saplings which spring from them. The children being vitiated in their parent, conveyed the taint to the grandchildren; in other words, corruption commencing in Adam, is, by perpetual descent, conveyed from those preceding to those coming after them. The cause of the contagion is neither in the substance of the flesh nor the soul, but God was pleased to ordain that those gifts which he had bestowed on the first man, that man should lose as well for his descendants as for himself. The Pelagian cavil, as to the improbability of children deriving corruption from pious parents, whereas, they ought rather to be sanctified by their purity, is easily refuted. Children come not by spiritual regeneration but carnal descent. Accordingly, as Augustine says, "Both the condemned unbeliever and the acquitted believer beget offspring not acquitted but condemned, because the nature which begets is corrupt." Moreover, though godly parents do in some measure contribute to the holiness of their offspring, this is by the blessing of God; a blessing, however, which does not prevent the primary and universal curse of the whole race from

previously taking effect. Guilt is from nature, whereas sanctification is from supernatural grace.

8. But lest the thing itself of which we speak be unknown or doubtful, it will be proper to define original sin. (Calvin, in Conc. Trident. 1, Dec. Sess. 5). I have no intention, however, to discuss all the definitions which different writers have adopted, but only to adduce the one which seems to me most accordant with truth. Original sin, then, may be defined a hereditary corruption and depravity of our nature, extending to all the parts of the soul, which first makes us obnoxious to the wrath of God, and then produces in us works which in Scripture are termed works of the flesh. This corruption is repeatedly designated by Paul by the term sin (Galatians 5:19); while the works which proceed from it, such as adultery, fornication, theft, hatred, murder, revellings, he terms, in the same way, the fruits of sin, though in various passages of Scripture, and even by Paul himself, they are also termed sins. The two things, therefore, are to be distinctly observed, viz., that being thus perverted and corrupted in all the parts of our nature, we are, merely on account of such corruption, deservedly condemned by God, to whom nothing is acceptable but righteousness, innocence, and purity. This is not liability for another's fault. For when it is said, that the sin of Adam has made us obnoxious to the justice of God, the meaning is not, that we, who are in ourselves innocent and blameless, are bearing his guilt, but that since by his transgression we are all placed under the curse, he is said to have brought us under obligation. Through him, however, not only has punishment been derived, but pollution instilled, for which punishment is justly due. Hence Augustine, though he often terms it another's sin (that he may more clearly show how it comes to us by descent), at the same time asserts that it is each individual's own sin. And the Apostle most distinctly testifies, that "death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Romans 5:12); that is, are involved in original sin, and polluted by its stain. Hence, even infants bringing their condemnation with them from their mother's womb, suffer not for another's, but for their own defect. For although they have not yet produced the fruits of their own unrighteousness, they have the seed implanted in them. Nay, their whole nature is, as it were, a seed-bed of sin, and therefore cannot but be odious and abominable to God. Hence it follows, that it is properly deemed sinful in the sight of God; for there could be no condemnation without guilt. Next comes the other point, viz., that this perversity in us never ceases, but constantly produces new fruits, in other words, those works of the flesh which we formerly described; just as a lighted furnace sends forth sparks and flames, or a fountain without ceasing pours out water. Hence, those who have defined original sin as the want of the original righteousness which we ought to have had, though they substantially comprehend the whole case, do not significantly enough express its power and energy. For our nature is not only utterly devoid of goodness, but so prolific in all kinds of evil, that it can never be idle. Those who term it concupiscence use a word not very inappropriate, provided it were added (this, however, many will by no means concede), that everything which is in man, from the intellect to the will, from the soul even to the flesh, is defiled and pervaded with this concupiscence; or, to express it more briefly, that the whole man is in himself nothing else than concupiscence.

9. I have said, therefore, that all the parts of the soul were possessed by sin, ever since Adam revolted from the fountain of righteousness. For not only did the inferior appetites entice him, but abominable impiety seized upon the very citadel of the mind, and pride penetrated to his inmost heart (Romans 7:11; Book 4, chap. 15, sec. 10-12), so that it is foolish and unmeaning to confine the corruption thence proceeding to what are called sensual motions, or to call it an excitement,

which allures, excites, and drags the single part which they call sensuality into sin. Here Peter Lombard has displayed gross ignorance (Lomb., lib. 2 Dist. 31). When investigating the seat of corruption, he says it is in the flesh (as Paul declares), not properly, indeed, but as being more apparent in the flesh. As if Paul had meant that only a part of the soul, and not the whole nature, was opposed to supernatural grace. Paul himself leaves no room for doubt, when he says, that corruption does not dwell in one part only, but that no part is free from its deadly taint. For, speaking of corrupt nature, he not only condemns the inordinate nature of the appetites, but, in particular, declares that the understanding is subjected to blindness, and the heart to depravity (Ephesians 4:17, Ephesians 4:18). The third chapter of the Epistle to the Romans is nothing but a description of original sin; The same thing appears more clearly from the mode of renovation. For the spirit, which is contrasted with the old man, and the flesh, denotes not only the grace by which the sensual or inferior part of the soul is corrected, but includes a complete reformation of all its parts (Ephesians 4:23). And, accordingly, Paul enjoins not only that gross appetites be suppressed, but that we be renewed in the spirit of our mind (Ephesians 4:23), as he elsewhere tells us to be transformed by the renewing of our mind (Romans 12:2). Hence it follows, that that part in which the dignity and excellence of the soul are most conspicuous, has not only been wounded, but so corrupted, that mere cure is not sufficient. There must be a new nature. How far sin has seized both on the mind and heart, we shall shortly see. Here I only wished briefly to observe, that the whole man, from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot, is so deluged, as it were, that no part remains exempt from sin, and, therefore, everything which proceeds from him is imputed as sin. Thus Paul says, that all carnal thoughts and affections are enmity against God, and consequently death (Romans 8:7).

10. Let us have done, then, with those who dare to inscribe the name of God on their vices, because we say that men are born vicious. The divine workmanship, which they ought to look for in the nature of Adam, when still entire and uncorrupted, they absurdly expect to find in their depravity. The blame of our ruin rests with our own carnality, not with God, its only cause being our degeneracy from our original condition. And let no one here glamour that God might have provided better for our safety by preventing Adam’s fall. This objection, which, from the daring presumption implied in it, is odious to every pious mind, relates to the mystery of predestination, which will afterwards be considered in its own place (Tertull. de Prescript., Calvin, Lib. de Predest). Meanwhile let us remember that our ruin is attributable to our own depravity, that we may not insinuate a charge against God himself, the Author of nature. It is true that nature has received a mortal wound, but there is a great difference between a wound inflicted from without, and one inherent in our first condition. It is plain that this wound was inflicted by sin; and, therefore, we have no ground of complaint except against ourselves. This is carefully taught in Scripture. For the Preacher says, “Lo, this only have I found, that God made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions” (Ecclesiastes 7:29). Since man, by the kindness of God, was made upright, but by his oven infatuation fell away unto vanity, his destruction is obviously attributable only to himself (Athanas. in Orat. Cont. Idola.).

11. We says then that man is corrupted by a natural viciousness, but not by one which proceeded from nature. In saying that it proceeded not from nature, we mean that it was rather an adventitious event which befell man, than a substantial property assigned to him from the beginning. We, however call it natural to prevent any one from supposing that each individual

contracts it by depraved habit, whereas all receive it by a hereditary law. And we have authority for so calling it. For, on the same grounds the apostle says, that we are “by nature the children of wrath” (Ephesians 2:3). How could God, who takes pleasure in the meanest of his works be offended with the noblest of them all? The offence is not with the work itself, but the corruption of the work. Wherefore, if it is not improper to say, that, in consequence of the corruption of human nature, man is naturally hateful to God, it is not improper to say, that he is naturally vicious and depraved. Hence, in the view of our corrupt nature, Augustine hesitates not to call those sins natural which necessarily reign in the flesh wherever the grace of God is wanting. This disposes of the absurd notion of the Manichees, who, imagining that man was essentially wicked, went the length of assigning him a different Creator, that they might thus avoid the appearance of attributing the cause and origin of evil to a righteous God.

08.02.02A. Chapter 2

Chapter 2. Man now deprived of freedom of will, and miserably enslaved.

Having in the first chapter treated of the fall of man, and the corruption of the human race, it becomes necessary to inquire, Whether the sons of Adam are deprived of all liberty; and if any particle of liberty remains, how far its power extends? The four next chapters are devoted to this question. This second chapter may be reduced to three general heads:

I. The foundation of the whole discussion.

II. The opinions of others on the subject of human freedom, sec. 2-9.

III. The true doctrine on the subject, sec. 10-27.

Sections

1. Connection of the previous with the four following chapters. In order to lay a proper foundation for the discussion of free will, two obstacles in the way to be removed, viz., sloth and pride. The basis and sum of the whole discussion. The solid structure of this basis, and a clear demonstration of it by the argument a majori ad minus. Also from the inconveniences and absurdities arising from the obstacle of pride.

2. The second part of the chapter containing the opinions of others. 1. The opinions of philosophers.

3. The labyrinths of philosophers. A summary of the opinion common to all the philosophers.

4. The opinions of others continued, viz., The opinions of the ancient theologians on the subject of free will. These composed partly of Philosophy and partly of Theology. Hence their falsehood, extravagance, perplexity, variety, and contradiction. Too great fondness for philosophy in the Church has obscured the knowledge of God and of ourselves. The better to explain the opinions of philosophers, a definition of Free Will given. Wide difference between this definition and these opinions.

5. Certain things annexed to Free Will by the ancient theologians, especially the Schoolmen. Many kinds of Free Will according to them.

6. Puzzles of scholastic divines in the explanation of this question.

7. The conclusion that so trivial a matter ought not to be so much magnified. Objection of those who have a fondness for new terms in the Church. Objection answered.

8. Another answer. The Fathers, and especially Augustine, while retaining the term Free Will, yet condemned the doctrine of the heretics on the subject, as destroying the grace of God.

9. The language of the ancient writers on the subject of Free Will is, with the exception of that of Augustine, almost unintelligible. Still they set little or no value on human virtue, and ascribe the praise of all goodness to the Holy Spirit.

10. The last part of the chapter, containing a simple statement of the true doctrine. The fundamental principle is, that man first begins to profit in the knowledge of himself when he becomes sensible of his ruined condition. This confirmed, 1. by passages of Scripture.

11. Confirmed, 2. by the testimony of ancient theologians.

12. The foundation being laid, to show how far the power both of the intellect and will now extends, it is maintained in general, and in conformity with the views of Augustine and the Schoolmen, that the natural endowments of man are corrupted, and the supernatural almost entirely lost. A separate consideration of the powers of the Intellect and the Will. Some general considerations, 1. The intellect possesses some powers of perception. Still it labours under a twofold defect.

13. Man's intelligence extends both to things terrestrial and celestial. The power of the intellect in regard to the knowledge of things terrestrial. First, with regard to matters of civil polity.

14. The power of the intellect, secondly, with regard to the arts. Particular gifts in this respect conferred on individuals, and attesting the grace of God.

15. The rise of this knowledge of things terrestrial, first, that we may see how human nature, notwithstanding of its fall, is still adorned by God with excellent endowments.

16. Use of this knowledge continued. Secondly, that we may see that these endowments bestowed on individuals are intended for the common benefit of mankind. They are sometimes conferred even on the wicked.

17. Some portion of human nature still left. This, whatever be the amount of it, should be ascribed entirely to the divine indulgence. Reason of this. Examples.

18. Second part of the discussion, namely, that which relates to the power of the human intellect in regard to things celestial. These reducible to three heads, namely, divine knowledge, adoption, and will. The blindness of man in regard to these proved and thus tested by a simile.

19. Proved, moreover, by passages of Scripture, showing, 1. That the sons of Adam are endued with some light, but not enough to enable them to comprehend God. Reasons.

20. Adoption not from nature, but from our heavenly Father, being sealed in the elect by the Spirit of regeneration. Obvious from many passages of Scripture, that, previous to regeneration, the human intellect is altogether unable to comprehend the things relating to regeneration. This fully proved. First argument. Second argument. Third argument.

21. Fourth argument. Scripture ascribes the glory of our adoption and salvation to God only. The human intellect blind as to heavenly things until it is illuminated. Disposal of a heretical objection.

22. Human intellect ignorant of the true knowledge of the divine law. This proved by the testimony of an Apostle, by an inference from the same testimony, and from a consideration of the end and definition of the Law of Nature. Plato obviously mistaken in attributing all sins to ignorance.

23. Themistius nearer the truth in maintaining, that the delusion of the intellect is manifested not so much in generals as in particulars. Exception to this rule.

24. Themistius, however, mistaken in thinking that the intellect is so very seldom deceived as to generals. Blindness of the human intellect when tested by the standard of the Divine Law, in regard both to the first and second tables. Examples.

25. A middle view to be taken, viz., that all sins are not imputable to ignorance, and, at the same time, that all sins do not imply intentional malice. All the human mind conceives and plans in this matter is evil in the sight of God. Need of divine direction every moment.

26. The will examined. The natural desire of good, which is universally felt, no proof of the freedom of the human will. Two fallacies as to the use of terms, appetite and good.

27. The doctrine of the Schoolmen on this subject opposed to and refuted by Scripture. The whole man being subject to the power of sin, it follows that the will, which is the chief seat of sin, requires to be most strictly curbed. Nothing ours but sin.

1. Having seen that the dominion of sin, ever since the first man was brought under it, not only extends to the whole race, but has complete possession of every soul, it now remains to consider more closely, whether from the period of being thus enslaved, we have been deprived of all liberty; and if any portion still remains, how far its power extends. In order to facilitate the answer to this questions it may be proper in passing to point out the course which our inquiry ought to take. The best method of avoiding error is to consider the dangers which beset us on either side. Man being devoid of all uprightness, immediately takes occasion from the fact to indulge in sloth, and having no ability in himself for the study of righteousness, treats the whole subject as if he had no concern in it. On the other hand, man cannot arrogate any thing, however minute, to himself, without robbing God of his honour, and through rash confidence subjecting himself to a fall. To keep free of both these rocks, our proper course will be, first, to show that man has no remaining good in himself, and is beset on every side by the most miserable destitution; and then teach him to aspire to the goodness of which he is devoid, and the liberty of which he has been deprived: thus giving him a stronger stimulus to exertion than he could have if he imagined himself possessed of the highest virtue. How necessary the latter point is, everybody sees. As to the former, several seem to entertain more doubt than they ought. For it being admitted as incontrovertible that man is not to be denied any thing that is truly his own, it ought also to be admitted, that he is to be deprived of every thing like false boasting. If man had no title to glory in himself, when, by the kindness of his Maker, he was distinguished by the noblest ornaments, how much ought he to be humbled now, when his ingratitude has thrust him down from the highest glory to extreme ignominy? At the time when he was raised to the highest pinnacle of honour, all which Scripture attributes to him is, that he was created in the image of God, thereby intimating that the blessings in which his happiness consisted were not his own, but derived by divine communication. What remains, therefore, now that man is stript of all his glory, than to acknowledge the God for whose kindness he failed to be grateful, when he was loaded with the riches of his grace? Not having glorified him by the acknowledgement of his blessings, now, at least, he ought to glorify him by the confession of his poverty. In truth, it is no less useful for us to renounce all the praise of wisdom and virtue, than to aim at the glory of God. Those who invest us with more than we possess only add sacrilege to our ruin. For when we are taught to contend in our own strength, what more is done than to lift us up,

and then leave us to lean on a reed which immediately gives way? Indeed, our strength is exaggerated when it is compared to a reed. All that foolish men invent and prattle on this subject is mere smoke. Wherefore, it is not without reason that Augustine so often repeats the well-known saying, that free will is more destroyed than established by its defenders (August. in Evang. Joann. Tract. 81). It was necessary to premise this much for the sake of some who, when they hear that human virtue is totally overthrown, in order that the power of God in man may be exalted, conceive an utter dislike to the whole subject, as if it were perilous, not to say superfluous, whereas it is manifestly both most necessary and most useful.

2. Having lately observed, that the faculties of the soul are seated in the mind and the heart, let us now consider how far the power of each extends. Philosophers generally maintain, that reason dwells in the mind like a lamp, throwing light on all its counsels, and like a queen, governing the will - that it is so pervaded with divine light as to be able to consult for the best, and so endued with vigour as to be able perfectly to command; that, on the contrary, sense is dull and short-sighted, always creeping on the ground, grovelling among inferior objects, and never rising to true vision; that the appetite, when it obeys reason, and does not allow itself to be subjugated by sense, is borne to the study of virtue, holds a straight course, and becomes transformed into will; but that when enslaved by sense, it is corrupted and depraved so as to degenerate into lust. In a word, since, according to their opinion, the faculties which I have mentioned above, namely, intellect, sense, and appetite, or will (the latter being the term in ordinary use), are seated in the soul, they maintain that the intellect is endued with reason, the best guide to a virtuous and happy life, provided it duly avails itself of its excellence, and exerts the power with which it is naturally endued; that, at the same time, the inferior movement, which is termed sense, and by which the mind is led away to error and delusion, is of such a nature, that it can be tamed and gradually subdued by the power of reason. To the will, moreover, they give an intermediate place between reason and sense, regarding it as possessed of full power and freedom, whether to obey the former, or yield itself up to be hurried away by the latter.

3. Sometimes, indeed, convinced by their own experience, they do not deny how difficult it is for man to establish the supremacy of reason in himself, inasmuch as he is at one time enticed by the allurements of pleasure; at another, deluded by a false semblance of good; and, at another, impelled by unruly passions, and pulled away (to use Plato’s expression) as by ropes or sinews (Plato, De Legibus, lib. 1). For this reason, Cicero says, that the sparks given forth by nature are immediately extinguished by false opinions and depraved manners (Cicero, Tusc, Quest. lib. 3). They confess that when once diseases of this description have seized upon the mind, their course is too impetuous to be easily checked, and they hesitate not to compare them to fiery steeds, which, having thrown off the charioteer, scamper away without restraint. At the same time, they set it down as beyond dispute, that virtue and vice are in our own power. For (say they), If it is in our choice to do this thing or that, it must also be in our choice not to do it: Again, If it is in our choice not to act, it must also be in our choice to act: But both in doing and abstaining we seem to act from free choice; and, therefore, if we do good when we please, we can also refrain from doing it; if we commit evil, we can also shun the commission of it (Aristot. Ethic. lib. 3 c. 5). Nay, some have gone the length of boasting (Seneca, passim), that it is the gift of the gods that we live, but our own that we live well and purely. Hence Cicero says, in the person of Cotta, that as every one acquires virtue for himself, no wise man ever thanked the gods for it. “We are praised,” says he, “for virtue,

and glory in virtue, but this could not be, if virtue were the gift of God, and not from ourselves" (Cicero, De Nat. Deorum). A little after, he adds, "The opinion of all mankind is, that fortune must be sought from God, wisdom from ourselves." Thus, in short, all philosophers maintain, that human reason is sufficient for right government; that the will, which is inferior to it, may indeed be solicited to evil by sense, but having a free choice, there is nothing to prevent it from following reason as its guide in all things.

4. Among ecclesiastical writers, although there is none who did not acknowledge that sound reason in man was seriously injured by sin, and the will greatly entangled by vicious desires, yet many of them made too near an approach to the philosophers. Some of the most ancient writers appear to me to have exalted human strengths from a fear that a distinct acknowledgement of its impotence might expose them to the jeers of the philosophers with whom they were disputing, and also furnish the flesh, already too much disinclined to good, with a new pretext for sloth. Therefore, to avoid teaching anything which the majority of mankind might deem absurd, they made it their study, in some measure, to reconcile the doctrine of Scripture with the dogmas of philosophy, at the same time making it their special care not to furnish any occasion to sloth. This is obvious from their words. Chrysostom says, "God having placed good and evil in our power, has given us full freedom of choice; he does not keep back the unwilling, but embraces the willing" (Homil. de Prodit. Judae). Again, "He who is wicked is often, when he so chooses, changed into good, and he who is good falls through sluggishness, and becomes wicked. For the Lord has made our nature free. He does not lay us under necessity, but furnishing apposite remedies, allows the whole to depend on the views of the patient" (Homily. 18, in Genesis). Again, "As we can do nothing rightly until aided by the grace of God, so, until we bring forward what is our own, we cannot obtain favour from above" (Homily. 52). He had previously said, "As the whole is not done by divine assistance, we ourselves must of necessity bring somewhat." Accordingly, one of his common expressions is, "Let us bring what is our own, God will supply the rest." In unison with this, Jerome says, "It is ours to begin, God's to finish: it is ours to offer what we can, his to supply what we cannot" (Dialog. 3 Cont. Pelag). From these sentences, you see that they have bestowed on man more than he possesses for the study of virtue, because they thought that they could not shake off our innate sluggishness unless they argued that we sin by ourselves alone. With what skill they have thus argued we shall afterwards see. Assuredly we shall soon be able to show that the sentiments just quoted are most inaccurate. Moreover although the Greek Fathers, above others, and especially Chrysostom, have exceeded due bounds in extolling the powers of the human will, yet all ancient theologians, with the exception of Augustine, are so confused, vacillating, and contradictory on this subject, that no certainty can be obtained from their writings. It is needless, therefore, to be more particular in enumerating every separate opinion. It will be sufficient to extract from each as much as the exposition of the subject seems to require. Succeeding writers (every one courting applause for his acuteness in the defence of human nature) have uniformly, one after the other, gone more widely astray, until the common dogma came to be, that man was corrupted only in the sensual part of his nature, that reason remained entire, and will was scarcely impaired. Still the expression was often on their lips, that man's natural gifts were corrupted, and his supernatural taken away. Of the thing implied by these words, however, scarcely one in a hundred had any distinct idea. Certainly, were I desirous clearly to express what the corruption of nature is, I would not seek for any other expression. But it is of great importance attentively to consider what the power of man now is when vitiated in all the parts of his nature, and deprived of supernatural gifts.

Persons professing to be the disciples of Christ have spoken too much like the philosophers on this subject. As if human nature were still in its integrity, the term free will has always been in use among the Latins, while the Greeks were not ashamed to use a still more presumptuous term, viz., autexousion, as if man had still full power in himself. But since the principle entertained by all, even the vulgar, is, that man is endued with free will, while some, who would be thought more skilful, know not how far its power extends; it will be necessary, first to consider the meaning of the term, and afterwards ascertain, by a simple appeal to Scripture, what man's natural power for good or evil is. The thing meant by free will, though constantly occurring in all writers, few have defined. Origin, however, seems to have stated the common opinion when he said, It is a power of reason to discern between good and evil; of will, to choose the one or other. Nor does Augustine differ from him when he says, It is a power of reason and will to choose the good, grace assisting - to choose the bad, grace desisting. Bernard, while aiming at greater acuteness, speaks more obscurely, when he describes it as consent, in regard to the indestructible liberty of the wills and the inalienable judgement of reason. Anselm's definition is not very intelligible to ordinary understandings. He calls it a power of preserving rectitude on its own account. Peter Lombard, and the Schoolmen, preferred the definition of Augustine, both because it was clearer, and did not exclude divine grace, without which they saw that the will was not sufficient of itself. They however add something of their own, because they deemed it either better or necessary for clearer explanation. First, they agree that the term will (arbitrium) has reference to reason, whose office it is to distinguish between good and evil, and that the epithet free properly belongs to the will, which may incline either way. Wherefore, since liberty properly belongs to the will, Thomas Aquinas says (Part 1 Quast. 83, Art. 3), that the most congruous definition is to call free will an elective power, combining intelligence and appetite, but inclining more to appetite. We now perceive in what it is they suppose the faculty of free will to consist, viz., in reason and will. It remains to see how much they attribute to each.

5. In general, they are wont to place under the free will of man only intermediate things, viz., those which pertain not to the kingdom of God, while they refer true righteousness to the special grace of God and spiritual regeneration. The author of the work, "De Vocatione Gentium" (On the Calling of the Gentiles), wishing to show this, describes the will as threefold, viz., sensitive, animal, and spiritual. The two former, he says, are free to man, but the last is the work of the Holy Spirit. What truth there is in this will be considered in its own place. Our intention at present is only to mention the opinions of others, not to refute them. When writers treat of free will, their inquiry is chiefly directed not to what its power is in relation to civil or external actions, but to the obedience required by the divine law. The latter I admit to be the great question, but I cannot think the former should be altogether neglected; and I hope to be able to give the best reason for so thinking (sec. 12 to 18). The schools, however, have adopted a distinction which enumerates three kinds of freedom (see Lombard, lib. 2 Dist. 25); the first, a freedom from necessity; the second, a freedom from sin; and the third, a freedom from misery: the first naturally so inherent in man, that he cannot possibly be deprived of it; while through sin the other two have been lost. I willingly admit this distinction, except in so far as it confounds necessity with compulsion. How widely the things differ, and how important it is to attend to the difference, will appear elsewhere.

6. All this being admitted, it will be beyond dispute, that free will does not enable any man to perform good works, unless he is assisted by grace; indeed, the special grace which the elect

alone receive through regeneration. For I stay not to consider the extravagance of those who say that grace is offered equally and promiscuously to all (Lomb. lib. 2 Dist. 26). But it has not yet been shown whether man is entirely deprived of the power of well-doing, or whether he still possesses it in some, though in a very feeble and limited degree - a degree so feeble and limited, that it can do nothing of itself, but when assisted by grace, is able also to perform its part. The Master of the Sentences (Lombard, ibid.) wishing to explain this, teaches that a twofold grace is necessary to fit for any good work. The one he calls Operating. To it, it is owing that we effectually will what is good. The other, which succeeds this good will, and aids it, he calls Co-operating. My objection to this division (see infra, chap. 3 sec. 10, and chap. 7 sec. 9) is, that while it attributes the effectual desire of good to divine grace, it insinuates that man, by his own nature, desires good in some degree, though ineffectually. Thus Bernard, while maintaining that a good will is the work of God, concedes this much to man, viz., that of his own nature he longs for such a good will. This differs widely from the view of Augustine, though Lombard pretends to have taken the division from him. Besides, there is an ambiguity in the second division, which has led to an erroneous interpretation. For it has been thought that we co-operate with subsequent grace, inasmuch as it pertains to us either to nullify the first grace, by rejecting its or to confirm it, by obediently yielding to it. The author of the work De Vocatione Gentium expresses it thus: It is free to those who enjoy the faculty of reason to depart from grace, so that the not departing is a reward, and that which cannot be done without the co-operation of the Spirit is imputed as merit to those whose will might have made it otherwise (lib. 2 cap. 4). It seemed proper to make these two observations in passing, that the reader may see how far I differ from the sounder of the Schoolmen. Still further do I differ from more modern sophists, who have departed even more widely than the Schoolmen from the ancient doctrine. The division, however, shows in what respect free will is attributed to man. For Lombard ultimately declares (lib. 2 Dist. 25), that our freedom is not to the extent of leaving us equally inclined to good and evil in act or in thought, but only to the extent of freeing us from compulsion. This liberty is compatible with our being depraved, the servants of sin, able to do nothing but sin.

7. In this way, then, man is said to have free will, not because he has a free choice of good and evil, but because he acts voluntarily, and not by compulsion. This is perfectly true: but why should so small a matter have been dignified with so proud a title? An admirable freedom! that man is not forced to be the servant of sin, while he is, however, ethelodoulos (a voluntary slave); his will being bound by the fetters of sin. I abominate mere verbal disputes, by which the Church is harassed to no purpose; but I think we ought religiously to eschew terms which imply some absurdity, especially in subjects where error is of pernicious consequence. How few are there who, when they hear free will attributed to man, do not immediately imagine that he is the master of his mind and will in such a sense, that he can of himself incline himself either to good or evil? It may be said that such dangers are removed by carefully expounding the meaning to the people. But such is the proneness of the human mind to go astray, that it will more quickly draw error from one little word, than truth from a lengthened discourse. Of this, the very term in question furnishes too strong a proof. For the explanation given by ancient Christian writers having been lost sight of, almost all who have come after them, by attending only to the etymology of the term, have been led to indulge a fatal confidence.

8. As to the Fathers (if their authority weighs with us), they have the term constantly in their mouths; but they, at the same time, declare what extent of meaning they attach to it. In particular, Augustine hesitates not to call the will a slave. In another passages he is offended with those who deny free will; but his chief reason for this is explained when he says, “Only lest any one should presume so to deny freedom of will, from a desire to excuse sin.” It is certain he elsewhere admits, that without the Spirit the will of man is not free, inasmuch as it is subject to lusts which chain and master it. And again, that nature began to want liberty the moment the will was vanquished by the revolt into which it fell. Again, that man, by making a bad use of free will, lost both himself and his will. Again, that free will having been made a captive, can do nothing in the way of righteousness. Again, that no will is free which has not been made so by divine grace. Again, that the righteousness of God is not fulfilled when the law orders, and man acts, as it were, by his own strength, but when the Spirit assists, and the will (not the free will of man, but the will freed by God) obeys. He briefly states the ground of all these observations, when he says, that man at his creation received a great degree of free will, but lost it by sinning. In another place, after showing that free will is established by grace, he strongly inveighs against those who arrogate any thing to themselves without grace. His words are, “How much soever miserable men presume to plume themselves on free will before they are made free, or on their strength after they are made free, they do not consider that, in the very expression, free will, liberty is implied. ‘Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty,’ (2 Corinthians 3:17). If, therefore, they are the servants of sin, why do they boast of free will? He who has been vanquished is the servant of him who vanquished him. But if men have been made free, why do they boast of it as of their own work? Are they so free that they are unwilling to be the servants of Him who has said, ‘Without me ye can do nothing’?” (John 15:5). In another passage he even seems to ridicule the word, when he says, “That the will is indeed free, but not freed - free of righteousness, but enslaved to sin.” The same idea he elsewhere repeats and explains, when he says, “That man is not free from righteousness save by the choice of his will, and is not made free from sin save by the grace of the Saviour.” Declaring that the freedom of man is nothing else than emancipation or manumission from righteousness, he seems to jest at the emptiness of the name. If any one, then, chooses to make use of this terms without attaching any bad meaning to it, he shall not be troubled by me on that account; but as it cannot be retained without very great danger, I think the abolition of it would be of great advantage to the Church. I am unwilling to use it myself; and others if they will take my advice, will do well to abstain from it.

9. It may, perhaps, seem that I have greatly prejudiced my own view by confessing that all the ecclesiastical writers, with the exception of Augustine, have spoken so ambiguously or inconsistently on this subject, that no certainty is attainable from their writings. Some will interpret this to mean, that I wish to deprive them of their right of suffrage, because they are opposed to me. Truly, however, I have had no other end in view than to consult, simply and in good faith, for the advantage of pious minds, which, if they trust to those writers for their opinion, will always fluctuate in uncertainty. At one time they teach, that man having been deprived of the power of free Will must flee to grace alone; at another, they equip or seem to equip him in armour of his own. It is not difficult, however, to show, that notwithstanding of the ambiguous manner in which those writers express themselves, they hold human virtue in little or no account, and ascribe the whole merit of all that is good to the Holy Spirit. To make this more manifest, I may here quote some passages from them. What, then, is meant by Cyprian in the passage so often lauded by Augustine, “Let us

glory in nothing, because nothing is ours," unless it be, that man being utterly destitute, considered in himself, should entirely depend on God? What is meant by Augustine and Eucherius, when they expound that Christ is the tree of life, and that whose puts forth his hand to it shall live; that the choice of the will is the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and that he who, forsaking the grace of God, tastes of it shall die? What is meant by Chrysostom, When he says, "That every man is not only naturally a sinner, but is wholly sin"? If there is nothing good in us; if man, from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot, is wholly sin; if it is not even lawful to try how far the power of the will extends; how can it be lawful to share the merit of a good work between God and man? I might quote many passages to the same effect from other writers; but lest any caviller should say, that I select those only which serve my purpose, and cunningly pass by those which are against me, I desist. This much, however, I dare affirm, that though they sometimes go too far in extolling free will, the main object which they had in view was to teach man entirely to renounce all self-confidence, and place his strength in God alone. I now proceed to a simple exposition of the truth in regard to the nature of man.

10. Here however, I must again repeat what I premised at the outset of this chapter, that he who is most deeply abased and alarmed, by the consciousness of his disgrace, nakedness, want, and misery, has made the greatest progress in the knowledge of himself. Man is in no danger of taking too much from himself, provided he learns that whatever he wants is to be recovered in God. But he cannot arrogate to himself one particle beyond his due, without losing himself in vain confidence, and, by transferring divine honour to himself, becoming guilty of the greatest impiety. And, assuredly, whenever our minds are seized with a longing to possess a somewhat of our own, which may reside in us rather than in God, we may rest assured that the thought is suggested by no other counsellor than he who enticed our first parents to aspire to be like gods, knowing good and evil. It is sweet, indeed, to have so much virtue of our own as to be able to rest in ourselves; but let the many solemn passages by which our pride is sternly humbled, deter us from indulging this vain confidence: "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm." (Jeremiah 17:5). "He delighteth not in the strength of the horse; he taketh not pleasure in the legs of a man. The Lord taketh pleasure in those that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy" (Psalms 147:10, Psalms 147:11). "He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength" (Isaiah 40:29-31). The scope of all these passages is that we must not entertain any opinion whatever of our own strength, if we would enjoy the favour of God, who "resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble" (James 4:6). Then let us call to mind such promises as these, "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground" (Isaiah 44:3); "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters" (Isaiah 55:1). These passages declare, that none are admitted to enjoy the blessings of God save those who are pining under a sense of their own poverty. Nor ought such passages as the following to be omitted: "The sun shall no more be thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory" (Isaiah 60:19). The Lord certainly does not deprive his servants of the light of the sun or moon, but as he would alone appear glorious in them, he dissuades them from confidence even in those objects which they deem most excellent.

11. I have always been exceedingly delighted with the words of Chrysostom, “The foundation of our philosophy is humility;” and still more with those of Augustine, “As the orator, when asked, What is the first precept in eloquence? answered, Delivery: What is the second? Delivery: What the third? Delivery: so, if you ask me in regard to the precepts of the Christian Religion, I will answer, first, second, and third, Humility.” By humility he means not when a man, with a consciousness of some virtue, refrains from pride, but when he truly feels that he has no refuge but in humility. This is clear from another passage, “Let no man,” says he, “flatter himself: of himself he is a devil: his happiness he owes entirely to God. What have you of your own but sin? Take your sin which is your own; for righteousness is of God.” Again, “Why presume so much on the capability of nature? It is wounded, maimed, vexed, lost. The thing wanted is genuine confession, not false defence.” “When any one knows that he is nothing in himself, and has no help from himself, the weapons within himself are broken, and the war is ended.” All the weapons of impiety must be bruised, and broken, and burnt in the fire; you must remain unarmed, having no help in yourself. The more infirm you are, the more the Lord will sustain you. So, in expounding the seventieth Psalm, he forbids us to remember our own righteousness, in order that we may recognise the righteousness of God, and shows that God bestows his grace upon us, that we may know that we are nothing; that we stand only by the mercy of God, seeing that in ourselves eve are altogether wicked. Let us not contend with God for our right, as if anything attributed to him were lost to our salvation. As our insignificance is his exaltation, so the confession of our insignificance has its remedy provided in his mercy. I do not ask, however, that man should voluntarily yield without being convinced, or that, if he has any powers, he should shut his eyes to them, that he may thus be subdued to true humility; but that getting quit of the disease of self-love and ambition, filautia kai filoneikia, under the blinding influences of which he thinks of himself more highly than he ought to think, he may see himself as he really is, by looking into the faithful mirror of Scripture.

12. I feel pleased with the well-known saying which has been borrowed from the writings of Augustine, that man’s natural gifts were corrupted by sin, and his supernatural gifts withdrawn; meaning by supernatural gifts the light of faith and righteousness, which would have been sufficient for the attainment of heavenly life and everlasting felicity. Man, when he withdrew his allegiance to God, was deprived of the spiritual gifts by which he had been raised to the hope of eternal salvation. Hence it follows, that he is now an exile from the kingdom of God, so that all things which pertain to the blessed life of the soul are extinguished in him until he recover them by the grace of regeneration. Among these are faith, love to God, charity towards our neighbour, the study of righteousness and holiness. All these, when restored to us by Christ, are to be regarded as adventitious and above nature. If so, we infer that they were previously abolished. On the other hand, soundness of mind and integrity of heart were, at the same time, withdrawn, and it is this which constitutes the corruption of natural gifts. For although there is still some residue of intelligence and judgement as well as will, we cannot call a mind sound and entire which is both weak and immersed in darkness. As to the will, its depravity is but too well known. Therefore, since reason, by which man discerns between good and evil, and by which he understands and judges, is a natural gift, it could not be entirely destroyed; but being partly weakened and partly corrupted, a shapeless ruin is all that remains. In this sense it is said (John 1:5), that “the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not;” these words clearly expressing both points, viz., that in the perverted and degenerate nature of man there are still some sparks which show that he is a rational animal, and differs from the brutes, inasmuch as he is endued with

intelligence, and yet, that this light is so smothered by clouds of darkness that it cannot shine forth to any good effect. In like manner, the will, because inseparable from the nature of man, did not perish, but was so enslaved by depraved lusts as to be incapable of one righteous desire. The definition now given is complete, but there are several points which require to be explained. Therefore, proceeding agreeably to that primary distinction (Book 1 Chap 15 sec. 7 and 8), by which we divided the soul into intellect and will, we will now inquire into the power of the intellect. To charge the intellect with perpetual blindness, so as to leave it no intelligence of any description whatever, is repugnant not only to the Word of God, but to common experience. We see that there has been implanted in the human mind a certain desire of investigating truth, to which it never would aspire unless some relish for truth antecedently existed. There is, therefore, now, in the human mind, discernment to this extent, that it is naturally influenced by the love of truth, the neglect of which in the lower animals is a proof of their gross and irrational nature. Still it is true that this love of truth fails before it reaches the goal, forthwith falling away into vanity. As the human mind is unable, from dullness, to pursue the right path of investigation, and, after various wanderings, stumbling every now and then like one groping in darkness, at length gets completely bewildered, so its whole procedure proves how unfit it is to search the truth and find it. Then it labours under another grievous defect, in that it frequently fails to discern what the knowledge is which it should study to acquire. Hence, under the influence of a vain curiosity, it torments itself with superfluous and useless discussions, either not adverting at all to the things necessary to be known, or casting only a cursory and contemptuous glance at them. At all events, it scarcely ever studies them in sober earnest. Profane writers are constantly complaining of this perverse procedure, and yet almost all of them are found pursuing it. Hence Solomon, throughout the Book of Ecclesiastes, after enumerating all the studies in which men think they attain the highest wisdom, pronounces them vain and frivolous.

13. Still, however, man’s efforts are not always so utterly fruitless as not to lead to some result, especially when his attention is directed to inferior objects. Nay, even with regard to superior objects, though he is more careless in investigating them, he makes some little progress. Here, however, his ability is more limited, and he is never made more sensible of his weakness than when he attempts to soar above the sphere of the present life. It may therefore be proper, in order to make it more manifest how far our ability extends in regard to these two classes of objects, to draw a distinction between them. The distinction is, that we have one kind of intelligence of earthly things, and another of heavenly things. By earthly things, I mean those which relate not to God and his kingdom, to true righteousness and future blessedness, but have some connection with the present life, and are in a manner confined within its boundaries. By heavenly things, I mean the pure knowledge of God, the method of true righteousness, and the mysteries of the heavenly kingdom. To the former belong matters of policy and economy, all mechanical arts and liberal studies. To the latter (as to which, see the eighteenth and following sections) belong the knowledge of God and of his will, and the means of framing the life in accordance with them. As to the former, the view to be taken is this: Since man is by nature a social animal, he is disposed, from natural instinct, to cherish and preserve society; and accordingly we see that the minds of all men have impressions of civil order and honesty. Hence it is that every individual understands how human societies must he regulated by laws, and also is able to comprehend the principles of those laws. Hence the universal agreement in regard to such subjects, both among nations and individuals, the seeds of them being implanted in the breasts of all without a teacher or lawgiver.

The truth of this fact is not affected by the wars and dissensions which immediately arise, while some, such as thieves and robbers, would invert the rules of justice, loosen the bonds of law, and give free scope to their lust; and while others (a vice of most frequent occurrence) deem that to be unjust which is elsewhere regarded as just, and, on the contrary, hold that to be praiseworthy which is elsewhere forbidden. For such persons do not hate the laws from not knowing that they are good and sacred, but, inflamed with headlong passion, quarrel with what is clearly reasonable, and licentiously hate what their mind and understanding approve. Quarrels of this latter kind do not destroy the primary idea of justice. For while men dispute with each other as to particular enactments, their ideas of equity agree in substance. This, no doubt, proves the weakness of the human mind, which, even when it seems on the right path, halts and hesitates. Still, however, it is true, that some principle of civil order is impressed on all. And this is ample proof, that, in regard to the constitution of the present life, no man is devoid of the light of reason.

08.02.02B. Chapter 02. Part B

Chapter 2. Man now deprived of freedom of will, and miserably enslaved.

Continued

14. Next come manual and liberal arts, in learning which, as all have some degree of aptitude, the full force of human acuteness is displayed. But though all are not equally able to learn all the arts, we have sufficient evidence of a common capacity in the fact, that there is scarcely an individual who does not display intelligence in some particular art. And this capacity extends not merely to the learning of the art, but to the devising of something new, or the improving of what had been previously learned. This led Plato to adopt the erroneous idea, that such knowledge was nothing but recollection. So cogently does it oblige us to acknowledge that its principle is naturally implanted in the human mind. But while these proofs openly attest the fact of a universal reason and intelligence naturally implanted, this universality is of a kind which should lead every individual for himself to recognise it as a special gift of God. To this gratitude we have a sufficient call from the Creator himself, when, in the case of idiots, he shows what the endowments of the soul would be were it not pervaded with his light. Though natural to all, it is so in such a sense that it ought to be regarded as a gratuitous gift of his beneficence to each. Moreover, the invention, the methodical arrangement, and the more thorough and superior knowledge of the arts, being confined to a few individuals cannot be regarded as a solid proof of common shrewdness. Still, however, as they are bestowed indiscriminately on the good and the bad, they are justly classed among natural endowments.

15. Therefore, in reading profane authors, the admirable light of truth displayed in them should remind us, that the human mind, however much fallen and perverted from its original integrity, is still adorned and invested with admirable gifts from its Creator. If we reflect that the Spirit of God is the only fountain of truth, we will be careful, as we would avoid offering insult to him, not to reject or condemn truth wherever it appears. In despising the gifts, we insult the Giver. How, then, can we deny that truth must have beamed on those ancient lawgivers who arranged civil order and discipline with so much equity? Shall we say that the philosophers, in their exquisite researches and skilful description of nature, were blind? Shall we deny the possession of intellect to those who drew up rules for discourse, and taught us to speak in accordance with reason? Shall we say that those who, by the cultivation of the medical art, expended their industry in our behalf were only raving? What shall we say of the mathematical sciences? Shall we deem them to be the dreams of madmen? Nay, we cannot read the writings of the ancients on these subjects without the highest admiration; an admiration which their excellence will not allow us to withhold. But shall we deem anything to be noble and praiseworthy, without tracing it to the hand of God? Far from us be such ingratitude; an ingratitude not chargeable even on heathen poets, who acknowledged that philosophy and laws, and all useful arts were the inventions of the gods. Therefore, since it is manifest that men whom the Scriptures term carnal, are so acute and clear-sighted in the investigation of inferior things, their example should teach us how many gifts the Lord has left in

possession of human nature, notwithstanding of its having been despoiled of the true good.

16. Moreover, let us not forget that there are most excellent blessings which the Divine Spirit dispenses to whom he will for the common benefit of mankind. For if the skill and knowledge required for the construction of the Tabernacle behaved to be imparted to Bezaleel and Aholiab, by the Spirit of God (Exodus 31:2; Exodus 35:30), it is not strange that the knowledge of those things which are of the highest excellence in human life is said to be communicated to us by the Spirit. Nor is there any ground for asking what concourse the Spirit can have with the ungodly, who are altogether alienated from God? For what is said as to the Spirit dwelling in believers only, is to be understood of the Spirit of holiness by which we are consecrated to God as temples. Notwithstanding of this, He fills, moves, and invigorates all things by the virtue of the Spirit, and that according to the peculiar nature which each class of beings has received by the Law of Creation. But if the Lord has been pleased to assist us by the work and ministry of the ungodly in physics, dialectics, mathematics, and other similar sciences, let us avail ourselves of it, lest, by neglecting the gifts of God spontaneously offered to us, we be justly punished for our sloth. Lest any one, however, should imagine a man to be very happy merely because, with reference to the elements of this world, he has been endued with great talents for the investigation of truth, we ought to add, that the whole power of intellect thus bestowed is, in the sight of God, fleeting and vain whenever it is not based on a solid foundation of truth. Augustine (supra, sec. 4 and sec. 12), to whom, as we have observed, the Master of Sentences (lib. 2 Dist. 25), and the Schoolmen, are forced to subscribe, says most correctly that as the gratuitous gifts bestowed on man were withdrawn, so the natural gifts which remained were corrupted after the fall. Not that they can be polluted in themselves in so far as they proceed from God, but that they have ceased to be pure to polluted man, lest he should by their means obtain any praise.

17. The sum of the whole is this: From a general survey of the human race, it appears that one of the essential properties of our nature is reason, which distinguishes us from the lower animals, just as these by means of sense are distinguished from inanimate objects. For although some individuals are born without reason, that defect does not impair the general kindness of God, but rather serves to remind us, that whatever we retain ought justly to be ascribed to the Divine indulgence. Had God not so spared us, our revolt would have carried along with it the entire destruction of nature. In that some excel in acuteness, and some in judgement, while others have greater readiness in learning some peculiar art, God, by this variety commends his favour toward us, lest any one should presume to arrogate to himself that which flows from His mere liberality. For whence is it that one is more excellent than another, but that in a common nature the grace of God is specially displayed in passing by many and thus proclaiming that it is under obligation to none. We may add, that each individual is brought under particular influences according to his calling. Many examples of this occur in the Book of Judges, in which the Spirit of the Lord is said to have come upon those whom he called to govern his people (Judges 6:34). In short, in every distinguished act there is a special inspiration. Thus it is said of Saul, that “there went with him a band of men whose hearts the Lord had touched” (1 Samuel 10:26). And when his inauguration to the kingdom is foretold, Samuel thus addresses him, “The Spirit of the Lord will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man” (1 Samuel 10:6). This extends to the whole course of government, as it is afterwards said of David, “The Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward” (1 Samuel 16:13). The same thing is elsewhere said

with reference to particular movements. Nay, even in Homer, men are said to excel in genius, not only according as Jupiter has distributed to each, but according as he leads them day by day, “hoion ep hemas ageisi”. And certainly experience shows when those who were most skilful and ingenious stand stupefied, that the minds of men are entirely under the control of God, who rules them every moment. Hence it is said, that “He poureth contempt upon princes, and causeth them to wander in the wilderness where there is no way” (Psalms 107:40). Still, in this diversity we can trace some remains of the divine image distinguishing the whole human race from other creatures.

18. We must now explain what the power of human reason is, in regard to the kingdom of God, and spiritual discernments which consists chiefly of three things - the knowledge of God, the knowledge of his paternal favour towards us, which constitutes our salvation, and the method of regulating of our conduct in accordance with the Divine Law. With regard to the former two, but more properly the second, men otherwise the most ingenious are blinder than moles. I deny not, indeed, that in the writings of philosophers we meet occasionally with shrewd and apposite remarks on the nature of God, though they invariably savour somewhat of giddy imagination. As observed above, the Lord has bestowed on them some slight perception of his Godhead that they might not plead ignorance as an excuse for their impiety, and has, at times, instigated them to deliver some truths, the confession of which should be their own condemnation. Still, though seeing, they saw not. Their discernment was not such as to direct them to the truth, far less to enable them to attain it, but resembled that of the bewildered traveller, who sees the flash of lightning glance far and wide for a moment, and then vanish into the darkness of the night, before he can advance a single step. So far is such assistance from enabling him to find the right path. Besides, how many monstrous falsehoods intermingle with those minute particles of truth scattered up and down in their writings as if by chance. In short, not one of them even made the least approach to that assurance of the divine favour, without which the mind of man must ever remain a mere chaos of confusion. To the great truths, What God is in himself, and what he is in relation to us, human reason makes not the least approach. (See Book 3 ch. 2 sec. 14, 15, 16).

19. But since we are intoxicated with a false opinion of our own discernment, and can scarcely be persuaded that in divine things it is altogether stupid and blind, I believe the best course will be to establish the fact, not by argument, but by Scripture. Most admirable to this effect is the passage which I lately quoted from John, when he says, “In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not” (John 1:4, John 1:5). He intimates that the human soul is indeed irradiated with a beam of divine light, so that it is never left utterly devoid of some small flame, or rather spark, though not such as to enable it to comprehend God. And why so? Because its acuteness is, in reference to the knowledge of God, mere blindness. When the Spirit describes men under the term “darkness” he declares them void of all power of spiritual intelligence. For this reason, it is said that believers, in embracing Christ, are “born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1:13); in other words, that the flesh has no capacity for such sublime wisdom as to apprehend God, and the things of God, unless illumined by His Spirit. In like manner our Saviour, when he was acknowledged by Peter, declared that it was by special revelation from the Father (Matthew 16:17).

20. If we were persuaded of a truth which ought to be beyond dispute, viz., that human nature possesses none of the gifts which the elect receive from their heavenly Father through the Spirit of

regeneration, there would be no room here for hesitation. For thus speaks the congregation of the faithful, by the mouth of the prophet: “With thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light” (Psalms 36:9). To the same effect is the testimony of the Apostle Paul, when he declares, that “no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost” (1 Corinthians 12:3). And John Baptist, on seeing the dullness of his disciples, exclaims, “A man can receive nothing, unless it be given him from heaven” (John 3:27). That the gift to which he here refers must be understood not of ordinary natural gifts, but of special illumination, appears from this - that he was complaining how little his disciples had profited by all that he had said to them in commendation of Christ. “I see,” says he, “that my words are of no effect in imbuing the minds of men with divine things, unless the Lord enlighten their understandings by His Spirit.” Nay, Moses also, while upbraiding the people for their forgetfulness, at the same time observes, that they could not become wise in the mysteries of God without his assistance. “Ye have seen all that the Lord did before your eyes in the land of Egypt, unto Pharaoh, and unto all his servants, and unto all his land; the great temptations which thine eyes have seen, the signs, and these great miracles: yet the Lord has not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this, day” (Deuteronomy 29:2, Deuteronomy 29:3, Deuteronomy 29:4). Would the expression have been stronger had he called us mere blocks in regard to the contemplation of divine things? Hence the Lord, by the mouth of the Prophet, promises to the Israelites as a singular favour, “I will give them an heart to know me” (Jeremiah 24:7); intimating, that in spiritual things the human mind is wise only in so far as he enlightens it. This was also clearly confirmed by our Saviour when he said, “No man can come to me, except the Father which has sent me draw him” (John 6:44). Nay, is not he himself the living image of his Father, in which the full brightness of his glory is manifested to us? Therefore, how far our faculty of knowing God extends could not be better shown than when it is declared, that though his image is so plainly exhibited, we have not eyes to perceive it. What? Did not Christ descend into the world that he might make the will of his Father manifest to men, and did he not faithfully perform the office? True! He did; but nothing is accomplished by his preaching unless the inner teacher, the Spirit, open the way into our minds. Only those, therefore, come to him who have heard and learned of the Father. And in what is the method of this hearing and learning? It is when the Spirit, with a wondrous and special energy, forms the ear to hear and the mind to understand. Lest this should seem new, our Saviour refers to the prophecy of Isaiah, which contains a promise of the renovation of the Church. “For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee” (Isaiah 54:7). If the Lord here predicts some special blessing to his elect, it is plain that the teaching to which he refers is not that which is common to them with the ungodly and profane.

It thus appears that none can enter the kingdom of God save those whose minds have been renewed by the enlightening of the Holy Spirit. On this subject the clearest exposition is given by Paul, who, when expressly handling it, after condemning the whole wisdom of the world as foolishness and vanity, and thereby declaring man’s utter destitution, thus concludes, “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned” (1 Corinthians 2:14). Whom does he mean by the “natural man”? The man who trusts to the light of nature. Such a man has no understanding in the spiritual mysteries of God. Why so? Is it because through sloth he neglects them? Nay, though he exert himself, it is of no avail; they are “spiritually discerned.” And what does this mean? That altogether hidden from human discernment, they are made known only by the revelation of the

Spirit; so that they are accounted foolishness wherever the Spirit does not give light. The Apostle had previously declared, that “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love him;” nay, that the wisdom of the world is a kind of veil by which the mind is prevented from beholding God (1 Corinthians 2:9). What would we more? The Apostle declares that God has “made foolish the wisdom of this world” (1 Corinthians 1:20); and shall we attribute to it an acuteness capable of penetrating to God, and the hidden mysteries of his kingdom? Far from us be such presumption!

21. What the Apostle here denies to man, he, in another place, ascribes to God alone, when he prays, “that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation” (Ephesians 1:17). You now hear that all wisdom and revelation is the gift of God. What follows? “The eyes of your understanding being enlightened.” Surely, if they require a new enlightening, they must in themselves be blind. The next words are, “that ye may know what is the hope of his calling” (Ephesians 1:18). In other words, the minds of men have not capacity enough to know their calling. Let no prating Pelagian here allege that God obviates this rudeness or stupidity, when, by the doctrine of his word, he directs us to a path which we could not have found without a guide. David had the law, comprehending in it all the wisdom that could be desired, and yet not contented with this, he prays, “Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law” (Psalms 119:18). By this expression, he certainly intimates, that it is like sunrise to the earth when the word of God shines forth; but that men do not derive much benefit from it until he himself, who is for this reason called the Father of lights (James 1:17), either gives eyes or opens them; because, whatever is not illuminated by his Spirit is wholly darkness. The Apostles had been duly and amply instructed by the best of teachers. Still, as they wanted the Spirit of truth to complete their education in the very doctrine which they had previously heard, they were ordered to wait for him (John 14:26). If we confess that what we ask of God is lacking to us, and He by the very thing promised intimates our want, no man can hesitate to acknowledge that he is able to understand the mysteries of God, only in so far as illuminated by his grace. He who ascribes to himself more understanding than this, is the blinder for not acknowledging his blindness.

22. It remains to consider the third branch of the knowledge of spiritual things, viz., the method of properly regulating the conduct. This is correctly termed the knowledge of the works of righteousness, a branch in which the human mind seems to have somewhat more discernment than in the former two, since an Apostle declares, “When the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meantime accusing or else excusing one another” (Romans 2:14, Romans 2:15). If the Gentiles have the righteousness of the law naturally engraven on their minds, we certainly cannot say that they are altogether blind as to the rule of life. Nothing, indeed is more common, than for man to be sufficiently instructed in a right course of conduct by natural law, of which the Apostle here speaks. Let us consider, however for what end this knowledge of the law was given to men. For from this it will forthwith appear how far it can conduct them in the way of reason and truth. This is even plain from the words of Paul, if we attend to their arrangement. He had said a little before, that those who had sinned in the law will be judged by the law; and those who have sinned without the law will perish without the law. As it might seem unaccountable that

the Gentiles should perish without any previous judgement, he immediately subjoins, that conscience served them instead of the law, and was therefore sufficient for their righteous condemnation. The end of the natural law, therefore, is to render man inexcusable, and may be not improperly defined - the judgement of conscience distinguishing sufficiently between just and unjust, and by convicting men on their own testimony depriving them of all pretext for ignorance. So indulgent is man towards himself, that, while doing evil, he always endeavours as much as he can to suppress the idea of sin. It was this, apparently, which induced Plato (in his Protagoras) to suppose that sins were committed only through ignorance. There might be some ground for this, if hypocrisy were so successful in hiding vice as to keep the conscience clear in the sight of God. But since the sinner, when trying to evade the judgement of good and evil implanted in him, is ever and anon dragged forward, and not permitted to wink so effectually as not to be compelled at times, whether he will or not, to open his eyes, it is false to say that he sins only through ignorance.

23. Themistius is more accurate in teaching (Paraphr. in Lib. 3 de Anima, cap. 46), that the intellect is very seldom mistaken in the general definition or essence of the matter; but that deception begins as it advances farther, namely, when it descends to particulars. That homicide, putting the case in the abstract, is an evil, no man will deny; and yet one who is conspiring the death of his enemy deliberates on it as if the thing was good. The adulterer will condemn adultery in the abstract, and yet flatter himself while privately committing it. The ignorance lies here: that man, when he comes to the particular, forgets the rule which he had laid down in the general case. Augustine treats most admirably on this subject in his exposition of the first verse of the fifty-seventh Psalm. The doctrine of Themistius, however, does not always hold true: for the turpitude of the crime sometimes presses so on the conscience, that the sinner does not impose upon himself by a false semblance of good, but rushes into sin knowingly and willingly. Hence the expression: I see the better course, and approve it; I follow the worse (Medea of Ovid). For this reason, Aristotle seems to me to have made a very shrewd distinction between incontinence and intemperance (Ethic. lib. 7 cap. 3) Where incontinence (akrasia) reigns, he says, that through the passion (pathos) particular knowledge is suppressed: so that the individual sees not in his own misdeed the evil which he sees generally in similar cases; but when the passion is over, repentance immediately succeeds. Intemperance (akolasia), again, is not extinguished or diminished by a sense of sin, but, on the contrary, persists in the evil choice which it has once made.

24. Moreover, when you hear of a universal judgement in man distinguishing between good and evil, you must not suppose that this judgement is, in every respect, sound and entire. For if the hearts of men are imbued with a sense of justice and injustice, in order that they may have no pretext to allege ignorance, it is by no means necessary for this purpose that they should discern the truth in particular cases. It is even more than sufficient if they understand so far as to be unable to practice evasion without being convicted by their own conscience, and beginning even now to tremble at the judgement-seat of God. Indeed, if we would test our reason by the Divine Law, which is a perfect standard of righteousness, we should find how blind it is in many respects. It certainly attains not to the principal heads in the First Table, such as, trust in God, the ascription to him of all praise in virtue and righteousness, the invocation of his name, and the true observance of his day of rest. Did ever any soul, under the guidance of natural sense, imagine that these and

the like constitute the legitimate worship of God? When profane men would worship God, how often soever they may be drawn off from their vain trifling, they constantly relapse into it. They admit, indeed, that sacrifices are not pleasing, to God, unless accompanied with sincerity of mind; and by this they testify that they have some conception of spiritual worship, though they immediately pervert it by false devices: for it is impossible to persuade them that every thing which the law enjoins on the subject is true. Shall I then extol the discernment of a mind which can neither acquire wisdom by itself, nor listen to advice? As to the precepts of the Second Table, there is considerably more knowledge of them, inasmuch as they are more closely connected with the preservation of civil society. Even here, however, there is something defective. Every man of understanding deems it most absurd to submit to unjust and tyrannical domination, provided it can by any means be thrown off, and there is but one opinion among men, that it is the part of an abject and servile mind to bear it patiently, the part of an honourable and high-spirited mind to rise up against it. Indeed, the revenge of injuries is not regarded by philosophers as a vice. But the Lord condemning this too lofty spirit, prescribes to his people that patience which mankind deem infamous. In regard to the general observance of the law, concupiscence altogether escapes our animadversion. For the natural man cannot bear to recognise diseases in his lusts. The light of nature is stifled sooner than take the first step into this profound abyss. For, when philosophers class immoderate movements of the mind among vices, they mean those which break forth and manifest themselves in grosser forms. Depraved desires, in which the mind can quietly indulge, they regard as nothing (see infra, chap. 8 sec. 49).

25. As we have above animadverted on Plato’s error, in ascribing all sins to ignorance, so we must repudiate the opinion of those who hold that all sins proceed from preconceived gravity and malice. We know too well from experience how often we fall, even when our intention is good. Our reason is exposed to so many forms of delusion, is liable to so many errors, stumbles on so many obstacles, is entangled by so many snares, that it is ever wandering from the right direction. Of how little value it is in the sight of God, in regard to all the parts of life, Paul shows, when he says, that we are not “sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves” (2 Corinthians 3:5). He is not speaking of the will or affection; he denies us the power of thinking aright how any thing cam be duly performed. Is it, indeed, true, that all thought, intelligence, discernment, and industry, are so defective, that, in the sight of the Lord, we cannot think or aim at any thing that is right? To us, who can scarcely bear to part with acuteness of intellect (in our estimation a most precious endowment), it seems hard to admit this, whereas it is regarded as most just by the Holy Spirit, who “knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are vanity” (Psalms 94:11), and distinctly declares, that “every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (Genesis 6:5; Genesis 8:21). If every thing which our mind conceives, meditates plans, and resolves, is always evil, how can it ever think of doing what is pleasing to God, to whom righteousness and holiness alone are acceptable? It is thus plain, that our mind, in what direction soever it turns, is miserably exposed to vanity. David was conscious of its weakness when he prayed, “Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law” (Psalms 119:34). By desiring to obtain a new understanding, he intimates that his own was by no means sufficient. This he does not once only, but in one psalm repeats the same prayer almost ten times, the repetition intimating how strong the necessity which urged him to pray. What he thus asked for himself alone, Paul prays for the churches in general. “For this cause,” says he, “we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will, in all wisdom and

spiritual understanding; that you might walk worthy of the Lord," &c. (Colossians 1:9, Colossians 1:10). Whenever he represents this as a blessing from God, we should remember that he at the same time testifies that it is not in the power of man. Accordingly, Augustine, in speaking of this inability of human reason to understand the things of God, says, that he deems the grace of illumination not less necessary to the mind than the light of the sun to the eye (August. de Peccat. Merit. et Remiss. lib. 2 cap. 5). And, not content with this, he modifies his expression, adding, that we open our eyes to behold the light, whereas the mental eye remains shut, until it is opened by the Lord. Nor does Scripture say that our minds are illuminated in a single day, so as afterwards to see of themselves. The passage, which I lately quoted from the Apostle Paul, refers to continual progress and increase. David, too, expresses this distinctly in these words: "With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments" (Psalms 119:10). Though he had been regenerated, and so had made no ordinary progress in true piety, he confesses that he stood in need of direction every moment, in order that he might not decline from the knowledge with which he had been endued. Hence, he elsewhere prays for a renewal of a right spirit, which he had lost by his sin (Psalms 51:10). For that which God gave at first, while temporarily withdrawn, it is equally his province to restore.

26. We must now examine the will, on which the question of freedom principally turns, the power of choice belonging to it rather than the intellect, as we have already seen (supra, sect. 4). And at the outset, to guard against its being thought that the doctrine taught by philosophers, and generally received, viz., that all things by natural instinct have a desire of good, is any proof of the rectitude of the human will, let us observe, that the power of free will is not to be considered in any of those desires which proceed more from instinct than mental deliberation. Even the schoolmen admit (Thomas, Part 1, Quest. 83, art. 3), that there is no act of free will, unless when reason looks at opposites. By this they mean, that the things desired must be such as may be made the object of choice, and that to pave the way for choice, deliberation must precede. And, undoubtedly, if you attend to what this natural desire of good in man is, you will find that it is common to him with the brutes. They, too, desire what is good; and when any semblance of good capable of moving the sense appears, they follow after it. Here, however, man does not, in accordance with the excellence of his immortal nature, rationally choose, and studiously pursue, what is truly for his good. He does not admit reason to his counsel, nor exert his intellect; but without reason, without counsel, follows the bent of his nature like the lower animals. The question of freedom, therefore, has nothing to do with the fact of man's being led by natural instinct to desire good. The question is, Does man, after determining by right reason what is good, choose what he thus knows, and pursue what he thus chooses? Lest any doubt should be entertained as to this, we must attend to the double misnomer. For this appetite is not properly a movement of the will, but natural inclination; and this good is not one of virtue or righteousness, but of condition, viz., that the individual may feel comfortable. In fine, how much soever man may desire to obtain what is good, he does not follow it. There is no man who would not be pleased with eternal blessedness; and yet, without the impulse of the Spirit, no man aspires to it. Since, then, the natural desire of happiness in man no more proves the freedom of the will, than the tendency in metals and stones to attain the perfection of their nature, let us consider, in other respects, whether the will is so utterly vitiated and corrupted in every part as to produce nothing but evil, or whether it retains some portion uninjured, and productive of good desires.

27. Those who ascribe our willing effectually, to the primary grace of Gods (supra, sect. 6), seem conversely to insinuate that the soul has in itself a power of aspiring to good, though a power too feeble to rise to solid affection or active endeavour. There is no doubt that this opinion, adopted from Origin and certain of the ancient Fathers, has been generally embraced by the schoolmen, who are wont to apply to man in his natural state (in puris naturalibus, as they express it) the following description of the apostle: “For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.” “To will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not” (Romans 7:15, Romans 7:18). But, in this way, the whole scope of Paul’s discourse is inverted. He is speaking of the Christian struggle (touched on more briefly in the Epistle to the Galatians), which believers constantly experience from the conflict between the flesh and the Spirit. But the Spirit is not from nature, but from regeneration. That the apostle is speaking of the regenerate is apparent from this, that after saying, “in me dwells no good thing,” he immediately adds the explanation, “in my flesh.” Accordingly, he declares, “It is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.” What is the meaning of the correction, “in me (that is, in my flesh?”) It is just as if he had spoken in this way, No good thing dwells in me, of myself, for in my flesh nothing good can be found. Hence follows the species of excuse, It is not I myself that do evil, but sin that dwelleth in me. This applies to none but the regenerate, who, with the leading powers of the soul, tend towards what is good. The whole is made plain by the conclusion, “I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind” (Romans 7:22, Romans 7:23). Who has this struggle in himself, save those who, regenerated by the Spirit of God, bear about with them the remains of the flesh? Accordingly, Augustine, who had at one time thought that the discourse related to the natural man (August. ad Bonifac. lib. 1 c. 10), afterwards retracted his exposition as unsound and inconsistent. And, indeed if we admit that men, without grace, have any motions to good, however feeble, what answer shall we give to the apostles who declares that “we are incapable of thinking a good thought?” (2 Corinthians 3:6). What answer shall we give to the Lord, who declares, by Moses, that “every imagination of man’s heart is only evil continually?” (Genesis 8:21). Since the blunder has thus arisen from an erroneous view of a single passage, it seems unnecessary to dwell upon it. Let us rather give due weight to our Saviour’s words, “Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin” (John 8:34). We are all sinners by nature, therefore we are held under the yoke of sin. But if the whole man is subject to the dominion of sin, surely the will, which is its principal seat, must be bound with the closest chains. And, indeed, if divine grace were preceded by any will of ours, Paul could not have said that “it is God which worketh in us both to will and to do” (Php 2:13). Away, then, with all the absurd trifling which many have indulged in with regard to preparation. Although believers sometimes ask to have their heart trained to the obedience of the divine law, as David does in several passages (Psalms 51:12), it is to be observed, that even this longing in prayer is from God. This is apparent from the language used. When he prays, “Create in me a clean heart,” he certainly does not attribute the beginning of the creation to himself. Let us therefore rather adopt the sentiment of Augustine, “God will prevent you in all things, but do you sometimes prevent his anger. How? Confess that you have all these things from God, that all the good you have is from him, all the evil from yourself” (August. De Verbis Apost. Serm. 10). Shortly after he says “Of our own we have nothing but sin.”

08.02.03. Chapter 3

Chapter 3. Every thing proceeding from the corrupt nature of man damnable. The principal matters in this chapter are:

I. A recapitulation of the former chapter, proving, from passages of Scriptures that the intellect and will of man are so corrupted, that no integrity, no knowledge or fear of God, can now be found in him, sect. 1 and 2.

II. Objections to this doctrine, from the virtues which shone in some of the heathen, refuted, sect. 3 and 4.

III. What kind of will remains in man, the slave of sin, sect. 5. The remedy and cure, sect. 6.

IV. The opinion of Neo-Pelagian sophists concerning the preparation and efficacy of the will, and also concerning perseverance and co-operating grace, refuted, both by reason and Scripture, sect. 7-12.

V. Some passages from Augustine confirming the truth of this doctrine, sect. 13 and 14.

Sections

1. The intellect and will of the whole man corrupt. The term flesh applies not only to the sensual, but also to the higher part of the soul. This demonstrated from Scripture.

2. The heart also involved in corruption, and hence in no part of man can integrity, or knowledge or the fear of God, be found.

3. Objection, that some of the heathen were possessed of admirable endowments, and, therefore, that the nature of man is not entirely corrupt. Answer, Corruption is not entirely removed, but only inwardly restrained. Explanation of this answer.

4. Objection still urged, that the virtuous and vicious among the heathen must be put upon the same level, or the virtuous prove that human nature, properly cultivated, is not devoid of virtue. Answer, That these are not ordinary properties of human nature, but special gifts of God. These gifts defiled by ambition, and hence the actions proceeding from them, however esteemed by man, have no merit with God.

5. Though man has still the faculty of willing there is no soundness in it. He falls under the bondage of sin necessarily, and yet voluntarily. Necessity must be distinguished from compulsion. The ancient Theologians acquainted with this necessity. Some passages condemning the vacillation of Lombard.

6. Conversion to God constitutes the remedy or soundness of the human will. This not only begun, but continued and completed; the beginning, continuance, and completion, being ascribed entirely to God. This proved by Ezekiel’s description of the stony heart, and from other passages of

Scripture.

7. Various Objections. 1. The will is converted by God, but, when once prepared, does its part in the work of conversion. Answer from Augustine. 2. Grace can do nothing without will, nor the will without grace. Answer. Grace itself produces will. God prevents the unwilling, making him willing, and follows up this preventing grace that he may not will in vain. Another answer gathered from various passages of Augustine.

8. Answer to the second Objection continued. No will inclining to good except in the elect. The cause of election out of man. Hence right will, as well as election, are from the good pleasure of God. The beginning of willing and doing well is of faith; faith again is the gift of God; and hence mere grace is the cause of our beginning to will well. This proved by Scripture.

9. Answer to second Objection continued. That good will is merely of grace proved by the prayers of saints. Three axioms 1. God does not prepare man's heart, so that he can afterwards do some good of himself, but every desire of rectitude, every inclination to study, and every effort to pursue it, is from Him. 2. This desire, study, and effort, do not stop short, but continue to effect. 3. This progress is constant. The believer perseveres to the end. A third Objection, and three answers to it.

10. A fourth Objection. Answer. Fifth Objection. Answer. Answer confirmed by many passages of Scripture, and supported by a passage from Augustine.

11. Perseverance not of ourselves, but of God. Objection. Two errors in the objection. Refutation of both.

12. An objection founded on the distinction of co-operating grace. Answer. Answer confirmed by the testimony of Augustine and Bernard.

13. Last part of the chapter, in which it is proved by many passages of Augustine, that he held the doctrine here taught.

14. An objection, representing Augustine at variance with himself and other Theologians, removed. A summary of Augustine's doctrine on free will.

1. The nature of man, in both parts of his soul (viz., intellect and will), cannot be better ascertained than by attending to the epithets applied to him in Scripture. If he is fully depicted (and it may easily be proved that he is) by the words of our Saviour, "that which is born of the flesh is flesh" (John 3:6), he must be a very miserable creature. For, as an apostle declares, "to be carnally minded is death" (Romans 8:8), "It is enmity against God, and is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Is it true that the flesh is so perverse, that it is perpetually striving with all its might against God? that it cannot accord with the righteousness of the divine law? that, in short, it can beget nothing but the materials of death? Grant that there is nothing in human nature but flesh, and then extract something good out of it if you can. But it will be said, that the word "flesh" applies only to the sensual, and not to the higher part of the soul. This, however, is completely refuted by the words both of Christ and his apostle. The statement of our Lord is, that a man must be born again, because he is flesh. He requires not to be born again, with reference to the body. But a mind is not born again merely by having some portion of it reformed. It must be totally renewed. This is confirmed by the antithesis used in both passages. In the contrast between the

Spirit and the flesh, there is nothing left of an intermediate nature. In this way, everything in man, which is not spiritual, falls under the denomination of carnal. But we have nothing of the Spirit except through regeneration. Everything, therefore, which we have from nature is flesh. Any possible doubt which might exist on the subject is removed by the words of Paul (Ephesians 4:23), where, after a description of the old man, who, he says, “is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts,” he bids us “be renewed in the spirit” of our mind. You see that he places unlawful and depraved desires not in the sensual part merely, but in the mind itself, and therefore requires that it should be renewed. Indeed, he had a little before drawn a picture of human nature, which shows that there is no part in which it is not perverted and corrupted. For when he says that the “Gentiles walk in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart” (Ephesians 4:17, Ephesians 4:18), there can be no doubt that his words apply to all whom the Lord has not yet formed anew both to wisdom and righteousness. This is rendered more clear by the comparison which immediately follows, and by which he reminds believers that they “have not so learned Christ these words implying that the grace of Christ is the only remedy for that blindness and its evil consequences. Thus, too, had Isaiah prophesied of the kingdom of Christ, when the Lord promised to the Church, that though darkness should “cover the earth, and gross darkness the people,” yet that he should “arise” upon it, and “his glory” should be seen upon it (Isaiah 40:2). When it is thus declared that divine light is to arise on the Church alone, all without the Church is left in blindness and darkness. I will not enumerate all that occurs throughout Scripture, and particularly in the Psalms and Prophetical writings, as to the vanity of man. There is much in what David says, “Surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie: to be laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity” (Psalms 62:10). The human mind receives a humbling blow when all the thoughts which proceed from it are derided as foolish, frivolous, perverse, and insane.

2. In no degree more lenient is the condemnation of the heart, when it is described as “deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked” (Jeremiah 17:9). But as I study brevity, I will be satisfied with a single passage, one, however, in which as in a bright mirror, we may behold a complete image of our nature. The Apostle, when he would humble man’s pride, uses these words: “There is none righteous no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that does good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: their feet are swift to shed blood: destruction and misery are in their ways: and the way of peace have they not known: there is no fear of God before their eyes” (Romans 3:10-18). Thus he thunders not against certain individuals, but against the whole posterity of Adam - not against the depraved manners of any single age, but the perpetual corruption of nature. His object in the passage is not merely to upbraid men in order that they may repent, but to teach that all are overwhelmed with inevitable calamity, and can be delivered from it only by the mercy of God. As this could not be proved without previously proving the overthrow and destruction of nature, he produced those passages to show that its ruin is complete.

Let it be a fixed point, then, that men are such as is here described, not by vicious custom, but by depravity of nature. The reasoning of the Apostle, that there is no salvation for man, save in the

mercy of God, because in himself he is desperate and undone, could not otherwise stand. I will not here labour to prove that the passages apply, with the view of removing the doubts of any who might think them quoted out of place. I will take them as if they had been used by Paul for the first time, and not taken from the Prophets. First, then, he strips man of righteousness, that is, integrity and purity; and, secondly, he strips him of sound intelligence. He argues, that defect of intelligence is proved by apostasy from God. To seek Him is the beginning of wisdom, and, therefore, such defect must exist in all who have revolted from Him. He subjoins, that all have gone astray, and become as it were mere corruption; that there is none that does good. He then enumerates the crimes by which those who have once given loose to their wickedness pollute every member of their bodies. Lastly, he declares that they have no fear of God, according to whose rule all our steps should be directed. If these are the hereditary properties of the human race, it is vain to look for anything good in our nature. I confess indeed, that all these iniquities do not break out in every individual. Still it cannot be denied that the hydra lurks in every breast. For as a body, while it contains and fosters the cause and matter of disease, cannot be called healthy, although pain is not actually felt; so a soul, while teeming with such seeds of vice, cannot be called sound. This similitude, however, does not apply throughout. In a body however morbid the functions of life are performed; but the soul, when plunged into that deadly abyss, not only labours under vice, but is altogether devoid of good.

3. Here, again we are met with a question very much the same as that which was previously solved. In every age there have been some who, under the guidance of nature, were all their lives devoted to virtue. It is of no consequence, that many blots may be detected in their conduct; by the mere study of virtue, they evinced that there was somewhat of purity in their nature. The value which virtues of this kind have in the sight of God will be considered more fully when we treat of the merit of works. Meanwhile however, it will be proper to consider it in this place also, in so far as necessary for the exposition of the subject in hand. Such examples, then, seem to warn us against supposing that the nature of man is utterly vicious, since, under its guidance, some have not only excelled in illustrious deeds, but conducted themselves most honourably through the whole course of their lives. But we ought to consider, that, notwithstanding of the corruption of our nature, there is some room for divine grace, such grace as, without purifying it, may lay it under internal restraint. For, did the Lord let every mind loose to wanton in its lusts, doubtless there is not a man who would not show that his nature is capable of all the crimes with which Paul charges it (Romans 3:1-31 compared with Psalms 14:3, &c). What? Can you exempt yourself from the number of those whose feet are swift to shed blood; whose hands are foul with rapine and murder; whose throats are like open sepulchres; whose tongues are deceitful; whose lips are venomous; whose actions are useless, unjust, rotten, deadly; whose soul is without God; whose inward parts are full of wickedness; whose eyes are on the watch for deception; whose minds are prepared for insult; whose every part, in short, is framed for endless deeds of wickedness? If every soul is capable of such abominations (and the Apostle declares this boldly), it is surely easy to see what the result would be, if the Lord were to permit human passion to follow its bent. No ravenous beast would rush so furiously, no stream, however rapid and violent, so impetuously burst its banks. In the elect, God cures these diseases in the mode which will shortly be explained; in others, he only lays them under such restraint as may prevent them from breaking forth to a degree incompatible with the preservation of the established order of things. Hence, how much soever men may disguise their impurity, some are restrained only by shame, others by a fear of the laws, from

breaking out into many kinds of wickedness. Some aspire to an honest life, as deeming it most conducive to their interest, while others are raised above the vulgar lot, that, by the dignity of their station, they may keep inferiors to their duty. Thus God, by his providence, curbs the perverseness of nature, preventing it from breaking forth into action, yet without rendering it inwardly pure.

4. The objection, however, is not yet solved. For vie must either put Cataline on the same footing with Camillus, or hold Camillus to be an example that nature, when carefully cultivated, is not wholly void of goodness. I admit that the specious qualities which Camillus possessed were divine gifts, and appear entitled to commendation when viewed in themselves. But in what way will they be proofs of a virtuous nature? Must we not go back to the mind, and from it begin to reason thus? If a natural man possesses such integrity of manners, nature is not without the faculty of studying virtue. But what if his mind was depraved and perverted, and followed anything rather than rectitude? Such it undoubtedly was, if you grant that he was only a natural man. How then will you laud the power of human nature for good, if, even where there is the highest semblance of integrity, a corrupt bias is always detected? Therefore, as you would not commend a man for virtue whose vices impose upon you by a show of virtue, so you will not attribute a power of choosing rectitude to the human will while rooted in depravity (see August. lib. 4, Cont. Julian). Still, the surest and easiest answer to the objection is, that those are not common endowments of nature, but special gifts of God, which he distributes in divers forms, and, in a definite measure, to men otherwise profane. For which reason, we hesitate not, in common language, to say, that one is of a good, another of a vicious nature; though we cease not to hold that both are placed under the universal condition of human depravity. All we mean is that God has conferred on the one a special grace which he has not seen it meet to confer on the other. When he was pleased to set Saul over the kingdom, he made him as it were a new man. This is the thing meant by Plato, when, alluding to a passage in the Iliad, he says, that the children of kings are distinguished at their birth by some special qualities - God, in kindness to the human race, often giving a spirit of heroism to those whom he destines for empire. In this way, the great leaders celebrated in history were formed. The same judgement must be given in the case of private individuals. But as those endued with the greatest talents were always impelled by the greatest ambitions (a stain which defiles all virtues and makes them lose all favour in the sight of God), so we cannot set any value on anything that seems praiseworthy in ungodly men. We may add, that the principal part of rectitude is wanting, when there is no zeal for the glory of God, and there is no such zeal in those whom he has not regenerated by his Spirit. Nor is it without good cause said in Isaiah, that on Christ should rest “the spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord” (Isaiah 11:2); for by this we are taught that all who are strangers to Christ are destitute of that fear of God which is the beginning of wisdom (Psalms 111:10). The virtues which deceive us by an empty show may have their praise in civil society and the common intercourse of life, but before the judgement-seat of God they will be of no value to establish a claim of righteousness.

5. When the will is enchained as the slave of sin, it cannot make a movement towards goodness, far less steadily pursue it. Every such movement is the first step in that conversion to God, which in Scripture is entirely ascribed to divine grace. Thus Jeremiah prays, “Turn thou me, and I shall be turned” (Jeremiah 31:18). Hence, too, in the same chapter, describing the spiritual redemption of believers, the Prophet says, “The Lord has redeemed Jacob, and ransomed him from the hand of him that was stronger than he” (Jeremiah 31:11); intimating how close the fetters are with which

the sinner is bound, so long as he is abandoned by the Lord, and acts under the yoke of the devil. Nevertheless, there remains a will which both inclines and hastens on with the strongest affection towards sin; man, when placed under this bondage, being deprived not of will, but of soundness of will. Bernard says not improperly, that all of us have a will; but to will well is proficiency, to will ill is defect. Thus simply to will is the part of man, to will ill the part of corrupt nature, to will well the part of grace. Moreover, when I say that the will, deprived of liberty, is led or dragged by necessity to evil, it is strange that any should deem the expression harsh, seeing there is no absurdity in it, and it is not at variance with pious use. It does, however, offend those who know not how to distinguish between necessity and compulsion. Were any one to ask them, Is not God necessarily good, is not the devil necessarily wicked, what answer would they give? The goodness of God is so connected with his Godhead, that it is not more necessary to be God than to be good; whereas the devil, by his fall, was so estranged from goodness, that he can do nothing but evil. Should any one give utterance to the profane jeer (see Calvin Adv. Pighium), that little praise is due to God for a goodness to which he is forced, is it not obvious to every man to reply, It is owing not to violent impulse, but to his boundless goodness, that he cannot do evil? Therefore, if the free will of God in doing good is not impeded, because he necessarily must do good; if the devil, who can do nothing but evil, nevertheless sins voluntarily; can it be said that man sins less voluntarily because he is under a necessity of sinning? This necessity is uniformly proclaimed by Augustine, who, even when pressed by the invidious cavil of Celestius, hesitated not to assert it in the following terms: “Man through liberty became a sinner, but corruption, ensuing as the penalty, has converted liberty into necessity” (August. lib. de Perf. Justin). Whenever mention is made of the subject, he hesitates not to speak in this way of the necessary bondage of sin (August. de Nature et Gratia, et alibi). Let this, then, be regarded as the sum of the distinction. Man, since he was corrupted by the fall, sins not forced or unwilling, but voluntarily, by a most forward bias of the mind; not by violent compulsion, or external force, but by the movement of his own passion; and yet such is the depravity of his nature, that he cannot move and act except in the direction of evil. If this is true, the thing not obscurely expressed is, that he is under a necessity of sinning. Bernard, assenting to Augustine, thus writes: “Among animals, man alone is free, and yet sin intervening, he suffers a kind of violence, but a violence proceeding from his will, not from nature, so that it does not even deprive him of innate liberty” (Bernard, Sermo. super Cantica, 81). For that which is voluntary is also free. A little after he adds, “Thus, by some means strange and wicked, the will itself, being deteriorated by sin, makes a necessity; but so that the necessity, in as much as it is voluntary, cannot excuse the will, and the will, in as much as it is enticed, cannot exclude the necessity.” For this necessity is in a manner voluntary. He afterwards says that “we are under a yoke, but no other yoke than that of voluntary servitude; therefore, in respect of servitude, we are miserable, and in respect of will, inexcusable; because the will, when it was free, made itself the slave of sin.” At length he concludes, “Thus the soul, in some strange and evil way, is held under this kind of voluntary, yet sadly free necessity, both bond and free; bond in respect of necessity, free in respect of will: and what is still more strange, and still more miserable, it is guilty because free, and enslaved because guilty, and therefore enslaved because free.” My readers hence perceive that the doctrine which I deliver is not new, but the doctrine which of old Augustine delivered with the consent of all the godly, and which was afterwards shut up in the cloisters of monks for almost a thousand years. Lombard, by not knowing how to distinguish between necessity and compulsion, gave occasion to a pernicious error.

6. On the other hand, it may be proper to consider what the remedy is which divine grace provides for the correction and cure of natural corruption. Since the Lord, in bringing assistance, supplies us with what is lacking, the nature of that assistance will immediately make manifest its converse, viz., our penury. When the Apostle says to the Philippians, “Being confident of this very thing, that he which has begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ” (Php 1:6), there cannot be a doubt, that by the good work thus begun, he means the very commencement of conversion in the will. God, therefore, begins the good work in us by exciting in our hearts a desire, a love, and a study of righteousness, or (to speak more correctly) by turning, training, and guiding our hearts unto righteousness; and he completes this good work by confirming us unto perseverance. But lest any one should cavil that the good work thus begun by the Lord consists in aiding the will, which is in itself weak, the Spirit elsewhere declares what the will, when left to itself, is able to do. His words are, “A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgements, and do them” (Ezekiel 36:26, Ezekiel 36:27). How can it be said that the weakness of the human will is aided so as to enable it to aspire effectually to the choice of good, when the fact is, that it must be wholly transformed and renovated? If there is any softness in a stone; if you can make it tender, and flexible into any shape, then it may be said, that the human heart may be shaped for rectitude, provided that which is imperfect in it is supplemented by divine grace. But if the Spirit, by the above similitude, meant to show that no good can ever be extracted from our heart until it is made altogether new, let us not attempt to share with Him what He claims for himself alone. If it is like turning a stone into flesh when God turns us to the study of rectitude, everything proper to our own will is abolished, and that which succeeds in its place is wholly of God. I say the will is abolished, but not in so far as it is will, for in conversion everything essential to our original nature remains: I also say, that it is created anew, not because the will then begins to exist, but because it is turned from evil to good. This, I maintains is wholly the work of God, because, as the Apostle testifies, we are not “sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves” (2 Corinthians 3:5). Accordingly, he elsewhere says, not merely that God assists the weak or corrects the depraved will, but that he worketh in us to will (Php 2:13). From this it is easily inferred, as I have said, that everything good in the will is entirely the result of grace. In the same sense, the Apostle elsewhere says, “It is the same God which worketh all in all” (1 Corinthians 12:6). For he is not there treating of universal government, but declaring that all the good qualities which believers possess are due to God. In using the term “all,” he certainly makes God the author of spiritual life from its beginning to its end. This he had previously taught in different terms, when he said that there is “one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him” (1 Corinthians 8:6); thus plainly extolling the new creation, by which everything of our common nature is destroyed. There is here a tacit antithesis between Adam and Christ, which he elsewhere explains more clearly when he says, “We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them” (Ephesians 2:10). His meaning is to show in this way that our salvation is gratuitous because the beginning of goodness is from the second creation which is obtained in Christ. If any, even the minutest, ability were in ourselves, there would also be some merit. But to show our utter destitution, he argues that we merit nothing, because we are created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has prepared; again intimating by these words, that all the fruits of good works are originally and immediately from God. Hence the Psalmist, after

saying that the Lord “has made us,” to deprive us of all share in the work, immediately adds, “not we ourselves.” That he is speaking of regeneration, which is the commencement of the spiritual life, is obvious from the context, in which the next words are, “we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture” (Psalms 100:3). Not contented with simply giving God the praise of our salvation, he distinctly excludes us from all share in it, just as if he had said that not one particle remains to man as a ground of boasting. The whole is of God.

7. But perhaps there will be some who, while they admit that the will is in its own nature averse to righteousness, and is converted solely by the power of God, will yet hold that, when once it is prepared, it performs a part in acting. This they found upon the words of Augustine, that grace precedes every good work; the will accompanying, not leading; a handmaid, and not a guide (August. ad Bonifac. Ephesians 106). The words thus not improperly used by this holy writer, Lombard preposterously wrests to the above effect (Lombard, lib. 2, Dist. 25). But I maintain, that as well in the words of the Psalmist which I have quoted, as in other passages of Scripture, two things are clearly taught, viz., that the Lord both corrects, or rather destroys, our depraved will, and also substitutes a good will from himself. In as much as it is prevented by grace, I have no objection to your calling it a handmaid; but in as much as when formed again, it is the work of the Lord, it is erroneous to say, that it accompanies preventing grace as a voluntary attendant. Therefore, Chrysostom is inaccurate in saying, that grace cannot do any thing without will, nor will any thing without grace (Serm. de Invent. Sanct. Crucis); as if grace did not, in terms of the passage lately quoted from Paul, produce the very will itself. The intention of Augustine, in calling the human will the handmaid of grace, was not to assign it a kind of second place to grace in the performance of good works. His object merely was to refute the pestilential dogma of Pelagius, who made human merit the first cause of salvation. As was sufficient for his purpose at the time, he contends that grace is prior to all merit, while, in the meantime, he says nothing of the other question as to the perpetual effect of grace, which, however, he handles admirably in other places. For in saying, as he often does, that the Lord prevents the unwilling in order to make him willing, and follows after the willing that he may not will in vain, he makes Him the sole author of good works. Indeed, his sentiments on this subject are too clear to need any lengthened illustration. “Men,” says he, “labour to find in our will something that is our own, and not God’s; how they can find it, I wot not” (August. de Remiss. Peccat., lib. 2 c. 18). In his First Book against Pelagius and Celestius, expounding the saying of Christ, “Every man therefore that has heard, and has learned of the Father, cometh unto me” (John 6:45), he says, “The will is aided not only so as to know what is to be done, but also to do what it knows.” And thus, when God teaches not by the letter of the Law, but by the grace of the Spirit, he so teaches, that every one who has learned, not only knowing, sees, but also willing, desires, and acting, performs.

8. Since we are now occupied with the chief point on which the controversy turns, let us give the reader the sum of the matter in a few, and those most unambiguous, passages of Scripture; thereafter, lest any one should charge us with distorting Scripture, let us show that the truth, which we maintain to be derived from Scripture, is not unsupported by the testimony of this holy man (I mean Augustine). I deem it unnecessary to bring forward every separate passage of Scripture in confirmation of my doctrine. A selection of the most choice passages will pave the way for the understanding of all those which lie scattered up and down in the sacred volume. On the other hand, I thought it not out of place to show my accordance with a man whose authority is justly of

so much weight in the Christian world. It is certainly easy to prove that the commencement of good is only with God, and that none but the elect have a will inclined to good. But the cause of election must be sought out of man; and hence it follows that a right will is derived not from man himself, but from the same good pleasure by which we were chosen before the creation of the world. Another argument much akin to this may be added. The beginning of right will and action being of faith, we must see whence faith itself is. But since Scripture proclaims throughout that it is the free gift of God, it follows, that when men, who are with their whole soul naturally prone to evil, begin to have a good will, it is owing to mere grace. Therefore, when the Lord, in the conversion of his people, sets down these two things as requisite to be done, viz., to take away the heart of stone, and give a heart of flesh, he openly declares, that, in order to our conversion to righteousness, what is ours must be taken away, and that what is substituted in its place is of himself. Nor does he declare this in one passage only. For he says in Jeremiah “I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever;” and a little after he says, “I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me” (Jeremiah 32:39, Jeremiah 32:40). Again, in Ezekiel, “I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh” (Ezekiel 11:19). He could not more clearly claim to himself, and deny to us, everything good and right in our will, than by declaring, that in our conversion there is the creation of a new spirit and a new heart. It always follows, both that nothing good can proceed from our will until it be formed again, and that after it is formed again in so far as it is good, it is of God, and not of us.

9. With this view, likewise the prayers of the saints correspond. Thus Solomon prays that the Lord may “incline our hearts unto him, to walk in his ways, and keep his commandments” (1 Kings 8:58); intimating that our heart is perverse, and naturally indulges in rebellion against the Divine law, until it be turned. Again, it is said in the Psalms, “Incline my heart unto thy testimonies” (Psalms 119:36). For we should always note the antithesis between the rebellious movement of the heart, and the correction by which it is subdued to obedience. David feeling for the time that he was deprived of directing grace, prays, “Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me” (Psalms 51:10). Is not this an acknowledgement that all the parts of the heart are full of impurity, and that the soul has received a twist, which has turned it from straight to crooked? And then, in describing the cleansing, which he earnestly demands as a thing to be created by God, does he not ascribe the work entirely to Him? If it is objected, that the prayer itself is a symptom of a pious and holy affection, it is easy to reply, that although David had already in some measure repented, he was here contrasting the sad fall which he had experienced with his former state. Therefore, speaking in the person of a man alienated from God, he properly prays for the blessings which God bestows upon his elect in regeneration. Accordingly, like one dead, he desires to be created anew, so as to become, instead of a slave of Satan, an instrument of the Holy Spirit. Strange and monstrous are the longings of our pride. There is nothing which the Lord enjoins more strictly than the religious observance of his Sabbath, in other words resting from our works; but in nothing do we show greater reluctance than to renounce our own works, and give due place to the works of God. Did not arrogance stand in the way, we could not overlook the clear testimony which Christ has borne to the efficacy of his grace. “I,” said he, “am the true vine, and my Father is the husband man.” “As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me” (John 15:1, John 15:4). If we can no more bear fruit of ourselves than a vine can bud when rooted up and deprived of moisture, there is no longer any

room to ask what the aptitude of our nature is for good. There is no ambiguity in the conclusion, “For without me ye can do nothing.” He says not that we are too weak to suffice for ourselves; but, by reducing us to nothing, he excludes the idea of our possessing any, even the least ability. If, when engrafted into Christ, we bear fruit like the vine, which draws its vegetative power from the moisture of the ground, and the dew of heaven, and the fostering warmth of the sun, I see nothing in a good work, which we can call our own, without trenching upon what is due to God. It is vain to have recourse to the frivolous cavil, that the sap and the power of producing are already contained in the vine, and that, therefore, instead of deriving everything from the earth or the original root, it contributes something of its own. Our Saviour’s words simply mean, that when separated from him, we are nothing but dry, useless wood, because, when so separated, we have no power to do good, as he elsewhere says, “Every plant which my heavenly Father has not planted, shall be rooted up” (Matthew 15:13). Accordingly, in the passage already quoted from the Apostle Paul, he attributes the whole operation to God, “It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure” (Php 2:13). The first part of a good work is the will, the second is vigorous effort in the doing of it. God is the author of both. It is, therefore, robbery from God to arrogate anything to ourselves, either in the will or the act. Were it said that God gives assistance to a weak will, something might be left us; but when it is said that he makes the will, every thing good in it is placed without us. Moreover, since even a good will is still weighed down by the burden of the flesh, and prevented from rising, it is added, that, to meet the difficulties of the contest, God supplies the persevering effort until the effect is obtained. Indeed, the Apostle could not otherwise have said, as he elsewhere does, that “it is the same God which worketh all in all” (1 Corinthians 12:6); words comprehending, as we have already observed (sec. 6), the whole course of the spiritual life. For which reason, David, after praying, “Teach me thy way, O Lord, I will walk in thy truths” adds, “unite my heart to fear thy name” (Psalms 86:11); by these words intimating, that even those who are well-affected are liable to so many distractions that they easily become vain, and fall away, if not strengthened to persevere. And hence, in another passage, after praying, “Order my steps in thy word,” he requests that strength also may be given him to carry on the war, “Let not any iniquity have dominion over me” (Psalms 119:133). In this way, the Lord both begins and perfects the good work in us, so that it is due to Him, first, that the will conceives a love of rectitude, is inclined to desire, is moved and stimulated to pursue it; secondly, that this choice, desire, and endeavour fail not, but are carried forward to effect; and, lastly, that we go on without interruption, and persevere even to the end.

10. This movement of the will is not of that description which was for many ages taught and believed, viz., a movement which thereafter leaves us the choice to obey or resist it, but one which affects us efficaciously. We must, therefore, repudiate the oft-repeated sentiment of Chrysostom, “Whom he draws, he draws willingly;” insinuating that the Lord only stretches out his hand, and waits to see whether we will be pleased to take his aid. We grant that, as man was originally constituted, he could incline to either side, but since he has taught us by his example how miserable a thing free will is if God works not in us to will and to do, of what use to us were grace imparted in such scanty measure? Nay, by our own ingratitude, we obscure and impair divine grace. The Apostle’s doctrine is not, that the grace of a good will is offered to us if we will accept of it, but that God himself is pleased so to work in us as to guide, turn, and govern our heart by his Spirit, and reign in it as his own possession. Ezekiel promises that a new spirit will be given to the elect, not merely that they may be able to walk in his precepts, but that they may really walk in

them (Ezekiel 11:19; Ezekiel 36:27). And the only meaning which can be given to our Saviour's words, "Every man, therefore, that has heard and learned of the Father, cometh unto me" (John 6:45), is, that the grace of God is effectual in itself. This Augustine maintains in his book De Praedestinatione Sancta. This grace is not bestowed on all promiscuously, according to the common brocard (of Occam, if I mistake not), that it is not denied to any one who does what in him lies. Men are indeed to be taught that the favour of God is offered, without exception, to all who ask it; but since those only begin to ask whom heaven by grace inspires, even this minute portion of praise must not be withheld from him. It is the privilege of the elect to be regenerated by the Spirit of God, and then placed under his guidance and government. Wherefore Augustine justly derides some who arrogate to themselves a certain power of willing, as well as censures others who imagine that that which is a special evidence of gratuitous election is given to all (August. de Verbis Apost. Serm. 21). He says, "Nature is common to all, but not grace;" and he calls it a showy acuteness "which shines by mere vanity, when that which God bestows, on whom he will is attributed generally to all." Elsewhere he says, "How came you? By believing. Fear, lest by arrogating to yourself the merit of finding the right way, you perish from the right way. I came, you say, by free choice, came by my own will. Why do you boast? Would you know that even this was given you? Hear Christ exclaiming, 'No man comets unto me, except the Father which has sent me draw him.'" And from the words of John (John 6:44), he infers it to be an incontrovertible fact, that the hearts of believers are so effectually governed from above, that they follow with undeviating affection. "Whosoever is born of God does not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him" (1 John 3:9). That intermediate movement which the sophists imagine, a movement which every one is free to obey or to reject, is obviously excluded by the doctrine of effectual perseverance.

11. As to perseverance, it would undoubtedly have been regarded as the gratuitous gift of God, had not the very pernicious error prevailed, that it is bestowed in proportion to human merit, according to the reception which each individual gives to the first grace. This having given rise to the idea that it was entirely in our own power to receive or reject the offered grace of God, that idea is no sooner exploded than the error founded on it must fall. The error, indeed, is twofold. For, besides teaching that our gratitude for the first grace and our legitimate use of it is rewarded by subsequent supplies of grace, its abettors add that, after this, grace does not operate alone, but only co-operates with ourselves. As to the former, we must hold that the Lord, while he daily enriches his servants, and loads them with new gifts of his grace, because he approves of and takes pleasure in the work which he has begun, finds that in them which he may follow up with larger measures of grace. To this effect are the sentences, "To him that has shall be given." "Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things" (Matthew 25:21, Matthew 25:23, Matthew 25:29; Luke 19:17, Luke 19:26). But here two precautions are necessary. It must not be said that the legitimate use of the first grace is rewarded by subsequent measures of grace, as if man rendered the grace of God effectual by his own industry, nor must it be thought that there is any such remuneration as to make it cease to be the gratuitous grace of God. I admit, then, that believers may expect as a blessing from God, that the better the use they make of previous, the larger the supplies they will receive of future grace; but I say that even this use is of the Lord, and that this remuneration is bestowed freely of mere good will. The trite distinction of operating and co-operating grace is employed no less sinistrously than unhappily. Augustine, indeed, used it, but softened it by a suitable definition, viz., that God, by

co-operating, perfects what he begins by operating - that both graces are the same, but obtain different names from the different manner in which they produce their effects. Whence it follows, that he does not make an apportionment between God and man, as if a proper movement on the part of each produced a mutual concurrence. All he does is to mark a multiplication of grace. To this effect, accordingly, he elsewhere says, that in man good will precedes many gifts from God; but among these gifts is this good will itself. (August. Enchiridion ad Laurent. cap. 32). Whence it follows, that nothing is left for the will to arrogate as its own. This Paul has expressly stated. For, after saying, “It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do,” he immediately adds, “of his good pleasure” (Php 2:13); indicating by this expression, that the blessing is gratuitous. As to the common saying, that after we have given admission to the first grace, our efforts co-operate with subsequent grace, this is my answer: If it is meant that after we are once subdued by the power of the Lord to the obedience of righteousness, we proceed voluntarily, and are inclined to follow the movement of grace, I have nothing to object. For it is most certain, that where the grace of God reigns, there is also this readiness to obey. And whence this readiness, but just that the Spirit of God being everywhere consistent with himself, after first begetting a principle of obedience, cherishes and strengthens it for perseverance? If, again, it is meant that man is able of himself to be a fellow-labourer with the grace of God, I hold it to be a most pestilential delusion.

12. In support of this view, some make an ignorant and false application of the Apostle’s words: “I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me” (1 Corinthians 15:10). The meaning they give them is, that as Paul might have seemed to speak somewhat presumptuously in preferring himself to all the other apostles, he corrects the expression so far by referring the praise to the grace of God, but he, at the same time, calls himself a co-operator with grace. It is strange that this should have proved a stumbling-block to so many writers, otherwise respectable. The Apostle says not that the grace of God laboured with him so as to make him a co-partner in the labour. He rather transfers the whole merit of the labour to grace alone, by thus modifying his first expression, “It was not I,” says he, “that laboured, but the grace of God that was present with me.” Those who have adopted the erroneous interpretation have been misled by an ambiguity in the expression, or rather by a preposterous translation, in which the force of the Greek article is overlooked. For to take the words literally, the Apostle does not say that grace was a fellow-worker with him, but that the grace which was with him was sole worker. And this is taught not obscurely, though briefly, by Augustine when he says, “Good will in man precedes many gifts from God, but not all gifts, seeing that the will which precedes is itself among the number.” He adds the reason, “for it is written, ‘the God of my mercy shall prevent me,’ (Psalms 59:10), and ‘Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me,’ (Psalms 23:6); it prevents him that is unwilling, and makes him willing; it follows him that is willing, that he may not will in vain.” To this Bernard assents, introducing the Church as praying thus, “Draw me, who am in some measure unwilling, and make me willing; draw me, who am sluggishly lagging, and make me run” (Serm. 2 in Cantic.).

13. Let us now hear Augustine in his own words, lest the Pelagians of our age, I mean the sophists of the Sorbonne, charge us after their wont with being opposed to all antiquity. In this indeed they imitate their father Pelagius, by whom of old a similar charge was brought against Augustine. In the second chapter of his Treatise De Correptione et Gratis, addressed to Valentinus, Augustine explains at length what I will state briefly, but in his own words, that to Adam was given the grace

of persevering in goodness if he had the will; to us it is given to will, and by will overcome concupiscence: that Adam, therefore, had the power if he had the will, but did not will to have the power, whereas to us is given both the will and the power; that the original freedom of man was to be able not to sin, but that we have a much greater freedom, viz., not to be able to sin. And lest it should be supposed, as Lombard erroneously does (lib. 2 Dist. 25), that he is speaking of the perfection of the future state, he shortly after removes all doubt when he says, “For so much is the will of the saints inflamed by the Holy Spirit, that they are able, because they are willing; and willing, because God worketh in them so to will.” For if, in such weakness (in which, however, to suppress pride, “strength” must be made “perfect,”) their own will is left to them, in such sense that, by the help of God, they are able, if they will, while at the same time God does not work in them so as to make them will; among so many temptations and infirmities the will itself would give way, and, consequently, they would not be able to persevere. Therefore, to meet the infirmity of the human will, and prevent it from failing, how weak soever it might be, divine grace was made to act on it inseparably and uninterruptedly. Augustine (ibid. cap. 14). next entering fully into the question, how our hearts follow the movement when God affects them, necessarily says, indeed, that the Lord draws men by their own wills; wills, however, which he himself has produced. We have now an attestation by Augustine to the truth which we are specially desirous to maintain, viz., that the grace offered by the Lord is not merely one which every individual has full liberty of choosing to receive or reject, but a grace which produces in the heart both choice and will: so that all the good works which follow after are its fruit and effect; the only will which yields obedience being the will which grace itself has made. In another place, Augustine uses these words, “Every good work in us is performed only by grace” (August. Ephesians 105).

