



WRITINGS

OF

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A
DECLARATION
OF
CHRIST AND HIS OFFICE.

COMPILED BY
JOHN HOOPER,

A.D. 1547.

“This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him.”

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CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION

FORASMUCH as almighty God, of his infinite mercy and goodness, prepared a mean, whereby Adam and his posterity might be restored again unto their original justice¹ and perfection, both of body and soul, and live eternally unto the same end that they were created for—to bless and magnify for ever the immortal and living God—it is the office of every true christian, before all other studies, travails, and pains, that he sustains in the time of this brief and miserable life, to apply himself with all diligent force and labour to know perfectly this mean, ordained by God for our salvation; and, the thing once known, diligently with heart, soul, and mind, to follow the mean, until such time as the effect and end be obtained, wherefore it was appointed. The mean was showed unto Adam at his first and original transgression, the Seed of the woman, which should break the head of the serpent, destroy the kingdom of the devil, and restore Adam, and as many as knew and believed in this Seed, unto life everlasting. And as the sin of Adam, the only occasion of all man’s misery, was derived unto all his posterity, and they were made subject unto death and the wrath of God for ever: so was this Seed from the beginning a very true and sufficient remedy to as many as believed; and God, for his promise sake, acquitted and delivered man from the right and claim of the devil, and by mercy restored the place, that, by malice and contempt, was lost.

He that would consider diligently these two things, the sin of Adam, and the mercy of God, would find himself far unable to express, or sufficiently think the greatness of the one, or of the other, when they so far pass the reason and understanding of man. All the solace and joy of Adam’s posterity consists solely and only in this, (Rom. v.) “Where sin abounded, grace did more abound:” the benefits and merits of this Seed abound, and are more available before the judgment of God, than sin, the flesh, the devil, and the world. This treasure and inestimable riches must be perfectly known of every person that will be saved. It is only in Christ and in the knowledge of him, that what he is, and what is his office can be learned.

¹ Righteousness.

CHAPTER II

WHAT CHRIST IS.

HE is the Son of the living God and the virgin Mary: both God and man, the true Messiah, promised unto man from the beginning to his fall. Whom St. John calls the Word, of eternal essence and divine majesty, saying, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” (John i.) St. Paul (Col. i.) calleth him “the image of God,” &c., and (Heb. i.) “the brightness of God.” The creed of Nice calleth him “light of light,” the natural Son of God, in whom dwelleth the fountain of all divinity naturally. As St. Paul saith, (Col. ii.) “In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily;” meaning, that he is not the Son of God by adoption or acceptation into grace, as Abraham, David, and other holy saints: but naturally the Son of God, equal with the Father in all things, as John saith, “We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father.” So St. John proves him in all his writings to be the very true and everlasting God, and not, as Ebion and Cerinthus said, that he was but man only. He was made mortal man, as St. John saith, “And the Word was made flesh,” to save the condemned man from immortal death: and to be a Mediator and Intercessor unto God for man. (Matt. xi. John iii. Isa. xi.)

This scripture not only teaches us the knowledge of salvation, but also comforts us against all the assaults, subtleties, and crafts of the devil—that God would of his inestimable love rather suffer his only Son to die for the world, than all the world should perish. Remaining always, as he was, very² God immortal, he received the thing he was not, the mortal nature and true flesh of man, in which he died, as Peter saith, 1 Pet. iv. Irenæus hath these godly words: “Christ was crucified and died, the Word submitting to be crucified and die.” The divine nature of Christ was not rent, or torn, or killed, but it obeyed the will of the Father. It gave place unto the displeasure and wrath of God, that the body of Christ might die. Being always equal with his Father, he could, if he had executed his divine power, have delivered his body from the tyranny of the Jews.

These words of Irenæus wonderfully declare unto us what Christ is, and agree with Paul, (Phil. ii.) “Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon himself the form of a servant.” Seeing he was sent into the world to suffer this most cruel death and passion, he would do nothing that should be contrary to his vocation, but, with patience praying for his enemies,

² “Very,” frequently means “true.”

submitted himself unto the ignominy and contempt of the cross; suffering pains innumerable, without grudge or murmur against the holy will of his Father: his Godhead hiding itself, until the third day, when it restored the soul again unto the body, and caused it to rise with great triumph and glory, (Rom. i. Mat. xxviii. John xx. Luke xxiv. Mark xvi.) repeating the doctrine, which before his death he preached unto the world, that he was both king and lord, high bishop and priest, both of heaven and of earth. "All power is given unto me both in heaven and in earth: go, therefore, teach all nations." (Matt. xxviii.)

He that before was most vile and contemptible in the sight of the world, now by right and just title claims the dominion and empire of all the world. How mighty a prince he is, the creation of the world and the preservation thereof declare. How merciful towards them that repent, we know by daily experience in ourselves, and by the example of others, Adam, David, Manasseh, and Peter. How rigorous for sin, the punishment that we suffer and the calamities of this world declare, especially the death of his most innocent body. How continual his wrath is against such as repent not, Saul, Pharaoh, Judas, with others, declare. How mighty and fearful a Lord this, our Saviour Jesus Christ, is, read his title and style, (Nahum i.) where the prophet threatens the destruction of Nineveh and the whole kingdom of the Assyrians. As the princes of the world use to declare in their letters patent, of what power, force, and strength they are, and the names of the realms and dominions that they have under their protection and governance, to alarm their enemies, that they should make no resistance, nor move the peace of so mighty a prince: so the prophet gives such a title unto God, to alarm the city of Nineveh and kingdom of the Assyrians, saying, "What do ye imagine against the Lord? he will make an utter end: affliction shall not rise up the second time." This is the style of the God omnipotent, our Saviour Jesus Christ, at whose name all powers bow their knees in heaven, in earth, and in hell. (Phil. ii.)

CHAPTER III.

OF THE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST.

Now that the scripture has taught us to know that Christ is both God and man, I will briefly treat of his office. First, of his priesthood; then of his kingdom and reign over his church till the world's end; then his being for ever in solace with his elect, in perpetual mercy and favour: but with such as contemn in this world his holy commandment and pleasure, he deals in severe justice and hatred and wrath for ever. (John iii.)

St. Paul, in the epistle to the Hebrews, proves him to be the Priest, called by God unto that function and office of the high Bishop; "Christ glorified not himself to be made an high-priest: but He that said unto him, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.' As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.' (Heb. v.) By whose obedience unto the cross he gave everlasting health³ to as many as obeyed him. And in all things he executed the very true office of a bishop, to whom it appertained to teach the people; which was the chief part of the bishop's office, and most diligently and strictly commanded by God. As all the books of Moses and the prophets teach, and Christ commanded Peter: (John xx.) and Paul all the bishops and priests of his time. (Acts xx.)

Of Christ's authority and preaching, Moses and Stephen (Acts vii. Deut. xviii.) say thus, "A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me: him ye shall hear." He that will not hearken unto his voice shall be as none of the people of God. This authority to preach, the Father gave unto him in the hearing of the apostles, (Matt. 17,) and bound his church to receive his doctrine, saying, "This is my dearly beloved Son, in whom I delight, hear him." He taught the will of his Father unto the world, and how they might be saved from death infernal, (John xvii. 6.) provided that they repented and believed the gospel. (Matt. iii. Mark x.) He left nothing untaught, but as a good doctor,⁴ manifested unto his audience all things necessary for the health of man. As the woman confessed, (John iv.) "Messias, when he is come, will tell us all things." He not only preached himself, but sent his apostles and disciples to manifest unto the world, that the acceptable time of grace was come, and the sacrifice for sin born into the world. (Matt. x. John x.) And after his resurrection he gave them commandment to preach, and likewise what they should preach. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel, which I have taught you, to every creature." (Matt. xxviii. Mark xvi.) The which doctrine Luke thus expounds: "That repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his

³ Salvation.

⁴ Teacher.

name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.” (Luke xxiv.) “In his name,” that is to say, “in the knowledge and faith of his merits, they should preach repentance and remission of sin unto all the world: as they did most sincerely and plainly, without any glosses or additions of their own invention, and were as testimonies of the truth, and not the authors thereof.” (Acts i. John i.)

So Paul teaches with gravity and manifest words, what is to be judged of himself and all other ministers: “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them: and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.” (2 Cor. v.) Always in their doctrine they taught the thing, that Christ first taught, and God’s Holy Spirit inspired them. (Gal. i. 2 Cor. iii.) Holy apostles never took upon them to be Christ’s vicars in the earth, nor to be his lieutenants: but said, “Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.” (1 Cor. iv.) In the same epistle he binds the Corinthians to follow him in nothing but where he followed Christ, (chap. xi.) “Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.” They ministered not in the church, as though Christ was absent, although his most glorious body was departed corporeally into the heavens above; but as Christ present, who always governed his church with his Spirit of truth, as he promised, (Matt. xxviii.) “Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.”

In the absence of his body, he has commended the protection and governance of his church unto the Holy Ghost, the same God, and one God with the Father and his divine nature. Whose divine puissance and power overmatches the force of the devil, so that hell itself cannot take one of Christ’s flock out of God’s protection. (John x.) And this defence dureth not for a day, nor year, but shall demour⁵ for ever, till this church be glorified at the resurrection of the flesh. (John xv.)

It was no little pain that Christ suffered in washing away the sins of this church: therefore he will not commit the defence thereof unto man. It is no less glory to defend and keep the thing won by force, than it is by force to obtain the victory. Adam, Abel, Abraham, Moses, or Aaron could not win this church out of the devil’s tyranny: no more can they defend it, when delivered. For although by imputation of Christ’s justice⁶ those men and all other faithful ones be delivered from the tyranny of the devil and condemnation of the law, yet the devil had and hath his very friends dwelling within the corrupt nature of man, as long as he liveth. The concupiscence and rebellion of man’s nature ceases not day nor night to betray man again to

⁵ Remain.

⁶ Righteousness.

the devil, except with the motion of true impenitence this concupiscence be kept under in fear and faith; which two virtues are so infirm in man, that he be ever so perfect, he falls from God sometimes, as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and Aaron. (Isa. xliii. Num. xxi.) Therefore Christ keeps the defence and governance of the church only and solely himself, in whom the devil hath not a jot of right. Though the apostles were instructed in all truth, and left the same written unto his church; yet were they ministers, servants, testimonies, and preachers of this verity, and not Christ's vicars in earth and lieutenants to keep the keys of heaven, hell, and purgatory: but only appointed to approve the thing to be good, that God's laws commanded; and that to be ill, which the word of God condemned.

Seeing that Christ governs his church always by his Holy Spirit, and binds all the ministers thereof unto the sole word of God, what abomination is this, that any bishop of Rome, Jerusalem, Antioch, or elsewhere, should claim to be Christ's vicar in earth, and take upon him to make any laws in the church of God, to bind the consciences of man, beside the word of God; and, in placing their superstition and idolatry, put the word of God out of its place! By what law, by whom, or where, hath any this title given unto him, to be God's vicar and lieutenant upon the earth?

Moses, the best prince that ever was, and most godly governor of the people; Aaron, that faithful high-priest and preacher of God's word, never usurped this title, to be as a second Christ and master over men's consciences. If godly Moses and his brother Aaron never claimed this title in the earth, doubtless, it is a foul and detestable arrogance, that these ungodly bishops of Rome attribute unto themselves to be the heads of Christ's church, and the more it is to be lamented. He that considers their life, and compares it with the scripture, will judge by the authority thereof, that they were not, for these many years, worthy to be accounted any members of God's church, but the members of the devil, and the first begotten of anti-christ.

This is true, the see of Rome is not only a tyranny and pestilence of body and soul, but the nest of all abomination. God give him grace and all his successors, to leave their abomination, and to come unto the light of God's word! This beast is preached unto the people to be a man, that cannot err; his authority to be above God and his laws; and to be the prince upon the earth of all princes. But God will judge him, as he is a murderer of both body and soul, and punish the princes of the world. that uphold his abomination.

Moses and Aaron, by the testimony of the scripture, never taught, excepting that which they received of God, and at the last they both offended (Num. xx.): insomuch, that God gave sentence against them, that neither of them should enter into the land of promise for their arrogance and pride. The text saith, "Because ye were unfaithful unto me." This false belief was

not of any doubt they had in the power of God; for the miracle was done, as God said: but that they attributed too much unto their own power, and said: “Hear now, ye rebels, must *we* fetch you water out of this rock?” For the changing of the *third* person in this sentence into the *first*, the wrath of God pronounced sentence of death against these two very godly ministers of his word. They sinned, because they said not; “Hear, ye rebellious, cannot Jehovah, the omnipotent, give you water out of this stone?” And is this first begotten of antichrist, the bishop of Rome, without sin, who changes not only the person in a sentence, but the whole sentence, yea, the whole law of God and of man? So that he reigns in the conscience above the law of God, and will save him, whom God hath damned, and damn him, whom God hath saved; yet we are told this person and man of sin cannot err! But he that spared not to kill good Moses and Aaron for the abuse of the word of God, will not favour this wicked man, nor any of his *holy* doctors, at the terrible day of judgment.

Nahum, the prophet, gives to God a wonderful name, which neither the Latin nor the Greek can properly express without circumlocution, it is as if he retained a remembrance of injuries, and reserved the occasion of vengeance. He is the God, that writes all blasphemies in his book of remembrance, and when he has showed his mercy sufficiently, he revenges the evil that man thinks is forgotten. It is of his superabundant mercy, that he throws not suddenly fire upon the world for sin; and not that he is asleep, or cannot do it. Right well judged Valerius Maximus, and better than now the most part of Christian men: “The divine wrath proceedeth with slow pace to its vengeance. But it will make up for its slowness by the weight of punishment.”

Because God hath given this light unto my countrymen,⁷ who are all persuaded, or may God send them to be persuaded, that neither the bishop of Rome nor any other, is Christ’s vicar upon the earth, there is no need to use any long or copious oration; it is so plain, that it needs no probation. The very properties of antichrist, I mean of Christ’s great and principal enemy, are so openly known to all men, that are not blinded with the smoke of Rome, that they know him to be the beast, which John describes in the Apocalypse.

This knowledge of Christ’s supremacy and continual presence in the church admits no lieutenant nor general vicar. Likewise it admits not the decrees and laws of men, brought into the church contrary unto the word and scripture of God, which is sufficient alone to teach all verity and truth for the salvation of man, as will appear in the chapter following.

⁷ This tract was written in the reign of king Edward VIth.

CHAPTER IV

OF THE AUTHORITY OF THE WORD OF GOD.

CHRIST, the only light of the world, sent from his Father, and born mortal man, according unto the scripture, began to teach the word of God purely and sincerely unto the world, and chose ministers and apostles convenient for the sending forth thereof; and being approved to be the very Messias by God the Father (Matt. iii. John v.), he taught his disciples the truth by the only law written by Moses and the prophets, and not by unwritten verities. And in all controversies and doubtful questions he answered his opponents by the word of God. In that wonderful temptation of the devil (Matt. iv.), by collation of the places of scripture he overcame the devil, (falsely and in a wrong sense alleging the word of God,) with his own sword, by the word of God godly applied.

