



An Abridgment of

CALVIN'S INSTITUTES

OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION
BOOK I – IV

Timothy Tow

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of the Christian Religion

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Far Eastern Bible College Press
Singapore, 1997

**An Abridgment of Calvin's Institutes of the Christian Religion:
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Published by
Far Eastern Bible College Press
9A Gilstead Road, Singapore 309063
Republic of Singapore

ISBN: 981-00-9335-7

Cover Design by Charles Seet

*Cover photograph of portrait of John Calvin—courtesy of Rev Reijer A. Grisnigt,
the Netherlands.*

**To
My Students**



The young Calvin. The first edition of the “Institutes” was published when he was 27 years old. (Picture by courtesy of Biliothèque publique et universitaire, Genève.)

FOREWORD TO BOOK I AND II

Calvinism is often misrepresented, not only by its opponents, but also by those who are counted among its adherents. While the latter sometimes draw conclusions that are alien to the Reformer's teaching, the former tend to make a caricature of his thoughts. Consequently, the rank and file of Protestant Christians are lacking a clear insight of what the system represents. We hardly dare to expect a change for the better. As a matter of fact, the number of those who are thoroughly acquainted with Calvin's thinking has always been very small, and it will probably continue to be so. There are not many Christians who would take the time to explore the rich spiritual heritage of the great Genevan as contained in his many sermons, his letters, and in his famous **Institutes of the Christian Religion**. And most certainly Calvin himself would advise us rather to turn to the living and everlasting Word of God and to attend to the preaching of it. As a matter of fact, he was not interested in Calvinism, nor did he seek the following of Calvinists, be they Hyper-, Neo-, or just ordinary Calvinists! In promptness and sincerity, he only wanted to promote true, Biblical Christianity. Unlike many other theologians, John Calvin did not try to develop a theology of his own. He is great in not seeking greatness. Yet, being endowed with an unusually keen mind, and a receptive heart, Calvin's expositions of Biblical truth are at once timeless and timely.

Having discovered the lasting value of Calvin's writings, Dr Tow desired to make them accessible to the Christian Community. Hence this Abridged Edition of the **Institutes of the Christian Religion**. It has been a great undertaking. With painstaking accuracy, Dr Tow has summarised the Reformer's teaching. Without deviating from the original, he has given us a very readable book. It should be in the hands of the old and the young. Pastors and youth leaders could use it as a textbook for religious instruction. It may serve as a Compendium for theologians who want to brush up their knowledge of Reformed doctrine.

The present edition covers Book I and II of Calvin's Institutes. We are looking forward to the publication of the remaining part. May it be given to the author to complete his task in not too long a time. May the Lord use it for our generation that we might be solidly rooted in the faith of our fathers.

J. C. Maris
Amsterdam
October 17, 1975

PREFACE TO BOOK I AND II

If it is true, according to B. B. Warfield: “what Plato is among philosophers, or the Iliad among epics, or Shakespeare among dramatists, that Calvin’s *Institutes* is among the theological treatises,” then no student of theology can afford to go without some serious reading in this immortal work. “Even from the point of view of mere literature, it holds a position so supreme in its class,” reiterates Warfield, “that everyone who would fain know the world’s best books, must make himself familiar with it.”

The writer of this Abridgment was first introduced to Calvin’s *Institutes of the Christian Religion* while a student at Faith Theological Seminary, USA. What was offered as an elective, he discovered to his delight to be a gem of the greatest price. This led him to pursue through the voluminous work on his own, and to re-study it in latter years. Through Calvin’s inspirational teaching (his emblem is a heart offered to the Lord) of “the true and substantial wisdom which principally consists of the knowledge of God and the knowledge of ourselves,” this writer has found a new, radiant confidence for living in perilous end-times like these. For, Calvin has taught, as no other theologian, that “salvation is **of the Lord**” (Jonah 2:9).

Reading Calvin’s *Institutes*, however, is like going through a ten-course Chinese dinner. The feast he spreads is so sumptuous that it takes no little time to imbibe. In order to render the *Institutes* more assimilable to students of Far Eastern Bible College, the writer has made this Abridgment for their guidance, chapter by chapter.

Having found such Abridgment profitable also to laymen, Rev Quek Kiok Chiang has given it generous space in the *Far Eastern Beacon* for serial publication. This wider dissemination in turn has found further reception in the *Australian Beacon* published by Mr John S. Mackenzie. Through these circulations, requests have been received from Calvin lovers at home and abroad for a more permanent form of the Abridgment.

With deep gratitude to the Father Almighty for His sustaining hand, the Abridgment of the first two of Calvin’s four books is completed hereat. It is sent forth with a view of giving some assistance to other students of theology, and of stirring up interest in those not acquainted with Calvin’s teaching. Yea, it is sent forth with a prayer, that it might grip the heart of everyone who has never been lifted into the heights of Calvin’s marvellous comprehension of the sovereignty and grace of God.

The writer is grateful also Dr J. C. Maris, his esteemed friend and colleague in the testimony of the International Council of Christian Churches, for his kind introduction and encouragement to consummate this work of Abridgment.

In making this Abridgment, the writer has solely used John Allen's English translation of Calvin's original in Latin and French. A glossary is added to help tide over Calvin's use of profound words for his profound thoughts on the profounder truths of God.

Timothy Tow,
Singapore, 1976.

PREFACE TO THIS COMPLETE EDITION

The Abridgment of Book III and IV took us another couple of years. This enabled us to teach it to our students a couple of times. By the early eighties, we should have published the complete edition.

Why did we procrastinate? There were two reasons. We printed seven thousand copies of Book I and II. It was when the stock had finally exhausted that we took steps toward publication of this complete edition. The other reason was the shortage of hands.

In typesetting and proof reading this complete edition, we gratefully acknowledge the labour of love rendered by Mrs Tan Yin Chan of Life B-P Church office, and by Miss Lau Yeong Shoon on behalf of Far Eastern Bible College Press. We are also indebted to Rev Charles Seet for the art work of the book, and to Roger Kok and Foo Siang-tse.

“To God by the glory, great things He hath done.” Amen.

Timothy Tow,
October 1997.

CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
Foreword to Book I and II	v
Preface to Book I and II	vi
Preface to This Complete Edition	vii
Contents	ix
List of Illustrations	xiv
Book I: On the Knowledge of God the Creator	1
Contents	3
<i>Chapter</i>	
I The Connection between the Knowledge of God and the Knowledge of Ourselves	5
II The Nature and Tendency of the Knowledge of God	7
III The Human Mind Naturally Endued with the Knowledge of God	8
IV This Knowledge Extinguished or Corrupted, Partly by Ignorance, Partly by Wickedness	10
V The Knowledge of God Conspicuous in the Creation and Continual Government of the World	12
VI The Guidance and Teaching of Scripture Necessary to Lead to Knowledge of God the Creator	17
VII The Testimony of the Spirit Necessary to Give Full Authority to Scripture. The Impiety of Pretending that the Credibility of Scripture Depends on the Judgment of the Church	19
VIII Rational Proofs to Establish the Belief of the Scripture	22
IX All the Principles of Piety Subverted by Fanatics Who Substitute Revelations for Scripture	25
X In Scripture, the True God Opposed, Exclusively, to All the Gods of the Heathen	28
XI Unlawfulness of Ascribing to God a Visible Form. All Idolatry a Defection from the True God	31
XII God Contradistinguished from Idols That He May be Solely and Supremely Worshipped	36
XIII One Divine Essence, Containing Three Persons, Taught in the Scriptures from the Beginning	38
XIV The True God Clearly Distinguished in the Scripture from All Fictitious Ones by the Creation of the World	51

	<i>Page</i>
XV The State of Man at His Creation, the Faculties of the Soul, the Divine Image, Free-Will, and the Original Purity of His Nature	59
XVI God's Preservation and Support of the World by His Power and His Government of Every Part of It by His Providence	65
XVII The Proper Application of This Doctrine to Render It Useful to Us	70
XVIII God Uses the Agency of the Impious, and Inclines Their Minds to Execute His Judgments, Yet Without the Least Stain of His Perfect Purity	77
 Book II: On the Knowledge of God the Redeemer in Christ Which Was Revealed First to the Fathers Under the Law, and Since to Us in the Gospel	
Contents	83
<i>Chapter</i>	
I The Fall and Defection of Adam the Cause of the Curse Inflicted on All Mankind, and of Their Degeneracy from Their Primitiv Condition. The Doctrine of Original Sin	85
II Man, in His Present State, Despoiled of Freedom of Will, and Subjected to a Miserable Slavery	90
III Every Thing that Proceeds from the Corrupt Nature of Man Worthy of Condemnation.	100
IV The Operation of God in the Hearts of Men	107
V A Refutation of the Objections Commonly Urged in Support of Free Will	111
VI Redemption for Lost Man to Be Sought in Christ	120
VII The Law Given, Not to Confine the Ancient People to Itself, but to Encourage Their Hope of Salvation in Christ, till the Time of His Coming	123
VIII An Exposition of the Moral Law	130
IX Christ, Though Known to the Jews Under the Law, Yet Clearly Revealed Only in the Gospel	151
X The Similarity of the Old and New Testaments	154
XI The Difference of the Two Testaments	161
XII The Necessity of Christ Becoming Man in Order to Fulfill the the Office of Mediator	167
XIII Christ's Assumption of Real Humanity	171
XIV The Union of the Two Natures Constituting the Person of the Mediator	174

	<i>Page</i>
XV The Consideration of Christ's Three Offices, Prophetical, Regal, and Sacerdotal, Necessary to Our Knowing the End of His Mission from the Father, and the Benefits Which He Confers on Us	178
XVI Christ's Execution of the Office of a Redeemer to Procure Our Salvation, His Death, Resurrection, and Ascension to Heaven . .	181
XVII Christ Truly and Properly Said to Have Merited the Grace of of God and Salvation for Us	189
<i>Illustrations: Life of John Calvin</i>	191
Book III: On the Manner of Receiving the Grace of Christ, the Benefits Which We Derive from It, and the Effects Which Follow It	197
Contents	199
<i>Chapter</i>	
I What Is Declared Concerning Christ Rendered Profitable to Us by the Secret Operation of the Spirit	201
II Faith Defined, and Its Properties Described	204
III On Repentance	215
IV The Sophistry and Jargon of the Schools Concerning Repentance, Very Remote from the Purity of the Gospel. On Confession and Satisfaction	224
V Indulgences and Purgatory. The Supplements to Their Doctrine of Satisfactions	236
VI The Life of a Christian. Scriptural Arguments and Exhortations to It	240
VII Summary of the Christian Life. Self-Denial	242
VIII Bearing the Cross, Which Is a Branch of Self-Denial	246
IX Meditation on the Future Life	249
X The Right Use of the Present Life and Its Support	251
XI Justification by Faith. The Name and Thing Defined	254
XII A Consideration of the Divine Tribunal, Necessary to a Serious Conviction of Gratuitous Justification	261
XIII Two Things Necessary to Be Observed in Gratuitous Justification	264
XIV The Commencement and Continual Progress of Justification . . .	266

	<i>Page</i>
XV Boasting of the Merit of Works, Equally Subversive of God's Glory in the Gift of Righteousness, and the Certainty of Salvation.	273
XVI A Refutation of the Injurious Calumnies of the Papists Against This Doctrine	275
XVII The Harmony Between the Promises of the Law and Those of the Gospel	278
XVIII Justification from Works Not to be Inferred from the Promise of a Reward	283
XIX On Christian Liberty	287
XX On Prayer, the Principal Exercise of Faith, and the Medium of Our Daily Reception of Divine Blessings	292
XXI Eternal Election, Or God's Predestination of Some to Salvation, and of Others to Destruction	305
XXII Testimonies of Scripture in Confirmation of this Doctrine	308
XXIII A Refutation of the Calumnies Generally, But Unjustly, Urged Against This Doctrine	312
XXIV Election Confirmed by the Divine Call. The Destined Destruction of the Reprobate Procured by Themselves	318
XXV The Final Resurrection	324
Book IV: On the External Means or Aids by Which God Calls Us Into Communion with Christ, and Retains Us in It	329
Contents	331
<i>Chapter</i>	
I The True Church, and the Necessity of Our Union with Her, Being the Mother of All the Pious	333
II The True and False Church Compared	342
III The Teachers and Ministers of the Church; Their Election and Office	346
IV The State of the Ancient Church, and the Mode of Government Practised Before the Papacy	351
V The Ancient Form of Government Entirely Subverted by the Papal Tyranny	357
VI The Primacy of the Roman See	363
VII The Rise and Progress of the Papal Power to Its Present Eminence, Attended with the Loss of Liberty to the Church, and the Ruin of all Moderation	369

	<i>Page</i>
VIII The Power of the Church Respecting Articles of Faith, and Its Licentious Perversion, Under the Papacy, to the Corruption of All Purity of Doctrine	377
IX Councils; Their Authority	382
X The Power of Legislation, in Which the Pope and His Adherents Have Most Cruelly Tyrannized Over the Minds, and and Tortured the Bodies, of Men	387
XI The Jurisdiction of the Church, and Its Abuse Under the Papacy	397
XII The Discipline of the Church: Its Principal Use in Censures and Excommunication	402
XIII Vows: The Misery of Rashly Making Them	408
XIV The Sacraments	414
XV Baptism	421
XVI Paedobaptism Perfectly Consistent with the Institution of Christ and the Nature of the Sign	427
XVII The Lord's Supper and Its Advantages	436
XVIII The Papal Mass, Not Only a Sacrilegious Profanation of the Lord's Supper, But a Total Annihilation of It	455
XIX The Five Other Ceremonies, Falsely Called Sacraments, Proved Not to be Sacraments; Their Nature Explained	463
XX On Civil Government	475
Glossary	485
Index of the Principal Matters	503

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	<i>Page</i>
The young Calvin. The first edition of the “Institutes” was published when he was 27 years old.	iv
The Notre Dame Cathedral at Noyon, Picardy, Northern France. John Calvin was born on July 10, 1509 at Noyon.	191
Rue de Calvin, Geneva: The street where Calvin lived from 1543–1564.	192
Plaque marking the place where Calvin lived on Rue de Calvin.	192
The City of Geneva, Switzerland: Calvin was persuaded by Farel to remain here in 1536.	193
St. Peter Cathedral, Geneva: The Church where Calvin refused the Lord’s Super to the Libertines.	193
The Chapel where Calvin taught his students, among whom was John Knox, the Reformer of Scotland.	194
Calvin’s chair inside the Chapel.	194
The Academy of Geneva, founded by Calvin in 1559. Today, it is known as the University of Geneva.	195
The Central Panel of the Monument to the Reformation at Geneva. Left to right: Farel, Calvin, Beza and Knox.	195
John Calvin’s grave in the Plain-Palais cemetery on the outskirts of Geneva. He died on May 27, 1564.	196
The simple gravestone of Calvin’s grave, marked with his initials, ‘J.C.’ “He being dead, yet speaketh” (Heb 11:4).	196

Except for the picture of the young Calvin, which is by courtesy of Bibliothèque publique et universitaire, Genève; and the Notre Dame Cathedral at Noyon, which is by courtesy of Alison Stones; the rest of the pictures are by courtesy of Rev Reijer Grisnigt, the Netherlands.

BOOK I

Book I

On the Knowledge of God the Creator

CONTENTS

The first book treats of the knowledge of God the Creator. But, this being chiefly manifested in the creation of man, man also is made the subject of discussion. Thus, the principal topics of the whole treatise are two—the knowledge of God, and the knowledge of man. In the first chapters, they are considered together. In the subsequent chapters, separately. Yet things are introduced, which may be referred to either or both. What respects the Scripture and images may belong to the knowledge of God. What respects the formation of the world, the holy angels, and the devils, to the knowledge of man; and what respects the manner in which God governs the world, to both.

On the first of these topics, the knowledge of God, this book shows,

First, What kind of knowledge God Himself requires—Chapter II.

Secondly, Where it must be sought—Chapters III–IX, as follows:

1. Not in man; because, though the human mind is naturally endued with it, yet it is extinguished, partly by ignorance, partly by wickedness—Chapters III–IV.
2. Nor in the structure of the world; because, though it shines there with the brightest evidence, testimonies of that kind, however plain, are through our stupidity, wholly useless to us—Chapter V.
3. But in the Scripture—Chapters VI–IX.

Thirdly, What kind of a being God is—Chapter X.

Fourthly, The impiety of ascribing to God a visible form, with observations on the adoration and origin of images—Chapter XI.

Fifthly, The reasonableness that God alone should be supremely worshipped—Chapter XII.

Lastly, The unity of the Divine Essence, and the distinction of three Persons—Chapter XIII.

On the other of these topics, the knowledge of man, it contains,

First, A dissertation on the creation of the world, and on the good and evil angels, all which relate to man—Chapter XIV.

Secondly, Proceeding to man himself, an examination of his nature and power—Chapter XV.

But, in order to get a clearer illustration of the knowledge of God and man, the three remaining chapters treat of the government of all human actions and of the whole world, in opposition to fortune and fate, stating the pure doctrine, and showing its use; and conclude with proving that, though God uses the agency of the wicked, He is pure from all pollution, and chargeable with no blame.

Chapter I

The Connection between the Knowledge of God and the Knowledge of Ourselves

1. True wisdom principally consists of two parts—the knowledge of God, and the knowledge of ourselves. Which of these two branches of knowledge comes first, it is hard to determine. They are intimately bound together. For, our very existence is nothing but a subsistence in God.

We begin to discover God, when we are plunged into misery. Our poverty and woes, caused by Adam’s sin, compel us to seek God’s help. This is the first step towards knowing God. Our poverty, infirmity and depravity, lead us to perceive and acknowledge that God is all strength, wisdom, goodness. Through our imperfections, we are made to realise His perfections.

A self-complacent man, content with his own endowment, but blind to his wretched condition, does not aspire to God.

2. When we are self-satisfied in our own goodness, by a natural proneness to hypocrisy, and compare ourselves with our neighbours, we tend to think ourselves holy and righteous. We judge ourselves by our own standards. Such judgment is as erroneous as by those who, being accustomed to seeing nothing but black, would call brown white. Such judgment is like the false confidence one has in one’s eyes, who is accustomed merely to an earthward vision until dazzled by the noonday sun. Thus, being satisfied with our own goodness, we flatter ourselves. We fancy we are demigods. A true vision of God and His perfections, however, casts us flat to the ground. We begin then to see our hypocritical righteousness, and loathe it as the greatest iniquity.

3. The Bible consistently records the awe that overwhelms the souls of saints, upon every discovery of God’s presence. “We shall surely die, because we have seen God” (Judg 13:22), “I . . . am but dust and ashes” (Gen 18:27), are some of the expressions of the patriarchs who saw God. Elijah “wrapped his face in his mantle” (1 Kgs 19:13), as he came into the presence of the Almighty.

In showing up man’s pollution and impotence, Job brings him to the presence of the Divine purity, power and wisdom.

Thus, we perceive man knows not his own meanness until he comes into God's Majesty.

Not only man becomes humbled before God, the cherubim, in holy awe, veil their faces too (Isa 6:2). Isaiah, indeed, puts down the whole universe under His feet—"the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the LORD of hosts shall reign" (Isa 24:23).

In conclusion, we see that the knowledge of God and the knowledge of ourselves are intimately connected. The proper order of instruction requires us, however, to treat the subject of the knowledge of God first.

Chapter II

The Nature and Tendency of the Knowledge of God

1. By the knowledge of God is not meant merely a notion that there is such a Being. The knowledge of God should tend to bring us into pious and religious communication with God. We perceive, in such a relationship, a twofold knowledge—(a) of Him as Author of Salvation and Redeemer, through the person of Jesus Christ; (b) of Him as Creator.

In this preliminary study, we shall see what our knowledge of God as Creator results. As we discover Him to be not only Creator of the universe, but also its Provider and Governor, with infinite power, wisdom and goodness; and that He rules over the affairs of men with righteousness and judgment, we should give Him our worship. This knowledge should tend to lead us into a life entirely dependent on Him—the fountain of all goodness. This knowledge should tend to produce a life of constant communion with Him, in supplication and thanksgiving. In short, we should have a reverential love of God arising from such a knowledge. For, till men come to such enlightened senses that they owe everything to God, in life and death, in great and small, they will not voluntarily serve Him.

2. Cold speculations merely on the essence of God without warm understanding of God's benign character, whatever they may be, are therefore refuted. For example, there is the doctrine of Epicurus, of a God not concerned about the world, who remains in a state of perpetual inactivity, as if He went to sleep. What benefit to mankind does such doctrine bring? Our knowledge of God should rather inspire fear and reverence, reliance upon His loving care, with rendering of thanks and praise. Our knowledge of God should inspire a personal devotion and submission to His rule and authority. Our knowledge of God should lead us to revere Him as Judge, rewarding the pious and punishing the wicked. We should therefore restrain ourselves from sin, not merely from a dread of vengeance, but rather from loving consecration. Because we love Him as our Father and Lord, even though there were no hell, we would shudder at the thought of offending Him. We fear not so much His hurting us as our hurting Him. We give Him, as a result of such enlightened knowledge, heart-worship which is that pure religion so hard to find. For, what we see mostly in worship is formality and great ostentation in ceremonies.

Chapter III

The Human Mind Naturally Endued with the Knowledge of God

1. Without controversy, the human mind is naturally endued with the knowledge of God. According to Romans 1:20, God the Creator has given to all some knowledge of His existence through the things He has made. Cicero observes, that there is no nation so barbarous, no race so savage, as not to be firmly persuaded of the being of God. Such knowledge should induce men to worship God, and consecrate their lives to His service. Thus those who are endued with such knowledge, but do not serve Him, are condemned by their own testimony!

That man is naturally endued with the knowledge of God is amply proved by the retention of some religious sense in the most barbarous who, in other aspects, appear to differ little from brutes. That man is naturally endued with the knowledge of God is also amply proved by idolatry. Though a corrupted form of worship of the Deity, it nevertheless evinces a strong impression of the knowledge of God upon the human mind.

2. It is, therefore, a most absurd assertion, that religion was the invention of a few cunning men, a political machine to confine the common people to their duty, while these inventors of religion disbelieved the existence of God. It is true that cunning men have introduced many inventions into religion to overawe the simple, that they might control their minds. But such craftiness could not have been practised, if the minds of men had not previously been possessed with a firm persuasion of the existence of God.

Under such circumstances, it is incredible to say that the cunning minds, who have used religion for their own ends, are themselves devoid of any knowledge of God. The case of Caligula should prove our diagnosis. The Roman Emperor was notorious for his audacious contempt of the Deity. Yet, no man trembled with greater distress at any occasion of Divine judgment, for he became ultimately fearful of the Divine Power, whom he earlier despised. This phenomenon of fear of the Almighty by the ungodly must be traced to God's vengeance, smiting their consciences the more as

they seek to fly away from Him. These hauntings from God upon the harassed consciences of the impious is further proof that the idea of God is never lost in the human mind.

3. By way of recapitulation, the idea of God impressed on the human mind is indelible. This, it has been observed, is evidenced by the futile struggle of the wicked mind to rid itself of it. Thus, Dionysius' scoff at the judgment of Heaven is but forced laughter; while the worm of a guilty conscience gnaws within. I, therefore, cannot agree with Cicero that religion is getting better and better, for the world, as we shall soon discover, uses every method to corrupt this worship.

The knowledge of God, far from being learnt in the schools, is self-taught from birth. Nature permits no one to forget it. Now, the knowledge of God that we should have is: We are born to know Him, and live for Him. Unless our understanding has reached this point, it is uncertain and useless. This truth is reflected in Plato's teaching, that the chief good of the soul consists in similitude to God, when the soul, having a clear knowledge of Him, is wholly transformed into His likeness.

The knowledge of God, that induces men to worship the Creator, is what renders men superior to beasts. It makes them aspire to immortality.

Chapter IV

This Knowledge Extinguished or Corrupted, Partly by Ignorance, Partly by Wickedness

1. Although the seeds of the knowledge of God are sown in every heart, we scarcely find one man in a hundred who cherishes what he has received, and none in whom they grow to maturity. Much less, bear fruit in due season! In other words, this knowledge is extinguished or corrupted, partly by ignorance, partly by wickedness.

Those who fall from the knowledge of God into superstition through ignorance are as inexcusable as the wicked. For, we see that their ignorance is connected with pride and vanity. Pride and vanity are seen in miserable men who, while seeking after God, rise not above their own level, but regard Him according to their own stupidity, and by the inventions of their own imaginations. The God they seek to worship is but a figment of their own brains. Thus, Paul has said of them, “Professing . . . to be wise, they become fools.” Before this, he says, “They . . . became vain in their imaginations.” (Rom 1:22, 21).

2. There is another class of people who extinguish the knowledge of God. These do so in wilful foolishness. This fact is attested by David in Psalm 14:1, “The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.” These who deny the existence of God, wilfully suppress the light of nature within their hearts, and try to banish every remembrance of God because of their own transgressions. Now, when they say, “There is no God,” they are not so much depriving God of His existence as defying His government. They would like to shut God up as an idler in heaven, in order that they might give free rein to their sins.

Such wicked people who wilfully rejected God receive God’s punishment, in righteously darkening their understandings. Thus, God told Isaiah, “Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed” (Isa 6:9, 10). Those who reject God are rejected by God! And, being rejected by God, they continue in rejecting God!

3. Coming back to those who extinguish the knowledge of God by their own ignorance, which results in superstition, we notice that they

substitute for a legitimate religion, which, Lactantius says, must be connected with Truth, with many methods of worshipping God. These are hypocritical services because, while superstition attempts to please God, it is worshipping and adoring gods of its foolish imaginations. That superstition worships God in so many false ways, and not according to God's Will, which is one and unchangeable, proves itself wrong. Hence, the Apostle declares any vague notion of God as ignorance of God, and those without a right knowledge of the only true God, to be without God. Any deviation from the knowledge of the one true God results in an execrable idol of man's own making.

4. With regard to the wicked, these will never come to God, until they are forced to do so. And when they come to Him, they do so not willingly, in reverence to the Divine Majesty, but from a cringing fear, born of necessity. They dread the judgment of God, which they know is inevitable, but at the same time they hate it. To such a situation is applicable the saying of Statius, that "fear first made gods in the world."

The wicked have always fought against the Lord as Judge, One with whom they have to reckon, until His irresistible arm of judgment finally reached them. Unable to escape His justice, they tremble with fear. In order to appease Him, they also practise some form of religion, with a few paltry sacrifices; while they cease not to pollute themselves with vices of every kind. While pretending to serve Him, they violate every part of God's holy law, and are not prevented by that fear of God from indulging themselves in all sorts of sinful pleasures. Instead of turning to Him in repentance to a life of obedience to His Will, they make no scruple of rebelling against Him in almost all their actions. Beguiling themselves to have done their duty to God by some ridiculous expiations, they abandon themselves to their wickedness with greater licentiousness. Involved in a greater and greater accumulation of errors, the sparks which should enable them to discover the glory of God are smothered, and at last extinguished by the darkness of their sin. However, the seeds of the knowledge of God remain imbedded in them. But, being greatly corrupted, they can produce only the worst of fruits.

Thus, in times of peace, they simply take God for granted. In times of distress, they seek Him even with prayers. This proves that they are not altogether ignorant of God, which all the more shows them up as reprobates.

Chapter V

The Knowledge of God Conspicuous in the Creation and Continual Government of the World

1. Although the essence of God is incomprehensible, He has made Himself known to us, as previously mentioned, by the seed of religion sown in our hearts. He further manifests Himself through the Creation, and by His continual government of it. The universe, with all its symmetry, is a mirror in which we may see the otherwise invisible God (Heb 11:3; Ps 19:1, 3; Rom 1:20).

2. The wonderful wisdom of God is manifested in innumerable proofs, both in heaven and on earth. While students of astronomy, medicine and physics, who apply to their subjects of study skill, exactness and industry, discover the wonderful operations of the providence of God; the non-scientific and illiterate, who are furnished with no other assistance than their own eyes, can neither be ignorant of the excellence of the Divine skill. With his natural eyes, the latter, looking merely at the regular movement of the stars, should know their Lord. The symmetry, beauty, and the ingenious use of the various parts of the human body, are a further manifestation of the wisdom of its Maker.

3. As to the wonders of God's handiwork in the structure of the human body, some ancient philosophers have justly called man a microcosm, or world in miniature. Man is an eminent specimen of the power, goodness and wisdom of God; and contains in himself wonders enough to occupy the attention of his mind. To attain some ideas of God, it is therefore not necessary to go beyond ourselves. By looking into ourselves we may find God! The human race is a clear mirror of the works of God, for even infants are able to praise Him (Ps 8:2). Paul quotes from Aratus, that "we are the offspring of God" (Acts 17:29), in the sense that God's adorning us with such great excellence has proven Himself to be our Father.

4. Despite the aforesaid manifestations of God's wonderful workmanship, there are those who, being blinded by ingratitude and pride, suppress the light of this knowledge in their hearts. While man should discover in the body and soul "a hundred vestiges of God," he still denies

His being. In God's place, they conveniently put nature as the author of all things.

5. One way of denying God is, to employ the dogma of Aristotle, to deny the immortality of the soul. Because, as it is observed, that the organs of the body are directed by the faculties of the soul, they pretend the soul to be so united to the body as to be incapable of subsisting without it. Such a notion is to be refuted! The soul can function without the action of the body in such measures as calculation of the movement of the stars, in bringing to memory things past and present, in imaginations and inventions, which are proofs of divinity in man. Even in sleep, the soul has freedom of action. Useful ideas spring into being, while future events may find divination. If we can make judgments between right and wrong, and, even in sleep, our souls remain intelligent, how can it be that there is no God to govern the world?

Then, there are those who talk of a secret inspiration animating the whole world, just as if the world, which is a theatre erected for displaying the glory of God, were its own creator! Such talk is to set up a shadowy deity, and to banish all ideas of the true God.

6. We see then that there is a God who governs with almighty power over the whole creation. Thunder, lightning, tempest and every other phenomenon of God's work of government in nature, which are particularly mentioned in Job and Isaiah, should lead us from acknowledging His power to considering His eternity, self-existence and goodness. The mighty acts of His continual government of Creation should lead us to show Him as the sole Cause to the Creation.

7. Having considered God's manifestation of Himself in His works of creation and providence in the physical realm, we must enter into a second species of His works, viz., His providence in the government of human society. As a general rule, He exhibits His kindness and beneficence to all. However, events that transpire daily show Him to be merciful to the pious, and severe to the wicked. His perpetual rule of righteousness in governing over human affairs is neither altered when it is seen. He frequently permits the wicked to exult in impunity for a time and, on the contrary, allows good men to be harassed with adversity, and even to be oppressed by the ungodly. This leads us to God's judgment hereafter. Till

then, certain punishments are deferred. And, when God shows mercy and unwearied benignity, it is with a view to overcoming man's depravity.

8. In His government over human affairs, God shows not only His goodness, justice and mercy but also His power and wisdom. The Psalmist sings of such power and wisdom (Ps 107): when, in desperate cases of His children perishing in deserts or shipwrecks, or suffering from imprisonment or hunger, God comes to their deliverance. Such are His acts of paternal clemency, far from being chance happenings, as the majority of men blindly suppose. His power is equally manifested when, on the other hand, He takes the wise in their own craftiness (1 Cor 3:19) by subduing the arrogance of the impious, demolishing their fortresses, confounding their machinations, and causing them to fall by their own exertions.

9. Our knowledge of God through such works of providence, with many more examples which we could easily adduce, should lead us to deep-rooted heart knowledge, and not merely some floating mental speculation. Thus, the best way of seeking God is not with that presumptuous curiosity attempting an examination of His essence, but rather to contemplate Him and His goodness in His works. Indeed, through His works, He familiarises with, and communicates Himself to us. Thus, the Apostle declares, that He is not to be sought afar off since He dwells in everyone of us (Acts 17:27). Augustine reverently teaches that, being incapable of comprehending Him, "and fainting, as it were, under His immensity, we must take a view of His works, that we may be refreshed with His goodness."

10. Such knowledge of God should inspire us not only to worship Him, but also arouse within us the hope of a future life. His judgments upon men in this life being incomplete, we should conclude these are preludes to greater things, to be fully manifested in the life beyond. When we see the pious afflicted by the impious and the wicked, on the contrary, flourish and prosper with impunity, we are led to conclude that there is another life, to which is reserved punishment to the bad and reward to the good.

11. Notwithstanding this knowledge of God and His everlasting dominion so abundantly reflected in the mirror of His works in providence,

there are so few who see it! How many of us, when we lift up our eyes to heaven or upon the various regions of the earth, think of the Creator? We see the works, but not the Author.

Similarly, in regard to the things that daily happen in the ordinary course of nature, is it not the general opinion that they take place by the workings of a blind fortune? This is the erroneous view, not only of the common, ignorant people, but of the learned, and of philosophers too. Plato, the most religious of them all, loses himself in his round globe. These believe that men are rolled and whirled about by the blind temerity or caprice of fortune.

12. Now, if men take the wise and mighty acts of God in providence to be merely blind occurrences of fortune, how erroneous they must be when they contemplate on the Deity. Every individual forms his own idea of Him, in wanderings through his labyrinths of dark understanding. The result is a multitude of gods, and that not only among the ignorant, but philosophers as well. For example, Stoics said that from all the parts of nature might be collected the various names of God, while Epicureans rejected the idea of God altogether. There is no subject productive of so many dissensions among both learned and unlearned as the subject of God.

The story is told of one Simonides, who, when asked by King Hiero what God was, requested a day to consider it. When the King asked for an answer the next day, Simonides begged to be allowed two days longer. And, having successfully doubled the number of days to ponder the matter, he at length answered, “The longer I consider the subject, the more obscure it appears to me.” Does it not show that men, who are taught only by nature, have no certain knowledge, but are so confused that finally they worship an unknown God?

13. Now, it must be maintained, that whoever adulterates the pure religion is guilty of a departure from the one true God. This is declared in Holy Scripture to be apostasy—even the substitute of demons in the place of God. Thus, Paul declares the Ephesians to be “without God” (Eph 2:12), though they had many, till they found the true One. Even the Samaritans, who seemed to approach very nearly to true worship, were declared by our Lord to “worship [they] knew not what” (John 4:22).

Every form of worship by human contrivance, including the best of legislation, which is founded on human consent, is rejected as spurious. It remains for God to give a revelation concerning Himself from Heaven.

14. We conclude, therefore, that the light of nature is insufficient to conduct us into the right way, unless our hearts are further illuminated through faith by an internal revelation of God, as the Apostle declares, “Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God” (Heb 11:3).

15. Now, it is to be noted that whatever deficiency of natural ability prevents us from a pure knowledge of God, yet, since the deficiency arises from our own fault, we are left without excuse. And this inexcusableness is all the more accentuated by the fact that God has fully manifested Himself in His works around us, and shown us the right way. Indeed, the seeds of Divine knowledge, by the wonderful operation of nature, are sown in our hearts, but these, being sinfully corrupted, produce no fair crop. We conclude, indeed, that fallen mankind cannot sufficiently find God merely through the light of God’s creation and providence.

Chapter VI

The Guidance and Teaching of Scripture Necessary to Lead to the Knowledge of God the Creator

1. We have seen how the light of nature has revealed God before the eyes of man, so that man has no excuse not to know God. But since man has not perceived the goodness of God by the light of nature, it is necessary for God to give us another light, and a better one, to lead us to Himself, viz., the light of His Word. The light of His Word leads us to a knowledge of Him, as Creator and Saviour, and it is given to those whom He intended to be brought closer to Himself.

The light of His Word, even Holy Scripture, is likened to a pair of spectacles. As old people with dim eyes brighten up immediately when given spectacles to read a book, so, with the help of His Word, we obtain a clear view of the true God. All dark and confused notions of Him are thereby dispelled.

The light of His Word is given by opening His own sacred mouth. This He began to do, by speaking to Adam, Noah and Abraham, and to the rest of the patriarchs. These who received God's spoken Word were distinguished from the unbelievers. The light of the Word spoken revealed God, not only as Creator, Author and Arbiter of all events, but also as Redeemer, which latter subject will be treated in due course. At this juncture, suffice us to note that, from the Word is the fact that God the Creator is clearly revealed in contradistinction to the whole multitude of fictitious deities.

2. Whether God revealed Himself to the patriarchs by oracles and visions, or, by means of the ministry of men, to hand down what has been received to posterity, those who received the revelation were convinced that the information they received came from God. This certainty was so attached to God's Word, that it had an undoubted credit, superior to all human opinion. In order to perpetuate this Word for instruction to all ages, the same oracles that were given to the patriarchs were written down as public records. With this design, the Law was promulgated, to which were added the Prophets as its interpreters.

Thus, in order to enjoy the true light of religion, we must become a disciple of Scripture. All true wisdom comes only through a reverential

embracing of this written testimony, which God has been pleased to deliver, concerning Himself, to us. We must come to His Word, the Holy Scriptures, in obedience, which is the source not only of a perfect faith, but of all right knowledge of God.

3. The mutability of the human mind, and its propensity to errors of every kind, necessitate the committing of God's Word into writing, that it might not be lost in oblivion or corrupted by the presumption of men. This written Word is the rule of eternal truth; and the line that directs us, as it were, through a labyrinth, to a knowledge of the Deity. Without the guidance of His Word, all our running in search of Him will never lead us to the goal. Thus, the Psalmist, in Psalm 93 and 96, talks of God "reigning," by which he refers, not so much to His power, as to the doctrine of "reigning," in the sense of dispelling errors and superstitions about Himself, so that pure religion might flourish.

4. While the Psalmist, in Psalm 19, declares the light of nature as revealing the Creator God to man, He deems such light to be ineffectual. Wherefore, the law of the Lord is introduced as the perfect one that converts the soul (v. 17). Similarly, in the 29th Psalm, he sees the need of God's higher revelation, above the terrors of the Divine voice, through thunders and tempests. The need of this higher revelation, which is His sacred Word, is affirmed by Christ in His talk with the Samaritan woman, in which He declared the Jews were the only true worshippers, because to them were committed the Word.

Chapter VII

The Testimony of the Spirit Necessary to Give Full Authority to Scripture. The Impiety of Pretending that the Credibility of Scripture Depends on the Judgment of the Church

1. Since God does not speak to men in daily oracles, He has preserved His truth in the Scripture, and only in the Scripture, for us. The Scriptures have authority over the believers, and are to be received as “the very words pronounced by God himself,” “when they are satisfied of its divine origin.”

But who can assure us that God is the author of the Scripture? The Roman Catholic Church presents herself as the answer: “The Scriptures have only so much weight as is conceded to them by the suffrages of the Church.” The Church decides which books of the Bible have come down to us from God, which are to be comprised in the canon, so they say. This is sheer arrogance, tantamount to an extortion from the ignorant; this admission that the Church can do everything! Such a claim, subjecting the authority of God’s Word to the judgment of men, is contempt of the Holy Spirit, a tyranny over conscience!

2. The Church does not take precedence over the Scriptures; but the Scriptures, the Church. One word from the Apostle suffices to prove this. St. Paul testifies that the Church is “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets” (Eph 2:20). If the doctrine of the Prophets and Apostles be the foundation of the Church, it must have been certain, antecedently to the existence of the Church. The Scripture existed before the Church, so it is absurd to say the Church is the power that determines the Scriptures’ authority. This rather is the truth of the relationship between the Church and the Scripture: when the Church receives the Scripture, and seals it with her suffrage, she does not authenticate a thing otherwise dubious or controvertible; but, knowing it to be the truth of her God, performs a duty of piety. But, if it is asked, “How shall we know it is God’s Word unless we have the Church to tell us?”; this is just like asking “How shall we distinguish light from darkness, white from black, sweet from bitter?” The Scripture exhibits its truth clearly, as white is distinguished from black, as sweet from bitter.

3. Augustine is commonly quoted for the opinion, that “he would not believe the Gospel unless he were influenced by the authority of the Church.” Where Augustine said these words, he was not maintaining that the faith of the pious was founded on the authority of the Church, nor did he mean that the certainty of the Gospel depended on it; but simply, that unbelievers would have no assurance of the truth of the Gospel unless they were influenced by the “consent of the Church.” He was arguing with the Manichees, a heretical sect, who claimed the truth to be on their side, without proving it. Augustine inquired, what they would do if they met with a man who did not believe the Gospel. In such a situation, to bring in the authority of the Church, which had come down from the Apostolic age, might be helpful as an introduction to prepare the unbelieving for the faith of the Gospel. Nowhere did Augustine propound that our faith in the Scripture rested in the arbitrary decision of the Church.

4. The authority of the Scripture rests, first of all, in God being the author. The Scriptures are not claimed by their writers, the Prophets and Apostles, to be products of their own genius, nor arguments from reason. The sacred name of God is throughout invoked, to compel the submission of the whole world.