14. In saying elsewhere that the will is not taken away by grace, but out of bad is changed into good, and after it is good is assisted - he only means, that man is not drawn as if by an extraneous impulses without the movement of the heart, but is inwardly affected so as to obey from the heart. Declaring that grace is given specially and gratuitously to the elect, he writes in this way to Boniface: “We know that Divine grace is not given to all men, and that to those to whom it is given, it is not given either according to the merit of works, or according to the merit of the will, but by free grace: in regard to those to whom it is not given, we know that the not giving of it is a just judgement from God” (August. ad Bonifac. Ephesians 106). In the same epistle, he argues strongly against the opinion of those who hold that subsequent grace is given to human merit as a reward for not rejecting the first grace. For he presses Pelagius to confess that gratuitous grace is necessary to us for every action, and that merely from the fact of its being truly grace, it cannot be the recompense of works. But the matter cannot be more briefly summed up than in the eighth chapter of his Treatise De Correptione et Gratia, where he shows, First, that human will does not by liberty obtain grace, but by grace obtains liberty. Secondly, that by means of the same grace, the heart being impressed with a feeling of delight, is trained to persevere, and strengthened with invincible fortitude. Thirdly, that while grace governs the will, it never falls; but when grace abandons it, it falls forthwith. Fourthly, that by the free mercy of God, the will is turned to good, and when turned, perseveres. Fifthly, that the direction of the will to good, and its constancy after being so directed, depend entirely on the will of God, and not on any human merit. Thus the will (free will, if you choose to call it so), which is left to man, is, as he in another place (Ephesians 46) describes it, a will which can neither be turned to God, nor continue in God, unless by grace; a will which, whatever its ability may be, derives all that ability from grace.

08.02.04. Chapter 04

Chapter 4. How God works in the hearts of men. The leading points discussed in this chapter are,

I. Whether in bad actions anything is to be attributed to God; if anything, how much. Also, what is to be attributed to the devil and to man, sec. 1-5.

II. In indifferent matters, how much is to be attributed to God, and how much is left to man, sec. 6.

III. Two objections refuted, sec. 7, 8.

Sections

1. Connection of this chapter with the preceding. Augustine's similitude of a good and bad rider. Question answered in respect to the devil.

2. Question answered in respect to God and man. Example from the history of Job. The works of God distinguished from the works of Satan and wicked men. 1 By the design or end of acting. How Satan acts in the reprobate. 2. How God acts in them.

3. Old Objection, that the agency of God in such cases is referable to prescience or permission, not actual operation. Answer, showing that God blinds and hardens the reprobate, and this in two ways; 1. By deserting them; 2. By delivering them over to Satan.

4. Striking passages of Scripture, proving that God acts in both ways, and disposing of the objection with regard to prescience. Confirmation from Augustine.

5. A modification of the former answer, proving that God employs Satan to instigate the reprobate, but, at the same time, is free from all taint.

6. How God works in the hearts of men in indifferent matters. Our will in such matters not so free as to be exempt from the overruling providence of God. This confirmed by various examples.

7. Objection, that these examples do not form the rule. An answer, fortified by the testimony of universal experience, by Scripture, and a passage of Augustine.

8. Some, in arguing against the error of free will, draw an argument from the event. How this is to be understood.

1. That man is so enslaved by the yoke of sin, that he cannot of his own nature aim at good either in wish or actual pursuit, has, I think, been sufficiently proved. Moreover, a distinction has been drawn between compulsion and necessity, making it clear that man, though he sins necessarily, nevertheless sins voluntarily. But since, from his being brought into bondage to the devil, it would seem that he is actuated more by the devil's will than his own, it is necessary, first, to explain what the agency of each is, and then solve the question. Whether in bad actions anything is to be attributed to God, Scripture intimating that there is some way in which he interferes? Augustine (in Psalms 31:1-24; Psalms 33:1-22) compares the human will to a horse preparing to start, and God

and the devil to riders. “If God mounts, he, like a temperate and skilful rider, guides it calmly, urges it when too slow, reins it in when too fast, curbs its forwardness and over-action, checks its bad temper, and keeps it on the proper course; but if the devil has seized the saddle, like an ignorant and rash rider, he hurries it over broken ground, drives it into ditches, dashes it over precipices, spurs it into obstinacy or fury.” With this simile, since a better does not occur, we shall for the present be contented. When it is said, then, that the will of the natural man is subject to the power of the devil, and is actuated by him, the meaning is not that the wills while reluctant and resisting, is forced to submit (as masters oblige unwilling slaves to execute their orders), but that, fascinated by the impostures of Satan, it necessarily yields to his guidance, and does him homage. Those whom the Lord favours not with the direction of his Spirit, he, by a righteous judgement, consigns to the agency of Satan. Wherefore, the Apostle says, that “the god of this world has blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine into them.” And, in another passage, he describes the devil as “the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience” (Ephesians 2:2). The blinding of the wicked, and all the iniquities consequent upon it, are called the works of Satan; works the cause of which is not to be Sought in anything external to the will of man, in which the root of the evil lies, and in which the foundation of Satan’s kingdom, in other words, sin, is fixed.

2. The nature of the divine agency in such cases is very different. For the purpose of illustration, let us refer to the calamities brought upon holy Job by the Chaldeans. They having slain his shepherds, carry off his flocks. The wickedness of their deed is manifest, as is also the hand of Satan, who, as the history informs us, was the instigator of the whole. Job, however, recognises it as the work of God, saying, that what the Chaldeans had plundered, “the Lord” had “taken away.” How can we attribute the same work to God, to Satan, and to man, without either excusing Satan by the interference of God, or making God the author of the crime? This is easily done, if we look first to the end, and then to the mode of acting. The Lord designs to exercise the patience of his servant by adversity; Satan’s plan is to drive him to despair; while the Chaldeans are bent on making unlawful gain by plunder. Such diversity of purpose makes a wide distinction in the act. In the mode there is not less difference. The Lord permits Satan to afflict his servant; and the Chaldeans, who had been chosen as the ministers to execute the deed, he hands over to the impulses of Satan, who, pricking on the already depraved Chaldeans with his poisoned darts, instigates them to commit the crime. They rush furiously on to the unrighteous deed, and become its guilty perpetrators. Here Satan is properly said to act in the reprobate, over whom he exercises his sway, which is that of wickedness. God also is said to act in his own way; because even Satan when he is the instrument of divine wrath, is completely under the command of God, who turns him as he will in the execution of his just judgements. I say nothing here of the universal agency of God, which, as it sustains all the creatures, also gives them all their power of acting. I am now speaking only of that special agency which is apparent in every act. We thus see that there is no inconsistency in attributing the same act to God, to Satan, and to man, while, from the difference in the end and mode of action, the spotless righteousness of God shines forth at the same time that the iniquity of Satan and of man is manifested in all its deformity.

3. Ancient writers sometimes manifest a superstitious dread of making a simple confession of the truth in this matter, from a fear of furnishing impiety with a handle for speaking irreverently of the works of God. While I embrace such soberness with all my heart, I cannot see the least danger in

simply holding what Scripture delivers. when Augustine was not always free from this superstition, as when he says, that blinding and hardening have respect not to the operation of God, but to prescience (Lib. de Predestina. et Gratia). But this subtilty is repudiated by many passages of Scriptures which clearly show that the divine interference amounts to something more than prescience. And Augustine himself, in his book against Julian, contends at length that sins are manifestations not merely of divine permission or patience, but also of divine power, that thus former sins may be punished. In like manner, what is said of permission is too weak to stand. God is very often said to blind and harden the reprobate, to turn their hearts, to incline and impel them, as I have elsewhere fully explained (Book 1 Chronicles 18:1-17) The extent of this agency can never be explained by having recourse to prescience or permission. We, therefore, hold that there are two methods in which God may so act. When his light is taken away, nothing remains but blindness and darkness: when his Spirit is taken away, our hearts become hard as stones: when his guidance is withdrawn, we immediately turn from the right path: and hence he is properly said to incline, harden, and blind those whom he deprives of the faculty of seeing, obeying, and rightly executing. The second method, which comes much nearer to the exact meaning of the words, is when executing his judgements by Satan as the minister of his anger, God both directs men's counsels, and excites their wills, and regulates their efforts as he pleases. Thus when Moses relates that Simon, king of the Amorites, did not give the Israelites a passage, because the Lord "had hardened his spirit, and made his heart obstinate," he immediately adds the purpose which God had in view, viz., that he might deliver him into their hand (Deuteronomy 2:30). As God had resolved to destroy him, the hardening of his heart was the divine preparation for his ruin.

4. In accordance with the former methods it seems to be said, "The law shall perish from the priests and counsel from the ancients." "He poureth contempt upon princes, and causeth them to wander in the wilderness, where there is no way." Again "O Lord, why hast thou made us to err from thy ways, and hardened our heart from thy fear?" These passages rather indicate what men become when God deserts them, than what the nature of his agency is when he works in them. But there are other passages which go farther, such as those concerning the hardening of Pharaoh: "I will harden his heart, that he shall not let the people go." The same thing is afterwards repeated in stronger terms. Did he harden his heart by not softening it? This is, indeed, true; but he did something more: he gave it in charge to Satan to confirm him in his obstinacy. Hence he had previously said, "I am sure he will not let you go." The people come out of Egypt, and the inhabitants of a hostile region come forth against them. How were they instigated? Moses certainly declares of Sihon, that it was the Lord who "had hardened his spirit, and made his heart obstinate" (Deuteronomy 2:30). The Psalmists relating the same history says, "He turned their hearts to hate his people" (Psalms 105:25). You cannot now say that they stumbled merely because they were deprived of divine counsel. For if they are hardened and turned, they are purposely bent to the very end in view. Moreover, whenever God saw it meet to punish the people for their transgression, in what way did he accomplish his purpose by the reprobate? In such a way as shows that the efficacy of the action was in him, and that they were only ministers. At one time he declares, "that he will lift an ensign to the nations from far, and will hiss unto them from the end of the earth;" at another, that he will take a net to ensnare them; and at another, that he will be like a hammer to strike them. But he specially declared that he was not inactive among theme when he called Sennacherib an axe, which was formed and destined to be wielded by his own hand. Augustine is not far from the mark when he states the matter thus, That men sin, is attributable to

themselves: that in sinning they produce this or that result, is owing to the mighty power of God, who divides the darkness as he pleases (August. de Praedest. Sanct.).

5. Moreover, that the ministry of Satan is employed to instigate the reprobate, whenever the Lord, in the course of his providence, has any purpose to accomplish in them, will sufficiently appear from a single passage. It is repeatedly said in the First Book of Samuel, that an evil spirit from the Lord came upon Saul, and troubled him (1 Samuel 16:14; 1 Samuel 18:10; 1 Samuel 19:9). It were impious to apply this to the Holy Spirit. An impure spirit must therefore be called a spirit from the Lord, because completely subservient to his purpose, being more an instrument in acting than a proper agent. We should also add what Paul says, “God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth” (2 Thessalonians 2:11, 2 Thessalonians 2:12). But in the same transaction there is always a wide difference between what the Lord does, and what Satan and the ungodly design to do. The wicked instruments which he has under his hand and can turn as he pleases, he makes subservient to his own justice. They, as they are wicked, give effect to the iniquity conceived in their wicked minds. Every thing necessary to vindicate the majesty of God from calumny, and cut off any subterfuge on the part of the ungodly, has already been expounded in the Chapters on Providence (Book 1 Chapter 16-18). Here I only meant to show, in a few words, how Satan reigns in the reprobate, and how God works in both.

6. In those actions, which in themselves are neither good nor bad, and concern the corporeal rather than the spiritual life, the liberty which man possesses, although we have above touched upon it (supra, Chap. 2 sec. 13-17), has not yet been explained. Some have conceded a free choice to man in such actions; more, I suppose, because they were unwilling to debate a matter of no great moment, than because they wished positively to assert what they were prepared to concede. While I admit that those who hold that man has no ability in himself to do righteousness, hold what is most necessary to be known for salvation, I think it ought not to be overlooked that we owe it to the special grace of God, whenever, on the one hand, we choose what is for our advantage, and whenever our will inclines in that direction; and on the other, whenever with heart and soul we shun what would otherwise do us harm. And the interference of Divine Providence goes to the extent not only of making events turn out as was foreseen to be expedient, but of giving the wills of men the same direction. If we look at the administration of human affairs with the eye of sense, we will have no doubt that, so far, they are placed at man’s disposal; but if we lend an ear to the many passages of Scripture which proclaim that even in these matters the minds of men are ruled by God, they will compel us to place human choice in subordination to his special influence. Who gave the Israelites such favour in the eyes of the Egyptians, that they lent them all their most valuable commodities? (Exodus 11:3). They never would have been so inclined of their own accord. Their inclinations, therefore, were more overruled by God than regulated by themselves. And surely, had not Jacob been persuaded that God inspires men with divers affections as seemeth to him good, he would not have said of his son Joseph (whom he thought to be some heathen Egyptian), “God Almighty give you mercy before the man” (Genesis 43:14). In like manner, the whole Church confesses that when the Lord was pleased to pity his people, he made them also to be pitied of all them that carried them captives (Psalms 106:46). In like manner, when his anger was kindled against Saul, so that he prepared himself for battle, the cause is stated to have been, that a spirit from God fell upon him (1 Samuel 11:6). Who dissuaded Absalom

from adopting the counsel of Ahithophel, which was wont to be regarded as an oracle? (2 Samuel 17:14.) Who disposed Rehoboam to adopt the counsel of the young men? (1 Kings 12:10.) Who caused the approach of the Israelites to strike terror into nations formerly distinguished for valour? Even the harlot Rahab recognised the hand of the Lord. Who, on the other hand, filled the hearts of the Israelites with fear and dread (Leviticus 26:36), but He who threatened in the Law that he would give them a “trembling heart”? (Deuteronomy 28:65.)

7. It may be objected, that these are special examples which cannot be regarded as a general rule. They are sufficient, at all events, to prove the point for which I contend, viz., that whenever God is pleased to make way for his providence, he even in external matters so turns and bends the wills of men, that whatever the freedom of their choice may be, it is still subject to the disposal of God. That your mind depends more on the agency of God than the freedom of your own choice, daily experience teaches. Your judgement often fails, and in matters of no great difficulty, your courage flags; at other times, in matters of the greatest obscurity, the mode of explicating them at once suggests itself, while in matters of moment and danger, your mind rises superior to every difficulty. In this way, I interpret the words of Solomon, “The hearing ear, and the seeing eye, the Lord hath made even both of them” (Proverbs 20:12). For they seem to me to refer not to their creation, but to peculiar grace in the use of them, when he says, “The king’s heart is in the hand of the Lard as the rivers of water; he turneth it whithersoever he will” (Proverbs 21:1), he comprehends the whole race under one particular class. If any will is free from subjection, it must be that of one possessed of regal power, and in a manner exercising dominion over other wills. But if it is under the hand of God, ours surely cannot be exempt from it. On this subject there is an admirable sentiment of Augustine, “Scripture, if it be carefully examined, will show not only that the good wills of men are made good by God out of evil, and when so made, are directed to good acts, even to eternal life, but those which retain the elements of the world are in the power of God, to turn them whither he pleases, and when he pleases, either to perform acts of kindness, or by a hidden, indeed, but, at the same time, most just judgement to inflict punishment” (August. De Gratia et Lib. Arb. ad Valent. cap. 20).

8. Let the reader here remember, that the power of the human will is not to be estimated by the event, as some unskilful persons are absurdly wont to do. They think it an elegant and ingenious proof of the bondage of the human will, that even the greatest monarchs are sometimes thwarted in their wishes. But the ability of which we speak must be considered as within the man, not measured by outward success. In discussing the subject of free will, the question is not, whether external obstacles will permit a man to execute what he has internally resolved, but whether, in any matter whatever, he has a free power of judging and of willing. If men possess both of these, Attilius Regulus, shut up in a barrel studded with sharp nails, will have a will no less free than Augustus Caesar ruling with imperial sway over a large portion of the globe.

08.02.05. Chapter 05

Chapter 5. The arguments usually alleged in support of free will refuted.

Objections reduced to three principal heads:

I. Four absurdities advanced by the opponents of the orthodox doctrine concerning the slavery of the will, stated and refuted, sec. 1-5.

II. The passages of Scripture which they pervert in favour of their error, reduced to five heads, and explained, sec. 6-15.

III. Five other passages quoted in defence of free will expounded, sec. 16-19.

Sections

1. Absurd fictions of opponents first refuted, and then certain passages of Scripture explained. Answer by a negative. Confirmation of the answer.

2. Another absurdity of Aristotle and Pelagius. Answer by a distinction. Answer fortified by passages from Augustine, and supported by the authority of an Apostle.

3. Third absurdity borrowed from the words of Chrysostom. Answer by a negative.

4. Fourth absurdity urged of old by the Pelagians. Answer from the works of Augustine. Illustrated by the testimony of our Saviour. Another answer, which explains the use of exhortations.

5. A third answer, which contains a fuller explanation of the second. Objection to the previous answers. Objection refuted. Summary of the previous answers.

6. First class of arguments which the Neo-Pelagians draw from Scripture in defence of free will. 1. The Law demands perfect obedience and therefore God either mocks us, or requires things which are not in our power. Answer by distinguishing precepts into three sorts. The first of these considered in this and the following section.

7. This general argument from the Law of no avail to the patrons of free will. Promises conjoined with precepts, prove that our sal vation is to be found in the grace of God. Objection, that the Law was given to the persons living at the time. Answer, confirmed by passages from Augustine.

8. A special consideration of the three classes of precepts of no avail to the defenders of free will. 1. Precepts enjoining us to turn to God. 2. Precepts which simply speak of the observance of the Law. 3. Precepts which enjoin us to persevere in the grace of God.

9. Objection. Answer. Confirmation of the answer from Jeremiah. Another objection refuted.

10. A second class of arguments in defence of free will drawn from the promises of God, viz., that the promises which God makes to those who seek him are vain if it is not in our power to do, or not do, the thing required. Answer, which explains the use of promises, and removes the supposed

inconsistency.

11. Third class of arguments drawn from the divine upbraidings - that it is in vain to upbraid us for evils which it is not in our power to avoid. Answer. Sinners are condemned by their own consciences, and, therefore, the divine upbraidings are just. Moreover, there is a twofold use in these upbraidings. Various passages of Scripture explained by means of the foregoing answers.

12. Objection founded on the words of Moses. Refutation by the words of an Apostle. Confirmation by argument.

13. Fourth class of arguments by the defenders of free will. God waits to see whether or not sinners will repent; therefore they can repent. Answer by a dilemma. Passage in Hosea explained.

14. Fifth class of arguments in defence of free will. God and bad works described as our own, and therefore we are capable of both. Answer by an exposition, which shows that this argument is unavailing. Objection drawn from analogy. Answer. The nature and mode of divine agency in the elect.

15. Conclusion of the answer to the last class of arguments.

16. Third and last division of the chapter discussing certain passages of Scripture. 1. A passage from Genesis. Its true meaning explained.

17. 2. Passage from the Epistle to the Romans. Explanation. Refutation of an objection. Another refutation. A third refutation from Augustine. 3. A passage from First Corinthians. Answer to it.

18. 4. A passage from Ecclesiastes. Explanation. Another explanation.

19. 5. A passage from Luke. Explanation. Allegorical arguments weak. Another explanation. A third explanation. A fourth from Augustine. Conclusion and summary of the whole discussion concerning free will.

1. Enough would seem to have been said on the subject of man’s will, were there not some who endeavour to urge him to his ruin by a false opinion of liberty, and at the same time, in order to support their own opinion, assail ours. First, they gather together some absurd inferences, by which they endeavour to bring odium upon our doctrine, as if it were abhorrent to common sense, and then they oppose it with certain passages of Scripture (infra, sec. 6). Both devices we shall dispose of in their order. If sin, say they, is necessary, it ceases to be sin; if it is voluntary, it may be avoided. Such, too, were the weapons with which Pelagius assailed Augustine. But we are unwilling to crush them by the weight of his name, until we have satisfactorily disposed of the objections themselves. I deny, therefore, that sin ought to be the less imputed because it is necessary; and, on the other hand, I deny the inference, that sin may be avoided because it is voluntary. If any one will dispute with God, and endeavour to evade his judgement, by pretending that he could not have done otherwise, the answer already given is sufficient, that it is owing not to creation, but the corruption of nature, that man has become the slave of sin, and can will nothing but evil. For whence that impotence of which the wicked so readily avail themselves as an excuse, but just because Adam voluntarily subjected himself to the tyranny of the devil? Hence the corruption by which we are held bound as with chains, originated in the first man’s revolt from his Maker. If all men are justly held guilty of this revolt, let them not think themselves excused by a

necessity in which they see the clearest cause of their condemnation. But this I have fully explained above; and in the case of the devil himself, have given an example of one who sins not less voluntarily that he sins necessarily. I have also shown, in the case of the elect angels, that though their will cannot decline from good, it does not therefore cease to be will. This Bernard shrewdly explains when he says (Serm. 81, in Cantica), that we are the more miserable in this, that the necessity is voluntary; and yet this necessity so binds us who are subject to it, that we are the slaves of sin, as we have already observed. The second step in the reasoning is vicious, because it leaps from voluntary to free; whereas we have proved above, that a thing may be done voluntarily, though not subject to free choice.

2. They add, that unless virtue and vice proceed from free choice, it is absurd either to punish man or reward him. Although this argument is taken from Aristotle, I admit that it is also used by Chrysostom and Jerome. Jerome, however, does not disguise that it was familiar to the Pelagians. He even quotes their words, “If grace acts in us, grace, and not we who do the work, will be crowned” (Heron. in Ep. ad Ctesiphont. et Dialog. 1) With regard to punishment, I answer, that it is properly inflicted on those by whom the guilt is contracted. What matters it whether you sin with a free or an enslaved judgement, so long as you sin voluntarily, especially when man is proved to be a sinner because he is under the bondage of sin? In regard to the rewards of righteousness, is there any great absurdity in acknowledging that they depend on the kindness of God rather than our own merits? How often do we meet in Augustine with this expression: “God crowns not our merits but his own gifts; and the name of reward is given not to what is due to our merits, but to the recompense of grace previously bestowed?” Some seem to think there is acuteness in the remark, that there is no place at all for the mind, if good works do not spring from free will as their proper source; but in thinking this so very unreasonable they are widely mistaken. Augustine does not hesitate uniformly to describe as necessary the very thing which they count it impious to acknowledge. Thus he asks, “What is human merit? He who came to bestow not due recompense but free grace, though himself free from sin, and the giver of freedom, found all men sinners” (Augustin. in Psalms 31:1-24). Again, “If you are to receive your due, you must be punished. What then is done? God has not rendered you due punishment, but bestows upon you unmerited grace. If you wish to be an alien from grace, boast your merits” (in Psalms 70:1-5). Again, “You are nothing in yourself, sin is yours, merit God’s. Punishment is your due; and when the reward shall come, God shall crown his own gifts, not your merits” (Ephesians 52). To the same effect he elsewhere says (De Verb. Apostol. Serm. 15), that grace is not of merit, but merit of grace. And shortly after he concludes, that God by his gifts anticipates all our merit, that he may thereby manifest his own merit, and give what is absolutely free, because he sees nothing in us that can be a ground of salvation. But why extend the list of quotations, when similar sentiments are ever and anon recurring in his works? The abettors of this error would see a still better refutation of it, if they would attend to the source from which the apostle derives the glory of the saints - “Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified” (Romans 8:30). On what ground, then, the apostle being judge (2 Timothy 4:8), are believers crowned? Because by the mercy of God, not their own exertions, they are predestinated, called, and justified. Away, then, with the vain fear, that unless free will stand, there will no longer be any merit! It is most foolish to take alarm, and recoil from that which Scripture inculcates. “If thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?” (1 Corinthians 4:7). You see how every thing is denied to free will, for the very

purpose of leaving no room for merit. And yet, as the beneficence and liberality of God are manifold and inexhaustible, the grace which he bestows upon us, inasmuch as he makes it our own, he recompenses as if the virtuous acts were our own.

3. But it is added, in terms which seem to be borrowed from Chrysostom (Homil. 22, in Genes.), that if our will possesses not the power of choosing good or evil, all who are partakers of the same nature must be alike good or alike bad. A sentiment akin to this occurs in the work De Vocatione Gentium (lib. 4 c. 4), usually attributed to Ambrose, in which it is argued, that no one would ever decline from faith, did not the grace of God leave us in a mutable state. It is strange that such men should have so blundered. How did it fail to occur to Chrysostom, that it is divine election which distinguishes among men? We have not the least hesitation to admit what Paul strenuously maintains, that all, without exception, are depraved and given over to wickedness; but at the same time we add, that through the mercy of God all do not continue in wickedness. Therefore, while we all labour naturally under the same disease, those only recover health to whom the Lord is pleased to put forth his healing hand. The others whom, in just judgement, he passes over, pine and rot away till they are consumed. And this is the only reason why some persevere to the end, and others, after beginning their course, fall away. Perseverance is the gift of God, which he does not lavish promiscuously on all, but imparts to whom he pleases. If it is asked how the difference arises - why some steadily persevere, and others prove deficient in steadfastness, we can give no other reason than that the Lord, by his mighty power, strengthens and sustains the former, so that they perish not, while he does not furnish the same assistance to the latter, but leaves them to be monuments of instability.

4. Still it is insisted, that exhortations are vain, warnings superfluous, and rebukes absurd, if the sinner possesses not the power to obey. When similar objections were urged against Augustine, he was obliged to write his book, De Correptione et Gratia, where he has fully disposed of them. The substance of his answer to his opponents is this: “O, man! learn from the precept what you ought to do; learn from correction, that it is your own fault you have not the power; and learn in prayer, whence it is that you may receive the power.” Very similar is the argument of his book, De Spiritu et Litera, in which he shows that God does not measure the precepts of his law by human strength, but, after ordering what is right, freely bestows on his elect the power of fulfilling it. The subject, indeed, does not require a long discussion. For we are not singular in our doctrine, but have Christ and all his apostles with us. Let our opponents, then, consider how they are to come off victorious in a contest which they wage with such antagonists. Christ declares, “without me ye can do nothing” (John 20:5). Does he the less censure and chastise those who, without him, did wickedly? Does he the less exhort every man to be intent on good works? How severely does Paul inveigh against the Corinthians for want of charity (1 Corinthians 3:3); and yet at the same time, he prays that charity may be given them by the Lord. In the Epistle to the Romans, he declares that “it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy” (Romans 9:16). Still he ceases not to warn, exhort, and rebuke them. Why then do they not expostulate with God for making sport with men, by demanding of them things which he alone can give, and chastising them for faults committed through want of his grace? Why do they not admonish Paul to spare those who have it not in their power to will or to run, unless the mercy of God, which has forsaken them, precede? As if the doctrine were not founded on the strongest reason - reason which no serious inquirer can fail to perceive. The extent to which doctrine, and exhortation, and rebuke, are

in themselves able to change the mind, is indicated by Paul when he says, “Neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase” (1 Corinthians 3:7) in like manner, we see that Moses delivers the precepts of the Law under a heavy sanction, and that the prophets strongly urge and threaten transgressors though they at the same time confess, that men are wise only when an understanding heart is given them; that it is the proper work of God to circumcise the heart, and to change it from stone into flesh; to write his law on their inward parts; in short, to renew souls so as to give efficacy to doctrine

5. What purpose, then, is served by exhortations? It is this: As the wicked, with obstinate heart, despise them, they will be a testimony against them when they stand at the judgement-seat of God; nay, they even now strike and lash their consciences. For, however they may petulantly deride, they cannot disapprove them. But what, you will ask, can a miserable mortal do, when softness of heart, which is necessary to obedience, is denied him? I ask, in reply, Why have recourse to evasion, since hardness of heart cannot be imputed to any but the sinner himself? The ungodly, though they would gladly evade the divine admonitions, are forced, whether they will or not, to feel their power. But their chief use is to be seen in the case of believers, in whom the Lord, while he always acts by his Spirit, also omits not the instrumentality of his word, but employs it, and not without effect. Let this, then, be a standing truth, that the whole strength of the godly consists in the grace of God, according to the words of the prophet, “I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh, that they may walk in my statutes” (Ezekiel 11:19, Ezekiel 11:20). But it will be asked, why are they now admonished of their duty, and not rather left to the guidance of the Spirit? Why are they urged with exhortations when they cannot hasten any faster than the Spirit impels them? and why are they chastised, if at any time they go astray, seeing that this is caused by the necessary infirmity of the flesh? “O, man! who art thou that replies against God?” If, in order to prepare us for the grace which enables us to obey exhortation, God sees meet to employ exhortation, what is there in such an arrangement for you to carp and scoff at? Had exhortations and reprimands no other profit with the godly than to convince them of sin, they could not be deemed altogether useless. Now, when, by the Spirit of God acting within, they have the effect of inflaming their desire of good, of arousing them from lethargy, of destroying the pleasure and honeyed sweetness of sin, making it hateful and loathsome, who will presume to cavil at them as superfluous? Should any one wish a clearer reply, let him take the following: God works in his elect in two ways: inwardly, by his Spirit; outwardly, by his Word. By his Spirit illuminating their minds, and training their hearts to the practice of righteousness, he makes them new creatures, while, by his Word, he stimulates them to long and seek for this renovation. In both, he exerts the might of his hand in proportion to the measure in which he dispenses them. The Word, when addressed to the reprobate, though not effectual for their amendment, has another use. It urges their consciences now, and will render them more inexcusable on the day of judgement. Thus, our Saviour, while declaring that none can come to him but those whom the Father draws, and that the elect come after they have heard and learned of the Father (John 6:44, John 6:45), does not lay aside the office of teacher, but carefully invites those who must be taught inwardly by the Spirit before they can make any profit. The reprobate, again, are admonished by Paul, that the doctrine is not in vain; because, while it is in them a savour of death unto death, it is still a sweet savour unto God (2 Corinthians 2:16).

6. The enemies of this doctrine are at great pains in collecting passages of Scripture, as if, unable to accomplish any thing by their weight, they were to overwhelm us by their number. But as in battle, when it is come to close quarters, an unwarlike multitude, how great soever the pomp and show they make, give way after a few blows, and take to flight, so we shall have little difficulty here in disposing of our opponents and their host. All the passages which they pervert in opposing us are very similar in their import; and hence, when they are arranged under their proper heads, one answer will suffice for several; it is not necessary to give a separate consideration to each. Precepts seem to be regarded as their stronghold. These they think so accommodated to our abilities, as to make it follow as a matter of course, that whatever they enjoin we are able to perform. Accordingly, they run over all the precepts, and by them fix the measure of our power. For, say they, when God enjoins meekness, submission, love, chastity, piety, and holiness, and when he forbids anger, pride, theft, uncleanness, idolatry, and the like, he either mocks us, or only requires things which are in our power.

All the precepts which they thus heap together may be divided into three classes. Some enjoin a first conversion unto God, others speak simply of the observance of the law, and others inculcate perseverance in the grace which has been received. We shall first treat of precepts in general, and then proceed to consider each separate class. That the abilities of man are equal to the precepts of the divine law, has long been a common idea, and has some show of plausibility. It is founded, however, on the grossest ignorance of the law. Those who deem it a kind of sacrilege to say, that the observance of the law is impossible, insist, as their strongest argument, that, if it is so, the Law has been given in vain (infra, Chap. 7 sec. 5). For they speak just as if Paul had never said anything about the Law. But what, pray, is meant by saying, that the Law “was added because of transgressions;” “by the law is the knowledge of sin;” “I had not known sin but by the law;” “the law entered that the offence might abound?” (Galatians 3:19; Romans 3:20; Romans 7:7; Romans 5:20). Is it meant that the Law was to be limited to our strength, lest it should be given in vain? Is it not rather meant that it was placed far above us, in order to convince us of our utter feebleness? Paul indeed declares, that charity is the end and fulfilling of the Law (1 Timothy 1:5). But when he prays that the minds of the Thessalonians may be filled with it, he clearly enough acknowledges that the Law sounds in our ears without profit, if God do not implant it thoroughly in our hearts (1 Thessalonians 3:12).

7. I admit, indeed, that if the Scripture taught nothing else on the subject than that the Law is a rule of life by which we ought to regulate our pursuits, I should at once assent to their opinion; but since it carefully and clearly explains that the use of the Law is manifold, the proper course is to learn from that explanation what the power of the Law is in man. In regard to the present question, while it explains what our duty is it teaches that the power of obeying it is derived from the goodness of God, and it accordingly urges us to pray that this power may be given us. If there were merely a command and no promise, it would be necessary to try whether our strength were sufficient to fulfil the command; but since promises are annexed, which proclaim not only that aid, but that our whole power is derived from divine grace, they at the same time abundantly testify that we are not only unequal to the observance of the Law, but mere fools in regard to it. Therefore, let us hear no more of a proportion between our ability and the divine precepts, as if the Lord had accommodated the standard of justice which he was to give in the Law to our feeble capacities. We should rather gather from the promises hove ill provided we are, having in everything so much need of grace.

But say they, Who will believe that the Lord designed his Law for blocks and stones? There is no wish to make any one believe this. The ungodly are neither blocks nor stones, when, taught by the Law that their lusts are offensive to God, they are proved guilty by their own confession; nor are the godly blocks or stones, when admonished of their powerlessness, they take refuge in grace. To this effect are the pithy sayings of Augustine, “God orders what we cannot do, that we may know what we ought to ask of him. There is a great utility in precepts, if all that is given to free will is to do greater honour to divine grace. Faith acquires what the Law requires; nay, the Law requires, in order that faith may acquire what is thus required; nay, more, God demands of us faith itself, and finds not what he thus demands, until by giving he makes it possible to find it.” Again, he says, “Let God give what he orders, and order what he wills.”

8. This will be more clearly seen by again attending to the three classes of precepts to which we above referred. Both in the Law and in the Prophets, God repeatedly calls upon us to turn to him. But, on the other hand, a prophet exclaims, “Turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the Lord my God. Surely after that I was turned, I repented.” He orders us to circumcise the foreskins of our hearts; but Moses declares, that that circumcision is made by his own hand. In many passages he demands a new heart, but in others he declares that he gives it. As Augustine says, “What God promises, we ourselves do not through choice or nature, but he himself does by grace.” The same observation is made, when, in enumerating the rules of Tichonius, he states the third in effect to be - that we distinguish carefully between the Law and the promises, or between the commands and grace (Augustin. de Doctrine Christiana, lib. 3). Let them now go and gather from precepts what man’s power of obedience is, when they would destroy the divine grace by which the precepts themselves are accomplished. The precepts of the second class are simply those which enjoin us to worship God, to obey and adhere to his will, to do his pleasure, and follow his teaching. But innumerable passages testify that every degree of purity, piety, holiness, and justices which we possess, is his gift. Of the third class of precepts is the exhortation of Paul and Barnabas to the proselytes, as recorded by Luke; they “persuaded them to continue in the grace of God” (Acts 13:43). But the source from which this power of continuance must be sought is elsewhere explained by Paul, when he says, “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord” (Ephesians 6:10). In another passage he says, “Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption” (Ephesians 4:30). But as the thing here enjoined could not be performed by man, he prays in behalf of the Thessalonians, that God would count them “worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power” (2 Thessalonians 1:11). In the same way, in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, when treating of alms, he repeatedly commends their good and pious inclination. A little farther on, however, he exclaims, “Thanks be to God, which put the same earnest care into the heart of Titus for you. For indeed he accepted the exhortation” (2 Corinthians 8:16, 2 Corinthians 8:17). If Titus could not even perform the office of being a mouth to exhort others, except in so far as God suggested, how could the others have been voluntary agents in acting, if the Lord Jesus had not directed their hearts?

9. Some, who would be thought more acute, endeavour to evade all these passages, by the quibble, that there is nothing to hinder us from contributing our part, while God, at the same time, supplies our deficiencies. They, moreover, adduce passages from the Prophets, in which the work of our conversion seems to be shared between God and ourselves; “Turn ye unto me, saith the

Lord of hosts, and I will turn unto you, saith the Lord of hosts" (Zechariah 1:3). The kind of assistance which God gives us has been shown above (sect. 7, 8), and need not now be repeated. One thing only I ask to be conceded to me, that it is vain to think we have a power of fulfilling the Law, merely because we are enjoined to obey it. Since, in order to our fulfilling the divine precepts, the grace of the Lawgiver is both necessary, and has been promised to us, this much at least is clear, that more is demanded of us than we are able to pay. Nor can any cavil evade the declaration in Jeremiah, that the covenant which God made with his ancient people was broken, because it was only of the letter - that to make it effectual, it was necessary for the Spirit to interpose and train the heart to obedience (Jeremiah 31:32). The opinion we now combat is not aided by the words, "Turn unto me, and I will turn unto you." The turning there spoken of is not that by which God renews the heart unto repentance; but that in which, by bestowing prosperity, he manifests his kindness and favour, just in the same way as he sometimes expresses his displeasure by sending adversity. The people complaining under the many calamities which befell them, that they were forsaken by God, he answers, that his kindness would not fail them, if they would return to a right course, and to himself, the standard of righteousness. The passage, therefore, is wrested from its proper meaning when it is made to countenance the idea that the work of conversion is divided between God and man (supra, Chap. 2 sec. 27). We have only glanced briefly at this subject, as the proper place for it will occur when we come to treat of the Law (Chap. 7 sec. 2 and 3).

10. The second class of objections is akin to the former. They allege the promises in which the Lord makes a paction with our will. Such are the following: "Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live" (Amos 5:14). "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword; for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it" (Isaiah 1:19, Isaiah 1:20). "If thou wilt put away thine abominations out of my sight, then thou shalt not remove" (Jeremiah 4:1). "It shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and do all the commandments which I command thee this days that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth" (Deuteronomy 28:1). There are other similar passages (Leviticus 26:3, &c). They think that the blessings contained in these promises are offered to our will absurdly and in mockery, if it is not in our power to secure or reject them. It is, indeed, an easy matter to indulge in declamatory complaint on this subject, to say that we are cruelly mocked by the Lord, when he declares that his kindness depends on our wills if we are not masters of our wills - that it would be a strange liberality on the part of God to set his blessings before us, while we have no power of enjoying them - a strange certainty of promises, which, to prevent their ever being fulfilled, are made to depend on an impossibility. Of promises of this description, which have a condition annexed to them, we shall elsewhere speak, and make it plain that there is nothing absurd in the impossible fulfilment of them. In regard to the matter in hand, I deny that God cruelly mocks us when he invites us to merit blessings which he knows we are altogether unable to merit. The promises being offered alike to believers and to the ungodly, have their use in regard to both. As God by his precepts stings the consciences of the ungodly, so as to prevent them from enjoying their sins while they have no remembrance of his judgements, so, in his promises, he in a manner takes them to witness how unworthy they are of his kindness. Who can deny that it is most just and most becoming in God to do good to those who worship him, and to punish with due severity those who despise his majesty? God, therefore, proceeds in due order, when, though the wicked are bound by the fetters of sin, he lays down the law in his

promises, that he will do them good only if they depart from their wickedness. This would be right, though His only object were to let them understand that they are deservedly excluded from the favour due to his true worshipers. On the other hand, as he desires by all means to stir up believers to supplicate his grace, it surely should not seem strange that he attempts to accomplish by promises the same thing which, as we have shown, he to their great benefit accomplishes by means of precepts. Being taught by precepts what the will of God is, we are reminded of our wretchedness in being so completely at variance with that will, and, at the same time, are stimulated to invoke the aid of the Spirit to guide us into the right path. But as our indolence is not sufficiently aroused by precepts, promises are added, that they may attract us by their sweetness, and produce a feeling of love for the precept. The greater our desire of righteousness, the greater will be our earnestness to obtain the grace of God. And thus it is, that in the protestations, “if we be willing”, “if thou shalt hearken”, the Lord neither attributes to us a full power of willing and hearkening, nor yet mocks us for our impotence.

11. The third class of objections is not unlike the other two. For they produce passages in which God upbraids his people for their ingratitude, intimating that it was not his fault that they did not obtain all kinds of favour from his indulgence. Of such passages, the following are examples: “The Amalekites and the Canaanites are before you, and ye shall fall by the sword: because ye are turned away from the Lord, therefore the Lord will not be with you” (Numbers 14:43). “Because ye have done all these works, saith the Lord, and I spake unto you, rising up early and speaking, but ye heard not; and I called you, but ye answered not; therefore will I do unto this house, which is called by my name, wherein ye trust, and unto the place which I gave to you and to your fathers, as I have done to Shiloh” (Jeremiah 7:13, Jeremiah 7:14). “They obeyed not thy voice, neither walked in thy law; they have done nothing of all that thou commandedst them to do: therefore thou hast caused all this evil to come upon them” (Jeremiah 32:23). How, they ask, can such upbraiding be directed against those who have it in their power immediately to reply, Prosperity was dear to us: we feared adversity; that we did not, in order to obtain the one and avoid the other, obey the Lord, and listen to his voice, is owing to its not being free for us to do so in consequence of our subjection to the dominion of sin; in vain, therefore, are we upbraided with evils which it was not in our power to escape. But to say nothing of the pretext of necessity, which is but a feeble and flimsy defence of their conduct, can they, I ask, deny their guilt? If they are held convicted of any fault, the Lord is not unjust in upbraiding them for having, by their own perverseness, deprived themselves of the advantages of his kindness. Let them say, then, whether they can deny that their own will is the depraved cause of their rebellion. If they find within themselves a fountain of wickedness, why do they stand declaiming about extraneous causes, with the view of making it appear that they are not the authors of their own destruction? If it be true that it is not for another’s faults that sinners are both deprived of the divine favour, and visited with punishment, there is good reason why they should hear these rebukes from the mouth of God. If they obstinately persist in their vices, let them learn in their calamities to accuse and detest their own wickedness, instead of charging God with cruelty and injustice. If they have not manifested docility, let them, under a feeling of disgust at the sins which they see to be the cause of their misery and ruin, return to the right path, and, with serious contrition, confess the very thing of which the Lord by his rebuke reminds them. Of what use those upbraidings of the prophets above quoted are to believers, appears from the solemn prayer of Daniel, as given in his ninth chapter. Of their use in regard to the ungodly, we see an example in the Jews, to whom Jeremiah was ordered to explain

the cause of their miseries, though the event could not be otherwise than the Lord had foretold. “Therefore thou shalt speak these words unto them; but they will not hearken unto thee: thou shalt also call unto them; but they will not answer thee” (Jeremiah 7:27). Of what use, then, was it to talk to the deaf? It was, that even against their will they might understand that what they heard was true, and that it was impious blasphemy to transfer the blame of their wickedness to God, when it resided in themselves.

These few explanations will make it very easy for the reader to disentangle himself from the immense heap of passages (containing both precepts and reprimands) which the enemies of divine grace are in the habit of piling up, that they may thereon erect their statue of free will. The Psalmist upbraids the Jews as “a stubborn and rebellious generation; a generation that set not their heart aright” (Psalms 78:8); and in another passage, he exhorts the men of his time, “Harden not your heart” (Psalms 95:8). This implies that the whole blame of the rebellion lies in human depravity. But it is foolish thence to infer, that the heart, the preparation of which is from the Lord, may be equally bent in either direction. The Psalmist says, “I have inclined my heart to perform thy statutes alway” (Psalms 119:112); meaning, that with willing and cheerful readiness of mind he had devoted himself to God. He does not boast, however, that he was the author of that disposition, for in the same psalm he acknowledges it to be the gift of God. We must, therefore, attend to the admonition of Paul, when he thus addresses believers, “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure” (Php 2:12, Php 2:13). He ascribes to them a part in acting that they may not indulge in carnal sloth, but by enjoining fear and trembling, he humbles them so as to keep them in remembrance, that the very thing which they are ordered to do is the proper work of God - distinctly intimating, that believers act (if I may so speak) passively in as much as the power is given them from heaven, and cannot in any way be arrogated to themselves. Accordingly, when Peter exhorts us to “add to faith virtue” (2 Peter 1:5), he does not concede to us the possession of a second place, as if we could do anything separately. He only arouses the sluggishness of our flesh, by which faith itself is frequently stifled. To the same effect are the words of Paul. He says, “Quench not the Spirit” (1 Thessalonians 5:19); because a spirit of sloth, if not guarded against, is ever and anon creeping in upon believers. But should any thence infer that it is entirely in their own power to foster the offered light, his ignorance will easily be refuted by the fact, that the very diligence which Paul enjoins is derived only from God (2 Corinthians 7:1). We are often commanded to purge ourselves of all impurity, though the Spirit claims this as his peculiar office. In fine, that what properly belongs to God is transferred to us only by way of concession, is plain from the words of John, “He that is begotten of God keepeth himself” (1 John 5:18). The advocates of free will fasten upon the expression as if it implied, that we are kept partly by the power of God, partly by our own, whereas the very keeping of which the Apostle speaks is itself from heaven. Hence, Christ prays his Father to keep us from evil (John 17:15), and we know that believers, in their warfare against Satan, owe their victory to the armour of God. Accordingly, Peter, after saying, “Ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth,” immediately adds by way of correction, “through the Spirit” (1 Peter 1:22). In fine, the nothingness of human strength in the spiritual contest is briefly shown by John, when he says, that “Whosoever is born of God does not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him” (1 John 3:9). He elsewhere gives the reasons “This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith” (1 John 5:4).

12. But a passage is produced from the Law of Moses, which seems very adverse to the view now given. After promulgating the Law, he takes the people to witness in these terms: “This commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it” (Deuteronomy 30:11, Deuteronomy 30:12, Deuteronomy 30:14). Certainly, if this is to be understood of mere precepts, I admit that it is of no little importance to the matter in hand. For, though it were easy to evade the difficulty by saying, that the thing here treated of is not the observance of the law, but the facility and readiness of becoming acquainted with it, some scruple, perhaps, would still remain. The Apostle Paul, however, no mean interpreter, removes all doubt when he affirms, that Moses here spoke of the doctrine of the Gospel (Romans 10:8). If any one is so refractory as to contend that Paul violently wrested the words in applying them to the Gospel, though his hardihood is chargeable with impiety, we are still able, independently of the authority of the Apostle, to repel the objection. For, if Moses spoke of precepts merely, he was only inflating the people with vain confidence. Had they attempted the observance of the law in their own strength, as a matter in which they should find no difficulty, what else could have been the result than to throw them headlong? Where, then, was that easy means of observing the law, when the only access to it was over a fatal precipice? Accordingly, nothing is more certain than that under these words is comprehended the covenant of mercy, which had been promulgated along with the demands of the law. A few verses before, he had said, “The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live” (Deuteronomy 30:6). Therefore, the readiness of which he immediately after speaks was placed not in the power of man, but in the protection and help of the Holy Spirit, who mightily performs his own work in our weakness. The passage, however, is not to be understood of precepts simply, but rather of the Gospel promises, which, so far from proving any power in us to fulfil righteousness, utterly disprove it. This is confirmed by the testimony of Paul, when he observes that the Gospel holds forth salvation to us, not under the harsh arduous, and impossible terms on which the law treats with us (namely, that those shall obtain it who fulfil all its demands), but on terms easy, expeditious, and readily obtained. This passage, therefore, tends in no degree to establish the freedom of the human will.

13. They are wont also to adduce certain passages in which God is said occasionally to try men, by withdrawing the assistance of his grace, and to wait until they turn to him, as in Hosea, “I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face” (Hosea 5:15). It were absurd (say they), that the Lord should wait till Israel should seek his face, if their minds were not flexible, so as to turn in either direction of their own accord. As if anything were more common in the prophetical writings than for God to put on the semblance of rejecting and casting off his people until they reform their lives. But what can our opponents extract from such threats? If they mean to maintain that a people, when abandoned by God, are able of themselves to think of turning unto him, they will do it in the very face of Scripture. On the other hand, if they admit that divine grace is necessary to conversion, why do they dispute with us? But while they admit that grace is so far necessary, they insist on reserving some ability for man. How do they prove it? Certainly not from this nor any similar passage; for it is one thing to withdraw from man, and look to what he will do when thus abandoned and left to himself, and another thing to assist his powers (whatever they may be), in proportion to their weakness. What, then, it will be asked, is meant by

such expressions? I answer, just the same as if God were to say, Since nothing is gained by admonishing, exhorting, rebuking this stubborn people, I will withdraw for a little, and silently leave them to be afflicted; I shall see whether, after long calamity, any remembrance of me will return, and induce them to seek my face. But by the departure of the Lord to a distance is meant the withdrawal of prophecy. By his waiting to see what men will do is meant that he, while silent, and in a manner hiding himself, tries them for a season with various afflictions. Both he does that he may humble us the more; for we shall sooner be broken than corrected by the strokes of adversity, unless his Spirit train us to docility. Moreover, when the Lord, offended and, as it were, fatigued with our obstinate perverseness, leaves us for a while (by withdrawing his word, in which he is wont in some degree to manifest his presence), and makes trial of what we will do in his absence, from this it is erroneously inferred, that there is some power of free will, the extent of which is to be considered and tried, whereas the only end which he has in view is to bring us to an acknowledgement of our utter nothingness.

14. Another objection is founded on a mode of speaking which is constantly observed both in Scripture and in common discourse. God works are said to be ours, and we are said to do what is holy and acceptable to God, just as we are said to commit sin. But if sins are justly imputed to us, as proceeding from ourselves, for the same reason (say they) some share must certainly be attributed to us in works of righteousness. It could not be accordant with reason to say, that we do those things which we are incapable of doing of our own motion, God moving us, as if we were stones. These expressions, therefore, it is said, indicate that while, in the matter of grace, we give the first place to God, a secondary place must be assigned to our agency. If the only thing here insisted on were, that good works are termed ours, I, in my turn, would reply, that the bread which we ask God to give us is also termed ours. What, then, can be inferred from the title of possession, but simply that, by the kindness and free gift of Gods that becomes ours which in other respects is by no means due to us? Therefore let them either ridicule the same absurdity in the Lord’s Prayer, or let them cease to regard it as absurd, that good works should be called ours, though our only property in them is derived from the liberality of God. But there is something stronger in the fact, that we are often said in Scripture to worship God, do justice, obey the law, and follow good works. These being proper offices of the mind and will, how can they be consistently referred to the Spirit, and, at the same time, attributed to us, unless there be some concurrence on our part with the divine agency? This difficulty will be easily disposed of if we attend to the manner in which the Holy Spirit acts in the righteous. The similitude with which they invidiously assail us is foreign to the purpose; for who is so absurd as to imagine that movement in man differs in nothing from the impulse given to a stone? Nor can anything of the kind be inferred from our doctrine. To the natural powers of man we ascribe approving and rejecting, willing and not willing, striving and resisting, viz., approving vanity, rejecting solid good, willing evil and not willing good, striving for wickedness and resisting righteousness. What then does the Lord do? If he sees meet to employ depravity of this description as an instrument of his anger, he gives it whatever aim and direction he pleases, that, by a guilty hand, he may accomplish his own good work. A wicked man thus serving the power of God, while he is bent only on following his own lust, can we compare to a stone, which, driven by an external impulse, is borne along without motion, or sense, or will of its own? We see how wide the difference is. But how stands the case with the godly, as to whom chiefly the question is raised? When God erects his kingdom in them, he, by means of his Spirit, curbs their will, that it may not follow its natural bent, and be carried hither and thither by vagrant

lusts; bends, frames trains, and guides it according to the rule of his justice, so as to incline it to righteousness and holiness, and establishes and strengthens it by the energy of his Spirit, that it may not stumble or fall. For which reason Augustine thus expresses himself (De Corrept. et Gratia, cap. 2), “It will be said we are therefore acted upon, and do not act. Nay, you act and are acted upon, and you then act well when you are acted upon by one that is good. The Spirit of God who actuates you is your helper in acting, and bears the name of helper, because you, too, do something.” In the former member of this sentence, he reminds us that the agency of man is not destroyed by the motion of the Holy Spirit, because nature furnishes the will which is guided so as to aspire to good. As to the second member of the sentence, in which he says that the very idea of help implies that we also do something, we must not understand it as if he were attributing to us some independent power of action; but not to foster a feeling of sloth, he reconciles the agency of God with our own agency, by saying, that to wish is from nature, to wish well is from grace. Accordingly, he had said a little before, “Did not God assist us, we should not only not be able to conquer, but not able even to fight.”

15. Hence it appears that the grace of God (as this name is used when regeneration is spoken of) is the rule of the Spirit, in directing and governing the human will. Govern he cannot, without correcting, reforming, renovating (hence we say that the beginning of regeneration consists in the abolition of what is ours); in like manner, he cannot govern without moving, impelling, urging, and restraining. Accordingly, all the actions which are afterwards done are truly said to be wholly his. Meanwhile, we deny not the truth of Augustine’s doctrine, that the will is not destroyed, but rather repaired, by grace - the two things being perfectly consistent, viz., that the human will may be said to be renewed when its vitiosity and perverseness being corrected, it is conformed to the true standard of righteousness and that, at the same time, the will may be said to be made new, being so vitiated and corrupted that its nature must be entirely changed. There is nothing then to prevent us from saying, that our will does what the Spirit does in us, although the will contributes nothing of itself apart from grace. We must, therefore, remember what we quoted from Augustine, that some men labour in vain to find in the human will some good quality properly belonging to it. Any intermixture which men attempt to make by conjoining the effort of their own will with divine grace is corruption, just as when unwholesome and muddy water is used to dilute wine. But though every thing good in the will is entirely derived from the influence of the Spirit, yet, because we have naturally an innate power of willing, we are not improperly said to do the things of which God claims for himself all the praise; first, because every thing which his kindness produces in us is our own (only we must understand that it is not of ourselves); and, secondly, because it is our mind, our will, our study which are guided by him to what is good.

16. The other passages which they gather together from different quarters will not give much trouble to any person of tolerable understanding, who pays due attention to the explanations already given. They adduce the passage of Genesis, “Unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him” (Genesis 4:7). This they interpret of sin, as if the Lord were promising Cain that the dominion of sin should not prevail over his mind, if he would labour in subduing it. We, however, maintain that it is much more agreeable to the context to understand the words as referring to Abel, it being there the purpose of God to point out the injustice of the envy which Cain had conceived against his brother. And this He does in two ways, by showing, first, that it was vain to think he could, by means of wickedness, surpass his brother in the favour of God, by whom

nothing is esteemed but righteousness; and, secondly, how ungrateful he was for the kindness he had already received, in not being able to bear with a brother who had been subjected to his authority. But lest it should be thought that we embrace this interpretation because the other is contrary to our view, let us grant that God does here speak of sin. If so, his words contain either an order or a promise. If an order, we have already demonstrated that this is no proof of man's ability; if a promise, where is the fulfilment of the promise when Cain yielded to the sin over which he ought to have prevailed? They will allege a tacit condition in the promise, as if it were said that he would gain the victory if he contended. This subterfuge is altogether unavailing. For, if the dominion spoken of refers to sin, no man can have any doubt that the form of expression is imperative, declaring not what we are able, but what it is our duty to do, even if beyond our ability. Although both the nature of the case, and the rule of grammatical construction, require that it be regarded as a comparison between Cain and Abel, we think the only preference given to the younger brother was, that the elder made himself inferior by his own wickedness.

17. They appeal, moreover, to the testimony of the Apostle Paul, because he says, "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy" (Romans 9:15). From this they infer, that there is something in will and endeavour, which, though weak in themselves, still, being mercifully aided by God, are not without some measure of success. But if they would attend in sober earnest to the subject there handled by Paul, they would not so rashly pervert his meaning. I am aware they can quote Origin and Jerome in support of this exposition. To these I might, in my turn, oppose Augustine. But it is of no consequence what they thought, if it is clear what Paul meant. He teaches that salvation is prepared for those only on whom the Lord is pleased to bestow his mercy - that ruin and death await all whom he has not chosen. He had proved the condition of the reprobate by the example of Pharaoh, and confirmed the certainty of gratuitous election by the passage in Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy." Thereafter he concludes, that it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy. If these words are understood to mean that the will or endeavour are not sufficient, because unequal to such a task, the Apostle has not used them very appropriately. We must therefore abandon this absurd mode of arguing, "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth;" therefore, there is some will, some running. Paul's meaning is more simple - there is no will nor running by which we can prepare the way for our salvation - it is wholly of the divine mercy. He indeed says nothing more than he says to Titus, when he writes, "After that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us" (Titus 3:4, Titus 3:5). Those who argue that Paul insinuated there was some will and some running when he said, "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth," would not allow me to argue after the same fashion, that we have done some righteous works, because Paul says that we have attained the divine favour, "not by works of righteousness which we have done." But if they see a flaw in this mode of arguing, let them open their eyes, and they will see that their own mode is not free from a similar fallacy. The argument which Augustine uses is well founded, "If it is said, 'It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth,' because neither will nor running are sufficient; it may, on the other hand, be retorted, it is not 'of God that showeth mercy,' because mercy does not act alone" (August. Ephesians 170, ad Vital. See also Enchirid. ad Laurent. cap. 32). This second proposition being absurd, Augustine justly concludes the meaning of the words to be, that there is no good will in man until it is prepared by the Lord; not that we ought not to will and run, but that both are produced in us by God. Some, with equal

unskilfulness, wrest the saying of Paul, “We are labourers together with God” (1 Corinthians 3:9). There cannot be a doubt that these words apply to ministers only, who are called “labourers with God,” not from bringing any thing of their own, but because God makes use of their instrumentality after he has rendered them fit, and provided them with the necessary endowments.

18. They appeal also to Ecclesiasticus, who is well known to be a writer of doubtful authority. But, though we might justly decline his testimony, let us see what he says in support of free will. His words are, “He himself made man from the beginning, and left him in the hand of his counsel; If thou wilt, to keep the commandments, and perform acceptable faithfulness. He has set fire and water before thee: stretch forth thy hand unto whether thou wilt. Before man is life and death; and whether him liketh shall be given him” (Sir 15:14-17). Grant that man received at his creation a power of acquiring life or death; what, then, if we, on the other hand, can reply that he has lost it? Assuredly I have no intention to contradict Solomon, who asserts that “God has made man upright;” that “they have sought out many inventions” (Ecclesiastes 7:29). But since man, by degenerating, has made shipwreck of himself and all his blessings, it certainly does not follow, that every thing attributed to his nature, as originally constituted, applies to it now when vitiated and degenerate. Therefore, not only to my opponents, but to the author of Ecclesiasticus himself (whoever he may have been), this is my answer: If you mean to tell man that in himself there is a power of acquiring salvation, your authority with us is not so great as, in the least degree, to prejudice the undoubted word of God; but if only wishing to curb the malignity of the fleshy which by transferring the blame of its own wickedness to God, is wont to catch at a vain defence, you say that rectitude was given to man, in order to make it apparent he was the cause of his own destruction, I willingly assent. Only agree with me in this, that it is by his own fault he is stript of the ornaments in which the Lord at first attired him, and then let us unite in acknowledging that what he now wants is a physician, and not a defender.

19. There is nothing more frequent in their mouths than the parable of the traveller who fell among thieves, and was left half dead (Luke 10:32). I am aware that it is a common idea with almost all writers, that under the figure of the traveller is represented the calamity of the human race. Hence our opponents argue that man was not so mutilated by the robbery of sin and the devil as not to preserve some remains of his former endowments; because it is said he was left half dead. For where is the half living, unless some portion of right will and reason remain? First, were I to deny that there is any room for their allegory, what could they say? There can be no doubt that the Fathers invented it contrary to the genuine sense of the parable. Allegories ought to be carried no further than Scripture expressly sanctions: so far are they from forming a sufficient basis to found doctrines upon. And were I so disposed I might easily find the means of tearing up this fiction by the roots. The Word of God leaves no half life to man, but teaches, that, in regard to life and happiness, he has utterly perished. Paul, when he speaks of our redemption, says not that the half dead are cured (Ephesians 2:5, Ephesians 2:6; Ephesians 5:14) but that those who were dead are raised up. He does not call upon the half dead to receive the illumination of Christ, but upon those who are asleep and buried. In the same way our Lord himself says, “The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God” (John 5:25). How can they presume to set up a flimsy allegory in opposition to so many clear statements? But be it that this allegory is good evidence, what can they extort out of it? Man is half dead, therefore there is some soundness in him. True! he has a mind capable of understanding, though incapable of attaining to

heavenly and spiritual wisdom; he has some discernment of what is honourable; he has some sense of the Divinity, though he cannot reach the true knowledge of God. But to what do these amount? They certainly do not refute the doctrine of Augustine - a doctrine confirmed by the common suffrages even of the Schoolmen, that after the fall, the free gifts on which salvation depends were withdrawn, and natural gifts corrupted and defiled (supra, chap. 2 sec. 2). Let it stand, therefore, as an indubitable truth, which no engines can shake, that the mind of man is so entirely alienated from the righteousness of God that he cannot conceive, desire, or design any thing but what is wicked, distorted, foul, impure, and iniquitous; that his heart is so thoroughly envenomed by sin that it can breathe out nothing but corruption and rottenness; that if some men occasionally make a show of goodness, their mind is ever interwoven with hypocrisy and deceit, their soul inwardly bound with the fetters of wickedness.

08.02.06. Chapter 06

Chapter 6. Redemption for man lost to be sought in Christ. The parts of this chapter are, I. The excellence of the doctrine of Christ the Redeemer - a doctrine always entertained by the Church, sec. 1.

II. Christ, the Mediator in both dispensations, was offered to the faith of the pious Israelites and people of old, as is plain from the institution of sacrifice, the calling of Abraham's family, and the elevation of David and his posterity, sec. 2.

III. Hence the consolation, strength, hope, and confidence of the godly under the Law, Christ being offered to them in various ways by their heavenly Father.

Sections

1. The knowledge of God the Creator of no avail without faith in Christ the Redeemer. First reason. Second reason strengthened by the testimony of an Apostle. Conclusion. This doctrine entertained by the children of God in all ages from the beginning of the world. Error of throwing open heaven to the heathen, who know nothing of Christ. The pretexts for this refuted by passages of Scripture.

2. God never was propitious to the ancient Israelites without Christ the Mediator. First reason founded on the institution of sacrifice. Second reason founded on the calling of Abraham. Third reason founded on the elevation of David's family to regal dignity, and confirmed by striking passages of Scripture.

3. Christ the solace ever promised to the afflicted; the banner of faith and hope always erected. This confirmed by various passages of Scripture.

4. The Jews taught to have respect to Christ. This teaching sanctioned by our Saviour himself. The common saying, that God is the object of faith, requires to be explained and modified. Conclusion of this discussion concerning Christ. No saving knowledge of God in the heathen.

1. The whole human race having been undone in the person of Adam, the excellence and dignity of our origin, as already described, is so far from availing us, that it rather turns to our greater disgrace, until God, who does not acknowledge man when defiled and corrupted by sin as his own work, appear as a Redeemer in the person of his only begotten Son. Since our fall from life unto death, all that knowledge of God the Creator, of which we have discoursed, would be useless, were it not followed up by faith, holding forth God to us as a Father in Christ. The natural course undoubtedly was, that the fabric of the world should be a school in which we might learn piety, and from it pass to eternal life and perfect felicity. But after looking at the perfection beheld wherever we turn our eye, above and below, we are met by the divine malediction, which, while it involves innocent creatures in our fault, of necessity fills our own souls with despair. For although God is still pleased in many ways to manifest his paternal favour towards us, we cannot, from a mere survey of the world, infer that he is a Father. Conscience urging us within, and showing that sin is a just ground for our being forsaken, will not allow us to think that God accounts or treats us as

sons. In addition to this are our sloth and ingratitude. Our minds are so blinded that they cannot perceive the truth, and all our senses are so corrupt that we wickedly rob God of his glory. Wherefore, we must conclude with Paul, “After that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe” (1 Corinthians 1:21). By the “wisdom of God,” he designates this magnificent theatre of heaven and earth replenished with numberless wonders, the wise contemplation of which should have enabled us to know God. But this we do with little profit; and, therefore, he invites us to faith in Christ - faith which, by a semblance of foolishness, disgusts the unbeliever. Therefore, although the preaching of the cross is not in accordance with human wisdom, we must, however, humbly embrace it if we would return to God our Maker, from whom we are estranged, that he may again become our Father. It is certain that after the fall of our first parent, no knowledge of God without a Mediator was effectual to salvation. Christ speaks not of his own age merely, but embraces all ages, when he says “This is life eternal that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” (John 17:3). The more shameful therefore is the presumption of those who throw heaven open to the unbelieving and profane, in the absence of that grace which Scripture uniformly describes as the only door by which we enter into life. Should any confine our Saviour’s words to the period subsequent to the promulgation of the Gospel, the refutation is at hand; since on a ground common to all ages and nations, it is declared, that those who are estranged from God, and as such, are under the curse, the children of wrath, cannot be pleasing to God until they are reconciled. To this we may add the answer which our Saviour gave to the Samaritan woman “Ye worship ye know not what; we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews” (John 4:22). By these words, he both charges every Gentile religion with falsehood, and assigns the reason, viz., that under the Law the Redeemer was promised to the chosen people only, and that, consequently, no worship was ever pleasing to God in which respect was not had to Christ. Hence also Paul affirms, that all the Gentiles were “without God,” and deprived of the hope of life. Now, since John teaches that there was life in Christ from the beginning, and that the whole world had lost it (John 1:4), it is necessary to return to that fountain; And, accordingly, Christ declares that inasmuch as he is a propitiator, he is life. And, indeed, the inheritance of heaven belongs to none but the sons of God (John 15:6). Now, it were most incongruous to give the place and rank of sons to any who have not been engrafted into the body of the only begotten Son. And John distinctly testifies that those become the sons of God who believe in his name. But as it is not my intention at present formally to discuss the subject of faith in Christ, it is enough to have thus touched on it in passing.

2. Hence it is that God never showed himself propitious to his ancient people, nor gave them any hope of grace without a Mediator. I say nothing of the sacrifices of the Law, by which believers were plainly and openly taught that salvation was not to be found anywhere but in the expiation which Christ alone completed. All I maintain is that the prosperous and happy state of the Church was always founded in the person of Christ. For although God embraced the whole posterity of Abraham in his covenant, yet Paul properly argues (Galatians 3:16), that Christ was truly the seed in which all the nations of the earth were to be blessed, since we know that all who were born of Abraham, according to the flesh, were not accounted the seed. To omit Ishmael and others, how came it that of the two sons of Isaac, the twin brothers, Esau and Jacob, while yet in the womb, the one was chosen and the other rejected? Nay, how came it that the first-born was rejected, and the younger alone admitted? Moreover, how happens it that the majority are rejected? It is plain,

therefore, that the seed of Abraham is considered chiefly in one head, and that the promised salvation is not attained without coming to Christ, whose office it is to gather together those which were scattered abroad. Thus the primary adoption of the chosen people depended on the grace of the Mediator. Although it is not expressed in very distinct terms in Moses, it, however, appears to have been commonly known to all the godly. For before a king was appointed over the Israelites, Hannah, the mother of Samuel, describing the happiness of the righteous, speaks thus in her song, “He shall give strength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed;” meaning by these words, that God would bless his Church. To this corresponds the prediction, which is afterwards added, “I will raise me up a faithful priest, and he shall walk before mine anointed for ever” (1 Samuel 2:10, 1 Samuel 2:35). And there can be no doubt that our heavenly Father intended that a living image of Christ should be seen in David and his posterity. Accordingly, exhorting the righteous to fear Him, he bids them “Kiss the Son” (Psalms 2:12). Corresponding to this is the passage in the Gospel, “He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father” (John 5:23). Therefore, though the kingdom was broken up by the revolt of the ten tribes, yet the covenant which God had made in David and his successors behaved to stand, as is also declared by his Prophets, “Howbeit I will not take the whole kingdom out of his hand: but I will make him prince all the days of his life for David my servant’s sake” (1 Kings 11:34). The same thing is repeated a second and third time. It is also expressly said, “I will for this afflict the seed of David, but not for ever” (1 Kings 11:39). Some time afterwards it was said, “Nevertheless, for David’s sake did the Lord his God give him a lamp in Jerusalem, to set up his son after him, and to establish Jerusalem” (1 Kings 15:4). And when matters were bordering on destruction, it was again said, “Yet the Lord would not destroy Judah for David his servant’s sake, as he had promised to give him alway a light, and to his children” (2 Kings 8:19). The sum of the whole comes to this: David, all others being excluded, was chosen to be the person in whom the good pleasure of the Lord should dwell; as it is said elsewhere, “He forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh;” “Moreover, he refused the tabernacle of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of Ephraim;” “But chose the tribe of Judah, the mount Zion which he loved;” “He chose David also his servant, and took him from the sheep folds: from following the ewes great with young he brought him to feed Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance” (Psalms 78:60, Psalms 78:67, Psalms 78:70, Psalms 78:71). In fine, God, in thus preserving his Church, intended that its security and salvation should depend on Christ as its head. Accordingly, David exclaims, “The Lord is their strength, and he is the saving strength of his anointed;” and then prays “Save thy people, and bless thine inheritance;” intimating, that the safety of the Church was indissolubly connected with the government of Christ. In the same sense he elsewhere says, “Save, Lord: let the king hear us when we call” (Psalms 20:9). These words plainly teach that believers, in applying for the help of God, had their sole confidence in this - that they were under the unseen government of the King. This may be inferred from another psalm, “Save now, I beseech thee O Lord: Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord” (Psalms 118:25, Psalms 118:26). Here it is obvious that believers are invited to Christ, in the assurance that they will be safe when entirely in his hand. To the same effect is another prayer, in which the whole Church implores the divine mercy “Let thy hand be upon the Man of thy right hand, upon the Son of man, whom thou madest strong (or best fitted) for thyself” (Psalms 80:17). For though the author of the psalm laments the dispersion of the whole nations he prays for its revival in him who is sole Head. After the people were led away into captivity, the land laid waste, and matters to appearance desperate, Jeremiah, lamenting the calamity of the Church, especially complains, that

by the destruction of the kingdom the hope of believers was cut off; “The breath of our nostrils, the anointed of the Lord, was taken in their pits, of whom we said, Under his shadow we shall live among the heathen” (Lamentations 4:20). From all this it is abundantly plain, that as the Lord cannot be propitious to the human race without a Mediator, Christ was always held forth to the holy Fathers under the Law as the object of their faith.

3. Moreover when comfort is promised in affliction, especially when the deliverance of the Church is described, the banner of faith and hope in Christ is unfurled. “Thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people, even for salvation with thine anointed,” says Habakkuk (Habakkuk 3:13). And whenever mention is made in the Prophets of the renovation of the Church, the people are directed to the promise made to David, that his kingdom would be for ever. And there is nothing strange in this, since otherwise there would have been no stability in the covenant. To this purpose is the remarkable prophecy in Isaiah 7:14. After seeing that the unbelieving king Ahab repudiated what he had testified regarding the deliverance of Jerusalem from siege and its immediate safety, he passes as it were abruptly to the Messiah, “Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel;” intimating indirectly, that though the king and his people wickedly rejected the promise offered to them, as if they were bent on causing the faith of God to fail, the covenant would not be defeated - the Redeemer would come in his own time. In fine, all the prophets, to show that God was placable, were always careful to bring forward that kingdom of David, on which redemption and eternal salvation depended. Thus in Isaiah it is said, “I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David. Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people” (Isaiah 55:3, Isaiah 55:4); intimating, that believers, in calamitous circumstances, could have no hope, had they not this testimony that God would be ready to hear them. In the same way, to revive their drooping spirits, Jeremiah says, “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgement and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely” (Jeremiah 23:5, Jeremiah 23:6). In Ezekiel also it is said, “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: I the Lord have spoken it. And I will make with them a covenant of peace” (Ezekiel 34:23, Ezekiel 34:24, Ezekiel 34:25). And again, after discoursing of this wondrous renovation, he says, “David my servant shall be king over them: and they all shall have one shepherd.” “Moreover, I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them” (Ezekiel 37:24-26). I select a few passages out of many, because I merely wish to impress my readers with the fact, that the hope of believers was ever treasured up in Christ alone. All the other prophets concur in this. Thus Hosea, “Then shall the children of Judah and the children of Israel be gathered together, and appoint themselves one head” (Hosea 1:11). This he afterwards explains in clearer terms, “Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king” (Hosea 3:5). Micas, also speaking of the return of the people, says expressly, “Their king shall pass before them, and the Lord on the head of them” (Micah 2:13). So Amos, in predicting the renovation of the people, says “In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up the ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old” (Amos 9:11); in other words, the only banner of salvation was, the exaltation of the family of David to regal splendour, as fulfilled in Christ. Hence, too, Zechariah, as nearer in time to the manifestation of Christ, speaks more plainly, “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O

daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation" (Zechariah 9:9). This corresponds to the passage already quoted from the Psalms, "The Lord is their strength, and he is the saving health of their anointed." Here salvation is extended from the head to the whole body.

4. By familiarising the Jews with these prophecies, God intended to teach them, that in seeking for deliverance, they should turn their eyes directly towards Christ. And though they had sadly degenerated, they never entirely lost the knowledge of this general principle, that God, by the hand of Christ, would be the deliverer of the Church, as he had promised to David; and that in this way only the free covenant by which God had adopted his chosen people would be fulfilled. Hence it was, that on our Saviour's entry into Jerusalem, shortly before his death, the children shouted, "Hosannah to the son of David" (Matthew 21:9). For there seems to have been a hymn known to all, and in general use, in which they sung that the only remaining pledge which they had of the divine mercy was the promised advent of a Redeemer. For this reason, Christ tells his disciples to believe in him, in order that they might have a distinct and complete belief in God, "Ye believe in God, believe also in me" (John 14:1). For although, properly speaking, faith rises from Christ to the Father, he intimates, that even when it leans on God, it gradually vanishes away, unless he himself interpose to give it solid strength. The majesty of God is too high to be scaled up to by mortals, who creep like worms on the earth. Therefore, the common saying that God is the object of faith (Lactantius, lib. 4 c. 16), requires to be received with some modification. When Christ is called the image of the invisible God (Colossians 1:15), the expression is not used without cause, but is designed to remind us that we can have no knowledge of our salvation, until we behold God in Christ. For although the Jewish scribes had by their false glosses darkened what the Prophets had taught concerning the Redeemer, yet Christ assumed it to be a fact, received, as it were, with public consent, that there was no other remedy in desperate circumstances, no other mode of delivering the Church than the manifestation of the Mediator. It is true, that the fact adverted to by Paul was not so generally known as it ought to have been, viz., that Christ is the end of the Law (Romans 10:4), though this is both true, and clearly appears both from the Law and the Prophets. I am not now, however, treating of faith, as we shall elsewhere have a fitter place (Book 3 Chap. 2), but what I wish to impress upon my readers in this way is, that the first step in piety is, to acknowledge that God is a Father, to defend, govern, and cherish us, until he brings us to the eternal inheritance of his kingdom; that hence it is plain, as we lately observed, there is no saving knowledge of God without Christ, and that, consequently, from the beginning of the world Christ was held forth to all the elect as the object of their faith and confidence. In this sense, Irenaeus says, that the Father, who is boundless in himself, is bounded in the Son, because he has accommodated himself to our capacity, lest our minds should be swallowed up by the immensity of his glory (Irenaeus, lib. 4 cap. 8). Fanatics, not attending to this, distort a useful sentiment into an impious dream, as if Christ had only a share of the Godhead, as a part taken from a whole; whereas the meaning merely is, that God is comprehended in Christ alone. The saying of John was always true, "whosoever denieth the Son, the same has not the Father" (1 John 2:23). For though in old time there were many who boasted that they worshipped the Supreme Deity, the Maker of heaven and earth, yet as they had no Mediator, it was impossible for them truly to enjoy the mercy of God, so as to feel persuaded that he was their Father. Not holding the head, that is, Christ, their knowledge of God was evanescent; and hence they at length fell away to gross and foul superstitions betraying their ignorance, just as the Turks in the present day, who, though

proclaiming, with full throat, that the Creator of heaven and earth is their God, yet by their rejection of Christ, substitute an idol in his place.

08.02.07. Chapter 07

Chapter 7. The law given, not to retain a people for itself, but to keep alive the hope of salvation in Christ until His advent. The divisions of this chapter are, I. The Moral and Ceremonial Law a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, sec. 1, 2.

II. This true of the Moral Law, especially its conditional promises. These given for the best reasons. In what respect the observance of the Moral Law is said to be impossible, sec. 3-5.

III. Of the threefold office and use of the Moral Law, sec. 6-12. Antinomians refuted, sec. 13.

IV. What the abrogation of the Law, Moral and Ceremonial, sec. 14-17.

Sections

1. The whole system of religion delivered by the hand of Moses, in many ways pointed to Christ. This exemplified in the case of sacrifices, ablutions, and an endless series of ceremonies. This proved, 1. By the declared purpose of God; 2. By the nature of the ceremonies themselves; 3. From the nature of God; 4. From the grace offered to the Jews; 5. From the consecration of the priests.

2. Proof continued. 6. From a consideration of the kingdom erected in the family of David. 7. From the end of the ceremonies. 8. From the end of the Moral Law.

3. A more ample exposition of the last proof. The Moral Law leads believers to Christ. Showing the perfect righteousness required by God, it convinces us of our inability to fulfil it. It thus denies us life, adjudges us to death, and so urges us to seek deliverance in Christ.

4. The promises of the Law, though conditional, founded on the best reason. This reason explained.

5. No inconsistency in giving a law, the observance of which is impossible. This proved from reason, and confirmed by Scripture. Another confirmation from Augustine.

6. A consideration of the office and use of the Moral Law shows that it leads to Christ. The Law, while it describes the righteousness which is acceptable to God, proves that every man is unrighteous.

7. The Law fitly compared to a mirror, which shows us our wretchedness. This derogates not in any degree from its excellence.

8. When the Law discloses our guilt, we should not despond, but flee to the mercy of God. How this may be done.

9. Confirmation of the first use of the Moral Law from various passages in Augustine.

10. A second use of the Law is to curb sinners. This most necessary for the good of the community at large; and this in respect not only of the reprobate, but also of the elect, previous to regeneration. This confirmed by the authority of an Apostle.

11. The Law showing our wretchedness, disposes us to admit the remedy. It also tends to keep us in our duty. Confirmation from general experience.

12. The third and most appropriate use of the Law respects the elect. 1. It instructs and teaches them to make daily progress in doing the will of God. 2. Urges them by exhortation to obedience. Testimony of David. How he is to be reconciled with the Apostle.

13. The profane heresy of the Antinomians must be exploded. Argument founded on a passage in David, and another in Moses.

14. Last part of the chapter treating of the abrogation of the Law. In what respect any part of the Moral Law abrogated.

15. The curse of the Law how abrogated.

16. Of the abrogation of the Ceremonial Law in regard to the observance only.

17. The reason assigned by the Apostle applicable not to the Moral Law, but to ceremonial observances only. These abrogated, not only because they separated the Jews from the Gentiles, but still more because they were a kind of formal instruments to attest our guilt and impunity. Christ, by destroying these, is justly said to have taken away the handwriting that was against us, and nailed it to his cross.

1. From the whole course of the observations now made, we may infer, that the Law was not superadded about four hundred years after the death of Abraham in order that it might lead the chosen people away from Christ, but, on the contrary, to keep them in suspense until his advent; to inflame their desire, and confirm their expectation, that they might not become dispirited by the long delay. By the Law, I understand not only the Ten Commandments, which contain a complete rule of life, but the whole system of religion delivered by the hand of Moses. Moses was not appointed as a Lawgiver, to do away with the blessing promised to the race of Abraham; nay, we see that he is constantly reminding the Jews of the free covenant which had been made with their fathers, and of which they were heirs; as if he had been sent for the purpose of renewing it. This is most clearly manifested by the ceremonies. For what could be more vain or frivolous than for men to reconcile themselves to God, by offering him the foul odour produced by burning the fat of beasts? or to wipe away their own impurities by be sprinkling themselves with water or blood? In short, the whole legal worship (if considered by itself apart from the types and shadows of corresponding truth) is a mere mockery. Wherefore, both in Stephen’s address (Acts 7:44), and in the Epistle to the Hebrews, great weight is justly given to the passage in which God says to Moses, “Look that thou make them after the pattern which was showed thee in the mount” (Exodus 25:40). Had there not been some spiritual end to which they were directed, the Jews, in the observance of them, would have deluded themselves as much as the Gentiles in their vanities. Profane men, who have never made religion their serious study, cannot bear without disgust to hear of such a multiplicity of rites. They not merely wonder why God fatigued his ancient people with such a mass of ceremonies, but they despise and ridicule them as childish toys. This they do,

because they attend not to the end; from which, if the legal figures are separated, they cannot escape the charge of vanity. But the type shows that God did not enjoin sacrifice, in order that he might occupy his worshippers with earthly exercises, but rather that he might raise their minds to something higher. This is clear even from His own nature. Being a spirit, he is delighted only with spiritual worship. The same thing is testified by the many passages in which the Prophets accuse the Jews of stupidity, for imagining that mere sacrifices have any value in the sight of God. Did they by this mean to derogate in any respect from the Law? By no means; but as interpreters of its true meaning, they wished in this way to turn the attention of the people to the end which they ought to have had in view, but from which they generally wandered. From the grace offered to the Jews we may certainly infer, that the law was not a stranger to Christ. Moses declared the end of the adoption of the Israelites to be, that they should be “a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation” (Exodus 19:6). This they could not attain, without a greater and more excellent atonement than the blood of beasts. For what could be less in accordance with reason, than that the sons of Adams who, from hereditary taint, are all born the slaves of sin, should be raised to royal dignity, and in this way made partakers of the glory of God, if the noble distinction were not derived from some other source? How, moreover, could the priestly office exist in vigour among those whose vices rendered them abominable in the sight of God, if they were not consecrated in a holy head? Wherefore, Peter elegantly transposes the words of Moses, teaching that the fulness of grace, of which the Jews had a foretaste under the Law, is exhibited in Christ, “Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood” (1 Peter 2:9). The transposition of the words intimates that those to whom Christ has appeared in the Gospel, have obtained more than their fathers, inasmuch as they are all endued with priestly and royal honour, and can, therefore, trusting to their Mediator, appear with boldness in the presence of God.

2. And it is to be observed, by the way, that the kingdom, which was at length erected in the family of David, is part of the Law, and is comprehended under the dispensation of Moses; whence it follows, that, as well in the whole tribe of Levi as in the posterity of David, Christ was exhibited to the eyes of the Israelites as in a double mirror. For, as I lately observed (sec. 1), in no other way could those who were the slaves of sin and death, and defiled with corruption, be either kings or priests. Hence appears the perfect truth of Paul’s statement, “The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ,” “till the seed should come to whom the promise was made” (Galatians 3:24, Galatians 3:19). For Christ not yet having been made familiarly known to the Jews, they were like children whose weakness could not bear a full knowledge of heavenly things. How they were led to Christ by the ceremonial law has already been adverted to, and may be made more intelligible by several passages in the Prophets. Although they were required, in order to appease God, to approach him daily with new sacrifices, yet Isaiah promises, that all their sins would be expiated by one single sacrifice, and with this Daniel concurs (Isaiah 53:5; Daniel 9:26, Daniel 9:27). The priests appointed from the tribe of Levi entered the sanctuary, but it was once said of a single priest, “The Lord has sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek” (Psalms 110:4). The unction of oil was then visible, but Daniel in vision declares that there will be another unction. Not to dwell on this, the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews proves clearly, and at length, from the fourth to the eleventh chapter, that ceremonies were vain, and of no value, unless as bringing us to Christ. In regard to the Ten Commandments, we must, in like manner, attend to the statement of Paul, that “Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth” (Romans 10:4); and, again, that ministers of the new testament were “not

of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the split giveth life" (2 Corinthians 3:6). The former passage intimates, that it is in vain to teach righteousness by precept, until Christ bestow it by free imputation, and the regeneration of the Spirit. Hence he properly calls Christ the end or fulfilling of the Law, because it would avail us nothing to know what God demands did not Christ come to the succour of those who are labouring, and oppressed under an intolerable yoke and burden. In another place, he says that the Law "was added because of transgressions" (Galatians 3:19), that it might humble men under a sense of their condemnation. Moreover, inasmuch as this is the only true preparation for Christ, the statements, though made in different words, perfectly agree with each other. But because he had to dispute with perverse teachers, who pretended that men merited justification by the works of the Law, he was sometimes obliged, in refuting their error, to speak of the Law in a more restricted sense, merely as law, though, in other respects, the covenant of free adoption is comprehended under it.

3. But in order that a sense of guilt may urge us to seek for pardon, it is of importance to know how our being instructed in the Moral Law renders us more inexcusable. If it is true, that a perfect righteousness is set before us in the Law, it follows, that the complete observance of it is perfect righteousness in the sight of God; that is, a righteousness by which a man may be deemed and pronounced righteous at the divine tribunal. Wherefore Moses, after promulgating the Law, hesitates not to call heaven and earth to witness, that he had set life and death, good and evil, before the people. Nor can it be denied, that the reward of eternal salvation, as promised by the Lord, awaits the perfect obedience of the Law (Deuteronomy 30:19). Again, however, it is of importance to understand in what way we perform that obedience for which we justly entertain the hope of that reward. For of what use is it to see that the reward of eternal life depends on the observance of the Law, unless it moreover appears whether it be in our power in that way to attain to eternal life? Herein, then, the weakness of the Law is manifested; for, in none of us is that righteousness of the Law manifested, and, therefore, being excluded from the promises of life, we again fall under the curse. I state not only what happens, but what must necessarily happen. The doctrine of the Law transcending our capacity, a man may indeed look from a distance at the promises held forth, but he cannot derive any benefit from them. The only thing, therefore, remaining for him is, from their excellence to form a better estimate of his own misery, while he considers that the hope of salvation is cut off, and he is threatened with certain death. On the other hand, those fearful denunciations which strike not at a few individuals, but at every individual without exceptions rise up; rise up, I says and, with inexorable severity, pursue us; so that nothing but instant death is presented by the Law.

4. Therefore, if we look merely to the Law, the result must be despondency, confusion, and despair, seeing that by it we are all cursed and condemned, while we are kept far away from the blessedness which it holds forth to its observers. Is the Lord, then, you will ask, only sporting with us? Is it not the next thing to mockery, to hold out the hope of happiness, to invite and exhort us to it, to declare that it is set before us, while all the while the entrance to it is precluded and quite shut up? I answer, Although the promises, in so far as they are conditional, depend on a perfect obedience of the Law, which is nowhere to be found, they have not, however, been given in vain. For when we have learned, that the promises would be fruitless and unavailing, did not God accept us of his free goodness, without any view to our works, and when, having so learned, we, by faith, embrace the goodness thus offered in the gospel, the promises, with all their annexed

conditions, are fully accomplished. For God, while bestowing all things upon us freely, crowns his goodness by not disdaining our imperfect obedience; forgiving its deficiencies, accepting it as if it were complete, and so bestowing upon us the full amount of what the Law has promised. But as this point will be more fully discussed in treating of justification by faith, we shall not follow it further at present.

5. What has been said as to the impossible observance of the Law, it will be proper briefly to explain and confirm, the general opinion being, that nothing can be more absurd. Hence Jerome has not hesitated to denounce anathema against it. What Jerome thought, I care not; let us inquire what is the truth. I will not here enter into a long and intricate discussion on the various kinds of possibility. By impossible, I mean, that which never was, and, being prevented by the ordination and decree of God, never will be. I say, that if we go back to the remotest period, we shall not find a single saint who, clothed with a mortal body, ever attained to such perfection as to love the Lord with all his heart, and soul, and mind, and strength; and, on the other hand, not one who has not felt the power of concupiscence. Who can deny this? I am aware, indeed of a kind of saints whom a foolish superstition imagines, and whose purity the angels of heaven scarcely equal. This, however, is repugnant both to Scripture and experience. But I say further, that no saint ever will attain to perfection, so long as he is in the body. Scripture bears clear testimony to this effect: “There is no man that sinneth not,” saith Solomon (1 Kings 8:46). David says, “In thy sight shall no man living be justified” (Psalms 143:2). Job also, in numerous passages, affirms the same thing. But the clearest of all is Paul, who declares that “the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh” (Galatians 5:17). And he proves, that “as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse,” for the simple reason, that it is written, “Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them” (Galatians 3:10; Deuteronomy 27:26); intimating, or rather assuming it as confessed, that none can so continue. But whatever has been declared by Scripture must be regarded as perpetual, and hence necessary. The Pelagians annoyed Augustine with the sophism, that it was insulting to God to hold, that he orders more than believers are able, by his grace, to perform; and he, in order to evade it, acknowledged that the Lord was able, if he chose, to raise a mortal man to angelic purity; but that he had never done, and never would do it, because so the Scripture had declared (Augustine, lib. de Nat. et Grat.). This I deny not: but I add, that there is no use in absurdly disputing concerning the power of God in opposition to his truth; and therefore there is no ground for cavilling, when it is said that that thing cannot be, which the Scriptures declare will never be. But if it is the word that is objected to, I refer to the answer which our Saviour gave to his disciples when they asked, “Who then can be saved?” “With men,” said he, “this is impossible; but with God all things are possible” (Matthew 19:25). Augustine argues in the most convincing manner, that while in the flesh, we never can give God the love which we owe him. “Love so follows knowledge, that no man can perfectly love God who has not previously a full comprehension of his goodness” (Augustin. de Spiritu et Litera, towards the end, and elsewhere). So long as we are pilgrims in the world, we see through a glass darkly, and therefore our love is imperfect. Let it therefore be held incontrovertible, that, in consequence of the feebleness of our nature, it is impossible for us, so long as we are in the flesh, to fulfil the law. This will also be proved elsewhere from the writings of Paul (Romans 8:3).

6. That the whole matter may be made clearer, let us take a succinct view of the office and use of the Moral Law. Now this office and use seems to me to consist of three parts. First, by exhibiting

the righteousness of God - in other words, the righteousness which alone is acceptable to God - it admonishes every one of his own unrighteousness, certiorates, convicts, and finally condemns him. This is necessary, in order that man, who is blind and intoxicated with self-love, may be brought at once to know and to confess his weakness and impurity. For until his vanity is made perfectly manifest, he is puffed up with infatuated confidence in his own powers, and never can be brought to feel their feebleness so long as he measures them by a standard of his own choice. So soon, however, as he begins to compare them with the requirements of the Law, he has something to tame his presumption. How high soever his opinion of his own powers may be, he immediately feels that they pant under the heavy load, then totter and stumble, and finally fall and give way. He, then, who is schooled by the Law, lays aside the arrogance which formerly blinded him. In like manner must he be cured of pride, the other disease under which we have said that he labours. So long as he is permitted to appeal to his own judgement, he substitutes a hypocritical for a real righteousness, and, contented with this, sets up certain factitious observances in opposition to the grace of God. But after he is forced to weigh his conduct in the balance of the Law, renouncing all dependence on this fancied righteousness, he sees that he is at an infinite distance from holiness, and, on the other hand, that he teems with innumerable vices of which he formerly seemed free. The recesses in which concupiscence lies hid are so deep and tortuous that they easily elude our view; and hence the Apostle had good reason for saying, “I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.” For, if it be not brought forth from its lurkingplaces, it miserably destroys in secret before its fatal sting is discerned.

7. Thus the Law is a kind of mirror. As in a mirror we discover any stains upon our face, so in the Law we behold, first, our impotence; then, in consequence of it, our iniquity; and, finally, the curse, as the consequence of both. He who has no power of following righteousness is necessarily plunged in the mire of iniquity, and this iniquity is immediately followed by the curse. Accordingly, the greater the transgression of which the Law convicts us, the severer the judgement to which we are exposed. To this effect is the Apostle’s declaration, that “by the law is the knowledge of sin” (Romans 3:20). By these words, he only points out the first office of the Law as experienced by sinners not yet regenerated. In conformity to this, it is said, “the law entered that the offence might abound;” and, accordingly, that it is “the ministration of death;” that it “worketh wrath” and kills (Romans 5:20; 2 Corinthians 3:7; Romans 4:15). For there cannot be a doubt that the clearer the consciousness of guilt, the greater the increase of sin; because then to transgression a rebellious feeling against the Lawgiver is added. All that remains for the Law, is to arm the wrath of God for the destruction of the sinner; for by itself it can do nothing but accuse, condemn, and destroy him. Thus Augustine says, “If the Spirit of grace be absent, the law is present only to convict and slay us.” But to say this neither insults the law, nor derogates in any degree from its excellence. Assuredly, if our whole will were formed and disposed to obedience, the mere knowledge of the law would be sufficient for salvation; but since our carnal and corrupt nature is at enmity with the Divine law, and is in no degree amended by its discipline, the consequence is, that the law which, if it had been properly attended to, would have given life, becomes the occasion of sin and death. When all are convicted of transgression, the more it declares the righteousness of God, the more, on the other hand, it discloses our iniquity; the more certainly it assures us that life and salvation are treasured up as the reward of righteousness, the more certainly it assures us that the unrighteous will perish. So far, however are these qualities from throwing disgrace on the Law, that their chief tendency is to give a brighter display of the divine goodness. For they show that it is

only our weakness and depravity that prevents us from enjoying the blessedness which the law openly sets before us. Hence additional sweetness is given to divine grace, which comes to our aid without the law, and additional loveliness to the mercy which confers it, because they proclaim that God is never weary in doing good, and in loading us with new gifts.

8. But while the unrighteousness and condemnation of all are attested by the law, it does not follow (if we make the proper use of it) that we are immediately to give up all hope and rush headlong on despair. No doubt, it has some such effect upon the reprobate, but this is owing to their obstinacy. With the children of God the effect is different. The Apostle testifies that the law pronounces its sentence of condemnation in order “that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God” (Romans 3:19). In another place, however, the same Apostle declares, that “God has concluded them all in unbelief;” not that he might destroy all, or allow all to perish, but that “he might have mercy upon all” (Romans 11:32 :) in other words, that divesting themselves of an absurd opinion of their own virtue, they may perceive how they are wholly dependent on the hand of God; that feeling how naked and destitute they are, they may take refuge in his mercy, rely upon it, and cover themselves up entirely with it; renouncing all righteousness and merit, and clinging to mercy alone, as offered in Christ to all who long and look for it in true faith. In the precepts of the law, God is seen as the rewarder only of perfect righteousness (a righteousness of which all are destitute), and, on the other hand, as the stern avenger of wickedness. But in Christ his countenance beams forth full of grace and gentleness towards poor unworthy sinners.

9. There are many passages in Augustine, as to the utility of the law in leading us to implore Divine assistance. Thus he writes to Hilary, “The law orders, that we, after attempting to do what is ordered and so feeling our weakness under the law, may learn to implore the help of grace.” In like manner, he writes to Asellius, “The utility of the law is, that it convinces man of his weakness, and compels him to apply for the medicine of grace, which is in Christ.” In like manner, he says to Innocentius Romanus, “The law orders; grace supplies the power of acting.” Again, to Valentinus, “God enjoins what we cannot do, in order that we may know what we have to ask of him.” Again, “The law was given, that it might make you guilty - being made guilty might fear; fearing, might ask indulgence, not presume on your own strength.” Again, “The law was given, in order to convert a great into a little man - to show that you have no power of your own for righteousness; and might thus, poor, needy, and destitute, flee to grace.” He afterwards thus addresses the Almighty, “So do, O Lord, so do, O merciful Lord; command what cannot be fulfilled; nay, command what cannot be fulfilled, unless by thy own grace: so that when men feel they have no strength in themselves to fulfil it, every mouth may be stopped, and no man seem great in his own eyes. Let all be little ones; let the whole world become guilty before God.” But I am forgetting myself in producing so many passages, since this holy man wrote a distinct treatise, which he entitled De Spiritu et Litera. The other branch of this first use he does not describe so distinctly, either because he knew that it depended on the former, or because he was not so well aware of it, or because he wanted words in which he might distinctly and clearly explain its proper meaning. But even in the reprobate themselves, this first office of the law is not altogether wanting. They do not, indeed, proceed so far with the children of God as, after the flesh is cast down, to be renewed in the inner man, and revive again, but stunned by the first terror, give way to despair. Still it tends to manifest the equity of the Divine judgement, when their consciences are thus heaved upon the waves. They would

always willingly carp at the judgement of God; but now, though that judgement is not manifested, still the alarm produced by the testimony of the law and of their conscience bespeaks their deserts.

10. The second office of the Law is, by means of its fearful denunciations and the consequent dread of punishment, to curb those who, unless forced, have no regard for rectitude and justice. Such persons are curbed not because their mind is inwardly moved and affected, but because, as if a bridle were laid upon them, they refrain their hands from external acts, and internally check the depravity which would otherwise petulantly burst forth. It is true, they are not on this account either better or more righteous in the sight of God. For although restrained by terror or shame, they dare not proceed to what their mind has conceived, nor give full license to their raging lust, their heart is by no means trained to fear and obedience. Nay, the more they restrain themselves, the more they are inflamed, the more they rage and boil, prepared for any act or outbreak whatsoever were it not for the terror of the law. And not only so, but they thoroughly detest the law itself, and execrate the Lawgiver; so that if they could, they would most willingly annihilate him, because they cannot bear either his ordering what is right, or his avenging the despisers of his Majesty. The feeling of all who are not yet regenerate, though in some more, in others less lively, is, that in regard to the observance of the law, they are not led by voluntary submission, but dragged by the force of fear. Nevertheless, this forced and extorted righteousness is necessary for the good of society, its peace being secured by a provision but for which all things would be thrown into tumult and confusion. Nay, this tuition is not without its use, even to the children of God, who, previous to their effectual calling, being destitute of the Spirit of holiness, freely indulge the lusts of the flesh. When, by the fear of Divine vengeance, they are deterred from open outbreakings, though, from not being subdued in mind, they profit little at present, still they are in some measure trained to bear the yoke of righteousness, so that when they are called, they are not like mere novices, studying a discipline of which previously they had no knowledge. This office seems to be especially in the view of the Apostle, when he says, “That the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for men-stealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine” (1 Timothy 1:9, 1 Timothy 1:10). He thus indicates that it is a restraint on unruly lusts that would otherwise burst all bonds.

11. To both may be applied the declaration of the Apostle in another place, that “The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ” (Galatians 3:24); since there are two classes of persons, whom by its training it leads to Christ. Some (of whom we spoke in the first place), from excessive confidence in their own virtue or righteousness, are unfit to receive the grace of Christ, until they are completely humbled. This the law does by making them sensible of their misery, and so disposing them to long for what they previously imagined they did not want. Others have need of a bridle to restrain them from giving full scope to their passions, and thereby utterly losing all desire after righteousness. For where the Spirit of God rules not, the lusts sometimes so burst forth, as to threaten to drown the soul subjected to them in forgetfulness and contempt of God; and so they would, did not God interpose with this remedy. Those, therefore, whom he has destined to the inheritance of his kingdom, if he does not immediately regenerate, he, through the works of the law, preserves in fear, against the time of his visitation, not, indeed, that pure and chaste fear which his children ought to have, but a fear useful to the extent of instructing them in true piety

according to their capacity. Of this we have so many proofs, that there is not the least need of an example. For all who have remained for some time in ignorance of God will confess, as the result of their own experience, that the law had the effect of keeping them in some degree in the fear and reverence of God, till, being regenerated by his Spirit, they began to love him from the heart.

12. The third use of the Law (being also the principal use, and more closely connected with its proper end) has respect to believers in whose hearts the Spirit of God already flourishes and reigns. For although the Law is written and engraven on their hearts by the finger of God, that is, although they are so influenced and actuated by the Spirit, that they desire to obey God, there are two ways in which they still profit in the Law. For it is the best instrument for enabling them daily to learn with greater truth and certainty what that will of the Lord is which they aspire to follow, and to confirm them in this knowledge; just as a servant who desires with all his soul to approve himself to his master, must still observe, and be careful to ascertain his master's dispositions, that he may comport himself in accommodation to them. Let none of us deem ourselves exempt from this necessity, for none have as yet attained to such a degree of wisdom, as that they may not, by the daily instruction of the Law, advance to a purer knowledge of the Divine will. Then, because we need not doctrine merely, but exhortation also, the servant of God will derive this further advantage from the Law: by frequently meditating upon it, he will be excited to obedience, and confirmed in it, and so drawn away from the slippery paths of sin. In this way must the saints press onward, since, however great the alacrity with which, under the Spirit, they hasten toward righteousness, they are retarded by the sluggishness of the flesh, and make less progress than they ought. The Law acts like a whip to the flesh, urging it on as men do a lazy sluggish ass. Even in the case of a spiritual man, inasmuch as he is still burdened with the weight of the flesh, the Law is a constant stimulus, pricking him forward when he would indulge in sloth. David had this use in view when he pronounced this high eulogium on the Law, "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes" (Psalms 19:7, Psalms 19:8). Again, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Psalms 119:105). The whole psalm abounds in passages to the same effect. Such passages are not inconsistent with those of Paul, which show not the utility of the law to the regenerate, but what it is able of itself to bestow. The object of the Psalmist is to celebrate the advantages which the Lord, by means of his law, bestows on those whom he inwardly inspires with a love of obedience. And he adverts not to the mere precepts, but also to the promise annexed to them, which alone makes that sweet which in itself is bitter. For what is less attractive than the law, when, by its demands and threatening, it overawes the soul, and fills it with terror? David specially shows that in the law he saw the Mediator, without whom it gives no pleasure or delight.

13. Some unskilful persons, from not attending to this, boldly discard the whole law of Moses, and do away with both its Tables, imagining it unchristian to adhere to a doctrine which contains the ministration of death. Far from our thoughts be this profane notion. Moses has admirably shown that the Law, which can produce nothing but death in sinners, ought to have a better and more excellent effect upon the righteous. When about to die, he thus addressed the people, "Set your hearts unto all the words which I testify among you this day, which ye shall command your children to observe to do, all the words of this law. For it is not a vain thing for you; because it is your life" (Deuteronomy 32:46, Deuteronomy 32:47). If it cannot be denied that it contains a perfect pattern

of righteousness, then, unless we ought not to have any proper rule of life, it must be impious to discard it. There are not various rules of life, but one perpetual and inflexible rule; and, therefore, when David describes the righteous as spending their whole lives in meditating on the Law (Psalms 1:2), we must not confine to a single age, an employment which is most appropriate to all ages, even to the end of the world. Nor are we to be deterred or to shun its instructions, because the holiness which it prescribes is stricter than we are able to render, so long as we bear about the prison of the body. It does not now perform toward us the part of a hard taskmaster, who will not be satisfied without full payment; but, in the perfection to which it exhorts us, points out the goal at which, during the whole course of our lives, it is not less our interest than our duty to aim. It is well if we thus press onward. Our whole life is a race, and after we have finished our course, the Lord will enable us to reach that goal to which, at present, we can only aspire in wish.

14. Since, in regard to believers, the law has the force of exhortation, not to bind their consciences with a curse, but by urging them, from time to time, to shake off sluggishness and chastise imperfection, many, when they would express this exemption from the curse, say, that in regard to believers the Law (I still mean the Moral Law) is abrogated: not that the things which it enjoins are no longer right to be observed, but only that it is not to believers what it formerly was; in other words, that it does not, by terrifying and confounding their consciences, condemn and destroy. It is certainly true that Paul shows, in clear terms, that there is such an abrogation of the Law. And that the same was preached by our Lord appears from this, that he would not have refuted the opinion of his destroying the Law, if it had not been prevalent among the Jews. Since such an opinion could not have arisen at random without some pretext, there is reason to presume that it originated in a false interpretation of his doctrine, in the same way in which all errors generally arise from a perversion of the truth. But lest we should stumble against the same stone, let us distinguish accurately between what has been abrogated in the Law, and what still remains in force. When the Lord declares, that he came not to destroy the Law, but to fulfil (Matthew 5:17); that until heaven and earth pass away, not one jot or little shall remain unfulfilled; he shows that his advent was not to derogate, in any degree, from the observance of the Law. And justly, since the very end of his coming was to remedy the transgression of the Law. Therefore, the doctrine of the Law has not been infringed by Christ, but remains, that, by teaching, admonishing, rebuking, and correcting, it may fit and prepare us for every good work.

15. What Paul says, as to the abrogation of the Law, evidently applies not to the Law itself, but merely to its power of constraining the conscience. For the Law not only teaches, but also imperiously demands. If obedience is not yielded, nay, if it is omitted in any degree, it thunders forth its curse. For this reason, the Apostle says, that “as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them” (Galatians 3:10; Deuteronomy 27:26). Those he describes as under the works of the Law, who do not place righteousness in that forgiveness of sins by which we are freed from the rigour of the Law. He therefore shows, that we must be freed from the fetters of the Law, if we would not perish miserably under them. But what fetters? Those of rigid and austere exaction, which remits not one iota of the demand, and leaves no transgression unpunished. To redeem us from this curse, Christ was made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree (Deuteronomy 21:23, compared with Galatians 3:13, Galatians 4:4). In the following chapter, indeed, he says, that “Christ was made under the

law, in order that he might redeem those who are under the law;" but the meaning is the same. For he immediately adds, "That we might receive the adoption of sons." What does this mean? That we might not be, all our lifetime, subject to bondage, having our consciences oppressed with the fear of death. Meanwhile, it must ever remain an indubitable truth, that the Law has lost none of its authority, but must always receive from us the same respect and obedience.