When his disciples were reprehended by the pharisees, as breakers of the sabbath (Matt. xii.), he excused their conduct by the law, "Have ye not read what David did, and those which were with him?" So likewise (Matt. xv.) in all controversies he made the law judge between his enemies and himself. When he was desired to teach a young man the way to heaven, and to come to everlasting life, he said, "What is written in the law? How readest thou?" (Matt. xxii.)

Likewise to the Sadducees that denied the resurrection of the dead: "Ye err (said he), not knowing the scriptures and the word of God." The rich man in hell, who was so desirous that his brothers living in the earth might have knowledge and warning to beware that they were not damned in time to come, would gladly have warned them himself, for the more surety (Luke xvi.) that the message should be done. Abraham answered, "They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them." The scripture teaches what heaven, hell, and what man are, and what Christ is: therefore Christ sendeth us thither. (John v.) "Search the scriptures," said he.

Again, being asked in a civil matter concerning tribute and obedience unto the princes of the world, (Matt. xxii.) he said, "Give unto the emperor that which is due unto the emperor, and unto God that which is due unto God." And under the name of the emperor he understands all superior powers appointed over the people by God, and requires us to give due honour unto both, as Paul teaches. (Rom. xiii. 1 Pet. ii.)

This law teaches man sufficiently, as well what he is bound to do unto God, as unto the princes of the world. Nothing can be desired necessary for man, but it is prescribed in this law: of what degree, vocation, or calling soever he be, his duty is showed unto him in the scripture. And in this it differs from man's laws, because it is absolute, perfect, and never to be

changed; nothing to be added unto it, nor taken from it. And the church of Christ, the more it was and is burdened with man's laws, the farther it is from the true and sincere verity of God's word. The more man presumes and takes authority to interpret the scripture after his own brain and subtle wit, and not as the verity of the text requires, the more he dishonours the scripture, and blasphemous God, the author thereof.

It is the office of a good man to teach the church, as Christ taught, to revoke all errors, and bring back such as err unto the fold of Christ, only by the word of Christ. For the water at the fountain-head is more wholesome and pure, than when it is carried abroad in rotten pipes or stinking ditches. I had rather follow the shadow of Christ, than the body of all the general councils or doctors since the death of Christ. The devil has never slept, but always by his ministers attempted to destroy the verity of Christ's religion, and quite to put out the light of truth, which was perfect in Christ's time and in the time of the apostles. None since that time so pure. St. Jerome saith, that his time was darkness compared with the apostles' time.

The antiquity of the world darkens the verity of God's word; as Varro saith the truth, "that age corrupteth and taketh away many things;" and "the third century doth not see the same man, which the first saw." The truth of God's verity, the more it is used, practised, and taught, after the wisdom of man, the more is the glory and perfection thereof darkened. It is the contrary in all human arts, as Cicero saith: "In human discoveries nothing is invented and perfected all at once, but is improved by use and practice; so that the arts of every kind are more advanced in excellence, the farther they are removed from their first origin and inventors."

The church of God must therefore be bound to no other authority than unto the voice of the gospel and unto the ministry thereof, as Isaiah saith (chap. viii.), "Seal the law among my disciples." The prophet speaketh of such darkness, as should follow his time, concerning the coming of Messias, the true teacher of the church. Therefore he prayed to preserve the true heirs of the promise, and that it would please him to confirm the doctrine of truth in their hearts, lest the word, and true understanding of the word, should be put out by the devil. And seeing the church is bound unto this infallible truth, the only word of God, it is a false and usurped authority that men attribute unto the clergy, and bind the word of God and Christ's church to the succession of bishops, or any college of cardinals, schools, ministries, or cathedral churches.

Paul would have no man to give faith to any person or minister in the church of God, but when he preaches the word of God truly. (Gal. i.) Men may have the gift of God to understand and interpret the scripture unto others, but they never have authority to interpret it, otherwise than it interprets itself; which the godly mind of man by study, meditation, and comparing

one place with the other, may find; howbeit some more, some less, as God gives his grace. For the punishment of our sins God leaves in all men great imperfection; and such as were endued with excellent wit and learning saw not always the truth. As it is to be seen in Basilius, Ambrose, Epiphanius, Augustine, Bernard, and others, though they stayed themselves in the knowledge of Christ, and erred not in any principal article of the faith: yet they did inordinately and more than enough extol the doctrine and tradition of men; and after the death of the apostles every doctor's time was subject unto such ceremony and man's decrees, as were neither profitable nor necessary. Therefore Paul diligently exhorted the church of Christ principally to consider and regard the foundation of all verity; meaning that doctors of the church had their imperfection and faults. "Other foundation, saith he, can no man lay, besides that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ." In these few words is established all our faith, and all false religion is reprehended.

Upon this foundation some men build gold, that is to say, godly and necessary doctrine. As Polycarp, who confuted the heresy of Marcion, on the being of God—of the causes of sin—that the devil and man are the cause of sin, and not God, nor fatal destiny, nor the influence or aspects of the planets. He maintained the true religion of God, and governed the church as the scripture taught, which he learned of John the evangelist, and defended this truth with wonderful constancy and martyrdom.

Basil and many others retained the articles of the faith; but they instituted the life and rule of monks, and preferred that kind of life before the life of such as govern in the commonwealth the people of God; and persuaded men that such kind of life was a very divine and acceptable honouring of God.

After him followed such as augmented this evil, and said, it was not only acceptable unto God, but also that men might deserve therewith remission of sin.

Thus by a little and a little the devil augmented superstition, and diminished the truth of God's glory; so that we see no where the church of Christ, as it was in the apostles' time. Though many and godly verities have been brought unto light in our time by men of divers graces, yet the truth of necessary verities is not plainly showed by them. Lest man should too much glory in himself, God has permitted them to err in certain points: as Luther, of blessed memory, who wrote and preached the gospel of justification, no man better; yet in the cause of the sacrament he erred concerning the corporeal presence of Christ's natural body, so that there is no man can err more. I shall have occasion to write the truth concerning this matter hereafter. It is no reproach of the dead man, but mine opinion unto all the world, that the scripture solely and the apostles' church is to be followed, and no man's authority, be he Augustine; Tertullian, or even cherubim or seraphim.

Unto the rules and canons of the scripture must man trust, and reform his errors thereby, or else he shall not reform himself, but rather deform his conscience. The church of the Romans, Corinthians, and others, the seven churches that John writeth of in the Apocalypse, were in all things reformed unto the rule and form prescribed by the everlasting God. The image of these churches I always print in my mind. And wheresoever I come, I look how near they resemble those before mentioned, and whether their preachers preach simply without dispensation of any part of God's most necessary word; and whether all the occasions of idolatry be taken away, as images, which Gregory calls the books of the laymen, though this title is against the second commandment, and never approved by the Old Testament nor the New, by word or example.

Where the occasion is not removed, the word of God must needs stand in hazard; for God will not (say the wisdom of man what it list) have his church pestered with any kind of idolatry; and to make God and the devil agree in one church, is impossible. St. John hath wonderful words in the Apocalypse, (chap. iii.) unto the church of the Laodiceans: "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So, then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth." These words are very necessary to be borne in mind. For he that is neither hot nor cold, but indifferent to use the knowledge of God's word and Christ's church with the word and gloss of man; and that teaches the use of images in the church, before he can prove by the authority of God's word that they may be suffered in the church, doth not well. They have been the occasion of great hurt and idolatry. The church of the Old Testament and the New never taught the people with images.

Therefore, it shall be the office of every man that loves God and his word, to follow the scripture only, and to bewail the ignorance of such as have, before our time, or now in our time, by words or writing defended the same; and with all humility submit himself to the judgment and censure of the judge of all judges, the word of God, that he may wisely and godly discern what is to be believed and accepted of any doctor's writings, and what is not to be accepted; what is to be pardoned, and what is not to be pardoned; and by the perils and dangers of others learn to be wise, that we commit not the same fault.

A fine gloss and free interpretation cannot make an ill thing good. If I should say, an image provokes devotion, or that holy water teaches that the blood of Christ was sprinkled for my sins, and the holy bread teaches that Christ's body was torn for my sins, what shall these glosses excuse the deed? Nay, nay, Christ, who died for our sakes, would not have his death preached this way; but out of the scripture by the tongue of man, and not out of the decrees of bishops by a drop of water or a painted post. He that took the pains to die and suffer his passion for the redemption of the world

solely and only, solely and only has taken the pains to teach the world how and which way they should keep this passion in mind, and he left it unto the world in writing by the hands of his holy apostles; unto which writing only he has bound and obligated his church, and not to the writings of men.

In this passage I admonish the christian reader, that I speak not of the laws of magistrates or princes, who daily ordain new laws for the preservation of their commonwealth, as they see the necessity of their realms or cities requires; but of such laws as men have ordained for the church of Christ, which should be now and for ever governed by the word of God. In this case, like as Eve offended, obeying the persuasion of the devil contrary unto the commandment of God, so doth every man offend, by obeying any laws or decrees that command any thing contrary unto the word of God. This law must prevail, "We must obey God, rather than man." The example hereof we have in Daniel, of the three children who chose rather to burn in the fiery furnace, than to worship the image that Nebuchadnezzar had made. So did the apostles. (Acts v.)

Let all the world consider, whether such laws of the bishops, as the mass, which is a profanation of Christ's Supper, to bind men's consciences to pray unto dead saints; to say, that images are to be suffered in the temples; and to constrain the ministers of the church to live unmarried, contrary to their vocation, are to be obeyed or not. They do no less offend God in obeying these laws, than Eve did in obeying the voice of the serpent. The wisdom of all the wits in the world cannot comprehend the greatness of this ill. Make what laws they will for the body, so they leave the conscience free, it is to be suffered with patience; only I lament the bondage of the conscience. Cursed be those that make such laws, and cursed be those that with sophistry defend them. That parasite and bondman of the bishop of Rome, Pighius, in his writings is not ashamed to say, "It is less sin for a priest to keep another man's wife, than to have a wife of his own!"

Concerning indifferent acts, which of themselves are neither good nor ill, as, to refrain from eating of flesh on the Friday, observing of the feasts kept holy in the remembrance of such holy martyrs as died for the faith of Christ, or in keeping holy Easter and Whitsunday; there are two repasts most diligently to be observed, the one good, and to be suffered; the other ill, and to be eschewed.⁸ Such as abstain from flesh, and think they do better service to God, and would likewise obtain remission of their sins by those works, declare both themselves and their works to be ill. But such as abstain that the spirit may be more ardent, and the mind more given to study and prayer, do well, and as they are bound to do. And they who come unto the temple to pray for themselves and the church of Christ, and to hear the word of God, do well. For, as God commands his word to be preached

⁸ Avoided, refused.

and heard, so he has appointed a certain time, as the Sabbath, when people should hear it. And not only is this order to be observed in the church, but, also, in every family and household, of what degree soever they be. Each should cause his family and children to read some part of the Bible for their erudition, to know God. Likewise, he should constrain them to pray unto God for the promotion of his holy word, and for the preservation of the governors of the commonwealth, so that no day should pass without prayer and augmentation of knowledge in the religion of Christ.

But our new evangelists have another opinion; they dream of faith that justifieth, which neither repentance precedes, nor honesty of life follows—which shall be to their double damnation, if they amend not. He that will conform his knowledge unto the word of God, let him, likewise, convert his life withal, as the word requires, and as all the examples of Christ and his gospel teach; or else what will he do with the doctrine of Christ, which only teaches, and sufficiently teaches, all verity and virtuous life? Let him tarry still in the doctrine of man, and live as manly⁹ and as carnally as he list, and not profess to know God, nor his truth, rather than so slander them both! This suffices to prove that the word of God alone is sufficient to teach the truth. All other men's laws are neither necessary nor profitable; and certain we are, that the church of the apostles had not those decrees that papistry of late days faithed¹⁰ the church withal.

⁹ After the manner of men.

¹⁰ Taught as matters of faith.

CHAPTER V.

OF THE INTERCESSION OF CHRIST.

THE second office of Christ is to pray and to make intercession for his people. This office John writes of in his first epistle: "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, that maketh intercession for us." And as Paul saith, "Christ, who was dead, yea, who is also raised again, who is even at the right hand of God: who also intercedeth for us." In his name, and in the belief and confidence of his merits, we may obtain the mercies of God and life everlasting, as Paul saith: "Let us with confidence draw nigh to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." This intercession of Christ alone suffices. No man should seek any other mediator of intercession or expiation of sin, as Paul saith, declaring the sufficiency and ability of Christ's death and intercession. "Christ remaineth for ever, having a perpetual priesthood. Wherefore he is able to save to the uttermost those that come to God by him; being alway living to this end, that he may intercede for them."

Unto this intercession and prayer in Christ's name he bound his church by express commandment "Ask, and it shall be given you." And in the same place he shows the cause wherefore it shall be given. "Whatsoever ye ask the Father in my name, it shall be given unto you." (John xiv. xv.) St. Paul calls Christ, sitting at the right hand of God, the minister and servant of the saints; that is to say, of such as are here living in this troubled and persecuted church, to solicit and do all their affairs, as a faithful ambassador with the Father of heaven, until the consummation of the world.

This doctrine of Christ's intercession must be always diligently preached unto the people; and, likewise, that in all necessities, calamities, and trouble, the afflicted person must seek no other means to offer his prayers unto God, but Christ only, according as the scripture teacheth, and as we have the example of holy saints in the same. Not only in the New Testament, where he commands us to pray in his name; and Stephen in his martyrdom commended his spirit unto this only Mediator, saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." But also in the Old Testament thus prayed the patriarchs and prophets. Jacob said, (Gen. xlviii.) "God and the angel who delivered me from all evil, bless these lads." And David, (Psa. lxxii.) "And they shall worship him alway." Forasmuch as Christ is daily in heaven, and prayeth for his church, the church of Christ must pray, as Christ hath taught it; as the patriarchs, prophets, and the apostles have given us examples, who never prayed unto dead saints; yea, as Christ hath given us an example, hanging on the cross, saying, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."

What intolerable ill blasphemy of God and ethnical¹¹ idolatry is this, to admit and teach the invocation of saints departed out of this world! It takes from God his true honour; it makes him as nothing, who hath ordained Christ alone to be Mediator between man and him; it diminishes the merits of Christ, and takes from the law of God its perfection and majesty; whereas God hath opened his will and pleasure unto the world in all things. It condemns the old church of the patriarchs and prophets, likewise the church of the apostles and martyrs, who never thought of the invocation of saints. It accuses the scripture of God to be false, which saith, “Thou shalt neither add, neither diminish any thing:” it makes Christ a liar, who said, “The Spirit, whom I will send from the Father, he shall teach you all truth.” If the men that teach, “Holy Mary, pray for us,” be more holy than all the patriarchs, or prophets and apostles, let the conscience of the christian reader judge.

