









Edited, with a
Preface, by John K. Holt



SELECTIONS
FROM
THE FIFTH BOOK
OF
HOOKER'S
ECCLESIASTICAL POLITY.



OXFORD.
J. H. PARKER.

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PREFACE

THE name of Richard Hooker is probably more universally known and venerated throughout the Church of England, than that of any one besides among her worshippers; but it may be doubted whether men's acquaintance with his writings is at all in proportion to the honour with which they regard him.

This is owing, on the one hand, to the circumstance of his life having been so extensively written by the most engaging of theologians, Isaac Walton; on the other, to the controversial and occasional cast of his great work, and the deep learning and profound investigation which he brought to bear on every part of that large and often intricate field of inquiry. Unlearned and uncontroverted readers, attracted to the work by the subject, the author's reputation, and the beauty of extracts which they have occasionally seen, are continually, it is believed, attempting the book, and as often putting it by in a kind of despair, on finding that they

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come very soon to something which they cannot hope to master: and those who wish to read for devotion's sake,—of all readers surely the most to be considered,—draw back at once from the more disputative portions, which however necessary to the author's purpose, will not, they feel, at all answer theirs.

Under these circumstances, it seemed not unadvisable to try whether such a selection could be made, as might exhibit in a connected form, and in the author's own words, his view of the Prayer Book, including the Ordination Service, clear of the difficulties above stated. —“Of the Prayer Book,” for to that, more or less directly, it will be found that all the following extracts refer: it being the part of the Church system with which all feel themselves concerned, and the portion of his great work which treats of it being confessedly the most popular and practical of the whole. The selection has therefore been made exclusively from the fifth Book of the Ecclesiastical Polity. Other passages no less beautiful, and perhaps as generally interesting, might have been added from other parts of his remains. But the object was not so much

to set forth the "Beauties of Hooker," as to put devout and thoughtful persons in possession of the principles, with a view to which the English Prayer Book should be studied, and the misgivings silenced, which our busy fancies are too ready to invent or adopt, with regard to certain of its details.

From the immediate object and occasion of the work, a complete systematic account of the Prayer Book was not to be looked for. Hooker's special purpose was to answer the objections of the Puritan party of his time to our laws and proceedings about the several public duties of Christian religion. His defence of course ran parallel with their attack. So it is, however, that all the main parts of the service were more or less attacked: his defence therefore, going back as he always did to principles, comes nearer to a Companion to the Prayer Book than might have been expected; as will be evident on merely reading over the titles of the sections ensuing. Perhaps, on considering all the circumstances of the case, it will seem hardly less than providential, that he was led to take so wide a range. The English Church in his

time was still more or less unsettled, and rocking, as it were, from the effects of the Reformation; and the impulse of one master mind, might be all that was wanted to make the difference between fixing and overturning it. In what direction its danger lay, the next century clearly shewed; and had it not been for that turn in our theology, to which he was chiefly instrumental, it seems probable that the unsound opinions which he combated, instead of coming into violent collision with our Church, would have silently overspread it, and eaten their way into its vitals. The Prayer Book, instead of being turned out of our churches for a time, would in all likelihood have been laid by for ever by consent; and we might have been, where Geneva and Holland are now.

Nothing, it is clear, was so likely to stay this imminent danger, as a calm and profound, yet earnest view like Hooker's: impressing English Christians with the serious conviction, that many things which they heard charged with Romish superstition, might not only be accounted for on principles of the deepest human wisdom, but were, in fact, of more

than human origin: that the Church system, in short, in its main lineaments, perverted as it was by the Papists, and traduced by many Protestants, was unalterable by man, being catholic, apostolical, and divine. Why the notions of the foreign reformers were likely to prevail, is not hard to perceive, considering the violent measures of the court of Rome, both for enforcing her claims on England by the excommunication of Queen Elizabeth, and for the peremptory inculcation of doctrine by the Council of Trent: considering also the sort of connection into which English churchmen had been brought with Protestants abroad, by negociation in the reigns of Henry and Edward, and by exile under Mary. Without blaming the reformation, one may easily understand how these events might cause disparagement of the authority of the Catholic Church; confused as the ideas of men were, (and still too often are,) between that and the Romish Church.

In such a state of things, it pleased the Great Shepherd, whose especial care over this portion of His flock, we may with humble gratitude recognize in this and many other

instances, to raise up Richard Hooker, as His instrument for preserving us in that good and middle way, into which, contrary to all human chances, and far above our deserts, His merciful favour had brought us. As far as we can be judges of such a thing, Hooker was indeed, (if one may so speak,) critically adapted to this his supposed destination.

His original bias lay rather against Church principles; for he commenced his education under his uncle John Vowel or Hooker, of the city of Exeter, the friend of Peter Martyr; and completed it under the auspices of bishop Jewel, and the tuition of Reynolds, in Corpus Christi college, Oxford.^a Now Jewel was the intimate friend of Bullinger, and a great admirer of the reformation at Zurich; and Reynolds was probably one of the most devoted Calvinists that ever taught theology in our Church. So much the stronger would be the subsequent witness of Hooker to those truths and practices, which Zurich and Calvin would teach him comparatively to slight: such as the apostolical succession in Bishops, which

^a He was born probably at Hcavitree near Exeter, about 1553.

he says himself he had once judged "far less probable" than he did, when he came to write his Polity.^b

But to proceed : having obtained great distinction in Oxford, he was nominated in his turn, as the custom was, to preach in London, at St. Paul's Cross ; where, however, " he was not so happy as to avoid exceptions against some point of doctrine delivered in his discourse, which seemed to cross a late opinion of Mr. Calvin's." A trifling circumstance, as it may seem, yet both indicating what line his opinions had taken, and probably not without effect in leading him on generally towards doctrinal views, more catholic than he could gain from modern teachers. This was in 1581 ; and when, two or three years after, he came to be Master of the Temple, the same happened again in respect of the particular class of doctrines, to which the present extracts chiefly refer. His sermon on Justification, and some other of his expressions and usages, being objected to by the puritan party in London, as too indulgent to the Church of Rome ; this gave him occasion to enter on

b B. vii. 8. xi. 8.

that course of thought and composition which terminated in the "Ecclesiastical Polity." His respect for the character of his chief opponent caused him "to examine his own conscience concerning his opinions, and to consult the Scriptures, and other laws both human and divine, whether the consciences of him and others of his judgment ought to be so far complied with, as to alter our frame of Church government, our manner of God's worship, our praising and praying to Him, and our established ceremonies, as often as his and others' tender consciences shall require us: wherein Hooker's meaning was not to provoke any, but rather to satisfy all tender consciences." Thus, to the untoward and irksome circumstances of his first appointment, we may trace, directly and certainly, his great work.

Again, when in compliance with his earnest request to his patron, Archbishop Whitgift, he was removed from the troubles and controversies of London, to a "place where he might study and pray for God's blessing on his endeavours, and keep himself in peace and privacy, and behold God's blessing spring out

of his mother earth, and eat his own bread without oppositions ;” i. e. first to Boscomb near Salisbury, (in 1591,) and afterwards to Bishopsborne near Canterbury, in 1595 ; it seems not to have been without a special providence that he was brought into near neighbourhood, which soon became familiar intimacy, with Dr. Adrian Saravia, Prebendary of Canterbury. Saravia was, as far as appears, the first to avow of the church doctrine of the apostolical succession, after the sort of abeyance in which it had been held (however distinctly implied in the Prayer Book) since the beginning of our intercourse with foreign reformers. The effects of this friendship with Saravia, as concurring with Hooker’s own researches, are not obscurely to be discerned in his later compositions ; nay, even in the tone of this fifth book, as compared with that of the four preceding. One may perceive throughout a growing tendency to judge of things by the rules of the ancient Church, and to take not a Roman nor a Protestant, but always, if possible, a Catholic view. Nor will it be thought that Saravia’s probable influence with him is here overrated,

when we read what follows, communicated to Walton by a near neighbour of Hooker's, and the sister of his most intimate friend.

“About one day before his death, Dr. Saravia, who knew the very secrets of his soul, (for they were supposed to be confessors to each other,) came to him, and, after a conference of the benefit, the necessity, and safety of the Church's absolution, it was resolved the Doctor should give him both that and the Sacrament the day following. To which end the Doctor came, and, after a short retirement and privacy, they two returned to the company; and then the Doctor gave him, and some of those friends which were with him, the blessed Sacrament of the body and blood of our Jesus. Which being performed, the Doctor thought he saw a reverend gayety and joy in his face; but it lasted not long; for his bodily infirmities did return suddenly, and became more visible, insomuch that the Doctor apprehended death ready to seize him; yet, after some amendment, left him at night, with a promise to return early the day following; which he did, and then found him better in appearance, deep in contemplation, and not in-

clinable to discourse : which gave the Doctor occasion to require his present thoughts. To which he replied, ‘That he was meditating the number and nature of angels, and their blessed obedience and order, without which peace could not be in heaven ; and oh, that it might be so on earth !’”^c

By this report of their last conversation, we may conjecture how they must have helped each other in the contemplation of that Catholic order, of which they seem to have gone on daily discerning more and more, as they drew nearer that place, where only it can be perfectly realized.

It might not perhaps be wrong to enumerate, among these providential circumstances, the discomfort of Hooker’s domestic life, to which the same tradition bears witness. His “restless studies,” might bear the more fruit, as he had less temptation to withdraw himself from them.

And as the author was thus raised up, and guided, and spared, to the completion of that

^c This was on the day he died, the 2nd of November, 1600, about two in the afternoon, he being then forty-six or forty-seven years old, leaving a widow and four daughters. He was buried in the chancel of Bishopsborne, about four miles from Canterbury.

part of his treatise especially which relates to the Prayer Book, (for of the three later books, although he had finished them, only fragments and sketches now remain ;) so there are not wanting corresponding tokens of a Providence, tending to prepare men's minds for the reception of his views, in the course of public affairs at the same time. The death of the Queen of Scots, and the destruction of the Spanish Armada, taking off men's immediate dread of a violent introduction of the Papal power, left them at leisure to understand that there might be dangers in another direction, and to admit and appreciate those safeguards, which the Catholic Church, and that alone, provides against both. The disorganizing tendencies of extreme Protestant principles had been largely exhibited in some other countries, and were apparent enough here in the proceedings of the discontented reformers all through Elizabeth's reign. The Earl of Leicester, who had favoured the puritans, was dead : the court interfered less, and the Church of England was left freer to right and settle herself on her own proper middle ground. She did not, as some years before she might have

done, resist the hand which was commissioned to steady her.

Such are some of the facts which, if one may so conjecture without irreverence, would lead to our regarding the Fifth Book especially of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity, from which the following extracts are taken, as a providential gift to this Church : how seasonable and how effectual, none can know till the day comes when all such mysteries shall be revealed.

One thing however is quite certain ; that as the Church is responsible for her use of the whole work, so must each individual bear his burden, when once it, or any part of it, has been brought fairly under his notice. He may, if he chooses, be content to read it as a classical English book, or as a curious chapter in ecclesiastical or civil history. Or according to its author's intention, he may suffer himself to be led by it to a thoughtful estimate of his own privileges as a member of the English Catholic Church, and of the degree in which he has hitherto laboured to improve them. In any case, the readers of such books cannot remain just where they were. They must be either the better or the worse. For undoubtedly that

grave rule of an ancient Bishop, concerning those who were admitted to the learning of the four Gospels, will apply in its degree to the readers of all human books also, in proportion as those books reflect or transmit the true meaning and spirit of the Gospels.

“ Inasmuch as the Lord hath declared that *to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more* ; more exceedingly abundant ought their fear and seriousness to be : as the Apostle teaches, saying, ‘ *We then as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.*’ And this cometh to pass, if we obey the Lord when He tells us, ‘ *If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.*’ ”

J. K.

May 2nd, 1839.



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SELECTIONS

FROM

HOOKER'S

ECCLESIASTICAL POLITY.

SECTION I.

OF DIVINE SERVICE IN GENERAL.

THERE is an inward reasonable^a, and there is a solemn outward serviceable^b worship belonging unto God. Of the former kind are all manner of virtuous duties that each man in reason and conscience to God-ward oweth. Solemn and serviceable worship we name for distinction's sake, whatsoever belongeth to the Church or public society of God, by way of external adoration. It is the later of these two whereupon our present question groweth.

a Rom. xii. 1.

b Luke i. 23.

Touching the nature of religious services, and the manner of their due performance, thus much generally we know to be most clear, that whereas the greatness and dignity of all manner of actions is measured by the worthiness of the subject from which they proceed, and of the object whereabout they are conversant, we must of necessity in both respects acknowledge, that this present world affordeth not any thing comparable unto the public duties of religion. For if the best things have the perfectest and best operations, it will follow, that seeing man is the worthiest creature upon earth, and every society of men more worthy than any man, and of societies that most excellent which we call the Church; there can be in this world no work performed equal to the exercise of true religion, the proper operation of the Church of God.

Again, forasmuch as religion worketh upon Him who in majesty and power is infinite, as we ought we account not of it, unless we esteem it even according to that very height of excellency which our hearts conceive when

divine sublimity itself is rightly considered. In the powers and faculties of our souls God requireth the uttermost which our unfeigned affection towards Him is able to yield^c. So that if we affect Him not far above and before all things, our religion hath not that inward perfection which it should have, neither do we indeed worship Him as our God.

That which inwardly each man should be, the Church outwardly ought to testify. And therefore the duties of our religion which are seen must be such as that affection which is unseen ought to be. Signs must resemble the things they signify. If religion bear the greatest sway in our hearts, our outward religious duties must shew it as far as the Church hath outward ability. Duties of religion performed by whole societies of men, ought to have in them according to our power a sensible excellency, correspondent to the majesty of Him whom we worship^d. Yea then are the public duties of religion best ordered, when the mili-

^c John iv. 24; Wisd. vi. 10; 1 Chron. xxix. 17.

^d 2 Chron. ii. 5.

tant Church doth resemble by sensible means, as it may in such cases, that hidden dignity and glory wherewith the Church triumphant in heaven is beautified.

SECTION II.

OF THE AUTHORITY DUE TO ANTIQUITY IN MATTERS OF DIVINE SERVICE.

NEITHER may we in this case lightly esteem what hath been allowed as fit in the judgment of antiquity, and by the long continued practice of the whole Church; from which unnecessarily to swerve, experience hath never as yet found it safe. For wisdom's sake we reverence them no less that are young, or not much less, than if they were stricken in years. And therefore of such it is rightly said, that their ripeness of understanding is "grey hair," and their virtues "old age^e." But because wisdom and youth are seldom joined in one,

^e Wisd. iv. 9.

and the ordinary course of the world is more according to Job's observation, who giveth men advice to seek wisdom^f amongst the ancient, and in the length of days understanding, therefore if the comparison do stand between man and man, which shall hearken unto other, since the aged for the most part are best experienced, least subject to rash and unadvised passions, it hath been ever judged reasonable that their sentence in matter of counsel should be better trusted and more relied upon than other men's. The goodness of God having furnished man with two chief instruments both necessary for this life, hands to execute, and a mind to devise great things; the one is not profitable longer than the vigour of youth doth strengthen it, nor the other greatly till age and experience have brought it to perfection. In whom therefore time hath not perfected knowledge, such must be contented to follow them in whom it hath. For this cause none is more attentively heard than they whose speeches are as David's were, "I

^f Job xii. 12.

have been young, and now am oldg," much I have seen and observed in the world. Sharp and subtile discourses of wit procure many times very great applause; but being laid in the balance with that which the habit of sound experience plainly delivereth, they are overweighed. God may endue men extraordinarily with understanding as it pleaseth Him; but let no man presuming thereupon neglect the instructions, or despise the ordinances of his elders, since He whose gift wisdom is hath said, "Ask thy father, and he will shew thee; thine ancients, and they will tell thee^h."

If therefore even at the first so great account should be made of wise men's counsels touching things that are publicly done, as time shall add thereunto continuance and approbation of succeeding ages, their credit and authority must needs be greater. They who do nothing but that which men of account did before them, are, although they do amiss, yet the less faulty, because they are not the authors of harm. And doing well, their actions

g Ps. xxxvii. 25.

h Deut. xxxii. 7.

are freed from the prejudice of novelty. To the best and wisest, while they live, the world is continually a froward opposite, a curious observer of their defects and imperfections, their virtues it afterwards as much admireth. And for this cause many times that which most deserveth approbation would hardly be able to find favour, if they who propose it were not content to profess themselves therein scholars and followers of the ancient. For the world will not endure to hear that we are wiser than any have been who went before. In which consideration there is cause why we should be slow and unwilling to change without very urgent necessity the ancient ordinances, rites, and long approved customs of our venerable predecessors. The love of things ancient doth argue stayedness, but levity and want of experience maketh apt unto innovations. That which wisdom did first begin, and hath been with good men long continued, challengeth allowance of them that succeed, although it plead for itself nothing. That which is new, if it promise not much, doth

fear condemnation before trial; till trial, no man doth acquit or trust it, what good soever it pretend and promise. So that in this kind there are few things known to be good, till such time as they grow to be ancient.

We are therefore bold to make our petition, that in things the fitness whereof is not of itself apparent, nor easy to be made sufficiently manifest unto all, yet the judgment of antiquity concurring with that which is received, may induce them to think it not unfit, who are not able to allege any known weighty inconvenience which it hath, or to take any strong exception against it.

SECTION III.

OF THE AUTHORITY OF THE PRESENT CHURCH IN MATTERS OF DIVINE SERVICE.

ALL things cannot be of ancient continuance, which are expedient and needful for the ordering of spiritual affairs: but the Church being

a body which dieth not, hath always power, as occasion requireth, no less to ordain that which never was, than to ratify what hath been before. It is not for a man who doth know or should know what order is, and what peaceable government requireth, to ask, "why we should hang our judgment upon the Church's sleeve," and "why in matters of order more than in matters of doctrine." The Church hath authority to establish that for an order at one time, which at another time it may abolish, and in both do well. But that which in doctrine the Church doth now deliver rightly as a truth, no man will say that it may hereafter recall, and as rightly avouch the contrary. Laws touching matter of order are changeable, by the power of the Church; articles concerning doctrine not so. We read often in the writings of catholic and holy men touching matters of doctrine, "This we believe, this we hold, this the prophets and evangelists have declared, this the apostles have delivered, this martyrs have sealed with their blood, and confessed in the midst of tor-

ments, to this we cleave as to the anchor of our souls, against this, though an angel from heaven should preach unto us, we would not believe." But did we ever in any of them read touching matters of mere comeliness, order, and decency, neither commanded nor prohibited by any prophet, any evangelist, any apostle; although the Church wherein we live do ordain them to be kept, although they be never so generally observed, though all the churches in the world should command them, though angels from heaven should require our subjection thereunto, *I would hold him accursed that doth obey?*

Be it in matter of the one kind or of the other, what Scripture doth plainly deliver, to that the first place both of credit and obedience is due; the next whereunto is whatsoever any man can necessarily^e conclude by force of reason; after these the voice of the

^e [Observe, he says "*necessarily.*" It must be *such a case as to exclude doubt*, and that justly. In all cases *at all doubtful*, the voice of the Church by this rule is to prevail against private judgment.]

Church succeedeth. That which the Church by her ecclesiastical authority shall probably think and define to be true or good, must in congruity of reason overrule all other inferior judgments whatsoever.

To them who ask why we thus hang our judgment on the Church's sleeve, I answer with Solomon, "because two are better than oneⁱ." "Yea, simply," saith Basil, "and universally, whether it be in works of nature, or of voluntary choice and counsel, I see not any thing done as it should be, if it be wrought by an agent singling itself from consorts." The Jews have a sentence of good advice, "Take not upon thee to be a judge alone; there is no sole judge but One only; say not to others, Receive my sentence, when their authority is above thine." The bare consent of the whole Church should itself in these things stop their mouths, who living under it, dare presume to bark against it." "There is," saith Cassianus, "no place of audience left for them by whom obedience is not yielded to that which all have

ⁱ Eccles. iv. 9.

agreed upon." Might we not think it more than wonderful, that nature should in all communities appoint a predominant judgment to sway and overrule in so many things; or that God himself should allow so much authority and power unto every poor family for the ordering of all who are in it: and the city of the living God, which is His Church, be able neither to command nor yet to forbid any thing, which the meanest shall in that respect, and for her sole authority's sake, be bound to obey?

We cannot hide or dissemble that evil, the grievous inconvenience whereof we feel. Our dislike of them, by whom too much heretofore hath been attributed unto the Church, is grown to an error on the contrary hand: so that now from the Church of God too much is derogated. By which removal of one extremity with another, the world seeking to procure a remedy, hath purchased a mere exchange of the evil which before was felt.

Suppose we that the sacred word of God can at their hands receive due honour, by

whose incitement the holy ordinances of the Church endure every where open contempt? No; it is not possible they should observe as they ought the one, who from the other withdraw unnecessarily their own or their brethren's obedience. Surely the Church of God in this business is neither of capacity, I trust, so weak, nor so unstrengthened, I know, with authority from above, but that her laws may exact obedience at the hands of her own children, and enjoin gainsayers silence; giving them roundly to understand, that where our duty is submission, weak oppositions betoken pride.

We therefore crave to have it granted, that the very authority of the Church herself may give so much credit to her own laws, as to make their sentence touching fitness and conveniency, weightier than any bare and naked conceit to the contrary; especially in them who can owe no less than childlike obedience to her that hath more than motherly power.

And so from rules of general direction it resteth that now we descend to a more distinct

explication of particulars, wherein those rules have their special efficacy.

SECTION IV.

OF PLACES SET APART FOR GOD'S SOLEMN SERVICE.

SOLEMN duties of public service to be done unto God, must have their places set and prepared in such sort, as beseemeth actions of that regard. Adam, even during the space of his small continuance in Paradise, had where to present himself before the Lord^k. Adam's sons had out of Paradise in like sort whither to bring their sacrifices^l. The Patriarchs used altars^m, and mountainsⁿ, and groves^o, to the selfsame purpose. In the vast wilderness when the people of God had themselves no settled habitation, yet a moveable tabernacle^p they were commanded of God to make. The like charge

k Gen. iii. 8. l Gen. iv. 3. m Gen. xiii. 4. n Gen. xxii. 2.

o Gen. xxi. 33. p Exod. xxvi.

was given them against the time they should come to settle themselves in the land which had been promised unto their fathers, "Ye shall seek that place, which the Lord your God shall choose^q." When God had chosen Jerusalem, and in Jerusalem Mount Moriah^r, there to have his standing habitation made, it was in the chiefest of David's^s desires to have performed so good a work. His grief was no less, that he could not have the honour to build God a temple, than their anger is at this day, who bite asunder their own tongues with very wrath, that they have not as yet the power to pull down the temples which they never built, and to level them with the ground. It was no mean thing which he purposed. To perform a work so majestic and stately was no small charge. Therefore he incited all men unto bountiful contribution, and procured towards it with all his power, gold, silver, brass, iron, wood, and precious stones, in great abundance^t. Yea, moreover, Because I have, saith David,

q Deut. xii. 5. r 2 Chron. iii. 1. s 2 Chron. vi. 7. Ps. cxxxii.

t 1 Chron. xxii. 14.

“ a joy in the house of my God, I have of mine own gold and silver, besides all that I have prepared for the house of the sanctuary, given to the house of my God, three thousand talents of gold, even the gold of Ophir, seven thousand talents of fined silver^u.” After the overthrow of this first house of God, a second was instead thereof erected ; but with so great odds, that they wept^x who had seen the former, and beheld how much this later came behind it, the beauty whereof notwithstanding was such, that even this was also the wonder of the whole world. Besides which temple, there were both in other parts of the land, and even in Jerusalem, by process of time, no small number of synagogues for men to resort unto. Our Saviour himself, and after him the apostles, frequented both the one and the other.

The Church of Christ which was in Jerusalem, and held that profession which had not the public allowance and countenance of authority, could not so long use the exercise of

u 1 Chron. xxix. 3, 4.

x Ezra iii. 12. Haggai ii. 3.

Christian religion, but in private only^y. So that as Jews, they had access to the temple and synagogues, where God was served after the custom of the law ; but for that which they did as Christians, they were of necessity forced elsewhere to assemble themselves^z. And as God gave increase to His Church, they sought out, both there and abroad, for that purpose, not the fittest, (for so the times would not suffer them to do,) but the safest places they could. In process of time, somewhiles by sufferance, somewhiles by special leave and favour, they began to erect themselves oratories, not in any sumptuous or stately manner, which neither was possible, by reason of the poor estate of the Church, and had been perilous in regard of the world's envy towards them. At the length, when it pleased God to raise up kings and emperors, favouring sincerely the Christian truth, that which the Church before either could not or durst not do, was with all alacrity performed. Temples were in all places erected : no cost was spared,

^y Acts i. 13.

^z Acts ii. 1. 46.

nothing judged too dear, which that way should be spent. The whole world did seem to exult, that it had occasion of pouring out gifts to so blessed a purpose. That cheerful devotion which David^a this way did exceedingly delight to behold, and wish that the same in the Jewish people might be perpetual, was then in Christian people every where to be seen.

SECTION V.

OF DEDICATION OF CHURCHES.

WE know no reason wherefore churches should be the worse, if at the first erecting of them, at the making of them public, at the time when they are delivered as it were into God's own possession, and when the use, whereunto they shall ever serve is established, ceremonies fit to betoken such intents and to accompany such actions be usual, as in the purest times

^a Chron. xxix. 17, 18.

they have been. When Constantine had finished an house for the service of God at Jerusalem, the dedication, he judged a matter not unworthy, about the solemn performance whereof the greatest part of the bishops in Christendom should meet together; which thing they did at the Emperor's motion, each most willingly setting forth that action to their power; some with orations, some with sermons, some with the sacrifice of prayers unto God for the peace of the world, for the Church's safety, for the Emperor's and his children's good. By Athanasius the like is recorded, concerning a bishop of Alexandria, in a work of the like devout magnificence. So that whether emperors or bishops in those days were church-founders, the solemn dedication^w of churches they thought not to be a work in itself either vain or superstitious.

^w "That feasts of dedication should be honoured, is an old law, and a good one: or, (to express myself more accurately,) that all new works (of piety) should be honoured by Feasts of Dedication. And this not once, but repeatedly, as each revolving year brings back the same day: that our good things wear not away by lapse of time." St. Gregory Nazianzen, Sermon for the First Sunday after Easter.

Nor doth the solemn dedication of churches serve only to make them public, but further also to surrender up that right which otherwise their founders might have in them, and to make God himself their owner. For which cause at the erection and consecration as well of the tabernacle, as of the temple, it pleased the Almighty to give a manifest sign that he took possession of both^b. Finally, it notifieth in solemn manner the holy and religious use whereunto it is intended such houses shall be put^c.

These things the wisdom of Solomon did not account superfluous^d. He knew how easily that which was meant should be holy and sacred, might be drawn from the use whereunto it was first provided; he knew how bold men are to take even from God himself; how hardly that house would be kept from impious profanation he knew; and right wisely therefore endeavoured by such solemnities to leave in the minds of men that impression which

b Exod. xl. 34. 1 Kings viii. 10. c Exod. xl. 9.

d 1 Kings viii.

might somewhat restrain their boldness, and nourish a reverent affection towards the house of God^e. For which cause, when the first house was destroyed, and a new one in the stead thereof erected by the children of Israel after their return from captivity, they kept the dedication even of this house also with joy^f.

The argument which our Saviour useth against profaners of the temple^g, he taketh from the use whereunto it was with solemnity consecrated. And as the prophet Jeremiah forbiddeth the carrying of burdens on the sabbath, because that was a sanctified day^h; so because the temple was a place sanctified, our Lord would not suffer no not the carriage of a vessel through the templeⁱ. These two commandments therefore are in the law conjoined, “Ye shall keep my sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary^k.”

Out of those the apostle’s words, “Have ye not houses to eat and drink^l?” albeit temples such as now were not then erected for the

e Levit. xvi. 2.

f Ezra vi. 16.

g S. Matth. xxi. 13.

h Jer. xvii. 24. i Mark xi. 16. k Levit. xxvi. 2. l 1 Cor. xi. 22.

exercise of the Christian religion, it hath been nevertheless not absurdly conceived that he teacheth what difference should be made between house and house ; that what is fit for the dwelling-place of God, and what for man's habitation he sheweth ; he requireth that Christian men at their own home take common food, and in the house of the Lord none but that food which is heavenly ; he instructeth them, that as in the one place they use to refresh their bodies, so they may in the other learn to seek the nourishment of their souls ; and as there they sustain temporal life, so here they would learn to make provision for eternal. Christ could not suffer that the temple should serve for a place of mart, nor the apostle of Christ that the church should be made an inn.



SECTION VI.

OF THE NAMING OF CHURCHES.

TOUCHING the names of angels and saints whereby the most of our churches are called ; as the custom of so naming them is very ancient, so neither was the cause thereof at the first, nor is the use and continuance with us at this present, hurtful. That churches were consecrated unto none but the Lord only, the very general name itself doth sufficiently shew : inas much as *church* doth signify no other thing than *the Lord's house*. And because the multitude as of persons so of things particular, causeth variety of proper names to be devised for distinction's sake, founders of churches did herein that which best liked their own conceit at the present time ; yet each intending that as oft as those buildings came to be mentioned, the name should put men in mind of some memorable thing or person. Thus therefore it cometh to pass that all churches have

had their names, some as memorials of peace^c, some of wisdom, some in memory of the Trinity itself, some of Christ under sundry titles, of the blessed Virgin not a few, many of one apostle, saint, or martyr, many of all.

Divers considerations there are, for which Christian churches might first take their names of saints : as either because by the ministry of saints it pleased God there to shew some rare effect of his power ; or else in regard of death, which those saints having suffered for the testimony of Jesus Christ, did thereby make the places where they died venerable ; or thirdly, for that it liked good and virtuous men to give such occasion of mentioning them often, to the end that the naming of their persons might cause enquiry to be made, and meditation to be had of their virtues.

^c In Constantinople, built by Constantine himself.



SECTION VII.

OF THE SUMPTUOUSNESS OF CHURCHES.

SOME it highly displeaseth, that so great expences this way are employed. "The mother of such magnificence," they think, "is but only a proud ambitious desire to be spoken of far and wide. Suppose we that God Himself delighteth to dwell sumptuously, or taketh pleasure in chargeable pomp? No; then was the Lord most acceptably served, when His temples were rooms borrowed within the houses of poor men. This was suitable unto the nakedness of Jesus Christ and the simplicity of His gospel."

What thoughts or cogitations they had who were authors of those things, the use and benefit whereof hath descended unto ourselves, as we do not know, so we need not search. It cometh we grant many times to pass, that the works of men being the same, their drifts and purposes therein are divers. The charge of Herod about the temple of God was ambitious, yet Solomon's virtuous, Con-

stantine's holy. But howsoever their hearts are disposed by whom any such thing is done in the world, shall we think that it baneth the work which they leave behind them, or taketh away from others the use and benefit thereof?

Touching God Himself, hath he any where revealed that it is his delight to dwell beggarly? and that he taketh no pleasure to be worshipped saving only in poor cottages? Even then was the Lord as acceptably honoured of his people as ever, when the stateliest places and things in the whole world were sought out to adorn His Temple. This was most suitable, decent, and fit for the greatness of Jesus Christ, for the sublimity of his gospel. As therefore the Son of Sirach giveth verdict concerning those things which God hath wrought, "A man need not say, This is worse than that, this more acceptable to God, that less; for in their season they are all worthy praise^m;" the like we may also conclude as touching these two so contrary ways of providing in meaner or in costlier sort for the

honour of Almighty God. A man need not say, This is worse than that—this more acceptable to God, that less : for with Him they are in their season both allowable ; the one when the state of the Church is poor, the other when God hath enriched it with plenty.

When they, who had seen the beauty of the first temple built by Solomon in the days of his great prosperity and peace, beheld how far it excelled the second which had not builders of like ability, the tears of their grieved eyes the prophets endeavoured with comforts to wipe awayⁿ. Whereas if the house of God were by so much the more perfect by how much the glory thereof is less, they should have done better to rejoice than weep, their prophets better to reprove than comfort.

It being objected against the Church in the times of universal persecution, that her service done to God was not solemnly performed in temples fit for the honour of divine Majesty, their most convenient answer was, that “The best temples which we can dedicate to God, are our

ⁿ Hagg. ii. 5. 9.

sanctified souls and bodies." Whereby it plainly appeareth how the Fathers, when they were upbraided with that defect, comforted themselves with the meditation of God's most gracious and merciful nature, who did not therefore the less accept of their hearty affection and zeal, rather than took any great delight, or imagined any high perfection in such their want of external ornaments, which when they wanted, the cause was only their lack of ability; ability serving, they wanted them not. Before the emperor Constantine's time, the state of Christian affairs being tolerable, the former buildings which were but of mean and small estate contented them not, spacious and ample churches they erected throughout every city. No envy was able to be their hinderance, no practice of Satan or fraud of man available against their proceedings herein, while they continued as yet worthy to feel the aid of the arm of God - extended over them for their safety. These churches Diocletian caused by solemn edict to be afterwards overthrown. Maximinus with like authority giving leave to erect them,

the hearts of all men were even rapt with divine joy, to see those places, which tyrannous impiety had laid waste, recovered as it were out of mortal calamity, "churches reared up to an height immeasurable, and adorned with far more beauty in their restoration, than their founders before had given them." Whereby we see how most Christian minds stood then affected, we see how joyful they were to behold the sumptuous stateliness of houses built unto God's glory.

If we should, over and besides this, allege the care which was had, that all things about the tabernacle of Moses might be as beautiful, gorgeous, and rich as art could make them; or what travel and cost was bestowed that the goodliness of the temple might be a spectacle of admiration to all the world; this they will say was figurative, and served by God's appointment but for a time, to shadow out the true everlasting glory of a more divine sanctuary, whereinto Christ being long since entered, it seemeth that all those curious exornations should rather cease. Which thing we

30 OF THE SUMPTUOUSNESS OF CHURCHES.

also ourselves would grant, if the use thereof had been merely and only mystical. But since the prophet David doth mention a natural conveniency which such kind of bounteous expences have, as well for that we do thereby give unto God a testimony^o of our cheerful affection, which thinketh nothing too dear to be bestowed about the furniture of His service; as also because it serveth to the world for a witness of His Almightyness^p, whom we outwardly honour with the chiefest of outward things as being of all things himself incomparably the greatest. Besides, were it not also strange, if God should have made such store of glorious creatures^q on earth, and leave them all to be consumed in secular vanity, allowing none but the baser sort to be employed in His own service? To set forth the majesty of kings^q, His vicegerents in this world, the most gorgeous and rare treasures which the world hath, are procured. We think belike that He will accept what the meanest of them would disdain^r.

o 1 Chron. xxviii. 14; xxix. 2. 3. 6. 9. 14. p 2 Chron. ii. 5.
q Matt. vi. 29, r Mal. i. 8.

If there be great care to build and beautify these corruptible sanctuaries, little or none that the living temples of the Holy Ghost, the dearly redeemed souls of the people of God, may be edified; huge expences upon timber and stone, but towards the relief of the poor, small devotion; cost this way infinite, and in the mean while charity cold; we have in such case just occasion to make complaint as St. Jerome did: The walls of the church there are enough contented to build, and to underset it with goodly pillars, the marbles are polished, the roofs shine with gold, the altar hath precious stones to adorn it; and of Christ's ministers no choice at all." The same Jerome both in that place and elsewhere debaseth with like intent the glory of such magnificence, (a thing whereunto men's affection in those times needed no spur,) thereby to extol the necessity sometimes of charity and alms, sometimes of other the most principal duties belonging unto Christian men; which duties were neither so highly esteemed as they ought, and being compared with that in question, the directest sentence we can

give of them both, as unto me it seemeth, is this ;
 “ God, who requireth the one as necessary,
 accepteth the other also as being an honourable
 work.”

SECTION VIII.

OF THE HOLINESS WHICH WE ASCRIBE TO THE
 CHURCH MORE THAN TO OTHER PLACES.

CHURCHES receive as every thing else their
 chief perfection from the end whereunto they
 serve. Which end being the public worship
 of God, they are in this consideration houses
 of greater dignity than any provided for
 meaner purposes.

For which cause they seem after a sort even
 to mourn, as being injured and defrauded of
 their right, when places not sanctified, as they
 are, prevent them unnecessarily in that pre-
 eminence and honour. Whereby also it doth
 come to pass, that the service of God hath not
 then itself such perfection of grace and come-
 liness, as when the dignity of place which it
 wisheth for doth concur.

Again, albeit the true worship of God be to God in itself acceptable, who respecteth not so much in what place, as with what affection he is served; and therefore Moses in the midst of the sea, Job on the dunghill, Hezekiah in bed, Jeremiah in mire, Jonas in the whale, Daniel in the den, the children in the furnace, the thief on the cross, Peter and Paul in prison, calling unto God were heard, as St. Basil noteth: manifest notwithstanding it is, that the very majesty and holiness of the place, where God is worshipped, hath *in regard of us* great virtue, force, and efficacy, for that it serveth as a sensible help to stir up devotion, and *in that respect* no doubt, *bettereth* even our holiest and best actions in this kind. As therefore we every where exhort all men to worship God, even so, for performance of this service by the people of God assembled, we think not any place *so good* as the church, neither any exhortation so fit as that of David, “O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness^s.”

^s Ps. xcvi. 9.

SECTION IX.

OF PUBLIC TEACHING, OR PREACHING, IN THE
CHURCH ; WHAT IT IS.

PLACES of public resort being thus provided for, our repair thither is especially for mutual conference, and as it were commerce ^{to be had} between God and us.

Because therefore want of the knowledge of God is the cause of all iniquity amongst men, and as contrariwise the very ground of all our happiness, and the seed of whatsoever perfect virtue groweth from us, is a right opinion touching things divine ; this kind of knowledge we may justly set down for the first and chiefest thing which God imparteth unto His people, and our duty of receiving this at His merciful hands, for the first of those religious offices, wherewith we publicly honour Him on earth. For the instruction therefore of all sorts of men to eternal life it is necessary, that the sacred and saving truth of God be openly published unto them. Which open

publication of heavenly mysteries, is by an excellency^e termed preaching. For otherwise there is not any thing *publicly notified*, but we may in that respect, rightly and properly say it is “preached.”

We find not in the world any people that have lived altogether without religion ; and yet this duty of religion, which provideth that publicly all sorts of men may be instructed in the fear of God, is to the Church of God and hath been always so peculiar, that none of the heathens, how curious soever in searching out all kinds of outward ceremonies like to ours, could ever once so much as endeavour to resemble *herein* the Church’s care for the endless good of her children.

SECTION X.

OF THE FIRST KIND OF PREACHING, i. e. PUBLIC
CATECHISING.

WAYS of teaching there have been sundry

^e That is, this is what we especially mean, when we use the word to preach or preaching.

always usual in God's Church. For the first introduction of youth to the knowledge of God, the Jews even till this day have their Catechisms. With religion it fareth as with other sciences; the first delivery of the elements thereof must, for like consideration, be framed according to the weak and slender capacity of young beginners: unto which manner of teaching principles in Christianity, the Apostle in the sixth to the Hebrews is himself understood to allude. For this cause therefore, as the Decalogue of Moses summarily declareth those things which we ought to do, the prayer of our Lord whatsoever we should request or desire: so either by the Apostles, or at the least wise, out of their writings, we have the substance of Christian belief compendiously drawn, into few and short articles, to the end that the weakness of no man's wit might either hinder altogether the knowledge, or excuse the utter ignorance of needful things.