16. The case of ceremonies is different, these having been abrogated not in effect but in use only. Though Christ by his advent put an end to their use, so far is this from derogating from their sacredness, that it rather commends and illustrates it. For as these ceremonies would have given nothing to God's ancient people but empty show, if the power of Christ's death and resurrection had not been prefigured by them, so, if the use of them had not ceased, it would, in the present day, be impossible to understand for what purpose they were instituted. Accordingly, Paul, in order to prove that the observance of them was not only superfluous, but pernicious also, says that they "are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ" (Colossians 2:17). We see, therefore, that the truth is made clearer by their abolition than if Christ, who has been openly manifested, were still figured by them as at a distance, and as under a veil. By the death of Christ, the veil of the temple was rent in vain, the living and express image of heavenly things, which had begun to be dimly shadowed forth, being now brought fully into view, as is described by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews (Hebrews 10:1). To the same effect, our Saviour declares, that "the law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it" (Luke 16:16); not that the holy fathers were left without the preaching of the hope of salvation and eternal life, but because they only saw at a distance, and under a shadow, what we now behold in full light. Why it behaved the Church to ascend higher than these elements, is explained by John the Baptist, when he says, "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1:17). For though it is true that expiation was promised in the ancient sacrifices, and the ark of the covenant was a sure pledge of the paternal favour of God, the whole would have been delusory had it not been founded on the grace of Christ, wherein true and eternal stability is found. It must be held as a fixed point, that though legal rites ceased to be observed, their end serves to show more clearly how great their utility was before the advent of Christ, who, while he abolished the use, sealed their force and effect by his death.

17. There is a little more difficulty in the following passage of Paul: "You, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, has he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross," &c. (Colossians 2:13, Colossians 2:14). He seems to extend the abolition of the Law considerably farther, as if we had nothing to do with its injunctions. Some err in interpreting this simply of the Moral Law, as implying the abolition not of its injunctions, but of its inexorable rigour. Others examining Paul's words more carefully, see that they properly apply to the Ceremonial Law, and show that Paul repeatedly uses the term ordinance in this sense. He thus writes to the Ephesians: "He is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man" (Ephesians 2:14). There can be no doubt that he is there treating of ceremonies, as he speaks of "the middle wall of partition" which separated Jews and Gentiles. I therefore hold that the former view is erroneous; but, at the same time, it does not appear to me

that the latter comes fully up to the Apostle's meaning. For I cannot admit that the two passages are perfectly parallel. As his object was to assure the Ephesians that they were admitted to fellowship with the Jews, he tells them that the obstacle which formerly stood in the way was removed. This obstacle was in the ceremonies. For the rites of ablution and sacrifice, by which the Jews were consecrated to the Lord, separated them from the Gentiles. But who sees not that, in the Epistle to the Colossians, a sublimer mystery is adverted to? No doubt, a question is raised there as to the Mosaic observances, to which false apostles were endeavouring to bind the Christian people. But as in the Epistle to the Galatians he takes a higher view of this controversy, and in a manner traces it to its fountain, so he does in this passage also. For if the only thing considered in rites is the necessity of observing them, of what use was it to call it a handwriting which was contrary to us? Besides, how could the bringing in of it be set down as almost the whole sum of redemption? Wherefore, the very nature of the case clearly shows that reference is here made to something more internal. I cannot doubt that I have ascertained the genuine interpretation, provided I am permitted to assume what Augustine has somewhere most truly affirmed, nay, derived from the very words of the Apostle, viz., that in the Jewish ceremonies there was more a confession than an expiation of sins. For what more was done in sacrifice by those who substituted purifications instead of themselves, than to confess that they were conscious of deserving death? What did these purifications testify but that they themselves were impure? By these means, therefore, the handwriting both of their guilt and impurity was ever and anon renewed. But the attestation of these things was not the removal of them. Wherefore, the Apostle says that Christ is "the mediator of the new testament - by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament" (Hebrews 9:15). Justly, therefore, does the Apostle describe these handwritings as against the worshipers, and contrary to them, since by means of them their impurity and condemnation were openly sealed. There is nothing contrary to this in the fact that they were partakers of the same grace with ourselves. This they obtained through Christ, and not through the ceremonies which the Apostle there contrasts with Christ, showing that by the continued use of them the glory of Christ was obscured. We perceive how ceremonies, considered in themselves, are elegantly and appositely termed handwritings, and contrary to the salvation of man, in as much as they were a kind of formal instruments which attested his liability. On the other hand, when false apostles wished to bind them on the Christian Church, Paul, entering more deeply into their signification, with good reason warned the Colossians how seriously they would relapse if they allowed a yoke to be in that way imposed upon them. By so doing, they, at the same time, deprived themselves of all benefit from Christ, who, by his eternal sacrifice once offered, had abolished those daily sacrifices, which were indeed powerful to attest sin, but could do nothing to destroy it.

08.02.08. Chapter 08. Part A

Chapter 8. Exposition of the Moral Law. This chapter consists of four parts.

I. Some general observations necessary for the understanding of the subject are made by way of preface, sec. 1-5.

II. Three things always to be attended to in ascertaining and expounding the meaning of the Moral Law, sec. 6-12.

III. Exposition of the Moral Law, or the Ten Commandments, sec. 13-15.

IV. The end for which the whole Law is intended, viz., to teach not only elementary principles, but perfection, sec. 51, to the end of the chapter.

Sections

1. The Law was committed to writing, in order that it might teach more fully and perfectly that knowledge, both of God and of ourselves, which the law of nature teaches meagrely and obscurely. Proof of this, from an enumeration of the principal parts of the Moral Law; and also from the dictate of natural law, written on the hearts of all, and, in a manner, effaced by sin.

2. Certain general maxims. 1. From the knowledge of God, furnished by the Law, we learn that God is our Father and Ruler. Righteousness is pleasing, iniquity is an abomination in his sight. Hence, how weak soever we may be, our duty is to cultivate the one, and shun the other.

3. From the knowledge of ourselves, furnished by the Law, we learn to discern our own utter powerlessness, we are ashamed; and seeing it is in vain to seek for righteousness in ourselves, are induced to seek it elsewhere.

4. Hence, God has annexed promises and threatening to his promises. These not limited to the present life, but embrace things heavenly and eternal. They, moreover, attest the spotless purity of God, his love of righteousness, and also his kindness towards us.

5. The Law shows, moreover, that there is nothing more acceptable to God than obedience. Hence, all superstitious and hypocritical modes of worship are condemned. A remedy against superstitious worship and human presumption.

6. The second part of the chapter, containing three observations or rules. First rule, Our life must be formed by the Law, not only to external honesty, but to inward and spiritual righteousness. In this respect, the Law of God differs from civil laws, he being a spiritual Lawgiver, man not. This rule of great extent, and not sufficiently attended to.

7. This first rule confirmed by the authority of Christ, and vindicated from the false dogma of Sophists, who say that Christ is only another Moses.

8. Second observation or rule to be carefully attended to, viz., that the end of the command must be inquired into, until it is ascertained what the Lawgiver approves or disapproves. Example. Where the Law approves, its opposite is condemned, and vice versa.

9. Full explanation of this latter point. Example.

10. The Law states what is most impious in each transgression, in order to show how heinous the transgression is. Example.

11. Third observation or rule regards the division of the Law into Two Tables: the former comprehending our duty to God; the latter, our duty to our neighbour. The connection between these necessary and inseparable. Their invariable order. Sum of the Law.

12. Division of the Law into Ten Commandments. Various distinctions made with regard to them, but the best distinction that which divides them into Two Tables. Four commandments belong to the First, and six to the Second Table.

13. The third part of the chapter, containing an exposition of the Decalogue. The preface vindicates the authority of the Law. This it does in three ways. First, by a declaration of its majesty.

14. The preface to the Law vindicates its authority. Secondly, by calling to mind God's paternal kindness.

15. Thirdly, by calling to mind the deliverance out of the land of Egypt. Why God distinguishes himself by certain epithets. Why mention is made of the deliverance from Egypt. In what way, and how far, the remembrance of this deliverance should still affect us.

16. Exposition of the First Commandment. Its end. What it is to have God, and to have strange gods. Adoration due to God, trust, invocation, thanksgiving, and also true religion, required by the Commandment. Superstition, Polytheism, and Atheism, forbidden. What meant by the words, "before me."

17. Exposition of the Second Commandment. The end and sum of it. Two parts. Short enumeration of forbidden shapes.

18. Why a threatening is added. Four titles applied to God, to make a deeper impression. He is called Mighty, Jealous, an Avenger, Merciful. Why said to be jealous. Reason drawn from analogy.

19. Exposition of the threatening which is added. First, as to visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children. A misinterpretation on this head refuted, and the genuine meaning of the threatening explained.

20. Whether this visiting of the sins of parents inconsistent with the divine justice. Apparently conflicting passages reconciled.

21. Exposition of the latter part, viz., the showing mercy to thousands. The use of this promise. Consideration of an exception of frequent occurrence. The extent of this blessing.

22. Exposition of the Third Commandment. The end and sum of it. Three parts. These considered. What it is to use the name of God in vain. Swearing. Distinction between this commandment and the Ninth.

23. An oath defined. It is a species of divine worship. This explained.

24. Many modes in which this commandment is violated. 1. By taking God to witness what we know is false. The insult thus offered.

25. Modes of violation continued. 2. Taking God to witness in trivial matters. Contempt thus shown. When and how an oath should be used. 3. Substituting the servants of God instead of himself when taking an oath.

26. The Anabaptists, who condemn all oaths, refuted. 1. By the authority of Christ, who cannot be opposed in anything to the Father. A passage perverted by the Anabaptists explained. The design of our Saviour in the passage. What meant by his there prohibiting oaths.

27. The lawfulness of oaths confirmed by Christ and the apostles. Some approve of public, but not of private oaths. The lawfulness of the latter proved both by reason and example. Instances from Scripture.

28. Exposition of the Fourth Commandment. Its end. Three purposes.

29. Explanation of the first purpose, viz., a shadowing forth of spiritual rest. This the primary object of the precept. God is therein set forth as our sanctifier; and hence we must abstain from work, that the work of God in us may not be hindered.

30. The number seven denoting perfection in Scripture, this commandment may, in that respect, denote the perpetuity of the Sabbath, and its completion at the last day.

31. Taking a simpler view of the commandment, the number is of no consequence, provided we maintain the doctrine of a perpetual rest from all our works, and, at the same time, avoid a superstitious observance of days. The ceremonial part of the commandment abolished by the advent of Christ.

32. The second and third purposes of the Commandment explained. These twofold and perpetual. This confirmed. Of religious assemblies.

33. Of the observance of the Lord’s day, in answer to those who complain that the Christian people are thus trained to Judaism. Objection.

34. Ground of this institution. There is no kind of superstitious necessity. The sum of the Commandment.

35. The Fifth Commandment (the first of the Second Table), expounded. Its end and substance. How far honour due to parents. To whom the term father applies.

36. It makes no difference whether those to whom this honour is required are worthy or unworthy. The honour is claimed especially for parents. It consists of three parts. 1. Reverence.

37. Honour due to parents continued. 2. Obedience. 3. Gratitude. Why a promise added. In what sense it is to be taken. The present life a testimony of divine blessing. The reservation considered and explained.

38. Conversely a curse denounced on disobedient children. How far obedience due to parents, and those in the place of parents.

39. Sixth Commandment expounded. Its end and substance. God, as a spiritual Lawgiver, forbids the murder of the heart, and requires a sincere desire to preserve the life of our neighbour.

. A twofold ground for this Commandment. 1. Man is the image of God. 2. He is our flesh.

41. Exposition of the Seventh Command. The end and substance of it. Remedy against fornication.

42. Continence an excellent gift, when under the control of God only. Altogether denied to some; granted only for a time to others. Argument in favour of celibacy refuted.

43. Each individual may refrain from marriage so long as he is fit to observe celibacy. True celibacy, and the proper use of it. Any man not gifted with continence wars with God and with nature, as constituted by him, in remaining unmarried. Chastity defined.

44. Precautions to be observed in married life. Everything repugnant to chastity here condemned.

45. Exposition of the Eighth Commandment. Its end and substance. Four kinds of theft. The bad acts condemned by this Commandment. Other peculiar kinds of theft.

46. Proper observance of this Commandment. Four heads. Application. 1. To the people and the magistrate. 2. To the pastors of the Church and their flocks. 3. To parents and children. 4. To the old and the young. 5. To servants and masters. 6. To individuals.

47. Exposition of the ninth Commandment. Its end and substance. The essence of the Commandment - detestation of falsehood, and the pursuit of truth. Two kinds of falsehood. Public and private testimony. The equity of this Commandment.

48. How numerous the violations of this Commandment. 1. By detraction. 2. By evil speaking - a thing contrary to the offices of Christian charity. 3. By scurrility or irony. 4. By prying curiosity, and proneness to harsh judgements.

49. Exposition of the Tenth Commandment. Its end and substance. What meant by the term Covetousness. Distinction between counsel and the covetousness here condemned.

50. Why God requires so much purity. Objection. Answer. Charity toward our neighbour here principally commended. Why house, wife, man-servant, maid-servant, ox, and ass, &c., are mentioned. Improper division of this Commandment into two.

51. The last part of the chapter. The end of the Law. Proof. A summary of the Ten Commandments. The Law delivers not merely rudiments and first principles, but a perfect standard of righteousness, modelled on the divine purity.

52. Why, in the Gospels and Epistles, the latter table only mentioned, and not the first. The same thing occurs in the Prophets.

53. An objection to what is said in the former section removed.

54. A conduct duly regulated by the divine Law, characterised by charity toward our neighbour. This subverted by those who give the first place to self-love. Refutation of their opinion.

55. Who our neighbour. Double error of the Schoolmen on this point.

56. This error consists, I. In converting precepts into counsels to be observed by monks.

57. Refutation of this error from Scripture and the ancient Theologians. Sophistical objection obviated.

58. Error of the Schoolmen consists, II. In calling hidden impiety and covetousness venial sins. Refutation drawn, 1. From a consideration of the whole Decalogue. 2. The testimony of an Apostle. 3. The authority of Christ. 4. The nature and majesty of God. 5. The sentence pronounced against sin. Conclusion.

1. I believe it will not be out of place here to introduce the Ten Commandments of the Law, and give a brief exposition of them. In this way it will be made more clear, that the worship which God originally prescribed is still in force (a point to which I have already adverted); and then a second point will be confirmed, viz., that the Jews not only learned from the law wherein true piety consisted, but from feeling their inability to observe it were overawed by the fear of judgements and so drawn, even against their will, towards the Mediator. In giving a summary of what constitutes the true knowledge of God, we showed that we cannot form any just conception of the character of God, without feeling overawed by his majesty, and bound to do him service. In regard to the knowledge of ourselves, we showed that it principally consists in renouncing all idea of our own strength, and divesting ourselves of all confidence in our own righteousness, while, on the other hand, under a full consciousness of our wants, we learn true humility and self-abasement. Both of these the Lord accomplishes by his Law, first, when, in assertion of the right which he has to our obedience, he calls us to reverence his majesty, and prescribes the conduct by which this reverence is manifested; and, secondly, when, by promulgating the rule of his justice (a rule, to the rectitude of which our nature, from being depraved and perverted, is continually opposed, and to the perfection of which our ability, from its infirmity and nervelessness for good, is far from being able to attain), he charges us both with impotence and unrighteousness. Moreover, the very things contained in the two tables are, in a manner, dictated to us by that internal law, which, as has been already said, is in a manner written and stamped on every heart. For conscience, instead of allowing us to stifle our perceptions, and sleep on without interruption, acts as an inward witness and monitor, reminds us of what we owe to God, points out the distinction between good and evil, and thereby convicts us of departure from duty. But man, being immured in the darkness of error, is scarcely able, by means of that natural law, to form any tolerable idea of the worship which is acceptable to God. At all events, he is very far from forming any correct knowledge of it. In addition to this, he is so swollen with arrogance and ambition, and so blinded with self-love, that he is unable to survey, and, as it were, descend into himself, that he may so learn to humble and abase himself, and confess his misery. Therefore, as a necessary remedy, both for our dullness and our contumacy, the Lord has given us his written Law, which, by its sure attestations, removes the obscurity of the law of nature, and also, by shaking off our lethargy, makes a more lively and permanent impression on our minds.

2. It is now easy to understand the doctrine of the law, viz., that God, as our Creator, is entitled to be regarded by us as a Father and Master, and should, accordingly, receive from us fear, love, reverence, and glory; nay, that we are not our own, to follow whatever course passion dictates, but are bound to obey him implicitly, and to acquiesce entirely in his good pleasure. Again, the Law teaches, that justice and rectitude are a delight, injustice an abomination to him, and, therefore, as we would not with impious ingratitude revolt from our Maker, our whole life must be spent in the cultivation of righteousness. For if we manifest becoming reverence only when we prefer his will to our own, it follows, that the only legitimate service to him is the practice of justice, purity, and holiness. Nor can we plead as an excuse, that we want the power, and, like debtors, whose means are exhausted, are unable to pay. We cannot be permitted to measure the glory of God by our ability; whatever we may be, he ever remains like himself, the friend of righteousness, the enemy of unrighteousness, and whatever his demands from us may be, as he can only require what is right, we are necessarily under a natural obligation to obey. Our inability to do so is our own fault. If lust, in which sin has its dominion, so enthrals us, that we are not free to obey our Father, there is no ground for pleading necessity as a defence, since this evil necessity is within, and must be imputed to ourselves.

3. When, under the guidance of the Law, we have advanced thus far, we must, under the same guidance, proceed to descend into ourselves. In this way, we at length arrive at two results: First, contrasting our conduct with the righteousness of the Law, we see how very far it is from being in accordance with the will of God, and, therefore, how unworthy we are of holding our place among his creatures, far less of being accounted his sons; and, secondly, taking a survey of our powers, we see that they are not only unequal to fulfil the Law, but are altogether null. The necessary consequence must be, to produce distrust of our own ability, and also anxiety and trepidation of mind. Conscience cannot feel the burden of its guilt, without forthwith turning to the judgement of God, while the view of this judgement cannot fail to excite a dread of death. In like manner, the proofs of our utter powerlessness must instantly beget despair of our own strength. Both feelings are productive of humility and abasement, and hence the sinner, terrified at the prospect of eternal death (which he sees justly impending over him for his iniquities), turns to the mercy of God as the only haven of safety. Feeling his utter inability to pay what he owes to the Law, and thus despairing of himself, he rethinks him of applying and looking to some other quarter for help.

4. But the Lord does not count it enough to inspire a reverence for his justice. To imbue our hearts with love to himself, and, at the same time, with hatred to iniquity, he has added promises and threatening. The eye of our mind being too dim to be attracted by the mere beauty of goodness, our most merciful Father has been pleased, in his great indulgence, to allure us to love and long after it by the hope of reward. He accordingly declares that rewards for virtue are treasured up with him, that none who yield obedience to his commands will labour in vain. On the other hand, he proclaims not only that iniquity is hateful in his sight, but that it will not escape with impunity, because he will be the avenger of his insulted majesty. That he may encourage us in every way, he promises present blessings, as well as eternal felicity, to the obedience of those who shall have kept his commands, while he threatens transgressors with present suffering, as well as the punishment of eternal death. The promise, “Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgements; which if a man do, he shall live in them” (Leviticus 18:5), and corresponding to this the threatening, “The souls that sinneth, it shall die” (Ezekiel 18:4, Ezekiel 18:20); doubtless point

to a future life and death, both without end. But though in every passage where the favour or anger of God is mentioned, the former comprehends eternity of life and the latter eternal destruction, the Law, at the same time, enumerates a long catalogue of present blessings and curses (Leviticus 26:4; Deuteronomy 28:1). The threatening attest the spotless purity of God, which cannot bear iniquity, while the promises attest at once his infinite love of righteousness (which he cannot leave unrewarded), and his wondrous kindness. Being bound to do him homage with all that we have, he is perfectly entitled to demand everything which he requires of us as a debt; and as a debt, the payment is unworthy of reward. He therefore foregoes his right, when he holds forth reward for services which are not offered spontaneously, as if they were not due. The amount of these services, in themselves, has been partly described and will appear more clearly in its own place. For the present, it is enough to remember that the promises of the Law are no mean commendation of righteousness as they show how much God is pleased with the observance of them, while the threatening denounced are intended to produce a greater abhorrence of unrighteousness, lest the sinner should indulge in the blandishments of vice, and forget the judgement which the divine Lawgiver has prepared for him.

5. The Lord, in delivering a perfect rule of righteousness, has reduced it in all its parts to his mere will, and in this way has shown that there is nothing more acceptable to him than obedience. There is the more necessity for attending to this, because the human mind, in its wantonness, is ever and anon inventing different modes of worship as a means of gaining his favour. This irreligious affectation of religion being innate in the human mind, has betrayed itself in every age, and is still doing so, men always longing to devise some method of procuring righteousness without any sanction from the Word of God. Hence in those observances which are generally regarded as good works, the precepts of the Law occupy a narrow space, almost the whole being usurped by this endless host of human inventions. But was not this the very license which Moses meant to curb, when, after the promulgation of the Law, he thus addressed the people: “Observe and hear all these words which I command thee, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee for ever, when thou does that which is good and right in the sight of the Lord thy God.” “What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it” (Deuteronomy 12:28-32). Previously, after asking “what nation is there so great, that has statutes and judgements so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?” he had added, “Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life” (Deuteronomy 4:8, Deuteronomy 4:9). God foreseeing that the Israelites would not rest, but after receiving the Law, would, unless sternly prohibited give birth to new kinds of righteousness, declares that the Law comprehended a perfect righteousness. This ought to have been a most powerful restraint, and yet they desisted not from the presumptuous course so strongly prohibited. How do we act? We are certainly under the same obligation as they were; for there cannot be a doubt that the claim of absolute perfection which God made for his Law is perpetually in force. Not contented with it, however, we labour prodigiously in feigning and coining an endless variety of good works, one after another. The best cure for this vice would be a constant and deep-seated conviction that the Law was given from heaven to teach us a perfect righteousness; that the only righteousness so taught is that which the divine will expressly enjoins; and that it is, therefore, vain to attempt, by new forms of worship, to gain the favour of God, whose true worship consists in obedience alone; or rather, that to go a wandering after good works which are not prescribed by the Law of God, is an intolerable violation

of true and divine righteousness. Most truly does Augustine say in one place, that the obedience which is rendered to God is the parent and guardian; in another, that it is the source of all the virtues.

6. After we shall have expounded the Divine Law, what has been previously said of its office and use will be understood more easily, and with greater benefit. But before we proceed to the consideration of each separate commandment, it will be proper to take a general survey of the whole. At the outset, it was proved that in the Law human life is instructed not merely in outward decency but in inward spiritual righteousness. Though none can deny this, yet very few duly attend to it, because they do not consider the Lawgiver, by whose character that of the Law must also be determined. Should a king issue an edict prohibiting murder, adultery, and theft, the penalty, I admit, will not be incurred by the man who has only felt a longing in his mind after these vices, but has not actually committed them. The reason is, that a human lawgiver does not extend his care beyond outward order, and, therefore, his injunctions are not violated without outward acts. But God, whose eye nothing escapes, and who regards not the outward appearance so much as purity of heart, under the prohibition of murder, adultery, and thefts includes wrath, hatred, lust, covetousness, and all other things of a similar nature. Being a spiritual Lawgiver, he speaks to the soul not less than the body. The murder which the soul commits is wrath and hatred; the theft, covetousness and avarice; and the adultery, lust. It may be alleged that human laws have respect to intentions and wishes, and not fortuitous events. I admit this but then these must manifest themselves externally. They consider the animus with which the act was done, but do not scrutinise the secret thoughts. Accordingly, their demand is satisfied when the hand merely refrains from transgression. On the contrary, the law of heaven being enacted for our minds, the first thing necessary to a due observance of the Law is to put them under restraint. But the generality of men, even while they are most anxious to conceal their disregard of the Law, only frame their hands and feet and other parts of their body to some kind of observance, but in the meanwhile keep the heart utterly estranged from everything like obedience. They think it enough to have carefully concealed from man what they are doing in the sight of God. Hearing the commandments, “Thou shalt not kill,” “Thou shalt not commit adultery,” “Thou shalt not steal,” they do not unsheathe their sword for slaughter, nor defile their bodies with harlots, nor put forth their hands to other men’s goods. So far well; but with their whole soul they breathe out slaughter, boil with lust, cast a greedy eye at their neighbour’s property, and in wish devour it. Here the principal thing which the Law requires is wanting. Whence then, this gross stupidity, but just because they lose sight of the Lawgiver, and form an idea of righteousness in accordance with their own disposition? Against this Paul strenuously protests, when he declares that the “law is spiritual” (Romans 7:14); intimating that it not only demands the homage of the soul, and mind, and will, but requires an angelic purity, which, purified from all filthiness of the flesh, savours only of the Spirit.

7. In saying that this is the meaning of the Law, we are not introducing a new interpretation of our own; we are following Christ, the best interpreter of the Law (Matthew 5:22, Matthew 5:28, Matthew 5:44). The Pharisees having instilled into the people the erroneous idea that the Law was fulfilled by every one who did not in external act do anything against the Law, he pronounces this a most dangerous delusion, and declares that an immodest look is adultery, and that hatred of a brother is murder. “Whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgement;” whosoever by whispering or murmuring gives indication of being offended, “shall be in

danger of the council;" whosoever by reproaches and evil-speaking gives way to open anger, "shall be in danger of hell-fire." Those who have not perceived this, have pretended that Christ was only a second Moses, the giver of an evangelical, to supply the deficiency of the Mosaic Law. Hence the common axiom as to the perfection of the Evangelical Law, and its great superiority to that of Moses. This idea is in many ways most pernicious. For it will appear from Moses himself, when we come to give a summary of his precepts, that great indignity is thus done to the Divine Law. It certainly insinuates, that the holiness of the fathers under the Law was little else than hypocrisy, and leads us away from that one unvarying rule of righteousness. It is very easy, however, to confute this error, which proceeds on the supposition that Christ added to the Law, whereas he only restored it to its integrity by maintaining and purifying it when obscured by the falsehood, and defiled by the leaven of the Pharisees.

8. The next observation we would make is, that there is always more in the requirements and prohibitions of the Law than is expressed in words. This, however, must be understood so as not to convert it into a kind of Lesbian code; and thus, by licentiously wresting the Scriptures, make them assume any meaning that we please. By taking this excessive liberty with Scripture, its authority is lowered with some, and all hope of understanding it abandoned by others. We must, therefore, if possible, discover some path which may conduct us with direct and firm step to the will of God. We must consider, I say, how far interpretation can be permitted to go beyond the literal meaning of the words, still making it apparent that no appending of human glosses is added to the Divine Law, but that the pure and genuine meaning of the Lawgiver is faithfully exhibited. It is true that, in almost all the commandments, there are elliptical expressions, and that, therefore, any man would make himself ridiculous by attempting to restrict the spirit of the Law to the strict letter of the words. It is plain that a sober interpretation of the Law must go beyond these, but how far is doubtful, unless some rule be adopted. The best rule, in my opinion, would be, to be guided by the principle of the commandment, viz., to consider in the case of each what the purpose is for which it was given. For example, every commandment either requires or prohibits; and the nature of each is instantly discerned when we look to the principle of the commandment as its end. Thus, the end of the Fifth Commandment is to render honour to those on whom God bestows it. The sum of the commandment, therefore, is, that it is right in itself, and pleasing to God, to honour those on whom he has conferred some distinction; that to despise and rebel against such persons is offensive to Him. The principle of the First Commandment is, that God only is to be worshipped. The sum of the commandment, therefore is that true piety, in other words, the worship of the Deity, is acceptable, and impiety is an abomination, to him. So in each of the commandments we must first look to the matter of which it treats, and then consider its end, until we discover what it properly is that the Lawgiver declares to be pleasing or displeasing to him. Only, we must reason from the precept to its contrary in this way: If this pleases God, its opposite displeases; if that displeases, its opposite pleases: if God commands this, he forbids the opposite; if he forbids that, he commands the opposite.

9. What is now touched on somewhat obscurely will become perfectly clear as we proceed and get accustomed to the exposition of the Commandments. It is sufficient thus to have adverted to the subject; but perhaps our concluding statement will require to be briefly confirmed, as it might otherwise not be understood, or, though understood mighty perhaps, at the outset appear unsound. There is no need of proving, that when good is ordered the evil which is opposed to it is

forbidden. This every one admits. It will also be admitted, without much difficulty, that when evil is forbidden, its opposite is enjoined. Indeed, it is a common saying, that censure of vice is commendation of virtue. We, however, demand somewhat more than is commonly understood by these expressions. When the particular virtue opposed to a particular vice is spoken of, all that is usually meant is abstinence from that vice. We maintain that it goes farther, and means opposite duties and positive acts. Hence the commandment, “Thou shalt not kill,” the generality of men will merely consider as an injunction to abstain from all injury and all wish to inflict injury. I hold that it moreover means, that we are to aid our neighbour’s life by every means in our power. And not to assert without giving my reasons I prove it thus: God forbids us to injure or hurt a brother, because he would have his life to be dear and precious to us; and, therefore, when he so forbids, he, at the same time, demands all the offices of charity which can contribute to his preservation.

10. But why did God thus deliver his commandments, as it were, by halves, using elliptical expressions with a larger meaning than that actually expressed? Other reasons are given, but the following seems to me the best: As the flesh is always on the alert to extenuate the heinousness of sin (unless it is made, as it were, perceptible to the touch), and to cover it with specious pretexts, the Lord sets forth, by way of example, whatever is foulest and most iniquitous in each species of transgression, that the delivery of it might produce a shudder in the hearer, and impress his mind with a deeper abhorrence of sin. In forming an estimate of sins, we are often imposed upon by imagining that the more hidden the less heinous they are. This delusion the Lord dispels by accustoming us to refer the whole multitude of sins to particular heads, which admirably show how great a degree of heinousness there is in each. For example, wrath and hatred do not seem so very bad when they are designated by their own names; but when they are prohibited under the name of murder, we understand better how abominable they are in the sight of God, who puts them in the same class with that horrid crime. Influenced by his judgement, we accustom ourselves to judge more accurately of the heinousness of offences which previously seemed trivial.

11. It will now be proper to consider what is meant by the division of the divine Law into Two Tables. It will be judged by all men of sense from the formal manner in which these are sometimes mentioned, that it has not been done at random, or without reason. Indeed, the reason is so obvious as not to allow us to remain in doubt with regard to it. God thus divided his Law into two parts, containing a complete rule of righteousness, that he might assign the first place to the duties of religion which relate especially to His worship, and the second to the duties of charity which have respect to man. The first foundation of righteousness undoubtedly is the worship of God. When it is subverted, all the other parts of righteousness, like a building rent asunder, and in ruins, are racked and scattered. What kind of righteousness do you call it, not to commit theft and rapine, if you, in the meantime, with impious sacrilege, rob God of his glory? or not to defile your body with fornication, if you profane his holy name with blasphemy? or not to take away the life of man, if you strive to cut off and destroy the remembrance of God? It is vain, therefore, to talk of righteousness apart from religion. Such righteousness has no more beauty than the trunk of a body deprived of its head. Nor is religion the principal part merely: it is the very soul by which the whole lives and breathes. Without the fear of God, men do not even observe justice and charity among themselves. We say, then, that the worship of God is the beginning and foundation of righteousness; and that wherever it is wanting, any degree of equity, or continence, or

temperance, existing among men themselves, is empty and frivolous in the sight of God. We call it the source and soul of righteousness, in as much as men learn to live together temperately, and without injury, when they revere God as the judge of right and wrong. In the First Table, accordingly, he teaches us how to cultivate piety, and the proper duties of religion in which his worship consists; in the second, he shows how, in the fear of his name, we are to conduct ourselves towards our fellow-men. Hence, as related by the Evangelists (Matthew 22:37; Luke 10:27), our Saviour summed up the whole Law in two heads, viz., to love the Lord with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our strength, and our neighbour as ourselves. You see how, of the two parts under which he comprehends the whole Law, he devotes the one to God, and assigns the other to mankind.

12. But although the whole Law is contained in two heads, yet, in order to remove every pretext for excuse, the Lord has been pleased to deliver more fully and explicitly in Ten Commandments, every thing relating to his own honour, fear, and love, as well as every thing relating to the charity which, for his sake, he enjoins us to have towards our fellowmen. Nor is it an unprofitable study to consider the division of the commandments, provided we remember that it is one of those matters in which every man should have full freedom of judgement, and on account of which, difference of opinion should not lead to contention. We are, indeed, under the necessity of making this observation, lest the division which we are to adopt should excite the surprise or derision of the reader, as novel or of recent invention.

There is no room for controversy as to the fact, that the Law is divided into ten heads since this is repeatedly sanctioned by divine authority. The question, therefore, is not as to the number of the parts, but the method of dividing them. Those who adopt a division which gives three commandments to the First Table, and throws the remaining seven into the Second Table, expunge the commandment concerning images from the list, or at least conceal it under the first, though there cannot be a doubt that it was distinctly set down by the Lord as a separate commandment; whereas the tenth, which prohibits the coveting of what belongs to our neighbour, they absurdly break down into two. Moreover, it will soon appear, that this method of dividing was unknown in a purer age. Others count four commandments in the First Table as we do, but for the first set down the introductory promise, without adding the precept. But because I must hold, unless I am convinced by clear evidence to the contrary, that the “ten words” mentioned by Moses are Ten Commandments and because I see that number arranged in most admirable order, I must, while I leave them to hold their own opinion, follow what appears to me better established, viz., that what they make to be the first commandment is of the nature of a preface to the whole Law, that thereafter follow four commandments in the First Table, and six in the Second, in the order in which they will here be reviewed. This division Origin adopts without discussion, as if it had been every where received in his day. It is also adopted by Augustine, in his book addressed to Boniface, where, in enumerating the commandments, he follows this order, Let one God be religiously obeyed, let no idol be worshipped, let the name of God be not used in vain; while previously he had made separate mention of the typical commandment of the Sabbath. Elsewhere, indeed, he expresses approbation of the first division, but on too slight grounds, because, by the number three (making the First Table consist of three commandments), the mystery of the Trinity would be better manifested. Even here, however, he does not disguise his opinion, that in other respects, our division is more to his mind. Besides these, we are supported

by the author of an unfinished work on Matthew. Josephus, no doubt with the general consent of his age, assigns five commandments to each table. This, while repugnant to reason, inasmuch as it confounds the distinction between piety and charity, is also refuted by the authority of our Saviour, who in Matthew places the command to honour parents in the list of those belonging to the Second Table (Matthew 19:19). Let us now hear God speaking in his own words.

First Commandment.

I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

13. Whether you take the former sentence as a part of the commandment, or read it separately is to me a matter of indifference, provided you grant that it is a kind of preface to the whole Law. In enacting laws, the first thing to be guarded against is their being forthwith abrogated by contempt. The Lord, therefore, takes care, in the first place, that this shall not happen to the Law about to be delivered, by introducing it with a triple sanction. He claims to himself power and authority to command, that he may impress the chosen people with the necessity of obedience; he holds forth a promise of favour, as a means of alluring them to the study of holiness; and he reminds them of his kindness, that he may convict them of ingratitude, if they fail to make a suitable return. By the name, Lord, are denoted power and lawful dominion. If all things are from him, and by him consist, they ought in justice to bear reference to him, as Paul says (Romans 11:36). This name, therefore, is in itself sufficient to bring us under the authority of the divine majesty: for it were monstrous for us to wish to withdraw from the dominion of him, out of whom we cannot even exist.

14. After showing that he has a right to command, and to be obeyed, he next, in order not to seem to drag men by mere necessity, but to allure them, graciously declares, that he is the God of the Church. For the mode of expression implies, that there is a mutual relation included in the promise, “I will be their God, and they shall be my people” (Jeremiah 31:33). Hence Christ infers the immortality of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, from the fact that God had declared himself to be their God (Matthew 22:32). It is, therefore, the same as if he had said, I have chosen you to myself, as a people to whom I shall not only do good in the present life, but also bestow felicity in the life to come. The end contemplated in this is adverted to in the Law, in various passages. For when the Lord condescends in mercy to honour us so far as to admit us to partnership with his chosen people, he chooses us, as Moses says, “to be a holy people,” “a peculiar people unto himself,” to “keep all his commandments” (Deuteronomy 7:6; Deuteronomy 14:2; Deuteronomy 26:18). Hence the exhortation, “Ye shall be holy; for I the Lord your God am holy” (Leviticus 19:2). These two considerations form the ground of the remonstrance, “A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master; if then I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the Lord of hosts” (Malachi 1:6).

15. Next follows a commemoration of his kindness, which ought to produce upon us an impression strong in proportion to the detestation in which ingratitude is held even among men. It is true, indeed, he was reminding Israel of a deliverance then recent, but one which, on account of its wondrous magnitude, was to be for ever memorable to the remotest posterity. Moreover, it is most appropriate to the matter in hand. For the Lord intimates that they were delivered from miserable bondage, that they might learn to yield prompt submission and obedience to him as the author of their freedom. In like manners to keep us to his true worship, he often describes himself by certain

epithets which distinguish his sacred Deity from all idols and fictitious gods. For, as I formerly observed, such is our proneness to vanity and presumption, that as soon as God is named, our minds, unable to guard against error, immediately fly off to some empty delusion. In applying a remedy to this disease, God distinguishes his divinity by certain titles, and thus confines us, as it were, within distinct boundaries, that we may not wander hither and thither, and feign some new deity for ourselves, abandoning the living God, and setting up an idol. For this reason, whenever the Prophets would bring him properly before us, they invest, and, as it were, surround him with those characters under which he had manifested himself to the people of Israel. When he is called the God of Abraham, or the God of Israel, when he is stationed in the temple of Jerusalem, between the Cherubim, these, and similar modes of expression, do not confine him to one place or one people, but are used merely for the purpose of fixing our thoughts on that God who so manifested himself in the covenant which he made with Israel, as to make it unlawful on any account to deviate from the strict view there given of his character. Let it be understood, then, that mention is made of deliverance, in order to make the Jews submit with greater readiness to that God who justly claims them as his own. We again, instead of supposing that the matter has no reference to us, should reflect that the bondage of Israel in Egypt was a type of that spiritual bondage, in the fetters of which we are all bound, until the heavenly avenger delivers us by the power of his own arm, and transports us into his free kingdom. Therefore, as in old times, when he would gather together the scattered Israelites to the worship of his name, he rescued them from the intolerable tyranny of Pharaoh, so all who profess him now are delivered from the fatal tyranny of the devil, of which that of Egypt was only a type. There is no man, therefore, whose mind ought not to be aroused to give heed to the Law, which, as he is told, proceeded from the supreme King, from him who, as he gave all their being, justly destines and directs them to himself as their proper end. There is no man, I say, who should not hasten to embrace the Lawgiver, whose commands, he knows, he has been specially appointed to obey, from whose kindness he anticipates an abundance of all good, and even a blessed immortality, and to whose wondrous power and mercy he is indebted for deliverance from the jaws of death.

16. The authority of the Law being founded and established, God delivers his First Commandment - Thou shalt have no other gods before me. The purport of this commandment is, that the Lord will have himself alone to be exalted in his people, and claims the entire possession of them as his own. That it may be so, he orders us to abstain from ungodliness and superstition of every kind, by which the glory of his divinity is diminished or obscured; and, for the same reason, he requires us to worship and adore him with truly pious zeal. The simple terms used obviously amount to this. For seeing we cannot have God without embracing everything which belongs to him, the prohibition against having strange gods means, that nothing which belongs to him is to be transferred to any other. The duties which we owe to God are innumerable, but they seem to admit of being not improperly reduced to four heads: Adoration, with its accessory spiritual submission of conscience, Trust, Invocation, Thanksgiving. By Adoration, I mean the veneration and worship which we render to him when we do homage to his majesty; and hence I make part of it to consist in bringing our consciences into subjection to his Law. Trust, is secure resting in him under a recognition of his perfections, when, ascribing to him all power, wisdom, justice, goodness, and truth, we consider ourselves happy in having been brought into intercourse with him. Invocation, may be defined the retaking of ourselves to his promised aid as the only resource in every case of need. Thanksgiving, is the gratitude which ascribes to him the praise of all our blessings. As the

Lord does not allow these to be derived from any other quarter, so he demands that they shall be referred entirely to himself. It is not enough to refrain from other gods. We must, at the same time, devote ourselves wholly to him, not acting like certain impious despisers, who regard it as the shortest method, to hold all religious observance in derision. But here precedence must be given to true religion, which will direct our minds to the living God. When duly imbued with the knowledge of him, the whole aim of our lives will be to revere, fear, and worship his majesty, to enjoy a share in his blessings, to have recourse to him in every difficulty, to acknowledge, laud, and celebrate the magnificence of his works, to make him, as it were, the sole aim of all our actions. Next, we must beware of superstition, by which our minds are turned aside from the true God, and carried to and fro after a multiplicity of gods. Therefore, if we are contented with one God, let us call to mind what was formerly observed, that all fictitious gods are to be driven far away, and that the worship which he claims for himself is not to be mutilated. Not a particle of his glory is to be withheld: everything belonging to him must be reserved to him entire. The words, “before me,” go to increase the indignity, God being provoked to jealousy whenever we substitute our fictions in his stead; just as an unfaithful wife stings her husband’s heart more deeply when her adultery is committed openly before his eyes. Therefore, God having by his present power and grace declared that he had respect to the people whom he had chosen, now, in order to deter them from the wickedness of revolt, warns them that they cannot adopt strange gods without his being witness and spectator of the sacrilege. To the audacity of so doing is added the very great impiety of supposing that they can mock the eye of God with their evasions. Far from this the Lord proclaims that everything which we design, plan, or execute, lies open to his sight. Our conscience must, therefore, keep aloof from the most distant thought of revolt, if we would have our worship approved by the Lord. The glory of his Godhead must be maintained entire and incorrupt, not merely by external profession, but as under his eye, which penetrates the inmost recesses of his heart.

Second Commandment

Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them.

17. As in the first commandment the Lord declares that he is one, and that besides him no gods must be either worshipped or imagined, so he here more plainly declares what his nature is, and what the kind of worship with which he is to be honoured, in order that we may not presume to form any carnal idea of him. The purport of the commandment, therefore, is, that he will not have his legitimate worship profaned by superstitious rites. Wherefore, in general, he calls us entirely away from the carnal frivolous observances which our stupid minds are wont to devise after forming some gross idea of the divine nature, while, at the same time, he instructs us in the worship which is legitimate, namely, spiritual worship of his own appointment. The grossest vice here prohibited is external idolatry. This commandment consists of two parts. The former curbs the licentious daring which would subject the incomprehensible God to our senses, or represent him under any visible shape. The latter forbids the worship of images on any religious ground. There is, moreover, a brief enumeration of all the forms by which the Deity was usually represented by heathen and superstitious nations. By “any thing which is in heaven above” is meant the sun, the moon, and the stars, perhaps also birds, as in Deuteronomy, where the meaning is explained,

there is mention of birds as well as stars (Deuteronomy 4:15). I would not have made this observation, had I not seen that some absurdly apply it to the angels. The other particulars I pass, as requiring no explanation. We have already shown clearly enough (Book 1. chap. 11, 12) that every visible shape of Deity which man devises is diametrically opposed to the divine nature; and, therefore, that the moment idols appear, true religion is corrupted and adulterated.

18. The threatening subjoined ought to have no little effect in shaking off our lethargy. It is in the following terms:

I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments. The meaning here is the same as if he had said, that our duty is to cleave to him alone. To induce us to this, he proclaims his authority which he will not permit to be impaired or despised with impunity. It is true, the word used is El, which means God; but as it is derived from a word meaning strength, I have had no hesitations in order to express the sense more fully, so to render it as inserted on the margin. Secondly, he calls himself jealous, because he cannot bear a partner. Thirdly, he declares that he will vindicate his majesty and glory, if any transfer it either to the creatures or to graven images; and that not by a simple punishment of brief duration, but one extending to the third and fourth generation of such as imitate the impiety of their progenitors. In like manner, he declares his constant mercy and kindness to the remote posterity of those who love him, and keep his Law. The Lord very frequently addresses us in the character of a husband; the union by which he connects us with himself, when he receives us into the bosom of the Church, having some resemblance to that of holy wedlock, because founded on mutual faith. As he performs all the offices of a true and faithful husband, so he stipulates for love and conjugal chastity from us; that is, that we do not prostitute our souls to Satan, to be defiled with foul carnal lusts. Hence, when he rebukes the Jews for their apostasy, he complains that they have cast off chastity, and polluted themselves with adultery. Therefore, as the purer and chaster the husband is, the more grievously is he offended when he sees his wife inclining to a rival; so the Lord, who has betrothed us to himself in truth, declares that he burns with the hottest jealousy whenever, neglecting the purity of his holy marriage, we defile ourselves with abominable lusts, and especially when the worship of his Deity, which ought to have been most carefully kept unimpaired, is transferred to another, or adulterated with some superstition; since, in this way, we not only violate our plighted troth, but defile the nuptial couch, by giving access to adulterers.

19. In the threatening we must attend to what is meant when God declares that he will visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation. It seems inconsistent with the equity of the divine procedure to punish the innocent for another’s fault; and the Lord himself declares, that “the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father” (Ezekiel 18:20). But still we meet more than once with a declaration as to the postponing of the punishment of the sins of fathers to future generations. Thus Moses repeatedly addresses the Lord as “visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation” (Numbers 14:18). In like manner, Jeremiah, “Thou showest loving-kindness unto thousands, and recompenses the iniquity of the fathers into the bosom of their children after them” (Jeremiah 32:18). Some feeling sadly perplexed how to solve this difficulty, think it is to be understood of temporal punishments only, which it is said sons may properly bear for the sins of their parents, because they are often inflicted for their own safety. This is indeed true; for Isaiah declared to Hezekiah, that his children

should be stript of the kingdom, and carried away into captivity, for a sin which he had committed (Isaiah 39:7); and the households of Pharaoh and Abimelech were made to suffer for an injury done to Abraham (Genesis 12:17; Genesis 20:3-18). But the attempt to solve the question in this way is an evasion rather than a true interpretation. For the punishment denounced here and in similar passages is too great to be confined within the limits of the present life. We must therefore understand it to mean, that a curse from the Lord righteously falls not only on the head of the guilty individual, but also on all his lineage. When it has fallen, what can be anticipated but that the father, being deprived of the Spirit of God, will live most flagitiously; that the son, being in like manner forsaken of the Lord, because of his father's iniquity, will follow the same road to destruction; and be followed in his turn by succeeding generations, forming a seed of evil-doers?

20. First, let us examine whether such punishment is inconsistent with the divine justice. If human nature is universally condemned, those on whom the Lord does not bestow the communication of his grace must be doomed to destruction; nevertheless, they perish by their own iniquity, not by unjust hatred on the part of God. There is no room to expostulate, and ask why the grace of God does not forward their salvation as it does that of others. Therefore, when God punishes the wicked and flagitious for their crimes, by depriving their families of his grace for many generations, who will dare to bring a charge against him for this most righteous vengeance? But it will be said, the Lord, on the contrary, declares, that the son shall not suffer for the father's sin (Ezekiel 18:20). Observe the scope of that passage. The Israelites, after being subjected to a long period of uninterrupted calamities, had begun to say, as a proverb, that their fathers had eaten the sour grape, and thus set the children's teeth on edge; meaning that they, though in themselves righteous and innocent, were paying the penalty of sins committed by their parents, and this more from the implacable anger than the duly tempered severity of God. The prophet declares it was not so: that they were punished for their own wickedness; that it was not in accordance with the justice of God that a righteous son should suffer for the iniquity of a wicked father; and that nothing of the kind was exemplified in what they suffered. For, if the visitation of which we now speak is accomplished when God withdraws from the children of the wicked the light of his truth and the other helps to salvation, the only way in which they are accursed for their fathers' wickedness is in being blinded and abandoned by God, and so left to walk in their parents' steps. The misery which they suffer in time, and the destruction to which they are finally doomed, are thus punishments inflicted by divine justice, not for the sins of others, but for their own iniquity.

21. On the other hand, there is a promise of mercy to thousands - a promise which is frequently mentioned in Scripture, and forms an article in the solemn covenant made with the Church - I will be "a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee" (Genesis 17:7). With reference to this, Solomon says, "The just man walketh in his integrity: his children are blessed after him" (Proverbs 20:7); not only in consequence of a religious education (though this certainly is by no means unimportant), but in consequence of the blessing promised in the covenant, viz., that the divine favour will dwell for ever in the families of the righteous. Herein is excellent consolation to believers, and great ground of terror to the wicked; for if, after death, the mere remembrance of righteousness and iniquity have such an influence on the divine procedure, that his blessing rests on the posterity of the righteous, and his curse on the posterity of the wicked, much more must it rest on the heads of the individuals themselves. Notwithstanding of this, however, the offspring of the wicked sometimes amends, while that of believers degenerates; because the Almighty has not here laid

down an inflexible rule which might derogate from his free election. For the consolation of the righteous, and the dismay of the sinner, it is enough that the threatening itself is not vain or nugatory, although it does not always take effect. For, as the temporal punishments inflicted on a few of the wicked are proofs of the divine wrath against sin, and of the future judgement that will ultimately overtake all sinners, though many escape with impunity even to the end of their lives, so, when the Lord gives one example of blessing a son for his father's sake, by visiting him in mercy and kindness, it is a proof of constant and unfailing favour to his worshipers. On the other hand, when, in any single instance, he visits the iniquity of the father on the son, he gives intimation of the judgement which awaits all the reprobate for their own iniquities. The certainty of this is the principal thing here taught. Moreover, the Lord, as it were by the way, commends the riches of his mercy by extending it to thousands, while he limits his vengeance to four generations.

08.02.08B. Chapter 08. Part B

Chapter 8. Exposition of the Moral Law.

Continued Third Commandment.

Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain.

22. The purport of this Commandment is, that the majesty of the name of God is to be held sacred. In sum, therefore, it means, that we must not profane it by using it irreverently or contemptuously. This prohibition implies a corresponding precept, viz. that it be our study and care to treat his name with religious veneration. Wherefore it becomes us to regulate our minds and our tongues, so as never to think or speak of God and his mysteries without reverence and great soberness, and never, in estimating his works, to have any feeling towards him but one of deep veneration. We must, I say, steadily observe the three following things: First, whatever our mind conceives of him, whatever our tongue utters, must bespeak his excellence, and correspond to the sublimity of his sacred name; in short, must be fitted to extol its greatness. secondly, We must not rashly and preposterously pervert his sacred word and adorable mysteries to purposes of ambition, or avarice, or amusement, but, according as they bear the impress of his dignity, must always maintain them in due honour and esteem. Lastly, We must not detract from or throw obloquy upon his works, as miserable men are wont insultingly to do, but must laud every action which we attribute to him as wise, and just, and good. This is to sanctify the name of God. When we act otherwise, his name is profaned with vain and wicked abuse, because it is applied to a purpose foreign to that to which it is consecrated. Were there nothing worse, in being deprived of its dignity it is gradually brought into contempt. But if there is so much evil in the rash and unseasonable employment of the divine name, there is still more evil in its being employed for nefarious purposes, as is done by those who use it in necromancy, cursing, illicit exorcisms, and other impious incantations. But the Commandment refers especially to the case of oaths, in which a perverse employment of the divine name is particularly detestable; and this it does the more effectually to deter us from every species of profanation. That the thing here commanded relates to the worship of God, and the reverence due to his name, and not to the equity which men are to cultivate towards each other, is apparent from this, that afterwards, in the Second Table, there is a condemnation of the perjury and false testimony by which human society is injured, and that the repetition would be superfluous, if, in this Commandment, the duty of charity were handled. Moreover, this is necessary even for distinction, because, as was observed, God has, for good reason, divided his Law into two tables. The inference then is, that God here vindicates his own right, and defends his sacred name, but does not teach the duties which men owe to men.

23. In the first place, we must consider what an oath is. An oath, then, is calling God to witness that what we say is true. Execrations being manifestly insulting to God, are unworthy of being classed among oaths. That an oath, when duly taken, is a species of divine worship, appears from many passages of Scripture, as when Isaiah prophesies of the admission of the Assyrians and Egyptians to a participation in the covenant, he says, “In that day shall five cities in the land of

Egypt speak the language of Canaan, and swear to the Lord of hosts" (Isaiah 19:18). Swearing by the name of the Lord here means, that they will make a profession of religion. In like manner, speaking of the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom, it is said, "He who blesseth himself in the earth shall bless himself in the God of truth: and he that sweareth in the earth shall swear by the God of truth" (Isaiah 65:16). In Jeremiah it is said, "If they will diligently learn the ways of my people, to swear by my name, The Lord liveth; as they taught my people to swear by Baal; then shall they be built in the midst of my people" (Jeremiah 12:16). By appealing to the name of the Lord, and calling him to witness, we are justly said to declare our own religious veneration of him. For we thus acknowledge that he is eternal and unchangeable truth, inasmuch as we not only call upon him, in preference to others, as a fit witness to the truth, but as its only assertor, able to bring hidden things to light, a discerner of the hearts. When human testimony fails, we appeal to God as witness, especially when the matter to be proved lies hid in the conscience. For which reason, the Lord is grievously offended with those who swear by strange gods, and construes such swearing as a proof of open revolt, "Thy children have forsaken me, and sworn by them that are no gods" (Jeremiah 5:7). The heinousness of the offence is declared by the punishment denounced against it, "I will cut off them that swear by the Lord, and that swear by Malcham" (Zephaniah 1:4, Zephaniah 1:5).

24. Understanding that the Lord would have our oaths to be a species of divine worship, we must be the more careful that they do not, instead of worship, contain insult, or contempt, and vilification. It is no slight insult to swear by him and do it falsely: hence in the Law this is termed profanation (Leviticus 19:12). For if God is robbed of his truth, what is it that remains? Without truth he could not be God. But assuredly he is robbed of his truth, when he is made the approver and attester of what is false. Hence, when Joshua is endeavouring to make Achan confess the truth, he says, "My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the Lord God of Israel" (Joshua 7:19); intimating, that grievous dishonour is done to God when men swear by him falsely. And no wonder; for, as far as in them lies, his sacred name is in a manner branded with falsehood. That this mode of expression was common among the Jews whenever any one was called upon to take an oath, is evident from a similar obtestation used by the Pharisees, as given in John (John 9:24); Scripture reminds us of the caution which we ought to use by employing such expressions as the following: "As the Lord liveth;" "God do so and more also;" "I call God for a record upon my soul." Such expressions intimate, that we cannot call God to witness our statement, without imprecating his vengeance for perjury if it is false.

25. The name of God is vulgarised and vilified when used in oaths, which, though true, are superfluous. This, too, is to take his name in vain. Wherefore, it is not sufficient to abstain from perjury, unless we, at the same time, remember that an oath is not appointed or allowed for passion or pleasure, but for necessity; and that, therefore, a licentious use is made of it by him who uses it on any other than necessary occasions. Moreover, no case of necessity can be pretended, unless where some purpose of religion or charity is to be served. In this matter, great sin is committed in the present day - sin the more intolerable in this, that its frequency has made it cease to be regarded as a fault, though it certainly is not accounted trivial before the judgement-seat of God. The name of God is everywhere profaned by introducing it indiscriminately in frivolous discourse; and the evil is disregarded, because it has been long and audaciously persisted in with impunity. The commandment of the Lord, however, stands; the penalty also

stands, and will one day receive effect. Special vengeance will be executed on those who have taken the name of God in vain. Another form of violation is exhibited, when, with manifest impiety, we, in our oaths, substitute the holy servants of God for God himself, thus conferring upon them the glory of his Godhead. It is not without cause the Lord has, by a special commandment, required us to swear by his name, and, by a special prohibition, forbidden us to swear by other gods. The Apostle gives a clear attestation to the same effect, when he says, that “men verily swear by the greater;” but that “when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself;” (Hebrews 6:16; Hebrews 6:13).

26. The Anabaptists, not content with this moderate use of oaths, condemn all, without exception, on the ground of our Saviour’s general prohibition, “I say unto you, Swear not at all:” “Let your speech be Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil” (Matthew 5:34; James 5:12). In this way, they inconsiderately make a stumbling-stone of Christ, setting him in opposition to the Father, as if he had descended into the world to annul his decrees. In the Law, the Almighty not only permits an oath as a thing that is lawful (this were amply sufficient), but, in a case of necessity, actually commands it (Exodus 22:11). Christ again declares, that he and his Father are one; that he only delivers what was commanded of his Father; that his doctrine is not his own, but his that sent him (John 10:18, John 10:30; John 7:16). What then? Will they make God contradict himself, by approving and commanding at one time, what he afterwards prohibits and condemns? But as there is some difficulty in what our Saviour says on the subject of swearing, it may be proper to consider it a little. Here, however, we shall never arrive at the true meaning, unless we attend to the design of Christ, and the subject of which he is treating. His purpose was, neither to relax nor to curtail the Law, but to restore the true and genuine meaning, which had been greatly corrupted by the false glosses of the Scribes and Pharisees. If we attend to this we shall not suppose that Christ condemned all oaths but those only which transgressed the rule of the Law. It is evident, from the oaths themselves, that the people were accustomed to think it enough if they avoided perjury, whereas the Law prohibits not perjury merely, but also vain and superfluous oaths. Therefore our Lord, who is the best interpreter of the Law, reminds them that there is a sin not only in perjury, but in swearing. How in swearing? Namely, by swearing vainly. Those oaths, however, which are authorised by the Law, he leaves safe and free. Those who condemn oaths think their argument invincible when they fasten on the expression, “not at all”. The expression applies not to the word swear, but to the subjoined forms of oaths. For part of the error consisted in their supposing, that when they swore by the heaven and the earth, they did not touch the name of God. The Lord, therefore, after cutting off the principal source of prevarication, deprives them of all subterfuges, warning them against supposing that they escape guilt by suppressing the name of God, and appealing to heaven and earth. For it ought here to be observed in passing, that although the name of God is not expressed, yet men swear by him in using indirect forms, as when they swear by the light of life, by the bread they eat, by their baptism, or any other pledges of the divine liberality towards them. Some erroneously suppose that our Saviour, in that passage, rebukes superstition, by forbidding men to swear by heaven and earth, and Jerusalem. He rather refutes the sophistical subtilty of those who thought it nothing vainly to utter indirect oaths, imagining that they thus spared the holy name of God, whereas that name is inscribed on each of his mercies. The case is different, when any mortal living or dead, or an angel, is substituted in the place of God, as in the vile form devised by flattery in heathen nations, “By the life or genius of the king”; for, in this case, the false apotheosis obscures and impairs the

glory of the one God. But when nothing else is intended than to confirm what is said by an appeal to the holy name of God, although it is done indirectly, yet his majesty is insulted by all frivolous oaths. Christ strips this abuse of every vain pretext when he says “Swear not at all”. To the same effect is the passage in which James uses the words of our Saviour above quoted (James 5:12). For this rash swearing has always prevailed in the world, notwithstanding that it is a profanation of the name of God. If you refer the words, “not at all”, to the act itself, as if every oath, without exception, were unlawful, what will be the use of the explanation which immediately follows - neither by heaven, neither by the earth, &c.? These words make it clear, that the object in view was to meet the cavils by which the Jews thought they could extenuate their fault.

27. Every person of sound judgement must now see that in that passage our Lord merely condemned those oaths which were forbidden by the Law. For he who in his life exhibited a model of the perfection which he taught, did not object to oaths whenever the occasion required them; and the disciples, who doubtless in all things obeyed their Master, followed the same rule. Who will dare to say that Paul would have sworn (Romans 1:9; 2 Corinthians 1:23) if an oath had been altogether forbidden? But when the occasion calls for it, he adjures without any scruple, and sometimes even imprecates. The question, however, is not yet disposed of. For some think that the only oaths exempted from the prohibition are public oaths, such as those which are administered to us by the magistrate, or independent states employ in ratifying treaties, or the people take when they swear allegiance to their sovereign, or the soldier in the case of the military oath, and others of a similar description. To this class they refer (and justly) those protestations in the writings of Paul, which assert the dignity of the Gospel; since the Apostles, in discharging their office, were not private individuals, but the public servants of God. I certainly deny not that such oaths are the safest because they are most strongly supported by passages of Scripture. The magistrate is enjoined, in a doubtful matter, to put the witness upon oath; and he in his turn to answer upon oath; and an Apostle says, that in this way there is an end of all strife (Hebrews 6:16). In this commandment, both parties are fully approved. Nay, we may observe, that among the ancient heathens a public and solemn oath was held in great reverence, while those common oaths which were indiscriminately used were in little or no estimation, as if they thought that, in regard to them, the Deity did not interpose. Private oaths used soberly, sacredly, and reverently, on necessary occasions, it were perilous to condemn, supported as they are by reason and example. For if private individuals are permitted, in a grave and serious matter, to appeal to God as a judge, much more may they appeal to him as a witness. Your brother charges you with perfidy. You, as bound by the duties of charity, labour to clear yourself from the charge. He will on no account be satisfied. If, through his obstinate malice, your good name is brought into jeopardy, you can appeal, without offence, to the judgement of God, that he may in time manifest your innocence. If the terms are weighed, it will be found that it is a less matter to call upon him to be witness; and I therefore see not how it can be called unlawful to do so. And there is no want of examples. If it is pretended that the oath which Abraham and Isaac made with Abimelech was of a public nature, that by which Jacob and Laban bound themselves in mutual league was private. Boaz, though a private man, confirmed his promise of marriage to Ruth in the same way. Obadiah, too, a just man, and one that feared God, though a private individual, in seeking to persuade Elijah, asseverates with an oath. I hold, therefore, that there is no better rule than so to regulate our oaths that they shall neither be rash, frivolous, promiscuous, nor passionate, but be made to serve a just necessity; in other words, to vindicate the glory of God, or promote the edification of a

brother. This is the end of the Commandment.

Fourth Commandment.

Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God. In it thou shalt not do any work, &c.

28. The purport of the commandment is, that being dead to our own affections and works, we meditate on the kingdom of God, and in order to such meditation, have recourse to the means which he has appointed. But as this commandment stands in peculiar circumstances apart from the others, the mode of exposition must be somewhat different. Early Christian writers are wont to call it typical, as containing the external observance of a day which was abolished with the other types on the advent of Christ. This is indeed true; but it leaves the half of the matter untouched. Wherefore, we must look deeper for our exposition, and attend to three cases in which it appears to me that the observance of this commandment consists. First, under the rest of the seventh days the divine Lawgiver meant to furnish the people of Israel with a type of the spiritual rest by which believers were to cease from their own works, and allow God to work in them. Secondly he meant that there should be a stated day on which they should assemble to hear the Law, and perform religious rites, or which, at least, they should specially employ in meditating on his works, and be thereby trained to piety. Thirdly, he meant that servants, and those who lived under the authority of others, should be indulged with a day of rest, and thus have some intermission from labour.

29. We are taught in many passages that this adumbration of spiritual rest held a primary place in the Sabbath. Indeed, there is no commandment the observance of which the Almighty more strictly enforces. When he would intimate by the Prophets that religion was entirely subverted, he complains that his sabbaths were polluted, violated, not kept, not hallowed; as if, after it was neglected, there remained nothing in which he could be honoured. The observance of it he eulogises in the highest terms, and hence, among other divine privileges, the faithful set an extraordinary value on the revelation of the Sabbath. In Nehemiah, the Levites, in the public assembly, thus speak: “Thou madest known unto them thy holy sabbath, and commandedst them precepts, statutes, and laws, by the hand of Moses thy servant.” You see the singular honour which it holds among all the precepts of the Law. All this tends to celebrate the dignity of the mystery, which is most admirably expressed by Moses and Ezekiel. Thus in Exodus: “Verily my sabbaths shall ye keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that does sanctify you. Ye shall keep my sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you: every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death: for whosoever does any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Six days may work be done; but in the seventh is the sabbath of rest, holy to the Lord: whosoever does any work in the sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever” (Exodus 31:13-17). Ezekiel is still more full, but the sum of what he says amounts to this: that the sabbath is a sign by which Israel might know that God is their sanctifier. If our sanctification consists in the mortification of our own will, the analogy between the external sign and the thing signified is most appropriate. We must rest entirely, in order that God may work in us; we must resign our own will, yield up our heart, and abandon all the lusts of the flesh. In short, we must desist from all the acts of our own mind, that God working in us, we may rest in

him, as the Apostle also teaches (Hebrews 3:13; Hebrews 4:3, Hebrews 4:9).

30. This complete cessation was represented to the Jews by the observance of one day in seven, which, that it might be more religiously attended to, the Lord recommended by his own example. For it is no small incitement to the zeal of man to know that he is engaged in imitating his Creator. Should any one expect some secret meaning in the number seven, this being in Scripture the number for perfection, it may have been selected, not without cause, to denote perpetuity. In accordance with this, Moses concludes his description of the succession of day and night on the same day on which he relates that the Lord rested from his works. Another probable reason for the number may be, that the Lord intended that the Sabbath never should be completed before the arrival of the last day. We here begin our blessed rest in him, and daily make new progress in it; but because we must still wage an incessant warfare with the flesh, it shall not be consummated until the fulfilment of the prophecy of Isaiah: “From one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord” (Isaiah 66:23); in other words, when God shall be “all in all” (1 Corinthians 15:28). It may seem, therefore, that by the seventh day the Lord delineated to his people the future perfection of his sabbath on the last day, that by continual meditation on the sabbath, they might throughout their whole lives aspire to this perfection.

31. Should these remarks on the number seem to any somewhat far-fetched, I have no objection to their taking it more simply: that the Lord appointed a certain day on which his people might be trained, under the tutelage of the Law, to meditate constantly on the spiritual rest, and fixed upon the seventh, either because he foresaw it would be sufficient, or in order that his own example might operate as a stronger stimulus; or, at least to remind men that the Sabbath was appointed for no other purpose than to render them conformable to their Creator. It is of little consequence which of these be adopted, provided we lose not sight of the principal thing delineated, viz., the mystery of perpetual resting from our works. To the contemplation of this, the Jews were every now and then called by the prophets, lest they should think a carnal cessation from labour sufficient. Beside the passages already quoted, there is the following: “If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord” (Isaiah 58:13, Isaiah 58:14). Still there can be no doubt, that, on the advent of our Lord Jesus Christ, the ceremonial part of the commandment was abolished. He is the truth, at whose presence all the emblems vanish; the body, at the sight of which the shadows disappear. He, I say, is the true completion of the sabbath: “We are buried with him by baptism unto death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we should walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:4). Hence, as the Apostle elsewhere says, “Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holiday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days; which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ” (Colossians 2:16, Colossians 2:17); meaning by body the whole essence of the truth, as is well explained in that passage. This is not contented with one day, but requires the whole course of our lives, until being completely dead to ourselves, we are filled with the life of God. Christians, therefore, should have nothing to do with a superstitious observance of days.

32. The two other cases ought not to be classed with ancient shadows, but are adapted to every age. The sabbath being abrogated, there is still room among us, first, to assemble on stated days for the hearing of the Word, the breaking of the mystical bread, and public prayer; and, secondly, to give our servants and labourers relaxation from labour. It cannot be doubted that the Lord provided for both in the commandment of the Sabbath. The former is abundantly evinced by the mere practice of the Jews. The latter Moses has expressed in Deuteronomy in the following terms: “The seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant; that thy man-servant and thy maid-servant may rest as well as thou” (Deuteronomy 5:14). Likewise in Exodus, “That thine ox and thine ass may rest, and the son of thy handmaid, and the stranger, may be refreshed” (Exodus 23:12). Who can deny that both are equally applicable to us as to the Jews? Religious meetings are enjoined us by the word of God; their necessity, experience itself sufficiently demonstrates. But unless these meetings are stated, and have fixed days allotted to them, how can they be held? We must, as the apostle expresses it, do all things decently and in orders (1 Corinthians 14:40). So impossible, however, would it be to preserve decency and order without this politic arrangements that the dissolution of it would instantly lead to the disturbance and ruin of the Church. But if the reason for which the Lord appointed a sabbath to the Jews is equally applicable to us, no man can assert that it is a matter with which we have nothing to do. Our most provident and indulgent Parent has been pleased to provide for our wants not less than for the wants of the Jews. Why, it may be asked, do we not hold daily meetings, and thus avoid the distinction of days? Would that we were privileged to do so! Spiritual wisdom undoubtedly deserves to have some portion of every day devoted to it. But if, owing to the weakness of many, daily meetings cannot be held, and charity will not allow us to exact more of them, why should we not adopt the rule which the will of God has obviously imposed upon us?

33. I am obliged to dwell a little longer on this because some restless spirits are now making an outcry about the observance of the Lord’s day. They complain that Christian people are trained in Judaism, because some observance of days is retained. My reply is, That those days are observed by us without Judaism, because in this matter we differ widely from the Jews. We do not celebrate it with most minute formality, as a ceremony by which we imagine that a spiritual mystery is typified, but we adopt it as a necessary remedy for preserving order in the Church. Paul informs us that Christians are not to be judged in respect of its observance, because it is a shadow of something to come (Colossians 2:16); and, accordingly, he expresses a fear lest his labour among the Galatians should prove in vain, because they still observed days (Galatians 4:10, Galatians 4:11). And he tells the Romans that it is superstitious to make one day differ from another (Romans 14:5). But who, except those restless men, does not see what the observance is to which the Apostle refers? Those persons had no regard to that politic and ecclesiastical arrangement, but by retaining the days as types of spiritual things, they in so far obscured the glory of Christ, and the light of the Gospel. They did not desist from manual labour on the ground of its interfering with sacred study and meditation, but as a kind of religious observance; because they dreamed that by their cessation from labour, they were cultivating the mysteries which had of old been committed to them. It was, I say, against this preposterous observance of days that the Apostle inveighs, and not against that legitimate selection which is subservient to the peace of Christian society. For in the churches established by him, this was the use for which the Sabbath was retained. He tells the Corinthians to set the first day apart for collecting contributions for the

relief of their brethren at Jerusalem (1 Corinthians 16:2). If superstition is dreaded, there was more danger in keeping the Jewish sabbath than the Lord's day as Christians now do. It being expedient to overthrow superstition, the Jewish holy day was abolished; and as a thing necessary to retain decency, orders and peace, in the Church, another day was appointed for that purpose.

34. It was not, however, without a reason that the early Christians substituted what we call the Lord's day for the Sabbath. The resurrection of our Lord being the end and accomplishment of that true rest which the ancient sabbath typified, this day, by which types were abolished serves to warn Christians against adhering to a shadowy ceremony. I do not cling so to the number seven as to bring the Church under bondage to it, nor do I condemn churches for holding their meetings on other solemn days, provided they guard against superstition. This they will do if they employ those days merely for the observance of discipline and regular order. The whole may be thus summed up: As the truth was delivered typically to the Jews, so it is imparted to us without figure; first, that during our whole lives we may aim at a constant rest from our own works, in order that the Lord may work in us by his Spirit; secondly that every individual, as he has opportunity, may diligently exercise himself in private, in pious meditation on the works of God, and, at the same time, that all may observe the legitimate order appointed by the Church, for the hearing of the word, the administration of the sacraments, and public prayer: And, thirdly, that we may avoid oppressing those who are subject to us. In this way, we get quit of the trifling of the false prophets, who in later times instilled Jewish ideas into the people, alleging that nothing was abrogated but what was ceremonial in the commandment (this they term in their language the taxation of the seventh day), while the moral part remains, viz., the observance of one day in seven. But this is nothing else than to insult the Jews, by changing the day, and yet mentally attributing to it the same sanctity; thus retaining the same typical distinction of days as had place among the Jews. And of a truth, we see what profit they have made by such a doctrine. Those who cling to their constitutions go thrice as far as the Jews in the gross and carnal superstition of sabbatism; so that the rebukes which we read in Isaiah (Isaiah 1:13; Isaiah 58:13) apply as much to those of the present day, as to those to whom the Prophet addressed them. We must be careful, however, to observe the general doctrine, viz., in order that religion may neither be lost nor languish among us, we must diligently attend on our religious assemblies, and duly avail ourselves of those external aids which tend to promote the worship of God.

Fifth Commandment.

Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

35. The end of this commandment is, that since the Lord takes pleasure in the preservation of his own ordinance, the degrees of dignity appointed by him must be held inviolable. The sum of the commandment, therefore, will be, that we are to look up to those whom the Lord has set over us, yielding them honour, gratitude, and obedience. Hence it follows, that every thing in the way of contempt, ingratitude, or disobedience, is forbidden. For the term honour has this extent of meaning in Scripture. Thus when the Apostle says, "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour" (1 Timothy 5:17), he refers not only to the reverence which is due to them, but to the recompense to which their services are entitled. But as this command to submit is very repugnant to the perversity of the human mind (which, puffed up with ambitious longings will

scarcely allow itself to be subject), that superiority which is most attractive and least invidious is set forth as an example calculated to soften and bend our minds to habits of submission. From that subjection which is most easily endured, the Lord gradually accustoms us to every kind of legitimate subjection, the same principle regulating all. For to those whom he raises to eminences he communicates his authority, in so far as necessary to maintain their station. The titles of Father, God, and Lord, all meet in him alone and hence whenever any one of them is mentioned, our mind should be impressed with the same feeling of reverence. Those, therefore, to whom he imparts such titles, he distinguishes by some small spark of his refulgence, so as to entitle them to honour, each in his own place. In this way, we must consider that our earthly father possesses something of a divine nature in him, because there is some reason for his bearing a divine title, and that he who is our prince and ruler is admitted to some communion of honour with God.

36. Wherefore, we ought to have no doubt that the Lord here lays down this universal rule, viz., that knowing how every individual is set over us by his appointment, we should pay him reverence, gratitude, obedience, and every duty in our power. And it makes no difference whether those on whom the honour is conferred are deserving or not. Be they what they may, the Almighty, by conferring their station upon them, shows that he would have them honoured. The commandment specifies the reverence due to those to whom we owe our being. This Nature herself should in some measure teach us. For they are monsters, and not men, who petulantly and contumeliously violate the paternal authority. Hence, the Lord orders all who rebel against their parents to be put to death, they being, as it where, unworthy of the light in paying no deference to those to whom they are indebted for beholding it. And it is evident, from the various appendices to the Law, that we were correct in stating, that the honour here referred to consists of three parts, reverence, obedience, and gratitude. The first of these the Lord enforces, when he commands that whose curseth his father or his mother shall be put to death. In this way he avenges insult and contempt. The second he enforces, when he denounces the punishment of death on disobedient and rebellious children. To the third belongs our Saviour’s declaration, that God requires us to do good to our parents (Matthew 15:1-39). And whenever Paul mentions this commandment, he interprets it as enjoining obedience.

37. A promise is added by way of recommendation, the better to remind us how pleasing to God is the submission which is here required. Paul applies that stimulus to rouse us from our lethargy, when he calls this the first commandment with promise; the promise contained in the First Table not being specially appropriated to any one commandment, but extended to the whole law. Moreover, the sense in which the promise is to be taken is as follows: The Lord spoke to the Israelites specially of the land which he had promised them for an inheritance. If, then, the possession of the land was an earnest of the divine favour, we cannot wonder if the Lord was pleased to testify his favour, by bestowing long life, as in this way they were able long to enjoy his kindness. The meaning therefore is: Honour thy father and thy mother, that thou may be able, during the course of a long life, to enjoy the possession of the land which is to be given thee in testimony of my favour. But, as the whole earth is blessed to believers, we justly class the present life among the number of divine blessings. Whence this promise has, in like manner, reference to us also, inasmuch as the duration of the present life is a proof of the divine benevolence toward us. It is not promised to us, nor was it promised to the Jews, as if in itself it constituted happiness, but because it is an ordinary symbol of the divine favour to the pious. Wherefore, if any one who is

obedient to parents happens to be cut off before mature age (a thing which not infrequently happens), the Lord nevertheless adheres to his promise as steadily as when he bestows a hundred acres of land where he had promised only one. The whole lies in this: We must consider that long life is promised only in so far as it is a blessing from God, and that it is a blessing only in so far as it is a manifestation of divine favour. This, however, he testifies and truly manifests to his servants more richly and substantially by death.

38. Moreover, while the Lord promises the blessing of present life to children who show proper respect to their parents, he, at the same time, intimates that an inevitable curse is impending over the rebellious and disobedient; and, that it may not fail of execution, he, in his Law, pronounces sentence of death upon theme and orders it to be inflicted. If they escape the judgement, he, in some way or other, will execute vengeance. For we see how great a number of this description of individuals fall either in battle or in brawls; others of them are overtaken by unwonted disasters, and almost all are a proof that the threatening is not used in vain. But if any do escape till extreme old age, yet, because deprived of the blessing of God in this life, they only languish on in wickedness, and are reserved for severer punishment in the world to come, they are far from participating in the blessing promised to obedient children. It ought to be observed by the way, that we are ordered to obey parents only in the Lord. This is clear from the principle already laid down: for the place which they occupy is one to which the Lord has exalted them, by communicating to them a portion of his own honour. Therefore the submission yielded to them should be a step in our ascent to the Supreme Parent, and hence, if they instigate us to transgress the law, they deserve not to be regarded as parents, but as strangers attempting to seduce us from obedience to our true Father. The same holds in the case of rulers, masters, and superiors of every description. For it were unbecoming and absurd that the honour of God should be impaired by their exaltation - an exaltation which, being derived from him, ought to lead us up to him.

Sixth Commandment.

Thou shalt not kill.

39. The purport of this commandment is that since the Lord has bound the whole human race by a kind of unity, the safety of all ought to be considered as entrusted to each. In general, therefore, all violence and injustice, and every kind of harm from which our neighbour’s body suffers, is prohibited. Accordingly, we are required faithfully to do what in us lies to defend the life of our neighbour; to promote whatever tends to his tranquillity, to be vigilant in warding off harm, and, when danger comes, to assist in removing it. Remembering that the Divine Lawgiver thus speaks, consider, moreover, that he requires you to apply the same rule in regulating your mind. It were ridiculous, that he, who sees the thoughts of the heart, and has special regard to them, should train the body only to rectitude. This commandment, therefore, prohibits the murder of the heart, and requires a sincere desire to preserve our brother’s life. The hand, indeed, commits the murder, but the mind, under the influence of wrath and hatred, conceives it. How can you be angry with your brother, without passionately longing to do him harm? If you must not be angry with him, neither must you hate him, hatred being nothing but inveterate anger. However you may disguise the fact, or endeavour to escape from it by vain pretexts. Where either wrath or hatred is, there is an inclination to do mischief. If you still persist in tergiversation, the mouth of the Spirit has declared, that “whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer” (1 John 3:15); and the mouth of our

Saviour has declared, that “whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgement: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire” (Matthew 5:22).

. Scripture notes a twofold equity on which this commandment is founded. Man is both the image of God and our flesh. Wherefore, if we would not violate the image of God, we must hold the person of man sacred - if we would not divest ourselves of humanity we must cherish our own flesh. The practical inference to be drawn from the redemption and gift of Christ will be elsewhere considered. The Lord has been pleased to direct our attention to these two natural considerations as inducements to watch over our neighbour’s preservation, viz., to revere the divine image impressed upon him, and embrace our own flesh. To be clear of the crime of murder, it is not enough to refrain from shedding man’s blood. If in act you perpetrate, if in endeavour you plot, if in wish and design you conceive what is adverse to another’s safety, you have the guilt of murder. On the other hand, if you do not according to your means and opportunity study to defend his safety, by that inhumanity you violate the law. But if the safety of the body is so carefully provided for, we may hence infer how much care and exertion is due to the safety of the soul, which is of immeasurably higher value in the sight of God.

08.02.08C. Chapter 08. Part C

Chapter 8. Exposition of the Moral Law.

Continued Seventh Commandment.

Thou shalt not commit adultery.

41. The purport of this commandment is, that as God loves chastity and purity, we ought to guard against all uncleanness. The substance of the commandment therefore is, that we must not defile ourselves with any impurity or libidinous excess. To this corresponds the affirmative, that we must regulate every part of our conduct chastely and continently. The thing expressly forbidden is adultery, to which lust naturally tends, that its filthiness (being of a grosser and more palpable form, in as much as it casts a stain even on the body) may dispose us to abominate every form of lust. As the law under which man was created was not to lead a life of solitude, but enjoy a help meet for him, and ever since he fell under the curse the necessity for this mode of life is increased; the Lord made the requisite provision for us in this respect by the institution of marriage, which, entered into under his authority, he has also sanctified with his blessing. Hence, it is evident, that any mode of cohabitation different from marriage is cursed in his sight, and that the conjugal relation was ordained as a necessary means of preventing us from giving way to unbridled lust. Let us beware, therefore, of yielding to indulgence, seeing we are assured that the curse of God lies on every man and woman cohabiting without marriage.

42. Now, since natural feeling and the passions unnamed by the fall make the marriage tie doubly necessary, save in the case of those whom God has by special grace exempted, let every individual consider how the case stands with himself. Virginity, I admit, is a virtue not to be despised; but since it is denied to some, and to others granted only for a season, those who are assailed by incontinence, and unable successfully to war against it, should retake themselves to the remedy of marriage, and thus cultivate chastity in the way of their calling. Those incapable of self-restraint, if they apply not to the remedy allowed and provided for intemperance, war with God and resist his ordinance. And let no man tell me (as many in the present day do) that he can do all things, God helping! The help of God is present with those only who walk in his ways (Psalms 91:14), that is, in his callings from which all withdraw themselves who, omitting the remedies provided by God, vainly and presumptuously strive to struggle with and surmount their natural feelings. That continence is a special gift from God, and of the class of those which are not bestowed indiscriminately on the whole body of the Church, but only on a few of its members, our Lord affirms (Matthew 19:12). He first describes a certain class of individuals who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heavenly sake; that is, in order that they may be able to devote themselves with more liberty and less restraint to the things of heaven. But lest any one should suppose that such a sacrifice was in every man’s power, he had shown a little before that all are not capable, but those only to whom it is specially given from above. Hence he concludes, “He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.” Paul asserts the same thing still more plainly when he says, “Every man has his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that” (1

Corinthians 7:7).

43. Since we are reminded by an express declaration, that it is not in every man's power to live chaste in celibacy although it may be his most strenuous study and aim to do so - that it is a special grace which the Lord bestows only on certain individuals, in order that they may be less encumbered in his service, do we not oppose God, and nature as constituted by him, if we do not accommodate our mode of life to the measure of our ability? The Lord prohibits fornication, therefore he requires purity and chastity. The only method which each has of preserving it is to measure himself by his capacity. Let no man rashly despise matrimony as a thing useless or superfluous to him; let no man long for celibacy unless he is able to dispense with the married state. Nor even here let him consult the tranquillity or convenience of the flesh, save only that, freed from this tie, he may be the readier and more prepared for all the offices of piety. And since there are many on whom this blessing is conferred only for a time, let every one, in abstaining from marriage, do it so long as he is fit to endure celibacy. If he has not the power of subduing his passion, let him understand that the Lord has made it obligatory on him to marry. The Apostle shows this when he enjoins: "Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife and let every woman have her own husband." "If they cannot contain, let them marry." He first intimates that the greater part of men are liable to incontinence; and then of those so liable, he orders all, without exception, to have recourse to the only remedy by which unchastity may be obviated. The incontinent, therefore, neglecting to cure their infirmity by this means, sin by the very circumstance of disobeying the Apostle's command. And let not a man flatter himself, that because he abstains from the outward act he cannot be accused of unchastity. His mind may in the meantime be inwardly inflamed with lust. For Paul's definition of chastity is purity of mind, combined with purity of body. "The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and spirit" (1 Corinthians 7:34). Therefore when he gives a reason for the former precept, he not only says that it is better to marry than to live in fornication, but that it is better to marry than to burn.

44. Moreover, when spouses are made aware that their union is blessed by the Lord, they are thereby reminded that they must not give way to intemperate and unrestrained indulgence. For though honourable wedlock veils the turpitude of incontinence, it does not follow that it ought forthwith to become a stimulus to it. Wherefore, let spouses consider that all things are not lawful for them. Let there be sobriety in the behaviour of the husband toward the wife, and of the wife in her turn toward the husband; each so acting as not to do any thing unbecoming the dignity and temperance of married life. Marriage contracted in the Lord ought to exhibit measure and modesty - not run to the extreme of wantonness. This excess Ambrose censured gravely, but not undeservedly, when he described the man who shows no modesty or comeliness in conjugal intercourse, as committing adultery with his wife. Lastly let us consider who the Lawgiver is that thus condemns fornication: even He who, as he is entitled to possess us entirely, requires integrity of body, soul, and spirit. Therefore, while he forbids fornication, he at the same time forbids us to lay snares for our neighbour's chastity by lascivious attire, obscene gestures, and impure conversation. There was reason in the remark made by Archelaus to a youth clothed effeminately and over-luxuriously, that it mattered not in what part his wantonness appeared. We must have respect to God, who abhors all contaminations whatever be the part of soul or body in which it appears. And that there may be no doubt about it, let us remember, that what the Lord here

commends is chastity. If he requires chastity, he condemns every thing which is opposed to it. Therefore, if you aspire to obedience, let not your mind burn within with evil concupiscence, your eyes wanton after corrupting objects, nor your body be decked for allurement; let neither your tongue by filthy speeches, nor your appetite by intemperance, entice the mind to corresponding thoughts. All vices of this description are a kind of stains which despoil chastity of its purity.

Eighth Commandment.

Thou shalt not steal.

45. The purport is, that injustice being an abomination to God, we must render to every man his due. In substance, then, the commandment forbids us to long after other men's goods, and, accordingly, requires every man to exert himself honestly in preserving his own. For we must consider, that what each individual possesses has not fallen to him by chance, but by the distribution of the sovereign Lord of all, that no one can pervert his means to bad purposes without committing a fraud on a divine dispensation. There are very many kinds of theft. One consists in violence, as when a man's goods are forcibly plundered and carried off; another in malicious imposture, as when they are fraudulently intercepted; a third in the more hidden craft which takes possession of them with a semblance of justice; and a fourth in sycophancy, which wiles them away under the pretence of donation. But not to dwell too long in enumerating the different classes, we know that all the arts by which we obtain possession of the goods and money of our neighbours, for sincere affection substituting an eagerness to deceive or injure them in any way, are to be regarded as thefts. Though they may be obtained by an action at law, a different decision is given by God. He sees the long train of deception by which the man of craft begins to lay nets for his more simple neighbour, until he entangles him in its meshes - sees the harsh and cruel laws by which the more powerful oppresses and crushes the feeble - sees the enticements by which the more wily baits the hook for the less wary, though all these escape the judgement of man, and no cognisance is taken of them. Nor is the violation of this commandment confined to money, or merchandise, or lands, but extends to every kind of right; for we defraud our neighbours to their hurt if we decline any of the duties which we are bound to perform towards them. If an agent or an indolent steward wastes the substance of his employer, or does not give due heed to the management of his property; if he unjustly squanders or luxuriously wastes the means entrusted to him; if a servant holds his master in derision, divulges his secrets, or in any way is treacherous to his life or his goods; if, on the other hand, a master cruelly torments his household, he is guilty of theft before God; since every one who, in the exercise of his calling, performs not what he owes to others, keeps back, or makes away with what does not belong to him.

46. This commandment, therefore, we shall duly obey, if, contented with our own lot, we study to acquire nothing but honest and lawful gain; if we long not to grow rich by injustice, nor to plunder our neighbour of his goods, that our own may thereby be increased; if we hasten not to heap up wealth cruelly wrung from the blood of others; if we do not, by means lawful and unlawful, with excessive eagerness scrape together whatever may glut our avarice or meet our prodigality. On the other hand, let it be our constant aim faithfully to lend our counsel and aid to all so as to assist them in retaining their property; or if we have to do with the perfidious or crafty, let us rather be prepared to yield somewhat of our right than to contend with them. And not only so, but let us contribute to the relief of those whom we see under the pressure of difficulties, assisting their want

out of our abundance. Lastly, let each of us consider how far he is bound in duty to others, and in good faith pay what we owe. In the same way, let the people pay all due honour to their rulers, submit patiently to their authority, obey their laws and orders, and decline nothing which they can bear without sacrificing the favour of God. Let rulers, again, take due charge of their people, preserve the public peace, protect the good, curb the bad, and conduct themselves throughout as those who must render an account of their office to God, the Judge of all. Let the ministers of churches faithfully give heed to the ministry of the word, and not corrupt the doctrine of salvation, but deliver it purely and sincerely to the people of God. Let them teach not merely by doctrine, but by example; in short, let them act the part of good shepherds towards their flocks. Let the people, in their turn, receive them as the messengers and apostles of God, render them the honour which their Supreme Master has bestowed on them, and supply them with such things as are necessary for their livelihood. Let parents be careful to bring up, guide, and teach their children as a trust committed to them by God. Let them not exasperate or alienate them by cruelty, but cherish and embrace them with the levity and indulgence which becomes their character. The regard due to parents from their children has already been adverted to. Let the young respect those advanced in years as the Lord has been pleased to make that age honourable. Let the aged also, by their prudence and their experience (in which they are far superior), guide the feebleness of youth, not assailing them with harsh and clamorous invectives but tempering strictness with ease and affability. Let servants show themselves diligent and respectful in obeying their masters, and this not with eye-service, but from the heart, as the servants of God. Let masters also not be stern and disobliging to their servants, nor harass them with excessive asperity, nor treat them with insult, but rather let them acknowledge them as brethren and fellow-servants of our heavenly Master, whom, therefore, they are bound to treat with mutual love and kindness. Let every one, I say, thus consider what in his own place and order he owes to his neighbours, and pay what he owes. Moreover, we must always have a reference to the Lawgiver, and so remember that the law requiring us to promote and defend the interest and convenience of our fellow-men, applies equally to our minds and our hands.

Ninth Commandment.

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

47. The purport of the commandment is, since God, who is truth, abhors falsehood, we must cultivate unfeigned truth towards each other. The sum, therefore, will be, that we must not by calumnies and false accusations injure our neighbour’s name, or by falsehood impair his fortunes; in fine, that we must not injure any one from petulance, or a love of evil-speaking. To this prohibition corresponds the command, that we must faithfully assist every one, as far as in us lies, in asserting the truth, for the maintenance of his good name and his estate. The Lord seems to have intended to explain the commandment in these words: “Thou shalt not raise a false report: put not thine hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness.” “Keep thee far from a false matter” (Exodus 23:1, Exodus 23:7). In another passage, he not only prohibits that species of falsehood which consists in acting the part of tale-bearers among the people, but says, “Neither shalt thou stand against the blood of thy neighbour” (Leviticus 19:16). Both transgressions are distinctly prohibited. Indeed, there can be no doubt, that as in the previous commandment he prohibited cruelty unchastity, and avarice, so here he prohibits falsehood, which consists of the two parts to which we have adverted. By malignant or vicious detraction, we sin against our

neighbour's good name: by lying, sometimes even by casting a slur upon him, we injure him in his estate. It makes no difference whether you suppose that formal and judicial testimony is here intended, or the ordinary testimony which is given in private conversation. For we must always recur to the consideration, that for each kind of transgression one species is set forth by way of example, that to it the others may be referred, and that the species chiefly selected, is that in which the turpitude of the transgression is most apparent. It seems proper, however, to extend it more generally to calumny and sinister insinuations by which our neighbours are unjustly aggrieved. For falsehood in a court of justice is always accompanied with perjury. But against perjury, in so far as it profanes and violates the name of God, there is a sufficient provision in the third commandment. Hence the legitimate observance of this precept consists in employing the tongue in the maintenance of truth, so as to promote both the good name and the prosperity of our neighbour. The equity of this is perfectly clear. For if a good name is more precious than riches, a man, in being robbed of his good name, is no less injured than if he were robbed of his goods; while, in the latter case, false testimony is sometimes not less injurious than rapine committed by the hand.

48. And yet it is strange, with what supine security men everywhere sin in this respect. Indeed, very few are found who do not notoriously labour under this disease: such is the envenomed delight we take both in prying into and exposing our neighbour's faults. Let us not imagine it is a sufficient excuse to say that on many occasions our statements are not false. He who forbids us to defame our neighbour's reputation by falsehood, desires us to keep it untarnished in so far as truth will permit. Though the commandment is only directed against falsehood, it intimates that the preservation of our neighbour's good name is recommended. It ought to be a sufficient inducement to us to guard our neighbour's good name, that God takes an interest in it. Wherefore, evil-speaking in general is undoubtedly condemned. Moreover, by evil-speaking, we understand not the rebuke which is administered with a view of correcting; not accusation or judicial decision, by which evil is sought to be remedied; not public censure, which tends to strike terror into other offenders; not the disclosure made to those whose safety depends on being forewarned, lest unawares they should be brought into danger, but the odious crimination which springs from a malicious and petulant love of slander. Nay, the commandment extends so far as to include that scurrilous affected urbanity, instinct with invective, by which the failings of others, under an appearance of sportiveness, are bitterly assailed, as some are wont to do, who court the praise of wit, though it should call forth a blush, or inflict a bitter pang. By petulance of this description, our brethren are sometimes grievously wounded. But if we turn our eye to the Lawgiver, whose just authority extends over the ears and the mind, as well as the tongue, we cannot fail to perceive that eagerness to listen to slander, and an unbecoming proneness to censorious judgements are here forbidden. It were absurd to suppose that God hates the disease of evil-speaking in the tongue, and yet disapproves not of its malignity in the mind. Wherefore, if the true fear and love of God dwell in us, we must endeavour, as far as is lawful and expedient, and as far as charity admits, neither to listen nor give utterance to bitter and acrimonious charges, nor rashly entertain sinister suspicions. As just interpreters of the words and the actions of other men, let us candidly maintain the honour due to them by our judgement, our ear, and our tongue.

Tenth Commandment.

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbour's.

49. The purport is: Since the Lord would have the whole soul pervaded with love, any feeling of an adverse nature must be banished from our minds. The sum, therefore, will be, that no thought be permitted to insinuate itself into our minds, and inhale them with a noxious concupiscence tending to our neighbour's loss. To this corresponds the contrary precept, that every thing which we conceive, deliberate, will, or design, be conjoined with the good and advantage of our neighbour. But here it seems we are met with a great and perplexing difficulty. For if it was correctly said above, that under the words adultery and theft, lust and an intention to injure and deceive are prohibited, it may seem superfluous afterwards to employ a separate commandment to prohibit a covetous desire of our neighbour's goods. The difficulty will easily be removed by distinguishing between design and covetousness. Design, such as we have spoken of in the previous commandments, is a deliberate consent of the will, after passion has taken possession of the mind. Covetousness may exist without such deliberation and assent, when the mind is only stimulated and tickled by vain and perverse objects. As, therefore, the Lord previously ordered that charity should regulate our wishes, studies, and actions, so he now orders us to regulate the thoughts of the mind in the same way, that none of them may be depraved and distorted, so as to give the mind a contrary bent. Having forbidden us to turn and incline our mind to wrath, hatred, adultery, theft, and falsehood, he now forbids us to give our thoughts the same direction.

50. Nor is such rectitude demanded without reason. For who can deny the propriety of occupying all the powers of the mind with charity? If it ceases to have charity for its aim, who can question that it is diseased? How comes it that so many desires of a nature hurtful to your brother enter your mind, but just because, disregarding him, you think only of yourself? Were your mind wholly imbued with charity, no portion of it would remain for the entrance of such thoughts. In so far, therefore, as the mind is devoid of charity, it must be under the influence of concupiscence. Some one will object that those fancies which casually rise up in the mind, and forthwith vanish away, cannot properly be condemned as concupiscences, which have their seat in the heart. I answer, That the question here relates to a description of fancies which while they present themselves to our thoughts, at the same time impress and stimulate the mind with cupidity, since the mind never thinks of making some choice, but the heart is excited and tends towards it. God therefore commands a strong and ardent affection, an affection not to be impeded by any portion, however minute, of concupiscence. He requires a mind so admirably arranged as not to be prompted in the slightest degree contrary to the law of love. Lest you should imagine that this view is not supported by any grave authority, I may mention that it was first suggested to me by Augustine. But although it was the intention of God to prohibit every kind of perverse desire, he, by way of example, sets before us those objects which are generally regarded as most attractive: thus leaving no room for cupidity of any kind, by the interdiction of those things in which it especially delights and loves to revel.

Such, then, is the Second Table of the Law, in which we are sufficiently instructed in the duties which we owe to man for the sake of God, on a consideration of whose nature the whole system of love is founded. It were vain, therefore, to inculcate the various duties taught in this table, without placing your instructions on the fear and reverence to God as their proper foundation. I need not tell the considerate reader, that those who make two precepts out of the prohibition of

covetousness, perversely split one thing into two. There is nothing in the repetition of the words, “Thou shalt not covet.” The “house” being first put down, its different parts are afterwards enumerated, beginning with the “wife;” and hence it is clear, that the whole ought to be read consecutively, as is properly done by the Jews. The sum of the whole commandment, therefore, is, that whatever each individual possesses remain entire and secure, not only from injury, or the wish to injure, but also from the slightest feeling of covetousness which can spring up in the mind.

51. It will not now be difficult to ascertain the general end contemplated by the whole Law, viz., the fulfilment of righteousness, that man may form his life on the model of the divine purity. For therein God has so delineated his own character, that any one exhibiting in action what is commanded, would in some measure exhibit a living image of God. Wherefore Moses, when he wished to fix a summary of the whole in the memory of the Israelites, thus addressed them, “And now, Israel, what does the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, to keep the commandments of the Lord and his statutes which I command thee this day for thy good?” (Deuteronomy 10:12, Deuteronomy 10:13). And he ceased not to reiterate the same thing, whenever he had occasion to mention the end of the Law. To this the doctrine of the Law pays so much regard, that it connects man, by holiness of life, with his God; and, as Moses elsewhere expresses it (Deuteronomy 6:5; Deuteronomy 11:13), and makes him cleave to him. Moreover, this holiness of life is comprehended under the two heads above mentioned. “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength, and thy neighbour as thyself”. First, our mind must be completely filled with love to God, and then this love must forthwith flow out toward our neighbour. This the Apostle shows when he says, “The end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned” (1 Timothy 1:5). You see that conscience and faith unfeigned are placed at the head, in other words, true piety; and that from this charity is derived. It is a mistake then to suppose, that merely the rudiments and first principles of righteousness are delivered in the Law, to form, as it were, a kind of introduction to good works, and not to guide to the perfect performance of them. For complete perfection, nothing more can be required than is expressed in these passages of Moses and Paul. How far, pray, would he wish to go, who is not satisfied with the instruction which directs man to the fear of God, to spiritual worship, practical obedience; in fine, purity of conscience, faith unfeigned, and charity? This confirms that interpretation of the Law which searches out, and finds in its precepts, all the duties of piety and charity. Those who merely search for dry and meagre elements, as if it taught the will of God only by halves, by no means understand its end, the Apostle being witness.

52. As, in giving a summary of the Law, Christ and the Apostles sometimes omit the First Table, very many fall into the mistake of supposing that their words apply to both tables. In Matthew, Christ calls “judgement, mercy, and faith,” the “weightier matters of the Law.” I think it clear, that by faith is here meant veracity towards men. But in order to extend the words to the whole Law, some take it for piety towards God. This is surely to no purpose. For Christ is speaking of those works by which a man ought to approve himself as just. If we attend to this, we will cease to wonder why, elsewhere, when asked by the young man, “What good thing shall I do, that 1 may have eternal life?” he simply answers, that he must keep the commandments, “Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honour thy

father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matthew 19:16, Matthew 19:18). For the obedience of the First Table consisted almost entirely either in the internal affection of the heart, or in ceremonies. The affection of the heart was not visible, and hypocrites were diligent in the observance of ceremonies; but the works of charity were of such a nature as to be a solid attestation of righteousness. The same thing occurs so frequently in the Prophets, that it must be familiar to every one who has any tolerable acquaintance with them. For, almost on every occasion, when they exhort men to repentance, omitting the First Table, they insist on faith, judgement, mercy, and equity. Nor do they, in this way, omit the fear of God. They only require a serious proof of it from its signs. It is well known, indeed, that when they treat of the Law, they generally insist on the Second Table, because therein the cultivation of righteousness and integrity is best manifested. There is no occasion to quote passages. Every one can easily for himself perceive the truth of my observation.

53. Is it then true, you will ask, that it is a more complete summary of righteousness to live innocently with men, than piously towards God? By no means; but because no man, as a matter of course, observes charity in all respects, unless he seriously fear God, such observance is a proof of piety also. To this we may add, that the Lord, well knowing that none of our good deeds can reach him (as the Psalmist declares, Psalms 16:2), does not demand from us duties towards himself, but exercises us in good works towards our neighbour. Hence the Apostle, not without cause, makes the whole perfection of the saints to consist in charity (Ephesians 3:19; Colossians 3:14). And in another passage, he not improperly calls it the "fulfilling of the law," adding, that "he that loveth another has fulfilled the law" (Romans 13:8). And again, "All the law is fulfilled in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Galatians 5:14). For this is the very thing which Christ himself teaches when he says, "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets" (Matthew 7:12). It is certain that, in the law and the prophets, faith, and whatever pertains to the due worship of God, holds the first place, and that to this charity is made subordinate; but our Lord means, that in the Law the observance of justice and equity towards men is prescribed as the means which we are to employ in testifying a pious fear of God, if we truly possess it.

54. Let us therefore hold, that our life will be framed in best accordance with the will of God, and the requirements of his Law, when it is, in every respect, most advantageous to our brethren. But in the whole Law, there is not one syllable which lays down a rule as to what man is to do or avoid for the advantage of his own carnal nature. And, indeed, since men are naturally prone to excessive self-love, which they always retain, how great soever their departure from the truth may be, there was no need of a law to inflame a love already existing in excess. Hence it is perfectly plain, that the observance of the Commandments consists not in the love of ourselves, but in the love of God and our neighbour; and that he leads the best and holiest life who as little as may be studies and lives for himself; and that none lives worse and more unrighteously than he who studies and lives only for himself, and seeks and thinks only of his own. Nay, the better to express how strongly we should be inclined to love our neighbour, the Lord has made self-love as it were the standard, there being no feeling in our nature of greater strength and vehemence. The force of the expression ought to be carefully weighed. For he does not (as some sophists have stupidly dreamed) assign the first place to self-love, and the second to charity. He rather transfers to others the love which we naturally feel for ourselves. Hence the Apostle declares, that charity "seeketh

not her own" (1 Corinthians 13:5). Nor is the argument worth a straw, That the thing regulated must always be inferior to the rule. The Lord did not make self-love the rule, as if love towards others was subordinate to it; but whereas, through natural gravity, the feeling of love usually rests on ourselves, he shows that it ought to diffuse itself in another direction - that we should be prepared to do good to our neighbour with no less alacrity, ardour, and solicitude, than to ourselves.

55. Our Saviour having shown, in the parable of the Samaritan (Luke 10:36), that the term neighbour comprehends the most remote stranger, there is no reason for limiting the precept of love to our own connections. I deny not that the closer the relation the more frequent our offices of kindness should be. For the condition of humanity requires that there be more duties in common between those who are more nearly connected by the ties of relationship, or friendship, or neighbourhood. And this is done without any offence to God, by whose providence we are in a manner impelled to do it. But I say that the whole human race, without exception, are to be embraced with one feeling of charity: that here there is no distinction of Greek or Barbarian, worthy or unworthy, friend or foe, since all are to be viewed not in themselves, but in God. If we turn aside from this view, there is no wonder that we entangle ourselves in error. Wherefore, if we would hold the true course in love, our first step must be to turn our eyes not to man, the sight of whom might oftener produce hatred than love, but to God, who requires that the love which we bear to him be diffused among all mankind, so that our fundamental principle must ever be, Let a man be what he may, he is still to be loved, because God is loved.