This distinction of mediators, to be one of expiation for sin, namely, Christ; and another for intercession, namely, the saints departed, is naught: it repugneth¹² the manifest text of the scripture. It is the office only of Christ to be the mediator for sin, and likewise to offer the prayers of the church to his Father. (John 1.) “Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world.” As concerning intercession, he commands us to ask only in his name, and prescribed the manner how to ask, and what to ask. (Luke xi.)

As for such’ as say, “If the saints that we pray unto, hear us not, nor profit a deal, yet it hinders not, we lose but our labour.” Thus much it hindereth, it declares him that prayeth to be an infidel. To pray unto that god or goddess, who is not able to help him, nor hear his prayers, is to be no better than he that prayed unto the image of Jupiter in Crete, which had neither ears nor eyes. It declares him to contemn both God and his word, who assures every man, in every time, and in every distress, not only to hear him, but also to give aid. (Matt. xi.) So now this worshipper of saints departs from the known and almighty God to an unknown god, and prefers the doctrine of man and the devil before the scripture of truth and the living God. I hope this detestable error is come to light, and all men taught to pray as the canonical scripture teaches.

But there is another evil as great as this, to be reprehended by all such as know how to pray aright—the being of images in the temple, which the world saith may be suffered in the churches, and saith they are good to put the people of God in remembrance of such godly saints as died for Christ’s sake. But this is always the subtlety of the devil, when a manifest ill cannot be borne withal, to seek a gloss and interpretation, that whereas he cannot

¹¹ Heathen.

¹² Opposes, denies.

walk in the church openly like a devil, and have candles stuck before a post, and the images kissed, yet he desires some man to put a fair coat upon his back, that he may have a place in the church to lurk in, until such time as occasion be ministered to show himself again as he is. The authority of God's word requires me to pronounce this true judgment in the cause of images, that they be not worshipped in the church—that their presence in the church is against God's word, as well as to say, "Holy Mary, pray for us." And as the one is to be eschewed and banished out of the heart, so is the other out of the eye, in the temple, where God's word is preached unto the people, and the sacraments ministered.

This I prove by the authority of both Testaments, the Old and the New. The Old saith, "Thou shalt make no image." (Exod. xx. Deut. v.) In the New there is no mention made of any image; but Christ concerning the law and precepts of the commandments said: "I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil the law." (Matt. v.) Forasmuch as Christ left the commandments of the old law unto the church, in the which he saith, "Thou shalt not make any image;" from whence have these men authority that say, if images be not honoured, they may be suffered in the church? It is but their opinion, contrary and beside the law of God. And this commandment, "Thou shalt not make"—"thou shalt not worship," forbids as well the making of the image, as the honouring of it. Concerning having them in the place of public prayer, and in the use of the sacraments, such as would have this occasion of idolatry to remain in the church, by division of the commandments would pass over the second commandment, which saith, "Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image, thou shalt not worship it;" and make of the tenth commandment two commandments.¹³ But the text will not suffer it. For as the Lord there forbids the inward lust and concupiscence of his neighbour's house, so he forbids the lust and concupiscence of his neighbour's wife, servant, or daughter, and it is all but one commandment (Exod. xx.): read the text in the Hebrew, and then it will be more plain.

The second commandment, which the defenders of images neglect, forbids not only the outward reverence and honour, but, also, by the same express commandment forbids to *make* any image. They do injury to the manifest text, and their gloss is to be abhorred, and the plain text to be followed.

The king's majesty that is dead,¹⁴ willed not only all his true subjects to have no familiarity with cardinal Pole, but also to refrain from his company, and not to have to do with him in any case; and this not without good and necessary consideration. He that would, notwithstanding this command of the king's majesty, have haunted Pole's company, and at the time of his

¹³ See the popular Roman catholic catechisms in every country.

¹⁴ Henry VIII.

accusation have said, he was not with Pole for friendship or familiarity, to do him any honour, but haunted his company with such other persons as meant no ill to the king's majesty or his realm; doubtless, this law would of right and equity condemn him; for neither for friendship, neither other cause, should any man use his company. Doubtless, as the king's majesty and every other prince knows it to be dangerous to suffer his subjects daily to be in the company of his traitorous enemies; so God knew right well what danger it was to suffer man, his creature, to have company with those idols, and therefore said, "Thou shalt neither worship them nor make them." All the princes of the earth have not had so many subjects betrayed and made traitors by their enemies, as God has lost souls by the means of images. I make all the world judge that know the truth.

It is so childish an opinion to say that images may be suffered in the church, if they be not honoured, that it needs no probation at all.¹⁵ The gentiles, whom St. Paul speaketh of (Rom. i.), knew right well that the idol was not God. And all the idolaters that used images, which the New Testament speaks of (1 Cor. viii. and x 1 Pet. iv. 1 John v.), knew right well that those images of gold or silver were not the devil that they worshipped. The apostles condemned not only their false religion, but also their images. John by express words calleth the image idolatry, and bids them beware of images, saying, "Keep yourselves from images." David (Psa. cxv.) saith, "The idols of the gentiles are silver and gold." He condemns not only their false religion, but also the images made by the hand of man, which were of gold and silver. Their false god was neither gold, nor silver, but a wicked spirit, who, for lack of faith, had entered into their spirits.

It is to be lamented, that God for our sins thus suffers the world to be deluded by the devil. Of late years, the images were in the temples, and .honoured with paternoster,¹⁶ heart and mind, with leg and knee. This use of images is taken away in many places, but now they are applied to another use, namely, to teach the people and to be the laymen's books! As Damascene and many others say, Oh! blasphemous and devilish doctrine, to appoint the most noble creature of God—man, endued with wit and reason, resembling the image of the everlasting God, to be instructed and taught by a mute, dumb, blind, and dead idol! The brute beast that goes by the way, and the ass that serves for the mill, is not taught by the rod of the carter, but by the prudence of him that uses the rod; and should those painted blocks be the books of reasonable man? Full well can the devil transform himself into an angel of light, and deceive the people under the pretence of true religion. I had rather trust to the shadow of the church

¹⁵ Requires no proof, is beyond doubt.

¹⁶ Prayers offered to them.

which the scripture teaches, than to all the men's writings since the death of Polycarp.

Christ saith not, "Go preach unto the people by images;" but he said, "Go into all the world, and preach the gospel." (Matt. xxviii.) They say, that images adorn and seemly deck the temple of God; whereas, the people resort to hear the word of God, so the more images, the more dishonoured is the temple. Let them first teach by the manifest ward of God, that the temple should be decked with such idols as cannot teach nor speak. Some man's tongue must declare the history of the idol, or else they know not what the idol is; peradventure, take St. Barbara for St. Catherine, and St. Concumbre for the rood¹⁷ of Paul; or Balaam and his ass, that for lucre attempted to curse the church of God, for Christ and his ass that came to bless and sanctify his church with his precious blood. It is the abuse and profanation of the temple to suffer them, and a great occasion for people to return to their accustomed ill. I would all men should, indifferently¹⁸ ponder these reasons, and judge whether they are to be suffered or not.

The most perfect churches of the prophets, Christ, and his apostles, used no such means to instruct the people. We ought to follow them, and the word of God written by the prophets and apostles. Also, the Greek church never consented willingly to admit the use of images in the temples.¹⁹ The ill that hath happened unto the people by the means of images is too plain and well known—God by idolatry is robbed of his glory, and the idolater disinherited of God's mercy, except he repent in this life. An image once brought into the church lives a long time. Grant, that at the beginning there was a good preacher in the church, the preacher dies: the idol, the longer it liveth the younger it waxes, as you may see by the idols of Walsingham, Canterbury, and Hales. They flourished most a little before their desolation in the reign of the king's majesty that is dead, Henry VIII. of a blessed memory. At their setting up I suppose the preachers were more diligent and zealous of God's glory than afterward. But was not the original damnable against the word of God, to give the people such a book to learn by, that should school them to the devil?

The words of Gregory to Serenus, bishop of the Massilians, should move no man, though he say, "What the scripture is to those that read, the same does the picture afford to the eyes of those who cannot;" and reprehends Serenus for breaking of images, saying, the like was not seen done

¹⁷ Image.

¹⁸ Impartially.

¹⁹ The Greek church resisted the introduction of the representations of saints long after image worship had been received by the Latin or Roman church.

by any other minister. This is but St. Gregory's opinion. Epiphanius, writing in a certain epistle to John, bishop of Jerusalem, desires the occasion of ill to be taken out of the church, as Paul commands. (1 Thess. v.) This doctor, as all men know, was of singular learning and virtue.

Again, against the authority of Gregory the great, I set the authority of Athanasius the great, who denies by express words images to be the books of the lay people. With great gravity and godly reasons this great clerk²⁰ confutes this fond opinion, that images are to be the books of the laymen.

The great and excellent clerk Lactantius cries so out against images, that he saith there can be no true religion where they are. Tertullian judges the same. The law of God and these holy doctors not only condemn the use of them in the church, but also the name of an image declares it to be an abomination.

Read all the scripture, and in every place where thou findest this word, *ezeb*, idol or image, it signifies either affliction, rebellion, sorrow, sadness, travail or pain, or else the wicked *muk* and mammon of the world, or the thing that always provokes the ire of God, as rabbi David Kymhy well expoundeth Psalm cxv. This Jew saith, that the idols bring men into hatred of God, expounding these words of David, "Like unto them are all they that put their trust in them:" he saith the text must be understood by the manner of prayer, as though David prayed almighty God to make these gravers and carvers of images as dumb, as blind, as mute, and as insensible, as the idol that can neither speak nor hear. Our Lord amend it!

What should move men to defend in the church of Christ so unnecessary an ill, and pestilent treasure, that has seduced both our fathers and great-grandfathers? whereas, the church of the patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, never used them, but in all their writings abhorred them. If we loved God, we should be content with scripture. Every scholar of Aristotle takes this for a sufficient verity, "The master saith so:" he will be contented as soon as he hears his master's name. Cicero (lib. iii. *De Oratore*) was thus persuaded of those that were excellent orators, "and so esteems the suavity of Isocrates, the subtlety of Lysias, the acumen of Hyperides, the eloquence of Æschines, the power of Demosthenes, and the oratory of Catullus: that whatsoever, saith he, you add, or change, or take away, it will become thereby worse." And should not the patriarchs, prophets, Christ, and the apostles, as well suffice the church of God?

What, although many learned men have approved of images, should their wisdom maintain any thing contrary unto the word of God? No: a christian man must not care who speaks, but what is spoken; the truth is to be accepted, whosoever speaks it. Balaam was as wise, learned, and replenished with God's gift, as man could be; notwithstanding, his ass telling the

²⁰ Learned man.

truth must be believed rather than he. The law of God teaches no use of images, but saith, "Thou shalt not make, thou shalt not worship it," (Exod. xx.) believe it. Yet the art of graving and painting is the gift of God. To have the picture or image of any martyr or others, so they be not put in the temple of God, nor otherwise abused, may be suffered. Christ by the picture of Caesar taught his audience obedience unto the civil prince, saying: "Whose image is this? They say to him, Caesar's: therefore render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's."

But if man will learn to know God by his creatures, let him not say "Good morrow, master," to an old moth-eaten post, but behold the heavens which declare the mighty power of God. Consider the earth, how it brings forth the fruits thereof, the water with fishes, the air with birds. Consider the disposition, order, and amity, that is between the members of man's body, the one always ready to help the other, and to save the other: the hand the head, the head the foot, the stomach to disperse the meat and drink into the external parts of the body. Yea, let man consider the hawk and the hound, that obey in their vocation, and so every other creature of the earth; and let him with true heart and unfeigned penitence come to the knowledge of himself, and say, "All the creatures that ever the living God made, obey in their vocation, saving the devil, and I, most wretched man."

Those things were made to be testimonies unto us of God's mighty power, and to draw men unto virtue, not to the idols which the devil caused to be set in the temple to bring men from God. Thus did Christ teach the people his most blessed death and passion, and the fruit of his passion by the grain of corn cast into the earth. He hanged not the picture of his body upon the cross, to teach them his death, as our late learned men have done.

The ploughman, be he ever so unlearned, shall better be instructed of Christ's death and passion by the corn that he soweth in the field, and likewise of Christ's resurrection, than by all the dead posts that hang in the church, or are pulled out of the sepulchre with, "Christ is risen." What resemblance hath the taking of the cross out of the sepulchre and going a procession with it, with the resurrection of Christ?²¹ None at all; the dead post is as dead, when they sing, "Now he is not dead," as it was, when they buried it with, "His grave is made in peace." If any preacher would manifest the resurrection of Christ unto the senses, why does not he teach them by the grain of the field that is risen out of the earth, and comes of the dead corn that he sowed in the winter? Why doth not the preacher preach the death and resurrection of Christ by such figures and metaphors as the scripture teaches 2 Paul wonderfully (1 Cor. xv.) proves with arguments the death and resurrection of Christ, and ours likewise, so that nothing may be more plainly taught.

²¹ Part of the Romish service on Easter day.

A dead post carried in procession as much resembles the resurrection of Christ, as death itself resembles life. People should not be taught either by images or by relics, as Erasmus in his third book of Ecclesiastes well declares. Lactantius uses a wonderful, divine, eloquent, and plain manner in the declaring of this resurrection, which is sung yearly in the church concerning Easter-day, with many godly and divine verses. The same Lactantius saith, that there can be no true religion where these images are. Augustine reprehends them wonderfully in these words of David, "Mouths have they, and speak not;" and saith, Men may be soon deceived by images.

Such as defend them have nothing but sophistical arguments to blind the people with. The scripture and the apostles' church used none: as for Gregory the great, and Theodosius, with others that defend them, all the histories declare, that men of greater learning than they condemned them by the scripture; as Leo III., also the emperor Constantine V., who assembled all the learned men of Asia and Greece, and condemned the use of images, which Gregory and Martin the first had established. But it would have been of no force, had all Asia, Africa, and Europe, and Gabriel the archangel, descended from heaven, and approved the use of images. Forasmuch as the apostles neither taught nor wrote of them, their authority should have no place. The word of God solely and only is to be preferred (Gal. i.), which forbiddeth images.

CHAPTER VI.

THE THIRD OFFICE OF CHRIST CONCERNING HIS PRIESTHOOD, IS TO OFFER SACRIFICE UNTO GOD, AND BY THE SAME TO PURGE THE WORLD FROM SIN.