Such as were trained up in these rudiments, and were so made fit to be afterwards by bap-

tism, received into the Church, the Fathers do term *hearers*, as having no further communion or fellowship with the Church, than only this, that they were admitted to hear the principles of Christian faith made plain unto them.

Catechising may be in schools, it may be in private families; but when we make it a kind of *preaching*, we mean always the public performance thereof, in the open hearing of men: because things are *preached*, not in that they are taught, but in that they are published.

SECTION XI.

OF THE SECOND KIND OF PREACHING: i. e.

PUBLIC READING OF SCRIPTURE.

MOSES and the Prophets, CHRIST and His Apostles, were in their times all preachers of God's truth; some by word, some by writing, some by both. This they did partly as faithful witnesses, making mere relation of what God Himself had revealed unto them; and partly,

as careful expounders, teachers, persuaders thereof. The Church in like case *preacheth* still, first publishing by way of testimony or relation the truth which from them she hath received, even in such sort as it was received, written in the sacred volumes of Scripture; secondly, by way of explication, discovering the mysteries which lie hid therein. The Church as a witness preacheth His mere revealed truth by *reading* publicly the sacred Scripture; so that a second kind of preaching is the reading of Holy Writ.

With us the reading of Scripture in the church is a part of our Church Liturgy, a special portion of the service which we do to God. Wherefore as the form of our public service is not voluntary, so neither are the parts thereof left uncertain, but they are all set down in such order, and with such choice, as hath in the wisdom of the Church seemed best to concur as well with the special occasions, as with the general purpose which we have to glorify God. With us there is never any time bestowed in Divine service without

the reading of a great part of the Holy Scripture, which we account a thing most necessary. We dare not admit any such form of Liturgy, as either appointeth no Scripture at all, or very little to be read in the Church.

But let us here consider, what the practice of our Fathers before us hath been, and how far forth the same may be followed. We find that in ancient times there was publicly read first the Scripture, as namely something out of the books of the Prophets of God which were of old; something out of the Apostles' writings, and lastly out of the holy Evangelists, some things which touched ~~of~~ the person of our LORD JESUS CHRIST Himself, The cause of their reading first the Old Testament, then the New, and always somewhat out of both, is most likely to have been that which Justin Martyr and St. Augustine observe in comparing the two Testaments. "The Apostles," saith the one, "have taught us as themselves did learn, first the precepts of the law, and then the Gospel's. For what else is the Law, but the Gospel foreshewed? What other the

Gospel, than the Law fulfilled?" In like sort the other; "What the Old Testament hath the very same the New containeth; but that which lieth there as under a shadow, is here brought forth into the open sun. Things there prefigured are here performed." Again, "In the Old Testament there is a close comprehension of the New; in the New an open discovery of the Old." To be short, the method of their public readings either purposely did tend, or at the leastwise doth fitly serve. "That from smaller things, the minds of the hearers may go forward to the knowledge of greater, and by degrees climb up from the lowest to the highest things."

SECTION XII.

OF READING THE APOCRYPHA.

BESIDES the Scripture, the books which they called ecclesiastical, were thought not unworthy sometime to be brought into public

audience, and with that name they entitled the books which we term Apocryphal. Rufinus therefore having rehearsed the self-same books of canonical Scripture, which with us are held to be alone canonical, addeth immediately by way of caution, "We must know that other books there are also, which our forefathers have used to name not canonical but ecclesiastical books, as the Book of Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, Tobit, Judith, the Maccabees, in the Old Testament. All which books and writings, they willed to be read in churches, but not to be alleged as if their authority did bind us to build upon them our faith. These things delivered unto us from the Fathers, we have in this place thought good to set down." So far Rufinus. Wherefore albeit, for the people's more plain instruction, (as the ancient use hath been,) we read in our churches certain books beside the Scripture, yet as the Scripture we read them not. All men know our professed opinion, touching the difference whereby we sever them from the Scripture. With what intent they were first published, those words of

the nephew of Jesus, [the Son of Sirach^s,] do plainly enough signify: "After that my grandfather Jesus, had given himself to the reading the Law, and the Prophets, and other books of our Fathers, and had gotten therein sufficient judgment, he purposed also to write something pertaining to learning and wisdom, to the intent that they which were desirous to learn, and would give themselves to these things, might profit much more in living according to the Law." Their end in writing, and ours in reading them is the same. The books of Judith, Tobit, Baruch, Wisdom, and Ecclesiasticus, we read, as serving most unto that end. The rest we leave unto men in private.



SECTION XIII.

SERMONS, IN WHAT SENSE THE WORD OF GOD.

THE Word of God is his heavenly truth touching matters of eternal life revealed and uttered unto men, unto Prophets and Apostles, by immediate Divine inspiration, from them to us by their books and writings. We therefore have no Word of God but the Scripture. Apostolic sermons were unto such as heard them His Word, even as properly as to us their writings are. Howbeit not so our own sermons, the expositions which our discourse of wit doth gather and minister out of the Word of God. For which cause in this present question, we are, when we name the Word of God, always to mean the Scripture only. The end of the Word of God is to save, and therefore we term it the Word of Life. The way for all men to be saved is by the knowledge of that truth which the Word hath taught. And since eternal life is a thing

of itself communicable unto all, it behoveth that the Word of God, the necessary mean thereunto, be so likewise. Wherefore the Word of Life hath been always a treasure, though precious, yet easy, as well to attain, as to find; lest any man desirous of life should perish through the difficulty of the way. To this end the Word of God no otherwise serveth, than only in the nature of a doctrinal instrument; it saveth because it maketh wise to salvation. Wherefore the ignorant it saveth not; they who live by the Word must know it. But as every thing of price, so this doth require travail. We bring not the knowledge of God with us into the world; and the less our own opportunity or ability is that way, the more we need the help of other men's judgments to be our direction herein. Nor doth any man ever believe, into whom the doctrine of belief is not instilled by instruction some way received at the first from others. Wherein whatsoever fit means there are to notify the mysteries of the Word of God, whether publicly, (which we call preaching,) or in private

howsoever, the Word by every such mean doth save, and not only by being delivered unto men in sermons. Sermons are not the only preaching which doth save souls ; for preaching is a general end whereunto writing and speaking do both serve. The apostles preached as well when they wrote as when they spake the Gospel of Christ, and our usual public reading of the Word of God for the people's instruction is *preaching*. The Word of God outwardly administered (his Spirit^t inwardly concurring therewith) converteth, edifieth, and saveth souls.

SECTION XIV.

PECULIAR ADVANTAGES OF THE WORD WRITTEN.

So worthy a part of divine service we should greatly wrong, if we did not esteem

f John vi. 63. Matt. xvi. 17. 2 Cor. iv. 6. 1 Cor. xii. 3.
Acts xvi. 14.

preaching as the blessed ordinance of God ; sermons as keys to the kingdom of heaven, as wings to the soul, as spurs to the good affections of men, unto the sound and healthy as food, as physic unto diseased minds. But touching the use of Scripture, even in that it is openly read, and the inestimable good which the Church of God by that very mean hath reaped ; there was, we may very well think, some cause, which moved the apostle St. Paul to require, that those things which any one Church's affairs gave particular occasion to write, might for the instruction of all be published, and that by reading^u.

1. When the very having of the books of God was a matter of no small charge and difficulty, inasmuch as they could not be had otherwise, than only in written copies, it was the necessity of reading the Word at large to the people, which caused churches throughout the world to have public care, that the sacred oracles of God being procured by common charge, might with great sedulity be kept both

^u 1 Thess. v. 27. Col. iv. 16.

entire and sincere. If, then, we admire the providence of God in the same continuance of Scripture, notwithstanding the violent endeavours of infidels to abolish, and the fraudulent of heretics always to deprave the same; shall we set light by that custom of reading, from whence so precious a benefit hath grown?

2. The voice and testimony of the Church acknowledging Scripture to be the law of the living God, is for the truth and certainty thereof no mean evidence. For if with reason we may presume upon things which a few men's depositions do testify, suppose we that the minds of men are not both at their first access to the school of Christ exceedingly moved, yea and for ever afterwards also confirmed much, when they consider the main consent of all the churches in the whole world witnessing the sacred authority of Scripture, ever since the first publication thereof, even till this present day and hour? And that they all have always so testified, I see not how we should possibly wish a proof more palpable, than this manifest received and every where continued

custom of reading them publicly as the Scriptures. The reading therefore of the Word of God, as the use hath ever been, in open audience, is the plainest evidence we have of the Church's assent and acknowledgment that it is His Word.

3. A further commodity this custom hath, which is to furnish the very simplest and rudest sort with such infallible axioms and precepts of sacred truth delivered even in the very letter of the Law of God, as may serve them for rules^x whereby to judge the better all other doctrines and instructions which they hear. For which end and purpose I see not how the Scripture could possibly be made familiar unto all, unless far more should be read in the people's hearing, than by a sermon can be opened. For whereas in a manner the whole Book of God is by reading every year published, a small part thereof in comparison of the whole may hold very well the readiest interpreter of Scripture occupied many years.

4. Besides, wherefore should any man think,

x John v. 39. Is. viii. 20.

but that reading itself is one of the ordinary means, whereby it pleaseth God of His gracious goodness to instil that celestial verity, which being but so received, is nevertheless effectual to save souls? Thus much therefore we ascribe to the reading of the Word of God as the manner is in our churches. The Scripture witnesseth that when the Book of the Law of God had been sometime missing and was after found, the king who heard it but only read, tare his clothes, and with tears confessed, "Great is the wrath of the Lord upon us, because our fathers have not kept His Word to do after all things which are written in this booky." This doth argue, that by bare reading, (for of sermons at that time there is no mention,) true repentance may be wrought in the hearts of such as fear God, and yet incur His displeasure, the deserved effect whereof is eternal death.

Besides, it seemeth that God would have no man stand in doubt but that the reading of Scripture is effectual, as well to lay even the

y 2 Chron. xxxiv. 18. 19. 21.

first foundation, as to add degrees of further perfection in the fear of God. And therefore the Law saith, “Thou shalt read this Law before all Israel, that men, women, and children may hear, yea even that their children, which as yet have not known it, may hear it, and by hearing it so read, may learn to fear the Lord^z.” Our Lord and Saviour was himself of opinion, that they who would not be drawn to amendment of life by the testimony which Moses and the Prophets have given concerning the miseries that follow sinners after death, were not likely to be persuaded by other means, although God from the very dead should have raised them up preachers^a.

Many hear the books of God, and believe them not. Howbeit their unbelief in that case we may not impute to any weakness or insufficiency in the mean which is used towards them, but to the wilful bent of their obstinate hearts against it. With minds obdurate, nothing prevaieth. As well they that preach as they that read unto such, shall still have cause

z Deut. xxxi. 12, 13.

a Luke xvi. 31.

to complain with the Prophets which were of old, "Who will give credit unto our teaching^b?" But with whom ordinary means will prevail, surely the power of the word of God, even without the help of interpreters in God's Church, worketh mightily, not unto their confirmation alone which are converted, but also to their conversion which are not.

The reason why no man can attain belief by the bare contemplation of heaven and earth, is, for that they neither are sufficient to give us the least spark of light concerning the very principal mysteries of our faith; and whatsoever we may learn by them, the same we can only attain to know according to the manner of natural sciences, which mere discourse of wit and reason findeth out; whereas the things which we properly believe be only such, as are received upon the credit of divine testimony. He who considereth the creatures of God, findeth therein both these defects, and neither the one nor the other in the Scriptures; because he that readeth unto us the Scriptures, deli-

vereth all the mysteries of faith, and not any thing amongst them all, more than the mouth of the Lord doth warrant. I would know by some special instance, what one article of Christian faith, or what duty required necessarily unto all men's salvation, there is, which the very reading of the Word of God is not apt to notify. Reading doth convey to the mind that truth without addition or diminution, which Scripture hath derived from the Holy Ghost. And the end of all Scripture is the same which St. John proposeth in the writing of that most divine Gospel, namely, faith, and through faith salvation^c. Life and salvation God will have offered unto all; His will is, that Gentiles should be saved as well as Jews. Salvation belongeth unto none but such as call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ^d. That which must save believers is the knowledge of the cross of Christ, the only subject of all our preaching. Belief in all sorts doth come by hearkening and attending to the word of life : which word sometime proposeth

c John xx. 21.

d 1 Cor. i. 2.

and preacheth itself to the hearer; sometime they deliver it, whom privately zeal and piety moveth to be instructors of others by conference; sometime of them it is taught whom the Church hath called to the public either reading thereof or interpreting. All these tend unto one effect.

SECTION XV.

OF THE MANNER IN WHICH GOOD MEN HAVE ALWAYS BEEN USED TO HEAR THE LESSONS IN THE CHURCH.

READING, saith Isidore, is to the hearers no small edifying. And I hope we may presume, that a rare thing it is not in the Church of God, even for that very word which is read to be both presently their joy^e, and afterwards their study that hear it.

St. Augustine, speaking of devout men, noteth how they daily frequented the Church, how attentive ear they gave unto the lessons and chapters read, how careful they were to remember the same, and to muse thereupon

e Ps. cxix. 16.

by themselves. St. Cyprian observeth that reading was not without effect in the hearts of men. Their joy and alacrity were to him an argument, that there is in this ordinance a blessing, such as ordinarily doth accompany the administration of the Word of Life. In this therefore preaching and reading are equal, that both are approved as His ordinances, both assisted with His grace.

The force of reading, how small soever, must of necessity be granted sufficient to notify that which is plain or easy to be understood. And of things necessary to all men's salvation we have been hitherto accustomed to hold, (especially since the publishing of the Gospel of JESUS CHRIST, whereby the simplest having now a key unto knowledge which the eunuch in the Acts did want^f, our children may of themselves by reading understand that, (which he without an interpreter could not,) they are in Scripture plain and easy to be understood. As for those things which at the first are obscure and dark, when memory hath

^f Acts viii. 31.

laid them up for a time, judgment afterwards growing explaineth them. Scripture therefore is not so hard, but that the only reading thereof may give life unto willing hearers. We admire the goodness of God in nature, when we consider how He hath provided that things most needful to preserve this life, should be most prompt and easy for all living creatures to come by. Is it not as evident a sign of his wonderful Providence over us, when that food of eternal life, upon the utter want whereof our endless death and destruction necessarily ensueth, is prepared and always set in such a readiness, that those very means, than which nothing is more easy, may suffice to procure the same? Surely if we perish, it is not the lack of scribes and learned expounders that can be our just excuse. The Word which saveth our souls is near us; we need for knowledge but to read and live. The man who readeth the Word of God, the Word itself doth pronounce blessed, if he also observe the same.

SECTION XVI.

READING NOT TO BE DISPARAGED FOR PREACHING'S SAKE.

IT hath come to pass that Churches which cannot enjoy the benefit of usual preaching, are judged as it were forsaken of God, forlorn, and without either hope or comfort. Contrariwise those places which every day for the most part are at sermons as the flowing sea, do both by their emptiness at times of reading, and other apparent tokens shew to the voice of the living God, this way sounding in the ears of men a great deal less reverence than were meet. What man's heart doth not rise at the mention of these things? It is true that the weakness of our wits and the dulness of our affections do make us, for the most part, even as our Lord's own disciples were for a certain time, hard and slow to believe what is written. For help whereof expositions and exhortations are needful, and that in the most effectual manner; To give them encourage-

ment^g; to put them in mind that it is not the deepness of their knowledge, but the singleness of their belief, which God accepteth^h; that they which “hunger and thirst after righteousnessⁱ,” shall be satisfied; that no imbecility of means can prejudice the truth of the promise of God herein^k; that the weaker their helps are, the more their need is to sharpen the edge of their own industry^l, and that painfulness, by feeble means shall be able to gain that, which in the plenty of more forcible instruments is through sloth and negligence lost^m.

SECTION XVII.

OF PRAYER.

BETWEEN the throne of God in heaven, and his Church upon earth here militant, if it be so that angels have their continual inter-

g Ecclus. li. 26, 27. Matt. xii. 20. h 1 Tim. i. 5; Rom. xiv. 1.
 1 Thess. iii. 10. i Matt. v. 6. k Phil. i. 6. 1 Peter v. 10.
 Matt. iii. 9. l 1 Thess. iv. 18. Heb. x. 24. Jude 20. 21.
 1 Peter iv. 10. m Luke xi. 31.

course, where should we find the same more verified than in these two ghostly exercises, the one doctrine, the other prayer? For what is the assembling of the Church to learn, but the receiving of angels descended from above? What to pray, but the sending of angels upward? His heavenly inspirations, and our holy desires are as so many angels of intercourse and commerce between God and us. As teaching bringeth us to know that God is our supreme truth; so prayer testifieth that we acknowledge Him our sovereign good. Besides, since on God as the most high, all inferior causes in the world are dependant; and the higher any cause is, the more it coveteth to impart virtue unto things beneath it, how should any kind of service we do or can do, find greater acceptance than prayer, which sheweth our concurrence with Him in desiring that wherewith His very nature doth most delight? Is not the very name of prayer usual to signify even all the service that ever we do unto God? and that for no other cause, as I suppose, but to shew

that there is in religion no acceptable duty which devout invocation of the name of God doth not either presuppose or infer? Prayers are those “calves of men’s lipsⁿ ;” those most gracious and sweet odours^o ; those rich presents and gifts, which being carried up into heaven^p, do best testify our dutiful affection, and are, for the purchasing of all favour at the hands of God, the most undoubted means we can use. On others what more easily, and yet what more fruitfully bestowed than our prayers? if we give counsel they are the simpler only that need it ; if alms, the poorer only are relieved ; but by prayer we do good to all. And whereas every other duty besides is but to shew itself as time and opportunity require, for this all times are convenient^q ; when we are not able to do any other thing for men’s behoof, when through maliciousness or unkindness they vouchsafe not to accept any other good at our hands, prayer is that which we always have in our power to bestow,

n Hosea xiv. 2. o Rev. v. 8. p Acts x. iv. q Rom. i. 9.
 i Thess. v. 17. Luke xviii. 1.

and they never in theirs to refuse. Wherefore God forbid, saith Samuel, speaking unto a most unthankful people, a people weary of the benefit of his most virtuous government over them, "God forbid that I should sin against the Lord, and cease to pray for you^r." It is the first thing wherewith a righteous life beginneth, and the last wherewith it doth end. The knowledge is small that we have on earth concerning things that are done in heaven. Notwithstanding thus much we know even of Saints in heaven, that they pray^s. And therefore prayer being a work common to the Church as well triumphant as militant, a work common unto men with angels, what should we think, but that so much of our lives is celestial and divine as we spend in the exercise of prayer? For which cause we see that the most comfortable visitations which God hath sent men from above, have taken especially the times of prayer as their most natural opportunities^t.

r 1 Sam. xii. 23. s Rev. vi. 9. t Dan. ix. 20. Acts. x. 30.

SECTION XVIII.

OF PUBLIC PRAYER.

THIS holy and religious duty of service towards God concerneth us one way in that we are men, and another way in that we are joined as parts to that visible mystical body, which is his Church. As men, we are at our own choice both for time, and place, and form, according to the exigence of our own occasions in private^a. But the service, which we do as members of a public body, is public, and for that cause must needs be accounted by so much worthier than the other, as a whole society of such condition exceedeth the worth of any one. In which consideration unto Christian assemblies there are most special promises made^b. St. Paul, though likely to prevail with God as much as any one, did notwithstanding, think it much more both for

a Psalm lv. 17. Dan. ix. 3. Acts x. 9. b Matt. xviii. 19.

God's glory and his own good, if prayers might be made and thanks yielded in his behalf by a number of men^b. The prince and people of Nineveh assembling themselves as a main army of supplicants, it was not in the power of God to withstand them^c. I speak no otherwise concerning the force of public prayer in the Church of God, than before me Tertullian hath done, "We come by troops to the place of assembly, that being banded as it were together, we may be supplicants enough to besiege God with our prayers: these forces are unto him acceptable." When we publicly make our prayers, it cannot be but that we do it with much more comfort than in private, for that the things we ask publicly are approved as needful and good in the judgment of all, we hear them sought for and desired with common consent. Again, thus much help and furtherance is more yielded, in that if so be our zeal and devotion to God-ward be slack, the alacrity and fervour of others serveth as a present spur^d. "For even prayer itself, (saith

b 2 Cor. i. 11.

c Jonah iii. 5.

d Psalm cxxii. 1.

St. Basil,) when it hath not the consort of many voices to strengthen it, is not itself. Finally, the good which we do by public prayer is more than in private can be done, for that besides the benefit which here is no less procured to ourselves, the whole Church is much bettered by our good example; and consequently whereas secret neglect of our duty in this kind is but only our own hurt, one man's contempt of the common prayer of the Church of God may be and oftentimes is most hurtful unto many. In which considerations, the prophet David^e so often voweth unto God the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving in the congregation; so earnestly exhorteth others to sing praises unto the Lord in his courts, in his sanctuary, before the memorial of His holiness; and so much complaineth of his own uncomfortable exile, wherein although he sustained many most grievous indignities, and endured the want of sundry both pleasures and honours before enjoyed; yet as if this one were his only grief, and the rest not felt, his

^e Psalm xxvi. 12. xxx. 4. xxxiv. 1. xcvi. 9.

speeches are all of the heavenly benefit of public assemblies, and the happiness of such as had free access thereunto^f.

SECTION XIX.

OF THE FORM OF COMMON PRAYER.

A GREAT part of the cause, wherefore religious minds are so inflamed with the love of public devotion, is that virtue, force and efficacy, which by experience they find that the very form and reverend solemnity of common prayer duly ordered, hath, to help that imbecility and weakness in us, by means whereof we are otherwise of ourselves the less apt to perform unto God so heavenly a service, with such affection of heart, and disposition in the powers of our souls as is requisite. To this end therefore all things hereunto appertaining have been ever thought convenient to be done with the most solemnity and majesty that the wisest could devise.

It is not with public as with private prayer.

^f Psalm xxvii. 4. xlii. 4. lxxxiv. 1.

In this, rather secrecy is commended than outward shew^a; whereas that being the public act of a whole society, requireth accordingly more care to be had of external appearance. The very assembling of men therefore unto this service hath been ever solemn. And concerning the place of assembly, although it serve for other uses as well as this, yet seeing that our Lord himself hath to this as to the chiefest of all other, plainly sanctified his own temple, by entitling it “the house of prayer^b,” what pre-eminence of dignity soever hath been either by the ordinance, or through the special favour and providence of God annexed unto his sanctuary, the principal cause thereof must needs be in regard of common prayer. For the honour and furtherance whereof, if it be as the gravest of the ancient Fathers seriously were persuaded, and do oftentimes plainly teach; affirming that the house of prayer is a court beautified with the presence of celestial powers; that there we stand, we pray, we sound forth hymns unto God, having his angels intermingled as our

^a Matt. vi. 5, 6.

^b Matt. xxi. 13.

associates ; and that with reference hereunto the apostle doth require so great care to be had of decency for the angels' sake^c ; how can we come to the house of prayer, and not be moved with the very glory of the place itself^d, so to frame our affections praying, as doth best beseem them, whose suits the Almighty doth there sit to hear, and his angels attend to further ? When this was engrafted in the minds of men, theré needed no penal statutes to draw them unto public prayer. The warning sound was no sooner heard, but the churches were presently filled, the pavements covered with bodies prostrate, and washed with their tears of devout joy. And as the place of public prayer is a circumstance in the outward form thereof, which hath moment to help devotion ; so the person much more with whom the people of God do join themselves in this action, as with him that standeth and speaketh in the presence of God for them.

The authority of his place, the fervour of his zeal, the piety and gravity of his whole beha-

c 1 Cor. xi. 10.

d Psalm xcvi. 6.

viour, must needs exceedingly both grace and set forward the service he doth. The authority of his calling is a furtherance, because if God have so far received him into favour, as to impose upon him by the hands of men that office of blessing the people in His name, and making intercession to Him in theirs, which office He hath sanctified with His own most gracious promise^e, and ratified that promise by manifest actual performance thereof^f, when others before in like place have done the same; is not his very ordination a seal as it were to us, that the selfsame divine love which hath chosen the instrument to work with, will by that instrument effect the thing whereto He ordained it, in blessing His people, and accepting the prayers which His servant offereth up unto God for them? It was in this respect a comfortable title which the ancients used to give unto God's ministers, terming them usually "God's most beloved;" who were ordained to procure by their prayers His love and favour towards all.

e Numb. vi. 23.

f 2 Chron. xxx. 27.

Again, if there be not zeal and fervency in him who proposeth for the rest those suits and supplications which they by their joyful acclamations must ratify ; if he praise not God with all his might ; if he pour not out his soul in prayer ; if he take not their causes to heart, or speak not as Moses, Daniel, and Ezra, did for their people ; how should there be but in them frozen coldness, when his affections seem benumbed, from whom theirs should take fire ?

Virtue and godliness of life are required at the hands of the minister of God, not only in that he is to teach and instruct the people, who for the most part are rather led away by the ill example, than directed aright by the wholesome instruction of them whose life swerveth from the rule of their own doctrine ; but also much more in regard of this other part of his function : whether we respect the weakness of the people apt to loathe and abhor the sanctuary, when they who perform the service thereof are such as the sons of Eli were ; or else consider the inclination of God Himself ; who requireth the lifting up of pure hands in

prayer^g, and hath given the world plainly to understand, that the wicked, although they cry, shall not be heard^h. They are no fit supplicants to seek His mercy in behalf of others, whose own unrepented sins provoke his just indignation. Let thy priests, therefore, O Lord, be evermore clothed with righteousness, that thy saints may thereby with more devotion rejoice and singⁱ.

But of all helps for due performance of this service, the greatest is that very set and standing order itself, ("The Book of Common Prayer;") which framed with common advice, hath both for matter and form prescribed whatsoever is herein publicly done. No doubt, from God it hath proceeded, and by us it must be acknowledged a work of His singular care and providence, that the Church hath evermore held a prescribed Form of Common Prayer, although not in all things every where the same, yet for the most part retaining still the same analogy. So that if the Liturgies of all

g 1 Tim. ii. 8.

h John ix. 31. Jer. xi. 11. Ez. viii. 18.

i Ps. cxxxii. 9.

ancient Churches throughout the world be compared amongst themselves, it may be easily perceived they had all one original mould, and that the public prayers of the people of God in churches thoroughly settled, did never use to be voluntary dictates, proceeding from any man's extemporal wit.

SECTION XX.

AUTHORITY FOR SET FORMS OF PRAYER.

THE reasons cannot be obscure, why God doth in public prayer so ^amuch respect the solemnity of places where the ^bauthority and calling of persons by whom, and the ^cprecise appointment even with what words or sentences His name should be called on amongst His people. No man hath hitherto been so impious as plainly and directly to condemn prayer. The best stratagem that Satan hath, who knoweth his kingdom to be no way more shaken than by the public devout prayers of God's Church, is by traducing the form and manner of them to bring them into contempt,

a 2 Chron. vi. 20.

b Joel ii. 17.

c 2 Chron. xxix. 30.

and so to shake the force of all men's devotion towards them. From this and from no other forge hath proceeded a strange conceit, that to serve God with any set form of common prayer is superstitious. As though God himself did not frame to his priests the very speech wherewith they were charged to bless the people^d; or as if our Lord, even of purpose to prevent this fancy of extemporal and voluntary prayers, had not left us of his own framing one, which might both remain as a part of the Church Liturgy and serve as a pattern whereby to frame all other prayers with efficacy, yet without superfluity of words.

The hymn of Moses grew afterwards to be a part of the ordinary Jewish Liturgy; nor only that, but sundry other since invented. Their books of common prayer contained partly hymns taken out of the Holy Scripture, partly, benedictions thanksgivings supplications, penned by such as have been from time to time the governors of that synagogue. These they sorted into their several times and places,

^d Numb. vi. 23.

some to begin the service of God with, and some to end, some to go before, and some to follow, and some to be interlaced between the divine readings of the Law and Prophets. Unto their custom of finishing the Passover with certain psalms, there is not any thing more probable, than that the holy Evangelist doth evidently allude, saying, that after the cup delivered by our Saviour unto his apostles, “*they sung, and went forth to the Mount of Olives*^e.”

As the Jews had their songs of Moses, and David, and the rest; so the Church of Christ from the very beginning hath both used the same, and besides them, others also of like nature, the Song of the Virgin Mary, the Song of Zacharias, the Song of Simeon, such hymns as the Apostle doth often speak of, saying, “I will pray and sing with the Spirit^f.” Again, “in Psalms, Hymns, and Songs, making melody unto the Lord and that heartily^g.” Hymns and psalms are such kinds of prayer as are not wont to be conceived upon a sudden; but are framed by meditation before-

^e Matt. xxvi. 30. ^f 1 Cor. xiv. 15. ^g Ephes. vi. 9.

hand, or else by prophetic illumination are inspired, as at that time it appeareth they were, when God by extraordinary gifts of the Spirit enabled men to all parts of the service necessary for the edifying of his Church.

SECTION XXI.

OF THE ATTIRE USED BY THE CLERGY IN THE SERVICE OF GOD.

THE attire which the minister of God is by order to use at times of Divine service being but a matter of mere formality, yet such as for comeliness sake, hath hitherto been judged by the wiser sort of men not unnecessary to concur with other sensible notes betokening the different kind or quality of persons and actions whereto it is tied; we submit ourselves unto that, which, in a matter so indifferent, the wisdom of authority and law have thought comely. “Divine religion,” saith St. Jerome, (he speaketh of the priestly attire of the law,) “hath one kind of habit wherein to minister

before the Lord, another for ordinary uses belonging unto common life." The honesty, dignity, and estimation of white apparel in the eastern part of the world, is a token of greater fitness for this sacred use, wherein it were not convenient that any thing basely thought of should be suffered. The wise man who feared God from his heart, and honoured the service that was done unto Him, could not mention so much as the garments of holiness, but with effectual signification of most singular reverence and love. Touching that Church attire which with us is usual in public prayer, our ecclesiastical laws so appoint, as well because it hath been of reasonable continuance, and by special choice was taken out of the number of those holy garments, which (over and besides their mystical reference) served for comeliness under the law^a, and is in the number of those ceremonies, which may with choice and discretion be used to that purpose in the Church of Christ; as also for that it suiteth so fitly with that lightsome affection of

^a Exod. xxviii. 2; xxxix. 27.

joy, wherein God delighteth when his saints praise Him^b; and so lively resembleth the glory of the saints in Heaven, together with the beauty wherein Angels have appeared unto men^c, that they which are to appear for men in the presence of God as Angels, if they were left to their own choice, and would choose any, would not easily devise a garment of more decency for such a service.

SECTION XXII.

OF GESTURE IN PRAYING, AND OF DIFFERENT
PLACES CHOSEN FOR THAT PURPOSE.

WHEN we make profession of our faith, we stand; when we acknowledge our sins, or seek unto God for favour, we fall down; because the gesture of constancy becometh us best in the one, in the other the behaviour of humility. Some parts of our Liturgy consist in the reading of the word of God, and the pro-

^b Ps. cxlix. 2. ^c Rev. xv. 6; Mark xvi. 5.

claiming of His law, that the people may thereby learn what their duties are towards Him; some consist in words of praise and thanksgiving, whereby we acknowledge unto God what his blessings are towards us; some are such as albeit they serve to singular good purpose even when there is no communion administered, nevertheless being devised at first for that purpose, are at the Table of the Lord for that cause also commonly read; some are uttered as from the people, some as with them unto God, some as from God unto them; all as before his sight, whom we fear, and whose presence to offend with any the least unseemliness we would surely be loath.

Now because the Gospels, which are weekly read, do all historically declare something which our Lord Jesus Christ himself either spake, did, or suffered in his own person, it hath been the custom of Christian men then especially in token of the greater reverence, to stand, to utter certain words of acclamation, and at the name of Jesus to bow. It sheweth a reverent regard to the Son of

God above other messengers^d, although speaking as from God also: and against infidels, Jews, Arians, who derogate from the honour of Jesus Christ, such ceremonies are most profitable.

SECTION XXIII.

OF THE LENGTH OF OUR PRAYERS.

Two faults there are which our Lord and Saviour himself especially reprov'd in prayer: the one, when ostentation did cause it to be open, the other when superstition made it long. As therefore prayers the one way are faulty, not whensoever they be openly made, but when hypocrisy is the cause of open praying: so the length of prayer is likewise a fault, howbeit not simply, but when error and superstition causeth more than convenient repetition or continuation of speech to be used. "It is not as some do imagine," saith St. Augustine, "that long praying is that fault of much speaking in prayer which our Sa-

^d Mark xii. 6.

viour did reprove; for then would not He himself in prayer have continued whole nights. "Use in prayer no vain superfluity of words, as the heathens do, for they imagine that their much speaking will cause them to be heard^e:" whereas in truth the thing which God doth regard is, how virtuous their minds are, and not how copious their tongues in prayer; how well they think, and not how long they talk, who come to present their supplications before Him. Notwithstanding, forasmuch as in public prayer we are not only to consider what is needful in respect of God, but there is also in men that which we must regard; we somewhat the rather incline to length, lest over-quick dispatch of a duty so important should give the world occasion to deem that the thing itself is but little accounted of wherein but little time is bestowed. Length thereof is a thing which the gravity and weight of such actions doth require. Besides, this benefit also it hath, that they whom earnest lets and impediments

do often hinder from being partakers of the whole, have yet, through the length of Divine service, opportunity left them at the least for access unto some reasonable part thereof. Again, it should be considered, how it doth come to pass that we are so long. That very service of God in the Jewish synagogues, which our Lord did approve and sanctify with the presence of His own person, had so large portions of the Law and the Prophets, together with so many prayers and Psalms read day by day, as equal in a manner the length of ours. If the reading of the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms, be a part of the service of God as needful under Christ as before, and the adding of the New Testament as profitable as the ordaining of the Old to be read; if therewith instead of Jewish prayers it be also for the good of the Church to annex that variety which the Apostle doth commend^f, seeing that the time which we spend is no more than the orderly performance of these things necessarily requireth, why are we thought to ex-

ceed in length? Words, be they never so few, are too many, where they benefit not the hearer. But he who speaketh no more than edifieth is undeservedly reprehended for much speaking.

SECTION XXIII.

OF SHORT EJACULATORY PRAYERS.

“THE brethren in Egypt,” saith St. Augustine, “are reported to have many prayers, but every of them very short, as if they were darts thrown out with a kind of sudden quickness, lest that vigilant and erect attention of mind, which in prayer is very necessary, should be wasted or dulled through continuance, if their prayers were few and long.” St. Augustin doth allow those prayers, wherunto devout minds have added a piercing kind of brevity, as well in that respect which we have already mentioned, as also thereby the better to express that quick and speedy expedition wherewith ardent affections, the very

wings of prayer, are delighted to present our suits in heaven, even sooner than our tongues can devise to utter them.

SECTION XXIV.

OF THE MINGLING OF LESSONS WITH PRAYERS.

AGAIN; for as much as effectual prayer is joined with a vehement intention of the inferior powers of the soul, which cannot therein long continue without pain, it hath been therefore thought good so by turns to interpose still somewhat for the higher part of the mind, the understanding, to work upon, that both being kept in continual exercise with variety, neither might feel any great weariness, and yet each be a spur to other. For prayer kindleth our desire to behold God by speculation, and the mind, delighted with that contemplative sight of God, taketh everywhere new inflammations to pray, the riches of the mysteries of heavenly wisdom continually stirring up in us correspondent desires towards

them. So that he who prayeth in due sort is thereby made the more attentive to hear, and he who heareth the more earnest to pray, for the time which we bestow as well in the one as the other.

SECTION XXV.

OF PRAYER FOR EARTHLY THINGS.

TOUCHING prayers for things earthly, we ought not to think that the Church hath set down so many of them without cause. The tender kindness of the Church of God it very well beseemeth to help the weaker sort, which are by so great odds more in number. Ignorant we are not, that of such as resorted to our Saviour Christ being present on earth, there came not any unto Him with better success for the benefit of their souls' everlasting happiness, than they whose bodily necessities gave them the first occasion to seek relief, where they saw willingness and ability

of doing any good unto all. The graces of the Spirit are much more precious than worldly benefits; our ghostly evils of greater importance than any harm which the body feel-eth. Therefore our desires to heavenward should both in measure and number no less exceed than their glorious object doth every way excel in value. These things are true and plain in the eye of a perfect judgment. But yet it must be withal considered, that the greater part of this world are they who be farthest from perfection. Such being better able by sense to discern the wants of this present life, than by spiritual capacity to apprehend things above sense, which tend to their happiness in the world to come, are in that respect the more apt to apply their minds even with hearty affection and zeal at the least unto those branches of public prayer wherein their own particular is moved. And by this mean there stealeth upon them a double benefit: first because that good affection, which things of smaller account have once set on work, is by so much the more easily raised

higher ; and secondly in that the very custom of seeking so particular aid and relief at the hands of God, doth by a secret contradiction withdraw them from endeavouring to help themselves by those wicked shifts which they know can never have His allowance whose assistance their prayer seeketh. These multiplied petitions of worldly things in prayer have therefore, besides their direct use, a service whereby the Church underhand, through a kind of heavenly fraud, taketh therewith the souls of men as with certain baits.

SECTION XXVI.

OF OFTEN REPEATING THE LORD'S PRAYER.

OUR custom is both to place it in front of our prayers as a guide, and to add it in the end of some principal limbs or parts, as a complement which fully perfecteth whatsoever may be defective in the rest. Twice we rehearse it ordinarily, and oftener as occasion requireth more solemnity or length in the

form of divine service: not mistrusting that ever any man would think our labour herein misspent, the time wastefully consumed, and the office itself made worse by so repeating that which otherwise would more hardly be made familiar to the simpler sort; for the good of whose souls there is not in the Christian religion any thing of like continual use and force throughout every hour and moment of their whole lives. I mean not because prayer, but because this very prayer, is of such efficacy and necessity. For John the Baptist's disciples of their master had received a form of prayer amongst themselves, which form none did use saving His disciples, so that by it as a mark of special difference they were known from others. And of this the Apostles having taken notice, they request that as John had taught his, so Christ would likewise teach them to pray^g. Tertullian and St. Augustine do for that cause term it the "enacted prayer," the prayer which Christ's own law hath tied His Church to use in the

^g Luke xi. 1.

same prescribed form of words wherewith he himself did deliver it; and therefore what part of the world soever we fall into, if Christian religion hath been there received, the ordinary use of this very prayer hath with equal continuance accompanied the same, as one of the principal and most materal duties of honour done to Jesus Christ. “Seeing that we have” (saith St. Cyprian) “an Advocate with the Father for our sins, when we that had sinned come to ^{seek} such for pardon, let us allege unto God the words which our Advocate hath taught. For since His promise is our plain warrant that in His name what we ask we shall receive, must we not needs much the rather obtain that for which we sue, if not only His name do countenance, but also His speech present, our requests. Though men should speak with the tongues of angels, yet words so pleasing to the ears of God as those which the Son of God himself hath composed were not possible for men to frame^a. He therefore who made us to live hath also

a Matt. vi. 9.

taught us to pray, to the end that, speaking unto the Father in the Son's own prescribed form, without gloss of ours, we may be sure that we utter nothing which God will either disallow or deny. Other prayers we use many besides this, and this oftener than any other: a thing which, uttered with true devotion and zeal of heart, affordeth to God himself that glory, that aid to the weakest sort of men, to the most perfect that solid comfort which is unspeakable.

SECTION XXVII.

OF REPEATING SOME PRAYERS AFTER THE MINISTER.