The Scripture exhibits the plainest evidences, that it is God who speaks in them. It is discernible that all the books of the sacred Scriptures very far excel all other writings. If we read with pure eyes and sound minds, we shall immediately perceive the majesty of God, which compels us to obey Him.

The authority of Scripture cannot be asserted by arguments and disputations. If I were to contend with the most subtle despisers of God, who want to display their wit and skill in weakening the authority of Scripture, I should be able, without difficulty, to silence their obstreperous clamour. And, if I were of any use to refute their cavils, I would easily demolish their boasts. But though anyone vindicates the sacred Word of God from the aspersions of men, yet this will not produce in their hearts sound faith in the Scripture. Reason alone cannot produce submission to the authority of the Scripture.

The authority of Scripture is to be established rather by the testimony of the Holy Spirit. For as God alone is a sufficient witness of Himself in His own Word, so the Scripture will never gain credit in the hearts of

men, till they be confirmed by the internal testimony of the Spirit. It is necessary, therefore, that the same Spirit, who spoke by the mouths of the prophets, should penetrate our hearts, to convince us that they faithfully delivered the oracles which were divinely entrusted to them. And this connection is very suitably expressed in these words, “My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed’s seed, . . . for ever” (Isa 59:21).

5. It is an undeniable truth, that they who have been inwardly taught by the Spirit, feel an entire acquiescence in the Scripture; and that it is self-authenticated, carrying with it its own evidence. The authority of Scripture is therefore not to be made the subject of demonstration and arguments from reason. Only those illuminated by Him can believe in the divine original of the Scripture. These have the certainty, not from their own judgment nor that of others, that they have received it from God’s own mouth by the ministry of men. These have an intuitive perception of God Himself. It is such a persuasion as requires no reasons; such a knowledge as is supported by the highest reason, in which, indeed, the mind rests, with greater security and constancy than in any reasons; it is, finally, such a sentiment as cannot be produced but by a revelation from heaven. Such conviction of the divine original of the Scripture, that it is invincible truth, is far different from that which captures those who hastily and superstitiously embrace what they understand not.

This, that I have spoken, is what every believer experiences in his heart. That alone is true faith, which the Spirit of God seals in our hearts, even as Isaiah predicts, that “all [the] children” of the renovated Church “shall be taught of the LORD” (Isa 54:13). This faith, which the Holy Spirit seals in our hearts, God deigns to confer only on his elect, and not on the rest of men. It is, therefore, not surprising that we see so much ignorance and stupidity among the vulgar herd of mankind.

Chapter VIII

Rational Proofs to Establish the Belief of the Scripture

1. Apart from the certainty we receive from the Holy Spirit of the authority of Scripture, it is beneficial to consider the rational proofs that should establish our belief in the Scripture.

The Divine origin of Scripture may be observed in its orderliness, the heavenly nature of its doctrine, the beautiful agreement of all the parts with each other. But it is the dignity of the subjects than the beauty of language that marks out its Divinity. The Scriptures compel us to receive them as God's Word, by the force of truth in them. Demosthenes, Cicero, Plato and Aristotle, the beauties of rhetoricians and philosophers, pale into insignificance in the light of Holy Scripture, for there is something Divine in Holy Writ, which far surpasses the highest attainments and ornaments of human industry. This quality of Scripture is what St. Paul declares: "not . . . of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power" (1 Cor 2:4).

2. The diction of some prophets, like Isaiah and David, is not inferior in eloquence to heathen writers, though the speech of Amos and Jeremiah is rough and rustic. Nevertheless, "the majesty of the Spirit" is everywhere conspicuous.

3. The antiquity of Scripture is of no small weight to accredit its Divinity. The most ancient writings of Greece or Egypt, are of a much lower age than Moses. And Moses, when he wrote, referred to a tradition that traced back four hundred years, to Abraham; which makes the Scripture of even more ancient beginning.

4. The Law of Moses, which records impartially the evil deeds of one's own next of kin, e.g., Jacob's disgrace of his own tribe in the sins of Simeon and Levi, and even those of Moses' own brother and sister, is another evidence of Divine inspiration. Shall we say that he spoke, according to the dictates of the flesh, or that he obeyed the command of the Holy Spirit?

5. The miracles which Moses relates, are further confirmations of the law he delivered. They are testimonies from heaven of his being a true prophet.

6. Some ascribe Moses' miracles to magical arts. Such a charge is absurd in the light of Moses' abhorrence of the same. Moses commanded, that he who merely consulted magicians and soothsayers should be stoned (Lev 20:6). The miracle of manna from heaven is one that refutes his use of magical arts.

7. That Moses spoke under Divine inspiration, is proved by the fulfilment of prophecies, e.g., Judah's sceptre, which did not come true until the choice of David, hundreds of years after Jacob's prediction.

8. The fulfilment of prophecies by other prophets further proves the Divinity of Scripture. There are too many to relate, but let it suffice to mention Isaiah's prediction on Cyrus' conquest of the Chaldeans (Isa 45:1), Jeremiah's declaration of the Jew's captivity for seventy years (Jer 25:11, 12; 29:10), and Daniel's prophecy of events of 600 years' duration in such a connected series, that he seemed to be composing a history.

9. Some clamorous men question the authorship of Moses and the prophets, and even if such a man as Moses ever lived! But if any man should question the existence of Plato or Aristotle, would he not run the risk of being beaten? The fact is, that Moses' law has been wonderfully preserved by God's providence, than by man's endeavour. Despite the negligence of the priests, which caused the concealment for a time, the law was rediscovered by King Josiah (2 Kgs 22:8, 10), and ever since has continued to be transmitted.

10. Another question put forward by the enemies of Scripture is, it was destroyed under Antiochus' burning of all books. I, on the contrary, ask where they could be so speedily fabricated? For, as soon as the persecution subsided, the books of Scripture immediately appeared, and they were acknowledged as Holy Writ by all the pious. And none ever charged the Scripture thus received as forged. That pious priests were fired with a zeal, to preserve the Scripture from destruction, with their lives, is another evidence of their sacredness. Soon a Greek Translation was made of the Scripture, because the Jews had by then lost much of their language. This all the more proved the antiquity of the Scripture. And in the law and prophets, God has preserved for us the doctrine of salvation, that Christ might be manifested in due time. Augustine observes:

the Jews who received not the doctrine, but kept the book intact, were in fact librarians of the Christian Church.

11. If we examine the New Testament, we will find the low and mean style of the Three Evangelists' narration, detested by proud men, compensated by the discourses of Christ. The loftiness of the writings of John, Peter, and Paul, needs to be explained. Peter and John were unlettered fishermen. As to Paul, he was once a cruel and sanguinary enemy of the Gospel. That he should now write to vindicate the doctrine he once opposed, is evidence of none other than the teaching of the Holy Spirit.

12. The consent of the Church, generation after generation, in voluntarily obeying the Scripture is another proof of their Divine origin. All the powers of earth, that have armed themselves for their destruction, have evaporated into smoke. The Scriptures have a power that rises superior to every danger. The Scriptures are received not by one nation, but by the whole world!

13. Finally, we have the testimony of martyrs. Is it no small confirmation of Scripture, that it has been sealed with the blood of so many, not by the fanaticism of erroneous men, but through a firm and constant zeal for God?

Now, all these rational proofs, that have been advanced for the Divine origin of Scripture, are still not sufficient to produce firm faith in it. The Scripture will only be effectual to produce the saving knowledge of God, when the Holy Spirit also acts to produce that internal persuasion. Without faith, which is the Holy Spirit's work, no amount of rational proofs of the Scripture will convince an infidel.

Chapter IX

All the Principles of Piety Subverted by Fanatics Who Substitute Revelations for Scripture

1. Those who abandon the Scripture, and imagine to themselves some other way of approach to God, must be considered a frenzied lot! There have arisen, lately, some unsteady men, who haughtily claim to be taught by the Spirit, but reject any Bible-reading! They deride those who read the Bible, as attending to the dead and killing letter. To these who put the Scripture below their revelations so-called, I would ask, by what spirit are they elevated to such a sublime position of their own? If they say, that it is the Spirit of Christ, I must reply, how ridiculous!

For, the Apostles of Christ, and other believers in the primitive Church, were illuminated by the same Spirit. Yet, not one of them contemned the Divine Word, but were rather filled with their high reverence for it. Such a reverential attitude was predicted by Isaiah, “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” (Isa. 59:21). It is stated here, that in the new Church, under the reign of Christ, His people will be governed by the Word of God, as well as by His Spirit. Therefore, those who try to disconnect the Word from the Spirit, which the prophet has joined in an inviolable union, are guilty of sacrilege. And, we have Paul, for a testimony against their sacrilege! Paul, after he was caught up to the third heaven, did not cease to study the Bible. Moreover, he exhorted Timothy “to give attendance to reading” (1 Tim 4:13). Worthy of remembrance in his eulogium on the Scriptures, that it “is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect” (2 Tim 3:16, 17).

The teaching, that the use of Scripture is only temporary and transient, is diabolical madness! The Spirit, that was promised to us, is not to feign new and unheard of revelations, or to coin a new system of doctrine, different from the Gospel, but rather to seal our minds in the same doctrine which the Gospel delivers.

2. Hence, it is incumbent on us diligently to read and attend to the Scripture, if we want to have any benefit from the Spirit. For, as Satan

transforms himself into an angel of light (2 Cor 11:14), we must have a certain criterion to distinguish between the Holy Spirit and Evil One. That criterion is the Word of God.

One argument these anti-Scripture fanatics propound for themselves is, that the Spirit of God, to whom all things ought to be subject, cannot be made subject to the Scripture. Our answer is, that He is degraded, if He is made to conform to the rules of men, or of angels, or of any other beings, but not to the Scripture. For, He is the author of the Scripture. To conform to the Scripture, is simply to be consistent with Himself. Therefore, if we want to understand the mind of the Spirit, we can find perfect guidance only through the Scripture.

3. Now these fanatics quote Paul, in 2 Corinthians 3:6, to prove their point: “Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.” Does Paul here teach one to indulge in self-revelations; against the teaching of the Scripture? In the text quoted, the Apostle is contending against false apostles, who, recommending the law to the exclusion of Christ, were seducing the people from the blessings of the New Covenant, in which the Lord engages to engrave His law in the minds of believers. In this context, the letter is dead, and the law slays the readers of it, where it is separated from the grace of Christ. On the other hand, if it efficaciously impressed on our hearts by the working of the Spirit, if it exhibits Christ, it becomes the Word of Life, “converting the soul . . . , making wise the simple” (Ps 19:7). Now, in the immediate context of the verse quoted by the fanatics, the Apostle calls his preaching “the ministration of the spirit” (v. 8), doubtless meaning, that the Holy Spirit so adheres to His own Truth, which He has expressed in the Scriptures. The Holy Spirit only displays and exerts His power where the Word is received with due reverence and honour. Conversely, as I have asserted before, the Scripture will not be received with certainty as God’s Word, unless the Spirit confirms them in our hearts. The Lord has established a kind of mutual connection between the certainty of His Word and of His Spirit; so that our minds are filled with a reverence for the Word, when, by the light of the Spirit, we are enabled therein to behold the Divine countenance. On the other hand, we gladly receive the Spirit, when we recognise Him in His image, that is, in the Word.

God did not publish His Word to mankind for a momentary ostentation, with a design to annul it on the advent of the Spirit. Therefore, when He sent the Spirit, it was rather with the view of confirming us in His Word. In this manner, Christ opened the understanding of His two disciples; not that, rejecting the Scriptures, they might be wise to themselves, but rather that they might understand the Scriptures (Luke 24:27). Similarly, Paul, in exhorting the Thessalonians to “quench not the Spirit” (1 Thess 5:19), he does not lead them to speculations independent of the Word; for he immediately adds, “despise not prophesyings” (v. 20). This means that the Spirit and Word are to go together, hand in hand. The light of the Spirit is extinguished, when prophecies fall into contempt.

The Word is the instrument, by which the Lord dispenses to believers the illumination of His Spirit.

Chapter X

In Scripture, the True God Opposed, Exclusively, to All the Gods of the Heathen

1. We have shown that the knowledge of God is revealed to us in the creation, and more clearly unfolded in Scripture. Let us now examine if the revelation of Himself in the Scripture agrees with the revelation of Himself in His creation. We shall confine ourselves to that knowledge of God, which relates to the creation, without getting into the realm of His redeeming work through Christ the Mediator. And though it will be useful to quote some New Testament passages on the power of God in creation and providence, I wish the reader to keep to the point now intended to be discussed. At present, then, let it suffice to understand how God, the Maker of heaven and earth, governs the universe which He has made. We find that the goodness of God, like a father, is everywhere manifested, as well as His severity, showing Him to be a righteous Judge, punishing the wicked, particularly the obstinate.

2. Here is a description of God, by Moses, that is intended to be a brief comprehension of all that men should know concerning Him. It is given in Exodus 34:6–7, “The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth. Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children’s children.”

In this statement we observe, first of all, in His twice repeated name, the assertion of His eternity and self-existence. Secondly, His attributes, giving us a description, not what He is in Himself, but of what He is to us, so that our knowledge of Him is not in the speculative heights, but rather “in a lively perception.” Here in the Scripture, we find an enumeration of the same attributes, as are brightly displayed in the creation—clemency, goodness, mercy, justice, judgment, and truth. In the word “God” is His power comprised, as its Hebrew original “Elohim,” connotes.

The prophets, in speaking of God, use the same adjectives, when they intend a complete exhibition of His holy name. To save the trouble of quoting many passages, let us content ourselves with just one reference to Psalm 145, which contains such an accurate summary of His perfections,

that nothing seems to be omitted. And yet it contains nothing but what may be known of Him from a contemplation of His creation. From experience, we perceive God to be just what He declares of Himself in His Word.

In Jeremiah, though in a briefer statement, God announces, to the same effect, in what characters He will be known by us, “Let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth” (Jer 9:24). These three things about God are of highest importance for us to know—mercy, in which alone consists of salvation; judgment, which is executed on the wicked every day, and awaits them in a still heavier degree to eternal destruction; righteousness, by which the faithful are preserved. When you understand these three attributes of God, then you will intelligently glorify God. Now, this revelation of God of His mercy, judgment, and righteousness, must logically lead us to His truth, power, holiness, and goodness. For how can God execute mercy, judgment, and righteousness, without His inflexible veracity, without being constantly truthful? And, how can we believe that He governs the world with justice, without His power? And, whence proceeds mercy, but from goodness? Then, as we contemplate His mercy, judgment, and righteousness, we are led to His holiness. The knowledge of God is imparted to us in Scripture, as designed for the same purpose as that derived from the creation—it invites us first to fear God, and then to trust in Him; that we may learn to honour Him with full obedience to His will, and with full dependence on His goodness.

3. The sum of the doctrine, we have learned above, of God is this: that the Scripture, in directing us to the true God, expressly excludes and rejects all the gods of the heathen. For, though the name of the one supreme God has been known universally, and acknowledged on the lips of those who worship a multitude of gods, as attested by Justin Martyr in his book, “*On the Monarchy of God,*” and by Tertullian, yet by the vanity of their minds, men have been drawn into all kinds of erroneous notions of God. Thus, even the wisest of them betray the wandering uncertainty of their mind, when, in their troubles, they call on all kinds of gods and fabulous deities to deliver them! And, though they do not entertain such absurd notions of God, as the ignorant crowd who superstitiously believe in Jupiter,

Mercury, Venus, and Minerva and the rest of them, yet they are by no means exempt from the delusions of Satan. As we have already remarked, whatever coverings their ingenuity have invented, none of the philosophers can free themselves from the sin of revolting from God, insofar as their corruption of His truth is concerned. For this reason Habakkuk, after condemning all idols of the heathen, bids us seek “the LORD . . . in His holy temple” (Hab 2:20), that the faithful might acknowledge no other God than Jehovah, who has revealed Himself to us in the Scripture.

Chapter XI

Unlawfulness of Ascribing to God a Visible Form. All Idolatry a Defection from the True God

1. Since the whole world is gripped by the stupidity, to make gods of wood, stone, and metal, to represent the Deity, we ought to hold to the principle, that any image that is made to represent God is falsehood, corrupting the Divine glory. The Second Command forbids this. God rejects, without exception, all statues and pictures and other figures, in which idolators imagined that He would be near them.

2. That God has no visible form is Moses' reminder to Israel, who saw no manner of similitude on the day that He spoke to them at Horeb. Isaiah condemned Israel for trying to represent God, the incorporeal, by setting up images of wood, stone, and gold (Isa 40:18; 41:7, 29; 46:5). Paul's testimony against idols is the same (Acts 17:29). Even Seneca, is cited by Augustine, to join in the condemnation of idolatry: "They dedicate the vilest and meanest materials to represent the sacred, immortal, and inviolable gods; and give them some a human form, and some a brutal one, and some a double sex, and different bodies; and they confer the name of gods upon images which, if animated, would be accounted monsters."

3. There are those who try to defend images of God and the saints by reference to the cherubim over the mercy seat (Exod 25:17, 18). This is an unreasonable argument, since the cherubim were constructed in the form of extended wings covering the Ark, so as to suggest that the best contemplation of the Divine Being is when the mind is transported beyond itself with admiration. The seraphim, as seen by the prophet Isaiah, also covered their faces (Isa 6:2), signifying that the splendour of the Divine glory is so great, that even angels themselves cannot steadfastly behold it. The cherubim were peculiar to the old state of tutelage under the legal dispensation. To adduce them, as examples for the imitation of the present age, is quite absurd.

4. That God should be represented by some dead material, even if it were gold, or silver, and made by mortal men who might die any moment, is presumption and madness. There is much propriety in that sarcasm of

a heathen poet, who represents one of their idols as saying, “Formerly, I was the trunk of a wild fig-tree, a useless log; when the artificer, after hesitating whether he would make me a stool or a deity, at length determined that I should be a god.” By the same sentiment, Isaiah has rebuked the idolators of his time who, from the same piece of wood, would carve a god, or chop firewood to heat an oven to make bread (Isa 44:9–20).

It is to be further observed, that all similitudes are equally as much forbidden as graven images. The Greeks who make no sculpture of Deity, but many pictures of the same, are just as guilty as others, because all similitudes are criminal and insulting to the Divine Majesty.

5. Gregory has said that images are the books of the illiterate. This is very different from the teaching of the Holy Spirit. Jeremiah pronounces that “the stock is a doctrine of vanities” (Jer 10:8), and Habakkuk says “the molten image [is] a teacher of lies” (Hab 2:18). The papist doctrine, that images are substitutes for books, is hereby condemned.

6. Images are condemned also by ancient theologians like Lactantius, Eusebius, and Augustine. Years before these ancients, it was decreed by Elibertine Council, in its Chapter 36: “It hath been decreed, that no pictures be had in the churches, and that what is worshipped or adored be not painted on the walls.” Most remarkable is what Augustine cites from Varro: “That they who first introduced images of the gods, removed fear and added error.”

7. Images are condemned also for their abandoned luxury and obscenity, which if anyone were to imitate, would be inviting corporeal punishment. Even prostitutes in brothels are to be seen in more chaste and modest dress, than those images in temples, which are supposed to be images of virgins. Nor are martyrs clothed in more becoming and modest attire. The fact is that those who presided churches with idols, had resigned to them the office of teaching—for no other reason than that they were themselves dumb.

8. Respecting the origin of idols, the generally received opinion agrees with what is asserted in the book of Wisdom (Chapter 14:15), namely, that the first authors of them were those who honoured and worshipped the dead. This custom, I grant, is very ancient. But, I cannot concede that it was the first cause of idolatry, for from Moses, we learn

that idols were long in use before the worship of the dead, as mentioned by secular writers. Moses' narration of Rachel's stolen idols (Gen 31:19) speaks of a common corruption, which may be traced to the times of Terah, Abraham's father. It is probable that, while the holy patriarch Noah was yet alive, the earth, which had been purged of its corruptions, was infested with idolatry. The example of Israel's idolatry proves that men cannot believe God to be among them, unless God exhibits some external signs of His presence. This leads to men's making of visible forms, in which they believe God to be presented to their carnal eyes.

9. The invention of idols leads to the adoration or worship of idols. This adoration or worship blinds the eyes and mind of the worshippers, so much so that they think the idols to be possessed of some inherent divinity. For this reason, the Lord has prohibited, not only the erection of statues made as representations of Him, but also the consecration of any inscriptions or monuments to stand as objects of worship.

Whether the idol is worshipped, or God in the idol is worshipped, is idolatry. To argue that the images are not considered gods, in defence of idolatry, falls flat in the light of Israel's behaviour before Aaron's golden calf. When Aaron said that those were the gods, by whom they had been liberated from Egypt, they boldly assented (Exod 32:4–6). The using of images invariably leads to the imagination that God is displaying His power in the images.

10. Those who defend the use of images, by differentiating them from the God they worship, are contradicted by the prostration they make before them. And when they pray, why do they turn themselves to them, as towards the ears of God? For, it is true, as Augustine says, "That no man prays or worships thus, looking on an image, who is not impressed with an opinion that he shall be heard by it, and a hope that it will do for him as he desires." For the sake of images, men will make pilgrimages; and even go to war, as in the defence of country and religion. Do they not in fact regard the images themselves to be gods indeed? Nor did the Jews or heathen in ancient times call them gods; and yet the Prophets were constantly accusing them of fornication with wood and stone. They were denounced for what self-called Christians today are daily practising, that is, for worshipping God by corporeal adoration before figures of wood and stone.

11. Those who wish to be thought Christians, whilst bowing down to images, have a subtle way of defending their action. It is the use of two Greek words, **eidolodouleia** (service of images), and **eidololatreaia** (worship of images). They pretend, that the reverence they pay to images is **eidolodouleia** (service of images), and not **eidololatreaia** (worship of images). But what is the difference between service and worship? By this rhetoric, they are trying to confuse the simple. What they say is equivalent to a confession, that they adore their images, without adoration!

12. While images are never to be permitted in worship, there is a legitimate use of sculpture and painting, insofar as both are gifts of God. However, nothing should be painted or engraved, but objects visible to our eyes. The subjects of sculpture and painting consist partly of histories and transactions, partly of corporeal forms without reference to any transactions. The former are of some use in information or recollection; the latter can furnish nothing but some amusement. It is evident, that almost all the images, which are set up in the churches, have been of the latter description; and this, I say, to be altogether unavailing for the purpose of instruction, not to mention the indecency displayed in most of them by the painters and statuaries.

13. Now, let us consider, whether it is expedient to have any images at all in Christian temples, either descriptive of historical events, or representative of human forms. Historically, the first five hundred years saw a purer religion, in which Christian churches generally were without images. Images were first introduced to ornament the churches, when the ministry had begun to degenerate. In the earlier days, images were intentionally kept out of churches. Augustine expressly discountenanced images, in that they would affect weak minds, to think they were real and alive. Hence, John had exhorted us, not only “keep” ourselves from worship of idols, but “from idols” (1 John 5:21) themselves. I therefore would not permit any images in a Christian temple, other than those natural and expressive ones, which the Lord has consecrated in His Word; such as Baptism and the Lord’s Supper.

14. Remarks made on the above subject should be sufficient, were it not for the consideration of the decree of the Second Council of Nice (AD 787), that not only should images be had in churches, but also that they should be worshipped. I am not concerned by any, who would use the

authority of this Council, for there is a book written, from that time, reciting the opinions of bishops who attended this Council, and who argued for the images in a most absurd manner, as to disgust the reader. For example, one John, delegate of Eastern churches, said, “God created man in his own image”; and, hence, he inferred that we ought to have images. Another, to prove that they ought to be placed on the altars, cited this verse, “No man, when he hath lighted a candle, putteth it . . . under a bushel” (Luke 11:33). Another said, “As the patriarchs used the sacrifices of the heathen, so Christians ought to have the images of saints, instead of the idols of the heathen.”

15. The advocates of images have foolishly based their arguments on Jacob’s worshipping of Pharaoh, and of the staff of Joseph, and such passage as, “Worship at his footstool” (Ps 99:5). Theodosius, bishop of Mira, defends the propriety of worshipping images even from the dreams of his archdeacon, as seriously as if he had an immediate revelation from heaven!

16. The worship of images must be deprived of its pretence to antiquity, which the papists falsely urge in its favour. It is only the bishops of a latter age, who insist on it, with such absurdity as to give them the same honour as is due to the Trinity. The Council of Nice, AD 787, decreed that the adversaries of images were counted worse than the worst of heretics, the Samaritans; and added, “Let them rejoice and exult, who have the image of Christ, and offer sacrifice to it.” Where is now the distinction of **latría** and **dulia**, with which they attempt to deceive both God and men? For the Council gives the same honour, without exception, to images and the living God.

Chapter XII

God Contradistinguished from Idols That He May be Solely and Supremely Worshipped

1. Whenever Scripture asserts that there is but one God, it does not merely contend for the bare name, but also teaches that whatever belongs to God, should not be transferred to another. This is the pure religion and differs from idolatry. Even blind mortals, groping in the dark, have perceived the necessity of some rule for orderly worship, as the Greek word **eusebeia**, meaning “right worship,” signifies.

The word “religion,” according to Cicero, is derived from a verb signifying “to read over again,” or to “gather again.” From this connotation, Cicero reasons, that good worshippers often recollect, and reconsider what is true. I consider this derivation to be far-fetched. I rather think the word “religion” is opposed to a liberty of wandering without restraint; because the greater part of the world rashly embrace what they meet with, and ramble from one thing to another. Piety, in order to walk with a steady step, keeps itself within proper limits. The word “superstition” appears to me to import a discontent with the method and order prescribed, and an accumulation of a superfluous mass of vain things.

Leaving the consideration of words, it has been admitted, in all ages, that religion is corrupted and perverted by errors and falsehoods. Those who try to serve Him, have not adhered to the one true God, nor solely worshipped Him. Hence, in order to assert His own right, God proclaims that He is “jealous,” and will avenge those who confound Him with any fictitious deity. And then, in order to keep mankind in obedience, He defines his legitimate worship. These He has done in the giving of the Law. What I would like to stress here is, that all that belongs to Divinity remains in God alone. What is detracted from this spoils His honour and violates His worship. In this connection, I must censure particularly on that superstition that, while giving God the supreme honour, it brings in a multitude of subordinate deities, who share His government of the universe, who therefore claim a share of His honour. This is both a cunning and hypocritical means, whereby the supreme God’s honour is detracted. This is idolatry, practised by both the ancient Gentiles and Jews, which intrudes into the Church in the form of exalting saints to the society of

God. Thus, in the Church, is not only God worshipped, but the saints who died in ages past, from whom favours are invoked.

2. On this account was invented the distinction of **latria** and **dulia**, by which these superstitious ones would ascribe divine honours to angels and deceased men. But, it is evident, that the honour which papists pay to the saints, differs not from the worship of God. To defend themselves with the argument that **latria**, which means “worship,” is reserved for God, but **dulia**, which means “service,” is given to saints, is of no avail. What is the difference between these two distinctions? In point of fact, to serve is more than to worship or honour, for service is rendered only to those one would honour.

3. Leaving these subtleties, let us consider the subject of idolatry itself. When Paul reminds the Galatians of their heathen past, that they did “service unto them which by nature are no gods” (Gal 4:8), though he does not mention **latria** (worship), but uses the word **dulia** (service), does this excuse their idolatry? He certainly condemns that perverse superstition, which he denominates **dulia**, equally as much as if he had used the word **latria**. And, when Christ repels Satan’s assault with this shield, “It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God” (Matt 4:10), the word **latria** came not into question, for Satan demanded **proskunesis**, i.e., prostration or adoration. But, when John is reprehended by an angel, for a falling on his knees before him, we must not understand that John was intending to transfer to an angel the honour due exclusively to God. But since all worship is given to the Divine, he could not prostrate (**proskunein**) himself before the angel, without detracting from the glory of God. We may see the same in Cornelius’ case that, when he “fell down” before Peter, it certainly was not with the intention of worshipping him instead of God (Acts 10:25). Yet, Peter positively forbade him. And why was this? Because, it was deemed that men never so particularly distinguished between worship of God, and that of creatures, as to avoid transferring to a creature what belongs exclusively to God. Wherefore, if we desire to have one God, let us remember that His glory ought not, in the least, to be diminished; but that He must retain it. No religious service can be transferred to another than God alone, without committing sacrilege.

Chapter XIII

One Divine Essence, Containing Three Persons, Taught in the Scriptures from the Beginning

1. The Scriptures teach us the immensity and spirituality of God. His immensity ought to inspire us with awe, that we should not try to measure Him with our senses. The spirituality of His nature prohibits us from any earthly or carnal speculations of Him.

An erroneous concept of God's immensity is committed by the Manichees, who maintain the existence of two original principles, making the devil, as it were, equal to God. The Anthropomorphites also, who imagined God to be corporeal, because the Scripture frequently ascribe to Him a mouth, ears, eyes, hands, and feet, are easily refuted. For, when God talks of Himself as having a mouth, eyes, ears, etc., He lisps, as it were, with us, just as nurses are accustomed to speak to infants. Wherefore, such forms of expression do not clearly explain the nature of God, but accommodate the knowledge of Him to our narrow capacity. To accomplish this, the Scripture must necessarily descend far below the height of His majesty.

2. Another peculiar character of God is, while He declares Himself to be One, He is to be distinctly considered as Three Persons. Without a knowledge of the Trinity, we have only a bare and empty name of God floating in our brains. Now, that no one may vainly dream of three gods, or suppose that the simple essence of God is divided among Three Persons, we must seek for a short and easy definition, which will preserve us from all error. But, since some object that the word Person is of human invention, we must first examine the reasonableness of this objection. When the Apostle denominates the Son the express image of the hypostasis of the Father, he undoubtedly ascribes to the Father some subsistence, in which He differs from the Son. From the words of the Apostle, we conclude, that there is in the Father a proper hypostasis, which is conspicuous in the Son. And thence we also infer the hypostasis of the Son, which distinguishes from His Father. The same reason is applicable to the Holy Spirit; for we shall soon prove him to be God; and yet He must be considered as distinct from the Father. But this is not a distinction of the

essence, which it is unlawful to represent as any other than simple and undivided. It follows, then, that there are in God three *hypostases*, or as the Latins have expressed by the word *person*. To translate word for word, we may call it *subsistence*, or, as a great many others say, *substance*. Nor has the word *Person* been used by the Latins only; but the Greeks also, for the sake of testifying their consent to the doctrine, taught the existence of three *prosopa* (persons) in God. Both Greeks and Latins, notwithstanding any verbal difference, are in perfect harmony respecting the doctrine itself.

3. Now, some object to the use of the word *Person*, because this word is not found in Scripture. They object to the introduction of what they call exotic words, which may generate future dissensions and disputes. Such objection is very unreasonable, for then no interpretation could be made of Scripture, apart from the composition of detached texts of Scripture connected together. When the Church uses the terms Trinity and Persons, she is merely making plain those things which, in the Scripture, are to our understanding intricate and obscure.

4. The use of exotic words is also in order to assert truth in opposition to malicious cavillers. Thus, the ancients, pestered with various controversies against erroneous dogmas, had to express their ideas with the utmost perspicuity, that they might leave no subterfuge for the impious, who otherwise might conceal their errors under obscure expressions. For example, Arius, unable to resist the clear testimony of Scripture, confessed Christ to be God, and the Son of God. But, at the same time, he also maintained that Christ was created, and had a beginning like other creatures. To draw the craftiness of this man from its concealment, the ancients declared Christ to be the eternal Son of God, consubstantial with the Father. At once, the Arians began inveterately to execrate the term *homoousios* (consubstantial), thus, betraying their hypocrisy. That little word distinguished Christians, who held the pure faith, from sacrilegious Arians.

Afterwards, there arose Sabellius, who considered the names of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, as little more than empty sounds; arguing, that they were not used on account of any real distinction. To him, the Father is the Son, and the Holy Spirit is the Father, without any order or distinction.

The good doctors of that age, who had the interest of religion at heart, in order to refute the wickedness of this man, maintained, there were three peculiar properties in one God; or, that in the unity of God there subsisted a trinity of Persons.

5. Although there arose an inconsistency among the ancients, in regard to the choice of words to express the nature of the Godhead, and what a difference in the terms used between Greeks and Latins, yet the use of newly coined theological words for the purpose is a necessity. While these new terms come slowly into usage, they will become useful phraseology. As we have said before, these words are used first to oppose the Arians on the one hand, and the Sabellians on the other. Arius confesses “that Christ is God”; but maintains also “that he was created, and had a beginning.” He acknowledges that Christ is “one with the Father”; but secretly whispers in the ears of his disciples, that he is united to him, like the rest of the faithful, though by a singular privilege. Say that he is **consubstantial**, you tear off the mask from the hypocrite, and yet you add nothing to the Scripture. Sabellius asserts, “that the names Father, Son, and Spirit, are expressive of no distinction in the Godhead.” Say that they are three, and he will exclaim, that you are talking of the “three gods.” Say, that in the one essence of God there is “a trinity of Persons,” and you will at once express what the Scripture declares, and restrain such frivolous loquacity. Now, if any persons are prevented, by such excessive scrupulousness, from admitting these terms, yet not one of them can deny, that, when Scripture speaks of one God, it should be understood to be a unity of substance; and that, when it speaks of three in one essence, it denotes the Persons in this trinity. When this is honestly confessed, we have no further concern about words. But I have found, that those who pertinaciously contend about words, cherish some latent poison. It is therefore better to provoke their resentment, than to use obscure language for the sake of obtaining their favour.

6. But, leaving the dispute about terms, I shall now enter on the discussion of the subject itself. What I denominate a Person, is a subsistence in the Divine essence, which is related to the others, and yet distinguished from them by an incommunicable property. By the word **subsistence**, we mean something different from the word **essence**. For, if the *Word* were simply God, and had no peculiar property, John had been

guilty of impropriety in saying that he was always *with God* (John 1:1). When he immediately adds, that “the Word was God,” he reminds us of the unity of the essence. But, because he could not be **with** God, without subsisting in the Father, hence arises that **subsistence**, which, although inseparably connected with the **essence**, has a peculiar mark, by which it is distinguished from it. Now, I say that each of the three subsistences has a relation to the others, but is distinguished from them by a peculiar property. We particularly use the word **relation** (or **comparison**) here, because, when mention is made simply and indefinitely of God, this name pertains no less to the Son and Spirit, than to the Father. But, whenever the Father is compared with the Son, the property peculiar to each distinguishes Him from the other. Thirdly, whatever is proper to each of them, I assert to be incommunicable, because whatever is ascribed to the Father as a character of distinction, cannot be applied or transferred to the Son. Nor, indeed, do I disapprove of the definition of Tertullian, if rightly understood: “That there is in God a certain distribution of economy, which makes no change in the unity of the essence.”

7. But before I proceed any further, I must prove the Deity of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; after which we shall see how they differ from each other.

The Deity of the Son is borne by His being the *Word of God*, the eternal wisdom residing in God, from whom the oracles, and all prophecies proceeded. The Word was begotten of the Father before the world began, and was truly God. As taught by Moses, this Word acted a conspicuous part in the creation of the world. This is so understood and declared by the Apostles, that the worlds were created by the Son (Heb 1:2, 3). Similarly, where Solomon introduces Wisdom as begotten of the Father before time began, and presiding at the creation of the world, he points to His eternal and essential Sonship. Christ’s own assertion, “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work” (John 5:17), affirms His continual cooperation with the Father, making a more explicit declaration of what had been briefly glanced at by Moses. John speaks most clearly, when he represents *the Word* as being God from the beginning, as in union with the Father, the original cause of all things. For, to the Word, he both attributes a real and permanent essence, and assigns some peculiar property, and plainly shows how God, by speaking, created the world.

Therefore, as all Divine revelations are justly entitled *the Word of God*, so we ought chiefly to understand that substantial Word, the source of all revelations, Who is liable to no variation, Who remains with God perpetually one and the same, and Who is God Himself.

8. But we are interrupted by some clamorous objectors, who, failing to rob Him of His Divinity, secretly steal from His eternity. These say that the Word only began to exist, when God opened His sacred mouth in the creation of the world. Nothing is more intolerable, than to suppose a beginning of that Word, which was always God, and afterwards the Creator of the world. If any should ask, how long the Word had existed before the creation, he will find no beginning. For He limits no certain period of time, when He Himself says, “O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was” (John 17:5). John has clearly declared that, before the creation of the world, the Word was in the beginning with God (John 1:2). We therefore conclude again, that the Word, conceived of God before time began, perpetually remained with Him, which proves His eternity, His true essence, and His Divinity.

9. The eternity and Divinity of Christ is further attested by such Scripture: “Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever” (Ps 45:6). Isaiah introduces Christ as God, crowned with supreme power, which is the prerogative of God alone. “His name,” says he, “shall be called . . . the mighty God, the everlasting Father” (Isa 9:6). A little before this declaration, Christ is called Immanuel. Nothing can be required plainer than a passage in Jeremiah, where the Branch of David is called “The LORD [Jehovah] our righteousness” (Jer 33:16), admitted by the Jews to be “the ineffable,” proper name expressive of His Essence. We conclude, therefore, the Son to be the one eternal God.

10. The Deity of Christ is attested by Jehovah frequently appearing in the character of an Angel. An Angel who appeared to the holy fathers, claimed for Himself the name of the eternal God. This Angel further accepted sacrifice offered to Him. He afterwards demonstrated He was really Jehovah Himself. From this evidence, Manoah and his wife concluded they had seen not a mere angel, but God Himself. The Angel’s refusal to disclose His name, seeing it was “wonderful” (“secret”), further confirmed the awfulness of his Deity (Judg 13:2–18, 22). Servetus’ heresy

notwithstanding, the orthodox doctors of the Church have always taught that this Angel was the Word of God. Though He was not yet incarnate, He descended, as it were, in mediatorial capacity, that He might approach the faithful with greater familiarity. Further testimony to the Deity of the Angel is given by Jacob (Gen 32:29, 30) and Isaiah (Isa 25:9); Malachi, who refers to the temple which is consecrated to the Most High God as belonging to Christ, witnesses decisively to Christ's Deity (Mal 3:1).

11. The Deity of Christ is witnessed by innumerable passages in the New Testament. Those things which were predicted concerning the eternal God, are represented by the Apostle as fulfilled in Christ. For example, Isaiah's prediction, that the Lord of Hosts would be "for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel" (Isa 8:14), Paul asserts to have been fulfilled in Christ (Rom 9:33). Similarly, Isaiah 45:23, which declares of God, "that unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear," finds its exhibition in Romans 14:10, 11, where "we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ." The majesty of God which Isaiah saw, in Isaiah 6, is attested by John to be the glory of the Son (John 12:41). The praises, which the Apostle to the Hebrews ascribes to the Son, beyond all doubt, most evidently belong to God. Other New Testament passages, which present Christ as God, are Romans 9:5; 1 Timothy 3:16; Philippians 2:6; 1 John 5:20; 1 Corinthians 8:5, 6, to mention just a few. Thomas, by publicly confessing Him to be "My Lord and my God" (John 20:28), declares Him to be the same true God whom he had always worshipped.

12. The Divine power, by which Jesus worked, and His own assertion that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God (John 5:18), further attest the Deity of Christ. The Jews' opposition to Jesus, not so much for breaking the Sabbath as His claim to Deity, all the more corroborates His Divine claim. His power to forgive sins, which is substantiated by a miracle, is another proof of His Deity (Matt 9:6).

13. Indeed, His miracles are a perspicuous evidence of His Deity. Though prophets and Apostles performed miracles similar and equal to His, there is a considerable difference between those performed by Christ and them. The former only dispensed God's favours, but Christ performed by His own power. Indeed, He is the true author of miracles, who gave the Apostles the power of miracles. The Evangelists relate, that He gave

His Apostles power to raise the dead, to heal the leprous, to cast out devils. Thus, when Peter healed the lame man, he performed the miracle only “in the name of Jesus Christ” (Acts 3:6). The purpose of Christ’s miracles was to convince the incredulity of the Jews, since, being performed in His own power, they must evidently declare His Deity, and that He is salvation Himself. The Name of Jesus heals, and in the Name of Jesus is invocation made to God.

14. The proof of the Deity of the Holy Spirit must be derived from the same sources. Moses testifies that, in the creation, the Spirit of God expanded over the abyss of chaos (Gen 1:2), signifying not only that the beautiful state of the world, which we now see, owes its preservation to the Spirit’s power, but also to His creative act. The Deity of the Holy Spirit is seen in the exercise of supreme power in the mission of the prophets, a further proof of His Divine majesty. Scripture also teaches, that the Spirit is the author of regeneration by a power not derived, but properly His own; and not of regeneration only, but of immortality. Finally, to Him, as well as to the Son, are applied all those offices which are peculiar to Deity: the Spirit “searcheth . . . , yea, the deep things of God” (1 Cor 2:10); bestows wisdom and the faculty of speech (1 Cor 12:8); works our justification and sanctification, and dispenses truth, grace, and every other blessing we can conceive of. Paul clearly attributes to the Spirit the Divine power, and thereby demonstrates Him to be a hypostasis or subsistence in God (1 Cor 12:11).