PAUL saith (Phil. ii.), that Christ humbled himself unto the death of the cross. (Heb. ii.) He was made partaker of a man's mortal nature, that by death he might destroy him that had the empire and dominion of death, that is to say, the devil. John calls him the Lamb that taketh away the sin of the world. (John i.) All the sacrifices of the old law were figures and types of this only sacrifice, which was appointed by God, to die and to suffer, the wrath and displeasure of God for the sin of man, as though he himself were a sinner, and had merited this displeasure. The greatness of this wrath, sorrow, confusion, ignominy, and contempt, neither angel nor man can express; his pains were so intolerable, and his passion so dolorous, his Deity so obedient with the Father's will, that it was not only a sacrifice, but also a just recompense to satisfy for all the world solely and only, as Christ taught Nicodemus, John iii. as Paul, Heb. vii. viii. ix. x. Isa. liii. and so all the prophets and patriarchs. And such a sacrifice as once for all sufficeth, Heb. vii.

These two offices of Christ should never be out of remembrance. They declare the infinite mercy of God, and likewise his impartial and equal justice unto all creatures without respect of persons. The token of his mercy may be known in this, that he would not that all mankind should be lost, though in Adam all deserved eternal death. He opened his mercy unto Adam not only by word, but also by the fire that descended upon his sacrifices and his son's. So to Abraham. Then to the world by the incarnation and death of his only Son, and the promise of grace, and the promise of everlasting life unto such as repent and believe in him.

The sign of his wrath and displeasure unto man is this, that he would not accept man again into his favour for any penance, any sorrow, any trouble, any adversity, any weeping, any wailing, nor for the death of any person, until his own Son, most dearly beloved, by death appeased his displeasure, and became surety to satisfy the justice of God and the right that the devil had unto all mankind. This if man remembered as deeply and as earnestly, as the matter requires, it should make his heart full sorry, and bring him unto an honest and virtuous manner of life. It would bring him to consider this example of God's justice and equity in the appeasing of his own justly conceived wrath, and likewise that he would do no wrong unto his mortal enemy the devil. Except the Son of God had been an equal and just redemption, a price correspondent to make amends and satisfy the

faults and guilt of man's sin, God would not have taken one soul from the right and justice of the devil.

Now of this infallible truth, that Christ hath sacrificed only for sin, and that his death is accounted only sufficient for the salvation of man, the church of Christ is aright instructed by two most necessary articles; first, of justification; and then of the right use of the sacrament of his holy body.

CHAPTER VII.

OF JUSTIFICATION.

CONCERNING justification thus the word of God teaches: St. Paul, when he saith that we are justified by faith, (Rom. iii. iv. v.) means that we have remission of sins, reconciliation, and acceptance into the favour of God. So doth this word, 'justify,' signify (Deut. xxv.), where God commandeth the judge to justify, quit, and absolve the innocent, and to condemn and punish the culpable person.

Paul saith, "We are justified by faith, and not by works."

To be justified by faith in Christ is as much as to say, we obtain remission of sin, and are accepted into the favour of God, by the merits of Christ.

To be justified by works is as much as to say, to deserve remission of sin by works.

Paul declares, that for the death and merits of Christ we are saved, and not by our own virtues. So that faith not only shows us Christ that died, and now sitteth at the right hand of God; but also applies the merits of this death unto us, and makes Christ ours. Faith lays nothing to gage²² unto the justice of God but the death of Christ, and thereupon claims mercy and God's promise, the remission of sin, and desires God to justify and deliver the soul from the accusation of the law and right of the devil, which he is bound to do for his promise sake. (Ezek. xxxiii. Matt. xviii.) And although with this remission of sin he gives likewise the Holy Ghost to work the will of God, to love both God and his neighbour, yet notwithstanding, the conscience, burdened and charged with sin, first seeks remission thereof. For this thing the conscience labours and contends in all fears and terrors of sorrow and contrition. It disputes not what virtues it brings (wretched soul) to claim this promise of mercy; but forsaking its own justice, offers Christ, dead upon the cross, and sitting at God's right hand. It makes nothing to be the cause, wherefore this mercy should be given, saving only the death of Christ, which is the only tron²³ the only sufficient price and gage for sin.

And although it is necessary and requisite, that in the justification of a sinner contrition be present, and that charity and virtuous life must necessarily follow; yet the scripture attributes the remission of sin only unto the mercy of God, which is given only for the merits of Christ, and received solely by faith. Paul does not exclude those virtues from being present, but he excludes the merits of those virtues, and derives the cause of our acceptance into the grace of God only for Christ.

²² Brings nothing as a pledge to satisfy.

²³ A tron was a public beam for weighing merchandize.

And mark this manner of speech: “We are justified by faith;” that is, “we are just through the confidence of mercy?” This word, faith, comprehends as well a persuasion and confidence, that the promise of God appertains unto us for Christ’s sake, as the knowledge of God. For faith, though it desires the company of contrition and sorrow for sin, yet it contends not in judgment upon the merits of any works, but only for the merits of Christ’s death. In case it did, it avails nothing; for if a man desire to be delivered from the law, the law must be satisfied, which saith, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy mind, and all thy heart, and all thy strength.” (Deut. vi.) Now there is not, nor ever was, any man born of the stock of Adam in original sin, that feared God, as much as the law requires, nor ever had such constant faith as is required, or such ardent love as it requires: seeing those virtues that the law required are infirm and weak, for their merits we can obtain nothing of God. We must therefore only trust to the merits of Christ, which satisfied the extreme jot and uttermost point of the law for us. And he imputes and communicates this his justice and perfection to us by faith.

Such as say that faith alone justifies not, because other virtues are present, cannot tell what they say. Every man that will have his conscience appeased, must mark these two things: how remission of sin is obtained, and wherefore it is obtained. Faith is the mean whereby it is obtained, and the cause wherefore it is received, is, the merits of Christ. Although faith be the means whereby it is received, yet neither faith, nor charity, nor contrition, nor the word of God, nor all these knit together, have sufficient merits wherefore we should obtain this remission of sin. But the only cause wherefore sin is forgiven, is the death of Christ.

Now mark the words of Paul: “Freely,” saith he, “we are justified by his grace.” Let the man burst his heart with contrition, believe that God is good a thousand times, and burn in charity; yet all these shall not satisfy the law, nor deliver man from the wrath of God, until such time as faith lets fall all hope and confidence in the merits of such virtues as are in man, and says, “Lord, behold thy unfruitful servant—only for the merits of Christ’s blood give me remission of sins; for I know no man can be justified otherwise before thee, as David saith, “No man living shall be justified in thy sight.” (Psa. cxliii.) And again, “Blessed is the man, to whom the Lord imputeth not sin.” (Psa. xxxii.)

He that would mark Christ’s communication with that nobleman and great clerk Nicodemus (John iii.) would be satisfied how and wherefore man is justified, so plainly, that no adversary of the truth should hurt this infallible verity, “Sole faith to justify.”²⁴ Nicodemus, having a good opinion, although not a sufficient knowledge of Christ, came unto him by night,

²⁴ Faith alone justifies.

and confessed him to be sent from God, and that because of such works and miracles as he had wrought. Christ made answer, “Truly, Nicodemus, I say unto thee, no man can see the kingdom of God, except he be born from above.” Nicodemus, not understanding what Christ meant, asked him how an old man could be born again, and whether he could enter his mother’s womb, and then be born again. Christ brings him yet nearer unto the light, that he might know the means, and saith, “I tell thee truly, Nicodemus, that no man can enter the kingdom of God, except he be born of water and the Holy Ghost,” &c.

Nicodemus confessed yet again his ignorance, and desired to be further instructed, saying, “How may these things be?” Christ answered, “Art thou a great master and rabbi in Israel, and yet ignorant of these things?” Meaning, that great and horrible must the ignorance of the people be, when their doctors know not the truth. Nicodemus confessing his ignorance, and receiving reproach at Christ’s hand, because he took upon him to teach others, and yet was a fool himself in the religion of God, might for shame have left Christ and his gospel-yoke, because he now was made only a scholar, who before for his prudence and learning was the chief of the Jews, a pharisee of most notable estimation. But Christ straightway comforts him and all others, learned and unlearned, and saith, “No man ascendeth into heaven, except He that descended from heaven, the Son of man, which is in heaven.” As though Christ had said thus: “Discomfort not thyself, Nicodemus, that although thou art a great learned man, yet thou art ignorant of the way unto everlasting life. For I promise thee, there is no man, learned or unlearned, that can of his own wit and learning ascend unto the knowledge of life everlasting, but only He that descended from heaven, the Son of man, which is in heaven.”

Now Nicodemus, being destitute of all worldly and human prudence, and finding himself full unable by wit²⁵ or learning to follow the effect of Christ’s preaching concerning the means of salvation, depended only on the mouth of Christ, and disputed no more the matter. Then Christ showed him the way, and made a ladder for Nicodemus, wherewith he might ascend into heaven, and said, “This way thou mayest understand the thing I speak of as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of man be lifted up.” This history of the serpent was not unknown unto this learned man, albeit he considered not the mystery and sacrament that it figured. Now Christ teaches him in this place to understand the law; and because this oration of Christ written by St. John is obscure, and lacketh a declaration somewhat of the purpose that Christ would prove, and omits the other part of the comparison, after the manner of the Hebrews, I will

²⁵ His own understanding.

annex the type and figure, with the effect and mystery of the figure, and make the text plain.

“As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up.” Moses was commanded to lift up this serpent in the wilderness for this cause, that whosoever was stung or venomed with the poison of the serpents, if he looked on the serpent of brass, he might be healed. Here is the cause and effect declared, why the serpent was lifted up. Now to the words of Christ. “It so behoved the Son of man to be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Here is Nicodemus taught the way to everlasting life; and because he was a doctor of Moses’ law, Christ by the law made open the matter unto him, and brought him from the shadow unto the true body, and from the letter, unto the understanding of the letter: saying, “As those that by faith beheld the serpent were healed of the stings of the serpent, so such as behold me in faith hanging upon the cross, shall be healed from that sickness and sin, which the devil by the serpent infected mankind withal.”

Now let us repeat the text of Moses again, that we may truly understand our Saviour’s words: “Make thee a fiery serpent, and put it upon a pole, and raise it on high; and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he looked upon it he did live.” (Numb. xxi.)

In these words are declared three things:

First, why the serpent was set up: the cause—the people were stung by serpents.

Second, the effect—the health of the people.

Third, the use—that they should look upon him.

So John declares why Christ was made man, the use and the effect of his humanity,²⁶ in these words: “So God loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” The cause of his coming was the sin and sickness of man, bitten by the serpent in paradise. The effect of his coming was the healing of this sickness. The use of his coming was to believe that his death upon the cross was, and is, sufficient for the remission of sin, and to obtain eternal life.

Here is the justification of man livelily expressed, and how many things concur as necessary unto the remission of sin; and yet man is only justified by faith. There was the word of God, the preacher of the word Christ himself, the contrition of Nicodemus, the Holy Ghost that moved Nicodemus to come by night unto Christ, the consenting will of Nicodemus unto the words of Christ. Yet only was he delivered from sin by the faith that he had in the death of Christ: as Christ saith, “So must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting

²⁶ Human nature.

life.” This must be diligently marked. For as the fathers of the old church used the serpent, so must those of our church use the precious body of Christ. They looked upon him only with the eyes of faith, they kissed him not, they cast no water upon him, and so washed their eyes therewithal. They touched him not with their hands, they ate him not corporeally, nor really, nor substantially; yet by their belief they obtained health.

So Christ himself teaches us the use of his precious body: to believe and look upon the merits of his passion suffered upon the cross, and so to use his precious body against the sting of original and actual sin: not to eat his body transformed into the form of bread, or in the bread, with the bread, under the bread, behind the bread, or before the bread, corporeally or bodily, substantially or really, invisibly, or any such ways, as many men, to the great injury of Christ’s body, do teach.

But as the children of Israel only by faith did eat the body spiritually not yet born, so by faith do the christians eat him now, being ascended into heaven, and no otherwise; as Christ saith unto Nicodemus, “Whosoever believeth in Him should not perish.” Grant that we could as well eat his carnal body as we eat other meat, yet the eating thereof would nothing avail. And if the apostles had corporeally eaten him in his last supper, it had profited nothing; for he took not his body of the holy virgin to that use, to be eaten for the remission of sin, or to sanctify him that eats him, but to die for sin, and in that way to sanctify his church. As he saith himself, that only by his death the fruit of his incarnation should be dispersed into the world. But of this I will speak farther in the chapter that follows.

This example of Nicodemus declares, that neither the works that go before justification, neither those that follow justification, deserve remission of sin. Though sole faith excludes not other virtues from being present at the conversion of every sinner, yet sole, and only faith, excludes the merits of other virtues, and obtains solely remission of sin for Christ’s sake, herself alone; as Paul saith (Ephes. ii.), “By grace ye are saved, through faith, and that not of ourselves: it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any one should boast.” Where he plainly excludes the dignity of works, and affirms us to be reconciled by faith. So does John (chap. i.) attribute those two singular gifts unto Christ, grace and verity, saying, “The law is given by Moses, and grace and verity is wrought by Jesus Christ.” Here “Grace” signifies free remission of sin for the merits of Christ. “Verity” is the true knowledge of God, and the gifts of the Holy Ghost that follow the remission of sin. Therefore such as say they are not justified only by faith in the mercy of God through Christ, extenuate sin and God’s wrath against sin too much, and likewise spoil Christ of his honour, who is the only sacrifice that taketh away the sin of the world.

They that will justify themselves any other way than by faith, doubt always whether their sins are forgiven or not; and by reason of this doubt

they can never pray unto God aright. For he that doubteth whether God be his friend or not, prays but as a heathen, and saith his Paternoster without faith and godly motion of the heart. He that is persuaded by the gospel, though his own unworthiness frighten him from God, yet he beholds the Son of God, and believes that both he and his prayers are accepted in Christ: and thus accepted into grace, he will follow the life of a justified man, as Paul commands (Rom. viii. Col. iii.), and as all the scripture gives example. For it is no profit to say sole faith justifies, except godliness of life follow, as Paul saith, "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die." He that has obtained the remission of sin must diligently pray for the preservation of God's favour, as David gives example unto the whole church, saying, "Create a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free Spirit." (Psalm li.)

This prayer contains a wonderful doctrine, necessary to be daily repeated with great attention and heed. First, he desires to have a heart pure and clean, judging aright of God, to fear his justice against sin, and to believe steadfastly his promised mercy unto the penitent; and that this light and knowledge be not taken from him by the devil or vanity of the world, as daily we see such as have the knowledge of God's word live more worldly than he that knows not what God is. Then he prays to have the help of God to govern all his counsels, and all the motions of his heart, that they may be agreeable unto the law of God, full of faith, fear, and charity, and that for sin he be no more cast out from the face and favour of God. He prayeth to have strength in adversity; and to rejoice under the cross of affliction; not to murmur or grudge at any trouble, but to obey willingly the pleasure of God; not to leave him or mistrust his mercy, for any punishment, but to suffer what God pleases, as much as God pleases, and when God pleases.