TWICE we appoint that the words which the minister first pronounceth the whole congregation shall repeat after him. As first in the public confession of sins, and again in rehearsal of our Lord's prayer presently after the blessed sacrament of His body and blood received^h. A thing no way offensive, no way

^h This rule was made more general in 1661: the Lord's prayer being now to be always repeated after the minister.

unfit or unseemly to be done, although it had been so appointed oftener than with us it is. But surely with so good reason it standeth in those two places, that otherwise to order it were not in all respects so well. Could there be any thing devised better than that we all at our first access unto God by prayer should acknowledge meekly our sins, and that not only in heart but with tongue, all who are present being made ear-witnesses even of every man's distinct and deliberate assent unto each particular branch of a common indictment drawn against ourselves? How were it possible that the Church should any how else with such ease and certainty provide, that none of her children may, as Adamⁱ, dissemble that wretchedness, the penitent confession whereof is so necessary a preamble, especially to common prayer?

In like manner if the Church did ever devise a thing fit and convenient, what more than this; that when together we have all

i Job. xxxi. 33.

received those heavenly mysteries wherein Christ imparteth Himself unto us, and giveth visible testification of our blessed communion with Him, we should in hatred of all heresies, factions, and schisms, the pastor as a leader, the people as willing followers of him, step by step, declare openly ourselves united as brethren in one, by offering up with all our hearts and tongues that most effectual supplication, wherein He unto whom we offer it hath Himself not only comprehended all our necessities, but in such sort also framed every petition, as might most naturally serve for many, and doth, though not always require, yet always import a multitude of speakers together? for which cause communicants have ever used it, and we at that time, by the form of our very utterance, do shew we use it, yea every word and syllable of it as communicants. In the rest we observe that custom whereunto St Paul alludeth^k and whereof the Fathers of the Church in their writings make often mention

^k 1 Cor. xiv. 16.

SECTION XXVIII.

THE PSALMS; AND WHAT DIFFERENCE THERE IS BETWEEN THEM AND OTHER PARTS OF SCRIPTURE.

THE choice and flower of all things profitable in other books the Psalms do both more briefly contain, and more movingly also express, by reason of that poetical form wherewith they are written. The ancients, when they speak of the Book of Psalms use to fall into large discourses, shewing how this part of Holy Scripture above the rest, doth of purpose set forth and celebrate all the considerations and operations which belong to God; it magnifieth the holy meditations and actions of divine men; it is of things heavenly an universal declaration, working in them whose hearts God inspireth with the due consideration thereof, an habit or disposition of mind whereby they are made fit vessels both for receipt and for delivery of whatsoever spiritual perfection. What is there necessary for man to know

which the Psalms are not able to teach? they are to beginners an easy and familiar introduction, a mighty augmentation of all virtue and knowledge in such as are entered before, a strong confirmation to the most perfect among others. Heroical magnanimity, exquisite justice, grave moderation, exact wisdom, repentance unfeigned, unwearied patience, the mysteries of God, the sufferings of Christ, the terrors of wrath, the comforts of grace, the works of Providence over this world, and the promised joys of that world which is to come, all good necessary to be either known, or done, or had, this one celestial fountain yieldeth.

Let there be any grief or disease incident unto the soul of man, any wound or sickness named, for which there is not in this treasure-house a present comfortable remedy at all times to be found. Hereof it is that we ^{covet} try to make the Psalms especially familiar unto all. This is the very cause why we iterate the Psalms oftener than any other part of scripture besides, the cause wherefore we inure the people together with their minister, and not

the minister alone to read them, as other parts of scripture he doth.

SECTION XXIX.

OF MUSIC WITH PLALMS.

TOUCHING musical harmony whether by instrument or by voice, it being but of high and low in sounds a due proportionable disposition, such notwithstanding is the force thereof, and so pleasing effects it hath in that very part of man which is most divine, that some have been thereby induced to think that the soul itself by nature, is, or hath in it harmony. A thing which delighteth all ages, and beseemeth all states; a thing as seasonable in grief as in joy; as decent being added unto actions of the greatest weight and solemnity, as being used when men most sequester themselves from action. The reason hereof is an admirable facility which music hath to express and represent to the mind, more inwardly

than any other sensible mean, the very standing, rising, and falling, the very steps and inflections every way, the turns and varieties of all passions, whereunto the mind is subject; yea, so to imitate them, that, whether it resemble unto us the same state wherein our minds already are, or a clean contrary, we are not more contentedly by the one confirmed, than changed and led away by the other. In harmony the very image and character even of virtue and vice is perceived, the mind delighted with their resemblances, and brought by having them often iterated into a love of the things themselves. For which cause there is nothing more contagious and pestilent than some kinds of harmony; than some, nothing more strong and potent unto good. And that there is such a difference of one kind from another we need no proof but our own experience, inasmuch as we are at the hearing of some more inclined unto sorrow and heaviness, of some more mollified and softened in mind; one kind apter to stay and settle us, another to move

and stir our affections; there is that draweth to a marvellous grave and sober mediocrity, there is also that carrieth as it were into ecstasies, filling the mind with a heavenly joy, and for the time in a manner severing it from the body. So that, although we lay altogether aside the consideration of ditty or matter, the very harmony of sounds being framed in due sort, and carried from the ear to the spiritual faculties of our souls, is by a native puissance and efficacy greatly available to bring to a perfect temper whatsoever is there troubled, apt as well to quicken the spirits as to allay that which is too eager, sovereign against melancholy and despair, forcible to draw forth tears of devotion, if the mind be such as can yield them, able both to move and to moderate all affections.

The prophet David having therefore singular knowledge, not in poetry alone, but in music also, judged them both to be things most necessary for the house of God; left behind him to that purpose a number of divinely indited poems, and was further the

author of adding unto poetry melody in public prayer, melody both vocal and instrumental, for the raising up of men's hearts, and the sweetening of their affections towards God. In which considerations the church of Christ doth likewise at this present day retain it as an ornament to God's service, and an help to our own devotion.

In church music, curiosity and ostentation of art, wanton, or light, or unsuitable harmony, such as only pleaseth the ear, and doth not naturally serve to the very kind and degree of those impressions which the matter that goeth with it leaveth, or is apt to leave, in men's minds, doth rather blemish and disgrace that we do than add either beauty or furtherance unto it. On the other side, these faults prevented, the force and efficacy of the thing itself, when it drowneth not utterly, but fitly suiteth with matter altogether sounding to the praise of God, is in truth most admirable, and doth much edify, if not the understanding, because it teacheth not, yet surely the affection, because therein it worketh

much. They must have hearts very dry and tough, from whom the melody of psalms doth not sometimes draw that wherein a mind religiously affected delighteth.

SECTION XXX.

OF SINGING PSALMS BY COURSE: I. E. THE MINISTER AND PEOPLE ANSWERING ONE ANOTHER.

IF the prophet David did think that the very meeting of men together, and their accompanying one another to the house of God, should make the bond of their love insoluble, and tie them in a league of inviolable amity¹; how much more may we judge it reasonable to hope, that the like effects may grow in each of the people towards other, in them all towards their pastor, and in their pastor towards every of them; between whom there daily and interchangeably pass in the hearing of God himself, and in the presence of his holy angels, so many holy acclamations, exultations, provocations,

¹ Ps. lv. 14.

petitions, songs of comfort, psalms of praise and thanksgiving. In all which particulars as when the pastor maketh their suits, and they with one voice testify a general assent thereunto; or when he joyfully beginneth, and they with like alacrity follow; dividing between them the sentences wherewith they strive which shall most shew his own and stir up others' zeal to the glory of that God whose name they magnify; or when he proposeth unto God their necessities, and they their own requests for relief in every of them; or when he lifteth up his voice like a trumpet to proclaim unto them the laws of God, they adjoining, though not as Israel did by way of generality a cheerful promise, "all that the Lord commandeth we will do^m," yet that which God doth no less approve, that which savoureth more of meekness, that which testifieth rather a feeling knowledge of our common imbecility, unto the several branches thereof, several, lowly and humble requests for grace at the merciful hands of God to perform the thing which is commanded; or when

m Exod. xix. 8; xxiv. 3; Deut. v. 27; xxvi. 17; Josh. xxiv. 16.

they wish reciprocally each other's ghostly happiness; or when he by exhortation raises them up, and they by protestation of their readiness declare he speaketh not in vain unto them; these interlocutory forms of speech, what are they but most effectual partly testifications and partly inflammations of all piety? When and how this custom of singing by course came up in the church it is not certainly known. Socrates maketh Ignatius the bishop of Antioch in Syria the first beginner thereof even under the apostles themselves. Ignatius in Trajan's days suffered martyrdom. And of the churches in Pontus and Bithynia to Trajan the emperor his own vicegerent there affirmeth, the only crime he knew of them was, they used to meet together at a certain day, and to praise Christ with hymns as God, one to another amongst themselves. Which for anything we know to the contrary, might be the self-same form which Philo Judæus expresseth, declaring how the Essenes were accustomed with hymns and psalms to honour God, sometimes all exalting their voices

together in one, and sometimes one part answering another ; wherein as he thought, they swerved not much from the pattern of Moses and Miriam. "I saw the Lord," saith the prophet Isaiah, "on a high throne, the seraphims stood upon it, *one cried to another* saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts, the whole world is full of his gloryⁿ."

But whosoever were the author, whatsoever the time, wheresoever the example of beginning this custom in the church of Christ ;— a thing which all Christian churches in the world have received ; a thing which so many ages have held ; a thing which the most approved councils and laws have so oftentimes ratified ; a thing which was never found to have any inconvenience in it ; a thing which always heretofore the best men and wisest governors of God's people did think they never could commend enough ; a thing which Basil was persuaded did both strengthen the meditation of those holy words which were uttered in that sort, and serve also to make

ⁿ Isa. vi. 1, 3.

attentive, and to raise up the hearts of men ; a thing whereunto God's people of old did resort, with hope and thirst that thereby especially their souls might be edified ; a thing which filleth the mind with comfort and heavenly delight, stirreth up fragrant desires and affections correspondent unto that which the words contain ; allayeth all kinds of base and earthly cogitations ; banisheth and driveth away those evil secret suggestions which our invisible enemy is always apt to minister, watereth the heart to the end it may fructify, maketh the virtuous in trouble full of magnanimity and courage, serveth as a most approved remedy against all doleful and heavy accidents which befall men in this present life ; to conclude, so fitly accordeth with the apostle's own exhortation, "Speak to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, making melody, and singing to the Lord in your hearts^o :"—surely there is more cause to fear lest the want thereof be a maim than the use a blemish to the service of God.

Let novelty therefore in this give over endless contradictions, and let ancient custom prevail^b.

SECTION XXXI.

OF MAGNIFICAT, BENEDICTUS, AND NUNC DIMITTIS.

WE have already given cause sufficient for the great conveniency and use of reading the Psalms oftener than other scriptures. Of reading or singing likewise *Magnificat*, *Benedictus*, and *Nunc Dimittis* oftener than the rest of the Psalms, the causes are no less reasonable: so that if the one may very well monthly the other may as well even daily be iterated. They are songs which concern us so much more than the songs of David, as the gospel touches us more than the law, the New Testament than the Old.

For the ancient received use of intermin-

^b This is so expressed, because the Puritans inveighed against the custom of alternate recitation of the Psalms.

gling hymns and psalms with divine readings, enough hath been written. And if any may fitly serve unto that purpose, how should it better have been devised than that a competent number of the old being first read, those of the new should succeed in the place where now they are set? they are the first gratulations wherewith our Lord and Saviour was joyfully received at his entrance into the world, by such as in their hearts, arms, and very bowels embraced him; being propheticall discoveries of Christ already present, whose future coming the other Psalms did but foreshew, they are against the obstinate incredulity of the Jews the most luculent testimonies that Christian religion hath; yea, the only sacred hymns they are that Christianity hath peculiar unto itself, the others being songs too of praise and thanksgiving, but songs wherewith as we serve God, so the Jew likewise. Ezechias amongst many other good things is commended for this also, that the praises of God were through his approvement daily set forth, by using in public divine service the

songs of David and Asaph unto that very end p. Ezechias was persuaded, as we are, that the praises of God in the mouth of his saints are not so restrained to their own particular, but that others may both conveniently and fruitfully use them: first, because the mystical communion of all faithful men is such as maketh *every* one to be interested in those precious blessings which *any* one of them receiveth at God's hands; secondly, because when any thing is spoken to extol the goodness of God whose mercy endureth for ever, albeit the particular occasion whereupon it riseth do come no more, yet the fountain continuing the same, and yielding other new effects, which are but only in some sort proportionable; a small resemblance between the benefit which we and others have received may serve to make the same words of praise and thanksgiving fit, though not equally in all circumstances fit, for both; a clear demonstration whereof we have in all the ancient fathers' commentaries and meditations upon the Psalms;

last of all because even when there is not as much as the show of any resemblance, nevertheless by often using their words in such manner, our minds are daily more and more inured with their affections.

SECTION XXXII.

OF THE LITANY.

THE public estate of the church of God amongst the Jews hath had many rare and extraordinary occurrents, which also were occasions of sundry open solemnities and offices, whereby the people did with general consent make show of correspondent affection towards God. The like duties appear usual in the ancient Church of Christ, by that which Tertullian speaketh of Christian women matching themselves with Infidels. "She cannot content the Lord with performance of His discipline, that hath at her side a vassal whom Satan hath made his vice-agent to cross whatsoever the faithful should do. If her

presence be required at the time of station or standing prayer, he chargeth her at no time but that to be with him in his baths; if a fasting-day come, he hath on that day a banquet to make; if there be cause for the church to go forth in solemn procession, his whole family have such business come upon them that no one can be spared." These processions, as it seemeth, were first begun for the interring of holy martyrs, and the visiting of those places where they were entombed. And as things intended to one purpose are by use easily converted to more, it grew that supplications with this solemnity for the appeasing of God's wrath, and the averting of public evils, were of the Greek Church termed Litanies; Rogations, of the Latin. To the people of Vienne, (Mamercus being their bishop, about four hundred years after Christ,) there befell many things, the suddeness and strangeness whereof so amazed the hearts of all men, that the city they began to forsake as a place which heaven did threaten with imminent ruin. It beseemed not the person of so grave a

prelate to be either utterly without counsel as the rest were, or in a common perplexity to shew himself alone secure. Wherefore, as many as remained he earnestly exhorted to prevent portended calamities, using those virtuous and holy means wherewith others in like case have prevailed with God. To which purpose he perfecteth the Rogations or Litanies before in use, and addeth unto them that which the present necessity required. Their good success moved Sidonius bishop of Auvergne to use the same so corrected Rogations, at such time as he and his people were afflicted with famine, and besieged with potent adversaries. For till the empty name of the empire came to be settled in Charles the Great, the fall of the Romans' huge dominion concurring with other universal evils, caused those times to be days of much affliction and trouble throughout the world. So that Rogations or Litanies were then the very strength, stay, and comfort of God's Church. Whereupon in the year five hundred and six it was by the council of Aurelia decreed, that the whole

Church should bestow yearly on the feast of Pentecost three days in that kind of processional service. About half a hundred years after, to the end that the Latin churches, which all observed this custom, might not vary in the order and form of those great Litanies which were so solemnly everywhere exercised, it was thought convenient by Gregory the first and best of that name to draw the flower of them all into one.

. As therefore Litanies have been of longer continuance than that we should make either Gregory or Mamercus the author of them, so they are of more permanent use than that now the church should think it needeth them not. What dangers at any time are imminent, what evils hang over our heads, God doth know and not we. We find by daily experience that those calamities may be nearest at hand readiest to break in suddenly upon us, which we in regard of times and circumstances may imagine to be farthest off. Or if they do not indeed approach, yet such miseries as being present all men are apt to bewail with tears,

the wise by their prayers should rather prevent. Finally, if we ourselves had a privilege of immunity, doth not true Christian charity require that whatsoever any part of the world, yea any one of all our brethren elsewhere, doth either suffer or fear, the same we account as our own burden? What one petition is there found in the whole Litany, whereof we shall at any time be able to say, that no man living needeth the grace or benefit therein craved at God's hands?

SECTION XXXIII.

OF THE CREEDS OF THE CHURCH, ESPECIALLY
THE ATHANASIAN CREED.

WE have from the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ received that brief confession of faith which hath been always a badge of the church, a mark whereby to discern Christian men from infidels and Jews. This faith received from the apostles and their disciples,

(saith Irenæus) “ the Church though dispersed throughout the world, doth notwithstanding keep as safe as if it dwelt within the walls of some one house, and as uniformly hold as if it had but one only heart and soul ; this as consonantly it preacheth, teacheth, and delivereth, as if but one tongue did speak for all. As one sun shineth to the whole world, so there is no faith but this one published, the brightness whereof must enlighten all that come to the knowledge of the truth.” “ This rule,” saith Tertullian, “ Christ did institute; the stream and current of this rule hath gone as far, it hath continued as long, as the very promulgation of the Gospel.”

Under Constantine the emperor, about three hundred years and upward after Christ, Arius, a priest in the church of Alexandria, a subtle witted and a marvellous fair-spoken man, but discontented that one should be placed before him in honour, whose superior he thought himself in desert, became through envy and stomach prone unto contradiction, and bold to broach at the length that heresy, wherein the

Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, contained but not opened in the former creed, the coequality and coeternity of the Son with the Father, was denied. Being for this impiety deprived of his place by the bishop of the same church, the punishment which should have reformed him did but increase his obstinacy, and give him occasion of labouring with greater earnestness elsewhere to entangle unwary minds with the snares of his damnable opinion. Arius in a short time had won to himself a number both of followers and of great defenders, whereupon much disquietness on all sides ensued. The emperor, to reduce the Church of Christ unto the unity of sound belief, when other means whereof trial was first made took no effect, gathered that famous assembly of 318 bishops in the council of Nice, where besides order taken for many things which seemed to need redress, there was with common consent, for the settling of all men's minds, that other confession of faith set down which we call the Nicene Creed; whereunto the Arians themselves who were present subscribed also, not that they

meant sincerely and indeed to forsake their error, but only to escape deprivation and exile. Until Constantine's death and somewhat after they professed love and zeal to the Nicene faith, yet ceased not in the meanwhile to strengthen that part which in heart they favoured, and to infest by all means under colour of other quarrels their greatest adversaries in this cause : amongst them Athanasius especially, whom by the space of forty-six years, from the time of his consecration to succeed Alexander, archbishop in the church of Alexandria, till the last hour of his life in this world, they never suffered to enjoy the comfort of a peaceable day. The heart of Constantine stolen from him, Constantius, Constantine's successor, his scourge and torment, by all the ways that malice armed with sovereign authority could devise and use : under Julian, no rest given him ; and in the days of Valentinian as little. Crimes there were laid to his charge many, the least whereof being just, had bereaved him of estimation and credit with men while the world standeth. His

judges evermore the selfsame men by whom his accusers were suborned : yet the issue always on their part shame ; on his, triumph. Those bishops and prelates, who should have accounted his cause theirs, and could not, many of them, but with bleeding hearts and watered cheeks behold a person of so great place and worth constrained to endure so foul indignities, were sure, by bewraying their affection towards him, to bring upon themselves those molestations, whereby if they would not be drawn to seem his adversaries, yet others should be taught how unsafe it was to continue his friends. Whereupon it came to pass in the end, that, very few excepted, all became subject to the sway of time ; other odds there were none among them, saving only that some fell sooner away, some later, from the soundness of belief : some were leaders in the host of impiety, and the rest as common soldiers ; either yielding through fear, or brought under with penury, or by flattery ensnared, or else beguiled through simplicity ; which is the fairest excuse that well may be

made for them. Such was the stream of those times that all men gave place unto it. Only in Athanasius there was nothing observed in the course of that long tragedy, other than such as very well became a wise man to do, and a righteous to suffer. So that this was the plain condition of those times, the whole world against Athanasius, and Athanasius against it: half a hundred of years spent in doubtful trial which of the two in the end would prevail, the side which had all, or else the part which had no friend but God and death, the one a defender of his innocency, the other a finisher of all his troubles.

Now although these contentions were the cause of much evil, yet some good the Church hath reaped by them, in that they occasioned the learned and sound in faith to explain such things as heresy went about to deprave. And in this respect the Creed of Athanasius was accepted as a treasure of inestimable price by as many as had not given up even the very ghost of belief. That which heresy did by sinister interpretations go about to pervert in

the first and most ancient Apostolic Creed, the same being by singular dexterity and plainness cleared from those heretical corruptions partly by this Creed of Athanasius, partly by that other set down in the Synod of Constantinople, comprehending together with the Nicene Creed an addition of other Articles which the Nicene Creed omitted, because the controversy then in hand needed no mention to be made of them; these catholic declarations of our belief, delivered by them who were so much nearer than we are unto the first publication thereof, and continuing needful for all men at all times to know:—these confessions, as testimonies of our continuance in the same faith to this present day, we rather use than any other gloss or paraphrase devised by ourselves, which though it were to the same effect, notwithstanding could not be of the like authority and credit. For that of Hilary to St. Augustine hath been ever, and is likely to be always true; “Your most religious wisdom knoweth how great their number is in the Church of God, whom the very authority

of men's names doth keep in that opinion which they hold already, or draw unto that which they have not before held."

SECTION XXXIV.

OF THE HYMN OF GLORY.

TOUCHING the hymn of glory, our usual conclusion to the Psalms, the glory of all things is that wherein their highest perfection doth consist^a; and the glory of God, that divine excellency whereby He is eminent above all things^b, His omnipotent, infinite, and eternal Being, which angels and glorified saints do intuitively behold^c; we on earth apprehend principally by faith, in part also by that kind of knowledge which groweth from experience of those effects, the greatness whereof exceedeth the powers and abilities of all creatures both in heaven and earth. God is glorified, when such His excellency above all things is with due admiration acknowledged^d.

a 1 Cor. xv. 40.

b Ex. xxxiii. 18. Heb. i. 3.

c Matt. xviii. 13.

d Josh. vii. 19. Ps. xxii. 23.

Which dutiful acknowledgment of God's excellency by occasion of special effects, being the very proper subject, and almost the only matter purposely treated of in the Psalms; if that joyful hymn of glory have any use in the Church of God, whose name we therewith extol and magnify; can we place it more fitly than where now it serveth as a close or conclusion to the Psalms? Neither is the form thereof newly or unnecessarily invented. We must (saith St. Basil) as we have received even so baptize, and as we baptize even so believe, and as we believe even so give glory. Baptizing, we use the Name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; confessing the Christian faith, we declare our belief in the Father, and in the Son, and in the Holy Ghost; ascribing glory unto God, we give it to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. It is the token of a true and sound understanding for matter of doctrine about the Trinity, when in ministering baptism, and making confession, and giving glory, there is a conjunction of all Three, and no one

of the Three severed from the other Two. It hath been the custom of the Church of Christ to end sometimes prayers, and sermons always, with words of glory,—that sacred Hymn of Glory, than which nothing doth sound more heavenly in the ears of faithful men. Albeit conflict with Arians brought forth the occasion of writing that Creed which long after was made a part of the Church Liturgy, as hymns and sentences of glory were a part thereof before; yet cause sufficient there is why both should remain in use, the one as a most divine explication of the chiefest articles of our Christian belief, the other as an heavenly acclamation of joyful applause to His praises in whom we believe; neither the one nor the other unworthy to be heard sounding as they are in the Church of Christ, whether Arianism live or die. Against which poison likewise if we think that the Church at this day needeth not those ancient preservatives which ages before us were so glad to use, we deceive ourselves greatly.

SECTION XXXV.

OF THE PRAYER IN THE LITANY AGAINST SUDDEN DEATH.

OUR good or evil estate after death dependeth most upon the quality of our lives. Yet somewhat there is why a virtuous mind should rather wish to depart this world with a kind of treatable dissolution, than to be suddenly cut off in a moment; rather to be taken, than snatched away from the face of the earth. Death is that which all men suffer, but not all men with one mind, neither all men in one manner. For being of necessity a thing common, it is through the manifold persuasions, dispositions, and occasions of men with equal desert, both of praise and dispraise shunned by some, by others desired. So that absolutely we cannot discommend, we cannot absolutely approve, either willingness to live or forwardness to die. And concerning the ways of death, albeit the choice thereof be only in His hands who alone hath power over all flesh, and unto whose appointment we ought with

patience meekly to submit ourselves; (for to be agents voluntarily in our own destruction is against both God and nature;) yet there is no doubt but in so great variety our desires will and may lawfully prefer one kind before another. Is there any man of worth and virtue, although not instructed in the school of Christ, or ever taught what the soundness of religion meaneth, that had not rather end the days of this transitory life as Cyrus in Xenophon, or in Plato Socrates are described, than to sink down with them of whom Eliheu hath said, *Memento moriuntur*^a, there is scarce an instant between their flourishing and their not being? But let us, who know what it is to die as Absalom^b or Ananias and Sapphira^c died—let us beg of God, that when the hour of our rest is come, the patterns of our dissolution may be Jacob^d, Moses^e, Joshua^f, David^g; who, leisureably ending their lives in peace, prayed for the mercies of God to come upon their posterity; replenished the hearts of the nearest unto them

a Job xxxiv. 20.

b 2 Sam. xviii. 15

c Acts v. 5. 10.

d Heb. xi. 21.

e Deut. xxxiv. 5.

f Josh. xxiv. 29.

g 1 Kings xi. 10.

with words of memorable consolation; strengthened men in the fear of God, gave them wholesome instructions of life, and confirmed them in true religion; in sum, taught the world no less virtuously how to die, than they had done before how to live. To such as judge things according to the sense of natural men, and ascend no higher, suddenness, because it shorteneth their grief, should in reason be most acceptable. That which causeth bitterness in death is the languishing attendance and expectation thereof ere it come. And therefore tyrants use what art they can to increase the slowness of death. Quick riddance out of life is often both requested and bestowed as a benefit. Commonly therefore it is for virtuous considerations that wisdom so far prevaieth with men, as to make them desirous of slow and deliberate death against the stream of their sensual inclination; content to endure the longer grief and bodily pain, that the soul may have time to call itself to a just account of all things past; by means whereof repentance is perfected, there is wherein to exercise

patience, the joys of the kingdom of heaven have leisure to present themselves, the pleasures of sin and this world's vanities are censured with uncorrupt judgment, charity is free to make advised choice of the soil wherein her last seed may most fruitfully be bestowed, the mind is at liberty to have due regard of that disposition of worldly things which it can never afterwards alter ; and because the nearer we draw unto God the more we are oftentimes enlightened with the shining beams of His glorious presence, as being then even almost in sight, a leisurable departure may in that case bring forth for the good of such as are present that which shall cause them for ever after from the bottom of their hearts to pray, " O let us die the death of the righteous, and let our last end be like theirs^h!" All which benefits and opportunities are by sudden death prevented.

And besides, forasmuch as death howsoever is a general effect of the wrath of God against sin, and the suddenness thereof a thing which

^h Numb. xxiii. 10.

happeneth but to few; the world in this respect feareth it the more, as being subject to doubtful constructions, which as no man willingly would incur, so they whose happy estate after life is of all men's the most certain, should especially wish that no such accident in their death may give uncharitable minds occasion of rash, sinister, and suspicious verdicts, whereunto they are over prone: so that whether evil men or good be respected, whether we regard ourselves or others, to be preserved from sudden death is a blessing of God. And our prayer against it importeth a twofold desire; first, that death when it cometh may give us some convenient respite; or, secondly, if that be denied us of God, yet we may have wisdom to provide always beforehand, that those evils overtake us not which death unexpected doth use to bring upon careless men; and that although it be sudden in itself, nevertheless in regard of our prepared minds it may not be sudden.

SECTION XXXVI.

OF CONFESSION OF OUR OWN UNWORTHINESS IN PRAYER^a.

THAT which we for our unworthiness are afraid to crave, our prayer is that God, for the worthiness of His Son, would notwithstanding vouchsafe to grant. In reference to other creatures of this inferior world, man's worth and excellency is admired. Compared with God, the truest inscription wherewith we can circle so base a coin is that of David, "Every man at his best state is altogether vanity^b:" whosoever hath the name of a mortal man, there is in him whatsoever the name of vanity doth comprehend. And therefore what we say of our own unworthiness, there is no doubt but truth will ratify.

^a This relates particularly to the last prayer but one in the Post Communion, That God would give us those things which we for our unworthiness dare not ask: which prayer was objected to by some Puritans as expressive of "servile fear."

^b Ps. xxxix. 5.

Alleged in prayer, it both becometh and behoveth saints. The consideration of our unworthiness maketh us fearful to open our mouths by way of suit. While Job had prosperity, and lived in honour, men feared him for his authority's sake, and in token of their fear when they saw him, they "hid themselves^c." Between Elihu and the rest of Job's familiars the greatest disparity was but in years. And he, though riper than they in judgment, doing them reverence in regard of age, stood long "doubtful," and very loath to adventure speech in his elders' hearing^d. If so small inequality between man and man make their modesty a commendable virtue who, respecting superiors as superiors can neither speak nor stand before them without fear: that the publican approacheth not more boldly to God; that when Christ in mercy draweth near to Peter, he in humility and fear craveth distance; that being to stand, to speak, to sue, in the presence of so great majesty, we are afraid, let no man blame us.

c Job xxix. 8.

d Job xxxii. 6.

In which consideration notwithstanding, because to fly altogether from God, to despair that creatures unworthy shall be able to obtain any thing at His hands, and under that pretence to surcease from prayers as bootless or fruitless offices, were to Him no less injurious than pernicious to our own souls, even that which we tremble to do we do ; we ask those things which we dare not ask. The knowledge of our own unworthiness is not without belief in the merits of Christ. With that true fear which the one causeth there is coupled true boldness and encouragement drawn from the other. The very silence which our unworthiness putteth us unto, doth itself make request for us, and that in the confidence of His grace. Looking inward, we are stricken dumb ; looking upward, we speak and prevail. O happy mixture, wherein things contrary do so qualify and correct, the one the danger of the other's excess, that neither boldness can make us presume, as long as we are kept under by the sense of our own wretchedness ; nor, while we trust in the mercy of God through

Christ Jesus, fear be able to tyrannize over us !

As therefore our fear excludeth not that boldness which becometh saints^e, so if their “ familiarity ” with God do not savour of this fear, it draweth too near that incoherent confidence wherewith true humility can never stand.

SECTION XXXVII.

OF PRAYER TO BE EVERMORE DELIVERED FROM
ALL ADVERSITY.

(See Collect for Trinity Sunday.)

MINDS religiously affected are wont, in every thing of weight and moment which they do or see, to examine according unto rules of piety what dependence it hath on God, what reference to themselves, what coherence with any of those duties whereunto all things in the world should lead: and accordingly they frame

^e Rom. v. 2. viii. 15. Heb. x. 19.

the inward disposition of their minds, sometime to admire God, sometime to bless Him and give Him thanks, sometime to exult in His love, sometime to implore His mercy. All which different elevations of spirit unto God are contained in the name of prayer. Every good and holy desire, though it lack the form, hath notwithstanding in itself the substance, and with Him the force of a prayer, who regardeth the very moanings, groans, and sighs of the heart of man. Petitionary prayer belongeth only to such as are in themselves impotent, and stand in need of relief from others. We thereby declare unto God what our own desire is that He by His power should effect. It presupposeth therefore in us, first, the want of that which we pray for ; secondly, a feeling of that want ; thirdly, an earnest willingness of mind to be eased therein ; fourthly, a declaration of this our desire in the sight of God, not as if He should be otherwise ignorant of our necessities, but because we this way shew that we honour Him as our God, and are verily persuaded that no good thing can come to

pass which He by His omnipotent power effecteth not. Now because there is no man's prayer acceptable whose person is odious, neither any man's person gracious without faith; it is of necessity required that they who pray do believe. The prayers which our Lord and Saviour made were for His own worthiness accepted; ours God accepteth not but with this condition, if they be joined with belief in Christ. The prayers of the just are accepted always, but not always those things granted for which they pray. For in prayer if faith and assurance to obtain were both one and the same thing, seeing that the effect of not obtaining is a plain testimony that they who prayed were not sure they should obtain, it would follow that their prayer being without certainty of the event, was also made unto God without faith, and consequently that God abhorred it. Which to think of so many prayers of saints as we find have failed in particular requests, how absurd were it! His faithful people have this comfort, that whatsoever they rightly ask, the same no doubt

but they shall receive, so far as may stand with the glory of God and their own everlasting good; unto either of which two, it is no virtuous man's purpose to seek, or desire to obtain any thing prejudicial; and therefore that clause which our Lord and Saviour in the prayer of his agony did express, we in petitions of like nature do always imply; "Father, if it be possible," if it may stand with thy will and pleasure. Or if not, but that there be secret impediments and causes, in regard whereof the thing we pray for is denied us; yet the prayer itself which we make is a pleasing sacrifice to God, who both accepteth and rewardeth it some other way. So that sinners, in very truth, are denied when they seem to prevail in their supplications^a, because it is not for their sakes, or to their good, that their suits take place; the faithful contrariwise, because it is for their good oftentimes that their petitions do not take place, prevail, even then when they most seem denied^b. "Our Lord

^a Numb. xi. 33. 1 Sam. viii. 7. Job i. 12. ii. 6. Luke viii. 32.

^b 2 Cor. xii. 7, 8, 9.

God in anger hath granted some impatient man's requests, as on the other side the apostle's suit He hath of favour and mercy not granted," saith St. Augustine.

To think we may pray unto God for nothing but what He hath promised in Holy Scripture we shall obtain, is perhaps an error. For of prayer there are two uses. It serveth as a mean to procure those things which God hath promised to grant when we ask ; and it serveth as a mean to express our lawful desires also towards that, which whether we shall have or no we know not till we see the event. Things in themselves unholy or unseemly we may not ask ; we may, whatsoever, being not forbidden, either nature or grace shall reasonably move us to wish as importing the good of men, albeit God himself have nowhere by promise assured us of that particular which our prayer craveth.

Some things our Lord knew should come to pass, and notwithstanding prayed for them, because He also knew that the necessary means to effect them were His prayers. As

in the Psalm it is said, "Ask of Me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the ends of the earth for thy possession^b."

Wherefore that which here God promiseth His Son, the same in the 17th of St. John He prayeth for; "Father, the hour is now come; glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee: according as Thou hast given Him power over all flesh." But had Christ the like promise concerning the effect of every particular for which He prayed? That which was not effected, could not be promised. And we know in what sort He prayed for removal of that bitter cup, which cup He tasted notwithstanding His prayer^c. Was Christ ignorant what God had determined touching those things which Himself should suffer? True it is, that the pangs of His heaviness and grief were unspeakable; and as true, that because the minds of the afflicted do never think they have fully conceived the weight or measure of their own woe, they use their affection as a whetstone both to wit and memory, these as nurses

^b Ps. xl. 8. ^c Matt. xxvi. 39. Mark xiv. 36. Luke xxii. 42.

to feed grief; so that the weaker His conceit had been touching that which He was to suffer, the more it must needs in that hour have helped to the mitigation of His anguish.

But His anguish we see was then at the very highest whereunto it could possibly rise; which argueth His deep apprehension, even to the last drop of the gall which that cup contained, and of every circumstance wherein there was any force to augment heaviness; but above all things, the resolute determination of God and His own unchangeable purpose, which He at that time could not forget. To what intent then was His prayer, which plainly testifieth so great willingness to avoid death? In Christ there is a divine and there is an human will, otherwise He were not both God and man. The works and operations of our Saviour's human will were all subject to the will of God, and framed according to His Law: "I desired to do Thy will, O God, and Thy law is within mine heart^d." Now, as man's will, so the will of Christ, hath two several kinds of ope-

^d Psalm xl. 8.

ration ; the one natural or necessary, whereby it desireth simply whatsoever is good in itself, and shunneth as generally all things which hurt ; the other deliberate, when we therefore embrace things as good, because the eye of understanding judgeth them good to that end which we simply desire. Thus in itself we desire health, physic only for health's sake. And in this sort special reason oftentimes causeth the will by choice to prefer one good thing before another, to leave one for another's sake, to forego meaner for the attainment of higher desires, which our Saviour likewise did.

These different inclinations of the will considered, the reason is easy how in Christ there might grow desires seeming but being not indeed opposite either the one of them unto the other, or either of them unto the will of God : for let the manner of His speech be weighed : " My soul is now troubled ; and what shall I say ? Father, save me out of this hour : but yet for this very cause am I come into this hour ^e." His purpose herein was

^e John xii. 27.

most effectually to propose to the view of the whole world two contrary objects, the like whereunto in force and efficacy were never presented in that manner to any, but only to the soul of Christ. There was presented before His eyes in that fearful hour, on the one side, God's heavy indignation and wrath towards mankind as yet unappeased, death as yet in full strength, hell as yet never mastered by any that came within the confines and bounds thereof, somewhat also peradventure more than is either possible or needful for the wit of man to find out ; finally himself, flesh and blood, left alone to enter into conflict with all these^f: on the other side, a world to be saved by one, a pacification of wrath through the dignity of that sacrifice which should be offered, a conquest over death through the power of that Deity which would not suffer the tabernacle thereof to see corruption, and an utter disappointment of all the forces of infernal powers, through the purity of that soul which they should have in their hands

f Matt. xxvii. 46.

and not be able to touch. Let no man marvel that in this case the soul of Christ was much troubled. For what could such apprehensions breed, but (as their nature is) inexplicable passions of mind, desires abhorring what they embrace, and embracing what they abhor : in which agony, “ how should the tongue go about to express what the soul endureth ? ” When the griefs of Job were exceeding great, his words accordingly to open them were many ; howbeit still unto his seeming they were undiscovered : “ Though my talk (saith Job) be this day in bitterness, yet my plague is greater than my groaningg.” But here to what purpose should words serve, when nature hath more to declare than groans and strong cries, more than streams of bloody sweats, more than his doubled and tripled prayers can express, who thrice putting forth his hand to receive that cup, besides which there was no other cause of his coming into the world, he thrice pulleth it back again, and as often, even

with tears of blood, craveth, "If it be possible, O Father; or if not, even what thine own good pleasure is;" for whose sake the passion, that hath in it a bitter and a bloody conflict, even with wrath, and death, and hell, is most welcome.

Whereas therefore we find in God a will resolved that Christ should suffer, and in the human will of Christ two actual desires, the one avoiding and the other accepting death; is that desire which first declareth itself by prayer against that wherewith He concludeth prayer, or either of them against His mind to whom prayer in this case seeketh? The will about one and the same thing may in contrary respects have contrary inclinations, and that without contrariety. The minister of justice may, for public example to others, virtuously will the execution of that party, whose pardon another, for consanguinity's sake, as virtuously may desire. Consider death in itself, and nature teacheth Christ to shun it. Consider death as a mean to procure the salvation of the world, and mercy worketh in Christ all

willingness of mind towards it^h. Therefore in these two desires there can be no repugnant opposition. Again, compare them with the will of God, and if any opposition be, it must be only between His appointment of Christ's death, and the former desire which wisheth deliverance from death. • But neither is this desire opposite to the will of God. The will of God was that Christ should suffer the pains of death. Not so His will, as if the torment of innocency did in itself please and delight God, but such was His will in regard of the end whereunto it was necessary that Christ should suffer. The death of Christ in itself therefore God willeth not, which to the end we might thereby obtain life He both alloweth and appointeth. In like manner the Son of Man endureth willingly to that purpose those grievous pains, which simply not to have shunned had been against nature, and, by consequent, against God. Prayers in truth both ours are and His were, as well sometime

^h Isaiah liii. 10. John x. 15.

a presentation of mere desires, as a mean of procuring desired effects at the hands of God.