56. Wherefore, nothing could be more pestilential than the ignorance or wickedness of the Schoolmen in converting the precepts respecting revenge and the love of enemies (precepts which had formerly been delivered to all the Jews, and were then delivered universally to all Christians) into counsels which it was free to obey or disobey, confining the necessary observance of them to the monks, who were made more righteous than ordinary Christians, by the simple circumstance of voluntarily binding themselves to obey counsels. The reason they assign for not receiving them as laws is, that they seem too heavy and burdensome, especially to Christians, who are under the law of grace. Have they, indeed, the hardihood to remodel the eternal law of God concerning the love of our neighbour? Is there a page of the Law in which any such distinction exists; or rather do we not meet in every page with commands which, in the strictest terms, require us to love our enemies? What is meant by commanding us to feed our enemy if he is hungry, to bring back his ox or his ass if we meet it going astray, or help it up if we see it lying under its burden? (Proverbs 25:21; Exodus 23:4). Shall we show kindness to cattle for man's sake, and have no feeling of good will to himself? What? Is not the word of the Lord eternally true: "Vengeance is mine, I will repay?" (Deuteronomy 32:35). This is elsewhere more explicitly stated: "Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people" (Leviticus 19:18). Let them either erase these passages from the Law, or let them acknowledge the Lord as a Lawgiver, not falsely feign him to be merely a counsellor.

57. And what, pray, is meant by the following passage, which they have dared to insult with this absurd gloss? "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 5:44, Matthew 5:45). Who does not here concur in the reasoning of Chrysostom (lib. de Compunctione Cordis, et ad Romans 7:1-25), that the nature of

the motive makes it plain that these are not exhortations, but precepts? For what is left to us if we are excluded from the number of the children of God? According to the Schoolmen, monks alone will be the children of our Father in heaven - monks alone will dare to invoke God as their Father. And in the meantime, how will it fare with the Church? By the same rule, she will be confined to heathens and publicans. For our Saviour says, “If ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?” It will truly be well with us if we are left only the name of Christians, while we are deprived of the inheritance of the kingdom of heaven! Nor is the argument of Augustine less forcible: “When the Lord forbids adultery, he forbids it in regard to the wife of a foe not less than the wife of a friend; when he forbids theft, he does not allow stealing of any description, whether from a friend or an enemy” (August. Lib. de Doctr. Christ). Now, these two commandments, “Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not commit adultery,” Paul brings under the rule of love; nay, he says that they are briefly comprehended in this saying, “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Romans 13:9). Therefore, Paul must either be a false interpreter of the Law, or we must necessarily conclude, that under this precept we are bound to love our enemies just as our friends. Those, then, show themselves to be in truth the children of Satan who thus licentiously shake off a yoke common to the children of God. It may be doubted whether, in promulgating this dogma, they have displayed greater stupidity or impudence. There is no ancient writer who does not hold it as certain that these are pure precepts. It was not even doubted in the age of Gregory, as is plain from his decided assertion; for he holds it to be incontrovertible that they are precepts. And how stupidly they argue! The burden, say they, were too difficult for Christians to hear! As if any thing could be imagined more difficult than to love the Lord with all the heart, and soul, and strength. Compared with this Law, there is none which may not seem easy, whether it be to love our enemy, or to banish every feeling of revenge from our minds. To our weakness, indeed, every thing, even to the minutest tittle of the Law, is arduous and difficult. In the Lord we have strength. It is his to give what he orders, and to order what he wills. That Christians are under the law of grace, means not that they are to wander unrestrained without law, but that they are engrafted into Christ, by whose grace they are freed from the curse of the Law, and by whose Spirit they have the Law written in their hearts. This grace Paul has termed, but not in the proper sense of the term, a law, alluding to the Law of God, with which he was contrasting it. The Schoolmen, laying hold of the term Law, make it the ground-work of their vain speculations.

58. The same must be said of their application of the term, venial sin, both to the hidden impiety which violates the First Table, and the direct transgression of the last commandment of the Second Table. They define venial sin to be, desire unaccompanied with deliberate assent, and not remaining long in the heart. But I maintain that it cannot even enter the heart unless through a want of those things which are required in the Law. We are forbidden to have strange gods. When the mind, under the influence of distrust, looks elsewhere or is seized with some sudden desire to transfer its blessedness to some other quarter, whence are these movements, however evanescent, but just because there is some empty corner in the soul to receive such temptations? And, not to lengthen out the discussion, there is a precept to love God with the whole heart, and mind, and soul; and, therefore, if all the powers of the soul are not directed to the love of God, there is a departure from the obedience of the Law; because those internal enemies which rise up against the dominion of God, and countermand his edicts prove that his throne is not well established in our consciences. It has been shown that the last commandment goes to this extent. Has some undue longing sprung up in our mind? Then we are chargeable with covetousness, and

stand convicted as transgressors of the Law. For the Law forbids us not only to meditate and plan our neighbour's loss, but to be stimulated and inflamed with covetousness. But every transgression of the Law lays us under the curse, and therefore even the slightest desires cannot be exempted from the fatal sentence. "In weighing our sins," says Augustine, "let us not use a deceitful balance, weighing at our own discretion what we will, and how we will, calling this heavy and that light: but let us use the divine balance of the Holy Scriptures, as taken from the treasury of the Lord, and by it weigh every offence, nay, not weigh, but rather recognise what has been already weighed by the Lord" (August. De Bapt. cont. Donatist. Lib. 2 chap. 6). And what saith the Scripture? Certainly when Paul says, that "the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23), he shows that he knew nothing of this vile distinction. As we are but too prone to hypocrisy, there was very little occasion for this sop to soothe our torpid consciences.

59. I wish they would consider what our Saviour meant when he said, "Whosoever shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:19). Are they not of this number when they presume to extenuate the transgression of the Law, as if it were unworthy of death? The proper course had been to consider not simply what is commanded, but who it is that commands, because every least transgression of his Law derogates from his authority. Do they count it a small matter to insult the majesty of God in any one respect? Again, since God has explained his will in the Law, every thing contrary to the Law is displeasing to him. Will they feign that the wrath of God is so disarmed that the punishment of death will not forthwith follow upon it? He has declared plainly (if they could be induced to listen to his voice, instead of darkening his clear truth by their insipid subtleties), "The soul that sinneth it shall die" (Ezekiel 18:20). Again, in the passage lately quoted, "The wages of sin is death." What these men acknowledge to be sin, because they are unable to deny it, they contend is not mortal. Having already indulged this madness too long, let them learn to repent; or, if they persist in their infatuation, taking no further notice of them, let the children of God remember that all sin is mortal, because it is rebellion against the will of God, and necessarily provokes his anger; and because it is a violation of the Law, against every violation of which, without exception, the judgement of God has been pronounced. The faults of the saints are indeed venial, not, however, in their own nature, but because, through the mercy of God, they obtain pardon.

08.02.09. Chapter 09

Chapter 9. Christ, though known to the Jews under the law, yet only manifested under the gospel.

There are three principal heads in this chapter.

I. Preparatory to a consideration of the knowledge of Christ, and the benefits procured by him; the 1st and 2d sections are occupied with the dispensation of this knowledge, which, after the manifestation of Christ in the flesh, was more clearly revealed than under the Law.

II. A refutation of the profane dream of Servetus, that the promises are entirely abrogated, sec. 3. Likewise, a refutation of those who do not properly compare the Law with the Gospel, sec. 4.

III. A necessary and brief exposition of the ministry of John Baptist, which occupies an intermediate place between the law and the Gospel.

Sections

1. The holy fathers under the Law saw the day of Christ, though obscurely. He is more fully revealed to us under the Gospel. A reason for this, confirmed by the testimony of Christ and his Apostles.

2. The term Gospel, used in its most extensive sense, comprehends the attestations of mercy which God gave to the fathers. Properly, however, it means the promulgation of grace exhibited in the God-man Jesus Christ.

3. The notion of Servetus, that the promises are entirely abolished, refuted. Why we must still trust to the promises of God. Another reason. Solution of a difficulty.

4. Refutation of those who do not properly compare the Law and the Gospel. Answer to certain questions here occurring. The Law and the Gospel briefly compared.

5. Third part of the chapter. Of the ministry of John the Baptist.

1. Since God was pleased (and not in vain) to testify in ancient times by means of expiations and sacrifices that he was a Father, and to set apart for himself a chosen people, he was doubtless known even then in the same character in which he is now fully revealed to us. Accordingly Malachi, having enjoined the Jews to attend to the Law of Moses (because after his death there was to be an interruption of the prophetical office), immediately after declares that the Sun of righteousness should arise (Malachi 4:2); thus intimating, that though the Law had the effect of keeping the pious in expectation of the coming Messiah, there was ground to hope for much greater light on his advent. For this reason, Peter, speaking of the ancient prophets, says, “Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us, they did minister the things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven” (1 Peter 1:12). Not that the prophetical doctrine was useless to the ancient people, or unavailing to the prophets themselves, but that they did not obtain possession of the

treasure which God has transmitted to US by their hands. The grace of which they testified is now set familiarly before our eyes. They had only a slight foretaste; to us is given a fuller fruition. Our Saviour, accordingly, while he declares that Moses testified of him, extols the superior measure of grace bestowed upon us (John 5:46). Addressing his disciples, he says, “Blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them, and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them” (Matthew 13:16; Luke 10:23). It is no small commendation of the gospel revelation, that God has preferred us to holy men of old, so much distinguished for piety. There is nothing in this view inconsistent with another passage, in which our Saviour says, “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it and was glad” (John 8:56). For though the event being remote, his view of it was obscure, he had full assurance that it would one day be accomplished; and hence the joy which the holy patriarch experienced even to his death. Nor does John Baptist, when he says, “No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he has declared him” (John 1:18), exclude the pious who had previously died from a participation in the knowledge and light which are manifested in the person of Christ; but comparing their condition with ours, he intimates that the mysteries which they only beheld dimly under shadows are made clear to us; as is well explained by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, in these words, “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken unto us by his Son” (Hebrews 1:1, Hebrews 1:2). Hence, although this only begotten Son, who is now to us the brightness of his Father’s glory and the express image of his person, was formerly made known to the Jews, as we have elsewhere shown from Paul, that he was the Deliverer under the old dispensation; it is nevertheless true, as Paul himself elsewhere declares, that “God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, has shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Corinthians 4:6); because, when he appeared in this his image, he in a manner made himself visible, his previous appearance having been shadowy and obscure. More shameful and more detestable, therefore, is the ingratitude of those who walk blindfold in this meridian light. Accordingly, Paul says that “the god of this world has blinded their minds, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ should shine unto them” (2 Corinthians 4:4).

2. By the Gospel, I understand the clear manifestation of the mystery of Christ. I confess, indeed, that inasmuch as the term Gospel is applied by Paul to the doctrine of faith (2 Timothy 4:10), it includes all the promises by which God reconciles men to himself, and which occur throughout the Law. For Paul there opposes faith to those terrors which vex and torment the conscience when salvation is sought by means of works. Hence it follows that Gospel, taken in a large sense, comprehends the evidences of mercy and paternal favour which God bestowed on the Patriarchs. Still, by way of excellence, it is applied to the promulgation of the grace manifested in Christ. This is not only founded on general use, but has the sanction of our Saviour and his Apostles. Hence it is described as one of his peculiar characteristics, that he preached the Gospel of the kingdom (Matthew 4:23; Matthew 9:35; Mark 1:14). Mark, in his preface to the Gospel, calls it “The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.” There is no use of collecting passages to prove what is already perfectly known. Christ at his advent “brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel” (2 Timothy 1:10). Paul does not mean by these words that the Fathers were plunged in the darkness of death before the Son of God became incarnate; but he claims for the Gospel the

honourable distinction of being a new and extraordinary kind of embassy, by which God fulfilled what he had promised, these promises being realised in the person of the Son. For though believers have at all times experienced the truth of Paul's declaration, that "all the promises of God in him are yea and amen," inasmuch as these promises were sealed upon their hearts; yet because he has in his flesh completed all the parts of our salvation, this vivid manifestation of realities was justly entitled to this new and special distinction. Accordingly, Christ says, "Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man." For though he seems to allude to the ladder which the Patriarch Jacob saw in vision, he commends the excellence of his advent in this, that it opened the gate of heaven, and gave us familiar access to it.

3. Here we must guard against the diabolical imagination of Servetus, who, from a wish, or at least the pretence of a wish, to extol the greatness of Christ, abolishes the promises entirely, as if they had come to an end at the same time with the Law. He pretends, that by the faith of the Gospel all the promises have been fulfilled; as if there was no distinction between us and Christ. I lately observed that Christ had not left any part of our salvation incomplete; but from this it is erroneously inferred, that we are now put in possession of all the blessings purchased by him; thereby implying, that Paul was incorrect in saying, "We are saved by hope" (Romans 3:24). I admit, indeed, that by believing in Christ we pass from death unto life; but we must at the same time remember the words of John, that though we know we are "the sons of God," "it does not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2). Therefore, although Christ offers us in the Gospel a present fulness of spiritual blessings, fruition remains in the keeping of hope, until we are divested of corruptible flesh, and transformed into the glory of him who has gone before us. Meanwhile, in leaning on the promises, we obey the command of the Holy Spirit, whose authority ought to have weight enough with us to silence all the barkings of that impure dog. We have it on the testimony of Paul, that "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come" (1 Timothy 4:8); for which reason, he glories in being "an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 1:1). And he elsewhere reminds us, that we have the same promises which were given to the saints in ancient time (2 Corinthians 7:1). In fine, he makes the sum of our felicity consist in being sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. Indeed we have no enjoyment of Christ, unless by embracing him as clothed with his own promises. Hence it is that he indeed dwells in our hearts and yet we are as pilgrims in regard to him, because "we walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Corinthians 5:6, 2 Corinthians 5:7). There is no inconsistency in the two things, viz., that in Christ we possess every thing pertaining to the perfection of the heavenly life, and yet that faith is only a vision "of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1). Only there is this difference to be observed in the nature or quality of the promises, that the Gospel points with the finger to what the Law shadowed under types.

4. Hence, also, we see the error of those who, in comparing the Law with the Gospel, represent it merely as a comparison between the merit of works, and the gratuitous imputation of righteousness. The contrast thus made is by no means to be rejected, because, by the term Law, Paul frequently understands that rule of holy living in which God exacts what is his due, giving no hope of life unless we obey in every respect; and, on the other hand, denouncing a curse for the slightest failure. This Paul does when showing that we are freely accepted of God, and accounted

righteous by being pardoned, because that obedience of the Law to which the reward is promised is nowhere to be found. Hence he appropriately represents the righteousness of the Law and the Gospel as opposed to each other. But the Gospel has not succeeded the whole Law in such a sense as to introduce a different method of salvation. It rather confirms the Law, and proves that every thing which it promised is fulfilled. What was shadow, it has made substance. When Christ says that the Law and the Prophets were until John, he does not consign the fathers to the curse, which, as the slaves of the Law, they could not escape. He intimates that they were only imbued with the rudiments, and remained far beneath the height of the Gospel doctrine. Accordingly Paul, after calling the Gospel “the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth,” shortly after adds, that it was “witnessed by the Law and the Prophets” (Romans 1:16; Romans 3:21). And in the end of the same Epistle, though he describes “the preaching of Jesus Christ” as “the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began,” he modifies the expression by adding, that it is “now made manifest” “by the scriptures of the prophets” (Romans 16:25, Romans 16:26). Hence we infer, that when the whole Law is spoken of, the Gospel differs from it only in respect of clearness of manifestation. Still, on account of the inestimable riches of grace set before us in Christ, there is good reason for saying, that by his advent the kingdom of heaven was erected on the earth (Matthew 12:28).

5. John stands between the Law and the Gospel, holding an intermediate office allied to both. For though he gave a summary of the Gospel when he pronounced Christ to be “the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world,” yet, inasmuch as he did not unfold the incomparable power and glory which shone forth in his resurrection, Christ says that he was not equal to the Apostles. For this is the meaning of the words: “Among them that are born of woman, there has not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he” (Matthew 11:28). He is not there commending the persons of men, but after preferring John to all the Prophets, he gives the first place to the preaching of the Gospel, which is elsewhere designated by the kingdom of heaven. When John himself, in answer to the Jews, says that he is only “a voice” (John 1:23), as if he were inferior to the Prophets it is not in pretended humility but he means to teach that the proper embassy was not entrusted to him, that he only performed the office of a messenger, as had been foretold by Malachi, “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophets before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord” (Malachi 4:5). And, indeed, during the whole course of his ministry, he did nothing more than prepare disciples for Christ. He even proves from Isaiah that this was the office to which he was divinely appointed. In this sense, he is said by Christ to have been “a burning and a shining light” (John 5:35), because full day had not yet appeared. And yet this does not prevent us from classing him among the preachers of the gospel, since he used the same baptism which was afterwards committed to the Apostles. Still, however, he only began that which had freer course under the Apostles, after Christ was taken up into the heavenly glory.

08.02.10. Chapter 10

Chapter 10. The resemblance between the Old Testament and the New. This chapter consists of four parts.

I. The sum, utility, and necessity of this discussion, sec. 1.

II. A proof that, generally speaking, the old and new dispensations are in reality one, although differently administered. Three points in which the two dispensations entirely agree, sec. 2-4.

III. The Old Testament, as well as the New, had regard to the hope of immortality and a future life, whence two other resemblances or points of agreement follow, viz., that both were established by the free mercy of God, and confirmed by the intercession of Christ. This proved by many arguments, passages of Scripture, and examples, see. 5-23.

IV. Conclusion of the whole chapter, where, for fuller confirmation, certain passages of Scripture are produced. Refutation of the cavils of the Sadducees and other Jews.

Sections

1. Introduction, showing the necessity of proving the similarity of both dispensations in opposition to Servetus and the Anabaptists.

2. This similarity in general. Both covenants truly one, though differently administered. Three things in which they entirely agree.

3. First general similarity, or agreement, viz., that the Old Testament, equally with the New, extended its promises beyond the present life, and held out a sure hope of immortality. Reason for this resemblance. Objection answered.

4. The other two points of resemblance, viz., that both covenants were established in the mercy of God, and confirmed by the mediation of Christ.

5. The first of these points of resemblance being the foundation of the other two, a lengthened proof is given of it. The first argument taken from a passage, in which Paul, showing that the sacraments of both dispensations had the same meaning, proves that the condition of the ancient church was similar to ours.

6. An objection from John 6:49, viz., that the Israelites ate manna in the wilderness, and are dead, whereas Christians eat the flesh of Christ, and die not. Answer reconciling this passage of the Evangelist with that of the Apostle.

7. Another proof from the Law and the Prophets, viz., the power of the divine word in quickening souls before Christ was manifested. Hence the believing Jews were raised to the hope of eternal life.

8. Third proof from the form of the covenant, which shows that it was in reality one both before and after the manifestation of Christ in the flesh.

9. Confirmation of the former proof from the clear terms in which the form is expressed. Another confirmation derived from the former and from the nature of God.

10. Fourth proof from examples. Adam, Abel, and Noah, when tried with various temptations, neglecting the present, aspired with living faith and invincible hope to a better life. They, therefore, had the same aim as believers under the Gospel.

11. Continuation of the fourth proof from the example of Abraham, whose call and whole course of life shows that he ardently aspired to eternal felicity. Objection disposed of.

12. Continuation of the fourth proof from the examples of Isaac and Jacob.

13. Conclusion of the fourth proof. Adam, Abel, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and others under the Law, looked for the fulfilment of the divine promises not on the earth, but in heaven. Hence they termed this life an earthly pilgrimage, and desired to be buried in the land of Canaan, which was a figure of eternal happiness.

14. A fifth proof from Jacob’s earnestness to obtain the birth-right. This shows a prevailing desire of future life. This perceived in some degree by Balaam.

15. A sixth proof from David, who expects such great things from the Lord, and yet declares the present life to be mere vanity.

16. A seventh proof also from David. His descriptions of the happiness of believers could only be realised in a future state.

17. An eighth proof from the common feeling and confession of all the pious who sought by faith and hope to obtain in heaven what they did not see in the present shadowy life.

18. A continuation and confirmation of the former proof from the exultation of the righteous, even amid the destruction of the world.

19. A ninth proof from Job, who spoke most distinctly of this hope. Two objections disposed of.

20. A tenth proof from the later Prophets, who taught that the happiness of the righteous was placed beyond the limits of the present life.

21. This clearly established by Ezekiel’s vision of the dry bones, and a passage in Isaiah 22:1-25. Last proof from certain passages in the Prophets, which clearly show the future immortality of the righteous in the kingdom of heaven.

23. Conclusion of the whole discussion concerning the similarity of both dispensations. For fuller confirmation, four passages of Scripture produced. Refutation of the error of the Sadducees and other Jews, who denied eternal salvation and the sure hope of the Church.

1. From what has been said above, it must now be clear, that all whom, from the beginning of the world, God adopted as his peculiar people, were taken into covenant with him on the same conditions, and under the same bond of doctrine, as ourselves; but as it is of no small importance

to establish this point, I will here add it by way of appendix, and show, since the Fathers were partakers with us in the same inheritance, and hoped for a common salvation through the grace of the same Mediator, how far their condition in this respect was different from our own. For although the passages which we have collected from the Law and the Prophets for the purpose of proof, make it plain that there never was any other rule of piety and religion among the people of God; yet as many things are written on the subject of the difference between the Old and New Testaments in a manner which may perplex ordinary readers, it will be proper here to devote a special place to the better and more exact discussion of this subject. This discussion, which would have been most useful at any rate, has been rendered necessary by that monstrous miscreant, Servetus, and some madmen of the sect of the Anabaptists, who think of the people of Israel just as they would do of some herd of swine, absurdly imagining that the Lord gorged them with temporal blessings here, and gave them no hope of a blessed immortality. Let us guard pious minds against this pestilential error, while we at the same time remove all the difficulties which are wont to start up when mention is made of the difference between the Old and the New Testaments. By the way also, let us consider what resemblance and what difference there is between the covenant which the Lord made with the Israelites before the advent of Christ, and that which he has made with us now that Christ is manifested.

2. It is possible, indeed, to explain both in one word. The covenant made with all the fathers is so far from differing from ours in reality and substance, that it is altogether one and the same: still the administration differs. But because this brief summary is insufficient to give any one a full understanding of the subject, our explanation to be useful must extend to greater length. It were superfluous, however, in showing the similarity, or rather identity, of the two dispensations, again to treat of the particulars which have already been discussed, as it were unseasonable to introduce those which are still to be considered elsewhere. What we propose to insist upon here may be reduced to three heads: First, That temporal opulence and felicity was not the goal to which the Jews were invited to aspire, but that they were admitted to the hope of immortality, and that assurance of this adoption was given by immediate communications, by the Law and by the Prophets. Secondly, That the covenant by which they were reconciled to the Lord was founded on no merits of their own, but solely on the mercy of God, who called them; and, thirdly, That they both had and knew Christ the Mediator, by whom they were united to God, and made capable of receiving his promises. The second of these, as it is not yet perhaps sufficiently understood, will be fully considered in its own place (Book 3 chap. 15-18). For we will prove by many clear passages in the Prophets, that all which the Lord has ever given or promised to his people is of mere goodness and indulgence. The third also has, in various places, been not obscurely demonstrated. Even the first has not been left unnoticed.

3. As the first is most pertinent to the present subject, and is most controverted, we shall enter more fully into the consideration of it, taking care, at the same time, where any of the others requires explanations to supply it by the way, or afterwards add it in its proper place. The Apostle, indeed, removes all doubt when he says that the Gospel which God gave concerning his Son, Jesus Christ, “he had promised aforetime by his prophets in the holy Scriptures” (Romans 1:2). And again, that “the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets” (Romans 3:21). For the Gospel does not confine the hearts of men to the enjoyment of the present life, but raises them to the hope of immortality; does not fix them down to

earthly delights, but announcing that there is a treasure laid up in heaven, carries the heart thither also. For in another place he thus explains, “After that ye believed [the Gospel,] ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance unto the redemption of the purchased possession” (Ephesians 1:13, Ephesians 1:14). Again, “Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints, for the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the Gospel” (Colossians 1:4). Again, “Whereunto he called you by our Gospel to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Thessalonians 2:14). Whence also it is called the word of salvation and the power of God, with salvation to every one that believes, and the kingdom of heaven. But if the doctrine of the Gospel is spiritual, and gives access to the possession of incorruptible life, let us not suppose that those to whom it was promised and declared altogether neglected the care of the soul, and lived stupidly like cattle in the enjoyment of bodily pleasures. Let no one here quibble and say, that the promises concerning the Gospel, which are contained in the Law and the Prophets, were designed for a new people. For Paul, shortly after making that statement concerning the Gospel promised in the Law, adds, that “whatsoever things the law saith, it saith to those who are under the law.” I admit, indeed, he is there treating of a different subject, but when he said that every thing contained in the Law was directed to the Jews, he was not so oblivious as not to remember what he had said a few verses before of the Gospel promised in the Law. Most clearly, therefore, does the Apostle demonstrate that the Old Testament had special reference to the future life, when he says that the promises of the Gospel were comprehended under it.

4. In the same way we infer that the Old Testament was both established by the free mercy of God and confirmed by the intercession of Christ. For the preaching of the Gospel declares nothing more than that sinners, without any merit of their own, are justified by the paternal indulgence of God. It is wholly summed up in Christ. Who, then, will presume to represent the Jews as destitute of Christ, when we know that they were parties to the Gospel covenant, which has its only foundation in Christ? Who will presume to make them aliens to the benefit of gratuitous salvation, when we know that they were instructed in the doctrine of justification by faith? And not to dwell on a point which is clear, we have the remarkable saying of our Lord, “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it and was glad” (John 8:56). What Christ here declares of Abraham, an apostle shows to be applicable to all believers, when he says that Jesus Christ is the “same yesterday, to-day, and for ever” (Hebrews 13:8). For he is not there speaking merely of the eternal divinity of Christ, but of his power, of which believers had always full proof. Hence both the blessed Virgin and Zachariah, in their hymns, say that the salvation revealed in Christ was a fulfilment of the mercy promised “to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever” (Luke 1:55, Luke 1:72). If, by manifesting Christ, the Lord fulfilled his ancient oath, it cannot be denied that the subject of that oaths must ever have been Christ and eternal life.

5. Nay, the Apostle makes the Israelites our equals, not only in the grace of the covenant, but also in the signification of the Sacraments. For employing the example of those punishments, which the Scripture states to have been of old inflicted on the Jews, in order to deter the Corinthians from falling into similar wickedness, he begins with premising that they have no ground to claim for themselves any privilege which can exempt them from the divine vengeance which overtook the Jews, since the Lord not only visited them with the same mercies, but also distinguished his grace among them by the same symbols: as if he had said, If you think you are out of danger, because

the Baptism which you received, and the Supper of which you daily partake, have excellent promises, and if, in the meantime, despising the goodness of God, you indulge in licentiousness, know that the Jews, on whom the Lord inflicted his severest judgements, possessed similar symbols. They were baptised in passing through the sea, and in the cloud which protected them from the burning heat of the sun. It is said, that this passage was a carnal baptism, corresponding in some degree to our spiritual baptism. But if so, there would be a want of conclusiveness in the argument of the Apostle, whose object is to prevent Christians from imagining that they excelled the Jews in the matter of baptism. Besides, the cavil cannot apply to what immediately follows, viz., that they did “all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ” (1 Corinthians 10:3, 1 Corinthians 10:4).

6. To take off the force of this passage of Paul, an objection is founded on the words of our Saviour, “Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead.” “If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever” (John 6:49, John 6:51). There is no difficulty in reconciling the two passages. The Lord, as he was addressing hearers who only desired to be filled with earthly food, while they cared not for the true food of the soul, in some degree adapts his speech to their capacity, and, in particular, to meet their carnal view, draws a comparison between manna and his own body. They called upon him to prove his authority by performing some miracle, such as Moses performed in the wilderness when he obtained manna from heaven. In this manna they saw nothing but a relief of the bodily hunger from which the people were then suffering; they did not penetrate to the sublimer mystery to which Paul refers. Christ, therefore, to demonstrate that the blessing which they ought to expect from him was more excellent than the lauded one which Moses had bestowed upon their fathers, draws this comparison: If, in your opinion, it was a great and memorable miracle when the Lord, by Moses, supplied his people with heavenly food that they might be supported for a season, and not perish in the wilderness from famine; from this infer how much more excellent is the food which bestows immortality. We see why our Lord omitted to mention what was of principal virtue in the manna, and mentioned only its meanest use. Since the Jews had, as it were by way of upbraiding, cast up Moses to him as one who had relieved the necessity of the people by means of manna, he answers, that he was the minister of a much larger grace, one compared with which the bodily nourishment of the people, on which they set so high a value, ought to be held worthless. Paul, again, knowing that the Lords when he rained manna from heaven, had not merely supplied their bodies with food, but had also dispensed it as containing a spiritual mystery to typify the spiritual quickening which is obtained in Christ, does not overlook that quality which was most deserving of consideration. Wherefore it is surely and clearly proved, that the same promises of celestial and eternal life, which the Lord now gives to us, were not only communicated to the Jews, but also sealed by truly spiritual sacraments. This subject is copiously discussed by Augustine in his work against Faustus the Manichee.

7. But if my readers would rather have passages quoted from the Law and the Prophets, from which they may see, as we have already done from Christ and the Apostles, that the spiritual covenant was common also to the Fathers, I will yield to the wish, and the more willingly, because opponents will thus be more surely convinced, that henceforth there will be no room for evasion. And I will begin with a proof which, though I know it will seem futile and almost ridiculous to supercilious Anabaptists, will have very great weight with the docile and sober-minded. I take it for

granted that the word of God has such an inherent efficacy, that it quickens the souls of all whom he is pleased to favour with the communication of it. Peter's statement has ever been true, that it is an incorruptible seed, "which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Peter 1:23), as he infers from the words of Isaiah (Isaiah 40:6). Now when God, in ancient times, bound the Jews to him by this sacred bond, there cannot be a doubt that he separated them unto the hope of eternal life. When I say that they embraced the word which brought them nearer to God, I refer not to that general method of communication which is diffused through heaven and earth, and all the creatures of the world, and which, though it quickens all things, each according to its nature, rescues none from the bondage of corruption. I refer to that special mode of communication by which the minds of the pious are both enlightened in the knowledge of God, and, in a manner, linked to him. Adam, Abel, Noah, Abraham, and the other patriarchs, having been united to God by this illumination of the word, I say there cannot be the least doubt that entrance was given them into the immortal kingdom of God. They had that solid participation in God which cannot exist without the blessing of everlasting life.

8. If the point still seems somewhat involved, let us pass to the form of the covenant, which will not only satisfy calm thinkers, but sufficiently establish the ignorance of gainsayers. The covenant which God always made with his servants was this, "I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people" (Leviticus 26:12). These words, even as the prophets are wont to expound them, comprehend life and salvation, and the whole sum of blessedness. For David repeatedly declares, and with good reason, "Happy is that people whose God is the Lord." "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord; and the people whom he has chosen for his own inheritance" (Psalms 144:15; Psalms 33:12); and this not merely in respect of earthly happiness, but because he rescues from death, constantly preserves, and, with eternal mercy, visits those whom he has adopted for his people. As is said in other prophets, "Art not thou from everlasting, O Lord my God, mine Holy One? we shall not die." "The Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king; he will save us" "Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord?" (Habakkuk 1:12 ; Isaiah 33:22; Deuteronomy 33:29). But not to labour superfluously, the prophets are constantly reminding us that no good thing and, consequently, no assurance of salvation, is wanting, provided the Lord is our God. And justly. For if his face, the moment it hath shone upon us, is a perfect pledge of salvation, how can he manifest himself to any one as his God, without opening to him the treasures of salvation? The terms on which God makes himself ours is to dwell in the midst of us, as he declared by Moses (Leviticus 26:11). But such presence cannot be enjoyed without life being, at the same time, possessed along with it. And though nothing more had been expressed, they had a sufficiently clear promise of spiritual life in these words, "I am your God" (Exodus 6:7). For he declared that he would be a God not to their bodies only, but specially to their souls. Souls, however, if not united to God by righteousness, remain estranged from him in death. On the other hand, that union, wherever it exists, will bring perpetual salvation with it.

9. To this we may add, that he not only declared he was, but also promised that he would be, their God. By this their hope was extended beyond present good, and stretched forward into eternity. Moreover, that this observance of the future had the effect, appears from the many passages in which the faithful console themselves not only in their present evils, but also for the future, by calling to mind that God was never to desert them. Moreover, in regard to the second part of the

promise, viz., the blessing of God, its extending beyond the limits of the present life was still more clearly confirmed by the words, I will be the God of your seed after you (Genesis 17:7). If he was to manifest his favour to the dead by doing good to their posterity, much less would he deny his favour to themselves. God is not like men, who transfer their love to the children of their friends, because the opportunity of bestowing kind offices as they wished upon themselves is interrupted by death. But God, whose kindness is not impeded by death, does not deprive the dead of the benefit of his mercy, which, on their account, he continues to a thousand generations. God, therefore, was pleased to give a striking proof of the abundance and greatness of his goodness which they were to enjoy after death, when he described it as overflowing to all their posterity (Exodus 20:6). The truth of this promise was sealed, and in a manner completed, when, long after the death of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, he called himself their God (Exodus 20:6). And why? Was not the name absurd if they had perished? It would have been just the same as if he had said, I am the God of men who exist not. Accordingly, the Evangelists relate that, by this very argument, our Saviour refuted the Sadducees (Matthew 22:23; Luke 20:32), who were, therefore, unable to deny that the resurrection of the dead was attested by Moses, inasmuch as he had taught them that all the saints are in his hand (Deuteronomy 33:3). Whence it is easy to infer that death is not the extinction of those who are taken under the tutelage, guardianship, and protection of him who is the disposer of life and death.

10. Let us now see (and on this the controversy principally turns) whether or not believers themselves were so instructed by the Lord, as to feel that they had elsewhere a better life, and to aspire to it while disregarding the present. First, the mode of life which heaven had imposed upon them made it a constant exercise, by which they were reminded, that if in this world only they had hope, they were of all men the most miserable. Adam, most unhappy even in the mere remembrance of his lost felicity, with difficulty supplies his wants by anxious labours; and that the divine curse might not be restricted to bodily labour, his only remaining solace becomes a source of the deepest grief: Of two sons, the one is torn from him by the parricidal hand of his brother; while the other, who survives, causes detestation and horror by his very look. Abel, cruelly murdered in the very flower of his days, is an example of the calamity which had come upon man. While the whole world are securely living in luxury, Noah, with much fatigue, spends a great part of his life in building an ark. He escapes death, but by greater troubles than a hundred deaths could have given. Besides his ten months' residence in the ark, as in a kind of sepulchre, nothing could have been more unpleasant than to have remained so long pent up among the filth of beasts. After escaping these difficulties he falls into a new cause of sorrow. He sees himself mocked by his own son, and is forced, with his own mouth, to curse one whom, by the great kindness of God, he had received safe from the deluge.

11. Abraham alone ought to be to us equal to tens of thousands if we consider his faith, which is set before us as the best model of believing, to whose race also we must be held to belong in order that we may be the children of God. What could be more absurd than that Abraham should be the father of all the faithful, and not even occupy the meanest corner among them? He cannot be denied a place in the list; nay, he cannot be denied one of the most honourable places in it, without the destruction of the whole Church. Now, as regards his experience in life, the moment he is called by the command of God, he is torn away from friends, parents, and country, objects in which the chief happiness of life is deemed to consist, as if it had been the fixed purpose of the

Lord to deprive him of all the sources of enjoyment. No sooner does he enter the land in which he was ordered to dwell, than he is driven from it by famine. In the country to which he retires to obtain relief, he is obliged, for his personal safety, to expose his wife to prostitution. This must have been more bitter than many deaths. After returning to the land of his habitation, he is again expelled by famine. What is the happiness of inhabiting a land where you must so often suffer from hunger, nay, perish from famine, unless you flee from it? Then, again, with Abimelech, he is reduced to the same necessity of saving his head by the loss of his wife (Genesis 12:12). While he wanders up and down uncertain for many years, he is compelled, by the constant quarrelling of servants to part with his nephew, who was to him as a son. This departure must doubtless have cost him a pang something like the cutting off of a limb. Shortly after, he learns that his nephew is carried off captive by the enemy. Wherever he goes, he meets with savage-hearted neighbours, who will not even allow him to drink of the wells which he has dug with great labour. For he would not have purchased the use from the king of Gerar if he had not been previously prohibited. After he had reached the verge of life, he sees himself childless (the bitterest and most unpleasant feeling to old age), until, beyond expectation, Ishmael is born; and yet he pays dearly for his birth in the reproaches of Sarah, as if he was the cause of domestic disturbance by encouraging the contumacy of a female slave. At length Isaac is born, but in return, the first-born Ishmael is displaced, and almost hostilely driven forth and abandoned. Isaac remains alone, and the good man, now worn out with age, has his heart upon him, when shortly after he is ordered to offer him up in sacrifice. What can the human mind conceive more dreadful than for the father to be the murderer of his son? Had he been carried off by disease, who would not have thought the old man much to be pitied in having a son given to him in mockery, and in having his grief for being childless doubled to him? Had he been slain by some stranger, this would, indeed, have been much worse than natural death. But all these calamities are little compared with the murder of him by his father’s hand. Thus, in fine, during the whole course of his life, he was harassed and tossed in such a way, that any one desirous to give a picture of a calamitous life could not find one more appropriate. Let it not be said that he was not so very distressed, because he at length escaped from all these tempests. He is not said to lead a happy life who, after infinite difficulties during a long period, at last laboriously works out his escape, but he who calmly enjoys present blessings without any alloy of suffering.

12. Isaac is less afflicted, but he enjoys very few of the sweets of life. He also meets with those vexations which do not permit a man to be happy on the earth. Famine drives him from the land of Canaan; his wife is torn from his bosom; his neighbours are ever and anon annoying and vexing him in all kinds of ways, so that he is even obliged to fight for water. At home, he suffers great annoyance from his daughters-in-law; he is stung by the dissension of his sons, and has no other cure for this great evil than to send the son whom he had blessed into exile (Genesis 26:27 :) Jacob, again, is nothing but a striking example of the greatest wretchedness. His boyhood is passed most uncomfortably at home amidst the threats and alarms of his elder brother, and to these he is at length forced to give way (Genesis 27:28) A fugitive from his parents and his native soil, in addition to the hardships of exile, the treatment he receives from his uncle Laban is in no respect milder and more humane (Genesis 29:1-35). As if it had been little to spend seven years of hard and rigorous servitude, he is cheated in the matter of a wife. For the sake of another wife, he must undergo a new servitude, during which, as he himself complains, the heat of the sun scorches him by day, while in frost and cold he spends the sleepless night (Genesis 31:40

Genesis 31:41). For twenty years he spends this bitter life, and daily suffers new injuries from his father-in-law. Nor is he quiet at home, which he sees disturbed and almost broken up by the hatreds, quarrels, and jealousies of his wives. When he is ordered to return to his native land, he is obliged to take his departure in a manner resembling an ignominious flight. Even then he is unable to escape the injustice of his father-in-law, but in the midst of his journey is assailed by him with contumely and reproach (Genesis 31:20). By and bye a much greater difficulty befalls him (Genesis 32:1-32; Genesis 33:1-20). For as he approaches his brother, he has as many forms of death in prospect as a cruel foe could invent. Hence, while waiting for his arrival, he is distracted and excruciated by direful terrors; and when he comes into his sight, he falls at his feet like one half dead, until he perceives him to be more placable than he had ventured to hope. Moreover, when he first enters the land, he is bereaved of Rachel his only beloved wife. Afterwards he hears that the son whom she had borne him, and whom he loved more than all his other children, is devoured by a wild beast (Genesis 37:33). How deep the sorrow caused by his death he himself evinces, when, after long tears, he obstinately refuses to be comforted, declaring that he will go down to the grave to his son mourning. In the meantime, what vexation, anxiety, and grief, must he have received from the carrying off and dishonour of his daughter, and the cruel revenge of his sons, which not only brought him into bad odour with all the inhabitants of the country, but exposed him to the greatest danger of extermination? (Genesis 34:1-31) Then follows the horrid wickedness of Reuben his first-born, wickedness than which none could be committed more grievous (Genesis 36:22). The dishonour of a wife being one of the greatest of calamities, what must be said when the atrocity is perpetrated by a son? Some time after, the family is again polluted with incest (Genesis 38:18). All these disgraces might have crushed a mind otherwise the most firm and unbroken by misfortune. Towards the end of his life, when he seeks relief for himself and his family from famine, he is struck by the announcement of a new misfortune, that one of his sons is detained in prison, and that to recover him he must entrust to others his dearly beloved Benjamin (Genesis 42:1-38; Genesis 43:1-34). Who can think that in such a series of misfortunes, one moment was given him in which he could breathe secure? Accordingly, his own best witness, he declares to Pharaoh, “Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been” (Genesis 47:9). In declaring that he had spent his life in constant wretchedness, he denies that he had experienced the prosperity which had been promised him by the Lord. Jacob, therefore, either formed a malignant and ungrateful estimate of the Lord’s favour, or he truly declared that he had lived miserable on the earth. If so, it follows that his hope could not have been fixed on earthly objects.

13. If these holy Patriarchs expected a happy life from the hand of God (and it is indubitable that they did), they viewed and contemplated a different happiness from that of a terrestrial life. This is admirably shown by an Apostle, “By faith he [Abraham] sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: for he looked for a city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.” “These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he has prepared for them a city” (Hebrews 11:9, Hebrews

11:10, Hebrews 11:13-16). They had been duller than blocks in so pertinaciously pursuing promises, no hope of which appeared upon the earth, if they had not expected their completion elsewhere. The thing which the Apostle specially urges, and not without reason, is, that they called this world a pilgrimage, as Moses also relates (Genesis 47:9). If they were pilgrims and strangers in the land of Canaan, where is the promise of the Lord which appointed them heirs of it? It is clear, therefore, that the promise of possession which they had received looked farther. Hence, they did not acquire a foot breadth in the land of Canaan, except for sepulture; thus testifying that they hoped not to receive the benefit of the promise till after death. And this is the reason why Jacob set so much value on being buried there, that he took Joseph bound by oath to see it done; and why Joseph wished that his bones should some ages later, long after they had mouldered into dust, be carried thither (Genesis 47:29, Genesis 47:30; Genesis 50:25).

14. In short, it is manifest, that in the whole course of their lives, they had an eye to future blessedness. Why should Jacob have aspired so earnestly to primogeniture, and intrigued for it at so much risk, if it was to bring him only exile and destitution, and no good at all, unless he looked to some higher blessing? And that this was his feeling, he declared in one of the last sentences he uttered, “I have waited for thy salvation, O God” (Genesis 49:18). What salvation could he have waited for, when he felt himself breathing his last, if he did not see in death the beginning of a new life? And why talk of saints and the children of God, when even one, who otherwise strove to resist the truth, was not devoid of some similar impression? For what did Balaam mean when he said, “Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his” (Numbers 23:10), unless he felt convinced of what David afterward declares, “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints?” (Psalms 116:15; Psalms 34:12). If death were the goal and ultimate limit, no distinction could be observed between the righteous and the wicked. The true distinction is the different lot which awaits them after death.

15. We have not yet come farther down than the books of Moses, whose only office, according to our opponents, was to induce the people to worship God, by setting before them the fertility of the land, and its general abundance; and yet to every one who does not voluntarily shun the light, there is clear evidence of a spiritual covenant. But if we come down to the Prophets, the kingdom of Christ and eternal life are there exhibited in the fullest splendour. First, David, as earlier in time, in accordance with the order of the Divine procedure, spoke of heavenly mysteries more obscurely than they, and yet with what clearness and certainty does he point to it in all he says. The value he put upon his earthly habitation is attested by these words, “I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were. Verily every man at his best estate is altogether vanity. Surely every man walketh in a vain show. And now, Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in thee” (Psalms 39:12, Psalms 39:5, Psalms 39:6, Psalms 39:7). He who confesses that there is nothing solid or stable on the earth, and yet firmly retains his hope in God, undoubtedly contemplates a happiness reserved for him elsewhere. To this contemplation he is wont to invite believers whenever he would have them to be truly comforted. For, in another passages after speaking of human life as a fleeting and evanescent show, he adds, “The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him” (Psalms 103:17). To this there is a corresponding passage in another psalm, “Of old thou hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure; yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed; but thou art the same, and thy years

shall have no end. The children of thy servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before thee" (Psalms 102:25-28). If, notwithstanding of the destruction of the heavens and the earth, the godly cease not to be established before God, it follows, that their salvation is connected with his eternity. But this hope could have no existence, if it did not lean upon the promise as expounded by Isaiah, "The heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner; but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished" (Isaiah 51:6). Perpetuity is here attributed to righteousness and salvation, not as they reside in God, but as they are experienced by men.

16. Nor can those things which are everywhere said as to the prosperous success of believers be understood in any other sense than as referring to the manifestation of celestial glory. Of this nature are the following passages: "He preserveth the souls of his saints; he delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked. Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart." "His righteousness endureth for ever; his horn shall be exalted with honour -- the desire of the wicked shall perish." "Surely the righteous shall give thanks unto thy name; the upright shall dwell in thy presence." "The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance." "The Lord redeemeth the soul of his servants." But the Lord often leaves his servants, not only to be annoyed by the violence of the wicked, but to be lacerated and destroyed; allows the good to languish in obscurity and squalid poverty, while the ungodly shine forth, as it were, among the stars; and even by withdrawing the light of his countenance does not leave them lasting joy. Wherefore, David by no means disguises the fact, that if believers fix their eyes on the present condition of the world, they will be grievously tempted to believe that with God integrity has neither favour nor reward; so much does impiety prosper and flourish, while the godly are oppressed with ignominy, poverty, contempt, and every kind of cross. The Psalmist says, "But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped. For I was envious of the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked." At length, after a statement of the case, he concludes, "When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me: until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end" (Psalms 73:2, Psalms 73:3, Psalms 73:16, Psalms 73:17).

17. Therefore, even from this confession of David, let us learn that the holy fathers under the Old Testament were not ignorant that in this world God seldom or never gives his servants the fulfilment of what is promised them, and therefore has directed their minds to his sanctuary, where the blessings not exhibited in the present shadowy life are treasured up for them. This sanctuary was the final judgement of God, which, as they could not at all discern it by the eye, they were contented to apprehend by faith. Inspired with this confidence, they doubted not that whatever might happen in the world, a time would at length arrive when the divine promises would be fulfilled. This is attested by such expressions as these: "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness" (Psalms 17:15). "I am like a green olive tree in the house of God" (Psalms 52:8). Again, "The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing" (Psalms 92:12-14). He had exclaimed a little before "O Lord, how great are thy works! and thy thoughts are very deep." "When the wicked spring as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish: it is that they shall be destroyed for ever." Where was this splendour and beauty of the righteous, unless when the appearance of this world was changed by the

manifestation of the heavenly kingdom? Lifting their eyes to the eternal world, they despised the momentary hardships and calamities of the present life, and confidently broke out into these exclamations: “He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved. But thou, O God, shalt bring them down into the pit of destruction: bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days” (Psalms 55:22, Psalms 55:23). Where in this world is there a pit of eternal destruction to swallow up the wicked, of whose happiness it is elsewhere said, “They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave?” (Job 21:13). Where, on the other hand, is the great stability of the saints, who, as David complains, are not only disturbed, but everywhere utterly bruised and oppressed? It is here. He set before his eyes not merely the unstable vicissitudes of the world, tossed like a troubled sea, but what the Lord is to do when he shall one day sit to fix the eternal constitution of heaven and earth, as he in another place elegantly describes: “They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches; none of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him.” “For he sees that wise men die, likewise the fool and the brutish person perish, and leave their wealth to others. Their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling-places to all generations; they call their lands after their own names. Nevertheless, man being in honour abideth not: he is like the beasts that perish. This their way is their folly: yet their posterity approve their sayings. Like sheep they are laid in the grave; death shall feed on them; and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning; and their beauty shall consume in the grave from their dwelling” (Psalms 49:6, Psalms 49:7, Psalms 49:10-14). By this derision of the foolish for resting satisfied with the slippery and fickle pleasures, of the world, he shows that the wise must seek for a very different felicity. But he more clearly unfolds the hidden doctrine of the resurrection when he sets up a kingdom to the righteous after the wicked are cast down and destroyed. For what, pray, are we to understand by the “morning,” unless it be the revelation of a new life, commencing when the present comes to an end?

18. Hence the consideration which believers employed as a solace for their sufferings, and a remedy for their patience: “His anger endureth but a moment: in his favour is life” (Psalms 30:5). How did their afflictions, which continued almost throughout the whole course of life, terminate in a moment? Where did they see the long duration of the divine benignity, of which they had only the slightest taste? Had they clung to earth, they could have found nothing of the kind; but looking to heaven, they saw that the period during which the Lord afflicted his saints was but a moment, and that the mercies with which he gathers them are everlasting: on the other hand, they foresaw that for the wicked, who only dreamed of happiness for a day, there was reserved an eternal and never-ending destruction. Hence those expressions: “The memory of the just is blessed, but the name of the wicked shall rot” (Proverbs 10:7). “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints” (Psalms 116:15). Again in Samuel: “The Lord will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness” (1 Samuel 2:9); showing they knew well, that however much the righteous might be tossed about, their latter end was life and peace; that how pleasant soever the delights of the wicked, they gradually lead down to the chambers of death. They accordingly designated the death of such persons as the death “of the uncircumcised,” that is, persons cut off from the hope of resurrection (Ezekiel 28:10; Ezekiel 31:18). Hence David could not imagine a greater curse than this: “Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous” (Psalms 69:28).

19. The most remarkable passage of all is that of Job: “I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another” (Job 19:25-27). Those who would make a display of their acuteness, pretend that these words are to be understood not of the last resurrection, but of the day when Job expected that God would deal more gently with him. Granting that this is partly meant, we shall, however, compel them, whether they will or not, to admit that Job never could have attained to such fulness of hope if his thoughts had risen no higher than the earth. It must, therefore, be confessed, that he who saw that the Redeemer would be present with him when lying in the grave, must have raised his eyes to a future immortality. To those who think only of the present life, death is the extremity of despair; but it could not destroy the hope of Job. “Though he slay me,” said he, “yet will I trust in him” (Job 13:15). Let no trifler here burst in with the objection that these are the sayings of a few, and do not by any means prove that there was such a doctrine among the Jews. To this my instant answer is, that these few did not in such passages give utterance to some hidden wisdom, to which only distinguished individuals were admitted privately and apart from others, but that having been appointed by the Holy Spirit to be the teachers of the people, they openly promulgated the mysteries of God, which all in common behaved to learn as the principles of public religion. When, therefore, we hear that those passages in which the Holy Spirit spoke so distinctly and clearly of the spiritual life were public oracles in the Jewish Church, it were intolerably perverse to confine them entirely to a carnal covenant relating merely to the earth and earthly riches.

20. When we descend to the later prophets, we have it in our power to expatiate freely as in our own field. If, when David, Job, and Samuel, were in question, the victory was not difficult, much easier is it here; for the method and economy which God observed in administering the covenant of his mercy was, that the nearer the period of its full exhibition approached, the greater the additions which were daily made to the light of revelation. Accordingly, at the beginning, when the first promise of salvation was given to Adam (Genesis 3:15), only a few slender sparks beamed forth: additions being afterwards made, a greater degree of light began to be displayed, and continued gradually to increase and shine with greater brightness, until at length all the clouds being dispersed, Christ the Sun of righteousness arose, and with full refulgence illumined all the earth (Malachi 4:1-6). In appealing to the Prophets, therefore, we can have no fear of any deficiency of proof; but as I see an immense mass of materials, which would occupy us much longer than compatible with the nature of our present work (the subject, indeed, would require a large volume), and as I trust, that by what has already been said, I have paved the way, so that every reader of the very least discernment may proceed without stumbling, I will avoid a prolixity, for which at present there is little necessity; only reminding my readers to facilitate the entrance by means of the key which was formerly put into their hands (supra, Chap. 4 sec. 3, 4); namely, that whenever the Prophets make mention of the happiness of believers (a happiness of which scarcely any vestiges are discernible in the present life), they must have recourse to this distinction: that the better to commend the Divine goodness to the people, they used temporal blessings as a kind of lineaments to shadow it forth, and yet gave such a portrait as might lift their minds above the earth, the elements of this world, and all that will perish, and compel them to think of the blessedness of a future and spiritual life.

21. One example will suffice. When the Israelites were carried away to Babylon, their dispersion seemed to be the next thing to death, and they could scarcely be dissuaded from thinking that Ezekiel's prophecy of their restoration (Ezekiel 37:4) was a mere fable, because it seemed to them the same thing as if he had prophesied that putrid caresses would be raised to life. The Lord, in order to show that, even in that case, there was nothing to prevent him from making room for his kindness, set before the prophet in vision a field covered with dry bones, to which, by the mere power of his word, he in one moment restored life and strength. The vision served, indeed, to correct the unbelief of the Jews at the time, but it also reminded them how much farther the power of the Lord extended than to the bringing back of the people, since by a single nod it could so easily give life to dry scattered bones. Wherefore, the passage may be fitly compared with one in Isaiah, "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead. Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For, behold, the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain" (Isaiah 26:19-21).

22. It were absurd however to interpret all the passages on a similar principle; for there are several which point without any veil to the future immortality which awaits believers in the kingdom of heaven. Some of them we have already quoted, and there are many others, but especially the following two. The one is in Isaiah, "As the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord. And they shall go forth, and look upon the caresses of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh" (Isaiah 66:22-24). The other passage is in Daniel. "At that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as there never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one shall be found written in the book. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt" (Daniel 12:1, Daniel 12:2).

23. In proving the two remaining points, viz., that the Patriarchs had Christ as the pledge of their covenant, and placed all their hope of blessing in him, as they are clearer, and not so much controverted, I will be less particular. Let us then lay it down confidently as a truth which no engines of the devil can destroy - that the Old Testament or covenant which the Lord made with the people of Israel was not confined to earthly objects, but contained a promise of spiritual and eternal life, the expectation of which behaved to be impressed on the minds of all who truly consented to the covenant. Let us put far from us the senseless and pernicious notion, that the Lord proposed nothing to the Jews, or that they sought nothing but full supplies of food, carnal delights, abundance of wealth, external influence, a numerous offspring, and all those things which our animal nature deems valuable. For, even now, the only kingdom of heaven which our Lord Jesus Christ promises to his followers, is one in which they may sit down with Abraham, and Isaac and Jacob (Matthew 8:11); and Peter declared of the Jews of his day, that they were heirs of gospel grace because they were the sons of the prophets, and comprehended in the covenant

which the Lord of old made with his people (Acts 3:25). And that this might not be attested by words merely, our Lord also approved it by act (Matthew 27:52). At the moment when he rose again, he deigned to make many of the saints partakers of his resurrection, and allowed them to be seen in the city; thus giving a sure earnest, that every thing which he did and suffered in the purchase of eternal salvation belonged to believers under the Old Testament, just as much as to us. Indeed, as Peter testifies, they were endued with the same spirit of faith by which we are regenerated to life (Acts 15:8). When we hear that that spirit, which is, as it were, a kind of spark of immortality in us (whence it is called the “earnest” of our inheritance, Ephesians 1:14), dwelt in like manner in them, how can we presume to deny them the inheritance? Hence, it is the more wonderful how the Sadducees of old fell into such a degree of sottishness as to deny both the resurrection and the substantive existence of spirits, both of which where attested to them by so many striking passages of Scripture. Nor would the stupidity of the whole nation in the present day, in expecting an earthly reign of the Messiah, be less wonderful, had not the Scriptures foretold this long before as the punishment which they were to suffer for rejecting the Gospel, God, by a just judgement, blinding minds which voluntarily invite darkness, by rejecting the offered light of heaven. They read, and are constantly turning over the pages of Moses, but a veil prevents them from seeing the light which beams forth in his countenance (2 Corinthians 3:14); and thus to them he will remain covered and veiled until they are converted to Christ, between whom and Moses they now study, as much as in them lies, to maintain a separation.

08.02.11. Chapter 11

Chapter 11. The difference between the two Testaments. This chapter consists principally of three parts.

I. Five points of difference between the Old and the New Testament, sec. 1-11.

II. The last of these points being, that the Old Testament belonged to the Jews only, whereas the New Testament belongs to all; the calling of the Gentiles is shortly considered, sec. 12.

III. A reply to two objections usually taken to what is here taught concerning the difference between the Old and the New Testaments, sec. 13, 14.

Sections

1. Five points of difference between the Old and the New Testaments. These belong to the mode of administration rather than the substance. First difference. In the Old Testament the heavenly inheritance is exhibited under temporal blessings; in the New, aids of this description are not employed.

2. Proof of this first difference from the simile of an heir in pupillarity, as in Galatians 4:1.

3. This the reason why the Patriarchs, under the Law, set a higher value on this life and the blessings of it, and dreaded the punishments, these being even more striking. Why severe and sudden punishments existed under the Law.

4. A second difference. The Old Testament typified Christ under ceremonies. The New exhibits the immediate truth and the whole body. The scope of the Epistle to the Hebrews in explaining this difference. Definition of the Old Testament.

5. Hence the Law our Schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ.

6. Notwithstanding, among those under the Law, some of the strongest examples of faith are exhibited, their equals being scarcely to be found in the Christian Church. The ordinary method of the divine dispensation to be here attended to. These excellent individuals placed under the Law, and aided by ceremonies, that they might behold and hail Christ afar off.

7. Third difference. The Old Testament is literal, the New spiritual. This difference considered first generally.

8. Next treated specially, on a careful examination of the Apostle’s text. A threefold antithesis. The Old Testament is literal, deadly, temporary. The New is spiritual, quickening, eternal. Difference between the letter and the spirit.

9. Fourth difference. The Old Testament belongs to bondage, the New to liberty. This confirmed by three passages of Scripture. Two objections answered.

10. Distinction between the three last differences and the first. Confirmation of the above from Augustine. Condition of the patriarchs under the Old Testament.

11. Fifth difference. The Old Testament belonged to one people only, the New to all.

12. The second part of the chapter depending on the preceding section. Of the calling of the Gentiles. Why the calling of the Gentiles scented to the Apostles so strange and new.

13. The last part of the chapter. Two objections considered. 1. God being immutable, cannot consistently disapprove what he once ordered. Answer confirmed by a passage of Scripture.

14. Objections. 2. God could at first have transacted with the Jews as he now does with Christians. Answer, showing the absurdity of this objection. Another answer founded on a just consideration of the divine will and the dispensation of grace.

1. What, then? you will say, Is there no difference between the Old and the New Testaments? What is to become of the many passages of Scripture in which they are contrasted as things differing most widely from each other? I readily admit the differences which are pointed out in Scripture, but still hold that they derogate in no respect from their established unity, as will be seen after we have considered them in their order. These differences (so far as I have been able to observe them and can remember) seem to be chiefly four, or, if you choose to add a fifth, I have no objections. I hold and think I will be able to show, that they all belong to the mode of administration rather than to the substance. In this way, there is nothing in them to prevent the promises of the Old and New Testament from remaining the same, Christ being the foundation of both. The first difference then is, that though, in old time, the Lord was pleased to direct the thoughts of his people, and raise their minds to the heavenly inheritance, yet, that their hope of it might be the better maintained, he held it forth, and, in a manner, gave a foretaste of it under earthly blessings, whereas the gift of future life, now more clearly and lucidly revealed by the Gospel, leads our minds directly to meditate upon it, the inferior mode of exercise formerly employed in regard to the Jews being now laid aside. Those who attend not to the divine purpose in this respect, suppose that God’s ancient people ascended no higher than the blessings which were promised to the body. They hear the land of Canaan so often named as the special, and as it were the only, reward of the Divine Law to its worshipers; they hear that the severest punishment which the Lord denounces against the transgressors of the Law is expulsion from the possession of that land and dispersion into other countries; they see that this forms almost the sum of the blessings and curses declared by Moses; and from these things they confidently conclude that the Jews were separated from other nations not on their own account, but for another reason, viz., that the Christian Church might have an emblem in whose outward shape might be seen an evidence of spiritual things. But since the Scripture sometimes demonstrates that the earthly blessings thus bestowed were intended by God himself to guide them to a heavenly hope, it shows great unskilfulness, not to say dullness, not to attend to this mode of dispensation. The ground of controversy is this: our opponents hold that the land of Canaan was considered by the Israelites as supreme and final happiness, and now, since Christ was manifested, typifies to us the heavenly inheritance; whereas we maintain that, in the earthly possession which the Israelites enjoyed, they beheld, as in a mirror, the future inheritance which they believed to be reserved for them in heaven.

2. This will better appear from the similitude which Paul uses in Galatians (Galatians 4:1). He compares the Jewish nation to an heir in pupillarity, who, as yet unfit to govern himself, follows the direction of a tutor or guide to whose charge he has been committed. Though this simile refers especially to ceremonies, there is nothing to prevent us from applying it most appropriately here also. The same inheritance was destined to them as to us, but from nonage they were incapable of entering to it, and managing it. They had the same Church, though it was still in puerility. The Lord, therefore kept them under this tutelage, giving them spiritual promises, not clear and simple, but typified by earthly objects. Hence, when he chose Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and their posterity, to the hope of immortality, he promised them the land of Canaan for an inheritance, not that it might be the limit of their hopes, but that the view of it might train and confirm them in the hope of that true inheritance, which, as yet, appeared not. And, to guard against delusion, they received a better promise, which attested that this earth was not the highest measure of the divine kindness. Thus, Abraham is not allowed to keep down his thoughts to the promised land: by a greater promise his views are carried upward to the Lord. He is thus addressed, “Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward” (Genesis 15:1). Here we see that the Lord is the final reward promised to Abraham that he might not seek a fleeting and evanescent reward in the elements of this world, but look to one which was incorruptible. A promise of the land is afterwards added for no other reason than that it might be a symbol of the divine benevolence, and a type of the heavenly inheritance, as the saints declare their understanding to have been. Thus David rises from temporal blessings to the last and highest of all, “My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.” “My heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God” (Psalms 73:26; Psalms 84:2). Again, “The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot” (Psalms 16:5). Again “I cried unto thee O Lord: I said Thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living” (Psalms 142:5). Those who can venture to speak thus, assuredly declare that their hope rises beyond the world and worldly blessings. This future blessedness, however, the prophets often describe under a type which the Lord had taught them. In this way are to be understood the many passages in Job (Job 18:17) and Isaiah, to the effect, That the righteous shall inherit the earth, that the wicked shall be driven out of it, that Jerusalem will abound in all kinds of riches, and Sion overflow with every species at abundance. In strict propriety, all these things obviously apply not to the land of our pilgrimage, nor to the earthly Jerusalem, but to the true country, the heavenly city of believers, in which the Lord has commanded blessing and life for evermore (Psalms 133:3).

3. Hence the reason why the saints under the Old Testament set a higher value on this mortal life and its blessings than would now be meet. For, though they well knew, that in their race they were not to halt at it as the goal, yet, perceiving that the Lord, in accommodation to their feebleness, had there imprinted the lineaments of his favour, it gave them greater delight than it could have done if considered only in itself. For, as the Lord, in testifying his good will towards believers by means of present blessings, then exhibited spiritual felicity under types and emblems, so, on the other hand, by temporal punishments he gave proofs of his judgement against the reprobate. Hence, by earthly objects, the favour of the Lord was displayed, as well as his punishment inflicted. The unskilful, not considering this analogy and correspondence (if I may so speak) between rewards and punishments, wonder that there is so much variance in God, that those who, in old time, were suddenly visited for their faults with severe and dreadful punishments, he now punishes much more rarely and less severely, as if he had laid aside his former anger, and, for this

reason, they can scarcely help imagining, like the Manichees, that the God of the Old Testament was different from that of the New. But we shall easily disencumber ourselves of such doubts if we attend to that mode of divine administration to which I have adverted - that God was pleased to indicate and typify both the gift of future and eternal felicity by terrestrial blessings, as well as the dreadful nature of spiritual death by bodily punishments, at that time when he delivered his covenant to the Israelites as under a kind of veil.

4. Another distinction between the Old and New Testaments is in the types, the former exhibiting only the image of truth, while the reality was absent, the shadow instead of the substance, the latter exhibiting both the full truth and the entire body. Mention is usually made of this, whenever the New Testament is contrasted with the Old, but it is no where so fully treated as in the Epistle to the Hebrews (Hebrews 7:1-28, Hebrews 8:1-13, Hebrews 9:1-28, Hebrews 10:1-39). The Apostle is there arguing against those who thought that the observances of the Mosaic Law could not be abolished without producing the total ruin of religion. In order to refute this error, he adverts to what the Psalmist had foretold concerning the priesthood of Christ (Psalms 110:4). Seeing that an eternal priesthood is assigned to him, it is clear that the priesthood in which there was a daily succession of priests is abolished. And he proves that the institution of this new Priest must prevail, because confirmed by an oath. He afterwards adds, that a change of the priest necessarily led to a change of the covenant. And the necessity of this he confirms by the reason, that the weakness of the law was such, that it could make nothing perfect. He then goes on to show in what this weakness consists, namely, that it had external carnal observances which could not render the worshipers perfect in respect of conscience, because its sacrifices of beasts could neither take away sins nor procure true holiness. He therefore concludes that it was a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, and accordingly had no other office than to be an introduction to the better hope which is exhibited in the Gospel.

Here we may see in what respect the legal is compared with the evangelical covenant, the ministry of Christ with that of Moses. If the comparison referred to the substance of the promises, there would be a great repugnance between the two covenants; but since the nature of the case leads to a different view, we must follow it in order to discover the truth. Let us, therefore bring forward the covenant which God once ratified as eternal and unending. Its completion, whereby it is fixed and ratified, is Christ. Till such completion takes place, the Lord, by Moses, prescribes ceremonies which are, as it were formal symbols of confirmation. The point brought under discussion was, Whether or not the ceremonies ordained in the Law behaved to give way to Christ. Although these were merely accidents of the covenant, or at least additions and appendages, and, as they are commonly called, accessories, yet because they were the means of administering it, the name of covenant is applied to them, just as is done in the case of other sacraments. Hence, in general, the Old Testament is the name given to the solemn method of confirming the covenant comprehended under ceremonies and sacrifices. Since there is nothing substantial in it, until we look beyond it, the Apostle contends that it behaved to be annulled and become antiquated (Hebrews 7:22), to make room for Christ, the surety and mediator of a better covenant, by whom the eternal sanctification of the elect was once purchased, and the transgressions which remained under the Law wiped away. But if you prefer it, take it thus: the covenant of the Lord was old, because veiled by the shadowy and ineffectual observance of ceremonies; and it was therefore temporary, being, as it were in suspense until it received a firm and substantial confirmation. Then

only did it become new and eternal when it was consecrated and established in the blood of Christ. Hence the Saviour, in giving the cup to his disciples in the last supper, calls it the cup of the new testament in his blood; intimating, that the covenant of God was truly realised, made new, and eternal, when it was sealed with his blood.

5. It is now clear in what sense the Apostle said (Galatians 3:24; Galatians 4:1), that by the tutelage of the Law the Jews were conducted to Christ, before he was exhibited in the flesh. He confesses that they were sons and heirs of God, though, on account of nonage, they were placed under the guardianship of a tutor. It was fit, the Sun of Righteousness not yet having risen, that there should neither be so much light of revelation nor such clear understanding. The Lord dispensed the light of his word, so that they could behold it at a distance, and obscurely. Accordingly, this slender measure of intelligence is designated by Paul by the term childhood, which the Lord was pleased to train by the elements of this world, and external observances, until Christ should appear. Through him the knowledge of believers was to be matured. This distinction was noted by our Saviour himself when he said that the Law and the Prophets were until John, that from that time the gospel of the kingdom was preached (Matthew 11:13). What did the Law and the Prophets deliver to the men of their time? They gave a foretaste of that wisdom which was one day to be clearly manifested, and showed it afar off. But where Christ can be pointed to with the finger, there the kingdom of God is manifested. In him are contained all the treasures of wisdom and understanding, and by these we penetrate almost to the very shrine of heaven.

6. There is nothing contrary to this in the fact, that in the Christian Church scarcely one is to be found who, in excellence of faith, can be compared to Abraham, and that the Prophets were so distinguished by the power of the Spirit, that even in the present day they give light to the whole world. For the question here is, not what grace the Lord conferred upon a few, but what was the ordinary method which he followed in teaching the people, and which even was employed in the case of those very prophets who were endued with special knowledge above others. For their preaching was both obscure as relating to distant objects, and was included in types. Moreover, however wonderful the knowledge displayed in them, as they were under the necessity of submitting to the tutelage common to all the people, they must also be ranked among children. Lastly, none of them ever had such a degree of discernment as not to savour somewhat of the obscurity of the age. Whence the words of our Saviour, “Many kings and prophets have desired to see the things which you see, and have not seen them, and to hear the things which ye hear, and have not heard them. Blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear” (Matthew 13:17). And it was right that the presence of Christ should have this distinguishing feature, that by means of it the revelation of heavenly mysteries should be made more transparent. To the same effect is the passage which we formerly quoted from the First Epistle of Peter, that to them it was revealed that their labour should be useful not so much to themselves as to our age.

7. I proceed to the third distinction, which is thus expressed by Jeremiah: “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah; not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand, to bring them out of the land of Egypt; (which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord); but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every

man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them" (Jeremiah 31:31-34). From these words, the Apostle took occasion to institute a comparison between the Law and the Gospel, calling the one a doctrine of the letter, the other a doctrine of the spirit; describing the one as formed on tables of stone, the other on tables of the heart; the one the preaching of death, the other of life; the one of condemnation, the other of justification; the one made void, the other permanent (2 Corinthians 3:5, 2 Corinthians 3:6). The object of the Apostle being to explain the meaning of the Prophet, the worlds of the one furnish us with the means of ascertaining what was understood by both. And yet there is some difference between them. For the Apostle speaks of the Law more disparagingly than the Prophet. This he does not simply in respect of the Law itself, but because there were some false zealots of the Law who, by a perverse zeal for ceremonies, obscured the clearness of the Gospel, he treats of the nature of the Law with reference to their error and foolish affection. It will, therefore, be proper to attend to this peculiarity in Paul. Both, however, as they are contrasting the Old and New Testament, consider nothing in the Law but what is peculiar to it. For example, the Law everywhere contains promises of mercy; but as these are adventitious to it, they do not enter into the account of the Law as considered only in its own nature. All which is attributed to it is, that it commands what is right, prohibits crimes, holds forth rewards to the cultivators of righteousness, and threatens transgressors with punishment, while at the same time it neither changes nor amends that depravity of heart which is naturally inherent in all.

8. Let us now explain the Apostle's contrast step by step. The Old Testament is literal, because promulgated without the efficacy of the Spirit: the New spiritual, because the Lord has engraven it on the heart. The second antithesis is a kind of exposition of the first. The Old is deadly, because it can do nothing but involve the whole human race in a curse; the New is the instrument of life, because those who are freed from the curse it restores to favour with God. The former is the ministry of condemnation, because it charges the whole sons of Adam with transgression; the latter the ministry of righteousness, because it unfolds the mercy of God, by which we are justified. The last antithesis must be referred to the Ceremonial Law. Being a shadow of things to come, it behaved in time to perish and vanish away; whereas the Gospel, inasmuch as it exhibits the very body, is firmly established for ever. Jeremiah indeed calls the Moral Law also a weak and fragile covenant; but for another reason, namely, because it was immediately broken by the sudden defection of an ungrateful people; but as the blame of such violation is in the people themselves, it is not properly alleged against the covenant. The ceremonies, again, inasmuch as through their very weakness they were dissolved by the advent of Christ, had the cause of weakness from within. Moreover, the difference between the spirit and the letter must not be understood as if the Lord had delivered his Law to the Jews without any good result; i. e. as if none had been converted to him. It is used comparatively to commend the riches of the grace with which the same Lawgivers assuming, as it were a new characters honoured the preaching of the Gospel. When we consider the multitude of those whom, by the preaching of the Gospel, he has regenerated by his Spirit, and gathered out of all nations into the communion of his Church, we may say that those of ancient Israel who, with sincere and heartfelt affections embraced the covenant of the Lord, were few or none, though the number is great when they are considered in themselves without comparison.

9. Out of the third distinction a fourth arises. In Scripture, the term bondage is applied to the Old Testaments because it begets fear, and the term freedom to the New, because productive of confidence and security. Thus Paul says to the Romans, “Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption whereby we cry, Abba, Father” (Romans 8:15). To the same effect is the passage in the Hebrews, “For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: (for they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart: and so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:) but ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem,” &c. (Hebrews 12:18-22). What Paul briefly touches on in the passage which we have quoted from the Romans, he explains more fully in the Epistles to the Galatians, where he makes an allegory of the two sons of Abraham in this way: “Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all” (Galatians 4:25, Galatians 4:26). As the offspring of Agar was born in slavery, and could never attain to the inheritances while that of Sara was free and entitled to the inheritance, so by the Law we are subjected to slavery, and by the Gospel alone regenerated into liberty. The sum of the matter comes to this: The Old Testament filled the conscience with fear and trembling,- The New inspires it with gladness. By the former the conscience is held in bondage, by the latter it is manumitted and made free. If it be objected, that the holy fathers among the Israelites, as they were endued with the same spirit of faith, must also have been partakers of the same liberty and joy, we answer, that neither was derived from the Law; but feeling that by the Law they were oppressed like slaves, and vexed with a disquieted conscience, they fled for refuge to the gospel; and, accordingly, the peculiar advantage of the Gospel was, that, contrary to the common rule of the Old Testament, it exempted those who were under it from those evils. Then, again, we deny that they did possess the spirit of liberty and security in such a degree as not to experience some measure of fear and bondage. For however they might enjoy the privilege which they had obtained through the grace of the Gospel, they were under the same bonds and burdens of observances as the rest of their nation. Therefore, seeing they were obliged to the anxious observance of ceremonies (which were the symbols of a tutelage bordering on slavery, and handwritings by which they acknowledged their guilt, but did not escape from it), they are justly said to have been, comparatively, under a covenant of fear and bondage, in respect of that common dispensation under which the Jewish people were then placed.

10. The three last contrasts to which we have adverted (sec. 4, sec. 7, sec. 9), are between the Law and the Gospel, and hence in these the Law is designated by the name of the Old, and the Gospel by that of the New Testament. The first is of wider extent (sec. 1), comprehending under it the promises which were given even before the Law. When Augustine maintained that these were not to be included under the name of the Old Testament (August. ad Bonifac. lib. 3 c. 14), he took a most correct view, and meant nothing different from what we have now taught; for he had in view those passages of Jeremiah and Paul in which the Old Testament is distinguished from the word of grace and mercy. In the same passage, Augustine, with great shrewdness remarks, that from the beginning of the world the sons of promise, the divinely regenerated, who, through faith working by love, obeyed the commandments, belonged to the New Testament; entertaining the

hope not of carnal, earthly, temporal, but spiritual, heavenly, and eternal blessings, believing especially in a Mediator, by whom they doubted not both that the Spirit was administered to them, enabling them to do good, and pardon imparted as often as they sinned. The thing which he thus intended to assert was, that all the saints mentioned in Scripture, from the beginning of the world, as having been specially selected by God, were equally with us partakers of the blessing of eternal salvation. The only difference between our division and that of Augustine is, that ours (in accordance with the words of our Saviour, “All the prophets and the law prophesied until John,” Matthew 11:13) distinguishes between the gospel light and that more obscure dispensation of the word which preceded it, while the other division simply distinguishes between the weakness of the Law and the strength of the Gospel. And here also, with regard to the holy fathers, it is to be observed, that though they lived under the Old Testament, they did not stop there, but always aspired to the New, and so entered into sure fellowship with it. Those who, contented with existing shadows, did not carry their thoughts to Christ, the Apostle charges with blindness and malediction. To say nothing of other matters, what greater blindness can be imagined, than to hope for the expiation of sin from the sacrifice of a beast, or to seek mental purification in external washing with water, or to attempt to appease God with cold ceremonies, as if he were greatly delighted with them? Such are the absurdities into which those fall who cling to legal observances, without respect to Christ.

11. The fifth distinction which we have to add consists in this, that until the advent of Christ, the Lord set apart one nation, to which he confined the covenant of his grace. Moses says, “When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel. For the Lord’s portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance” (Deuteronomy 32:8, Deuteronomy 32:9). In another passage he thus addresses the people: “Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens is the Lord’s thy God, the earth also, with all that therein is. Only the Lord had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and he chose their seed, after them, even you, above all people, as it is this day” (Deuteronomy 10:14,Deuteronomy 10:15). That people, therefore, as if they had been the only part of mankind belonging to him he favoured exclusively with the knowledge of his name, depositing his covenant, as it were, in their bosom, manifesting to them the presence of his divinity and honouring them with all privileges. But to say nothing of other favours, the only one here considered is his binding them to him by the communion of his word, so that he was called and regarded as their God. Meanwhile, other nations, as if they had had no kind of intercourse with him, he allowed to wander in vanity not even supplying them with the only means of preventing their destructions viz., the preaching of his word. Israel was thus the Lord’s favourite child, the others were aliens. Israel was known and admitted to trust and guardianship, the others left in darkness; Israel was made holy, the others were profane; Israel was honoured with the presence of God, the others kept far aloof from him. But on the fulness of the time destined to renew all things, when the Mediator between God and man was manifested the middle wall of partition, which had long kept the divine mercy within the confines of Israel, was broken down, peace was preached to them who were afar off, as well as to those who were nigh, that being, together reconciled to God, they might unite as one people. Wherefore, there is now no respect of Jew or Greek, of circumcision or uncircumcision, but Christ is all and in all. To him the heathen have been given for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession (Psalms 2:8), that he may rule without distinction “from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth”

(Psalms 72:8).

12. The calling of the Gentiles, therefore, is a distinguishing feature illustrative of the superiority of the New over the Old Testament. This, it is true, had been previously declared by the prophets, in passages both numerous and clear, but still the fulfilment of it was deferred to the reign of the Messiah. Even Christ did not acknowledge it at the very outset of his ministry, but delayed it until having completed the whole work of redemption in all its parts, and finished the period of his humiliation, he received from the Father “a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow” (Php 2:9, Php 2:10). Hence the period being not yet completed, he declared to the woman of Canaan, “I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matthew 15:24). Nor in his first commission to the Apostles does he permit them to pass the same limits, “Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matthew 10:5, Matthew 10:6). However plainly the thing may have been declared in numerous passages, when it was announced to the Apostles, it seemed to them so new and extraordinary, that they were horrified at it as something monstrous. At length, when they did act upon it, it was timorously, and not without reluctance. Nor is this strange; for it seemed by no means in accordance with reason, that the Lord, who for so many ages had selected Israel from the rest of the nations should suddenly, as it were, change his purpose, and abandon his choice. Prophecy, indeed, had foretold it, but they could not be so attentive to prophecies, as not to be somewhat startled by the novel spectacle thus presented to their eye. It was not enough that God had in old times given specimens of the future calling of the Gentiles. Those whom he had so called were very few in number, and, moreover, he in a manner adopted them into the family of Abraham, before allowing them to approach his people. But by this public call, the Gentiles were not only made equal to the Jews, but seemed to be substituted into their place, as if the Jews had been dead. We may add, that any strangers whom God had formerly admitted into the body of the Church, had never been put on the same footing with the Jews. Wherefore, it is not without cause that Paul describes it as the mystery which has been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints (Colossians 1:26).

13. The whole difference between the Old and New Testaments has, I think, been fully and faithfully explained, under these four or five heads in so far as requisite for ordinary instruction. But since this variety in governing the Church, this diversity in the mode of teaching, this great change in rites and ceremonies, is regarded by some as an absurdity, we must reply to them before passing to other matters. And this can be done briefly, because the objections are not so strong as to require a very careful refutation. It is unreasonable they say, to suppose that God, who is always consistent with himself, permitted such a change as afterwards to disapprove what he had once ordered and commended. I answer, that God ought not to be deemed mutable, because he adapts different forms to different ages, as he knows to be expedient for each. If the husband man prescribes one set of duties to his household in winter, and another in summer, we do not therefore charge him with fickleness or think he deviates from the rules of good husbandry which depends on the regular course of nature. In like manner, if a father of a family, in educating, governing, and managing his children, pursues one course in boyhood another in adolescence and another in manhood we do not therefore say that he is fickle, or abandons his opinions. Why, then do we charge God with inconstancy when he makes fit and congruous arrangements for diversities of times? The latter similitude ought to be completely satisfactory. Paul likens the Jews

to children, and Christians to grown men (Galatians 4:1). What irregularity is there in the Divine arrangement, which confined them to the rudiments which were suitable to their age, and trains us by a firmer and more manly discipline? The constancy of God is conspicuous in this, that he delivered the same doctrine to all ages, and persists in requiring that worship of his name which he commanded at the beginning. His changing the external form and manner does not show that he is liable to change. In so far he has only accommodated himself to the mutable and diversified capacities of man.

14. But it is said, Whence this diversity, save that God chose to make it? Would it not have been as easy for him from the first, as after the advent of Christ, to reveal eternal life in clear terms without any figures, to instruct his people by a few clear sacraments, to bestow his Holy Spirit, and diffuse his grace over the whole globe? This is very much the same as to bring a charge against God, because he created the world at so late a period, when he could have done it at the first, or because he appointed the alternate changes of summer and winter, of clay and night. With the feeling common to every pious mind, let us not doubt that every thing which God has done has been done wisely and justly, although we may be ignorant of the cause which required that it should be so done. We should arrogate too much to ourselves were we not to concede to God that he may have reasons for his counsel, which we are unable to discern. It is strange, they say, that he now repudiates and abominates the sacrifices of beasts, and the whole apparatus of that Levitical priesthood in which he formerly delighted. As if those external and transient matters could delight God, or affect him in any way! It has already been observed, that he appointed none of these things on his own account, but instituted them all for the salvation of men. If a physician, adopting the best method, effects a cure upon a youth, and afterwards, when the same individual has grown old, and is again subject to the same disease, employs a different method of cure, can it be said that he repudiates the method which he formerly approved? Nay, continuing to approve of it, he only adapts himself to the different periods of life. In like manner, it was necessary in representing Christ in his absence, and predicting his future advent, to employ a different set of signs from those which are employed, now that his actual manifestation is exhibited. It is true, that since the advent of Christ, the calling of God is more widely addressed to all nations, and the graces of the Spirit more liberally bestowed than they had previously been. But who, I ask, can deny the right of God to have the free and uncontrolled disposal of his gifts, to select the nations which he may be pleased to illuminate, the places which he may be pleased to illustrate by the preaching of his word, and the mode and measure of progress and success which he may be pleased to give to his doctrine - to punish the world for its ingratitude by withdrawing the knowledge of his name for certain ages, and again, when he so pleases, to restore it in mercy? We see, then, that in the calumnies which the ungodly employ in this matter, to perplex the minds of the simple, there is nothing that ought to throw doubt either on the justice of God or the veracity of Scripture.

08.02.12. Chapter 12

Chapter 12. Christ, to perform the office of Mediator, behoved to become Man. The two divisions of this chapter are, I. The reasons why our Mediator behoved to be very God, and to become man, sec. 1-3.

II. Disposal of various objections by some fanatics, and especially by Osiander, to the orthodox doctrine concerning the Mediator, sec. 4-7.

Sections

1. Necessary, not absolutely, but by divine decree, that the Mediator should be God, and become man. Neither man nor angel, though pure, could have sufficed. The Son of God behoved to come down. Man in innocence could not penetrate to God without a Mediator, much less could he after the fall.

2. A second reason why the Mediator behoved to be God and man, viz., that he had to convert those who were heirs of hell into children of God.

3. Third reason, that in our flesh he might yield a perfect obedience, satisfy the divine justice, and pay the penalty of sin. Fourth reason, regarding the consolation and confirmation of the whole Church.

4. First objection against the orthodox doctrine: Answer to it. Conformation from the sacrifices of the Law, the testimony of the Prophets, Apostles, Evangelists, and even Christ himself.

5. Second objection: Answer: Answer confirmed. Third objection: Answer. Fourth objection by Osiander: Answer.

6. Fifth objection, forming the basis of Osiander's errors on this subject: Answer. Nature of the divine image in Adam. Christ the head of angels and men.

7. Sixth objection: Answer. Seventh objection: Answer. Eighth objection: Answer. Ninth objection: Answer. Tenth objection: Answer. Eleventh objection: Answer. Twelfth objection: Answer. The sum of the doctrine.

1. It deeply concerned us, that he who was to be our Mediator should be very God and very man. If the necessity be inquired into, it was not what is commonly termed simple or absolute, but flowed from the divine decree on which the salvation of man depended. What was best for us, our most merciful Father determined. Our iniquities, like a cloud intervening between Him and us, having utterly alienated us from the kingdom of heaven, none but a person reaching to him could be the medium of restoring peace. But who could thus reach to him? Could any of the sons of Adam? All of them, with their parents, shuddered at the sight of God. Could any of the angels? They had need of a head, by connection with which they might adhere to their God entirely and inseparably. What then? The case was certainly desperate, if the Godhead itself did not descend to us, it being impossible for us to ascend. Thus the Son of God behoved to become our

Emmanuel, the God with us; and in such a way, that by mutual union his divinity and our nature might be combined; otherwise, neither was the proximity near enough, nor the affinity strong enough, to give us hope that God would dwell with us; so great was the repugnance between our pollution and the spotless purity of God. Had man remained free from all taint, he was of too humble a condition to penetrate to God without a Mediator. What, then, must it have been, when by fatal ruin he was plunged into death and hell, defiled by so many stains, made loathsome by corruption; in fine, overwhelmed with every curse? It is not without cause, therefore, that Paul, when he would set forth Christ as the Mediator, distinctly declares him to be man. There is, says he, “one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Timothy 2:5). He might have called him God, or at least, omitting to call him God he might also have omitted to call him man; but because the Spirit, speaking by his mouth, knew our infirmity, he opportunely provides for it by the most appropriate remedy, setting the Son of God familiarly before us as one of ourselves. That no one, therefore, may feel perplexed where to seek the Mediator, or by what means to reach him, the Spirit, by calling him man, reminds us that he is near, nay, contiguous to us, inasmuch as he is our flesh. And, indeed, he intimates the same thing in another place, where he explains at greater length that he is not a high priest who “cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Hebrews 4:15).

2. This will become still clearer if we reflect, that the work to be performed by the Mediator was of no common description: being to restore us to the divine favour, so as to make us, instead of sons of men, sons of God; instead of heirs of hell, heirs of a heavenly kingdom. Who could do this unless the Son of God should also become the Son of man, and so receive what is ours as to transfer to us what is his, making that which is his by nature to become ours by grace? Relying on this earnest, we trust that we are the sons of God, because the natural Son of God assumed to himself a body of our body, flesh of our flesh, bones of our bones, that he might be one with us; he declined not to take what was peculiar to us, that he might in his turn extend to us what was peculiarly his own, and thus might be in common with us both Son of God and Son of man. Hence that holy brotherhood which he commends with his own lips, when he says, “I ascend to my Father, and your Father, to my God, and your God” (John 20:17). In this way, we have a sure inheritance in the heavenly kingdom, because the only Son of God, to whom it entirely belonged, has adopted us as his brethren; and if brethren, then partners with him in the inheritance (Romans 8:17). Moreover, it was especially necessary for this cause also that he who was to be our Redeemer should be truly God and man. It was his to swallow up death: who but Life could do so? It was his to conquer sin: who could do so save Righteousness itself? It was his to put to flight the powers of the air and the world: who could do so but the mighty power superior to both? But who possesses life and righteousness, and the dominion and government of heaven, but God alone? Therefore, God, in his infinite mercy, having determined to redeem us, became himself our Redeemer in the person of his only begotten Son.

3. Another principal part of our reconciliation with God was, that man, who had lost himself by his disobedience, should, by way of remedy, oppose to it obedience, satisfy the justice of God, and pay the penalty of sin. Therefore, our Lord came forth very man, adopted the person of Adam, and assumed his name, that he might in his stead obey the Father; that he might present our flesh as the price of satisfaction to the just judgement of God, and in the same flesh pay the penalty which we had incurred. Finally, since as God only he could not suffer, and as man only could not

overcome death, he united the human nature with the divine, that he might subject the weakness of the one to death as an expiation of sin, and by the power of the other, maintaining a struggle with death, might gain us the victory. Those, therefore, who rob Christ of divinity or humanity either detract from his majesty and glory, or obscure his goodness. On the other hand, they are no less injurious to men, undermining and subverting their faith, which, unless it rest on this foundation, cannot stand. Moreover, the expected Redeemer was that son of Abraham and David whom God had promised in the Law and in the Prophets. Here believers have another advantage. Tracing up his origin in regular series to David and Abraham, they more distinctly recognise him as the Messiah celebrated by so many oracles. But special attention must be paid to what I lately explained, namely, that a common nature is the pledge of our union with the Son of God; that, clothed with our flesh, he warred to death with sin that he might be our triumphant conqueror; that the flesh which he received of us he offered in sacrifice, in order that by making expiation he might wipe away our guilt, and appease the just anger of his Father.

4. He who considers these things with due attention, will easily disregard vague speculations, which attract giddy minds and lovers of novelty. One speculation of this class is, that Christ, even though there had been no need of his interposition to redeem the human race, would still have become man. I admit that in the first ordering of creation, while the state of nature was entire, he was appointed head of angels and men; for which reason Paul designates him “the first-born of every creature” (Colossians 1:15). But since the whole Scripture proclaims that he was clothed with flesh in order to become a Redeemer, it is presumptuous to imagine any other cause or end. We know well why Christ was at first promised, viz., that he might renew a fallen world, and succour lost man. Hence under the Law he was typified by sacrifices, to inspire believers with the hope that God would be propitious to them after he was reconciled by the expiation of their sins. Since from the earliest age, even before the Law was promulgated, there was never any promise of a Mediator without blood, we justly infer that he was destined in the eternal counsel of God to purge the pollution of man, the shedding of blood being the symbol of expiation. Thus, too, the prophets, in discoursing of him, foretold that he would be the Mediator between God and man. It is sufficient to refer to the very remarkable prophecy of Isaiah (Isaiah 53:4, Isaiah 53:5), in which he foretells that he was “smitten for our iniquities;” that “the chastisement of our peace was upon him;” that as a priest “he was made an offering for sin;” “that by his stripes we are healed;” that as all “like lost sheep have gone astray,” “it pleased the Lord to bruise him, and put him to grief,” that he might “bear our iniquities.” After hearing that Christ was divinely appointed to bring relief to miserable sinners, whose overleaps these limits gives too much indulgence to a foolish curiosity.

Then when he actually appeared, he declared the cause of his advent to be, that by appeasing God he might bring us from death unto life. To the same effect was the testimony of the Apostles concerning him (John 1:9; John 10:14). Thus John, before teaching that the Word was made flesh, narrates the fall of man. But above all, let us listen to our Saviour himself when discoursing of his office: “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Again, “The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.” “I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.” “The Son of man is come to save that which was lost.” Again, “They that be whole need not a physician.” I should never have done were I to quote all the passages. Indeed, the Apostles, with one consent, lead us

back to this fountain; and assuredly, if he had not come to reconcile God, the honour of his priesthood would fall, seeing it was his office as priest to stand between God and men, and “offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins” (Hebrews 5:1); nor could he be our righteousness, as having been made a propitiation for us in order that God might not impute to us our sins (2 Corinthians 5:19). In short, he would be stript of all the titles with which Scripture invests him. Nor could Paul’s doctrine stand “What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh” (Romans 8:3). Nor what he states in another passage: “The grace of God that bringeth salvation has appeared to all men” (Titus 2:11). In fine, the only end which the Scripture uniformly assigns for the Son of God voluntarily assuming our nature, and even receiving it as a command from the Father, is, that he might propitiate the Father to us by becoming a victim. “Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer;” - “and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name.” “Therefore does my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again.” - “This commandment have I received of my Father.” “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up.” “Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name.” Here he distinctly assigns as the reason for assuming our nature, that he might become a propitiatory victim to take away sin. For the same reason Zacharias declares (Luke 1:79), that he came “to perform the mercy promised to our fathers,” “to give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death.” Let us remember that all these things are affirmed of the Son of God, in whom, as Paul elsewhere declares, were “hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge,” and save whom it was his determination “not to know any thing” (Colossians 2:3; 1 Corinthians 2:2).

5. Should any one object, that in this there is nothing to prevent the same Christ who redeemed us when condemned from also testifying his love to us when safe by assuming our nature, we have the brief answer, that when the Spirit declares that by the eternal decree of God the two things were connected together, viz., that Christ should be our Redeemer, and, at the same time, a partaker of our nature, it is unlawful to inquire further. He who is tickled with a desire of knowing something more, not contented with the immutable ordination of God, shows also that he is not even contented with that Christ who has been given us as the price of redemption. And, indeed, Paul not only declares for what end he was sent, but rising to the sublime mystery of predestination, seasonably represses all the wantonness and prurience of the human mind. “He has chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he has made us accepted in the Beloved: In whom we have redemption through his blood” (Ephesians 1:4-7). Here certainly the fall of Adam is not presupposed as anterior in point of time, but our attention is directed to what God predetermined before all ages, when he was pleased to provide a cure for the misery of the human race. If, again, it is objected that this counsel of God depended on the fall of man, which he foresaw, to me it is sufficient and more to reply, that those who propose to inquire, or desire to know more of Christ than God predestinated by his secret decree, are presuming with impious audacity to invent a new Christ. Paul, when discoursing of the proper office of Christ, justly prays for the Ephesians that God would strengthen them “by his Spirit in the inner man,” that they might “be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length, and depth and height; and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge”

(Ephesians 3:16, Ephesians 3:18); as if he intended of set purpose to set barriers around our minds, and prevent them from declining one iota from the gift of reconciliation whenever mention is made of Christ. Wherefore, seeing it is as Paul declares it to be, “a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners” (1 Timothy 1:15), in it I willingly acquiesce. And since the same Apostle elsewhere declares that the grace which is now manifested by the Gospel “was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began” (2 Timothy 1:9), I am resolved to adhere to it firmly even to the end. This moderation is unjustly vituperated by Osiander, who has unhappily, in the present day, again agitated this question, which a few had formerly raised. He brings a charge of overweening confidence against those who deny that the Son of God would have appeared in the flesh if Adam had not fallen, because this notion is not repudiated by any passage of Scripture. As if Paul did not lay a curb on perverse curiosity when after speaking of the redemption obtained by Christ, he bids us “avoid foolish questions” (Titus 3:9). To such insanity have some proceeded in their preposterous eagerness to seem acute, that they have made it a question whether the Son of God might not have assumed the nature of an ass. This blasphemy, at which all pious minds justly shudder with detestation, Osiander excuses by the pretext that it is no where distinctly refuted in Scripture; as if Paul, when he counted nothing valuable or worth knowing “save Jesus Christ and him crucified” (1 Corinthians 2:2), were admitting, that the author of salvation is an ass. He who elsewhere declares that Christ was by the eternal counsel of the Father appointed “head over all things to the church,” would never have acknowledged another to whom no office of redemption had been assigned.

6. The principle on which Osiander founds is altogether frivolous. He will have it that man was created in the image of God, inasmuch as he was formed on the model of the future Messiah, in order to resemble him whom the Father had already determined to clothe with flesh. Hence he infers, that though Adam had never fallen from his first and pure original, Christ would still have been man. How silly and distorted this view is, all men of sound judgement at once discern; still he thinks he was the first to see what the image of God was, namely, that not only did the divine glory shine forth in the excellent endowments with which he was adorned, but God dwelt in him essentially. But while I grant that Adam bore the image of God, inasmuch as he was united to God (this being the true and highest perfection of dignity), yet I maintain, that the likeness of God is to be sought for only in those marks of superiority with which God has distinguished Adam above the other animals. And likewise, with one consent, acknowledge that Christ was even then the image of God, and, accordingly, whatever excellence was engraven on Adam had its origin in this, that by means of the only begotten Son he approximated to the glory of his Maker. Man, therefore, was created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27), and in him the Creator was pleased to behold, as in a mirror, his own glory. To this degree of honour he was exalted by the kindness of the only begotten Son. But I add, that as the Son was the common head both of men and angels, so the dignity which was conferred on man belonged to the angels also. For when we hear them called the sons of God (Psalms 82:6), it would be incongruous to deny that they were endued with some quality in which they resembled the Father. But if he was pleased that his glory should be represented in men and angels, and made manifest in both natures, it is ignorant trifling in Osiander to say, that angels were postponed to men, because they did not bear the image of Christ. They could not constantly enjoy the immediate presence of God if they were not like to him; nor does Paul teach (Colossians 3:10) that men are renewed in the image of God in any other way than by being associated with angels, that they may be united together under one head. In fine, if

we believe Christ, our felicity will be perfected when we shall have been received into the heavens, and made like the angels. But if Osiander is entitled to infer that the primary type of the image of God was in the man Christ, on the same ground may any one maintain that Christ behoved to partake of the angelic nature, seeing that angels also possess the image of God.

7. Osiander has no reason to fear that God would be found a liar, if the decree to incarnate the Son was not previously immutably fixed in his mind. Even had Adam not lost his integrity, he would, with the angels, have been like to God; and yet it would not therefore have been necessary that the Son of God should become either a man or an angel. In vain does he entertain the absurd fear, that unless it had been determined by the immutable counsel of God, before man was created, that Christ should be born, not as the Redeemer, but as the first man, he might lose his precedence, since he would not have been born, except for an accidental circumstance, namely, that he might restore the lost race of man; and in this way would have been created in the image of Adam. For why should he be alarmed at what the Scripture plainly teaches, that “he was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin?” (Hebrews 4:15). Hence Luke, also, hesitates not to reckon him in his genealogy as a son of Adam (Luke 3:38). I should like to know why Christ is termed by Paul the second Adam (1 Corinthians 15:47), unless it be that a human condition was decreed him, for the purpose of raising up the ruined posterity of Adam. For if in point of order, that condition was antecedent to creation, he ought to have been called the first Adam. Osiander confidently affirms, that because Christ was in the purpose of God foreknown as man, men were formed after him as their model. But Paul, by calling him the second Adam, gives that revolt which made it necessary to restore nature to its primitive condition an intermediate place between its original formation and the restitution which we obtain by Christ: hence it follows, that it was this restitution which made the Son of God be born, and thereby become man. Moreover, Osiander argues ill and absurdly, that as long as Adam maintained his integrity, he would have been the image of himself, and not of Christ. I maintain, on the contrary, that although the Son of God had never become incarnate, nevertheless the image of God was conspicuous in Adam, both in his body and his soul; in the rays of this image it always appeared that Christ was truly head, and had in all things the pre-eminence. In this way we dispose of the futile sophism put forth by Osiander, that the angels would have been without this head, had not God purposed to clothe his Son with flesh, even independent of the sin of Adam. He inconsiderately assumes what no rational person will grant, that Christ could have had no supremacy over the angels, so that they might enjoy him as their prince, unless in so far as he was man. But it is easy to infer from the words of Paul (Colossians 1:15), that inasmuch as he is the eternal Word of God, he is the first-born of every creature, not because he is created, or is to be reckoned among the creatures, but because the entire structure of the world, such as it was from the beginning, when adorned with exquisite beauty had no other beginning; then, inasmuch as he was made man, he is the first-born from the dead. For in one short passage (Colossians 1:16-18), the Apostle calls our attention to both views: that by the Son all things were created, so that he has dominion over angels; and that he became man, in order that he might begin to be a Redeemer. Owing to the same ignorance, Osiander says that men would not have had Christ for their king unless he had been a man; as if the kingdom of God could not have been established by his eternal Son, though not clothed with human flesh, holding the supremacy while angels and men were gathered together to participate in his celestial life and glory. But he is always deluded, or imposes upon himself by this false principle, that the church would have been akefalon - without a head - had not Christ appeared in the flesh. In the

same way as angels enjoyed him for their head, could he not by his divine energy preside over men, and by the secret virtue of his Spirit quicken and cherish them as his body, until they were gathered into heaven to enjoy the same life with the angels? The absurdities which I have been refuting, Osiander regards as infallible oracles. Taking an intoxicating delight in his own speculations, his wont is to extract ridiculous plans out of nothing. He afterwards says that he has a much stronger passage to produce, namely, the prophecy of Adam, who, when the woman was brought to him, said, “This is now bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh” (Genesis 2:23). But how does he prove it to be a prophecy? Because in Matthew Christ attributes the same expression to God! as if every thing which God has spoken by man contained a prophecy. On the same principle, as the law proceeded from God, let Osiander in each precept find a prophecy. Add, that our Saviour’s exposition would have been harsh and grovelling, had he confined himself to the literal meaning. He was not referring to the mystical union with which he has honoured the Church, but only to conjugal fidelity, and states, that the reason why God declared man and wife to be one flesh, was to prevent any one from violating that indissoluble tie by divorce. If this simple meaning is too low for Osiander, let him censure Christ for not leading his disciples to the hidden sense, by interpreting his Father’s words with more subtlety. Paul gives no countenance to Osiander’s dream, when, after saying that “we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones,” he immediately adds, “This is a great mystery” (Ephesians 5:30-32). For he meant not to refer to the sense in which Adam used the words, but sets forth, under the figure and similitude of marriage, the sacred union which makes us one with Christ. His words have this meaning; for reminding us that he is speaking of Christ and the Church, he, by way of correction, distinguishes between the marriage tie and the spiritual union of Christ with his Church. Wherefore, this subtlety vanishes at once. I deem it unnecessary to discuss similar absurdities: for from this very brief refutation, the vanity of them all will be discovered. Abundantly sufficient for the solid nurture of the children of God is this sober truth, that “when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them who were under the law” (Galatians 4:4, Galatians 4:5).

08.02.13. Chapter 13

Chapter 13. Christ clothed with the true substance of human nature. The heads of this chapter are, I. The orthodoxy doctrine as to the true humanity of our Saviour, proved from many passages of Scripture, sec. 1.

II. Refutation of the impious objections of the Marcionites, Manichees, and similar heretics, sec. 2-4.

Sections 1. Proof of the true humanity of Christ, against the Manichees and Marcionites.

2. Impious objections of heretics further discussed.

3. Six objections answered.

4. Other eight objections answered.

1. Of the divinity of Christ, which has elsewhere been established by clear and solid proofs, I presume it were superfluous again to treat. It remains, therefore, to see how, when clothed with our flesh, he fulfilled the office of Mediator. In ancient times, the reality of his human nature was impugned by the Manichees and Marcionites, the latter figuring to themselves a phantom instead of the body of Christ, and the former dreaming of his having been invested with celestial flesh. The passages of Scripture contradictory to both are numerous and strong. The blessing is not promised in a heavenly seed, or the mask of a man, but the seed of Abraham and Jacob; nor is the everlasting throne promised to an aerial man, but to the Son of David, and the fruit of his loins. Hence, when manifested in the flesh, he is called the Son of David and Abraham, not because he was born of a virgin, and yet created in the air, but because, as Paul explains, he was “made of the seed of David, according to the flesh” (Romans 1:3), as the same apostle elsewhere says, that he came of the Jews (Romans 9:5). Wherefore, our Lord himself not contented with the name of man, frequently calls himself the Son of man, wishing to express more clearly that he was a man by true human descent. The Holy Spirit having so often, by so many organs, with so much care and plainness, declared a matter which in itself is not abstruse, who could have thought that mortals would have had the effrontery to darken it with their glosses? Many other passages are at hand, were it wished to produce more: for instance, that one of Paul, that “God sent forth his Son, made of a woman” (Galatians 4:4), and innumerable others, which show that he was subject to hunger, thirst, cold, and the other infirmities of our nature. But from the many we must chiefly select those which may conduce to build up our minds in true faith, as when it is said, “Verily, he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham,” “that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death” (Hebrews 2:16, Hebrews 2:14). Again, “Both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren.” “Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest.” (Hebrews 2:11, Hebrews 2:17). Again “We have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities” (Hebrews 4:15), and the like. To the same effect is the passage to which we lately referred, in which Paul distinctly

declares, that the sins of the world behoved to be expiated in our flesh (Romans 8:3). And certainly every thing which the Father conferred on Christ pertains to us for this reason, that “he is the head,” that from him the whole body is “fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth” (Ephesians 4:16). Nay, in no other way could it hold true as is said, that the Spirit was given to him without measure (John 1:16), and that out of his fulness have all we received; since nothing could be more absurd than that God, in his own essence, should be enriched by an adventitious gift. For this reason also, Christ himself elsewhere says, “For their sakes I sanctify myself” (John 17:19).