These virtues man must practise and use, after he is justified, as well as to obtain remission of his sin, or else he is not justified at all: he is but a speaker of justification, and hath no justice²⁷ within him. As he makes Christ only his Saviour, so must he follow such as were of Christ's family; the patriarchs, prophets, and the apostles, in the life prescribed by Christ, as they did, or else they shall be no disciples of the prophets, who were the doers as well as the speakers of virtue, but rather the disciples of the poets, that only commended virtue and followed it not, as Ovid saith: "There is a god within us! we are warmed by his influences: he comes from the ethereal mansions." These holy words availed nothing!

Such as cannot understand the epistle of Paul to the Romans concerning justification, and what life is required of him that is justified, let him read diligently the first epistle of John, and then he shall right well perceive an-

²⁷ Righteousness.

other life is required of the justified man than the gossellers lead now-a-days, who have words without deeds, who slander the gospel, and promote it not; as it is to be seen, the more pity! in such men and such counties as the truth hath been preached a long time in. For the receiving of it unworthily, the Lord will, doubtless, take from them his word, and leave them unto their own lusts. For this is certain and too true. But let the whole gospel be preached unto the world as it ought to be: penitence and a virtuous life with faith, as God preached the gospel unto Adam in paradise, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Isaiah, saying, "Woe to the sinful generation." As John the Baptist, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." As Christ did, "Repent, and believe the gospel;" (Mark i.) and then of an hundred that come to the gospel, there would not come one. When they hear of faith alone, and the mercy of God to justify, and that they may eat all meats at all times with thanksgiving, they embrace that gospel with all joy and willing heart. And what is he that would not receive this gospel? The flesh itself; were there no immortal soul in it, would receive this gospel, because it promises aid, help, and consolation, without works; and when it hears that it may as well eat a pasty of venison upon the Friday as a herring, who is he that would not be such a gosseller? But now speak of the other part of the gospel, as Paul teaches to the Romans, (chap. viii.) "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die;" and as he prescribes the life of a justified man in the same epistle. (chap. xii. xiii. xiv. xv. xvi.) As Christ. (Matt. x.) As Peter. (2 Peter.) He that is justified, let him study those canons to live by.

St. Paul wrote to a justified church of the Corinthians, and to such as had received the knowledge of the gospel, and saith, "If any that is called a brother, be a whoremonger or covetous, or a worshipper of idols, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with such an one eat not." (1 Cor. v.) This part of the gospel is not so pleasant as the other; therefore men take the first liberty, and neglect the fruits that should follow the gospel, and think themselves to be rich in the gospel, as the church of the Laodiceans judged of themselves, (Rev. iii.) when they indeed are miserable, and wretched, poor, and naked of all godliness. Paul declares (Rom. viii.) what it is to be justified, and to be in Christ, to walk after the Spirit; he saith, "There is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who walk after the Spirit."

For a conclusion, justification is a free remission of sin, and acceptance into the favour of God, for Christ's merits: which remission of sin must be followed necessarily by amendment of life, or else we receive the grace of God in vain. (2 Cor. vi. Rom. viii. 2 Peter i.)

CHAPTER VIII.

OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

FROM this infallible truth, "Only the death of Christ is the sacrifice for the expiation of sin," may be necessarily taught the right and true use of the Lord's Supper, which men call the mass.

First, it is manifest that it is not a sacrifice for sin, as men teach, contrary unto the word of God, that saith, "Christ, by one sacrifice, made perfect all things;" (Heb. vii. viii. ix. x.) and, as John saith, "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from sins:" and there remaineth no more after it, as Paul saith, "Where is remission of sins, there is no more sacrifice for sin;" and, to take away all doubt that remission of sin cannot be obtained for the merits of the mass, Paul saith plainly, that without blood-shedding no sacrifice can merit remission of sin.

Although Christ now sitteth at the right hand of God and prayed] for his church, and likewise offers the prayers and complaints of us that believe, yet it is only for the merits of his death that we obtain the mercy of God's promise; in which he sustained such pain, that the remembrance thereof, and the greatness of God's wrath against sin, put his precious body and soul into such an agony and fear, that his passion of sorrow surmounted the passion of all men, that ever travailed or were burdened with the weight of God's insufferable wrath against man for sin; insomuch that he wept not only tears of blood, but pain forced them to descend so abundantly, that they trickled upon the ground. Sore troubled and overcome with sorrow was David (Psalm vi.) when he washed his bed with tears for sin, but it was joy and mirth, if his pains be compared to these dolours of Christ; they wanted no augmentation. This sacrifice was killed by a little and a little; from one place of judgment sent unto another; and always from the flames into the ardent coals. His death upon the cross so differed, that although he was very God, and the dearly beloved Son of the Father, his abjection was so contemptible and vile, that he cried out as a man most destitute of God's favour and love, and said, "My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?" And until such time as he offered his most holy soul unto the Father, and his blessed side was pierced with the spear, his pains and sorrows increased. Lo! thus was the manner to offer Christ for sin! after this sort and cruel handling of Christ was the wrath of God appeased.

If they sacrifice Christ in the mass, let them hang him as tyrants again upon the cross, and thrust a spear into his blessed heart, that they may shed his blood; for without shedding of blood is no remission. The scrip-

ture condemneth this abuse of the Lord's Supper, which is the conculcation²⁸ of his precious blood.

As concerning the use of this sacrament and all other rites and ceremonies that are godly, they should *be* so kept and used in the church, as they were delivered unto us by the high Bishop, Christ, the author of all sacraments. For this is true, that he most godlily, most religiously, and most perfectly instituted and celebrated the Supper, and no otherwise than the evangelist records. The best manner and most godly way to celebrate this Supper, is to preach the death of Christ unto the church, and the redemption of man, as Christ did at his Supper, and there to have common prayers, as Christ prayed with his disciples; then to repeat the last words of the Supper, and with the same to break the bread, and distribute the wine to the whole church: then, giving thanks to God, depart in peace.

Those ceremonies that God instituted not, but which repugn²⁹ God's institution, are not necessary, but rather in any case ought to be left, because they abrogate the institution of Christ. It seems sufficient unto me, if the church do as Christ commanded it to do. St. Paul wrote his epistle to the Corinthians after the ascension of Christ at least eighteen years, and said he would deliver them nothing but that which he had received of the Lord, and wrote concerning the use of the Supper, as Matthew, Mark, and Luke wrote.

This is, therefore, an ungodly disputation that the papists contend about, the change and alteration of the bread, and also a false and pernicious doctrine, that teaches the corporeal presence of Christ, both God and man, in the bread, for although Christ said of the bread, "This is my body," it is well known that he purposed to institute a sacrament, therefore he spoke of a sacrament sacramentally. To speak sacramentally is to give the name of the thing to the sign; and yet so, notwithstanding, that the nature and substance of the sign remains, and is not turned into the thing that it verifies. Further the verity of the scripture, and the verity of christian faith, will not suffer us to judge and believe that Christ's body, invisible or visible, is upon the earth. (Acts i. Luke xxiv. Mark xvi. Acts iii.)

If we likewise consider the other places of the scripture, (John vi. xvi. xvii.) we shall find that Christ would not, and meant not, to institute any corporeal presence of his body, but a remembrance of his body slain, resuscitated, ascended into heaven, and from thence to come unto judgment. True it is, that the body is eaten, and the blood drunken, but not corporeally. In faith and spirit it is *eaten*; and by that sacrament the promise of God is sealed and confirmed in us, the corporeal body remaining in heaven.

²⁸ Treading under foot.

²⁹ Oppose.

In the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew, Christ, giving his church warning of this heresy to come by the preaching of false prophets, said, “They will say, Lo! here is Christ, lo! there is Christ!” believe them not; for as the lightning cometh from the east into the west, so shall the coming of the Son of man be;” meaning by these words, that his body is not a fantastical nor invisible body, as those teach that say his corporeal body is corporeally given in the bread, with the bread, and under the bread invisible. Against this error I will set the word of God, and declare the truth thereby, that they have but an imagination or idea of Christ’s body, and not the natural and corporeal body.

And the first reason is this: Christ bade his disciples that they should not believe him that should say, “Lo! here is Christ!” or, “There is Christ!” He spake of his body, doubtless, and human nature: for he commandeth us to believe that his Godhead is everywhere, as David saith; and as he saith, “My Father and I are one.” Likewise he told them in plain words, (Matt. the last chapter) that he would be with them unto the end of the world. Christ having but two natures, one divine, and the other human, by these express words now declares himself to be present with the one and absent with the other. These things being marked, I put this matter in short to be judged of every humble and charitably-spirited man, who judges aright of the body of Christ; those that say he is not bodily in the sacrament; or those that say he is bodily and corporeally there. If he be there corporeally and bodily, as they say, why should I not believe these words, “Lo, here! lo, there!” and say, Christ lieth that said, “Believe them not that say, Lo! here is my body,’ or There is my body?” “Christ having good experience of the devil’s subtlety—that he would intoxicate the wit of man with more subtle reasons than the simple heart could eschew, prepared of his mercy a means to preserve the faith of the simple: and against the sophistical and crafty reason of the devil, God calleth man to the judgment of his senses, and saith, “Reason what they will of my body, and say it is here or there substantially, bodily, corporeally, believe them not. Trust to thine eyes; for as the lightning sensibly cometh from the east into the west, so shall the coming of the Son of man be.” How so? Turned into fire? No, not so, visibly and sensibly. God wist right well, when he called man from reason to the judgment of his senses, what doctors and doctrine should follow respecting his sensible body. One to change a cake into his body,³⁰ and another to teach, though the cake be not his body, yet is his body present corporeally, substantially, really, bodily; the same body that hanged upon the cross, and is given by hand, with the bread, under the bread, and in the bread, yet insensible.³¹

³⁰ Transubstantiation.

³¹ Consubstantiation.

Grant that all their glosses and interpretations were true, as they are most false; and say, as they would have it, that the very true humanity, and Christ in the true shape and form of a man, as he is, with all qualities and quantities, except sin and mortality, are in the bread, under the bread, or with the bread, after the bread, or before the bread; and say that there is present, in the priest's hand, as great a body, and as natural a man, as the priest or minister is himself, even "the Word of God made man," so they would have it; yet they shall never deceive a godly christian with their glosses: for he will trust unto the simplicity of God's word that saith, "Believe them not, till they show my body unto the senses, like as the lightning."

The defenders of this doctrine, because they are not able to answer unto such as write and preach the truth, challenge and attribute unto themselves the only knowledge of truth, and say their adversaries are not learned, or cannot understand them. Grant there were none learned that defend this truth, as there are, have been, and ever, till the world's end, shall be, yet will the truth defend itself; and because no man should, in this matter, leave the truth, though many better learned than he judge fantastically of a true body, Christ would have his simple disciple to judge sensibly of his natural body, and let this sophistication pass; and saith his body shall be as sensible as the lightning in the air, and not invisible with a piece of bread: though that most religious sacrament ought to be most godly used for the mystery that it contains, and likewise the promise of grace that it confirms.

They say this place makes not against the presence of Christ's body in the sacrament, but against such as should preach, in the latter days, false doctrine against Christ's doctrine, and make another Christ. True it is, he speaks of such as should preach false doctrine; but what should be that false doctrine that could be overcome with these words, "Believe them not; for as the lightning cometh from the east unto the west, so shall the coming of the Son of man be." What heresy does any man read in the histories were vanquished by these words? Not that of 'Paul of Samosata, which was condemned in the council of Nice; not that of Nestorius, which denied two natures to be united in Christ; nor that of Eutyches, which said one nature was converted into the other; nor any of the heresies that the devil moved against the essence and' divine majesty of God, as Marcion and the Manichees, who said there were two gods, and both eternal, the one good and the other evil, the one always repugnant to the other: neither yet the heresy of Valentinian, who said there were innumerable gods; but of this false doctrine Christ spake, and of such as would, after his corporeal ascension into heaven, yet preach in the latter days unto the people, that his body should be in the earth. And, therefore, he gave them these words, "Believe them not; for as the lightning cometh from the east unto the west, so shall the coming of the Son of man be."

Christ spake of those that should deceive the people in the time between his ascension and coming to judgment. For in the end of the world there shall be no need to bid us beware, for all false preachers shall be damned when his glorious body shall appear. He that believes that the natural body of Christ can be here any way corporeally before that time, neglects the commandment of Christ, "Believe them not;" (Matt. xxiv.) and, likewise, he forgets his creed, "He sitteth at the right hand of the Father, thence he shall come," &c. And Luke saith plainly, that as visibly as he ascended, so shall he descend at the latter day, and not before, as he saith. (Acts iii.) Because they defend their opinion by the wrong interpretation of the words in the articles of our faith, I will answer to one or two objections that they make.

First, they say that this word "heaven," in the article of our faith, "he ascended into heaven," signifies no certain and determinate place, but, generally, all the world, heaven, earth, and hell, wheresoever God's power is manifested; and so say, that the right hand of God betokens no place, but the whole power of God. As when I say, "He sitteth at the right hand of God," it is as much as to say, that he is in his humanity everywhere, as his divinity is.

Unto the first, this I answer, that heaven in no place of the scripture is so taken, though it signify sometimes all the celestial bodies above; heaven ethereal, and then it signifies the air, as: (Psa. cxlviii.) "Ye waters, that be above the heavens, praise the name of the Lord;" and sometimes it signifies only the upper place of creatures, as in the same Psalm, "Praise him, ye heavens of heavens, praise him in the heights." Into these superior heavens Christ ascended, as the manner of his ascension declares. (Luke xxiv. Acts i.) He took his disciples with him into the mount of Olivet, and bade them there farewell. He departed bodily from them, as their eyes bore them record; and a cloud received his body, that it could no more be seen: yet, what became of this body after it passed their sight? That no question afterward should be, where this body was gone to, St. Luke saith, "He was taken into heaven." This mutation of place, to ascend from the earth, only his human nature suffered; concerning his godhead, it is everywhere, and can neither ascend nor descend.

Such as say that heaven and the right hand of God are in the articles of our faith taken for God's power and might, which is everywhere, they do wrong to the scripture, and unto the articles of our faith. They make a confusion of the scripture, and leave nothing certain. They darken the simple and plain verity thereof with intolerable sophisms. They make heaven hell, and hell heaven, turn upside down and pervert the order of God. If the heaven and God's right hand, whither our Saviour's body is ascended, be everywhere, and note no certain place, as these uncertain men teach, then I will believe no ascension. What needs it? seeing Christ's body is every-

where with his godhead. I will interpret this article of my creed thus: “Christ ascended to the right hand of the Father; the right hand of the Father is everywhere; therefore, Christ ascended to everywhere.” See what erroneous doctrine follows their imaginations!