We are therefore taught by His example, that the presence of dolorous and dreadful objects, even in minds most perfect, may as clouds overcast all sensible joy; that no assurance touching future victories can make present conflicts so sweet and easy, but nature will shun and shrink from them, nature will desire ease and deliverance from oppressive burthens; that the contrary determination of God is oftentimes against the effect of this desire, yet not against the affection itself, because it is naturally in us; that in such case our prayers cannot serve us as means to obtain the thing we desire; that notwithstanding they are unto God most acceptable sacrifices, because they testify we desire nothing but at His hands, and our desires we submit with contentment to be overruled by His will; and in general they are not repugnant unto the natural will of God, who wisheth to the works of his own hands, in that they are his own handy-work, all happiness, although perhaps for some spe-

cial cause in our own particular, a contrary determination have seemed more convenient ; finally, that thus to propose our desires, which cannot take such effect as we specify, shall notwithstanding otherwise procure us His heavenly grace, even as this very prayer of Christ obtained angels to be sent Him as comforters in His agonyⁱ. And, according to this example, we are not afraid to present unto God our prayers for those things, which that he will perform unto us we have no sure nor certain knowledge. St. Paul's prayer for the Church of Corinth was, that they might not do any evil^k, although he knew that no man liveth who sinneth not, although he knew that in this life we always must pray, "Forgive us our sins." It is our frailty that in many things we all do amiss ; but a virtue, that we would do amiss in nothing ; and a testimony of that virtue, when we pray that what occasion of sin soever do offer itself, we may be strengthened from above to withstand it. They pray in vain to have sin pardoned, who seek not

i Luke xxii. 43.

k 2 Cor. xiii. 7.

also to prevent sin by prayer, even every particular sin by prayer against all sin; except men can name some transgression wherewith we ought to have truce. For in very deed although we cannot be free from all sin collectively, in such sort that no part thereof shall be found inherent in us, yet distributively at the least all great and grievous actual offences, as they offer themselves one by one, both may and ought to be by all means avoided. So that in this sense to be preserved from all sin is not impossible¹.

Finally, concerning deliverance itself from all adversity; we use not to say men are in adversity whensoever they feel any small hinderance of their welfare in this world, but when some notable affliction or cross, some great calamity or trouble befalleth them. Tribulation hath in it divers circumstances, the mind sundry faculties to apprehend them. It offereth sometime itself to the lower parts of the

¹ This remark is made, because the Puritans said, "We may not pray in this life to be free from all sin, because we must always pray, 'Forgive us our sins.'"

soul as a most unpleasant spectacle, to the higher sometime as drawing after it a train of dangerous inconveniences : sometime as bringing with it remedies for the curing of sundry evils, as God's instruments of revenge and fury sometime, sometime as a rod of His just yet moderate ire and displeasure, sometime as matter for them that spitefully hate us to exercise their poisoned malice, sometime as a furnace of trial for virtue to shew itself, and through conflict to obtain glory. Which different contemplations of adversity do work for the most part their answerable effects. Adversity, either apprehended by sense as a thing offensive and grievous unto nature ; or by reason conceived as a snare, an occasion of many men's falling from God, a sequel of God's indignation and wrath, a thing which Satan desireth and would be glad to behold ; tribulation thus considered being present causeth sorrow, and being imminent breedeth fear. For moderation of which two affections, growing from the very natural bitterness and gall of adversity, the Scripture much allegeth con-

trary fruits, which affliction likewise hath whensoever it falleth on them that are tractable^m, the grace of God's Holy Spirit concurring therewith. But when the apostle St. Paul teacheth that every one who will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecutionⁿ, and by many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of heaven^o, because in a forest of many wolves, sheep cannot choose but feed in continual danger of life; or when St. James exhorteth to account it a matter of exceeding joy when we fall into divers temptations^p, because by the trial of faith patience is brought forth; was it, suppose we, their meaning to frustrate our Lord's admonition, "Pray that ye enter not into temptation?" when Himself pronounceth them blessed that should for His name's sake be subject to all kinds of ignominy and opprobrious malediction, was it His purpose that no man should ever pray with David, "Lord, remove from me shame and contempt^q?" "In those tribulations,"

^m Psalm cxix. 71.

ⁿ 2 Tim. iii. 12.

^o Acts xiv. 22.

^p James i. 2.

^q Psalm cxix. 22.

saith St. Augustine, " which may hurt as well as profit, we must say with the apostle, What we should ask as we ought we know not ; yet because they are tough, because they are grievous, because the sense of our weakness flieth them, we pray, according to the general desire of the will of man, that God would turn them away from us ; owing in the meanwhile this devotion to the Lord our God, that if He remove them not, yet we do not therefore imagine ourselves in His sight despised, but rather with godly sufferance of evils expect greater good at His merciful hands. For thus is virtue in weakness perfected." To the flesh (as the apostle himself granteth) all affliction is naturally grievous^r. Therefore nature, which causeth to fear, teacheth to pray against all adversity. Prosperity, in regard of our corrupt inclination to abuse the blessings of Almighty God, doth prove for the most part a thing dangerous to the souls of men. Very ease itself is death to the wicked, and the prosperity of fools slayeth them^s ; their table is a snare,

^r Heb. xii. 11.

^s Prov. i. 32.

and their felicity their utter overthrow. Few men there are who long prosper and sin not. Howbeit, even as these ill effects, though they be very usual and common, are no bar to the hearty prayers whereby most virtuous minds wish peace and prosperity always where they love, because they consider that this in itself is a thing naturally desired; so because all adversity is in itself against nature, what should hinder to pray against it, although the providence of God turn it often unto the great good of many men? Such prayers of the Church to be delivered from all adversity are no more repugnant to any reasonable disposition of men's minds towards death, much less to that blessed patience and meek contentment which saints by heavenly inspiration have to endure what cross or calamity soever it pleaseth God to lay upon them, than our Lord and Saviour's own prayer before His passion was repugnant unto His most gracious resolution to die for the sins of the whole world.

SECTION XXXVIII.

OF THE PRAYER IN THE LITANY, HAVE MERCY
UPON ALL MEN.

IN praying for deliverance from all adversity we seek that which nature doth wish to itself; but by intreating for mercy towards all, we declare that affection wherewith Christian charity thirsteth after the good of the whole world, we discharge that duty which the Apostle himself doth impose on the Church of Christ as a commendable office, a sacrifice acceptable in God's sight, a service according to His heart whose desire is to have all men saved^a, a work most suitable with His purpose who gave Himself to be the price of redemption for all, and a forcible mean to procure the conversion of all such as are not yet acquainted with the mysteries of that truth which must save their souls. There is in the knowledge both of God and man this certainty, that life and death have divided between them the

^a 1 Tim. ii. 3.

whole body of mankind. What portion either of the two hath, God Himself knoweth ; for us He hath left no sufficient means to comprehend, and for that cause neither given any leave to search in particular who are infallibly the heirs of the kingdom of God, who castaways. Howbeit concerning the state of all men with whom we live (for only of them our prayers are meant) we may till the world's end, for the present, always presume, that as far as in us there is power to discern what others are, and as far as any duty of ours dependeth upon the notice of their condition in respect of God, the safest axioms for charity to rest itself upon are these : He who believeth already, is, and he who believeth not as yet may be the child of God. It becometh not us during life altogether to condemn any man, seeing that (for any thing we know) there is hope of every man's forgiveness, the possibility of whose repentance is not yet cut off by death. And therefore charity, which hopeth all things^b, prayeth also for all men.

b 1 Cor. xiii. 7.

Wherefore to let go personal knowledge touching vessels of wrath and mercy: what they are inwardly in the sight of God it skilleth not, for us there is cause sufficient in all men whereupon to ground our prayers to God in their behalf. For whatsoever the mind of man apprehendeth as good, the will of charity and love is to have it enlarged in the very uttermost extent, that all may enjoy it to whom it can any way add perfection. Because therefore the farther a good thing doth reach the nobler and worthier we reckon it, our prayers for all men's good no less than for our own the Apostle with very fit terms commendeth as being a work commendable for the largeness of the affection from whence it springeth; even as theirs who have requested at God's hands the salvation of many with the loss of their own souls^c, drowning as it were and overwhelming themselves in the abundance of their love towards others, is proposed as being in regard of the rareness of such affections, more than excellent. But this extraordinary height

c Romans ix. 3. 8. x. 1.

of desire after other men's salvation is no common mark: the other is a duty which belongeth unto all, and prevaileth with God daily. For as it is in itself good, so God accepteth and taketh it in very good part at the hands of faithful men. Our prayers for all men do include both them that shall find mercy, and them also that shall find none. For them that shall, no man will doubt but our prayers are both accepted and granted. Touching them for whom we crave that mercy which is not to be obtained, let us not think that our Saviour did misinstruct His disciples^d, willing them to pray for the peace even of such as should be incapable of so great a blessing; or that the prayers of the prophet Jeremy offended God^e, because the answer of God was a resolute denial of favour to them for whom supplication was made.

When the object or matter therefore of our desires is (as in this case) a thing both good in itself and not forbidden of God; when the end for which we desire it, is virtuous and

d Matt. x. 11, 12.

e Jer. xv. 1.

apparently most holy ; when the root from which our affection towards it proceedeth is charity, piety that which we do in declaring our desire by prayer ; yea over and besides all this, since we know that to pray for all men living is but to shew the same affection, which towards every of them our Lord Jesus Christ hath borne, who knowing only as God who are His, did as man taste death for the good of all men : surely to that will of God, which ought to be, and is the known rule of all our actions, we do not herein oppose ourselves, although his secret determination haply be against us ; which if we did understand, as we do not, yet to rest contented with that which God will have done, is as much as He requireth at the hands of man. And concerning ourselves, what we earnestly crave in this case, the same, as all things else that are of like condition, we meekly submit unto His most gracious will and pleasure.

Finally ; as we have cause sufficient why to think the practice of our Church allowable in this behalf, so neither is ours the first which

hath been of that mind. For, to end with the words of Prosper : “ This law of supplication for all men, saith he, the devout zeal of all priests and of all faithful men doth hold with such full agreement, that there is not any part of all the world where Christian people do not use to pray in the same manner. The Church every where maketh prayers unto God, not only for saints and such as already in Christ are regenerate, but for all infidels and enemies of the cross of Jesus Christ, for all idolaters, for all that persecute Christ in His followers, for Jews to whose blindness the light of the Gospel doth not yet shine, for heretics and schismatics, who from the unity of faith and charity are estranged. And for such what doth the Church ask of God but this, that leaving their errors they may be converted unto Him, that faith and charity may be given them, and that out of the darkness of ignorance they may come to the knowledge of His truth? which because they cannot themselves do in their own behalf as long as the sway of evil custom overbeareth them, and the chains

of Satan detain them bound, neither are they able to break through those errors wherein they are so determinately settled, that they pay unto falsity the whole sum of whatsoever love is owing unto God's truth, our Lord merciful and just requireth to have all men prayed for, that when we behold innumerable multitudes drawn up from the depth of so bottomless evils, we may not doubt but, in part, God hath done the thing we requested, nor despair, but that being thankful for them towards whom already He hath shewed mercy, the rest which are not as yet enlightened, shall before they pass out of life be made partakers of the like grace. Or if the grace of Him who saveth (for so we see it falleth out) overpass some, so that the prayer of the Church for them be not received, this we may leave to the hidden judgments of God's righteousness, and acknowledge that in this secret there is a gulph, which while we live we shall never sound.



SECTION XXXIX.

OF SACRAMENTS IN GENERAL.

INSTRUCTION and prayer, whereof we have hitherto spoken, are duties which serve as elements, parts, or principles to the rest that follow; in which number the sacraments of the Church are chief. The Church is to us that very mother of our new birth^a, in whose bowels we are all bred, at whose breasts we receive nourishment. As often as we mention a sacrament properly understood, (for in the writings of the ancient Fathers all Articles which are peculiar to Christian faith, all duties of religion containing that which sense or natural reason cannot of itself discern, are most commonly named Sacraments,) our restraint of the word to some few principal divine ceremonies, importeth in every such ceremony two things; the substance of the ceremony itself which is visible, and besides

a Gal. iv. 26. Isalah liv. 3.

that somewhat else more secret, in reference whereunto we conceive that ceremony to be a sacrament. For we all admire and honour the holy sacraments, not respecting so much the service which we do unto God in receiving them, as the dignity of that sacred and secret gift which we thereby receive from God. Seeing that sacraments therefore consist altogether in relation to some such gift or grace supernatural, as only God can bestow, how should any but the Church administer those ceremonies as sacraments, which are not thought to be sacraments by any but the Church? The use of sacraments is but only in this life, yet so, that here they concern a far better life than this, and are for that cause accompanied with grace which worketh salvation. Sacraments are the powerful instruments of God to eternal life: for as our natural life consisteth in the union of the body with the soul, so our life supernatural in the union of the soul with God. And forasmuch as there is no union of God with man, without that mean between both which is both, it seemeth

requisite, that we must first consider how God is in Christ, then how Christ is in us, and how the sacraments do serve to make us partakers of Christ.

SECTION XL.

OF THE UNION OF GOD AND MAN IN THE PERSON OF CHRIST.

“THE Lord our God is but one God.” In which indivisible unity notwithstanding, we adore the Father, as being altogether of Himself; we glorify that consubstantial Word which is the Son; we bless and magnify that co-essential Spirit eternally proceeding from both, which is the Holy Ghost. Seeing, therefore, the Father is of none, the Son is of the Father, and the Spirit is of both, they are by these their several properties really distinguishable each from other. For the substance of God with this property, to be of none, doth make the person of the Father; the very self-same substance in number with this property,

to be of the Father, maketh the person of the Son; the same substance having added unto it the property of proceeding from the other two, maketh the person of the Holy Ghost. So that in every person there is implied both the substance of God, which is one; and also that property which causeth the same person really and truly to differ from the other two.

Now when God became man, lest we should err in applying this to the person of the Father, or of the Spirit, St. Peter's confession unto Christ was, "Thou art the Son of the living God ^a;" and St. John's exposition thereof was made plain, that it is the Word ^b which was made flesh. "The Father and the Holy Ghost (saith Damascen) have no communion with the incarnation of the Word, otherwise than only by approbation and assent."

Notwithstanding, forasmuch as the Word and Deity are one subject, we must beware we exclude not the nature of God from incarnation, and so make the Son of God incarnate

^a Matt. xvi. 16.

^b John i. 14.

not to be very God. For, undoubtedly, even the nature of God itself in the only person of the Son is incarnate, and hath taken to itself flesh. Wherefore, incarnation may neither be granted to any person but only one, nor yet denied to that nature which is common unto all three.

Concerning the cause of which incomprehensible mystery, forasmuch as it seemeth a thing inconsonant that the world should honour any other as the Saviour, but Him whom it honoureth as the Creator of the world, and in the wisdom of God it hath not been thought convenient to admit any way of saving man but by man himself; though nothing should be spoken of the love and mercy of God towards man, which this way are become such a spectacle as neither men nor angels can behold without a kind of heavenly astonishment; we may hereby perceive there is cause sufficient why Divine nature should assume human, that so God might be in Christ reconciling to Himself the world^c. And if some

cause be likewise required, why rather to this end and purpose the Son, than either the Father or the Holy Ghost, should be made man; could we who are born the children of wrath, be adopted the sons of God, through grace, any other than the natural Son of God being mediator between God and us? It became therefore Him, by whom all things^d are, to be the way of salvation to all, that the institution and restitution of the world might be both wrought by one hand, The world's salvation was without the incarnation of the Son of God a thing impossible; not simply impossible, but impossible, it being presupposed that the will of God was no otherwise to have it saved, than by the death of His own Son. Wherefore, taking to Himself our flesh, and by His incarnation making it His own flesh, He had now of His own, although from us, what to offer unto God for us.

And as Christ took manhood, that by it He might be capable of death, whereunto He humbled Himself; so, because manhood is the

^d Heb. ii. 10. Col. i. 15. 18.

proper subject of compassion and feeling pity, which maketh the ceptre of Christ's regency even in the kingdom of heaven amiable, He who without our nature could not on earth suffer for the sins of the world, doth now also, by means thereof^e, both make intercession to God for sinners, and exercise dominion over all men with a true, a natural, and a sensible touch of mercy.

It is not in man's ability either to express perfectly, or conceive the manner how this was brought to pass. But the strength of our faith is tried by those things wherein our wits and capacities are not strong.

SECTION XLI.

OF THE EXALTATION OF HUMAN NATURE BY
CHRIST'S INCARNATION.

IF then both natures do remain with their properties in Christ thus distinct, as hath been

^e Heb. iv. 15.

shewed, we are, for our better understanding what either nature receiveth from other, to note, that Christ is by three degrees a receiver; first, in that He is the Son of God; secondly, in that His human nature hath had the honour of union with Deity bestowed upon it; thirdly, in that by means thereof sundry eminent graces have flowed as effects from Deity into that nature which is coupled with it. On Christ, therefore, is bestowed the gift of eternal generation, the gift of union, and the gift of unction.

By the gift of eternal generation, Christ hath received of the Father one ~~and~~ and in number the selfsame substance, which the Father hath of Himself unreceived from any other. For every "beginning^a" is a father unto that which cometh of it, and every "offspring" is a son unto that out of which it groweth. Seeing, therefore, the Father alone is originally that Deity which Christ originally is not, (for Christ is God by being of God; light by issuing out of light); it followeth hereupon,

a Ephes. iii. 15.

that whatsoever Christ hath common unto Him with His heavenly Father, the same of necessity must be given Him, but naturally and eternally given; not bestowed by way of benevolence and favour, as the other gifts both are. And, therefore, where the Fathers give it out for a rule, that whatsoever Christ is said in Scripture to have received, the same we ought to apply only to the manhood of Christ: their assertion is true of all things which Christ hath received by grace; but to that which He hath received of the Father by eternal nativity or birth, it reacheth not.

Touching union of Deity with manhood, it is by grace, because there can be no greater grace shewed towards men, than that God should vouchsafe to unite unto man's nature the person of His only begotten Son. Because "the Father loveth the Son^b" as man, He hath by uniting Deity with manhood, "given all things into His hands." It hath pleased the Father, that in Him "all fulness should dwell^c." The name which He hath above all

b John iii. 35.

c Ephes. i. 5. Colos. i. 19.

names is given Him^d. "As the Father hath life in Himself," the Son in Himself hath life also by the gift of the Father^e. The gift whereby God hath made Christ a fountain of life, is that "conjunction of the nature of God with the nature of man^f in the person of Christ, which gift (saith Christ to the woman of Samaria) if thou didst know, and in that respect understand who it is who asketh water of thee, thou wouldest ask of Him, that He might give thee living water^g." The union therefore of the flesh with Deity, is to that flesh a gift of principal grace and favour: for, by virtue of this grace, man is really made God, a creature is exalted above the dignity of all creatures, and hath all creatures else under it.

This admirable union of God with man can enforce in that higher nature no alteration, because unto God there is nothing more natural, than not to be subject to any change. God from us can receive nothing, we by Him have obtained much. For albeit, the natural

^d Phil. ii, 9. ^e John v. 26. ^f John v. 20. ^g John iv. 10.

properties of Deity be not communicable to man's nature, the supernatural gifts graces and effects thereof are.

The honour which our flesh hath by being the flesh of the Son of God, is in many respects great. If we respect but that which is common unto us with Him, the glory provided for Him and His in the kingdom of heaven, His right and title thereunto, even in that He is man, differeth from other men's, because He is that man of whom God is Himself a part. We have right to the same inheritance with Christ; but not the same right which He hath; His being such as we cannot reach, and ours such as He cannot stoop unto.

Furthermore, to be the way, the truth, and the life; to be the wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, resurrection; to be the peace of the whole world, the hope of the righteous, the heir of all things; to be that supreme head whereunto all power, both in heaven and in earth, is given: These are not honours common to Christ with other men; they are titles above the dignity and worth of any who

were but a mere man, yet true of Christ, even in that He is man ; but man with whom Deity is personally joined, and unto whom it hath added those excellencies which make Him more than worthy thereof.

Finally, since God hath deified our nature, though not by turning it into Himself, yet by making it His own inseparable habitation, we cannot now conceive how God should without man, either exercise Divine power, or receive the glory of Divine praise ; for man is in both an associate of Deity.

But to come to the grace of unction : did the parts of our nature, the soul and body of Christ, receive by the influence of Deity wherewith they were matched, no ability of operation, no virtue, or quality above nature ? Surely, as the sword which is made fiery, doth not only cut by reason of the sharpness which simply it hath, but also burn by means of that heat which it hath from fire ; so, there is no doubt but the Deity of Christ hath enabled that nature which it took of man, to do more than man in this world hath power to compre-

hend; forasmuch as (the bare essential properties of the Deity excepted) He hath imparted unto it all things, He hath replenished it with all such perfections, as the same is any way apt to receive, at the least, according to the exigence of that economy or service for which it pleased Him in love and mercy to be made man. For as the parts, degrees, and offices of that mystical administration did require, which He voluntarily undertook, the beams of Deity did in operation always accordingly either restrain or enlarge themselves^h.

From hence we may somewhat conjecture, how the powers of that soul are illuminated, which being so inward unto God, cannot choose but be privy unto all things which God worketh, and must therefore of necessity be endued with knowledge so far forth universalⁱ, though not with infinite knowledge peculiar to Deity itself. The soul of Christ that saw in this life the face of God, was here, through so visible presence of Deity, filled with all manner of graces and virtues in that unmatch-

^h Matt. xxvii. 46.

ⁱ Col. ii. 3.

able degree of perfection, for which, of Him we read it written, "That God with the oil of gladness anointed Him above His fellows^k."

And as God hath in Christ unspeakably glorified the nobler, so likewise the meaner part of our nature, the very bodily substance of man. Where also that must again be remembered which we noted before, concerning degrees of the influence of Deity proportionable unto His own purposes, intents, and counsels: for in this respect His body, which by natural condition was corruptible, wanted the gift of everlasting immunity from death, passion, and dissolution, till God, who gave it to be slain for sin, had for righteousness' sake restored it to life, with certainty of endless continuance. Yea in this respect the very glorified body of Christ retained in it the scars and marks of former mortality^l. We nothing doubt, but God hath, many ways above the

^k Isaiah xi. 2. lxi. 1. Luke iv. 18. Acts iv. 27. Heb. i. 9.

^l 2 Cor. i. 21. 1 John ii. 20. 27.

1 John xx. 27.

reach of our capacities, exalted that body which it hath pleased Him to make His own, that body wherewith He hath saved the world, that body which hath been and is the root of eternal life; the instrument wherewith Deity worketh, the sacrifice which taketh away sin, the price which hath ransomed souls from death, the leader of the whole army of bodies that shall rise again. For though it had a beginning from us, yet God hath given it vital efficacy, heaven hath endowed it with celestial power, that virtue it hath from above, in regard whereof all the angels of heaven adore it. Notwithstanding a body still it continueth, a body consubstantial with our bodies.

We conclude, therefore, that to save the world it was of necessity the Son of God should be thus incarnate, and that God should so be in Christ, as hath been declared.



SECTION XLII.

OF THE PRESENCE OF CHRIST, IN ORDER TO
OUR PARTICIPATION OF HIM.

HAVING thus far proceeded in speech concerning the person of Jesus Christ, His two natures, their conjunction, that which He either is or doth in respect of both, and that which the one receiveth from the other ; since God in Christ is generally the medicine which doth cure the world, and Christ in us that receipt of the same medicine, whereby we are every one particularly cured : inasmuch as Christ's incarnation and passion can be available to no man's good who is not made partaker of Christ, neither can we participate Him without His presence ; we are briefly to consider how Christ is present, to the end it may thereby better appear how we are made partakers of Christ, both otherwise and in the sacraments themselves.

His human substance in itself is naturally absent from the earth ; his soul and body not on earth but in heaven only : yet as the manhood of Christ may after a sort be every where said to be present, because that person is every where present from whose Divine

substance manhood nowhere is severed; so the same universality of presence may likewise seem in another respect applicable thereunto, namely, by cooperation with Deity; and that in all things. The light created of God in the beginning, did first by itself illuminate the world; but after that the sun and moon were created, the world since hath by them always enjoyed the same. And that Deity of Christ, which before our Lord's incarnation wrought all things without man, doth now work nothing wherein the nature which it hath assumed is either absent from it or idle. Christ, as man, hath^a all power both in heaven and earth given Him. He hath as man, not as God only, supreme dominion over quick and dead^b; for so much his ascension into heaven and his session at the right hand of God do import. The Son of God who did first humble Himself by taking our flesh upon Him, descended afterwards much lower, and became according to the flesh obedient so far as to suffer death, even the death of the cross for

a Matt. xxviii. 18.

b Rom. xiv. 9.

all men, because such was His Father's will. The former was an humiliation of Deity, the latter an humiliation of manhood^c; for which cause there followed upon the latter an exaltation of that which was humbled: for with power He created the world, but restored it by obedience. In which obedience, as according to His manhood He had glorified God on earth; so God hath glorified in heaven that nature which yielded Him obedience; and hath given unto Christ, even in that He is man, such fulness of power over the whole world^d, that He who before fulfilled in the state of humility and patience whatsoever God did require, doth now reign in glory till the time that all things be restored^e. He who came down from heaven, and descended into the lowest parts of the earth, is ascended far above all heavens^f: that sitting at the right hand of God, He might from thence fill all things with the gracious and happy fruits of His saving presence. Ascension into heaven is a plain

c Phil. ii. 8, 9. Heb. ii. 9. Rev. v. 12. d Luke xxi. 17.

e Acts iii. 21.

f Ephes. iv. 9.

local translation of Christ according to His manhood, from the lower to the higher parts of the world. Session at the right hand of God is the actual exercise of that regency and dominion wherein the manhood of Christ is joined, and matched with the Deity of the Son of God. Not that His manhood was before without the possession of the same power, but because the full use thereof was suspended, till that humility which had been before as a veil to hide and conceal majesty, were laid aside. After His rising again from the dead, then did God set Him at His right hand in heavenly places^g, far above all principality, and power, and might and domination, and every name that is named, not in this world only, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under His feet^h, and hath appointed Him over all the head to the Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all. The sceptre of which spiritual regiment over us in this present world is at the length to be yielded up into the hands of

g Ephès. i. 20. 23.

h Ps. viii. 6. Heb. ii. 8.

the Father who gave itⁱ, that is to say, the use and exercise thereof shall cease, there being no longer on earth any militant Church to govern. This government, therefore, he exerciseth both as God and as man ; as God, by essential presence with all things ; as man, by co-operation with that which essentially is present.

Touching the manner how He worketh as man in all things ; the principal powers of the soul of man are the will and understanding, the one of which two in Christ assenteth unto all things, and from the other nothing which Deity doth work is hid ; so that by knowledge and assent the soul of Christ is present with all things which the Deity of Christ worketh.

And even the body of Christ itself, although the definite limitation thereof be most sensible, doth notwithstanding admit in some sort a kind of infinite and unlimited presence likewise. For His body being a part of that nature, which whole nature is presently joined unto Deity wheresoever Deity is, it followeth that His bodily substance hath every where a

presence of true conjunction with Deity. And forasmuch as it is, by virtue of that conjunction, made the body of the Son of God, by whom also it was made a sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, this giveth it a presence of force and efficacy throughout all generations of men. Albeit therefore nothing be actually infinite in substance but God only, in that He is God; nevertheless, as every number is infinite by possibility of addition, and every line by possibility of extension infinite; so there is no stint which can be set to the value or merit of the sacrificed body of Christ, it hath no measured certainty of limits, bounds of efficacy unto life it knoweth none, but is also itself infinite in possibility of application.

Which things indifferently every way considered, that gracious promise of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ concerning presence with His to the very end of the world, I see no cause but that we may well and safely interpret He doth perform, both as God, by essential presence of Deity; and as man, in that order, sense, and meaning, which hath been shewed.

SECTION XLIII.

OF THE PARTICIPATION OF CHRIST; i. e. OF THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS.

WE have hitherto spoken of the person and of the presence of Christ. Participation is that mutual inward hold which Christ hath of us and we of Him, in such sort that each possesseth other by way of special interest, property, and inherent copulation. For plainer explication whereof, we may, from that which hath been before sufficiently proved, assume to our purpose these two principles, "That every original cause imparteth itself unto those things which come of it: and whatsoever taketh being from any other, the same is after a sort in that which giveth it being."

It followeth hereupon, that the Son of God being light of light^a, must needs be also light in light. The persons of the Godhead, by reason of the unity of their substance, do as

^a John i. 18.

necessarily remain one within another, as they are of necessity to be distinguished one from another, because two are the issue of one, and one the offspring of the other two; only of three, one not growing out of any other. The Father therefore is in the Son, and the Son in Him; they both in the Spirit, and the Spirit in both them. So that the Father's offspring, which is the Son, remaineth eternally in the Father; the Father eternally also in the Son, not severed or divided, by reason of the sole and single unity of their substance. The Son in the Father, as light in that light out of which it floweth without separation: the Father in the Son, as light in that light which it causeth and leaveth not. And because in this respect His eternal being is of the Father, which eternal being is His life, therefore He by the Father liveth.

Again, since all things do accordingly love their offspring, as themselves are more or less contained in it, He who is thus the only-begotten, must needs be in this degree the only-beloved of the Father. He therefore

who is in the Father by eternal derivation of being and life from Him, must needs be in Him through an eternal affection of love.

His incarnation causeth Him also as man to be now in the Father, and the Father to be in Him. For in that He is man, He receiveth life from the Father as from the fountain of that ever-living Deity, which in the Person of the Word hath combined itself with manhood, and doth thereunto impart such life as to no other creature besides Him is communicated. In which consideration, likewise, the love of the Father towards Him is more than it can be towards any other^b; neither can any attain unto that perfection of love which He beareth towards His heavenly Father^c. Wherefore, God is not so in any, nor any so in God as Christ; whether we consider Him as the personal Word of God, or as the natural Son of Man.

All other things that are of God, have God in them, and He them in Himself likewise.

^b Luke iii. 22. John iii. 34, 35. v. 20. x. 17.

^c John xiv. 31. xv. 10.

Yet because their substance and His wholly differeth, their coherence and communion either with Him or amongst themselves, is in no sort like unto that before mentioned.

God hath His influence into the very essence of all things, without which influence of Deity supporting them, their utter annihilation could not choose but follow. Of Him all things have both received their first being, and their continuance to be that which they are. All things are therefore partakers of God, they are His offspring, His influence is in them, and the personal wisdom of God is for that very cause said to excel in nimbleness or agility, to pierced^d into all intellectual pure and subtile spirits, to go through all, and to reach unto every thing which is. Otherwise, how should the same wisdom be that which supporteth, beareth up^e, and sustaineth all ?

Whatsoever God doth work, the hands of all three persons are jointly and equally in it, according to the order of that connexion whereby they each depend upon other. And,

d Wisdom vii. 23.

e Heb. i. 3.

therefore, albeit in that respect the Father be first, the Son next, the Spirit last, and consequently nearest unto every effect which groweth from all three; nevertheless, they all being of one essence, are likewise all of one efficacy. Dare any man, unless he be ignorant altogether how inseparable the persons of the Trinity are, persuade himself that every of them may have their sole and several possessions, or that we, being not partakers of all, can have fellowship with any one^f? The Father as goodness, the Son as wisdom, the Holy Ghost as power, do all concur in every particular, outwardly issuing from that one only glorious Deity which they all are. For that which moveth God to work is goodness; and that which ordereth His work is wisdom; and that which perfecteth His work is power. All things which God in their times and seasons hath brought forth, were eternally and before all times in God, as a work unbegun is in the artificer who afterward bringeth it into effect. Therefore whatsoever we do behold now in this present world, it was enwrapped within

the bowels of Divine mercy, written in the book of eternal wisdom, and held in the hands of omnipotent power, the first foundations of the world being as yet unlaid.

So that all things which God hath made are in that respect the offspring of God^g, they are in Him as effects in their highest cause; He likewise actually is in them, the assistance and influence of His Deity is their life^h.

Let hereunto saving efficacy be added, and it bringeth forth a special offspring amongst men, containing them to whom God hath Himself given the gracious and amiable name of sonsⁱ. We are by nature the sons of Adam. When God created Adam He created us; and as many as are descended from Adam, have in themselves the root out of which they spring. The sons of God we neither are all nor any one of us, otherwise than only by grace and favour. The sons of God have God's own natural Son as a second Adam^j from heaven, whose race and progeny they are by spiritual and heavenly birth. God therefore loving eternally His Son,

g Acts xvii. 28, 29.

i John iii. 1.

h John i. 4. 10. Is. xl. 26.

j 1 Cor. xv. 47.

He must needs eternally in Him have loved and preferred before all others them who are spiritually since descended and sprung out of Him^k. These were in God as in their Saviour, and not as in their Creator only. It was the purpose of His saving goodness, His saving wisdom, and His saving power, which inclined itself towards them.

They who thus were in God eternally by their intended admission to life, have by vocation or adoption God actually now in them, as the artificer is in the work which his hand doth presently frame. Life, as all other gifts and benefits, groweth originally from the Father, and cometh not to us but by the Son^l; nor by the Son to any of us in particular, but through the Spirit^m. For this cause the apostle wisheth to the Church of Corinth, “the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghostⁿ.” Which three St. Peter comprehendeth in one, “the participation of Divine nature^o.” We are there-

k Eph. i. 34.

l 1 John v. 11.

m Rom. viii. 10.

n 2 Cor. xiii. 13.

o 2 Pet. i. 4.

fore in God through Christ eternally, according to that intent and purpose whereby we were chosen to be made His in this present world, before the world itself was made : we are in God, through the knowledge which is had of us, and the love which is borne towards us from everlasting. But in God we actually are no longer than only from the time of our actual adoption into the body of His true Church, into the fellowship of His children. For His Church He knoweth and loveth ; so that they who are in the Church are thereby known to be in Him. Our being in Christ by eternal foreknowledge saveth us not without our actual and real adoption into the fellowship of His saints in this present world. For in Him we actually are by our actual incorporation into that society which hath Him for their head^p ; and doth make together with Him one body, (He and they in that respect having one name^q,) for which cause, by virtue of this mystical conjunction, we are of Him, and in Him even as though our very flesh and bones

p Col. ii. 18.

q 1 Cor. xii. 12.

should be made continue with His^r. We are in Christ, because He knoweth and loveth us^s, even as parts of Himself. No man actually is in Him, but they in whom He actually is; for “ he who hath not the Son of God hath not life^t: I am the vine, and ye are the branches: he who abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit^u;” but the branch severed from the vine withereth. We are, therefore, adopted sons of God to eternal life by participation of the only-begotten Son of God, whose life is the wellspring and cause of ours.

It is too cold an interpretation whereby some men expound our being in Christ to import nothing else, but only that the self-same nature which maketh us to be men is in Him, and maketh Him man as we are. For what man in the world is there, which hath not so far forth communion with Jesus Christ? It is not this that can sustain the weight of such sentences as speak of the mystery of our

r Eph. v. 30.

s John xv. 9.

t 1 John v. 12.

u John xv. 5, 6.

coherence with Jesus Christ. The Church was in Christ, as Eve was in Adam. Yea, by grace we are every one of us in Christ and in His Church, as by nature we were in those our first parents. God made Eve of the rib of Adam; and His Church He frameth out of the very flesh, the very wounded and bleeding side of the Son of Man. His body crucified, and His blood shed for the life of the world, are the true elements of that heavenly Being, which maketh us such as Himself is of whom we come. For which cause the words of Adam may be fitly words of Christ concerning His Church, "flesh of my flesh, and bone of my bones;" a true nature extract out of my own body. So that in Him, even according to His manhood, we according to our heavenly being, are as branches in that root out of which they grow.

To all things He is life, and to men light, as the Son of God; to the Church, both life and light eternal, by being made the Son of Man for us, and by being in us a Saviour, whether we respect Him as God or as man.

Adam is in us as an original cause of nature, and of that corruption of nature which causeth death; Christ as the cause original of restoration to life. The person of Adam is not in us, but his nature, and the corruption of his nature, deriveth into all men by propagation; Christ having Adam's nature, as we have, but incorrupt, deriveth not nature but incorruption, and that immediately from His own person, into all that belong unto Him. As, therefore, we are really partakers of the body of sin and death received from Adam; so except we be truly partakers of Christ, and as really possessed of His Spirit, all we speak of eternal life is but a dream.

That which quickeneth us is the Spirit of the second Adam, and His flesh that wherewith He quickeneth. That which in Him made our nature uncorrupt, was the union of His Deity with our nature; and in that respect the sentence of death and condemnation, which only taketh hold upon sinful flesh, could no way possibly extend unto Him. This caused His voluntary death for others to prevail with

God, and to have the force of an expiatory sacrifice. The blood of Christ, as the Apostle witnesseth, doth therefore take away sin, because “through the eternal Spirit He offered Himself unto God without spot.” That which sanctified our nature in Christ, that which made it a sacrifice available to take away sin, is the same which quickeneth it, raised it out of the grave after death, and exalted it unto glory. Seeing, therefore, that Christ is in us as a quickening Spirit, the first degree of communion with Christ must needs consist in the participation of His Spirit, which Cyprian in that respect well termeth *germanissimam societatem*, the highest and truest society that can be between man and Him, which is both God and man in one.

These things St. Cyril duly considering, reproveth their speeches which taught, that only the Deity of Christ is the vine whereupon we by faith do depend as branches, and that neither His flesh nor our bodies are comprised in this resemblance. For, doth any man doubt, but that even from the flesh of Christ our very

bodies do receive that life which shall make them glorious at the latter day ; and for which they are already accounted parts of His blessed body ? Our corruptible bodies could never live the lives they shall live, were it not that here they are joined with His body which is incorruptible, and that His is in ours as a cause of immortality ; a cause by removing through the death and merit of His own flesh that which hindered the life of ours. Christ is therefore, both as God and as man, that true vine whereof we both spiritually and corporally are branches. The mixture of His bodily substance with ours is a thing which the ancient Fathers disclaim ; yet the mixture of His flesh with ours they speak of, to signify what our very bodies, through mystical conjunction receive from that vital efficacy which we know to be in His ; and from bodily mixtures they borrow divers similitudes, rather to declare the truth, than the manner of coherence between His sacred and the sanctified bodies of saints.

Thus much no Christian man will deny, that

when Christ sanctified His own flesh, giving as God and taking as man the Holy Ghost, He did not this for Himself only, but for our sakes, that the grace and sanctification and life, which was first received in Him, might pass from Him to His whole race, as malediction came from Adam unto all mankind. Howbeit, because the work of His Spirit to those effects is in us prevented by sin and death, possessing us before ; it is of necessity, that as well our present sanctification unto newness of life, as the future restoration of our bodies, should presuppose a participation of the grace, efficacy, merit, or virtue, of His body and blood ; without which foundation first laid, there is no place for those other operations of the Spirit of Christ to ensue. So that Christ imparteth plainly Himself by degrees.

It pleaseth Him in mercy to account Himself incomplete and maimed without us. But most assured we are, that we all receive of His fulness, because He is in us as a moving and working cause ; from which many blessed

effects are really found to ensue, and that in sundry both kinds and degrees, all tending to eternal happiness. It must be confessed, that of Christ, working as a Creator and a Governor of the world by providence, all are partakers; not all partakers of that grace whereby He inhabiteth whom He saveth.

Again, as He dwelleth not by grace in all, so neither doth He equally work in all them in whom He dwelleth. "Whence is it," saith St. Augustin, "that some be holier than others are, but because God doth dwell in some more plentifully than in others?"