2. The passages which they produce in confirmation of their error are absurdly wrested, nor do they gain any thing by their frivolous subtleties when they attempt to do away with what I have now adduced in opposition to them. Marcion imagines that Christ, instead of a body, assumed a phantom, because it is elsewhere said, that he was made in the likeness of man, and found in fashion as a man. Thus he altogether overlooks what Paul is then discussing (Php 2:7). His object is not to show what kind of body Christ assumed, but that, when he might have justly asserted his divinity he was pleased to exhibit nothing but the attributes of a mean and despised man. For, in order to exhort us to submission by his example, he shows, that when as God he might have displayed to the world the brightness of his glory, he gave up his right, and voluntarily emptied himself; that he assumed the form of a servant, and, contented with that humble condition, suffered his divinity to be concealed under a veil of flesh. Here, unquestionably, he explains not what Christ was, but in what way he acted. Nay, from the whole context it is easily gathered, that it was in the true nature of man that Christ humbled himself. For what is meant by the words, he was “found in fashion as a man,” but that for a time, instead of being resplendent with divine glory, the human form only appeared in a mean and abject condition? Nor would the words of Peter, that he was “put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirits” (1 Peter 3:18), hold true, unless the Son of God had become weak in the nature of man. This is explained more clearly by Paul, when he declares that “he was crucified through weakness” (2 Corinthians 13:4). And hence his exaltation; for it is distinctly said, that Christ acquired new glory after he humbled himself. This could fitly apply only to a man endued with a body and a soul. Manes dreams of an aerial body, because Christ is called the second Adam, the Lord from heaven. But the apostle does not there speak of the essence of his body as heavenly, but of the spiritual life which derived from Christ quickens us (1 Corinthians 15:47). This life Paul and Peter, as we have seen, separate from his flesh. Nay, that passage admirably confirms the doctrine of the orthodox, as to the human nature of Christ. If his body were not of the same nature with ours, there would be no soundness in the argument which Paul pursues with so much earnestness - If Christ is risen we shall rise also; if we rise not, neither has Christ risen. Whatever be the cavils by which the ancient Manichees, or their modern disciples, endeavour to evade this, they cannot succeed. It is a frivolous and despicable evasion to say, that Christ is called the Son of man, because he was promised to men; it being obvious that, in the Hebrew idiom, the Son of man means a true man: and Christ, doubtless, retained the idiom of his own tongue. Moreover, there cannot be a doubt as to what is to be understood by the sons of Adam. Not to go farther, a passage in the eighth psalm, which the apostles apply to Christ, will abundantly suffice: “What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him.?” (Psalms 8:4). Under this figure is expressed the true humanity of Christ. For although he was not immediately descended of an earthly father, yet he originally sprang from Adam. Nor could it otherwise be said in terms of the passage which we have

already quoted, “Forasmuch, then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same;” these words plainly proving that he was an associate and partner in the same nature with ourselves. In this sense also it is said, that “both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one.” The context proves that this refers to a community of nature; for it is immediately added, “For which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren” (Hebrews 2:11). Had he said at first that believers are of God, where could there have been any ground for being ashamed of persons possessing such dignity? But when Christ of his boundless grace associates himself with the mean and ignoble, we see why it was said that “he is not ashamed.” It is vain to object, that in this way the wicked will be the brethren of Christ; for we know that the children of God are not born of flesh and blood, but of the Spirit through faith. Therefore, flesh alone does not constitute the union of brotherhood. But although the apostle assigns to believers only the honour of being one with Christ, it does not however follow, that unbelievers have not the same origin according to the flesh; just as when we say that Christ became man, that he might make us sons of God, the expression does not extend to all classes of persons; the intervention of faith being necessary to our being spiritually ingrafted into the body of Christ. A dispute is also ignorantly raised as to the term first-born. It is alleged that Christ ought to have been the first son of Adam, in order that he might be the first-born among the brethren (Romans 8:29). But primogeniture refers not to age, but to degree of honour and pre-eminence of virtue. There is just as little colour for the frivolous assertion that Christ assumed the nature of man, and not that of angels (Hebrews 2:16), because it was the human race that he restored to favour. The apostle, to magnify the honour which Christ has conferred upon us, contrasts us with the angels, to whom we are in this respect preferred. And if due weight is given to the testimony of Moses (Genesis 3:15), when he says that the seed of the woman would bruise the head of the serpent, the dispute is at an end. For the words there used refer not to Christ alone, but to the whole human race. Since the victory was to be obtained for us by Christ, God declares generally, that the posterity of the woman would overcome the devil. From this it follows, that Christ is a descendant of the human race, the purpose of God in thus addressing Eve being to raise her hopes, and prevent her from giving way to despair.

3. The passages in which Christ is called the seed of Abraham, and the fruit of the loins of David, those persons, with no less folly than wickedness, wrap up in allegory. Had the term seed been used allegorically, Paul surely would not have omitted to notice it, when he affirms clearly, and without figure, that the promise was not given “to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ” (Galatians 3:16). With similar absurdity they pretend that he was called the Son of David for no other reason but because he had been promised, and was at length in due time manifested. For Paul, after he had called him the Son of David, by immediately subjoining “according to the flesh”, certainly designates his nature. So also (Romans 9:5), while declaring him to be “God blessed for ever,” he mentions separately, that, “as concerning the flesh, he was descended from the Jews.” Again if he had not been truly begotten of the seed of David, what is the meaning of the expression, that he is the “fruit of his loins;” or what the meaning of the promise, “Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne”? (Psalms 132:11). Moreover their mode of dealing with the genealogy of Christ, as given by Matthew, is mere sophistry; for though he reckons up the progenitors not of Mary, but of Joseph, yet as he was speaking of a matter then generally understood, he deems it enough to show that Joseph was descended from the seed of David, since it is certain that Mary was of the same family. Luke goes still farther, showing that the

salvation brought by Christ is common to the whole human race, inasmuch as Christ, the author of salvation, is descended from Adam, the common father of us all. I confess, indeed, that the genealogy proves Christ to be the Son of David only as being descended of the Virgin; but the new Marcionites, for the purpose of giving a gloss to their heresy, namely to prove that the body which Christ assumed was unsubstantial, too confidently maintain that the expression as to seed is applicable only to males, thus subverting the elementary principles of nature. But as this discussion belongs not to theology, and the arguments which they adduce are too futile to require any laboured refutation, I will not touch on matters pertaining to philosophy and the medical art. It will be sufficient to dispose of the objection drawn from the statement of Scripture, that Aaron and Jehoiadah married wives out of the tribe of Judah, and that thus the distinction of tribes was confounded, if proper descent could come through the female. It is well known, that in regard to civil order, descent is reckoned through the male; and yet the superiority on his part does not prevent the female from having her proper share in the descent. This solution applies to all the genealogies. When Scripture gives a list of individuals, it often mentions males only. Must we therefore say that females go for nothing? Nay, the very children know that they are classified with men. For this reasons wives are said to give children to their husbands, the name of the family always remaining with the males. Then, as the male sex has this privilege, that sons are deemed of noble or ignoble birth, according to the condition of their fathers, so, on the other hand, in slavery, the condition of the child is determined by that of the mother, as lawyers say, partus sequitur ventrem. Whence we may infer, that offspring is partly procreated by the seed of the mother. According to the common custom of nations, mothers are deemed progenitors, and with this the divine law agrees, which could have had no ground to forbid the marriage of the uncle with the niece, if there was no consanguinity between them. It would also be lawful for a brother and sister uterine to intermarry, when their fathers are different. But while I admit that the power assigned to the woman is passive, I hold that the same thing is affirmed indiscriminately of her and of the male. Christ is not said to have been made by a woman, but of a woman (Galatians 4:4). But some of this herd, laying aside all shame, publicly ask whether we mean to maintain that Christ was procreated of the proper seed of a virgin. I, in my turn, asks whether they are not forced to admit that he was nourished to maturity in the Virgin’s womb. Justly, therefore, we infer from the words of Matthew, that Christ, inasmuch as he was begotten of Mary, was procreated of her seed; as a similar generation is denoted when Boaz is said to have been begotten of Rachab (Matthew 1:5, Matthew 1:16). Matthew does not here describe the Virgin as the channel through which Christ flowed, but distinguishes his miraculous from an ordinary birth, in that Christ was begotten by her of the seed of David. For the same reason for which Isaac is said to be begotten of Abraham, Joseph of Jacob, Solomon of David, is Christ said to have been begotten of his mother. The Evangelist has arranged his discourse in this way. Wishing to prove that Christ derives his descent from David, he deems it enough to state, that he was begotten of Mary. Hence it follows, that he assumed it as an acknowledged fact, that Mary was of the same lineage as Joseph.

4. The absurdities which they wish to fasten upon us are mere puerile calumnies. They reckon it base and dishonouring to Christ to have derived his descent from men; because, in that case, he could not be exempted from the common law which includes the whole offspring of Adam, without exception, under sin. But this difficulty is easily solved by Paul’s antithesis, “As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin” - “even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life” (Romans 5:12, Romans 5:18). Corresponding to this is

another passage, “The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven” (1 Corinthians 15:47). Accordingly, the same apostle, in another passage, teaching that Christ was sent “in the likeness of sinful flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us,” distinctly separates him from the common lot, as being true man, and yet without fault and corruption (Romans 8:3). It is childish trifling to maintain, that if Christ is free from all taint, and was begotten of the seed of Mary, by the secret operation of the Spirit, it is not therefore the seed of the woman that is impure, but only that of the man. We do not hold Christ to be free from all taint, merely because he was born of a woman unconnected with a man, but because he was sanctified by the Spirit, so that the generation was pure and spotless, such as it would have been before Adam’s fall. Let us always bear in mind, that wherever Scripture adverts to the purity of Christ, it refers to his true human nature, since it were superfluous to say that God is pure. Moreover, the sanctification of which John speaks in his seventeenth chapter is inapplicable to the divine nature. This does not suggest the idea of a twofold seed in Adam, although no contamination extended to Christ, the generation of man not being in itself vicious or impure, but an accidental circumstance of the fall. Hence, it is not strange that Christ, by whom our integrity was to be restored, was exempted from the common corruption. Another absurdity which they obtrude upon us, viz., that if the Word of God became incarnate, it must have been enclosed in the narrow tenement of an earthly body, is sheer petulance. For although the boundless essence of the Word was united with human nature into one person, we have no idea of any enclosing. The Son of God descended miraculously from heaven, yet without abandoning heaven; was pleased to be conceived miraculously in the Virgin’s womb, to live on the earth, and hang upon the cross, and yet always filled the world as from the beginning.

08.02.14. Chapter 14

Chapter 14. How two natures constitute the Person of the Mediator. This chapter contains two principal heads:

I. A brief exposition of the doctrine of Christ's two natures in one person, sec. 1-4.

II. A refutation of the heresies of Servetus, which destroy the distinction of natures in Christ, and the eternity of the divine nature of the Son.

Sections

1. Proof of two natures in Christ - a human and a divine. Illustrated by analogy, from the union of body and soul. Illustration applied.

2. Proof from passages of Scripture which distinguish between the two natures. Proof from the communication of properties.

3. Proof from passages showing the union of both natures. A rule to be observed in this discussion.

4. Utility and use of the doctrine concerning the two natures. The Nestorians. The Eutychians. Both justly condemned by the Church.

5. The heresies of Servetus refuted. General answer or sum of the orthodox doctrine concerning Christ. What meant by the hypostatic union. Objections of Servetus to the deity of Christ. Answer.

6. Another objection and answer. A twofold filiation of Christ.

7. Other objections answered.

8. Conclusion of the former objections. Other pestilential heresies of Servetus.

1. When it is said that the Word was made flesh, we must not understand it as if he were either changed into flesh, or confusedly intermingled with flesh, but that he made choice of the Virgin's womb as a temple in which he might dwell. He who was the Son of God became the Son of man, not by confusion of substance, but by unity of person. For we maintain, that the divinity was so conjoined and united with the humanity, that the entire properties of each nature remain entire, and yet the two natures constitute only one Christ. If, in human affairs, any thing analogous to this great mystery can be found, the most apposite similitudes seems to be that of man, who obviously consists of two substances, neither of which however is so intermingled with the other as that both do not retain their own properties. For neither is soul body, nor is body soul. Wherefore that is said separately of the soul which cannot in any way apply to the body; and that, on the other hand, of the body which is altogether inapplicable to the soul; and that, again, of the whole man, which cannot be affirmed without absurdity either of the body or of the soul separately. Lastly, the properties of the soul are transferred to the body, and the properties of the body to the soul, and

yet these form only one man, not more than one. Such modes of expression intimate both that there is in man one person formed of two compounds, and that these two different natures constitute one person. Thus the Scriptures speak of Christ. They sometimes attribute to him qualities which should be referred specially to his humanity and sometimes qualities applicable peculiarly to his divinity, and sometimes qualities which embrace both natures, and do not apply specially to either. This combination of a twofold nature in Christ they express so carefully, that they sometimes communicate them with each other, a figure of speech which the ancients termed idio4mato4n koino4nia (a communication of properties).

2. Little dependence could be placed on these statements, were it not proved by numerous passages throughout the sacred volume that none of them is of man's devising. What Christ said of himself, "Before Abraham was I am" (John 8:58), was very foreign to his humanity. I am not unaware of the cavil by which erroneous spirits distort this passage, viz., that he was before all ages, inasmuch as he was foreknown as the Redeemer, as well in the counsel of the Father as in the minds of believers. But seeing he plainly distinguishes the period of his manifestation from his eternal existence, and professedly founds on his ancient government, to prove his precedence to Abraham, he undoubtedly claims for himself the peculiar attributes of divinity. Paul's assertion that he is "the first-born of every creature," that "he is before all things, and by him all things consist" (Colossians 1:15, Colossians 1:17); his own declaration, that he had glory with the Father before the world was, and that he worketh together with the Father, are equally inapplicable to man. These and similar properties must be specially assigned to his divinity. Again, his being called the servant of the Father, his being said to grow in stature, and wisdom, and favour with God and man, not to seek his own glory, not to know the last day, not to speak of himself, not to do his own will, his being seen and handled, apply entirely to his humanity; since, as God, he cannot be in any respect said to grow, works always for himself, knows every thing, does all things after the counsel of his own will, and is incapable of being seen or handled. And yet he not merely ascribes these things separately to his human nature, but applies them to himself as suitable to his office of Mediator. There is a communication of idio4mata, or properties, when Paul says, that God purchased the Church "with his own blood" (Acts 20:28), and that the Jews crucified the Lord of glory (1 Corinthians 2:8). In like manner, John says, that the Word of God was "handled." God certainly has no blood, suffers not, cannot be touched with hands; but since that Christ, who was true God and true man, shed his blood on the cross for us, the acts which were performed in his human nature are transferred improperly, but not ceaselessly, to his divinity. We have a similar example in the passage where John says that God laid down his life for us (1 John 3:16). Here a property of his humanity is communicated with his other nature. On the other hand, when Christ, still living on the earth, said, "No man has ascended up to heaven but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man, which is in heaven" (John 3:13), certainly regarded as man in the flesh which he had put on, he was not then in heaven, but inasmuch as he was both God and man, he, on account of the union of a twofold nature, attributed to the one what properly belonged to the other.

3. But, above all, the true substance of Christ is most clearly declared in those passages which comprehend both natures at once. Numbers of these exist in the Gospel of John. What we there read as to his having received power from the Father to forgive sins; as to his quickening whom he will; as to his bestowing righteousness, holiness, and salvation; as to his being appointed judge

both of the quick and the dead; as to his being honoured even as the Father, are not peculiar either to his Godhead or his humanity, but applicable to both. In the same way he is called the Light of the world, the good Shepherd, the only Door, the true Vine. With such prerogatives the Son of God was invested on his manifestation in the flesh, and though he possessed the same with the Father before the world was created, still it was not in the same manner or respect; neither could they be attributed to one who was a man and nothing more. In the same sense we ought to understand the saying of Paul, that at the end Christ shall deliver up “the kingdom to God, even the Father” (1 Corinthians 15:24). The kingdom of God assuredly had no beginning, and will have no end: but because he was hid under a humble clothing of flesh, and took upon himself the form of a servant, and humbled himself (Php 2:8), and, laying aside the insignia of majesty, became obedient to the Father; and after undergoing this subjection was at length crowned with glory and honour (Hebrews 2:7), and exalted to supreme authority, that at his name every knee should bow (Php 2:10); so at the end he will subject to the Father both the name and the crown of glory, and whatever he received of the Father, that God may be all in all (1 Corinthians 15:28). For what end were that power and authority given to him, save that the Father might govern us by his hand? In the same sense, also, he is said to sit at the right hand of the Father. But this is only for a time, until we enjoy the immediate presence of his Godhead. And here we cannot excuse the error of some ancient writers, who, by not attending to the office of Mediator, darken the genuine meaning of almost the whole doctrine which we read in the Gospel of John, and entangle themselves in many snares. Let us, therefore, regard it as the key of true interpretation, that those things which refer to the office of Mediator are not spoken of the divine or human nature simply. Christ, therefore, shall reign until he appear to judge the world, inasmuch as, according to the measure of our feeble capacity, he now connects us with the Father. But when, as partakers of the heavenly glory, we shall see God as he is, then Christ, having accomplished the office of Mediator, shall cease to be the vicegerent of the Father, and will be content with the glory which he possessed before the world was. Nor is the name of Lord specially applicable to the person of Christ in any other respect than in so far as he holds a middle place between God and us. To this effect are the words of Paul, “To us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him” (1 Corinthians 8:6); that is, to the latter a temporary authority has been committed by the Father until his divine majesty shall be beheld face to face. His giving up of the kingdom to the Father, so far from impairing his majesty, will give a brighter manifestation of it. God will then cease to be the head of Christ, and Christ’s own Godhead will then shine forth of itself, whereas it is now in a manner veiled.

4. This observation, if the readers apply it properly, will be of no small use in solving a vast number of difficulties. For it is strange how the ignorant, nay, some who are not altogether without learning, are perplexed by these modes of expression which they see applied to Christ, without being properly adapted either to his divinity or his humanity, not considering their accordance with the character in which he was manifested as God and man, and with his office of Mediator. It is very easy to see how beautifully they accord with each other, provided they have a sober interpreter, one who examines these great mysteries with the reverence which is meet. But there is nothing which furious and frantic spirits cannot throw into confusion. They fasten on the attributes of humanity to destroy his divinity; and, on the other hand, on those of his divinity to destroy his humanity: while those which, spoken conjointly of the two natures, apply to neither, they employ to

destroy both. But what else is this than to contend that Christ is not man because he is God, not God because he is man, and neither God nor man because he is both at once. Christ, therefore, as God and man, possessing natures which are united, but not confused, we conclude that he is our Lord and the true Son of God, even according to his humanity, though not by means of his humanity. For we must put far from us the heresy of Nestorius, who, presuming to dissect rather than distinguish between the two natures, devised a double Christ. But we see the Scripture loudly protesting against this, when the name of the Son of God is given to him who is born of a Virgin, and the Virgin herself is called the mother of our Lord (Luke 1:32, Luke 1:43). We must beware also of the insane fancy of Eutyches, lest, when we would demonstrate the unity of person, we destroy the two natures. The many passages we have already quoted, in which the divinity is distinguished from the humanity, and the many other passages existing throughout Scripture, may well stop the mouth of the most contentious. I will shortly add a few observations, which will still better dispose of this fiction. For the present, one passage will suffice - Christ would not have called his body a temple (John 2:19), had not the Godhead distinctly dwelt in it. Wherefore, as Nestorius had been justly condemned in the Council of Ephesus, so afterwards was Eutyches in those of Constantinople and Chalcedony, it being not more lawful to confound the two natures of Christ than to divide them.

5. But in our age, also, has arisen a not less fatal monster, Michael Servetus, who for the Son of God has substituted a figment composed of the essence of God, spirit, flesh, and three untreated elements. First, indeed, he denies that Christ is the Son of God, for any other reason than because he was begotten in the womb of the Virgin by the Holy Spirit. The tendency of this crafty device is to make out, by destroying the distinction of the two natures, that Christ is somewhat composed of God and man, and yet is not to be deemed God and man. His aim throughout is to establish, that before Christ was manifested in the flesh there were only shadowy figures in God, the truth or effect of which existed for the first time, when the Word who had been destined to that honour truly began to be the Son of God. We indeed acknowledge that the Mediator who was born of the Virgin is properly the Son of God. And how could the man Christ be a mirror of the inestimable grace of God, had not the dignity been conferred upon him both of being and of being called the only-begotten Son of God? Meanwhile, however, the definition of the Church stands unmoved, that he is accounted the Son of God, because the Word begotten by the Father before all ages assumed human nature by hypostatic union - a term used by ancient writers to denote the union which of two natures constitutes one person, and invented to refute the dream of Nestorius, who pretended that the Son of God dwelt in the flesh in such a manner as not to be at the same time man. Servetus calumniously charges us with making the Son of God double, when we say that the eternal Word before he was clothed with flesh was already the Son of God: as if we said anything more than that he was manifested in the flesh. Although he was God before he became man, he did not therefore begin to be a new God. Nor is there any greater absurdity in holding that the Son of God, who by eternal generation ever had the property of being a Son, appeared in the flesh. This is intimated by the angel’s word to Mary: “That holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God” (Luke 1:35); as if he had said that the name of Son, which was more obscure under the law, would become celebrated and universally known. Corresponding to this is the passage of Paul, that being now the sons of God by Christ, we “have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father” (Romans 8:15). Were not also the holy patriarchs of old reckoned among the sons of God? Yea, trusting to this privilege, they invoked God as their Father.

But because ever since the only-begotten Son of God came forth into the world, his celestial paternity has been more clearly manifested, Paul assigns this to the kingdom of Christ as its distinguishing feature. We must, however, constantly hold, that God never was a Father to angels and men save in respect of his only-begotten Son: that men, especially, who by their iniquity were rendered hateful to God, are sons by gratuitous adoption, because he is a Son by nature. Nor is there anything in the assertion of Servetus, that this depends on the filiation which God had decreed with himself. Here we deal not with figures, as expiation by the blood of beasts was shown to be; but since they could not be the sons of God in reality, unless their adoption was founded in the head, it is against all reason to deprive the head of that which is common to the members. I go farther: since the Scripture gives the name of sons of God to the angels, whose great dignity in this respect depended not on the future redemption, Christ must in order take precedence of them that he may reconcile the Father to them. I will again briefly repeat and add the same thing concerning the human race. Since angels as well as men were at first created on the condition that God should be the common Father of both; if it is true, as Paul says, that Christ always was the head, “the first-born of every creature - that in all things he might have the pre-eminence” (Colossians 1:15,Colossians 1:18), I think I may legitimately infer, that he existed as the Son of God before the creation of the world.

6. But if his filiation (if I may so express it) had a beginning at the time when he was manifested in the flesh, it follows that he was a Son in respect of human nature also. Servetus, and others similarly frenzied, hold that Christ who appeared in the flesh is the Son of God, inasmuch as but for his incarnation he could not have possessed this name. Let them now answer me, whether, according to both natures, and in respect of both, he is a Son? So indeed they prate; but Paul’s doctrine is very different. We acknowledge, indeed, that Christ in human nature is called a Son, not like believers by gratuitous adoption merely, but the true, natural, and, therefore, only Son, this being the mark which distinguishes him from all others. Those of us who are regenerated to a new life God honours with the name of sons; the name of true and only-begotten Son he bestows on Christ alone. But how is he an only Son in so great a multitude of brethren, except that he possesses by nature what we acquire by gift? This honour we extend to his whole character of Mediator, so that He who was born of a Virgin, and on the cross offered himself in sacrifice to the Father, is truly and properly the Son of God; but still in respect of his Godhead: as Paul teaches when he says, that he was “separated unto the gospel of God (which he had promised afore by his prophets in the Holy Scriptures), concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with power” (Romans 1:1-4). When distinctly calling him the Son of David according to the flesh, why should he also say that he was “declared to be the Son of God,” if he meant not to intimate, that this depended on something else than his incarnation? For in the same sense in which he elsewhere says, that “though he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God” (2 Corinthians 13:4), so he now draws a distinction between the two natures. They must certainly admit, that as on account of his mother he is called the Son of David, so, on account of his Father, he is the Son of God, and that in some respect differing from his human nature. The Scripture gives him both names, calling him at one time the Son of God, at another the Son of Man. As to the latter, there can be no question that he is called a Son in accordance with the phraseology of the Hebrew language, because he is of the offspring of Adam. On the other hand, I maintain that he is called a Son on account of his Godhead and eternal essence, because it is no less congruous to refer to

his divine nature his being called the Son of God, than to refer to his human nature his being called the Son of Man. In fine, in the passage which I have quoted, Paul does not mean, that he who according to the flesh was begotten of the seed of David, was declared to be the Son of God in any other sense than he elsewhere teaches that Christ, who descended of the Jews according to the flesh, is “over all, God blessed for ever” (Romans 9:5). But if in both passages the distinction of two natures is pointed out, how can it be denied, that he who according to the flesh is the Son of Man, is also in respect of his divine nature the Son of God?

7. They indeed find a blustering defence of their heresy in its being said, that “God spared not his own Son,” and in the communication of the angel, that He who was to be born of the Virgin should be called the “Son of the Highest” (Romans 8:32; Luke 1:32). But before pluming themselves on this futile objection, let them for a little consider with us what weight there is in their argument. If it is legitimately concluded, that at conception he began to be the Son of God, because he who has been conceived is called a Son, it will follow, that he began to be the Word after his manifestation in the flesh, because John declares, that the Word of life of which he spoke was that which “our hands have handled” (1 John 1:1). In like manner we read in the prophet, “Thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Israel, yet out of thee shall he come forth that is to be a ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting” (Micah 5:2). How will they be forced to interpret if they will follow such a method of arguing? I have declared that we by no means assent to Nestorius, who imagined a twofold Christ, when we maintain that Christ, by means of brotherly union, made us sons of God with himself, because in the flesh, which he took from us, he is the only-begotten Son of God. And Augustine wisely reminds us, that he is a bright mirror of the wonderful and singular grace of God, because as man he obtained honour which he could not merit. With this distinction, therefore, according to the flesh, was Christ honoured even from the womb, viz., to be the Son of God. Still, in the unity of person we are not to imagine any intermixture which takes away from the Godhead what is peculiar to it. Nor is it more absurd that the eternal Word of God and Christ, uniting the two natures in one person, should in different ways be called the Son of God, than that he should in various respects be called at one time the Son of God, at another the Son of Man. Nor are we more embarrassed by another cavil of Servetus, viz., that Christ, before he appeared in the flesh, is nowhere called the Son of God, except under a figure. For though the description of him was then more obscure, yet it has already been clearly proved, that he was not otherwise the eternal God, than as he was the Word begotten of the eternal Father. Nor is the name applicable to the office of Mediator which he undertook, except in that he was God manifest in the flesh. Nor would God have thus from the beginning been called a Father, had there not been even then a mutual relation to the Son, “of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named” (Ephesians 3:15). Hence it is easy to infer, that under the Law and the Prophets he was the Son of God before this name was celebrated in the Church. But if we are to dispute about the word merely, Solomon, speaking of the incomprehensibility of God, affirms that his Son is like himself, incomprehensible: “What is his name, and what is his Son’s name, if thou canst tell?” (Proverbs 30:4). I am well aware that with the contentious this passage will not have sufficient weight; nor do I found much upon it, except as showing the malignant cavils of those who affirm that Christ is the Son of God only in so far as he became man. We may add, that all the most ancient writers, with one mouth and consent, testified the same thing so plainly, that the effrontery is no less ridiculous than detestable, which dares to oppose us with Irenaeus and Tertullian, both of whom acknowledge that He who was afterwards

visibly manifested was the invisible Son of God.

8. But although Servetus heaped together a number of horrid dogmas, to which, perhaps, others would not subscribe, you will find, that all who refuse to acknowledge the Son of God except in the flesh, are obliged, when urged more closely, to admit that he was a Son, for no other reason than because he was conceived in the womb of the Virgin by the Holy Spirit; just like the absurdity of the ancient Manichees, that the soul of man was derived by transfusion from God, from its being said, that he breathed into Adam's nostrils the breath of life (Genesis 2:7). For they lay such stress on the name of Son that they leave no distinction between the natures, but babblingly maintain that the man Christ is the Son of God, because, according to his human nature, he was begotten of God. Thus, the eternal generation of Wisdom, celebrated by Solomon (Proverbs 8:22, seq). is destroyed, and no kind of Godhead exists in the Mediator: or a phantom is substituted instead of a man. The grosser delusions of Servetus, by which he imposed upon himself and some others, it were useful to refute, that pious readers might be warned by the example, to confine themselves within the bounds of soberness and modesty: however, I deem it superfluous here, as I have already done it in a special treatise. The whole comes to this, that the Son of God was from the beginning an idea, and was even then a preordained man, who was to be the essential image of God. nor does he acknowledge any other word of God except in external splendour. The generation he interprets to mean, that from the beginning a purpose of generating the Son was begotten in God, and that this purpose extended itself by act to creation. Meanwhile, he confounds the Spirit with the Word, saying that God arranged the invisible Word and Spirit into flesh and soul. In short, in his view the typifying of Christ occupies the place of generation; but he says, that he who was then in appearance a shadowy Son, was at length begotten by the Word, to which he attributes a generating power. From this it will follow, that dogs and swine are not less sons of God, because created of the original seed of the Divine Word. But although he compounds Christ of three untreated elements, that he may be begotten of the essence of God, he pretends that he is the first-born among the creatures, in such a sense that, according to their degree, stones have the same essential divinity. But lest he should seem to strip Christ of his Deity, he admits that his flesh is homoousion, of the same substance with God, and that the Word was made man, by the conversion of flesh into Deity. Thus, while he cannot comprehend that Christ was the Son of God, until his flesh came forth from the essence of God and was converted into Deity, he reduces the eternal personality (hypostasis) of the Word to nothing, and robs us of the Son of David, who was the promised Redeemer. It is true, he repeatedly declares that the Son was begotten of God by knowledge and predestination, but that he was at length made man out of that matter which, from the beginning, shone with God in the three elements, and afterwards appeared in the first light of the world, in the cloud and pillar of fire. How shamefully inconsistent with himself he ever and anon becomes, it were too tedious to relate. From this brief account sound readers will gather, that by the subtle ambiguities of this infatuated man, the hope of salvation was utterly extinguished. For if the flesh were the Godhead itself, it would cease to be its temple. Now, the only Redeemer we can have is He who being begotten of the seed of Abraham and David according to the flesh, truly became man. But he erroneously insists on the expression of John, "The Word was made flesh." As these words refute the heresy of Nestorius, so they give no countenance to the impious fiction of which Eutyches was the inventor, since all that the Evangelist intended was to assert a unity of person in two natures.

08.02.15. Chapter 15

Chapter 15. Three things briefly to be regarded in Christ; viz., His Offices of prophet, king, and priest. The principal parts of this chapter are, I. Of the Prophetical Office of Christ, its dignity and use, sec. 1, 2.

II. The nature of the Kingly power of Christ, and the advantage we derive from it, sec. 3-5.

III. Of the Priesthood of Christ, and the efficacy of it, sec. 6.

Sections

1. Among heretics and false Christians, Christ is found in name only; but by those who are truly and effectually called of God, he is acknowledged as a Prophet, King, and Priest. In regard to the Prophetical Office, the Redeemer of the Church is the same from whom believers under the Law hoped for the full light of understanding.

2. The unction of Christ, though it has respect chiefly to the Kingly Office, refers also to the Prophetical and Priestly Offices. The dignity, necessity, and use of this unction.

3. From the spirituality of Christ's kingdom its eternity is inferred. This twofold, referring both to the whole body of the Church, and to its individual members.

4. Benefits from the spiritual kingdom of Christ. 1. It raises us to eternal life. 2. It enriches us with all things necessary to salvation. 3. It makes us invincible by spiritual foes. 4. It animates us to patient endurance. 5. It inspires confidence and triumph. 6. It supplies fortitude and love.

5. The unction of our Redeemer heavenly. Symbol of this unction. A passage in the apostle reconciled with others previously quoted, to prove the eternal kingdom of Christ.

6. What necessary to obtain the benefit of Christ's Priesthood. We must set out with the death of Christ. From it follows, 1. His intercession for us. 2. Confidence in prayer. 3. Peace of conscience. 4. Through Christ, Christians themselves become priests. Grievous sin of the Papists in pretending to sacrifice Christ.

1. Though heretics pretend the name of Christ, truly does Augustine affirm (Enchir. ad Laurent. cap. 5), that the foundation is not common to them with the godly, but belongs exclusively to the Church: for if those things which pertain to Christ be diligently considered, it will be found that Christ is with them in name only, not in reality. Thus in the present day, though the Papists have the words, Son of God, Redeemer of the world, sounding in their mouths, yet, because contented with an empty name, they deprive him of his virtue and dignity; what Paul says of "not holding the head," is truly applicable to them (Colossians 2:19). Therefore, that faith may find in Christ a solid ground of salvation, and so rest in him, we must set out with this principle, that the office which he received from the Father consists of three parts. For he was appointed both Prophet, King, and Priest; though little were gained by holding the names unaccompanied by a knowledge of the end and use. These too are spoken of in the Papacy, but frigidly, and with no great benefit, the full

meaning comprehended under each title not being understood. We formerly observed, that though God, by supplying an uninterrupted succession of prophets, never left his people destitute of useful doctrine, such as might suffice for salvation; yet the minds of believers were always impressed with the conviction that the full light of understanding was to be expected only on the advent of the Messiah. This expectation, accordingly, had reached even the Samaritans, to whom the true religion had never been made known. This is plain from the expression of the woman, “I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things” (John 4:25). Nor was this a mere random presumption which had entered the minds of the Jews. They believed what sure oracles had taught them. One of the most remarkable passages is that of Isaiah, “Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people” (Isaiah 54:4); that is, in the same way in which he had previously in another place styled him “Wonderful, Counsellor” (Isaiah 9:6). For this reason, the apostle commending the perfection of gospel doctrine, first says that “God, at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past unto the prophets,” and then adds, that he “has in these last days spoken unto us by his Son” (Hebrews 1:1, Hebrews 1:2). But as the common office of the prophets was to hold the Church in suspense, and at the same time support it until the advent of the Mediator; we read, that the faithful, during the dispersion, complained that they were deprived of that ordinary privilege. “We see not our signs: there is no more any prophet, neither is there among us any that knoweth how long” (Psalms 74:9). But when Christ was now not far distant, a period was assigned to Daniel “to seal up the vision and prophecy” (Daniel 9:24), not only that the authority of the prediction there spoken of might be established, but that believers might, for a time, patiently submit to the want of the prophets, the fulfilment and completion of all the prophecies being at hand.

2. Moreover, it is to be observed, that the name Christ refers to those three offices: for we know that under the law, prophets as well as priests and kings were anointed with holy oil. Whence, also, the celebrated name of Messiah was given to the promised Mediator. But although I admit (as, indeed, I have elsewhere shown) that he was so called from a view to the nature of the kingly office, still the prophetical and sacerdotal unctions have their proper place, and must not be overlooked. The former is expressly mentioned by Isaiah in these words: “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me: because the Lord has anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captive, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord” (Isaiah 61:1, Isaiah 61:2). We see that he was anointed by the Spirit to be a herald and witness of his Father’s grace, and not in the usual way; for he is distinguished from other teachers who had a similar office. And here, again, it is to be observed, that the unction which he received, in order to perform the office of teacher, was not for himself, but for his whole body, that a corresponding efficacy of the Spirit might always accompany the preaching of the Gospel. This, however, remains certain, that by the perfection of doctrine which he brought, an end was put to all the prophecies, so that those who, not contented with the Gospel, annex somewhat extraneous to it, derogate from its authority. The voice which thundered from heaven, “This is my beloved Son, hear him” gave him a special privilege above all other teachers. Then from him, as head, this unction is diffused through the members, as Joel has foretold, “Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions” (Joel 2:28). Paul’s expressions, that he was “made unto us wisdom” (1 Corinthians 1:30), and elsewhere, that in him “are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Colossians 2:3), have a somewhat different meaning, namely, that out

of him there is nothing worth knowing, and that those who, by faith, apprehend his true character, possess the boundless immensity of heavenly blessings. For which reason, he elsewhere says, “I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified” (1 Corinthians 2:2). And most justly: for it is unlawful to go beyond the simplicity of the Gospel. The purpose of this prophetical dignity in Christ is to teach us, that in the doctrine which he delivered is substantially included a wisdom which is perfect in all its parts.

3. I come to the Kingly office, of which it were in vain to speak, without previously reminding the reader that its nature is spiritual; because it is from thence we learn its efficacy, the benefits it confers, its whole power and eternity. Eternity, moreover, which in Daniel an angel attributes to the office of Christ (Daniel 2:44), in Luke an angel justly applies to the salvation of his people (Luke 1:33). But this is also twofold, and must be viewed in two ways; the one pertains to the whole body of the Church the other is proper to each member. To the former is to be referred what is said in the Psalms, “Once have I sworn by my holiness, that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me. It shall be established for ever, as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven” (Psalms 89:35, Psalms 89:37). There can be no doubt that God here promises that he will be, by the hand of his Son, the eternal governor and defender of the Church. In none but Christ will the fulfilment of this prophecy be found; since immediately after Solomon’s death the kingdom in n great measure lost its dignity, and, with ignominy to the family of David, was transferred to a private individual. Afterwards decaying by degrees, it at length came to a sad and dishonourable end. In the same sense are we to understand the exclamation of Isaiah, “Who shall declare his generation?” (Isaiah 53:8). For he asserts that Christ will so survive death as to be connected with his members. Therefore, as often as we hear that Christ is armed with eternal power, let us learn that the perpetuity of the Church is thus effectually secured; that amid the turbulent agitations by which it is constantly harassed, and the grievous and fearful commotions which threaten innumerable disasters, it still remains safe. Thus, when David derides the audacity of the enemy who attempt to throw off the yoke of God and his anointed, and says, that kings and nations rage “in vain” (Psalms 2:2-4), because he who sitteth in the heaven is strong enough to repel their assaults, assuring believers of the perpetual preservation of the Church, he animates them to have good hope whenever it is occasionally oppressed. So, in another place, when speaking in the person of God, he says, “The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool” (Psalms 110:1), he reminds us, that however numerous and powerful the enemies who conspire to assault the Church, they are not possessed of strength sufficient to prevail against the immortal decree by which he appointed his Son eternal King. Whence it follows that the devil, with the whole power of the world, can never possibly destroy the Church, which is founded on the eternal throne of Christ. Then in regard to the special use to be made by each believer, this same eternity ought to elevate us to the hope of a blessed immortality. For we see that every thing which is earthly, and of the world, is temporary, and soon fades away. Christ, therefore, to raise our hope to the heavens, declares that his kingdom is not of this world (John 18:36). In fine, let each of us, when he hears that the kingdom of Christ is spiritual, be roused by the thought to entertain the hope of a better life, and to expect that as it is now protected by the hand of Christ, so it will be fully realised in a future life.

4. That the strength and utility of the kingdom of Christ cannot, as we have said, be fully perceived without recognising it as spiritual, is sufficiently apparent, even from this, that having during the

whole course of our lives to war under the cross, our condition here is bitter and wretched. What then would it avail us to be ranged under the government of a heavenly King, if its benefits were not realised beyond the present earthly life? We must, therefore, know that the happiness which is promised to us in Christ does not consist in external advantages - such as leading a joyful and tranquil life, abounding in wealth, being secure against all injury, and having an affluence of delights, such as the flesh is wont to long for - but properly belongs to the heavenly life. As in the world the prosperous and desirable condition of a people consists partly in the abundance of temporal good and domestic peace, and partly in the strong protection which gives security against external violence; so Christ also enriches his people with all things necessary to the eternal salvation of their souls and fortifies them with courage to stand unassailable by all the attacks of spiritual foes. Whence we infer, that he reigns more for us than for himself, and that both within us and without us; that being replenished, in so far as God knows to be expedient, with the gifts of the Spirit, of which we are naturally destitute, we may feel from their first fruits, that we are truly united to God for perfect blessedness; and then trusting to the power of the same Spirit, may not doubt that we shall always be victorious against the devil, the world, and every thing that can do us harm. To this effect was our Saviour's reply to the Pharisees, "The kingdom of God is within you." "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation" (Luke 17:21, Luke 17:22). It is probable that on his declaring himself to be that King under whom the highest blessing of God was to be expected, they had in derision asked him to produce his insignia. But to prevent those who were already more than enough inclined to the earth from dwelling on its pomp, he bids them enter into their consciences, for "the kingdom of God" is "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Romans 14:17). These words briefly teach what the kingdom of Christ bestows upon us. Not being earthly or carnal, and so subject to corruption, but spiritual, it raises us even to eternal life, so that we can patiently live at present under toil, hunger, cold, contempt, disgrace, and other annoyances; contented with this, that our King will never abandon us, but will supply our necessities until our warfare is ended, and we are called to triumph: such being the nature of his kingdom, that he communicates to us whatever he received of his Father. Since then he arms and equips us by his power, adorns us with splendour and magnificence, enriches us with wealth, we here find most abundant cause of glorying, and also are inspired with boldness, so that we can contend intrepidly with the devil, sin, and death. In fine, clothed with his righteousness, we can bravely surmount all the insults of the world: and as he replenishes us liberally with his gifts, so we can in our turn bring forth fruit unto his glory.

5. Accordingly, his royal unction is not set before us as composed of oil or aromatic perfumes; but he is called the Christ of God, because "the Spirit of the Lord" rested upon him; "the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord" (Isaiah 11:2). This is the oil of joy with which the Psalmist declares that he was anointed above his fellows (Psalms 45:7). For, as has been said, he was not enriched privately for himself, but that he might refresh the parched and hungry with his abundance. For as the Father is said to have given the Spirit to the Son without measure (John 3:34), so the reason is expressed, that we might all receive of his fulness, and grace for grace (John 1:16). From this fountain flows the copious supply (of which Paul makes mention, Ephesians 4:7) by which grace is variously distributed to believers according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Here we have ample confirmation of what I said, that the kingdom of Christ consists in the Spirit, and not in earthly delights or pomp, and that hence, in order to be partakers with him, we must renounce the world.

A visible symbol of this grace was exhibited at the baptism of Christ, when the Spirit rested upon him in the form of a dove. To designate the Spirit and his gifts by the term “unction” is not new, and ought not to seem absurd (see 1 John 2:20, 1 John 2:27), because this is the only quarter from which we derive life; but especially in what regards the heavenly life, there is not a drop of vigour in us save what the Holy Spirit instils, who has chosen his seat in Christ, that thence the heavenly riches, of which we are destitute, might flow to us in copious abundance. But because believers stand invincible in the strength of their King, and his spiritual riches abound towards them, they are not improperly called Christians. Moreover, from this eternity of which we have spoken, there is nothing derogatory in the expression of Paul, “Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father” (1 Corinthians 15:24); and also, “Then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in and” (1 Corinthians 15:28); for the meaning merely is, that, in that perfect glory, the administration of the kingdom will not be such as it now is. For the Father has given all power to the Son, that by his hand he may govern, cherish, sustain us, keep us under his guardianship, and give assistance to us. Thus, while we wander far as pilgrims from God, Christ interposes, that he may gradually bring us to full communion with God. And, indeed, his sitting at the right hand of the Father has the same meaning as if he was called the vicegerent of the Father, entrusted with the whole power of government. For God is pleased, mediately (so to speak) in his person to rule and defend the Church. Thus also his being seated at the right hand of the Father is explained by Paul, in the Epistle to the Ephesians, to mean, that “he is the head over all things to the Church, which is his body” (Ephesians 1:20, Ephesians 1:22). Nor is this different in purport from what he elsewhere teaches, that God has “given him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Php 2:9-11). For in these words, also, he commends an arrangement in the kingdom of Christ, which is necessary for our present infirmity. Thus Paul rightly infers that God will then be the only Head of the Church, because the office of Christ, in defending the Church, shall then have been completed. For the same reason, Scripture throughout calls him Lord, the Father having appointed him over us for the express purpose of exercising his government through him. For though many lordships are celebrated in the world, yet Paul says, “To us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him” (1 Corinthians 8:6). Whence it is justly inferred that he is the same God, who, by the mouth of Isaiah, declared, “The Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King: he will save us” (Isaiah 33:22). For though he every where describes all the power which he possesses as the benefit and gift of the Father, the meaning simply is, that he reigns by divine authority, because his reason for assuming the office of Mediator was, that descending from the bosom and incomprehensible glory of the Father, he might draw near to us. Wherefore there is the greater reason that we all should with one consent prepare to obey, and with the greatest alacrity yield implicit obedience to his will. For as he unites the offices of King and Pastor towards believers, who voluntarily submit to him, so, on the other hand, we are told that he wields an iron sceptre to break and bruise all the rebellious like a potter’s vessel (Psalms 2:9). We are also told that he will be the Judge of the Gentiles, that he will cover the earth with dead bodies, and level down every opposing height (Psalms 110:6). Of this examples are seen at present, but full proof will be given at the final judgement, which may be properly regarded as the last act of his reign.

6. With regard to his Priesthood, we must briefly hold its end and use to be, that as a Mediator, free from all taint, he may by his own holiness procure the favour of God for us. But because a deserved curse obstructs the entrance, and God in his character of Judge is hostile to us, expiation must necessarily intervene, that as a priest employed to appease the wrath of God, he may reinstate us in his favour. Wherefore, in order that Christ might fulfil this office, it behoved him to appear with a sacrifice. For even under the law of the priesthood it was forbidden to enter the sanctuary without blood, to teach the worshipper that however the priest might interpose to deprecate, God could not be propitiated without the expiation of sin. On this subject the Apostle discourses at length in the Epistle to the Hebrews, from the seventh almost to the end of the tenth chapter. The sum comes to this, that the honour of the priesthood was competent to none but Christ, because, by the sacrifice of his death, he wiped away our guilt, and made satisfaction for sin. Of the great importance of this matter, we are reminded by that solemn oath which God uttered, and of which he declared he would not repent, “Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek” (Psalms 110:4). For, doubtless, his purpose was to ratify that point on which he knew that our salvation chiefly hinged. For, as has been said, there is no access to God for us or for our prayers until the priest, purging away our defilements, sanctify us, and obtain for us that favour of which the impurity of our lives and hearts deprives us. Thus we see, that if the benefit and efficacy of Christ’s priesthood is to reach us, the commencement must be with his death. Whence it follows, that he by whose aid we obtain favour, must be a perpetual intercessor. From this again arises not only confidence in prayer, but also the tranquillity of pious minds, while they recline in safety on the paternal indulgence of God, and feel assured, that whatever has been consecrated by the Mediator is pleasing to him. But since God under the Law ordered sacrifices of beasts to be offered to him, there was a different and new arrangement in regard to Christ, viz., that he should be at once victim and priest, because no other fit satisfaction for sin could be found, nor was any one worthy of the honour of offering an only begotten son to God. Christ now bears the office of priest, not only that by the eternal law of reconciliation he may render the Father favourable and propitious to us, but also admit us into this most honourable alliance. For we though in ourselves polluted, in him being priests (Revelation 1:6), offer ourselves and our all to God, and freely enter the heavenly sanctuary, so that the sacrifices of prayer and praise which we present are grateful and of sweet odour before him. To this effect are the words of Christ, “For their sakes I sanctify myself” (John 17:19); for being clothed with his holiness, inasmuch as he has devoted us to the Father with himself (otherwise we were an abomination before him), we please him as if we were pure and clean, nay, even sacred. Hence that unction of the sanctuary of which mention is made in Daniel (Daniel 9:24). For we must attend to the contrast between this unction and the shadowy one which was then in use; as if the angel had said, that when the shadows were dispersed, there would be a clear priesthood in the person of Christ. The more detestable, therefore, is the fiction of those who, not content with the priesthood of Christ, have dared to take it upon themselves to sacrifice him, a thing daily attempted in the Papacy, where the mass is represented as an immolation of Christ.

08.02.16. Chapter 16

Chapter 16. How Christ performed the office of Redeemer in procuring our salvation. The death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ. This chapter contains four leading heads,

I. A general consideration of the whole subject, including a discussion of a necessary question concerning the justice of God and his mercy in Christ, sec. 1-4.

II. How Christ fulfilled the office of Redeemer in each of its parts, sec. 5-17. His death, burial, descent to hell, resurrection, ascension to heaven, seat at the right hand of the Father, and return to judgement.

III. A great part of the Creed being here expounded, a statement is given of the view which ought to be taken of the Creed commonly ascribed to the Apostles, sec. 18.

IV. Conclusion, setting forth the doctrine of Christ the Redeemer, and the use of the doctrine, sec. 19.

Sections 1. Every thing needful for us exists in Christ. How it is to be obtained.

2. Question as to the mode of reconciling the justice with the mercy of God. Modes of expression used in Scripture to teach us how miserable our condition is without Christ.

3. Not used improperly; for God finds in us ground both of hatred and love.

4. This confirmed from passages of Scripture and from Augustine.

5. The second part of the chapter, treating of our redemption by Christ. First generally. Redemption extends to the whole course of our Saviour's obedience, but is specially ascribed to his death. The voluntary subjection of Christ. His agony. His condemnation before Pilate. Two things observable in his condemnation. 1. That he was numbered among transgressors. 2. That he was declared innocent by the judge. Use to be made of this.

6. Why Christ was crucified. This hidden doctrine typified in the Law, and completed by the Apostles and Prophets. In what sense Christ was made a curse for us. The cross of Christ connected with the shedding of his blood.

7. Of the death of Christ. Why he died. Advantages from his death. Of the burial of Christ. Advantages.

8. Of the descent into hell. This article gradually introduced into the Church. Must not be rejected, nor confounded with the previous article respecting burial.

9. Absurd exposition concerning the Limbus Patrum. This fable refuted.

10. The article of the descent to hell more accurately expounded. A great ground of comfort.

11. Confirmation of this exposition from passages of Scripture and the works of ancient Theologians. An objection refuted. Advantages of the doctrine.

12. Another objection that Christ is insulted, and despair ascribed to him in its being said that he feared. Answer, from the statements of the Evangelists, that he did fear, was troubled in spirit, amazed, and tempted in all respects as we are, yet without sin. Why Christ was pleased to become weak. His fear without sin. Refutation of another objection, with an answer to the question, Did Christ fear death, and why? When did Christ descend to hell, and how? What has been said refutes the heresy of Apollinaris and of the Monothelites.

13. Of the resurrection of Christ. The many advantages from it. 1. Our righteousness in the sight of God renewed and restored. 2. His life the basis of our life and hope, also the efficacious cause of new life in us. 3. The pledge of our future resurrection.

14. Of the ascension of Christ. Why he ascended. Advantages derived from it.

15. Of Christ's seat at the Father's right hand. What meant by it.

16. Many advantages from the ascension of Christ. 1. He gives access to the kingdom which Adam had shut up. 2. He intercedes for us with the Father. 3. His virtue being thence transfused into us, he works effectually in us for salvation.

17. Of the return of Christ to judgement. Its nature. The quick and dead who are to be judged. Passages apparently contradictory reconciled. Mode of judgement.

18. Advantages of the doctrine of Christ's return to judgement. Third part of the chapter, explaining the view to be taken of the Apostles' Creed. Summary of the Apostles' Creed.

19. Conclusion of the whole chapter, showing that in Christ the salvation of the elect in all its parts is comprehended.

1. All that we have hitherto said of Christ leads to this one result, that condemned, dead, and lost in ourselves, we must in him seek righteousness, deliverance, life and salvation, as we are taught by the celebrated words of Peter, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). The name of Jesus was not given him at random, or fortuitously, or by the will of man, but was brought from heaven by an angel, as the herald of the supreme decree; the reason also being added, "for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). In these words attention should be paid to what we have elsewhere observed, that the office of Redeemer was assigned him in order that he might be our Saviour. Still, however, redemption would be defective if it did not conduct us by an uninterrupted progression to the final goal of safety. Therefore, the moment we turn aside from him in the minutest degree, salvation, which resides entirely in him, gradually disappears; so that all who do not rest in him voluntarily deprive themselves of all grace. The observation of Bernard well deserves to be remembered: The name of Jesus is not only light but food also, yea, oil, without which all the food of the soul is dry; salt, without which as a condiment whatever is set before us is insipid; in fine, honey in the mouth, melody in the ear, joy in the heart, and, at the same time, medicine; every discourse where this name is not heard is absurd (Bernard in Cantica., Serm. 15). But here it is necessary diligently to consider in what way we obtain salvation from him, that we may not only be persuaded that he is the author of it, but having embraced whatever is sufficient

as a sure foundation of our faith, may eschew all that might make us waver. For seeing no man can descend into himself, and seriously consider what he is, without feeling that God is angry and at enmity with him, and therefore anxiously longing for the means of regaining his favour (this cannot be without satisfaction), the certainty here required is of no ordinary description - sinners, until freed from guilt, being always liable to the wrath and curse of God, who, as he is a just judge, cannot permit his law to be violated with impunity, but is armed for vengeance.

2. But before we proceed farther, we must see in passing, how can it be said that God, who prevents us with his mercy, was our enemy until he was reconciled to us by Christ. For how could he have given us in his only-begotten Son a singular pledge of his love, if he had not previously embraced us with free favour? As there thus arises some appearance of contradiction, I will explain the difficulty. The mode in which the Spirit usually speaks in Scripture is, that God was the enemy of men until they were restored to favour by the death of Christ (Romans 5:10); that they were cursed until their iniquity was expiated by the sacrifice of Christ (Galatians 3:10, Galatians 3:13); that they were separated from God, until by means of Christ's body they were received into union (Colossians 1:21, Colossians 1:22). Such modes of expression are accommodated to our capacity, that we may the better understand how miserable and calamitous our condition is without Christ. For were it not said in clear terms, that Divine wrath, and vengeance, and eternal death, lay upon us, we should be less sensible of our wretchedness without the mercy of God, and less disposed to value the blessing of deliverance. For example, let a person be told, Had God at the time you were a sinner hated you, and cast you off as you deserved, horrible destruction must have been your doom; but spontaneously and of free indulgence he retained you in his favour, not suffering you to be estranged from him, and in this way rescued you from danger - the person will indeed be affected, and made sensible in some degree how much he owes to the mercy of God. But again, let him be told, as Scripture teaches, that he was estranged from God by sin, an heir of wrath, exposed to the curse of eternal death, excluded from all hope of salvation, a complete alien from the blessing of God, the slave of Satan, captive under the yoke of sin; in fine, doomed to horrible destruction, and already involved in it; that then Christ interposed, took the punishment upon himself and bore what by the just judgement of God was impending over sinners; with his own blood expiated the sins which rendered them hateful to God, by this expiation satisfied and duly propitiated God the Father, by this intercession appeased his anger, on this basis founded peace between God and men, and by this tie secured the Divine benevolence toward them; will not these considerations move him the more deeply, the more strikingly they represent the greatness of the calamity from which he was delivered? In short, since our mind cannot lay hold of life through the mercy of God with sufficient eagerness, or receive it with becoming gratitude, unless previously impressed with fear of the Divine anger, and dismayed at the thought of eternal death, we are so instructed by divine truth, as to perceive that without Christ God is in a manner hostile to us, and has his arm raised for our destruction. Thus taught, we look to Christ alone for divine favour and paternal love.

3. Though this is said in accommodation to the weakness of our capacity, it is not said falsely. For God, who is perfect righteousness, cannot love the iniquity which he sees in all. All of us, therefore, have that within which deserves the hatred of God. Hence, in respect, first, of our corrupt nature; and, secondly, of the depraved conduct following upon it, we are all offensive to God, guilty in his sight, and by nature the children of hell. But as the Lord wills not to destroy in us

that which is his own, he still finds something in us which in kindness he can love. For though it is by our own fault that we are sinners, we are still his creatures; though we have brought death upon ourselves he had created us for life. Thus, mere gratuitous love prompts him to receive us into favour. But if there is a perpetual and irreconcilable repugnance between righteousness and iniquity, so long as we remain sinners we cannot be completely received. Therefore, in order that all ground of offence may be removed, and he may completely reconcile us to himself, he, by means of the expiation set forth in the death of Christ, abolishes all the evil that is in us, so that we, formerly impure and unclean, now appear in his sight just and holy. Accordingly, God the Father, by his love, prevents and anticipates our reconciliation in Christ. Nay, it is because he first loves us, that he afterwards reconciles us to himself. But because the iniquity, which deserves the indignation of God, remains in us until the death of Christ comes to our aid, and that iniquity is in his sight accursed and condemned, we are not admitted to full and sure communion with God, unless, in so far as Christ unites us. And, therefore, if we would indulge the hope of having God placable and propitious to us, we must fix our eyes and minds on Christ alone, as it is to him alone it is owing that our sins, which necessarily provoked the wrath of God, are not imputed to us.

4. For this reason Paul says, that God “has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as he has chosen us in him before the foundation of the world” (Ephesians 1:3, Ephesians 1:4). These things are clear and conformable to Scripture, and admirably reconcile the passages in which it is said, that “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son” (John 3:16); and yet that it was “when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son” (Romans 5:10). But to give additional assurance to those who require the authority of the ancient Church, I will quote a passage of Augustine to the same effect: “Incomprehensible and immutable is the love of God. For it was not after we were reconciled to him by the blood of his Son that he began to love us, but he loved us before the foundation of the world, that with his only begotten Son we too might be sons of God before we were any thing at all. Our being reconciled by the death of Christ must not be understood as if the Son reconciled us, in order that the Father, then hating, might begin to love us, but that we were reconciled to him already, loving, though at enmity with us because of sin. To the truth of both propositions we have the attestation of the Apostle, ‘God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us,’ (Romans 5:8). Therefore he had this love towards us even when, exercising enmity towards him, we were the workers of iniquity. Accordingly in a manner wondrous and divine, he loved even when he hated us. For he hated us when we were such as he had not made us, and yet because our iniquity had not destroyed his work in every respect, he knew in regard to each one of us, both to hate what we had made, and love what he had made.” Such are the words of Augustine (Tract in John 110).

5. When it is asked then how Christ, by abolishing sin, removed the enmity between God and us, and purchased a righteousness which made him favourable and kind to us, it may be answered generally, that he accomplished this by the whole course of his obedience. This id proved by the testimony of Paul, “As by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous” (Romans 5:19). And indeed he elsewhere extends the ground of pardon which exempts from the curse of the law to the whole life of Christ, “When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law” (Galatians 4:4, Galatians 4:5). Thus even at his baptism he

declared that a part of righteousness was fulfilled by his yielding obedience to the command of the Father. In short, from the moment when he assumed the form of a servant, he began, in order to redeem us, to pay the price of deliverance. Scripture, however, the more certainly to define the mode of salvation, ascribes it peculiarly and specially to the death of Christ. He himself declares that he gave his life a ransom for many (Matthew 20:28). Paul teaches that he died for our sins (Romans 4:25). John Baptist exclaimed, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). Paul in another passage declares, “that we are justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood” (Romans 3:25). Again, being justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him” (Romans 5:9). Again “He has made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Corinthians 5:21). I will not search out all the passages, for the list would be endless, and many are afterwards to be quoted in their order. In the Confession of Faith, called the Apostles’ Creed, the transition is admirably made from the birth of Christ to his death and resurrection, in which the completion of a perfect salvation consists. Still there is no exclusion of the other part of obedience which he performed in life. Thus Paul comprehends, from the beginning even to the end, his having assumed the form of a servant, humbled himself, and become obedient to death, even the death of the cross (Php 2:7). And, indeed, the first step in obedience was his voluntary subjection; for the sacrifice would have been unavailing to justification if not offered spontaneously. Hence our Lord, after testifying, “I lay down my life for the sheep,” distinctly adds, “No man taketh it from me” (John 10:15, John 10:18). In the same sense Isaiah says, “ Like a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth” (Isaiah 53:7). The Gospel History relates that he came forth to meet the soldiers; and in presence of Pilate, instead of defending himself, stood to receive judgement. This, indeed, he did not without a struggle, for he had assumed our infirmities also, and in this way it behoved him to prove that he was yielding obedience to his Father. It was no ordinary example of incomparable love towards us to struggle with dire terrors, and amid fearful tortures to cast away all care of himself that he might provide for us. We must bear in minds that Christ could not duly propitiate God without renouncing his own feelings and subjecting himself entirely to his Father’s will. To this effect the Apostle appositely quotes a passage from the Psalms, “Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God” (Hebrews 10:5; Psalms 40:7, Psalms 40:8). Thus, as trembling consciences find no rest without sacrifice and ablution by which sins are expiated, we are properly directed thither, the source of our life being placed in the death of Christ. Moreover, as the curse consequent upon guilt remained for the final judgement of God, one principal point in the narrative is his condemnation before Pontius Pilate, the governor of Judea, to teach us, that the punishment to which we were liable was inflicted on that Just One. We could not escape the fearful judgement of God; and Christ, that he might rescue us from it, submitted to be condemned by a mortal, nay, by a wicked and profane man. For the name of Governor is mentioned not only to support the credibility of the narrative, but to remind us of what Isaiah says, that “the chastisement of our peace was upon him;” and that “with his stripes we are healed” (Isaiah 53:5). For, in order to remove our condemnation, it was not sufficient to endure any kind of death. To satisfy our ransom, it was necessary to select a mode of death in which he might deliver us, both by giving himself up to condemnations and undertaking our expiation. Had he been cut off by assassins, or slain in a seditious tumult, there could have been no kind of satisfaction in such a death. But when he is placed as a criminal at the bar, where witnesses are brought to give evidence against him, and the

mouth of the judge condemns him to die, we see him sustaining the character of an offender and evil-doer. Here we must attend to two points which had both been foretold by the prophets, and tend admirably to comfort and confirm our faith. When we read that Christ was led away from the judgement-seat to execution, and was crucified between thieves, we have a fulfilment of the prophecy which is quoted by the Evangelist, “He was numbered with the transgressors” (Isaiah 53:12; Mark 15:28). Why was it so? That he might bear the character of a sinner, not of a just or innocent person, inasmuch as he met death on account not of innocence, but of sin. On the other hand, when we read that he was acquitted by the same lips that condemned him (for Pilate was forced once and again to bear public testimony to his innocence), let us call to mind what is said by another prophet, “I restored that which I took not away” (Psalms 69:4). Thus we perceive Christ representing the character of a sinner and a criminal, while, at the same time, his innocence shines forth, and it becomes manifest that he suffers for another’s and not for his own crime. He therefore suffered under Pontius Pilate, being thus, by the formal sentence of the judge, ranked among criminals, and yet he is declared innocent by the same judge, when he affirms that he finds no cause of death in him. Our acquittal is in this that the guilt which made us liable to punishment was transferred to the head of the Son of God (Isaiah 53:12). We must specially remember this substitution in order that we may not be all our lives in trepidation and anxiety, as if the just vengeance which the Son of God transferred to himself, were still impending over us.

6. The very form of the death embodies a striking truth. The cross was cursed not only in the opinion of men, but by the enactment of the Divine Law. Hence Christ, while suspended on it, subjects himself to the curse. And thus it behoved to be done, in order that the whole curse, which on account of our iniquities awaited us, or rather lay upon us, might be taken from us by being transferred to him. This was also shadowed in the Law, since)ashamot, the word by which sin itself is properly designated, was applied to the sacrifices and expiations offered for sin. By this application of the term, the Spirit intended to intimate, that they were a kind of katharmato4n (purifications), bearing, by substitutions the curse due to sin. But that which was represented figuratively in the Mosaic sacrifices is exhibited in Christ the archetype. Wherefore, in order to accomplish a full expiation, he made his soul to)asham, i. e., a propitiatory victim for sin (as the prophet says, Isaiah 53:5, Isaiah 53:10), on which the guilt and penalty being in a manner laid, ceases to be imputed to us. The Apostle declares this more plainly when he says, that “he made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Corinthians 5:21). For the Son of God, though spotlessly pure, took upon him the disgrace and ignominy of our iniquities, and in return clothed us with his purity. To the same thing he seems to refer, when he says, that he “condemned sin in the flesh” (Romans 8:3), the Father having destroyed the power of sin when it was transferred to the flesh of Christ. This term, therefore, indicates that Christ, in his death, was offered to the Father as a propitiatory victim; that, expiation being made by his sacrifice, we might cease to tremble at the divine wrath. It is now clear what the prophet means when he says, that “the Lord has laid upon him the iniquity of us all” (Isaiah 53:6); namely, that as he was to wash away the pollution of sins, they were transferred to him by imputation. Of this the cross to which he was nailed was a symbol, as the Apostle declares, “Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ” (Galatians 3:13, Galatians 3:14). In the same way Peter says, that he “bare our sins in his own body on the tree” (1 Peter 2:24), inasmuch as from the very symbol of the

curse, we perceive more clearly that the burden with which we were oppressed was laid upon him. Nor are we to understand that by the curse which he endured he was himself overwhelmed, but rather that by enduring it he repressed broke, annihilated all its force. Accordingly, faith apprehends acquittal in the condemnation of Christ, and blessing in his curse. Hence it is not without cause that Paul magnificently celebrates the triumph which Christ obtained upon the cross, as if the cross, the symbol of ignominy, had been converted into a triumphal chariot. For he says, that he blotted out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross: that “having spoiled principalities and powers he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it” (Colossians 2:14, Colossians 2:15). Nor is this to be wondered at; for, as another Apostle declares, Christ, “through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God” (Hebrews 9:14), and hence that transformation of the cross which were otherwise against its nature. But that these things may take deep root and have their seat in our inmost hearts, we must never lose sight of sacrifice and ablution. For, were not Christ a victim, we could have no sure conviction of his being apolutro4sis, antilutron, kai hilaste4rion, our substitute-ransom and propitiation. And hence mention is always made of blood whenever scripture explains the mode of redemption: although the shedding of Christ’s blood was available not only for propitiation, but also acted as a laver to purge our defilements.

7. The Creed next mentions that he “was dead and buried”. Here again it is necessary to consider how he substituted himself in order to pay the price of our redemption. Death held us under its yoke, but he in our place delivered himself into its power, that he might exempt us from it. This the Apostle means when he says, “that he tasted death for every man” (Hebrews 2:9). By dying he prevented us from dying; or (which is the same thing) he by his death purchased life for us (see Calvin in Psychopann). But in this he differed from us, that in permitting himself to be overcome of death, it was not so as to be engulfed in its abyss but rather to annihilate it, as it must otherwise have annihilated us; he did not allow himself to be so subdued by it as to be crushed by its power; he rather laid it prostrate, when it was impending over us, and exulting over us as already overcome. In fine, his object was, “that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage” (Hebrews 2:14, Hebrews 2:15). This is the first fruit which his death produced to us. Another is, that by fellowship with him he mortifies our earthly members that they may not afterwards exert themselves in action, and kill the old man, that he may not hereafter be in vigour and bring forth fruit. An effect of his burials moreover is that we as his fellows are buried to sin. For when the Apostle says, that we are ingrafted into the likeness of Christ’s deaths and that we are buried with him unto sin, that by his cross the world is crucified unto us and we unto the world, and that we are dead with him, he not only exhorts us to manifest an example of his death, but declares that there is an efficacy in it which should appear in all Christians, if they would not render his death unfruitful and useless. Accordingly in the death and burial of Christ a twofold blessing is set before us, viz., deliverance from death, to which we were enslaved, and the mortification of our flesh (Romans 6:5; Galatians 2:19, Galatians 6:14; Colossians 3:3).

8. Here we must not omit the descent to hell, which was of no little importance to the accomplishment of redemption. For although it is apparent from the writings of the ancient Fathers, that the clause which now stands in the Creed was not formerly so much used in the churches, still, in giving a summary of doctrine, a place must be assigned to it, as containing a

matter of great importance which ought not by any means to be disregarded. Indeed, some of the ancient Fathers do not omit it, and hence we may conjecture, that having been inserted in the Creed after a considerable lapse of time, it came into use in the Church not immediately but by degrees. This much is uncontroverted, that it was in accordance with the general sentiment of all believers, since there is none of the Fathers who does not mention Christ's descent into hell, though they have various modes of explaining it. But it is of little consequence by whom and at what time it was introduced. The chief thing to be attended to in the Creed is, that it furnishes us with a full and every way complete summary of faith, containing nothing but what has been derived from the infallible word of God. But should any still scruple to give it admission into the Creed, it will shortly be made plain, that the place which it holds in a summary of our redemption is so important, that the omission of it greatly detracts from the benefit of Christ's death. There are some again who think that the article contains nothing new, but is merely a repetition in different words of what was previously said respecting burial, the word Hell (Infernis) being often used in Scripture for sepulchre. I admit the truth of what they allege with regard to the not infrequent use of the term infernos for sepulchre; but I cannot adopt their opinion, for two obvious reasons. First, What folly would it have been, after explaining a matter attended with no difficulty in clear and unambiguous terms, afterwards to involve rather than illustrate it by clothing it in obscure phraseology? When two expressions having the same meaning are placed together, the latter ought to be explanatory of the former. But what kind of explanation would it be to say, the expression, "Christ was buried", means, that "he descended into hell"? My second reason is the improbability that a superfluous tautology of this description should have crept into this compendium, in which the principal articles of faith are set down summarily in the fewest possible number of words. I have no doubt that all who weigh the matter with some degree of care will here agree with me.

9. Others interpret differently, viz., That Christ descended to the souls of the Patriarchs who died under the law, to announce his accomplished redemption, and bring them out of the prison in which they were confined. To this effect they wrest the passage in the Psalms "He has broken the gates of brass, and cut the bars of iron in sunder." (Psalms 107:16); and also the passage in Zechariah, "I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water" (Zechariah 9:11). But since the psalm foretells the deliverance of those who were held captive in distant lands, and Zechariah comparing the Babylonish disaster into which the people had been plunged to a deep dry well or abyss, at the same time declares, that the salvation of the whole Church was an escape from a profound pit, I know not how it comes to pass, that posterity imagined it to be a subterraneous cavern, to which they gave the name of Limbus. Though this fable has the countenance of great authors, and is now also seriously defended by many as truth, it is nothing but a fable. To conclude from it that the souls of the dead are in prison is childish. And what occasion was there that the soul of Christ should go down thither to set them at liberty? I readily admit that Christ illumined them by the power of his Spirit, enabling them to perceive that the grace of which they had only had a foretaste was then manifested to the world. And to this not improbably the passage of Peter may be applied, wherein he says, that Christ "went and preached to the spirits that were in prison" (or rather "a watch-tower,") (1 Peter 3:19). The purport of the context is, that believers who had died before that time were partakers of the same grace with ourselves: for he celebrates the power of Christ's death, in that he penetrated even to the dead, pious souls obtaining an immediate view of that visitation for which they had anxiously waited; while, on the other hand, the reprobate were more clearly convinced that they were completely

excluded from salvation. Although the passage in Peter is not perfectly definite, we must not interpret as if he made no distinction between the righteous and the wicked: he only means to intimate, that the death of Christ was made known to both.

10. But, apart from the Creed, we must seek for a surer exposition of Christ's descent to hell: and the word of God furnishes us with one not only pious and holy, but replete with excellent consolation. Nothing had been done if Christ had only endured corporeal death. In order to interpose between us and God's anger, and satisfy his righteous judgement, it was necessary that he should feel the weight of divine vengeance. Whence also it was necessary that he should engage, as it were, at close quarters with the powers of hell and the horrors of eternal death. We lately quoted from the Prophet, that the "chastisement of our peace was laid upon him" that he "was bruised for our iniquities" that he "bore our infirmities;" expressions which intimate, that, like a sponsor and surety for the guilty, and, as it were, subjected to condemnation, he undertook and paid all the penalties which must have been exacted from them, the only exception being, that the pains of death could not hold him. Hence there is nothing strange in its being said that he descended to hell, seeing he endured the death which is inflicted on the wicked by an angry God. It is frivolous and ridiculous to object that in this way the order is perverted, it being absurd that an event which preceded burial should be placed after it. But after explaining what Christ endured in the sight of man, the Creed appropriately adds the invisible and incomprehensible judgement which he endured before God, to teach us that not only was the body of Christ given up as the price of redemption, but that there was a greater and more excellent price - that he bore in his soul the tortures of condemned and ruined man.

11. In this sense, Peter says that God raised up Christ, "having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible he should be holden of it" (Acts 2:24). He does not mention death simply, but says that the Son of God endured the pains produced by the curse and wrath of God, the source of death. How small a matter had it been to come forth securely, and as it were in sport to undergo death. Herein was a true proof of boundless mercy, that he shunned not the death he so greatly dreaded. And there can be no doubt that, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Apostle means to teach the same thing, when he says that he "was heard in that he feared" (Hebrews 5:7). Some instead of "feared," use a term meaning reverence or piety, but how inappropriately, is apparent both from the nature of the thing and the form of expression. Christ then praying in a loud voice, and with tears, is heard in that he feared, not so as to be exempted from death, but so as not to be swallowed up of it like a sinner, though standing as our representative. And certainly no abyss can be imagined more dreadful than to feel that you are abandoned and forsaken of God, and not heard when you invoke him, just as if he had conspired your destruction. To such a degree was Christ dejected, that in the depth of his agony he was forced to exclaim, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" The view taken by some, that he here expressed the opinion of others rather than his own conviction, is most improbable; for it is evident that the expression was wrung from the anguish of his inmost soul. We do not, however, insinuate that God was ever hostile to him or angry with him. How could he be angry with the beloved Son, with whom his soul was well pleased? or how could he have appeased the Father by his intercession for others if He were hostile to himself? But this we say, that he bore the weight of the divine anger, that, smitten and afflicted, he experienced all the signs of an angry and avenging God. Hence Hilary argues, that to this descent we owe our exemption from death. Nor does he dissent from this view in other

passages, as when he says, “The cross, death, hell, are our life.” And again, “The Son of God is in hell, but man is brought back to heaven.” And why do I quote the testimony of a private writer, when an Apostle asserts the same thing, stating it as one fruit of his victory that he delivered “them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage?” (Hebrews 2:15). He behoved therefore, to conquer the fear which incessantly vexes and agitates the breasts of all mortals; and this he could not do without a contest. Moreover it will shortly appear with greater clearness that his was no common sorrow, was not the result of a trivial cause. Thus by engaging with the power of the devil, the fear of death, and the pains of hell, he gained the victory, and achieved a triumph, so that we now fear not in death those things which our Prince has destroyed.

12. Here some miserable creatures, who, though unlearned, are however impelled more by malice than ignorance, cry out that I am offering an atrocious insult to Christ, because it were most incongruous to hold that he feared for the safety of his soul. And then in harsher terms they urge the calumnious charge that I attribute despair to the Son of God, a feeling the very opposite of faith. First, they wickedly raise a controversy as to the fear and dread which Christ felt, though these are openly affirmed by the Evangelists. For before the hour of his death arrived, he was troubled in spirit, and affected with grief; and at the very onset began to be exceedingly amazed. To speak of these feelings as merely assumed, is a shameful evasion. It becomes us, therefore (as Ambrose truly teaches), boldly to profess the agony of Christ, if we are not ashamed of the cross. And certainly had not his soul shared in the punishment, he would have been a Redeemer of bodies only. The object of his struggle was to raise up those who were lying prostrate; and so far is this from detracting from his heavenly glory, that his goodness, which can never be sufficiently extolled, becomes more conspicuous in this, that he declined not to bear our infirmities. Hence also that solace to our anxieties and griefs which the Apostle sets before us: “We have not an high priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all respects tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Hebrews 4:15). These men pretend that a thing in its nature vicious is improperly ascribed to Christ; as if they were wiser than the Spirit of God, who in the same passage reconciles the two things, viz., that he was tempted in all respects like as we are, and yet was without sin. There is no reason, therefore, to take alarm at infirmity in Christ, infirmity to which he submitted not under the constraint of violence and necessity, but merely because he loved and pitied us. Whatever he spontaneously suffered, detracts in no degree from his majesty. One thing which misleads these detractors is, that they do not recognise in Christ an infirmity which was pure and free from every species of taint, inasmuch as it was kept within the limits of obedience. As no moderation can be seen in the depravity of our nature, in which all affections with turbulent impetuosity exceed their due bounds, they improperly apply the same standard to the Son of God. But as he was upright, all his affections were under such restraint as prevented every thing like excess. Hence he could resemble us in grief, fear, and dread, but still with this mark of distinction. Thus refuted, they fly off to another cavil, that although Christ feared death, yet he feared not the curse and wrath of God, from which he knew that he was safe. But let the pious reader consider how far it is honourable to Christ to make him more effeminate and timid than the generality of men. Robbers and other malefactors contumaciously hasten to death, many men magnanimously despise it, others meet it calmly. If the Son of God was amazed and terror-struck at the prospect of it, where was his firmness or magnanimity? We are even told, what in a common death would have been deemed most extraordinary, that in the depth of his agony his sweat was like great drops of blood falling to the ground. Nor was this a spectacle exhibited to

the eyes of others, since it was from a secluded spot that he uttered his groans to his Father. And that no doubt may remain, it was necessary that angels should come down from heaven to strengthen him with miraculous consolation. How shamefully effeminate would it have been (as I have observed) to be so excruciated by the fear of an ordinary death as to sweat drops of blood, and not even be revived by the presence of angels? What? Does not that prayer, thrice repeated, “Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me” (Matthew 26:39), a prayer dictated by incredible bitterness of soul, show that Christ had a fiercer and more arduous struggle than with ordinary death?

Hence it appears that these triflers, with whom I am disputing, presume to talk of what they know not, never having seriously considered what is meant and implied by ransoming us from the justice of God. It is of consequence to understand aright how much our salvation cost the Son of God. If any one now ask, Did Christ descend to hell at the time when he deprecated death? I answer, that this was the commencement, and that from it we may infer how dire and dreadful were the tortures which he endured when he felt himself standing at the bar of God as a criminal in our stead. And although the divine power of the Spirit veiled itself for a moment, that it might give place to the infirmity of the flesh, we must understand that the trial arising from feelings of grief and fear was such as not to be at variance with faith. And in this was fulfilled what is said in Peter’s sermon as to having been loosed from the pains of death, because “it was not possible he could be holden of it” (Acts 2:24). Though feeling, as it were, forsaken of God, he did not cease in the slightest degree to confide in his goodness. This appears from the celebrated prayer in which, in the depth of his agony, he exclaimed, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Matthew 27:46). Amid all his agony he ceases not to call upon his God, while exclaiming that he is forsaken by him. This refutes the Apollinarian heresy as well as that of those who are called Monothelites. Apollinaris pretended, that in Christ the eternal Spirit supplied the place of a soul, so that he was only half a man; as if he could have expiated our sins in any other way than by obeying the Father. But where does the feeling or desire of obedience reside but in the soul? And we know that his soul was troubled in order that ours, being free from trepidation, might obtain peace and quiet. Moreover, in opposition to the Monothelites, we see that in his human he felt a repugnance to what he willed in his divine nature. I say nothing of his subduing the fear of which we have spoken by a contrary affection. This appearance of repugnance is obvious in the words, “Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name” (John 12:27, John 12:28). Still, in this perplexity, there was no violent emotion, such as we exhibit while making the strongest endeavours to subdue our own feelings.

13. Next follows the resurrection from the dead, without which all that has hitherto been said would be defective. For seeing that in the cross, death, and burial of Christ, nothing but weakness appears, faith must go beyond all these, in order that it may be provided with full strength. Hence, although in his death we have an effectual completion of salvation, because by it we are reconciled to God, satisfaction is given to his justice, the curse is removed, and the penalty paid; still it is not by his death, but by his resurrection, that we are said to be begotten again to a living hope (1 Peter 1:3); because, as he, by rising again, became victorious over death, so the victory of our faith consists only in his resurrection. The nature of it is better expressed in the words of Paul, “Who (Christ) was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification” (Romans 4:25); as if he had said, By his death sin was taken away, by his resurrection righteousness was

renewed and restored. For how could he by dying have freed us from death, if he had yielded to its power? how could he have obtained the victory for us, if he had fallen in the contest? Our salvation may be thus divided between the death and the resurrection of Christ: by the former sin was abolished and death annihilated; by the latter righteousness was restored and life revived, the power and efficacy of the former being still bestowed upon us by means of the latter. Paul accordingly affirms, that he was declared to be the Son of God by his resurrection (Romans 1:4), because he then fully displayed that heavenly power which is both a bright mirror of his divinity, and a sure support of our faith; as he also elsewhere teaches, that “though he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God” (2 Corinthians 13:4). In the same sense, in another passage, treating of perfection, he says, “That I may know him and the power of his resurrection” (Php 3:10). Immediately after he adds, “being made conformable unto his death.” In perfect accordance with this is the passage in Peter, that God “raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory, that your faith and hope might be in God” (1 Peter 1:21). Not that faith founded merely on his death is vacillating, but that the divine power by which he maintains our faith is most conspicuous in his resurrection. Let us remember, therefore, that when death only is mentioned, everything peculiar to the resurrection is at the same time included, and that there is a like synecdoche in the term resurrection, as often as it is used apart from death, everything peculiar to death being included. But as, by rising again, he obtained the victory, and became the resurrection and the life, Paul justly argues, “If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins” (1 Corinthians 15:17). Accordingly, in another passage, after exulting in the death of Christ in opposition to the terrors of condemnation, he thus enlarges, “Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us” (Romans 8:34). Then, as we have already explained that the mortification of our flesh depends on communion with the cross, so we must also understand, that a corresponding benefit is derived from his resurrection. For as the Apostle says, “Like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:4). Accordingly, as in another passage, from our being dead with Christ, he inculcates, “Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth” (Colossians 3:5); so from our being risen with Christ he infers, “seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God” (Colossians 3:1). In these words we are not only urged by the example of a risen Saviour to follow newness of life, but are taught that by his power we are renewed unto righteousness. A third benefit derived from it is, that, like an earnest, it assures us of our own resurrection, of which it is certain that his is the surest representation. This subject is discussed at length (1 Corinthians 15:1-58). But it is to be observed, in passing, that when he is said to have “risen from the dead,” these terms express the reality both of his death and resurrection, as if it had been said, that he died the same death as other men naturally die, and received immortality in the same mortal flesh which he had assumed.

14. The resurrection is naturally followed by the ascension into heaven. For although Christ, by rising again, began fully to display his glory and virtue, having laid aside the abject and ignoble condition of a mortal life, and the ignominy of the cross, yet it was only by his ascension to heaven that his reign truly commenced. This the Apostle shows, when he says he ascended “that he might fill all things” (Ephesians 4:10); thus reminding us, that under the appearance of contradiction, there is a beautiful harmony, inasmuch as though he departed from us, it was that his departure might be more useful to us than that presence which was confined in a humble tabernacle of flesh during his abode on the earth. Hence John, after repeating the celebrated invitation, “If any man

thirst, let him come unto me and drink," immediately adds, "the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified" (John 7:37, John 7:39). This our Lord himself also declared to his disciples, "It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you" (John 16:7). To console them for his bodily absence, he tells them that he will not leave them comfortless, but will come again to them in a manner invisible indeed, but more to be desired, because they were then taught by a surer experience that the government which he had obtained, and the power which he exercises would enable his faithful followers not only to live well, but also to die happily. And, indeed we see how much more abundantly his Spirit was poured out, how much more gloriously his kingdom was advanced, how much greater power was employed in aiding his followers and discomfiting his enemies. Being raised to heaven, he withdrew his bodily presence from our sight, not that he might cease to be with his followers, who are still pilgrims on the earth, but that he might rule both heaven and earth more immediately by his power; or rather, the promise which he made to be with us even to the end of the world, he fulfilled by this ascension, by which, as his body has been raised above all heavens, so his power and efficacy have been propagated and diffused beyond all the bounds of heaven and earth. This I prefer to explain in the words of Augustine rather than my own: "Through death Christ was to go to the right hand of the Father, whence he is to come to judge the quick and the dead, and that in corporal presence, according to the sound doctrine and rule of faith. For, in spiritual presence, he was to be with them after his ascension" (August. Tract. in Joann. 109). In another passage he is more full and explicit: "In regard to ineffable and invisible grace, is fulfilled what he said, Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world (Matthew 28:20); but in regard to the flesh which the Word assumed in regard to his being born of a Virgin, in regard to his being apprehended by the Jews, nailed to the tree, taken down from the cross, wrapt in linen clothes, laid in the sepulchre, and manifested on his resurrection, it may be said, Me ye have not always with you. Why? because, in bodily presence, he conversed with his disciples forty days, and leading them out where they saw, but followed not, he ascended into heaven, and is not here: for there he sits at the right hand of the Father: and yet he is here, for the presence of his Godhead was not withdrawn. Therefore, as regards his divine presence, we have Christ always: as regards his bodily presence, it was truly said to the disciples, Me ye have not always. For a few days the Church had him bodily present. Now, she apprehends him by faith, but sees him not by the eye" (August. Tract. 51).

15. Hence it is immediately added, that he "sitteth at the right hand of God the Father;" a similitude borrowed from princes, who have their assessors to whom they commit the office of ruling and issuing commands. Thus Christ, in whom the Father is pleased to be exalted, and by whose hand he is pleased to reign, is said to have been received up, and seated on his right hand (Mark 16:19); as if it had been said, that he was installed in the government of heaven and earth, and formally admitted to possession of the administration committed to him, and not only admitted for once, but to continue until he descend to judgement. For so the Apostle interprets, when he says, that the Father "set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and has put all things under his feet, and given him to be the head over all things to the Church." You see to what end he is so seated namely, that all creatures both in heaven and earth should reverence his majesty, be ruled by his hand, do him implicit homage, and submit to his power. All that the Apostles intends when they so often mention his seat at the Father's hand, is to teach, that every thing is placed at his disposal. Those, therefore, are in error,

who suppose that his blessedness merely is indicated. We may observe, that there is nothing contrary to this doctrine in the testimony of Stephen, that he saw him standing (Acts 7:56), the subject here considered being not the position of his body, but the majesty of his empire, sitting meaning nothing more than presiding on the judgement-seat of heaven.

16. From this doctrine faith derives manifold advantages. First, it perceives that the Lord, by his ascension to heaven, has opened up the access to the heavenly kingdom, which Adam had shut. For having entered it in our flesh, as it were in our name, it follows, as the Apostle says, that we are in a manner now seated in heavenly places, not entertaining a mere hope of heaven, but possessing it in our head. Secondly, faith perceives that his seat beside the Father is not without great advantage to us. Having entered the temple not made with hands, he constantly appears as our advocate and intercessor in the presence of the Father; directs attention to his own righteousness, so as to turn it away from our sins; so reconciles him to us, as by his intercession to pave for us a way of access to his throne, presenting it to miserable sinners, to whom it would otherwise be an object of dread, as replete with grace and mercy. Thirdly, it discerns his power, on which depend our strength, might, resources, and triumph over hell, “When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive” (Ephesians 4:8). Spoiling his foes, he gave gifts to his people, and daily loads them with spiritual riches. He thus occupies his exalted seat, that thence transferring his virtue unto us, he may quicken us to spiritual life, sanctify us by his Spirit, and adorn his Church with various graces, by his protection preserve it safe from all harm, and by the strength of his hand curb the enemies raging against his cross and our salvation; in fine, that he may possess all power in heaven and earth, until he have utterly routed all his foes, who are also ours and completed the structure of his Church. Such is the true nature of the kingdom, such the power which the Father has conferred upon him, until he arrive to complete the last act by judging the quick and the dead.

17. Christ, indeed, gives his followers no dubious proofs of present power, but as his kingdom in the world is in a manner veiled by the humiliation of a carnal condition, faith is most properly invited to meditate on the visible presence which he will exhibit on the last day. For he will descend from heaven in visible form, in like manner as he was seen to ascend, and appear to all, with the ineffable majesty of his kingdom, the splendour of immortality, the boundless power of divinity, and an attending company of angels. Hence we are told to wait for the Redeemer against that day on which he will separate the sheep from the goats and the elect from the reprobate, and when not one individual either of the living or the dead shall escape his judgement. From the extremities of the universe shall be heard the clang of the trumpet summoning all to his tribunal; both those whom that day shall find alive, and those whom death shall previously have removed from the society of the living. There are some who take the words, quick and dead, in a different sense; and, indeed, some ancient writers appear to have hesitated as to the exposition of them; but our meaning being plain and clear, is much more accordant with the Creed which was certainly written for popular use. There is nothing contrary to it in the Apostle’s declaration, that it is appointed unto all men once to die. For though those who are surviving at the last day shall not die after a natural manner, yet the change which they are to undergo, as it shall resemble, is not improperly called, death (Hebrews 9:27). “We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed” (1 Corinthians 15:51). What does this mean? Their mortal life shall perish and be swallowed up in one moment, and be transformed into an entirely new nature. Though no one can deny that that destruction of the flesh

will be death, it still remains true that the quick and the dead shall be summoned to judgement (1 Thessalonians 4:16): for “the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the lord in the air.” Indeed, it is probable, that these words in the Creed were taken from Peter’s sermon as related by Luke (Acts 10:42), and from the solemn charge of Paul to Timothy (2 Timothy 4:1).

18. It is most consolatory to think, that judgement is vested in him who has already destined us to share with him in the honour of judgement (Matthew 19:28); so far is it from being true, that he will ascend the judgement-seat for our condemnation. How could a most merciful prince destroy his own people? how could the head disperse its own members? how could the advocate condemn his clients? For if the Apostle, when contemplating the interposition of Christ, is bold to exclaim, “Who is he that condemneth?” (Romans 8:33), much more certain is it that Christ, the intercessor, will not condemn those whom he has admitted to his protection. It certainly gives no small security, that we shall be sisted at no other tribunal than that of our Redeemer, from whom salvation is to be expected; and that he who in the Gospel now promises eternal blessedness, will then as judge ratify his promise. The end for which the Father has honoured the Son by committing all judgement to him (John 5:22), was to pacify the consciences of his people when alarmed at the thought of judgement. Hitherto I have followed the order of the Apostles’ Creed, because it states the leading articles of redemption in a few words, and may thus serve as a tablet in which the points of Christian doctrine, most deserving of attention, are brought separately and distinctly before us. I call it the Apostles’ Creed, though I am by no means solicitous as to its authorship. The general consent of ancient writers certainly does ascribe it to the Apostles, either because they imagined it was written and published by them for common use, or because they thought it right to give the sanction of such authority to a compendium faithfully drawn up from the doctrine delivered by their hands. I have no doubt, that, from the very commencement of the Church, and, therefore, in the very days of the Apostles, it held the place of a public and universally received confession, whatever be the quarter from which it originally proceeded. It is not probable that it was written by some private individual, since it is certain that, from time immemorial, it was deemed of sacred authority by all Christians. The only point of consequence we hold to be incontrovertible, viz., that it gives, in clear and succinct order, a full statement of our faith, and in every thing which it contains is sanctioned by the sure testimony of Scripture. This being understood, it were to no purpose to labour anxiously, or quarrel with any one as to the authorship, unless, indeed, we think it not enough to possess the sure truth of the Holy Spirit, without, at the same time, knowing by whose mouth it was pronounced, or by whose hand it was written.

19. When we see that the whole sum of our salvation, and every single part of it, are comprehended in Christ, we must beware of deriving even the minutes portion of it from any other quarter. If we seek salvation, we are taught by the very name of Jesus that he possesses it; if we seek any other gifts of the Spirit, we shall find them in his unction; strength in his government; purity in his conception; indulgence in his nativity, in which he was made like us in all respects, in order that he might learn to sympathise with us: if we seek redemption, we shall find it in his passion; acquittal in his condemnation; remission of the curse in his cross; satisfaction in his sacrifice; purification in his blood; reconciliation in his descent to hell; mortification of the flesh in his sepulchre; newness of life in his resurrection; immortality also in his resurrection; the inheritance of a celestial kingdom in his entrance into heaven; protection, security, and the

abundant supply of all blessings, in his kingdom; secure anticipation of judgement in the power of judging committed to him. In fine, since in him all kinds of blessings are treasured up, let us draw a full supply from him, and none from any other quarter. Those who, not satisfied with him alone, entertain various hopes from others, though they may continue to look to him chiefly, deviate from the right path by the simple fact, that some portion of their thought takes a different direction. No distrust of this description can arise when once the abundance of his blessings is properly known.

08.02.17. Chapter 17

Chapter 17. Christ rightly and properly said to have merited grace and salvation for us. The three leading divisions of this chapter are,

I. A proof from reason and from Scripture that the grace of God and the merit of Christ (the prince and author of our salvation) are perfectly compatible, sec. 1 and 2.

II. Christ, by his obedience, even to the death of the cross (which was the price of our redemption), merited divine favour for us, sec. 3-5.

III. The presumptuous rashness of the Schoolmen in treating this branch of doctrine.

Sections

1. Christ not only the minister, but also the author and prince of salvation. Divine grace not obscured by this mode of expression. The merit of Christ not opposed to the mercy of God, but depends upon it.

2. The compatibility of the two proved by various passages of Scripture.

3. Christ by his obedience truly merited divine grace for us.

4. This grace obtained by the shedding of Christ's blood, and his obedience even unto death.

5. In this way he paid our ransom.

6. The presumptuous manner in which the Schoolmen handle this subject.

1. A question must here be considered by way of supplement. Some men too much given to subtilty, while they admit that we obtain salvation through Christ, will not hear of the name of merit, by which they imagine that the grace of God is obscured; and therefore insist that Christ was only the instrument or minister, not the author or leader, or prince of life, as he is designated by Peter (Acts 3:15). I admit that were Christ opposed simply, and by himself, to the justice of God, there could be no room for merit, because there cannot be found in man a worth which could make God a debtor; nay, as Augustine says most truly, "The Saviour, the man Christ Jesus, is himself the brightest illustration of predestination and grace: his character as such was not procured by any antecedent merit of works or faith in his human nature. Tell me, I pray, how that man, when assumed into unity of person by the Word, co-eternal with the Father, as the only begotten Son at God, could merit this." - "Let the very fountain of grace, therefore, appear in our head, whence, according to the measure of each, it is diffused through all his members. Every man, from the commencement of his faith, becomes a Christian, by the same grace by which that man from his formation became Christ." Again, in another passage, "There is not a more striking example of predestination than the mediator himself. He who made him (without any antecedent merit in his will) of the seed of David a righteous man never to be unrighteous, also converts those who are members of his head from unrighteous into righteous" and so forth. Therefore when we treat of the

merit of Christ, we do not place the beginning in him, but we ascend to the ordination of God as the primary cause, because of his mere good pleasure he appointed a Mediator to purchase salvation for us. Hence the merit of Christ is inconsiderately opposed to the mercy of God. It is a well known rule, that principal and accessory are not incompatible, and therefore there is nothing to prevent the justification of man from being the gratuitous result of the mere mercy of God, and, at the same time, to prevent the merit of Christ from intervening in subordination to this mercy. The free favour of God is as fitly opposed to our works as is the obedience of Christ, both in their order: for Christ could not merit anything save by the good pleasure of God, but only inasmuch as he was destined to appease the wrath of God by his sacrifice, and wipe away our transgressions by his obedience: in one word, since the merit of Christ depends entirely on the grace of God (which provided this mode of salvation for us), the latter is no less appropriately opposed to all righteousness of men than is the former.

2. This distinction is found in numerous passages of Scripture: “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish” (John 3:16). We see that the first place is assigned to the love of God as the chief cause or origin, and that faith in Christ follows as the second and more proximate cause. Should any one object that Christ is only the formal cause, he lessens his energy more than the words justify. For if we obtain justification by a faith which leans on him, the groundwork of our salvation must be sought in him. This is clearly proved by several passages: “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins” (1 John 4:10). These words clearly demonstrate that God, in order to remove any obstacle to his love towards us, appointed the method of reconciliation in Christ. There is great force in this word “propitiation”; for in a manner which cannot be expressed, God, at the very time when he loved us, was hostile to us until reconciled in Christ. To this effect are all the following passages: “He is the propitiation for our sins;” “It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell, and having made peace by the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself;” “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them;” “He has made us accepted in the Beloved,” “That he might reconcile both into one body by the cross.” The nature of this mystery is to be learned from the first chapter to the Ephesians, where Paul, teaching that we were chosen in Christ, at the same time adds, that we obtained grace in him. How did God begin to embrace with his favour those whom he had loved before the foundation of the world, unless in displaying his love when he was reconciled by the blood of Christ? As God is the fountain of all righteousness, he must necessarily be the enemy and judge of man so long as he is a sinner. Wherefore, the commencement of love is the bestowing of righteousness, as described by Paul: “He has made him to be sin for us who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Corinthians 5:21). He intimates, that by the sacrifice of Christ we obtain free justification, and become pleasing to God, though we are by nature the children of wrath, and by sin estranged from him. This distinction is also noted whenever the grace of Christ is connected with the love of God (2 Corinthians 13:13); whence it follows, that he bestows upon us of his own which he acquired by purchase. For otherwise there would be no ground for the praise ascribed to him by the Father, that grace is his, and proceeds from him.

3. That Christ, by his obedience, truly purchased and merited grace for us with the Father, is accurately inferred from several passages of Scripture. I take it for granted, that if Christ satisfied

for our sins, if he paid the penalty due by us, if he appeased God by his obedience; in fine, if he suffered the just for the unjust, salvation was obtained for us by his righteousness; which is just equivalent to meriting. Now, Paul's testimony is, that we were reconciled, and received reconciliation through his death (Romans 5:11). But there is no room for reconciliation unless where offence has preceded. The meaning, therefore, is, that God, to whom we were hateful through sin, was appeased by the death of his Son, and made propitious to us. And the antithesis which immediately follows is carefully to be observed, "As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous" (Romans 5:19). For the meaning is, as by the sin of Adam we were alienated from God and doomed to destruction, so by the obedience of Christ we are restored to his favour as if we were righteous. The future tense of the verb does not exclude present righteousness, as is apparent from the context. For he had previously said, "the free gift is of many offences unto justification."

4. When we say, that grace was obtained for us by the merit of Christ, our meaning is, that we were cleansed by his blood, that his death was an expiation for sin, "His blood cleanses us from all sin." "This is my blood, which is shed for the remission of sins" (1 John 1:7; Luke 22:20). If the effect of his shed blood is, that our sins are not imputed to us, it follows, that by that price the justice of God was satisfied. To the same effect are the Baptist's words, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). For he contrasts Christ with all the sacrifices of the Law, showing that in him alone was fulfilled what these figures typified. But we know the common expression in Moses - Iniquity shall be expiated, sin shall be wiped away and forgiven. In short, we are admirably taught by the ancient figures what power and efficacy there is in Christ's death. And the Apostle, skilfully proceeding from this principle, explains the whole matter in the Epistle to the Hebrews, showing that without shedding of blood there is no remission (Hebrews 9:22). From this he infers, that Christ appeared once for all to take away sin by the sacrifice of himself. Again, that he was offered to bear the sins of many (Hebrews 9:12). He had previously said, that not by the blood of goats or of heifers, but by his own blood, he had once entered into the holy of holies, having obtained eternal redemption for us. Now, when he reasons thus, "If the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself to God, purge your consciences from dead works to serve the living God?" (Hebrews 9:13, Hebrews 9:14), it is obvious that too little effect is given to the grace of Christ, unless we concede to his sacrifice the power of expiating, appeasing, and satisfying: as he shortly after adds, "For this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of his death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance" (Hebrews 9:15). But it is especially necessary to attend to the analogy which is drawn by Paul as to his having been made a curse for us (Galatians 3:13). It had been superfluous and therefore absurd, that Christ should have been burdened with a curse, had it not been in order that, by paying what others owed, he might acquire righteousness for them. There is no ambiguity in Isaiah's testimony, "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was laid upon him; and with his stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5). For had not Christ satisfied for our sins, he could not be said to have appeased God by taking upon himself the penalty which we had incurred. To this corresponds what follows in the same place, "for the transgression of my people was he stricken" (Isaiah 53:8). We may add the interpretation of Peter, who unequivocally declares, that he "bare

our sins in his own body on the tree" (1 Peter 2:24), that the whole burden of condemnation, of which we were relieved, was laid upon him.

5. The Apostles also plainly declare that he paid a price to ransom us from death: "Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood" (Romans 3:24, Romans 3:25). Paul commends the grace of God, in that he gave the price of redemption in the death of Christ; and he exhorts us to flee to his blood, that having obtained righteousness, we may appear boldly before the judgement-seat of God. To the same effect are the words of Peter: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold," "but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Peter 1:18,1 Peter 1:19). The antithesis would be incongruous if he had not by this price made satisfaction for sins. For which reason, Paul says, "Ye are bought with a price." Nor could it be elsewhere said, there is "one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all" (1 Timothy 2:5, 1 Timothy 2:6), had not the punishment which we deserved been laid upon him. Accordingly, the same Apostle declares, that "we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins" (Colossians 1:14); as if he had said, that we are justified or acquitted before God, because that blood serves the purpose of satisfaction. With this another passage agrees, viz., that he blotted out "the handwriting of ordinances which was against us, which was contrary to us" (Colossians 2:14). These words denote the payment or compensation which acquits us from guilt. There is great weight also in these words of Paul: "If righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain" (Galatians 2:21). For we hence infer, that it is from Christ we must seek what the Law would confer on any one who fulfilled it; or, which is the same thing, that by the grace of Christ we obtain what God promised in the Law to our works: "If a man do, he shall live in them" (Leviticus 18:5). This is no less clearly taught in the discourse at Antioch, when Paul declares, "That through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses" (Acts 13:38, Acts 13:39). For if the observance of the Law is righteousness, who can deny that Christ, by taking this burden upon himself, and reconciling us to God, as if we were the observers of the Law, merited favour for us? Of the same nature is what he afterwards says to the Galatians: "God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law" (Galatians 4:4, Galatians 4:5). For to what end that subjection, unless that he obtained justification for us by undertaking to perform what we were unable to pay? Hence that imputation of righteousness without works, of which Paul treats (Romans 4:5), the righteousness found in Christ alone being accepted as if it were ours. And certainly the only reason why Christ is called our "meat" (John 6:55), is because we find in him the substance of life. And the source of this efficacy is just that the Son of God was crucified as the price of our justification; as Paul says, Christ "has given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour" (Ephesians 5:2); and elsewhere, he "was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification" (Romans 4:25). Hence it is proved not only that salvation was given us by Christ, but that on account of him the Father is now propitious to us. For it cannot be doubted that in him is completely fulfilled what God declares by Isaiah under a figure, "I will defend this city to save it for mine own sakes and for my servant David's sake" (Isaiah 37:35). Of this the Apostle is the best witness when he says "Your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake" (1 John 2:12). For although the name of Christ is not expressed, John, in his usual manner, designates him by the pronoun "He" (autos). In the same sense also

our Lord declares, “As the living Father has sent me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me” (John 6:57). To this corresponds the passage of Paul, “Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for his sake” (Php 1:29).

6. To inquire, as Lombard and the Schoolmen do (Sent. Lib. 3 Dist. 18), whether he merited for himself, is foolish curiosity. Equally rash is their decision when they answer in the affirmative. How could it be necessary for the only Son of God to come down in order to acquire some new quality for himself? The exposition which God gives of his own purpose removes all doubt. The Father is not said to have consulted the advantage of his Son in his services, but to have given him up to death, and not spared him, because he loved the world (Romans 8:1-39). The prophetical expressions should be observed: “To us a Son is born;” “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion: shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee” (Isaiah 9:6; Zechariah 9:9). It would otherwise be a cold commendation of love which Paul describes, when he says, “God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8). Hence, again, we infer that Christ had no regard to himself; and this he distinctly affirms, when he says, “For their sakes I sanctify myself” (John 17:19). He who transfers the benefit of his holiness to others, testifies that he acquires nothing for himself. And surely it is most worthy of remark, that Christ, in devoting himself entirely to our salvation, in a manner forgot himself. It is absurd to wrest the testimony of Paul to a different effect: “Wherefore God has highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name” (Php 2:9). By what services could a man merit to become the judge of the world, the head of angels, to obtain the supreme government of God, and become the residence of that majesty of which all the virtues of men and angels cannot attain one thousandth part? The solution is easy and complete. Paul is not speaking of the cause of Christ’s exaltation, but only pointing out a consequence of it by way of example to us. The meaning is not much different from that of another passage: “Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?” (Luke 24:26).

End of book two.

Chapter 89

08.03. 1541 - (Part 3) - Prayer

III. Prayer

233. Since we have spoken sufficiently of the service of God, which is the second part of His worship, let us now speak of the third part.