15. The Deity of the Holy Spirit is attested by His being accorded the appellation of God. Paul says we are the temple of God, because His Spirit indwells us (1 Cor 3:16; 6:19; 2 Cor 6:16). Peter, in reprehending Ananias for lying, declares such a sin “not . . . unto men, but unto God” (Acts 5:4). Lastly, if blasphemy against the Spirit be not forgiven (Matt 12:31), whilst a man may obtain pardon who has been guilty of blasphemy against the Son, this is an open declaration of His Divine majesty.

16. As God afforded a clear manifestation of Himself at the advent of Christ, the three Persons also then became better known. We see this in the Baptism Commission, “baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost” (Matt 28:19). In this formula, we see that one is to be baptised in the name of the one God, who has clearly manifested Himself in the Father, Son and Spirit; hence, it evidently

appears, that in the Divine Essence there exist three Persons, in whom is known the one God. Since in the Baptism formula is revealed the name of the one God, we conclude the Word and the Spirit to be of the very Essence of the Deity. The Arians erred, when they confessed the Divinity of the Son, but deprived Him to possess the substance of God. The Macedonians also erred, when they explained the term “Spirit” to mean only the gifts of grace conferred upon man.

17. While we see that the Son and Spirit are of the same substance or essence with the Father; we find, in the Scriptures, a distinction between each of them. I am exceedingly pleased with Gregory Nazianzen’s observation: “I cannot think of the *one*, but I am immediately surrounded with the splendour of the *three*. Nor can I clearly discover the *three*, but I am suddenly carried back to the *one*.” In contemplating the holy Trinity, we should not entertain the idea of a separation that divides the unity, but rather, a distinction within the unity as the different names Father, Son, Spirit imply. The Son has a property by which He is distinguished from the Father. Thus, we see, that it was not the Father who descended to earth, but the Son; not the Father who died and rose again, but He who was sent. The distinction between the Holy Spirit and the Father is announced by Christ, when He says that He “proceedeth from the Father” (John 15:26). The Holy Spirit is distinguished from the Son, who calls Him “another Comforter” (John 14:16).

18. Continuing with our observation on the distinction between the Persons of the Trinity, we further see that, to the Father is attributed the principle of action, the fountain and source of all things; to the Son, wisdom, counsel, and the arrangements of all operations; and the power and efficacy of the action is assigned to the Spirit. And the order of distinction is, that the Father is mentioned first, next the Son, and then the Spirit. The Son is said to be from the Father, and the Spirit from both the Father and the Son. And, in Romans 8, the Spirit is called the Spirit of Christ (v. 9).

19. This distinction is so far from opposing the most absolute simplicity and unity of the Divine Being, that it affords a proof that the Son is one God with the Father, because He has the same Spirit with Him; and that the Spirit is not a different substance from the Father and the Son, because He is the Spirit of the Father and of the Son. In regard to the unity and distinctions of the three Persons, Augustine explains perspicuously in

the following manner: “Christ, considered in himself, is called God; but with relation to the Father, he is called the Son. The Father, considered in himself, is called God; but with relation to the Son, he is called the Father. He who, with relation to the Son, is called the Father, is not the Son; he who, with relation to the Father, is called the Son, is not the Father; they who are severally called the Father and the Son, are the same God.”

20. Thus, when we profess to believe in one God, the word **God** denotes a single and simple essence, in which we comprehend three Persons, or hypostases; and that, whenever the word **God** is used indefinitely, the Son and Spirit are intended as much as the Father; but when the Son is associated with the Father, that introduces the reciprocal relation of one to the other; and thus we distinguish between the Persons.

When the Apostles assert Him to be the Son of God, whom Moses and the Prophets have represented as Jehovah, it is necessary to recur to the unity of the essence. The name “Jehovah,” when used in an indefinite sense, is applicable to Christ, as seen in Paul’s words, “for this thing I besought the Lord thrice,” which is related to Christ’s answer, “My grace is sufficient for thee” (2 Cor 12:8, 9). (The word “Lord” is the Greek translation of the word “Jehovah.”)

21. Satan, in order to subvert our faith, has always been exciting contentions concerning the Divine essence of the Son and the Spirit, and the distinctions of the Persons. In almost every age, he has instigated impious spirits to vex the orthodox teachers. There are, for example, extant on the argument five homilies of Chrysostum against the Anomoei. The errors of heretics should warn us to study this question with more docility than subtlety; and not allow ourselves to investigate God anywhere but in His sacred Word, or to form any ideas of Him but such as are agreeable to His Word, or to speak anything concerning Him but what is derived from the same Word.

22. To compose a catalogue of the errors on this point of doctrine, viz., the Trinity, would be too prolix without being profitable. Suffice it is to say that of the ancient heresiarchs, Arius and Sabellius are the most notorious. Since our own times, we have witnessed some madmen, like Servetus and his followers. The word *Trinity* was so odious to Servetus, that he asserted all Trinitarians to be Atheists. According to Servetus, the Persons of the Trinity are merely external ideas, which have no real

subsistence in the Divine essence. The Trinity to Servetus is therefore imaginary, and the Spirit a shadow of the Deity.

23. From the same corrupt source has proceeded another heresy, equally monstrous. Some worthless men, in order to escape the odium which attended the tenets of Servetus, have indeed confessed there are three Persons, but with this qualification: The Father, who alone is truly God, had created the Son and Spirit, and transfused His Deity into them. They err dreadfully by distinguishing the Father from the Son and Spirit, as being the sole possessor of the Divine essence. If the Father only is the sole possessor of the Divine essence, then Christ would be a figurative god, a god in appearance and name only, and not in reality.

24. The same false teachers try to exclude Christ from the Deity, by teaching that the name of God is mentioned absolutely in the Scripture to mean only the Father. I retort, that whatever belongs to God is attributed to Christ. The equality of Christ with God, before He abased Himself in the form of a servant, is stated by Paul (Phil 2:6, 7). Now, how could this equality subsist, unless He had been that God whose name is JAH and JEHOVAH, who rides on the cherubim, whose kingdom is universal and everlasting? No clamour of theirs can deprive Christ of Isaiah's declaration, "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him" (Isa 25:9), since, in these words, he describes the advent of God the Redeemer, not only for the deliverance of the people from exile in Babylon, but also for the complete restoration of the Church.

Some scorners ridicule our concluding a distinction of Persons from Moses' words, where he introduces God thus speaking, "Let us make man in our image" (Gen 1:26). Pious readers perceive, on the other hand, how foolishly Moses would have introduced this conference, if in one God there had not subsisted a plurality of Persons. Now, it is certain that God did not direct His conversation to some exterior agents, but within Himself; and they whom the Father addressed were uncreated. But, there is nothing uncreated, except the one God Himself. This is the mystery of the Trinity.

25. But, they who dream of three separate individuals, each possessing a part of the Divine essence, are deceived! We teach, according to Scripture, that there is essentially but one God; and, therefore, that the essence of both the Son and Spirit is unbegotten. But, since the Father is

first in order, and has Himself begotten His wisdom, therefore, He is justly esteemed the original and fountain of the whole Divinity. Thus God, infinitely, is unbegotten; and the Father is also unbegotten with regard to his Person. It is to be noted, from our writings, that we separate not the Persons from the essence. Though they subsist in it, we make only a distinction between them. If the persons were separated from the essence, then there would be a trinity of Gods, not a trinity of persons contained in one God.

Therefore we say, that the Deity is absolutely self-existent. Whence we confess, also, that the Son of God, independently of the consideration of Person, is self-existent. But as the Son, we say, He is of the Father. Thus, His essence is unoriginated; but the origin of His Person is God Himself. Indeed, the orthodox writers, who have written on the Trinity, have referred this name only to the Persons. To comprehend the essence in that distinction were not only an absurd error, but a most gross impiety. For it is evident that those who maintain that the Trinity consists in a union of the Essence, the Son, and the Spirit, annihilate the essence of the Son and of the Spirit; otherwise the parts would be destroyed by being confounded together; which is a fault in every distinction.

Finally, if the Father were the author of the Deity, nothing would be left in the Son but a mere shadow! Nor would the Trinity be any other than a conjunction of one God with two created beings.

26. Christ, the Mediator between God and man, holds an intermediate station; yet without diminution of His majesty. For, although He abased Himself, He lost not His glory with the Father. Thus, the Apostle to the Hebrews, though he acknowledges that Christ was made for a short time inferior to the angels (Heb 2:9), yet, nevertheless, hesitates not to assert, that He is the eternal God (Heb 1:10).

When Christ said to His Apostles, "I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I" (John 14:28), He attributes not to Himself a secondary Divinity, as if He were inferior to the Father with respect to the essence, but rather in a functional sense. As Mediator, He gathers together the faithful to a participation of His glory, which is already obtained by Him in heaven. He represents the Father to be in a station superior to Himself, just as the illustrious perfection of the splendour which appears in heaven

excels that degree of glory which was visible in Him during His incarnate state.

27. The false teachers accumulate numerous passages from Irenaeus, to assert that the holy man taught that the Father of Christ was the only and eternal God of Israel. They do this, either out of shameful ignorance, or consummate wickedness; for they ought to have considered, that Irenaeus was engaged in controversy with some, who denied that the Father of Christ was the same God who spoke by Moses and the Prophets. His only object was to show that no other God is revealed in the Scripture than the Father of Christ. There never was any other God of Israel than He who was preached by Christ and His Apostles. On our part, we truly assert, that the God who appeared formerly to the patriarchs was no other than Christ. If it be objected that it was the Father, we are prepared to reply, that, while we contend for the Divinity of the Son, we by no means rejected the Father. If the reader attends to this design of Irenaeus, all contention will cease. Irenaeus definitely contends, that the Son is called God, as well as the Father, by the Prophets and Apostles. In Book IV, Chapter 9 of his book, he declares, “Therefore Christ himself is, with the Father, the God of the living.” And, in Chapter 12, he states, that Abraham believed in God inasmuch as Christ is the Creator of heaven and earth, and the only God.

28. Their pretensions to the sanction of Tertullian are equally unfounded. For, notwithstanding the harshness and obscurity of his mode of expression, yet he unequivocally teaches the substance of the doctrine we are defending: That is, whereas there is one God, yet by dispensation or economy there is His Word; that there is but one God in the unity of the substance, but that the unity, by a mysterious dispensation, is disposed into a trinity; that there are three, not in condition, but in degree; not in substance, but in form; not in power, but in order.

29. Now, if we diligently compare the writings of the fathers, we will find nothing that differs from Irenaeus or Justin Martyr, Hilary or Ignatius, who are quoted by the false teachers out of context. But, in the Nicene Council, Arius never dared to defend himself by the authority of any approved writer; and not one of the Greek or Latin fathers, who were united against him, excused himself as at all dissenting from his

predecessors. With regard to Augustine, who experienced great hostility from these disturbers, he takes it for granted that the doctrine which those men oppose has been received without controversy from the remotest antiquity. These observations, I hope, will be approved by the pious readers, as sufficient to refute all the calumnies, with which Satan has hitherto laboured to pervert or obscure the purity of this doctrine. Finally, I trust that the whole substance of this doctrine has been faithfully stated and explained.

Chapter XIV

The True God Clearly Distinguished in the Scripture from All Fictitious Ones by the Creation of the World

1. In order that we might not be misled by our own stupidity to worship fictitious deities, or to regard God, as some philosophers say, to be the soul of the world; God has given us, through Moses, a history of the creation. The first thing specified in this history is the time. The knowledge of the origin of the human race, and of all things, is eminently useful, not only to contradict the monstrous fables of Egypt and other countries, but also to give us a clearer view of the eternity of God.

Some who sneer at the fact, that God had been unemployed for an immeasurable duration, before He created heaven and earth, need only receive for an answer from a certain pious old man, that, during that time, while He was supposed to be idle, He was making hell for over curious men! Augustine justly complains, that it is an offence against God to inquire for any cause of things higher than His will. It is therefore madness for those who censure God of inaction, for not creating, according to their wishes, the world innumerable ages before; as though, in the course of six thousand years, God had not given us lessons sufficient to exercise our minds in assiduous meditation on them. Then, let us cheerfully remain within these barriers with which God has been pleased to circumscribe us.

2. To the same purpose is the narration of Moses, that the work of God was completed, not in one moment, but in six days. Here, also, human reason murmurs, as though such progressive works were inconsistent with the power of Deity. But we see rather, in the order of those things, the paternal love of God towards the human race. For, Adam was created only after the earth was enriched with an abundant supply of everything conducive to happiness. Had He placed him in the earth while it remained barren and vacant, He would have appeared not attentive to his benefit. If the reader will more carefully consider with himself these things, he will be convinced that Moses was an authentic witness of the one God, the Creator of the world.

3. But before I begin to enlarge on the nature of man, something must be said concerning angels. Although Moses mentions, at the outset, no other works of God than such as are visible to our eyes, yet he afterwards introduces angels as ministers of God. These angels, we may easily conclude, are His creation. To think of them as possessing some kind of divinity, would be an error.

The dualism of Manichaeus, that God and devil comprise the two original principles; making God the origin of all good things and the devil the producer of all evil natures, in such a way as to detract from God's glory and to ascribe divinity to the devil, is wrong. The orthodox teaching concerning evil is, that nothing in the universe is evil in nature, but the depravity and wickedness of men and devils, proceed rather from a corruption of nature.

4. As to the nature of angels, we can, without controversy, conclude that they are God's creatures; since angels are ministers of God appointed to execute His commands. If it is asked, when the angels were created, we have Moses' narration: "The heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them" (Gen 2:1). It is to no purpose to inquire on what day, besides, the stars and planets, the other more concealed hosts of heaven began to exist. Let us remember to observe one rule of sobriety in the study of religion; which is, "not to speak, or think, or even desire to know, concerning obscure subjects, anything beyond the information given us in the Divine Word." Another rule to be followed is, "in the reading of Scripture, continually to direct our attention to investigate and meditate upon those things conducive to edification; not to indulge curiosity or the study of things unprofitable." Wherefore, if we wish to be truly wise, we must forsake the vain imaginations propagated by triflers concerning the nature, orders, and multitude of angels.

5. We are informed, in the Scriptures, that angels are celestial spirits, whose ministry God uses for the execution of whatever He has decreed. Hence, this name is given them, because they are his messengers, for "angels" means "messengers." They are also called "hosts," because, as lifeguards, they surround their Prince, aggrandising His majesty, and rendering it conspicuous. They are heavenly soldiers. This is described by the prophets, particularly by Daniel (Dan 7:10). By them, God administers His government in the world, and so they are sometimes called

principalities, powers, dominions (Col 1:16; Eph 1:21; 1 Cor 15:24). Lastly, because the glory of God in some measure resides in them, they are called “thrones” (Col 1:16). More than once, they are called “gods” (e.g., Ps 138:1), because in their ministry, as in a mirror, they give us an imperfect representation of Divinity. Finally, the Angel, who appeared to Abraham (Gen 18:2), Jacob (Gen 32:2, 28), Moses, and others (Josh 5:13; Judg 6:11; 13:3, 22), is none other than Christ.

6. Angels guard our safety, undertake our defence, direct our ways, and exercise a constant solicitude that no evil befall us (Ps 91:11, 12; 34:7). Accordingly, the angel of the Lord consoles Hagar, and commands her to be reconciled to her mistress (Gen 16:9). Abraham promises his servant that an angel should be the guide of his journey (Gen 24:7). Jacob, in blessing Ephraim and Manasseh, prays that the angel of the Lord, by whom he had been redeemed from all evil, would cause them to prosper (Gen 48:16). Angels even ministered to Christ, and attended Him in all His difficulties (Matt 4:11; Luke 22:43). Angels announced His resurrection (Matt 28:5, 6; Luke 24:4–6). Thus, we see, in the discharge of their office as our protectors, they contend against the devil, and execute God’s vengeance on those who assail us, e.g., an angel of God slew 185,000 of the Assyrians in one night (2 Kgs 19:35).

7. Certain angels are appointed, according to Daniel, to preside over kingdoms and provinces (Dan 10:13, 20; 12:1); while others, according to Christ, are charged to care for the safety of children (Matt 18:10). But, we do not know whether this justifies the conclusion, that everyone of them has a guardian angel. Now, since all the angels in heaven together rejoice over one sinner turned to repentance, more than over ninety and nine just persons (Luke 15:7), all the angels together surely watch over our salvation. That the angels are assigned to protect us, is clearly reflected in Peter’s liberation from prison, when the disciples said, “It is his angel” (Acts 12:15). According to the heathen notion of different genii, it is commonly imagined that every person has two angels, a good one and a bad one. Those who thus restrict to one angel the care which God exercises over everyone of us, can only do great injury to themselves.

8. Let those, who venture to determine concerning the orders and numbers of angels, examine the foundation of their opinions.

From Scripture, we see that Michael is called “the great prince” in Daniel (12:1), and in Jude, “the archangel” (v. 9). Gabriel is the second angel named in Scripture. There’s a third found in the history of Tobias (Tob 3:17). I would not try to determine the degrees of honour among angels.

As to their numbers, we hear of legions, from Christ’s mouth (Matt 26:53), and from Daniel of myriads (Dan 7:10). Elisha’s servant saw many chariots, a great multitude (2 Kgs 6:17).

It is certain that angels have no form. The Scriptures, on account of the slender capacity of our minds, represent angels as having wings, the cherubim and seraphim, to impress on us the lightning speed with which they travel in the execution of God’s business.

9. Angels are ministering spirits. Ancient Sadducees, who regarded angels as mere motions, which God inspired into men, are repugnant to so many testimonies of Scripture. Angels are spirits possessing an actual existence and their own peculiar nature. The declarations of Stephen and Paul, that the law was given by the hand of angels (Acts 7:53; Gal 3:19), and of Christ, that the elect, after the resurrection, shall be like angels, etc., surely speak of their peculiar being. Likewise, when Paul charges Timothy, before Christ and the elect angels, to keep His precepts (1 Tim 5:21), he intends, not unsubstantial qualities or inspirations, but real spirits. And Christ Himself, on account of the preeminence which He obtains in the capacity of Mediator, is called an angel (Mal 3:1). I have cursorily touched on this point, in order to fortify the simple against the absurd notions, disseminated by Satan through the Sadducees many years ago, and are frequently springing up afresh.

10. While the Sadducees regard angels as non-personal beings, there are those who transfer to them the honour that solely belongs to God and Christ. Even Paul had a great controversy with some, who worshipped angels, in the Epistle to the Colossians. The splendour of Divine majesty, displayed in the angels, has induced their adoration from man, even from St. John, in the Revelation. But the angel’s reply was: “See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, . . . worship God” (Rev 19:10; 22:8, 9).

11. Angels are only a means, whereby God chooses to communicate the gifts of His beneficence to us. This He does, not from necessity, but

for the sake of our weakness. For this reason, He promises not only to take care of us Himself, but also that we will have innumerable lifeguards, to whom He has committed the charge of our safety. An example of His accommodating to our weakness is in the story of Elisha's servant (2 Kgs 6:15–18). When he saw that the mountain was besieged by the Syrians, and that no way of escape was left, he was fearful as though he and his master had been captured. Then Elisha prayed that God would open his eyes, and immediately he saw the mountain full of horses and chariots of fire, i.e., of a multitude of angels who were to guard him and the Prophet. This vision of angels changed the fear in the servant to fearlessness.

12. The ministry of angels should therefore more firmly establish our hope in God. What is described in the vision of Jacob (Gen 28:12), of angels ascending and descending by a ladder, above which stands the Lord, implies that it is through the intercession of Christ that we are favoured with the ministry of angels, as He Himself affirms, “Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man” (John 1:51). Let us, therefore, take leave of that Platonic philosophy, which seeks access to God by means of angels, and worships them to render Him more propitious to us.

13. Scripture has much to say about devils, and teaches us how we may guard against their insidious machinations, as well as repel them with suitable armour. When Scripture describes Satan as the god of this world (2 Cor 4:4; John 12:31), the strong man armed (Matt 12:29; Luke 11:21), the prince of the power of the air (Eph 2:2), a roaring lion (1 Pet 5:8, 9), these descriptions only tend to make us more cautious and vigilant, and better prepared to encounter him. We should, therefore, not be slothful in warfare against the adversary, but vigorously resist him till death. We should also be conscious of our weakness and ignorance, and implore the assistance of God; since He alone can supply us the wisdom and strength.

14. Scripture describes the adversary as many. Mary Magdalene was delivered from seven demons (Mark 16:9), and another is said to have been possessed by a whole legion (Luke 8:30). By these instances, we are taught, that we have to contend with an infinite multitude of enemies.

But when one Satan or Devil is frequently mentioned in the singular number, it denotes that principality of wickedness, which opposes the kingdom of righteousness. Satan is the prince of all the impious.

15. Since Satan is called, not only our adversary, but also God's, then if we are concerned for the glory of God, we ought to resist him in every act of his, that opposes God and His kingdom. In Genesis 3, he seduces man from obedience to God, so that he at once robs God of His just honour, and precipitates man into ruin. He was a murderer and liar from the beginning (John 8:44), and his actions verify that characteristic of his. Satan opposes Divine truth, involves men in errors, stirs up animosities, etc., for the subverting of God's kingdom. John says "he sinneth from the beginning" (1 John 3:8), meaning that he is the author of all wickedness.

16. Though the Devil was created by God, his wicked nature is not by creation, but from corruption. Whatever evil quality he has, he has acquired by his defection and fall. For this reason, Christ declares that Satan, "when he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own" (John 8:44).

The Scriptures does not give us a detailed account of Satan's fall, to satisfy our curiosity. However, we know that the devils were originally created angels of God, but by degenerating, have ruined themselves, and become instruments of perdition. Peter and Jude state, that God "spared not the angels that sinned" (2 Pet 2:4), and "kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation" (Jude 6). When Paul mentions "elect angels" (1 Tim 5:21), he tacitly implies reprobate ones.

17. Although Satan is said to contend with God, he can do nothing without God's will and consent. We see this truth manifested in the case of Job. Thus, also, when Ahab was to be deceived, Satan undertook to be a lying spirit in the mouth of all the prophets; and, being commissioned by God, he performed it (1 Kgs 22:20–23). For this reason, he is called the "evil spirit from the LORD" (1 Sam 16:14) who tormented Saul, because he was employed as a scourge to punish the sins of the impious monarch. Elsewhere, it is recorded, that the plagues were inflicted on the Egyptians by "evil angels" (Ps 78:49). Satan is subject to the power of God, and so governed by His control, that he is compelled to obey Him. Now, when we say that Satan resists God, we also assert that this contention depends on God's permission. I speak not of the will or endeavour, which is naturally wicked, but of the effect. The resistance to God arises from himself and his wickedness, but, since God keeps Satan under the bridle of His power, the latter can only execute those things that are Divinely permitted.

18. In God's government, He uses Satan sometimes to exercise the faithful, and frequently fatigue them, and even wound them, yet never conquering them. Paul confesses that, as a remedy to subdue his pride, the messenger of Satan was given to him to buffet him (2 Cor 12:7). For the righteous vengeance of God, David was for a time delivered to Satan, that, by his instigation, he might number the people (2 Sam 24:1; 1 Chr 21:1). This exercise is common to all the children of God. But, the promise of breaking the head of Satan belongs to Christ. However, I deny that the faithful can ever be conquered or overwhelmed by Satan; since Christ, by His death, overcame Satan, so that Satan cannot hurt the Church.

As to the impious and unbelieving, Satan subdues and tyrannises over their souls and bodies. Satan is said to have the undisturbed possession of the world, until he is expelled by Christ. He is said to blind all who believe not the Gospel, and to work in the children of disobedience.

19. As we have previously reported, the nugatory philosophy concerning the holy angels, which teaches that they are nothing but inspirations, or good motions, excited by God in the minds of men, so we must refute those who pretend that devils are nothing but evil affections, which "our flesh obtrudes on our minds." The names given to them, as unclean spirits and apostate angels (Matt 12:43; Jude 6), sufficiently express their possessing personality, and not being mere mental emotions. The personality of Satan is given by John, who asserts that he sinned from the beginning, and is further attested by Jude who introduces Michael the archangel as contending with the Devil. In the history of Job, Satan appeared with the holy angels before God. But the clearest of all are those passages which mention the punishment which they begin to feel from the judgment of God, and are to feel much more at the resurrection. How unmeaning were such expressions, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt 25:41), that the devils are appointed to eternal judgment, if there were no devils at all!

20. From the works of creation, we should meditate upon the Creator, which is our first lesson of faith. We should meditate for what end God created them. To this end, we should first of all understand the history of the creation of the world. But since it is not my design to treat at large of the creation of the world, let it suffice to have again dropped these few hints by the way.

21. To be brief, let the readers know, that they have truly apprehended by faith what is meant by God being the Creator of heaven and earth, if they, in the first place, follow this universal rule, not to pass over with ungrateful inattention or oblivion, those glorious perfections which God manifests in his creatures. Secondly, to learn to make such application to themselves as thoroughly to affect their hearts. The first point is exemplified, when we consider the multitude of stars, which adorn the heaven, in such regular order, and are so appointed to measure days and nights, months, years and seasons so perfectly that it occasions no confusion. So, also, when we observe His power in sustaining so great a mass, in governing the celestial machine, and the like. These few examples sufficiently declare, what it is to recognise the perfections of God in the creation of the world.

22. There remains the other point, which approaches nearly more to faith—that, while we observe how God has appointed all things for our benefit and safety, and, at the same time, perceive His power and grace in ourselves, we may excite ourselves to confide in Him, to praise Him and love Him.

Chapter XV

The State of Man at His Creation, the Faculties of the Soul, the Divine Image, Free Will, and the Original Purity of His Nature

1. We must now treat the creation of man, not only because he is the most noble amongst the works of God, but because, as we observed in the beginning, we cannot attain to a clear knowledge of God, without a mutual knowledge of ourselves. As we study into ourselves, we discover a twofold knowledge—the condition in which we were originally created, and of that into which we entered after the fall of Adam. For the present, we shall content ourselves with a description of human nature in its primitive integrity. Afterwards, we shall see how far men are fallen from that purity which was bestowed upon Adam. However, first let it be understood, that, by his being made of earth, a restraint was laid upon pride.

2. That man consists of soul and body, ought not to be controverted. By “soul,” I understand an immortal, yet created essence, which is the nobler part of man. Sometimes it is called “spirit”; for though, when these names are used together, they have a different signification, yet when “spirit” is used separately, it is synonymous with “soul.” When Christ commended His spirit to the Father (Luke 23:46), and Stephen his to Christ (Acts 7:59), their souls were liberated from the prison of the flesh, to return to God, their perpetual keeper. Those who think that the “soul” is called “spirit,” because it is a breath Divinely imposed into the body, but destitute of any essence, are proved to be in a gross error by the thing itself, and by the whole tenor of Scripture. Men, who are so immoderately attached to earth, as to consider they would go into non-existence at death, are become stupid and immersed in darkness. However, they are affected by some sense of immortality, through their conscience. The conscience, discerning between good and evil, answers to God’s judgment. This is an indubitable proof of an immortal spirit. Now, the very knowledge of God should prove the immortality of the soul, since an evanescent breath could not arrive at the fountain of life. The immortality of the soul is further indicated by the many noble faculties, with which the human mind is adorned. For the sense which the brutes have, extends not beyond the

body or, at most, not beyond the objects near it. The agility of the human mind, however, looking through heaven and earth, and the secrets of nature, and comprehending in its intellect and memory of all ages, digesting everything in proper order, and concluding future events from those which are past, clearly demonstrates that there is, in man, something distinct from the body. The spirit, therefore, is the seat of all this intelligence. This intelligence functions even in sleep, suggesting to us ideas of things which never happen, and presaging even future events.

Unless the soul is something essentially distinct from the body, the Scripture would not inform us that we “dwell in houses of clay” (Job 4:19), and, at death, quit the tabernacle of the flesh (2 Cor 5:4), and to receive a reward at the last day, according to the respective conduct of each individual in the body (2 Cor 5:10). Other passages of Scripture which distinguish the soul from the body are 2 Corinthians 1:23; 7:1, 1 Peter 1:9, 22; 2:11, 25; Hebrews 13:17. Christ states, that we are to fear Him, who, after having killed the body, is able to cast the soul into hell (Matt 10:28; Luke 12:4, 5). And, unless the soul survived after liberation from the prison of the body, it was absurd for Christ to represent the soul of Lazarus as enjoying happiness in Abraham’s bosom, and the soul of the rich man as condemned to dreadful torments (Luke 16:22, 24). Paul confirms the same point, when he says that we are absent from God as long as we dwell in the body, but that when absent from the body we are present with the Lord (2 Cor 5:6, 8).

3. A solid proof of this point may be gathered from man being said to be created in God’s image (Gen 1:27). For, though the glory of God is displayed in his external form, yet there is no doubt that the seat of His image is in the soul.

Osiander, who teaches that the image of God extends promiscuously to the body as well as the soul, confounds heaven and earth together. Let it be decided that the image of God, which appears in the external, is spiritual.

Expositors who seek to differentiate between the two Hebrew words, *zelem* and *demuth*, translated *image* and *likeness*, to refer to the substance of the soul and to its qualities, are wrong. There is no such distinction between the two Hebrew words, which, according to Hebrew idiom, are expressing the same idea.

The image of God in man includes all the excellence in which the nature of man surpasses all other species of animals. This term denotes the integrity which Adam possessed, when he was endued with a right understanding, when he had affections regulated by reason, and all his senses governed in proper order, and when, in the excellency of his nature, he truly resembled the excellence of His Creator.

4. When Adam fell into sin, he was alienated from God. Though the Divine image in him was not utterly effaced, yet it was so corrupted that whatever remains is horribly deformed. To be restored to the Divine image, we need Christ, who is called the Second Adam, because He restores us to true and perfect integrity. In our regeneration, we are made anew in the image of God, as St. Paul informs us, of “the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him” (Col 3:10). This renewal is even superior to that manifested in creation, with which corresponds the following exhortation, “put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Eph 4:24).

Now, let us see what qualities Paul includes in this renovation. He mentions knowledge, righteousness and holiness, from which we infer that, in the beginning, the image of God was conspicuous in the light of the mind, in the rectitude of the heart, and in the soundness of all parts of our nature. And, in another passage, where the Apostle says, “we all, with open face beholding . . . the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image” (2 Cor 3:18), we see, now, how Christ is the most perfect image of God, to which, being conformed, we are so restored that we bear the Divine image in true piety, righteousness, purity, and understanding. This position being established, the imagination of Osiander, about the figure of the body, immediately vanished of itself.

The passage where Paul calls the man “the image and glory of God” (1 Cor 11:7), appears, from the context, to be confined to political subjection. But that the image, which has been mentioned, comprehended whatever relates to spiritual and eternal life, has now, I think, been sufficiently proved. Therefore, since the image of God is the uncorrupted excellence of human nature, which shone in Adam before his fall, but was afterwards corrupted, and almost obliterated, it is now partly visible in the elect, inasmuch as they are regenerated by the Spirit. That image will obtain its full glory in heaven.

With regard to the part of which the image of God consists, it is necessary to treat of the faculties of the soul. Augustine's speculation that the soul is a mirror of the Trinity, because it contains understanding, will, and memory, is far from being solid.

5. Before I proceed any further, it is necessary to combat the Manichaeian error, which Servetus has attempted to revive in the present age. Because God is said to have breathed in man the breath of life (Gen 2:7), they supposed that the soul was an emanation from the substance of God. This is a diabolical error. For, if the soul of man be an emanation from the essence of God, it will follow that the Divine nature is not only mutable and subject to passions, but also to ignorance, desires, and vices of every kind. This would be a monstrous tenet. It is a certain truth, quoted by Paul from Aratus, that "we are the offspring of God" (Acts 17:29), but in quality, and not substance. Creation is not a transfusion, but an origination of existence from nothing. And, where Paul treats of the restoration of this image, we may readily conclude from his words, that man was conformed to God not by an influx of his substance, but by the grace and power of His Spirit. For, he says that, by beholding the glory of Christ, we are transformed into the same image as by the Spirit of the Lord (2 Cor 3:18), who certainly operates in us not in such a manner as to render us consubstantial to God.

6. Of the philosophers, Plato is almost the only one who has plainly asserted the soul to be an immortal substance. Other philosophers merely confine the powers and faculties of the soul to the present life, that they leave nothing beyond the body. We have stated from Scripture, that the soul is an incorporeal substance; and now we add that, although it is not properly contained in any place, it inhabits the body as its dwelling, and animates its parts, for their respective operations, and holds the supremacy of the government of the human life. That concerns not only of the terrestrial life, but also the heavenly, even in the worship of God. Without controversy, man was created to aspire to a heavenly life, so it is certain that the knowledge of it was impressed on his soul. Thus, the chief operation of the soul is to aspire after God, so that the more man seeks to approach to God, the more he proves himself a rational creature.

Some philosophers maintain that there are two souls in man, a sensitive and a rational one; for they say that there is a great repugnancy between

the organic motions and the rational part of the soul. This tension, we say, is due to the depravity of nature, and not to man having two souls.

In regard to the nature of man, I admit, in the first place, that there are five senses, which Plato calls organs, by which all objects are conveyed into a common sensory. Next follows the fancy or imagination, which discerns the objects apprehended by the common sensory. Next, reason, to which belongs universal judgment. Lastly, the understanding, which contemplates the objects considered by reason.

Corresponding to understanding, reason, and imagination, the three intellectual faculties of the soul, are three appetitive ones. They are: the *will*, whose place it is to choose those things which the *understanding* and *reason* propose to it. Next, the irascible faculty, which embraces the things offered to it by reason and imagination; and, finally, the concupiscible faculty, which apprehends the objects presented by the imagination and sensation. As far as Aristotle is concerned, there are three principles of action—sense, intellect, and appetite. Though these observations are true, or at least probable, yet, since I fear they will involve us in their obscurity rather than assist us, I think they ought to be omitted. If any one chooses to make a different distribution of the powers of the soul, so as to call one appetitive, and to call another intellectual, I shall not much oppose. But, let us rather choose a division placed within the comprehension of all, and which certainly cannot be sought in the philosophers.

7. The philosophers, being ignorant of the corruption of human nature, confound two very different states of mankind. We submit the following division, that the human soul has two faculties: the *understanding* and the *will*. The office of *understanding* is to discriminate between objects, as they shall appear deserving of all approbation or disapprobation. The *will*, however, is to choose and follow what the *understanding* shall have pronounced to be good; and to abhor what it shall have condemned. The *understanding* is, as it were, the guide and governor of the soul. The *will* always respects its authority, and waits for its judgments in its desires.

8. God has furnished the soul of man, therefore, with a mind capable of discerning good from evil; and of discovering, by light of reason, what ought to be done or avoided. To this, He has annexed the *will*, on which depends the choice. The primitive condition of man was ennobled by those eminent faculties—reason, understanding, prudence, judgment. To these

was added *choice*, to direct the appetites; so that the *will* should be entirely conformed to the government of *reason*. Man was endued with free will, by which, if he had chosen, he might have obtained eternal life. Adam, therefore, could have stood, if he would, since he fell, merely by his own will. But, because his will was flexible to either side, and he was not endued with constancy to persevere, he so easily fell. Yet his choice of good and evil was a free choice. By his fall, he corrupted all his excellencies. Hence proceeded the darkness which blinded the minds of the philosophers, because they have sought for a complete edifice amongst ruins, for beautiful order in the midst of confusion. They hold that man is endued with a free choice of good and evil; and that man could regulate his life according to his inclination. Thus far, it had been well, if there had been no change in man, but they are ignorant of the fall of man, which renders him incapable of a free choice of good and evil.

At present, let it be remembered, that man, at his first creation, was very different from all his posterity, who, deriving their original from him in his corrupted state, have contracted every hereditary defilement. Man, at his first creation, was formed with utmost rectitude, in all parts of his soul. He enjoyed soundness of mind, and a free will to the choice of good. He had received the power, if he chose to exert it, but he had not the will to use that power. Yet there is no excuse for him. He received so much, that he was the voluntary procurer of his own destruction. But God was under no necessity to give him other than a mutable will, that, from his fall, he might educe matter for His own glory.

Chapter XVI

God's Preservation and Support of the World by His Power and His Government of Every Part of It by His Providence

1. Although even the minds of impious men, by the mere contemplation of heaven and earth, are constrained to rise to a knowledge of the Creator (but practically stops at that), it is faith that leads us to a deeper knowledge of God. When it has learned that He is the Creator of all things, it should immediately conclude that He is their perpetual Governor and Preserver. And that not by a general universal motion, actuating the whole machine of the world, but by a particular providence sustaining, nourishing, and providing for every thing which He has made (Matt 10:29).

In general, both philosophers teach, and the minds of men conceive, that all parts of the world are quickened by the secret inspiration of God. But they go not so far as David, who is followed by all the pious, when he says, "These wait all upon thee; that thou mayest give them their meat in due season. That thou givest them they gather: thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good. Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled: thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust. Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth" (Ps 104:27–30). This special care of God, as seen by the eyes of faith, the philosophers have no apprehension.

2. It must be observed that the providence of God, according to the Scripture, is opposed to the erroneous notion that all things happen by chance. Carnal reason will ascribe all occurrences to fortune, whether prosperous or adverse, such as when one falls into the hands of a robber, or meets with wild beasts; or when another, wandering through deserts, finds relief, or, after having been tossed about by waves, reaches port. But, whoever has been taught, from the mouth of Christ, that the hairs of his are numbered (Matt 10:30), will seek further cause, and conclude that all events are governed by the secret counsel of God. Although the sun rises and sets in daily regularity, yet is this action not from a blind instinct of nature, but due to His governance. The miracles of Joshua's sun standing still (Josh 10:13), and Hezekiah's retrograding ten degrees (2 Kgs 20:11)

manifest God's power in providence. And, although the four seasons succeed one another, we discover that there are so many diversities in the succession, that it is obvious that every year, month, and day, is governed by a new and particular providence of God.

3. This particular providence of God is not such as imagined by sophists, vain, idle, and almost asleep, but vigilant, efficacious, operative, and engaged in continued action. It is not a general principle of confused motion, but governing and regulating all things, in such a manner that nothing happens but according to His counsel. Thus, in adversity, the faithful should rather encourage themselves with this consolation, that they suffer no affliction, but by the ordination of God, because they are under His hand. So it is puerile cavil to limit events to an uncontrolled course, according to a perpetual law of nature. This notion not only defrauds God of His glory, but them who hold it of a very useful doctrine. Those who recognise God's omnipotence in providence receive, from this knowledge, a double advantage. In the first place, they are consoled by His ample ability to bless them, and; secondly, to protect them even against Satan, with all his furies and machinations. For, we are superstitiously timid, I say, if whenever creatures menace or terrify us, we are frightened, as though they had of themselves the power to hurt us, or as if against their injuries God were unable to afford us sufficient aid. In the doctrine of the providence of God, we are reminded that every creature, action, or motion, is so governed by the secret counsel of God, that nothing can happen but what is subject to His knowledge and decreed only by His will.

4. First, then, let the readers know that what is called providence describes God, not as idly beholding from heaven the transactions that happen in the world, but as holding the helm of the universe, regulating all events. Thus, it belongs no less to His hands than to His eyes. When Abraham said to his son, "God will provide" (Gen 22:8), he intended not only to assert His prescience of a future event, but to leave the care of the thing unknown to the will of Him who puts an end to circumstances of perplexity and confusion. Thus, providence consists not only of prescience but also of action.

Those who teach that God governs only by a general motion, without peculiarity directing the action of each individual creature, are quite

erroneous, and should not be tolerated. The Epicureans dream of a god absorbed in sloth and inactivity; while there are others, no less erroneous, who pretended that God's domination extended over the middle region of the air, but that he left inferior things to fortune. This makes Him ruler in name, and not in reality.

It is true that all things are actuated by a secret instinct of nature, as though they obeyed the eternal command of God, and that what God has once appointed, appears to proceed from voluntary inclination in the creatures. This is under what is called general providence, even as St. Paul has asserted, "In him we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17:28); but let this not obscure the doctrine of particular providence, which is also plainly asserted in Scripture. We shall prove, that God attends to the government of particular events, and that they all proceed from His determinate counsel, in such a manner that there can be no such thing as a fortuitous contingency.