And because the Divine substance of Christ is equally in all, His human substance equally distant from all; it appeareth that the participation of Christ, wherein there are many degrees and differences, must needs consist in such effects, as, being derived from both natures of Christ really into us, are made our own, and we, by having them in us, are truly said to have Him from whom they come; Christ also more or less, to inhabit and impart Himself, as the graces are fewer or more,

greater or smaller, which really flow into us from Christ.

Christ is whole with the whole Church, and whole with every part of the Church. But the participation of Christ importeth, besides the presence of Christ's person, and besides the mystical copulation thereof with the parts and members of His whole Church, a true actual influence of Grace, whereby the life which we live^x according to godliness is His, and from Him we receive those perfections wherein our eternal happiness consisteth.

Thus we participate Christ, partly by imputation; as when those things which He did and suffered for us are imputed unto us for righteousness :^y partly by habitual and real infusion, as when Grace is inwardly bestowed while we are on earth, and afterward more fully both our souls and bodies made like unto His in glory. The first thing of His so infused into our hearts in this life is the Spirit of Christ; whereupon, because the rest of what kind soever do all both necessarily depend and

x Gal. ii. 20.

y Isaiah liii. 5. Ephes. i. 7.

infallibly also ensue^z; therefore the Apostles term it, sometime the seed of God, sometime the pledge of our heavenly inheritance^a, sometime the handsel or earnest of that which is to come. From whence it is, that they which belong to the mystical body of our Saviour Christ, and be in number as the stars of heaven, divided successively, by reason of their mortal condition, into many generations, are notwithstanding coupled every one to Christ their Head, and all unto every particular person amongst themselves, inasmuch as the same Spirit which anointed the blessed soul of our Saviour Christ doth so formalize, unite, and actuate His whole race, as if both He and they were so many limbs compacted into one body, by being quickened all with one and the same soul.

Thus therefore we see how the Father is in the Son, and the Son in the Father; how They both are in all things, and all things in Them: what communion Christ hath with His

^z Rom. viii. 9. Gal. iv. 6. ^a 1 John iii. 9. Ephes. i. 14.
Rom. viii. 23.

Church, how His Church and every member thereof is in Him by original derivation, and He personally in them by way of mystical association, wrought through the gift of the Holy Ghost, which they that are His receive from Him, and together with the same what benefit soever the vital force of His body and blood may yield; yea, by steps and degrees they receive the complete measure of all such divine grace as doth sanctify and save throughout, till the day of their final exaltation to a state of fellowship in glory with Him, whose partakers they are now in those things that tend to glory.

SECTION XLIV.

OF THE NECESSITY OF SACRAMENTS TO THE PARTICIPATION OF CHRIST.

It greatly offendeth, that some, when they labour to shew the use of the holy sacraments, assign unto them no end but only to teach the

mind, by other senses, that which the Word doth teach by hearing. Whereupon, how easily neglect and careless regard of so heavenly mysteries may follow, we see in part by some experience had of those men with whom that opinion is most strong. For where the word of God may be heard, which teacheth with much more expedition and more full explication any thing we have to learn, if all the benefit we reap by sacraments be instruction, they which at all times have opportunity of using the better mean to that purpose, will surely hold the worse in less estimation. And unto infants, which are not capable of instruction, who would not think it a mere superfluity that any sacrament is administered, if to administer the sacraments be but to teach receivers what God doth for them? There is of sacraments therefore undoubtedly some other more excellent and heavenly use.

Let respect be had to the duty which every communicant doth undertake, and we may well determine concerning the use of sacraments, that they serve as bonds of obedience to God,

strict obligations to the mutual exercise of Christian charity, provocations to godliness, preservations from sin, memorials of the principal benefits of Christ; respect the time of their institution, and it thereby appeareth that God hath annexed them for ever unto the New Testament, as other rites were before with the Old; regard the weakness which is in us, and they are warrants for the more security of our belief; compare the receivers of them with such as receive them not, and sacraments are marks of distinction to separate God's own from strangers: so that in all these respects they are found to be most necessary.

But their chiefest force and virtue consisteth not herein, so much as in that they are heavenly ceremonies which God hath sanctified and ordained to be administered in His Church; first, as marks whereby to know when God doth impart the vital or saving grace of Christ unto all that are capable thereof; and, secondly, as means conditional, which God requireth in them unto whom He imparteth grace. For since God himself is

invisible, and cannot by us be discerned working, therefore when it seemeth good in the eyes of His heavenly wisdom that men for some special intent and purpose should take notice of His glorious presence, He giveth them some plain and sensible token whereby to know what they cannot see. For Moses to see God and live was impossible; yet Moses by fire knew where the glory of God extraordinarily was present^a. The angel by whom God endued the waters of the pool, called Bethesda, with supernatural virtue to heal, was not seen of any, yet the time of the angel's presence known by the troubled motions of the waters themselves^b. The Apostles by fiery tongues which they saw, were admonished when the Spirit, which they could not behold, was upon them^c. In like manner it is with us. Christ and His Holy Spirit, with all their blessed effects, though entering into the soul of man, we are not able to apprehend or express how, do notwithstanding give notice of the times when they use to make their access,

^a Exod. iii. 2.^b John v. 4.^c Acts ii. 3.

because it pleaseth Almighty God to communicate by sensible means those blessings which are incomprehensible.

Seeing therefore that grace is a consequent of sacraments, a thing which accompanieth them as their end, a benefit which he that hath receiveth from God himself the Author of sacraments, and not from any other natural or supernatural quality in them, it may be hereby both understood that sacraments are necessary, and that the manner of their necessity to life supernatural is not in all respects as food unto natural life, because they contain in themselves no vital force or efficacy, they are not physical but moral instruments of salvation; duties of service and worship; which unless we perform as the Author of grace requireth, they are unprofitable. For all receive not the grace of God which receive the sacraments of his grace. Neither is it ordinarily His will to bestow the grace of sacraments on any but by the sacraments; which grace also they that receive by sacraments or with sacraments, receive it from Him and not from them. For of sacraments

the very same is true which Solomon's wisdom observeth in the brazen serpent, "He that turned towards it was not healed by the thing he saw, but by Thee, O Saviour, of all^d." This is therefore the necessity of sacraments. That saving grace which Christ originally is or hath for the general good of His whole Church, by sacraments He severally deriveth into every member thereof.

Sacraments serve as the instruments of God, to that end and purpose; moral instruments, the use whereof is in our own hands, the effect in His; for the use we have His express commandment; for the effect, His conditional promise. So that without our obedience to the one, there is of the other no apparent assurance; as contrariwise, where the signs and sacraments of His grace are not either through contempt unreceived, or received with contempt, we are not to doubt but that they really give what they promise, and are what they signify. For we take not baptism nor the eucharist for bare resemblances or memorials

d Wisdom xvi. 7.

of things absent, neither for naked signs and testimonies assuring us of grace received before, but (as they are indeed and in verity) for means effectual, whereby God, when we take the sacraments, delivereth into our hands that grace available unto eternal life, which grace the sacraments represent or signify.

There have grown in the doctrine concerning sacraments many difficulties for want of distinct explication what kind or degree of grace doth belong unto each sacrament. The true immediate cause why baptism and why the supper of our Lord is necessary, few do rightly and distinctly consider. It cannot be denied but sundry the same effects and benefits which grow unto men by the one sacrament may rightly be attributed unto the other. Yet then doth baptism challenge to itself but the inchoation of those graces, the consummation whereof dependeth on mysteries ensuing.

We receive Christ Jesus in baptism once, as the first beginner, in the Eucharist often, as being by continual degrees the finisher of our life. By

baptism therefore we receive Christ Jesus, and from Him that saving grace which is proper unto baptism. By the other sacrament we receive Him also, imparting therein Himself and that grace which the Eucharist properly bestoweth. So that each sacrament having both that which is general or common, and that also which is peculiar unto itself, we may hereby gather that the participation of Christ, which properly belongeth to any one sacrament, is not otherwise to be obtained but by the sacrament whereunto it is proper.

SECTION XLV.

WHAT ARE ESSENTIAL, WHAT ACCESSARY PARTS
OF A SACRAMENT.

Now even as the soul doth organize the body, and give unto every member thereof that substance, quantity, and shape, which nature seeth most expedient, so the inward grace of sacraments may teach what serveth

best for their outward forms, a thing in no part of Christian religion, much less here to be neglected. Grace intended by sacraments was a cause of the choice, and is a reason of the fitness, of the elements themselves. Furthermore, seeing that the grace which here we receive, doth no way depend upon the natural force of that which we presently behold, it was of necessity, that words of express declaration taken from the very mouth of our Lord Himself, should be added unto visible elements, that the one might infallibly teach what the other do most assuredly bring to pass. To make complete the outward substance of a sacrament, there is required an outward form, which form sacramental elements receive from sacramental words. Hereupon it groweth, that many times there are three things said to make up the substance of a sacrament; namely, the grace which is thereby offered, the element which shadoweth or signifieth grace, and the word which expresseth what is done by the element. So that whether we consider the outward by itself alone, or both the outward

and inward substance of any sacrament ; there are in the one respect but two essential parts, and in the other but three, that concur to give sacraments their full being.

Furthermore we must note, that inasmuch as sacraments are actions religious and mystical, which nature they have not unless they proceed from a serious meaning, and what every man's private mind is, as we cannot know, so neither are we bound to examine : therefore always in these cases the known intent of the Church generally doth suffice ; and where the contrary is not manifest, we may presume that he which outwardly doth the work, hath inwardly the purpose of the Church of God. Concerning all other orders, rites, prayers, lessons, sermons, actions, and their circumstances whatsoever, they are to the outward substance of baptism but things accessory, which the wisdom of the Church of Christ is to order according to the exigence of that which is principal. Again, considering that such ordinances have been made to adorn the sacrament, not the sacrament to depend on

them; seeing also, that they are not of the substance of baptism, and that baptism is far more necessary than any such incident, rite, or solemnity ordained for the better administration thereof; if the case be such as permitteth not baptism to have the decent complements of baptism, better it were to enjoy the body without his furniture, than to wait for this till the opportunity of that for which we desire it be lost. Which premises standing, it seemeth to have been no absurd collection, that in cases of necessity which will not suffer delay till baptism be administered with usual solemnities (to speak the least), it may be tolerably given without them, rather than any man without it should be suffered to depart this life.

SECTION XLVI.

NECESSITY OF OUTWARD BAPTISM IN PARTICULAR.

THEY which deny that any such case of

necessity can fall, in regard whereof the Church should tolerate baptism, without the decent rites and solemnities thereunto belonging, pretend that such tolerations have risen from a false interpretation which certain men have made of the Scriptures, grounding a necessity of external baptism upon the words of our Saviour Christ; "Unless a man be born again of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven." For by water and the Spirit, we are in that place to understand (as they imagine) no more than if the Spirit alone had been mentioned, and water not spoken of. Which they think is plain, because elsewhere it is not improbable that the Holy Ghost and fire, do but signify the Holy Ghost in operation resembling fire. Whereupon they conclude, that seeing fire in one place may be, therefore water in another place is but a metaphor, Spirit, the interpretation thereof; and so the words do only mean, that unless a man be born again of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven. I hold for a most infallible rule in expositions

of sacred Scripture, that when a literal construction will stand, the farthest from the letter is commonly the worst. There is nothing more dangerous than this licentious and deluding art, which changeth the meaning of words, as alchymy doth or would do the substance of metals, maketh of any thing what it listeth, and bringeth in the end all truth to nothing. Or howsoever such voluntary exercise of wit might be borne with otherwise, yet in places which usually serve, as this doth concerning regeneration by water and the Holy Ghost, to be alleged for grounds and principles, less is permitted. To hide the general consent of antiquity, agreeing in the literal interpretation, they cunningly affirm that "certain" have taken those words as meant of material water; when they know that of all the ancients there is not one to be named that ever did otherwise either expound or allege the place than as implying external baptism. Shall that which hath always received this and no other construction be now disguised with the toy of novelty? When the

letter of the law hath two things plainly and expressly specified, water and the Spirit; water as a duty required on our parts, the Spirit as a gift which God bestoweth; there is danger in presuming so to interpret it, as if the clause which concerneth ourselves were more than needeth. We may by such rare expositions attain perhaps in the end to be thought witty, but with ill advice. Finally, if at the time when that baptism which was meant by John came to be really and truly performed by Christ Himself,^a we find the Apostles that had been, as we are, before baptized, new baptized with the Holy Ghost, and in this their later baptism as well a visible descent of fire,^b as a secret miraculous infusion of the Spirit; if on us He accomplish likewise the Heavenly work of our new birth not with the Spirit alone, but with water thereunto adjoined; since the faithfulest exponents of His words are His own deeds, let that which his hand hath manifestly wrought declare what His speech did doubtfully utter.

a Acts i. 5.

b Acts ii. 3.

The true necessity of baptism, a few propositions considered will soon decide. All things which either are known causes or set means, whereby any great good is usually procured, or men delivered from grievous evil, the same we must needs confess necessary. And if regeneration were not in this very sense a thing necessary to eternal life, would Christ Himself have taught Nicodemus^c, that to see the kingdom of God is impossible, saving only for those men which are born from above? His words following in the next sentence are a proof sufficient, that to our regeneration His Spirit is no less necessary, than regeneration itself necessary unto life^d. Thirdly, unless as the Spirit is a necessary inward cause, so water was a necessary outward mean to our regeneration, what construction should we give unto those words wherein we are said to be new born, and that even of water? Why are we taught, that with water God doth purify and cleanse His Church^e? Wherefore

c John iii. 3.

d John iii. 5.

e Eph. v. 26.

do the Apostles of Christ term baptism^f a bath of regeneration? What purpose had they in giving men advice to receive outward baptism, and in persuading them it did avail to remission of sins^g? The grace which is given them with their baptism, doth so far forth depend on the very outward sacrament, that God will have it embraced not only as a sign or token what we receive, but also as a mean or instrument whereby we receive grace, because baptism is a sacrament which God hath instituted in His Church, to the end that they which receive the same might thereby be incorporated into Christ, and so through His most precious merit obtain as well that saving grace of imputation which taketh away all former guiltiness, as also that infused Divine virtue of the Holy Ghost which giveth to the powers of the soul their first disposition towards future newness of life.

There are that elevate too much the ordinary and immediate means of life, relying wholly

^f Tit. iii. 5.

^g Acts ii. 38.

upon the bare conceit of that eternal election, which notwithstanding includeth a subordination of means without which we are not actually brought to enjoy what God did secretly intend; and therefore to build upon God's election if we keep not ourselves to the ways which He hath appointed for men to walk in, is but a self-deceiving vanity.

When the Apostle saw men called to the participation of Jesus Christ, after the gospel of God embraced and the sacrament of life received, he feareth not then to put them in the number of elect saints^h; he then accounteth them delivered from death and cleansed from all sinⁱ. Till then notwithstanding their preordination unto life which none could know of saving God, what were they in the Apostle's own account, but children of wrath as well as others, plain aliens altogether without hope, strangers utterly without God in this present world^k? So that by sacraments and other sensible tokens of grace we may boldly gather, that He whose mercy

^h Eph. i. 1.

ⁱ Eph. v. 8.

^k Eph. ii. 3. 12.

vouchsafeth now to bestow the means, hath also long since intended us that whereunto they lead. But let us never think it safe to presume of our own last end by bare conjectural collections of His first intent and purpose, the means failing that should come between. Predestination bringeth not to life, without the grace of external vocation, wherein our baptism is implied¹. For as we are not naturally men without birth, so neither are we Christian men in the eye of the Church of God but by new birth, nor according to the manifest ordinary course of Divine dispensation new born, but by that baptism which both declareth and maketh us Christians. In which respect, we justly hold it to be the door of our actual entrance into God's house, the first apparent beginning of life, a seal perhaps to the grace of election before received, but to our sanctification here a step that hath not any before it.

There were of the old Valentinian heretics some who had knowledge in such admiration,

¹ Rom. viii. 3.

that to it they ascribed all, and so despised the sacraments of Christ, pretending that as ignorance had made us subject to all misery, so the full redemption of the inward man, and the work of our restoration, must needs belong unto knowledge only. They draw very near unto this error, who fixing wholly their minds on the known necessity of faith, imagine that nothing but faith is necessary for the attainment of all grace. Yet is it a branch of belief that sacraments are in their place no less required than belief itself. For when our Lord and Saviour promiseth eternal life, is it any otherwise than as He promised restitution of health unto Naaman the Syrian, namely, with this condition, "Wash, and be clean^m?" or as to them who were stung of serpents, health, by beholding the brazen serpentⁿ? If Christ Himself who giveth salvation, do require baptism^o; it is not for us that look for salvation to sound and examine Him, whether unbaptized men may be saved; but seriously to do

^m 2 Kings v. 12.

ⁿ Numb. xxi. 8.

^o Mark xvi. 16.

that which is required, and religiously to fear the danger which may grow by the want thereof.

Had Christ only declared His will to have all men baptized, and not acquainted us with any cause why baptism is necessary, our ignorance in the reason of that He enjoineth might perhaps have hindered somewhat the forwardness of our obedience thereunto : whereas now being taught that baptism is necessary to take away sin, how have we the fear of God in our hearts if care of delivering men's souls from sin do not move us to use all means for their baptism ?

It is on all parts gladly confessed, that there may be in divers cases life by virtue of inward baptism, even where outward is not found. So that if any question be made, it is but about the bounds and limits of this possibility. For example, to think that a man whose baptism the crown of martyrdom preventeth, doth lose in that case the happiness which so many thousands enjoy, that only have had the grace to believe, and not the honour to seal the

testimony thereof with death, were almost barbarous.

Again, when some certain opinionative men in St. Bernard's time began privately to hold that, because our Lord hath said, "Unless a man be born again of water," therefore life, without either actual baptism or martyrdom instead of baptism, cannot possibly be obtained at the hands of God. Bernard, considering that the same equity which had moved them to think the necessity of baptism no bar against the happy estate of unbaptized martyrs, is as forcible for the warrant of their salvation, in whom, although there be not the sufferings of holy martyrs, there are the virtues which sanctified those sufferings, and made them precious in God's sight, professed himself an enemy to that severity and strictness which admitteth no exception but of martyrs only. For, saith he, if a man desirous of baptism be suddenly cut off by death, in whom there wanted neither sound faith, by devout hope, nor sincere charity (God be merciful unto me, and pardon me, if I err), but

verily of such a one's salvation in whom there is no other defect besides his faultless lack of baptism, despair I cannot, nor induce my mind to think his faith void, his hope confounded, and his charity fallen to nothing, only because he hath not that which not contempt but impossibility withholdeth.

“Tell me, I beseech you,” saith Ambrose, “what there is in any of us more than to will, and to seek for our own good. Thy servant Valentinian, O Lord, did both. (For Valentinian the emperor died before his purpose to receive baptism could take effect.) And is it possible that he who had purposely thy Spirit given him to desire grace, should not receive Thy grace which that Spirit did desire? Doth it move you that the outward accustomed solemnities were not done? As though converts that suffer martyrdom before baptism did thereby forfeit their right to the crown of eternal glory in the kingdom of heaven. If the blood of martyrs in that case be their baptism, surely his religious desire of baptism standeth him in the same stead.” It hath been

therefore constantly held, as well touching other believers as martyrs, that baptism, taken away by necessity, is supplied by desire of baptism, because with equity this opinion doth best stand.

Wherefore a necessity there is of receiving, and a necessity of administering the sacrament of baptism: the one peradventure not so absolute as some have thought, but out of all peradventure the other more straight and narrow than that the Church, which is by office a mother unto such us crave at her hands the sacred mystery of their new birth, should repel them, and see them die unsatisfied of these their ghostly desires, rather than give them their soul's rights with omission of those things that serve but only for the more convenient and orderly administration thereof. For as on the one side we grant that those sentences of Holy Scripture which make sacraments most necessary to eternal life, are no prejudice to their salvation, that want them by some inevitable necessity, and without any fault of their own; so it ought, in reason, to

be likewise acknowledged, that forasmuch as our Lord Himself maketh baptism necessary, necessary whether we respect the good received by baptism, or the testimony thereby yielded unto God of that humility and meek obedience, which reposing wholly itself on the absolute authority of His commandment, and on the truth of His heavenly promise, doubteth not but from creatures despicable in their own condition and substance to obtain grace of inestimable value ; or rather not from them but from Him, yet by them as by His appointed means ; howsoever He by the secret ways of His own incomprehensible mercy may be thought to save without baptism, this clear-eth not the Church from guiltiness of blood, if through her superfluous scrupulosity, lets and impediments of less regard should cause a grace of so great moment to be withheld ; wherein our merciless strictness may be our own harm, though not theirs towards whom we shew it ; and we for the hardness of our hearts may perish, albeit they through God's unspeakable mercy do live. God, who did not

afflict that innocent whose circumcision Moses had over long deferred^p, took revenge upon Moses himself for the injury which was done through so great neglect; giving us thereby to understand, that they whom God's own mercy saveth without us, are on our parts notwithstanding and as much as in us lieth even destroyed, when under insufficient pretences we defraud them of such ordinary outward helps as we should exhibit.

We have for baptism no day set, as the Jews had for circumcision; neither have we by the law of God, but only by the Church's discretion, a place thereunto appointed. Baptism therefore even in the meaning of the law of Christ belongeth unto infants capable thereof from the very instant of their birth. Which if they have not howsoever, rather than lose it, by being put off because the time, the place, or some such like circumstance doth not solemnly enough concur, the Church, as much as in her lieth, wilfully casteth away their souls.

^p Exod. iv. 24.

SECTION XLVII.

OF INTERROGATORIES IN BAPTISM TOUCHING FAITH AND OBEDIENCE.

ALL that are of the race of Christ, the Scripture ^{nam} maketh them "children of the promise"^a which God hath made. The promise of eternal life is the seed of the Church of God. And because there is no attainment of life, but through the only begotten Son of God, nor by Him otherwise than being such as the Creed Apostolic describeth; it followeth that the articles thereof are principles necessary for all men to subscribe unto, whom by baptizm the Church receiveth into Christ's school.

The principles whereupon we do build our souls have their evidence where they had their original; and as received from thence we adore them, we hold them in reverent admiration, we neither argue nor dispute

about them, we give unto them that assent which the oracles of God require. We are not, therefore, ashamed of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, because miscreants in scorn have upbraided us, that the highest point of our wisdom is belief. The mysteries of our religion are above the reach of our understanding, above discourse of man's reason, above all that any creature can comprehend. Therefore the first thing required of him who standeth for admission into Christ's family is belief. Which belief consisteth not so much in knowledge, as in acknowledgment of all things that heavenly wisdom revealeth; the affection of faith is above her reach, her love to Godward above the comprehension which she hath of God. And because only for believers all things may be done, He which is goodness itself loveth them above all. Deserve we then the love of God, because we believe in the Son of God? What more opposite than faith and pride? When God had created all things, He looked upon them and loved them, because they were all as Himself had

made them. So the true reason wherefore Christ doth love believers is because their belief is the gift of God, a gift than which flesh and blood in this world cannot possibly receive a greater.^b

Seeing therefore no religion enjoyeth sacraments, the signs of God's love, unless it have also that faith whereupon the sacraments are built; could there be any thing more convenient than that our first admittance to the actual receipt of His grace in the sacrament of baptism should be consecrated with profession of belief? which is to the kingdom of God as a key, the want whereof excludeth infidels both from that and from all other saving grace.

We find by experience that although faith be an intellectual habit of the mind, and have her seat in the understanding, yet an evil moral disposition, obstinately wedded to the love of darkness, dampeth the very light of heavenly illumination, and permitteth not the mind to see what doth shine before it. Men

^b Matt. xvi. 17. John i. 12, 13.

are "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God."^c Their assent to His saving truth is many times withheld from it, not that the truth is too weak to persuade, but because the stream of corrupt affection carrieth them a clean contrary way. That the mind therefore may abide in the light of faith, there must abide in the will as constant a resolution to have no fellowship at all with the vanities and works of darkness. "Two covenants there are which Christian men," saith Isidore, "do make in baptism, the one concerning relinquishment of Satan, the other touching obedience to the faith of Christ." In like sort St. Ambrose: "He who is baptised, forsaketh the intellectual Pharaoh, the prince of this world, saying, thee O Satan and thy angels, thy works and thy mandates, I forsake utterly." Tertullian having speech of wicked spirits, "These," saith he, "are the angels which we in baptism renounce." The declaration of Justin the martyr, concerning baptism, sheweth how such as the Church in those

days did baptize, made profession of Christian belief, and undertook to live accordingly. Neither do I think it a matter easy for any man to prove, that ever baptism did use to be administered without interrogatories of these two kinds; whereunto St. Peter, as it may be thought, alluding, hath said, that the baptism which saveth us^d is not, as legal purifications were, a cleansing of the flesh from outward impurity, but an interrogative trial of a good conscience towards God.

SECTION XLVIII.

OF INTERROGATORIES TO INFANTS.

WE are then believers, because we then begin to be that which process of time doth make perfect. And till we come to actual belief, the very sacrament of faith is a shield as strong as, after this, the faith of the sacrament against all contrary infernal powers;

d 1 Peter iii. 21.

which, whosoever doth think impossible, is undoubtedly farther off from Christian belief, although he be baptized, than are these innocents, which at their baptism, albeit they have no conceit or cogitation of faith, are notwithstanding pure and free from all opposite cogitations, whereas the other is not free. If therefore without any fear or scruple, we may account them and term them believers only for their outward profession's sake, who inwardly are farther from faith than infants; why not infants much more at the time of their solemn initiation by baptism, the sacrament of faith, whereunto they not only conceive nothing opposite, but have also that grace given them, which is the first and most effectual cause out of which our belief groweth? In sum the whole Church is a multitude of believers, all honoured with that title; even hypocrites for their profession's sake, as well as saints, because of their inward sincere persuasion, and "infants, as being in the first degree of their ghostly motion towards the actual habit of faith;" the first sort are

faithful in the eye of the world; the second, faithful in the sight of God; the last, in the ready direct way to become both, if all things after be suitable to these their present beginnings. "This," saith St. Augustine, "would not haply content such persons as are incapable or unquiet; but to them who having knowledge, are not troublesome, it may suffice. Wherein I have not for ease of myself objected against you that custom only, than which nothing is more firm; but of a custom most profitable, I have done that little which I could, to yield you a reasonable cause."

We speak of infants, as the rule of piety alloweth both to speak and think. For when we know how Christ in general hath said that "Of such is the kingdom of heaven,"^a which kingdom is the inheritance of God's elect, and do withal behold how His providence hath called them unto the first beginnings of eternal life, and presented them at the wellspring of new birth wherein original sin is purged, besides which sin there

^a Matt. xix. 14.

is no hinderance of their salvation known to us; hard it were that having so many fair inducements whereupon to ground, we should not be thought to utter, at the least, a truth probable and allowable, in terming any such particular infant an elect babe.^b

Baptism implieth a covenant or league between God and man, wherein as God doth bestow presently remission of sins and the Holy Ghost, binding also Himself to add (in process of time) what grace soever shall be further necessary for the attainment of everlasting life; so every baptized soul receiving the same grace at the hands of God, tieth likewise itself for ever to the observation of His law, no less than the Jews by circumcision bound themselves to the law of Moses.^c The law of Christ requiring therefore faith and newness of life in all men, by virtue of the covenant which they make in baptism; the Church in baptism exacteth at every man's hands an express profession of faith, and an irrevocable promise of obedience by way of a solemn

b 2 John i.

c Gal. v. 3.

stipulation. That infants may contract and covenant with God, the law is plain.^d Neither is the reason of the law obscure; for since it tendeth, we cannot sufficiently express how much, to their own good, and doth no way hurt or endanger them to begin the race of their lives herewith, they are as equity requireth admitted thereunto, and in favour of their tender years, such formal complements of stipulation as being requisite, are impossible by themselves in their own persons to be performed, leave is given that they may sufficiently discharge them by others. Through His indulgence, who respecting the singular benefit thereof, accepteth children brought unto Him for that end, entereth into articles of covenant with them, and in tender commiseration, granteth that other men's professions and promises in baptism made for them, shall avail no less than if they had been themselves able to have made their own.

None more fit to undertake this office in their behalf, than such as present them unto

^d Genesis xvii. 14.

baptism. It is not the virtue of our fathers, nor the faith of any other, that can give us the true holiness which we have by virtue of our new birth. Yet, even through the common faith and spirit of God's Church, a thing which no quality of parents can prejudice, I say, through the faith of the Church of God, undertaking the motherly care of our souls, so far forth we may be and are in our infancy sanctified, as to be thereby made sufficiently capable of baptism, and to be interested in the rites of our new birth, for their piety's sake, that offer us thereunto. "It cometh sometime to pass," saith St. Augustine, "that the children of bond-slaves are brought to baptism by their lord; sometime the parents being dead, the friends alive undertake that office; sometimes strangers or virgins consecrated unto God, who neither have nor can have children of their own take up infants in the streets, and so offer them unto baptism, whom the cruelty of unnatural parents casteth out, and leaveth to the adventure of uncertain pity." As therefore he

that did the part of a neighbour, was a neighbour to that wounded man whom the parable of the Gospel describeth ; so they are fathers although strangers, that bring infants to Him who maketh them the sons of God. It savoureth more of piety to give them their old accustomed name of fathers and mothers in God, whereby they are well put in mind what affection they ought to bear towards those innocents, for whose religious education the Church accepteth them as pledges. This therefore is their own duty : but because the answer which they make to the usual demands of stipulation proposed in baptism is not their own, the Church doth best to receive it of them in that form which best sheweth whose the act is.

SECTION XLIX.

OF THE SIGN OF THE CROSS.

A ceremony the use whereof hath been profitable, although we observe it not as the

ordinance of God but of man. “For, saith Tertullian, “if of this and the like customs thou shouldst require some commandment to be shewed thee out of Scripture, there is none found.” What reason there is to justify tradition, use, or custom in this behalf “either thou mayest of thyself perceive, or else learn of some other that doth.” Lest therefore the name of tradition should be offensive to any, considering how far by some it hath been and is abused; we mean by traditions, ordinances made in the prime of Christian religion, established with that authority which Christ hath left to His Church for matters indifferent; and in that consideration requisite to be observed, till like authority see just and reasonable cause to alter them. So that traditions ecclesiastical are not rudely and in the gross to be shaken off because the inventors of them are men. Ceremonies have more in weight than in sight; they work by commonness of use much, although in the several acts of their usage we scarcely discern any good they do. And because the use which they have for the

most part, is not perfectly understood, superstition is apt to impute unto them greater virtue than indeed they have. For prevention whereof, when we use this ceremony, we always plainly express the end whereunto it serveth, namely, for a sign of remembrance to put us in mind of our duty.

Ceremonies destitute of signification are no better than the idle gestures of men whose broken wits are not masters of what they do. For if we look but into secular and civil complements, what other cause can there possibly be given why to omit them, where of course they are looked for (for where they are not so due, to use them bringeth men's secret intentions oftentimes into great jealousy :) I would know, I say, what reason we are able to yield why things so light in their own nature should weigh in the opinions of men so much, saving only in regard of that which they use to signify or betoken? Doth not our Lord Jesus Christ Himself impute the omission of some courteous ceremonies, even in domestical entertainment, to a colder degree of loving affection, and

take the contrary in better part, not so much respecting what was less done, as what was signified less by the one than by the other? For to that very end He referreth in part those gracious expostulations: "Simon, Seest thou this woman?" Since "I entered into thine house, thou gavest Me no water for My feet: but she hath washed My feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest Me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss My feet. Mine head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed My feet with ointment."^a Wherefore as the usual dumb ceremonies of common life, are in request or dislike according to what they import; even so religion, having likewise her silent rites, the chiefest rule whereby to judge of their quality is that which they mean or betoken. For if they signify good things, (as somewhat they must of necessity signify, because it is of their very nature to be signs of

^a Luke vii. 44, 46.

intimation, presenting both themselves unto outward sense, and besides themselves, some other thing to the understanding of beholders,) unless they be either greatly mischosen to signify the same, or else applied where that which they signify agreeth not, there is no cause of exception against them, as against evil and unlawful ceremonies.

The cause why antiquity did the more in actions of common life, honour the ceremony of the cross, might be for that they lived with infidels. But that which they did in the sacrament of baptism was for the selfsame good of believers, which is thereby intended still: The cross is for us an admonition no less necessary, than for them to glory in the service of Jesus Christ; and not to hang down our heads as men ashamed thereof, although it procure us reproach and obloquy at the hands of this wretched world. Shame is a kind of fear to incur disgrace and ignominy. Now whereas some things are worthy of reproach, some things ignominious only through a false opinion which men have conceived of them,

nature, that generally feareth opprobrious reprehension, must by reason and religion be taught what it should be ashamed of and what not.^b But be we never so well instructed what our duty is in this behalf, without some present admonition at the very instant of practice, what we know is many times not called to mind, till that be done whereupon our just confusion ensueth.

To supply the absence of such as that way might do us good, when they see us in danger of sliding, there are judicious and wise men who think we may greatly relieve ourselves, by a bare imagined presence of some whose authority we fear and would be loath to offend, if indeed they were present with us. Witnesses at hand are a bridle unto many offences. Let the mind have always some whom it feareth, some whose authority may keep even secret thoughts under awe. Take Cato, or if he be too harsh and rugged, choose some other of a softer metal, whose gravity of life and speech thou lovest; his mind and coun-

^b Ephes. v. 12. Rom. vi. 21.

tenance carry with thee, set him always before thine eyes either as a watch or as a pattern. That which is crooked we cannot straighten but by some such level. If men of so good experience and insight in the maims of our weak flesh, have thought these fancied remembrances available to awaken shamefacedness, that so the boldness of sin may be stayed ere it look abroad; surely the wisdom of the Church of Christ, which hath to that use converted the ceremony of the cross in baptism, it is no Christian man's part to despise; especially seeing that by this mean, where nature doth earnestly implore aid, religion yieldeth her that ready assistance, than which there can be no help more forcible, serving only to relieve memory, and to bring to our cogitation that which should most make ashamed of sin.

The mind, while we are in this present life whether it contemplate, meditate, deliberate, or howsoever exercise itself, worketh nothing, without continual recourse unto imagination, the only storehouse of wit, and

peculiar chair of memory. On this anvil it ceaseth not day and night to strike, by means whereof as the pulse declareth how the heart doth work, so the very thoughts and cogitations of man's mind, be they good or bad, do no where sooner bewray themselves, than through the crevices of that wall wherewith nature hath compassed the cells and closets of fancy. In the forehead nothing more plain to be seen than the fear of contumely and disgrace. For which cause, the Scripture, as with great probability it may be thought, describeth them marked of God in the forehead,^c whom His mercy hath undertaken to keep from final confusion and shame. Not that God doth set any corporal mark on His chosen, but to note that He giveth His elect security of preservation from reproach, the fear whereof doth use to shew itself in that part. Shall I say, that the sign of the cross, as we use it, is in some sort a mean to work our preservation from reproach? Surely the mind which as yet hath not hardened itself in

^c Ezekiel ix. 4. Rev. vii. 3. ix. 4.

sin, is seldom provoked thereunto in any gross and grievous manner, but nature's secret suggestion objecteth against it, ignominy as a bar. Which conceit being entered into that palace of man's fancy, the gates whereof have imprinted in them that holy sign which bringeth forthwith to mind whatsoever Christ hath brought, and we vowed against sin; it cometh hereby to pass that Christian men never want a most effectual, though a silent teacher, to avoid whatsoever may deservedly procure shame. So that in things which we should be ashamed of, we are by the cross admonished faithfully of our duty, at the very moment when admonition doth most need.

Other things there are which deserve honour, and yet do purchase many times our disgrace in this present world, as of old the very truth of religion itself, till God by His own outstretched arm made the glory thereof to shine over all the earth. Whereupon St. Cyprian, exhorting to martyrdom in times of heathenish persecution and cruelty, thought it not vain to allege unto them, with other

arguments, the very ceremony of that cross whereof we speak. "Never let that hand offer sacrifice to idols, which hath already received the body of our Saviour Christ, and shall hereafter the crown of His glory." Arm your foreheads unto all boldness, that the "sign of God may be kept safe." Again, when it pleased God that the fury of their enemies being bridled, the Church had some little rest and quietness, if so small a liberty but only to breathe between troubles may be termed quietness and rest, to such as fell not away from Christ through former persecutions, He giveth due and deserved praise in the self-same manner. "You that were ready to endure imprisonment and were resolute to suffer death; you that have courageously withstood the world, ye have made yourselves both a glorious spectacle for God to behold, and a worthy example for the rest of your brethren to follow. Those mouths which had sanctified themselves with food coming down from heaven, loathed after Christ's own body and blood, to taste the poisoned and con-

tagious scraps of idols ; those foreheads which the sign of God had purified kept themselves to be crowned by Him, the touch of the garlands of Satan they abhorred." Thus was the memory of that sign which they had in baptism, a kind of bar or prevention to keep them even from apostasy, whereinto the frailty of flesh and blood over-much fearing to endure shame, might peradventure the more easily otherwise have drawn them.

We have not now, through the gracious goodness of Almighty God, those extreme conflicts which our fathers had with blasphemous contumelies every where offered to the name of Christ, by such as professed themselves infidels and unbelievers. Howbeit, unless we be strangers to the age wherein we live, or else in some partial respect dissemblers of that we hourly both hear and see, there is not the simplest of us but knoweth, with what disdain and scorn Christ is dishonoured far and wide. Is there any burden in the world more heavy to bear than contempt? Is there any contempt that grieveth as theirs doth,

whose quality no way making them less worthy than others are of reputation, only the service which they do to Christ in the daily exercise of religion treadeth them down? Doth any contumely, which we sustain for religion's sake pierce so deeply, as that which would seem of mere conscience religiously spiteful? When they that honour God are despised; when the chiefest service of honour that man can do unto Him, is the cause why they are despised; when they which pretend to honour Him, and that with greatest sincerity, do with more than heathenish petulancy trample underfoot almost whatsoever either we or the whole Church of God, by the space of so many ages have been accustomed unto, for the comelier and better exercise of our religion according to the soundest rules that wisdom directed by the Word of God, and by long experience confirmed, hath been able with common advice, with much deliberation, and exceeding great diligence, to comprehend; when no man fighting under Christ's banner can be always exempted from seeing or sus-

taining those indignities, the sting whereof not to feel, or feeling not to be moved thereat, is a thing impossible to flesh and blood: if this be any object for patience to work on, the strictest bond that thereunto tieth us is our vowed obedience to Christ; the solemnest vow that we ever made to obey Christ and to suffer willingly all reproaches for His sake was made in baptism; and amongst other memorials to keep us mindful of that vow, we cannot think that the sign which our new baptized foreheads did there receive is either unfit or unforcible, the reasons hitherto alleged being weighed with indifferent balance.

It is not, you will, say the cross in our foreheads, but in our hearts, the faith of Christ that armeth us with patience, constancy, and courage. Which as we grant to be most true, so neither dare we despise, no, not the meanest helps that serve, though it be but in the very lowest degree of furtherance towards the highest services that God doth require at our hands. And if any man deny that such ceremonies are available, at the least as me-

morials of duty, or do think that himself hath no need to be so put in mind what our duties are, it is but reasonable that in the one the public experience of the world outweigh some few men's persuasion; and in the other, the rare perfection of a few condescend unto common imbecility.