As concerning the right hand of God, it is taken sometimes for God himself and his omnipotent power. (Psa. cxviii.) “The right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly. The right hand of the Lord hath exalted me,” Thus his right hand, being taken for his power, it is everywhere. But it is not so taken, when we say Christ sitteth at the right hand of God, as Mark saith, chapter xvi. and as Stephen said, Acts vii. “I see Jesus standing at the right hand of God.” But it signifies a certain place of joy, where the souls of the blessed saints rest. Thither hath God translated the body of Christ, to be in as much joy, as it was in contempt here in the earth, as Paul saith. (Phil. ii.) Sitting thus at the right hand of God, his body is as true man as it was upon the earth, and in length, breadth, and weight, as physical, mathematical, and natural a body, as it was when hanging upon the cross.

In the changing of mortal qualities the humanity of Christ is neither destroyed nor changed into his deity; but as truly as his godhead, concerning his essence, cannot be seen, so his body, wheresoever it be, is subject unto the judgment of the senses. And as he that makes a house first conceives a true form in his imagination, and yet this imagination or conceit of the mind is not materially the house; so, such as dream and imagine a certain fantasy, and reduce the form and figure of a true body into their imagination, such is not a true body, but a conceit or imagination of a body, as those men have who say Christ is in the bread and with the bread, yet it occupies no place, nor is sensible. This is a wonderful doctrine, to make that glorious body of Christ to be *a* true body, and yet it lacketh all the qualities and quantities of a body. If Christ could have such a dreaming body as they speak of, yet may I not believe it is in the sacrament corporeally, because Christ saith, “Believe it not.”

And where they would better the matter with these words, that Christ in the time of his being upon the earth did many things above the nature of a body, and carried his body sometimes invisibly, and entered the house of the disciples, the gates being shut; they prove nothing, only they trouble the simple conscience, and establish such as are more addicted unto the writing of man than unto the writing of God, in their error. Peter walked upon the water, yet was very man nothing the less; so it pleased. God to use his creatures to his glory. Christ’s body was nothing changed, although sometimes, to avoid being stoned, he conveyed himself out of the way. Though his disciples knew not how he entered, the doors being shut, it is possible enough that he opened the doors, and yet they perceived it not: men’s eyes are obedient unto the Creator, that they may see one thing, and yet not another. The scripture so teaches. Those evil men that would have

done villainy unto the angels in Lot's house, (Gen. xix.) were made so blind, they could not find the next door to them; yet Lot's house still abode in one place. The same may you read, (2 Kings vi.) how God made the Assyrian host blind, so that Elisha led the whole army into the city of Samaria. Balaam saw to beat his ass, and yet could not see the angel whom the ass saw, till he was reprehended by the angel. (Numb. xxii.) Here may you see that those reasons prove not that Christ's body is in the sacrament, because sometimes he would not be seen of his enemies.

This is our belief, that Christ is very man, and like unto his brothers. (Heb. ii.) Therefore, wheresoever his body be, it must have the qualities and quantities of a true man. If his body be corporeally in the sacrament, and yet without all properties of a true body, this text is false, "He was found in fashion as a man;" likewise this, "was like unto his brethren in all things." They grant that only the spirit of man eats the body of Christ in the sacrament; then either the spirit of man is turned into a corporeal substance, or else the body of Christ loses his corporeal substance, and is become a spirit. For it is not possible for the spirit of man to eat corporeally a corporeal body, no more than he that studies the scripture, and commends the contents of the Bible to his memory, corporeally eats the book; but by the help of God's Spirit and his own diligence he eats the effect, marrow, and doctrine of the Bible. And in case it were corporeally and substantially with paper and ink, in the bottom of the sea, yet the learned man may comfort himself, and teach the mariners in the ship the contents thereof, though the corporeal Bible be drowned. So in the sacrament the Christian heart, that is instructed in the law of God, and knoweth the right use of the sacraments by the Holy Ghost, and a firm faith that he hath in the merits of Christ's body and soul, which is ascended corporeally into heaven, may in spirit receive the effect, marrow, sweetness, and advantage of Christ's precious body, though it never descendeth corporeally. Thus do faith and the scripture compel the church to believe.

When they say it is in the sacrament, and yet moves not from the right hand of God, I believe not their saying, but require a proof thereof. Christ hath not so great a body to fill heaven and earth corporeally; he is like unto his brethren; he is perfect God and perfect man. They make him to be there, and yet to occupy no place, then it is no body; for a true body, physical and mathematical, as Christ's body is, cannot be, except it occupy a place. They say, I must believe, and say with the virgin, "Behold the Lord's handmaid," I may not seek to know the means how. Well, let them do as much to me in this matter as was done unto the virgin Mary, and I am content. She could not comprehend how Christ was made man in her womb; yet the effect and corporeal nativity of Christ ascertained both her reason and senses, that she had borne a true body. It shall suffice me if they make demonstration unto my senses, and warrant my reason, that they have present a corporeal body;

how it cometh, and by what means, I leave that unto God. But until such time as they show me that glorious and perfect man's body of Christ, as it was shown unto the blessed virgin, their saying, "Believe, believe," shall not come into my belief; for Christ saith, "Believe it not."

Of Christ's words, (Mark xiii.) "The moment of the last time no man knoweth, neither the Son of God," inasmuch as he is man, I gather this argument. If it be denied to Christ concerning his manhood to know the last day, much more to be everywhere, or to be in divers places at one time, is denied to his humanity. For it is more impossible and wonderful to be everywhere, than to know many things. I know the geographer can conceive and comprehend all the world in his head, but to be in all places, where his thoughts and spirit are occupied, it is impossible.

Further, Christ's body has not lost its corporeal qualities, but wheresoever he is corporeally, there is he with all the qualities of a body, and not without qualities, as these dreamers imagine. I will not judge that my Saviour who died for the sin of the world has a body in heaven sensibly with all qualities of a true man, and in the sacrament to be without all qualities and quantities of a true body; but I abhor and detest, with the scripture, this opinion as a heresy so little differing from Marcion's, that I can scarce put diversity.

As corporeally the corporeal and substantial body of all England is in the head of him who describes by map or chart the whole realm, in Italy or elsewhere; so corporeally is the body of Christ in the heart of the christian. The conceit, imagination, or form conceived of England is not the body, matter, nor substance itself of England; no more is the spiritual conceit of Christ's body the corporeal body itself. Though Avicene and Averroes³² would prove such a conclusion, yet the faith of our religion will not suffer a fantastical imagination to be a true substance.

To say that Christ's very natural body is in the earth, and yet invisible, is to destroy the body and not to honour the body. Aristotle (*5 Metaphysicorum, cap. xxii.*) defines what invisible' is: invisible (saith he) is that which has no colour at all. To take this from Christ's body, that it is truly in the sacrament corporeally, and yet invisible, is to say, Christ hath lost all the colour, shape, and form of his humanity. But what should Aristotle do in this our faith? The scripture teaches what we should believe; he ascended into heaven, sitteth at the right hand of God the Father almighty, from *thence* he shall come to judge the quick and the dead, (Acts i. Mark xvi. Luke xxiv.) and he has left us a sacrament of his blessed body, which we are bound to use religiously and many times, in order to exercise and estab-

³² Avicenna, who is called the prince of Arabian philosophers and physiciaos, lived in the eleventh century. His works were highly popular, even in the European schools of philosophy. Averroes was also a celebrated Arabian philosopher, who by many was considered equal to Aristotle, and wrote commentaries upon his works. He lived in the twelfth century.

lish our faith; and he, being absent corporeally, communicates by faith in spirit that most precious body and the merits of the same; and would to God people would use it with more reverence and more awe, as the scripture teaches, with true amendment of life and firm faith.

I put out a book in September last past, dedicated to my lord of Winchester,³³ wherein I have declared all my faith concerning this blessed and holy sacrament; therefore, I will pass to the other office of Christ's priesthood.

³³ Bishop Gardiner.

CHAPTER IX.

OF CHRIST'S OFFICE OF SANCTIFYING THOSE THAT BELIEVE IN HIM.

THE fourth office of Christ is to consecrate and sanctify those that believe in him. He is not only holy himself, but makes others holy also; as he saith, (John xvii.) "For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they may also be sanctified by the truth."

This sanctification is none other than a true knowledge of God in Christ by the gospel, that teaches us how unclean we are by the sin of Adam, and how that we are cleansed 'by Christ; for whose sake the Father of heaven not only remits the sins wrought willingly against the word of God, but also the imperfection and natural concupiscence which remains in every man, as long as the nature of man is mortal. How the Father sanctifies his people the prayer of Christ showeth: (John xvii.) "Sanctify them by thy truth," sanctify them by thy word, cleanse their heart, teach them, hallow them, make them fit for thy kingdom. Wherewith? With thy word, which is everlasting verity.

The means to sanctify are the word of God, the Holy Ghost, and faith that receives the word of our redemption.. So Peter says, (Act: xv.) "Our hearts are purified by faith." Here is the cause expressed whereby we accept' our sanctification; by faith, saith St. Peter. St. Paul. (1 Cor. vi.) shows for whose sake, and wherefore we are sanctified. "Ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified through the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." We are sanctified for the merits of Jesus Christ, by the operation of the Holy Ghost.

This is to be always marked, that when Christ had prayed his Father to sanctify his church by his word and by his Holy Spirit, and desired him to preserve it from ill for his mercy's sake, he added the price—the merits, and just deserving of God's grace, and said, "I sanctify myself for them, to the end that they may be sanctified by the truth." He sanctified himself for the church, when he died for the detestable uncleanness and filthiness thereof, more offensive and filthy than ever was the abhorred and leprous body of Lazarus. (Luke xvi.) As though *he* had said, "Forasmuch as I offer and submit myself unto the bitter and cruel pain of the cross for the church, thou must, most holy Father, sanctify them and accept them as sanctified: nourish them, love them, and defend them, for the price and satisfaction of my death."

What a consolation is this for every troubled conscience to understand! Although it be unworthy of remission of sin, considering the greatness thereof, yet for the prayer of Christ he shall not be a castaway, so that he

believe, as Christ said. He prayed not only for his apostles, but also for as many as should believe his word till the world's end. As many as will be gossellers, as they love the gospel and their own salvation, let them not dally and play with it, as if God could be trifled with; but let them think upon the most vile and tyrannous death of him, who alone was able to cleanse us from sin, and from hence beware of sin. It suffices, as Paul saith, that "before we knew the truth, we lived wantonly." (1 Cor. vi.)

CHAPTER X

BY THIS VERITY AND TRUTH, THAT “THE GOSPEL TEACHES WE ARE ONLY TO BE SANCTIFIED IN THE BLOOD OF CHRIST,” IS CONFUTED THE BLASPHEMOUS PRIDE OF THE BISHOP OF ROME.

THE bishop of Rome names himself “the most holy father,” and takes upon him to sanctify all other men of the earth; as God’s vicar and lieutenant, to absolve from guilt and punishment, to pull out of hell and send to, heaven with his pardons, masses, and other abominations; whereas Christ only and solely doth sanctify, as it appears in John xvii. Likewise, by the title that Pilate gave him, hanging upon the cross, with these words, “Jesus of Nazareth, king, of the Jews.” This title declareth him to be both Messiah, Saviour, and Nazar, the Protector and Sanctifier of his church, as Matthew saith, (chap. ii.) “He shall be called a Nazarene.”

This office of Christ abrogates all other things that man’s constitution’s attribute any holiness unto, as bewitched water, candles, vows, or any such heathen superstition. For only Christ sanctifies, and all holiness we must attribute unto him, as John said, (chap. i.) “Behold the Lamb of God, as to say destined and appointed by God to take away the sin of the world,” and to sanctify his church.

Although baptism is a sacrament to be received and honourably used of all men, yet it sanctifies no man. And such as attribute the remission of sins unto the external sign, do offend. John (Matt. iii.) preached penitence in the desert and remission of sin in Christ. Such as confessed their faults he marked and declared’ them to be of Christ’s church. So that external baptism was but an inauguration or external consecration of those that first believed and were cleansed of their sin, as he declares himself in the same place: “I,” saith he, “baptize with water;” as though he said, “My baptism makes no man the better, inwardly it changes no man; but I call and preach to the outward ear, I exhort unto repentance. And such as say they do repent, and would change their old sinful life, I wash with water. He that inwardly cleanses is stronger than I. His grace alone purifies the soul. I baptize into repentance, that is to say, into a new life.”

This new life comes not until such time as Christ is known and received. Now, to put on Christ, is to live a new life. Such as are baptized must remember that repentance and faith precede this external sign, and in Christ the purgation was inwardly obtained before the external sign was given. So that there are two kinds of baptism, and both necessary. The one interior, which is the cleansing of the heart, the drawing of the Father, the operation

of the Holy Ghost: and this baptism is in man, when he believes and trusts that Christ is the only author of his salvation.

Thus the infants are examined concerning repentance and faith, before they are baptized with water; at the contemplation of the which faith God cleanses the soul. Then is the exterior sign added, not to cleanse the heart, but to confirm, manifest, and open unto the world, that this child is God's.

And, likewise, baptism with the repetition of the words is a true sacrament and sign, that the baptized creature should die from sin all his life, as Paul writes. (Rom. vi.) Likewise, no man should condemn or neglect this exterior sign, for the commandment's sake; though it have no power to cleanse from sin, yet it confirms the cleansing of sin, and the act of itself pleases God, because the receivers thereof obey the will of his commandment.

Like, as the king's majesty that now is, immediately after the death of his father was the true and legitimate king of England, right heir unto the crown; and received his coronation, not to make himself thereby king, but to manifest that the kingdom appertained unto him before. He took the crown to confirm his right and title. Had all England said nay, and by force, contrary unto God's laws and man's laws with an exterior ceremony and pomp, crowned any other man, he would have been an adulterous and wrong king, with all his solemnities and coronation. Though this ceremony confirm and manifest a king in his kingdom, yet it makes not a king, but the laws of God and of the land that give by succession the right of the kingdom to the old king's first heir male in England and other realms. And the babe in the cradle has as good a right and claim, and is as true a king, in his cradle uncrowned, as his father was, though he reigned a crowned king forty years. And this right of the babe should be defended and manifested, not only by the ceremony of coronation, but with all obedience and true subjection.

So it is in the church of Christ: man is made the brother of Christ, and heir of eternal life, by God's sole mercy received by faith, before he receive any ceremony to confirm and manifest openly his right and title. He saith, he believeth in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and believeth (he saith) the remission of sin; he doth not only deny the devil, the world, and sin, but saith, he will forsake him for ever, and serve his master, the Lord of virtue, King of heaven and earth. Thus assured of God, and cleansed from sin in Christ, he hath the livery of God given unto him, baptism, which no christian should neglect, and yet not attribute his sanctification unto the external sign. As the king's majesty may not attribute his right unto the crown, but unto God and unto his father. God who has not only given him grace to be born into the world, but also to govern as a king in the world, whose right and title the crown confirms and shows the same unto all the world. Whereas, this right by God and natural succession precedes the cor-

onation—the ceremony avails nothing. A traitor may receive the crown, and yet nothing the more be true king. So a hypocrite and infidel may receive the external sign of baptism, and yet be no christian man any the more, as Simon Magus and others.