5. Not only is the regularity of day and night, and of the changing of the four seasons, the work of God; but also excessive heats and drought, storms and unseasonable rains, and other natural calamities. In the law and the prophets, He frequently declares, that whenever He moistens the earth with dew or rain, He affords a testimony of His favour; and that, on the contrary, when the crops of corn are blasted and otherwise destroyed, He gives a proof of His certain and special vengeance. Not a drop of rain falls but at the express command of God.

David indeed praises the general providence of God, because "He giveth . . . food, . . . to the young ravens which cry" (Ps 147:9), but when God Himself threatens animals with famine, does He not plainly declare, that He withholds as He pleases? God's particular acts of providence, even to the care of a sparrow (Matt 10:29), cannot be restrained.

6. But, as we know that the world was made chiefly for the sake of mankind, we must observe this end in the government of it. Jeremiah exclaims, "I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jer 10:23). Man cannot predetermine on an end for himself, without regard to God. Solomon says, "The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the LORD" (Prov 16:1). It is ridiculous madness for miserable men to resolve

on undertaking any work independently of God, whilst they cannot even speak a word but what He chooses!

That being the case, those things which appear most fortuitous, and what you would attribute to chance, are indeed acts of God. A falling branch of a tree that kills a passing traveller, is to be regarded from the Lord, even the results in lot-casting. The rich and poor are predetermined by the Lord, according to the Psalmist, “promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another” (Ps 75:6, 7).

7. Particular events are, in general, proof of the special providence of God, e.g., the wind God raised to provide His people with a large flock of birds (Exod 16:13; Num 11:31), and the wind He raised to cause Jonah to be thrown into the sea (Jonah 1:4). In this respect, the Psalmist declares, the winds to be messengers, and His ministers, a flame of fire (Ps 104:3, 4).

God’s special providence is also seen in child births. Whilst men are naturally endued with a power to generation, He leaves some without posterity, and bestows children on others, “the fruit of the womb is his reward” (Ps 127:3). Jacob understood this truth, who said to his wife, “Am I in God’s stead, who hath withheld from thee the fruit of the womb?” (Gen 30:2). And, so we quote from Psalm 34:15, 16, God’s dealings with the righteous and the evil, in helping the former and destroying the latter. We conclude, therefore, not only that there is a general providence of God over His creatures, but, also, that by His wonderful counsel, they are all directed to some specific end.

8. Fate, which the Stoics teach, is a necessity arising from a perpetual concatenation and intricate series of causes, contained in nature. We admit not the term “fate,” but rather make God the Arbiter and Governor of all things, who in His own wisdom, has, from the remotest eternity, decreed what He would do, and now, by His own power, executes what He has decreed. Therefore, as Basil the Great observed, “fortune” and “chance” are words used by the heathen, with the signification of which words, the pious ought not to be occupied. What is commonly termed “fortune,” Augustine says, is regulated by a secret order, and what we call “chance” is only that, with the reason and cause of which, we are not acquainted.

Instead of saying “fortune,” men ought to say, “This was the will of God.” For, if anything be left to fortune, the world revolves at random.

9. I would add, that what we regard as fortuitous is not that fortune holds any dominion over the world or mankind, and whirls about all things at random; but because the order, reason, end, and necessity of events are chiefly concealed in the purpose of God, and not comprehended by the mind of man, those things are in some measure fortuitous (which must happen according to Divine will). Let us suppose, for example, that a merchant, having entered a wood in the company of honest men, imprudently wanders from his companions, and falls into the hands of robbers, and is murdered. His death was not only foreseen by God, but also decreed by Him (Job 14:5). Yet, as far as our minds are capable of comprehending, all these circumstances appear fortuitous. What opinion shall a Christian form on this case? He will consider all the circumstances of such a death as in their nature fortuitous; yet he will not doubt that the providence of God presided, and directed fortune to that end. There is no event, either past, present, or future, which God has not ordained. In this sense, the word “chance” is frequently repeated in Ecclesiastes.

An eminent example of how God, by the reins of providence, directs all events according to His pleasure, is David’s being overtaken by Saul in the wilderness of Maon. At this very juncture, the Philistines made an irruption in the land, which compelled Saul to depart from pursuing David. This surely happened not by chance. What to man seems a contingency, faith will acknowledge to have been a secret impulse of God. It is not always that there appears a similar reason; but it should be considered indubitably certain, that all the revolutions visible in the world proceed from the secret exertion of the Divine power. What God decrees must necessarily come to pass—yet not by absolute or natural necessity.

Chapter XVII

The Proper Application of This Doctrine to Render It Useful to Us

1. The doctrine of the providence of God, to render it useful to us, must be considered, firstly, in regard to futurity, as well as in reference to that which is past, and, secondly, that it governs all things in such a manner as to operate sometimes by the intervention of means, sometimes without, and sometimes in opposition to all means. Lastly, that it tends to show God's care for the whole human race, and especially His vigilance in the government of the Church.

Although God's paternal favour, or His severe justice, is frequently conspicuous in the whole course of His providence, yet sometimes the causes of events are concealed, so that a suspicion intrudes itself, that the revolutions of human affairs are conducted by a blind impetuosity of fortune. Though the causes are concealed from us, we must admit it as a certain truth, that they are hidden with Him. "Many, O LORD my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered" (Ps 40:5). And, we must esteem His will the most righteous cause of everything that He does. Behind and above the thick clouds that obscure the heavens, there is a quiet serenity. So, it must be concluded, that while the turbulent state of the world deprives us of our judgment, God, by the pure light of His own righteousness and wisdom, regulates all those commotions in the most exact order, and directs them to their proper end.

2. To attain a just and profitable view of the providence of God, one must consider that one has to do with one's Maker and Creator, and submit oneself with reverence and humility. Whatever comes to pass in the world is governed by the incomprehensible counsel of God. Concerning this, Paul also says, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?" (Rom 11:33, 34). This sublime doctrine is declared by Moses (Deut 29:29), and also in the Book of Job (Job 26:14; 28:21, 28).

3. Those who have learned this sublime doctrine, will neither murmur against God on account of past adversities, nor charge Him with the guilt of their crimes, like Agamemnon, in Homer, who says, “The blame belongs not to me, but to Jupiter and Fate.” Nor will they, under the influence of despair, put an end to their lives, like the young man whom Plautus introduces as saying, “I will betake myself to a precipice, and there destroy my life and everything at once.” Nor will they ascribe their flagitious actions by ascribing them to God, after the example of another young man introduced by the same poet, who says, “God was the cause: I believe it was the Divine will. For had it not been so, I know it would not have happened.” But, they will rather search the Scripture, to learn what is pleasing to God, and they will exhibit proofs in their conduct, that nothing is more useful than a knowledge of this doctrine.

4. In reference to future things, Solomon easily reconciles the deliberations of men with the providence of God. “A man’s heart deviseth his way: but the LORD directeth his steps” (Prov 16:9). This signifies that the eternal decrees of God form no impediment to our providing for ourselves, and disposing all our concerns in subservience to His will. The reason of this is manifest. For He, who has fixed the limits of our life, has also intrusted us with the care of it; has furnished us with means and supplies for its preservation; has also made us provident of dangers, and that they may not oppress us unawares, has furnished us with cautions and remedies. In using all the means and supplies God has given us for our well-being, we fit into the pattern of His providence. Not to take care of ourselves against danger or evil, and, by neglect, charge our safety blindly to God’s providence, is to be a fool, whose ruin is traced to his own inconsiderate temerity.

5. It is absurd to say, that a thief or a murderer cannot be punished in the light of the doctrine of the providence of God, because, after all, he was subservient to the Divine will. But I deny that they serve the will of God, because the immediate cause of their crime comes from their malignant passions. The will of God, that we must be concerned about, is His precepts which are declared in His Word. If we do anything contrary to them, it is not obedience, but contumacy and transgression. We cannot please Him by performing evil actions. However, in His infinite greatness and wisdom, criminal actions even subserve His righteous ordination. He

well knows how to use evil instruments for the accomplishment of good purposes. But, there are inconsiderate and erroneous ones, who would thus exonerate those criminals, because their crimes have come under the ordination of God. While I admit that these have become instruments of Divine providence, I deny that this ought to afford any excuse for their crimes, even as their consciences do reprove them. They cannot lay any blame upon God, for they find in themselves nothing but evil, and, in Him, only a legitimate use of their wickedness. Now, if it is alleged that He operates by their means, I would answer with this illustration: Whence, I ask, proceeds the fetid smell of a carcass, which has been putrefied and disclosed by the solar rays? Yet, no person attributes to those rays an offensive smell. So, when the matter and guilt of evil resides in a bad man, why should God be supposed to contract any defilement, if He uses his service according to His pleasure?

6. Having dispelled the cavils against this doctrine, the pious Christian will derive the greatest pleasure and advantage from it. He will discern that all things happen by the ordination of God, and that there is nothing happening blindly by chance. He will always see God as the supreme cause of all things, and will consider inferior causes in their proper order. He will not doubt that the particular providence of God is watchful for his preservation, never permitting any event which it will not overrule for his advantage and safety.

The vigilance of the particular providence of God for the safety of the faithful is attested by numerous and remarkable promises, such as 1 Peter 5:7; Psalm 91:1, 12; Zechariah 2:8; Isaiah 49:15, 25; Matthew 10:29, 30; yea, extending even to the hairs of our head. What more can we desire for ourselves, if not a single hair can fall from our head, but according to His will? This particular providence is directed especially by His paternal care over the Church, which He has chosen out of the human race.

7. All men are subject to His power, either to conciliate their minds in our favour, or to restrain their malice from being injurious. The Lord gave Israel favour in the eyes of the Egyptians (Exod 3:21), but sent Satan to fill the mouths of all the prophets with falsehood, whereby Ahab was deceived (1 Kgs 22:22). He infatuated Rehoboam by the young men's counsel (1 Kgs 12:10–15), and defeated the counsel of Ahithophel, which would have been fatal to David (2 Sam 17:7, 14). For our safety, He

governs the devil himself, who, we see, dared not attempt anything against Job without His permission and command (Job 1:12). The results of this knowledge are: gratitude in prosperity; patience in adversity; and a wonderful security respecting the future.

8. If any adversity befall him, in this case also, he will immediately lift his heart to God. If Joseph had dwelt on a review of the perfidy of his brethren, he never could have recovered his fraternal affection for them. But, as he turned his mind to the Lord, he forgot his injuries, and even consoled them, “It was not you that sent me hither, but . . . God sent me before you . . . to save your lives . . . Ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good” (Gen 45:8, 7; 50:20). Though the Chaldeans injured his family, Job consoled himself with this very beautiful observation, “The LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD” (Job 1:21). David, when assailed by Shimei with reproachful language and with stones, retaliated not; but, more understandingly, accepted the abuse, “Let him curse, because the LORD hath said unto him, Curse David” (2 Sam 16:10). The conclusion of the whole is this—that, when we suffer injuries from men, we should remember to ascend to God, and learn that whatsoever our enemies have committed against us, has been permitted and directed by His righteous dispensation.

9. On the other hand, a pious man will not overlook inferior causes. Nor, because he accounts those from whom he has received benefit, the ministers of Divine goodness, will he pass them by unnoticed, as though they deserved not thanks for their kindness. He will readily acknowledge his obligation to them, and seek to return it as ability and opportunity may permit. Finally, he will praise God as the principal Author of benefits received, and will honour men as His ministers. If he suffer any loss either through negligence or imprudence, he will conclude that it happened according to the Divine will, and will also impute the blame of it to himself. The responsibility of man is not at all to be discounted under the doctrine of the providence of God.

In regard to the future, he will direct his attention to the inferior causes. He will regard to be among the blessings of the Lord, not to be destitute of human aids, which he may use for his own safety; nor be negligent in imploring the help, of those whom he perceives to be capable of affording him assistance. He will consider all the creatures, that can in any respect

be serviceable to him, as so many gifts from the Lord. He will use them as the legitimate instruments of Divine providence. And, while he will judge what is the best way to carry out his purpose, he will not be carried away by his own opinion, but seek closely the wisdom of God. Thus, Joab, though he acknowledges the event of battle to depend on the will and power of God, yet surrenders himself not to inactivity. He worked his hardest, while leaving the outcome to the Divine decision. “Let us play the men,” says he, “for our people, and for the cities of our God: and the LORD do that which seemeth him good” (2 Sam 10:12). This knowledge will divest us of temerity and false confidence, and excite us to continual invocations of God. This knowledge will inspire us with good hope, and make us bold to face all the dangers surrounding us.

10. Human life is beset by innumerable evils, and threatened with a thousand deaths. Our body is the receptacle of a thousand diseases, and is at the mercy of cold and heat. Danger lurks at every corner against us, whether in embarking on a ship, mounting a horse, or just walking through the streets. If you endeavour to shut yourself in a garden surrounded with a good fence, even there sometimes lurks a serpent. Amidst these difficulties, must not man be most miserable and dispirited and alarmed as though he had a sword perpetually applied to his neck? Man must feel most miserable, if he is subject to all these under the dominion of fortune.

11. On the contrary, when this light of Divine providence has shone on a pious man, he is relieved, not only from every anxiety and dread with which he was previously oppressed, but also from every care. For, as he has just dreaded fortune, he now commits himself securely to God. He knows no evil can happen to him, by His appointment. He realises he is even under the protection of angels, so that he can sing with the Psalmist (Ps 91:3–6), and glorify with the saints: “The LORD is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me? The LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? Though an host should encamp against me, . . . though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil” (Ps 118:6; 27:1, 3; 23:4). Because he knows that God is governing universally, and nothing can happen without His permissive will, so when his safety is attacked, by the devil or wicked men, he remains secure and unshaken. Established in this persuasion, Paul determined his journey in one place by the permission of God, which, in another, he had declared

was prevented by Satan (1 Cor 16:7; 1 Thess 2:18). If he had only said that Satan was the obstacle, he would have appeared to attribute too much power to him, as though he were able to subvert the purposes of God; but when he states God to be the arbiter, on whose permission all journeys depend, he at the same time shows, that Satan can effect nothing but by His permission. Thus, David, despite the various vicissitudes of life, can say, “My times are in thy hand” (Ps 31:15). Ignorance of providence is the greatest of miseries, but the knowledge of it is attended with the highest felicity.

12. On the doctrine of Divine providence, enough would have been said, were it not for a difficulty arising from a few passages, which apparently imply, that the counsel of God is not firm and stable, but liable to change. For example, it is said that God repented of having created man (Gen 6:6), and of having exalted Saul to the kingdom (1 Sam 15:11), and that He will repent of the evil which He had determined to inflict on His people, as soon as He shall have perceived their conversion (Jer 18:8). We also read of the abrogation of some of His decrees; e.g., the declaration of Jonah to the Ninevites of destruction within forty days, and their penitence and a more merciful sentence (Jonah 3:4, 10). Hence, many persons argue, that God has not fixed the affairs of men by an eternal decree.

With regard to repentance, insofar as God is concerned, this is not to be associated with ignorance, error, or impotence; for, elsewhere, it is stated that God “is not a man, that he should repent” (1 Sam 15:29).

13. How, then, is the term **repentance** to be understood, when attributed to God? I reply, in the same manner as all the other forms of expression, which describe God to us after the manner of men. Since our infirmity cannot reach His sublimity, in order that we may understand it, He lowers Himself to our capacity, not as He is in Himself, but according to our perception of Him. **Repentance**, used in Scripture in regard to God’s actions, simply means a change of His works, but not an alteration of His counsel or will.

14. Nor does remission of the destruction which was denounced against the Ninevites, prove that there was any abrogation of the Divine decrees. The declaration to Nineveh contained, in fact, a tacit condition.

For, did God send Jonah to Nineveh, merely to predict its ruin? Jonah was sent not to destroy them, but rather to reform them. So, the denouncement of Nineveh was uttered rather to prevent its fall. We must not infer that there is any abrogation of a prior purpose of God, because He may have annulled some former declarations. For, God rather prepares the way for His eternal ordination, when, by a denunciation of punishment, He calls to repentance those whom He designs to spare, than makes any variation in His will. Isaiah's assertion must remain true, "The LORD of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? and his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?" (Isa 14:27).

Chapter XVIII

God Uses the Agency of the Impious, and Inclines Their Minds to Execute His Judgments, Yet Without the Least Stain of His Perfect Purity

1. A question of greater difficulty arises from other passages, where God is said to incline or draw, according to His pleasure, Satan himself and all the reprobate. Satan and all the reprobate are subject to His government, so that He directs their malice to whatever end He pleases, and uses their crimes for the execution of His own judgments. In so doing, God contracts no defilement from their criminality, and, even in operations common to Himself and them, is free from every fault, and yet righteously condemns those whose ministry He uses. To many persons, the outworking of God's decree thus has appeared an inexplicable difficulty. To evade this difficulty, it is alleged that this happens only by His permission, and not by His will. But, it is clearly declared that men can effect nothing but by the secret will of God, and can deliberate nothing but what He has previously decreed.

This subject will be better elucidated by particular examples. In the case of Job, we know how Satan presents himself, together with the angels, to receive His commands. Satan's commission was for a different end from the others; yet he cannot attempt anything but by the Divine will. Under Satan's affliction, Job declares, "The LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away" (Job 1:21). From this statement, we conclude God is the author of that trial, of which Satan and the robbers are the immediate agents. Therefore, whatever is attempted by men or Satan himself, God still holds the helm, so that whatsoever they do are to the execution of His judgments.

We can study the outworking of God's decrees, through the agency of Satan and wicked men in the instances of Ahab (1 Kgs 22:20–23), in the condemning of Christ by Pilate through the instigation of the Jews (Acts 4:28; 2:23), in Absalom's defiling his father's bed with incest (2 Sam 12:12; 16:22), and in Nebuchadnezzar's (Jer 25:9) and Assyria's (Isa 10:5) roles as God's servant and rod.

2. Concerning the heart of a king, Solomon declares that it is inclined by the Divine will (Prov 21:1). Such a secret influence from God certainly extends to the whole human race, so that whatever conceptions we form in our minds, they are directed by the secret inspiration of God. He causes “the wisdom of [the] wise men [to] perish, and the understanding of [the] prudent men [to] be hid. He poureth contempt upon princes, and causeth them to wander in the wilderness, where there is no way” (Isa 29:14; Ps 107:40). But, nothing can be more explicit than His frequent declarations, that He blinds the minds of men, strikes them with giddiness, inebriates them with the spirit of slumber, fills them with infatuation, and hardens their hearts (Rom 1:28; 11:8; Exod 8:15). Many refer to these passages of Scripture as revealing God’s permission, that God, abandoning the reprobate, permitted them to be blinded by Satan. Such solution is too frivolous, since the Holy Spirit declares that their blindness and infatuation are inflicted by the righteous judgment of God. The hardening of Pharaoh’s heart (Exod 4:21) was not a bare permission, but truly the cause of God in righteous judgment; and so was the heart of the Canaanites, that they should go to battle (Deut 2:30; Josh 11:20). In Isaiah, He declares He will “send [the Assyrian] against an hypocritical nation, and . . . will I give him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey” (Isa 10:6).

God often actuates the reprobate by the interposition of Satan; but in such a manner that Satan himself acts his part by the Divine impulse, and proceeds to the extent of the Divine appointment. Saul was disturbed by an evil spirit, but is said “from the LORD” (1 Sam 16:14), in order to teach us that Saul’s madness proceeded from righteous vengeance of God. God is the principal author of His righteous vengeance, and Satan is only the dispenser. In summing up, as the will of God is said to be the cause of all things, His providence is established as the governor in all the counsels and works of men, so that it not only exerts its power in the elect, who are influenced by the Holy Spirit, but also compels the compliances of the reprobate.

3. Augustine’s teaching on this subject is as follows: “That a man may sometimes choose, with a good intention, that which is not agreeable to the will of God; as, if a good son wishes his father to live, whilst God determines that he shall die. It is also possible for a man to will with a bad design, what God wills with a good one; as, if a bad son wishes his father

to die, which is also the will of God. Now, the former wishes what is not agreeable, the latter what is agreeable to the Divine will. And, yet the filial affection of the former is more consonant to the righteous will of God, than the want of natural affection in the latter, though it accords with His secret design. So great is the difference between what belongs to the human will, and what to the Divine, and between the ends to which the will of every one is referred, for approbation or censure. For God fulfils his righteous will by the wicked wills of wicked men.”

“In a wonderful and ineffable manner, that is not done without his will which yet is contrary to his will; because it would not be done if he did not permit it; and this permission is not involuntary, but voluntary; nor would his goodness permit the perpetration of evil, unless his omnipotence were able even from that evil to educe good.”

4. Another objection to this doctrine is, that if God not only uses the agency of the impious, but governs their designs and affections, He is the author of all crimes. Therefore, it is argued, men are undeservedly condemned, if they execute what God has decreed, because they obey His will. In this argument, we see that His will is improperly confounded with His precept. The difference between His will and His precept is very great, and is evinced by innumerable examples in the Scripture. For example, in Absalom’s defilement of David’s wives, while it was God’s will to disgrace David to punish his adultery (2 Sam 16:22), He, on the other hand, did not command that abandoned son to commit incest. And, so we can see this principle operating in the election of Jeroboam to regal dignity (1 Kgs 12:20), in the punishing of Solomon’s ingratitude, in depriving Solomon’s son of part of the kingdom.

I have clearly explained how, in the same act, there is displayed the criminality of men and the justice of God. And, to modest minds, this answer of Augustine will suffice: “Since God delivered Christ, and Christ delivered his own body, and Judas delivered the Lord, why, in this delivery, is God righteous and man guilty? Because, in the same act, they acted not from the same cause.”

BOOK II

Book II

On the Knowledge of God the Redeemer in Christ Which Was Revealed First to the Fathers Under the Law, and Since to Us in the Gospel

CONTENTS

The discussion of the first part of the Apostolic Creed, on the knowledge of God the Creator, being finished, is followed by another, on the knowledge of God the Redeemer in Christ, which is the subject of this Second Book.

It treats, first, of the occasion of redemption, that is, the fall of Adam, secondly, of the redemption itself. The former of these subjects occupies the first five chapters; the remaining ones are assigned to the latter.

On the occasion of redemption, it treats, not only of the fall in general, but also of its effects in particular; that is, of original sin, the slavery of the will, the universal corruption of human nature, the operation of God in the hearts of men—Chapters I–IV, to which is subjoined a refutation of the objections commonly adduced in defence of free will—Chapter V.

The discourse on redemption may be divided into five principal parts. It shows,

1. In whom salvation must be sought by lost man, that is, in Christ—Chapter VI.
2. How Christ has been manifested to the world; which has been in two ways; first, under the law (which introduces an explanation of the Decalogue, and a discussion of some other things relative to the Law)—Chapters VII–VIII; secondly; under the Gospel, which leads to a statement of the similarity and difference of the two Testaments—Chapters IX–XI.
3. What kind of a being it was necessary for Christ to be, in order to His fulfillment of the office of a Mediator; that is, God and man in one person—Chapters XII–XIV.
4. The end of His mission from the Father into the world—Chapter XV, which explains His prophetic, regal, and sacerdotal offices.

5. The methods or steps by which He fulfilled the part of a Redeemer, to procure our salvation—Chapter XVI; which discusses the articles relating to His crucifixion, death, burial, descent into hell, resurrection, ascension to heaven, session at the right hand of the Father, and the benefits arising from this doctrine. Then follows Chapter XVII, a solution of the question, Whether Christ merited for us the grace of God and salvation.

Chapter I

The Fall and Defection of Adam the Cause of the Curse Inflicted on All Mankind, and of Their Degeneracy from Their Primitive Condition. The Doctrine of Original Sin

1. Philosophers exhort us to know ourselves, but the knowledge they lead us into ends in vain confidence and inflates us with pride. But, the knowledge of ourselves should consist, first, in considering what was so excellently bestowed upon us at our creation, and, secondly, our miserable condition since the fall of Adam. At the beginning, we were formed after His image, and, being endued with reason and intelligence, we should lead a holy and virtuous life and aspire to eternal life. However, in the person of the first man, we are fallen from our original condition. Hence arise disapprobation and abhorrence of ourselves, and the inflaming within us to seek after God, to recover in Him those excellences of which we find ourselves utterly destitute.

2. This is what the truth of God directs us to seek in the examination of ourselves: it requires a knowledge that will take us away from all confidence in our ability, deprive us of every cause of boasting, and reduce us to submission. This rule, we must observe if we are to reach the proper point of knowledge and action. That man has, in himself, sufficient ability to insure his own virtue and happiness is a very false opinion. Whoever, therefore, attends to such teachers as amuse us with a mere exhibition of our virtues, will make no progress in the knowledge of himself, but will be absorbed in the most pernicious ignorance.

3. We may divide the knowledge man ought to have for himself into these two parts. First, he should consider the end of his being created and endued with such estimable gifts; a reflection which may excite him to the consideration of Divine worship, and of a future life. Secondly, he should examine his own ability, or rather his want of ability, the view of which may confound and almost annihilate him. The former consideration should acquaint him with his duty, the latter with his power to perform it. We shall treat of them both in regular order.

4. In regard to the nature of Adam's sin, the common opinion of its being due to gluttony is quite puerile. Rather, the prohibition of the tree of

knowledge of good and evil was a test of obedience, that Adam might prove his willing submission to the Divine government. The name of the tree shows that the precept was given for no other purpose than that he might be contented with his condition, and not aim with criminal cupidity at any higher. The promise of eternal life, as long as he should eat of the tree of life, with the dread denunciation of death, in the eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, was calculated for the probation and exercise of his faith. Hence, it is easy to infer by what means Adam sinned. Augustine observes that it was pride. From the nature of the temptation wherein the woman was seduced to discredit the Word of God, it is evident that the fall commenced in disobedience, as also confirmed by Paul (Rom 5:19). But disobedience is traced to infidelity, for it is observed that when the first man rebelled against the government of God, he was not only ensnared by Satan's allurements, but despised the truth. Infidelity, therefore, was the root of that defection.

5. Adam's sin alienated him from God. Inasmuch as his spiritual life consisted in a union to his Maker, alienation from Him brought death to his soul. His sin also ruined his posterity and perverted the whole order of nature in heaven and earth (Rom 8:20, 22), inasmuch as the creatures were created for the use of man. Adam's guilt being the origin of that curse which extends to every part of the world, it is reasonable to conclude its propagation to all his offspring. Therefore, when the Divine image in him was obliterated, he suffered not alone, but involved all his posterity with him, and plunged them into the same miseries. This is that hereditary corruption which the fathers call **original sin**. But Pelagius has profanely pretended that the sin of Adam only ruined himself, and did not injure his descendants. But, when it was evinced by the plain testimony of Scripture, that sin was communicated from the first man to all his posterity, he sophistically urged that it was communicated by imitation, not by propagation. Augustine demonstrates, however, that we are corrupted not by any adventitious means, but that we derive an innate depravity from our very birth (Ps 51:5; Job 14:4).

6. Adam was not only the progenitor, but, as it were, the root of mankind, and, therefore, that all the race were necessarily vitiated by his corruption. The Apostle explains this by a comparison between him and Christ: "As," says he, "by one man sin entered into the world, and death

by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned” (Rom 5:12), so, by the grace of Christ, righteousness and life have been restored to us. If the righteousness of Christ is ours by communication, and life as its consequence, it is equally evident that both were lost in Adam, in the same manner they were recovered in Christ, and vice versa, that sin and death were introduced by Adam, in the same manner they were abolished by Christ.

7. In line with the subject under discussion, the fathers were perplexed whether the soul of a son proceeds by derivation or transmission from the soul of the father. We need not enter into this dispute because the soul is the principal seat of the pollution. From a putrefied root, therefore, have sprung putrid branches, which have transmitted their putrescence to remote ramifications. There was such a spring of corruption in Adam, that it transfused from parents to children in a perpetual stream. But, the cause of the contagion is not in the substance of the body or the soul, but because it was ordained of God, that the gifts which He conferred on the first man should, by him, be preserved or lost for himself and for all his posterity. The cavil of the Pelagians, that it is improbable that children should derive corruption from pious parents, whereas they ought to be sanctified by their parents, is easily refuted. Augustine says, “Neither the guilty unbeliever nor the justified believer, generates innocent, but guilty children, because the generation of both is from corrupt nature.” If they, in some measure, participate in the sanctity of the parents, that is the peculiar benediction of the people of God. From nature is their guilt, from supernatural grace their sanctification.

8. Let me define original sin. Original sin appears to be an hereditary pravity and corruption of our nature, diffused through all the parts of the soul, rendering us liable to the Divine wrath, and producing in us those works which the Scripture calls “works of the flesh” (Gal 5:19). This is what Paul frequently denominates **sin**. The works which proceed thence, such as adulteries, fornications, thefts, hatreds, etc., he calls “fruits of sin,” although they are also called “sins” in many passages of Scripture. These two things should be distinctly observed: that our nature being totally vitiated and depraved, we are, on account of this very corruption, considered as convicted and justly condemned in the sight of God. And this liableness to punishment arises not as if we, though innocent, were

undeservedly loaded with the guilt of sin; but because we are subject to a curse in consequence of Adam's transgression. Therefore, infants themselves, as they bring their condemnation in the world with them, are rendered liable to punishment by their own sinfulness, not by the sinfulness of another. Though they have not produced the fruits of sin, they have the seed of sin within them.

The other thing to be remarked is that this depravity never ceases in us, but is perpetually producing new fruits, those works of the flesh already mentioned. Original sin, therefore, is not only the privation of original righteousness, but the corruption of our whole nature, so that everything in man, the understanding, will, soul, body, is polluted and engrossed by concupiscence. Man, of himself, is nothing else but concupiscence.

9. The corruption of our nature extends not to one part of us, such as the sensual affections as asserted by some, including Peter Lombard. There is nothing in us that is pure and uncontaminated by its mortal infection. Paul removes every doubt on this total depravity by his statements in Ephesians 4:17, 18, and his description of original sin in Romans 3. How far sin occupies both mind and heart, we shall presently see, but my intention here was only to hint that man is so totally overwhelmed, as with a deluge, that no part is free from sin; and therefore that whatever proceeds from him is accounted sin (Rom 8:6, 7).

10. Some would like to charge God with their corruptions, because we say that man is naturally corrupt. They try to accuse God of man's ruin and even suggest that God might have made a better provision for our safety by preventing Adam's fall. Such argument is to be abominated, as too presumptuously curious; and it also belongs to the mystery of predestination. It is an important question, whether the ruin inherent in our nature was in it originally, or derived from an extraneous cause. It is evident that it was occasioned by sin. As the Preacher says, "This only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions" (Eccl 7:29). It is clear that the misery of man must be ascribed solely to himself, since he was favoured with rectitude by the Divine goodness, but has lapsed into vanity by his own folly.

11. We conclude, therefore, that man is corrupted by a natural depravity, but which did not originate from nature. We deny that it

proceeded from nature. It is not a substantial property originally innate. It is rather an adventitious quality or accident. Yet we call it natural, that no one may suppose it to be contracted from corrupt habit. It prevails over all by hereditary right. Thus, the Apostle says that we are all “by nature the children of wrath” (Eph 2:3). God is angry with man, His noblest of creatures, not with His work itself, but the corruption thereof. Therefore, if, on account of the corruption of human nature, man be justly said to be naturally abominable to God, he may also be truly said to be naturally depraved and corrupt; as Augustine, in consequence of the corruption of nature, hesitates not to call those sins natural, where they are not prevented by the grace of God.

Chapter II

Man, in His Present State, Despoiled of Freedom of Will, and Subjected to a Miserable Slavery

1. Since we have seen how sin has dominated the whole human race and possessed every soul, let us examine whether this sin has despoiled us of all freedom, i.e., the freedom of the will.

2. To study whether sin has despoiled us of the freedom of the will, we must proceed with an investigation of the faculties of soul, which consist of the mind and heart.

The philosophers teach that *Reason* presides over the mind and governs the will. *Reason* is said to be so irradiated with Divine light and endowed with such vigour as to be qualified to govern in the most excellent manner. *Sense*, on the contrary, is torpid and afflicted with weakness of sight, is absorbed in the grossest objects, nor ever elevates itself to a view of the truth. Then, there is *Appetite*. If *Appetite* can submit to the obedience of *Reason* and resist the attractions of *Sense*, then, it is inclined to the practice of virtues and is formed into *Will*. If it succumbs to *Sense* and becomes corrupted, it degenerates into *Lust*. The philosophers teach that *Reason* can control the inferior affections of the soul called *Sense*. They place the *Will* in the middle between *Reason* and *Sense*, and assert that this *Will* has perfect liberty, whether to obey *Reason* or to submit to the violence of *Sense*.

3. Although there are many forces of alluring pleasures and immoderate passions like so many fierce horses pulling, and have even thrown off *Reason* like throwing off the charioteer, yet it is argued by the philosophers that virtue and vice are in our own power. For, if we can choose to do this or that, and are also free to abstain from it, we must also be free to do it. The conclusion of philosophers is that *Reason* can exercise proper government over the human soul. The *Will*, being subject to *Reason*, though solicited by *Sense* to evil, has a free choice. There can be no impediment to its following *Reason* as its guide in all things.

4. Among the ecclesiastical writers, however, there has not been one who would not acknowledge both that human reason is grievously

wounded by sin and that the will is very much embarrassed by corrupt affections. Yet, many have followed the philosophers far beyond what is right. They compromised between the doctrine of the Scripture and the dogmas of the philosophers. Chrysostum says, “Since God has placed good and evil things in our power, he has given us freedom of choice; and he constrains not the willing, but embraces the willing.” Asserting that fallen man has a free will, Chrysostum further says, “Let us bring what is ours; God will supply the rest.” To which Jerome agrees, “That it belongs to us to begin, and to God to complete; that it is ours to offer what we can, but his to supply our deficiencies.” In these sentences, you see that they certainly attributed to man more than could justly be attributed to him towards the pursuit of virtue. Man was commonly supposed to be corrupted in his sensual part, but to have his will in a great measure, and his reason entirely, unimpaired.

The Latins use the term “*free will*” as though man still remained in his primitive integrity. The Greeks use an expression much more arrogant, “*Auteksousion*,” denoting that man possesses sovereign power over himself. Since all men are tinctured with this principle, that man is endued with free will, let us examine the meaning of the term, and let us describe, according to the simplicity of Scripture, the power which man naturally possesses to do either good or evil. It is of great importance to examine what ability is retained by man in his present state, corrupted in all the parts of his nature, and deprived of supernatural gifts.

5. Common and external things, which do not pertain to the kingdom of God, they generally consider as subject to the free determination of man. But, true righteousness, they refer to the special grace of God and spiritual regeneration. To support this notion, the author of the treatise, “*On the Vocation of the Gentiles*,” enumerates three kinds of will—the first a sensitive, the second an animal and the third a spiritual one. The two former ones, he states to be freely exercised by us, and the last to be the work of the Holy Spirit in us. The truth or falsehood of this statement shall be discussed in its proper place. Hence, when writers treat of free will, the first inquiry respects not its ability in civil or external actions, but its power to obey the Divine law. Though I confess the latter to be the principal question, yet I think the other ought not to be totally neglected.

6. In the light of the admission above, man undoubtedly has no free will for good works, unless he be assisted by special grace which is bestowed on the elect alone in regeneration.

But Lombard argues that we are not therefore possessed of free will, because we have an equal power to do or think either good or evil, but only because we are free from constraint. He argues that this liberty is not diminished, although we are corrupt, and the slaves of sin, and capable of doing nothing but sin.

7. Then man will be said to possess free will in this sense, not that he has an equally free election of good and evil, but because he does evil voluntarily, and not by constraint. That is indeed very true, but what liberty, the free will of a slave held in bondage by the fetters of sin! What an absurd use of words which leads to a pernicious error. When it is said that man has free will, do we not immediately conceive that he has the sovereignty over his own mind and will, and is able by his innate power to incline himself to whatever he pleases?

8. In regard to free will, Augustine has not hesitated to call it “the will of a slave,” though he has expressed his displeasure against those who deny free will in this sense: “Only let no man dare so to deny the freedom of the will, as to desire to excuse sin.” Elsewhere, he plainly confesses, that the human will is not free with the Spirit, since it is subject to its lusts, by which it is conquered and bound. Again: that when the will was overcome by the sin into which it fell, nature began to be destitute of liberty. Again: that man, having made a wrong use of his free will, lost both it and himself. Again: that free will is in a state of captivity, so that it can do nothing towards righteousness. Again: that the will cannot be free, which has not been liberated by Divine grace. Again: that the Divine justice is not fulfilled while the law commands, and man acts from his own strength; but when the Spirit assists, and the human will obeys, not as being free, but as liberated by God. And he briefly assigns the cause of all these, when, in another place, he tells us, that man at his creation received great strength of free will, but lost it by sin. Therefore, having shown that free will is the result of grace, he sharply inveighs against those who arrogate it to themselves without grace. Augustine argues that the term “*free will*” signifies liberty. Now, if they are the slaves of sin, why do they

boast of free will? He observes ironically, in another place, of those who use the term “free will” erroneously, that their will is free, but not liberated; free from righteousness, enslaved to sin!

9. Except Augustine, all the ecclesiastical writers have treated this subject with such ambiguities or variations, that nothing certain can be learned from their writings. At one time, they teach man, despoiled of all strength of free will, to have recourse to grace alone; at another, they either furnish, or appear to furnish, him with armour naturally his own. I now proceed to a simple explication of the truth in considering the nature of man.

10. Let me repeat what I premised in the beginning of this chapter—that he who feels the most consternation, from a consciousness of his own calamity, poverty, nakedness and ignominy, has made the greatest proficiency in the knowledge of himself. But, whenever our minds are tempted to desire to have something of our own apart from God, we may know that this idea is suggested by the evil one. To keep ourselves from allurements to this vain confidence, let us be deterred by the many awful sentences which should humble us to dust: “Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm” (Jer 17:5). Again: God “delighteth not in the strength of the horse: he taketh not pleasure in the legs of a man. The LORD taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy” (Ps 147:10–11).

11. I have always been exceedingly pleased with Chrysostom that humility is the foundation of our philosophy; but still more with this of Augustine. “As a rhetorician,” says he, “on being interrogated what was the first thing in the rules of eloquence, replied, ‘Pronunciation’; on being separately interrogated what was the second, and what was the third, gave the same reply. So, should anyone interrogate me concerning the rules of Christian religion, the first, second and third, I would always reply, Humility.”

The greater your weakness is in yourself, so much the more the Lord assists you. So in Psalm 70, He forbids us to remember our own righteousness, that we may know the righteousness of God; and shows that God so recommends His grace to us, that we may know we are nothing. We are solely dependent on Divine mercy, being of ourselves altogether evil.

12. I much approve of that common observation borrowed from Augustine, that the natural talents in man have been corrupted by sin, but of the supernatural ones he has been wholly deprived. Man has been deprived of the light of faith and righteousness by which he could have attained to life eternal. (In Christ, these supernatural endowments are restored).

The corruption of the natural talents involves the soundness of mind which is oppressed with debility. The depravity of the will is sufficiently known. Reason, therefore, by which man distinguishes between good and evil, is partly debilitated. Man, in his corrupt and degenerate state, however, retains some sparks to shine within him, which differentiates him as a rational creature from the brutes. Nor is man's will annihilated though it is fettered by depraved and inordinate desires.

13. As to man's understanding, I propose there is one for terrestrial things and another for celestial ones. I call those terrestrial which relate entirely to the present life. Celestial things are the pure knowledge of God, the method of true righteousness, and the mysteries of the heavenly kingdom. In the former are included civil polity, domestic economy, all the mechanical arts and liberal sciences. In the latter, the knowledge of God and of the Divine will, and the rule for conformity to it in our lives. It is certainly true that some seeds of political order are sown in the minds of all. And there is a powerful argument, that in the constitution of this life, no man is destitute of reason.

14. Next follow the arts, both liberal and manual. Though all men are not capable of learning every art, there is a common energy that gives every individual some sagacity in some particular art. Some even invest and improve upon their predecessors, which prove that men are endued with a general apprehension of reason and understanding. Though this is a universal blessing, everyone ought to acknowledge it as a particular favour of God. For consider those who are idiots in whose souls there is no illumination!

15. In heathen writers also is the light of truth admirably displayed through their works, e.g., the just principles of civil order and polity by ancient lawyers. Consider also the light given to philosophers in their scientific description of nature, and the realm of medicine also. What about

the truth in mathematics? We admire the true findings in every realm of scientific study which cannot but proceed from God.

16. Indeed, these are excellent gifts of the Holy Spirit which He dispenses to whomsoever He pleases, for the common good of mankind. If it was necessary for the Spirit of God to infuse in Bezaleel and Aholiah the skill to construct the Tabernacle (Exod 31:2–11; 35:30–35), we conclude that the knowledge of those things, which are most excellent in human life, is also communicated by God. Thus, if it has pleased the Lord that we should learn physics, logic, mathematics and other arts and sciences, by the labour and industry of the heathens, let us make use of them.