Seeing, therefore, that to fear shame, which doth worthily follow sin, and to bear undeserved reproach constantly, is the general duty of all men professing Christianity; seeing also that our weakness, while we are in this present world, doth need towards spiritual duties the help even of corporal furtherance, and that by reason of natural intercourse between the highest and the lowest powers of man's mind in all actions, his fancy or imagination carrying in it that special note of remembrance, than which there is nothing more forcible, where either too weak or too strong a conceit of infamy and disgrace might do great harm, standeth always ready to put forth a kind of necessary helping hand; we are in that respect to acknowledge the good

and profitable use of this ceremony, and not to think it superfluous that Christ hath His mark applied unto that part where bashfulness appeareth, in token that they who are Christians should be at no time ashamed of His ignominy.

But to prevent some inconveniences which might ensue, if the over ordinary use thereof, as it fareth with such rites when they are too common should cause it to be of less observation or regard where it most availeth; we neither omit it in that place, nor altogether make it so vulgar as the custom heretofore hath been. Although to condemn the whole Church of God when it most flourished in zeal and piety, to mark that age with the brand of error and superstition, only because they had this ceremony more in use than we now think needful; is, as we take it, a censure of greater zeal than knowledge.

When heathens despised Christian religion, because of the sufferings of Jesus Christ, the fathers, to testify how little such contumelies and contempts prevailed with them, chose

rather the sign of the cross, than any other outward mark, whereby the world might most easily discern always what they were. On the contrary side, now, whereas they who do all profess the Christian religion, are divided amongst themselves; and the fault the one part is, that in zeal to the sufferings of Christ they admire too much, and over superstitiously adore the visible sign of His cross: if you ask what we that mislike them should do, we are here advised to cure one contrary by another. Which art or method is not yet so current as they imagine. For if, as their practice for the most part sheweth, it be their meaning that the scope and drift of reformation, when things are faulty, should be to settle the Church in the contrary; it standeth them upon to beware of this rule, because seeing vices have not only virtues, but other vices also in nature opposite unto them, it may be dangerous in these cases to seek but that which we find contrary to present evils. For in sores and sicknesses of the mind, we are not simply to measure good by distance from evil,

because one vice may in some respect be more opposite to another, than either of them to that virtue which holdeth the mean between them both. Liberality and covetousness, the one a virtue and the other a vice, are not so contrary as the vices of covetousness and prodigality. Religion and superstition have more affiance, though the one be light and the other darkness, than superstition and profaneness, which both are vicious extremities. By means whereof it cometh also to pass, that the mean, which is virtue, seemeth in the eyes of each extreme an extremity: the liberal hearted man is, by the opinion of the prodigal, miserable, and by the judgment of the miserable lavish; impiety for the most part upbraideth religion as superstitious, which superstition often accuseth as impious; both so conceiving thereof because it doth seem more to participate each extreme than one extreme doth another, and is by consequent less contrary to either of them, than they mutually between themselves. Now if he that seeketh to reform covetous-

ness or superstition, should but labour to induce the contrary, it were but to draw men out of lime into coaldust : so that their course, which will remedy the superstitious abuse of things profitable in the Church, is not still to abolish utterly the use thereof, because not using at all is most opposite to ill using ; but rather, if it may be, to bring them back to a right, perfect, and religious usage, which albeit less contrary to the present sore, is notwithstanding the better, and by many degrees the sounder way of recovery : and unto this effect, that very precedent itself which they propose may be best followed. For, as the fathers when the cross of Christ was in utter contempt, did not superstitiously adore the same, but rather declare that they so esteemed it as was meet ; in like manner where we find the cross to have that honour which is due to Christ, is it not as lawful for us to retain it in that estimation, which it ought to have, and in that use which it had of old without offence, as by taking it clean away, to seem followers of their example, who cure

wilfully by abscission that which they might both preserve and heal ?

Touching therefore the sign and ceremony of the cross, we no way find ourselves bound to relinquish it, neither because the first inventors thereof were but mortal men, nor lest the sense and signification we give unto it should burden us as authors of a new gospel in the house of God, nor in respect of some cause which the fathers had more than we have to use the same ; nor finally, for any such offence or scandal as heretofore it hath been subject unto by error now reformed in the minds of men.

SECTION L.

CONFIRMATION AFTER BAPTISM.

THE ancient custom of the Church was, after they had baptised, to add thereunto imposition of hands, with effectual prayer for

the illumination of God's most Holy Spirit, to confirm and perfect that which the grace of the same Spirit had already begun in baptism. For our means to obtain the graces which God doth bestow are our prayers. Our prayers to that intent are available as well for others as for ourselves. To pray for others is to bless them for whom we pray; because prayer procureth the blessing of God upon them, especially the prayers of such as God either most respecteth for their piety and zeal that way, or else regardeth for that their place and calling bindeth them above others unto this duty, as it doth both natural and spiritual fathers.

With prayers of spiritual and personal benediction the manner hath been in all ages to use imposition of hands, as a ceremony betokening our restrained desires to the party whom we present unto God by prayer. Thus when Isreal blessed Ephriam and Manasses, Joseph's sons, he imposed upon them his hands and prayed; "God, in whose sight my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk; God, which had fed me all my life-long unto this day, and the

angel which hath delivered me from all evil, bless these children.”^a The prophets who healed diseases by prayer, used therein the self-same ceremony. And therefore when Elisha willed Naaman to wash himself seven times in Jordan for cure of his foul disease, it much offended him; “I thought,”^b saith he, “with myself, surely the man will come forth, and stand, and call upon the name of the Lord his God, and put his hand on the place, to the end he may so heal the leprosy.” In consecrations and ordinations of men unto ^{rooms} offices of divine calling, the like was usually done from the time of Moses to Christ.^c Their suits that came unto Christ for help were also tendered oftentimes, and are expressed in such forms or phrases of speech, as shew that He was Himself an observer of the same custom.^d He who with imposition of hands and prayer did so great works of mercy for restoration of bodily health, was worthily judged as able to effect the infusion of heavenly grace into them,

a Gen. xlviii. 15. b 2 Kings v, 11. c Num. xxvii. 18.

d Matt. ix. 18. Mark x. 13. Mark v. 23. viii. 22.

whose age was not yet depraved with that malice which might be supposed a bar to the goodness of God towards them. They brought Him therefore young children^e to put His hands upon them and pray. After the ascension of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, that which He had begun continued in the daily practice of His apostles, whose prayer and imposition of hands were a mean whereby thousands became partakers of the wonderful gifts of God. The Church had received from Christ a promise, that such as have believed in Him, these signs and tokens should follow them; "To cast out devils, to speak with tongues, to drive away serpents, to be free from the harm which any deadly poison could work, and to cure diseases by imposition of hands." ^f

Which power, common at the first in a manner unto all believers, all believers had not power to derive or communicate unto all other men; but whosoever was the instrument of God to instruct, convert, and baptize them,

the gift of miraculous operations by the power of the Holy Ghost they had not, but only at the Apostles' own hands^g. For which cause, Simon Magus perceiving that power to be in none but them, and presuming that they who had it might sell it, sought to purchase it of them with money^h. And, as miraculous graces of the Spirit continued after the Apostles' times, "For," saith Irenæus, "they who are truly His disciples do in His name, and through grace received from Him, such works for the benefit of other men, as every of them is by Him enabled to work: some cast out devils, insomuch as they who are delivered from wicked spirits have been thereby won unto Christ, and do constantly persevere in the Church and society of faithful men: some excel in the knowledge of things to come, in the grace of visions from God, and the gift of prophetic prediction: some by laying on their hands restore them to health, which are grievously afflicted with sickness: yea, there are that of dead have been made alive, and

^g Acts xix. 6.

^h Acts viii. 17.

have afterwards many years conversed with us. What should I say? The gifts are innumerable wherewith God hath enriched His Church throughout the world, and by virtue whereof, in the name of Christ crucified under Pontius Pilate, the Church every day doth many wonders for the good of nations, neither fraudulently, nor in any respect of lucre and gain to herself, but as freely bestowing, as God on her hath bestowed His divine graces: so it nowhere appeareth, that ever any did by prayer and imposition of hands, since the Apostles' times, make others partakers of the like miraculous gifts and graces, as long as it pleased God to continue the same in His Church, but only Bishops, the Apostles successors for a time, even in that power. St. Augustine acknowledgeth, that such gifts were not permitted to last always, lest men should wax cold with the commonness of that, the strangeness whereof at the first inflamed them. Which words of St. Augustine declaring how the vulgar use of those miracles was then expired, are no prejudice to the like extraor-

dinary graces, more rarely observed in some, either then or of later days.

Now whereas the successors of the Apostles had but only for a time such power, as by prayer and imposition of hands to bestow the Holy Ghost; the reason wherefore confirmation, nevertheless, by prayer and laying on of hands, hath hitherto always continued, is for other very special benefits which the Church thereby enjoyeth. The Fathers every where impute unto it that gift or grace of the Holy Ghost, not which maketh us first Christian men, but when we are made such, assisteth us in all virtue, armeth us against temptation and sin. For after baptism administered, "there followeth," saith Tertullian, "imposition of hands, with invocation and invitation of the Holy Ghost, which willingly cometh down from the Father, to rest upon the purified and blessed bodies, as it were acknowledging the waters of baptism a fit seat." St. Cyprian in more particular manner alluding to that effect of the Spirit, which here especially was respected, "How great," saith he, "is that

power and force wherewith the mind is here (he meaneth in baptism) enabled, being not only withdrawn from that pernicious hold which the world before had of it, nor only so purified and made clean, that no stain or blemish of the enemies' invasion doth remain; but over and besides (namely, through prayer and imposition of hands) becometh yet greater, yet mightier in strength, so far as to reign with a kind of imperial dominion over the whole band of that roaming and spoiling adversary." As much is signified by Eusebius Emisenus, saying, "The Holy Ghost which descendeth with saving influence upon the waters of baptism, doth there give that fulness which sufficeth for innocency, and afterward exhibiteth in confirmation an augmentation of further grace." The Fathers, therefore, being thus persuaded, held confirmation as an ordinance apostolic, always profitable^c in God's Church, although not always accompanied with equal largeness of those external effects which gave it countenance at the first.

c Heb. vi. 2.

The cause of severing confirmation from baptism (for most commonly they went together) was sometimes in the minister, who being of inferior degree, might baptize, but not confirm, as in their case it came to pass whom Peter and John did confirm, whereas Philip had before baptized them^d; and in theirs of whom St. Jerome hath said, “I deny not but the custom of the Churches is, that the Bishop should go abroad, and imposing his hands, pray for the gift of the Holy Ghost on them whom presbyters and deacons far off, in lesser cities, have already baptized.” Which ancient custom of the Church St. Cyprian groundeth upon the example of Peter and John, in the eighth of the Acts before alleged. “The faithful in Samaria,” saith he, “had already obtained baptism; only that which was wanting, Peter and John supplied by prayer and imposition of hands, to the end the Holy Ghost might be poured upon them. Which also is done amongst ourselves, when they who be already baptized, are brought to

^d Acts viii. 12. 17.

the prelates of the Church to obtain by our prayer and imposition of hands the Holy Ghost." By this it appeareth, that when the ministers of baptism were persons of inferior degree, the Bishops did after confirm whom such had before baptized.

Sometimes they who by force of their ecclesiastical calling might do as well the one as the other, were notwithstanding men whom heresy had disjoined from the fellowship of true believers. Whereupon, when any man by them baptized and confirmed, came afterwards to see and renounce their error, the generally-received custom was only to admit them with imposition of hands and prayer.

Finally, sometime the cause of severing confirmation from baptism, was in the parties that received baptism being infants, at which age they might be very well admitted to live in the family; but because to fight in the army of God, to discharge the duties of a Christian man, to bring forth the fruits, and to do the works of the Holy Ghost, their time of ability was not yet come, (so that baptism

were not deferred, there could, by stay of their confirmation, no harm ensue, but rather good. For by this mean it came to pass, that children in expectation thereof, were seasoned with the principles of true religion, before malice and corrupt examples depraved their minds, a good foundation was laid betimes for direction of the course of their whole lives, the seed of the Church of God was preserved sincere and sound, the prelates and fathers of God's family, to whom the cure of their souls belonged, saw by trial and examination of them a part of their own heavy burden discharged, reaped comfort by beholding the first beginnings of true godliness in tender years, glorified Him whose praise they found in the mouths of infants, and neglected not so fit opportunity of giving every one fatherly encouragement and exhortation. Whereunto imposition of hands and prayer being added, our warrant for the great good effect thereof is the same which patriarchs, prophets, priests, apostles, fathers, and men of God, have had for such their particular invocations and bene-

dictions, as no man, I suppose, professing truth of religion, will easily think to have been without fruit.

SECTION LI.

OF THE SACRAMENT OF THE BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST.

THE grace which we have by the Holy Eucharist, doth not begin but continue life. No man therefore receiveth this Sacrament before baptism, because no dead thing is capable of nourishment. That which groweth must of necessity first live. If our bodies did not daily waste, food to restore them were a thing superfluous. And it may be that the grace of baptism would serve to eternal life, were it not that the state of our spiritual being is daily so much hindered and impaired after baptism. In that life therefore, where neither body nor soul can decay, our souls shall as little require this Sacrament, as our bodies corporal nou-

ishment. But as long as the days of our warfare last, during the time that we are both subject to diminution and capable of augmentation in grace, the words of our Lord and Saviour Christ will remain forcible : “ Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you.”^a Life being therefore proposed unto all men as their end, they who by baptism have laid the foundation and attained the first beginning of a new life, have here their nourishment and food prescribed for continuance of life in them. Such as will live the life of God must eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of man ; because this is a part of that diet, which if we want we cannot live. Whereas therefore in our infancy we are incorporated into Christ, and by baptism receive the grace of His Spirit without any sense or feeling of the gift which God bestoweth ; in the Eucharist we so receive the gift of God, that we know by grace what the grace is which God giveth us ; the degrees of our own increase in holiness

^a John vi. 53.

and virtue we see and can judge of them, we understand that the strength of our life, begun in Christ is Christ, that His flesh is meat, and His blood drink; not by surmised imagination, but truly; even so truly that through faith we perceive in the body and blood sacramentally presented, the very taste of eternal life; the grace of the Sacrament is here as the food which we eat and drink.

SECTION LII.

THE MANNER OF THE REAL PRESENCE NOT TO BE INQUIRED INTO.

ALL things considered, and compared with that success which truth hath hitherto had by so bitter conflicts with errors in this point, shall I wish that men would more give themselves to meditate with silence what we have by the sacrament, and less to dispute of the manner how? If any man suppose that this were too great stupidity and dulness, let us see

whether the Apostles of our Lord themselves have not done the like. It appeareth by many examples, that they of their own disposition were very scrupulous and inquisitive, yea, in other cases of less importance and less difficulty, always apt to move questions. How cometh it to pass, that so few words of so high a mystery being uttered, they receive with gladness the gift of Christ, and make no show of doubt or scruple? The reason hereof is not dark to them who have any thing at all observed how the powers of the mind are wont to stir, when that which we infinitely long for presenteth itself above and besides expectation. Curious and intricate speculations do hinder, they abate, they quench such inflamed motions of delight and joy as Divine graces use to raise when extraordinarily they are present. The mind, therefore, feeling present joy, is always marvellous unwilling to admit any other cogitation, and in that case casteth off those disputes whereunto the intellectual part at other times easily draweth. A manifest effect whereof may be noted, if we

compare with our Lord's disciples in the twentieth of John, the people that are said in the sixth of John to have gone after him to Capernaum. These leaving Him on the one side the sea of Tiberias, and finding Him again as soon as themselves by ship were arrived on the contrary side, whither they knew that by ship He came not, and by land the journey was longer than according to the time He could have to travel, as they wondered, so they asked also, "Rabbi, when camest Thou hither^a?" The disciples, when Christ appeared to them in far more strange and miraculous manner, moved no question, but rejoiced greatly in that they saw. For why? The one sort beheld only that in Christ, which they knew was more than natural, but yet their affection was not rapt therewith through any great extraordinary gladness; the other, when they looked on Christ, were not ignorant that they saw the wellspring of their own everlasting felicity; the one, because they enjoyed not disputed, the other disputed not

^a John vi. 25.

because they enjoyed. If, then, the presence of Christ with them did so much move, judge what their thoughts and affections were at the time of this new presentation of Christ; not before their eyes, but within their souls. They had learned before, that His flesh and blood are the true cause of eternal life; that this they are not by the bare force of their own substance, but through the dignity and worth of His Person, who offered them up by way of sacrifice for the life of the whole world, and doth make them still effectual thereunto: finally, that to us they are life in particular, by being particularly received. Thus much they knew, although as yet they understood not perfectly to what effect or issue the same would come, till at the length being assembled for no other cause which they could imagine, but to have eaten the Passover only that Moses appointeth, when they saw their Lord and Master, with hands and eyes lifted up to heaven, first bless and consecrate, for the endless good of all generations till the world's end, the chosen elements of bread and wine;

which elements made for ever the instruments of life by virtue of His Divine benediction, they being the first that were commanded to receive from Him, the first which were warranted by His promise, that not only unto them at the present time, but to whomsoever they and their successors after them did duly administer the same, those mysteries should serve as conducts of life, and conveyances of His body and blood unto them; was it possible they should hear that voice, "Take, eat, this is my body; Drink ye all of this, this is my blood?" Possible, that doing what was required, and believing what was promised, the same should have present effect in them, and not fill them with a kind of fearful admiration at the heaven which they saw in themselves? They had at that time a sea of comfort and joy to wade in, and we by that which they did are taught that this heavenly food is given for the satisfying of our empty souls, and not for the exercising of our curious and subtile wits. If we doubt what those admirable words may import, let Him be our teacher for the mean-

ing of Christ, to whom Christ was Himself a schoolmaster; let our Lord's Apostle be His interpreter, content we ourselves with his explication; My Body, "the communion of My Body:" My Blood, "the communion of My Blood."

Our souls and bodies quickened to eternal life are effects; the cause whereof is the person of Christ: His body and blood are the true wellspring out of which this life floweth. So that His body and blood are in that very subject whereunto they minister life, not only by effect or operation, even as the influence of the heavens is in plants, beasts, men, and in every thing which they quicken; but also by a far more Divine and mystical kind of union, which maketh us one with Him, even as He and the Father are one.

SECTION LIII.

SUMMARY ACCOUNT OF THE BLESSINGS OF THE EUCHARIST.

It is on all sides plainly confessed, that this sacrament is a true and real participation of

Christ, who thereby imparteth Himself, even His whole entire Person, as a mystical Head unto every soul that receiveth Him, and that every such receiver doth thereby incorporate or unite himself unto Christ as a mystical member of Him, yea of them also whom He acknowledgeth to be His own. Secondly, that to whom the person of Christ is thus communicated, to them He giveth by the same sacrament His Holy Spirit to sanctify them, as it sanctifieth Him which is their Head. Thirdly, that what merit, force, or virtue soever there is in His sacrificed body and blood, we freely, fully, and wholly have it by this sacrament. Fourthly, that the effect thereof in us, is a real transmutation of our souls and bodies from sin to righteousness, from death and corruption to immortality and life. Fifthly, that because the sacrament being of itself but a corruptible and earthly creature, must needs be thought an unlikely instrument to work so admirable effects in man, we are therefore to rest ourselves altogether upon the strength of His glorious power, who is able

and will bring to pass, that the bread and cup which He giveth us shall be truly the thing He promiseth.

He who hath said of the one sacrament, "Wash, and be clean," hath said concerning the other likewise, "Eat, and live." If therefore, without any such particular and solemn warrant as this is, that poor distressed woman coming unto Christ for health could so constantly resolve herself, "May I but touch the skirt of His garment, I shall be whole^a;" what moveth us to argue of the manner how life should come by bread? our duty being here but to take what is offered, and most assuredly to rest persuaded of this, that can we but eat, we are safe.

When I behold with mine eyes some small and scarce discernible grain or seed, whereof nature maketh a promise that a tree shall come; and when afterwards of that tree any skilful artificer undertaketh to frame some exquisite and curious work, I look for the

^a Matt. ix. 21.

event, I move no question about performance either of the one or of the other. Shall I simply credit nature in things natural? Shall I in things artificial rely myself on art, never offering to make doubt? and in that which is above both art and nature refuse to believe the Author of both, except He acquaint me with His ways, and lay the secret of His skill before me? Where God himself doth speak those things which either for height and sublimity of matter, or else for secrecy of performance, we are not able to reach unto, as we may be ignorant without danger, so it can be no disgrace to confess we are ignorant. Such as love piety will, as much as in them lieth, know all things that God commandeth, but especially the duties of service which they owe to God. As for His dark and hidden works, they prefer, as becometh them in such cases, simplicity of faith before that knowledge, which curiously sifting what it should adore, and disputing too boldly of that which the wit of man cannot search, chilleth for the most part all warmth of zeal, and bringeth

soundness of belief many times into great hazard.

Let it therefore be sufficient for me, presenting myself at the Lord's table, to know what I there receive from Him; without searching or inquiring of the manner how Christ performeth His promise: let disputes and questions, enemies to piety, abatements of true devotion, and hitherto in this cause but over-patiently heard, let them take their rest; let curious and sharp-witted men beat their heads about what questions themselves will: the very letter of the Word of Christ giveth plain security, that these mysteries do, as nails, fasten us to His very cross, that by them we draw out, as touching efficacy, force, and virtue, even the blood of His gored side.

In the wounds of our Redeemer we there dip our tongues, we are dyed red both within and without, our hunger is satisfied, and our thirst for ever quenched. They are things wonderful which he feeleth, great which he seeth, and unheard of which he uttereth, whose

soul is possessed of this Paschal Lamb, and made joyful in the strength of this new wine ; this bread hath in it more than the substance which our eyes behold, this cup hallowed with solemn benediction availeth to the endless life and welfare both of soul and body ; in that it serveth as well for a medicine to heal our infirmities and purge our sins, as for a sacrifice of thanksgiving ; with touching it sanctifieth, it enlighteneth with belief, it truly conformeth us unto the image of Jesus Christ. What these elements are in themselves, it skilleth not ; it is enough, that to me who take them they are the body and blood of Christ, His promise in witness hereof sufficeth ; His word He knoweth which way to accomplish ; why should any cogitation possess the mind of a faithful communicant but this, O my God, thou art true ; O my soul, thou art happy !

Thus, therefore, we see that howsoever men's opinions do otherwise vary, nevertheless, touching Baptism and the Supper of the Lord, we may with consent of the whole Christian world conclude they are necessary the one to

initiate or begin, the other to consummate or make perfect our life in Christ.

SECTION LIV.

OF THE COMMUNION OF THE SICK.

THERE is nothing which the soul of man doth desire in that last hour so much, as comfort against the natural terrors of death, and other scruples of conscience which commonly do then most trouble and perplex the weak; towards whom the very law of God doth exact at our hands all the helps that Christian lenity and indulgence can afford. Our general consolation departing this life is, the hope of that glorious and blessed resurrection which St. Paul nameth^a *a lifting up on high*, to note that as all men shall have their *lifting up*, and be raised again from the dead,^b so the just shall be taken up and exalted above the rest, whom the power of God doth

a 1 Cor. xv. 21.

b Phil. iii. 11.

but raise and not exalt. This life and this resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, is for all men as touching the sufficiency of that He hath done; but that which maketh us partakers thereof, is our particular communion with Christ; and this sacrament a principal mean, as well to strengthen the bond as to multiply in us the fruits of the same communion. For which cause St. Cyprian termeth it "a joyful solemnity of expedite and speedy resurrection." Ignatius, "a medecine which procureth immortality and preventeth death." Irenæus, "the nourishment of our bodies to eternal life, and their preservative from corruption." Now because that sacrament, which at all times we may receive unto this effect, is then most acceptable and most fruitful, when any special extraordinary occasion, nearly and presently urging, kindleth our desires towards it, according to the charitable order of the Church wherein we live, there ensueth unto God that glory which His righteous saints, comforted in their greatest distresses, do yield, and unto them who have their reasonable

petitions satisfied, the same contentment, tranquillity, and joy that others before them, by means of like satisfaction, have reaped, and wherein we all are or should be desirous finally to take our leave of the world, whensoever our own uncertain time of most assured departure shall come.

Concerning therefore both prayers and sacraments, together with our usual and received form of administering the same in the Church of England, let thus much suffice.

SECTION LV.

OF FESTIVAL DAYS, THE DUTY OF KEEPING THEM GENERALLY.

ALL things whatsoever having their time, the works of God have always that time which is seasonablest and fittest for them. His works are some ordinary, some more rare; all worthy of observation, but not all of like necessity to be often remembered; they all have their

times, but they all do not add the same estimation and glory to the times wherein they are. For as God by being every where, yet doth not give unto all places one and the same degree of holiness; so neither one and the same dignity to all times by working in all. For if all either places or times were in respect of God alike; wherefore was it said unto Moses by particular designation, "This very place wherein thou standest is holy ground^a?" Why doth the prophet David choose out of all the days of the year but one, whereof he speaketh by way of principal admiration, "This is the day which the Lord hath made^b?" No doubt as God's extraordinary presence hath hallowed and sanctified certain places, so they are His extraordinary works that have truly and worthily advanced certain times; for which cause they ought to be with all men that honour God more holy than other days. The wise man therefore compareth herein not unfitly the times of God with the persons of men. If any should ask how it cometh to pass

a Exod. iii. 5.

b Psalm cxviii. 24.

“ that one day doth excel another, seeing the light of all the days in the year proceedeth from one sun”; to this he answereth, “ That the knowledge of the Lord hath parted them asunder, He hath by them disposed the times and solemn feasts; some He hath chosen out and sanctified, some He hath put among the days to number^c:” even as Adam and all other men are of one substance, all created of the earth: “ But the Lord hath divided them by great knowledge, and made their ways divers; some He hath blessed and exalted, some He hath sanctified and appropriated unto Himself, some He hath cursed, humbled, and put them out of their dignity.” So that the cause being natural and necessary for which there should be a difference in days, the solemn observation whereof declareth religious thankfulness towards Him, whose works of principal reckoning we thereby admire and honour; it cometh next to be considered, what kinds of duties and services they are wherewith such times should be kept holy.

c Eccclus. xxxiii. 7—12.

SECTION LVI.

OF THE WAY OF CELEBRATING FESTIVAL DAYS.

THE sanctification of days and times is a token of that thankfulness, and a part of that public honour which we owe to God for admirable benefits, whereof it doth not suffice, that we keep a secret calendar, taking thereby our private occasions as we list ourselves to think how much God hath done for all men; but the days which are chosen out to serve as public memorials of such His mercies ought to be clothed with those outward robes of holiness, whereby their difference from other days may be made sensible. But because time in itself can receive no alteration, the hallowing of festival days must consist in the shape or countenance which we put upon the affairs that are incident unto those days. “This is the day which the Lord hath made,” saith the prophet David, “let us rejoice and be glad in

it."^a So that generally offices and duties of religious joy are that wherein the hallowing of festival times consisteth. The most natural testimonies of our rejoicing in God are, first, His praises set forth with cheerful alacrity of mind; secondly, our comfort and delight expressed by a charitable largeness of somewhat more than common bounty; thirdly, sequestration from ordinary labours, the toils and cares whereof are not meet to be companions of such gladness. Festival solemnity, therefore, is nothing but the due mixture, as it were, of these three elements, praise, bounty, and rest. Touching praise, forasmuch as the Jews who alone knew the way how to magnify God aright, did commonly, as appeared by their wicked lives, more of custom and for fashion sake execute the service of their religion, than with hearty and true devotion which God especially requireth. He therefore protesteth against their sabbaths and solemn days, as being therewith much offended. Plentiful and liberal expense is required in them

that abound, partly as a sign of their own joy in the goodness of God towards them, and partly as a mean whereby to refresh those poor and needy, who being especially at these times made partakers of relaxation and joy with others, do the more religiously bless God, whose great mercies were a cause thereof, and the more contentedly endure the burden of that hard estate wherein they continue. Rest is the end of all motion, and the last perfection of all things that labour. Labours in us are journeys, and even in them who feel no weariness by any work, yet they are but ways whereby to come unto that which bringeth not happiness till it do bring rest. For as long as any thing we desire is unattained, we rest not. Let us not here take rest for idleness. They are idle, whom the painfulness of action causeth to avoid those labours whereunto both God and nature bindeth them; they rest, who either cease from their work when they have brought it to perfection, or else give over a meaner labour because a worthier and better is to be under-

taken. God hath created nothing to be idle or ill employed. As therefore man doth consist of different and distinct parts, every part endued with manifold abilities, which all have their several ends and actions thereunto referred; so there is in this great variety of duties which belong to men that dependency and order by means whereof the lower sustaining always the more excellent, and the higher perfecting the more base, they are in their times and seasons continued with most exquisite correspondence. Labours of bodily and daily toil purchase freedom for actions of religious joy, which benefit these actions requite with the gift of desired rest; a thing most natural and fit to accompany the solemn festival duties of honour which are done to God. For if those principal works of God, the memory whereof we use to celebrate at such times, be but certain tastes and says, as it were, of that final benefit wherein our perfect felicity and bliss lieth folded up, seeing that the presence of the one doth direct our cogitations, thoughts, and desires towards the

other, it giveth surely a kind of life, and addeth inwardly no small delight to those so comfortable expectations, when the very outward countenance of that we presently do, representeth after a sort that also whereunto we tend ; as festival rest doth that celestial estate whereof the very heathens themselves, who had not the means whereby to apprehend much, did notwithstanding imagine that it needs must consist in rest, and have therefore taught that above the highest moveable sphere there is nothing which feeleth alteration, motion, or change, but all things immutable, unsubject to passion, blest with eternal continuance in a life of the highest perfection, and of that complete abundant sufficiency within itself, which no possibility of want, maim, or defect, can touch. Besides, whereas ordinary labours are both in themselves painful and base in comparison of festival services done to God, doth not the natural difference between them shew that the one, as it were by way of submission and homage, should surrender themselves to the other, wherewith they can

neither easily concur, because painfulness and joy are opposite, nor decently, because while the mind hath just occasion to make her abode in the house of gladness, the weed of ordinary toil and travel becometh her not? Wherefore even nature hath taught the heathens, and God the Jews, and Christ us, first that festival solemnities are a part of the public exercise of religion; secondly, that praise, liberality, and rest, are as natural elements whereof solemnities consist. But these things the heathens converted to the honour of their false gods; and as they failed in the end itself, so neither could they discern rightly what form and measure religion therein should observe. Whereupon when the Israelites impiously followed so corrupt an example, they are in every degree noted to have done amiss; their songs of praise were idolatry; their bounty, excess; and their rest, wantonness. Therefore the law of God, which appointed them days of solemnity, taught them likewise in what manner the same should be celebrated. According to the pattern of which institution, David establishing

the state of religion ordained praise to be given unto God, in the sabbaths, months, and appointed times^b, as their custom had been always before the Lord. Now, besides the times which God Himself in the Law of Moses particularly specified there were through the wisdom of the Church certain other devised by occasion of like occurrences to those whereupon the former had risen; as namely, that which Mordecai and Esther did first celebrate in memory of the Lord's most wonderful protection, when Haman had laid his inevitable plot, to man's thinking, for the utter extirpation of the Jews even in one day^c. This they call the Feast of Lots, because Haman had cast their life and their death, as it were, upon the hazard of a lot. To this may be added that other also of Dedication^d, mentioned in St. John, the institution whereof is declared in the history of the Maccabees^e. But forasmuch as their law by the coming of Christ is changed, and we thereunto no way bound,

b 1 Chron. xxiii. 31.

c Esther ix. 27.

d John x. 22.

e 1 Maec. iv. 54.

St. Paul, although it were not his purpose to favour invectives against the special sanctification of days and times to the service of God, and to the honour of Jesus Christ, doth notwithstanding bend his forces against that opinion which imposed on the Gentiles the yoke of Jewish legal observations, as if the whole world ought for ever, and that upon pain of condemnation, to keep and observe the same. Such as in this persuasion hallowed those Jewish sabbaths the Apostle sharply reproveth, saying, “Ye observe days and months, and times, and years; I am in fear of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain^f.” Howbeit so far off was Tertullian from imagining how any man could possibly hereupon call in question such days as the Church of Christ doth observe, that the observation of these days he useth for an argument whereby to prove it could not be the Apostle’s intent and meaning to condemn simply all observing of such times.

f Gal. iv. 10.

Generally therefore touching feasts in the Church of Christ, they have that profitable use whereof St. Augustine speaketh, "By festival solemnities and set days, we dedicate and sanctify to God the memory of His benefits, lest unthankful forgetfulness thereof should creep upon us in course of time.

And concerning particulars, their Sabbath the Church hath changed into our Lord's day; that as the one did continually bring to mind the former world finished by creation, so the other might keep us in perpetual remembrance of a far better world, begun by Him who came to restore all things, to make both heaven and earth new. For which cause they honoured the last day, we the first in every seven throughout the year.

The rest of the days and times which we celebrate have relation all to one head. We begin therefore our ecclesiastical year with the glorious annunciation of His birth by angelical embassage.^g There being hereunto added His blessed nativity itself; the mystery of His

^g Luke i. 26.

legal circumcision, the testification of His true incarnation by the purification of her who brought Him into the world ; His resurrection, His ascension into heaven, the admirable sending down of His Spirit upon His chosen, and, which consequently ensued, the notice of that incomprehensible Trinity thereby given to the Church of God. Again, forasmuch as we know that Christ hath not only been manifested great in Himself, but great in other His saints also, the days of whose departure out of the world are to the Church of Christ as the birth and coronation days of kings or emperors ; therefore especial choice being made of the very flower of all occasions in this kind, there are annual selected times to meditate of Christ glorified in them who had the honour to suffer for His sake, before they had age and ability to know Him ; glorified in them who knowing Him as Stephen, had the sight of that before death, whereunto so acceptable death did lead ; glorified in those sages of the East, that came from far to adore Him, and were conducted by

strange light ; glorified in the second Elias of the world, sent before Him to prepare His way ; glorified in those apostles, whom it pleased Him to use as founders of His kingdom here ; glorified in the angels, as in Michael ; glorified in all those happy souls, that are already possessed of heaven. Over and besides which number not great, the rest be but four other days heretofore annexed to the feast of Easter and Pentecost, by reason of general baptism usual at those two feasts ; which also is the cause why they had not, as other days, any proper name given them. Their first institution was therefore through necessity, and their present continuance is now for the greater honour of the principles ^{of} whereupon they still attend.

If it be then demanded, whether we observe these times as being thereunto bound by force of divine law, or else by the only positive ordinances of the Church ; I answer to this, that the very law of nature itself, which all men confess to be God's law, requireth in general no less the sanctification of times

than of places, persons, and things, unto God's honour. For which cause it hath pleased Him heretofore, as of the rest, so of time likewise, to exact some parts by way of perpetual homage, never to be dispensed withal, nor remitted; again, to require some other parts of time with as strict exaction, but for less continuance; and of the rest which were left arbitrary, to accept what the Church shall in due consideration consecrate voluntarily unto like religious uses. Of the first kind, amongst the Jews was the sabbath day; of the second, those feasts which are appointed by the law of Moses; the feast of Dedication, invented by the Church, standeth in the number of the last kind. The moral law requires therefore a seventh part throughout the age of the whole world to be that way employed, although with us the day be changed, in regard of a new revolution begun by our Saviour Christ; yet the same proportion of time continueth which was before; because in reference to the benefit of creation, and now much more of renovation thereunto

added by Him who was Prince of the world to come, we are bound to account the sanctification of one day in seven a duty which God's immutable law doth exact for ever.

Duties of all sorts must have their several successions and seasons. Feasts, whether God Himself hath ordained them, or the Church by that authority which God hath given, they are of religion such public services as neither can nor ought to be continued otherwise than only by iteration; which iteration is a most effectual mean to bring unto full maturity and growth those seeds of godliness, that be sown in the hearts of many thousands, during the while that such feasts are present. The constant habit of welldoing is not gotten without the custom of doing well, neither can virtue be made perfect but by the manifold works of virtue often practised. Before the powers of our minds be brought unto some perfection, our first essays and offers towards virtue must needs be raw; yet commendable, because they tend unto ripeness. For which cause, the wisdom of

God hath commended, especially this circumstance amongst others in solemn feasts, that to children, and novices in religion, they minister the first occasion to ask and inquire of God. Whereupon, if there follow but so much piety as hath been mentioned, let the Church learn to further imbecility, with prayer; "Preserve Lord, these good and gracious beginnings, that they suddenly dry not up like the morning dew, but may prosper and grow as the trees, which rivers of waters keep always flourishing."

Let all men's acclamations be, "grace, grace unto it;" as to that first laid corner stone in Zerubbabel's buildings.^h "For who hath despised the day of those things which are small."ⁱ Or, how dare we take upon us to condemn that very thing which voluntarily we grant maketh us of nothing somewhat, seeing all we pretend against it, is only that as yet this somewhat is not much? The days of solemnity which are but few, cannot choose but soon finish that outward exercise of god-

^h Zechariah iv. 7.

ⁱ Ver. 10.

liness which properly appertaineth to such times ; howbeit, men's inward disposition to virtue they both augment for the present, and by their often returns bring also the same at the length unto that perfection which we most desire. So that although by their necessary short continuance, they abridge the present exercise of piety in some kind, yet because by repetition they enlarge, strengthen, and confirm, the habits of all virtue, it remaineth, that we honour, observe, and keep them, as ordinances many ways singularly profitable in God's Church.

Let it suffice men of sober minds to know, that the law both of God and nature alloweth generally days of rest and festival solemnity to be observed by way of thankful and joyful remembrance, if such miraculous favours be shewed towards mankind as require the same ; that such graces God hath bestowed upon His Church, as well in latter as in former times ; that in some particulars, when they have fallen out, Himself hath demanded His own honour, and in the rest hath left it to the wisdom of

the Church, directed by those precedents, and enlightened by other means, always to judge when the like is requisite.]

Touching those festival days therefore which we now observe, what remaineth but to keep them throughout all generations holy, severed by manifest notes of difference from other times, adorned with that which most may betoken true, virtuous, and celestial joy.

SECTION LVII.

OF STRICTNESS IN RESTING ON FESTIVAL DAYS.

To which intent because surcease from labour is necessary, yet not so necessary, no, not on the Sabbath or seventh day itself, but that rarer occasions in men's particular affairs. subject to manifest detriment unless they be presently followed, may with very good conscience draw them sometimes aside from the ordinary rule, considering the favourable dispensation which our

Lord and Saviour groundeth on this axiom; “Man was not made for the Sabbath, but the Sabbath ordained for man;”^a so far forth as concerneth ceremonies annexed to the principal sanctification thereof; howsoever the rigour of the law of Moses may be thought to import the contrary, if we regard with what severity the violation of Sabbaths hath been sometime punished,^b a thing perhaps the more requisite at that instant, both because the Jews, by reason of their long abode in a place of continual servile toil, could not suddenly be weaned and drawn unto contrary offices, without some strong impression of terror; and also for that there is nothing more needful than to punish with extremity the first transgressions of those laws that require a more exact observation for many ages to come: therefore, as the Jews superstitiously addicted to their Sabbath’s rest for a long time, not without danger to themselves and obloquy to their very law, did afterwards perceive and amend wisely their former error, not doubting

a St. Mark ii. 27.

b Numb. xv. 32.

that bodily labours are made by necessity venial,^c though otherwise especially on that day rest be more convenient : so at all times the voluntary scandalous contempt of that rest from labour wherewith publicly God is served, we cannot too severely correct and bridle.^d

The emperor Constantine having with over great facility licensed Sunday's labour in country villages, under that pretence, whereof there may justly no doubt sometime consideration be had, namely, lest any thing which God by His providence hath bestowed should miscarry, not being taken in due time, Leo, who afterwards saw that this ground would not bear so general and large indulgence as had been granted, doth by a contrary edict both reverse and severely censure his predecessor's remissness, saying ; " We ordain, " according to the true meaning of the Holy " Ghost and of the apostles thereby directed, " that on the sacred day, wherein our own " integrity was restored, all do rest and " surcease from labour ; that neither husband-

c 1 Macc. ii. 41.

d Neh. xiii. 15.