We said it was the invocation of God in all our needs.

234. Do you think that He alone is to be invoked?

Yes, for He requires this as the worship proper to His Deity.

235. If it is so, in what way is it legitimate for us to ask the aid of men?

There is a great difference between these two things. For we call upon God to protest that we expect no good but from Him, and that we have no refuge elsewhere, and yet we ask the assistance of men, as far as He permits, and has given them the power and means of helping us.

236. You mean that when we seek the succour of men, there is nothing to prevent our calling upon God alone, seeing that we do not put our reliance on them, and do not seek their aid except in so far as God has ordained them to be ministers and dispensers of His blessings, in order to assist us. That is true. And indeed, every benefit that comes to us we should take as coming from God Himself, as in truth it is He who sends it to us by their hands.

237. Nevertheless, should we not give thanks to men for the kindness which they do to us?

Certainly, if only for the reason that God honours them by communicating His blessings to us through their hands, for in this way He lays us under obligation to Him, and wishes us to be mindful of them.

238. Can we not conclude from this that it is wrong to invoke angels, and saints who have departed from this world?

Yes, indeed; for God has not assigned to saints this office of aiding and assisting us. And in regard to angels, though He employs their ministry for our salvation, nevertheless He does not wish us to invoke them, nor to address ourselves to them.

239. You say, then, that all that conflicts with the order instituted by the Lord, contravenes His will?

Yes, for it is a sure sign of infidelity if we are not contented with what the Lord gives to us. Moreover, if instead of having a refuge in God alone, in obedience to His command, we have recourse to them, putting something of our reliance on them, we fall into idolatry, seeing we transfer to them that which God has reserved for Himself.

240. Let us now speak of the way of prayer to God. Is it sufficient to pray with the tongue, or does prayer require also the spirit and the heart? The tongue is not always necessary, but there must be

understanding and affection.

241. How will you prove that?

Since God is Spirit, He always requires the heart, and especially in prayer, in which we enter into communication with Him, wherefore He promises to be near to those only who call upon Him in truth (Psalms 145:18). On the other hand, He curses all who pray to Him in hypocrisy, and without affection (Isaiah 29:13-14).

242. All prayers, then, made only with the mouth are vain? Not only vain, but also displeasing to God.

243. What kind of affection should we have in prayer?

First, that we feel our misery and poverty, and that this feeling should beget sorrow and anguish in us. Secondly, that we have an earnest desire to obtain grace from God. This desire will also kindle our hearts, and engender in us an ardent longing to pray.

244. Does this derive from our nature, or from the grace of God?

Here God must come to our aid, for we are too dull, but the Spirit of God helps us with groanings that cannot be uttered, and forms in our hearts the affection and zeal that God requires, as Paul says (Romans 8:26; Galatians 4:6).

245. Does this mean that we have not to incite and urge ourselves to pray? By no means. On the contrary, when we do not feel such a disposition within us we should beseech the Lord to put it into us, so as to make us capable and fit to pray as we ought.

246. You do not, however, mean that the tongue is quite useless in prayer? Not at all, for sometimes it helps the mind, sustaining and keeping it from being drawn away from God so easily. Besides, since more than all the other members it was formed to the glory of God, it is very reasonable that it should be employed by all means for this purpose. Moreover, the zeal of the heart by its own ardour and vehemence often constrains the tongue to speak quite spontaneously.

247. If so, what about prayer in an unknown tongue?

It is a mockery of God, and a perverse hypocrisy (1 Corinthians 14:14).

248. But when we pray to God, is it a venture in which we do not know whether we will succeed or not? Or ought we to be certain that our praying will be heard? The ground of our prayers should always be, that they will received by God, and that we shall obtain what we request as far is it is expedient for us. And therefore St. Paul says that true prayer comes from faith (Romans 10:14). For if we have no reliance upon the goodness of God, it will be impossible for us to call upon Him in truth.

249. And what of those who doubt, not knowing if God hears or not? Their prayers are utterly void, since they have no promise, for He says that whatever we ask, believing, we shall receive (Matthew 21:22; Mark 11:24).

250. It remains to learn how and in whose name we can have the boldness to present ourselves before God, seeing that we are so unworthy in ourselves.

First we have promises on which we must rest, without considering our worthiness (Psalms 50:15; Psalms 91:3; Psalms 145:18; Isaiah 30:15; Isaiah 65:24; Jeremiah 29:12; Joel 3:5). Secondly, if we are children of God, He induces and urges us by His Holy Spirit to betake ourselves to Him familiarly, as to our Father (Matthew 9:2, Matthew 9:22; etc.). And lest we, who are poor worms of the earth, and miserable sinners, should be afraid to appear before His glorious majesty, He gives us our Lord Jesus Christ as a Mediator (1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 4:16; 1 John 2:1), that through Him we may have access and have no doubt of finding grace.

251. Do you understand that we are to call upon God only, in the Name of Jesus Christ?

I understand so, for we have an express commandment about this. And in it we are promised that by His intercession our requests will be heard (John 14:13).

252. It is not, then, temerity or foolish presumption on our part, if we presume to address God personally, seeing that we have Jesus Christ for our Advocate, and if we set Him before us, that God may for His sake be gracious to us and accept us?

No, for we pray as it were by His mouth, since He gives us entrance and audience, and intercedes for us (Romans 8:34).

253. Let us now speak of the substance of our prayers. Can we ask for all that comes into our mind, or is there a certain rule to be observed about it?

If we followed our fantasy, our prayers would be very badly ordered. We are so ignorant that we cannot judge what it is good to ask: Moreover, all our desires are so intemperate that it is necessary that we should not give them a loose rein.

254. What is to be done, then? That God Himself should instruct us, according to what He knows to be expedient; that we do nothing but follow Him, as if He were leading us by the hand.

255. What instructions has He given?

He has given us ample instructions throughout Scripture; but that we may address ourselves the better to a definite end, He has given us a form in which He has briefly comprehended everything that is legitimate and expedient for us to pray for.

256. Repeat it. Our Lord Jesus Christ, being asked by His Disciples to teach them how to pray, answered that they should pray thus (Matthew 6:9-13; Luke 11:1-4):"Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed by thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen."

257. To make it easier to understand, tell me how many sentences it contains.

Six, of which the first three concern the glory of God alone, without any reference to ourselves; the other three are for us, and concern our blessing and profit.

258. Are we then to ask God for anything from which no benefit redounds to us?

It is true that God, by His infinite goodness, so arranges and orders things, that nothing tends to the glory of His Name without being also salutary to us. Therefore, when His name is sanctified, He turns it to our sanctification; when His Kingdom comes, we are, in a way, sharers in it. But in desiring and asking all these things, we ought to have regard only for His glory, without thinking of ourselves, or seeking our own profit.

259. According to what you say, the first three of these requests are expedient for us, and yet they ought not to be made with any other intention that of desiring that God may be glorified.

It is so. And similarly, although the last three requests are appointed as prayers for what is expedient to us, yet even in them we ought to seek the glory of God, so that it may be the end of all our desires.

260. Let us come to the exposition. And before we go any further, why is God called our Father, rather than by some other name?

(Matthew 7:11).

262. Can we not prove from this very Name, what has been said, viz. that prayer should be grounded on the intercession of Jesus Christ?

Yes, certainly. For God does not acknowledge us as His children, except in so far as we are members of His Son.

263. Why do you not call God your God, but call Him our Father together?

Each believer may indeed call Him his own Father, but in this formula Jesus Christ instructs us to pray together, to remind us that in our prayers we are to exercise charity towards our neighbours, and not only to care for ourselves.

264. What is meant by the clause "who art in heaven"?

It is just the same as if I were to call Him exalted, mighty, incomprehensible.

265. To what end, and for what reason? That when we call upon Him, we may learn to lift our thoughts on high, and not to have any carnal or earthly thoughts of Him, not to measure Him by our apprehension, nor to subject Him to our will, but to adore His glorious Majesty in humility. It teaches us also to have more reliance on Him, since He is Governor and Master of all.

266. Now expound the first petition. The Name of God is His renown, with which He is celebrated among men. We pray then that His glory may be exalted above all, and in all things.

267. Do you think that His glory can increase or decrease? Not in itself. But this means that it may be manifested, as it ought to be, that all the works which God performs may appear glorious, as indeed they are, so that He Himself may be glorified in every way.

268. What do you understand by the Kingdom of God in the second petition?

It consists principally of two things: that He leads His own, and governs them by His Spirit, and on the other hand casts down and confounds the reprobate who refuse to subject themselves to His rule, and so makes it clear that there is no power which can resist His power.

269. In what sense do you pray that this Kingdom may come? That day by day the Lord may increase the numbers of the faithful, that day by day He may increasingly bestow His graces upon them, until He has filled them completely; moreover, that He cause His truth to shine more and more and manifest His justice, so that Satan and the powers of darkness may be put to confusion, and all iniquity be destroyed and abolished.

270. Is that not taking place today?

Yes indeed---in part, but we pray that it may continually increase and advance, until at last it comes to its perfection in the day of judgment, in which God alone will be exalted, and ever creature will be humbled before His Majesty, and He will be all in all (1 Corinthians 15:28).

271. What do you mean by asking that the will of God may be done?

(Deuteronomy 8:3, Deuteronomy 8:17).

277. Why do you call it yours, when you ask God to give it to you?

(Job 9:3). Thus the only refuge we may have is in His mercy.

282. How do you think that such remission is granted to us?

(Romans 7:23), but He gives us strength to resist, sustains us by His hand, takes us into His safe keeping, to defend and lead us.

290. How is this done?

(1 Peter 5:8). We are so feeble and frail that he would immediately overcome us, if God did not fortify us, that we might be victorious over him.

292. What does the word "temptation" signify?

08.03.00. Book 3.

Argument The two former Books treated of God the Creator and Redeemer. This Book, which contains a full exposition of the Third Part of the Apostles' Creed, treats of the mode of procuring the grace of Christ, the benefits which we derive and the effects which follow from it, or of the operations of the Holy Spirit in regard to our salvation. The subject is comprehended under seven principal heads, which almost all point to the same end, namely, the doctrine of faith.

I. As it is by the secret and special operation of the Holy Spirit that we enjoy Christ and all his benefits, the First Chapter treats of this operation, which is the foundation of faith, new life, and all holy exercises.

II. Faith being, as it were, the hand by which we embrace Christ the Redeemer, offered to us by the Holy Spirit, Faith is fully considered in the Second Chapter.

III. In further explanation of Saving Faith, and the benefits derived from it, it is mentioned that true repentance always flows from true faith. The doctrine of Repentance is considered generally in the Third Chapter, Popish Repentance in the Fourth Chapter, Indulgences and Purgatory in the Fifth Chapter. Chapters Sixth to Tenth are devoted to a special consideration of the different parts of true Repentance, viz., mortification of the flesh, and quickening of the Spirit.

IV. More clearly to show the utility of this Faith, and the effects resulting from it, the doctrine of Justification by Faith is explained in the Eleventh Chapter, and certain questions connected with it explained from the Twelfth to the Eighteenth Chapter. Christian liberty a kind of accessory to Justification, is considered in the Nineteenth Chapter.

V. The Twentieth Chapter is devoted to Prayer, the principal exercise of faith, and, as it were, the medium or instrument through which we daily procure blessings from God.

VI. As all do not indiscriminately embrace the fellowship of Christ offered in the Gospel, but those only whom the Lord favors with the effectual and special grace of his Spirit, lest any should impugn this arrangement, Chapters Twenty-First to Twenty-Fourth are occupied with a necessary and apposite discussion of the subject of Election.

VII. Lastly, as the hard warfare which the Christian is obliged constantly to wage may have the effect of disheartening him, it is shown how it may be alleviated by meditating on the final resurrection. Hence the subject of the Resurrection is considered in the Twenty-Fifth Chapter.

08.03.01. Chapter 01

Chapter 1. The benefits of Christ made available to us by the secret operation of the Spirit. The three divisions of this chapter are,

I. The secret operation of the Holy Spirit, which seals our salvation, should be considered first in Christ the Mediator as our Head, sec. 1 and 2.

II. The titles given to the Holy Spirit show that we become members of Christ by his grace and energy, sec. 3.

III. As the special influence of the Holy Spirit is manifested in the gift of faith, the former is a proper introduction to the latter, and thus prepares for the second chapter, sec. 4.

Sections

1. The Holy Spirit the bond which unites us with Christ. This the result of faith produced by the secret operation of the Holy Spirit. This obvious from Scripture.

2. In Christ the Mediator the gifts of the Holy Spirit are to be seen in all their fulness. To what end. Why the Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of the Father and the Son.

3. Titles of the Spirit: 1. The Spirit of adoption. 2. An earnest and seal. 3. Water. 4. Life. 5. Oil and unction. 6. Fire. 7. A fountain. 8. The word of God. Use of these titles.

4. Faith being the special work of the Holy Spirit, the power and efficacy of the Holy Spirit usually ascribed to it.

1. We must now see in what way we become possessed of the blessings which God has bestowed on his only-begotten Son, not for private use, but to enrich the poor and needy. And the first thing to be attended to is, that so long as we are without Christ and separated from him, nothing which he suffered and did for the salvation of the human race is of the least benefit to us. To communicate to us the blessings which he received from the Father, he must become ours and dwell in us. Accordingly, he is called our Head, and the first-born among many brethren, while, on the other hand, we are said to be ingrafted into him and clothed with him, all which he possesses being, as I have said, nothing to us until we become one with him. And although it is true that we obtain this by faith, yet since we see that all do not indiscriminately embrace the offer of Christ which is made by the gospel, the very nature of the case teaches us to ascend higher, and inquire into the secret efficacy of the Spirit, to which it is owing that we enjoy Christ and all his blessings. I have already treated of the eternal essence and divinity of the Spirit (Book 1 chap. 13 sec. 14, 15); let us at present attend to the special point, that Christ came by water and blood, as the Spirit testifies concerning him, that we might not lose the benefits of the salvation which he has purchased. For as there are said to be three witnesses in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Spirit, so there are also three on the earth, namely, water, blood, and Spirit. It is not without cause that the testimony of the Spirit is twice mentioned, a testimony which is engraven on our hearts by

way of seal, and thus seals the cleansing and sacrifice of Christ For which reason, also, Peter says, that believers are “elect” “through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 1:2). By these words he reminds us, that if the shedding of his sacred blood is not to be in vain, our souls must be washed in it by the secret cleansing of the Holy Spirit. For which reason, also, Paul, speaking of cleansing and purification, says, “but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Corinthians 6:11). The whole comes to this that the Holy Spirit is the bond by which Christ effectually binds us to himself. Here we may refer to what was said in the last Book concerning his anointing.

2. But in order to have a clearer view of this most important subjects we must remember that Christ came provided with the Holy Spirit after a peculiar manner, namely, that he might separate us from the world, and unite us in the hope of an eternal inheritance. Hence the Spirit is called the Spirit of sanctification, because he quickens and cherishes us, not merely by the general energy which is seen in the human race, as well as other animals, but because he is the seed and root of heavenly life in us. Accordingly, one of the highest commendations which the prophets give to the kingdom of Christ is, that under it the Spirit would be poured out in richer abundance. One of the most remarkable passages is that of Joel, “It shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh” (Joel 2:28). For although the prophet seems to confine the gifts of the Spirit to the office of prophesying, he yet intimates under a figure, that God will, by the illumination of his Spirit, provide himself with disciples who had previously been altogether ignorant of heavenly doctrine. Moreover, as it is for the sake of his Son that God bestows the Holy Spirit upon us, and yet has deposited him in all his fulness with the Son, to be the minister and dispenser of his liberality, he is called at one time the Spirit of the Father, at another the Spirit of the Son: “Ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now, if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his” (Romans 8:9); and hence he encourages us to hope for complete renovation: “If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you” (Romans 8:11). There is no inconsistency in ascribing the glory of those gifts to the Father, inasmuch as he is the author of them, and, at the same time, ascribing them to Christ, with whom they have been deposited, that he may bestow them on his people. Hence he invites all the thirsty to come unto him and drink (John 7:37). And Paul teaches, that “unto every one of us is given grace, according to the measure of the gift of Christ” (Ephesians 4:7). And we must remember, that the Spirit is called the Spirit of Christ, not only inasmuch as the eternal Word of God is with the Father united with the Spirit, but also in respect of his office of Mediator; because, had he not been endued with the energy of the Spirit, he had come to us in vain. In this sense he is called the “last Adam,” and said to have been sent from heaven “a quickening Spirit” (1 Corinthians 15:45), where Paul contrasts the special life which Christ breathes into his people, that they may be one with him with the animal life which is common even to the reprobate. In like manner, when he prays that believers may have “the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God,” he at the same time adds, “the communion of the Holy Ghost,” without which no man shall ever taste the paternal favor of God, or the benefits of Christ. Thus, also, in another passage he says, “The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us” (Romans 5:5).

3. Here it will be proper to point out the titles which the Scripture bestows on the Spirit, when it treats of the commencement and entire renewal of our salvation. First, he is called the “Spirit of adoption,” because he is witness to us of the free favor with which God the Father embraced us in his well-beloved and only-begotten Son, so as to become our Fathers and give us boldness of access to him; nays he dictates the very words, so that we can boldly cry, “Abba, Father.” For the same reason, he is said to have “sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts,” because, as pilgrims in the world, and persons in a manner dead, he so quickens us from above as to assure us that our salvation is safe in the keeping of a faithful God. Hence, also, the Spirit is said to be “life because of righteousness.” But since it is his secret irrigation that makes us bud forth and produce the fruits of righteousness, he is repeatedly described as water. Thus in Isaiah “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters.” Again, “I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground.” Corresponding to this are the words of our Savior, to which I lately referred, “If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.” Sometimes, indeed, he receives this name from his energy in cleansing and purifying, as in Ezekiel, where the Lord promises, “Then will I sprinkle you with clean water, and ye shall be clean.” As those sprinkled with the Spirit are restored to the full vigor of life, he hence obtains the names of “Oil” and “Unction.” On the other hand, as he is constantly employed in subduing and destroying the vices of our concupiscence, and inflaming our hearts with the love of God and piety, he hence receives the name of Fire. In fine, he is described to us as a Fountain, whence all heavenly riches flow to us; or as the Hand by which God exerts his power, because by his divine inspiration he so breathes divine life into us, that we are no longer acted upon by ourselves, but ruled by his motion and agency, so that everything good in us is the fruit of his grace, while our own endowments without him are mere darkness of mind and perverseness of heart. Already, indeed, it has been clearly shown, that until our minds are intent on the Spirit, Christ is in a manner unemployed, because we view him coldly without us, and so at a distance from us. Now we know that he is of no avail save only to those to whom he is a head and the first-born among the brethren, to those, in fine, who are clothed with him. To this union alone it is owing that in regard to us, the Savior has not come in vain. To this is to be referred that sacred marriage, by which we become bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh, and so one with him (Ephesians 5:30), for it is by the Spirit alone that he unites himself to us. By the same grace and energy of the Spirit we become his members, so that he keeps us under him, and we in our turn possess him.

4. But as faith is his principal work, all those passages which express his power and operations are, in a great measure, referred to it, as it is, only by faith that he brings us to the light of the Gospel, as John teaches, that to those who believe in Christ is given the privilege “to become the sons of God, even to them that believe in his name, which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1:12). Opposing God to flesh and blood, he declares it to be a supernatural gift, that those who would otherwise remain in unbelief, receive Christ by faith. Similar to this is our Savior’s reply to Peter, “Flesh and blood has not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 16:17). These things I now briefly advert to, as I have fully considered them elsewhere. To the same effect Paul says to the Ephesians, “Ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise” (Ephesians 1:13); thus showing that he is the internal teacher, by whose agency the promise of salvation, which would otherwise only strike the air or our ears, penetrates into our minds. In like manner, he says to the Thessalonians, “God has from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth” (2

Thessalonians 2:13); by this passage briefly reminding us, that faith itself is produced only by the Spirit. This John explains more distinctly, “We know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he has given us;” again, “Hereby know we that we dwell in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit” (1 John 3:24; 1 John 4:13). Accordingly to make his disciples capable of heavenly wisdom, Christ promised them “the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive” (John 14:17). And he assigns it to him, as his proper office, to bring to remembrance the things which he had verbally taught; for in vain were light offered to the blind, did not that Spirit of understanding open the intellectual eye; so that he himself may be properly termed the key by which the treasures of the heavenly kingdom are unlocked, and his illumination, the eye of the mind by which we are enabled to see: hence Paul so highly commends the ministry of the Spirit (2 Corinthians 3:6), since teachers would cry aloud to no purpose, did not Christ, the internal teacher, by means of his Spirit, draw to himself those who are given him of the Father. Therefore, as we have said that salvation is perfected in the person of Christ, so, in order to make us partakers of it, he baptizes us “with the Holy Spirit and with fire” (Luke 3:16), enlightening us into the faith of his Gospel, and so regenerating us to be new creatures. Thus cleansed from all pollution, he dedicates us as holy temples to the Lord.

08.03.02A. Chapter 02. Part A

Chapter 2. Of faith. The definition of it. Its peculiar properties. This chapter consists of three principal parts.

I. A brief explanation of certain matters pertaining to the doctrine of Faith, sec. 1-14. First, of the object of faith, sec. 1. Second, of Implicit Faith, sec. 2-6. Third, Definition of Faith, sec. 7. Fourth, the various meanings of the term Faith, sec. 8-13.

II. A full exposition of the definition given in the seventh section, sec. 14- .

III. A brief confirmation of the definition by the authority of an Apostle. The mutual relation between faith, hope, and charity, sec. 41-43.

Sections

1. A brief recapitulation of the leading points of the whole discussion. The scope of this chapter. The necessity of the doctrine of faith. This doctrine obscured by the Schoolmen, who make God the object of faith, without referring to Christ. The Schoolmen refuted by various passages.

2. The dogma of implicit faith refuted. It destroys faith, which consists in a knowledge of the divine will. What this will is, and how necessary the knowledge of it.

3. Many things are and will continue to be implicitly believed. Faith, however, consists in the knowledge of God and Christ, not in a reverence for the Church. Another refutation from the absurdities to which this dogma leads.

4. In what sense our faith may be said to be implicit. Examples in the Apostles, in the holy women, and in all believers.

5. In some, faith is implicit, as being a preparation for faith. This, however, widely different from the implicit faith of the Schoolmen.

6. The word of God has a similar relation to faith, the word being, as it were, the source and basis of faith, and the mirror in which it beholds God. Confirmation from various passages of Scripture. Without the knowledge of the word there can be no faith. Sum of the discussion of the Scholastic doctrine of implicit faith.

7. What faith properly has respect to in the word of God, namely, the promise of grace offered in Christ, provided it be embraced with faith. Proper definition of faith.

8. Scholastic distinction between faith formed and unformed, refuted by a consideration of the nature of faith, which, as the gift of the Spirit, cannot possibly be disjoined from pious affection.

9. Objection from a passage of Paul. Answer to it. Error of the Schoolmen in giving only one meaning to faith, whereas it has many meanings. The testimony of faith improperly ascribed to two classes of men.

10. View to be taken of this. Who those are that believe for a time. The faith of hypocrites. With whom they may be compared.

11. Why faith attributed to the reprobate. Objection. Answer. What perception of grace in the reprobate. How the elect are distinguished from the reprobate.

12. Why faith is temporary in the reprobate, firm and perpetual in the elect. Reason in the case of the reprobate. Example. Why God is angry with his children. In what sense many are said to fall from faith.

13. Various meanings of the term faith. 1. Taken for soundness in the faith. 2. Sometimes restricted to a particular object. 3. Signifies the ministry or testimony by which we are instructed in the faith.

14. Definition of faith explained under six principal heads. 1. What meant by Knowledge in the definition.

15. Why this knowledge must be sure and firm. Reason drawn from the consideration of our weakness. Another reason from the certainty of the promises of God.

16. The leading point in this certainty. Its fruits. A description of the true believer.

17. An objection to this certainty. Answer. Confirmation of the answer from the example of David. This enlarged upon from the opposite example of Ahab. Also from the uniform experience and the prayers of believers.

18. For this reason the conflict between the flesh and the Spirit in the soul of the believer described. The issue of this conflict, the victory of faith.

19. On the whole, the faith of the elect certain and indubitable. Conformation from analogy.

20. Another confirmation from the testimony of an Apostle, making it apparent, that, though the faith of the elect is as yet imperfect, it is nevertheless firm and sure.

21. A fuller explanation of the nature of faith. 1. When the believer is shaken with fear, he retakes himself to the bosom of a merciful God. 2. He does not even shun God when angry, but hopes in him. 3. He does not suffer unbelief to reign in his heart. 4. He opposes unbelief, and is never finally lost. 5. Faith, however often assailed, at length comes off victorious.

22. Another species of fear, arising from a consideration of the judgment of God against the wicked. This also faith overcomes. Examples of this description, placed before the eyes of believers, repress presumption, and fix their faith in God.

23. Nothing contrary to this in the exhortation of the Apostle to work out our salvation with fear and trembling. Fear and faith mutually connected. Confirmation from the words of a Prophet.

24. This doctrine gives no countenance to the error of those who dream of a confidence mingled with incredulity. Refutation of this error, from a consideration of the dignity of Christ dwelling in us. The argument retorted. Refutation confirmed by the authority of an Apostle. What we ought to hold on this question.

25. Confirmation of the preceding conclusion by a passage from Bernard.

26. True fear caused in two ways, viz., when we are required to reverence God as a Father, and also to fear him as Lord.

27. Objection from a passage in the Apostle John. Answer founded on the distinction between filial and servile fear.

28. How faith is said to have respect to the divine benevolence. What comprehended under this benevolence. Confirmation from David and Paul.

29. Of the Free Promise which is the foundation of Faith. Reason. Confirmation.

30. Faith not divided in thus seeking a Free Promise in the Gospel. Reason. Conclusion confirmed by another reason.

31. The word of God the prop and root of faith. The word attests the divine goodness and mercy. In what sense faith has respect to the power of God. Various passages of Isaiah, inviting the godly to behold the power of God, explained. Other passages from David. We must beware of going beyond the limits prescribed by the word, lest false zeal lead us astray, as it did Sarah, Rebekah, and Isaac. In this way faith is obscured, though not extinguished. We must not depart one iota from the word of God.

32. All the promises included in Christ. Two objections answered. A third objection drawn from example. Answer explaining the faith of Naaman, Cornelius, and the Eunuch.

33. Faith revealed to our minds, and sealed on our hearts, by the Holy Spirit. 1. The mind is purified so as to have a relish for divine truth. 2. The mind is thus established in the truth by the agency of the Holy Spirit.

34. Proof of the former. 1. By reason. 2. By Scripture. 3. By example. 4. By analogy.

35. 5. By the excellent qualities of faith. 6. By a celebrated passage from Augustine.

36. Proof of the latter by the argument a minore ad majus. Why the Spirit is called a seal, an earnest, and the Spirit of promise.

37. Believers sometimes shaken, but not so as to perish finally. They ultimately overcome their trials, and remain steadfast. Proofs from Scripture.

38. Objection of the Schoolmen. Answer. Attempt to support the objection by a passage in Ecclesiastes. Answer, explaining the meaning of the passage.

39. Another objection, charging the elect in Christ with rashness and presumption. Answer. Answer confirmed by various passages from the Apostle Paul. Also from John and Isaiah 40:1-31 w:1-31 A third objection, impugning the final perseverance of the elect. Answer by an Apostle. Summary of the refutation.

41. The definition of faith accords with that given by the Apostle in the Hebrews. Explanation of this definition. Refutation of the scholastic error, that charity is prior to faith and hope.

42. Hope the inseparable attendant of true faith. Reason. Connection between faith and hope. Mutually support each other. Obvious from the various forms of temptation, that the aid of hope necessary to establish faith.

43. The terms faith and hope sometimes confounded. Refutation of the Schoolmen, who attribute a twofold foundation to hope, viz., the grace of God and the merit of works.

1. All these things will be easily understood after we have given a clearer definition of faith, so as to enable the readers to apprehend its nature and power. Here it is of importance to call to mind what was formerly taught, first, That since God by his Law prescribes what we ought to do, failure in any one respect subjects us to the dreadful judgment of eternal death, which it denounces. Secondly, Because it is not only difficult, but altogether beyond our strength and ability, to fulfill the demands of the Law, if we look only to ourselves and consider what is due to our merits, no ground of hope remains, but we lie forsaken of God under eternal death. Thirdly, That there is only one method of deliverance which can rescue us from this miserable calamity, viz., when Christ the Redeemer appears, by whose hand our heavenly Father, out of his infinite goodness and mercy, has been pleased to succor us, if we with true faith embrace this mercy, and with firm hope rest in it. It is now proper to consider the nature of this faith, by means of which, those who are adopted into the family of God obtain possession of the heavenly kingdom. For the accomplishment of so great an end, it is obvious that no mere opinion or persuasion is adequate. And the greater care and diligence is necessary in discussing the true nature of faith, from the pernicious delusions which many, in the present day, labour under with regard to it. Great numbers, on hearing the term, think that nothing more is meant than a certain common assent to the Gospel History; nay, when the subject of faith is discussed in the Schools, by simply representing God as its object, they by empty speculation, as we have elsewhere said (Book 2, chap. 6, sec. 4), hurry wretched souls away from the right mark instead of directing them to it. For seeing that God dwells in light that is inaccessible, Christ must intervene. Hence he calls himself “the light of the world;” and in another passage, “the way, the truth, and the life.” None cometh to the Father (who is the fountain of life) except by him; for “no man knoweth who the Father is but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him.” For this reason, Paul declares, “I count all things as loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.” In the twentieth chapter of the Acts, he states that he preached “faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ;” and in another passage, he introduces Christ as thus addressing him: “I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness;” “delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee,” - “that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified through faith which is in me.” Paul further declares, that in the person of Christ the glory of God is visibly manifested to us, or, which is the same thing, we have “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” It is true, indeed, that faith has respect to God only; but to this we should add, that it acknowledges Jesus Christ whom he has sent. God would remain far off, concealed from us, were we not irradiated by the brightness of Christ. All that the Father had, he deposited with his only begotten Son, in order that he might manifest himself in him, and thus by the communication of blessings express the true image of his glory. Since, as has been said, we must be led by the Spirit, and thus stimulated to seek Christ, so must we also remember that the invisible Father is to be sought nowhere but in this image. For which reason Augustine treating of the object of faith (De Civitate Dei, lib. 11, ch. 2), elegantly says, “The thing to be known is,

whither we are to go, and by what way;" and immediately after infers, that "the surest way to avoid all errors is to know him who is both God and man. It is to God we tend, and it is by man we go, and both of these are found only in Christ." Paul, when he preaches faith towards God, surely does not intend to overthrow what he so often inculcates, viz., that faith has all its stability in Christ. Peter most appropriately connects both, saying, that by him "we believe in God" (1 Peter 1:21).

2. This evil, therefore, must, like innumerable others, be attributed to the Schoolmen, who have in a manner drawn a veil over Christ, to whom, if our eye is not directly turned, we must always wander through many labyrinths. But besides impairing, and almost annihilating, faith by their obscure definition, they have invented the fiction of implicit faith, with which name decking the grossest ignorance, they delude the wretched populace to their great destruction. Nay, to state the fact more truly and plainly, this fiction not only buries true faith, but entirely destroys it. Is it faith to understand nothing, and merely submit your convictions implicitly to the Church? Faith consists not in ignorance, but in knowledge - knowledge not of God merely, but of the divine will. We do not obtain salvation either because we are prepared to embrace every dictate of the Church as true, or leave to the Church the province of inquiring and determining; but when we recognize God as a propitious Father through the reconciliation made by Christ, and Christ as given to us for righteousness, sanctification, and life. By this knowledge, I say, not by the submission of our understanding, we obtain an entrance into the kingdom of heaven. For when the Apostle says, "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:10); he intimates, that it is not enough to believe implicitly without understanding, or even inquiring. The thing requisite is an explicit recognition of the divine goodness, in which our righteousness consists.

3. I indeed deny not (so enveloped are we in ignorance), that to us very many things now are and will continue to be completely involved until we lay aside this weight of flesh, and approach nearer to the presence of God. In such cases the fittest course is to suspend our judgment, and resolve to maintain unity with the Church. But under this pretext, to honor ignorance tempered with humility with the name of faith, is most absurd. Faith consists in the knowledge of God and Christ (John 17:3), not in reverence for the Church. And we see what a labyrinth they have formed out of this implicit faith - every thing, sometimes even the most monstrous errors, being received by the ignorant as oracles without any discrimination, provided they are prescribed to them under the name of the Church. This inconsiderate facility, though the surest precipice to destruction, is, however, excused on the ground that it believes nothing definitely, but only with the appended condition, if such is the faith of the Church. Thus they pretend to find truth in error, light in darkness, true knowledge in ignorance. Not to dwell longer in refuting these views, we simply advise the reader to compare them with ours. The clearness of truth will itself furnish a sufficient refutation. For the question they raise is not, whether there may be an implicit faith with many remains of ignorance, but they maintain, that persons living and even indulging in a stupid ignorance duly believe, provided, in regard to things unknown, they assent to the authority and judgment of the Church: as if Scripture did not uniformly teach, that with faith understanding is conjoined.

4. We grant, indeed, that so long as we are pilgrims in the world faith is implicit, not only because as yet many things are hidden from us, but because, involved in the mists of error, we attain not to

all. The highest wisdom, even of him who has attained the greatest perfection, is to go forward, and endeavor in a calm and teachable spirit to make further progress. Hence Paul exhorts believers to wait for further illumination in any matter in which they differ from each other (Php 3:15). And certainly experience teaches, that so long as we are in the flesh, our attainments are less than is to be desired. In our daily reading we fall in with many obscure passages which convict us of ignorance. With this curb God keeps us modest, assigning to each a measure of faith, that every teacher, however excellent, may still be disposed to learn. Striking examples of this implicit faith may be observed in the disciples of Christ before they were fully illuminated. We see with what difficulty they take in the first rudiments, how they hesitate in the minutest matters, how, though hanging on the lips of their Master, they make no great progress; nay, even after running to the sepulchre on the report of the women, the resurrection of their Master appears to them a dream. As Christ previously bore testimony to their faith, we cannot say that they were altogether devoid of it; nay, had they not been persuaded that Christ would rise again, all their zeal would have been extinguished. Nor was it superstition that led the women to prepare spices to embalm a dead body of whose revival they had no expectation; but, although they gave credit to the words of one whom they knew to be true, yet the ignorance which still possessed their minds involved their faith in darkness, and left them in amazement. Hence they are said to have believed only when, by the reality, they perceive the truth of what Christ had spoken; not that they then began to believe, but the seed of a hidden faith, which lay as it were dead in their hearts, then burst forth in vigor. They had, therefore, a true but implicit faith, having reverently embraced Christ as the only teacher. Then, being taught by him, they felt assured that he was the author of salvation: in fine, believed that he had come from heaven to gather disciples, and take them thither through the grace of the Father. There cannot be a more familiar proof of this, than that in all men faith is always mingled with incredulity.

5. We may also call their faith implicit, as being properly nothing else than a preparation for faith. The Evangelists describe many as having believed, although they were only roused to admiration by the miracles, and went no farther than to believe that Christ was the promised Messiah, without being at all imbued with Evangelical doctrine. The reverence which subdued them, and made them willingly submit to Christ, is honored with the name of faith, though it was nothing but the commencement of it. Thus the nobleman who believed in the promised cure of his son, on returning home, is said by the Evangelist (John 4:53) to have again believed; that is, he had first received the words which fell from the lips of Christ as an oracular response, and thereafter submitted to his authority and received his doctrine. Although it is to be observed that he was docile and disposed to learn, yet the word “believed” in the former passage denotes a particular faith, and in the latter gives him a place among those disciples who had devoted themselves to Christ. Not unlike this is the example which John gives of the Samaritans who believed the women, and eagerly hastened to Christ; but, after they had heard him, thus express themselves, “Now we believe, not because of thy saying, for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world” (John 4:42). From these passages it is obvious, that even those who are not yet imbued with the first principles, provided they are disposed to obey, are called believers, not properly indeed, but inasmuch as God is pleased in kindness so highly to honor their pious feeling. But this docility, with a desire of further progress, is widely different from the gross ignorance in which those sluggishly indulge who are contented with the implicit faith of the Papists. If Paul severely condemns those who are “ever learning, and never able to come to

the knowledge of the truth," how much more sharply ought those to be rebuked who avowedly affect to know nothing?

6. The true knowledge of Christ consists in receiving him as he is offered by the Father, namely, as invested with his Gospel. For, as he is appointed as the end of our faith, so we cannot directly tend towards him except under the guidance of the Gospel. Therein are certainly unfolded to us treasures of grace. Did these continue shut, Christ would profit us little. Hence Paul makes faith the inseparable attendant of doctrine in these words, "Ye have not so learned Christ; if so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus" (Ephesians 4:20, Ephesians 4:21). Still I do not confine faith to the Gospel in such a sense as not to admit that enough was delivered to Moses and the Prophets to form a foundation of faith; but as the Gospel exhibits a fuller manifestation of Christ, Paul justly terms it the doctrine of faith (1 Timothy 4:6). For which reason, also he elsewhere says, that, by the coming of faith, the Law was abolished (Romans 10:4), including under the expression a new and unwonted mode of teaching, by which Christ, from the period of his appearance as the great Master, gave a fuller illustration of the Father's mercy, and testified more surely of our salvation. But an easier and more appropriate method will be to descend from the general to the particular. First, we must remember, that there is an inseparable relation between faith and the word, and that these can no more be disconnected from each other than rays of light from the sun. Hence in Isaiah the Lord exclaims, "Hear, and your soul shall live" (Isaiah 4:3). And John points to this same fountain of faith in the following words, "These are written that ye might believe" (John 20:31). The Psalmist also exhorting the people to faith says, "To-day, if ye will hear his voice" (Psalms 95:7), to hear being uniformly taken for to believe. In fine, in Isaiah the Lord distinguishes the members of the Church from strangers by this mark, "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord" (Isaiah 54:13); for if the benefit was indiscriminate, why should he address his words only to a few? Corresponding with this, the Evangelists uniformly employ the terms believers and disciples as synonymous. This is done especially by Luke in several passages of the Acts. He even applies the term disciple to a woman (Acts 9:36). Wherefore, if faith declines in the least degree from the mark at which it ought to aim, it does not retain its nature, but becomes uncertain credulity and vague wandering of mind. The same word is the basis on which it rests and is sustained. Declining from it, it falls. Take away the word, therefore, and no faith will remain. We are not here discussing, whether, in order to propagate the word of God by which faith is engendered, the ministry of man is necessary (this will be considered elsewhere); but we say that the word itself, whatever be the way in which it is conveyed to us, is a kind of mirror in which faith beholds God. In this, therefore, whether God uses the agency of man, or works immediately by his own power, it is always by his word that he manifests himself to those whom he designs to draw to himself. Hence Paul designates faith as the obedience which is given to the Gospel (Romans 1:5); and writing to the Philippians, he commends them for the obedience of faith (Php 2:17). For faith includes not merely the knowledge that God is, but also, nay chiefly, a perception of his will toward us. It concerns us to know not only what he is in himself, but also in what character he is pleased to manifest himself to us. We now see, therefore, that faith is the knowledge of the divine will in regard to us, as ascertained from his word. And the foundation of it is a previous persuasion of the truth of God. So long as your mind entertains any misgivings as to the certainty of the word, its authority will be weak and dubious, or rather it will have no authority at all. Nor is it sufficient to believe that God is true, and cannot lie or deceive, unless you feel firmly persuaded that every word which proceeds from him is sacred,

inviolable truth.

7. But since the heart of man is not brought to faith by every word of God, we must still consider what it is that faith properly has respect to in the word. The declaration of God to Adam was, “Thou shalt surely die” (Genesis 2:17); and to Cain, “The voice of thy brother’s blood crieth unto me from the ground” (Genesis 4:10); but these, so far from being fitted to establish faith, tend only to shake it. At the same time, we deny not that it is the office of faith to assent to the truth of God whenever, whatever, and in whatever way he speaks: we are only inquiring what faith can find in the word of God to lean and rest upon. When conscience sees only wrath and indignation, how can it but tremble and be afraid? and how can it avoid shunning the God whom it thus dreads? But faith ought to seek God, not shun him. It is evident, therefore, that we have not yet obtained a full definition of faith, it being impossible to give the name to every kind of knowledge of the divine will. Shall we, then, for “will”, which is often the messenger of bad news and the herald of terror, substitute the benevolence or mercy of God? In this way, doubtless, we make a nearer approach to the nature of faith. For we are allured to seek God when told that our safety is treasured up in him; and we are confirmed in this when he declares that he studies and takes an interest in our welfare. Hence there is need of the gracious promise, in which he testifies that he is a propitious Father; since there is no other way in which we can approach to him, the promise being the only thing on which the heart of man can recline. For this reason, the two things, mercy and truth, are uniformly conjoined in the Psalms as having a mutual connection with each other. For it were of no avail to us to know that God is true, did He not in mercy allure us to himself; nor could we of ourselves embrace his mercy did not He expressly offer it. “I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation: I have not concealed thy loving-kindness and thy truth. Withhold not thy tender mercies from me, O Lord: let thy loving-kindness and thy truth continually preserve me” (Psalms 40:10, Psalms 40:11). “Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens; and thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds” (Psalms 36:5). “All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies” (Psalms 25:10). “His merciful kindness is great toward us: and the truth of the Lord endureth for ever” (Psalms 117:2). “I will praise thy name for thy loving-kindness and thy truth” (Psalms 138:2). I need not quote what is said in the Prophets, to the effect that God is merciful and faithful in his promises. It were presumptuous in us to hold that God is propitious to us, had we not his own testimony, and did he not prevent us by his invitation, which leaves no doubt or uncertainty as to his will. It has already been seen that Christ is the only pledge of love, for without him all things, both above and below speak of hatred and wrath. We have also seen, that since the knowledge of the divine goodness cannot be of much importance unless it leads us to confide in it, we must exclude a knowledge mingled with doubt - a knowledge which, so far from being firm, is continually wavering. But the human mind, when blinded and darkened, is very far from being able to rise to a proper knowledge of the divine will; nor can the heart, fluctuating with perpetual doubt, rest secure in such knowledge. Hence, in order that the word of God may gain full credit, the mind must be enlightened, and the heart confirmed, from some other quarter. We shall now have a full definition of faith, if we say that it is a firm and sure knowledge of the divine favor toward us, founded on the truth of a free promise in Christ, and revealed to our minds, and sealed on our hearts, by the Holy Spirit.

8. But before I proceed farther, it will be necessary to make some preliminary observations for the purpose of removing difficulties which might otherwise obstruct the reader. And first, I must refute

the nugatory distinction of the Schoolmen as to formed and unformed faith. For they imagine that persons who have no fear of God, and no sense of piety, may believe all that is necessary to be known for salvation; as if the Holy Spirit were not the witness of our adoption by enlightening our hearts unto faith. Still, however, though the whole Scripture is against them, they dogmatically give the name of faith to a persuasion devoid of the fear of God. It is unnecessary to go farther in refuting their definition, than simply to state the nature of faith as declared in the word of God. From this it will clearly appear how unskillfully and absurdly they babble, rather than discourse, on this subject. I have already done this in part, and will afterwards add the remainder in its proper place. At present, I say that nothing can be imagined more absurd than their fiction. They insist that faith is an assent with which any despiser of God may receive what is delivered by Scripture. But we must first see whether any one can by his own strength acquire faith, or whether the Holy Spirit, by means of it, becomes the witness of adoption. Hence it is childish trifling in them to inquire whether the faith formed by the supervening quality of love be the same, or a different and new faith. By talking in this style, they show plainly that they have never thought of the special gift of the Spirit; since one of the first elements of faith is reconciliation implied in man's drawing near to God. Did they duly ponder the saying of Paul, "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness" (Romans 10:10), they would cease to dream of that frigid quality. There is one consideration which ought at once to put an end to the debate, viz., that assent itself (as I have already observed, and will afterwards more fully illustrate) is more a matter of the heart than the head, of the affection than the intellect. For this reason, it is termed "the obedience of faith" (Romans 1:5), which the Lord prefers to all other service, and justly, since nothing is more precious to him than his truth, which, as John Baptist declares, is in a manner signed and sealed by believers (John 3:33). As there can be no doubt on the matter, we in one word conclude, that they talk absurdly when they maintain that faith is formed by the addition of pious affection as an accessory to assent, since assent itself, such at least as the Scriptures describe, consists in pious affection. But we are furnished with a still clearer argument. Since faith embraces Christ as he is offered by the Father, and he is offered not only for justification, for forgiveness of sins and peace, but also for sanctification, as the fountain of living waters, it is certain that no man will ever know him aright without at the same time receiving the sanctification of the Spirit; or, to express the matter more plainly, faith consists in the knowledge of Christ; Christ cannot be known without the sanctification of his Spirit: therefore faith cannot possibly be disjoined from pious affection.

9. In their attempt to mar faith by divesting it of love, they are wont to insist on the words of Paul, "Though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing" (1 Corinthians 13:2). But they do not consider what the faith is of which the Apostle there speaks. Having, in the previous chapter, discoursed of the various gifts of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:10), including diversity of tongues, miracles, and prophecy, and exhorted the Corinthians to follow the better gifts, in other words, those from which the whole body of the Church would derive greater benefit, he adds, "Yet show I unto you a more excellent way" (1 Corinthians 12:30). All other gifts, how excellent soever they may be in themselves, are of no value unless they are subservient to charity. They were given for the edification of the Church, and fail of their purpose if not so applied. To prove this he adopts a division, repeating the same gifts which he had mentioned before, but under different names. Miracles and faith are used to denote the same thing, viz., the power of working miracles. Seeing, then, that this miraculous power or faith is the particular gift of God, which a wicked man may possess and abuse, as the gift of tongues, prophecy, or other gifts, it is

not strange that he separates it from charity. Their whole error lies in this, that while the term faith has a variety of meanings, overlooking this variety, they argue as if its meaning were invariably one and the same. The passage of James, by which they endeavor to defend their error, will be elsewhere discussed (infra, chap. 17, sec. 11). Although, in discoursing of faith, we admit that it has a variety of forms; yet, when our object is to show what knowledge of God the wicked possess, we hold and maintain, in accordance with Scripture, that the pious only have faith. Multitudes undoubtedly believe that God is, and admit the truth of the Gospel History, and the other parts of Scripture, in the same way in which they believe the records of past events, or events which they have actually witnessed. There are some who go even farther: they regard the Word of God as an infallible oracle; they do not altogether disregard its precepts, but are moved to some degree by its threatening and promises. To such the testimony of faith is attributed, but by catachresis; because they do not with open impiety impugn, reject, or condemn, the Word of God, but rather exhibit some semblance of obedience.

10. But as this shadow or image of faith is of no moment, so it is unworthy of the name. How far it differs from true faith will shortly be explained at length. Here, however, we may just indicate it in passing. Simon Magus is said to have believed, though he soon after gave proof of his unbelief (Acts 8:13-18). In regard to the faith attributed to him, we do not understand with some, that he merely pretended a belief which had no existence in his heart: we rather think that, overcome by the majesty of the Gospel, he yielded some kind of assent, and so far acknowledged Christ to be the author of life and salvation, as willingly to assume his name. In like manner, in the Gospel of Luke, those in whom the seed of the word is choked before it brings forth fruit, or in whom, from having no depth of earth, it soon withereth away, are said to believe for a time. Such, we doubt not, eagerly receive the word with a kind of relish, and have some feeling of its divine power, so as not only to impose upon men by a false semblance of faith, but even to impose upon themselves. They imagine that the reverence which they give to the word is genuine piety, because they have no idea of any impiety but that which consists in open and avowed contempt. But whatever that assent may be, it by no means penetrates to the heart, so as to have a fixed seat there. Although it sometimes seems to have planted its roots, these have no life in them. The human heart has so many recesses for vanity, so many lurking places for falsehood, is so shrouded by fraud and hypocrisy, that it often deceives itself. Let those who glory in such semblances of faith know that, in this respect, they are not a whit superior to devils. The one class, indeed, is inferior to them, inasmuch as they are able without emotion to hear and understand things, the knowledge of which makes devils tremble (James 2:19). The other class equals them in this, that whatever be the impression made upon them, its only result is terror and consternation.

11. I am aware it seems unaccountable to some how faith is attributed to the reprobate, seeing that it is declared by Paul to be one of the fruits of election; and yet the difficulty is easily solved: for though none are enlightened into faith, and truly feel the efficacy of the Gospel, with the exception of those who are fore-ordained to salvation, yet experience shows that the reprobate are sometimes affected in a way so similar to the elect, that even in their own judgment there is no difference between them. Hence it is not strange, that by the Apostle a taste of heavenly gifts, and by Christ himself a temporary faith, is ascribed to them. Not that they truly perceive the power of spiritual grace and the sure light of faith; but the Lord, the better to convict them, and leave them without excuse, instills into their minds such a sense of his goodness as can be felt without the

Spirit of adoption. Should it be objected, that believers have no stronger testimony to assure them of their adoption, I answer, that though there is a great resemblance and affinity between the elect of God and those who are impressed for a time with a fading faith, yet the elect alone have that full assurance which is extolled by Paul, and by which they are enabled to cry, Abba, Father. Therefore, as God regenerates the elect only for ever by incorruptible seed, as the seed of life once sown in their hearts never perishes, so he effectually seals in them the grace of his adoption, that it may be sure and steadfast. But in this there is nothing to prevent an inferior operation of the Spirit from taking its course in the reprobate. Meanwhile, believers are taught to examine themselves carefully and humbly, lest carnal security creep in and take the place of assurance of faith. We may add, that the reprobate never have any other than a confused sense of grace, laying hold of the shadow rather than the substance, because the Spirit properly seals the forgiveness of sins in the elect only, applying it by special faith to their use. Still it is correctly said, that the reprobate believe God to be propitious to them, inasmuch as they accept the gift of reconciliation, though confusedly and without due discernment; not that they are partakers of the same faith or regeneration with the children of God; but because, under a covering of hypocrisy, they seem to have a principle of faith in common with them. Nor do I even deny that God illumines their minds to this extent, that they recognize his grace; but that conviction he distinguishes from the peculiar testimony which he gives to his elect in this respect, that the reprobate never attain to the full result or to fruition. When he shows himself propitious to them, it is not as if he had truly rescued them from death, and taken them under his protection. He only gives them a manifestation of his present mercy. In the elect alone he implants the living root of faith, so that they persevere even to the end. Thus we dispose of the objection, that if God truly displays his grace, it must endure for ever. There is nothing inconsistent in this with the fact of his enlightening some with a present sense of grace, which afterwards proves evanescent.

12. Although faith is a knowledge of the divine favor towards us, and a full persuasion of its truth, it is not strange that the sense of the divine love, which though akin to faith differs much from it, vanishes in those who are temporarily impressed. The will of God is, I confess, immutable, and his truth is always consistent with itself; but I deny that the reprobate ever advance so far as to penetrate to that secret revelation which Scripture reserves for the elect only. I therefore deny that they either understand his will considered as immutable, or steadily embrace his truth, inasmuch as they rest satisfied with an evanescent impression; just as a tree not planted deep enough may take root, but will in process of time wither away, though it may for several years not only put forth leaves and flowers, but produce fruit. In short, as by the revolt of the first man, the image of God could be effaced from his mind and soul, so there is nothing strange in His shedding some rays of grace on the reprobate, and afterwards allowing these to be extinguished. There is nothing to prevent His giving some a slight knowledge of his Gospel, and imbuing others thoroughly. Meanwhile, we must remember that however feeble and slender the faith of the elect may be, yet as the Spirit of God is to them a sure earnest and seal of their adoption, the impression once engraven can never be effaced from their hearts, whereas the light which glimmers in the reprobate is afterwards quenched. Nor can it be said that the Spirit therefore deceives, because he does not quicken the seed which lies in their hearts so as to make it ever remain incorruptible as in the elect. I go farther: seeing it is evident, from the doctrine of Scripture and from daily experience, that the reprobate are occasionally impressed with a sense of divine grace, some desire of mutual love must necessarily be excited in their hearts. Thus for a time a pious affection prevailed in Saul,

disposing him to love God. Knowing that he was treated with paternal kindness, he was in some degree attracted by it. But as the reprobate have no rooted conviction of the paternal love of God, so they do not in return yield the love of sons, but are led by a kind of mercenary affection. The Spirit of love was given to Christ alone, for the express purpose of conferring this Spirit upon his members; and there can be no doubt that the following words of Paul apply to the elect only: “The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us” (Romans 5:5); namely, the love which begets that confidence in prayer to which I have above adverted. On the other hand, we see that God is mysteriously offended with his children, though he ceases not to love them. He certainly hates them not, but he alarms them with a sense of his anger, that he may humble the pride of the flesh, arouse them from lethargy, and urge them to repentance. Hence they, at the same instant, feel that he is angry with them or their sins, and also propitious to their persons. It is not from fictitious dread that they deprecate his anger, and yet they retake themselves to him with tranquil confidence. It hence appears that the faith of some, though not true faith, is not mere pretence. They are borne along by some sudden impulse of zeal, and erroneously impose upon themselves, sloth undoubtedly preventing them from examining their hearts with due care. Such probably was the case of those whom John describes as believing on Christ; but of whom he says, “Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man” (John 2:24, John 2:25). Were it not true that many fall away from the common faith (I call it common, because there is a great resemblance between temporary and living, everduring faith), Christ would not have said to his disciples, “If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:31, John 8:32). He is addressing those who had embraced his doctrine, and urging them to progress in the faith, lest by their sluggishness they extinguish the light which they have received. Accordingly, Paul claims faith as the peculiar privilege of the elect, intimating that many, from not being properly rooted, fall away (Titus 1:1). In the same way, in Matthew, our Savior says, “Every plant which my heavenly Father has not planted shall be rooted up” (Matthew 16:13). Some who are not ashamed to insult God and man are more grossly false. Against this class of men, who profane the faith by impious and lying pretence, James inveighs (James 2:14). Nor would Paul require the faith of believers to be unfeigned (1 Timothy 1:5), were there not many who presumptuously arrogate to themselves what they have not, deceiving others, and sometimes even themselves, with empty show. Hence he compares a good conscience to the ark in which faith is preserved, because many, by falling away, have in regard to it made shipwreck.

13. It is necessary to attend to the ambiguous meaning of the term: for faith is often equivalent in meaning to sound doctrine, as in the passage which we lately quoted, and in the same epistle where Paul enjoins the deacons to hold “the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience;” in like manner, when he denounces the defection of certain from the faith. The meaning again is the same, when he says that Timothy had been brought up in the faith; and in like manner, when he says that profane babblings and oppositions of science, falsely so called, lead many away from the faith. Such persons he elsewhere calls reprobate as to the faith. On the other hand, when he enjoins Titus, “Rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith;” by soundness he means purity of doctrine, which is easily corrupted, and degenerates through the fickleness of men. And indeed, since in Christ, as possessed by faith, are “hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Colossians 1:2, Colossians 1:3), the term faith is justly extended to the whole sum of heavenly

doctrine, from which it cannot be separated. On the other hand, it is sometimes confined to a particular object, as when Matthew says of those who let down the paralytic through the roof, that Jesus saw their faith (Matthew 9:2); and Jesus himself exclaims in regard to the centurion, “I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel” (Matthew 8:10). Now, it is probable that the centurion was thinking only of the cure of his son, by whom his whole soul was engrossed; but because he is satisfied with the simple answer and assurance of Christ, and does not request his bodily presence, this circumstance calls forth the eulogium on his faith. And we have lately shown how Paul uses the term faith for the gift of miracles - a gift possessed by persons who were neither regenerated by the Spirit of God, nor sincerely reverenced him. In another passage, he uses faith for the doctrine by which we are instructed in the faith. For when he says, that “that which is in part shall be done away” (1 Corinthians 13:10), there can be no doubt that reference is made to the ministry of the Church, which is necessary in our present imperfect state; in these forms of expression the analogy is obvious. But when the name of faith is improperly transferred to a false profession or lying assumption, the catachresis ought not to seem harsher than when the fear of God is used for vicious and perverse worship; as when it is repeatedly said in sacred history, that the foreign nations which had been transported to Samaria and the neighbouring districts, feared false gods and the God of Israel: in other words, confounded heaven with earth. But we have now been inquiring what the faith is, which distinguishes the children of God from unbelievers, the faith by which we invoke God the Father, by which we pass from death unto life, and by which Christ our eternal salvation and life dwells in us. Its power and nature have, I trust, been briefly and clearly explained.

14. Let us now again go over the parts of the definition separately: I should think that, after a careful examination of them, no doubt will remain. By knowledge we do not mean comprehension, such as that which we have of things falling under human sense. For that knowledge is so much superior, that the human mind must far surpass and go beyond itself in order to reach it. Nor even when it has reached it does it comprehend what it feels, but persuaded of what it comprehends not, it understands more from mere certainty of persuasion than it could discern of any human matter by its own capacity. Hence it is elegantly described by Paul as ability “to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge” (Ephesians 3:18, Ephesians 3:19). His object was to intimate, that what our mind embraces by faith is every way infinite, that this kind of knowledge far surpasses all understanding. But because the “mystery which has been hid from ages and from generations” is now “made manifest to the saints” (Colossians 1:26), faith is, for good reason, occasionally termed in Scripture understanding (Colossians 2:2); and knowledge, as by John (1 John 3:2), when he declares that believers know themselves to be the sons of God. And certainly they do know, but rather as confirmed by a belief of the divine veracity than taught by any demonstration of reason. This is also indicated by Paul when he says, that “whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (For we walk by faith, not by sight)” (2 Corinthians 5:6, 2 Corinthians 5:7 :) thus showing, that what we understand by faith is yet distant from us and escapes our view. Hence we conclude that the knowledge of faith consists more of certainty than discernment.

15. We add, that it is sure and firm, the better to express strength and constancy of persuasion. For as faith is not contented with a dubious and fickle opinion, so neither is it contented with an obscure and ill-defined conception. The certainty which it requires must be full and decisive, as is

usual in regard to matters ascertained and proved. So deeply rooted in our hearts is unbelief, so prone are we to it, that while all confess with the lips that God is faithful, no man ever believes it without an arduous struggle. Especially when brought to the test, we by our wavering betray the vice which lurked within. Nor is it without cause that the Holy Spirit bears such distinguished testimony to the authority of God, in order that it may cure the disease of which I have spoken, and induce us to give full credit to the divine promises: “The words of the Lord” (says David, Psalms 12:6) “are pure words, as silver tried in a furnace of earth purified seven times:” “The word of the Lord is tried: he is a buckler to all those that trust in him” (Psalms 18:30). And Solomon declares the same thing almost in the same words, “Every word of God is pure” (Proverbs 30:5). But further quotation is superfluous, as the 119th Psalm is almost wholly occupied with this subject. Certainly, whenever God thus recommends his word, he indirectly rebukes our unbelief, the purport of all that is said being to eradicate perverse doubt from our hearts. There are very many also who form such an idea of the divine mercy as yields them very little comfort. For they are harassed by miserable anxiety while they doubt whether God will be merciful to them. They think, indeed, that they are most fully persuaded of the divine mercy, but they confine it within too narrow limits. The idea they entertain is, that this mercy is great and abundant, is shed upon many, is offered and ready to be bestowed upon all; but that it is uncertain whether it will reach to them individually, or rather whether they can reach to it. Thus their knowledge stopping short leaves them only mid-way; not so much confirming and tranquilizing the mind as harassing it with doubt and disquietude. Very different is that feeling of full assurance (ple4roforia) which the Scriptures uniformly attribute to faith - an assurance which leaves no doubt that the goodness of God is clearly offered to us. This assurance we cannot have without truly perceiving its sweetness, and experiencing it in ourselves. Hence from faith the Apostle deduces confidence, and from confidence boldness. His words are, “In whom (Christ) we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him” (Ephesians 3:12) thus undoubtedly showing that our faith is not true unless it enables us to appear calmly in the presence of God. Such boldness springs only from confidence in the divine favor and salvation. So true is this, that the term faith is often used as equivalent to confidence.

16. The principal hinge on which faith turns is this: We must not suppose that any promises of mercy which the Lord offers are only true out of us, and not at all in us: we should rather make them ours by inwardly embracing them. In this way only is engendered that confidence which he elsewhere terms peace (Romans 5:1); though perhaps he rather means to make peace follow from it. This is the security which quiets and calms the conscience in the view of the judgment of God, and without which it is necessarily vexed and almost torn with tumultuous dread, unless when it happens to slumber for a moment, forgetful both of God and of itself. And verily it is but for a moment. It never long enjoys that miserable obliviousness, for the memory of the divine judgment, ever and anon recurring, stings it to the quick. In one word, he only is a true believer who, firmly persuaded that God is reconciled, and is a kind Father to him, hopes everything from his kindness, who, trusting to the promises of the divine favor, with undoubting confidence anticipates salvation; as the Apostle shows in these words, “We are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end” (Hebrews 3:14). He thus holds, that none hope well in the Lord save those who confidently glory in being the heirs of the heavenly kingdom. No man, I say, is a believer but he who, trusting to the security of his salvation, confidently triumphs over the devil and death, as we are taught by the noble exclamation of Paul,

“I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:38). In like manner, the same Apostle does not consider that the eyes of our understanding are enlightened unless we know what is the hope of the eternal inheritance to which we are called (Ephesians 1:18). Thus he uniformly intimates throughout his writings, that the goodness of God is not properly comprehended when security does not follow as its fruit.

17. But it will be said that this differs widely from the experience of believers, who, in recognizing the grace of God toward them, not only feel disquietude (this often happens), but sometimes tremble, overcome with terror, so violent are the temptations which assail their minds. This scarcely seems consistent with certainty of faith. It is necessary to solve this difficulty, in order to maintain the doctrine above laid down. When we say that faith must be certain and secure, we certainly speak not of an assurance which is never affected by doubt, nor a security which anxiety never assails; we rather maintain that believers have a perpetual struggle with their own distrust, and are thus far from thinking that their consciences possess a placid quiet, uninterrupted by perturbation. On the other hand, whatever be the mode in which they are assailed, we deny that they fall off and abandon that sure confidence which they have formed in the mercy of God. Scripture does not set before us a brighter or more memorable example of faith than in David, especially if regard be had to the constant tenor of his life. And yet how far his mind was from being always at peace is declared by innumerable complaints, of which it will be sufficient to select a few. When he rebukes the turbulent movements of his soul, what else is it but a censure of his unbelief? “Why art thou cast down, my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God” (Psalms 42:6). His alarm was undoubtedly a manifest sign of distrust, as if he thought that the Lord had forsaken him. In another passage we have a fuller confession: “I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes” (Psalms 31:22). In another passage, in anxious and wretched perplexity, he debates with himself, nay, raises a question as to the nature of God: “Has God forgotten to be gracious? has he in anger shut up his tender mercies?” (Psalms 77:9). What follows is still harsher: “I said this is my infirmity; but I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High.” As if desperate, he adjudges himself to destruction. He not only confesses that he is agitated by doubt, but as if he had fallen in the contest, leaves himself nothing in reserve - God having deserted him, and made the hand which was wont to help him the instrument of his destruction. Wherefore, after having been tossed among tumultuous waves, it is not without reason he exhorts his soul to return to her quiet rest (Psalms 116:7). And yet (what is strange) amid those commotions, faith sustains the believer’s heart, and truly acts the part of the palm tree, which supports any weights laid upon it, and rises above them; thus David, when he seemed to be overwhelmed, ceased not by urging himself forward to ascend to God. But he who anxiously contending with his own infirmity has recourse to faith, is already in a great measure victorious. This we may infer from the following passage, and others similar to it: “Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord” (Psalms 27:14). He accuses himself of timidity, and repeating the same thing twice, confesses that he is ever and anon exposed to agitation. Still he is not only dissatisfied with himself for so feeling, but earnestly labors to correct it. Were we to take a nearer view of his case, and compare it with that of Ahaz, we should find a great difference between them. Isaiah is sent to relieve the anxiety of an impious and hypocritical king, and addresses him in these terms: “Take heed, and be quiet; fear not,” &c.

(Isaiah 7:4). How did Ahab act? As has already been said, his heart was shaken as a tree is shaken by the wind: though he heard the promise, he ceased not to tremble. This, therefore, is the proper hire and punishment of unbelief, so to tremble as in the day of trial to turn away from God, who gives access to himself only by faith. On the other hand, believers, though weighed down and almost overwhelmed with the burden of temptation, constantly rise up, though not without toil and difficulty; hence, feeling conscious of their own weakness, they pray with the Prophet, “Take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouths” (Psalms 119:43). By these words, we are taught that they at times become dumb, as if their faith were overthrown, and yet that they do not withdraw or turn their backs, but persevere in the contest, and by prayer stimulate their sluggishness, so as not to fall into stupor by giving way to it. (See Calv. in Psalms 88:16).

18. To make this intelligible, we must return to the distinction between flesh and spirit, to which we have already adverted, and which here becomes most apparent. The believer finds within himself two principles: the one filling him with delight in recognizing the divine goodness, the other filling him with bitterness under a sense of his fallen state; the one leading him to recline on the promise of the Gospel, the other alarming him by the conviction of his iniquity; the one making him exult with the anticipation of life, the other making him tremble with the fear of death. This diversity is owing to imperfection of faith, since we are never so well in the course of the present life as to be entirely cured of the disease of distrust, and completely replenished and engrossed by faith. Hence those conflicts: the distrust cleaving to the remains of the flesh rising up to assail the faith enlisting in our hearts. But if in the believer’s mind certainty is mingled with doubt, must we not always be carried back to the conclusion, that faith consists not of a sure and clear, but only of an obscure and confused, understanding of the divine will in regard to us? By no means. Though we are distracted by various thoughts, it does not follow that we are immediately divested of faith. Though we are agitated and carried to and fro by distrust, we are not immediately plunged into the abyss; though we are shaken, we are not therefore driven from our place. The invariable issue of the contest is, that faith in the long run surmounts the difficulties by which it was beset and seemed to be endangered.

19. The whole, then, comes to this: As soon as the minutest particle of faith is instilled into our minds, we begin to behold the face of God placid, serene, and propitious; far off, indeed, but still so distinctly as to assure us that there is no delusion in it. In proportion to the progress we afterwards make (and the progress ought to be uninterrupted), we obtain a nearer and surer view, the very continuance making it more familiar to us. Thus we see that a mind illumined with the knowledge of God is at first involved in much ignorance - ignorance, however, which is gradually removed. Still this partial ignorance or obscure discernment does not prevent that clear knowledge of the divine favor which holds the first and principal part in faith. For as one shut up in a prison, where from a narrow opening he receives the rays of the sun indirectly and in a manner divided, though deprived of a full view of the sun, has no doubt of the source from which the light comes, and is benefited by it; so believers, while bound with the fetters of an earthly body, though surrounded on all sides with much obscurity, are so far illumined by any slender light which beams upon them and displays the divine mercy as to feel secure.

20. The Apostle elegantly adverts to both in different passages. When he says, “We know in part, and we prophesy in part;” and “Now we see through a glass darkly” (1 Corinthians 13:9, 1 Corinthians 13:12), he intimates how very minute a portion of divine wisdom is given to us in the

present life. For although those expressions do not simply indicate that faith is imperfect so long as we groan under a height of flesh, but that the necessity of being constantly engaged in learning is owing to our imperfection, he at the same time reminds us, that a subject which is of boundless extent cannot be comprehended by our feeble and narrow capacities. This Paul affirms of the whole Church, each individual being retarded and impeded by his own ignorance from making so near an approach as were to be wished. But that the foretaste which we obtain from any minute portion of faith is certain, and by no means fallacious, he elsewhere shows, when he affirms that “We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Corinthians 3:18). In such degrees of ignorance much doubt and trembling is necessarily implied, especially seeing that our heart is by its own natural bias prone to unbelief. To this we must add the temptations which, various in kind and infinite in number, are ever and anon violently assailing us. In particular, conscience itself, burdened with an incumbent load of sins, at one time complains and groans, at another accuses itself; at one time murmurs in secret, at another openly rebels. Therefore, whether adverse circumstances betoken the wrath of God, or conscience finds the subject and matter within itself, unbelief thence draws weapons and engines to put faith to flight, the aim of all its efforts being to make us think that God is adverse and hostile to us, and thus, instead of hoping for any assistance from him, to make us dread him as a deadly foe.

08.03.02B. Chapter 02. Part B

Chapter 2. Of faith. The definition of it. Its peculiar properties.

Continued

21. To withstand these assaults, faith arms and fortifies itself with the word of God. When the temptation suggested is, that God is an enemy because he afflicts, faith replies, that while he afflicts he is merciful, his chastening proceeding more from love than anger. To the thought that God is the avenger of wickedness, it opposes the pardon ready to be bestowed on all offences whenever the sinner retakes himself to the divine mercy. Thus the pious mind, how much soever it may be agitated and torn, at length rises superior to all difficulties, and allows not its confidence in the divine mercy to be destroyed. Nay, rather, the disputes which exercise and disturb it tend to establish this confidence. A proof of this is, that the saints, when the hand of God lies heaviest upon them, still lodge their complaints with him, and continue to invoke him, when to all appearance he is least disposed to hear. But of what use were it to lament before him if they had no hope of solace? They never would invoke him did they not believe that he is ready to assist them. Thus the disciples, while reprimanded by their Master for the weakness of their faith in crying out that they were perishing, still implored his aid (Matthew 8:25). And he, in rebuking them for their want of faith, does not disown them or class them with unbelievers, but urges them to shake off the vice. Therefore, as we have already said, we again maintain, that faith remaining fixed in the believer’s breast never can be eradicated from it. However it may seem shaken and bent in this direction or in that, its flame is never so completely quenched as not at least to lurk under the embers. In this way, it appears that the word, which is an incorruptible seed, produces fruit similar to itself. Its germ never withers away utterly and perishes. The saints cannot have a stronger ground for despair than to feel, that, according to present appearances, the hand of God is armed for their destruction; and yet Job thus declares the strength of his confidence: “Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.” The truth is, that unbelief reigns not in the hearts of believers, but only assails them from without; does not wound them mortally with its darts, but annoys them, or, at the utmost, gives them a wound which can be healed. Faith, as Paul (declares (Ephesians 6:16), is our shield, which receiving these darts, either wards them off entirely, or at least breaks their force, and prevents them from reaching the vitals. Hence when faith is shaken, it is just as when, by the violent blow of a javelin, a soldier standing firm is forced to step back and yield a little; and again when faith is wounded, it is as if the shield were pierced, but not perforated by the blow. The pious mind will always rise, and be able to say with David, “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me” (Psalms 23:4). Doubtless it is a terrific thing to walk in the darkness of death, and it is impossible for believers, however great their strength may be, not to shudder at it; but since the prevailing thought is that God is present and providing for their safety, the feeling of security overcomes that of fear. As Augustine says, whatever be the engines which the devil erects against us, as he cannot gain the heart where faith dwells, he is cast out. Thus, if we may judge by the event, not only do believers come off safe from every contest so as to be ready, after a short repose, to descend again into the

arena, but the saying of John, in his Epistle, is fulfilled, “This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith” (1 John 5:4). It is not said that it will be victorious in a single fight, or a few, or some one assault, but that it will be victorious over the whole world, though it should be a thousand times assailed.

22. There is another species of fear and trembling, which, so far from impairing the security of faith, tends rather to establish it; namely, when believers, reflecting that the examples of the divine vengeance on the ungodly are a kind of beacons warning them not to provoke the wrath of God by similar wickedness keep anxious watch, or, taking a view of their own inherent wretchedness, learn their entire dependence on God, without whom they feel themselves to be fleeting and evanescent as the wind. For when the Apostle sets before the Corinthians the scourges which the Lord in ancient times inflicted on the people of Israel, that they might be afraid of subjecting themselves to similar calamities, he does not in any degree destroy the ground of their confidence; he only shakes off their carnal torpor which suppresses faith, but does not strengthen it. Nor when he takes occasion from the case of the Israelites to exhort, “Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall” (1 Corinthians 10:12), he does not bid us waver, as if we had no security for our steadfastness: he only removes arrogance and rash confidence in our strength, telling the Gentiles not to presume because the Jews had been cast off, and they had been admitted to their place (Romans 11:20). In that passage, indeed, he is not addressing believers only, but also comprehends hypocrites, who gloried merely in external appearance; nor is he addressing individuals, but contrasting the Jews and Gentiles, he first shows that the rejection of the former was a just punishment of their ingratitude and unbelief, and then exhorts the latter to beware lest pride and presumption deprive them of the grace of adoption which had lately been transferred to them. For as in that rejection of the Jews there still remained some who were not excluded from the covenant of adoptions, so there might be some among the Gentiles who, possessing no true faith, were only puffed up with vain carnal confidence, and so abused the goodness of God to their own destruction. But though you should hold that the words were addressed to elect believers, no inconsistency will follow. It is one thing, in order to prevent believers from indulging vain confidence, to repress the temerity which, from the remains of the flesh, sometimes gains upon them, and it is another thing to strike terror into their consciences, and prevent them from feeling secure in the mercy of God.

23. Then, when he bids us work out our salvation with fear and trembling, all he requires is, that we accustom ourselves to think very meanly of our own strength, and confide in the strength of the Lord. For nothing stimulates us so strongly to place all our confidence and assurance on the Lord as self diffidence, and the anxiety produced by a consciousness of our calamitous condition. In this sense are we to understand the words of the Psalmist: “I will come into thy house in the multitude of thy mercy: and in thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temples” (Psalms 5:7). Here he appropriately unites confident faith leaning on the divine mercy with religious fear, which of necessity we must feel whenever coming into the presence of the divine majesty we are made aware by its splendor of the extent of our own impurity. Truly also does Solomon declare: “Happy is the man that feareth alway; but he that hardeneth his heart falleth into mischief” (Proverbs 28:14). The fear he speaks of is that which renders us more cautious, not that which produces despondency, the fear which is felt when the mind confounded in itself resumes its equanimity in God, downcast in itself, takes courage in God, distrusting itself, breathes confidence in God.

Hence there is nothing inconsistent in believers being afraid, and at the same time possessing secure consolation as they alternately behold their own vanity, and direct their thoughts to the truth of God. How, it will be asked, can fear and faith dwell in the same mind? Just in the same way as sluggishness and anxiety can so dwell. The ungodly court a state of lethargy that the fear of God may not annoy them; and yet the judgment of God so urges that they cannot gain their desire. In the same way God can train his people to humility, and curb them by the bridle of modesty, while yet fighting bravely. And it is plain, from the context, that this was the Apostle's meaning, since he states, as the ground of fear and trembling, that it is God who worketh in us to will and to do of his good pleasure. In the same sense must we understand the words of the Prophet, "The children of Israel" "shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days" (Hosea 3:5). For not only does piety beget reverence to God, but the sweet attractiveness of grace inspires a man, though desponding of himself, at once with fear and admiration, making him feel his dependence on God, and submit humbly to his power.

24. Here, however, we give no countenance to that most pestilential philosophy which some semi-papists are at present beginning to broach in corners. Unable to defend the gross doubt inculcated by the Schoolmen, they have recourse to another fiction, that they may compound a mixture of faith and unbelief. They admit, that whenever we look to Christ we are furnished with full ground for hope; but as we are ever unworthy of all the blessings which are offered us in Christ, they will have us to fluctuate and hesitate in the view of our unworthiness. In short, they give conscience a position between hope and fear, making it alternate, by successive turns, to the one and the other. Hope and fear, again, they place in complete contrast - the one falling as the other rises, and rising as the other falls. Thus Satan, finding the devices by which he was wont to destroy the certainty of faith too manifest to be now of any avail, is endeavoring, by indirect methods, to undermine it. But what kind of confidence is that which is ever and anon supplanted by despair? They tell you, if you look to Christ salvation is certain; if you return to yourself damnation is certain. Therefore, your mind must be alternately ruled by diffidence and hope; as if we were to imagine Christ standing at a distance, and not rather dwelling in us. We expect salvation from him - not because he stands aloof from us, but because ingrafting us into his body he not only makes us partakers of all his benefits, but also of himself. Therefore, I thus retort the argument, If you look to yourself damnation is certain: but since Christ has been communicated to you with all his benefits, so that all which is his is made yours, you become a member of him, and hence one with him. His righteousness covers your sins - his salvation extinguishes your condemnation; he interposes with his worthiness, and so prevents your unworthiness from coming into the view of God. Thus it truly is. It will never do to separate Christ from us, nor us from him; but we must, with both hands, keep firm hold of that alliance by which he has riveted us to himself. This the Apostle teaches us: "The body is dead because of sin; but the spirit is life because of righteousness" (Romans 8:10). According to the frivolous trifling of these objectors, he ought to have said, Christ indeed has life in himself, but you, as you are sinners, remain liable to death and condemnation. Very different is his language. He tells us that the condemnation which we of ourselves deserve is annihilated by the salvation of Christ; and to confirm this he employs the argument to which I have referred, viz., that Christ is not external to us, but dwells in us; and not only unites us to himself by an undivided bond of fellowship, but by a wondrous communion brings us daily into closer connection, until he becomes altogether one with us. And yet I deny not, as I lately said, that faith occasionally suffers certain interruptions when, by violent assault, its

weakness is made to bend in this direction or in that; and its light is buried in the thick darkness of temptation. Still happen what may, faith ceases not to long after God.

25. The same doctrine is taught by Bernard when he treats professedly on this subject in his Fifth Homily on the Dedication of the Temple: “By the blessing of God, sometimes meditating on the soul, methinks, I find in it as it were two contraries. When I look at it as it is in itself and of itself, the truest thing I can say of it is, that it has been reduced to nothing. What need is there to enumerate each of its miseries? how burdened with sin, obscured with darkness, ensnared by allurements, teeming with lusts, ruled by passion, filled with delusions, ever prone to evil, inclined to every vice; lastly, full of ignominy and confusion. If all its righteousnesses, when examined by the light of truth, are but as filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6), what must we suppose its unrighteousness to be? ‘If, therefore, the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness?’ (Matthew 6:23). What then? man doubtless has been made subject to vanity - man here been reduced to nothing - man is nothing. And yet how is he whom God exalts utterly nothing? How is he nothing to whom a divine heart has been given? Let us breathe again, brethren. Although we are nothing in our hearts, perhaps something of us may lurk in the heart of God. O Father of mercies! O Father of the miserable! how plantest thou thy heart in us? Where thy heart is, there is thy treasure also. But how are we thy treasure if we are nothing? All nations before thee are as nothing. Observe, before thee; not within thee. Such are they in the judgment of thy truth, but not such in regard to thy affection. Thou callest the things which be not as though they were; and they are not, because thou callest them ‘things that be not:’ and yet they are because thou callest them. For though they are not as to themselves, yet they are with thee according to the declaration of Paul: ‘Not of works, but of him that calleth,’” (Romans 9:11). He then goes on to say that the connection is wonderful in both points of view. Certainly things which are connected together do not mutually destroy each other. This he explains more clearly in his conclusion in the following terms: “If, in both views, we diligently consider what we are - in the one view our nothingness, in the other our greatness - I presume our glorying will seem restrained; but perhaps it is rather increased and confirmed, because we glory not in ourselves, but in the Lord. Our thought is, if he determined to save us we shall be delivered; and here we begin again to breathe. But, ascending to a loftier height, let us seek the city of God, let us seek the temple, let us seek our home, let us seek our spouse. I have not forgotten myself when, with fear and reverence, I say, We are - are in the heart of God. We are, by his dignifying, not by our own dignity.”

26. Moreover, the fear of the Lord, which is uniformly attributed to all the saints, and which, in one passage, is called “the beginning of wisdom,” in another wisdom itself, although it is one, proceeds from a twofold cause. God is entitled to the reverence of a Father and a Lord. Hence he who desires duly to worship him, will study to act the part both of an obedient son and a faithful servant. The obedience paid to God as a Father he by his prophet terms honor; the service performed to him as a master he terms fear. “A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master. If then I be a father, where is mine honor? and if I be a master, where is my fear?” But while he thus distinguishes between the two, it is obvious that he at the same time confounds them. The fear of the Lord, therefore, may be defined reverence mingled with honor and fear. It is not strange that the same mind can entertain both feelings; for he who considers with himself what kind of a father God is to us, will see sufficient reason, even were there no hell, why the thought of offending him should seem more dreadful than any death. But so prone is our carnal nature to indulgence in sin,

that, in order to curb it in every way, we must also give place to the thought that all iniquity is abomination to the Master under whom we live; that those who, by wicked lives, provoke his anger, will not escape his vengeance.

27. There is nothing repugnant to this in the observation of John: “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear has torment” (1 John 4:18). For he is speaking of the fear of unbelief, between which and the fear of believers there is a wide difference. The wicked do not fear God from any unwillingness to offend him, provided they could do so with impunity; but knowing that he is armed with power for vengeance, they tremble in dismay on hearing of his anger. And they thus dread his anger, because they think it is impending over them, and they every moment expect it to fall upon their heads. But believers, as has been said, dread the offense even more than the punishment. They are not alarmed by the fear of punishment, as if it were impending over them, but are rendered the more cautious of doing anything to provoke it. Thus the Apostle addressing believers says, “Let no man deceive you with vain words; for because of these things, the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience” (Ephesians 5:6; Colossians 3:6). He does not threaten that wrath will descend upon them; but he admonishes them, while they think how the wrath of God is prepared for the wicked, on account of the crimes which he had enumerated, not to run the risk of provoking it. It seldom happens that mere threatening have the effect of arousing the reprobate; nay, becoming more callous and hardened when God thunders verbally from heaven, they obstinately persist in their rebellion. It is only when actually smitten by his hand that they are forced, whether they will or not, to fear. This fear the sacred writers term servile, and oppose to the free and voluntary fear which becomes sons. Some, by a subtle distinction, have introduced an intermediate species, holding that that forced and servile fear sometimes subdues the mind, and leads spontaneously to proper fear.

28. The divine favor to which faith is said to have respect, we understand to include in it the possession of salvation and eternal life. For if, when God is propitious, no good thing can be wanting to us, we have ample security for our salvation when assured of his love. “Turn us again, O God, and cause thy face to shine,” says the Prophet, “and we shall be saved” (Psalms 80:3). Hence the Scriptures make the sum of our salvation to consist in the removal of all enmity, and our admission into favor; thus intimating, that when God is reconciled all danger is past, and every thing good will befall us. Wherefore, faith apprehending the love of God has the promise both of the present and the future life, and ample security for all blessings (Ephesians 2:14). The nature of this must be ascertained from the word. Faith does not promise us length of days, riches and honors (the Lord not having been pleased that any of these should be appointed us); but is contented with the assurance, that however poor we may be in regard to present comforts, God will never fail us. The chief security lies in the expectation of future life, which is placed beyond doubt by the word of God. Whatever be the miseries and calamities which await the children of God in this world, they cannot make his favor cease to be complete happiness. Hence, when we were desirous to express the sum of blessedness, we designated it by the favor of God, from which, as their source, all kinds of blessings flow. And we may observe throughout the Scriptures, that they refer us to the love of God, not only when they treat of our eternal salvation, but of any blessing whatever. For which reason David sings, that the loving-kindness of God experienced by the pious heart is sweeter and more to be desired than life itself (Psalms 63:3). In short, if we have every earthly comfort to a wish, but are uncertain whether we have the love or the hatred of God,

our felicity will be cursed, and therefore miserable. But if God lift on us the light of his fatherly countenance, our very miseries will be blessed, inasmuch as they will become helps to our salvation. Thus Paul, after bringing together all kinds of adversity, boasts that they cannot separate us from the love of God: and in his prayers he uniformly begins with the grace of God as the source of all prosperity. In like manner, to all the terrors which assail us, David opposes merely the favor of God - “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me” (Psalms 23:4). And we feel that our minds always waver until, contented with the grace of God, we in it seek peace, and feel thoroughly persuaded of what is said in the psalm, “Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, and the people whom he has chosen for his own inheritance” (Psalms 33:12).

29. Free promise we make the foundation of faith, because in it faith properly consists. For though it holds that God is always true, whether in ordering or forbidding, promising or threatening; though it obediently receive his commands, observe his prohibitions, and give heed to his threatening; yet it properly begins with promise, continues with it, and ends with it. It seeks life in God, life which is not found in commands or the denunciations of punishment, but in the promise of mercy. And this promise must be gratuitous; for a conditional promise, which throws us back upon our works, promises life only in so far as we find it existing in ourselves. Therefore, if we would not have faith to waver and tremble, we must support it with the promise of salvation, which is offered by the Lord spontaneously and freely, from a regard to our misery rather than our worth. Hence the Apostle bears this testimony to the Gospel, that it is the word of faith (Romans 10:8). This he concedes not either to the precepts or the promises of the Law, since there is nothing which can establish our faith, but that free embassy by which God reconciles the world to himself. Hence he often uses faith and the Gospel as correlative terms, as when he says, that the ministry of the Gospel was committed to him for “obedience to the faith;” that “it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth;” that “therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith” (Romans 1:5, Romans 1:16,Romans 1:17). No wonder: for seeing that the Gospel is “the ministry of reconciliation” (2 Corinthians 5:18), there is no other sufficient evidence of the divine favor, such as faith requires to know. Therefore, when we say, that faith must rest on a free promise, we deny not that believers accept and embrace the word of God in all its parts, but we point to the promise of mercy as its special object. Believers, indeed, ought to recognize God as the judge and avenger of wickedness; and yet mercy is the object to which they properly look, since he is exhibited to their contemplation as “good and ready to forgive,” “plenteous in mercy,” “slow to anger,” “good to all,” and shedding “his tender mercies over all his works” (Psalms 86:5; Psalms 103:8; Psalms 145:8, Psalms 145:9).

30. I stay not to consider the rabid objections of Pighius, and others like-minded, who inveigh against this restriction, as rending faith, and laying hold of one of its fragments. I admit, as I have already said, that the general object of faith (as they express it) is the truth of God, whether he threatens or gives hope of his favor. Accordingly, the Apostle attributes it to faith in Noah, that he feared the destruction of the world, when as yet it was not seen (Hebrews 11:17). If fear of impending punishment was a work of faith, threatening ought not to be excluded in defining it. This is indeed true; but we are unjustly and calumniously charged with denying that faith has respect to the whole word of God. We only mean to maintain these two points - that faith is never decided until it attain to a free promise; and that the only way in which faith reconciles us to God is by

uniting us with Christ. Both are deserving of notice. We are inquiring after a faith which separates the children of God from the reprobate, believers from unbelievers. Shall every man, then, who believes that God is just in what he commands, and true in what he threatens, be on that account classed with believers? Very far from it. Faith, then, has no firm footing until it stand in the mercy of God. Then what end have we in view in discoursing of faith? Is it not that we may understand the way of salvation? But how can faith be saving, unless in so far as it in grafts us into the body of Christ? There is no absurdity, therefore, when, in defining it, we thus press its special object, and, by way of distinction, add to the generic character the particular mark which distinguishes the believer from the unbeliever. In short, the malicious have nothing to carp at in this doctrine, unless they are to bring the same censure against the Apostle Paul, who specially designates the Gospel as “the word of faith” (Romans 10:8).

31. Hence again we infer, as has already been explained, that faith has no less need of the word than the fruit of a tree has of a living root; because, as David testifies, none can hope in God but those who know his name (Psalms 9:10). This knowledge, however, is not left to every man’s imagination, but depends on the testimony which God himself gives to his goodness. This the same Psalmist confirms in another passage, “Thy salvation according to thy word” (Psalms 119:41). Again, “Save me,” “I hoped in thy word” (Psalms 119:146, Psalms 119:147). Here we must attend to the relation of faith to the word, and to salvation as its consequence. Still, however, we exclude not the power of God. If faith cannot support itself in the view of this power, it never will give Him the honor which is due. Paul seems to relate a trivial or very ordinary circumstance with regard to Abraham, when he says, that he believed that God, who had given him the promise of a blessed seed, was able also to perform it (Romans 4:21). And in like manner, in another passage, he says of himself, “I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day” (2 Timothy 1:12). But let any one consider with himself, how he is ever and anon assailed with doubts in regard to the power of God, and he will readily perceive, that those who duly magnify it have made no small progress in faith. We all acknowledge that God can do whatsoever he pleases; but while every temptation, even the most trivial, fills us with fear and dread, it is plain that we derogate from the power of God, by attaching less importance to his promises than to Satan’s threatening against them. This is the reason why Isaiah, when he would impress on the hearts of the people the certainty of faith, discourses so magnificently of the boundless power of God. He often seems, after beginning to speak of the hope of pardon and reconciliation, to digress, and unnecessarily take a long circuitous course, describing how wonderfully God rules the fabric of heaven and earth, with the whole course of nature; and yet he introduces nothing which is not appropriate to the occasion; because unless the power of God, to which all things are possible is presented to our eye, our ears malignantly refuse admission to the word, or set no just value upon it. We may add, that an effectual power is here meant; for piety, as it has elsewhere been seen, always makes a practical application of the power of God; in particular, keeps those works in view in which he has declared himself to be a Father. Hence the frequent mention in Scripture of redemption; from which the Israelites might learn, that he who had once been the author of salvation would be its perpetual guardian. By his own example, also, David reminds us, that the benefits which God has bestowed privately on any individual, tend to confirm his faith for the time to come; nay, that when God seems to have forsaken us, we ought to extend our view farther, and take courage from his former favors, as is said in another psalm, “I remember the days of old: I meditate on all thy works” (Psalms 143:5).

Again “I will remember the works of the Lord; surely I will remember thy wonders of old” (Psalms 77:11). But because all our conceptions of the power and works of God are evanescent without the word, we are not rash in maintaining, that there is no faith until God present us with clear evidence of his grace.

Here, however, a question might be raised as to the view to be taken of Sarah and Rebekah, both of whom, impelled as it would seem by zeal for the faith, went beyond the limits of the word. Sarah, in her eager desire for the promised seed, gave her maid to her husband. That she sinned in many respects is not to be denied; but the only fault to which I now refer is her being carried away by zeal, and not confining herself within the limits prescribed by the Word. It is certain, however, that her desire proceeded from faith. Rebekah, again, divinely informed of the election of her son Jacob, procures the blessing for him by a wicked stratagem; deceives her husband, who was a witness and minister of divine grace; forces her son to lie; by various frauds and impostures corrupts divine truth; in fine, by exposing his promise to scorn, does what in her lies to make it of no effect. And yet this conduct, however vicious and reprehensible, was not devoid of faith. She must have overcome many obstacles before she obtained so strong a desire of that which, without any hope of earthly advantage, was full of difficulty and danger. In the same way, we cannot say that the holy patriarch Isaac was altogether void of faith, in that, after he had been similarly informed of the honor transferred to the younger son, he still continues his predilection in favor of his first-born, Esau. These examples certainly show that error is often mingled with faith; and yet that when faith is real, it always obtains the preeminence. For as the particular error of Rebekah did not render the blessing of no effect, neither did it nullify the faith which generally ruled in her mind, and was the principle and cause of that action. In this, nevertheless, Rebekah showed how prone the human mind is to turn aside whenever it gives itself the least indulgence. But though defect and infirmity obscure faith, they do not extinguish it. Still they admonish us how carefully we ought to cling to the word of God, and at the same time confirm what we have taught, viz., that faith gives way when not supported by the word, just as the minds of Sarah, Isaac, and Rebekah, would have lost themselves in devious paths, had not the secret restraint of Providence kept them obedient to the word.

32. On the other hand, we have good ground for comprehending all the promises in Christ, since the Apostle comprehends the whole Gospel under the knowledge of Christ, and declares that all the promises of God are in him yea, and amen. The reason for this is obvious. Every promise which God makes is evidence of his good will. This is invariably true, and is not inconsistent with the fact, that the large benefits which the divine liberality is constantly bestowing on the wicked are preparing them for heavier judgment. As they neither think that these proceed from the hand of the Lord, nor acknowledge them as his, or if they do so acknowledge them, never regard them as proofs of his favor, they are in no respect more instructed thereby in his mercy than brute beasts, which, according to their condition, enjoy the same liberality, and yet never look beyond it. Still it is true, that by rejecting the promises generally offered to them, they subject themselves to severer punishment. For though it is only when the promises are received in faith that their efficacy is manifested, still their reality and power are never extinguished by our infidelity or ingratitude. Therefore, when the Lord by his promises invites us not only to enjoy the fruits of his kindness, but also to meditate upon them, he at the same time declares his love. Thus we are brought back to our statement, that every promise is a manifestation of the divine favor toward us. Now, without

controversy, God loves no man out of Christ. He is the beloved Son, in whom the love of the Father dwells, and from whom it afterwards extends to us. Thus Paul says “In whom he has made us accepted in the Beloved” (Ephesians 1:6). It is by his intervention, therefore, that love is diffused so as to reach us. Accordingly, in another passage, the Apostle calls Christ “our peace” (Ephesians 2:14), and also represents him as the bond by which the Father is united to us in paternal affection (Romans 8:3). It follows, that whenever any promise is made to us, we must turn our eyes toward Christ. Hence, with good reasons Paul declares that in him all the promises of God are confirmed and completed (Romans 15:8). Some examples are brought forward as repugnant to this view. When Naaman the Syrian made inquiry at the prophet as to the true mode of worshipping God, we cannot (it is said) suppose that he was informed of the Mediator, and yet he is commended for his piety (2 Kings 5:17-19). Nor could Cornelius, a Roman heathen, be acquainted with what was not known to all the Jews, and at best known obscurely. And yet his alms and prayers were acceptable to God (Acts 10:31), while the prophet by his answer approved of the sacrifices of Naaman. In both, this must have been the result of faith. In like manner, the eunuch to whom Philip was sent, had he not been endued with some degree of faith, never would have incurred the fatigue and expense of a long and difficult journey to obtain an opportunity of worship (Acts 8:27, Acts 8:31); and yet we see how, when interrogated by Philip, he betrays his ignorance of the Mediator. I admit that, in some respect, their faith was not explicit either as to the person of Christ, or the power and office assigned him by the Father. Still it is certain that they were imbued with principles which might give some, though a slender, foretaste of Christ. This should not be thought strange; for the eunuch would not have hastened from a distant country to Jerusalem to an unknown God; nor could Cornelius, after having once embraced the Jewish religion, have lived so long in Judea without becoming acquainted with the rudiments of sound doctrine. In regard to Naaman, it is absurd to suppose that Elisha, while he gave him many minute precepts, said nothing of the principal matter. Therefore, although their knowledge of Christ may have been obscure, we cannot suppose that they had no such knowledge at all. They used the sacrifices of the Law, and must have distinguished them from the spurious sacrifices of the Gentiles, by the end to which they referred, viz., Christ.

33. A simple external manifestation of the word ought to be amply sufficient to produce faith, did not our blindness and perverseness prevent. But such is the proneness of our mind to vanity, that it can never adhere to the truth of God, and such its dullness, that it is always blind even in his light. Hence without the illumination of the Spirit the word has no effect; and hence also it is obvious that faith is something higher than human understanding. Nor were it sufficient for the mind to be illumined by the Spirit of God unless the heart also were strengthened and supported by his power. Here the Schoolmen go completely astray, dwelling entirely in their consideration of faith, on the bare simple assent of the understanding, and altogether overlooking confidence and security of heart. Faith is the special gift of God in both ways - in purifying the mind so as to give it a relish for divine truth, and afterwards in establishing it therein. For the Spirit does not merely originate faith, but gradually increases it, until by its means he conducts us into the heavenly kingdom. “That good thing which was committed unto thee,” says Paul, “keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us” (2 Timothy 1:14). In what sense Paul says (Galatians 3:2), that the Spirit is given by the hearing of faith, may be easily explained. If there were only a single gift of the Spirit, he who is the author and cause of faith could not without absurdity be said to be its effect; but after celebrating the gifts with which God adorns his church, and by successive additions of faith leads it

to perfection, there is nothing strange in his ascribing to faith the very gifts which faith prepares us for receiving. It seems to some paradoxical, when it is said that none can believe Christ save those to whom it is given; but this is partly because they do not observe how recondite and sublime heavenly wisdom is, or how dull the mind of man in discerning divine mysteries, and partly because they pay no regard to that firm and stable constancy of heart which is the chief part of faith.

34. But as Paul argues, “What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man but the Spirit of God” (1 Corinthians 2:11). If in regard to divine truth we hesitate even as to those things which we see with the bodily eye, how can we be firm and steadfast in regard to those divine promises which neither the eye sees nor the mind comprehends? Here human discernment is so defective and lost, that the first step of advancement in the school of Christ is to renounce it (Matthew 11:25; Luke 10:21). Like a veil interposed, it prevents us from beholding divine masteries, which are revealed only to babes. “Flesh and blood” does not reveal them (Matthew 16:17). “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned” (1 Corinthians 2:14). The supplies of the Holy Spirit are therefore necessary, or rather his agency is here the only strength. “For who has known the mind of the Lord? or who has been his counselor?” (Romans 11:34); but “The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God” (1 Corinthians 2:10). Thus it is that we attain to the mind of Christ: “No man can come to me, except the Father which has sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.” “Every man therefore that has heard, and learned of the Father, cometh unto me. Not that any man has seen the Father, save he which is of God, he has seen the Father” (John 6:44, John 6:45, John 6:46). Therefore, as we cannot possibly come to Christ unless drawn by the Spirit, so when we are drawn we are both in mind and spirit exalted far above our own understanding. For the soul, when illumined by him, receives as it were a new eye, enabling it to contemplate heavenly mysteries, by the splendor of which it was previously dazzled. And thus, indeed, it is only when the human intellect is irradiated by the light of the Holy Spirit that it begins to have a taste of those things which pertain to the kingdom of God; previously it was too stupid and senseless to have any relish for them. Hence our Savior, when clearly declaring the mysteries of the kingdom to the two disciples, makes no impression till he opens their minds to understand the Scriptures (Luke 24:27, Luke 24:45). Hence also, though he had taught the Apostles with his own divine lips, it was still necessary to send the Spirit of truth to instill into their minds the same doctrine which they had heard with their ears. The word is, in regard to those to whom it is preached, like the sun which shines upon all, but is of no use to the blind. In this matter we are all naturally blind; and hence the word cannot penetrate our mind unless the Spirit, that internal teacher, by his enlightening power make an entrance for it.

35. Having elsewhere shown more fully, when treating of the corruption of our nature, how little able men are to believe (Book 2, ch. 2, 3), I will not fatigue the reader by again repeating it. Let it suffice to observe, that the spirit of faith is used by Paul as synonymous with the very faith which we receive from the Spirit, but which we have not naturally (2 Corinthians 4:13). Accordingly, he prays for the Thessalonians, “that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power” (2 Thessalonians 1:2). Here, by designating faith the work of God, and distinguishing it by way of epithet, appropriately calling it his

good pleasure, he declares that it is not of man's own nature; and not contented with this, he adds, that it is an illustration of divine power. In addressing the Corinthians, when he tells them that faith stands not "in the wisdom of man, but in the power of God" (1 Corinthians 2:4), he is no doubt speaking of external miracles; but as the reprobate are blinded when they behold them, he also includes that internal seal of which he elsewhere makes mention. And the better to display his liberality in this most excellent gift, God does not bestow it upon all promiscuously, but, by special privilege, imparts it to whom he will. To this effect we have already quoted passages of Scripture, as to which Augustine, their faithful expositor, exclaims (De Verbo Apost. Serm. 2) "Our Savior, to teach that faith in him is a gift, not a merit, says, 'No man can come to me, except the Father, which has sent me, draw him,' (John 6:44). It is strange when two persons hear, the one despises, the other ascends. Let him who despises impute it to himself; let him who ascends not arrogate it to himself' In another passage he asks, "Wherefore is it given to the one, and not to the other? I am not ashamed to say, This is one of the deep things of the cross. From some unknown depth of the judgments of God, which we cannot scrutinize, all our ability proceeds. I see that I am able, but how I am able I see not; this far only I see, that it is of God. But why the one, and not the other? This is too great for me: it is an abyss a depth of the cross. I can cry out with wonder; not discuss and demonstrate." The whole comes to this, that Christ, when he produces faith in us by the agency of his Spirit, at the same time ingrafts us into his body, that we may become partakers of all blessings.

36. The next thing necessary is, that what the mind has imbibed be transferred into the heart. The word is not received in faith when it merely flutters in the brain, but when it has taken deep root in the heart, and become an invincible bulwark to withstand and repel all the assaults of temptation. But if the illumination of the Spirit is the true source of understanding in the intellect, much more manifest is his agency in the confirmation of the heart; inasmuch as there is more distrust in the heart than blindness in the mind; and it is more difficult to inspire the soul with security than to imbue it with knowledge. Hence the Spirit performs the part of a seal, sealing upon our hearts the very promises, the certainty of which was previously impressed upon our minds. It also serves as an earnest in establishing and confirming these promises. Thus the Apostle says, "In whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance" (Ephesians 1:13, Ephesians 1:14). You see how he teaches that the hearts of believers are stamped with the Spirit as with a seal, and calls it the Spirit of promise, because it ratifies the gospel to us. In like manner he says to the Corinthians, "God has also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts" (2 Corinthians 1:22). And again, when speaking of a full and confident hope, he founds it on the "earnest of the Spirit" (2 Corinthians 5:5).

37. I am not forgetting what I formerly said, and experience brings daily to remembrance; viz., that faith is subject to various doubts, so that the minds of believers are seldom at rest, or at least are not always tranquil. Still, whatever be the engines by which they are shaken, they either escape from the whirlpool of temptation, or remain steadfast in their place. Faith finds security and protection in the words of the Psalm, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble; therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea" (Psalms 46:1, Psalms 46:2). This delightful tranquillity is elsewhere described: "I laid me down and slept; I awaked, for the Lord sustained me" (Psalms 3:5). Not that David was uniformly in this joyful frame; but in so far as the measure of his faith made him sensible

of the divine favor, he glories in intrepidly despising every thing that could disturb his peace of mind. Hence the Scripture, when it exhorts us to faith, bids us be at peace. In Isaiah it is said, “In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength” (Isaiah 30:15); and in the psalm, “Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him.” Corresponding to this is the passage in the Hebrews, “Ye have need of patience,” &c. (Hebrews 10:36).

38. Hence we may judge how pernicious is the scholastic dogma, that we can have no stronger evidence of the divine favor toward us than moral conjecture, according as each individual deems himself not unworthy of it. Doubtless, if we are to determine by our works in what way the Lord stands affected towards us, I admit that we cannot even get the length of a feeble conjecture: but since faith should accord with the free and simple promise, there is no room left for ambiguity. With what kind of confidence, pray, shall we be armed if we reason in this way - God is propitious to us, provided we deserve it by the purity of our lives? But since we have reserved this subject for discussion in its proper place, we shall not prosecute it farther at present, especially seeing it is already plain that nothing is more adverse to faith than conjecture, or any other feeling akin to doubt. Nothing can be worse than their perversion of the passage of Ecclesiastes, which is ever in their mouths: “No man knoweth either love or hatred by all that is before them” (Ecclesiastes 9:1). For without insisting that the passage is erroneously rendered in the common version - even a child cannot fail to perceive what Solomon’s meaning is - viz., that any one who would ascertain, from the present state of things, who are in the favor or under the displeasure of God, labors in vain, and torments himself to no useful purpose, since “All things come alike to all;” “to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not:” and hence God does not always declare his love to those on whom he bestows uninterrupted prosperity, nor his hatred against those whom he afflicts. And it tends to prove the vanity of the human intellect, that it is so completely in the dark as to matters which it is of the highest importance to know. Thus Solomon had said a little before, “That which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other” (Ecclesiastes 3:19). Were any one thence to infer that we hold the immortality of the soul by conjecture merely, would he not justly be deemed insane? Are those then sane who cannot obtain any certainty of the divine favor, because the carnal eye is now unable to discern it from the present appearance of the world?