17. Let us conclude that reason is a peculiar property of our nature which distinguishes us from brute animals. This reason, though corrupted, displays God’s goodness to us, so that no one may arrogate to himself as his own what proceeds from the Divine liberality. God inspires particular motions according to the vocation of each individual; of which many examples occur in the Book of Judges, where the spirit of God is said to “come upon” those whom He called to govern the people.

Finally, in all important actions there is a special instinct; as in the example of Saul, who was followed by valiant men “whose hearts God had touched” (1 Sam 10:26). So, with David, that “the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward” (1 Sam 16:13). Even in Homer, men are said to excel in abilities, not only as Jupiter has distributed to every one, but according as he guides him day by day. In all these instances, we perceive some remaining marks of the Divine image which distinguish man from brutes.

18. We must now analyse what human reason can discern with regard to knowing God. Human reason, in the most sagacious of mankind, is blinder than the moles. Some judicious observations of God may be found scattered in the writings of philosophers; but they always betray a confused imagination. The view of philosophers concerning God may be likened to a man travelling at night, who sees flashes of lightning extending for a moment far and wide, but with such an evanescent view, that so far from assisted by them in proceeding on his journey, he is re-absorbed in the dark night before he can advance a single step. Human reason, then, neither

approaches nor directs its views towards this truth, to understand who is the true God, or how He will manifest Himself to us.

19. In Divine things our reason is totally blind and stupid, as John declares: “In him [God] was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not” (John 1:4, 5). When the Spirit calls men “darkness,” He at once totally despoils them of the faculty of spiritual understanding.

20. Our nature indeed is destitute of all those things which our heavenly Father confers on His elect through the Spirit of regeneration. A special illumination is needed by the work of the Holy Spirit to make us see Divine things, as declared by John the Baptist, “A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven” (John 3:27). This fact is confirmed by Moses’ statement to the Israelites: “Thine eyes have seen the signs, and those great miracles: Yet the LORD hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear” (Deut 29:3, 4). Without the illumination of the Holy Spirit, those to whom Moses had addressed his word could well be called blockheads! Christ has also confirmed this by His own declaration, that no man can come to Him, except the Father draws him (John 6:44). Despite the fact that He is the lively image of the Father, descended from heaven to earth, His preaching is not at all efficacious, unless the way to the human heart is laid open by the internal teaching of the Spirit. It must be concluded, therefore, that there is no admission to the kingdom of God, but for him whose mind has been renewed by the illumination of the Holy Spirit. But Paul expresses himself more clearly than all the others. Having professedly entered upon this argument, after he has condemned all human wisdom as folly and vanity, he comes to this conclusion, “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Cor 2:14).

21. That which he here detracts from men, he, in another place, ascribes exclusively to God. Praying for the Ephesians, he says, “That the God . . . , the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation” (Eph 1:17). If they need a new revelation, they are certainly blind of themselves. Notwithstanding any Pelagian objection, let no man hesitate to acknowledge, that he is incapable of understanding the mysteries

of God, any further than he has been illuminated by Divine grace. He who attributes to himself more understanding is so much the blinder, because he does not perceive and acknowledge his blindness.

22. In regard to the third branch of spiritual knowledge, which relates to the rule for the proper regulation of our life, which we denominate the knowledge of works of righteousness, we see the human mind more acutely aware than in respect of the two former categories. For the Apostle declares, “when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another” (Rom 2:14–15). If the Gentiles have naturally the righteousness of the law engraven on their minds, we certainly cannot say that they are altogether ignorant how they ought to live.

But let us examine for what purpose this knowledge of the law was given to men. Paul further says, “As many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law” (Rom 2:12). Because it might appear absurd that the Gentiles should perish without any previous knowledge, he immediately subjoins that their conscience supplies the place of a law to them, and therefore is sufficient for a just condemnation. The end of the law of nature, therefore, is, that man may be rendered inexcusable. To put it in another way, conscience sufficiently discerns between good and evil so that men are deprived of the plea of ignorance. Plato’s remark, that no sin is committed but through ignorance, cannot be accepted.

23. Themistius, another philosopher, with more truth, teaches that the human understanding is very rarely deceived in the universal definition, but that it falls into error when it proceeds to the consideration of particular cases. For example, no man will not affirm homicide to be criminal, but he who conspires the death of his enemy, deliberates on it as a good action. The adulterer will condemn adultery in general; but will privately flatter himself in his own. Here lies the ignorance—when a man, proceeding to a particular case, forgets the rule which he had just fixed as a general position. The observation of Themistius, however, is not applicable to all cases. For, sometimes, the turpitude of the crime so oppresses the

conscience of the sinner, that, no longer imposing on himself under the false image of virtue, he rushes to evil with the knowledge of his mind and the consent of his will. This state of mind produced these expressions, which we find in a heathen poet, “I see the better path, and approve it; I pursue the worse.”

24. Now, when you hear of a universal judgment in man to discriminate between good and evil, you must not imagine that it is everywhere sound and perfect. It is quite sufficient if they understand so much that they can avail themselves of no subterfuge. If we examine our reason by the Divine law, which is the rule of perfect righteousness, we shall find in how many respects it is blind. It is certainly far from reaching the principal points in the first Four Commandments. What mind, relying on its natural powers, ever imagined that the legitimate worship of God consists in these things? Of the precepts of the Second Table, it has a little clearer understanding, since they are more connected with the preservation of society among men.

25. Wherefore, as Plato has before been deservedly censured for imputing all sins to ignorance, so also we must reject the opinion of those who maintain that all sins proceed from deliberate malice and pravity. For we often experience how frequently we fall into error, even when our intention is good. Our reason is overwhelmed with deceptions in so many forms, that it is very far from being a certain guide (2 Cor 3:5). In the estimation of the Holy Spirit, who knows all the thoughts of the wisest of men are vain (Ps 94:11; Gen 6:5; 8:21), such a representation is consistent with the strictest truth. It is evident that the reason of our mind, whithersoever it turns, is unhappily exposed to vanity. Even after we are regenerated, we still need the perpetual direction every moment, from above, lest we decline from the knowledge which we possess through illumination. This is the testimony both of Paul (Col 1:9; Phil 1:4) and David (Ps 119:34; 51:10).

26. We must now proceed to the examination of the will, to which principally belongs the liberty of choice. Let us consider whether the will be in every part so vitiated and depraved that it can produce nothing but what is evil; or whether it retain any small part uninjured which may be the source of good desires.

27. Those who assert that we are able to will effectually seem to imply that the soul has a faculty of spontaneously aspiring to good, but that it is too weak to rise into a solid affection, or to excite any endeavour. The schoolman has, in general, embraced this opinion which was borrowed from Origen.

They quote Romans 7:18, 19 to show there is that will in human nature, weak though it is, to do good. But, this is a miserable perversion of the argument which Paul is pursuing, treating of the Christian conflict, the conflict which the faithful perpetually experience within themselves in the contention between the flesh and the spirit. Now, the spirit is not from nature, but from regeneration! Thus, Augustine, though he had at one time supposed that discourse to relate to the natural state of man, retracted his interpretation as false and inconsistent. And indeed, if we allow that men, destitute of grace, have some motions towards true goodness, though ever so feeble, what answer shall we give to the Apostle, who denies that we are sufficient of ourselves to entertain even a good thought? (2 Cor 3:5). What reply shall we make to the Lord, who pronounces, by the mouth of Moses, that every imagination of the human heart is only evil? (Gen 8:21). Advises Augustine: "Confess that you have all those things from God; that whatever good you have, it is from him; but whatever evil, from yourself." And a little after, "Nothing is ours, but sin."

Chapter III

Every Thing that Proceeds from the Corrupt Nature of Man Worthy of Condemnation

1. Is the nature of man so perverse that it entertains a secret hatred against God, that it cannot consent to the righteousness of the Divine law—in a word, that it can produce nothing but what tends to death? Is the corrupt nature of man, called by Christ “flesh” (John 3:6), that which pertains only to the sensual and not to the superior faculties of the soul? When Christ says that man must be born again, because he is “flesh,” He does not teach a new birth in regard to the body. A new birth of the soul is what He taught, which means the human nature needs an entire renovation. This includes, therefore, not only the sensual but the superior faculties of the soul, the mind, as Paul has said, “be renewed in the spirit of your mind” (Eph 4:23). Everything in man that is not spiritual is denominated carnal, but we have nothing of the spirit, except by regeneration.

2. Not only is the mind condemned till it is “born again,” equally severe is the condemnation of the heart, when it is called “deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked” (Jer 17:9). To be brief, let me cite Romans 3:10–18, which should serve as a mirror in which we may see, at full length, the image of our nature. In this passage, the Apostle inveighs not against particular individuals, but, against all the posterity of Adam, he accuses the perpetual corruption of our nature. Nor does he describe their corrupt habits, but rather their depraved nature. For as the body, which already contains within itself the cause and matter of a disease, although it has yet no sensation of pain, cannot be said to enjoy good health, neither can the soul be esteemed healthy, while it is full of such moral maladies. The soul, indeed, being immersed in the gulf of iniquity, is not only the subject of vices, but totally destitute of everything that is good.

3. A question, however, is presented in respect of the above assertions—“How about those, in every age, who have devoted their lives to the pursuit of virtue?” These examples seem to teach us that we should not consider human nature to be totally corrupted, since some men have not only been eminent for noble actions, but have uniformly conducted

themselves in a most virtuous manner through the whole course of their lives.

Our answer is that, amidst this corruption of nature, there is some room for Divine grace, not to purify it, but internally to restrain its operations. For, should the Lord permit the minds of all men to give up the reins to every lawless passion, there certainly would not be an individual in the world, whose actions would not evince all the crimes, for which Paul condemns human nature in general, to be most truly applicable to him. The Divine grace restrains them for the preservation of the world. Some by shame, and some by fear of the laws, are prevented from running into many kinds of pollutions; others because they think that a virtuous course of life is advantageous. God, by His providence, restrains the perverseness of our nature from breaking out into external acts, but does not purify us within unless we are the elect.

4. It is true that men like Camillus, who studiously cultivate themselves, may not be altogether destitute of goodness. I grant, rather, that the virtues displayed by Camillus were gifts of God. Those virtues are not the common properties of nature, but the peculiar grace of God which He dispenses, in a great variety, and in a certain degree to men that are otherwise profane. For which reason, in common speech, we hesitate not to call the nature of one man good, and of another depraved. Yet, we still include both in the universal state of human depravity. But we signify what peculiar grace God has conferred on the one, with which He has not deigned to favour the other. Thus, when He determined to exalt Saul to the kingdom, He made him, as it were, a new man; and this is the reason why Plato, alluding to the fable of Homer, says that the sons of kings are formed with some singularity of character; because God, for the benefit of mankind, frequently furnishes with a heroic nature those whom He destines to hold the reins of empire. But, since everyone who has risen to eminence has been impelled by his ambition, which defiles all virtues, whatever may be apparently laudable in ungodly men ought not be esteemed at all meritorious. Besides, the chief branch of virtue is wanting, where there is no display for the glory of God. The virtues, which are applauded in civil courts and in the common estimation of mankind, will possess no value to merit the reward of righteousness before the celestial tribunal.

5. As to our will, so bound by the slavery of sin, Bernard properly observes that we have all a power to will. To will what is good is an advantage. To will what is evil is a defect. Therefore, simply to will belongs to man; but to will what is evil, to corrupt nature; and to will what is good, to grace. Now I have asserted that the will, being deprived of its liberty, is necessarily drawn to evil. By necessity, which is to be distinguished from compulsion, I mean this: man, having been corrupted by his fall, sins voluntarily, not with reluctance or constraint; with the strongest propensity of disposition, not with violent coercion; with the bias of his own passions, and not with external compulsion. Such is the pravity of his nature that he cannot be excited and biased to anything but what is evil. If this is true, there is no impropriety in affirming that he is under a necessity of sinning. I am teaching no novel doctrine, but what was long ago advanced by Augustine, with the universal consent of pious men.

6. On the other hand, it is necessary to consider the remedy of Divine grace, by which the depravity of nature is corrected and healed. In this remedy of Divine grace, no one can assert that the infirmity of the human will is merely strengthened by assistance, to enable it efficaciously to aspire to that which is good, when it actually needs a total transformation and renovation. This total transformation and renovation is taught both in Philippians 1:6, and Ezekiel 36:26, 27: “A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, . . .” The creating anew does not mean the beginning of the existence of the will, but rather the conversion of an evil into a good one. This is entirely the work of God, so that whatever good there is in the human will is the work of pure grace. Now, if we possessed an ability, though ever so small, we should also have some portion of merit. But to annihilate all our pretensions, Paul argues that we have merited nothing because “we are . . . created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained” (Eph 2:10). This truth is attested also by the Psalmist who says that God “hath made us, and not we ourselves” (Ps 100:3).

7. It is the Lord who corrects our depraved will, or rather removes it, and of Himself introduces a good one in its place. It is wrong to attribute to man a voluntary obedience in following the guidance of grace. Therefore,

it is not a proper expression of Chrysostom, that grace is able to effect nothing without the will, nor the will without grace. Nor was it the intention of Augustine, when he called the human will the companion of grace, to assign to it any secondary office next to grace in the good work; but with the view to refute the nefarious dogma broached by Pelagius, who made the prime cause of salvation to consist in human merit. Augustine teaches that God is the sole author of the good work.

8. A summary of the doctrine under discussion is that the origin of all good clearly appears to be from no other than God alone. For no propensity of the will to anything good can be found but in the elect. But, the cause of election must not be sought in men. Whence we may conclude, that man has not a good will from himself, but that it proceeds from the same decree by which we were elected before the creation of the world.

There is another reason not dissimilar. Inasmuch as good volitions and good actions both arise from faith, we must see whence faith itself originates. Since Scripture uniformly proclaims it to be the gratuitous gift of God, it follows that faith is the effect of mere grace.

9. That nothing good proceeds from our will is seen even in the prayer of the saints. Solomon prayed, “that he may incline our hearts unto him, . . . to keep his commandments” (1 Kgs 8:58). The same petition is offered by the Psalmist, “Incline my heart unto thy testimonies” (Ps 119:36). Even David prayed, that God would create in him a clean heart and renew a right spirit within (Ps 51:10). Does he not acknowledge that all the parts of his heart are full of iniquity, and his spirit warped by a depraved obliquity? Then, when Christ says, “Without me ye can do nothing” (John 15:5), does He not reduce us to nothing, which excludes every idea of ability, however diminutive. For the meaning of Christ is clear, that we are as dry as a worthless log when separated from Him. Finally, the Apostle, as cited earlier, declares, “It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do” (Phil 2:13). The first part of a good work is volition, the next an effectual endeavour to perform it, and God is the author of both. Even good men are subject to so many distractions of mind that they soon wander and fall, unless they are strengthened to persevere. For the same reason, in another place, the Psalmist implores strength for a warfare, “Let not any iniquity have dominion over me” (Ps 119:133). It is the Lord who

both begins and completes the good work in us, that it may be due to Him that the will is inclined to right and perseveres in it to the end.

10. The observation by Chrysostom, that “whom God draws, he draws willing,” is an insinuation that God only waits for us with His hand extended, if we choose to accept assistance. We grant such was the primitive condition of man during his state of integrity, that he could incline to the one side or the other. But since Adam has taught us, by his own example, how miserable free will is, unless God give us will and power, what will become of us if he impart His grace to us in that small proportion? No, the Apostle does not teach that the grace of a good will is offered for our acceptance, but that “God . . . worketh in [us] . . . to will” (Phil 2:13). This is equivalent to saying that the Lord, by His Spirit, directs, inclines and governs our hearts and reigns in it as His possession. Thus, when a man chooses to believe, let him not arrogate to himself the discovery of the way of righteousness. Even faith is a gift of God, for “no man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him” (John 6:44). And, it follows that the hearts of the pious are so divinely governed that they follow with an affection which nothing can alter (1 John 3:9). This constancy, yea, even perseverance, excludes that neutral inefficacious impulse, imagined by the sophists, which everyone would be at liberty to obey or resist.

11. Perseverance in the saints is also the gratuitous gift of God. To say that it is dispensed according to the merit of men, in proportion to the gratitude which each person has discovered for the grace bestowed on him, is a pestilent error. Besides erroneously teaching that our gratitude for the grace first bestowed on us are remunerated by subsequent blessings, the sophists add also that, now, grace does not operate alone in us, but only cooperates with us. What must be avoided is the implication that man, by his own industry, rendered the grace of God efficacious. Nor must it be accounted a remuneration in such a sense as to cease to be esteemed the free favour of God. What remuneration there is also proceeds from His gratuitous benevolence. To distinguish between what they call operating and cooperating grace is equally awkward. But, the Apostle Paul, after teaching that “it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do” (Phil 2:13), immediately adds, that He does both “of his good pleasure.” This signifies that these acts are of gratuitous benignity. So, in

the perseverance of saints, it is the Spirit of God who cherishes and strengthens to a constancy that disposition of obedience which He first originated. To say that man derives from himself an ability to cooperate with the grace of God is to be involved in a most pestilent error.

12. Then, there are those who pervert the Apostle's observation, "I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me" (1 Cor 15:10). They teach that, because his preference of himself to all others might appear too arrogant, he corrects it by referring the praise to the grace of God, which laboured with him to make him a partner in the labour. I say, from the Greek literally translated, not that grace was cooperative with him, but that grace was the author of all.

13. The sophists of the Sorbonne, those Pelagians of the present age, accuse us of opposing the whole current of antiquity. But we have Augustine to refute them. In his treatise, "*De Corr. et Grat.*," addressed to Valentine, he says, "That to Adam was given the grace of persevering in good if he chose; that grace is given to us to will, and by willing to conquer concupiscence. That Adam therefore had the power if he had the will, but not the will and the power. That the primitive liberty was a power to abstain from sin, but that ours is much greater, being an inability to commit sin." He continues, "The will of the saints is so inflamed by the Holy Spirit, that they therefore have an ability, because they have such a will; and that their having such a will proceeds from the operations of God." So, Augustine teaches what we are principally endeavouring to establish; that grace is not merely offered by the Lord to be either received or rejected, according to the free choice of the individual, but that it is grace which produces both the choice and the will of the heart; so that every subsequent good work is the fruit and effect of it. It is obeyed by no other will but that which it has produced. Grace alone performs every good work in us.

14. That grace is specially and gratuitously given to the elect, Augustine maintains in an epistle to Boniface. "We know that the grace of God is not given to all men; and that to them to whom it is given, it is given neither according to the merits of works, nor according to the merits of will, but by gratuitous favour; and to those to whom it is not given, we know it is not given by the righteous judgment of God." Grace is not a

retribution of our works, that it may be acknowledged to be pure grace. Augustine, in his treatise to Valentine, further teaches that the human will obtains, not grace by liberty, but liberty by grace; that being impressed by the same grace with a disposition of delight, it is formed for perpetuity; that it is strengthened with invincible fortitude; that while grace reigns, it never falls, but, deserted by grace, falls immediately; that by the gratuitous mercy of the Lord, it is converted to what is good, and, being converted, perseveres in it; that the first direction of the human will to that which is good, and its subsequent constancy, depend solely on the will of God, and not on the merit of man.

Chapter IV

The Operation of God in the Hearts of Men

1. It has now been sufficiently proved that man is so enslaved by sin, as to be incapable of an effort toward that which is good. We have also noted that he sins necessarily, yet voluntarily. It is also observed that man is a slave of the devil, and seems to be actuated by his will, rather than by his own. We must explain the nature of both kinds of influence. Another question to be resolved is whether anything is to be attributed to God in evil actions, in which Scripture intimates that some influence of His is concerned.

Augustine compares human will to a horse; and God and the devil, he compares to riders. If God rides it, He manages it in a graceful manner like a skilful rider; and even tames its perverseness and conducts it into the right way. The devil, in contrast, like a foolish and wanton rider, drives it down precipices and excites its obstinacy and ferocity.

When the will of a natural man is said to be subject to the power of the devil, the meaning is not that it resists and is compelled to a reluctant submission, but that it necessarily submits itself, being fascinated by Satan's fallacies, to all his directions. As the Apostle says, "The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not" (2 Cor 4:4). The blinding of the wicked is called the works of Satan. The cause must be found in the human will, from which proceeds the root of evil, and in which rests the foundation of Satan's kingdom, viz., sin.

2. Very different, in such instances, is the Divine operation. To understand this, let us take, as an example, the calamity which Job suffered from the Chaldeans (Job 1). The Chaldeans killed Job's shepherds and the wickedness of their act is evident. Yet, in this transaction, Satan was not unconcerned; for with him the history states the whole affair to have originated. However, Job recognises it to be the work of the Lord. How can we refer the same action to God, to Satan and to man, as being each the author of it, without either excusing Satan by associating him with God or making God the author of evil? Very easily, if we examine, first, the end for which the action was designed and, secondly, the manner in which it was effected.

The design of the Lord is to test the patience of Job by adversity. The design of Satan is to drive him to despair. The design of the Chaldeans is to enrich themselves in defiance of law and justice. This great diversity of design makes a great distinction in the action.

There is no less a difference in the manner. The Lord permits Job to be afflicted by Satan. The Chaldeans whom He commissions to execute His purpose, He permits to be impelled by Satan. Satan instigates the minds of the Chaldeans to commit the crime. Satan is, therefore, properly said to work in the reprobate, who are in his kingdom of iniquity. God is also said to work in a way proper to Himself, because Satan, being His instrument of wrath, turns himself here and there at His appointment to execute His righteous judgments. We see that the same action is without absurdity ascribed to God, to Satan and to man.

3. On this topic, the operation of God in the hearts of men, there is that action described in Scripture called “hardening and blinding.” Augustine says, at one time, that hardening and blinding is not from God’s operation, but rather His prescience or foreknowledge. Later, in his fifth book against Julian, he contends that sins proceed not from the permission or prescience of God, but from His power, in order that the former sins may thereby be punished. I say that, when Scripture says that God blinds and hardens the reprobate, He does more than merely foreknow or permit. His action of hardening and blinding operates in two ways.

First, He removes His light so that nothing remains but darkness and blindness. When His Spirit is withdrawn, our hearts harden into stones. Second, for the execution of His judgments, He, by means of Satan, the minister of His wrath, directs their counsels to what He pleases. Thus, when Moses relates that Sihon would not grant a free passage to the Israelites, because God “hardened his spirit, and made his heart obstinate,” he immediately subjoins the end of God’s design, “that he might deliver him into thy hand” (Deut 2:30). Since God willed his destruction, the obduration of his heart, therefore, was the Divine preparation for his ruin.

4. The following expressions seem to relate to the first method. “He removeth away the speech of the trusty, and taketh away the understanding of the aged. He taketh away the heart of the chief of the people of the earth, and causeth them to wander in a wilderness where

there is no way” (Job 12:20, 24). Again: “O LORD, why hast thou made us to err from thy ways, and hardened our heart from thy fear?” (Isa 63:17). These passages rather indicate what God makes men by deserting them, than show how He performs His operations within them. But there are other testimonies, which go further, particularly those which relate to the hardening of Pharaoh’s heart (Exod 4:21). Did He harden it by not mollifying it? That is true; but He did somewhat more. He delivered his heart to Satan to make him obstinate whence He had before said, “I will harden his heart.” Similarly, it is said that God hardened the hearts of the people who met them in a hostile manner (Deut 2:30). The Psalmist, reciting the same history, says, “He turned their heart to hate his people” (Ps 105:25). God particularly declares Himself to be operative in all these actions of hardening, even as Sennacherib is called His axe (Isa 10:15), which was both directed and driven by His hand.

5. In regard to the ministry of Satan in instigating the reprobate, the following one passage sufficiently proves. It is frequently asserted in Samuel, that an evil spirit from the Lord agitated Saul (1 Sam 16:14; 18:10; 19:9). The evil spirit is said to be from the Lord because it acts according to His command, being an instrument than the author in the performance of the action. He makes use of the evil instruments to be subservient to His justice.

6. In those actions which, in themselves, are neither righteous nor wicked, and pertain rather to the corporeal than spiritual life, what liberty does man possess? I say that it is owing to God’s special favour that our mind is disposed to choose that which is advantageous and to avoid what would otherwise hurt us. God’s special influence is seen in the Egyptians’ willingness to lend the Israelites their valuables (Exod 11:3), in Saul’s indignation to prepare himself for war (1 Sam 11:6), in diverting the mind of Absalom from adopting Ahithophel’s counsel (2 Sam 17:14).

7. In examples quoted above, I contend that God, whenever He designs to prepare the way for His providence, inclines and moves the wills of men even in external things, and that their choice is not free, but that its liberty is subject to the will of God. That your mind depends more on the influence of God, than on the liberty of your own choice, you must be constrained to conclude whether you are willing or not, from this daily

experience—that, in affairs of no perplexity, your judgment and understanding frequently fail. On the other hand, in things the most obscure, suitable advice is immediately offered; in things great and perilous, your mind proves superior to every difficulty. And, thus I explain the observation of Solomon: “The hearing ear, and the seeing eye, the LORD hath made even both of them” (Prov 20:12). Solomon appears to me to speak, not of their creation, but of the peculiar favour of God displayed in their functions.

8. In the dispute concerning free will, the question is not, whether a man, notwithstanding external impediments, can perform and execute whatever he may have resolved in his mind; but whether in every case his judgment exerts freedom of choice, and his will freedom of inclination. If men possess both these, then Attilius Regulus, when confined to the small extent of a cask stuck round with nails, will possess as much free will as Augustus Caesar, when governing a great part of the world with his nod!

Chapter V

A Refutation of the Objections Commonly Urged in Support of Free Will

1. In support of the doctrine that fallen man still possesses a free will, those who entertain a false notion of liberty endeavour to oppose us with certain absurd objections which they even seek to support with Scripture.

The first argument against us is that, if sin is necessary, then it ceases to be sin. If it is voluntary, then it may be avoided. I deny that sin is less criminal because it is necessary. I deny also the other consequence, which they infer, that it is avoidable because it is voluntary. If any wish by advancing these arguments to escape God's judgment, God has an answer to silence them. The sinful tendency in man arises not from creation, but from corruption. The corruption of our nature originated in the revolt of the first man from his Maker. And, if all men are justly accounted guilty of this rebellion, let them not suppose themselves excused by necessity. The second branch of their argument is also erroneous, because it confuses what is voluntary with what is free. We have before evinced that a thing may be done voluntarily, which yet is not the subject of free choice.

2. They add that unless both virtues and vices proceed from the free choice of the will, it is not reasonable either that punishments should be inflicted or that rewards should be conferred on man.

In regard to punishments, I reply, that they are justly inflicted on us, from whom the guilt of sin proceeds. Of what importance is it, whether sin be committed with a judgment free or enslaved? With respect to rewards of righteousness, where is the absurdity, if we confess that they depend rather on the Divine benignity than on our own merits? What does Augustine say on these matters? He says, "You are nothing of yourself; sins are yours, merits belong to God; you deserve punishment; and when you come to be rewarded, He will crown His own gifts, not your merits." Augustine, elsewhere, teaches that grace proceeds not from merit, but merit from grace. Above all, let them be delivered from their errors by the Apostle who tells them from what origin he deduces the glory of the saints: "Whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called,

them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified” (Rom 8:30). Why, then, are the faithful crowned? Because, by the mercy of the Lord and not by their own industry, they are elected, called and justified. Farewell, then, this vain fear, that there will be an end of all merits if free will be overturned. Again, the Apostle declares, “If thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?” (1 Cor 4:7). You see that he divests free will of everything, with the express design of leaving no room for merits. But yet, the liberality of God being inexhaustible and various, those graces which He confers on us, because He makes them ours, He rewards, just as if they are our own virtues.

3. They further allege what may appear to be borrowed from Chrysostum, that if our will has not the ability to choose good or evil, then the partakers of the same nature must be either all evil or all good. We reply that it is election of God which makes this difference between men. We agree with what Paul strongly asserts, that all, without exception, are depraved and addicted to wickedness; but the mercy of God does not permit all to remain in depravity. Therefore, since we all labour under the same disease, they alone recover to whom the Lord has been pleased to heal. The rest, whom He passes by in righteous judgment, putrefy, in their corruption, till they are entirely consumed. For the same cause, some persevere to the end. Others decline and fall in the midst of the course.

4. A further argument for free will is that, if a sinner has not the power to obey, it is vain to give exhortation, and admonitions are superfluous. Augustine, answering the objection above, says, “O man, in the commandment learn what is your duty: in correction learn, that through your own fault you have it not: in prayer learn whence you may receive what you wish to enjoy.” Augustine maintains that God does not regulate the precepts of His law by the ability of men, but when He has commanded what is right, freely gives to his elect ability to perform it. Thus, we see that Moses severely sanctions the precepts of the law, and the Prophets earnestly urge and threaten transgressors; though they acknowledge that men never begin to be wise till a heart is given them to understand.

5. What then, it will be inquired, is the use of exhortations? I reply, if the impious despise them with obstinate hearts, they will serve as a testimony against them when they come to the tribunal of the Lord; and, in their present state, they wound their consciences.

Exhortations have an important function on the faithful, to convince them of sin. But, in this regard, God must work internally in the heart by His Spirit and, externally, by His Word. By His Spirit illuminating the minds of the elect and forming their hearts to love righteousness, He makes them new creatures. By His Word, He excites them to desire, seek, and obtain the same renovation. When He addresses the same word to the reprobate, though it produces not their correction, He makes it effectual for another purpose, that they may be confounded by their consciences now, and be rendered more inexcusable at the judgment day.

6. In regard to the testimonies of Scripture adduced by our adversaries, they derive their principal argument from the precepts. They suppose these precepts are given in proportion to our ability to fulfil them. All the precepts which they collect may be distributed into three classes. Some require the first conversion to God; others simply relate to the observation of the law; others enjoin perseverance in the grace of God already received.

Now, to represent the ability of man as coextensive with the precepts of the Divine law, has indeed, for a long time, not been unusual; but it has proceeded from the grossest ignorance of the law. The giving of the law, far from producing our observance, is to make us realise our sinfulness (Gal 3:19; Rom 3:20; 4:15; 5:20). The verses quoted above rather show that the law was placed beyond our ability, in order to convince us of our impotence.

7. To the purpose above are the following passages from Augustine. “God gives us commands which we cannot perform, that we may know what we ought to request of Him. The utility of the precepts is great, if only so much be given to free will, that the grace of God may receive the greater honour. Faith obtains what the law commands; and the law therefore commands, that faith may obtain that which is commanded by the law: moreover God requires faith itself of us, and finds not what He requires, unless He has given what He finds.” Again: “Let God give what He enjoins, and let Him enjoin what He pleases.”

8. Now, let us examine the three kinds of precepts adduced by our adversaries which are mentioned above.

In regard to the first kind which commands us to be converted to Him (Joel 2:12; Jer 31:18, 19; Deut 10:16; 30:6), while He requires newness

of heart, He elsewhere declares that this is His own gift (Jer 4:4; Ezek 36:26). “What God promises,” says Augustine, “we do not perform ourselves through free will or nature; but He does it Himself by His grace.”

The precepts of the second class are simple, enjoining on us the worship of God, constant submission to His will, and observance of His commands. But, there are innumerable passages, which prove that the highest degree of righteousness, sanctity and piety, capable of being attained, is His own gift.

Of the third class is that exhortation of Paul and Barnabas to the faithful, “to continue in the grace of God” (Acts 13:43). This continuing in the grace of God, in the light of other exhortations (Eph 6:10; 4:30; 2 Thess 1:11; 2 Cor 8:1), is not in the might of the faithful to accomplish by themselves but by the power of the Lord.

9. Our more subtle adversaries cavil at all these testimonies, because there is no impediment, they say, that prevents our exerting our own ability, and God assisting our weak efforts. This they try to prove from such Scripture as Zechariah 1:3, “Turn ye unto me, . . . and I will turn unto you.” My reply to the quoting of this Scripture is, that this exhortation denotes not that turning of God in which He renovates our hearts to repentance, but that in which He declares his benevolence in external prosperity. This passage has, therefore, been miserably perverted, when it is made to represent the work of conversion as divided between God and men.

10. Secondly, they consider it an absurdity, that the benefits which the Lord offers in the promises are referred to our will, unless it be in our power either to confirm or frustrate them. Such passages as: “Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live” (Amos 5:14), and “If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it” (Isa 1:19, 20), they allege to be promises in which God covenants with our will. With respect to this present question, I deny God is absurd, when He invites us to merit His favours, though He knows us to be altogether incapable of doing this. Because, as the promises are offered equally to the faithful and the impious, they have their use with them both. As by the precepts God disturbs the consciences of the impious, that they may not

enjoy too much pleasure in sin without any recollection of His judgments, so, in the promises, He calls them to attest how unworthy they are of His kindness. Who can deny that it is most equitable for the Lord to bless those who worship Him, and severely to punish the despisers of His Majesty?

11. The third class of arguments also has a great affinity with the preceding. They produce such a passage in which God reproaches an ungrateful people, that it was owing to their own fault that they did not receive blessings from His indulgent hand: “They obeyed not thy voice, neither walked in thy law; they have done nothing of all that thou commandedst them to do: therefore thou hast caused all this evil to come upon them” (Jer 32:23). How, say they, could such reproaches be applicable to those who might immediately reply, “It is true we desired prosperity and dreaded adversity. But our not obeying the Lord has been owing to our want of liberty, and subjection to the domination of sin. It is in vain, therefore, to reproach us with evils, which we had no power to avoid.”

In answer to this, leaving the pretext of necessity, I ask whether they can exculpate themselves from all guilt. For, if they are convicted of any fault, the Lord justly reproaches them with their perverseness. Let them answer if they can deny that their own perverse will was the cause of their obstinacy. If they find the source of evil within themselves, why do they inquire after extraneous causes? But, if it be true that sinners are deprived of God’s favours, and chastised with punishments, for their own sins, there is great reason why they should hear those reproaches from His mouth. They shall rather accuse their iniquity, than charge God with unrighteous cruelty. They should rather become weary of their sins, and return to God who rebukes them. God’s reproofs, on the other hand, have produced His beneficial effect on the faithful, as evidenced in the solemn prayer of Daniel in his ninth chapter.

12. There is also a testimony cited from the law of Moses, which appears directly repugnant of our solution: “This commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, . . . But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it” (Deut 30:11, 12, 14). If these expressions refer to the precepts, I grant that they have much weight in

the present argument. But, the Apostle affirms that Moses here is not speaking of the precepts, but the doctrine of the Gospel (Rom 10:8). Nor is Moses, in the above verses, speaking of the commands of the law, but rather the covenant of mercy, which he had promulgated together with the precepts of the law. For, in a preceding verse, he had taught that our hearts must be circumcised by God, in order that we may love Him (Deut 30:6). Therefore, he placed this facility, of which he speaks in the latter verses, not in the strength of man, but in the assistance of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the citing of Deuteronomy 30:11–14 contributes nothing in support of the liberty of human will.

13. Some other passages are objected, which show that God sometimes tries men by withdrawing the assistance of His grace, and waits to see what course they will pursue; as in Hosea: “I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face” (Hos 5:15). It would be ridiculous, they argue, for the Lord to consider, whether Israel would seek His face, unless their minds were flexible, capable of inclining either way. Our answer is, if they maintain, that those who are deserted by God are capable of converting themselves, they oppose the uniform declarations of Scripture. If they acknowledge that the grace of God is necessary to conversion, they have no more controversy with us. Now, when the Lord, being offended and wearied by our continued obstinacy, leaves us for a time and makes the experiment to see what we shall do in His absence—it is falsely inferred from this, that there is some power of free will, which He observes and proves. But, God acts in this manner with no other design than to bring us to a sense and acknowledgment of our own nothingness.

14. They argue also from the manner of expression found both in Scripture and in common conversation. Inasmuch as we commit sins, good actions are called our own, and we are said to perform what is holy and pleasing to the Lord. If sins are justly imputed to us, as proceeding from ourselves, certainly some share ought to be, for the same reason, assigned to us also in works of righteousness.

This question is related to the actions of good men in whom God operates. When a person becomes God’s dominion, His Spirit, on one hand, restrains his will from evil which is the propensity of his old nature, and, on the other hand, inclines it to holiness and righteousness. For which

reason, Augustine says, “You will reply me, Then we are actuated; we do not act. Yes, you both act and are actuated; and you act well, when you are actuated by that which is good. The Spirit of God, who actuates you, assists those who act, and calls Himself a helper, because you also perform something.” When Augustine says that the Spirit of God is helper “because you perform something,” he does not attribute anything to us independently. In order to avoid encouraging us in our indolence, he reconciles the Divine agency with ours in this way; that to will is from nature, but to will what is good is from grace. Therefore, he adds, “Without the assistance of God, we shall not only be unable to conquer, but even to contend.”

15. Hence, it appears that the grace of God, in the sense in which this word is used when we treat of regeneration, is the rule of the Spirit for directing and governing the human will. He cannot govern it unless He correct and renovate it; support and restrain it. However, Augustine teaches that the will is not destroyed by grace, but rather repaired. Indeed, a new will is said to be created in man, because the natural will is so corrupted that it needs to be formed entirely anew. The human will has nothing good of its own, so that whatever mixture men try to add from the power of free will to the grace of God is like diluting good wine with dirty water.

16. Another passage quoted by our adversaries is Genesis 4:7, which they interpret in reference to sin to be: “Subject to thee shall be its appetite, and thou shalt rule over it.” Granted that this is the case, then what the Lord here declares is either promised or commanded by Him. If it be a command, we have already demonstrated that it affords no proof of the power of men. If it be a promise, where is the completion of the promise, seeing that Cain fell under the dominion of sin, over which he ought to have prevailed? They will say that the promise includes a tacit condition, as though it had been declared to him that he should obtain the victory if he would contend for it. But, who can admit these subterfuges? For if this dominion refers to sin, the speech is doubtless a command, expressive, not of our ability, but of our duty, which remains our duty though it exceed our ability.

17. They adduce also the Apostle’s testimony that “it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy” (Rom 9:16). They argue here that there is something in the will and

endeavour, which, though ineffectual of itself, is rendered successful by the help of the Divine mercy.

But, what is Paul's teaching in this regard? Salvation is provided for them alone, whom the Lord favours with His mercy; but that ruin and perdition awaits all those whom He has not chosen. He has shown, by Pharaoh's example, the condition of the reprobate; and had confirmed the certainty of gratuitous election of the testimony of Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy" (Rom 9:15). His conclusion is, that "it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy" (Rom 9:16). For them to further argue that, in this statement above, it can be concluded that, therefore, "there is some willing and some running," is sheer sophism. Away with such!

18. From Ecclesiasticus, of doubtful authority, they produce a passage in support of free will. The writer says, that man, as soon as he was created, was left in the power of his own will; that precepts were given him, which if he kept, he should also be kept by them; that he had life and death, good and evil set before him; and that whatever he desired, would be given him (Ecclesiasticus 15:14). Let it be granted that man, at his creation, was endowed with a power of choosing life and death. But, he has lost it and, by his degeneracy, he made shipwreck both of himself and all his excellences, whatever is attributed to his primitive state. In his present situation, man needs not an advocate, but a physician!

19. Finally, one of their most frequent arguments for some relics of the former excellences remaining in man is by allegorising the parable in which the traveller was left half dead on the road (Luke 10:30). Man, they argue, is similarly not so mutilated by the violence of sin and the devil, but that he still retains some relics of his former excellences. To allegorise from this parable a teaching in support of man's partial goodness in opposition to the doctrine of his total depravity, I will not admit.

But the Word of God does not leave man in possession of a proportion of life, but teaches, that as far as respects happiness of life, he is wholly dead. Paul, when speaking of our redemption, says not that we were recovered when half dead, but rather that "when we were dead . . . [we were] raised . . . up" (Eph 2:5, 6; 5:14). Our Lord says the same, "The

hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live” (John 5:25).

Let me conclude with what Augustine asserts, which has received the general approbation even of the schools, that man, since his fall, has been deprived of the gifts of grace on which salvation depends; but that the natural ones are corrupted and polluted.

Let us hold this, that the mind of man is so completely alienated from the righteousness of God, that it conceives, desires, and undertakes everything that is impious, perverse, base, impure, flagitious; that his heart is so thoroughly infected by the poison of sin, that it cannot produce anything but what is corrupt; and that, at any time, men do anything apparently good, yet the mind always remains involved in hypocrisy, and the heart is enslaved by its inward perverseness.

Chapter VI

Redemption for Lost Man to Be Sought in Christ

1. The whole human race having perished in Adam, it needs a Redeemer in the person of God's only begotten Son. All the knowledge of God as Creator, of which we have been treating, would be useless, unless it were succeeded by faith exhibiting God to us as a Father in Christ.