“man nor other on that day put their hands
“to forbidden works. For if the Jews did so
“much reverence their Sabbath, which was
“but a shadow of ours, are not we, who
“inhabit the light and truth of grace, bound
“to honour that day which the Lord Himself
“hath honoured, and hath therein delivered us
“both from dishonour and from death? Are
“we not bound to keep it singular and in-
“violable, well contenting ourselves with so
“liberal a grant of the rest, and not en-
“croaching upon that one day which God
“hath chosen to His own honour? Were it
“not reckless neglect of religion to make that
“very day common, and to think we may do
“with it as with the rest?” Imperial laws
which had such care of hallowing, especially
our Lord’s day, did not omit to provide that
other festival times might be kept with
vacation from labour, whether they were days
appointed on the sudden, as extraordinary
occasions fell out, or days which were cele-
brated yearly for politic and civil consider-
ations; or finally, such days as Christian

religion hath ordained in God's Church. The joy that setteth aside labour, disperseth those things which labour gathereth. For gladness doth always rise from a kind of fruition and happiness, which happiness banisheth the cogitation of all want, it needeth nothing but only the bestowing of that it hath, inasmuch as the greatest felicity that felicity hath, is to spread and enlarge itself. It cometh hereby to pass, that the first effect of joyfulness is to rest, because it seeketh no more; the next, because it aboundeth to give. The root of both is the glorious presence of that joy of mind, which ariseth from the manifold considerations of God's unspeakable mercy into which we are led by occasion of sacred times. For how could the Jewish congregations of old be put in mind by their weekly Sabbaths what the world reaped through His goodness, who did of nothing create the world; by their yearly Passover, what farewell they took of the land of Egypt; by their Pentecost, what ordinances, laws, and statutes their fathers received at the hand of God; by

their feast of Tabernacles, with what protection they journeyed from place to place, through so many fears and hazards, during the tedious time of forty years' travel in the wilderness; by their annual solemnity of lots, how near the whole seed of Israel was unto utter extirpation, when it pleased that great God who guideth all things in heaven and earth, so to change the counsels and purposes of men, that the same hand which had signed a decree, in the opinion both of them that granted and of them that procured it, irrevocable, for the general massacre of man, woman, and child, became the buckler of their preservation, that no one hair of their heads might be touched; the same days which had been set for the pouring out of so much innocent blood, were made the days of their execution whose malice had contrived the plot thereof; and the selfsame persons that should have endured whatsoever violence and rage could offer, were employed in the just revenge of cruelty, to give unto blood-thirsty men the taste of their own cup; or how can the

Church of Christ now endure to be so much called upon and preached unto by that which every dominical day throughout the year;^d that which year by year so many festival times, if not commanded by the apostles themselves, whose care at that time was of greater things, yet instituted either by such universal authority as no man, or at the least such as we with no reason may despise, do as sometimes the holy angels did from heaven, sing, "Glory be to God on high, peace on earth, towards men good-will;"^e for this in effect is the very song that all Christian feasts do apply as their several occasions require; how should the days and times continually thus inculcate what God hath done, and we refuse to agnize the benefit of such remembrances; that very benefit which caused Moses to acknowledge those guides of day and night, the sun and moon, which enlighten the world, not more profitable to nature by giving all things life, than they are to the Church of God by oc-

^d Matt. xxviii. 1. Mark xvi. 1. Luke xxiv. 1. John xx. 1.

^e 1 Cor. xvi. 2. Rev. i. 10. Luke ii. 14.

casion of the use they have in regard of the appointed festival times? well to celebrate these religious and sacred days, is to spend the flower of our time happily. They are the splendour and outward dignity of our religion, forcible witnesses of ancient truth, provocations to the exercise of all piety, shadows of our endless felicity in heaven, on earth everlasting records and memorials; wherein they who cannot be drawn to hearken unto that we teach, may only, by looking upon that we do, in a manner read whatsoever we believe.

SECTION LVIII.

OF FASTS.

THE matching of contrary things together is a kind of illustration to both. Having therefore spoken thus much of festival days, the next that offer themselves to hand are the days of pensive humiliation and sorrow.

Fastings are either of men's own free and voluntary accord as their particular de-

votion doth move them thereunto, or else they are publicly enjoined in the Church, and required at the hands of all men. Much hurt hath grown to the Church of God through a false imagination that fasting standeth men in no stead for any spiritual respect, but only to take down the frankness of nature, and to tame the wildness of flesh.

Whereupon the world being bold to surfeit, doth now blush to fast, supposing that men when they fast, do rather bewray a disease than exercise a virtue. I much wonder what they who are thus persuaded do think, what conceit they have concerning the fasts of the patriarchs, the prophets, the apostles, our Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

The affections of joy and grief are so knit unto all the actions of man's life, that whatsoever we can do, or may be done unto us, the sequel thereof is continually the one or the other affection. Wherefore considering that they who grieve and joy as they ought, cannot possibly otherwise live than as they should, the Church of Christ, the most absolute and

perfect school of all virtue, hath, by the special direction of God's good Spirit, hitherto always inured men from their infancy, partly with days of festival exercise for the framing of the one affection, and partly with times of a contrary sort for the perfecting of the other. Howbeit over and besides this, we must note, that as resting, so fasting likewise attendeth sometimes no less upon the actions of the higher, than upon the affections of the lower part of the mind. "Fasting," saith Tertullian, "is a work of reverence towards God." The end thereof, sometimes elevation of mind, sometimes the purpose thereof clean contrary. The cause why Moses in the Mount did so long fast was mere divine speculation; the cause why David, humiliation. Our life is a mixture of good with evil. When we are partakers of good things, we joy; neither can we but grieve at the contrary. If that befall us which maketh glad, our festival solemnities declare our rejoicing to be in Him, whose mere undeserved mercy is the author of all happiness; if any thing be

either imminent or present which we shun, our watchings, fastings, cries, and tears, are unfeigned testimonies that ourselves we condemn as the only causes of our own misery, and do all acknowledge Him no less inclinable than able to save. And because as the memory of the one, though past, reneweth gladness; so the other, called again to mind, doth make the wound of our just remorse to bleed anew; which wound needeth often touching the more, for that we are generally more apt to calendar saints than sinners' days; therefore there is in the Church a care not to iterate the one alone, but to have frequent repetition of the other.

Never to seek after God saving only when either the crib or the whip doth constrain, were brutish servility, and a great derogation to the worth of that which is most predominant in man, if sometimes it had not a kind of voluntary access to God, and of conference, as it were, with God, all these inferior considerations laid aside. In which seques-

tration, forasmuch as higher^a cogitations do naturally drown and bury all inferior cares, the mind may as well forget both natural food and sleep, by being carried above itself with serious and heavenly meditation, as by being cast down with heaviness, drowned and swallowed up of sorrow. Albeit, therefore, concerning Jewish abstinence from certain kinds of meat as being unclean, the Apostle doth teach, that “the kingdom of heaven is not meat nor drink,” that food “commendeth us not unto God,”^b whether we take it, or abstain from it; that if we eat, we are not thereby the more acceptable in His sight; nor the less, if we eat not;^c His purpose, notwithstanding, was far from any attempt to derogate from that fasting, which is no such scrupulous abstinence as only refuseth some kinds of meats and drinks, lest they make him unclean that tasteth them; but an abstinence whereby we either interrupt or otherwise abridge the care of our bodily sustenance, to shew by this kind of outward exercise the

a John iv. 34.

b Rom. xiv. 17.

c 1 Cor. viii. 8.

serious intention of our minds fixed on heavenlier and better desires, the earnest hunger and thirst whereof depriveth the body of those usual contentments, which otherwise are not denied unto it.

These being in nature the first causes that induce fasting, the next thing which followeth to be considered, is the ancient practice thereof amongst the Jews. Touching whose private voluntary fasts, the precept which our Saviour gave them was; "When ye fast, look not sour as hypocrites; for they disfigure their faces, that they might seem to men to fast. Verily, I say unto you, they have their reward. When thou fastest, anoint thy head, and wash thy face, that thou seem not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret, will reward thee openly."^d Our Lord and Saviour would not teach the manner of doing, much less propose a reward for doing, that which were not both holy and acceptable in God's sight. The Pharisees weekly bound

^d Matt. vi. 16.

themselves unto double fasts, neither are they for this reprov'd.^e Often fasting, which was a virtue in John's disciples, could not in them of itself be a vice; therefore, not the oftenness of their fasting, but their hypocrisy therein was blamed.^f Of public enjoined fasts upon causes extraordinary,^g the examples in Scripture are so far frequent, that they need no particular rehearsal. Public extraordinary fastings were sometimes for one only day,^h sometimes for three,ⁱ sometimes for seven.^k Touching fasts not appointed for any such extraordinary causes, but either yearly, or monthly, or weekly observed and kept; first, upon the ninth day of that month,^l the tenth whereof was the feast of expiation, they were commanded of God that every soul, year by year, should afflict itself. Their yearly fasts every fourth month, in regard of the city of Jerusalem entered by the enemy; every fifth, in memory of the overthrow of their temple;

e Luke xviii. 12. f Matt. ix. 14. g 2 Chron. xx. 3.

Jer. xxxvi. 9. Ezra viii. 21. 1 Sam. vii. 6. h Judges xx. 26.

i 2 Macc. xiii. 12. k 1 Sam. 31. 13. 1 Chron. x. 12.

l Levit. xxiii. 16.

every seventh, for the treacherous destruction and death of Godaliah, the very last stay which they had to lean unto in their greatest misery, every tenth, in remembrance of the time when siege began first to be laid against them: all these not commanded of God Himself, but ordained by a public constitution of their own, as the prophet Zechariah^m expressly teacheth. That St. Jerome, following the tradition of the Hebrews, doth make the first a memorial of the breaking of the two tables, when Moses descended from mount Sinai;ⁿ the second, a memorial as well of God's indignation, condemning them to forty years' travel in the desert,^o as of His wrath in permitting Chaldeans to waste, burn, and destroy their city; the last a memorial of heavy tidings, brought out of Jewry to Ezekiel^p and the rest, who lived as captives in foreign parts; the difference is not of any moment, considering that each time of sorrow is naturally evermore a register of all such grievous events as have

^m Zec. viii. 19. ⁿ Exod. xxxii. 19. ^o Numb. xiv. 33.

^p Ezekiel xxiv. 1, 2.

happened either in, or near about the same time. To these I might add sundry other fasts, above twenty in number, ordained amongst them by like occasions, and observed in like manner; besides their weekly abstinence, Mondays and Thursdays, throughout the whole year.

When men fasted, it was not always after one and the same sort; but either by depriving themselves wholly of all food, during the time that their fasts continued, or by abating both the quantity and kind of diet. We have of the one a plain example in the Ninevites' fasting,^q and as plain a precedent for the other in the prophet Daniel: "I was," saith he, "in heaviness for three weeks of days; I ate no pleasant bread, neither tasted flesh nor wine."^r Their tables, when they gave themselves to fasting, had not that usual furniture of such dishes as do cherish blood with blood; but for food, they had bread; for suppage, salt; and for sauce, herbs. Whereunto the apostle may be thought to allude,

q Jon. iii. 7.

r Dan. x. 2, 3.

saying ; “ One believeth he may eat all things, another who is weak, and maketh a conscience of keeping those customs which the Jews observe, eateth herbs.”^s This austere repast they took in the evening, after abstinence the whole day ; for to forfeit a noon’s meal, and then to recompense themselves at night, was not their use, nor did they ever accustom themselves on sabbaths or festival days to fast.^t And yet it may be a question, whether in some sort they did not always fast the sabbath. Their fastings were partly in token of penitency, humiliation, grief, and sorrow, partly in sign of devotion and reverence towards God. Which second consideration, (I dare not peremptorily and boldly affirm any thing,) might induce to abstain till noon, as their manner was on fasting days to do till night. May it not very well be thought that hereunto the Sacred Scripture doth give some secret kind of testimony ?^u Josephus is plain, that the sixth hour (the day they divided into twelve) was wont on the sabbath always to

s Rom. xiv. 2. t Judith viii. 6. u Nehem. viii. 3, 12.

call them home unto meat. Neither is it improbable, but that the heathens did therefore so often upbraid them with fasting on that day. Besides, they who found so great fault with our Lord's disciples, for rubbing a few ears of corn in their hands on the sabbath day, are not unlikely to have aimed also at the same mark. For neither was the bodily pain so great, that it should offend them in that respect, and the very manner of defence which our Saviour there useth, is more direct and literal to justify the breach of the Jewish custom in fasting, than in working at that time.

Finally the apostles afterwards themselves when God first gave them the gift of tongues, whereas some in disdain and spite termed grace drunkenness, it being then the day of Pentecost and but only a fourth part of the day spent, they use this as an argument against the other cavil; "These men," saith Peter, "are not drunk as you suppose, since as yet the third hour of the day is not over-past." v

Howbeit, leaving this in suspense, as a thing not altogether certainly known, and to come from Jews to Christians, we find that of private voluntary fastings, the apostle St. Paul speaketh more than once.^w And, saith Tertullian, they are sometimes commanded throughout the Church, “the care and fear of the Church so requiring.” It doth not appear that the apostles ordained any set and certain days to be generally kept of all. Notwithstanding, forasmuch as Christ hath fore-signified, that when Himself should be taken from them, His absence would soon make them apt to fast;^x it seemeth that even as the first festival day appointed to be kept of the Church, was the day of our Lord’s return from the dead, so the first sorrowful and mourning day, was that which we now observe in memory of His departure out of this world. And because there could be no abatement of grief till they saw Him raised, whose death was the occasion of their heaviness; therefore,

w 1 Cor. vii. 5. 2 Cor. vi. 5. 2 Cor. xi. 27. Col. iv. 3.

x Luke v. 35.

the day He lay in the sepulchre hath been also kept and observed as a weeping day. The custom of fasting these two days before Easter, is undoubtedly most ancient; inas-⁵⁰much that Ignatius, not thinking him a Catholic Christian man who did not abhor, and, as the state of the Church was then, avoid fasting on the Jew's sabbath, doth notwithstanding except for ever, that one sabbath or Saturday which falleth out to be the Easter eve, as with us it always doth, and did sometimes also with them who kept at that time their Easter the fourteenth day of March, as the custom of the Jews was. It came afterwards to be an order, that even as the day of Christ's resurrection, so the other two, in memory of His death and burial were weekly. But, this when St. Ambrose lived, had not as yet taken place throughout all Churches, no, not in Milan, where himself was bishop. And for that cause he saith, that although at Rome he observed the Saturday's fast, because such was then the custom in Rome, nevertheless in his own Church at home he did otherwise. The

churches which did not observe that day, had another instead thereof, which was the Wednesday, for that when they judged it meet to have weekly a day of humiliation, besides that whereon our Saviour suffered death, it seemed best to make their choice of that day especially, whereon the Jews are thought to have first contrived their treason, together with Judas, against Christ. So that the instituting and ordaining both of these, and of all other times of like exercise, is as the Church shall judge expedient for men's good. And concerning every Christian man's duty herein, surely that which Augustine and Ambrose are before alleged to have done, is such as all men favouring equity must needs allow and follow, if they affect peace. I will not in this place dispute, whether voluntary fasting with a virtuous purpose of mind, be any medicinal remedy of evil, or a duty acceptable unto God, and in the world to come, even rewardable as other offices are, which proceed from Christian piety; whether wilfully to break and despise the wholesome laws of the

Church herein, be a thing which offendeth God; whether truly it may not be said that both penitent weeping and fasting are means to blot out sin, means whereby through God's unspeakable and undeserved mercy, we obtain or procure to ourselves pardon; which attainment unto any gracious benefit by Him bestowed, the phrase of antiquity useth to express by the name of merit.

No doubt but penitency is as prayer, a thing acceptable to God, be it in public or in secret. Howbeit, as in the one, if men were wholly left to their own voluntary meditations in their closets, and not drawn by laws and orders unto the open assemblies of the Church, that there they may join with others in prayer, it may be soon conjectured what Christian devotion that way would come unto in a short time; even so in the other we are by sufficient experience taught, how little it booteth to tell men of washing away their sins with tears of repentance; and so to leave them altogether unto themselves. O Lord, what heaps of grievous transgressions have

we committed, the best, the perfectest, the most righteous amongst us all; and yet clean pass them over unsorrowed for, and unrepented of; only because the Church hath forgotten utterly how to bestow her wonted times of discipline, wherein the public example of all was unto every particular person a most effectual mean to put them often in mind, and even in a manner to draw them to that which now we all quite and clean forget, as if penitency were no part of a Christian man's duty.

Again, besides our private offences which ought not thus loosely to be overslipt; suppose we the body and corporation of the Church so just, that at no time it needeth to shew itself openly cast down, in regard of those faults and transgressions, which though they do not properly belong unto any one, had notwithstanding a special sacrifice appointed for them in the law of Moses; and being common to the whole society which containeth all, must needs so far concern every man in particular, as at some time in solemn manner to require

acknowledgment, with more than daily and ordinary testifications of grief. There could not hereunto a fitter preamble be devised, than that memorable Commination set down in the Book of Common Prayer, if our practice in the rest were suitable. The head already so well drawn, doth but wish a proportionable body. And by the preface to that very part of the English Liturgy, it may appear, how at the first setting down thereof, no less was intended. For so we are to interpret the meaning of those words, where in *“restitution of the primitive Church discipline is greatly wished for,”* touching the manner of public penance in time of Lent.

Having therefore hitherto spoken both of festival days, and so much of solemn fasts, as may reasonably serve to shew the ground thereof in the law of nature, the practice partly appointed and partly allowed of God in the Jewish Church; the like continued in the Church of Christ; we will only collect the chiefest points as well of resemblance, as of difference between them, and so end. First,

in this they agree that because nature is the general root of both, therefore both have been always common to the Church with infidels and heathen men : secondly, they also herein accord, that ^{as oft} joy is the cause of the one and grief the wellspring of the other, they are incompatible. A third degree of affinity between them is, that neither being acceptable to God of itself, but both tokens of that which is acceptable, their approbation with Him must necessarily depend on that which they ought to import and signify ; so that if herein the mind dispose not itself aright, whether we rest^y or fast,^z we offend. A fourth thing common unto them is, that the greatest part of the world hath always grossly and palpably offended in both ; infidels because they did all in relation to false Gods ; godless, sensual, and careless minds, for that there is in them no constant, true, and sincere affection towards those things which are pretended by such exercise ; yea, certain flattering oversights there are, wherewith sundry,

y Isai. i. 13.

z Isai. lviii. 3.

and they not of the worst sort, may be easily in these cases led awry, even through abundance of love and liking to that which must be embraced by all means, but with caution; inasmuch as the very admiration of saints, whether we celebrate their glory, or follow them in humility; whether we laugh or weep, mourn or rejoice with them, is, as in all things the affection of love, apt to deceive, and doth therefore need the more to be directed by a watchful guide; seeing there is manifestly both ways, even in them whom we honour, that which we are to observe and shun. The best have not still been sufficiently mindful, that God's very angels in heaven are but angels; and that bodily exercise, considered in itself, is no great matter.^a Finally, seeing that both are ordinances well devised for the good of man, and yet not man created purposely for them as for other offices of virtue,^b whereunto God's immutable law for ever tieth; it is but equity to wish or admonish, that

a 1 Tim. iv. 8. b Eccles. xii. 13. Isai. lviii. 6, 7. Rom. xiv. 17.
James i. 27. Heb. xii. 14. Ephes. ii. 10.

where, by uniform order, they are not as yet received, the example of Victor's extremity in the one, and of John's disciples' curiosity in the other,^c be not followed; yea, where they are appointed by law,^d that notwithstanding we avoid Judaism; and, as in festival days men's necessities for matter of labour, so in times of fasting, regard be had to their imbecilities; lest they should suffer harm doing good.

Thus, therefore, we see how these two customs are in divers respects equal. But of fasting, the use and exercise, though less pleasant, is by so much more requisite than the other, as grief of necessity is a more familiar guest than the contrary passion of mind; albeit, gladness to all men be naturally more welcome. For, first, we ourselves do many more things amiss than well, and the fruit of our own ill-doing is remorse, because nature is conscious to itself that it should do the contrary. Again, forasmuch as the world over aboundeth with malice, and few are de-

c Matt. ix. 14.

d Col. ii. 16.

lighted in doing good to other men, there is no man so seldom crossed as pleased at the hands of others ; whereupon it cannot be chosen but every man's woes must double, in that respect, the number and measure of his delights. Besides, concerning the very choice which oftentimes we are to make, our corrupt inclination well considered, there is cause why our Saviour should account them happiest that do most mourn,^e and why Solomon might judge it better to frequent mourning than feasting houses :^f not better simply and in itself, for then would nature that way incline, but in regard of us and our common weakness better. Job was not ignorant that his children's banquets, though tending to amity, needed sacrifice ;^g neither doth any of us all need to be taught, that in things which delight we easily swerve from mediocrity, and are not easily led by a direct line. On the other side ; the sores and diseases of mind which inordinate pleasure breedeth, are by dolour and grief cured : for which cause as all

^e Matt. v. 4.

^f Eccles. vii. 2, 4.

^g Job i. 5.

offences use to seduce by pleasing, so all punishments endeavour by vexing to reform transgressions. We are of our own accord apt enough to give entertainment to things delectable, but patiently to lack what flesh and blood doth desire, and by virtue to forbear what by nature we covet ; this, no man attaineth unto but by labour and long practice. From hence it ariseth, that in former ages, abstinence and fasting more than ordinary, was always a special branch of their praise in whom it could be observed and known; were they such as continually gave themselves to austere life, or men that took often occasions, in private virtuous respects, to lay Solomon's counsel aside : " Eat thy bread with joy^h" and to be followers of David's example, who saith, " I humbled my soul with fasting ;"ⁱ or but they who, otherwise worthy of no great commendation, have made of hunger, some their gain, some their physic, some their art ; that, by mastering sensual appetites without constraint, they might grow

h Eccies. ix. 7.

i Ps. xxxv. 13.

able to endure hardness whensoever need should require ; for the body accustomed to emptiness, pineth not away so soon as having still used to fill itself.

The very purpose of the Church of God both in the number and the order of her fasts, hath been not only to preserve thereby throughout all ages the remembrance of miseries heretofore sustained, and of the causes in ourselves out of which they have risen, that men considering the one might fear the other the more, but farther also to temper the mind, lest contrary affections coming in place should make it too profuse and dissolute ; in which respect it seemeth that fasts have been set as ushers of festival days, for prevention of those disorders as much as might be ; wherein, notwithstanding, the world always will deserve, as it hath done, blame ; because such evils being not possible to be rooted out, the most we can do is in keeping them low, and, which is chiefly the fruit we look for, to create in the minds of men a love towards a frugal and severe life, to undermine

the palaces of wantonness ; to plant parsimony as nature where riotousness hath been studied ; to harden whom pleasure would melt ; and to help the tumours which always fulness breedeth ; that children as it were in the wool of their infancy dyed with hardness, may never afterwards change colour ; that the poor whose perpetual fasts are of necessity may with better contentment endure the hunger which virtue causeth others so often to choose ; and by advice of religion itself so far to esteem above the contrary ; that they who for the most part do lead sensual and easy lives, they who as the prophet David describeth them, “ are not plagued like other men,”^h may by the public spectacle of all be still put in mind what themselves are ; finally, that every man may be every man’s daily guide and example, as well by fasting to declare humility, as by praise to express joy in the sight of God, although it have herein befallen the Church as sometimes David, so that the speech of the one may be

^h Psalm lxxiii. 5.

truly the voice of the other, "My soul fasted, and even that was also turned to my reproof." ^k

SECTION LIX.

CELEBRATION OF MATRIMONY.

IN this world there can be no society durable otherwise than only by propagation. Albeit therefore single life be a thing more angelical and divine, yet since the replenishing first of earth with blessed inhabitants, and then of heaven with saints everlastingly praising God, did depend upon conjunction of man and woman; He who made all things complete and perfect, saw it could not be good to leave man without a helper unto the fore-alleged end. In things which some farther end doth cause to be desired, choice seeketh rather proportion than absolute perfection of goodness. So that woman being created for man's sake

to be his helper, in regard to the end before-mentioned; namely, the having and bringing up of children, whereunto it was not possible they could concur, unless there were subalternation between them, which subalternation is naturally grounded upon inequality, because things equal in every respect are never willingly directed one by another; woman therefore was even in her first estate framed by nature not only after in time, but inferior in excellency also unto man; howbeit in so due and sweet proportion, as being presented before our eyes, might be sooner perceived than defined. And even herein doth lie the reason why that kind of love which is the perfectest ground of wedlock, is seldom able to yield any reason of itself. Now, that which is born of man must be nourished with far more travail, as being of greater price in nature, and of slower pace to perfection, than the offspring of any other creature besides. Man and woman being therefore to join themselves for such a purpose, they were of necessity to be linked with some strait and

indissoluble knot. The bond of wedlock hath been always more or less esteemed of as a thing religious and sacred. The title which the very heathens themselves do thereunto oftentimes give is holy. Those rites and orders which were instituted in the solemnization of marriage, the Hebrews term by the name of conjugal sanctification.

To begin with times wherein the liberty of marriage is restrained: "There is," saith Solomon, "a time for all things, a time to laugh, and a time to mourn."^a That duties belonging unto marriage, and offices appertaining to penance, are things unsuitable and unfit to be matched together, the prophets^b and apostles^c themselves do witness. Upon which ground, as we might right well think it marvellously absurd to see in a Church a wedding on the day of a public fast; so likewise, in the selfsame consideration, our predecessors thought it not amiss to take away the common liberty of marriages during the time which was appointed for the preparation

^a Ecces. iii. 1, 4. ^b Joel ii. 16. ^c 1 Cor. vii. 5.

unto, and for exercise of, general humiliation by fasting and praying, weeping for sins.

As for the delivering up of the woman, either by her father, or by some other, we must note, that in ancient times all women who had not husbands nor fathers to govern them, had their tutors, without whose authority there was no act which they did warrantable; and for this cause they were in marriage delivered unto their husbands by others. Which custom retained, hath still this use, that it putteth women in mind of a duty whereunto the very imbecility of their nature and sex doth bind them; namely, to be always directed, guided, and ordered by others, although our positive laws do not tie them now as pupils.

The ring hath been always used as an especial pledge of faith and fidelity: nothing more fit to serve as a token of our purposed endless continuance in that which we never ought to revoke. This is the cause wherefore the heathens themselves did in such cases use the ring, whereunto Tertullian alluding, saith:

“that in ancient times no woman was permitted to wear gold, saving only upon one finger, which her husband had fastened unto himself, with that ring which was usually given for assurance of future marriage.” The cause why the Christians use it, as some of the Fathers think, is either to testify mutual love, or rather to serve for a pledge of conjunction in heart and mind agreed upon between them.

But of all things the most hardly taken is the uttering of those words; “with my body I thee worship;” in which words when once they are understood, there will appear as little cause as in the rest, for any wise man to be offended. First, therefore, inasmuch as unlawful copulation doth pollute and dishonour both parties,^d this protestation, that we do worship and honour another with our bodies, may import a denial of all such lets and impediments to our knowledge, as might cause any stain, blemish, or disgrace that way; which kind of construction being probable,

d Rom. i. 24.

would easily approve that speech to a peaceable and quiet mind.

Secondly, in that the apostle doth so expressly affirm, that parties married have not any longer entire power over themselves,^e but each hath interest in other's person, it cannot be thought an absurd construction to say, that worshipping with the body, is the imparting of that interest in the body unto another, which none before had, save only ourselves. But if this were the natural meaning, the words should perhaps be as requisite to be used on the one side as on the other; and therefore a third sense there is, which I rather rely upon. Apparent it is, that the ancient difference between a lawful life and a concubine, was only in the different purpose of man betaking himself to the one or the other. If his purpose were only fellowship, there grew to the woman by this means no worship at all, but the contrary. In professing that his intent was to add by his person honour and worship unto hers, he took her plainly and

wife

e 1 Cor. vii. 4.

clearly to wife. This is it which the civil law doth mean, when it maketh a wife to differ from a concubine in dignity: a wife to be taken where conjugal honour and affection do go before. The worship that grew unto her being taken with declaration of this intent was, that her children became by this means legitimate and free; herself was made a mother over his family. Last of all she received such advancement of state, as things annexed unto his person might augment her with; yea, a right of participation was thereby given her both in him, and even in all things which were his. This doth somewhat the more plainly appear, by adding also that other clause; "With all my worldly goods I thee endow." The former branch having granted the principal, the latter granteth that which is annexed thereunto.

To end the public solemnity of marriage with receiving the blessed Sacrament, is a custom so religious and so holy, that if the Church of England be blamable in this respect, it is not for suffering it to be so

much but rather for not providing that it may be more put in use. The laws of Romulus concerning marriage are therefore extolled above the rest amongst the heathen which were before, in that they established the use of certain special solemnities, whereby the minds of men were drawn to make the greater conscience of wedlock, and to esteem the bond thereof a thing which could not be without impiety dissolved. If there be any thing in Christian religion strong and effectual to like purpose it is the Sacrament of the holy Eucharist; in regard of the force whereof Tertullian breaketh out into these words concerning matrimony therewith sealed; "I know not which way I should be able to shew the happiness of that wedlock, the knot whereof the Church doth fasten, and the Sacrament of the Church confirm." Touching marriage, therefore, let thus much be sufficient.

SECTION LX.

OF THE RITES OF BURIAL.

THE end of funeral duties is, first, to shew that love towards the party deceased which nature requireth ; then, to do him that honour which is fit both generally for man, and particularly for the quality of his person ; last of all, to testify the care which the Church hath to comfort the living, and the hope which we all have concerning the resurrection of the dead. For signification of love towards them that are departed, mourning is not denied to be a thing convenient : as in truth the Scripture everywhere doth approve lamentation made unto this end. The Jews by our Saviour's tears therefore gathered in this case that His love towards Lazarus was great.^a And that as mourning at such times is fit, so likewise that there may be a kind of attire suitable to a sorrowful affection, and con-

^a John xi. 36.

venient for mourners to wear, how plainly doth David's example shew, who, being in heaviness, went up the mount with his head covered, and all the people that were with him in like sort.^b White garments being fit to use at marriage feasts, and such other times of joy, whereunto Solomon alluding when he requireth continual cheerfulness of mind, speaketh in this sort; "Let thy garments be always white;"^c what doth hinder the contrary from being now as convenient in grief as this heretofore in gladness hath been?

The honour generally due unto all men maketh a decent interring of them to be convenient, even for very humanity's sake. And therefore so much as is mentioned in the burial of the widow's son, the "carrying of him forth upon a bier,"^d and the accompanying of him to the earth, hath been used even amongst infidels; all men accounting it a very extreme destitution not to have at the least this honour done them.^e Some man's estate may require a great deal more, according as the fashion of

b 2 Sam. xv. 30.

c Eccles. ix. 8.

d Luke vii. 12.

e Psalm lxxix. 3.

the country where he dieth doth afford. And unto this appertained the ancient use of the Jews, to embalm the corpse with sweet odours,^f and to adorn the sepulchres of certain.^g

The life and death of saints is precious in God's sight. The care, no doubt, of the living, both to live and to die well, must needs be somewhat increased, when they know that their departure shall not be folded up in silence, but the ears of many be made acquainted with it. Moreover, when they hear how mercifully God hath dealt with their brethren in their last need, besides the praise which they give to God, and the joy which they have or should have by reason of their fellowship and communion of saints, is not their hope also much confirmed against the day of their own dissolution. Again, the sound of these things doth not so pass the ears of them that are most loose and dissolute in life, but it causeth them one time or other to wish, "O that I might die the death of the righteous, and that my end might be like his!

^f John xix. 40.

^g Matt. xxiii. 27.

But the greatest thing of all other, about this duty of Christian burial, is an outward testification of the hope which we have touching the resurrection of the dead.

SECTION LXI.

OF THE NATURE OF THE MINISTRY.

I COME now unto that function which undertaketh the public ministry of holy things according to the laws of Christian religion. We must know that the object of this function is both God and men; God, in that He is publicly worshipped of His Church; and men, in that they are capable of happiness by means which Christian discipline appointeth. So that the sum of our whole labour in this kind is, to honour God, and to save men. Religion, without the help of spiritual ministry, is unable to plant itself, the fruits thereof not possible to grow of their own accord. All things which are of God He hath by wonder-

ful art and wisdom soldered as it were together with the glue of mutual assistance, appointing the lowest to receive from the nearest to themselves what the influence of the highest yieldeth. And therefore the Church being the most absolute of all His works, was in reason to be also ordered with like harmony, that what He worketh might, no less in grace than in nature, be affected by hands and instruments duly subordinated unto the power of His own Spirit. A thing both needful for the humiliation of man who would not willingly be debtor to any but to himself; and of no small effect to nourish that divine love, which now maketh each embrace other, not as men but as angels of God.

Ministerial actions tending immediately unto God's honour and man's happiness, are either as contemplation, which helpeth forward the principal work of the ministry, or else they are parts of that principal work of administration itself, which work consisteth in doing the service of God's house, and in applying unto men the sovereign medicines of

grace,^a already spoken of, the more largely to the end it might thereby appear, that we owe to the guides of our souls even as much as our souls are worth, although the debt of our temporal blessings should be stricken off.

SECTION LXII.

OF ORDINATION.

THE ministry of things divine is a function, which, as God Himself did institute, so neither may men undertake the same but by authority and power given them in lawful manner. That God which is no way deficient or wanting unto man in necessaries, and hath therefore given us the light of His heavenly truth, because without that inestimable benefit we must needs have wandered in darkness to our endless perdition and woe, hath in the like abundance of mercies, ordained certain to

^a Luke xii. 42. 1 Cor. iv. 1. Titus i. 7. 1 Peter iv. 10.

Ephes. iii. 2.

attend upon the due execution of requisite parts and offices therein prescribed for the good of the whole world, which men thereunto assigned do hold their authority from Him, whether they be such as Himself immediately, or as the Church in His name investeth; it being neither possible for all, nor for every man without distinction convenient, to take upon him a charge of so great importance. They are therefore ministers of God, not only by way of subordination, as princes and civil magistrates, whose execution of judgment and justice the supeme hand of divine Providence doth uphold; but ministers of God, as from whom their authority is derived, and not from men. For in that they are Christ's ambassadors and His labourers, who should give them their commission but He whose most inward affairs they manage? Is not God alone the Father of spirits? Are not souls the purchase of Jesus Christ? What angel in heaven could have said to man as our Lord did unto St. Peter—"Feed my sheep"—"Preach"—"Baptize"—"Do this in remem-

brance of me." " Whose sins ye retain, they are retained ;" " and their offences in heaven pardoned, whose faults you shall on earth forgive." What think we ? are these terrestrial sounds, or else are they voices uttered out of the clouds above ? The power of the ministry of God translateth out of darkness into glory ; it raiseth men from the earth, and bringeth God Himself down from heaven ; by blessing invisible elements, it maketh them invisible grace ; it giveth daily the Holy Ghost, it hath to dispose of that flesh which was given for the life of the world, and that blood which was poured out to redeem souls ; when it poureth malediction upon the heads of the wicked, they perish ; when it revoketh the same, they revive. O wretched blindness, if we admire not so great power ; more wretched if we consider it aright, and notwithstanding imagine that any but God can bestow it !

To whom Christ hath imparted power, both over that mystical body which is the society of souls, and over that natural which is Himself, for the knitting of both in one, a work

which antiquity doth call *the making of Christ's body*; the same power is in such not amiss both termed a kind of mark or character, and acknowledged to be indelible.

Ministerial power is a mark of separation, because it severeth them that have it from other men, and maketh them a special order, consecrated unto the service of the Most High, in things wherewith others may not meddle. Their difference therefore from other men is in that they are a distinct order. So Tertullian calleth them. And St. Paul himself, dividing the body of the Church of Christ into two moieties, nameth the one part "unlearned,"^a which is as much as to say the Order of the Laity, the opposite part whereunto we in like sort term the Order of God's Clergy, and the spiritual power which he hath given them, the power of their Order.

They who have once received this power may not think to put it off and on like a cloak, as the weather serveth; to take it, reject and resume it, as oft as themselves list; of which

^a 1 Cor. xlv. 16, 23, 24.

profane and impious contempt these latter times have yielded, as of all other kinds of iniquity and apostasy, strange examples. But let them know, which put their hands unto this plough, that once consecrated unto God, they are made His peculiar inheritance for ever. Suspensions may stop, and degradations utterly cut off the use or exercise of power before given; but voluntarily it is not in the power of man to separate and pull asunder what God by His authority coupleth. So that although there may be through misdesert degradation, as there may be cause of just separation after matrimony,^b yet if, as sometimes it doth, restitution to former dignity, or reconciliation after breach doth happen, neither doth the one or the other ever iterate the first knot.

“The Holy Ghost” may be used to signify, not the person alone, but the gifts of the Holy Ghost, and we know that spiritual gifts are not only abilities to do things miraculous, as to speak with tongues which were never

b Matt. xix. 4, 9.

taught us, to cure diseases without art, and such like; but also that the very authority and power which is given men in the Church to be ministers of holy things, is contained within the number of those gifts whereof the Holy Ghost is author; and therefore He who giveth this power may say, "Receive the Holy Ghost," such power as the Spirit of Christ hath endued His holy Church withal, such power as neither prince nor potentate, king nor Cæsar, on earth can give.

Our Saviour, after His resurrection from the dead, gave His apostles their commission, saying, "All power is given me in heaven and in earth. Go therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."^c In sum, "As my Father sent me, so send I you." Whereunto St. John doth add farther, that "having thus spoken, He breathed on them and said, Receive the Holy Ghost."^d By which words he must of

^c Matt. xxviii. 18.

^d John xx. 22.

likelihood understand some gift of the Spirit which was presently at that time bestowed upon them, as both the speech of actual delivery in saying, "Receive," and the visible sign thereof, His breathing, did shew. It resteth then that we search what special grace they did at that time receive. Touching miraculous power of the Spirit, most apparent it is, that as then they received it not, but the promise thereof was to be shortly after performed. The words of St. Luke concerning that power are therefore set down with signification of the time to come; "Behold, I will send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high."^e Wherefore, undoubtedly, it was some other effect of the Spirit, the Holy Ghost in some other kind, which our Saviour did then bestow. What other likelier than that which Himself doth mention, as it should seem of purpose to take away all ambiguous constructions, and to declare that the Holy Ghost which He then

^e Luke xxiv. 49.

gave was a holy and a ghostly authority, authority over the souls of men, authority, a part whereof consisteth in power to remit and retain sins? "Receive the Holy Ghost: whose sins soever ye remit, they are remitted; whose sins ye retain, they are retained."^f Whereas, therefore, the other evangelists had set down, that Christ did before His suffering promise to give His apostles the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and being risen from the dead promised moreover at that time a miraculous power of the Holy Ghost,^{*} for castigation and relaxation of sin, wherein was fully accomplished that which the promise of the keys did import.