Sacraments must be used holily, and yet not to have the office of Christ added unto them. Solely it is his office to sanctify and purge from sin. I take nothing from the sacraments, but honour them, and extol them in all things, as they are worthy; howbeit, not too much. I call a sacrament, a ceremony instituted in the law of God to this end, that it should be a testimony of God's promise unto all such as believe, and a sign of God's good will and favour towards us. As Paul saith, that Abraham received a testimony, by which God testified that he was received into grace. (Rom. iv.) And as the promise of God, the remission of sin is received by faith, so must these sacraments, that are signs, tokens, and testimonies of the promise, be received in faith. Thus by Christ we are sanctified only, and as Peter saith, "The chosen people, a princely priesthood, a holy people, and peculiar nation, to declare the power of him that hath called us from the darkness of error and sin into his wonderful light." These words declare the manner how we are sanctified, and what our office is after we are sanctified; to preach the power of him that hath called us from the darkness of sin; as it is written, (Isa. xliii.) "This people have I formed for myself, they shall show forth my praise;" and likewise in chapter lxvi. The prophets and apostles do use many times this word, "*annunciare*," for "*laudare*," and "*gratias agere*"³⁴ So Paul, (1 Cor. xi.). "Ye shall show the death of the Lord until he come;" that is, ye shall celebrate the death of Christ with all praises and giving of thanks.

Such as are sanctified by Christ must live an honest and holy life, or else their sanctification avails not. As God forsook the children of Israel for sin, so will he forsake us. They were elected to be his people with this condition, "If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people." (Exod. xix.) He that favoured not the Israelites, but took cruel vengeance, upon them, because they walked not in their vocation, will do, and doth daily, the same unto us. (Rom. xi.) Therefore one of these two we must needs do, that say we are justified and sanctified in Christ; either from the bottom of our hearts we must amend, or else be eternally lost, with all our spiritual knowledge. For the axe is put to the root of the tree. So far has the malice of man proceeded, that the wrath of God can be no longer deferred. A great time has the gospel been known of many men, yet the life of the gospel is as new to seek as though it were but now begun.

³⁴ "Show forth," for "praise and give thanks."

Therefore, we see how God begins again to permit the darkness of error to overwhelm the world. Such blindness ever follows the contempt of God's word, and the unthankful receiving thereof. Therefore, as we are sanctified by Christ, so let us bear him and sanctify him in our breasts, or else we perish. (Rom. vi.) For faith intends and always makes haste unto this port, as Paul saith, (Tit. ii.) "that we should live soberly, righteously, and godly."

Men know not what the gospel is. They read it as they read "Sir Bevis of Southampton," or "The deeds of Robin Hood."³⁵ If they may know what the scripture saith, they judge it sufficient; whereas it is quite the contrary. Men should not only read the scripture to be wiser, but to be better. We bear the name of Christ, and confess him. We must, therefore, be those persons in whose life; the stamps of Christ must appear, or else we blaspheme our master, whose name we bear. (Rom. vi. xiii.) Because after baptism we should live a modest and temperate life, Christ departed into the desert, and fasted, making this answer unto the devil: "Man liveth not by bread alone." Man is not created to the foolish pleasures of the world, but to regard what the will of God requireth.

They deceive themselves that trust to faith, where honesty of life follows not. Faith is mistress in the soul of the christian, and entertains no such servants as are adulterers, thieves, slanderers, drunkards, covetous persons, swearers, ill and unoccupied ravengers of the meat of the poor; but charity, peace, temperance, prayer, liberality, and avoiding all occasion of ill. (2 Pet. i. James ii. 1 Cor xii.)

³⁵ Two popular story books

CHAPTER XI.

OF CHRIST AS A KING.

As the scripture teaches that Christ is the very true priest and bishop of the church, who prays for the church, satisfies the wrath of God for the sins of the church, and who alone sanctifies the church; so it proves Christ to be the King, Emperor, and Protector of the church, and that by the office and property of a king who defends his subjects, not only by his godly laws, but also by force and civil resistance, as the enemies of his commonwealth minister occasion. By these two means every commonwealth is preserved, as the scripture teaches everywhere.

Pharaoh, who desired that the church of God and commonwealth of the Israelites should be destroyed, was lost with all his army in the sea. The idolaters, that would make the commonwealth of Christ's church one with the commonwealth of Egypt, were destroyed.

Such as rebelled, as Korah and the Reubenites, against the governors of God's church, Moses and Aaron, were destroyed with the artillery of God's wrath. And to set his commonwealth in due order, God destroyed all the princes and nations that possessed the land of Canaan.

In the latter days, when the king of this commonwealth should be born, the angel declared unto the blessed virgin of what puissance and power this kingdom of Christ should be; "He shall *reign* over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end." (Luke i.) Although now the commonwealth of the church has no certain place appointed where it shall remain, as was appointed in the old law, yet we are certain that this kingdom of Christ remains upon the earth, and shall do so, till the earth is burned. (Matt. xvi. xxviii. 1 Cor. xv.) Howbeit, as Christ won and obtained this kingdom in the latter days without shield or spear, so doth he preserve it with his Holy Spirit, and not with carnal weapons. As Christ said unto Pilate, (John xviii.) "*My kingdom is not of this world;*" meaning, that he would not reign in this world, as a prince of this world, with pomp and pride; but defend his people with his Holy Spirit, so that neither the devil nor the world should break their patience, though many afflictions and sorrows should fight against them for the truth's sake. Christ did not deny himself to be the King of the world before Pilate, but asserted, that he meant not to reign in a worldly manner, to the hindrance and defacing of the emperor's dignity and title, as the Jews falsely accused him. So Cyril (lib. xii. cap. x.) on John saith: and so is the mind of St. Augustin on the same place.

This kingdom is spiritual. Christ sitting at the right hand of God the Father prays for us, gives us remission of sin, and the Holy Ghost, to fight and

overcome the world. He has left here in the church, his gospel as the only weapon to fight with for the time of this mortal life. See John xvii. where he defines life everlasting to be the knowledge of God. So does Paul (Rom. viii.) prove this kingdom to be spiritual; but concerning the body, it appears, that Christ defends not his people, because they live in such contempt and adversity; but hereafter it shall appear, as Paul saith (Col. iii.); and John, (1 John iii.) “Now we are sons of God, but it doth not yet appear, what we shall be.”

This kingdom shall be ever persecuted till the world’s end, (Psalm ii. lxxi. cxviii.) Isaiah the prophet described the church of this present life, saying, “The Lord shall give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction; yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner.” (Is. xxx.) Thus the church shall remain, but always in affliction. I know such as favour not the truth, will misinterpret my words, that I condemn all princes and kings, as enemies of the gospel, because they peaceably enjoy their kingdoms. So I wish them always to do, with hearty prayer to the glory of God. But of this one thing I will assure every prince of the world: the more sincere he is in the cause of God, the more shall be his cross.

I would refer unto the king’s majesty, that is dead, who at the first brunt, as soon as he took God’s cause in hand, that leopard and dragon of Rome did not only solicit the whole foreign world against him, but also he suffered such an ungodly and detestable insurrection of his popish subjects, and such other crosses also, that never would have been moved, had he not disquieted the beast of her rest, that sat above his majesty, and above God also, in his own realm.

They are flatterers of princes that say every thing may be ruled with ease: they consider not what an enemy of God’s order the devil is, that would not only have the gospel of truth oppressed, but also every prince who studies the preferment and setting forth of God’s word. The devil never ceases to molest and disquiet every godly polity and commonwealth. Were there no scriptural divine to detect the art of the devil, Aristotle, in the fifth book of his Politics, sufficiently manifests the devil’s enmity against all commonwealths.

Further, the nature of man is infirm, and very unable to sustain the office of any vocation, be it political, ecclesiastical, or domestic, without a singular aid of God. We see by Saul that, noble man, who, in the beginning of his reign, did many noble acts, yet the devil got the victory in *the* end. His successor David was likewise so entangled in the devices of the devil, that without much pain he could not extricate himself from the wicked snare, which the devil once brought him into. Howbeit, God defended both him and his kingdom, so that not only the preachers, but also he himself, taught the word of God unto the people, as he had promised. (Psalm vi. xl.)

God preserves his ministers above human reason, as he did Jacob from the hands of Esau, David from Saul, Daniel from the lions, and Paul in the ship, where was no human hope of salvation at all, but only the protection of God. These examples declare, that he defends his people against all the world by his mighty power.

Likewise he governs his church with his own laws only, and would his subjects should know him, honour him, and obey him, as he hath commanded in his law. Paul expresses this law, (Rom. i.) “The gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.” And Mark says, “Preach the gospel to every creature.” (Mark xvi.) The only law, whereunto this congregation is bound, is the gospel, as Christ saith, (John xiv.) “The Holy Spirit shall teach you all things, and bring to your memory all things which I have said unto you.” Here Christ binds the apostles and all the church unto the things he had taught them.

This commonwealth of the true church is known by these two marks; the pure preaching of the gospel, and the right use of the sacraments. Thus Paul proves, (Eph. ii.) that the church is bound unto the word of God: “Upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets are ye built.” Likewise (Isa. lix.) My Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed for ever.”

Of the right use of sacraments it is taught, 1 Cor. xi. Mark xvi. Luke xxiv. and Matt. xxviii. Those who teach people to know the church by these signs, the traditions of men, and the succession of bishops, teach wrong. Those two false opinions have given unto the succession of bishops power to interpret the scripture, and power to make such laws in the church as it pleased them. There is no man that has power to interpret the scripture. God, for the preservation of his church, gives unto certain persons the gift and knowledge to open the scripture: but that gift is not a power bound to any order, or succession of bishops, or title of dignity. The princes of the earth give always such power of civil justice by succession; as one is chief justice for the time of his office to do every thing appertaining unto the same; so his successor always has the like.

God has given the civil magistrates power and authority to make such laws for the commonwealth, as shall be agreeable with reason and not against God’s law, and likewise power to interpret the same laws. But this is not to be admitted in the church, unto whom God hath given the gospel, and interpreted the same by his only Son, who taught the meaning and contents thereof himself.

To know God and his wrath against sin; the greatness of sin; the justice³⁶ given in Christ; the fear of God; the faith in his promises; the persecution of

³⁶ Righteousness.

his members; the aid and help of God in adversity; the resurrection of the dead; where and what the true church is; the doctrine of everlasting life; of the two natures in Christ; of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost: these are the contents of the law whereunto God has bound his church; and he has commanded her to hear his Son concerning the interpretation of these points. And at the commandment of Christ the apostles were sent to preach these verities in the Spirit of God. It is therefore necessary to retain in the church the doctrine given unto us by the apostles, and to be the disciples of their doctrine, and not to feign interpretations of our own heads contrary unto their doctrine.

Such, as will be the members of this church, must be disciples of the gospel, and learn, in fear and humbleness of spirit, the articles of our religion, as they are taught there, and not stand unto the judgment of any man, whatsoever he be, though he say truth. For his truth is nothing, except the authority of God's word contain the said truth.

It is a great confirmation of our faith when we see such as were godly persons before us, interpret the scripture, and use the sacraments as we do. As when the heresy of Samosata troubled the christian brethren, by saying "the Word," in John, "In the beginning' was the Word," did not signify any person or divine substance, they were confirmed by the testimony of Irenaeus, who had heard Polycarp, John the evangelist's disciple, interpret "the Word," in the gospel, for the Son of God, the second person in the Trinity. Though we are bound to hear the church, that is, the true and faithful preachers of God's word, as Polycarp and Irenaeus were in this case; notwithstanding, our faith is not grounded upon the authority of the church, but in and upon the voice of the gospel. We pray and invoke the Son of God, the second person in the Trinity, because the scripture proves him to be God: "The Word was God;" also, "My Father worketh until now, and I also work;" "Without me ye can do nothing likewise, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

The adversaries of truth defend many a false error under the name of the holy church; therefore, these treasons and secret conspiracies must be taken heed of; and when the church is named, we ought diligently to consider, when the articles they would defend were accepted of the church, by whom, and who was the author of them; and not to leave till the matter is brought unto the first original and most perfect church of the apostles. If you find by their writings that their church used' the thing which the preacher would prove, then accept it, or else not. Be not amazed, though they speak of ever so many years, or name ever so many doctors. Christ and his apostles are grandfathers in age to their doctors and masters in learning. Repose thyself only on the church which they have taught thee by the scripture. Fear neither the ordinary power or succession of bishops, nor that of the greater part. For if either the authority of bishops, or the greater

part, should have power to interpret the scripture, the sentence of the pharisees should have been preferred before the sentence of Zacharias, Simeon, Elizabeth, or the blessed virgin.

Consider, that many times the true church is hut a small congregation, as Isaiah saith: “Except God had left us a seed, we had been as Sodom.” Therefore the interpretation of the Scripture is not obligated³⁷ unto an ordinary power, or-to the greatest number, as Noah, Abraham, Moses, Samuel, David, and Christ’s time testify.

Beware of deceit, when you hear the name of the church.’ The verity is then assaulted; for they call the church of the devil, the holy church many times. As Korah and the rest of the people said unto Moses many times, “Why have ye deceived the people of God, and brought them out of Egypt?” They were the church of God nothing the more, though it was painted with this holy title; but the church of the devil and a congregation of rebellious and seditious persons, as God declared both by word and deed. Moses called them not the church of God, but the church of Korah; not the people of God, but rebels and God’s enemies, as God declared them to be by his severely punishing them. So, many times, if the most part had been preferred, then the truth had been confounded, and Moses and Aaron put to death.

Remember, christian reader, that the gift of interpretation of the scripture is the light of the Holy Ghost given unto the humble and penitent person that seeks it only to honour God with; and not unto that person who claims it by title or place, because he is a bishop, or followed by succession Peter or Paul. Examine their laws by the scripture, and then shalt thou perceive, that they are the enemies of Christ’s church and the very church of Korah. Remember, therefore, to examine all kinds of doctrine by the word of God. For even such as preach it aright have their infirmities and ignorance: they may depart from the truth, or else build some superstition and false doctrine upon the gospel of Christ. Superstition is to be avoided, and false doctrine to be abhorred, whosoever is the author thereof, prince, magistrate, or bishop: and the apostles made answer, (Acts v.) “We must obey God, rather than men.”