From a contemplation of the world God has made, we should conclude Him to be our Father, but our conscience disturbs us within, and convinces that our sins afford a just reason why God should abandon us, and no longer esteem us as His children. If we desire to return to God our Creator, from whom we have been alienated, and to have Him resume the character of our Father, we must have faith in Christ. We should embrace the preaching of the cross with all humility, though not agreeable to human reason (1 Cor 1:21).

Since the fall of the first man, no knowledge of God, without the Mediator, has been available to salvation. Christ says, "This is life eternal, they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3). This statement aggravates the stupidity of those who set open the gate of heaven to all unbelievers and profane persons, without the grace of Christ, the only door of entrance into salvation. All the religions of the Gentiles are false (John 4:22). Hence, Paul affirms that all the Gentiles are without God, and destitute of the hope of life (Eph 2:12).

Christ is the fountain of life and it is necessary for lost mankind to return to it. Christ asserts Himself to be the life because He is the author of the propitiation.

2. Therefore, God never showed Himself propitious to His ancient people without a Mediator.

Though God comprehended in His covenant all the posterity of Abraham, yet Paul judiciously reasons, that Christ is, in reality, that Seed in whom all the nations were to be blessed. The natural descendants of the patriarch were not reckoned as his seed, e.g., Ishmael and Esau. Indeed, the majority of the people were disinherited. It is evident, therefore, that the seed of Abraham is reckoned principally in one person, and the

promised salvation was not manifested till the coming of Christ. The adoption, therefore, of the chosen people depended on the grace of the Mediator.

Though it is not plainly expressed by Moses, yet it appears to have been generally well known to all the pious. Hannah, Samuel's mother, sings of the coming king and anointed (1 Sam 2:10). In David and his posterity is exhibited a lively image of Christ. David particularly is chosen, to the rejection of all others, as the perpetual object of the Divine favour, so Christ was always exhibited to the ancients under the law as the object to which they should direct their faith—Christ, the Mediator, without whom God could not be propitious to a lost mankind.

3. When God's people came under affliction, their consolation and hope were to be found in Christ alone (Hab 3:13). The memorable answer of Isaiah, to unbelieving King Ahaz, indeed even makes an abrupt transition to the Messiah, "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son" (Isa 7:14). This prediction, of the coming of the Saviour in the flesh by the Virgin, is a challenge to the perverseness of the king and his people, that, under their unbelief, God's purpose and covenant would not be frustrated, but that the Mediator and Redeemer would come at the appointed time. So prophesied Isaiah in Chapter 55:3, 4, Jeremiah in 23:5, 6, Ezekiel in 37:24, 26, and Hosea in 1:11. Zechariah, who lived nearest to the manifestation of the Saviour, prophesied the coming of the Saviour-King (Zech 9:9).

4. The purpose of all these prophecies was that the Jews might direct their eyes to Christ whenever they wanted deliverance. God would deliver His Church only by the hand of Christ, according to His promise to David; and that, in this manner, the covenant of grace, in which God had adopted His elect, would at length be confirmed. The hosannas sung to Christ, the Son of David, before His death, were derived from a sentiment generally received and avowed by the people, that there remained no other pledge of the mercy of God, but in the advent of the Redeemer. Christ Himself commands His disciples to believe in Him (John 14:1).

The majesty of God is otherwise far above the reach of mortals, who are like worms crawling on the earth. So, although God is the object of faith, we need Christ, "the image of the invisible God" (Col 1:15), which

reminds us, that unless God reveal Himself to us in Christ, we cannot have that knowledge of Him which is necessary to salvation. In this sense, Irenaeus says that the Father, who is infinite in Himself, becomes finite in the Son. He has accommodated Himself to our capacity, that He may not overwhelm our minds with the infinity of His glory.

In ancient times, many gloried in being worshippers of the Supreme Deity, the Creator of heaven and earth. Yet, because they had no Mediator, it was impossible for them to have any real acquaintance with the mercy of God, or persuasion that He was their Father. As they did not hold the head, that is, Christ, all their knowledge of God was obscure and unsettled. In modern times, the Turks, who boast of having the Creator of heaven and earth for their God, only substitute an idol instead of the true God as long as they remain enemies of Christ.

Chapter VII

The Law Given, Not to Confine the Ancient People to Itself, but to Encourage Their Hope of Salvation in Christ, till the Time of His Coming

1. The law was superadded four hundred years after Abraham's death, not to draw away the chosen people from Christ, but rather to keep them waiting for His Coming.

By the word **law**, I mean not only the Decalogue, but also the ceremonies; in short, the whole legal worship which contained shadows and figures of the promised Christ. These ceremonies were instituted "according to the pattern shewed to thee [Moses] in the mount" (Heb 8:5; Exod 25:40; Acts 7:44). For unless there had been some spiritual design, to which they were directed, the Jews would have laboured to no purpose in these observances.

2. By the way, it must be remarked that the kingdom, which was finally raised in the family of David, is a part of the law of Moses. Whence it follows that, both in the posterity of David, and in the whole Levitical tribe, as a twofold mirror, Christ was exhibited to His ancient people.

Paul asserts that the Jews under the law were subject, as it were, to a schoolmaster, till the coming of Christ (Gal 3:24). For Christ being not yet familiarly discovered, they were like children, whose imbecility could not yet bear the full knowledge of heavenly things. But how they were led to Christ by the ceremonies, has been already stated, and may be better learned from the testimonies of the Prophets. For although they were obliged to approach God with new sacrifices daily, yet Isaiah promises them the expiation of all their transgressions by a single sacrifice (Isa 53:5), which is confirmed by Daniel (Dan 9:26). Particularly, the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, from Chapters 4 to 11, demonstrates that, irrespective of Christ, all the Mosaic ceremonies are worthless and vain.

With regard to the Decalogue, we should heed Paul's declaration, that "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth" (Rom 10:4), and also that Christ is "that Spirit" (2 Cor 3:17) who gives "life" to the otherwise dead letter (2 Cor 3:6). By these, Paul

signifies that the righteousness is taught in vain in the precepts till Christ bestows it, both by a gratuitous imputation and by the Spirit of regeneration. Wherefore, he justly denominates Christ the completion or end of the law.

3. By the instructions of the moral law, which is comprehended in the Decalogue, we are seized with a sense of guilt that excites us to supplicate for pardon. While the law rewards us with eternal life if we righteously obey it, it is weak at this point, in that none of us is able to observe the law. Therefore, the end result of trying merely to keep the law to attain to eternal life is to discover ourselves excluded from the promises of life, and fall entirely under the curse.

4. Therefore, if we direct our views exclusively to the law, the effects upon our mind will only be despondency, confusion and despair, since it condemns and curses us all, and keeps us far from that blessedness which it proposes to them who observe it.

Nevertheless, the law is given not in vain. For, when we have learned that the law is inefficacious to us, then, we discover that God has graciously received us, without any regard to our works, if we now embrace His goodness by faith.

5. Our assertion on man's impossibility of observing the law has been earlier denounced by Jerome. I regard not Jerome's opinion, but let us inquire what is truth. I say it is impossible for man fully to keep the law because no one has ever done it nor ever shall be able by the decree and ordination of God. There are those who foolishly imagine that some saints can excel even the angels of heaven in purity; but such imagination is repugnant both to Scripture and the dictates of experience. Solomon says, "There is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not" (Eccl 7:20). David reiterates, "In thy sight shall no man living be justified" (Ps 143:2). Job, in many passages, affirms the same thing (Job 4:17; 9:2; 15:14; 25:4); but Paul most plainly of all, that "the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh" (Gal 5:17). Nor does he prove, that "as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse," by any other reason but because "It is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them" (Gal 3:10). It is impossible in this carnal state to fulfil the law, if we consider the impotence of our nature, as will elsewhere be proved also from Paul (Rom 8:3).

6. Now, let us state in a compendious order, the office and use of what is called the moral law. As far as I understand, it is contained in these three points:

The first is, that while it discovers the righteousness of God, it also warns everyone of his own unrighteousness, convicts, and condemns him. Man, blinded and inebriated with self-love, is inflated with a foolish confidence in his strength, and can never be brought to perceive its feebleness as long as he measures it by the rule of his own fancy. But, as soon as he begins to compare it to the difficulty of the law, he finds his insolence and pride immediately abate, yea, even totter and fall. Under the tuition of the law, he lays aside his arrogance and pride; and realises that he is at an infinite distance from holiness. Thus, the Apostle testifies, “I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet” (Rom 7:7).

7. Thus, the law is like a mirror in which we behold, first, our impotence; secondly, our iniquity, and lastly, the consequence of both, our coming under the curse. “By the law is the knowledge of sin” (Rom 3:20). This is the first office of the law, and it is experienced in sinners not yet regenerated. It becomes “the ministration of the death,” which worketh wrath and slayeth (2 Cor 3:7; Rom 4:15). And, as Augustine says, if we have not the Spirit of grace, the law serves only to convict and slay us. But this assertion neither reflects dishonour on the law, nor at all derogates from its excellence.

8. But though the iniquity and condemnation of us all are confirmed by the testimony of the law, this is not done to make us sink into despair. The wicked, by the obstinacy of their hearts, are thus confounded; but with the children of God, its instructions must lead us to God who offers mercy and grace in Christ.

9. Augustine, writing to Hilary, says, “The law gives commands, in order that, endeavouring to perform them, and being wearied through our infirmity under the law, we may learn to pray for the assistance of grace.” Also to Asellius, “The utility of the law is to convince man of his own infirmity, and to compel him to pray for the gracious remedy provided by Christ.” Afterwards, he addresses himself to God, “O merciful Lord, command that which cannot be performed . . . but when men cannot

perform it in their own strength, every mouth may be stopped, and no man appear great in his own estimation. Let all men be mean, and let all the world be proved guilty before God.”

10. The second office of the law is, to restrain those who feel no concern for justice and rectitude by its terrible penalties. The law restrains the depraved from external acts which, otherwise, they would have wantonly discharged. This makes them neither better nor more righteous, because their hearts are not disposed to fear and obey God; but rather the dread of the law. All the unregenerate are induced to attend to the law, not by a voluntary submission, but with reluctance and resistance, only by the violence of fear. This constrained righteousness is necessary to the well-being of community, to prevent confusion, which would certainly be the case if all men were permitted to pursue their own inclinations. To this second office of the law, the Apostle appears particularly to have referred, when he says, “that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient” (1 Tim 1:9, 10).

11. But, we may apply to both what he elsewhere asserts, that to the Jews, “the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ” (Gal 3:24); for there are two kinds of persons who are led to Christ by its discipline. Some, from too much confidence in their own strength and righteousness; and others who need a bridle to restrain them, lest they abandon themselves to carnal licentiousness. Those, therefore, whom He has destined to the inheritance of His Kingdom, if He do not immediately regenerate them, He keeps under fear by the works of the law till the time of His visitation.

12. The third use of the law, which is the principal one, relates to the faithful. Although the law is inscribed in their hearts, that is, although they are so animated by the direction of the Spirit, that they desire to obey God, yet they derive a twofold advantage from the law. First, they find in the law an excellent instrument to give them, from day to day, a better and more certain understanding of the Divine will to which they aspire, and to confirm them in the knowledge of it. The law may be compared to orders a willing servant receives from his master, to which the former gladly conforms.

In the next place, as we need not only instruction, but also exhortation, the servant of God will derive this further advantage from the law. By

frequent meditation on it, he will be excited to obedience, and restrained from the slippery path of transgression. To the flesh, the law serves as a whip, urging it, like a dull and tardy animal, forwards to its work. To the spiritual man, the law will be a perpetual spur, that will not permit him to loiter (Pss 19:7, 8; 119:105).

13. Some, being unable to discern this distinction, explode Moses altogether, and discard the two tables of the law; because they consider it improper for Christians to adhere to a doctrine which contains the administration of death. But, Moses teaches otherwise. While the law administers death to the sinners; it has an excellent use for saints, “because it is your life” (Deut 32:46, 47), and they are to command even their children to observe it. The law is immutable and perpetual, and is suitable for all ages, even to the end of the world. The law shows the children of God a goal, to aim at which, during our whole lives, would be equally conducive to our interest and consistent with our duty.

14. Yet, there are some who, in order to express their liberation from the curse of the law, say that the law is abrogated to the faithful. Such an abrogation is clearly taught by Paul, but let us accurately distinguish what is abrogated in the law, and what still remains in force. When the Lord declares that He came “not . . . to destroy, but to fulfil [it]” (Matt 5:17), He sufficiently proves that His advent would detract nothing from the observance of the law. The doctrine of the law remains, therefore, through Christ, inviolable; which by tuition, admonition, reproof, and correction, forms and prepares us for every good work.

15. The assertions of Paul, respecting the abrogation of the law, evidently relate, not to the instruction itself, but to the power of binding the conscience.

Christ, in order to redeem us from the curse of the law that binds our conscience, was “made a curse for us” (Gal 3:13). Christ was “made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons” (Gal 4:4, 5). What is this? That we might not be oppressed with a perpetual servitude, which would keep our consciences in continual distress with the dread of death. At the same time, this truth remains that the law sustains no diminution of its authority, but ought always to receive from us the same veneration and obedience.

16. The case of ceremonies which have been abrogated, not as to their effect, but only to their use, is very different. Their having been abolished by the advent of Christ, is so far from derogating from their sanctity, that it rather recommends and renders it more illustrious.

Since the ceremonies were shadows of the body of which we have in Christ (Col 2:17), their discontinuance gives us a better knowledge of their great utility before the advent of Christ, who, abolishing the observance of them, confirmed their virtue and efficacy in His death. For this reason, at the death of Christ, “the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom” (Matt 27:51); because, according to the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, the living and express image of the heavenly blessings, which before had been only sketched in obscure lineaments, was clearly revealed.

17. The reasoning of Paul is attended with more difficulty: “And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross” (Col 2:13, 14). Some commentators on this passage regard it as referring to the moral law and some to the ceremonies, quoting Ephesians 2:14, 15.

I have discovered the genuine meaning of the difficult expression, the “handwriting that was against us,” which Augustine somewhere very truly asserts, and which he has even borrowed from the positive expression of an Apostle (Heb 10:3–14). In the Jewish ceremonies, there was rather a confession of sins than an expiation of them. In offering sacrifices, they confessed themselves worthy of death. What were their purifications, but confessions that they were themselves impure? Thus, the handwriting, both of their sin and of their impurity, was frequently renewed by them. But, that confession afforded no deliverance. For which reason the Apostle says that the death of Christ effected “the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament” (Heb 9:15). The Apostle justly denominates the ceremonies “a handwriting against those who observe them,” because, by them, they publicly attested their condemnation and impurity.

We find, then, that the ceremonies, considered by themselves, are beautifully and appositely called a “handwriting that was against” the

salvation of men; because they were solemn instruments testifying their guilt. When the false apostles wished to bring the Church back to the observance of them, the Apostle deeply investigated their signification and, very justly, admonished the Colossians into what circumstances they would relapse, if they should permit themselves to be thus enslaved by them. For they would, at the same time, be deprived of the benefit of Christ; since, by the external expiation that He has once effected, He has abolished those daily observances, which could only attest their sins, but could never cancel them.

Chapter VIII

An Exposition of the Moral Law

1. In this introduction to an exposition of the ten precepts, it is to be noted that the internal law, which has before been said to be inscribed on the hearts of all men, suggests to us, in some measure, the same things which are to be learned from the two tables. But man, being involved in a cloud of errors, scarcely obtains from this law of nature what worship is accepted by God. Certainly, he is at an immense distance from a right understanding of it. It was necessary, therefore, both for our dullness and obstinacy, that the Lord gave us a written law—to declare, with greater certainty, what in the law of nature was too obscure.

2. Now, it is easy to perceive, what we are to learn from the law; namely, that God is our Creator, Father and Lord. On this account, we owe Him our love and fear, and an attentiveness to do His will. Righteousness and rectitude are a delight to Him, but iniquity an abomination. Whatever He requires of us, and He can require nothing but what is right, we are under a natural obligation to obey.

3. Under the instruction of the law, we ought to learn two things. First, by comparing our life with the righteousness of the law, we shall find we are far from acting agreeably to the will of God. Secondly, by examining our strength, we shall see, that it is not only unequal to the observance of the law, but a nullity. Perceiving his inability to fulfil the commands of the law, and feeling nothing but despair in himself, man implores and expects assistance from another quarter.

4. Apart from conciliating a reverence for righteousness through the law, the Lord has also subjoined promises and threatenings, in order that our hearts might imbibe a love for Him, and, at the same time, a hatred for iniquity. The Father allures us to the love and worship of Himself by the sweetness of His rewards. On the contrary, He proclaims that unrighteousness is execrable in His sight, and shall not escape with impunity. Those who keep His commandments are promised blessings of life, both now and eternal (Lev 18:5); but the transgressors are threatened, not only with present calamities, but also with eternal death (Ezek 18:4).

5. Obedience to the precepts of the law is therefore what God requires of us. Thus, after the promulgation of the law, Moses addressed the people: “Observe and hear all these words which I command thee, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children for ever, when thou doest that which is good and right in the sight of the LORD thy God. What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish it” (Deut 12:28, 32).

Observance of the law forbids every human invention of worship or service, and every contrivance some way of attaining righteousness. It is vain, therefore, to attempt new species of works in order to merit God’s favour, whose legitimate worship consists solely in obedience. Any deviation from the law of God is an intolerable profanation of the Divine and real righteousness. Augustine observes that obedience to God is the parent and origin of all virtues.

6. Insofar as human legislators are concerned, their superintendence extends only to the external conduct. Thus, if a king prohibit by an edict, adultery, murder or theft, no man will be liable to the penalty of such a law, who has only conceived in his mind a desire to commit adultery, murder or theft, but has not perpetrated. But God, whose eye nothing escapes, and who esteems not so much the external appearance as the purity of the heart, in the prohibition of adultery, murder and theft, comprises a prohibition of lust, wrath, hatred, coveting what belongs to another, etc. Being a spiritual Legislator, He addresses Himself to the soul as much as to the body. Now, murder committed by the soul is wrath and hatred; theft committed by the soul is avarice; and adultery committed by the soul is lust.

Although human laws also relate to designs and intentions, they relate only to such designs and intentions as have been manifested in outward actions, but do not scrutinise the secret thoughts. Human laws therefore are satisfied, when a man abstains from external transgressions. On the contrary, Divine law being given to our minds, the proper regulation of our minds is the principal requisite to a righteous observance of it. Thus, when Paul affirms that “the law is spiritual” (Rom 7:14), he signifies that it requires not only the obedience of the soul, the understanding, and the

will, but even an angelic purity, which, being cleansed from all the pollution of the flesh, may savour entirely of the Spirit.

7. What we have said above is no novel interpretation of our own but after Christ. It is He who confutes the corrupt opinion of the Pharisees, who teach a mere external observance, by pronouncing an unchaste look at a woman to be adultery (Matt 5:28). He declares them to be murderers who hate a brother (Matt 5:22). Persons who have not perceived this deeper sense of the law, have pretended Christ to be giving an evangelical law, which supplied the deficiencies of the law of Moses. Whence that common maxim, concerning the perfection of the evangelical law, that it is far superior to the old law—a maxim in many respects very pernicious. They err, who have supposed that Christ made addition to the law, whereas He only restored it to its genuine purity, by clearing it from the obscurities and blemishes which it had contracted from the falsehoods and leaven of the Pharisees.

8. Every interpretation of Scripture must not be an appendix of human glosses annexed to the Divine law, but a faithful explanation of the pure and genuine sense of the Legislator. The best rule of interpretation, I conceive, will be that the exposition be directed to the design of the precept; that, in regard to every precept, it should be considered for what end it was given. For example, every precept is either imperative or prohibitory. Thus, as the end of the fifth commandment is, that honour be given to whom God assigns it; the substance of this precept, then, is, that it is pleasing to God, that we should honour those on whom He has conferred any excellence, and that contemptuous conduct towards them is an abomination to Him. In every commandment, we should first examine the subject of it. In the next place, inquire the end of it, till we discover what the Legislator really declares in it to be either pleasing or displeasing to Him. Lastly, we must draw an argument from the commandment to the opposite of it, in this manner: If this please God, the contrary must displease Him; if this displease Him, the contrary must please Him. If He enjoins this, He forbids the contrary. If He forbids this, He enjoins the contrary.

9. It needs no proof, that an injunction of anything good is a prohibition of the opposite evil. And, common sense will easily admit, that the prohibition of crimes is a command to practise the contrary duties. But we require somewhat more than is commonly intended by those forms

of expression. For while men generally understand the virtue which is opposite to any vice to be an abstinence from that vice; we affirm that it goes further, even to the performance of the opposite duty. Thus, in “Thou shalt not kill,” while the common sense of mankind will perceive nothing more than we should abstain from all acts of injury to others, I maintain that it also implies, that we should do everything that we possibly can towards the preservation of the life of our neighbour.

10. Because the flesh endeavours to extenuate and, by specious pretexts, to conceal the turpitude of sin; God has proposed, by way of example, that which is most atrocious and detestable, the mention of which inspires us with horror. This is to impress our minds with the greater detestation of every sin. Paradoxically, this often deceives us in forming an unbalanced view of vices—if they are private, we extenuate them. The Lord destroys these subterfuges, when He refers the whole multitude of vices to these general heads, which best represent the abominable nature of species of transgressions. For example, anger and hatred are not supposed to be such execrable crimes when mentioned under their own names. But, when they are mentioned under the name of murder, we have a clearer perception how abominable they are in the view of God.

11. In the third place, let us consider what is intended by the division of the Divine law into two tables. We see clearly that God has divided His law into two parts, the first part assigned to the duties of religion, particularly worship of His majesty. The second part, He has assigned to the duties of charity, which respect men. The first part is the foundation of the second, for, if the worship of God is destroyed, all the other branches of righteousness will fall and scatter.

It is vain to boast of righteousness without religion. Religion is not only the head of righteousness, but the very soul of it. Without the fear of God, men preserve no equity or love among themselves. We, therefore, call the worship of God the foundation of righteousness, the source and soul of righteousness. Our Lord summarily comprised the whole law in two principal points—that we love God with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our strength; and that we love our neighbour as ourselves (Matt 22:37–40; Luke 10:27). Of the two parts in which he comprehends the whole law, we see how He directs one towards God, and assigns the other to men.

12. Although the whole is contained in these two principal points, God has been pleased to declare them more diffusely and explicitly in ten commandments.

While there is no controversy over the law's division into ten, the question is not concerning the number of the precepts, but concerning the manner of dividing them. Those who divide them, so as to assign three to the first table, and leave the remaining seven to the second, expunge from the number the precept concerning images, or at least conceal it under the first. In order to make up the number, they improperly divide the tenth into two. This method was unknown in purer ages. Others reckon four in the first table; but the first commandment, they consider as a simple promise, without a precept. I regard what they make the first precept to be a preface to the whole law. This is followed by the precepts, four belonging to the first table and six to the second. This division was mentioned by Origen as if it were universally received, and by Augustine. Augustine, in another passage, expresses his approbation for the former three and seven division for a most trivial reason; that if the first table be digested into three precepts, the trinal number will be a more conspicuous exhibition of the Trinity. Josephus, according to the common opinion of his time, assigns five precepts to each table. This is repugnant to reason, because it confounds the distinction between religion and charity; and is also refuted by our Lord who, in Matthew, places the precept concerning honour to parents in the second table.

The First Commandment

“I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.”

13. Whether you make the first sentence a part of the first commandment, or read it separately, is of no matter to me, provided you allow it to be a preface to the whole law. The first object of attention in making laws is to guard against their being abrogated by contempt. Therefore, God provides that the majesty of the law may never fall into contempt. To sanction it, He uses a threefold argument. He asserts His authority, exhibits His grace, and reminds the Israelites of His favour. The name LORD, or JEHOVAH, designates His authority and legitimate domain.

14. After having shown that He has a right to command, that He may not appear to constrain us by necessity alone, He sweetly allures us by pronouncing Himself the God of the Church. This expression implies the mutual relation contained in the promise, “I . . . will be their God, and they shall be my people” (Jer 31:33). The design of this favour is remarked in various places in the law, such as, “the LORD hath chosen thee,” says Moses, “to be a peculiar people unto himself, . . . and thou shouldest keep all his commandments” (Deut 7:6; 14:2; 26:18).

15. Next follows a recital of His kindness in proportion to the detestable guilt of ingratitude, even among men. God reminds them they were liberated from a miserable slavery, in order that they might serve the author of their liberty with a promptitude of reverence and obedience. To retain us in the true and exclusive worship of Himself, He distinguishes Himself by certain epithets, by which He discriminates Himself from all idols. Now, the servitude of Israel in Egypt was a type of the spiritual captivity, in which we are all detained, till our celestial Deliverer extricates us by the power of His arm, and introduces us into the kingdom of liberty. Every man, I say, ought to welcome the Legislator; to observe whose commands he is taught that he is particularly chosen, from whose benignity he expects an abundance of temporal blessings, and a life of immortality and glory.

16. Having firmly established the authority of His law, He publishes His first commandment, that we should have no other gods before Him. God chooses to have the sole pre-eminence, and to enjoy undiminished His authority among His people. To produce this end, He enjoins us to keep at a distance from all impiety and superstition, by which we should obscure the glory of His Deity.

Our duty towards God may be classed under four heads—adoration, trust, invocation and thanksgiving. Adoration is the reverence and worship which He receives from us who have submitted to His majesty. Trust is a secure dependence on Him arising from a knowledge of His perfections. Invocation is the application of our minds, under every pressure of necessity, resorting to His fidelity, faithfulness, and assistance, as our only defence. Thanksgiving is gratitude, which ascribes to Him the praise of all blessings.

The following clause, “before me,” aggravates the atrociousness of the offence. The sin of presumption rises to the highest degree of impiety, when man imagines that he can elude the observation of God in his acts of rebellion. God, on the contrary, proclaims that whatever we do is present in His view.

The Second Commandment

“Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them.”

17. In this commandment, He reveals His nature, and the kind of worship with which He is to be honoured. He forbids superstitious rites. He calls us off, from carnal observances, to spiritual worship which He has instituted. The grossest transgression is external idolatry.

This precept consists of two parts. The first restrains us from licentiously daring to make God the subject of our senses, or to represent Him under any visible form. The second prohibits us from paying religious adoration to any images. By those things which are in heaven, he means the sun, moon and stars and perhaps birds (Deut 4:17).

18. The penal sanction which is annexed arouses us from our lethargy. He thus threatens: “for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments” (Exod 20:5, 6).

The Hebrew word *EL*, which is here used for God, is expressive of strength. In the second place, He calls Himself “a jealous God,” i.e., He can bear no rival. Thirdly, He declares He will punish those who transfer His glory and majesty to creatures or graven images, to the fourth generation, i.e., those who shall imitate the impiety of parents.

The word “jealous” hints at the character of God towards us, as a husband; a figure He often uses in regard to his sacred relationship with the Church, which relationship must be maintained by mutual fidelity. To turn from God to idols is to commit spiritual adultery.

19. It seems the threat to visit “the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation” is inconsistent with the declaration that “the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father” (Ezek 18:20). A proper explanation of the threat is that there is a curse of the Lord that righteously rests, not only on the offender, but also on his whole family.

20. First, let us inquire whether such punishment be inconsistent with Divine justice. The whole nature of man, being worthy of condemnation, we know that destruction awaits those who are not favoured with His grace. At any rate, they perish through their own sins, and not through the unjust hatred of God. Now, when God removes His grace from the family of the impious, the very circumstance of children blinded and abandoned by Him being found treading in the footsteps of their fathers, is an instance of their bearing the curse in consequence of the crimes of their parents. But, their being the subjects of temporal miseries, and finally of eternal perdition, are punishments from the righteous judgement of God, not for the sins of others, but of themselves.

21. On the other hand, God promises to extend His mercy to a thousand generations. Solomon, in allusion to this, says that “The just man walketh in his integrity: his children are blessed after him” (Prov 20:7). This is not only as the effect of a religious education, but also from the blessing promised in the covenant. This is a source of particular consolation to the faithful, and a proof of His perpetual favour to His worshippers.

The Third Commandment

“Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain.”

22. The end of this precept is that the Lord will have the majesty of His name to be held inviolably sacred by us. We must not think or speak anything concerning God and His mysteries, but with the greatest reverence. We ought carefully to observe three things in what we think or say: First, exalt the magnificence of His name. Secondly, we should honour His Word and adorable mysteries and refrain from abusing them. Lastly, we should not injure His works by obloquy or detraction, but rather celebrate them with praise of His wisdom, justice, and goodness. By such

reverential attitudes and expressions, His name is “sanctified.” But an oath, such as is uttered in necromancy, in horrible imprecations and unlawful exorcisms, is the thing principally contemplated, in the command, as the most detestable instance of the abuse of the Divine name. This commandment that commands reverence for His name relates primarily to worship.

23. What is called an oath consists in calling upon God to witness, to confirm the truth of any declaration we make. Execrations, being manifestly insulting to God, are unworthy of being classed among oaths. An oath, when rightly taken, is a species of Divine worship, as Isaiah declares concerning the Assyrians and Egyptians, that they shall “swear to the LORD of hosts” (Isa 19:18; 65:16). Jeremiah says, “If they will diligently learn the ways of my people, to swear by my name, The LORD liveth; as they taught my people to swear by Baal; then shall they be built in the midst of my people” (Jer 12:16).

We resort to oath-taking where human testimonies are wanting, particularly when anything is to be affirmed, which is hidden in the conscience. In oaths, we call on the Lord to bear witness for us, Him who is truth itself, eternal and immutable, not only as a witness of the truth, but also as only defender of it, who brings to light things that are concealed.

24. Since we should reverence His name in oaths, we ought to use so much the more caution, lest they bring contempt upon it. Perjury committed in His name is called profanation (Lev 19:12). When perjury is committed, God’s truth is despoiled and He is made an abettor of falsehood.

Forms of oaths used in Scripture are: “The LORD liveth” (1 Sam 14:45); “I call God for a record upon my soul” (2 Cor 1:23). These imply that we cannot invoke God to be a witness to our declarations, without imprecating His vengeance upon us, if we be guilty of perjury.

25. The name of God is rendered contemptible when it is used in unnecessarily swearing even to what is true. This is another form of taking His name in vain. Swearing cannot be performed except from necessity. The crime of capricious swearing is carried on to a great extent today in trifling conversations.

This commandment is violated in another way. If, in our oaths, we substitute the servants of God in the place of God Himself, we are guilty of transferring to them the glory due to the Deity. Nor is it without reason, that a special prohibition interdicts us from swearing by any strange gods (Exod 23:13).

26. The Anabaptists condemn all oaths without exception, quoting Christ in Matthew 5:34. But, by this mode of interpretation, they set Christ in opposition to the Father!

But, Christ's design, in His statement on oaths, is not to relax or restrict the law, but to reduce it to its true and genuine meaning, which had been corrupted by the false comments of the scribes and Pharisees. Christ did not absolutely condemn all oaths, but only those which transgress the law. These were their customary perjuries and all superfluous oaths. But the oaths which are sanctioned in the law, He leaves without objection. James's teaching on oaths is the same as Christ's inasmuch as he uses the language of Christ (Jas 5:12).

27. Christ Himself hesitated not to use oaths whenever occasion required. So did the Apostles after His example, including Paul.

Some people allow public oaths, as required by a magistrate or used by princes in ratifying treaties, or by subjects when they swear allegiance to their princes (Heb 6:16). As to private oaths which they do not permit, it would be dangerous to condemn them which are taken out of necessity, with reverence. If it is lawful for private persons to appeal to God as a judge (in public oaths), much more must it be allowable to invoke Him as a witness. Your brother will accuse you of perfidy. You endeavour to exculpate yourself. He will not permit himself, by any means, to be satisfied. If your reputation is endangered by his obstinate malignity, you may, without offence, appeal to the judgment of God, that, in His own time, He will manifest your innocence. Examples of private oaths are found in Genesis 21:24; 26:31; 31:53; Ruth 3:13; 1 Kings 18:10.

The Fourth Commandment

“Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, . . .”

28. The end of this precept is, that, being dead to our own works, we should meditate on the kingdom of God, in order that such meditation have recourse to the means which He has appointed.

This commandment has an aspect distinct from the others, whereby early Christian writers had called it a *shadowy commandment*. This is because it contains the external observance of the day, which was abolished with the rest of the types at the advent of Christ. There is much truth in this observation; but it reaches only half of the subject.

There are three causes, on which I have observed this commandment to rest. First, it was the design of the heavenly Lawgiver, under the rest of the seventh day, to give to Israel a figure of the spiritual rest. Secondly, that there should be a stated day, on which they might assemble to hear the law and perform the ceremonies, and meditate on His works. This holy exercise was to work piety within them. Thirdly, it was His design to give servants a day of rest, that they might enjoy some remission from their labour.

29. We are taught in many places that the adumbration of the spiritual rest was the principal design of the sabbath. Thus, when the sabbath was violated, neglected or profaned, the Prophets complained as though religion was totally subverted (Jer 17:21, 22, 27; Isa 56:2). On the other hand, the observance of the sabbath was noticed with special commendation. The sabbath was highly esteemed again by the Levites, as recorded by Nehemiah, “Thou . . . madest known unto them thy holy sabbath, and commandedst them precepts, statutes, and laws, by the hand of Moses thy servant” (Neh 9:14). Indeed, we see the singular estimation in which it was held above all commandments of the law (Exod 31:13, 14, 16, 17), that the sabbath was a sign given by which the Israelites might know that God was their sanctifier (Ezek 20:12). If our sanctification consists in the mortification of our own will, there is a very natural analogy between the external sign and the internal thing that it represents. We must rest altogether that, having God operating within us, we may enjoy rest in Him, as we are also taught by the Apostle (Heb 4:9).

30. This perpetual rest was represented to the Jews by the observance of one day in seven. This was patterned after the rest of the Creator, that it might be more religiously kept. If one inquire after the significance of the

septenary number, it is probable that, in Scripture, it is the number of perfection, and thereby selected to denote perpetual duration.

Another conjecture respecting this number is that the sabbath would never be completed until arrival of the last day. For, in it we begin that blessed rest, in which we make new advances from day to day. But because we are still engaged in a perpetual warfare with the flesh, it will not be consummated before the completion of Isaiah's prediction, "It shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the LORD" (Isa 66:23), that is, when God shall be "all in all" (1 Cor 15:28). The Lord had given His people, in the seventh day, the future perfection of His sabbath in the last day, that, by a continual meditation on the sabbath during their whole life, they might be aspiring towards perfection.

31. It is of little importance whether my observation on the number be approved or not, provided we retain the mystery, which is principally exhibited, of a perpetual rest from our works. To impress this truth on the Jews, the Prophets reminded the Jews, that a mere cessation from manual labour on the sabbath was not enough. Isaiah said, "If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: Then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD" (Isa. 58:13, 14).

But, all that it contained of a ceremonial nature was abolished by the advent of Christ. For He is the truth, at whose presence all figures disappear. Christ is the fulfilment of the sabbath. Therefore, the Apostle says in another place, "The sabbath days . . . are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ" (Col 2:16, 17); that is the real substance of truth. This is contained not in one day, but in the whole course of our life, till being wholly dead to ourselves, we be filled with the life of God. Christians should therefore depart from all superstitious observance of days.

32. As the two latter causes should not be numbered among the ancient shadows, but are equally suitable for all ages—though the sabbath is abrogated, yet it is customary still among us to be assembled on stated days and also to allow our servants a remission from their labour. The

principle of assembling for worship and hearing God's word and the principle of giving rest to servants, yea, even oxen and asses (Exod 23:12), are applicable as much to the Church as to the Jews. To some who ask why we do not assemble everyday, that all distinction of days may be removed, I wish sincerely this were practised. Since the infirmity of many persons will not admit of daily assemblies, why should we not just keep to the rule God has imposed on us?

33. In the present age, some unquiet spirits have been raising noisy contentions respecting the Lord's day. They complain that Christians are tinctured with Judaism, because they retain any observance of days. But I reply, that the Lord's day is not observed by us upon the principles of Judaism. For we celebrate it, not with scrupulous rigour, but only use it as a remedy necessary to the preservation of order in the Church. Some, who quote Paul, to teach that Christians are not to be judged in the observance of it (Col 2:16, 17; Gal 4:10, 11; Rom 14:5), misunderstand the Apostle. In these passages, he is speaking against the superstitious keeping of days under an old order, now abolished by the advent of Christ. For in the churches which he founded, the sabbath was retained for regular worship. He prescribes the same day to the Corinthians, for making collections for the relief of the brethren in Jerusalem. The Jewish sabbath day was substituted by the Lord's day in the Christian Church.

34. The reason why the ancients substituted what we call the Lord's day in the room of the sabbath is this: since the resurrection of the Lord is the consummation of that true rest, which was adumbrated by the ancient sabbath, the same day which put an end to the shadows, admonishes Christians not to adhere to a shadowy ceremony. Yet, I do not lay so much stress on the septenary number that I would oblige the Church to an invariable adherence to it. Nor will I condemn those churches which have other solemn days for their assemblies, provided they keep away from superstition.

Let us sum up the teaching on the fourth commandment as follows. As the truth was delivered to the Jews under a figure, so it is given to us without any shadows. First, it is given in order that, during our whole life, we should meditate on a perpetual rest from our works, that the Lord may operate within us by His Spirit. Secondly, that every man, whenever in

leisure, should diligently exercise himself in private pious reflections on the works of God, and that we should observe the legitimate order of the Church appointed for worship and hearing of the Word. Thirdly, that we should not unkindly oppress those who are subject to us.

The Fifth Commandment

“Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.”

35. The end of the precept is, that since the Lord God desires the preservation of the order He has appointed, the degrees of pre-eminence fixed by Him ought to be inviolably preserved. We should, therefore, reverence them whom God has exalted to any authority over us, and render them obedience.

To those, to whom He gives any pre-eminence, He communicates His own authority for the preservation of that pre-eminence. We ought to recognise in a father something Divine, for he bears one of the titles of the Deity; while our prince, or our Lord, enjoys an honour somewhat similar to that which is given to God.

36. It makes no difference, whether those whom God has appointed over us are worthy of the honour or not. He has particularly enjoined reverence to our parents, who have brought us into this life; which nature itself ought to teach us. Those who violate parental authority by contempt or rebellion, are not men, but monsters worthy to be put to death (Exod 21:17). This commandment requires, not only reverence and obedience to our parents, but also gratitude (Exod 21:17; Deut 21:18–21; Matt 15:4–6), and whenever Paul mentions this commandment, he explains it as a requisition of obedience (Eph 6:1; Col 3:20).

37. Paul calls this commandment the first with promise, to stimulate our attention. Now, the true explanation of this promise is, that the Lord spoke particularly to the Israelites concerning the land which He had promised them as an inheritance. If the possession of that land was a pledge of the Divine goodness, we need not wonder, if it was the Lord’s will to manifest His favour by bestowing length of life, in order to prolong the enjoyment of the blessing conferred by Him. Such a blessing belongs likewise to us, inasmuch as the whole earth is blessed to the faithful.

38. When the Lord promises the blessing of the present life to those children who honour their parents, He, at the same time, implies a curse over the disobedient and perverse. To see that this curse on the disobedient is executed, He pronounces them, in His law, to be liable to the sentence of death. If they escape the death sentence, He punishes them in some other way. We see what great numbers of disobedient children fall in battles and in private quarrels, or in unusual ways. Those who live to an extreme age are, however, deprived of His blessing, and only languish in misery, and are reserved to greater punishments hereafter.

Obedience to parents, however, must be “in the Lord” (Eph 6:1). Therefore, if our parents instigate us to any transgression of the law, we must justly consider them not our parents, but strangers. The same observation is applicable to princes and superiors of every description.

The Sixth Commandment

“Thou shalt not kill.”

39. The end of this precept is that, since God has connected mankind together in a kind of unity, every man ought to consider himself as charged with the safety of all. All violence and every kind of mischief, which may injure the body of your neighbour, are forbidden. The same against the soul is also forbidden. Mental homicide is prohibited. Though it is the hand that accomplishes the act, it is conceived first by the mind under the influence of anger and hatred. “Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer” (1 John 3:15). “Whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment” (Matt 5:22).

40. The Scripture states two reasons on which this precept is founded. First, man is the image of God. Second, he is our own flesh. These two characters, which are inseparable from the nature of man, God requires us to consider as motives to our exertions for his security. That person is not innocent of the crime of murder, who has merely restrained himself from the effusion of blood. If you perpetrate, in your mind anything inimical to the safety of another, you stand guilty of murder.

The Seventh Commandment

“Thou shalt not commit adultery.”