39. But, they say, it is rash and presumptuous to pretend to an undoubted knowledge of the divine will. I would grant this, did we hold that we were able to subject the incomprehensible counsel of God to our feeble intellect. But when we simply say with Paul, “We have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God” (1 Corinthians 2:12), what can they oppose to this, without offering insult to the Spirit of God? But if it is Sacrilege to charge the revelation which he has given us with falsehood, or uncertainty, or ambiguity, how can we be wrong in maintaining its certainty? But they still exclaim, that there is great temerity in our presuming to glory in possessing the Spirit of God. Who could believe that these men, who desire to be thought the masters of the world, could be so stupid as to err thus grossly in the very first principles of religion? To me, indeed, it would be incredible, did not their own writings make it manifest. Paul declares that those only are the sons of God who are led by his Spirit (Romans 8:14); these men would have those who are the sons of God to be led by their own, and void of the divine Spirit. He tells us that we call God our Father in terms dictated by the Spirit, who alone bears witness with our spirit that we are the sons of God (Romans 8:16); they,

though they forbid us not to invoke God, withdraw the Spirit, by whose guidance he is duly invoked. He declares that those only are the servants of Christ who are led by the Spirit of Christ (Romans 8:9); they imagine a Christianity which has no need of the Spirit of Christ. He holds out the hope of a blessed resurrection to those only who feel His Spirit dwelling in them (Romans 8:11); they imagine hope when there is no such feeling. But perhaps they will say, that they deny not the necessity of being endued with the Spirit, but only hold it to be the part of modesty and humility not to recognize it. What, then, does Paul mean, when he says to the Corinthians, “Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith: prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?” (2 Corinthians 13:5). John, moreover, says, “Hereby we know that he abideth in us by the Spirit which he has given us” (1 John 3:24). And what else is it than to bring the promises of Christ into doubt, when we would be deemed servants of Christ without having his Spirit, whom he declared that he would pour out on all his people? (Isaiah 44:3). What! do we not insult the Holy Spirit, when we separate faith, which is his peculiar work, from himself? These being the first rudiments of religion, it is the most wretched blindness to charge Christians with arrogance, for presuming to glory in the presence of the Holy Spirit; a glorying without which Christianity itself does not exist. The example of these men illustrates the truth of our Savior’s declaration, that his Spirit “the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you” (John 14:17).

. That they may not attempt to undermine the certainty of faith in one direction only, they attack it in another, viz., that though it be lawful for the believer, from his actual state of righteousness, to form a judgment as to the favor of God, the knowledge of final perseverance still remains in suspense. An admirable security, indeed, is left us, if, for the present moment only, we can judge from moral conjecture that we are in grace, but know not how we are to be to-morrow! Very different is the language of the Apostle, “I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:38). They endeavor to evade the force of this by frivolously pretending that the Apostle had this assurance by special revelation. They are too well caught thus to escape; for in that passage he is treating not of his individual experience, but of the blessings which all believers in common derive from faith. But then Paul in another passage alarms us by the mention of our weakness and inconstancy, “Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall” (1 Corinthians 10:12). True; but this he says not to inspire us with terror, but that we may learn to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, as Peter explains (1 Peter 5:6). Then how preposterous is it to limit the certainty of faith to a point of time; seeing it is the property of faith to pass beyond the whole course of this life, and stretch forward to a future immortality? Therefore since believers owe it to the favor of God, that, enlightened by his Spirit, they, through faith, enjoy the prospect of heavenly life; there is so far from an approach to arrogance in each glorying, that any one ashamed to confess it, instead of testifying modesty or submission, rather betrays extreme ingratitude, by maliciously suppressing the divine goodness.

41. Since the nature of faith could not be better or more clearly evinced than by the substance of the promise on which it leans as its proper foundation, and without which it immediately falls or rather vanishes away, we have derived our definition from it - a definition, however, not at all at

variance with that definition, or rather description, which the Apostle accommodates to his discourse, when he says that faith is “the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1). For by the term substance (hupostasis), he means a kind of prop on which the pious mind rests and leans. As if he had said, that faith is a kind of certain and secure possession of those things which are promised to us by God; unless we prefer taking hupostasis for confidence. I have no objection to this, though I am more inclined to adopt the other interpretation, which is more generally received. Again, to intimate that until the last day, when the books will be opened (Daniel 7:10; Revelation 20:12), the things pertaining to our salvation are too lofty to be perceived by our sense, seen by our eyes, or handled by our hands, and that in the meantime there is no possible way in which these can be possessed by us, unless we can transcend the reach of our own intellect, and raise our eye above all worldly objects; in short, surpass ourselves, he adds that this certainty of possession relates to things which are only hoped for, and therefore not seen. For as Paul says (Romans 8:24), “A hope that is seen is not hope,” that we “hope for that we see not.” When he calls it the evidence or proof, or, as Augustine repeatedly renders it (see Hom. in Joann. 79 and 95), the conviction of things not present, the Greek term being elengchos, it is the same as if he had called it the appearance of things not apparent, the sight of things not seen, the clearness of things obscure, the presence of things absent, the manifestation of things hid. For the mysteries of God (and to this class belong the things which pertain to our salvation) cannot be discerned in themselves, or, as it is expressed, in their own nature; but we behold them only in his word, of the truth of which we ought to be as firmly persuaded as if we held that every thing which it says were done and completed. But how can the mind rise to such a perception and foretaste of the divine goodness, without being at the same time wholly inflamed with love to God? The abundance of joy which God has treasured up for those who fear him cannot be truly known without making a most powerful impression. He who is thus once affected is raised and carried entirely towards him. Hence it is not strange that no sinister perverse heart ever experiences this feeling, by which, transported to heaven itself, we are admitted to the most hidden treasures of God, and the holiest recesses of his kingdom, which must not be profaned by the entrance of a heart that is impure. For what the Schoolmen say as to the priority of love to faith and hope is a mere dream (see Sent. Lib. 3 Dist. 25, &c.), since it is faith alone that first engenders love. How much better is Bernard, “The testimony of conscience, which Paul calls ‘the rejoicing’ of believers, I believe to consist in three things. It is necessary, first of all, to believe that you cannot have remission of sins except by the indulgence of God; secondly, that you cannot have any good work at all unless he also give it; lastly, that you cannot by any works merit eternal life unless it also be freely given” (Bernard, Serm. 1 in Annuntiatione). Shortly after he adds, “These things are not sufficient, but are a kind of commencement of faith; for while believing that your sins can only be forgiven by God, you must also hold that they are not forgiven until persuaded by the testimony of the Holy Spirit that salvation is treasured up for us; that as God pardons sins, and gives merits, and after merits rewards, you cannot halt at that beginning.” But these and other topics will be considered in their own place; let it suffice at present to understand what faith Isaiah 42:1-25. Wherever this living faith exists, it must have the hope of eternal life as its inseparable companion, or rather must of itself beget and manifest it; where it is wanting, however clearly and elegantly we may discourse of faith, it is certain we have it not. For if faith is (as has been said) a firm persuasion of the truth of God - a persuasion that it can never be false, never deceive, never be in vain, those who have received this assurance must at the same time

expect that God will perform his promises, which in their conviction are absolutely true; so that in one word hope is nothing more than the expectation of those things which faith previously believes to have been truly promised by God. Thus, faith believes that God is true; hope expects that in due season he will manifest his truth. Faith believes that he is our Father; hope expects that he will always act the part of a Father towards us. Faith believes that eternal life has been given to us; hope expects that it will one day be revealed. Faith is the foundation on which hope rests; hope nourishes and sustains faith. For as no man can expect any thing from God without previously believing his promises, so, on the other hand, the weakness of our faith, which might grow weary and fall away, must be supported and cherished by patient hope and expectation. For this reason Paul justly says, “We are saved by hope” (Romans 8:24). For while hope silently waits for the Lord, it restrains faith from hastening on with too much precipitation, confirms it when it might waver in regard to the promises of God or begin to doubt of their truth, refreshes it when it might be fatigued, extends its view to the final goal, so as not to allow it to give up in the middle of the course, or at the very outset. In short, by constantly renovating and reviving, it is ever and anon furnishing more vigor for perseverance. On the whole, how necessary the reinforcements of hope are to establish faith will better appear if we reflect on the numerous forms of temptation by which those who have embraced the word of God are assailed and shaken. First, the Lord often keeps us in suspense, by delaying the fulfillment of his promises much longer than we could wish. Here the office of hope is to perform what the prophet enjoins, “Though it tarry, wait for it” (Habakkuk 2:3). Sometimes he not only permits faith to grow languid, but even openly manifests his displeasure. Here there is still greater necessity for the aid of hope, that we may be able to say with another prophet, “I will wait upon the Lord that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him” (Isaiah 8:17). Scoffers also rise up, as Peter tells us, and asks where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation” (2 Peter 3:4). Nay, the world and the flesh insinuate the same thing. Here faith must be supported by the patience of hope, and fixed on the contemplation of eternity, consider that “one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day” (2 Peter 3:8; Psalms 90:4).

43. On account of this connection and affinity Scripture sometimes confounds the two terms faith and hope. For when Peter says that we are “kept by the power of God through faith until salvation, ready to be revealed in the last times” (1 Peter 1:5), he attributes to faith what more properly belongs to hope. And not without cause, since we have already shown that hope is nothing else than the food and strength of faith. Sometimes the two are joined together, as in the same Epistles “That your faith and hope might be in God” (1 Peter 1:21). Paul, again, in the Epistle to the Philippians, from hope deduces expectation (Php 1:20), because in hoping patiently we suspend our wishes until God manifest his own time. The whole of this subject may be better understood from the tenth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, to which I have already adverted. Paul, in another passage, though not in strict propriety of speech, expresses the same thing in these words, “For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith” (Galatians 5:5); that is, after embracing the testimony of the Gospel as to free love, we wait till God openly manifest what is now only an object of hope. It is now obvious how absurdly Peter Lombard lays down a double foundation of hope, viz., the grace of God and the merit of works (Sent. Lib. 3, Dist. 26). Hope cannot have any other object than faith has. But we have already shown clearly that the only object of faith is the mercy of God, to which, to use the common expression, it must look with both

eyes. But it is worth while to listen to the strange reason which he adduces. If you presume, says he, to hope for any thing without merit, it should be called not hope, but presumption. Who, dear reader, does not execrate the gross stupidity which calls, it rashness, and presumption to confide in the truth of God? The Lord desires us to expect every thing from his goodness and yet these men tell us, it is presumption to rest in it. O teacher, worthy of the pupils, whom you found in these insane raving schools! Seeing that, by the oracles of God, sinners are enjoined to entertain the hope of salvation, let us willingly presume so far on his truth as to cast away all confidence in our works, and trusting in his mercy, venture to hope. He who has said, “According to your faith be it unto you” (Matthew 9:29), will never deceive.

08.03.03A. Chapter 03. Part A

Chapter 3. Regeneration by faith. Of repentance. This chapter is divided into five parts.

I. The title of the chapter seems to promise a treatise on Faith, but the only subject here considered is Repentance, the inseparable attendant of faith. And, first, various opinions on the subject of repentance are stated, sec. 1-4.

II. An exposition of the orthodox doctrine of Repentance, sec. 5-9.

III. Reasons why repentance must be prolonged to the last moment of life, sec. 10-14.

IV. Of the fruits of repentance, or its object and tendency, sec. 15-20.

V. The source whence repentance proceeds, sec. 21-24. Of the sin against the Holy Spirit, and the impenitence of the reprobate, sec. 25.

Sections

1. Connection of this chapter with the previous one and the subsequent chapters. Repentance follows faith, and is produced by it. Reason. Error of those who take a contrary view.

2. Their First Objection. Answer. In what sense the origin of Repentance ascribed to Faith. Cause of the erroneous idea that faith is produced by repentance. Refutation of it. The hypocrisy of Monks and Anabaptists in assigning limits to repentance exposed.

3. A second opinion concerning repentance considered.

4. A third opinion, assigning two forms to repentance, a legal and an Evangelical. Examples of each.

5. The orthodox doctrine of Repentance. 1. Faith and Repentance to be distinguished, not confounded or separated. 2. A consideration of the name. 3. A definition of the thing, or what repentance is. Doctrine of the Prophets and Apostles.

6. Explanation of the definition. This consists of three parts. 1. Repentance is a turning of our life unto God. This described and enlarged upon.

7. 2. Repentance produced by fear of God. Hence the mention of divine judgment by the Prophets and Apostles. Example. Exposition of the second branch of the definition from a passage in Paul. Why the fear of God is the first part of Repentance.

8. 3. Repentance consists in the mortification of the flesh and the quickening of the Spirit. These required by the Prophets. They are explained separately.

9. How this mortification and quickening are produced. Repentance just a renewal of the divine image in us. Not completed in a moment, but extends to the last moment of life.

10. Reasons why repentance must so extend. Augustine’s opinion as to concupiscence in the regenerate examined. A passage of Paul which seems to confirm that opinion.

11. Answer. Confirmation of the answer by the Apostle himself. Another confirmation from a precept of the law. Conclusion.

12. Exception, that those desires only are condemned which are repugnant to the order of God. Desires not condemned in so far as natural, but in so far as inordinate. This held by Augustine.

13. Passages from Augustine to show that this was his opinion. Objection from a passage in James 14. Another objection of the Anabaptists and Libertines to the continuance of repentance throughout the present life. An answer disclosing its impiety. Another answer, founded on the absurdities to which it leads. A third answer, contrasting sincere Christian repentance with the erroneous view of the objectors. Conformation from the example and declaration of an Apostle.

15. Of the fruits of repentance. Carefulness. Excuse. Indignation. Fear. Desire. Zeal. Revenge. Moderation to be observed, as most sagely counseled by Bernard.

16. Internal fruits of Repentance. 1. Piety towards God. 2. Charity towards man. 3. Purity of life. How carefully these fruits are commended by the Prophets. External fruits of repentance. Bodily exercises too much commended by ancient writers. Twofold excess in regard to them.

17. Delusion of some who consider these external exercises as the chief part of Repentance. Why received in the Jewish Church. The legitimate use of these exercises in the Christian Church.

18. The principal part of repentance consists in turning to God. Confession and acknowledgment of sins. What their nature should be. Distinction between ordinary and special repentance. Use of this distinction.

19. End of Repentance. Its nature shown by the preaching of John Baptist, our Savior, and his Apostles. The sum of this preaching.

20. Christian repentance terminates with our life.

21. Repentance has its origin in the grace of God, as communicated to the elect, whom God is pleased to save from death. The hardening and final impenitence of the reprobate. A passage of an Apostle as to voluntary reprobates, gives no countenance to the Novatians.

22. Of the sin against the Holy Ghost. The true definition of this sin as proved and explained by Scripture. Who they are that sin against the Holy Spirit. Examples: 1. The Jews resisting Stephen. 2. The Pharisees. Definition confirmed by the example of Paul.

23. Why that sin unpardonable. The paralogism of the Novatians in wresting the words of the Apostle examined. Two passages from the same Apostle.

24. First objection to the above doctrine. Answer. Solution of a difficulty founded on the example of Esau and the threatening of a Prophet. Second objection.

25. Third objection, founded on the seeming approval of the feigned repentance of the ungodly, as Ahab. Answer. Confirmation from the example of Esau. Why God bears for a time with the ungodly, pretending repentance. Exception.

1. Although we have already in some measure shown how faith possesses Christ, and gives us the enjoyment of his benefits, the subject would still be obscure were we not to add an exposition of the effects resulting from it. The sum of the Gospel is, not without good reason, made to consist in repentance and forgiveness of sins; and, therefore, where these two heads are omitted, any discussion concerning faith will be meager and defective, and indeed almost useless. Now, since Christ confers upon us, and we obtain by faith, both free reconciliation and newness of life, reason and order require that I should here begin to treat of both. The shortest transition, however, will be from faith to repentance; for repentance being properly understood it will better appear how a man is justified freely by faith alone, and yet that holiness of life, real holiness, as it is called, is inseparable from the free imputation of righteousness. That repentance not only always follows faith, but is produced by it, ought to be without controversy (see Calvin in Joann. 1:13). For since pardon and forgiveness are offered by the preaching of the Gospel, in order that the sinner, delivered from the tyranny of Satan, the yoke of sin, and the miserable bondage of iniquity, may pass into the kingdom of God, it is certain that no man can embrace the grace of the Gospel without retaking himself from the errors of his former life into the right path, and making it his whole study to practice repentance. Those who think that repentance precedes faith instead of flowing from, or being produced by it, as the fruit by the tree, have never understood its nature, and are moved to adopt that view on very insufficient grounds.

2. Christ and John, it is said, in their discourses first exhort the people to repentance, and then add, that the kingdom of heaven is at hand (Matthew 3:2; Matthew 4:17). Such too, is the message which the Apostles received and such the course which Paul followed, as is narrated by Luke (Acts 20:21). But clinging superstitiously to the juxtaposition of the syllables, they attend not to the coherence of meaning in the words. For when our Lord and John begin their preaching thus “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 3:2), do they not deduce repentance as a consequence of the offer of grace and promise of salvation? The force of the words, therefore, is the same as if it were said, As the kingdom of heaven is at hand, for that reason repent. For Matthew, after relating that John so preached, says that therein was fulfilled the prophecy concerning the voice of one crying in the desert, “Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God” (Isaiah 40:3). But in the Prophet that voice is ordered to commence with consolation and glad tidings. Still, when we attribute the origin of repentance to faith, we do not dream of some period of time in which faith is to give birth to it: we only wish to show that a man cannot seriously engage in repentance unless he know that he is of God. But no man is truly persuaded that he is of God until he have embraced his offered favor. These things will be more clearly explained as we proceed. Some are perhaps misled by this, that not a few are subdued by terror of conscience, or disposed to obedience before they have been imbued with a knowledge, nay, before they have had any taste of the divine favor (see Calvin in Acts 20:21). This is that initial fear which some writers class among the virtues, because they think it approximates to true and genuine obedience. But we are not here considering the various modes in which Christ draws us to himself, or prepares us for the study of piety: All I say is, that no righteousness can be found where the Spirit, whom Christ received in order to communicate it to his members, reigns not. Then, according to the passage in the Psalms, “There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared” (Psalms 130:4), no man will ever reverence God who does not trust that God is propitious to him, no man will ever willingly set himself to observe the Law who is not persuaded that his services are pleasing to God. The indulgence of God in tolerating and pardoning our

iniquities is a sign of paternal favor. This is also clear from the exhortation in Hosea, “Come, and let us return unto the Lord: for he has torn, and he will heal us; he has smitten, and he will bind us up” (Hosea 6:1); the hope of pardon is employed as a stimulus to prevent us from becoming reckless in sin. But there is no semblance of reason in the absurd procedure of those who, that they may begin with repentance, prescribe to their neophytes certain days during which they are to exercise themselves in repentance, and after these are elapsed, admit them to communion in Gospel grace. I allude to great numbers of Anabaptists, those of them especially who plume themselves on being spiritual, and their associates the Jesuits, and others of the same stamp. Such are the fruits which their giddy spirit produces, that repentance, which in every Christian man lasts as long as life, is with them completed in a few short days.

3. Certain learned men, who lived long before the present days and were desirous to speak simply and sincerely according to the rule of Scripture, held that repentance consists of two parts, mortification and quickening. By mortification they mean, grief of soul and terror, produced by a conviction of sin and a sense of the divine judgment. For when a man is brought to a true knowledge of sin, he begins truly to hate and abominate sin. He also is sincerely dissatisfied with himself, confesses that he is lost and undone, and wishes he were different from what he is. Moreover, when he is touched with some sense of the divine justice (for the one conviction immediately follows the other), he lies terrorstruck and amazed, humbled and dejected, desponds and despairs. This, which they regarded as the first part of repentance, they usually termed contrition. By quickening they mean, the comfort which is produced by faith, as when a man prostrated by a consciousness of sin, and smitten with the fear of God, afterwards beholding his goodness, and the mercy, grace, and salvation obtained through Christ, looks up, begins to breathe, takes courage, and passes, as it were, from death unto life. I admit that these terms, when rightly interpreted, aptly enough express the power of repentance; only I cannot assent to their using the term quickening, for the joy which the soul feels after being calmed from perturbation and fear. It more properly means, that desire of pious and holy living which springs from the new birth; as if it were said, that the man dies to himself that he may begin to live unto God.

4. Others seeing that the term is used in Scripture in different senses, have set down two forms of repentance, and, in order to distinguish them, have called the one Legal repentance; or that by which the sinner, stung with a sense of his sin, and overwhelmed with fear of the divine anger, remains in that state of perturbation, unable to escape from it. The other they term Evangelical repentance; or that by which the sinner, though grievously downcast in himself, yet looks up and sees in Christ the cure of his wound, the solace of his terror; the haven of rest from his misery. They give Cain, Saul and Judas, as examples of legal repentance. Scripture, in describing what is called their repentance, means that they perceived the heinousness of their sins, and dreaded the divine anger; but, thinking only of God as a judge and avenger, were overwhelmed by the thought. Their repentance, therefore, was nothing better than a kind of threshold to hell, into which having entered even in the present life, they began to endure the punishment inflicted by the presence of an offended God. Examples of evangelical repentance we see in all those who, first stung with a sense of sin, but afterwards raised and revived by confidence in the divine mercy, turned unto the Lord. Hezekiah was frightened on receiving the message of his death, but praying with tears, and beholding the divine goodness, regained his confidence. The Ninevites were terrified at the fearful

announcement of their destruction; but clothing themselves in sackcloth and ashes, they prayed, hoping that the Lord might relent and avert his anger from them. David confessed that he had sinned greatly in numbering the people, but added “Now, I beseech thee O Lord, take away the iniquity of thy servant.” When rebuked by Nathan, he acknowledged the crime of adultery, and humbled himself before the Lord; but he, at the same time, looked for pardon. Similar was the repentance of those who, stung to the heart by the preaching of Peter, yet trusted in the divine goodness, and added, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” Similar was the case of Peter himself, who indeed wept bitterly, but ceased not to hope.

5. Though all this is true, yet the term repentance (in so far as I can ascertain from Scripture) must be differently taken. For in comprehending faith under repentance, they are at variance with what Paul says in the Acts, as to his “testifying both to the Jews and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 20:21). Here he mentions faith and repentance as two different things. What then? Can true repentance exist without faith? By no means. But although they cannot be separated, they ought to be distinguished. As there is no faith without hope, and yet faith and hope are different, so repentance and faith, though constantly linked together, are only to be united, not confounded. I am not unaware that under the term repentance is comprehended the whole work of turning to God, of which not the least important part is faith; but in what sense this is done will be perfectly obvious, when its nature and power shall have been explained. The term repentance is derived in the Hebrew from conversion, or turning again; and in the Greek from a change of mind and purpose; nor is the thing meant inappropriate to both derivations, for it is substantially this, that withdrawing from ourselves we turn to God, and laying aside the old, put on a new mind. Wherefore, it seems to me, that repentance may be not inappropriately defined thus: A real conversion of our life unto God, proceeding from sincere and serious fear of God; and consisting in the mortification of our flesh and the old man, and the quickening of the Spirit. In this sense are to be understood all those addresses in which the prophets first, and the apostles afterwards, exhorted the people of their time to repentance. The great object for which they labored was, to fill them with confusion for their sins and dread of the divine judgment, that they might fall down and humble themselves before him whom they had offended, and, with true repentance, retake themselves to the right path. Accordingly, they use indiscriminately in the same sense, the expressions turning, or returning to the Lord; repenting, doing repentance. Whence, also, the sacred history describes it as repentance towards God, when men who disregarded him and wantoned in their lusts begin to obey his word, and are prepared to go whithersoever he may call them. And John Baptist and Paul, under the expression, bringing forth fruits meet for repentance, described a course of life exhibiting and bearing testimony, in all its actions, to such a repentance.

6. But before proceeding farther, it will be proper to give a clearer exposition of the definition which we have adopted. There are three things, then, principally to be considered in it. First, in the conversion of the life to God, we require a transformation not only in external works, but in the soul itself, which is able only after it has put off its old habits to bring forth fruits conformable to its renovation. The prophet, intending to express this, enjoins those whom he calls to repentance to make them “a new heart and a new spirit” (Ezekiel 18:31). Hence Moses, on several occasions, when he would show how the Israelites were to repent and turn to the Lord, tells them that it must be done with the whole heart, and the whole soul (a mode of expression of frequent recurrence in

the prophets), and by terming it the circumcision of the heart, points to the internal affections. But there is no passage better fitted to teach us the genuine nature of repentance than the following: “If thou wilt return, O Israel, saith the Lord, return unto me.” “Break up your fallow ground, and sow not among thorns. Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, and take away the foreskins of your heart” (Jeremiah 4:1-4). See how he declares to them that it will be of no avail to commence the study of righteousness unless impiety shall first have been eradicated from their inmost heart. And to malice the deeper impression, he reminds them that they have to do with God, and can gain nothing by deceit, because he hates a double heart. For this reason Isaiah derides the preposterous attempts of hypocrites, who zealously aimed at an external repentance by the observance of ceremonies, but in the meanwhile cared not “to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free” (Isaiah 58:6). In these words he admirably shows wherein the acts of unfeigned repentance consist.

7. The second part of our definition is, that repentance proceeds from a sincere fear of God. Before the mind of the sinner can be inclined to repentance, he must be aroused by the thought of divine judgment; but when once the thought that God will one day ascend his tribunal to take an account of all words and actions has taken possession of his mind, it will not allow him to rest, or have one moment’s peace, but will perpetually urge him to adopt a different plan of life, that he may be able to stand securely at that judgment-seat. Hence the Scripture, when exhorting to repentance, often introduces the subject of judgment, as in Jeremiah, “Lest my fury come forth like fire, and burn that none can quench it, because of the evil of your doings” (Jeremiah 4:4). Paul, in his discourse to the Athenians says, “The times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: because he has appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness” (Acts 17:30, Acts 17:31). The same thing is repeated in several other passages. Sometimes God is declared to be a judge, from the punishments already inflicted, thus leading sinners to reflect that worse awaits them if they do not quickly repent. There is an example of this in the 29th chapter of Deuteronomy. As repentance begins with dread and hatred of sin, the Apostle sets down godly sorrow as one of its causes (2 Corinthians 7:10). By godly sorrow he means when we not only tremble at the punishment, but hate and abhor the sin, because we know it is displeasing to God. It is not strange that this should be, for unless we are stung to the quick, the sluggishness of our carnal nature cannot be corrected; nay, no degree of pungency would suffice for our stupor and sloth, did not God lift the rod and strike deeper. There is, moreover, a rebellious spirit which must be broken as with hammers. The stern threatening which God employs are extorted from him by our depraved dispositions. For while we are asleep it were in vain to allure us by soothing measures. Passages to this effect are everywhere to be met with, and I need not quote them. But there is another reason why the fear of God lies at the root of repentance, viz., that though the life of man were possessed of all kinds of virtue, still if they do not bear reference to God, how much soever they may be lauded in the world, they are mere abomination in heaven, inasmuch as it is the principal part of righteousness to render to God that service and honor of which he is impiously defrauded, whenever it is not our express purpose to submit to his authority.

8. We must now explain the third part of the definition, and show what is meant when we say that repentance consists of two parts, viz., the mortification of the flesh, and the quickening of the Spirit. The prophets, in accommodation to a carnal people, express this in simple and homely

terms, but clearly, when they say, “Depart from evil, and do good” (Psalms 34:14). “Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment; relieve the oppressed,” &c. (Isaiah 1:16, Isaiah 1:17). In dissuading us from wickedness they demand the entire destruction of the flesh, which is full of perverseness and malice. It is a most difficult and arduous achievement to renounce ourselves, and lay aside our natural disposition. For the flesh must not be thought to be destroyed unless every thing that we have of our own is abolished. But seeing that all the desires of the flesh are enmity against God (Romans 8:7), the first step to the obedience of his law is the renouncement of our own nature. Renovation is afterwards manifested by the fruits produced by it, viz., justice, judgment, and mercy. Since it were not sufficient duly to perform such acts, were not the mind and heart previously endued with sentiments of justice, judgment, and mercy this is done when the Holy Spirit, instilling his holiness into our souls, so inspired them with new thoughts and affections, that they may justly be regarded as new. And, indeed, as we are naturally averse to God, unless self-denial precede, we shall never tend to that which is right. Hence we are so often enjoined to put off the old man, to renounce the world and the flesh, to forsake our lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of our mind. Moreover, the very name mortification reminds us how difficult it is to forget our former nature, because we hence infer that we cannot be trained to the fear of God, and learn the first principles of piety, unless we are violently smitten with the sword of the Spirit and annihilated, as if God were declaring, that to be ranked among his sons there must be a destruction of our ordinary nature.

9. Both of these we obtain by union with Christ. For if we have true fellowship in his death, our old man is crucified by his power, and the body of sin becomes dead, so that the corruption of our original nature is never again in full vigor (Romans 6:5, Romans 6:6). If we are partakers in his resurrection, we are raised up by means of it to newness of life, which conforms us to the righteousness of God. In one word, then, by repentance I understand regeneration, the only aim of which is to form in us anew the image of God, which was sullied, and all but effaced by the transgression of Adam. So the Apostle teaches when he says, “We all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord.” Again, “Be renewed in the spirit of your minds” and “put ye on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.” Again, “Put ye on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.” Accordingly through the blessing of Christ we are renewed by that regeneration into the righteousness of God from which we had fallen through Adam, the Lord being pleased in this manner to restore the integrity of all whom he appoints to the inheritance of life. This renewal, indeed, is not accomplished in a moment, a day, or a year, but by uninterrupted, sometimes even by slow progress God abolishes the remains of carnal corruption in his elect, cleanses them from pollution, and consecrates them as his temples, restoring all their inclinations to real purity, so that during their whole lives they may practice repentance, and know that death is the only termination to this warfare. The greater is the effrontery of an impure raver and apostate, named Staphylus, who pretends that I confound the condition of the present life with the celestial glory, when, after Paul, I make the image of God to consist in righteousness and true holiness; as if in every definition it were not necessary to take the thing defined in its integrity and perfection. It is not denied that there is room for improvement; but what I maintain is, that the nearer any one approaches in resemblance to God, the more does the image of God appear in him. That believers may attain to it, God assigns repentance as the

goal towards which they must keep running during the whole course of their lives.

10. By regeneration the children of God are delivered from the bondage of sin, but not as if they had already obtained full possession of freedom, and no longer felt any annoyance from the flesh. Materials for an unremitting contest remain, that they may be exercised, and not only exercised, but may better understand their weakness. All writers of sound judgment agree in this, that, in the regenerate man, there is still a spring of evil which is perpetually sending forth desires that allure and stimulate him to sin. They also acknowledge that the saints are still so liable to the disease of concupiscence, that, though opposing it, they cannot avoid being ever and anon prompted and incited to lust, avarice, ambition, or other vices. It is unnecessary to spend much time in investigating the sentiments of ancient writers. Augustine alone may suffice, as he has collected all their opinions with great care and fidelity. Any reader who is desirous to know the sense of antiquity may obtain it from him. There is this difference apparently between him and us, that while he admits that believers, so long as they are in the body, are so liable to concupiscence that they cannot but feel it, he does not venture to give this disease the name of sin. He is contented with giving it the name of infirmity, and says, that it only becomes sin when either external act or consent is added to conception or apprehension; that is, when the will yields to the first desire. We again regard it as sin whenever man is influenced in any degree by any desire contrary to the law of God; nay, we maintain that the very gravity which begets in us such desires is sin. Accordingly, we hold that there is always sin in the saints until they are freed from their mortal frame, because depraved concupiscence resides in their flesh, and is at variance with rectitude. Augustine himself dose not always refrain from using the name of sin, as when he says, “Paul gives the name of sin to that carnal concupiscence from which all sins arise. This in regard to the saints loses its dominion in this world, and is destroyed in heaven.” In these words he admits that believers, in so far as they are liable to carnal concupiscence, are chargeable with sin.

11. When it is said that God purifies his Church, so as to be “holy and without blemish” (Ephesians 5:26, Ephesians 5:27), that he promises this cleansing by means of baptism, and performs it in his elect, I understand that reference is made to the guilt rather than to the matter of sin. In regenerating his people God indeed accomplishes this much for them; he destroys the dominion of sin, by supplying the agency of the Spirit, which enables them to come off victorious from the contest. Sin, however, though it ceases to reign, ceases not to dwell in them. Accordingly, though we say that the old man is crucified, and the law of sin is abolished in the children of God (Romans 6:6), the remains of sin survive, not to have dominion, but to humble them under a consciousness of their infirmity. We admit that these remains, just as if they had no existence, are not imputed, but we, at the same time, contend that it is owing to the mercy of God that the saints are not charged with the guilt which would otherwise make them sinners before God. It will not be difficult for us to confirm this view, seeing we can support it by clear passages of Scripture. How can we express our view more plainly than Paul does in Romans 7:6? We have elsewhere shown and Augustine by solid reasons proves, that Paul is there speaking in the person of a regenerated man. I say nothing as to his use of the words evil and sin. However those who object to our view may quibble on these words, can any man deny that aversion to the law of God is an evil, and that hindrance to righteousness is sin? In short, who will not admit that there is guilt where there is spiritual misery? But all these things Paul affirms of this disease. Again, the law furnishes us with a clear demonstration by which the whole question may be quickly disposed of. We are enjoined to

love God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength. Since all the faculties of our soul ought thus to be engrossed with the love of God, it is certain that the commandment is not fulfilled by those who receive the smallest desire into their heart, or admit into their minds any thought whatever which may lead them away from the love of God to vanity. What then? Is it not through the faculties of mind that we are assailed with sudden motions, that we perceive sensual, or form conceptions of mental objects? Since these faculties give admission to vain and wicked thoughts, do they not show that to that extent they are devoid of the love of God? He, then, who admits not that all the desires of the flesh are sins, and that that disease of concupiscence, which they call a stimulus, is a fountain of sin, must of necessity deny that the transgression of the law is sin.

12. If any one thinks it absurd thus to condemn all the desires by which man is naturally affected, seeing they have been implanted by God the author of nature, we answer, that we by no means condemn those appetites which God so implanted in the mind of man at his first creation, that they cannot be eradicated without destroying human nature itself, but only the violent lawless movements which war with the order of God. But as, in consequence of the corruption of nature, all our faculties are so vitiated and corrupted, that a perpetual disorder and excess is apparent in all our actions, and as the appetites cannot be separated from this excess, we maintain that therefore they are vicious; or, to give the substance in fewer words, we hold that all human desires are evil, and we charge them with sin not in as far as they are natural, but because they are inordinate, and inordinate because nothing pure and upright can proceed from a corrupt and polluted nature. Nor does Augustine depart from this doctrine in reality so much as in appearance. From an excessive dread of the invidious charge with which the Pelagians assailed him, he sometimes refrains from using the term sin in this sense; but when he says (ad Bonif). that the law of sin remaining in the saints, the guilt only is taken away, he shows clearly enough that his view is not very different from ours.

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Chapter 3. Regeneration by faith. Of repentance.

Continued

13. We will produce some other passages to make it more apparent what his sentiments were. In his second book against Julian, he says, “This law of sin is both remitted in spiritual regeneration and remains in the mortal flesh; remitted, because the guilt is forgiven in the sacrament by which believers are regenerated, and yet remains, inasmuch as it produces desires against which believers fight.” Again, “Therefore the law of sin (which was in the members of this great Apostle also) is forgiven in baptism, not ended.” Again, “The law of sin, the guilt of which, though remaining, is forgiven in baptism, Ambrose called iniquity, for it is iniquitous for the flesh to lust against the Spirit.” Again, “Sin is dead in the guilt by which it bound us; and until it is cured by the perfection of burial, though dead it rebels.” In the fifth book he says still more plainly, “As blindness of heart is the sin by which God is not believed; and the punishment of sin, by which a proud heart is justly punished; and the cause of sin, when through the error of a blinded heart any evil is committed: so the lust of the flesh, against which the good Spirit wars, is also sin, because disobedient to the authority of the mind; and the punishment of sin, because the recompense rendered for disobedience; and the cause of sin, consenting by revolt or springing up through contamination.” He here without ambiguity calls it sin, because the Pelagian heresy being now refuted, and the sound doctrine confirmed, he was less afraid of calumny. Thus, also, in his forty-first Homily on John, where he speaks his own sentiments without controversy, he says, “If with the flesh you serve the law of sin, do what the Apostle himself says, ‘Let not sin, therefore, reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof,’ (Romans 6:12). He does not say, Let it not be, but Let it not reign. As long as you live there must be sin in your members; but at least let its dominion be destroyed; do not what it orders.” Those who maintain that concupiscence is not sin, are wont to found on the passage of James, “Then, when lust has conceived, it bringeth forth sin” (James 1:15). But this is easily refuted: for unless we understand him as speaking only of wicked works or actual sins, even a wicked inclination will not be accounted sin. But from his calling crimes and wicked deeds the fruits of lust, and also giving them the name of sins, it does not follow that the lust itself is not an evil, and in the sight of God deserving of condemnation.

14. Some Anabaptists in the present age mistake some indescribable sort of frenzied excess for the regeneration of the Spirit, holding that the children of God are restored to a state of innocence, and, therefore, need give themselves no anxiety about curbing the lust of the flesh; that they have the Spirit for their guide, and under his agency never err. It would be incredible that the human mind could proceed to such insanity, did they not openly and exultingly give utterance to their dogma. It is indeed monstrous, and yet it is just, that those who have resolved to turn the word of God into a lie, should thus be punished for their blasphemous audacity. Is it indeed true, that all distinction between base and honorable, just and unjust, good and evil, virtue and vice, is abolished? The distinction, they say, is from the curse of the old Adam, and from this we are

exempted by Christ. There will be no difference, then, between whoredom and chastity, sincerity and craft, truth and falsehood, justice and robbery. Away with vain fear! (they say), the Spirit will not bid you do any thing that is wrong, provided you sincerely and boldly leave yourself to his agency. Who is not amazed at such monstrous doctrines? And yet this philosophy is popular with those who, blinded by insane lusts, have thrown off common sense. But what kind of Christ, pray, do they fabricate? what kind of Spirit do they belch forth? We acknowledge one Christ, and his one Spirit, whom the prophets foretold and the Gospel proclaims as actually manifested, but we hear nothing of this kind respecting him. That Spirit is not the patron of murder, adultery, drunkenness, pride, contention, avarice, and fraud, but the author of love, chastity, sobriety, modesty, peace, moderation, and truth. He is not a Spirit of giddiness, rushing rashly and precipitately, without regard to right and wrong, but full of wisdom and understanding, by which he can duly distinguish between justice and injustice. He instigates not to lawless and unrestrained licentiousness, but, discriminating between lawful and unlawful, teaches temperance and moderation. But why dwell longer in refuting that brutish frenzy? To Christians the Spirit of the Lord is not a turbulent phantom, which they themselves have produced by dreaming, or received ready-made by others; but they religiously seek the knowledge of him from Scripture, where two things are taught concerning him; first, that he is given to us for sanctification, that he may purge us from all iniquity and defilement, and bring us to the obedience of divine righteousness, an obedience which cannot exist unless the lusts to which these men would give loose reins are tamed and subdued; secondly that though purged by his sanctification, we are still beset by many vices and much weakness, so long as we are enclosed in the prison of the body. Thus it is, that placed at a great distance from perfection, we must always be endeavoring to make some progress, and daily struggling with the evil by which we are entangled. Hence, too, it follows, that, shaking off sloth and security, we must be intently vigilant, so as not to be taken unawares in the snares of our flesh; unless, indeed, we presume to think that we have made greater progress than the Apostle, who was buffeted by a messenger of Satan, in order that his strength might be perfected in weakness,, and who gives in his own person a true, not a fictitious representation, of the strife between the Spirit and the flesh (2 Corinthians 12:7, 2 Corinthians 12:9; Romans 7:6).

15. The Apostle, in his description of repentance (2 Corinthians 7:2), enumerates seven causes, effects, or parts belonging to it, and that on the best grounds. These are carefulness, excuse, indignation fear, desire, zeal, revenge. It should not excite surprise that I venture not to determine whether they ought to be regarded as causes or effects: both views may be maintained. They may also be called affections conjoined with repentance; but as Paul’s meaning may be ascertained without entering into any of these questions, we shall be contented with a simple exposition. He says then that godly sorrow produces carefulness. He who is really dissatisfied with himself for sinning against his God, is, at the same time, stimulated to care and attention, that he may completely disentangle himself from the chains of the devil, and keep a better guard against his snares, so as not afterwards to lose the guidance of the Holy Spirit, or be overcome by security. Next comes excuse, which in this place means not defense, in which the sinner to escape the judgment of God either denies his fault or extenuates it, but apologizing, which trusts more to intercession than to the goodness of the cause; just as children not altogether abandoned, while they acknowledge and confess their errors yet employ deprecation; and to make room for it, testify, by every means in their power, that they have by no means cast off the reverence which they owe to their parents; in short, endeavor by excuse not to prove themselves righteous and

innocent, but only to obtain pardon. Next follows indignation, under which the sinner inwardly murmurs expostulates, and is offended with himself on recognizing his perverseness and ingratitude to God. By the term fear is meant that trepidation which takes possession of our minds whenever we consider both what we have deserved, and the fearful severity of the divine anger against sinners. Accordingly, the exceeding disquietude which we must necessarily feel, both trains us to humility and makes us more cautious for the future. But if the carefulness or anxiety which he first mentioned is the result of fear, the connection between the two becomes obvious. Desire seems to me to be used as equivalent to diligence in duty, and alacrity in doing service, to which the sense of our misdeeds ought to be a powerful stimulus. To this also pertains zeal, which immediately follows; for it signifies the ardor with which we are inflamed when such goads as these are applied to us. “What have I done? Into what abyss had I fallen had not the mercy of God prevented?” The last of all is revenge, for the stricter we are with ourselves, and the severer the censure we pass upon our sins, the more ground we have to hope for the divine favor and mercy. And certainly when the soul is overwhelmed with a dread of divine judgment, it cannot but act the part of an avenger in inflicting punishment upon itself. Pious men, doubtless, feel that there is punishment in the shame, confusion, groans, self-displeasure, and other feelings produced by a serious review of their sins. Let us remember, however, that moderation must be used, so that we may not be overwhelmed with sadness, there being nothing to which trembling consciences are more prone than to rush into despair. This, too, is one of Satan’s artifices. Those whom he sees thus overwhelmed with fear he plunges deeper and deeper into the abyss of sorrow, that they may never again rise. It is true that the fear which ends in humility without relinquishing the hope of pardon cannot be in excess. And yet we must always beware, according to the apostolic injunction, of giving way to extreme dread, as this tends to make us shun God while he is calling us to himself by repentance. Wherefore, the advice of Bernard is good, “Grief for sins is necessary, but must not be perpetual. My advice is to turn back at times from sorrow and the anxious remembrance of your ways, and escape to the plain, to a calm review of the divine mercies. Let us mingle honey with wormwood, that the salubrious bitter may give health when we drink it tempered with a mixture of sweetness: while you think humbly of yourselves, think also of the goodness of the Lord” (Bernard in Cant. Serm. 11).

16. We can now understand what are the fruits of repentance; viz., offices of piety towards God, and love towards men, general holiness and purity of life. In short, the more a man studies to conform his life to the standard of the divine law, the surer signs he gives of his repentance. Accordingly, the Spirit, in exhorting us to repentance, brings before us at one time each separate precept of the law; at another the duties of the second table; although there are also passages in which, after condemning impurity in its fountain in the heart, he afterwards descends to external marks, by which repentance is proved to be sincere. A portraiture of this I will shortly set before the eye of the reader when I come to describe the Christian life (infra, chapter 6) I will not here collect the passages from the prophets in which they deride the frivolous observances of those who labour to appease God with ceremonies, and show that they are mere mockery; or those in which they show that outward integrity of conduct is not the chief part of repentance, seeing that God looks at the heart. Any one moderately versant in Scripture will understand by himself, without being reminded by others, that when he has to do with God, nothing is gained without beginning with the internal affections of the heart. There is a passage of Joel which will avail not a little for the understanding of others: “Rend your heart, and not your garments” (Joel 2:13). Both are also

briefly expressed by James in these words: “Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double-minded” (James 4:8). Here, indeed, the accessory is set down first; but the source and principle is afterwards pointed out - viz., that hidden defilements must be wiped away, and an altar erected to God in the very heart. There are, moreover, certain external exercises which we employ in private as remedies to humble us and tame our flesh, and in public, to testify our repentance. These have their origin in that revenge of which Paul speaks (2 Corinthians 7:2), for when the mind is distressed, it naturally expresses itself in sackcloth, groans, and tears, shuns ornament and every kind of show, and abandons all delights. Then he who feels how great an evil the rebellion of the flesh is, tries every means of curbing it. Besides, he who considers aright how grievous a thing it is to have offended the justice of God, cannot rest until, in his humility, he have given glory to God. Such exercises are often mentioned by ancient writers when they speak of the fruits of repentance. But although they by no means place the power of repentance in them, yet my readers must pardon me for saying what I think - they certainly seem to insist on them more than is right. Any one who judiciously considers the matter will, I trust, agree with me that they have exceeded in two ways; first, by so strongly urging and extravagantly commending that corporal discipline, they indeed succeeded in making the people embrace it with greater zeal; but they in a manner obscured what they should have regarded as of much more serious moment. Secondly, the inflictions which they enjoined were considerably more rigorous than ecclesiastical mildness demands, as will be elsewhere shown.

17. But as there are some who, from the frequent mention of sackcloth, fasting, and tears, especially in Joel (Joel 2:12), think that these constitute the principal part of repentance, we must dispel their delusion. In that passage the proper part of repentance is described by the words, “turn ye even to me with your whole heart;” “rend your heart, and not your garments.” The “fastings”, “weeping,” and “mourning,” are introduced not as invariable or necessary effects, but as special circumstances. Having foretold that most grievous disasters were impending over the Jews, he exhorts them to turn away the divine anger not only by repenting, but by giving public signs of sorrow. For as a criminal, to excite the commiseration of the judge, appears in a supplicating posture, with a long beard, uncombed hair, and coarse clothing, so should those who are charged at the judgment-seat of God deprecate his severity in a garb of wretchedness. But although sackcloth and ashes were perhaps more conformable to the customs of these times, yet it is plain that weeping and fasting are very appropriate in our case whenever the Lord threatens us with any defeat or calamity. In presenting the appearance of danger, he declares that he is preparing, and, in a manner, arming himself for vengeance. Rightly, therefore, does the Prophet exhort those, on whose crimes he had said a little before that vengeance was to be executed, to weeping and fasting - that is, to the mourning habit of criminals. Nor in the present day do ecclesiastical teachers act improperly when, seeing ruin hanging over the necks of their people, they call aloud on them to hasten with weeping and fasting: only they must always urge, with greater care and earnestness, “rend your hearts, and not your garments.” It is beyond doubt that fasting is not always a concomitant of repentance, but is specially destined for seasons of calamity. Hence our Savior connects it with mourning (Matthew 9:15), and relieves the Apostles of the necessity of it until, by being deprived of his presence, they were filled with sorrow. I speak of formal fasting. For the life of Christians ought ever to be tempered with frugality and sobriety, so that the whole course of it should present some appearance of fasting. As this subject will be fully discussed when the discipline of the Church comes to be considered, I now dwell less upon it.

18. This much, however, I will add: when the name repentance is applied to the external profession, it is used improperly, and not in the genuine meaning as I have explained it. For that is not so much a turning unto God as the confession of a fault accompanied with deprecation of the sentence and punishment. Thus to repent in sackcloth and ashes (Matthew 11:21; Luke 10:13), is just to testify self dissatisfaction when God is angry with us for having grievously offended him. It is, indeed, a kind of public confession by which, condemning ourselves before angels and the world, we prevent the judgment of God. For Paul, rebuking the sluggishness of those who indulge in their sins, says, “If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged” (1 Corinthians 11:31). It is not always necessary, however, openly to inform others, and make them the witnesses of our repentance; but to confess privately to God is a part of true repentance which cannot be omitted. Nothing were more incongruous than that God should pardon the sins in which we are flattering ourselves, and hypocritically cloaking that he may not bring them to light. We must not only confess the sins which we daily commit, but more grievous lapses ought to carry us farther, and bring to our remembrance things which seemed to have been long ago buried. Of this David sets an example before us in his own person (Psalms 51:1-19). Filled with shame for a recent crime he examines himself, going back to the womb, and acknowledging that even then he was corrupted and defiled. This he does not to extenuate his fault, as many hide themselves in the crowd, and catch at impunity by involving others along with them. Very differently does David, who ingenuously makes it an aggravation of his sin, that being corrupted from his earliest infancy he ceased not to add iniquity to iniquity. In another passage, also, he takes a survey of his past life, and implores God to pardon the errors of his youth (Psalms 25:7). And, indeed, we shall not prove that we have thoroughly shaken off our stupor until, groaning under the burden, and lamenting our sad condition, we seek relief from God. It is, moreover to be observed, that the repentance which we are enjoined assiduously to cultivate, differs from that which raises, as it were, from death those who had fallen more shamefully, or given themselves up to sin without restraint, or by some kind of open revolt, had thrown off the authority of God. For Scripture, in exhorting to repentance, often speaks of it as a passage from death unto life, and when relating that a people had repented, means that they had abandoned idolatry, and other forms of gross wickedness. For which reason Paul denounces woe to sinners, “who have not repented of the uncleanness, and fornication, and lasciviousness which they have committed” (2 Corinthians 12:21). This distinction ought to be carefully observed, lest when we hear of a few individuals having been summoned to repent we indulge in supine security, as if we had nothing to do with the mortification of the flesh; whereas, in consequence of the depraved desires which are always enticing us, and the iniquities which are ever and anon springing from them, it must engage our unremitting care. The special repentance enjoined upon those whom the devil has entangled in deadly snares, and withdrawn from the fear of God, does not abolish that ordinary repentance which the corruption of nature obliges us to cultivate during the whole course of our lives.

19. Moreover if it is true, and nothing can be more certain, than that a complete summary of the Gospel is included under these two heads, viz., repentance and the remission of sins, do we not see that the Lord justifies his people freely, and at the same time renews them to true holiness by the sanctification of his Spirit? John, the messenger sent before the face of Christ to prepare his ways, proclaimed, “repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 11:10; Matthew 3:2). By inviting them to repentance, he urged them to acknowledge that they were sinners, and in all respects condemned before God, that thus they might be induced earnestly to seek the

mortification of the flesh, and a new birth in the Spirit. By announcing the kingdom of God he called for faith, since by the kingdom of God which he declared to be at hand, he meant forgiveness of sins, salvation, life, and every other blessing which we obtain in Christ; wherefore we read in the other Evangelists, “John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins” (Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3). What does this mean, but that, weary and oppressed with the burden of sin, they should turn to the Lord, and entertain hopes of forgiveness and salvation? Thus, too, Christ began his preaching, “The kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the Gospel” (Mark 1:10). First, he declares that the treasures of the divine mercy were opened in him; next, he enjoins repentance; and, lastly, he encourages confidence in the promises of God. Accordingly, when intending to give a brief summary of the whole Gospel, he said that he behaved “to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations” (Luke 24:26, Luke 24:46). In like manner, after his resurrection the Apostles preached, “Him has God exalted with his right hand, to be a Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins” (Acts 5:31). Repentance is preached in the name of Christ, when men learn, through the doctrines of the Gospel, that all their thoughts, affections, and pursuits, are corrupt and vicious; and that, therefore, if they would enter the kingdom of God they must be born again. Forgiveness of sins is preached when men are taught that Christ “is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption” (1 Corinthians 1:30), that on his account they are freely deemed righteous and innocent in the sight of God. Though both graces are obtained by faith (as has been shown elsewhere), yet as the goodness of God, by which sins are forgiven, is the proper object of faith, it was proper carefully to distinguish it from repentance.

20. Moreover, as hatred of sin, which is the beginning of repentance, first gives us access to the knowledge of Christ, who manifests himself to none but miserable and afflicted sinners, groaning, laboring, burdened, hungry, and thirsty, pining away with grief and wretchedness, so if we would stand in Christ, we must aim at repentance, cultivate it during our whole lives, and continue it to the last. Christ came to call sinners, but to call them to repentance. He was sent to bless the unworthy, but by “turning away every one” “from his iniquities.” The Scripture is full of similar passages. Hence, when God offers forgiveness of sins, he in return usually stipulates for repentance, intimating that his mercy should induce men to repent. “Keep ye judgment,” saith he, “and do justice: for my salvation is near to come.” Again, “The Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob.” Again, “Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him.” “Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.” Here, however, it is to be observed, that repentance is not made a condition in such a sense as to be a foundation for meriting pardon; nay, it rather indicates the end at which they must aim if they would obtain favor, God having resolved to take pity on men for the express purpose of leading them to repent. Therefore, so long as we dwell in the prison of the body, we must constantly struggle with the vices of our corrupt nature, and so with our natural disposition. Plato sometimes says, that the life of the philosopher is to meditate on death. More truly may we say, that the life of a Christian man is constant study and exercise in mortifying the flesh, until it is certainly slain, and the Spirit of God obtains dominion in us. Wherefore, he seems to me to have made most progress who has learned to be most dissatisfied with himself. He does not, however, remain in the miry clay without going

forward; but rather hastens and sighs after God, that, ingrafted both into the death and the life of Christ, he may constantly meditate on repentance. Unquestionably those who have a genuine hatred of sin cannot do otherwise: for no man ever hated sin without being previously enamored of righteousness. This view, as it is the simplest of all, seemed to me also to accord best with Scripture truth.

21. Moreover, that repentance is a special gift of God, I trust is too well understood from the above doctrine to require any lengthened discourse. Hence the Church' extols the goodness of God, and looks on in wonder, saying, "Then has God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life" (Acts 11:18); and Paul enjoining Timothy to deal meekly and patiently with unbelievers, says, "If God per adventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth, and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil" (2 Timothy 2:25, 2 Timothy 2:26). God indeed declares, that he would have all men to repent, and addresses exhortations in common to all; their efficacy, however, depends on the Spirit of regeneration. It were easier to create us at first, than for us by our own strength to acquire a more excellent nature. Wherefore, in regard to the whole process of regeneration, it is not without cause we are called God's "workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them" (Ephesians 2:10) Those whom God is pleased to rescue from death, he quickens by the Spirit of regeneration; not that repentance is properly the cause of salvation, but because, as already seen, it is inseparable from the faith and mercy of God; for, as Isaiah declares, "The Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob." This, indeed, is a standing truth, that wherever the fear of God is in vigor, the Spirit has been carrying on his saving work. Hence, in Isaiah, while believers complain and lament that they have been forsaken of God, they set down the supernatural hardening of the heart as a sign of reprobation. The Apostle, also, intending to exclude apostates from the hope of salvation, states, as the reason, that it is impossible to renew them to repentance (Hebrews 6:6); that is, God by renewing those whom he wills not to perish, gives them a sign of paternal favor, and in a manner attracts them to himself, by the beams of a calm and reconciled countenance; on the other hand, by hardening the reprobate, whose impiety is not to be forgiven, he thunders against them. This kind of vengeance the Apostle denounces against voluntary apostates (Hebrews 10:29), who, in falling away from the faith of the gospel, mock God, insultingly reject his favor, profane and trample under foot the blood of Christ, nay, as far as in them lies, crucify him afresh. Still, he does not, as some austere persons preposterously insist, leave no hope of pardon to voluntary sins, but shows that apostasy being altogether without excuse, it is not strange that God is inexorably rigorous in punishing sacrilegious contempt thus shown to himself. For, in the same Epistle, he says, that "it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away to renew them again to repentance, seeing they crucify the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame" (Hebrews 7:4-6). And in another passage, "If we sin willingly, after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment," &c. (Hebrews 11:25, Hebrews 11:26). There are other passages, from a misinterpretation of which the Novatians of old extracted materials for their heresy; so much so, that some good men taking offense at their harshness, have deemed the Epistle altogether spurious, though it truly savors in every part of it of the apostolic spirit. But as our dispute is only with those who receive the Epistle, it is easy to show that those passages give no support to their

error. First, the Apostle must of necessity agree with his Master, who declares, that “all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men, but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men,” “neither in this world, neither in the world to come” (Matthew 12:31; Luke 12:10). We must hold that this was the only exception which the Apostle recognized, unless we would set him in opposition to the grace of God. Hence it follows, that to no sin is pardon denied save to one, which proceeding from desperate fury cannot be ascribed to infirmity, and plainly shows that the man guilty of it is possessed by the devil.

22. Here, however, it is proper to consider what the dreadful iniquity is which is not to be pardoned. The definition which Augustine somewhere gives - viz., that it is obstinate perverseness, with distrust of pardon, continued till death - scarcely agrees with the words of Christ, that it shall not be forgiven in this world. For either this is said in vain, or it may be committed in this world. But if Augustine’s definition is correct, the sin is not committed unless persisted in till death. Others say, that the sin against the Holy Spirit consists in envying the grace conferred upon a brother; but I know not on what it is founded. Here, however, let us give the true definition, which, when once it is established by sound evidence, will easily of itself overturn all the others. I say therefore that he sins against the Holy Spirit who, while so constrained by the power of divine truth that he cannot plead ignorance, yet deliberately resists, and that merely for the sake of resisting. For Christ, in explanation of what he had said, immediately adds, “Whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh against the holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him” (Matthew 12:31). And Matthew uses the term spirit of blasphemy for blasphemy against the Spirit. How can any one insult the Son, without at the same time attacking the Spirit? In this way. Those who in ignorance assail the unknown truth of God, and yet are so disposed that they would be unwilling to extinguish the truth of God when manifested to them, or utter one word against him whom they knew to be the Lord’s Anointed, sin against the Father and the Son. Thus there are many in the present day who have the greatest abhorrence to the doctrine of the Gospel, and yet, if they knew it to be the doctrine of the Gospel, would be prepared to venerate it with their whole heart. But those who are convinced in conscience that what they repudiate and impugn is the word of God, and yet cease not to impugn it, are said to blaspheme against the Spirit, inasmuch as they struggle against the illumination which is the work of the Spirit. Such were some of the Jews, who, when they could not resist the Spirit speaking by Stephen, yet were bent on resisting (Acts 6:10). There can be no doubt that many of them were carried away by zeal for the law; but it appears that there were others who maliciously and impiously raged against God himself, that is, against the doctrine which they knew to be of God. Such, too, were the Pharisees, on whom our Lord denounced woe. To depreciate the power of the Holy Spirit, they defamed him by the name of Beelzebub (Matthew 9:3, Matthew 9:4; Matthew 12:24). The spirit of blasphemy, therefore, is, when a man audaciously, and of set purpose, rushes forth to insult his divine name. This Paul intimates when he says, “but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief;” otherwise he had deservedly been held unworthy of the grace of God. If ignorance joined with unbelief made him obtain pardon, it follows, that there is no room for pardon when knowledge is added to unbelief.

23. If you attend properly, you will perceive that the Apostle speaks not of one particular lapse or two, but of the universal revolt by which the reprobate renounce salvation. It is not strange that God should be implacable to those whom John, in his Epistle, declares not to have been of the

elect, from whom they went out (1 John 2:19). For he is directing his discourse against those who imagined that they could return to the Christian religion though they had once revolted from it. To divest them of this false and pernicious opinion, he says, as is most true, that those who had once knowingly and willingly cast off fellowship with Christ, had no means of returning to it. It is not, however so cast off by those who merely, by the dissoluteness of their lives, transgress the word of the Lord, but by those who avowedly reject his whole doctrine. There is a paralogism in the expression casting off and sinning. Casting off, as interpreted by the Novatians, is when any one, notwithstanding of being taught by the Law of the Lord not to steal or commit adultery, refrains not from theft or adultery. On the contrary, I hold that there is a tacit antithesis, in which all the things, contrary to those which had been said, must be held to be repeated, so that the thing expressed is not some particular vice, but universal aversion to God, and (so to speak) the apostasy of the whole man. Therefore, when he speaks of those falling away “who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted of the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come,” we must understand him as referring to those who, with deliberate impiety, have quenched the light of the Spirit, tasted of the heavenly word and spurned it, alienated themselves from the sanctification of the Spirit, and trampled under foot the word of God and the powers of a world to come. The better to show that this was the species of impiety intended, he afterwards expressly adds the term willfully. For when he says, “If we sin willfully, after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins,” he denies not that Christ is a perpetual victim to expiate the transgressions of saints (this the whole Epistle, in explaining the priesthood of Christ, distinctly proclaims), but he says that there remains no other sacrifice after this one is abandoned. And it is abandoned when the truth of the Gospel is professedly abjured.

24. To some it seems harsh, and at variance with the divine mercy, utterly to deny forgiveness to any who retake themselves to it. This is easily disposed of. It is not said that pardon will be refused if they turn to the Lord, but it is altogether denied that they can turn to repentance, inasmuch as for their ingratitude they are struck by the just judgment of God with eternal blindness. There is nothing contrary to this in the application which is afterwards made of the example of Esau, who tried in vain, by crying and tears, to recover his lost birthright; nor in the denunciation of the Prophet, “They cried, and I would not hear.” Such modes of expression do not denote true conversion or calling upon God, but that anxiety with which the wicked, when in calamity, are compelled to see what they before securely disregarded, viz., that nothing can avail but the assistance of the Lord. This, however, they do not so much implore as lament the loss of. Hence all that the Prophet means by crying, and the apostle by tears, is the dreadful torment which stings and excruciates the wicked in despair. It is of consequence carefully to observe this: for otherwise God would be inconsistent with himself when he proclaims through the Prophet, that “If the wicked will turn from all his sins that he has committed,” - “he shall surely live, he shall not die” (Ezekiel 18:21, Ezekiel 18:22). And (as I have already said) it is certain that the mind of man cannot be changed for the better unless by his preventing grace. The promise as to those who call upon him will never fail; but the names of conversion and prayer are improperly given to that blind torment by which the reprobate are distracted when they see that they must seek God if they would find a remedy for their calamities, and yet shun to approach him.

25. But as the Apostle declares that God is not appeased by feigned repentance, it is asked how Ahab obtained pardon, and averted the punishment denounced against him (1 Kings 21:28, 1 Kings 21:29), seeing, it appears, he was only amazed on the sudden, and afterwards continued his former course of life. He, indeed, clothed himself in sackcloth, covered himself with ashes, lay on the ground, and (as the testimony given to him bears) humbled himself before God. It was a small matter to rend his garments while his heart continued obstinate and swollen with wickedness, and yet we see that God was inclined to mercy. I answer, that though hypocrites are thus occasionally spared for a time, the wrath of God still lies upon them, and that they are thus spared not so much on their own account as for a public example. For what did Ahab gain by the mitigation of his punishment except that he did not suffer it alive on the earth? The curse of God, though concealed, was fixed on his house, and he himself went to eternal destruction. We may see the same thing in Esau (Genesis 27:38, Genesis 27:39). For though he met with a refusal, a temporal blessing was granted to his tears. But as, according to the declaration of God, the spiritual inheritance could be possessed only by one of the brothers, when Jacob was selected instead of Esau, that event excluded him from the divine mercy; but still there was given to him, as a man of a groveling nature, this consolation, that he should be filled with the fulness of the earth and the dew of heaven. And this, as I lately said, should be regarded as done for the example of others, that we may learn to apply our minds, and exert ourselves with greater alacrity, in the way of sincere repentance, as there cannot be the least doubt that God will be ready to pardon those who turn to him truly and with the heart, seeing his mercy extends even to the unworthy though they bear marks of his displeasure. In this way also, we are taught how dreadful the judgment is which awaits all the rebellious who with audacious brow and iron heart make it their sport to despise and disregard the divine threatening. God in this way often stretched forth his hand to deliver the Israelites from their calamities, though their cries were pretended, and their minds double and perfidious, as he himself complains in the Psalms, that they immediately returned to their former course (Psalms 78:36, Psalms 78:37). But he designed thus by kindness and forbearance to bring them to true repentance, or leave them without excuse. And yet by remitting the punishment for a time, he does not lay himself under any perpetual obligation. He rather at times rises with greater severity against hypocrites, and doubles their punishment, that it may thereby appear how much hypocrisy displeases him. But, as I have observed, he gives some examples of his inclination to pardon, that the pious may thereby be stimulated to amend their lives, and the pride of those who petulantly kick against the pricks be more severely condemned.

08.03.04A. Chapter 04. Part A

Chapter 4. Penitence, as explained in the sophistical jargon of the Schoolmen, widely different from the purity required by the Gospel. Of confession and satisfaction. The divisions of this chapter are,

I. The orthodox doctrine of repentance being already expounded, the false doctrine is refuted in the present chapter; a general summary survey being at the same time taken of the doctrine of the Schoolmen, sec. 1, 2.

II. Its separate parts are afterwards examined. Contrition, sec. 2 and 3. Confession, sec. 4-20. Sanctification, from sec. 20 to the end of the chapter.

Sections

1. Errors of the Schoolmen in delivering the doctrine of repentance. 1. Errors in defining it. Four different definitions considered. 2. Absurd division. 3. Vain and puzzling questions. 4. Mode in which they entangle themselves.

2. The false doctrine of the Schoolmen necessary to be refuted. Of contrition. Their view of it examined.

3. True and genuine contrition.

4. Auricular confession. Whether or not of divine authority. Arguments of Canonists and Schoolmen. Allegorical argument founded on Judaism. Two answers. Reason why Christ sent the lepers to the priests.

5. Another allegorical argument. Answer.

6. A third argument from two passages of Scripture. These passages expounded.

7. Confession proved not to be of divine authority. The use of it free for almost twelve hundred years after Christ. Its nature. When enacted into a law. Confirmation from the history of the Church. A representation of the ancient auricular confession still existing among the Papists, to bear judgment against them. Confession abolished in the Church of Constantinople.

8. This mode of confession disapproved by Chrysostom, as shown by many passages.

9. False confession being thus refuted, the confession enjoined by the word of God is considered. Mistranslation in the old version. Proof from Scripture that confession should be directed to God alone.

10. Effect of secret confession thus made to God. Another kind of confession made to men.

11. Two forms of the latter confession, viz., public and private. Public confession either ordinary or extraordinary. Use of each. Objection to confession and public prayer. Answer.

12. Private confession of two kinds. 1. On our own account. 2. On account of our neighbor. Use of the former. Great assistance to be obtained from faithful ministers of the Church. Mode of procedure. Caution to be used.

13. The use of the latter recommended by Christ. What comprehended under it. Scripture sanctions no other method of confession.

14. The power of the keys exercised in these three kinds of confession. The utility of this power in regard to public confession and absolution. Caution to be observed.

15. Popish errors respecting confession. 1. In enjoining on all the necessity of confessing every sin. 2. Fictitious keys. 3. Pretended mandate to loose and bind. 4. To whom the office of loosing and binding committed.

16. Refutation of the first error, from the impossibility of so confessing, as proved by the testimony of David.

17. Refuted farther from the testimony of conscience. Impossible to observe this most rigid obligation. Necessarily leads to despair or indifference. Confirmation of the preceding remarks by an appeal to conscience.

18. Another refutation of the first error from analogy. Sum of the whole refutation. Third refutation, laying down the surest rule of confession. Explanation of the rule. Three objections answered.

19. Fourth objection, viz., that auricular confession does no harm, and is even useful. Answer, unfolding the hypocrisy, falsehood, impiety, and monstrous abominations of the patrons of this error.

20. Refutation of the second error. 1. Priests not successors of the Apostles. 2. They have not the Holy Spirit, who alone is arbiter of the keys.

21. Refutation of the third error. 1. They are ignorant of the command and promise of Christ. By abandoning the word of God they run into innumerable absurdities.

22. Objection to the refutation of the third error. Answers, reducing the Papists to various absurdities.

23. Refutation of the fourth error. 1. Petitio principii. 2. Inversion of ecclesiastical discipline. Three objections answered.

24. Conclusion of the whole discussion against this fictitious confession.

25. Of satisfaction, to which the Sophists assign the third place in repentance. Errors and falsehoods. These views opposed by the terms, 1. Forgiveness. 2. Free forgiveness. 3. God destroying iniquities. 4. By and on account of Christ. No need of our satisfaction.

26. Objection, confining the grace and efficacy of Christ within narrow limits. Answers by both John the Evangelist and John the Baptist. Consequence of these answers.

27. Two points violated by the fiction of satisfaction. First, the honor of Christ impaired. Secondly, the conscience cannot find peace. Objection, confining the forgiveness of sins to Catechumens,

refuted.

28. Objection, founded on the arbitrary distinction between venial and mortal sins. This distinction insulting to God and repugnant to Scripture. Answer, showing the true distinction in regard to venial sin.

29. Objection, founded on a distinction between guilt and the punishment of it. Answer, illustrated by various passages of Scripture. Admirable saying of Augustine.

30. Answer, founded on a consideration of the efficacy of Christ's death, and the sacrifices under the law. Our true satisfaction.

31. An objection, perverting six passages of Scripture. Preliminary observations concerning a twofold judgment on the part of God. 1. For punishment. 2. For correction.

32. Two distinctions hence arising. Objection, that God is often angry with his elect. Answer, God in afflicting his people does not take his mercy from them. This confirmed by his promise, by Scripture, and the uniform experience of the Church. Distinction between the reprobate and the elect in regard to punishment.

33. Second distinction. The punishment of the reprobate a commencement of the eternal punishment awaiting them; that of the elect designed to bring them to repentance. This confirmed by passages of Scripture and of the Fathers.

34. Two uses of this doctrine to the believer. In affliction he can believe that God, though angry, is still favourable to him. In the punishment of the reprobate, he sees a prelude to their final doom.

35. Objection, as to the punishment of David, answered. Why all men here subjected to chastisement.

36. Objections, founded on five other passages, answered.

37. Answer continued.

38. Objection, founded on passages in the Fathers. Answer, with passages from Chrysostom and Augustine.

39. These satisfactions had reference to the peace of the Church, and not to the throne of God. The Schoolmen have perverted the meaning of some absurd statements by obscure monks.

1. I come now to an examination of what the scholastic sophists teach concerning repentance. This I will do as briefly as possible; for I leave no intention to take up every point, lest this work, which I am desirous to frame as a compendium of doctrine, should exceed all bounds. They have managed to envelop a matter, otherwise not much involved, in so many perplexities, that it will be difficult to find an outlet if once you get plunged but a little way into their mire. And, first, in giving a definition, they plainly show they never understood what repentance means. For they fasten on some expressions in the writings of the Fathers which are very far from expressing the nature of repentance. For instance, that to repent is to deplore past sins and not commit what is to be deplored. Again that it is to bewail past evils and not to sin to do what is to be bewailed. Again, that it is a kind of grieving revenge, punishing in itself what it grieves to have committed. Again, that it is

sorrow of heart and bitterness of soul for the evils which the individual has committed, or to which he has consented. Supposing we grant that these things were well said by Fathers (though, if one were inclined to dispute, it were not difficult to deny it), they were not, however said with the view of describing repentance but only of exhorting penitents not again to fall into the same faults from which they had been delivered. But if all descriptions of this kind are to be converted into definitions, there are others which have as good a title to be added. For instance, the following sentence of Chrysostom: “Repentance is a medicine for the cure of sin, a gift bestowed from above, an admirable virtue, a grace surpassing the power of laws.” Moreover, the doctrine which they afterwards deliver is somewhat worse than their definition. For they are so keenly bent on external exercises, that all you can gather from immense volumes is, that repentance is a discipline, and austerity, which serves partly to subdue the flesh, partly to chasten and punish sins: of internal renovation of mind, bringing with it true amendment of life, there is a strange silence. No doubt, they talk much of contrition and attrition, torment the soul with many scruples, and involve it in great trouble and anxiety; but when they seem to have deeply wounded the heart, they cure all its bitterness by a slight sprinkling of ceremonies. Repentance thus shrewdly defined, they divide into contrition of the heart, confession of the mouth, and satisfaction of works. This is not more logical than the definition, though they would be thought to have spent their whole lives in framing syllogisms. But if any one argues from the definition (a mode of argument prevalent with dialecticians) that a man may weep over his past sins and not commit things that cause weeping; may bewail past evils, and not commit things that are to be bewailed; may punish what he is grieved for having committed, though he does not confess it with the mouth - how will they defend their division? For if he may be a true penitent and not confess, repentance can exist without confession. If they answer, that this division refers to repentance regarded as a sacrament, or is to be understood of repentance in its most perfect form, which they do not comprehend in their definitions, the mistake does not rest with me: let them blame themselves for not defining more purely and clearly. When any matter is discussed, I certainly am dull enough to refer everything to the definition as the hinge and foundation of the whole discussion. But granting that this is a license which masters have, let us now survey the different parts in their order. In omitting as frivolous several things which they vend with solemn brow as mysteries, I do it not from ignorance. It were not very difficult to dispose of all those points which they plume themselves on their acuteness and subtilty in discussing; but I consider it a sacred duty not to trouble the reader to no purpose with such absurdities. It is certainly easy to see from the questions which they move and agitate, and in which they miserably entangle themselves, that they are pealing of things they know not. Of this nature are the following: Whether repentance of one sin is pleasing to God, while there is an obstinate adherence to other sins. Again, whether punishments divinely indicted are available for satisfaction. Again, whether repentance can be several times repeated for mortal sins, whereas they grossly and wickedly define that daily repentance has to do with none but venial sins. In like manner, with gross error, they greatly torment themselves with a saying of Jerome, that repentance is a second plank after shipwreck. Herein they show that they have never awoke from brutish stupor, so as to obtain a distant view of the thousandth part of their sins.

2. I would have my readers to observe, that the dispute here relates not to a matter of no consequence; but to one of the most important of all, viz., the forgiveness of sins. For while they require three things in repentance, viz., compunction of heart, confession of the mouth, and satisfaction of work, they at the same time teach that these are necessary to obtain the pardon of

sins. If there is any thing in the whole compass of religion which it is of importance to us to know, this certainly is one of the most important, viz., to perceive and rightly hold by what means, what rule, what terms, with what facility or difficulty, forgiveness of sins may be obtained. Unless our knowledge here is clear and certain, our conscience can have no rest at all, no peace with God, no confidence or security, but is continually trembling, fluctuating, boiling, and distracted; dreads, hates, and shuns the presence of God. But if forgiveness of sins depends on the conditions to which they bind it, nothing can be more wretched and deplorable than our situation. Contrition they represent as the first step in obtaining pardon; and they exact it as due, that is, full and complete: meanwhile, they decide not when one may feel secure of having performed this contrition in due measure. I admit that we are bound strongly and incessantly to urge every man bitterly to lament his sins, and thereby stimulate himself more and more to dislike and hate them. For this is the “repentance to salvation not to be repented of” (2 Corinthians 7:10). But when such bitterness of sorrow is demanded as may correspond to the magnitude of the offense, and be weighed in the balance with confidence of pardon, miserable consciences are sadly perplexed and tormented when they see that the contrition due for sin is laid upon them, and yet that they have no measure of what is due, so as to enable them to determine that they have made full payment. If they say, we are to do what in us lies, we are always brought back to the same point; for when will any man venture to promise himself that he has done his utmost in bewailing sin? Therefore, when consciences, after a lengthened struggle and long contests with themselves, find no haven in which they may rest, as a means of alleviating their condition in some degree, they extort sorrow and wring out tears, in order to perfect their contrition.

3. If they say that this is calumny on my part, let them come forward and point out a single individual who, by this doctrine of contrition, has not either been driven to despair, or has not, instead of true, opposed pretended fear to the justice of God. We have elsewhere observed, that forgiveness of sins never can be obtained without repentance, because none but the afflicted, and those wounded by a consciousness of sins, can sincerely implore the mercy of God; but we, at the same time, added, that repentance cannot be the cause of the forgiveness of sins: and we also did away with that torment of souls - the dogma that it must be performed as due. Our doctrine was, that the soul looked not to its own compunction or its own tears, but fixed both eyes on the mercy of God alone. Only we observed, that those who labour and are heavy laden are called by Christ, seeing he was sent “to preach good tidings to the meek;” “to bind up the broken-hearted; to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;” “to comfort all that mourn.” Hence the Pharisees were excluded, because, full of their own righteousness, they acknowledged not their own poverty; and despisers, because, regardless of the divine anger, they sought no remedy for their wickedness. Such persons neither labour nor are heavy laden, are not broken-hearted, bound, nor in prison. But there is a great difference between teaching that forgiveness of sins is merited by a full and complete contrition (which the sinner never can give), and instructing him to hunger and thirst after the mercy of God, that recognizing his wretchedness, his turmoil, weariness, and captivity, you may show him where he should seek refreshment, rest, and liberty; in fine, teach him in his humility to give glory to God.

4. Confession has ever been a subject of keen contest between the Canonists and the Scholastic Theologians; the former contending that confession is of divine authority - the latter insisting, on the contrary, that it is merely enjoined by ecclesiastical constitution. In this contest great effrontery

has been displayed by the Theologians, who have corrupted and violently wrested every passage of Scripture they have quoted in their favour. And when they saw that even thus they could not gain their object, those who wished to be thought particularly acute had recourse to the evasion that confession is of divine authority in regard to the substance, but that it afterwards received its form from positive enactment. Thus the silliest of these quibblers refer the citation to divine authority, from its being said, “Adam, where art thou?” (Genesis 3:9, Genesis 3:12); and also the exception from Adam having replied as if excepting, “The women whom thou gavest to be with me,” &c.; but say that the form of both was appointed by civil law. Let us see by what arguments they prove that this confession, formed or unformed, is a divine commandment. The Lord, they say, sent the lepers to the priests (Matthew 8:4). What? did he send them to confession? Who ever heard tell that the Levitical priests were appointed to hear confession? Here they resort to allegory. The priests were appointed by the Mosaic law to discern between leper and leper: sin is spiritual leprosy; therefore it belongs to the priests to decide upon it. Before I answer, I would ask, in passing, why, if this passage makes them judges of spiritual leprosy, they claim the cognizance of natural and carnal leprosy? This, for sooth, is not to play upon Scripture! The law gives the cognizance of leprosy to the Levitical priests: let us usurp this to ourselves. Sin is spiritual leprosy: let us also have cognizance of sin. I now give my answer: There being a change of the priesthood, there must of necessity be a change of the law. All the sacerdotal functions were transferred to Christ, and in him fulfilled and ended (Hebrews 7:12). To him alone, therefore, all the rights and honors of the priesthood have been transferred. If they are so fond then of hunting out allegories, let them set Christ before them as the only priest, and place full and universal jurisdiction on his tribunal: this we will readily admit. Besides, there is an incongruity in their allegory: it classes a merely civil enactment among ceremonies. Why, then, does Christ send the lepers to the priests? Lest the priests should be charged with violating the law, which ordained that the person cured of leprosy should present himself before the priest, and be purified by the offering of a sacrifice, he orders the lepers who had been cleansed to do what the law required. “Go and show thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing according as Moses commanded for a testimony unto them.” (Luke 5:17). And assuredly this miracle would be a testimony to them: they had pronounced them lepers; they now pronounce them cured. Whether they would or not, they are forced to become witnesses to the miracles of Christ. Christ allows them to examine the miracle, and they cannot deny it: yet, as they still quibble, they have need of a testimony. So it is elsewhere said, “This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations” (Matthew 24:14). Again, “Ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles” (Matthew 10:18); that is, in order that, in the judgment of Gods they might be more filly convicted. But if they prefer taking the view of Chrysostom (Hom. 12 de Muliere Cananaea), he shows that this was done by Christ for the sake of the Jews also, that he might not be regarded as a violator of the law. But we are ashamed to appeal to the authority of any man in a matter so clear, when Christ declares that he left the legal right of the priests entire, as professed enemies of the Gospel, who were always intent on making a clamour if their mouths were not stopped. Wherefore, let the Popish priests, in order to retain this privilege, openly make common cause with those whom it was necessary to restrain, by forcible means, from speaking evil of Christ. For there is here no reference to his true ministers.

5. They draw their second argument from the same fountain - I mean allegory; as if allegories were of much avail in confirming any doctrine. But, indeed, let them avail, if those which I am able to

produce are not more specious than theirs. They say, then, that the Lord, after raising Lazarus, commanded his disciples to “loose him and let him go” (John 11:44). Their first statement is untrue: we nowhere read that the Lord said this to the disciples; and it is much more probable that he spoke to the Jews who were standing by, that from there being no suspicion of fraud the miracle might be more manifest, and his power might be the more conspicuous from his raising the dead without touching him, by a mere word. In the same way, I understand that our Lord, to leave no ground of suspicion to the Jews, wished them to roll back the stone, feel the stench, perceive the sure signs of death, see him rise by the mere power of a word, and first handle hint when alive. And this is the view of Chrysostom (Serm. C. Jud. Gent. et Haeret). But granting that it was said to the disciples, what can they gain by it? That the Lord gave the apostles the power of loosing? How much more aptly and dexterously might we allegorize and say, that by this symbol the Lord designed to teach his followers to loose those whom he raises up; that is, not to bring to remembrance the sins which he himself had forgotten, not to condemn as sinners those whom he had acquitted, not still to upbraid those whom he had pardoned, not to be stern and severe in punishing, while he himself was merciful and ready to forgive. Certainly nothing should more incline us to pardon than the example of the Judge who threatens that he will be inexorable to the rigid and inhumane. Let them go now and vend their allegories.

6. They now come to closer quarters, while they support their view by passages of Scripture which they think clearly in their favour. Those who came to John’s baptism confessed their sins, and James bids us confess our sins one to another (James 5:16). It is not strange that those who wished to be baptized confessed their sins. It has already been mentioned, that John preached the baptism of repentance, baptized with water unto repentance. Whom then could he baptize, but those who confessed that they were sinners? Baptism is a symbol of the forgiveness of sins; and who could be admitted to receive the symbol but sinners acknowledging themselves as such? They therefore confessed their sins that they might be baptized. Nor without good reason does James enjoin us to confess our sins one to another. But if they would attend to what immediately follows, they would perceive that this gives them little support. The words are, “Confess your sins one to another, and pray one for another.” He joins together mutual confession and mutual prayer. If, then, we are to confess to priests only, we are also to pray for them only. What? It would even follow from the words of James, that priests alone can confess. In saying that we are to confess mutually, he must be addressing those only who can hear the confession of others. He says, alle4lous, mutually, by turns, or, if they prefer it, reciprocally. But those only can confess reciprocally who are fit to hear confession. This being a privilege which they bestow upon priests only, we also leave them the office of confessing to each other. Have done then with such frivolous absurdities, and let us receive the true meaning of the apostle, which is plain and simple; first, That we are to deposit our infirmities in the breasts of each other, with the view of receiving mutual counsel, sympathy, and comfort; and, secondly, That mutually conscious of the infirmities of our brethren we are to pray to the Lord for them. Why then quote James against us who so earnestly insist on acknowledgment of the divine mercy? No man can acknowledge the mercy of God without previously confessing his own misery. Nay, we pronounce every man to be anathema who does not confess himself a sinner before God, before his angels, before the Church; in short, before all men. “The Scripture has concluded all under sin,” “that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God,” that God alone may be justified and exalted (Galatians 3:22; Romans 3:9, Romans 3:19).

7. I wonder at their effrontery in venturing to maintain that the confession of which they speak is of divine authority. We admit that the use of it is very ancient; but we can easily prove that at one time it was free. It certainly appears, from their own records, that no law or constitution respecting it was enacted before the days of Innocent III. Surely if there had been a more ancient law they would have fastened on it, instead of being satisfied with the decree of the Council of Lateral, and so making themselves ridiculous even to children. In other matters, they hesitate not to coin fictitious decrees, which they ascribe to the most ancient Councils, that they may blind the eyes of the simple by veneration for antiquity. In this instance it has not occurred to them to practice this deception, and hence, themselves being witnesses, three centuries have not yet elapsed since the bridle was put, and the necessity of confession imposed by Innocent III. And to say nothing of the time, the mere barbarism of the terms used destroys the authority of the law. For when these worthy fathers enjoin that every person of both sexes (utriusque sexus) must once a year confess his sins to his own priest, men of wit humorously object that the precept binds hermaphrodites only, and has no application to any one who is either a male or a female. A still grosser absurdity has been displayed by their disciples, who are unable to explain what is meant by one's own priest (proprius sacerdos). Let all the hired ravers of the Pope babble as they may, we hold that Christ is not the author of this law, which compels men to enumerate their sins; nay, that twelve hundred years elapsed after the resurrection of Christ before any such law was made, and that, consequently, this tyranny was not introduced until piety and doctrine were extinct, and pretended pastors had usurped to themselves unbridled license. There is clear evidence in historians, and other ancient writers, to show that this was a politic discipline introduced by bishops, not a law enacted by Christ or the Apostles. Out of many I will produce only one passage, which will be no obscure proof. Sozomen relates, that this constitution of the bishops was carefully observed in the Western churches, but especially at Rome; thus intimating that it was not the universal custom of all churches. He also says, that one of the presbyters was specially appointed to take charge of this duty. This abundantly confutes their falsehood as to the keys being given to the whole priesthood indiscriminately for this purpose, since the function was not common to all the priests, but specially belonged to the one priest whom the bishop had appointed to it. He it was (the same who at present in each of the cathedral churches has the name of penitentiary) who had cognizance of offenses which were more heinous, and required to be rebuked for the sake of example. He afterwards adds, that the same custom existed at Constantinople, until a certain matron, while pretending to confess, was discovered to have used it as a cloak to cover her intercourse with a deacon. In consequence of that crime, Nectarius, the bishop of that church - a man famous for learning and sanctity - abolished the custom of confessing. Here, then, let these asses prick up their ears. If auricular confession was a divine law, how could Nectarius have dared to abolish or remodel it? Nectarius, a holy man of God, approved by the suffrage of all antiquity, will they charge with heresy and schism? With the same vote they will condemn the church of Constantinople, in which Sozomen affirms that the custom of confessing was not only disguised for a time, but even in his own memory abolished. Nay, let them charge with defections not only Constantinople but all the Eastern churches, which (if they say true) disregarded an inviolable law enjoined on all Christians.

8. This abrogation is clearly attested in so many passages by Chrysostom, who lived at Constantinople, and was himself prelate of the church, that it is strange they can venture to maintain the contrary: "Tell your sins", says he, "that you may efface them: if you blush to tell

another what sins you have committed, tell them daily in your soul. I say not, tell them to your fellow-servant who may upbraid you, but tell them to God who cures them. Confess your sins upon your bed, that your conscience may there daily recognize its iniquities." Again, "Now, however, it is not necessary to confess before witnesses; let the examination of your faults be made in your own thought: let the judgment be without a witness: let God alone see you confessing." Again, "I do not lead you publicly into the view of your fellow servants; I do not force you to disclose your sins to men; review and lay open your conscience before God. Show your wounds to the Lord, the best of physicians, and seek medicine from him. Show to him who upbraids not, but cures most kindly." Again, "Certainly tell it not to man lest he upbraid you. Nor must you confess to your fellow servant, who may make it public; but show your wounds to the Lord, who takes care of you, who is kind and can cure." He afterwards introduces God speaking thus: "I oblige you not to come into the midst of a theatre, and have many witnesses; tell your sins to me alone in private, that I may cure the ulcer." Shall we say that Chrysostom, in writing these and similar passages, carried his presumption so far as to free the consciences of men from those chains with which they are bound by the divine law? By no means; but knowing that it was not at all prescribed by the word of God, he dares not exact it as necessary.

9. But that the whole matter may be more plainly unfolded, we shall first honestly state the nature of confession as delivered in the word of God, and thereafter subjoin their inventions - not all of them indeed (who could drink up that boundless sea?) but those only which contain summary of their secret confession. Here I am grieved to mention how frequently the old interpreter has rendered the word confess instead of praise, a fact notorious to the most illiterate, were it not fitting to expose their effrontery in transferring to their tyrannical edict what was written concerning the praises of God. To prove that confession has the effect of exhilarating the mind, they obtrude the passage in the psalm, "with the voice of joy and praise" (Vulgate, confessionis) (Psalms 42:4). But if such a metamorphosis is valid, any thing may be made of any thing. But, as they have lost all shame, let pious readers reflect how, by the just vengeance of God, they have been given over to a reprobate mind, that their audacity may be the more detestable. If we are disposed to acquiesce in the simple doctrine of Scripture, there will be no danger of our being misled by such glosses. There one method of confessing is prescribed; since it is the Lord who forgives, forgets and wipes away sins, to him let us confess them, that we may obtain pardon. He is the physician, therefore let us show our wounds to him. He is hurt and offended, let us ask peace of him. He is the discerner of the heart, and knows all one thoughts; let us hasten to pour out our hearts before him. He it is, in fine, who invites sinners; let us delay not to draw near to him. "I acknowledge my sin unto thee," says David; "and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin" (Psalms 32:5). Another specimen of David's confessions is as follows: "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindness" (Psalms 51:1). The following is Daniel's confession: "We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and thy judgments" (Daniel 9:5). Other examples every where occur in Scripture: the quotation of them would almost fill a volume. "If we confess our sins," says John, "he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins" (1 John 1:9). To whom are we to confess? to Him surely; that is, we are to fall down before him with a grieved and humbled heart, and sincerely accusing and condemning ourselves, seek forgiveness of his goodness and mercy.

10. He who has adopted this confession from the heart and as in the presence of God, will doubtless have a tongue ready to confess whenever there is occasion among men to publish the mercy of God. He will not be satisfied to whisper the secret of his heart for once into the ear of one individual, but will often, and openly, and in the hearing of the whole world, ingenuously make mention both of his own ignominy, and of the greatness and glory of the Lord. In this way David, after he was accused by Nathan, being stung in his conscience, confesses his sin before God and men. “I have sinned unto the Lord,” says he (2 Samuel 12:13); that is, I have now no excuse, no evasion; all must judge me a sinner; and that which I wished to be secret with the Lord must also be made manifest to men. Hence the secret confession which is made to God is followed by voluntary confession to men, whenever that is conducive to the divine glory or our humiliation. For this reason the Lord anciently enjoined the people of Israel that they should repeat the words after the priest, and make public confession of their iniquities in the temple; because he foresaw that this was a necessary help to enable each one to form a just idea of himself. And it is proper that by confession of our misery, we should manifest the mercy of our God both among ourselves and before the whole world.

11. It is proper that this mode of confession should both be ordinary in the Church, and also be specially employed on extraordinary occasions, when the people in common happen to have fallen into any fault. Of this latter description we have an example in the solemn confession which the whole people made under the authority and guidance of Ezra and Nehemiah (Nehemiah 1:6, Nehemiah 1:7). For their long captivity, the destruction of the temple, and suppression of their religion, having been the common punishment of their defection, they could not make meet acknowledgment of the blessing of deliverance without previous confession of their guilt. And it matters not though in one assembly it may sometimes happen that a few are innocent, seeing that the members of a languid and sickly body cannot boast of soundness. Nay, it is scarcely possible that these few have not contracted some taint, and so bear part of the blame. Therefore, as often as we are afflicted with pestilence, or war, or famine, or any other calamity whatsoever, if it is our duty to retake ourselves to mourning, fasting, and other signs of guiltiness, confession also, on which all the others depend, is not to be neglected. That ordinary confession which the Lord has moreover expressly commended, no sober man, who has reflected on its usefulness, will venture to disapprove. Seeing that in every sacred assembly we stand in the view of God and angels, in what way should our service begin but in acknowledging our own unworthiness? But this you will say is done in every prayer; for as often as we pray for pardon, we confess our sins. I admit it. But if you consider how great is our carelessness, or drowsiness, or sloth, you will grant me that it would be a salutary ordinance if the Christian people were exercised in humiliation by some formal method of confession. For though the ceremony which the Lord enjoined on the Israelites belonged to the tutelage of the Law, yet the thing itself belongs in some respect to us also. And, indeed, in all well ordered churches, in observance of an useful custom, the minister, each Lord’s day, frames a formula of confession in his own name and that of the people, in which he makes a common confession of iniquity, and supplicates pardon from the Lord. In short, by this key a door of prayer is opened privately for each, and publicly for all.

12. Two other forms of private confession are approved by Scripture. The one is made on our own account, and to it reference is made in the passage in James, “Confess your sins one to another” (James 5:16); for the meaning is, that by disclosing our infirmities to each other, we are to obtain

the aid of mutual counsel and consolation. The other is to be made for the sake of our neighbor, to appease and reconcile him if by our fault he has been in any respect injured. In the former, although James, by not specifying any particular individual into whose bosom we are to disburden our feelings, leaves us the free choice of confessing to any member of the church who may seem fittest; yet as for the most part pastors are to be supposed better qualified than others, our choice ought chiefly to fall upon them. And the ground of preference is, that the Lord, by calling them to the ministry, points them out as the persons by whose lips we are to be taught to subdue and correct our sins, and derive consolation from the hope of pardon. For as the duty of mutual admonition and correction is committed to all Christians, but is specially enjoined on ministers, so while we ought all to console each other mutually and confirm each other in confidence in the divine mercy, we see that ministers, to assure our consciences of the forgiveness of fins, are appointed to be the witnesses and sponsors of it, so that they are themselves said to forgive sins and loose souls (Matthew 16:19; Matthew 18:18). When you hear this attributed to them, reflect that it is for your use. Let every believer, therefore, remember, that if in private he is so agonized and afflicted by a sense of his sins that he cannot obtain relief without the aid of others, it is his duty not to neglect the remedy which God provides for him, viz., to have recourse for relief to a private confession to his own pastor, and for consolation privately implore the assistance of him whose business it is, both in public and private, to solace the people of God with Gospel doctrine. But we are always to use moderation, lest in a matter as to which God prescribes no certain rule, our consciences be burdened with a certain yoke. Hence it follows first, that confession of this nature ought to be free so as not to be exacted of all, but only recommended to those who feel that they have need of it; and, secondly, even those who use it according to their necessity must neither be compelled by any precept, nor artfully induced to enumerate all their sins, but only in so far as they shall deem it for their interest, that they may obtain the full benefit of consolation. Faithful pastors, as they would both eschew tyranny in their ministry, and superstition in the people, must not only leave this liberty to churches, but defend and strenuously vindicate it.

13. Of the second form of confession, our Savior speaks in Matthew. “If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there remember that thy brother has ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift” (Matthew 5:23, Matthew 5:24). Thus love, which has been interrupted by our fault, must be restored by acknowledging and asking pardon for the fault. Under this head is included the confession of those who by their sin have given offense to the whole Church (supra, sec. 10). For if Christ attaches so much importance to the offense of one individual, that he forbids the sacrifice of all who have sinned in any respect against their brethren, until by due satisfaction they have regained their favor, how much greater reason is there that he, who by some evil example has offended the Church should be reconciled to it by the acknowledgment of his fault? Thus the member of the Church of Corinth was restored to communion after he had humbly submitted to correction (2 Corinthians 2:6). This form of confession existed in the ancient Christian Church, as Cyprian relates: “They practice repentance,” says he, “for a proper time, then they come to confession, and by the laying on of the hands of the bishop and clergy, are admitted to communion.” Scripture knows nothing of any other form or method of confessing, and it belongs not to us to bind new chains upon consciences which Christ most strictly prohibits from being brought into bondage. Meanwhile, that the flock present themselves before the pastor whenever they would partake of the Holy Supper, I am so far from disapproving, that I am most desirous it should be everywhere observed. For both those whose

conscience is hindered may thence obtain singular benefit, and those who require admonition thus afford an opportunity for it; provided always no countenance is given to tyranny and superstition.

14. The power of the keys has place in the three following modes of confession: either when the whole Church, in a formal acknowledgment of its defects, supplicates pardon; or when a private individual, who has given public offense by some notable delinquency, testifies his repentance; or when he who from disquiet of conscience needs the aid of his minister, acquaints him with his infirmity. With regard to the reparation of offense, the case is different. For though in this also provision is made for peace of conscience, yet the principal object is to suppress hatred, and reunite brethren in the bond of peace. But the benefit of which I have spoken is by no means to be despised, that we may the more willingly confess our sins. For when the whole Church stands as it were at the bar of God, confesses her guilt, and finds her only refuge in the divine mercy, it is no common or light solace to have an ambassador of Christ present, invested with the mandate of reconciliations by whom she may hear her absolution pronounced. Here the utility of the keys is justly commended when that embassy is duly discharged with becoming order and reverence. In like manner, when he who has as it were become an alien from the Church receives pardon, and is thus restored to brotherly unity, how great is the benefit of understanding that he is pardoned by those to whom Christ said, “Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them” (John 20:23). Nor is private absolution of less benefit or efficacy when asked by those who stand in need of a special remedy for their infirmity. It not seldom happens, that he who hears general promises which are intended for the whole congregation of the faithful, nevertheless remains somewhat in doubts, and is still disquieted in mind, as if his own remission were not yet obtained. Should this individual lay open the secret wound of his soul to his pastor, and hear these words of the Gospel specially addressed to him, “Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee” (Matthew 9:2), his mind will feel secure, and escape from the trepidation with which it was previously agitated. But when we treat of the keys, us must always beware of dreaming of any power apart from the preaching of the Gospel. This subject will be more fully explained when we come to treat of the government of the Church (Book 4 chap. 11, 12) There we shall see, that whatever privilege of binding and loosing Christ has bestowed on his Church is annexed to the word. This is especially true with regard to the ministry of the keys, the whole power of which consists in this, that the grace of the Gospel is publicly and privately sealed on the minds of believers by means of those whom the Lord has appointed; and the only method in which this can be done is by preaching.

15. What say the Roman theologians? That all persons of both sexes, so soon as they shall have reached the years of discretion, must, once a year at least, confess all their sins to their own priest; that the sin is not discharged unless the resolution to confess has been firmly conceived; that if this resolution is not carried into effect when an opportunity offers, there is no entrance into Paradise; that the priest, moreover has the power of the keys, by which he can loose and bind the sinner; because the declaration of Christ is not in vain: “Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven” (Matthew 18:18). Concerning this power, however they wage a fierce war among themselves. Some say there is only one key essentially, viz., the power of binding and loosing; that knowledge, indeed, is requisite for the proper use of it, but only as an accessory, not as essentially inherent in it. Others seeing that this gave too unrestrained license, have imagined two keys, viz., discernment and power. Others, again, seeing that the license of priests was curbed by such restraint, have forged other keys (infra, sec. 21), the authority of discerning to be

used in defining, and the power to carry their sentences into execution; and to these they add knowledge as a counselor. This binding and loosing, however, they do not venture to interpret simply, to forgive and wipe away sins, because they hear the Lord proclaiming by the prophet, “I, even I, am the Lord; and beside me there is no savior.” “I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions” (Isaiah 43:11, Isaiah 43:25). But they say it belongs to the priest to declare who are bound or loosed, and whose sins are remitted or retained; to declare, moreover, either by confession, when he absolves and retains sins, or by sentence, when he excommunicates or admits to communion in the Sacraments. Lastly, perceiving that the knot is not yet untied, because it may always be objected that persons are often undeservedly bound and loosed, and therefore not bound or loosed in heaven; as their ultimate resource, they answer, that the conferring of the keys must be taken with limitations because Christ has promised that the sentence of the priest, properly pronounced, will be approved at his judgment-seat according as the bound or loosed asked what they merited. They say, moreover, that those keys which are conferred by bishops at ordination were given by Christ to all priests but that the free use of them is with those only who discharge ecclesiastical functions; that with priests excommunicated or suspended the keys themselves indeed remain, but tied and rusty. Those who speak thus may justly be deemed modest and sober compared with others, who on a new anvil have forged new keys, by which they say that the treasury of heaven is locked up: these we shall afterwards consider in their own place (chap. 5 sec. 2).

16. To each of these views I will briefly reply. As to their binding the souls of believers by their laws, whether justly or unjustly, I say nothing at present, as it will be seen at the proper place; but their enacting it as a law, that all sins are to be enumerated; their denying that sin is discharged except under the condition that the resolution to confess has been firmly conceived; their pretence that there is no admission into Paradise if the opportunity of confession has been neglected, are things which it is impossible to bear. Are all sins to be enumerated? But David, who, I presume, had honestly pondered with himself as to the confession of his sins, exclaimed, “Who can understand his errors? Cleanse thou me from secret faults” (Psalms 19:12); and in another passage, “Mine iniquities are gone over my head: as a heavy burden they are too heavy for me” (Psalms 38:4). He knew how deep was the abyss of our sins, how numerous the forms of wickedness, how many heads the hydra carried, how long a tail it drew. Therefore, he did not sit down to make a catalogue, but from the depth of his distress cried unto the Lord, “I am overwhelmed, and buried, and sore vexed; the gates of hell have encircled me: let thy right hand deliver me from the abyss into which I am plunged, and from the death which I am ready to die.” Who can now think of a computation of his sins when he sees David’s inability to number his?

17. By this ruinous procedure, the souls of those who were affected with some sense of God have been most cruelly racked. First, they retook themselves to calculation, proceeding according to the formula given by the Schoolmen, and dividing their sins into boughs, branches, twigs, and leaves; then they weighed the qualities, quantities, and circumstances; and in this way, for some time, matters proceeded. But after they had advanced farther, when they looked around, nought was seen but sea and sky; no road, no harbor. The longer the space they ran over, a longer still met the eye; nay, lofty mountains began to rise, and there seemed no hope of escape; none at least till after long wanderings. They were thus brought to a dead halt, till at length the only issue was found in despair. Here these cruel murderers, to ease the wounds which they had made, applied

certain fomentations. Every one was to do his best. But new cares again disturbed, nay, new torments excruciated their souls. “I have not spent enough of time; I have not exerted myself sufficiently: many things I have omitted through negligence: forgetfulness proceeding from want of care is not excusable.” Then new drugs were supplied to alleviate their pains. “Repent of your negligence; and provided it is not done supinely, it will be pardoned.” All these things, however, could not heal the wound, being not so much alleviations of the sore as poison besmeared with honey, that its bitterness might not at once offend the taste, but penetrate to the vitals before it could be detected. The dreadful voice, therefore, was always heard pealing in their ears, “Confess all your sins,” and the dread thus occasioned could not be pacified without sure consolation. Here let my readers consider whether it be possible to take an account of the actions of a whole year, or even to collect the sins committed in a single day, seeing every man’s experience convinces him that at evening, in examining the faults of that single day, memory gets confused, so great is the number and variety presented. I am not speaking of dull and heartless hypocrites, who, after animadverting on three or four of their grosser offenses, think the work finished; but of the true worshipers of God, who, after they have performed their examination, feeling themselves overwhelmed, still add the words of John: “If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things” (1 John 3:20); and, therefore, tremble at the thought of that Judge whose knowledge far surpasses our comprehension.

18. Though a good part of the world rested in these soothing suggestions, by which this fatal poison was somewhat tempered, it was not because they thought that God was satisfied, or they had quite satisfied themselves; it was rather like an anchor cast out in the middle of the deep, which for a little interrupts the navigation, or a weary, worn-out traveler, who lies down by the way. I give myself no trouble in proving the truth of this fact. Every one can be his own witness. I will mention generally what the nature of this law is. First. The observance of it is simply impossible; and hence its only results to destroy, condemn, confound, to plunge into ruin and despair. Secondly, By withdrawing sinners from a true sense of their sins, it makes them hypocritical, and ignorant both of God and themselves. For, while they are wholly occupied with the enumeration of their sins, they lose sight of that lurking hydra, their secret iniquities and internal defilements, the knowledge of which would have made them sensible of their misery. But the surest rule of confession is, to acknowledge and confess our sins to be an abyss so great as to exceed our comprehension. On this rule we see the confession of the publican was formed, “God be merciful to me, a sinner” (Luke 18:13); as if he had said, How great, how very great a sinner, how utterly sinful I am! the extent of my sins I can neither conceive nor express. Let the depth of thy mercy engulf the depth of sin! What! you will say, are we not to confess every single sin? Is no confession acceptable to God but that which is contained in the words, “I am a sinner”? Nay, our endeavor must rather be, as much as in us lies, to pour out our whole heart before the Lord. Nor are we only in one word to confess ourselves sinners, but truly and sincerely acknowledge ourselves as such; to feel with our whole soul how great and various the pollutions of our sins are; confessing not only that we are impure, but what the nature of our impurity is, its magnitude and its extent; not only that we are debtors, but what the debts are which burden us, and how they were incurred; not only that we are wounded, but how numerous and deadly are the wounds. When thus recognizing himself, the sinner shall have poured out his whole heart before God, let him seriously and sincerely reflect that a greater number of sins still remains, and that their recesses are too deep for him thoroughly to penetrate. Accordingly, let him exclaim with David, “Who can understand his

errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults" (Psalms 19:12). But when the Schoolmen affirm that sins are not forgiven, unless the resolution to confess has been firmly conceived, and that the gate of Paradise is closed on him who has neglected the opportunity of confessing when offered, far be it from us to concede this to them. The remission of sins is not different now from what it has ever been. In all the passages in which we read that sinners obtained forgiveness from God, we read not that they whispered into the ear of some priest. Indeed they could not then confess, as priests were not then confessionaries, nor did the confessional itself exist. And for many ages afterwards, this mode of confession, by which sins were forgiven on this condition, was unheard of: But not to enter into a long discussion, as if the matter were doubtful, the word of God, which abideth for ever, is plain, "When the wicked shall turn away from all his sins that he has committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die" (Ezekiel 18:21). He who presumes to add to this declaration binds not sins, but the mercy of God. When they contend that judgment cannot be given unless the case is known, the answer is easy, that they usurp the right of judging, being only self-created judges. And it is strange, how confidently they lay down principles, which no man of sound mind will admit. They give out, that the office of binding and loosing has been committed to them, as a kind of jurisdiction annexed to the right of inquiry. That the jurisdiction was unknown to the Apostles their whole doctrine proclaims. Nor does it belong to the priest to know for certainty whether or not a sinner is loosed, but to Him from whom acquittal is asked; since he who only hears can ever know whether or not the enumeration is full and complete. Thus there would be no absolution, without restricting it to the words of him who is to be judged. We may add, that the whole system of loosing depends on faith and repentance, two things which no man can know of another, so as to pronounce sentence. It follows, therefore, that the certainty of binding and loosing is not subjected to the will of an earthly judge, because the minister of the word, when he duly executes his office, can only acquit conditionally, when, for the sake of the sinner, he repeats the words, "Whose soever sins ye remit;" lest he should doubt of the pardon, which, by the command and voice of God, is promised to be ratified in heaven.