The superior powers have authority, and may make what laws they list for the wealth and preservation of their subjects, so they repugn not the law of nature, nor the law of God. But, as touching the church of Christ which governs the soul of man, only the law of God must be obeyed; the ceremonies ordained for good order to be observed in the church should not be neglected, as the assemblies of people on the Sabbath -day, and other feasts wherein the word of God is preached, and the sacraments rightly administered. But those ceremonies, that partly superstition, partly avarice, partly

³⁷ Limited, restrained.

tyranny, have brought into the church, are to be eschewed; as the saying of private masses, blessing of water, holy bread; bell or candle, with such-like. As for the praying unto dead saints, or to have their images in the church, it is not a mere ceremonial matter, but very plain and manifest idolatry, contrary to the express word of God, who forbids to make any image. And he that prays unto God in the name of any dead saint is a heathen, and knows not God; for he follows his own imagination, and not the word of God, which teaches and commands that we should both know and pray unto him in his Son's name. (John xiv.) The neglect of this commandment deserves eternal pains.

Such as have a knowledge of Christ, from henceforth let them give him his right honour, and leave this idolatry and superstition, considering that with great pain he has won the church out of the hands of the devil, defends it with his Holy Spirit, and governs it with the laws of his only word. And consider, whether these injuries, blasphemies, troubles, unquietness, and destruction of God's people by the laws of the bishops are to be permitted, though they cry till they be hoarse again, "The holy church, the holy church!" Were the like trouble in any realm among the king's subjects, by the occasion and abuse of the king's majesty's laws, (doubtless they could not show under the king's seal their law to be of authority;) they should, as is right, soon be put to silence, and their adulterous laws and sophistical glosses removed out of the way. This I know, that Christ knew best all the histories of the old law, was himself, when present, the teacher of all truth, and most wise to provide for the church such laws as should preserve it in his absence.

Now that we know what Christ and his office is in the church of God, it is likewise necessary for every man that is a member of this church to know what man is, and his office towards Christ. For as God has bound himself by his promise to be our God and helper for Christ, so hath he bound man by his commandment to be his servant, and in his word to follow Christ, and in Christ God, for the commandment's sake; until such time as the end wherefore man was made, be obtained; which is eternal felicity, and man restored and made like unto the image of God, as he was at the beginning, full of justice, obedience, and love towards his Creator and Maker.

Studying brevity, and to be short, I will not write particularly of every member and the office thereof, wherewith all the whole mass and substance of man is framed. That I refer unto the learned physicians who write diligently of the parts of man, and unto Lactantius. Neither what man was, at the beginning, before he sinned; full of godly knowledge, always lauding the goodness of his Creator, always obedient unto his will, always following the order of reason, without any ill and contrary concupiscence or other carnal resistance. To be short, man's nature had been in all things like unto

the law, and as perfect as the law of the decalogue, or ten commandments, had not he sinned: but what man is now, after his transgression, the christian reader shall be advertised.

CHAPTER XII.

OF WHAT MAN IS.

MAN, fallen from his first dignity and original perfection, is now the creature that fighteth with the law of God; is full of darkness, ignorance, and the contempt of God; without obedience, fear, and love of God; oppressed and subject unto all calamities, and wilful concupiscence, both of body and soul.

Man is the enemy of God, (Rom. viii.) the image of the devil, the library of lies, the friend of the devil, right heir of eternal death, and the child of damnation. (Eph. ii.) We are murderers by the means of sin, not only of ourselves, but also of the Son of God, who never sinned. And yet, not understanding this our woeful case and condition, we neglect both God and his law, and feel not our infirmities and sickness—the more is our health to be despaired of!

He that labours under a dangerous disease, and yet feels not the grief thereof, will never find the remedy, nor have the ill removed. We see this to be true by natural reason. Of all diseases frenzy is the most dangerous, yet the patient feels it not, nor can show where or how this woeful and miserable disease molests him; therefore very seldom or never are such persons cured and made whole. *Seeing* the next way unto health is the knowledge of the disease, and man is in himself sick and infected with more diseases a thousand fold than I have rehearsed, it is not without cause that I say, that to know what man is, is very necessary; although it seem not so unto such as are drunk with the pleasures of the world, and never think from the bottom of their heart to return unto repentance. If the scripture of God and the writings of learned men cannot persuade them what the wrath of God is against sin, I know well my labours will little avail. Yet every disciple of Christ is bound to seek the glory of God and salvation of his neighbour, and to commit the success unto God,

It is very difficult and hard for man to know himself; the only way thereunto is to examine and open himself before God by the light of the scripture: and he, that beholds himself well in that mirror and glass, will find such a deformity and disgraced physiognomy, that he will abhor his own proportion so horribly disfigured. Let man seek no further than the first commandment, (Exod. xx. Deut. vi.) “Thou shalt love thy Lord God with all thy heart, with all thy mind, with all thy power, and thy neighbour as thyself,” then shall man perceive his wretchedness; how that many times he loves nothing less than God or his neighbour; and perceive that he is the friend of the devil and of the world, and a contemner of God.

This way St. James teaches man to know himself: “Whoso looketh in the law of liberty,” &c. ‘St. James uses this word, “law,” which in the Hebrew phrase signifies a doctrine that teaches, instructs, and leads a man as well unto the knowledge of himself as of God.

So St. Paul disputes by admirable enallages³⁸ and prosopopœias,³⁹ in the seventh chapter of Romans. “By the law cometh the knowledge of sin;” he calls the law the power and force of sin. (1 Cor. xv.) Only the law declares how great an ill sin is; and the man that beholds the will of God in the law, will find himself and all his life guilty of eternal death. Read the seventh chapter to the Romans with judgment, and then know what man is, how miserably spoiled of virtue and oppressed with sin. So Paul learned to know himself; and knew not what sin was, till the law had made him afraid, and showed him that he, being a pharisee, was, with all his holiness, condemned. “Sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me.” (Rom. vii.) And in the same chapter he shows plainly what he saw in the glass and contemplation of the law, that sin was manifested thereby, and the greatness thereof known. “But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.” Mark the travice⁴⁰ and play between the law of God and the conscience of Paul, and see how he gives thanks unto his master the law, and proclaims it to be a spiritual and holy thing, as a light or torch, to show man his filthy and stinking nature; saying, “The law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold under sin;” a bondman of sin and traitor to God.

Here thou seest, good reader, what a miserable wretch man is; and how man may know his misery by the law. Howbeit, though we read it many times, we are neither the wiser, nor the better. We are not taught much by this mistress the law; she cannot make us good scholars. We dally and play so with the world, we live in such security and ease, that, say she what she list, we turn the deaf ear and will not hear.

Therefore, to make man know himself, God sendeth another mistress to school him, namely, adversity; then we begin to understand the law of God, that dissuades from sin, and we then know our misery. As David cries, that he is not able to bear the burden of sin, if the Lord execute justice, as the greatness thereof merits: “If thou, Lord, shouldest be extreme to mark what we have done amiss, who may abide .it?” (Ps. cxxx.) David, when he felt the pains of his adultery, the death of his child, the conspiracy of Absalom, the vitiating of his wives, exile and banishment, and such other calamities; in this school of, misery learned this verse, “Who can sustain the wrath of God?” Now, though these temporal pains be more than man

³⁸ A figure in grammar, whereby some change is made of the common modes of speech.

³⁹ A figure, by which things are made persons.

⁴⁰ Opposition, as in fencing.

can support, they are but sport and dalliance in respect of the eternal pains. Howbeit, man may learn by them how much God is displeased with sin, and know himself to be, as he is, a vile piece of earth with all his pride and pomp, and a rebel unto his Maker, as no creature else is, saving the devil and he.

This inward and secret ill, rebellion of the heart, blindness of the intention, and frowardness of will, is daily augmented by the malice of the devil, and our own negligence, that regards not what the law teaches that God requires of man. Because the gospel teaches, that we are only saved by the mercy of God for the merits of Christ, our gospellers have set all at liberty, and care not at all about such a life as should and ought to follow every justified man and disciple of Christ. It is no marvel, for there is no discipline and punishment for sin; and wheresoever the gospel is preached and this correction not used, as well against the highest as the lowest, there shall never be a godly church.

As a king's army, though their hearts are ever so good, cannot resist the force of his enemies without weapons and artillery necessary for men of war; no more can the king's majesty, the magistrates, and preachers, preserve the church against the devil and sin, without the excommunication of such as openly offend the divine majesty of God and his word. For, by this means, the sinner is taught by the scripture to know himself: (1 Cor. v.) "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such an one unto satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." God would not only the faithful, but also that the unbelievers should be kept in order by the discipline of the law, as Paul saith, "The law is given for the unrighteous;" likewise Deut. xix, "Thou shalt put the evil away from among you. And these which remain shall hear, and fear; thine eye shall not pity him."

This political and civil use of the law teaches man to know his faults: and this discipline of the law, exterior and civil, is necessary for man for divers causes: first, to declare our obedience unto God; then, to avoid the punishment that always God, or else the magistrate, punishes the transgression with; thirdly, because of public peace in every commonwealth, that one man should not do injuries to another, either in body or in goods.

There is yet another cause why this discipline of the law is necessary, which few men regard. Paul saith, that it is a schoolmistress unto Christ; because such as leave not off to sin, and to do the thing which is contrary unto the express word of God, to those Christ is not profitable. This use teaches Paul: (1 Cor. vi.) "Fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, &c. shall not inherit the kingdom of God." And so saith John, "Whosoever sinneth is of the devil." He that knows himself must refrain from doing of ill; hear the gospel, and learn the gospel, that the Spirit of God may be efficacious in

him: which cannot be as long as he hath a purpose to continue doing of ill. Ezekiel speaks of this civil and politic use of the law; and likewise of the second use thereof, which is, as I said before, to show man his sin, to accuse man before God, to alarm him, and to condemn man plainly: (chap. xxxiii.) “I will not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should be converted and live.” These words declare that as God would not the death of a sinner, so he requires the sinner to cease from doing of ill, and to be converted unto virtue.

As for the second use of the law, which is to declare what sin is, I showed before that it manifests the greatness and vileness thereof; as Paul writes, it condemns sin, and delivers not from sin. “By the law (saith he) is the knowledge of sin. The law worketh wrath; through the law sin is made exceedingly sinful.” (Rom. vii.) “The sting of death is sin: but the strength of sin is the law.” (1 Cor. xv.) In men that are addicted unto the pleasures of this world, the law has not this use, say the preacher what he list. Let the word of God threaten eternal death for sin, it avails not. He thinks that God is asleep, and will, at last, be satisfied with some trifle as an offering for sin. We shall find the contrary to our great pain, as others have before our time, that would not believe the word till they felt the vengeance and punishment of God, as Cain, the world drowned with the flood, the burning of Sodom and others. It is a great and horrible offence to hide or extenuate the judgments of God against sin, and the voice of the law that condemns the same. God willeth his pleasure to be known openly (Jer. i.) “Lo I have put my words in thy mouth behold I have set thee over nations, that thou mayest root out and destroy.”

This use and office of the law none feel nor perceive so well as such as are God’s friends, Adam, Abraham, Jacob, David, Hezekiah, &c. David said that the fear of God’s displeasure and wrath was no less pain unto him than though a fierce lion had rent and dismembered his body in pieces, “as a lion hath broken all my bones.” (Ps. xxii.) So saith Paul, “O wretched man that I am, who shall-deliver me from the body of this death?” He before said, “Once I lived without the law,” that is, “I was secure, not feeling the wrath of God;” but now, being converted from a pharisee to be an apostle, and brought to a knowledge of himself, he confesses his imbecility and faults, and says, “I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, there dwelleth no good thing.” Yet Paul confesses, that the law makes us not afraid to be damned because we cannot satisfy it, but that we should come to Christ with these comfortable words: “He hath concluded all under sin, that he might have mercy upon all:” a great consolation for every troubled conscience!

Thus man may know himself to be, as he is, a very wretched and damnable creature, were it not for the virtue of Christ’s death.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE OFFICE (OR DUTY) OF A JUSTIFIED MAN.

WHAT the office of a justified man is Paul declares, (Tit. ii.) “The grace of God which bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men, teaching us, that, denying ungodliness and fleshly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.” By these words Paul forbids all impiety and dishonest life, and shows man that is justified, what he should do: not to live after the concupiscence of the flesh, but soberly: not unjustly and doing wrong unto others, but rather to profit and do well unto all men. It suffices not man justly to keep his goods; but he is bound justly to dispense his goods unto others, whether they are of the body or of the mind, religiously and not superstitiously. A notable word “godly,” as the word of God teaches, and not as man’s laws, contrary unto God’s law, teach. “Waiting for the blessed hope,” &c., he stirs up men to live well, and takes his reason from the profit and advantage that follows a godly life, which is immortal life at the coming of Christ to judgment.

Likewise he proves it with another argument: “The Son of God gave neither gold nor silver for our purgation, but his own body and precious blood.” It is, therefore, an unworthy thing, and not becoming a christian man, who, by faith, hath received this cleansing, to live a vicious and ungodly life. But we should be a holy people and followers of good works. It is not sufficient to work well, except the justified man with a godly zeal and ardent desire follow this good work begun. Therefore Paul saith, “It is a good thing to be zealously affected in a good thing,” and not only a performer of good works. Whereby we know, that although we are delivered from the malediction, curse, and damnation of the law, so that we retain a true faith, and with confidence in Christ repugn sin and overcome the terrors thereof; yet are we bound to the obedience of the law, which is God’s will to keep us from living ill. And the more the justified man beholds the law, the more the knowledge of sin increases—the more he beholds the mercy of God in Christ, the more is his faith increased.

The law is also necessary for the justified man, to teach him with what works he should exercise his faith and obedience unto God. We may not choose works of our own wisdom to serve him withal; but he would have us to be governed by his word, as David saith, “Thy word is a light to my feet.” Also, “In vain they worship me, following the traditions of men.” The wisdom of man, not governed by the word of God, soon errs; it is carried for the most part, with affections, and chooses the works that are contrary to the law of God: therefore, this is true, that the ordinance of God still remains immutable in the justified man, that he must obey the law and

serve in his vocation according to the scripture; that the exterior facts may bear testimony to the inward reconciliation.

The scripture is more diligent and more ample in teaching the christian justified man obedience unto God and a virtuous life, than it is to show us our salvation in Christ; and that it is for this purpose only—that we should not oar licentious liberty, receive the grace of God in vain. It is more easy for man to know the gospel, than to follow the life of the gospel. Another may preach Christ, but the hearer must follow Christ. The science of the scripture is practical and not speculative; it requires a doer, and not a speaker only.

There are many who dissemble faith, and have a certain show of religion, when indeed, in their inward man, there is no faith at all. Let every man, therefore, search his own conscience, with what faith he is endued, and remember that Christ said, “It is a strait way and narrow that leadeth to life, (Matt. vii.) and but few that walk therein.” Therefore our only remedy is to pray for grace and amend.

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