41. The end of this precept is that, because God loves chastity and purity, we ought to depart from all uncleanness, any carnal impurity or libidinous intemperance. To this prohibition corresponds the affirmative injunction, that every part of our lives ought to be regulated by chastity and continence. But He expressly forbids adultery, to which all incontinence tends.

Marriage, which God instituted for mankind, is the only bond in which there can be any cohabitation between male and female. Outside this bond, such cohabitation is accursed.

42. Since violence of the passions, consequent upon the fall, have rendered union of the sexes doubly necessary, except to those whom God has exempted by special grace, let those who cannot contain themselves marry.

Our Lord mentions a certain class of men who “have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven’s sake” (Matt 19:12), who are of a few in the whole body of the Church. These are they who remain single that they might devote their attention to the affairs of God’s kingdom.

43. Therefore, celibacy is a special grace, which the Lord confers only on particular persons. Let no one rashly despise marriage as a thing unnecessary to him. Paul counsels, “To avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.” Again, “If they cannot contain, let them marry” (1 Cor 7:2, 9).

44. Marriage must not be contaminated by libidinous intemperance. Every man should observe sobriety to his wife, and every wife, reciprocally towards her husband. Ambrose calls those who, in their conjugal intercourse, have no regard to modesty, the adulterers of their own wives.

Considering who the Legislator of this commandment is, who desires to have the entire possession of our spirit, soul and body, let us heed His prohibition also of lasciviously ornamenting our persons, obscene gesticulations, impure expressions, insidious attacks on the chastity of others. Let not our mind internally burn with depraved concupiscence, nor let our eyes wanton into corrupt affections, nor our bodies be adorned for purposes of seduction, nor let our tongue with impure speeches allure our mind to similar thoughts.

The Eighth Commandment

“Thou shalt not steal.”

45. The end of this precept is, that every man may possess what belongs to him. We are forbidden to covet the property of others, and are enjoined faithfully to preserve to every man what belongs to him. Since it is God who dispenses to each man his portion, any deprivation of another’s possession by criminal means is an injury to the Lord.

The species of theft are numerous. One consists in the violent taking away of property. Another consists in fraud. Another consists in more secret cunning, where anyone is deprived of his property under the mask of justice. Cheating of all kinds, even by law suit. Theft through cruel and inhuman laws, by which the more powerful oppresses the weaker.

Theft may be committed if we deny our neighbour the kind offices, which it is our duty to perform to them, such as a steward’s unfaithfulness in service, squandering of his master’s goods, divulging of secrets, and any other means of betrayal.

46. On the other hand, we shall rightly obey this commandment if, contented with our own lot, we seek no gain but in an honest and lawful way; if we do not labour to accumulate wealth by cruelty, and at the expense of the blood of others. On the contrary, it should be our constant aim to preserve what belongs to others. Let us alleviate the sufferings of the poor.

The people should honour the governors and obey the laws; while the governors should take care of their people, to protect the good and punish the wicked, for they must render an account of their office to God, the supreme Judge.

Let the ministers of churches faithfully devote themselves to the ministry of the Word, and let them never adulterate the doctrine of salvation, and teach, not only by doctrine, but also by example of their lives. Let the people receive them as the messengers of God, render them their due honour, and furnish them with the necessaries of life.

Let this order of government and obedience be observed between parents and children, seniors and juniors, masters and servants; and, not in appearance only, but rather from the heart.

The Ninth Commandment

“Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.”

47. The end of this precept is that, because God who is truth itself, execrates a lie, we ought to preserve the truth without the least disguise. The sum of it, therefore, is that we neither violate the character of any man, either by calumnies or false accusations, nor distress him in his property by falsehood. Positively, we should do all we can with our tongue to affirm the truth for the protection of his reputation and property. Exodus 23:1, 7 and Leviticus 19:16 are expositions of this command.

Falsehood in a forensic testimony is perjury, which involves the profanation of God’s name. This has been condemned under the third commandment.

48. This commandment has been generally transgressed by some, with the malignant pleasure of examining and detecting the faults of others. Detraction, or defamation, which is odious crimination which arises from malice, is forbidden. The commandment extends so far as to forbid us to affect a pleasantry, tinctured with scurrilous and bitter sarcasms, severely lashing the faults of others under the appearance of sport. Now, since the Legislator rules not only our tongues, but also our ears and minds, an avidity to hear detraction and an unreasonable propensity to unfavourable opinions respecting others are equally prohibited.

The Tenth Commandment

“Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour’s.”

49. The end of this precept is that, since it is the will of God that our whole soul should be under the influence of love, every desire inconsistent with charity ought to be expelled from our minds. Positively, all our conceptions and deliberations should be consistent with the benefit and advantage of our neighbours. In the commandments against theft and adultery, our wills are subjected to the law of love. In this commandment, which appears to be an unnecessary addition to the earlier ones, we see the subjection of the conceptions of our minds to the same regulation, lest any of them be perverted, and give our hearts an improper impulse. As

He has forbidden our minds to be inclined and persuaded to anger, hatred, adultery, rapine and falsehood, so now He prohibits them from being instigated to these vices.

50. In this commandment, God enjoins a wonderful ardour of love, which will not allow to be interrupted, even by the smallest degree of concupiscence.

After “Thou shalt not covet,” God mentions the house or family, enumerating the different parts of it, beginning with the wife. In short, God commands, that all that every man possesses remain safe and entire, not only from any actual injury or fraudulent intention, but even from the least emotion of cupidity that can solicit our hearts.

51. The whole tendency of law is to a perfection of righteousness, that it may form the life of man after the example of the Divine purity. The tendency of the doctrine of the law is to connect man with his God, to make him cleave to the Lord in sanctity of life (Deut 11:22). Now, the perfection of the sanctity consists in two principal points, already cited—that we “love the Lord [our] God with all [our] heart, and with all [our] soul, and with all [our] strength, and with all [our] mind; and [our] neighbour as [ourselves]” (Luke 10:27). If our souls be completely filled with the love of God, from this the love of our neighbour will naturally follow. As the Apostle signifies, “The end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned” (1 Tim 1:5). A good conscience and faith unfeigned means true piety, from which charity is derived. Man, who is directed to the fear of God and to the spiritual worship of Him, is required, with purity of conscience and sincere faith, to love his fellowmen.

52. The necessity of proving our love for God with love for our fellowmen is observed in our Lord’s emphasis on the keeping of the commandments in the second table (Matt 23:23). To the inquiry of a young man what those commandments are, by the observance of which we enter into life, Christ answered, “Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Matt 19:18, 19). For obedience to the first table consisted chiefly either in the disposition of the heart, or in ceremonies. The disposition of the

heart was not visible, and the ceremonies were diligently performed by hypocrites. But, the works of charity are such as enable us to give certain evidence of righteousness.

53. It is not without reason, then, that the Apostle makes all the perfection of the saints to consist in love (Eph 3:17), which, in another place, he very justly styles “the fulfilling of the law” (Rom 13:10), adding, “he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law” (Rom 13:8). Again, that “all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Gal 5:14). The Apostle teaches nothing different from what Christ Himself taught, “All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets” (Matt 7:12). This exposition by Christ shows that the worship stressed in the law and by the prophets must be equated with love for our fellowmen.

54. The observance of the commandments, therefore, consists not in the love of ourselves, but in the love of God and of our neighbour. No man leads a more iniquitous life, than he who lives exclusively for himself. Moreover, the Lord, in order to give us the best expression of that love which we ought to exercise towards our neighbours, has regulated it by the standard of our self-love, because there was no stronger affection. Whereas, through our depravity, our love used to terminate in ourselves, He shows it should now be diffused abroad. We should be ready to do service to our neighbours, with as much ardour and solicitude, as to ourselves.

55. Now, since Christ has shown, in the parable of the Good Samaritan, that the word “neighbour” includes every man, even the greatest stranger, we have no reason to limit the commandment to love to our friends. In this respect, there is no difference between barbarian and Grecian, worthy and unworthy, friend or foe; for they are to be considered in God, and not in themselves. So, this must be a fundamental maxim with us, that whatever be the character of a man, yet we ought to love him because we love God.

56. When treating of the precepts prohibiting revenge, and enjoining love to our enemies, the schoolmen have erred, when they made them non-binding on the laymen and confined the necessary observance to the monks. Another error is their subterfuge under “the law of grace,” making

a distinction between themselves and the Jews. But, God's word is eternal and abounds with commandments most strictly enjoining love of our enemies (Prov 25:21), yea, even to directing into the right way their straying oxen and asses (Exod 23:4, 5). Shall we do good to their cattle for their sake, and feel no benevolence to their persons?

57. Nor can the schoolmen escape from such a commandment given by Christ, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven" (Matt 5:44, 45). Those who licentiously shake off the yoke common to the children of God, evidently betray themselves to be the sons of Satan. The being Christians under the law of grace consists, not in unbounded licence uncontrolled by any law, but by being ingrafted to Christ, by whose grace they are delivered from the curse of the law, and, by whose Spirit, they have the law inscribed in their hearts.

58. The schoolmen have erred in calling certain sins venial. This is their definition of venial sin: "It is evil desire without any deliberate assent, and without any long continuance in the heart." I say that when we feel any evil desire in the heart, we are already guilty of concupiscence, and are become, at once, transgressors of the law. Paul asserts that "the wages of sin is death" (Rom 6:23), and demonstrates this groundless distinction to have been unknown to him.

59. Christ says, "Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt 5:19). Are they not of this number, who thus presume to extenuate the transgression of the law, as though it were not worthy of death? The smallest transgression of the law is a derogation from God's authority. Again, it is declared, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezek 18:20). The schoolmen admit venial sins to be sin, because it is impossible to deny them, yet they contend that they are not **mortal**. Let the children of God know that all sin is **mortal**, because it is a rebellion to the will of God, which necessarily provokes His wrath. Now, the offences of saints are **venial**, not of their own nature, but because they obtain pardon through the mercy of God.

Chapter IX

Christ, Though Known to the Jews Under the Law, Yet Clearly Revealed Only in the Gospel

1. God was pleased, in ancient times, to manifest Himself as a Father by means of expiations and sacrifices, and there is no doubt that He was known in the same image in which He now appears to us with meridian splendour. Under the law, the Jews were tutored to an expectation of the Messiah that was to come, and that, at His advent, there was hope for a much greater degree of light. For this reason, Peter says, “The prophets have inquired and searched diligently” concerning the salvation, which is now revealed in the Gospel (1 Pet 1:10–12). Contrasting the evangelical revelation with the shadowy images of Him in ancient times, our Lord said to the disciples, “Blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear” (Matt 13:16). “For I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them” (Luke 10:24). That we have a clearer manifestation of those mysteries, of which the Jews had only an obscure prospect through the medium of shadows, is declared again by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son” (Heb 1:1, 2), Who is “the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person” (Heb 1:3).

2. Whilst under the law, there were promises concerning the gracious remission of sins, by which God reconciles men to Himself, it is the Gospel that clearly manifests the mystery of Christ. The word “Gospel,” in a larger sense, comprehends all those testimonies, which God formerly gave to the fathers, but it is more eminently applicable to the promulgation of the grace exhibited in Christ. Whence it is properly said of Him, that He preached “the gospel of the kingdom” (Matt 9:35) and of His ministry, in Mark’s introduction, it is denominated “the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ.” Christ, then, by His advent, “hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” (2 Tim 1:10). By these expressions, Paul claims for the gospel this honourable prerogative, that it is a new

kind of embassy, in which God has performed those things He had promised in ancient times. The truth of those promises is fully revealed in the person of His Son in the Gospel.

3. But, we must beware of the diabolical imagination of Servetus, who, while he professes to extol the magnitude of the grace of Christ, totally abolishes all the promises, as though they were terminated together with the law. He pretends that, by faith in the Gospel, we receive the completion of all the promises.

While it is true that Christ left nothing incomplete of all that was essential to our salvation, it is not fair to infer that we already enjoy every benefit procured by Him. I grant that, when we believe in Christ, we pass from death into life; but we should remember the observation of John, that though “now are we the sons of God, . . . it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is” (1 John 3:2). We are still subjected in hope, till we are divested of our corrupted body, and transfigured into glory. In the meantime, the Holy Spirit commands us to rely on the promises; as Paul testifies, “Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come” (1 Tim 4:8). Christ dwells in our hearts, and yet we live like pilgrims at a distance from Him; because “we walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Cor 5:7).

4. Then, there are those who never make any other comparison between the Law and the Gospel, than between the merit of works and the gratuitous imputation of righteousness. Because the observance of the law, to which the reward is promised, is not to be found in any man, Paul justly represents the righteousness of the law and that of the Gospel as opposed to each other.

But, the Gospel has not succeeded the whole law, so as to introduce a different way of salvation; but rather to confirm and ratify the promises of the law, and to connect the body with the shadows. This connection between the law and the Gospel is seen in Paul’s declaration, that “the gospel . . . is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth” (Rom 1:16), which he afterwards adds to be “witnessed by the law and the prophets” (Rom 3:21). Hence, we conclude, that when mention is made of the whole law, the Gospel differs from it only with respect to a

clear manifestation. On account of the fullness of grace, which is displayed in Christ, the celestial kingdom of God is justly said to have been erected on earth at His advent.

5. Now, John was placed between the Law and the Gospel, holding an intermediate office connected with both. Though he preached the substance of the Gospel (John 1:29), yet, because he did not clearly express the power and glory of the Resurrection, Christ affirms that he is not equal to the Apostles, in whom the fullness of the Gospel was manifested. It was not till after Christ was received into celestial glory, that the more free and rapid progress of the Apostles completed what John had begun.

Chapter X

The Similarity of the Old and New Testaments

1. Many disputes concerning the difference between the Old and New Testaments have been raised by certain writers, including Servetus and the Anabaptists. To remove all difficulties which may arise from the mention of a diversity between the Old and New Testaments, let us examine what similarity there is between them, and what difference; what covenant the Lord made with the Israelites, in ancient times, and what He has entered into with us since the manifestation of Christ.

2. Indeed, both of these topics may be despatched in one word! The covenant made with the fathers is the same as that made with us. It is dissimilar insofar as the administration of it is concerned. In showing the similarity, or rather unity, of the Old and New Testaments, let us mention three principal points. First, that earthly wealth and felicity were not proposed to the Jews as the mark, towards which they should ultimately aspire, but that they were adopted to the hope of immortality. The truth of this adoption was certified to them by oracles, by the law, and the prophets. Secondly, that the covenant, by which they were united to the Lord, was made not on any merits of theirs, but on the mere mercy of God. Thirdly, that they possessed and knew Christ as the Mediator, by whom they were united to God, and became partakers of His promises.

3. In discussing the first point, which principally belongs to the present argument, we notice there are numerous passages which teach that the Gospel is “promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures, concerning his Son” (Rom 1:1–3), and is “witnessed by the law and the prophets” (Rom 3:21). Now, the Gospel does not detain men in the joy of the present life, but elevates them to the hope of immortality (Eph 1:13, 14; Col 1:4, 5; 2 Thess 2:14). If the doctrine of the Gospel be spiritual, leading to immortal life, let us not suppose that the Jews, to whom it was promised, were totally negligent of their souls, and pursued only corporeal pleasures. By declaring that the Old Testament contained evangelical promises, the Apostle clearly demonstrates that it is principally related to a future life.

4. In discussing the second and third points, that the covenant was founded on the free mercy of God, and confirmed by the mediation of Christ, we see a similarity in the preaching of the Gospel, which announces that sinners are justified by God, independently of any merit of their own, and the whole substance of it terminates in Christ. Who, then, dares to represent the Jews as destitute of Christ—they with whom, we are informed, the evangelical covenant was made, of which Christ is the sole foundation? Who dares to represent them as strangers to a free salvation, to whom the doctrine of the righteousness of faith was communicated? Christ who appeared to Abraham (John 8:56), “the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever” (Heb 13:8), is perpetually manifested to the faithful. Wherefore, both the Virgin and Zacharias declare that the salvation revealed in Christ is a performance of the promises which the Lord made to Abraham (Luke 1:54, 72). If the Lord, in the manifestation of Christ, faithfully performed His oath, it cannot be denied that the end of the Old Testament was always in Christ and eternal life.

5. Moreover, the Apostle makes the Israelites equal to us, not only in the covenant, but also in the sacraments. Inasmuch as we, in the New Testament, receive baptism and the Lord’s Supper; the Israelites were baptised in the cloud and in the sea, “and did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink,” which the Apostle interprets to be of Christ (1 Cor 10:1–4).

6. To invalidate the comparison by the Apostle Paul above, they attempt to prove from Christ’s assertion to the Jews, “Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. If any man eat of this bread [that is, my flesh], he shall live for ever” (John 6:49, 51). Our answer is, that Christ’s statement and the Apostles’ are reconciled without difficulty. The Lord, because He was addressing those who sought to be satisfied carnally, but were unconcerned about food for the soul, accommodates His discourse to their capacity. The Jews were demanding some miracles from Him to substantiate His authority, as Moses, in the desert, obtained manna from heaven. In the manna, however, they had no idea of anything but a remedy for corporeal hunger. They did not penetrate into the sublimer mystery of which Paul treats. Christ, therefore, to demonstrate the higher blessing they ought to expect from Him, than that which they said their fathers had

received from Moses, makes this comparison: If it be a great miracle to you that God gave manna to the hungry Israelites by means of Moses, how much more wonderful that food must be, which gives immortality! We see, then, why Christ omitted the higher mystery contained in the manna—it was because the Jews, as if to reproach Him, contrasted Him with Moses, who fed them with manna. He replies, He is the dispenser of a far superior favour, in comparison with which the corporeal satisfaction of the people, the sole object of their administration, deserves to be considered as nothing. Wherefore, it is proved that the same promises of eternal life, which we receive from the Lord, were also given to the Jews, and even sealed by sacraments truly spiritual.

7. To show again the spiritual covenant was received of the fathers, as we have heard from Christ and the Apostles, let me quote Peter's assertion, that the Divine Word given them is an "[in]corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Pet 1:23, 25). This statement by Peter is rather taken from Isaiah 40:8. When God united the Jews with Himself in this sacred Word is that special communication, by which the minds of the pious are enlightened into the saving knowledge of God. Adam, Abel, Noah, Abraham were illumined by this Word that undoubtedly brought them entrance into God's immortal kingdom.

8. The spirituality of the covenant with the ancients, promising eternal life, is proved even by its very form. This is the form of covenant: "I . . . will be your God, and ye shall be my people" (Lev 26:12). These expressions, according to the prophets, comprehend life, salvation, and consummate felicity. David, in pronouncing how "blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD" (Pss 33:12; 144:15), certainly regards not so much the earthly blessings as the heavenly, because God delivers from death, and attends, with everlasting mercy, those whom He has taken as His people. So, in the expressions contained in such passages as Habakkuk 1:12; Isaiah 33:22; Deuteronomy 33:29; Leviticus 26:12; Exodus 6:7; we are reminded that we shall have even certainty of salvation, provided the Lord be our God.

9. Moreover, the salvation promised was to continue forever to eternity, as the use of the future tense suggests, where the faithful console themselves that God will never desert them. This promise extended to

their children (Gen 17:7) and, all the more, to themselves after they were dead (Exod 20:6). For God is not like men, who transfer their love to the children of their friends, because death takes away their opportunity of performing kind offices to those who were objects of their regard. Thus, when God called Himself God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, long after they were dead (Exod 3:6), He is saying none other than that the patriarchs continued to exist and receive His salvation.

10. Now, coming back to the first point of our discussion, let us examine whether the faithful themselves were not so instructed of the Lord, to aspire to a better life in another world, even to the neglect of the present. From Adam to Noah, we see them in a perpetual exercise, by which they were reminded that they were most miserable, if they had not happiness but in this present life. Adam was rendered unhappy, not only by the mere remembrance of his lost felicity, but by his daily anxious toils (Gen 3:17–19). Moreover, he experienced the bitterest of sorrows when Abel, the remaining of his consolation, was deprived by the parricidal hands of his brother (Gen 4:8, 14). Abel exhibits an example of human calamity. Noah consumed a valuable part of his life with fatigue in the building of the ark (Gen 6:14–21) and, though saved from watery death, was attended with greater distress in the ark than if he had died a hundred times. After all the trials in the ark, in his latter days, he was ridiculed by his own son, and constrained to pronounce a curse on him.

11. What troubles the antediluvian patriarchs went through, we see them repeated in the life of Abraham, the Father of all the faithful. We see him torn from his parents and friends (Gen 12:1) when the Lord called him. As soon as he entered into the land God led him, he was driven from it by a famine. After his afflictions in Egypt, he returned to his country to be driven about by famine again. Abimelech, Hagar, Ishmael were personages that brought him trouble. In short, through the whole course of his life, Abraham was so driven about and afflicted, that if anyone wished to give an example of a life of calamity, he could not find one more suitable.

12. The same may be said of Issac and Jacob.

Jacob's case is an eminent example of extreme unhappiness as his history, recorded in Genesis 27 onwards, tells. His life was menaced by terrors from his elder brother, dissipated by the bitterness of exile,

defrauded and harassed by an unkind uncle, tormented with fears of meeting his brother again, prematurely deprived of his beloved wife, grieved by the alleged death of Joseph, and by the violence and incest of his sons. Jacob affirmed before Pharaoh that his days on earth were few and evil, which spoke the truth that his hope was not fixed on terrestrial things.

13. Thus the Apostle, with great force, insists on this—that the patriarchs called the present life a *pilgrimage*, as it is also stated by Moses (Gen 47:9). For, if they were sojourners in the land of Canaan, what became of the Divine promise, by which they had been appointed heirs of it? This manifestly implies, that the promise, which the Lord had given them concerning the possession of it, related to something more remote. Wherefore, they never acquired a foot of land in Canaan, except for a sepulchre; by which they testified they had no hope of enjoying the benefit of the promise till after death. This is the reason why Jacob thought it so desirable to be buried there, that he made his son Joseph promise it to him by oath (Gen 47:30). This is the reason why Joseph commanded that his bones should be removed there, even several ages after his death (Gen 50:25).

14. The blessedness of the future life was in the constant view of the patriarchs, even Jacob, for why should he have desired the birth right which occasioned his exile, if he had not looked on a nobler blessing? And that such was his view, he declared at his death, “I have waited for thy salvation, O LORD” (Gen 49:18). What salvation could be expected when he was on the brink of death, unless he had seen in death the commencement of a new life? Even Balaam, one who opposed the truth, was not destitute of such saving knowledge, when he said, “Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!” (Num 23:10). David said, “Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints” (Ps 116:15). If death were the ultimate end of human existence, no difference could be observed between the righteous and impious. The difference between them consists in the different destinies which await them after death.

15. When we come down to the prophets, there we have the fullest revelation both of eternal life and of the kingdom of Christ. With what perspicuity and certainty does David testify “I am a stranger with thee,

and a sojourner, as all my fathers were. Verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity. Surely every man walketh in a vain shew. And now, Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in thee” (Ps 39:12, 5, 6, 7). Isaiah says the same: “The heavens,” saith the Lord, “shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner: but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished” (Isa 51:6).

16. Nor can what David frequently says concerning the prosperity of the faithful be understood in any other sense than as manifesting of the glory in heaven. Such are the following passages: Psalms 34:22; 73:2, 16, 17; 97:10, 11; 112:6, 9, 10; 140:13.

17. Moreover, from David’s further confession, we may learn that the holy fathers in the Old Testament looked by faith to the last judgment. Relying on this confidence, whatever events might befall them in the world, they, nevertheless, had no doubt that there would come a time when the Divine promises would be fulfilled (Ps 17:15; 52:8; 55:22, 23; 92:5, 7, 12–14; Job 21:13). David, furthermore, looked to the resurrection when, in contrasting the righteous with the wicked, he said, “And the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning” (Ps 49:6–14, etc.).

18. Hence arose that reflection, which served the faithful as a consolation under their miseries, and a remedy for their sufferings. “His [the Lord’s] anger endureth but a moment; in his favour is life” (Ps 30:5). How did they limit their afflictions to a moment, who were afflicted all their lifetime? As they directed their eyes towards heaven, they perceived that the afflictions with which the Lord exercises His saints are but “for a small moment,” and that the “mercies” with which he “gathers” them “everlasting” (Isa 54:7, 8).

19. But, the following declaration by Job is remarkable beyond all others: “I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another” (Job 19:25–27). We must confess that he, who saw that his Redeemer would be present with him even when lying in the sepulchre, must have elevated views to a future immortality. Indeed, death could not annihilate his hope, as Job declares in another place, “Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him” (Job 13:15).

20. If we descend to the later prophets, we will find a considerable enlargement of the light till at length Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, completely illuminated the whole world. Whenever the prophets mention the blessedness of the faithful they would invariably point to the felicity of the future life.

21. Thus says Isaiah, “Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead” (Isa 26:19).

22. Furthermore, it is recorded, “For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the LORD. And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh” (Isa 66:22–24).

23. We may safely conclude, therefore, that the Old Testament, or covenant which the Lord made with the Israelitish nation, was not limited to terrestrial things, but contained a promise of spiritual and eternal life. Then let us drive far away from us this absurd notion, that the Jews sought nothing else, but an abundance of food, carnal delights, and whatever is esteemed valuable by a natural man. For Christ promises to His people no other kingdom of heaven, than where they may sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Matt 8:11). And Peter asserted the Jews to be heirs of the grace of the Gospel, when he says that they “are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers” (Acts 3:25). And that this might not only be testified in words, the Lord also proved it by a matter of fact. For on the day in which He rose from the dead, He honoured many of the saints with a participation of His resurrection, and caused them to appear in the city (Matt 27:52, 53). This furnishes a certain assurance that whatever He did for the acquisition of eternal salvation, belonged to the faithful of the Old Testament as much as to us.

Chapter XI

The Difference of the Two Testaments

1. Although there are differences mentioned in the Scripture, I maintain that they derogate nothing from the unity already established. The principal differences are four in number, or five, if any one should so determine, but I assert that all these are such as pertain to the mode of administration, than to the substance. In this view, they will not prevent the promises of the Old and New Testaments from remaining the same, and the promises of both Testaments from having in Christ the same foundation.

Now, the first difference is this, that although it was God's will that the hearts and minds of His people should be directed towards the celestial inheritance, yet, He exhibited it for their contemplation and partial enjoyment under the figures of terrestrial blessings. Under the Gospel dispensation, however, He more directly reveals the grace of the future life and, leaving the inferior mode of instruction which He used with the Israelites, He directs our minds to the immediate contemplation of it. Those who overlook this design of God suppose that the ancients ascended no higher than the corporeal blessings which were promised them. We, on the contrary, contend, that in the earthly possession which they enjoyed, they contemplated, as in a mirror, the future inheritance which they believed to be prepared for them in heaven.

2. In Galatians, Paul compares the Jewish nation to a young heir who, being yet incapable of governing himself, follows the dictates of a tutor or governor. The same inheritance was destined for them as for us. However, since the Church among them was in a state of childhood, the Lord kept them under His tuition, that He might give them the spiritual promises, veiled under terrestrial figures. Therefore, when He admitted Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, with their posterity, to the hope of immortality, He promised them the land of Canaan; not that their hopes might terminate in that land, but that, in the prospect of it, they might confirm themselves in the hope of that true inheritance which was not yet visible. Thus, Abraham is not permitted to grow indolent after having received a promise of the land, but a greater promise elevates his mind to the Lord: "Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward" (Gen 15:1). God is seen

drawing Abraham towards Himself as his ultimate reward, that he may not seek a transitory one in the elements of this world. That the saints of old all aspired to this higher inheritance is reflected in David's prayer, "My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the LORD" (Ps 84:2; 133:3).

3. However, as the favours of God to the Old Testament saints were more conspicuous in earthly things, so also were His punishments. Injudicious persons, not considering this analogy between the punishments and rewards, wonder at so great a variation in God, that in ancient times He was ready to avenge all the transgressions of men by the immediate infliction of severe punishments, but now, as if He had laid aside His ancient wrath, punishes with far less severity. On this account, they almost adopt the notion of the Manichaeans, that the God of the Old Testament is a different being from the God of the New. But, we shall get rid of such difficulties, if we see clearly that dispensation of God in which He gave the Israelites His covenant, in which He prefigured the grace of future and eternal felicity by terrestrial blessings, and the grievousness of spiritual death by corporal punishments.

4. A second difference between the Old Testament and the New consists in figures. The former, in the absence of the truth, displayed an image and shadow instead of the body; but the latter exhibits the present truth and substantial body (Col 2:17). This contrast is clearly manifested in the Epistle to the Hebrews (Heb 10:1, etc.), in which the Apostle is disputing against those who supposed that the observance of the Mosaic law could not be abolished. To refute this error, he adduces the eternal priesthood of Christ, as predicted by the Psalmist (Ps 110:4; Heb 7:17), which abolished the Aaronic priesthood, in which new priests daily succeeded each other (Heb 7:23, 24). He further showed that the law prescribed external righteousness, consisting in carnal ordinances, which could not make the observers of them "perfect, as pertaining to the conscience" (Heb 9:9); that, by animal victims, it could neither expiate sins nor procure true holiness (Heb 9:13, 14; 10:4). He concludes, therefore, that it contained "a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things" (Heb 10:1), and that consequently it had no other office, but to serve as an introduction to "a better hope" (Heb 7:19), which is exhibited in the Gospel.

Since the old covenant contains nothing substantial, the Apostle contends that it ought to be abrogated, in order to make way for Christ, the Mediator of a better testament (Heb 7:22), by whom eternal sanctification has been at once procured for the elect, and those transgressions obliterated, which remained under the law. For this reason, Christ calls the cup, which He gives His disciples in the Supper, “my blood of the new testament” (Matt 26:28), to signify that, when the testament of God is sealed with His blood, the truth of it is then accomplished, and thus it is made new and eternal.

5. With regard to the Jews being kept, as it were, under a tutor, under the law before they were conducted to Christ (Gal 3:24), Christ Himself alluded to this distinction between the old and new dispensations, when He said, “The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached” (Luke 16:16). Moses and the prophets afforded their contemporaries only some taste of that wisdom which was, in after times, to be clearly manifested. But, when Christ came, the kingdom of God was fully revealed (Col 2:3). For in Him are discovered “all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Col 2:3), by which we penetrate almost into the furthest recesses of heaven.

6. Although scarcely a person in the Christian Church can be found to be comparable with Abraham in the excelling of his faith, and there is no denying of the fact that the prophets of old were given such energy by the Spirit, as to be sufficient to illuminate the whole world, yet their preaching was obscure as relating to things very distant and was comprehended in types. Whence this observation of Christ on the clearer revelation of the mysteries of heaven under the New Testament, over the Old: “many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them” (Luke 10:24). “Blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear” (Matt 13:16).

7. I come now to the third difference, which is taken from Jeremiah: “Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: But this

shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more” (Jer 31:31–34). From this passage, the Apostle made comparison between the Law and the Gospel: He calls the former a literal, the latter a spiritual doctrine. The former was engraven on tables of stone, the latter is inscribed on the heart (2 Cor 3:6, etc.). The former was the preaching of death, the latter of life. The former was the ministration of condemnation, the latter of righteousness. The former is abolished, the latter remains.

8. Now, let us explain the comparison of the Apostle in all its branches. In the first place, the Old Testament is literal, because it is promulgated without the efficiency of the Spirit. The New is spiritual, because the Lord has engraven it on the hearts of men. The second contrast, therefore, serves as an elucidation of the first. The Old Testament is the revelation of death, because it can involve all mankind in a curse. The New is the instrument of life, because it delivers us from the curse, and restores us to favour with God. The former is the ministry of condemnation, because it convicts the children of Adam of unrighteousness. The latter is the ministry of righteousness, because it reveals the mercy of God, by which we are made righteous. The last contrast must be referred to the legal ceremonies. The Law, having an image of things that were at a distance, it was necessary that in time it should be abolished and disappear. The Gospel, exhibiting the body itself, retains a firm and perpetual stability.

Now, this difference between the “letter” and the “spirit” is not to be understood as if the Lord had given His law to the Jews without any beneficial result, without one of them being converted to Him, but it is used in a way of comparison, to display the plenitude of grace, with which the Legislator has honoured the preaching of the Gospel. If we survey the multitude of those, from among all nations, whom, the Lord has regenerated through the preaching of the Gospel, we shall say those of ancient Israel, who sincerely embraced the covenant of the Lord, were extremely few.

9. The fourth difference arises out of the third. For the Scripture calls the Old Testament a covenant of bondage, because it produces fear in the mind. But the New, it describes as a covenant of liberty, because it leads the heart to confidence and security. Paul says, “Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father” (Rom 8:15). Similarly, that passage in the Epistle to the Hebrews says of the faithful, that they “are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest” (Heb 12:18, etc.). Again, Paul explains the Roman passage further in Galatians, when he allegorises the two sons of Abraham—that Agar, the bondwoman, is a type of Mount Sinai where Israel received the law; that Sarah, the free-woman, is a figure of the celestial Jerusalem, whence proceeds the Gospel. That as the son of Agar is born in bondage, and can never attain to the inheritance, and the son of Sarah is born free, and has the right to inheritance (Gal 4:22, etc.), so, by the law, we were devoted to slavery, but, by the Gospel alone are generated to liberty.

10. The three last comparisons are between the Law and the Gospel. In these, “the Old Testament” denotes **the law**; and “the New Testament,” **the gospel**.

How about the faithful who lived in the Old Testament dispensation as respecting their salvation? I say that all the saints, whom the Scripture mentions as having been chosen by God, even from the beginning of the world, have been partakers of the same blessing with us to eternal salvation. For the holy fathers, though they lived under the Old Testament, did not rest satisfied with it, but always aspired after the New, and thus enjoyed a certain participation of it. Those who contented themselves with present shadows, and did not extend their views to Christ, are condemned as blind and under the curse. For, what greater ignorance can be imagined than to hope for an expiation of sin by the sacrifice of an animal? Those who merely observed the law, without any reference to Christ, were condemned

11. The fifth difference, which we may add, consists in this—that till the advent of Christ, the Lord selected one nation to which He would limit the covenant of grace (Deut 32:8, 9; 10:14, 15). In the meantime, He suffered other nations, as if they had no business with Him, to walk in

vanity (Acts 14:16). The Israelitish nation were as darling sons; others were strangers. But when the fulness of time was come (Gal 4:4), appointed for the restoration of all things (Matt 17:11), and the Reconciler of God and man was manifested (Eph 2:14), the barrier was demolished. The Divine mercy, so long confined in the Jewish church, was announced to the Gentiles that they might, being reconciled to God, be coalesced into one people (Col 3:11; Ps 2:8; 72:8).

12. The vocation of the Gentiles, therefore, is an eminent illustration of the superior excellence of the New Testament above the Old. This call to the Gentiles was explicitly announced by the prophets; but it was not to be answered until the kingdom of the Messiah. Even Christ Himself made no advances towards it at the beginning of His preaching, but deferred it till He should have completed all our redemption (Matt 15:24; 10:5, 6).

13. In these four or five points, I think I have given a correct statement of the whole of the difference between the Old and the New Testaments. But, because some persons represent the different modes of instruction, and such a considerable alteration of rites, as a great absurdity, I reply that God ought not to be deemed mutable, because He accommodated different forms to different ages, as He knew would be suitable to each. Now, Paul compares the Jews to children and the Christians to youth (Gal 4:1–3). What impropriety is there in this part of the government of God, that He detained them in the rudiments which were suitable to them on account of their age, but has placed us under a stronger and more manly discipline?

14. Now, if it is asked why God could not have given a revelation of eternal life in clear language, without figures, and diffuse His grace throughout the world before Christ came, then it is just the same as if they were to quarrel with God! Well might they ask why God created the world at so late a period, whereas He might have done it before. Whatever is done by God is done wisely and righteously.

Chapter XII

The Necessity of Christ Becoming Man in Order to Fulfil the Office of Mediator

1. Although man had remained immaculately innocent, yet his condition would have been too mean for him to approach to God without a Mediator. What, then, can he do, after having been plunged by his fatal fall into death and hell, and overwhelmed with every curse?

Since our iniquities had entirely alienated us from God, all the more we needed a Mediator for the restoration of peace with our God. Neither any child of Adam nor any one of the angels could do this. Unless God Himself would descend to us, we could not ascend to Him. Thus, it was necessary that the Son of God should become Immanuel, that is, God with us, and this is in order that there might be a mutual union and coalition between His Divinity and the nature of man. Otherwise, the proximity could not be sufficiently strong, to give us hope that God would dwell with us.

But, what is the reason for Paul to call the Mediator man and not God (1 Tim 2:5)? The Spirit, knowing our infirmity, has inspired Paul to call the Mediator a man, that we might find him near to us (Heb 4:15).

2. The work of restoring us to God's favour, making us, children of men, into children of God; and heirs of hell into heirs of the kingdom of heaven, could not be accomplished unless the Son of God should become the Son of man. In so doing, the Mediator received to Himself what belongs to us, and transferred to us that which is His (Eph 5:30). He refused not to assume that which was peculiar to us, that we might also obtain that which was peculiar to Him. Hence arises that holy fraternity (John 20:17), so that we have a certainty of the inheritance of the kingdom of heaven, because the Son of God has adopted us as His brethren. And if we are brethren, we are consequently co-heirs to the inheritance (Rom 8:17).

Our Mediator's work was the work of redemption. By His life, He swallowed up death. By His righteousness, He overcame sin. By His superior power, He put to flight the powers of the world and of the air. Who could do all this but God alone? Therefore, when He determined on

our redemption, He became Himself our Redeemer in the person of His only begotten Son!

3. Another branch of our reconciliation was this—that man, who had ruined himself by his disobedience, should remedy his condition by obedience, should satisfy the justice of God, and suffer punishment for his sin. Our Lord then became a real man, put on the character of Adam and assumed his name, to act as his substitute in obedience to the Father, to lay down our flesh as the price of satisfaction to the justice of God, and to suffer the punishment which we had deserved. As it would have been impossible for one who was only God to suffer death, or for one who was a mere man to overcome it, He associated the human nature with the Divine that He might submit the weakness of the former to death as an atonement for sins, and that with the power of the latter, He might conquer death on our behalf. Those who, therefore, despoil Christ either of His Divinity or humanity, either diminish His glory or obscure His goodness.

Moreover, the Redeemer to be expected was that Son of Abraham and David, whom God had promised in the law and prophets. The faithful, tracing Christ's ancestry to David and Abraham, have thus an additional assurance.

4. Some people speculate that Christ would have become man, even if the human race had needed no redemption. I grant that, at the original creation, He was exalted as head over angels and men, for which reason Paul calls Him "the firstborn of every creature" (Col 1:15). But, since the whole Scriptures proclaim that He was clothed in flesh in order to become a Redeemer, it argues excessive temerity to imagine another cause for it. The end for which Christ was promised was to restore a fallen world and ruined men. Therefore, under the law, His image was exhibited in sacrifices; and as in all ages, even before the law was given, the Mediator was never promised without blood, we conclude that He was destined to purify the pollution of men. The prophets foretold this, and a celebrated specimen of their testimonies is Isaiah's, where he predicts that He should be smitten of God for the transgressions of the people (Isa 53:4). When He Himself appeared in the world, He declared the design of His coming was to appease God and restore us from death to life (John 1:9; 3:16; 5:25; 11:25; Matt 9:12; 18:11). The Apostles declare the same truth of Mediatorship (Heb 5:1; 2 Cor 5:19; Rom 8:3; Titus 3:4).

To conclude, the Scripture nowhere assigns any other end, for which the Son of God should choose to become incarnate (Luke 1:72; 24:46, 47; John 3:14; 10:17, 18, 12:27; 17:1).

5. To answer those who would argue and speculate that Christ could not have shown His love to men if they had remained in a state of integrity, we say it is not right to make any further inquiry. Paul, according to the sublime mystery of predestination, however, represses all the licentiousness and prurience of the human mind (Eph 1:4, etc.). And, since “this is,” testified by Paul, to be “a faithful saying, . . . that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners” (1 Tim 1:15), I gladly acquiesce in it. And, since Paul declares that the grace, which is now made manifest by the gospel, “was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began” (2 Tim 1:9, 10), I conclude that I ought to persevere in the same doctrine with constancy to the end. Osiander, who likes to speculate and would excuse the monstrous supposition that the Son of God could assume the nature of an ass, is silenced by Paul’s injunction, “Avoid foolish questions” (Titus 3:9).

6. As to the similitude of God in man, I contend that it is to be sought only in those characters of excellence, with which God distinguished Adam above the other creatures. And, Christ being the image of God, whatever excellence was impressed on Adam proceeded from this, that he approached to the glory of the Maker by means of His only begotten Son.