Now besides that the power and authority delivered with those words is itself a gracious donation which the Spirit of God doth bestow, we may most assuredly persuade ourselves that the hand which imposeth upon us the function of our ministry, doth under the same form of words so tie itself thereunto, that he who receiveth the burden is thereby for ever

f John xx. 23.

* St. John addeth that He also invested them even then with the power of the Holy Ghost.

warranted to have the Spirit with him and in him for his assistance, aid, countenance, and support, in whatsoever he faithfully doth to discharge duty. Knowing therefore, that when we take ordination, we also receive the presence of the Holy Ghost, partly to guide, direct, and strengthen us in all our ways, and partly to assume unto itself for the more authority those actions that appertain to our place and calling; can our ears admit such a speech, uttered in the reverent performance of that solemnity, or can we at any time renew the memory, and enter into serious cogitation thereof, but with much admiration and joy? Whereas now, forasmuch as the Holy Ghost, which our Saviour in His first ordinations gave, doth no less concur with spiritual vocations throughout all ages, than the Spirit, which God derived from Moses to them that assisted him in his government, & did descend from them to their successors in like authority and place, we have, for the least and meanest duties, performed by virtue of ministerial

power, that to dignify, grace and authorise them, which no other offices on earth can challenge. Whether we preach, pray, baptize, communicate, condemn, give absolution, or whatsoever; as disposers of God's mysteries, our words, judgments, acts, and deeds are not ours, but the Holy Ghost's. Enough, if unfeignedly and in heart we did believe it, enough to banish whatsoever may justly be thought corrupt, either in bestowing, or in using, or in esteeming the same otherwise than is meet. For profanely to bestow, or loosely to use, or vilely to esteem of the Holy Ghost, we all in show and profession abhor.

Now because the ministry is an office of dignity and honour, some are doubtful whether any man may seek for it without offence. But as for the power of order considered by itself, such reputation it hath in the eye of this present world, that they who affect it, rather need encouragement to bear contempt, than deserve blame as men that carry aspiring minds. The work whereunto this power serveth is commended, and the desire there-

of allowed by the apostle for good.^h Nevertheless, because the burden thereof is heavy, and the charge great, it cometh many times to pass, that the minds even of virtuous men are drawn into clean contrary affections, some in humility declining that by reason of hardness, which others in regard of goodness only do with fervent alacrity covet. So that there is not the least degree in this service, but it may be both in reverence shunned, and of very devotion longed for.

The prophet Isaiah, receiving his message at the hands of God, and his charge by heavenly vision, heard the voice of the Lord, saying, "Whom shall I send? Who shall go for us?" Whereunto he recordeth his own answer: "Then I said, Here, Lord, I am; send me."ⁱ Which in effect is the rule and canon whereby touching this point the very order of the Church is framed. The appointment of times for solemn Ordination is but the public demand of the Church in the name of the Lord Himself, "Whom shall I send?"

^h 1 Tim. iii. 1.

ⁱ Isaiah vi. 8.

Who shall go for us?" The confluence of men, whose inclinations are bent that way, is but the answer thereunto, whereby the labours of sundry being offered, the Church hath freedom to take whom her agents in such case think meet and requisite.

SECTION LXIII.

OF DEGREES OF ORDER.

It pleased Almighty God to choose to Himself, for discharge of the legal ministry, one only tribe out of twelve others, the tribe of Levi, not all unto every divine service, but Aaron and his sons to one charge, the rest of that sanctified tribe to another. With what solemnities they were admitted into their functions, in what manner Aaron and his successors the high priests ascended every Sabbath and festival day, offered and ministered in the temple; with what sin-offering once every year they reconciled first themselves and their own house, afterwards the

people unto God ; how they confessed all the iniquities of the children of Irsael, laid all their trespasses upon the head of a sacred goat, and so carried them out of the city ; how they purged the holy place from all uncleanness, with what reverence they entered within the veil, presented themselves before the mercy-seat, and consulted with the oracle of God : what service the other priests did continually in the holy place, how they ministered about the lamps, morning and evening, how every Sabbath they placed on the table of the Lord those twelve loaves with pure incense, in perpetual remembrance of that mercy which the fathers, the twelve tribes, had found by the providence of God for their food, when hunger caused them to leave their natural soil, and to seek for sustenance in Egypt ; how they employed themselves in sacrifice day by day ; finally, what offices the Levites discharged, and what duties the rest did execute, it were a labour too long to enter into if I should collect that which Scripture and other ancient records do mention.

Besides these, there were out of all tribes from time to time some called of God as prophets, foreshewing them things to come, and giving them counsel in such particulars as they could not be directed in by the law ; some chosen of men to read, study, and interpret the Law of God, as the sons or scholars of the old prophets, in whose room afterwards Scribes and expounders of the law succeeded.

And because, where so great variety is, if there should be equality, confusion would follow, the Levites were in all their service at the appointment and direction of the sons of Aaron, or priests ; they subject to the principal guides and leaders of their own order, and they all in obedience under the high priest.

Touching the ministry of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the whole body of the Church being divided into laity and clergy, the clergy are either presbyters or deacons.

The fathers of the Church of Christ call usually the ministry of the Gospel Priesthood, in regard of that which the Gospel hath proportionable to ancient sacrifices, namely, the

Communion of the blessed body and blood of Christ, although it hath properly now no sacrifice.

To pass by the name whether we call it a Priesthood, a Presbytership, or a Ministry, it skilleth not. For what are they that embrace the Gospel but sons of God? What are Churches but His families? Seeing therefore we receive the adoption and state of sons by their ministry, whom God hath chosen out for that purpose; seeing that also when we are the sons of God, our continuance is still under their care who were our progenitors; what better title could there be given them than the reverend name of Presbyters or fatherly guides? A Presbyter, according to the proper meaning of the New Testament, is he unto whom our Saviour Christ hath communicated the power of spiritual procreation. Out of twelve patriarchs issued the whole multitude of Israel according to the flesh. And according to the mystery of heavenly birth, our Lord's apostles we all acknowledge to be the patriarchs of His whole Church. St. John

therefore beheld sitting about the throne of God in heaven four and twenty Presbyters, the one half fathers of the old, the other of the new Jerusalem.^a In which respect the apostles likewise gave themselves the same title,^b although that name were not proper, but common unto them with others.

For of presbyters some were greater, some less in power, and that by our Saviour's own appointment: the greater, they who received fulness of spiritual power; the less, they to whom less was granted. The apostles' peculiar charge was to publish the Gospel of Christ unto all nations, and to deliver them His ordinances received by immediate revelation from Himself. Which preeminence excepted, to all other offices and duties incident unto their Order, it was in them to ordain and consecrate whomsoever they thought meet, even as our Saviour did Himself assign seventy other of His own disciples inferior presbyters, whose commission to preach and baptize was the same which the apostles had.

a Rev. iv. 4; xxi. 14. Matt. xix. 28.

b 1 Peter v. 1.

Whereas, therefore, we find that the very first sermon which the apostles did publicly make, was the conversion of above three thousand souls;⁹ unto whom there were every day more and more added, and no open place being allowed for the exercise of Christian religion; think we that twelve were sufficient to teach and administer sacraments in so many private places, as so great a multitude of people did require? This harvest our Saviour, no doubt, foreseeing, provided accordingly labourers for it beforehand. By which means it came to pass that the growth of that Church being so great and so sudden, they had notwithstanding in a readiness presbyters enough to furnish it. And therefore there is no mention made by what occasion presbyters were instituted in Jerusalem, only we read of things which they did, and how the like were made afterwards elsewhere.

To these two degrees appointed of our Lord and Saviour Christ, His apostles soon after annexed deacons: Deacons were stewards of

c Acts ii. 41, 47.

the Church, unto whom at the first was committed the distribution of Church goods, the care of providing therewith for the poor, and the charge to see that all things of expense might be religiously and faithfully dealt in. A part also of their office was attendance upon their presbyters at the time of divine service. For which cause Ignatius, to set forth the dignity of their calling, saith, that they are in such case to the bishop as if angelical powers did serve him. When the subject wherein one man's labours of sundry kinds are employed doth wax so great, that the same men are no longer able to manage it sufficiently as before, the most natural way to help this is, by dividing their charge into slips, and ordaining of under officers; as our Saviour under twelve apostles, seventy presbyters; and the apostles by His example seven deacons to be under both.

It appeareth therefore how long these three degrees of ecclesiastical order have continued in the Church of Christ; the highest and largest, that which the apostles, the next that

which presbyters, and the lowest that which deacons had.

Touching prophets, they were such men as, having otherwise learned the Gospel, had from above bestowed upon them a special gift of expounding Scriptures, and of foreshewing things to come. Of this sort Agabus^d was, and besides him in Jerusalem sundry others, who notwithstanding are not therefore to be reckoned with the clergy, because no man's gifts or qualities can make him a minister of holy things, unless ordination do give him power. And we nowhere find prophets to have been made by ordination, but all whom the Church did ordain were either to serve as presbyters or as deacons.

Evangelists were presbyters of principal sufficiency, whom the apostles sent abroad, and used as agents in Church affairs where-soever they saw need. They whom we find to have been named in Scripture, evangelists, as Ananias,^e Apollos,^f Timothy, ^gand others,

^d Acts xxi. 10 ; xi. 27. ^e Acts ix. 17. ^f Acts xviii. 24.

^g 2 Tim. iv. 5, 9. ¹ Tim. iii. 15 ; v. 14 ; ii. 8.

were thus employed. And concerning evangelists afterward in Trajan's days, the history ecclesiastical noteth, that many of the apostles' disciples and scholars who were then alive, and did with singular love of wisdom affect the heavenly word of God, to shew their willing minds in executing that which Christ first of all required at the hands of men, they sold their possessions, gave them to the poor, and betaking themselves to travel, undertook the labour of evangelists; that is, they painfully preached Christ and delivered the Gospel to them, who as yet had never heard the doctrine of faith.

Finally, whom the apostle nameth pastors and teachers, what other were they than presbyters also, howbeit settled in some certain charge, and thereby differing from evangelists?

For in Christian religion, this being the ground of our whole belief, that the promises which God of old had made by His prophets concerning the wonderful gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost, wherewith the reign of the

true Messiah should be made glorious, were immediately after our Lord's ascension performed, there is no one thing whereof the apostles did take more often occasion to speak. Out of men thus endued with gifts of the Spirit upon their conversion to the Christian faith, the Church had her ministers chosen, unto whom was given ecclesiastical power by ordination. It clearly appeareth that Churches apostolic did know but three degrees in the power of ecclesiastical order; at the first, apostles, presbyters, and deacons; afterwards, instead of apostles, bishops. The ancientest therefore of the fathers mention those three degrees of ecclesiastical order, and no more. "When your captains," saith Tertullian, "that is to say the deacons, presbyters, and bishops fly, who shall teach the laity that they must be constant?" Again, "What should I mention laymen," saith Optatus, "yea, or divers of the ministry itself? To what purpose deacons, which are in the third, or presbyters, in the second degree of priesthood, when the very heads and princes

of all, even certain of the bishops themselves, were content to redeem life with the loss of heaven?" Heaps of allegations in a case so evident and plain are needless.

I may securely therefore conclude, that there are at this day in the Church of England, no other than the same degrees of ecclesiastical orders, namely, bishops, presbyters, and deacons, which had their beginning from Christ and His blessed apostles themselves.

SECTION LXIV.

OF CHURCH OBLATIONS AND ENDOWMENTS.

WE might somewhat marvel what the Apostle St. Paul should mean to say, that "covetousness is idolatry,"^a if the daily practice of men did not shew that whereas nature requireth God to be honoured with wealth, we honour for the most part wealth as God. Fain we would teach ourselves to

^a Coloss. iii. 5.

believe that for worldly goods it sufficeth frugally and honestly to use them to our own benefit, without detriment and hurt of others ; or if we go a degree farther, and perhaps convert some small contemptible portion thereof to charitable uses, the whole duty which we owe unto God herein is fully satisfied.

But forasmuch as we cannot rightly honour God, unless both our souls and bodies be sometime employed merely in His service ; again, since we know that religion requireth at our hands the taking away of so great a part of the time of our lives quite and clean from our own business, and the bestowing of the same in His, suppose we that nothing of our wealth and substance is immediately due to God, but all our own, to bestow and spend as ourselves think meet ? Are not our riches as well His as the days of our life are His ? Wherefore unless with part we acknowledge His supreme dominion by whose benevolence we have the whole, how give we honour to whom honour belongeth, or how hath God the things that

are God's? I would know what nation in the world did ever honour God and not think it a point of their duty to do Him honour with their very goods.

So that this we may boldly set down as a principle clear in nature, an axiom which ought not to be called in question, a truth manifest and infallible, that men are eternally bound to honour God with their substance in token of thankful acknowledgment that all they have is from Him. To honour Him with our worldly goods, not only by spending them in lawful manner, and by using them without offence, but also by alienating from ourselves some reasonable part or portion thereof, and by offering up the same to Him as a sign that we gladly confess His sole and sovereign dominion over all, is a duty which all men are bound unto, and a part of that very worship of God, which, as the law of God and nature itself requireth, so we are the rather to think all men no less strictly bound thereunto than to any other natural duty, inasmuch as the hearts of men do so cleave to these earthly things, so

much admire them for the sway they have in the world, impute them so generally either to nature or to chance and fortune, so little think upon the grace and providence from which they come, that unless by a kind of continual tribute we did acknowledge God's dominion, it may be doubted that in short time men would learn to forget whose tenants they are, and imagine that the world is their own absolute free and independant inheritance.

Now concerning the kind or quality of gifts which God receiveth in that sort, we are to consider them partly as first they proceed from us, and partly as afterwards they are to serve for divine uses. In that they are testimonies of our affection towards God, there is no doubt but such they should be as beseemeth most His glory to whom we offer them. In this respect the fatness of Abel's^b sacrifice is commended, the flower of all men's increase assigned to God by Solomon,^c the gifts and donations of the people rejected as oft as their cold affection to God-ward made their presents

b Gen. iv. 4.

c Prov. iii. 9.

to be little worth. Somewhat the heathens saw touching that which was herein fit, and therefore they unto their Gods did not think they might consecrate any thing which was impure, or unsound, or already given, or else not truly their own to give.

Again, in regard of use, forasmuch as we know that God hath Himself no need of worldly commodities, but taketh them because it is our good to be so exercised, and with no other intent accepteth them, but to have them used for the endless continuance of religion, there is no place left of doubt or controversy, but that we in the choice of our gifts are to level at the same mark, and to frame ourselves to His known intents and purposes. Whether we give unto God therefore that which Himself by commandment requireth; or that which the public consent of the Church thinketh good to allot; or that which every man's private devotion doth best like, inasmuch as the gift which we offer proceedeth not only as a testimony of our affection towards God, but also as a mean to uphold

religion, the exercise whereof cannot stand without the help of temporal commodities; if all men be taught of nature to wish, and as much as in them lieth to procure the perpetuity of good things; if for that very cause we honour and admire their wisdom who having been founders of commonweals, could devise how to make the benefit they left behind them durable, if especially in this respect we prefer Lycurgus before Solon and the Spartan before the Athenian polity, it must needs follow that as we do unto God very acceptable service in honouring Him with our substance, so our service that way is then most acceptable when it tendeth to perpetuity.

The first permanent donations of honour in this kind are temples. Which works do so much set forward the exercise of religion, that while the world was in love with religion it gave to no sort greater reverence than to whom it could point and say, "These are the men that have built us synagogues."^d But of churches we have spoken sufficiently heretofore.

^d Luke vii. 5.

The next things to churches are the ornaments of churches, memorials which men's devotion hath added, to remain in the treasure of God's house, not only for uses wherein the exercise of religion presently needeth them, but also partly for supply of future casual necessities, whereunto the Church is one arth subject; and partly to the end, that while they are kept, they may continually serve as testimonies, giving all men to understand that God hath in every age and nation such as think it no burden to honour Him with their substance.

The riches, first of the tabernacle of God, and then of the temple of Jerusalem, arising out of voluntary gifts and donations, were, as we commonly speak, an unknown quantity; the value of them above that which any man would imagine. After that the tabernacle was made, furnished with all necessaries, and set up, although in the wilderness their ability could not possibly be great, the very metal of those vessels which the princes of the twelve tribes gave to God for their first presents amounted even then to two thousand and four hundred

shekels of silver, a hundred and twenty shekels of gold,^a every shekel weighing half an ounce. What was given to the temple which Solomon erected we may partly conjecture, when, over and besides wood, marble, iron, brass, vestments, precious stones and money, the sum which David delivered into Solomon's hands for that purpose, was of gold in mass eight thousand, and of silver seventeen thousand cichars, every cichar^b containing a thousand and eight hundred shekels, which riseth to nine hundred ounces in every one cichar: whereas the whole charge of the tabernacle did not amount unto thirty cichars. After their return out of Babylon, they were not presently in case to make their second temple of equal magnificence and glory with that which the enemy had destroyed. Notwithstanding, what they could, they did.^c Insomuch, that, the building finished, there remained in the coffers of the church, to uphold the fabric thereof, six hundred and fifty cichars of silver, one hundred

a Num. vii. 85, 86. b 1 Chron. xxix. 2, 7. Exod. xxv. 28, 39;

xxxvii. 24.

c Ezra ii. 68, 69. Hag. ii. 3.

of gold.^d Whereunto was added by Nehemias^e of his own gift a thousand drachms of gold, fifty vessels of silver, five hundred and thirty priests' vestments; by other the princes of the fathers twenty thousand drachms of gold, two thousand and two hundred pieces of silver; by the rest of the people twenty thousand of gold, two thousand of silver, three score and seven attires of priests. And they furthermore bound themselves^f towards other charges to give by the poll in what part of the world soever they should dwell the third of a shekel, that is to say, the sixth part of an ounce, yearly. This out of foreign provinces, they always sent in gold. Whereof Mithridates is said to have taken up by the way, before it could pass to Jerusalem from Asia in one adventure eight hundred talents; Crassus after that to have borrowed of the temple itself eight thousand: at which time Eleazar having both many other rich ornaments, and all the tapestry of the temple under his custody thought it the safest way to grow unto some

d Ezra viii. 26. e Nehem. vii. 70. f Nehem. x. 32.

composition, and so to redeem the residue by parting with a certain beam of gold, about seven hundred and a half in weight, a prey sufficient for one man, as he thought, who had never bargained with Crassus till then, and therefore, upon the confidence of a solemn oath that no more should be looked for, he simply delivered up a large morsel, whereby the value of that which remained was betrayed, and the whole lost.

Such being the casualties whereunto movable treasures are subject, the law of Moses did both require eight and twenty cities together with their fields, and whole territories in the land of Jewry, to be reserved for God Himself, and not only provide for the liberty of further additions, if men of their own accord should think good, but also for the safe preservation thereof unto all posterities,^f that no man's avarice or fraud by defeating so virtuous intents might discourage from like purposes. God's third endowment did therefore of old consist in lands.

^f Levit. xxv. 34 ; xxvii. 28.

Furthermore, some cause no doubt there is why besides sundry other more rare donations of uncertain rate, the tenth should be thought a revenue so natural to be allotted out unto God. For of the spoils which Abraham had taken in war he delivered unto Melchisedec the tithes.^g The vow of Jacob, at such time as he took his journey towards Haran, was, "If God will be with me, and will keep me in this voyage which I am to go, and will give me bread to eat, and clothes to put on, so that I may return to my father's house in safety; then shall the Lord be my God; and this stone, which I have set up as a pillar, the same shall be God's house: and of all Thou shalt give me, I will give unto Thee the tithe."^h And as Abraham gave voluntarily, as Jacob vowed to give God tithes, so the law of Moses did require at the hands of all men, the selfsame kind of tribute, the tenth of their corn, wine, oil, fruit, cattle, and whatsoever increase His heavenly providence should send. Inasmuch, that Painims being herein followers of their

^g Gen. xiv. 20. ^h Gen. xxviii. 20. ⁱ Deut. xiv. 22.

steps, paid tithes likewise. Imagine we that this was for no cause done, or that there was not some special inducement to judge the tenth of our worldly profits the most convenient for God's portion? Are not all things by Him created in such sort, that the forms which give them their distinction are number, their operations measure, and their matter weight? Three being the mystical number of God's unsearchable perfection within Himself; seven the number whereby our own perfections, through grace, are most ordered; and ten the number of nature's perfection, (for the beauty of nature is order, and the foundations of order number, and of number, ten: the highest we can rise unto without iteration of numbers under it,) could nature better acknowledge the power of the God of nature, than by assigning unto Him that quantity which is the continent of all she possesseth? There are in Philo the Jew many arguments to shew the great congruity and fitness of this number in things consecrated unto God: but being herein

But because over nice and curious specula-

tions become not the earnestness of holy things, I omit what might be farther observed as well out of others as out of him, touching the quantity of this general sacred tribute, whereby it cometh to pass that the meanest and the very poorest amongst men yielding unto God as much in proportion as the greatest, and many times in affection more, have this as a sensible token always assuring their minds, that in His sight, from whom all good is expected, they are concerning acceptation, protection, divine privileges, and preeminences whatsoever, equals and peers with them unto whom they are otherwise in earthly respects inferiours; being furthermore well assured, that the top as it were thus presented to God is neither lost nor unfruitfully bestowed, but doth sanctify to them again the whole mass, and that He by receiving a little undertaketh to bless all. In which consideration the Jews were accustomed to name their tithes, the hedge of their riches. Albeit a hedge do only fence and preserve that which is contained, whereas their tithes and offerings did more, because they procured increase of the heap out of

which they were taken. God demanded no such debt for His own need, but for their only benefit that owe it. Wherefore detaining the same they hurt not Him whom they wrong, and themselves whom they think they relieve, they wound, except men will haply affirm that God did by fair speeches and large promises delude the world in saying, "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in Mine house," (deal truly, defraud not God of His due, but bring all,) "and prove if I will not open unto you the windows of heaven, and pour down upon you an immeasurable blessing." That which St. James hath concerning the effect of our prayers unto God, is for the most part of like moment in our gifts. We pray and obtain not, because He who knoweth our hearts doth know our desires are evil. In like manner we give and we are not the more accepted, because he beholdeth how unwisely we spill our gifts in the bringing. It is to Him who needeth nothing all, one whether any thing or nothing be given Him;

to the good will; Mal. iii. 10. *the word of the Lord*

But for our own good it always behoveth that whatsoever we offer up into His hands we bring it seasoned with this cogitation; "Thou, Lord, art worthy of all honour."

With the Church of Christ touching these matters it standeth as it did with the whole world before Moses. Whereupon for many years men being desirous to honour God in the same manner as other virtuous and holy personages before had done, both during the time of their life, and if further ability did serve by such device as might cause their works of piety to remain always, it came by these means to pass that the Church from time to time had treasure proportionable unto the poorer or wealthier estate of Christian men. And as soon as the state of the Church could admit thereof, they easily condescended to think it most natural and most fit that God should receive as before of all men his ancient accustomed revenues of tithes.

Thus therefore both God and nature have taught to convert things temporal to eternal uses, and to provide for the perpetuity of

religion even by that which is most transitory. For to the end that in worth and value there might be no abatement of any thing once assigned to such purposes, the law requireth precisely the best of that we possess, and to prevent all damages by way of commutation, where instead of natural commodities or other rights the price of them might be taken, the Law of Moses determined their rates, and the payments to be always made by the shekel of the sanctuary,^k wherein there was great advantage of weight above the ordinary current shekel.

The truest and surest way for God to have always His own, is by making Him payment in kind out of the very selfsame riches which through his gracious benediction the earth doth continually yield. This, where it may be without inconvenience, is for every man's conscience safe. That which cometh from God to us by the natural course of His providence, which we know to be innocent and pure, is perhaps best accepted, because least spotted with the stain of unlawful or indirect procurement.

^k Levit. xxvii. 25. ¹

Besides, whereas prices daily change, nature which commonly is one must needs be the most indifferent and permanent standard between God and man.

But the main foundation of all, whereupon the security of these things dependeth, as far as any thing may be ascertained amongst men, is that the title and right which man had in every of them before donation, doth by the act and from the time of any such donation, dedication, or grant, remain the proper possession of God till the world's end, unless Himself renounce or relinquish it. For if equity have taught us that every one ought to enjoy his own; that what is ours no other can alienate from us, but with our own deliberate consent; finally, that no man having passed his consent or deed may change it to the prejudice of any other, should we presume to deal with God worse than God hath allowed any man to deal with us?

Albeit therefore we be now free from the Law of Moses, and consequently not thereby bound to the payment of tithes; yet because nature hath taught men to honour God with

their substance, and Scripture hath left us an example of that particular proportion which for moral considerations hath been thought fittest by Him whose wisdom could best judge; furthermore seeing that the Church of Christ hath long sithence entered into like obligation, it seemeth in these days a question altogether vain and superfluous whether tithes be a matter of divine right; because howsoever at the first it might have been thought doubtful, our case is clearly the same now with theirs unto whom St. Peter sometime spake, saying, "While it was whole, it was whole thine."a When our tithes might have probably seemed our own, we had colour of liberty to use them as we ourselves saw good. But having made them His whose they are, let us be warned by other men's example what it is, *νοσφίσασθαι*, "to purloin," to wash or clip that coin which hath on it the mark of God.

For that all these are His possessions, and that He doth Himself so reckon them appeareth by the form of His own speeches

^a Acts v. 4. nature hath taught

Touching gifts and oblations, "Thou shalt give them Me;"^a touching oratories and Churches, "My house shall be called the house of prayer;"^b touching tithes, "Will a man spoil God?^c yet behold even Me your God ye have spoiled, notwithstanding ye ask wherein, as though ye were ignorant what injury there hath been offered in tithes, ye are heavily accursed because with a kind of public consent you have joined yourselves in one to rob Me, imagining the commonness of your offence to be every man's particular justification;" touching lands, "Ye shall offer to the Lord a sacred portion of ground, and that sacred portion shall belong to the priests."

Neither did God only thus ordain amongst the Jews, but the very purpose, intent, and meaning of all that have honoured Him with their substance, was to invest Him with the property of those benefits, the use whereof must needs be committed to the hands of men. In which respect the style of ancient grants and charters is, "We have given unto God

a Exod. xxii. 29, 30. b Matt. xxi. 13. c Mal. iii. 8. d Ezek. xlv. 1-4.

both for us and our heirs for ever ;” yea, “ We know,” saith Charles the Great, “ that the goods of the Church are the sacred endowments of God, to the Lord our God we offer and dedicate whatsoever we deliver unto His Church.” Whereupon the laws imperial do likewise divide all things in such sort that they make some to belong by right of nature indifferently unto every man, some to be the certain goods and possessions of commonweals, some to appertain unto several corporations or companies of men, some to be privately men’s own in particular, and some to be separated quite from all men, which last branch compriseth things sacred and holy because thereof God alone is owner. The sequel of which received opinion as well without as within the walls of the house of God touching such possessions hath been ever, that there is not an act more honourable than by all means to amplify and to defend the patrimony of religion, not any more impious and hateful than to impair those possessions which men in former times, when they gave unto holy uses,

were wont at the altar of God and in the presence of their ghostly superiors to make as they thought inviolable by words of fearful execration, saying, " These things we offer to God ; from Whom if any take them away (which we hope no man will attempt to do,) but if any shall, let his account be without favour in the last day, when he cometh to receive the doom which is due for sacrilege against that Lord and God unto Whom we dedicate the same."

The best and most renowned prelates of the Church of Christ have in this consideration rather sustained the wrath than yielded to satisfy the hard desires of their greatest commanders on earth, coveting with ill advice and counsel that which they willingly should have suffered God to enjoy. There are of martyrs whom posterity doth much honour, for that having under their hands the custody of such treasures, they could by virtuous delusions invent how to save them from prey, even when the safety of their own lives they gladly neglected; as one sometime an Archdeacon under Xistus the Bishop of Rome did, whom when his judge

understood to be one of the church-stewards, thirst of blood began to slake and another humour to work, which first by a favourable countenance and then by quiet speech did thus calmly disclose itself:—

“ You that profess the Christian religion make great complaint of the wonderful cruelty we shew towards you. Neither peradventure altogether without cause. But for myself, I am far from any such bloody purpose. Ye are not so willing to live, as I unwilling that out of these lips should proceed any capital sentence against you. Your bishops are said to have rich vessels of gold and silver, which they use in the exercise of their religion, besides the fame is that numbers sell away their lands and livings, the huge prices whereof are brought to your church-coffers, by which means the devotion that maketh them and their whole posterity poor must needs mightily enrich you; whose God we know was no coiner of money, but left behind him many wholesome and good precepts; as namely, that Cæsar should have of you the things that are fit for and due to Cæsar,

His wars are costly and chargeable unto him. That which you suffer to crust in corners the affairs of the commonwealth do need. Your profession is not to make account of things transitory. And yet if ye can be contented but to forego that which ye care not for, I dare undertake to warrant you both safety of life and freedom of using your conscience, a thing more acceptable to you than wealth.

Which fair parley the happy martyr quietly hearing, and perceiving it necessary to make some shift for the safe concealments of that which being now desired was not unlikely to be more narrowly afterwards sought, he craved respite for three days to gather the riches of the Church together, in which space against the time the governors should come to the doors of the temple big with hope to receive his prey, a miserable rank of poor, lame, and impotent persons was provided, their names delivered him up in writing as a true inventory of the Church's goods, and some few words used to signify how proud the Church was of these treasures.

If men did not naturally abhor sacrilege, to resist or defeat so impious attempts would deserve small praise. But such is the general detestation of rapine in this kind, that whereas nothing doth either in peace or war more uphold to men's reputation than prosperous success, because in common construction unless notorious improbity be joined with prosperity, it seemeth to argue favour with God, they who once have stained their hands with these odious spoils do thereby fasten unto all their actions an eternal prejudice, in respect whereof for that it passeth through the world as an undoubted rule and principle that sacrilege is open defiance to God, whatsoever they afterwards undertake, if they prosper in it men reckon it but *Dionysius* his navigation; and if any thing befall them otherwise it is not, as commonly, so in them ascribed to the great uncertainty of casual events, wherein the providence of God doth control the purposes of men oftentimes much more for their good than if all things did answer fully their heart's desire, but the censure of the world is

ever directly against them both bitter and peremptory.

To make such actions therefore less odious, and to mitigate the envy of them, many colourable shifts and inventions have been used, as if the world did hate only wolves and think the fox a goodly creature. The time it may be will come, when they that either violently have spoiled or thus smoothly defrauded God, shall find they did but deceive themselves.

But though no other plague and revenge should follow sacrilegious violations of holy things, the natural secret disgrace and ignominy, the very turpitude of such actions in the eye of a wise understanding heart is itself a heavy punishment. Men of virtuous quality are by this sufficiently moved to beware, how they answer and requite the mercies of God with injuries, whether openly or indirectly offered.

† I will not absolutely say concerning the goods of the Church, that they may in no case be seized on by men, or that no obligation,

commerce, and bargain made between man and man can ever be of force to alienate the property which God hath in them. Certain cases I grant there are wherein it is not so dark what God himself doth warrant, but that we may safely presume Him as willing to forego for our benefit, as always to use and convert to our benefit whatsoever our religion hath honoured Him withal. But surely under the name of that which may be, many things that should not be are often done. By means whereof the Church most commonly for gold hath flannel, and whereas the usual saw of old was "Glaucus's change," the proverb is now "A Church bargain."

And for fear lest covetousness alone should linger out the time too much, and not be able to make havoc of the house of God with that expedition which the mortal enemy thereof did vehemently wish, he hath by certain strong enchantments so deeply bewitched religion itself, as to make it in the end an earnest solicitor and an eloquent persuader of sacrilege, urging confidently, that the very best service

which all men of power can do to Christ, is without any more ceremony to sweep all, and leave the Church as bare as in the day it was first born; that fulness of bread having made the children of the household wanton, it is without any scruple to be taken away from them and thrown to dogs; that they who laid the prices of their lands at the apostles' feet, did but sow the seeds of superstition; that they who endowed churches with lands, poisoned religion; that tithes and oblations are now in the sight of God as the sacrificed blood of goats; that if we give Him our hearts and affections, our goods are better bestowed otherwise; that Irenæus, Polycarp's disciple, should not have said, "We offer unto God our goods as tokens of thankfulness for that we receive;" neither Origen, "He who worshippeth God must by gifts and oblations acknowledge Him the Lord of all;" in a word, that to give unto God is error, reformation of error to take from the Church that which the blindness of former ages did unwisely give.

By these or the like suggestions, received

with all joy and with like sedulity practised in certain parts of the Christian world; they have brought to pass, that as David doth say of man, so it is in hazard to be verified concerning the whole religion and service of God: The time thereof peradventure may fall out to be threescore and ten years, or if strength do serve unto fourscore, what followeth is likely to be small joy for them whosoever they be that behold it. Thus have the best things been overthrown, not so much by puissance and might of adversaries, as through defect of counsel in them that should have upheld and defended the same.



By these or the like suggestions, received
ages did unwisely give.





NOTES.

*P. 25. Herod's charge about the temple
was ambitious.*

IN the eighteenth year of Herod's reign he entered on the repair of the temple, increasing the area, and adding to the height of the walls twenty cubits, by which the second temple had fallen short of the first; accounting this more likely to obtain him honour than any thing which he had done; and his first step was to assemble the people and expound his purpose in a set oration. The work was so far advanced in a year and six months, that he was able to keep a feast of dedication, which he did with all splendour; but it was not completed until the times of the younger Agrippa, A. D. 60. To this work it is supposed the Jews alluded, when they said to our Lord, "Forty and six years hath this temple been in building." One great point of his magnificence was the size of the stones which formed the body of the building; they were "white, and of a firm grain, each twenty-five cubits high, twelve wide, and eight deep." Josephus, Antiquities, xv. ii. 3; xx. 8: St. John ii. 20.

P. 56. Churches without preaching judged forsaken of God.

This alludes to the condition of things in the English Church just after the Reformation, when there being comparatively but few ministers capable of preaching, many churches were committed to those who were not licensed to preach, and for their use the books of homilies were provided. This the Puritans complained of in such terms as these; "Prayers and Sacraments, forasmuch as they take effect by the preaching of the Word,—where *that* is not, *these* do not only not feed, but are ordinarily to further condemnation." "The holy Sacraments are not effectual to salvation, without men be instructed by preaching before they be partakers of them." "I do not say but the Lord may if He will save those, who never heard nor shall hear a sermon in all their lives. But, wretches as we are, what is that to us? We have no warrant to hope for any such salvation." "The people living under our readers, though they faithfully execute their ministry, cannot hope for eternal life."

P. 74. "The Wise Man."

See Ecclesiasticus xlv. 7.

P. 200. They which deny the necessity of Baptism.

That is, the Puritans, who said that "private Baptism first arose upon a false interpretation of the place

of St. John, iii. 5 : where *certain* do interpret the word water, of material and elemental water.”

P. 207. Valentinian heretics.

St. Irenæus says of some of them, “ They affirm that the mystery of the ineffable and invisible Power ought not to be solemnized by means of visible and corruptible creatures ; but that perfect redemption is the simple knowledge of the ineffable greatness. For ignorance having been the cause of defect and suffering, it must be the work of knowledge to undo the whole system which ignorance has put together.” *Against Heresy, I. 18.* Valentine was an Egyptian, whose sect arose at Rome in the second century. It was one of the most flourishing branches of Gnosticism. See Mosheim, E. H. part ii. c. v. §. 15, &c.

P. 216. Miscreants (i. e. unbelievers) in scorn have upbraided us.

St. Gregory Nazianzen, in his first oration against the emperor Julian, quotes him for this sentiment ; “ Nothing beyond the one word *believe* is the reach of your party’s wisdom.”

P. 231. Men of so good experience.

Because the passage above, recommending us to exercise ourselves in imagining the presence of some wise or good person, was taken from Seneca’s Epistles, lib. i. ep. 11.

P. 306. Avoid fasting on the Jews' sabbath.

Because the Gnostics and other heretics who ascribed the world to an evil being, kept the day of the creation of the world as a fast, betokening their rejection of His authority, and of the Old Testament.

P. 313. Victor's extremity.

See Euseb. E. H. v. 23. Victor, bishop of Rome, wishing to bring the East and West to an agreement in the manner of keeping Easter, and finding that the bishops of Asia would not submit to his decree, excommunicated them and their churches. The dissension was stopped by the remonstrances of St. Irenæus.

P. 371. Laws Imperial.

That is, the laws of the Roman empire, as collected and methodized by Justinian, from whose Institutes this division is taken.

P. 372. An Archdeacon.

This martyr was St. Lawrence; the time, that of Dioclesian, about A. D. 300. The history is preserved by Prudentius, who was a contemporary. It may be seen recorded in stained glass in the east window of the church of Ludlow, Shropshire.

P. 375. Dionysius's navigation.

“Dionysius of Syracuse, having robbed the temple of Proserpine at Locri, finding the wind favourable for his voyage afterwards, said with a smile to his friends, “See you not what a good voyage we sacrilegious wretches are favoured with from the immortal Gods themselves.” Valer. Maximus, i. 2.



CORRIGENDA.

- | Page | line | |
|------|--------------|---|
| 34. | 6. | <i>for</i> commerce between <i>read</i> commerce to he had
between |
| 39. | 15. | <i>dele</i> of |
| 56. | last. | <i>for</i> manner. To <i>read</i> manner ; to |
| 58. | 22. | <i>dele</i> very. |
| 86. | 12. | <i>for</i> such <i>read</i> seek |
| 91. | 20. | <i>for</i> try <i>read</i> covet |
| 126. | 7. | <i>for</i> incoherent <i>read</i> irreverent |
| 159. | 15. | <i>for</i> one ; <i>read</i> one |
| 162. | 23. | <i>for</i> given. <i>read</i> given : |
| 164. | 6. | <i>for</i> receive at the least <i>read</i> receive, at the least |
| 182. | 5. | <i>for</i> are <i>read</i> were |
| 183. | 7. | <i>for</i> deriveth <i>read</i> derived |
| 185. | 6. | <i>for</i> lives <i>read</i> life |
| 207. | <i>note.</i> | <i>for</i> 3 <i>read</i> 30 |
| 210. | 23. | <i>for</i> faith by devout <i>read</i> faith, devout |
| 215. | 5. | <i>for</i> maketh <i>read</i> nameth |
| 227. | 8. | <i>for</i> complements <i>read</i> compliments |
| 233. | 9. | <i>for</i> brought <i>read</i> wrought |
| 235. | 22. | <i>for</i> dishonoured <i>read</i> honoured |
| 244. | 24. | <i>for</i> had <i>read</i> hath |
| 245. | 13. | <i>for</i> offices <i>read</i> rooms |
| 250. | 7. | <i>for</i> enemies' <i>read</i> enemy's |
| 282. | 18. | <i>for</i> principles <i>read</i> principals |
| 293. | 10. | <i>for</i> sometimes <i>read</i> sometime |
| 301. | 9. | <i>dele</i> as |
| 306. | 5. | <i>for</i> inasmuch <i>read</i> insomuch |
| 310. | 13. | <i>for</i> where in <i>read</i> wherein |
| 310. | 14. | <i>dele</i> inverted commas. |
| 310. | 14. | <i>for</i> church, discipline <i>read</i> church discipline |
| 311. | 6. | <i>for</i> as joy <i>read</i> as oft as joy |
| 315. | 18. | <i>for</i> joy ? <i>read</i> joy, |
| 323. | 17. | <i>for</i> life <i>read</i> wife |
| 338. | 13. | <i>after</i> Holy Ghost <i>add</i> , St. John addeth that He also
invested them even then with the power of the
Holy Ghost. |