19. It is not strange, therefore, that we condemn that auricular confession, as a thing pestilent in its nature, and in many ways injurious to the Church, and desire to see it abolished. But if the thing were in itself indifferent, yet, seeing it is of no use or benefit, and has given occasion to so much impiety, blasphemy, and error, who does not think that it ought to be immediately abolished? They enumerate some of its uses, and boast of them as very beneficial, but they are either fictitious or of no importance. One thing they specially commend, that the blush of shame in the penitent is a severe punishment, which makes him more cautious for the future, and anticipates divine punishment, by his punishing himself. As if a man was not sufficiently humbled with shame when brought under the cognizance of God at his supreme tribunal. Admirable proficiency - if we cease to sin because we are ashamed to make one man acquainted with it, and blush not at having God as the witness of our evil conscience! The assertion, however, as to the effect of shame, is most unfounded, for we may every where see, that there is nothing which gives men greater confidence and license in sinning than the idea, that after making confession to priests, they can wipe their lip, and say, I have not done it. And not only do they during the whole year become bolder in sin, but, secure against confession for the remainder of it, they never sigh after God, never examine themselves, but continue heaping sins upon sins, until, as they suppose, they get rid of them all at once. And when they have got rid of them, they think they are disburdened of their load, and imagine they have deprived God of the right of judging, by giving it to the priest; have made God

forgetful, by making the priest conscious. Moreover, who is glad when he sees the day of confession approaching? Who goes with a cheerful mind to confess, and does not rather, as if he were dragged to prison with a rope about his neck, go unwillingly, and, as it were, struggling against it? with the exception, perhaps, of the priests themselves, who take a fond delight in the mutual narrative of their own misdeeds, as a kind of merry tales. I will not pollute my page by retailing the monstrous abominations with which auricular confession teems; I only say, that if that holy man (Nectarius, of whom supra sec. 7) did not act unadvisedly when for one rumour of whoredom he banished confession from his church, or rather from the memory of his people, the innumerable acts of prostitution, adultery, and incest, which it produces in the present day, warn us of the necessity of abolishing it.

20. As to the pretence of the confessionaries respecting the power of the keys, and their placing in it, so to speak, the sum and substance of their kingdom, we must see what force it ought to have. Were the keys then (they ask), given without a cause? Was it said without a cause, “Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven?” (Matthew 18:18). Do we make void the word of Christ? I answer, that there was a weighty reason for giving the keys, as I lately explained, and will again show at greater length when I come to treat of Excommunication (Book 4, chap. 12). But what if I should cut off the handle for all such questions with one sword, viz., that priests are neither vicars nor successors of the Apostles? But that also will be elsewhere considered (Book 4, chap. 6). Now, at the very place where they are most desirous to fortify themselves, they erect a battering-ram, by which all their own machinations are overthrown. Christ did not give his Apostles the power of binding and loosing before he endued them with the Holy Spirit. I deny, therefore, that any man, who has not previously received the Holy Spirit, is competent to possess the power of the keys. I deny that any one can use the keys, unless the Holy Spirit precede, teaching and dictating what is to be done. They pretend, indeed, that they have the Holy Spirit, but by their works deny him; unless, indeed, we are to suppose that the Holy Spirit is some vain thing of no value, as they certainly do feign, but we will not believe them. With this engine they are completely overthrown; whatever be the door of which they boast of having the key, we must always ask, whether they have the Holy Spirit, who is arbiter and ruler of the keys? If they reply, that they have, we must again ask, whether the Holy Spirit can err? This they will not venture to say distinctly, although by their doctrine they indirectly insinuate it. Therefore, we must infer, that no priestlings have the power of the keys, because they every where and indiscriminately loose what the Lord was pleased should be bound, and bind what he has ordered to be loosed.

08.03.04B. Chapter 04. Part B

Chapter 4. Penitence, as explained in the sophistical jargon of the Schoolmen, widely different from the purity required by the Gospel. Of confession and satisfaction.

Continued

21. When they see themselves convicted on the clearest evidence, of loosing and binding worthy and unworthy without distinction, they lay claim to power without knowledge. And although they dare not deny that knowledge is requisite for the proper use, they still affirm that the power itself has been given to bad administrators. This, however, is the power, “Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” Either the promise of Christ must be false, or those who are endued with this power bind and loose properly. There is no room for the evasion, that the words of Christ are limited, according to the merits of him who is loosed or bound. We admit, that none can be bound or loosed but those who are worthy of being bound or loosed. But the preachers of the Gospel and the Church have the word by which they can measure this worthiness. By this word preachers of the Gospel can promise forgiveness of sins to all who are in Christ by faith, and can declare a sentence of condemnation against all, and upon all, who do not embrace Christ. In this word the Church declares, that “neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers,” “nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners shall inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Corinthians 6:9, 1 Corinthians 6:10). Such it binds in sure fetters. By the same word it looses and consoles the penitent. But what kind of power is it which knows not what is to be bound or loosed? You cannot bind or loose without knowledge. Why, then, do they say, that they absolve by authority given to them, when absolution is uncertain? As regards us, this power is merely imaginary, if it cannot be used. Now, I holds either that there is no use, or one so uncertain as to be virtually no use at all. For when they confess that a good part of the priests do not use the keys duly, and that power without the legitimate use is ineffectual, who is to assure me, that the one by whom I am loosed is a good dispenser of the keys? But if he is a bad one, what better has he given me than this nugatory dispensation: What is to be bound or loosed in you I know not, since I have not the proper use of the keys; but if you deserve it, I absolve you? As much might be done, I say not by a laic (since they would scarcely listen to such a statement), but by the Turk or the devil. For it is just to say, I have not the word of God, the sure rule for loosing, but authority has been given me to absolve you, if you deserve it. We see, therefore, what their object was, when they defined (see sec. 16) the keys as authority to discern and power to execute; and said, that knowledge is added as a counselor, and counsels the proper use; their object was to reign libidinously and licentiously, without God and his word.

22. Should any one object, first, that the lawful ministers of Christ will be no less perplexed in the discharge of their duty, because the absolution, which depends on faith, will always be equivocal; and, secondly, that sinners will receive no comfort at all, or cold comfort, because the minister, who is not a fit judge of their faith, is not certain of their absolution, we are prepared with an

answer. They say that no sins are remitted by the priest, but such sins as he is cognizant of; thus, according to them, remission depends on the judgment of the priest, and unless he accurately discriminate as to who are worthy of pardon, the whole procedure is null and void. In short, the power of which they speak is a jurisdiction annexed to examination, to which pardon and absolution are restricted. Here no firm footing can be found, nay, there is a profound abyss; because, where confession is not complete, the hope of pardon also is defective; next, the priest himself must necessarily remain in suspense, while he knows not whether the sinner gives a faithful enumeration of his sins; lastly, such is the rudeness and ignorance of priests, that the greater part of them are in no respect fitter to perform this office than a cobbler to cultivate the fields, while almost all the others have good reason to suspect their own fitness. Hence the perplexity and doubt as to the Popish absolution, from their choosing to found it on the person of the priest, and not on his person only, but on his knowledge, so that he can only judge of what is laid before him investigated, and ascertained. Now, if any should ask at these good doctors, whether the sinner is reconciled to God when some sins are remitted? I know not what answer they could give, unless that they should be forced to confess, that whatever the priest pronounces with regard to the remission of sins which have been enumerated to him will be unavailing, so long as others are not exempted from condemnation. On the part of the penitent, again, it is hence obvious in what a state of pernicious anxiety his conscience will be held; because, while he leans on what they call the discernment of the priest, he cannot come to any decision from the word of God. From all these absurdities the doctrine which we deliver is completely free. For absolution is conditional, allowing the sinner to trust that God is propitious to him, provided he sincerely seek expiation in the sacrifice of Christ, and accept of the grace offered to him. Thus, he cannot err who, in the capacity of a herald, promulgates what has been dictated to him from the word of God. The sinner, again, can receive a clear and sure absolution when, in regard to embracing the grace of Christ, the simple condition annexed is in terms of the general rule of our Master himself - a rule impiously spurned by the Papacy - “According to your faith be it unto you” (Matthew 9:29).

23. The absurd jargon which they make of the doctrine of Scripture concerning the power of the keys, I have promised to expose elsewhere; the proper place will be in treating of the Government of the Church (Book 4, ch. 12). Meanwhile, let the reader remember how absurdly they wrest to auricular and secret confession what was said by Christ partly of the preaching of the Gospel, and partly of excommunication. Wherefore, when they object that the power of loosing was given to the Apostles, and that this power priests exercise by remitting sins acknowledged to them, it is plain that the principle which they assume is false and frivolous: for the absolution which is subordinate to faith is nothing else than an evidence of pardon, derived from the free promise of the Gospel, while the other absolution, which depends on the discipline of the Church, has nothing to do with secret sins; but is more a matter of example for the purpose of removing the public offense given to the Church. As to their diligence in searching up and down for passages by which they may prove that it is not sufficient to confess sins to God alone, or to laymen, unless the priest take cognizance, it is vile and disgraceful. For when the ancient fathers advise sinners to disburden themselves to their pastor, we cannot understand them to refer to a recital which was not then in use. Then, so unfair are Lombard and others like-minded, that they seem intentionally to have devoted themselves to spurious books, that they might use them as a cloak to deceive the simple. They, indeed, acknowledge truly, that as forgiveness always accompanies repentance, no obstacle properly remains after the individual is truly penitent, though he may not have actually

confessed; and, therefore, that the priest does not so much remit sins, as pronounce and declare that they are remitted; though in the term declaring, they insinuate a gross error, surrogating ceremony in place of doctrine. But in pretending that he who has already obtained pardon before God is acquitted in the face of the Church, they unseasonably apply to the special use of every individual, that which we have already said was designed for common discipline when the offense of a more heinous and notorious transgression was to be removed. Shortly after they pervert and destroy their previous moderation, by adding that there is another mode of remission, namely, by the infliction of penalty and satisfaction, in which they arrogate to their priests the right of dividing what God has every where promised to us entire. While He simply requires repentance and faith, their division or exception is altogether blasphemous. For it is just as if the priest, assuming the office of tribune, were to interfere with God, and try to prevent him from admitting to his favor by his mere liberality any one who had not previously lain prostrate at the tribunicial bench, and there been punished.

24. The whole comes to this, when they wish to make God the author of this fictitious confession their vanity is proved as I have shown their falsehood in expounding the few passages which they cite. But while it is plain, that the law was imposed by men, I say that it is both tyrannical and insulting to God, who, in binding consciences to his word, would have them free from human rule. Then when confession is prescribed as necessary to obtain pardon, which God wished to be free, I say that the sacrilege is altogether intolerable, because nothing belongs more peculiarly to God than the forgiveness of sins, in which our salvation consists. I have, moreover, shown that this tyranny was introduced when the world was sunk in shameful barbarism. Besides, I have proved that the law is pestiferous, inasmuch as when the fear of God exists, it plunges men into despair, and when there is security soothing itself with vain flattery, it blunts it the more. Lastly, I have explained that all the mitigations which they employ have no other tendency than to entangle, obscure, and corrupt the pure doctrine, and cloak their iniquities with deceitful colors.

25. In repentance they assign the third place to satisfaction, all their absurd talk as to which can be refuted in one word. They say, that it is not sufficient for the penitent to abstain from past sins, and change his conduct for the better, unless he satisfy God for what he has done; and that there are many helps by which we may redeem sins, such as tears, fastings oblations, and offices of charity; that by them the Lord is to be propitiated; by them the debts due to divine justice are to be paid; by them our faults are to be compensated; by them pardon is to be deserved: for though in the riches of his mercy he has forgiven the guilt, he yet, as a just discipline, retains the penalty, and that this penalty must be bought off by satisfaction. The sum of the whole comes to this: that we indeed obtain pardon of our sins from the mercy of God, but still by the intervention of the merit of works, by which the evil of our sins is compensated, and due satisfaction made to divine justice. To such false views I oppose the free forgiveness of sins, one of the doctrines most clearly taught in Scripture. First, what is forgiveness but a gift of mere liberality? A creditor is not said to forgive when he declares by granting a discharge, that the money has been paid to him; but when, without any payment, through voluntary kindness, he expunges the debt. And why is the term gratis (free) afterwards added, but to take away all idea of satisfaction? With what confidence, then, do they still set up their satisfactions, which are thus struck down as with a thunderbolt? What? When the Lord proclaims by Isaiah, “I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins,” does he not plainly declare, that the cause and foundation of

forgiveness is to be sought from his goodness alone? Besides, when the whole of Scripture bears this testimony to Christ, that through his name the forgiveness of sins is to be obtained (Acts 10:43), does it not plainly exclude all other names? How then do they teach that it is obtained by the name of satisfaction? Let them not deny that they attribute this to satisfactions, though they bring them in as subsidiary aids. For when Scripture says, by the name of Christ, it means, that we are to bring nothing, pretend nothing of our own, but lean entirely on the recommendation of Christ. Thus Paul, after declaring that “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them,” immediately adds the reason and the method, “For he has made him to be sin for us who knew no sin” (2 Corinthians 5:19, 2 Corinthians 5:20).

26. But with their usual perverseness, they maintain that both the forgiveness of sins and reconciliation take place at once when we are received into the favor of God through Christ in baptism; that in lapses after baptism we must rise again by means of satisfactions; that the blood of Christ is of no avail unless in so far as it is dispensed by the keys of the Church. I speak not of a matter as to which there can be any doubt; for this impious dogma is declared in the plainest terms, in the writings not of one or two, but of the whole Schoolmen. Their master (Sent. Lib. 3, Dist. 9), after acknowledging, according to the doctrine of Peter, that Christ “bare our sins in his own body on the tree” (1 Peter 2:24), immediately modifies the doctrine by introducing the exception, that in baptism all the temporal penalties of sin are relaxed; but that after baptism they are lessened by means of repentance, the cross of Christ and our repentance thus co-operating together. St. John speaks very differently, “If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins.” “I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name’s sake” (1 John 2:1-2; 1 John 2:12). He certainly is addressing believers, and while setting forth Christ as the propitiation for sins, shows them that there is no other satisfaction by which an offended God can be propitiated or appeased. He says not: God was once reconciled to you by Christ; now, seek other methods; but he makes him a perpetual advocate, who always, by his intercession, reinstates us in his Fathered favour - a perpetual propitiation by which sins are expiated. For what was said by another John will ever hold true, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world” (John 1:29). He, I say, took them away, and no other; that is, since he alone is the Lamb of God, he alone is the offering for our sins; he alone is expiation; he alone is satisfaction. For though the right and power of pardoning properly belongs to the Father, when he is distinguished from the Son, as has already been seen, Christ is here exhibited in another view, as transferring to himself the punishment due to us, and wiping away our guilt in the sight of God. Whence it follows that we could not be partakers of the expiation accomplished by Christ, were he not possessed of that honor of which those who try to appease God by their compensations seek to rob him.

27. Here it is necessary to keep two things in view: that the honor of Christ be preserved entire and unimpaired, and that the conscience, assured of the pardon of sin, may have peace with God. Isaiah says that the Farther “has laid on him the iniquity of us all;” that “with his stripes we are healed” (Isaiah 53:5, Isaiah 53:6). Peter repeating the same thing, in other words says, that he “bare our sins in his own body on the tree” (1 Peter 2:24). Paul’s words are, “God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh,” “being made a curse for us” (Romans 8:3; Galatians 3:13); in other words, the power and curse of sin was destroyed in his flesh when he was offered as a sacrifice, on which the whole weight of our sins was laid, with their

curse and execration, with the fearful judgment of God, and condemnation to death. Here there is no mention of the vain dogma, that after the initial cleansing no man experiences the efficacy of Christ's passion in any other way than by means of satisfying penance: we are directed to the satisfaction of Christ alone for every fall. Now call to mind their pestilential dogma: that the grace of God is effective only in the first forgiveness of sins; but if we afterwards fall, our works co-operate in obtaining the second pardon. If these things are so, do the properties above attributed to Christ remain entire? How immense the difference between the two propositions - that our iniquities were laid upon Christ, that in his own person he might expiate them, and that they are expiated by our works; that Christ is the propitiation for our sins, and that God is to be propitiated by works. Then, in regard to pacifying the conscience, what pacification will it be to be told that sins are redeemed by satisfactions? How will it be able to ascertain the measure of satisfaction? It will always doubt whether God is propitious; will always fluctuate, always tremble. Those who rest satisfied with petty satisfactions form too contemptible an estimate of the justice of God, and little consider the grievous heinousness of sin, as shall afterwards be shown. Even were we to grant that they can buy off some sins by due satisfaction, still what will they do while they are overwhelmed with so many sins that not even a hundred lives, though wholly devoted to the purpose, could suffice to satisfy for them? We may add, that all the passages in which the forgiveness of sins is declared refer not only to catechumens, but to the regenerate children of God; to those who have long been nursed in the bosom of the Church. That embassy which Paul so highly extols, "we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God" (2 Corinthians 5:20), is not directed to strangers, but to those who had been regenerated long before. Setting satisfactions altogether aside, he directs us to the cross of Christ. Thus when he writes to the Colossians that Christ had "made peace through the blood of his cross," "to reconcile all things unto himself," he does not restrict it to the moment at which we are received into the Church but extends it to our whole course. This is plain from the context, where he says that in him "we have redemption by his blood, even the forgiveness of sins" (Colossians 1:14). It is needless to collect more passages, as they are ever occurring.

28. Here they take refuge in the absurd distinction that some sins are venial and others mortal; that for the latter a weighty satisfaction is due, but that the former are purged by easier remedies; by the Lord's Prayer, the sprinkling of holy water, and the absolution of the Mass. Thus they insult and trifle with God. And yet, though they have the terms venial and mortal sin continually in their mouth, they have not yet been able to distinguish the one from the other, except by making impiety and impurity of hearts to be venial sin. We, on the contrary, taught by the Scripture standard of righteousness and unrighteousness, declare that "the wages of sin is death;" and that "the soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Romans 6:23; Ezekiel 18:20). The sins of believers are venial, not because they do not merit death, but because by the mercy of God there is "now no condemnation to those which are in Christ Jesus" their sin being not imputed, but effaced by pardon. I know how unjustly they calumniate this our doctrine; for they say it is the paradox of the Stoics concerning the equality of sins: but we shall easily convict them out of their own mouths. I ask them whether, among those sins which they hold to be mortal, they acknowledge a greater and a less? If so, it cannot follow, as a matter of course, that all sins which are mortal are equal. Since Scripture declares that the wages of sin is death, that obedience to the law is the way to life - the transgression of it the way to death - they cannot evade this conclusion. In such a mass of sins, therefore, how will they find an end to their satisfactions? If the satisfaction for one sin requires

one day, while preparing it they involve themselves in more sins; since no man, however righteous, passes one day without falling repeatedly. While they prepare themselves for their satisfactions, number, or rather numbers without number, will be added. Confidence in satisfaction being thus destroyed, what more would they have? How do they still dare to think of satisfying?

29. They endeavor, indeed, to disentangle themselves, but it is impossible. They pretend a distinction between penalty and guilt, holding that the guilt is forgiven by the mercy of God; but that though the guilt is remitted, the punishment which divine justice requires to be paid remains. Satisfactions then properly relate to the remission of the penalty. How ridiculous this levity! They now confess that the remission of guilt is gratuitous; and yet they are ever and anon telling as to merit it by prayers and tears, and other preparations of every kind. Still the whole doctrine of Scripture regarding the remission of sins is diametrically opposed to that distinction. But although I think I have already done more than enough to establish this, I will subjoin some other passages, by which these slippery snakes will be so caught as to be afterwards unable to writhe even the tip of their tail: “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah.” “I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more” (Jeremiah 31:31, Jeremiah 31:34). What this means we learn from another Prophet, when the Lord says, “When the righteous turneth away from his righteousness” “all his righteousness that he has done shall not be mentioned.” “Again, when the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he has committed, and does that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive” (Ezekiel 18:24, Ezekiel 18:27). When he declares that he will not remember righteousness, the meaning is, that he will take no account of it to reward it. In the same way, not to remember sins is not to bring them to punishment. The same thing is denoted in other passages, by casting them behind his back, blotting them out as a cloud, casting them into the depths of the sea, not imputing them, hiding them. By such forms of expression the Holy Spirit has explained his meaning not obscurely, if we would lend a willing ear. Certainly if God punishes sins, he imputes them; if he avenges, he remembers; if he brings them to judgment, he has not hid them; if he examines, he has not cast them behind his back; if he investigates, he has not blotted them out like a cloud; if he exposes them, he has not thrown them into the depths of the sea. In this way Augustine clearly interprets: “If God has covered sins, he willed not to advert to them; if he willed not to advert, he willed not to animadvert; if he willed not to animadvert, he willed not to punish: he willed not to take knowledge of them, he rather willed to pardon them. Why then did he say that sins were hid? Just that they might not be seen. What is meant by God seeing sins but punishing them?” (August. in Psalms 32:1). But let us hear from another prophetical passage on what terms the Lord forgives sins: “Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool” (Isaiah 1:18). In Jeremiah again we read: “In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, they shall not be found: for I will pardon them whom I reserve” (Jeremiah 50:20). Would you briefly comprehend the meaning of these words? Consider what, on the contrary, is meant by these expressions, “that transgression is sealed up in a bag;” “that the iniquity of Ephraim is bound up; his sin is hid;” that “the sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond.” If they mean, as they certainly do, that vengeance will be recompensed, there can be no doubt that, by the contrary passages, the Lord declares that he renounces all thought of vengeance. Here I must entreat the reader not to listen to any glosses of mine, but only to give some deference to the word of God.

30. What, pray, did Christ perform for us if the punishment of sin is still exacted? For when we say that he “bare our sins in his own body on the tree” (1 Peter 2:24), all we mean is, that he endured the penalty and punishment which was due to our sins. This is more significantly declared by Isaiah, when he says that the “chastisement (or correction) of our peace was upon him” (Isaiah 53:5). But what is the correction of our peace, unless it be the punishment due to our sins, and to be paid by us before we could be reconciled to God, had he not become our substitute? Thus you clearly see that Christ bore the punishment of sin that he might thereby exempt his people from it. And whenever Paul makes mention of the redemption procured by him, he calls it apolutro4sis, by which he does not simply mean redemption, as it is commonly understood, but the very price and satisfaction of redemption. For which reason, he also says, that Christ gave himself an antilutron (ransom) for us. “What is propitiation with the Lord (says Augustine) but sacrifice? And what is sacrifice but that which was offered for us in the death of Christ?” But we have our strongest argument in the injunctions of the Mosaic Law as to expiating the guilt of sin. The Lord does not there appoint this or that method of satisfying, but requires the whole compensation to be made by sacrifice, though he at the same time enumerates all the rites of expiation with the greatest care and exactness. How comes it that he does not at all enjoin works as the means of procuring pardon, but only requires sacrifices for expiation, unless it were his purpose thus to testify that this is the only kind of satisfaction by which his justice is appeased? For the sacrifices which the Israelites then offered were not regarded as human works, but were estimated by their anti type, that is, the sole sacrifice of Christ. The kind of compensation which the Lord receives from us is elegantly and briefly expressed by Hosea: “Take with you words, and turn to the Lord: say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously,” here is remission: “so will we render the calves of our lips,” here is satisfaction (Hosea 14:2). I know that they have still a more subtile evasion, by making a distinction between eternal and temporal punishment; but as they define temporal punishment to be any kind of infliction with which God visits either the body or the soul, eternal death only excepted, this restriction avails them little. The passages which we have quoted above say expressly that the terms on which God receives us into favor are these, viz., he remits all the punishment which we deserved by pardoning our guilt. And whenever David or the other prophets ask pardon for their sins, they deprecate punishment. Nay, a sense of the divine justice impels them to this. On the other hand, when they promise mercy from the Lord, they almost always discourse of punishments and the forgiveness of them. Assuredly, when the Lord declares in Ezekiel, that he will put an end to the Babylonish captivity, not “for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name’s sake” (Ezekiel 36:22), he sufficiently demonstrates that both are gratuitous. In short, if we are freed from guilt by Christ, the punishment consequent upon guilt must cease with it.

31. But since they also arm themselves with passages of Scripture, let us see what the arguments are which they employ. David, they say, when upbraided by Nathan the Prophet for adultery and murder, receives pardon of the sin, and yet by the death of the son born of adultery is afterwards punished (2 Samuel 12:13, 2 Samuel 12:14). Such punishments which were to be inflicted after the remission of the guilt, we are taught to ransom by satisfactions. For Daniel exhorted Nebuchadnezzar: “Break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by showing mercy to the poor” (Daniel 4:27). And Solomon says, “by mercy and truth iniquity is purged” (Proverbs 16:6); and again, “love covereth all sins” (Proverbs 10:12). This sentiment is confirmed by Peter (1 Peter 4:8). Also in Luke, our Lord says of the woman that was a sinner, “Her sins, which are many, are

forgiven; for she loved much" (Luke 7:47). How perverse and preposterous the judgment they ever form of the doings of God! Had they observed, what certainly they ought not to have overlooked, that there are two kinds of divine judgment, they would have seen in the correction of David a very different form of punishment from that which must be thought designed for vengeance. But since it in no slight degree concerns us to understand the purpose of God in the chastisements by which he animadverts upon our sins and how much they differ from the exemplary punishments which he indignantly inflicts on the wicked and reprobate, I think it will not be improper briefly to glance at it. For the sake of distinction, we may call the one kind of judgment punishment, the other chastisement. In judicial punishment, God is to be understood as taking vengeance on his enemies, by displaying his anger against them, confounding, scattering, and annihilating them. By divine punishment, properly so called, let us then understand punishment accompanied with indignation. In judicial chastisement, he is offended, but not in wrath; he does not punish by destroying or striking down as with a thunderbolt. Hence it is not properly punishment or vengeance, but correction and admonition. The one is the act of a judge, the other of a father. When the judge punishes a criminal, he animadverts upon the crime, and demands the penalty. When a father corrects his son sharply, it is not to mulct or avenge, but rather to teach him, and make him more cautious for the future. Chrysostom in his writings employs a simile which is somewhat different, but the same in purport. He says, "A son is whipt, and a slave is whipt, but the latter is punished as a slave for his offense: the former is chastised as a free-born son, standing in need of correction." The correction of the latter is designed to prove and amend him; that of the former is scourging and punishment.

32. To have a short and clear view of the whole matter, we must make two distinctions. First, whenever the infliction is designed to avenge, then the curse and wrath of God displays itself. This is never the case with believers. On the contrary, the chastening of God carries his blessing with it, and is an evidence of love, as Scripture teaches. This distinction is plainly marked throughout the word of God. All the calamities which the wicked suffer in the present life are depicted to us as a kind of anticipation of the punishment of hell. In these they already see, as from a distance, their eternal condemnation; and so far are they from being thereby reformed, or deriving any benefit, that by such preludes they are rather prepared for the fearful doom which finally awaits them. The Lord chastens his servants sore, but does not give them over unto death (Psalms 118:18). When afflicted, they acknowledge it is good for them, that they may learn his statutes (Psalms 119:71). But as we everywhere read that the saints received their chastisements with placid mind, so inflictions of the latter kind they always most earnestly deprecated. "O Lord, correct me," says Jeremiah, "but with judgment; not in thine anger, lest thou bring me to nothing. Pour out thy furry upon the heathen that know thee not, and upon the families that call not on thy name" (Jeremiah 10:24-25). David says "O Lord, rebuke me not in thine anger, neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure" (Psalms 6:1). There is nothing inconsistent with this in its being repeatedly said, that the Lord is angry with his saints when he chastens them for their sins (Psalms 38:7). In like manner, in Isaiah, "And in that day thou shalt say, O Lord, I will praise thee: though thou west angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me" (Isaiah 12:1). Likewise in Habakkuk, "In wrath remember mercy" (Habakkuk 3:2); and in Micah, "I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him" (Micah 7:9). Here we are reminded not only that those who are justly punished gain nothing by murmuring, but that believers obtain a mitigation of their pain by reflecting on the divine intention. For the same reason, he is said to profane his

inheritance; and yet we know that he will never profane it. The expression refers not to the counsel or purpose of God in punishing, but to the keen sense of pain, endured by those who are visited with any measure of divine severity. For the Lord not only chastens his people with a slight degree of austerity, but sometimes so wounds them, that they seem to themselves on the very eve of perdition. He thus declares that they have deserved his anger, and it is fitting so to do, that they may be dissatisfied with themselves for their sins, may be more careful in their desires to appease God, and anxiously hasten to seek his pardon; still, at this very time, he gives clearer evidence of his mercy than of his anger. For He who cannot deceive has declared, that the covenant made with us in our true Solomon stands fast and will never be broken, “If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; then will I visit their transgressions with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless, my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail” (Psalms 89:31-34). To assure us of this mercy, he says, that the rod with which he will chastise the posterity of Solomon will be the “rod of men,” and “the stripes of the children of men” (2 Samuel 7:14). While by these terms he denotes moderation and levity, he, at the same time, intimates, that those who feel the hand of God opposed to them cannot but tremble and be confounded. How much regard he has to this levity in chastening his Israel he shows by the Prophet, “Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction” (Isaiah 48:10). Although he tells them that they are chastisements with a view to purification, he adds, that even these are so tempered, that they are not to be too much crushed by them. And this is very necessary, for the more a man reveres God, and devotes himself to the cultivation of piety, the more tender he is in bearing his anger (Psalms 90:11; and ibid. Calv). The reprobate, though they groan under the lash, yet because they weigh not the true cause, but rather turn their back, as well upon their sins as upon the divine judgment, become hardened in their stupor; or, because they murmur and kick, and so rebel against their judge, their infatuated violence fills them with frenzy and madness. Believers, again, admonished by the rod of God, immediately begin to reflect on their sins, and, struck with fear and dread, retake themselves as suppliants to implore mercy. Did not God mitigate the pains by which wretched souls are excruciated, they would give way a hundred times, even at slight signs of his anger.

33. The second distinction is, that when the reprobate are brought under the lash of God, they begin in a manner to pay the punishment due to his justice; and though their refusal to listen to these proofs of the divine anger will not escape with impunity, still they are not punished with the view of bringing them to a better mind, but only to teach them by dire experience that God is a judge and avenger. The sons of God are beaten with rods, not that they may pay the punishment due to their faults, but that they may thereby be led to repent. Accordingly, we perceive that they have more respect to the future than to the past. I prefer giving this in the words of Chrysostom rather than my own: “His object in imposing a penalty upon us, is not to inflict punishment on our sins but to correct us for the future” (Chrysost. Serm. de Poenit. et Confess). So also Augustine, “The suffering at which you cry, is medicine, not punishment; chastisement, not condemnation. Do not drive away the rod, if you would not be driven away from the inheritance. Know, brethren, that the whole of that misery of the human race, under which the world groans, is a medicinal pain, not a penal sentence” (August. in Psal. 102, circa finem). It seemed proper to quote these passages, lest any one should think the mode of expression which I have used to be novel or uncommon. To the same effect are the indignant terms in which the Lord expostulates with his people, for their

ingratitude in obstinately despising all his inflictions. In Isaiah he says, “Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more. The whole head is sick and the whole heart faint” (Isaiah 1:5, Isaiah 1:6). But as such passages abound in the Prophets, it is sufficient briefly to have shown, that the only purpose of God in punishing his Church is to subdue her to repentance. Thus, when he rejected Saul from the kingdoms he punished in vengeance (1 Samuel 15:23); when he deprived David of his child, he chastised for amendment (2 Samuel 12:18). In this sense Paul is to be understood when he says, “When we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world” (1 Corinthians 11:32); that is, while we as sons of God are afflicted by our heavenly Father’s hand, it is not punishment to confound, but only chastisement to train us. On this subject Augustine is plainly with us (De Peccator. Meritis ac Remiss. Lib. 2 cap. 33, 34). For he shows that the punishments with which men are equally chastened by God are to be variously considered; because the saints after the forgiveness of their sins have struggles and exercises, the reprobate without forgiveness are punished for their iniquity. Enumerating the punishments inflicted on David and other saints, he says, it was designed, by thus humbling them, to prove and exercise their piety. The passage in Isaiah, in which it is said, “Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished that her iniquity is pardoned; for she has received of the Lord’s hands double for all her sins” (Isaiah 40:2), proves not that the pardon of sin depends on freedom from punishment. It is just as if he had said, Sufficient punishment has now been exacted; as for their number and heinousness you have long been oppressed with sorrow and mourning, it is time to send you a message of complete mercy, that your minds may be filled with joy on feeling me to be a Father. For God there assumes the character of a father who repents even of the just severity which he has been compelled to us, towards his Song of Solomon 34. These are the thoughts with which the believer ought to be provided in the bitterness of affliction, “The time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God,” “the city which is called by my name” (1 Peter 4:17; Jeremiah 25:29). What could the sons of God do, if they thought that the severity which they feel was vengeance? He who, smitten by the hand of God, thinks that God is a judge inflicting punishment, cannot conceive of him except as angry and at enmity with him; cannot but detest the rod of God as curse and condemnation; in short, Can never persuade himself that he is loved by God, while he feels that he is still disposed to inflict punishment upon him. He only profits under the divine chastening who considers that God, though offended with his sins, is still propitious and favorable to him. Otherwise, the feeling must necessarily be what the Psalmist complains that he had experienced, “Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and thou hast afflicted me with all thy waves.” Also what Moses says, “For we are consumed by thine anger, and by thy wrath we are troubled. Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance. For all our days are passed away in thy wrath; we spend our years as a tale that is told” (Psalms 90:7-9). On the other hand, David speaking of fatherly chastisements, to show how believers are more assisted than oppressed by them, thus sings “Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy law; that thou mayest give him rest from the days of adversity, until the pit be digged for the wicked” (Psalms 94:12,Psalms 94:13). It is certainly a sore temptation, when God, sparing unbelievers and overlooking their crimes, appears more rigid towards his own people. Hence, to solace them, he adds the admonition of the law which teaches them, that their salvation is consulted when they are brought back to the right path, whereas the wicked are borne headlong in their errors, which ultimately lead to the pit. It matters not whether the punishment is eternal or temporary. For

disease, pestilence, famine, and war, are curses from God, as much as even the sentence of eternal death, whenever their tendency is to operate as instruments of divine wrath and vengeance against the reprobate.

35. All, if I mistake not, now see what view the Lord had in chastening David, namely, to prove that murder and adultery are most offensive to God, and to manifest this offensiveness in a beloved and faithful servant, that David himself might be taught never again to dare to commit such wickedness; still, however, it was not a punishment designed in payment of a kind of compensation to God. In the same way are we to judge of that other correction, in which the Lord subjects his people to a grievous pestilence, for the disobedience of David in forgetting himself so far as to number the people. He indeed freely forgave David the guilt of his sin; but because it was necessary, both as a public example to all ages and also to humble David himself, not to allow such an offense to go unpunished, he chastened him most sharply with his whip. We ought also to keep this in view in the universal curse of the human race. For since after obtaining grace we still continue to endure the miseries denounced to our first parent as the penalty of transgression, we ought thereby to be reminded, how offensive to God is the transgression of his law, that thus humbled and dejected by a consciousness of our wretched condition, we may aspire more ardently to true happiness. But it were most foolish in any one to imagine, that we are subjected to the calamities of the present life for the guilt of sin. This seems to me to have been Chrysostom's meaning when he said, "If the purpose of God in inflicting punishment is to bring those persisting in evil to repentance, when repentance is manifested punishment would be superfluous" (Chrysos. Homily. 3 de Provid). Wherefore, as he knows what the disposition of each requires, he treats one with greater harshness and another with more indulgence. Accordingly, when he wishes to show that he is not excessive in exacting punishment, he upbraids a hard hearted and obstinate people, because, after being smitten, they still continued in sin (Jeremiah 5:3). In the same sense he complains, that "Ephraim is a cake not turned" (Hosea 7:8), because chastisement did not make a due impression on their minds, and, correcting their vices, make them fit to receive pardon. Surely he who thus speaks shows, that as soon as any one repents he will be ready to receive him, and that the rigor which he exercises in chastising faults is wrung from him by our perverseness, since we should prevent him by a voluntary correction. Such, however, being the hardness and rudeness of all hearts, that they stand universally in need of castigation, our infinitely wise Parent has seen it meet to exercise all without exception, during their whole lives, with chastisement. It is strange how they fix their eyes so intently on the one example of David, and are not moved by the many examples in which they might have beheld the free forgiveness of sins. The publican is said to have gone down from the temple justified (Luke 18:14); no punishment follows. Peter obtained the pardon of his sin (Luke 22:61). "We read of his tears," says Ambrose (Serm. 46, De Poenit. Petri), "we read not of satisfaction." To the paralytic it is said, "Son, be of good cheer; thy sina be forgiven thee" (Matthew 9:2); no penance is enjoined. All the acts of forgiveness mentioned in Scripture are gratuitous. The rule ought to be drawn from these numerous examples, rather than from one example which contains a kind of specialty.

36. Daniel, in exhorting Nebuchadnezzar to break off his sins by righteousness, and his iniquities by showing mercy to the poor (Daniel 4:27), meant not to intimate, that righteousness and mercy are able to propitiate God and redeem from punishment (far be it from us to suppose that there ever was any other apolutro4sis (ransom) than the blood of Christ); but the breaking off referred to

in that passage has reference to man rather than to God: as if he had said, O king, you have exercised an unjust and violent domination, you have oppressed the humble, spoiled the poor, treated your people harshly and unjustly; instead of unjust exaction, instead of violence and oppression, now practice mercy and justice. In like manner, Solomon says, that love covers a multitude of sins; not, however, with God, but among men. For the whole verse stands thus, “Hatred stirreth up strifes; but love covereth all sins” (Proverbs 10:12). Here, after his manner, he contrasts the evils produced by hatred with the fruits of charity, in this sense, Those who hate are incessantly biting, carping at, upbraiding, lacerating each other, making every thing a fault; but those who love mutually conceal each other’s faults, wink at many, forgive many: not that the one approves the vices of the other, but tolerates and cures by admonishing, rather than exasperates by assailing. That the passage is quoted by Peter (1 Peter 4:8) in the same sense we cannot doubt, unless we would charge him with corrupting or craftily wresting Scripture. When it is said, that “by mercy and truth iniquity is purged” (Proverbs 16:6), the meaning is, not that by them compensation is made to the Lord, so that he being thus satisfied remits the punishment which he would otherwise have exacted; but intimation is made after the familiar manner of Scripture, that those who, forsaking their vices and iniquities turn to the Lord in truth and piety, will find him propitious: as if he had said, that the wrath of God is calmed, and his judgment is at rest, whenever we rest from our wickedness. But, indeed, it is not the cause of pardon that is described, but rather the mode of true conversion; just as the Prophets frequently declare, that it is in vain for hypocrites to offer God fictitious rites instead of repentance, seeing his delight is in integrity and the duties of charity. In like manner, also, the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, commending kindness and humanity, reminds us, that “with such sacrifices God is well pleased” (Hebrews 13:16). And indeed when Christ, rebuking the Pharisees because, intent merely on the outside of the cup and platter, they neglected purity of heart, enjoins them, in order that they may be clean in all respects, to give alms, does he exhort them to give satisfaction thereby? He only tells them what the kind of purity is which God requires. Of this mode of expression we have treated elsewhere (Matthew 23:25; Luke 11:39-41; see Calv. in Harm. Evang).

37. In regard to the passage in Luke (Luke 7:36, sq). no man of sober judgment, who reads the parable there employed by our Lord, will raise any controversy with us. The Pharisee thought that the Lord did not know the character of the woman whom he had so easily admitted to his presence. For he presumed that he would not have admitted her if he had known what kind of a sinner she was; and from this he inferred, that one who could be deceived in this way was not a prophet. Our Lord, to show that she was not a sinner, inasmuch as she had already been forgiven, spake this parable: “There was a certain creditor which had two debtors; the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me, therefore, which of them will love him most? The Pharisee answers: “I suppose that he to whom he forgave most.” Then our Savior rejoins: “Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much.” By these words it is plain he does not make love the cause of forgiveness, but the proof of it. The similitude is borrowed from the case of a debtor, to whom a debt of five hundred pence had been forgiven. It is not said that the debt is forgiven because he loved much, but that he loved much because it was forgiven. The similitude ought to be applied in this way: You think this woman is a sinner; but you ought to have acknowledged her as not a sinner, in respect that her sins have been forgiven her. Her love ought to have been to you a proof of her having obtained forgiveness, that love being an expression of gratitude for the benefit received. It is an argument a

posteriori, by which something is demonstrated by the results produced by it. Our Lord plainly attests the ground on which she had obtained forgiveness, when he says, “Thy faith has saved thee.” By faith, therefore, we obtain forgiveness: by love we give thanks, and bear testimony to the loving-kindness of the Lord.

38. I am little moved by the numerous passages in the writings of the Fathers relating to satisfaction. I see indeed that some (I will frankly say almost all whose books are extant) have either erred in this matter, or spoken too roughly and harshly; but I cannot admit that they were so rude and unskillful as to write these passages in the sense in which they are read by our new satisfactionaries. Chrysostom somewhere says, “When mercy is implored interrogation ceases; when mercy is asked, judgment rages not; when mercy is sought, there is no room for punishment; where there is mercy, no question is asked; where there is mercy, the answer gives pardon” (Chrysos. Hom. 2 in Psal. 50). How much soever these words may be twisted, they can never be reconciled with the dogmas of the Schoolmen. In the book De Dogmatibus Ecclesiasticis, which is attributed to Augustine, you read (cap. 54), “The satisfaction of repentance is to cut off the causes of sins, and not to indulge an entrance to their suggestions.” From this it appears that the doctrine of satisfaction, said to be paid for sins committed, was every where derided in those ages; for here the only satisfaction referred to is caution, abstinence from sin for the future. I am unwilling to quote what Chrysostom says (Hom. 10 in Genes). that God requires nothing more of us than to confess our faults before him with tears, as similar sentiments abound both in his writings and those of others. Augustine indeed calls works of mercy remedies for obtaining forgiveness of sins (Enchir. ad Laur.); but lest any one should stumble at the expression, he himself, in another passage, obviates the difficulty. “The flesh of Christ,” says he, “is the true and only sacrifice for sins - not only for those which are all effaced in baptism, but those into which we are afterwards betrayed through infirmity, and because of which the whole Church daily cries, ‘Forgive us our debts,’ (Matthew 6:12). And they are forgiven by that special sacrifice.”

39. By satisfaction, however, they, for the most part, meant not compensation to be paid to God, but the public testimony, by which those who had been punished with excommunication, and wished again to be received into communion, assured the Church of their repentance. For those penitents were enjoined certain fasts and other things, by which they might prove that they were truly, and from the heart, weary of their former life, or rather might obliterate the remembrance of their past deeds: in this way they were said to give satisfaction, not to God, but to the Church. The same thing is expressed by Augustine in a passage in his Enchiridion ad Laurentium, cap. 65. From that ancient custom the satisfactions and confessions now in use took their rise. It is indeed a viperish progeny, not even a vestige of the better form now remaining. I know that ancient writers sometimes speak harshly; nor do I deny, as I lately said, that they have perhaps erred; but dogmas, which were tainted with a few blemishes now that they have fallen into the unwashed hands of those men, are altogether defiled. And if we were to decide the contest by authority of the Fathers, what kind of Fathers are those whom they obtrude upon us? A great part of those, from whom Lombard their Coryphaeus framed his centos, are extracted from the absurd dreams of certain monks passing under the names of Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine, and Chrysostom. On the present subject almost all his extracts are from the book of Augustine De Paenitentia, a book absurdly compiled by some rhapsodist, alike from good and bad authors - a book which indeed bears the name of Augustine, but which no person of the least learning would deign to

acknowledge as his. Wishing to save my readers trouble, they will pardon me for not searching minutely into all their absurdities. For myself it were not very laborious, and might gain some applause, to give a complete exposure of dogmas which have hitherto been vaunted as mysteries; but as my object is to give useful instruction, I desist.

08.03.05. Chapter 05

Chapter 5. Of the modes of supplementing satisfaction, viz., indulgences and purgatory.

Divisions of the chapter, I. A summary description and refutation of Popish indulgences, sec. 1, 2.

II. Confutation by Leo and Augustine. Answer to two objections urged in support of them, sec. 3, 4. A profane love of filthy lucre on the part of the Pope. The origin of indulgences unfolded, sec. 5.

III. An examination of Popish purgatory. Its horrible impiety, sec. 6. An explanation of five passages of Scripture by which Sophists endeavor to support that dream, sec. 7, 8. Sentiments of the ancient Theologians concerning purgatory, sec. 10.

Sections

1. The dogma of satisfaction the parent of indulgences. Vanity of both. The reason of it. Evidence of the avarice of the Pope and the Romish clergy: also of the blindness with which the Christian world was smitten

2. View of indulgences given by the Sophists. Their true nature. Refutation of them. Refutation confirmed by seven passages of Scripture.

3. Confirmed also by the testimony of Leo, a Roman Bishop, and by Augustine. Attempts of the Popish doctors to establish the monstrous doctrine of indulgences, and even support it by Apostolical authority. First answer.

4. Second answer to the passage of an Apostle adduced to support the dogma of indulgences. Answer confirmed by a comparison with other passages, and from a passage in Augustine, explaining the Apostle’s meaning. Another passage from the same Apostle confirming this view.

5. The Pope’s profane thirst for filthy lucre exposed. The origin of indulgences.

6. Examination of the fictitious purgatory of the Papists. 1. From the nature of the thing itself. 2. From the authority of God. 3. From the consideration of the merit of Christ, which is destroyed by this fiction. Purgatory, what it Isaiah 4:1-6. From the impiety teeming from this fountain.

7. Exposition of the passages of Scripture quoted in support of purgatory. 1. Of the Impardonable sin, from which it is inferred that there are some sins afterwards to be forgiven. 2. Of the passage as to paying the last farthing.

8. 3. The passage concerning the bending of the knee to Christ by things under the earth. 4. The example of Judas Maccabaeus in sending an oblation for the dead to Jerusalem.

9. 5. Of the fire which shall try every man’s work. The sentiment of the ancient theologians. Answer, containing a reductio ad absurdum. Confirmation by a passage of Augustine. The meaning of the Apostle. What to be understood by fire. A clear exposition of the metaphor. The day of the Lord. How those who suffer loss are saved by fire.

10. The doctrine of purgatory ancient, but refuted by a more ancient Apostle. Not supported by ancient writers, by Scripture, or solid argument. Introduced by custom and a zeal not duly regulated by the word of God. Ancient writers, as Augustine, speak doubtfully in commending prayer for the dead. At all events, we must hold by the word of God, which rejects this fiction. A vast difference between the more ancient and the more modern builders of purgatory. This shown by comparing them.

1. From this dogma of satisfaction that of indulgences takes its rise. For the pretence is, that what is wanting to our own ability is hereby supplied; and they go the insane length of defining them to be a dispensation of the merits of Christ, and the martyrs which the Pope makes by his bulls. Though they are fitter for hellebore than for argument - and it is scarcely worth while to refute these frivolous errors, which, already battered down, begin of their own accord to grow antiquated, and totter to their fall; yet, as a brief refutation may be useful to some of the unlearned, I will not omit it. Indeed, the fact that indulgences have so long stood safe and with impunity, and wantoned with so much fury and tyranny, may be regarded as a proof into how deep a night of ignorance mankind were for some ages plunged. They saw themselves insulted openly, and without disguise, by the Pope and his bull-bearers; they saw the salvation of the soul made the subject of a lucrative traffic, salvation taxed at a few pieces of money, nothing given gratuitously; they saw what was squeezed from them in the form of oblations basely consumed on strumpets, pimps and gluttony, the loudest trumpeters of indulgences being the greatest despisers; they saw the monster stalking abroad, and every day luxuriating with greater license, and that without end, new bulls being constantly issued, and new sums extracted. Still indulgences were received with the greatest reverence, worshipped, and bought. Even those who saw more clearly than others deemed them pious frauds, by which, even in deceiving, some good was gained. Now, at length, that a considerable portion of the world have begun to rethink themselves, indulgences grow cool, and gradually even begin to freeze, preparatory to their final extinction.

2. But since very many who see the vile imposture, theft, and rapine (with which the dealers in indulgences have hitherto deluded and sported with us), are not aware of the true source of the impiety, it may be proper to show not only what indulgences truly are, but also that they are polluted in every part. They give the name of treasury of the Church to the merits of Christ, the holy Apostles and Martyrs. They pretend, as I have said, that the radical custody of the granary has been delivered to the Roman bishop, to whom the dispensation of these great blessings belongs in such a sense, that he can both exercise it by himself, and delegate the power of exercising it to others. Hence we have from the Pope at one time plenary indulgences, at another for certain years; from the cardinals for a hundred days, and from the bishops for forty. These, to describe them truly, are a profanation of the blood of Christ, and a delusion of Satan, by which the Christian people are led away from the grace of God and the life which is in Christ, and turned aside from the true way of salvation. For how could the blood of Christ be more shamefully profaned than by denying its sufficiency for the remission of sins, for reconciliation and satisfaction, unless its defects, as if it were dried up and exhausted, are supplemented from some other quarter? Peter’s words are: “To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins” (Acts 10:43); but indulgences bestow the remission of sins through Peter, Paul, and the Martyrs. “The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin,” says John (1 John 1:7). Indulgences make the blood of the martyrs an

ablution of sins. “He has made him to be sin (i. e. a satisfaction for sin) for us who knew no sin,” says Paul (2 Corinthians 5:21), “that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” Indulgences make the satisfaction of sin to depend on the blood of the martyrs. Paul exclaimed and testified to the Corinthians, that Christ alone was crucified, and died for them (1 Corinthians 1:13). Indulgences declare that Paul and others died for us. Paul elsewhere says that Christ purchased the Church with his own blood (Acts 20:28). Indulgences assign another purchase to the blood of martyrs. “By one offering he has perfected for ever them that are sanctified,” says the Apostle (Hebrews 10:14). Indulgences, on the other hand, insist that sanctification, which would otherwise be insufficient, is perfected by martyrs. John says that all the saints “have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb” (Revelation 7:14). Indulgences tell us to wash our robes in the blood of saints.

3. There is an admirable passage in opposition to their blasphemies in Leo, a Roman Bishop (ad Palaestinos, Ephesians 81). “Although the death of many saints was precious in the sight of the Lord (Psalms 116:15), yet no innocent man’s slaughter was the propitiation of the world. The just received crowns did not give them; and the fortitude of believers produced examples of patience, not gifts of righteousness: for their deaths were for themselves; and none by his final end paid the debt of another, except Christ our Lord, in whom alone all are crucified - all dead, buried, and raised up.” This sentiment, as it was of a memorable nature, he has elsewhere repeated (Epist. 95). Certainly one could not desire a clearer confutation of this impious dogma. Augustine introduces the same sentiment not less appositely: “Although brethren die for brethren, yet no martyr’s blood is shed for the remission of sins: this Christ did for us, and in this conferred upon us not what we should imitate, but what should make us grateful” (August. Tract. in Joann. 84). Again, in another passage: “As he alone became the Son of God and the Son of man, that he might make us to be with himself sons of God, so he alone, without any ill desert, undertook the penalty for us, that through him we mighty without good desert, obtain undeserved favor” (ad Bonif. Lib. 4, cap. 4). Indeed, as their whole doctrine is a patchwork of sacrilege and blasphemy, this is the most blasphemous of the whole. Let them acknowledge whether or not they hold the following dogmas: That the martyrs, by their death, performed more to God, and merited more than was necessary for themselves, and that they have a large surplus of merits which may be applied to others; that in order that this great good may not prove superfluous, their blood is mingled with the blood of Christ, and out of both is formed the treasury of the Church, for the forgiveness and satisfaction of sins; and that in this sense we must understand the words of Paul: “Who now rejoice in my sufferings, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body’s sake, which is the Church” (Colossians 1:24). What is this but merely to leave the name of Christ, and at the same time make him a vulgar saintling, who can scarcely be distinguished in the crowd? He alone ought to be preached, alone held forth, alone named, alone looked to, whenever the subject considered is the obtaining of the forgiveness of sins, expiation, and sanctification. But let us hear their propositions. That the blood of martyrs may not be shed without fruit, it must be employed for the common good of the Church. Is it so? Was there no fruit in glorifying God by death? in sealing his truth with their blood? in testifying, by contempt of the present life, that they looked for a better? in confirming the faith of the Church, and at the same time disabling the pertinacity of the enemy by their constancy? But thus it is. They acknowledge no fruit if Christ is the only propitiation, if he alone died for our sins, if he alone was offered for our redemption. Nevertheless, they say, Peter and Paul would have gained the crown of victory though they had died in their beds a natural

death. But as they contended to blood, it would not accord with the justice of God to leave their doing so barren and unfruitful. As if God were unable to augment the glory of his servants in proportion to the measure of his gifts. The advantage derived in common by the Church is great enough, when, by their triumphs, she is inflamed with zeal to fight.

4. How maliciously they wrest the passage in which Paul says, that he supplies in his body that which was lacking in the sufferings of Christ! (Colossians 1:24). That defect or supplement refers not to the work of redemption, satisfaction, or expiation, but to those afflictions with which the members of Christ, in other words, all believers, behave to be exercised, so long as they are in the flesh. He says, therefore, that part of the sufferings of Christ still remains, viz., that what he suffered in himself he daily suffers in his members. Christ so honors us as to regard and count our afflictions as his own. By the additional words - for the Church, Paul means not for the redemptions or reconciliations or satisfaction of the Church, but for edification and progress. As he elsewhere says, “I endure all things for the elect’s sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory” (2 Timothy 2:10). He also writes to the Corinthians: “Whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer” (2 Corinthians 1:6). In the same place he immediately explains his meaning by adding, that he was made a minister of the Church, not for redemption, but according to the dispensation which he received to preach the gospel of Christ. But if they still desire another interpreter, let them hear Augustine: “The sufferings of Christ are in Christ alone, as in the head; in Christ and the Church as in the whole body. Hence Paul, being one member says, ‘I fill up in my body that which is behind of the sufferings of Christ.’ Therefore O hearers whoever you be, if you are among the members of Christ, whatever you suffer from those who are not members of Christ, was lacking to the sufferings of Christ” (August. in Psalms 16:1-11). He elsewhere explains the end of the sufferings of the Apostles undertaken for Christ: “Christ is my door to you, because ye are the sheep of Christ purchased by his blood: acknowledge your price, which is not paid by me, but preached by me” (August. Tract. in Joann. 47). He afterwards adds, “As he laid down his life, so ought we to lay down our lives for the brethren, to build up peace and maintain faith.” Thus far Augustine. Far be it from us to imagine that Paul thought any thing was wanting to the sufferings of Christ in regard to the complete fulness of righteousness, salvation, and life, or that he wished to make any addition to it, after showing so clearly and eloquently that the grace of Christ was poured out in such rich abundance as far to exceed all the power of sin (Romans 5:15). All saints have been saved by it alone, not by the merit of their own life or death, as Peter distinctly testifies (Acts 15:11); so that it is an insult to God and his Anointed to place the worthiness of any saint in any thing save the mercy of God alone. But why dwell longer on this, as if the matter were obscure, when to mention these monstrous dogmas is to refute them?

5. Moreover, to say nothing of these abominations, who taught the Pope to enclose the grace of Jesus Christ in lead and parchment, grace which the Lord is pleased to dispense by the word of the Gospel? Undoubtedly either the Gospel of God or indulgences must be false. That Christ is offered to us in the Gospel with all the abundance of heavenly blessings, with all his merits, all his righteousness, wisdom, and grace, without exception, Paul bears witness when he says, “Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he has made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Corinthians 5:20, 2 Corinthians 5:21).

And what is meant by the fellowship (koino4nia) of Christ, which according to the same Apostle (1 Corinthians 1:9) is offered to us in the Gospel, all believers know. On the contrary, indulgences, bringing forth some portion of the grace of God from the armory of the Pope, fix it to lead, parchment, and a particular place, but dissever it from the word of God. When we inquire into the origin of this abuse, it appears to have arisen from this, that when in old times the satisfactions imposed on penitents were too severe to be borne, those who felt themselves burdened beyond measure by the penance imposed, petitioned the Church for relaxation. The remission so given was called indulgence. But as they transferred satisfactions to God, and called them compensations by which men redeem themselves from the justice of God, they in the same way transferred indulgences, representing them as expiatory remedies which free us from merited punishment. The blasphemies to which we have referred have been feigned with so much effrontery that there is not the least pretext for them.

6. Their purgatory cannot now give us much trouble, since with this ax we have struck it, thrown it down, and overturned it from its very foundations. I cannot agree with some who think that we ought to dissemble in this matter, and make no mention of purgatory, from which (as they say) fierce contests arise, and very little edification can be obtained. I myself would think it right to disregard their follies did they not tend to serious consequences. But since purgatory has been reared on many, and is daily propped up by new blasphemies; since it produces many grievous offenses, assuredly it is not to be connived at, however it might have been disguised for a time, that without any authority from the word of God, it was devised by prying audacious rashness, that credit was procured for it by fictitious revelations, the wiles of Satan, and that certain passages of Scripture were ignorantly wrested to its support. Although the Lord bears not that human presumption should thus force its way to the hidden recesses of his judgments; although he has issued a strict prohibition against neglecting his voice, and making inquiry at the dead (Deuteronomy 18:11), and permits not his word to be so erroneously contaminated. Let us grant, however, that all this might have been tolerated for a time as a thing of no great moment; yet when the expiation of sins is sought elsewhere than in the blood of Christ, and satisfaction is transferred to others, silence were most perilous. We are bound, therefore, to raise our voice to its highest pitch, and cry aloud that purgatory is a deadly device of Satan; that it makes void the cross of Christ; that it offers intolerable insult to the divine mercy; that it undermines and overthrows our faith. For what is this purgatory but the satisfaction for sin paid after death by the souls of the dead? Hence when this idea of satisfaction is refuted, purgatory itself is forthwith completely overturned. But if it is perfectly clear, from what was lately said, that the blood of Christ is the only satisfaction, expiation, and cleansing for the sins of believers, what remains but to hold that purgatory is mere blasphemy, horrid blasphemy against Christ? I say nothing of the sacrilege by which it is daily defended, the offenses which it begets in religion, and the other innumerable evils which we see teeming forth from that fountain of impiety.

7. Those passages of Scripture on which it is their wont falsely and iniquitously to fasten, it may be worth while to wrench out of their hands. When the Lord declares that the sin against the Holy Ghost will not be forgiven either in this world or the world to come, he thereby intimates (they say) that there is a remission of certain sins hereafter. But who sees not that the Lord there speaks of the guilt of sin? But if this is so, what has it to do with their purgatory, seeing they deny not that the guilt of those sins, the punishment of which is there expiated, is forgiven in the present life? Lest,

however, they should still object, we shall give a plainer solution. Since it was the Lord's intention to cut off all hope of pardon from this flagitous wickedness, he did not consider it enough to say, that it would never be forgiven, but in the way of amplification employed a division by which he included both the judgment which every man's conscience pronounces in the present life, and the final judgment which will be publicly pronounced at the resurrection; as if he had said, Beware of this malignant rebellion, as you would of instant destruction; for he who of set purpose endeavors to extinguish the offered light of the Spirit, shall not obtain pardon either in this life, which has been given to sinners for conversion, or on the last day when the angels of God shall separate the sheep from the goats, and the heavenly kingdom shall be purged of all that offends. The next passage they produce is the parable in Matthew: "Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily, I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost earthing" (Matthew 5:25, Matthew 5:26). If in this passage the judge means God, the adversary the devil, the officer an angel, and the prison purgatory, I give in at once. But if every man sees that Christ there intended to show to how many perils and evils those expose themselves who obstinately insist on their utmost right, instead of being satisfied with what is fair and equitable, that he might thereby the more strongly exhort his followers to concord, where, I ask, are we to find their purgatory?

8. They seek an argument in the passage in which Paul declares, that all things shall bow the knee to Christ, "things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth" (Php 2:10). They take it for granted, that by "things under the earth," cannot be meant those who are doomed to eternal damnation, and that the only remaining conclusion is, that they must be souls suffering in purgatory. They would not reason very ill if, by the bending of the knee, the Apostle designated true worship; but since he simply says that Christ has received a dominion to which all creatures are subject, what prevents us from understanding those "under the earth" to mean the devils, who shall certainly be sisted before the judgment-seat of God, there to recognize their Judge with fear and trembling? In this way Paul himself elsewhere interprets the same prophecy: "We shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God" (Romans 14:10, Romans 14:11). But we cannot in this way interpret what is said in the Apocalypse: "Every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever" (Revelation 5:13). This I readily admit; but what kinds of creatures do they suppose are here enumerated? It is absolutely certain, that both irrational and inanimate creatures are comprehended. All, then, which is affirmed is, that every part of the universe, from the highest pinnacle of heaven to the very centre of the earth, each in its own way proclaims the glory of the Creator. To the passage which they produce from the history of the Maccabees (1Ma 12:43), I will not deign to reply, lest I should seem to include that work among the canonical books. But Augustine holds it to be canonical. First, with what degree of confidence? "The Jews," says he, "do not hold the book of the Maccabees as they do the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms, to which the Lord bears testimony as to his own witnesses, saying, Ought not all things which are written in the Law, and the Psalms, and the Prophets, concerning me be fulfilled? (Luke 24:44). But it has been received by the Church not uselessly, if it be read or heard with soberness." Jerome, however, unhesitatingly affirms, that it is of no authority in establishing doctrine; and from the

ancient little book, De Expositione Symboli; which bears the name of Cyprian, it is plain that it was in no estimation in the ancient Church. And why do I here contend in vain? As if the author himself did not sufficiently show what degree of deference is to be paid him, when in the end he asks pardon for any thing less properly expressed (2Ma 15:38). He who confesses that his writings stand in need of pardon, certainly proclaims that they are not oracles of the Holy Spirit. We may add, that the piety of Judas is commended for no other reason than for having a firm hope of the final resurrection, in sending his oblation for the dead to Jerusalem. For the writer of the history does not represent what he did as furnishing the price of redemption, but merely that they might be partakers of eternal life, with the other saints who had fallen for their country and religion. The act, indeed, was not free from superstition and misguided zeal; but it is mere fatuity to extend the legal sacrifice to us, seeing we are assured that the sacrifices then in use ceased on the advent of Christ.

9. But, it seems, they find in Paul an invincible support, which cannot be so easily overthrown. His words are, “Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is. If any man’s work shall be burnt, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire” (1 Corinthians 3:12-15). What fire (they ask) can that be but the fire of purgatory, by which the defilements of sin are wiped away, in order that we may enter pure into the kingdom of God? But most of the Fathers give it a different meaning, viz., the tribulation or cross by which the Lord tries his people, that they may not rest satisfied with the defilements of the flesh. This is much more probable than the fiction of a purgatory. I do not, however, agree with them, for I think I see a much surer and clearer meaning to the passage. But, before I produce it, I wish they would answer me, whether they think the Apostle and all the saints have to pass through this purgatorial fire? I am aware they will say, no; for it were too absurd to hold that purification is required by those whose superfluous merits they dream of as applicable to all the members of the Church. But this the Apostle affirms; for he says, not that the works of certain persons, but the works of all will be tried. And this is not my argument, but that of Augustine, who thus impugns that interpretation. And (what makes the thing more absurd) he says, not that they will pass through fire for certain works, but that even if they should have edified the Church with the greatest fidelity, they will receive their reward after their works shall have been tried by fire. First, we see that the Apostle used a metaphor when he gave the names of wood, hay, and stubble, to doctrines of man’s device. The ground of the metaphor is obvious, viz., that as wood when it is put into the fire is consumed and destroyed, so neither will those doctrines be able to endure when they come to be tried. Moreover, every one sees that the trial is made by the Spirit of God. Therefore, in following out the thread of the metaphor, and adapting its parts properly to each other, he gave the name of fire to the examination of the Holy Spirit. For, just as silver and gold, the nearer they are brought to the fire, give stronger proof of their genuineness and purity, so the Lord’s truth, the more thoroughly it is submitted to spiritual examination, has its authority the better confirmed. As hay, wood, and stubble, when the fire is applied to them, are suddenly consumed, so the inventions of man, not founded on the word of God, cannot stand the trial of the Holy Spirit, but forthwith give way and perish. In fine, if spurious doctrines are compared to wood, hay, and stubble, because, like wood, hay, and stubble, they are burned by fire and fitted for destruction, though the actual destruction is only completed by the Spirit of the Lord, it follows that the Spirit is that fire by which they will be proved. This proof Paul

calls the day of the Lord; using a term common in Scripture. For the day of the Lord is said to take place whenever he in some way manifests his presence to men, his face being specially said to shine when his truth is manifested. It has now been proved, that Paul has no idea of any other fire than the trial of the Holy Spirit. But how are those who suffer the loss of their works saved by fire? This it will not be difficult to understand, if we consider of what kind of persons he speaks. For he designates them builders of the Church, who, retaining the proper foundation, build different materials upon it; that is, who, not abandoning the principal and necessary articles of faith, err in minor and less perilous matters, mingling their own fictions with the word of God. Such, I say, must suffer the loss of their work by the destruction of their fictions. They themselves, however, are saved, yet so as by fire; that is, not that their ignorance and delusions are approved by the Lord, but they are purified from them by the grace and power of the Holy Spirit. All those, accordingly, who have tainted the golden purity of the divine word with the pollution of purgatory must necessarily suffer the loss of their work.

10. But the observance of it in the Church is of the highest antiquity. This objection is disposed of by Paul, when, including even his own age in the sentence, he declares, that all who in building the Church have laid upon it something not conformable to the foundation, must suffer the loss of their work. When, therefore, my opponents object, that it has been the practice for thirteen hundred years to offer prayers for the dead, I, in return, ask them, by what word of God, by what revelation, by what example it was done? For here not only are passages of Scripture wanting, but in the examples of all the saints of whom we read, nothing of the kind is seen. We have numerous, and sometimes long narratives, of their mourning and sepulchral rites, but not one word is said of prayers. But the more important the matter was, the more they ought to have dwelt upon it. Even those who in ancient times offered prayers for the dead, saw that they were not supported by the command of God and legitimate example. Why then did they presume to do it? I hold that herein they suffered the common lot of man, and therefore maintain, that what they did is not to be imitated. Believers ought not to engage in any work without a firm conviction of its propriety, as Paul enjoins (Romans 14:23); and this conviction is expressly requisite in prayer. It is to be presumed, however, that they were influenced by some reason; they sought a solace for their sorrow, and it seemed cruel not to give some attestation of their love to the dead, when in the presence of God. All know by experience how natural it is for the human mind thus to feel.

Received custom too was a kind of torch, by which the minds of many were inflamed. We know that among all the Gentiles, and in all ages, certain rites were paid to the dead, and that every year lustrations were performed for their manes. Although Satan deluded foolish mortals by these impostures, yet the means of deceiving were borrowed from a sound principle, viz., that death is not destruction, but a passages from this life to another. And there can be no doubt that superstition itself always left the Gentiles without excuse before the judgment-seat of God, because they neglected to prepare for that future life which they professed to believe. Thus, that Christians might not seem worse than heathens, they felt ashamed of paying no office to the dead, as if they had been utterly annihilated. Hence their ill advised assiduity; because they thought they would expose themselves to great disgrace, if they were slow in providing funeral feasts and oblations. What was thus introduced by perverse rivalship, ever and anon received new additions, until the highest holiness of the Papacy consisted in giving assistance to the suffering dead. But far better and more solid comfort is furnished by scripture when it declares, “Blessed are the dead

that die in the Lord;" and adds the reason, "for they rest from their labors" (Revelation 14:13). We ought not to indulge our love so far as to set up a perverse mode of prayer in the Church. Surely every person possessed of the least prudence easily perceives, that whatever we meet with on this subject in ancient writers, was in deference to public custom and the ignorance of the vulgar. I admit they were themselves also carried away into error, the usual effect of rash credulity being to destroy the judgment. Meanwhile the passages themselves show, that when they recommended prayer for the dead it was with hesitation. Augustine relates in his Confessions, that his mother, Monica, earnestly entreated to be remembered when the solemn rites at the altar were performed; doubtless an old woman's wish, which her son did not bring to the test of Scripture, but from natural affection wished others to approve. His book, De Cura pro Mortals Agenda, On showing Care for the Dead, is so full of doubt, that its coldness may well extinguish the heat of a foolish zeal. Should any one, in pretending to be a patron of the dead, deal merely in probabilities, the only effect will be to make those indifferent who were formerly solicitous. The only support of this dogma is, that as a custom of praying for the dead prevailed, the duty ought not to be despised. But granting that ancient ecclesiastical writers deemed it a pious thing to assist the dead, the rule which can never deceive is always to be observed, viz., that we must not introduce anything of our own into our prayers, but must keep all our wishes in subordination to the word of God, because it belongs to Him to prescribe what he wishes us to ask. Now, since the whole Law and Gospel do not contain one syllable which countenances the right of praying for the dead, it is a profanation of prayer to go one step farther than God enjoins. But, lest our opponents boast of sharing their error with the ancient Church, I say, that there is a wide difference between the two. The latter made a commemoration of the dead, that they might not seem to have cast off all concern for them; but they, at the same time, acknowledged that they were doubtful as to their state; assuredly they made no such assertion concerning purgatory as implied that they did not hold it to be uncertain. The former insist, that their dream of purgatory shall be received without question as an article of faith. The latter sparingly and in a perfunctory manner only commended their dead to the Lord, in the communion of the holy supper. The former are constantly urging the care of the dead, and by their importunate preaching of it, make out that it is to be preferred to all the offices of charity. But it would not be difficult for us to produce some passages from ancient writers, which clearly overturn all those prayers for the dead which were then in use. Such is the passage of Augustine, in which he shows that the resurrection of the flesh and eternal glory is expected by all, but that rest which follows death is received by every one who is worthy of it when he dies. Accordingly, he declares that all the righteous, not less than the Apostles, Prophets, and Martyrs, immediately after death enjoy blessed rest. If such is their condition, what, I ask, will our prayers contribute to them? I say nothing of those grosser superstitions by which they have fascinated the minds of the simple; and yet they are innumerable, and most of them so monstrous, that they cannot cover them with any cloak of decency. I say nothing, moreover, of those most shameful traffickings, which they plied as they listed while the world was stupefied. For I would never come to an end; and, without enumerating them, the pious reader will here find enough to establish his conscience.

08.03.06. Chapter 06

Chapter 6. The life of a Christian man. Scriptural arguments exhorting to it. This and the four following chapters treat of the Life of the Christian, and are so arranged as to admit of being classed under two principal heads.

First, it must be held to be an universally acknowledged point, that no man is a Christian who does not feel some special love for righteousness, chap. 6. Secondly, in regard to the standard by which every man ought to regulate his life, although it seems to be considered in chap. 7 only, yet the three following chapters also refer to it. For it shows that the Christian has two duties to perform. First, the observance being so arduous, he needs the greatest patience. Hence chap. 8 treats professedly of the utility of the cross, and chap. 9 invites to meditation on the future life. Lastly, chap. 10 clearly shows, as in no small degree conducive to this end, how we are to use this life and its comforts without abusing them. This sixth chapter consists of two parts,

I. Connection between this treatise on the Christian Life and the doctrine of Regeneration and Repentance. Arrangement of the treatise, sec. 1-3.

II. Extremes to be avoided; 1. False Christians denying Christ by their works condemned, sec. 4. 2. Christians should not despair, though they have not attained perfection, provided they make daily progress in piety and righteousness.

Sections

1. Connection between this chapter and the doctrine of Regeneration. Necessity of the doctrine concerning the Christian Life. The brevity of this treatise. The method of it. Plainness and unadorned simplicity of the Scripture system of morals.

2. Two divisions. First, personal holiness. 1. Because God is holy. 2. Because of our communion with his saints.

3. Second division, relating to our Redemption. Admirable moral system of Scripture. Five special inducements or exhortations to a Christian Life.

4. False Christians who are opposed to this life censured: 1. They have not truly learned Christ. 2. The Gospel not the guide of their words or actions. 3. They do not imitate Christ the Master. 4. They would separate the Spirit from his word.

5. Christians ought not to despond, provided: 1. They take the word of God for their guide. 2. Sincerely cultivate righteousness. 3. Walk, according to their capacity, in the ways of the Lord. 4. Make some progress. 5. Persevere.

1. We have said that the object of regeneration is to bring the life of believers into concord and harmony with the righteousness of God, and so confirm the adoption by which they have been received as sons. But although the law comprehends within it that new life by which the image of God is restored in us, yet, as our sluggishness stands greatly in need both of helps and incentives

it will be useful to collect out of Scripture a true account of this reformations lest any who have a heartfelt desire of repentance should in their zeal go astray. Moreover, I am not unaware that, in undertaking to describe the life of the Christian, I am entering on a large and extensive subject, one which, when fully considered in all its parts, is sufficient to fill a large volume. We see the length to which the Fathers in treating of individual virtues extend their exhortations. This they do, not from mere loquaciousness; for whatever be the virtue which you undertake to recommend, your pen is spontaneously led by the copiousness of the matter so to amplify, that you seem not to have discussed it properly if you have not done it at length. My intention, however, in the plan of life which I now propose to give, is not to extend it so far as to treat of each virtue specially, and expatiate in exhortation. This must be sought in the writings of others, and particularly in the Homilies of the Fathers. For me it will be sufficient to point out the method by which a pious man may be taught how to frame his life aright, and briefly lay down some universal rule by which he may not improperly regulate his conduct. I shall one day possibly find time for more ample discourse, [or leave others to perform an office for which I am not so fit. I have a natural love of brevity, and, perhaps, any attempt of mine at copiousness would not succeed. Even if I could gain the highest applause by being more prolix, I would scarcely be disposed to attempt it], while the nature of my present work requires me to glance at simple doctrine with as much brevity as possible. As philosophers have certain definitions of rectitude and honesty, from which they derive particular duties and the whole train of virtues; so in this respect Scripture is not without order, but presents a most beautiful arrangement, one too which is every way much more certain than that of philosophers. The only difference is, that they, under the influence of ambition, constantly affect an exquisite perspicuity of arrangement, which may serve to display their genius, whereas the Spirit of God, teaching without affectation, is not so perpetually observant of exact method, and yet by observing it at times sufficiently intimates that it is not to be neglected.

2. The Scripture system of which we speak aims chiefly at two objects. The former is, that the love of righteousness, to which we are by no means naturally inclined, may be instilled and implanted into our minds. The latter is (see chap. 2), to prescribe a rule which will prevent us while in the pursuit of righteousness from going astray. It has numerous admirable methods of recommending righteousness. Many have been already pointed out in different parts of this work; but we shall here also briefly advert to some of them. With what better foundation can it begin than by reminding us that we must be holy, because “God is holy?” (Leviticus 19:1; 1 Peter 1:16). For when we were scattered abroad like lost sheep, wandering through the labyrinth of this world, he brought us back again to his own fold. When mention is made of our union with God, let us remember that holiness must be the bond; not that by the merit of holiness we come into communion with him (we ought rather first to cleave to him, in order that, pervaded with his holiness, we may follow whither he calls), but because it greatly concerns his glory not to have any fellowship with wickedness and impurity. Wherefore he tells us that this is the end of our calling, the end to which we ought ever to have respect, if we would answer the call of God. For to what end were we rescued from the iniquity and pollution of the world into which we were plunged, if we allow ourselves, during our whole lives, to wallow in them? Besides, we are at the same time admonished, that if we would be regarded as the Lord’s people, we must inhabit the holy city Jerusalem (Isaiah Revelation 8:1-13, et alibi); which, as he hath consecrated it to himself, it were impious for its inhabitants to profane by impurity. Hence the expressions, “Who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness”

(Psalms 15:1, Psalms 15:2; Psalms 24:3, Psalms 24:4); for the sanctuary in which he dwells certainly ought not to be like an unclean stall.

3. The better to arouse us, it exhibits God the Father, who, as he hath reconciled us to himself in his Anointed, has impressed his image upon us, to which he would have us to be conformed (Romans 5:4). Come, then, and let them show me a more excellent system among philosophers, who think that they only have a moral philosophy duly and orderly arranged. They, when they would give excellent exhortations to virtue, can only tell us to live agreeably to nature. Scripture derives its exhortations from the true source, when it not only enjoins us to regulate our lives with a view to God its author to whom it belongs; but after showing us that we have degenerated from our true origin, viz., the law of our Creator, adds, that Christ, through whom we have returned to favour with God, is set before us as a model, the image of which our lives should express. What do you require more effectual than this? Nay, what do you require beyond this? If the Lord adopts us for his sons on the condition that our life be a representation of Christ, the bond of our adoption - then, unless we dedicate and devote ourselves to righteousness, we not only, with the utmost perfidy, revolt from our Creator, but also abjure the Saviour himself. Then, from an enumeration of all the blessings of God, and each part of our salvation, it finds materials for exhortation. Ever since God exhibited himself to us as a Father, we must be convicted of extreme ingratitude if we do not in turn exhibit ourselves as his sons. Ever since Christ purified us by the laver of his blood, and communicated this purification by baptism, it would ill become us to be defiled with new pollution. Ever since he ingrafted us into his body, we, who are his members, should anxiously beware of contracting any stain or taint. Ever since he who is our head ascended to heaven, it is befitting in us to withdraw our affections from the earth, and with our whole soul aspire to heaven. Ever since the Holy Spirit dedicated us as temples to the Lord, we should make it our endeavour to show forth the glory of God, and guard against being profaned by the defilement of sin. Ever since our soul and body were destined to heavenly incorruptibility and an unfading crown, we should earnestly strive to keep them pure and uncorrupted against the day of the Lord. These, I say, are the surest foundations of a well-regulated life, and you will search in vain for any thing resembling them among philosophers, who, in their commendation of virtue, never rise higher than the natural dignity of man.

4. This is the place to address those who, having nothing of Christ but the name and sign, would yet be called Christians. How dare they boast of this sacred name? None have intercourse with Christ but those who have acquired the true knowledge of him from the Gospel. The Apostle denies that any man truly has learned Christ who has not learned to put off “the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and put on Christ” (Ephesians 4:22). They are convicted, therefore, of falsely and unjustly pretending a knowledge of Christ, whatever be the volubility and eloquence with which they can talk of the Gospel. Doctrine is not an affair of the tongue, but of the life; is not apprehended by the intellect and memory merely, like other branches of learning; but is received only when it possesses the whole soul, and finds its seat and habitation in the inmost recesses of the heart. Let them, therefore, either cease to insult God, by boasting that they are what they are not, or let them show themselves not unworthy disciples of their divine Master. To doctrine in which our religion is contained we have given the first place, since by it our salvation commences; but it must be transfused into the breast, and pass into the conduct, and so transform us into itself, as not to prove unfruitful. If philosophers are justly offended, and banish from their

company with disgrace those who, while professing an art which ought to be the mistress of their conduct, convert it into mere loquacious sophistry, with how much better reason shall we detest those flimsy sophists who are contented to let the Gospel play upon their lips, when, from its efficacy, it ought to penetrate the inmost affections of the heart, fix its seat in the soul, and pervade the whole man a hundred times more than the frigid discourses of philosophers?

5. I insist not that the life of the Christian shall breathe nothing but the perfect Gospel, though this is to be desired, and ought to be attempted. I insist not so strictly on evangelical perfection, as to refuse to acknowledge as a Christian any man who has not attained it. In this way all would be excluded from the Church, since there is no man who is not far removed from this perfection, while many, who have made but little progress, would be undeservedly rejected. What then? Let us set this before our eye as the end at which we ought constantly to aim. Let it be regarded as the goal towards which we are to run. For you cannot divide the matter with God, undertaking part of what his word enjoins, and omitting part at pleasure. For, in the first place, God uniformly recommends integrity as the principal part of his worship, meaning by integrity real singleness of mind, devoid of gloss and fiction, and to this is opposed a double mind; as if it had been said, that the spiritual commencement of a good life is when the internal affections are sincerely devoted to God, in the cultivation of holiness and justice. But seeing that, in this earthly prison of the body, no man is supplied with strength sufficient to hasten in his course with due alacrity, while the greater number are so oppressed with weakness, that hesitating, and halting, and even crawling on the ground, they make little progress, let every one of us go as far as his humble ability enables him, and prosecute the journey once begun. No one will travel so badly as not daily to make some degree of progress. This, therefore, let us never cease to do, that we may daily advance in the way of the Lord; and let us not despair because of the slender measure of success. How little soever the success may correspond with our wish, our labour is not lost when to-day is better than yesterday, provided with true singleness of mind we keep our aim, and aspire to the goal, not speaking flattering things to ourselves, nor indulging our vices, but making it our constant endeavour to become better, until we attain to goodness itself. If during the whole course of our life we seek and follow, we shall at length attain it, when relieved from the infirmity of flesh we are admitted to full fellowship with God.

08.03.07. Chapter 07

Chapter 7. A summary of the Christian life. Of self-denial. The divisions of the chapter are,

I. The rule which permits us not to go astray in the study of righteousness, requires two things, viz., that man, abandoning his own will, devote himself entirely to the service of God; whence it follows, that we must seek not our own things, but the things of God, sec. 1, 2.

II. A description of this renovation or Christian life taken from the Epistle to Titus, and accurately explained under certain special heads, sec. 3 to end.

Sections

1. Consideration of the second general division in regard to the Christian life. Its beginning and sum. A twofold respect. 1. We are not our own. Respect to both the fruit and the use. Unknown to philosophers, who have placed reason on the throne of the Holy Spirit.

2. Since we are not our own, we must seek the glory of God, and obey his will. Self-denial recommended to the disciples of Christ. He who neglects it, deceived either by pride or hypocrisy, rushes on destruction.

3. Three things to be followed, and two to be shunned in life. Impiety and worldly lusts to be shunned. Sobriety, justice, and piety, to be followed. An inducement to right conduct.

4. Self-denial the sum of Paul's doctrine. Its difficulty. Qualities in us which make it difficult. Cures for these qualities. 1. Ambition to be suppressed. 2. Humility to be embraced. 3. Candour to be esteemed. 4. Mutual charity to be preserved. 5. Modesty to be sincerely cultivated.

5. The advantage of our neighbour to be promoted. Here self- denial most necessary, and yet most difficult. Here a double remedy. 1. The benefits bestowed upon us are for the common benefit of the Church. 2. We ought to do all we can for our neighbour. This illustrated by analogy from the members of the human body. This duty of charity founded on the divine command.

6. Charity ought to have for its attendants patience and kindness. We should consider the image of God in our neighbours, and especially in those who are of the household of faith. Hence a fourfold consideration which refutes all objections. A common objection refuted.

7. Christian life cannot exist without charity. Remedies for the vices opposed to charity. 1. Mercy. 2. Humility. 3. Modesty. 4. Diligence. 5. Perseverance.

8. Self-denial, in respect of God, should lead to equanimity and tolerance. 1. We are always subject to God. 2. We should shun avarice and ambition. 3. We should expect all prosperity from the blessing of God, and entirely depend on him.

9. We ought not to desire wealth or honours without the divine blessing, nor follow the arts of the wicked. We ought to cast all our care upon God, and never envy the prosperity of others.

10. We ought to commit ourselves entirely to God. The necessity of this doctrine. Various uses of affliction. Heathen abuse and corruption.

1. Although the Law of God contains a perfect rule of conduct admirably arranged, it has seemed proper to our divine Master to train his people by a more accurate method, to the rule which is enjoined in the Law; and the leading principle in the method is, that it is the duty of believers to present their “bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, which is their reasonable service” (Romans 12:1). Hence he draws the exhortation: “Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.” The great point, then, is, that we are consecrated and dedicated to God, and, therefore, should not henceforth think, speak, design, or act, without a view to his glory. What he hath made sacred cannot, without signal insult to him, be applied to profane use. But if we are not our own, but the Lord’s, it is plain both what error is to be shunned, and to what end the actions of our lives ought to be directed. We are not our own; therefore, neither is our own reason or will to rule our acts and counsels. We are not our own; therefore, let us not make it our end to seek what may be agreeable to our carnal nature. We are not our own; therefore, as far as possible, let us forget ourselves and the things that are ours. On the other hand, we are God’s; let us, therefore, live and die to him (Romans 14:8). We are God’s; therefore, let his wisdom and will preside over all our actions. We are God’s; to him, then, as the only legitimate end, let every part of our life be directed. O how great the proficiency of him who, taught that he is not his own, has withdrawn the dominion and government of himself from his own reason that he may give them to God! For as the surest source of destruction to men is to obey themselves, so the only haven of safety is to have no other will, no other wisdom, than to follow the Lord wherever he leads. Let this, then be the first step, to abandon ourselves, and devote the whole energy of our minds to the service of God. By service, I mean not only that which consists in verbal obedience, but that by which the mind, divested of its own carnal feelings, implicitly obeys the call of the Spirit of God. This transformation (which Paul calls the renewing of the mind, Romans 12:2; Ephesians 4:23), though it is the first entrance to life, was unknown to all the philosophers. They give the government of man to reason alone, thinking that she alone is to be listened to; in short, they assign to her the sole direction of the conduct. But Christian philosophy bids her give place, and yield complete submission to the Holy Spirit, so that the man himself no longer lives, but Christ lives and reigns in him (Galatians 2:20).

2. Hence follows the other principle, that we are not to seek our own, but the Lord’s will, and act with a view to promote his glory. Great is our proficiency, when, almost forgetting ourselves, certainly postponing our own reason, we faithfully make it our study to obey God and his commandments. For when Scripture enjoins us to lay aside private regard to ourselves, it not only divests our minds of an excessive longing for wealth, or power, or human favour, but eradicates all ambition and thirst for worldly glory, and other more secret pests. The Christian ought, indeed, to be so trained and disposed as to consider, that during his whole life he has to do with God. For this reason, as he will bring all things to the disposal and estimate of God, so he will religiously direct his whole mind to him. For he who has learned to look to God in everything he does, is at the same time diverted from all vain thoughts. This is that self-denial which Christ so strongly enforces on his disciples from the very outset (Matthew 16:24), which, as soon as it takes hold of the mind, leaves no place either, first, for pride, show, and ostentation; or, secondly, for avarice, lust, luxury,

effeminacy, or other vices which are engendered by self love. On the contrary, wherever it reigns not, the foulest vices are indulged in without shame; or, if there is some appearance of virtue, it is vitiated by a depraved longing for applause. Show me, if you can, an individual who, unless he has renounced himself in obedience to the Lord's command, is disposed to do good for its own sake. Those who have not so renounced themselves have followed virtue at least for the sake of praise. The philosophers who have contended most strongly that virtue is to be desired on her own account, were so inflated with arrogance as to make it apparent that they sought virtue for no other reason than as a ground for indulging in pride. So far, therefore, is God from being delighted with these hunters after popular applause with their swollen breasts, that he declares they have received their reward in this world (Matthew 6:2), and that harlots and publicans are nearer the kingdom of heaven than they (Matthew 21:31). We have not yet sufficiently explained how great and numerous are the obstacles by which a man is impeded in the pursuit of rectitude, so long as he has not renounced himself. The old saying is true, There is a world of iniquity treasured up in the human soul. Nor can you find any other remedy for this than to deny yourself, renounce your own reason, and direct your whole mind to the pursuit of those things which the Lord requires of you, and which you are to seek only because they are pleasing to Him.

3. In another passage, Paul gives a brief, indeed, but more distinct account of each of the parts of a well-ordered life: "The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearance of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Titus 2:11-14). After holding forth the grace of God to animate us, and pave the way for His true worship, he removes the two greatest obstacles which stand in the way, viz., ungodliness, to which we are by nature too prone, and worldly lusts, which are of still greater extent. Under ungodliness, he includes not merely superstition, but everything at variance with the true fear of God. Worldly lusts are equivalent to the lusts of the flesh. Thus he enjoins us, in regard to both tables of the Law, to lay aside our own mind, and renounce whatever our own reason and will dictate. Then he reduces all the actions of our lives to three branches, sobriety, righteousness, and godliness. Sobriety undoubtedly denotes as well chastity and temperance as the pure and frugal use of temporal goods, and patient endurance of want. Righteousness comprehends all the duties of equity, in every one his due. Next follows godliness, which separates us from the pollutions of the world, and connects us with God in true holiness. These, when connected together by an indissoluble chain, constitute complete perfection. But as nothing is more difficult than to bid adieu to the will of the flesh, subdue, nay, abjure our lusts, devote ourselves to God and our brethren, and lead an angelic life amid the pollutions of the world, Paul, to set our minds free from all entanglements, recalls us to the hope of a blessed immortality, justly urging us to contend, because as Christ has once appeared as our Redeemer, so on his final advent he will give full effect to the salvation obtained by him. And in this way he dispels all the allurements which becloud our path, and prevent us from aspiring as we ought to heavenly glory; nay, he tells us that we must be pilgrims in the world, that we may not fail of obtaining the heavenly inheritance.

4. Moreover, we see by these words that self-denial has respect partly to men and partly (more especially) to God (sec. 8-10). For when Scripture enjoins us, in regard to our fellow men, to prefer

them in honour to ourselves, and sincerely labour to promote their advantages (Romans 12:10; Php 2:3), he gives us commands which our mind is utterly incapable of obeying until its natural feelings are suppressed. For so blindly do we all rush in the direction of self- love, that every one thinks he has a good reason for exalting himself and despising all others in comparison. If God has bestowed on us something not to be repented of, trusting to it, we immediately become elated, and not only swell, but almost burst with pride. The vices with which we abound we both carefully conceal from others, and flatteringly represent to ourselves as minute and trivial, nay, sometimes hug them as virtues. When the same qualities which we admire in ourselves are seen in others, even though they should be superior, we, in order that we may not be forced to yield to them, maliciously lower and carp at them; in like manner, in the case of vices, not contented with severe and keen animadversion, we studiously exaggerate them. Hence the insolence with which each, as if exempted from the common lot, seeks to exalt himself above his neighbour, confidently and proudly despising others, or at least looking down upon them as his inferiors. The poor man yields to the rich, the plebeian to the noble, the servant to the master, the unlearned to the learned, and yet every one inwardly cherishes some idea of his own superiority. Thus each flattering himself, sets up a kind of kingdom in his breast; the arrogant, to satisfy themselves, pass censure on the minds and manners of other men, and when contention arises, the full venom is displayed. Many bear about with them some measure of mildness so long as all things go smoothly and lovingly with them, but how few are there who, when stung and irritated, preserve the same tenor of moderation? For this there is no other remedy than to pluck up by the roots those most noxious pests, self-love and love of victory (filoneikia kai filautia). This the doctrine of Scripture does. For it teaches us to remember, that the endowments which God has bestowed upon us are not our own, but His free gifts, and that those who plume themselves upon them betray their ingratitude. “Who maketh thee to differ,” saith Paul, “and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?” (1 Corinthians 4:7). Then by a diligent examination of our faults let us keep ourselves humble. Thus while nothing will remain to swell our pride, there will be much to subdue it. Again, we are enjoined, whenever we behold the gifts of God in others, so to reverence and respect the gifts, as also to honour those in whom they reside. God having been pleased to bestow honour upon them, it would ill become us to deprive them of it. Then we are told to overlook their faults, not, indeed, to encourage by flattering them, but not because of them to insult those whom we ought to regard with honour and good will. In this way, with regard to all with whom we have intercourse, our behaviour will be not only moderate and modest, but courteous and friendly. The only way by which you can ever attain to true meekness, is to have your heart imbued with a humble opinion of yourself and respect for others.

5. How difficult it is to perform the duty of seeking the good of our neighbour! Unless you leave off all thought of yourself and in a manner cease to be yourself, you will never accomplish it. How can you exhibit those works of charity which Paul describes unless you renounce yourself, and become wholly devoted to others? “Charity (says he, 1 Corinthians 13:4) suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked &c. Were it the only thing required of us to seek not our own, nature would not have the least power to comply: she so inclines us to love ourselves only, that she will not easily allow us carelessly to pass by ourselves and our own interests that we may watch over the interests of others, nay, spontaneously to yield our own rights and resign it to another. But Scripture, to conduct us to this, reminds us, that whatever we obtain

from the Lord is granted on the condition of our employing it for the common good of the Church, and that, therefore, the legitimate use of all our gifts is a kind and liberal communication of them with others. There cannot be a surer rule, nor a stronger exhortation to the observance of it, than when we are taught that all the endowments which we possess are divine deposits entrusted to us for the very purpose of being distributed for the good of our neighbour. But Scripture proceeds still farther when it likens these endowments to the different members of the body (1 Corinthians 12:12). No member has its function for itself, or applies it for its own private use, but transfers it to its fellow- members; nor does it derive any other advantage from it than that which it receives in common with the whole body. Thus, whatever the pious man can do, he is bound to do for his brethren, not consulting his own interest in any other way than by striving earnestly for the common edification of the Church. Let this, then, be our method of showing good-will and kindness, considering that, in regard to everything which God has bestowed upon us, and by which we can aid our neighbour, we are his stewards, and are bound to give account of our stewardship; moreover, that the only right mode of administration is that which is regulated by love. In this way, we shall not only unite the study of our neighbour's advantage with a regard to our own, but make the latter subordinate to the former. And lest we should have omitted to perceive that this is the law for duly administering every gift which we receive from God, he of old applied that law to the minutest expressions of his own kindness. He commanded the first-fruits to be offered to him as an attestation by the people that it was impious to reap any advantage from goods not previously consecrated to him (Exodus 22:29; Exodus 23:19). But if the gifts of God are not sanctified to us until we have with our own hand dedicated them to the Giver, it must be a gross abuse that does not give signs of such dedication. It is in vain to contend that you cannot enrich the Lord by your offerings. Though, as the Psalmist says "Thou art my Lord: my goodness extendeth not unto thee," yet you can extend it "to the saints that are in the earth" (Psalms 16:2, Psalms 16:3); and therefore a comparison is drawn between sacred oblations and alms as now corresponding to the offerings under the Law.

6. Moreover, that we may not weary in well-doing (as would otherwise forthwith and infallibly be the case), we must add the other quality in the Apostle's enumeration, "Charity suffiereth long, and is kind, is not easily provoked" (1 Corinthians 13:4). The Lord enjoins us to do good to all without exception, though the greater part, if estimated by their own merit, are most unworthy of it. But Scripture subjoins a most excellent reason, when it tells us that we are not to look to what men in themselves deserve, but to attend to the image of God, which exists in all, and to which we owe all honour and love. But in those who are of the household of faith, the same rule is to be more carefully observed, inasmuch as that image is renewed and restored in them by the Spirit of Christ. Therefore, whoever be the man that is presented to you as needing your assistance, you have no ground for declining to give it to him. Say he is a stranger. The Lord has given him a mark which ought to be familiar to you: for which reason he forbids you to despise your own flesh (Galatians 6:10). Say he is mean and of no consideration. The Lord points him out as one whom he has distinguished by the lustre of his own image (Isaiah 58:7). Say that you are bound to him by no ties of duty. The Lord has substituted him as it were into his own place, that in him you may recognize the many great obligations under which the Lord has laid you to himself. Say that he is unworthy of your least exertion on his account; but the image of God, by which he is recommended to you, is worthy of yourself and all your exertions. But if he not only merits no good, but has provoked you by injury and mischief, still this is no good reason why you should not embrace him in love, and

visit him with offices of love. He has deserved very differently from me, you will say. But what has the Lord deserved? Whatever injury he has done you, when he enjoins you to forgive him, he certainly means that it should be imputed to himself. In this way only we attain to what is not to say difficult but altogether against nature, to love those that hate us, render good for evil, and blessing for cursing, remembering that we are not to reflect on the wickedness of men, but look to the image of God in them, an image which, covering and obliterating their faults, should by its beauty and dignity allure us to love and embrace them.

7. We shall thus succeed in mortifying ourselves if we fulfil all the duties of charity. Those duties, however, are not fulfilled by the mere discharge of them, though none be omitted, unless it is done from a pure feeling of love. For it may happen that one may perform every one of these offices, in so far as the external act is concerned, and be far from performing them aright. For you see some who would be thought very liberal, and yet accompany every thing they give with insult, by the haughtiness of their looks, or the violence of their words. And to such a calamitous condition have we come in this unhappy age, that the greater part of men never almost give alms without contumely. Such conduct ought not to have been tolerated even among the heathen; but from Christians something more is required than to carry cheerfulness in their looks, and give attractiveness to the discharge of their duties by courteous language. First, they should put themselves in the place of him whom they see in need of their assistance, and pity his misfortune as if they felt and bore it, so that a feeling of pity and humanity should incline them to assist him just as they would themselves. He who is thus minded will go and give assistance to his brethren, and not only not taint his acts with arrogance or upbraiding but will neither look down upon the brother to whom he does a kindness, as one who needed his help, or keep him in subjection as under obligation to him, just as we do not insult a diseased member when the rest of the body labours for its recovery, nor think it under special obligation to the other members, because it has required more exertion than it has returned. A communication of offices between members is not regarded as at all gratuitous, but rather as the payment of that which being due by the law of nature it were monstrous to deny. For this reason, he who has performed one kind of duty will not think himself thereby discharged, as is usually the case when a rich man, after contributing somewhat of his substance, delegates remaining burdens to others as if he had nothing to do with them. Every one should rather consider, that however great he is, he owes himself to his neighbours, and that the only limit to his beneficence is the failure of his means. The extent of these should regulate that of his charity.

8. The principal part of self-denial, that which as we have said has reference to God, let us again consider more fully. Many things have already been said with regard to it which it were superfluous to repeat; and, therefore, it will be sufficient to view it as forming us to equanimity and endurance. First, then, in seeking the convenience or tranquillity of the present life, Scripture calls us to resign ourselves, and all we have, to the disposal of the Lord, to give him up the affections of our heart, that he may tame and subdue them. We have a frenzied desire, an infinite eagerness, to pursue wealth and honour, intrigue for power, accumulate riches, and collect all those frivolities which seem conducive to luxury and splendour. On the other hand, we have a remarkable dread, a remarkable hatred of poverty, mean birth, and a humble condition, and feel the strongest desire to guard against them. Hence, in regard to those who frame their life after their own counsel, we see how restless they are in mind, how many plans they try, to what fatigues they submit, in order that

they may gain what avarice or ambition desires, or, on the other hand, escape poverty and meanness. To avoid similar entanglements, the course which Christian men must follow is this: first, they must not long for, or hope for, or think of any kind of prosperity apart from the blessing of God; on it they must cast themselves, and there safely and confidently recline. For, however much the carnal mind may seem sufficient for itself when in the pursuit of honour or wealth, it depends on its own industry and zeal, or is aided by the favour of men, it is certain that all this is nothing, and that neither intellect nor labour will be of the least avail, except in so far as the Lord prospers both. On the contrary, his blessing alone makes a way through all obstacles, and brings every thing to a joyful and favourable issue. Secondly, though without this blessing we may be able to acquire some degree of fame and opulence (as we daily see wicked men loaded with honours and riches), yet since those on whom the curse of God lies do not enjoy the least particle of true happiness, whatever we obtain without his blessing must turn out ill. But surely men ought not to desire what adds to their misery.

9. Therefore, if we believe that all prosperous and desirable success depends entirely on the blessing of God, and that when it is wanting all kinds of misery and calamity await us, it follows that we should not eagerly contend for riches and honours, trusting to our own dexterity and assiduity, or leaning on the favour of men, or confiding in any empty imagination of fortune; but should always have respect to the Lord, that under his auspices we may be conducted to whatever lot he has provided for us. First, the result will be, that instead of rushing on regardless of right and wrong, by wiles and wicked arts, and with injury to our neighbours, to catch at wealth and seize upon honours, we will only follow such fortune as we may enjoy with innocence. Who can hope for the aid of the divine blessing amid fraud, rapine, and other iniquitous arts? As this blessing attends him only who thinks purely and acts uprightly, so it calls off all who long for it from sinister designs and evil actions. Secondly, a curb will be laid upon us, restraining a too eager desire of becoming rich, or an ambitious striving after honour. How can any one have the effrontery to expect that God will aid him in accomplishing desires at variance with his word? What God with his own lips pronounces cursed, never can be prosecuted with his blessing. Lastly, if our success is not equal to our wish and hope, we shall, however, be kept from impatience and detestation of our condition, whatever it be, knowing that so to feel were to murmur against God, at whose pleasure riches and poverty, contempt and honours, are dispensed. In shorts he who leans on the divine blessing in the way which has been described, will not, in the pursuit of those things which men are wont most eagerly to desire, employ wicked arts which he knows would avail him nothing; nor when any thing prosperous befalls him will he impute it to himself and his own diligence, or industry, or fortune, instead of ascribing it to God as its author. If, while the affairs of others flourish, his make little progress, or even retrograde, he will bear his humble lot with greater equanimity and moderation than any irreligious man does the moderate success which only falls short of what he wished; for he has a solace in which he can rest more tranquilly than at the very summit of wealth or power, because he considers that his affairs are ordered by the Lord in the manner most conducive to his salvation. This, we see, is the way in which David was affected, who, while he follows God and gives up himself to his guidance, declares, “Neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me. Surely I have behaved and quieted myself as a child that is weaned of his mother” (Psalms 131:1, Psalms 131:2).

10. Nor is it in this respect only that pious minds ought to manifest this tranquillity and endurance; it must be extended to all the accidents to which this present life is liable. He alone, therefore, has properly denied himself, who has resigned himself entirely to the Lord, placing all the course of his life entirely at his disposal. Happen what may, he whose mind is thus composed will neither deem himself wretched nor murmur against God because of his lot. How necessary this disposition is will appear, if you consider the many accidents to which we are liable. Various diseases ever and anon attack us: at one time pestilence rages; at another we are involved in all the calamities of war. Frost and hail, destroying the promise of the year, cause sterility, which reduces us to penury; wife, parents, children, relatives, are carried off by death; our house is destroyed by fire. These are the events which make men curse their life, detest the day of their birth, execrate the light of heaven, even censure God, and (as they are eloquent in blasphemy) charge him with cruelty and injustice. The believer must in these things also contemplate the mercy and truly paternal indulgence of God. Accordingly, should he see his house by the removal of kindred reduced to solitude even then he will not cease to bless the Lord; his thought will be, Still the grace of the Lord, which dwells within my house, will not leave it desolate. If his crops are blasted, mildewed, or cut off by frost, or struck down by hail, and he sees famine before him, he will not however despond or murmur against God, but maintain his confidence in him; “We thy people, and sheep of thy pasture, will give thee thanks for ever” (Psalms 79:13); he will supply me with food, even in the extreme of sterility. If he is afflicted with disease, the sharpness of the pain will not so overcome him, as to make him break out with impatience, and expostulate with God; but, recognising justice and lenity in the rod, will patiently endure. In short, whatever happens, knowing that it is ordered by the Lord, he will receive it with a placid and grateful mind, and will not contumaciously resist the government of him, at whose disposal he has placed himself and all that he has. Especially let the Christian breast eschew that foolish and most miserable consolation of the heathen, who, to strengthen their mind against adversity, imputed it to fortune, at which they deemed it absurd to feel indignant, as she was ascopos (aimless) and rash, and blindly wounded the good equally with the bad. On the contrary, the rule of piety is, that the hand of God is the ruler and arbiter of the fortunes of all, and, instead of rushing on with thoughtless violence, dispenses good and evil with perfect regularity.

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