But, I add that this Son was a common head to angels as well as to men. So, the angels were also entitled to the same dignity which was conferred on man. And, when we hear them called the “children of the most High” (Ps 82:6), it would be unreasonable to deny that they have some resemblance to their Father. Osiander betrays his ignorance in saying that men were preferred to angels, because the latter did not bear the image of Christ. But, Paul teaches us that men are no otherwise renewed after the image of God, than if they be associated with angels, they may be united together under one head (Col 2:10).

7. Osiander argues further that, while Adam retained his integrity, he would be the image of himself, and not of Christ. On the contrary, I reply, that although the Son of God had never been incarnate, both the

body and the soul of man would equally have displayed the image of God; in whose radiance it always appeared; that Christ was truly the head, possessing the supremacy over all. Thus, we destroy the futile subtlety raised by Osiander, that the angels would have been destitute of this head, unless God had decreed to clothe His Son with flesh, even without any transgression of Adam. Osiander argues that Christ has no supremacy over angels, and that He is not their Prince, except in His human nature. But, we may easily conclude, from Paul, that as the eternal Word of God, He is “the firstborn of every creature” (Col 1:15)—not that He was created, but because He was its author. Afterwards, as man, He was “the first begotten of the dead” (Rev 1:5; Col 1:18). In these two points, Paul teaches that all things were created by the Son, that He might have dominion over angels; and that He was made man that He might become our Redeemer (Col 1:16, 18). By calling Him “the second Adam” (cf. 1 Cor 15:45, 47), Paul places the fall between the first original of mankind and the restitution which we obtain through Christ. Whence, it follows that the fall was the cause of the incarnation of the Son of God. Had man not sinned, Christ would not have manifested in the flesh, but as head over angels, He could likewise, by His Divine power, preside over men and, by the secret energy of His Spirit, animate and support them, till they be exalted to heaven and enjoy the life of angels! But Christ was destined to become man in order to extricate the posterity of Adam from ruin. All speculations on the personality of Christ by Osiander, in relationship to Adam and after the fall, are vain and futile. But this sober declaration will sufficiently satisfy the children of God, that, “when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law” (Gal 4:4, 5).

Chapter XIII

Christ's Assumption of Real Humanity

1. The reality of Christ's humanity was anciently opposed by the Manichaeans and the Marcionites. The latter imagined Christ's body to be a visionary phantom; and the former dreamed that He had a celestial body. Both these errors are contrary to the testimonies of Scripture. Christ came into the world, not in a heavenly seed, nor in a phantom of a man, but in the seed of Abraham, Jacob and David (Gen 12:3; 18:18; 22:18; 26:4; Acts 3:25; 2:30; Ps 132:11; Matt 1:1). He was called the Son of David and of Abraham, not because He was merely born of the virgin after having been formed of some aerial substance; but because He was "made of the seed of David according to the flesh" (Rom 1:3), descending from the Jews (Rom 9:5). The Lord Himself, not content with the appellation of **man**, frequently calls Himself also **the Son of Man**—a more express declaration of His real humanity. His real humanity is further attested by innumerable other passages of Scripture, which record His hunger, thirst, cold and other infirmities of our nature, and that "he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham" (Heb 2:16). He was "not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities" (Heb 4:15), etc. And, as He is the head and we are His body (Eph 4:15, 16), all that the Father conferred on Christ belongs to us.

2. Marcion argues that Christ invested Himself with a phantom instead of a real body because He is said to have been "made in the likeness of men" and to have been "found in fashion as a man" (Phil 2:7, 8). Our answer is that the subject of this statement is not the nature of Christ, but His conduct. It refers to Christ's humility by the assumption of a real human nature, for what is the meaning of He "was found in fashion as a man" but that, for a time, His Divine glory was invisible and nothing appeared but the human form in a mean and abject condition (1 Pet 3:18; 2 Cor 13:4)?

Manichaeus fabricates for Christ an aerial body, because He is called "the second man . . . the Lord from heaven" (1 Cor 15:47). But, the Apostle here is not speaking of a celestial corporeal essence, but of a spiritual energy which, diffused from Christ, raises us into life.

Respecting the appellation of **firstborn**, the Manichaeans plead that Christ ought to have been born at the beginning, before Adam, in order “that he might be the firstborn among many brethren” (Rom 8:29). We reply that the primogeniture attributed to Him refers not to age, but to the degree of honour which He enjoys.

3. Those passages where Christ is called “the seed of Abraham” (Heb 2:16) and “the fruit of his [David’s] loins” (Acts 2:30), they with equal folly involve in allegories. Equally unfounded is their notion, that Christ is called the Son of David in no other sense, but because He had been promised, and was at length manifested in due time. For after Paul has declared Him to have been “made of the seed of David,” the immediate addition of this phrase, “according to the flesh” (Rom 1:3), is certainly a designation of nature. Now, if He was not really begotten of the seed of David, what is the meaning of this expression, “the fruit of his loins”?

The modern Marcionites, contending that women have no generative semen, argue, therefore, that Christ derived his body from nothing. As this is not a theological question, I shall not meddle with points belonging to philosophy and medical art.

I grant that a passive power is ascribed to women, but I also maintain that the same power that is affirmed of men is indiscriminately predicated of them. Nor is Christ Himself said to be “made” by a woman, but “of a woman” (Gal 4:4). Some impudently inquire whether we choose to say that Christ was procreated from the menstrual seed of the Virgin. I will inquire, on the other hand, whether He was not united with the blood of His mother? This they must be constrained to confess. It is properly inferred, therefore, from the language of Matthew (Matt 1:16), that Christ was procreated from her seed; as when Boaz is said to have been begotten of Rahab (Matt 1:5), it denotes a similar generation. Nor is it the design of Matthew here to describe the Virgin as a tube through which Christ passed, but to discriminate this miraculous conception from ordinary generation, in that Jesus Christ was generated of the seed of David by means of a Virgin.

4. Our opponents further argue that, if Christ is perfectly immaculate and was begotten of the seed of Mary by the secret operation of the Holy Spirit, then it follows that there is no impurity in the seed of women, but

only in that of men. But, we do not represent Christ as perfectly immaculate, merely because He was born of the seed of a woman unconnected with any man, but because He was sanctified by the Spirit, so that His generation was pure and holy, such as would have been before Adam's fall. Therefore, whenever Scripture mentions the purity of Christ, it relates to a real humanity, because to assert the purity of Deity would be quite unnecessary. The generation of man is not naturally and originally impure and corrupt, but only accidentally so, in consequence of the fall. Therefore, we need not wonder that Christ, who was to restore our integrity, was exempted from general corruption.

Another argument they put forth is that if the Word of God was clothed with flesh, it was confined within the narrow prison of an earthly body. This is mere impudence because although the infinite essence of the Word is united as one person with the nature of man, yet we have no idea of its incarceration. For the Son of God miraculously descended from heaven, yet in a manner He never left heaven. He chose to be conceived in the womb of the Virgin; and yet He never ceased to fill the universe.

Chapter XIV

The Union of the Two Natures Constituting the Person of the Mediator

1. When it is said that “the Word was made flesh” (John 1:14), this is not to be understood as if the Word was transmuted into flesh. The Son of God became the Son of man, not by a confusion of substance, but by a unity of person. In the union of the Divinity with humanity, each nature retains its properties entire, yet both together constitute one Christ. This mystery is reflected in man’s composition of two substances, the soul and the body. Neither of the substances is confounded with the other as not to retain its own nature. But, it is also true that the properties of the soul are transferred to the body and vice versa, yet he that is composed of these two parts is no more than one man. Now, the Scripture speaks in a similar manner respecting Christ. They attribute to Him, sometimes those things which are applicable merely to humanity; sometimes those things which belong peculiarly to His Divinity; and not infrequently those things which comprehend both natures, but are incompatible with either of them alone. This union of the two natures of Christ they so carefully maintain, that they sometimes attribute to one what belongs to the other. Ancient writers called this a communication of properties.

2. Those things which belong peculiarly to His Divinity may be seen, e.g., in Christ’s own expression, “Before Abraham was, I am” (John 8:58). From Paul is the assertion that Christ was “the firstborn of every creature,” that “he is before all things, and by him all things consist” (Col 1:15, 17).

Those things which belong peculiarly to humanity may be seen in the Mediator’s role as “servant” (Isa 52:13), and in His having “increased in wisdom and stature” (Luke 2:52), in that He seeks not His own glory (John 8:50), and that He knows not the last day (Mark 13:32).

But, the communication of properties is exemplified in the assertion of Paul, that God “purchased [the Church] with His own blood” (Acts 20:28) and that “the Lord of glory” was “crucified” (1 Cor 2:8). Also in what John says, that they had “handled . . . the Word of life” (1 John 1:1).

God has no blood. He is not capable of suffering or being touched with hands. But, since He, who was at once true God and the man Christ

Jesus, was crucified and shed His blood for us, those things which were performed in His human nature are improperly, yet not without reason, transferred to the Divinity.

3. But the clearest of all the passages declarative of the true substance of Christ are those which comprehend both the natures together. These abounded in the Gospel of John. For it is not with exclusive reference to the Deity or the humanity, but respecting the complex person composed of both. In these passages, it is stated that He has received power of the Father to forgive sins, to raise up whom He will, to bestow righteousness, holiness and salvation; that He is appointed Judge of the living and the dead, that He may receive the same honour as the Father (John 1:29, 5:21–23). Finally, that He is “the light of the world” (John 9:5), “the good shepherd” (John 10:11), “the [only] door” (John 10:9), “the true vine” (John 15:1). For with such prerogatives was the Son of God invested at His manifestation in the flesh; which although He enjoyed with the Father before the creation of the world, yet not in the same manner or on the same account; and which could not be conferred on a mere man. Let this maxim serve as a key to the true sense, that those things which relate to the office of the Mediator are not spoken simply of His Divine or of His human nature. The title of “Lord,” when peculiarly applied to the person of Christ, marks an intermediate station between God and us (1 Cor 8:6).

4. Without understanding the significance of the intermediate station of the Mediator, the mysteries of the Divine-human complex of Christ are thrown into confusion. But, we conclude that Christ, as He is both man and God, composed of these two natures united, yet not confounded, is our Lord and the true Son of God, even in His humanity.

We ought to avoid the error of Nestorius who, attempting rather to divide than to distinguish the two natures, imagined a double Christ. We must also beware of the error of Eutyches, lest while we aim to establish the unity of Christ’s person, we destroy the distinction between the two natures. Wherefore, as Nestorius was justly condemned in the Council of Ephesus (AD 431), so also was Eutyches afterwards in the Councils of Constantinople (AD 553) and Chalcedon (AD 451). To confound the two natures of Christ, and to separate them, are equally wrong.

5. But in our time, there has arisen a heretic in Michael Servetus who, in the place of the Son of God, has substituted an imaginary being composed of the essence of God, spirit, flesh and three uncreated elements. His subtlety tends to subvert the distinction between the two natures, and thereby to represent Christ as something composed of God and man, and yet neither God and man. He declares that, before Christ was manifested in the flesh, there were in God only some shadowy figures, with no real existence till the Word actually became the Son of God.

6. But, if His filiation (so to speak) commenced at the time of His manifestation in the flesh, it will follow that He was the Son also in respect of His human nature. Servetus, however, maintains that, out of the flesh, He could not be entitled to this appellation.

But, by Paul's teaching, Christ is called "the Son" in His human nature, not as the faithful are by adoption, but the true and natural, and therefore the **only** Son. We, who are regenerated, are honoured by God with the title of sons, but the appellation of His true and "only begotten Son," He gives to Christ alone. And, we extend this honour to the whole person of the Mediator, that He, who was born of the Virgin, is truly and properly the Son of God; but nevertheless with respect to His Deity, as Paul suggests, when he says that he was "separated unto the gospel of God, (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,) Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; And declared to be the Son of God with power" (Rom 1:1-4). The appellation "Son of God" refers particularly to Christ's Deity and eternal existence, and "the Son of man," to His human nature.

7. Servetus further argues that, before Christ appeared in the flesh, He is nowhere called the Son of God, but in a figurative sense. We reply that, although the description of Him then was rather obscure, the inference is clear, even under the law and the prophets, He was the Son of God before His name was commonly used in the Church. Solomon, speaking of the infinite sublimity of God, affirms His Son to be incomprehensible as Himself. "What is his name," he asks, "and what is his son's name, if thou canst tell?" (Prov 30:4). It must also be remarked that all the most ancient writers have, with one accord, asserted the same doctrine, for

example, Irenaeus and Tertullian who both acknowledge Jesus Christ was always the invisible Son of God before His visible appearance.

8. Servetus, who recognises Christ to be the Son of God insofar as He was conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin, destroys the eternal generation of Wisdom of which Solomon speaks (Prov 8:22, etc.). Servetus must be refuted that the pious reader, admonished by his example, may preserve himself within the bounds of sobriety.

The substance of Servetus' heresy is, that the Son of God was from the beginning an ideal existence, and that, even then, He was predestinated to be a man who was to be the essential image of God. His generation, he explains thus: that there existed in God from the beginning a will to beget a Son, which was carried into effect by His actual formation. He, likewise, confounds the Spirit with the Word by asserting that God distributed the invisible Word and Spirit into body and soul. In short, he puts the prefiguration of Christ in the place of His generation, and affirms that He, who was then in external appearance a shadowy Son, was at length begotten by the Word, to which he attributes the properties of the seed. Whence it will follow, that the meanest animals are equally the children of God, because they were created of the original seed of the Word of God. For though he compounds Christ of three uncreated elements, to countenance the assertion that He is begotten of the essence of God, yet he pretends Him to have been the firstborn among creatures, in such a sense that even inanimate substances possess the same essential Divinity! From this summary, the judicious reader will conclude, that by the subtle fallacies of this heretic, the hope of salvation is completely extinguished. But, we can have no Redeemer, except Him who became man, by being really begotten of the seed of Abraham and David according to the flesh.

Chapter XV

The Consideration of Christ's Three Offices, Prophetical, Regal, and Sacerdotal, Necessary to Our Knowing the End of His Mission from the Father, and the Benefits Which He Confers on Us

1. In order that faith may find, in Christ, a solid ground of salvation, it is proper to know that the office which was assigned Him by the Father consists of three parts. He was given as a Prophet, a King and a Priest. Merely to pronounce the name of these offices, like the Papists, while remaining ignorant of their end and use would be quite unprofitable.

We have observed before, that although God sent prophets one after another, and never left His people destitute of instruction, yet the minds of the pious were always persuaded, that the full light of understanding could not come till the advent of the Messiah (John 4:25; Isa 55:4, Heb 1:1, 2).

2. Now, it is to be observed, that the appellation of "Christ" belongs to these three offices. Under the law, not only priests and kings, but prophets also, were anointed with holy oil. Hence, the celebrated title "Messiah" was given to the promised Mediator. Isaiah expressly mentions His anointing to the prophetical office, "The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek" (Isa 61:1, 2). Notice that He is anointed by the Spirit, and that not in a common manner, for He is distinguished from other teachers who held a similar office. Furthermore, notice that He received this anointing, not only for Himself that He might perform the office of a teacher, but for His whole body, that the preaching of the Gospel might be attended continually with the power of the Spirit. Christ is the end of all prophecies, so that they, who make any extraneous addition to it, are guilty of derogating from His authority.

3. With regard to the kingdom, it would be useless to speak without first apprizing the reader, that it is a spiritual one. For though God has sworn that the throne of David would be as enduring as the sun (Ps 89:35–37); immediately after Solomon's death, the dignity of the kingdom

sustained a considerable degradation. It diminished afterwards more and more till, at length, it fell in total ruin. In the Psalm quoted above, there is no doubt that God here promises to be an everlasting Governor and Defender of His Church, through the medium of His Son. Whence, it follows that it is impossible for the devil and the world ever to destroy the Church, which is founded on the eternal throne of Christ. To each individual, the same eternity ought to encourage our hope of a blessed immortality.

4. The truth of our observation, that Christ's kingdom is a spiritual one, is evident from a consideration of the hardship and misery of our condition in the warfare under the cross. It ought to be known, that whatever felicity is promised us in Christ, consists not in external accommodations, such as a life of joy and tranquillity, abundant wealth, security from every injury, and numerous delights suited to our carnal desires, but that it is suited to the heavenly state. Rather, "the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Rom 14:17). Since it is not terrestrial or carnal, but spiritual, it elevates us even to eternal life, that we may patiently pass through this life in afflictions, hunger, cold, contempt and other disagreeable circumstances; contented with this single assurance, that our King will never desert us till our warfare is done.

5. His regal unction, therefore, is not composed of oil and aromatic perfumes, but He is called "The Christ of God" (Luke 9:20) because the sevenfold Spirit rested on Him (Isa 11:2). This is the "oil of gladness" which the Psalmist declares Him to have been "anointed . . . above" His "fellows" (Ps 45:7; John 3:34). From "his fulness" of grace (John 1:16) proceeds the munificence mentioned by Paul, by which grace is variously distributed to the faithful (Eph 4:7). These confirm that the kingdom of Christ consists in the Spirit, not in terrestrial pleasures or pomps. Therefore, to be partakers of it, we must renounce the world. A visible emblem of this unction was displayed at the baptism of Christ, when the Holy Spirit descended on Him in the form of a dove.

During the period of our pilgrimage, Christ rules at the right hand of the Father as His vicegerent, because it is the will of God to govern and defend His Church through the mediation of His Son (Eph 1:20, 22, 23). Ultimately, "he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the

Father,” and “then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him . . . , that God may be all in all” (1 Cor 15:24, 28).

Apart from His ruling over the Church as King and Shepherd, we are informed that He bears “a rod of iron” to “break” all the stubborn and rebellious (Ps 2:9). It is likewise predicted “He shall judge among the heathen” (Ps 110:6). Of this, there are some instances to be seen in the present state, but the consummation of it will be at the last judgment, which may be considered as the last act of His reign.

6. Concerning His priesthood, He is a Mediator, pure from every stain and, by His holiness, He renders us acceptable to God. Because of sin that separates us from God, and the wrath of God needs to be appeased, there is the necessity for the intervention of an atonement. This subject the Apostle discusses at large in Hebrews Chapters 7 to 10. But the sum of the whole is this—that the sacerdotal dignity belongs exclusively to Christ, because, by the sacrifice of His death, He has abolished our guilt and made satisfaction for our sins. There is no access of God, unless our Priest sanctify us by taking away our sins, and obtain for us that grace from which we are excluded by the pollution of our vices and crimes.

Now, under the law, God commanded victims to be offered to Him from the flock and herd. A new and different method has been adopted in the case of Christ, that the sacrifice should be the same as the priest; because it was impossible to find any other adequate satisfaction for sins, or anyone worthy of so great an honour as to offer to God His only begotten Son. In His priestly act, Christ also associates us with Himself in so great an honour, for we, who are polluted in ourselves, are “made . . . priests” in Him (Rev 1:6). In Him, we offer ourselves and services to God, so that the sacrifices of prayers and praise, which proceed from us, are “acceptable” (Eph 5:10) and a “sweetsmelling savour” (Eph 5:2) before God.

Detestable is the invention of those, who, not content with the priesthood of Christ, have presumed to take upon themselves the office of sacrificing Him. This is daily attempted among the Papists, where the mass is considered an immolation of Christ.

Chapter XVI

Christ's Execution of the Office of a Redeemer to Procure Our Salvation, His Death, Resurrection, and Ascension to Heaven

1. The office of Redeemer was assigned to Christ in order that He might be our Saviour (Acts 4:12; Matt 1:21). Nevertheless, the redemption would be incomplete if He did not, by continual advances, carry us forward to the ultimate end of salvation.

2. Before we proceed any further, let us examine, by the way, how it could be consistent that God, who precedes us with His mercy, should be our enemy, till He was reconciled to us by Christ. God was an enemy to men, till, by the death of Christ, they were restored to His favour (Rom 5:10).

3. For God, who is the perfection of righteousness, cannot love iniquity, which He beholds in us. Notwithstanding we are sinners by our own fault, yet we are still His creatures. Notwithstanding we have brought death on ourselves, yet He had created us for life. Thus, by a gratuitous love towards us, He is excited to receive us into His favour. But, He cannot receive us as long as we remain sinners. Therefore, in order to remove all enmity, and to reconcile us to Himself, He abolishes all our guilt by the expiation exhibited in the death of Christ, that we, who before were polluted, may appear righteous and holy in His sight. The love of God the Father therefore precedes our reconciliation in Christ (1 John 4:19).

4. "The love of God," says Augustine, "is incomprehensible and immutable. For He did not love us when we were reconciled to Him by the blood of His Son, but He loved us before the creation of the world, that we might be His children, together with His only begotten Son, even before we had any existence. Therefore our reconciliation by the death of Christ must not be understood as if He reconciled us to God, that God might begin to love those whom He had before hated; but we are reconciled to Him who already loved us, but with whom we were at enmity on account of sin. And whether my assertion be true, let the apostle attest. 'God,' says he, 'commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet

sinner, Christ died for us' (Rom 5:8). He loved us, therefore, even when we were in the exercise of enmity against Him, and engaged in the practice of iniquity. Wherefore, in a wonderful and Divine manner, He both hated and loved us at the same time. He hated us, as being different from what He had made us; but as our iniquity had not entirely destroyed His work in us, He could not at the same time in everyone of us hate what we had done, and love what proceeded from Himself." This is the language of Augustine.

5. Now in answer to the inquiry, how Christ, by the abolition of our sins, has destroyed the enmity between God and us, and procured a righteousness to render Him favourable and propitious to us, it may be replied that He accomplished it for us by the whole course of His obedience (Rom 5:19; Gal 4:4, 5). Christ saved us by His obedience in life, assuming the character of a servant, yet more precisely by His death, giving "his life a ransom for many" (Matt 20:28). Other passages of Scripture emphasising His death are 1 Corinthians 15:3; John 1:29; Romans 3:24, 25; 5:9, 10; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Philippians 2:7, 8; John 10:15, 18; Isaiah 53:5, 7; John 18:4; Matthew 27:12, 14. But His death must be that of a malefactor, when He is accused and overpowered by the testimony of witnesses and, by the mouth of the judge, condemned to die—in order to satisfy justice and atone for our sins, even as Isaiah had foretold in 53:12 (Mark 15:28), while, from the lustre of His innocence, it will at the same time appear that He was loaded with the guilt of others, but had none of His own. Had He been assassinated by robbers, or murdered in a popular tumult, in such a death there would have been no appearance of satisfaction and atonement.

6. From the sacrifices prescribed by the law of Moses and from the prophets, we see that Christ's death was a vicarious sacrifice atoning for our sin (Isa 53:10). The Apostle more explicitly testifies the same, when he says, "He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Cor 5:21). Christ, at His death, was offered to the Father as an expiatory sacrifice, in order that, a complete atonement being made by the oblation, we may no longer dread the Divine wrath. Now, it is evident what the prophet meant, when he said, "The LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isa 53:6); namely, that when He was about to expiate our sins, they were to be

transferred to Him by imputation. The cross, to which He was fixed, was a symbol of this, as the Apostle informs us: “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ” (Gal 3:13, 14). Now, when it is said that He was “made a curse for us,” we must not conceive that He submitted to a curse which overwhelmed Him, but, on the contrary, that by sustaining it, He depressed, broke and destroyed all its power. Therefore, Paul proclaims the triumph which Christ gained for Himself on the cross; as though the cross, which was full of ignominy, had been converted into a triumphal chariot (Col 2:14, 15)

The words used in connection with Christ’s death—*redemption*, *ransom* and *propitiation*—have to do with a slaughtered victim, while the blood shed by Christ has not only served as an atonement to God, but likewise as a laver to purge away our pollutions.

7. It follows in the Creed, “that He died and was buried.” This means that Christ surrendered Himself to the power of death in our stead. The Apostle says, “He taste[d] death for every man” (Heb 2:9).

Now, He surrendered Himself to death, not to be absorbed in its abyss, but rather that He might overthrow and destroy it.

Lastly, He died, “that . . . he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage” (Heb 2:14, 15). This is the first benefit.

The second is that, by a communication of Himself, He “mortif[ies]” our “members which are upon the earth” (Col 3:5), that they may no longer perform their own actions; and slays our old man, that it may not flourish and bear fruit any more. The burial of Christ has the same tendency, that being made partakers of it, we may be buried to sin and the world (Rom 6:4, 5; Gal 6:14; Col 3:3). In the death and burial of Christ, we have a twofold benefit—deliverance from the thralldom of death and the mortification of our flesh.

8. But it is not right to omit His “descent into hell,” which is of no small importance towards the accomplishment of our redemption. This was inserted into the Creed a little after the days of the Apostles, and was gradually received in the churches. Some are of opinion that this clause

contains nothing new, but is only a repetition of what had before been said respecting His burial; because the word rendered here “hell” is frequently used in Scripture to signify the *grave*. While it is true that the word “hell” is frequently understood to be of the “grave,” I say it is not probable that such a superfluous tautology could have found its way into this compendium, in which the principal articles of faith are summarily expressed with the utmost possible brevity.

9. Others interpret that Christ descended to the souls of the fathers, who had died under the law, for the purpose of announcing the redemption, and liberating them from the prison in which they were confined. They quote Psalm 107:16 and Zechariah 9:11, and imagine a subterraneous cavern to which they have the name *Limbus*. This is a fable.

But, I confess that Christ rather illuminated them by the power of His Spirit; that they might know that the grace, which they had only tasted by hope, was then exhibited to the world. Probably to this we accommodate that passage of Peter, where he says, that Christ “went and preached unto the spirits in prison” (1 Pet 3:19). This is generally rendered “the spirits in prison,” but I conceive improperly.

The context also gives us to understand that the faithful, who had died before that time, were partakers of the same grace with us. For the Apostle amplifies, it penetrated even to the dead; when the souls of the faithful enjoyed the present view of the visitation they had been anxiously expecting. On the contrary, it was more clearly discovered to the reprobate, that they were excluded from all salvation. But, since Peter had not spoken in this distinct manner of the pious and the impious, we must not understand him as confounding them all together. He only designs to say that the knowledge of Christ’s death was common to them both.

10. But laying aside the Creed, we have to seek a more certain explanation of the descent of Christ into hell; and we find one in the Word which also gives consolation. It is in Acts 2:24, where it is declared “Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: . . . it was not possible that he should be holden of it.” This verse tells us that not only the body of Christ was given as the price of our redemption, but that there was another greater and more excellent ransom, since He suffered

in His soul the dreadful torments of a person condemned and irretrievably lost.

11. In this sense Peter says, that “Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it” (Acts 2:24). Notice that He does not simply say “death,” but that the Son of God was involved in “the pains of death,” which proceed from the Divine wrath and malediction, which is the origin of death. We affirm also that, according to Hebrews 5:7, Matthew 27:46 and Isaiah 53:4, Christ sustained the weight of the Divine severity. Hilary argues that, by this descent, we have obtained the destruction of death. Again, in another place, “The Son of God is in hell, but man is raised to heaven.” Thus, by contending with the pains of hell, He obtained the victory, that in death we may no longer dread those things which our Prince has destroyed.

12. We ought, therefore, as Ambrose justly advises, fearlessly to acknowledge the sorrow of Christ, unless we are ashamed of the cross. If His soul had experienced no punishment, He would have been only a Redeemer of the body.

It is also wrong to measure the emotional stresses suffered by Christ by the standards of sinful men. Robbers and malefactors obstinately rush forward to death. Many men nobly despise it; and others calmly submit to it. But, what constancy and magnanimity would the Son of God have discovered, in being astonished and almost struck dead with fear of it? For it is related of Him, what might generally be accounted a prodigy, that through the vehemence of His agonies, drops of blood flowed from His face. What disgraceful effeminacy would this have been to be distressed by the fear of a common death, as to be in a bloody sweat, and incapable of being comforted without the presence of angels! Does not His thrice-repeated prayer (Matt 26:39), proceeding from an incredible bitterness of soul, demonstrate that Christ had a more severe conflict than with common death? If any one inquire whether Christ was then descending to hell, when He deprecated death, I reply, this was the prelude to it whence we conclude what horrible agonies He must have suffered.

13. Next follows His resurrection from the dead. Although our salvation is perfectly accomplished by His death, yet we are said to have been “begotten . . . again unto a lively hope”—not by His death, but “by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (1 Pet 1:3). For it is on His resurrection that our faith principally rests. According to Paul, Christ “was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification” (Rom 4:25), as though he had said, that sin was removed by His death, and righteousness restored by His resurrection. Wherefore, we ascribe our salvation partly to His death and partly to His resurrection. Therefore, Paul asserts that He was “declared to be the Son of God with power, . . . by the resurrection from the dead” (Rom 1:4), because He then displayed His heavenly power, which is both a lucid mirror of His Divinity and a firm support of our faith (2 Cor 13:4; Phil 3:10). Let us remember, therefore, that whenever mention is made of His death alone, it comprehends also what strictly belongs to His resurrection and vice versa.

Besides, as we have before stated, that the mortification of our flesh depends on communion with His cross, so it must be understood that we obtain another benefit, corresponding to that, from His resurrection (Rom 6:4, 5; Col 3:1, 2, 5). A third benefit we derive from His resurrection is, as it were, a pledge to assure us of our own resurrection (1 Cor 15).

14. His *resurrection* is properly followed, in the Creed, by His *ascension to heaven*, which was the real commencement of His reign (Eph 4:10). By being received up into heaven, He removed His corporeal presence from our view; not that He might no longer be present with the faithful who were still in a state of pilgrimage on earth, but that He might govern both heaven and earth by a more efficacious energy. As His body was elevated above all heavens, so His power and energy have been diffused and extended beyond all the limits of heaven and earth (Matt 28:20).

15. After His ascension, it is immediately added that *He is seated at the right hand of the Father*. This is a similitude borrowed from princes, who have their assistants, to whom they depute the exercise of government. So Christ, by whose medium God chooses to reign, is said to have been received to His right hand, as though it were said, that He had been inaugurated in the government of heaven and earth, till He descends to

judgment (Eph 1:20–22). All things, celestial and terrestrial, are committed to His government. “Sitting” refers not to posture of His body, but to the majesty of His dominion, presiding at the tribunal of heaven.

16. By faith, we also “sit together” with Him, “in heavenly places” (Eph 2:6). We not only hope for heaven, but already possess it in our Head. Faith knows that His residence with His Father conduces greatly to our advantage, for there He continually appears before the Father as our advocate and intercessor (Rom 8:34), attracting the eyes of the Father to His righteousness, so as to avert them from our sins. He reconciles Him to us and, by His intercession, makes a way of access to His throne (Heb 4:16).

In the third place, faith has an apprehension of His power, in which consists our strength, wealth and triumph over hell. He sits on high that He may sanctify us by His Spirit, and adorn His Church with a variety of graces, and defend it by His protection from every calamity. And, the Father has conferred on Him this power, till He completes the last act by coming to judge the living and the dead.

17. Faith is called to mediate on that visible presence which He will manifest at the last day, for He will descend in the same visible form in which He was seen to ascend (Acts 1:11). He will appear with the splendour of immortality (Matt 24:30), and with a host of angels (Matt 25:31; 1 Thess 4:16, 17). We are commanded to expect Him as our Redeemer at the last day, when He will separate the sheep from the goats; and none will escape His judgment. From the remote corners of the world, they will hear the sound of the trumpet, both the living and the dead. In a moment, as far as the living are concerned, their mortal life will be extinguished and absorbed and will be transformed into a nature entirely new. “The dead in Christ shall rise first: Then they which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air” (1 Thess 4:16, 17).

18. It is a source of peculiar consolation to hear that He will preside at the judgment, who has already destined us to sit in judgment with Him, so far will He be from ascending the tribunal to condemn us (Rom 8:34). It is no inconsiderable security, that we shall stand before no other tribunal than that of our Redeemer, and that He will relieve the consciences of His people from fear concerning the judgment.

Thus far, I have followed the order of the Apostle's Creed, which I believe to be universally received as a confession of faith from the days of the Apostles. What we ought to regard principally, however, is that it comprehends a complete account of our faith in a concise and distinct order, and that everything it contains is confirmed by Scripture.

19. In conclusion, we see that the whole of our salvation, and all the branches of it, are comprehended in Christ. If we seek salvation, we are taught by His name JESUS, that it is in Him. If we seek any other gifts of the Spirit, they are to be found in His unction; strength, in His dominion; purity, in His conception; redemption, in His passion; absolution, in His condemnation; remission of the curse, in His cross; satisfaction, in His sacrifice; purification, in His blood; reconciliation, in His descent into hell; mortification of the flesh, in His sepulchre; newness of life and immortality, in His resurrection; inheritance of the celestial kingdom, in His entrance into heaven; protection, security, abundance and enjoyment of all blessings, in His kingdom; a fearless expectation of the judgment, in the judicial authority committed to Him.

Chapter XVII

Christ Truly and Properly Said to Have Merited the Grace of God and Salvation for Us

1. We must devote an additional Chapter to the solution of this problem. For there are some men who, though they confess that Christ obtained salvation for us, yet cannot bear the word *merit*. These maintain that Christ is only the instrument, and not the Author of grace.

Now, when we speak of the merit of Christ, we do not consider Him as the origin of it, but we ascend to the ordination of God, which is the first cause. Because it was of His mere good pleasure, that the Father appointed Him Mediator to procure salvation for us. But, the merit of Christ and the mercy of God are not antithetical, but synthetical. So, the justification of men is both from God's mercy and through the merit of Christ. But, to our works are directly and equally opposed the gratuitous favour of God and the obedience of Christ.

2. The distinction between God's mercy and Christ's merit is gathered from numerous passages of Scripture. For example, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish" (John 3:16). Here, we see that the love of God holds the first place, is the supreme or original cause, and that faith in Christ follows as the second cause. If it be objected, that Christ is only the formal cause, this diminishes His merit more than words quoted will bear. For, if we obtain righteousness by a faith which relies on Him, it is in Him we are to seek the cause of our Salvation. Another passage teaching the same truth is 1 John 4:10, "not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." These words clearly demonstrate, that to remove every obstacle in the way of His love towards us, God appointed a method of reconciliation in Christ. Other passages of Scripture are 1 John 2:2; Colossians 1:19, 20; 2 Corinthians 5:19, 21; Ephesians 1:6; 2:16. There is the love of God, but also the grace of Christ, indeed, the grace that is His, and which proceeds from Him. The two are complementary to each other.

3. The grace Christ has merited from the Father for us is obtained by His obedience. If it is Christ who has appeased God by His obedience;

if He has suffered, the just for the unjust, then Salvation has been obtained by His righteousness, which is the same as being merited.

4. Now, when we say that grace is procured for us by the merit of Christ, we intend that we have been purified by His blood, and that His death was an expiation for sins (1 John 1:7). The blood of Christ was the price of satisfaction to the justice of God (Matt 26:28, John 1:29). The ancient sacrifices, whereby Moses declared atonement was made for sin, give us a fine exhibition of the power and efficacy of the death of Christ. The author of Hebrews copiously discusses the subject of Christ's blood and stresses that it is by His blood that He obtained our redemption (Heb 9:12).

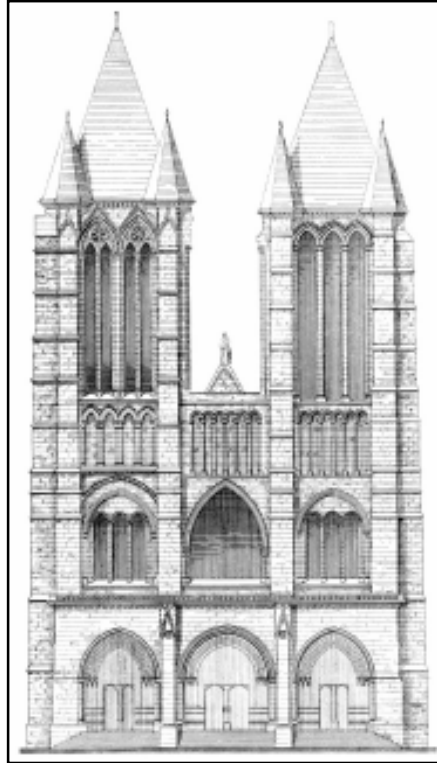
5. Furthermore, the Apostles declare that Christ paid a price to redeem us: "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood" (Rom 3:24, 25; 1 Pet 1:18, 19; 1 Cor 6:20; 1 Tim 2:5, 6; Col 1:14; 2:14). Through the "redemption through His blood," which is equated with "forgiveness of sins" (Col 1:14), we are justified or acquitted before God, because that blood is a complete satisfaction for us.

Christ also merited favour for us by keeping the law, and He reconciles us to God as though we were complete observers of the law ourselves (Gal 2:21; Lev 18:5; Acts 13:39; Gal 4:4, 5; Rom 4:5).

6. For Lombard and the schoolmen to inquire, whether Christ merited for Himself, is foolish curiosity. What necessity was there for the only begotten Son of God to make any new acquisition for Himself? For it is said, not that the Father consulted the benefit of the Son in His merits, but that He "delivered him up" to death, and "spared not his own Son" (Rom 8:32), because He loved the world (John 3:16). By transferring the benefit of His sanctity to others, He declares that He makes no acquisition for Himself. It is highly worthy of our observation that, in order to devote Himself wholly to our salvation, Christ, in a manner, forgot Himself.

*The Notre Dame
Cathedral at Noyon,
Picardy, Northern
France. John Calvin
was born on July 10,
1509 at Noyon.*

*(Pictures by courtesy of
Alison Stones.)*





Left: Rue de Calvin, Geneva: The street where Calvin lived from 1543–1564.



Right: Plaque marking the place where Calvin lived on Rue de Calvin.

(Pictures by courtesy of Rev Reijer Grisnigt, the Netherlands.)



The City of Geneva, Switzerland: Calvin was persuaded by Farel to remain here in 1536.



St. Peter Cathedral, Geneva: The Church where Calvin refused the Lord's Supper to the Libertines.

(Pictures by courtesy of Rev Reijer Grisnigt, the Netherlands.)



Top: The Chapel where Calvin taught his students, among whom was John Knox, the Reformer of Scotland.



Right: Calvin's chair inside the Chapel.

(Pictures by courtesy of Rev Reijer Grisnigt, the Netherlands.)



The Academy of Geneva, founded by Calvin in 1559. Today, it is known as the University of Geneva.



*The Central Panel of the Monument to the Reformation at Geneva.
Left to right: Farel, Calvin, Beza and Knox.*

(Pictures by courtesy of Rev Reijer Grisnigt, the Netherlands.)



John Calvin's grave in the Plain-Palais cemetery on the outskirts of Geneva. He died on May 27, 1564.



The simple gravestone of Calvin's grave, marked with his initials, 'J.C.' "He being dead, yet speaketh" (Heb 11:4).

(Pictures by courtesy of Rev Reijer Grisnigt, the Netherlands.)

BOOK III

Book III

On the Manner of Receiving the Grace of Christ, the Benefits Which We Derive from It, and the Effects Which Follow It

CONTENTS

The two former books relate to God the Creator and Redeemer. This treats of God the Sanctifier, or of the operations of the Holy Spirit towards our salvation, being an accurate exposition of the third part of the Apostles' Creed.

The principal topics of this are seven, relating chiefly to one object, the doctrine of faith.

First, Since our enjoyment of Christ and all his benefits depends on the secret and special operation of the Holy Spirit, it discusses this operation, which is the foundation of faith, of newness of life, and of all holy exercises—Chapter I.

Secondly, Faith being as it were the hand by which we embrace Christ the Redeemer, as offered to us by the Holy Spirit, it next adds a complete description of faith—Chapter II.

Thirdly, To improve our knowledge of this salutary faith, it proceeds to show the effects which necessarily result from it; and contends that true penitence is always the consequence of true faith. But first it proposes the doctrine of repentance in general—Chapter III; and then treats of Popish penance and its constituent parts—Chapter IV—of indulgences and purgatorial fire—Chapter V. But institutes a particular discussion of the two branches of true penitence, the mortification of the flesh, and the vivification of the spirit, or the life of a Christian, which is excellently described—Chapters VI, VII, VIII, IX, X.

Fourthly, In order to a clearer display of the advantages and consequences of this faith, it first treats of justification by faith—Chapter XI—then explains the questions which arise from it—Chapters XII, XIII, XIV, XV, XVI, XVII, XVIII—and, lastly, proceeds to a dissertation on Christian liberty, which is an appendage to justification—Chapter XIX.

Fifthly, Next follows prayer, the principal exercise of faith, and the medium or instrument by which we daily receive blessings from God—Chapter XX.

Sixthly, But since the communication of Christ offered in the Gospel is not embraced by men in general, but only by those whom the Lord has favoured with the efficacy and peculiar grace of his Spirit, it obviates any supposition of absurdity, by subjoining a necessary and appropriate dissertation on the doctrine of Divine election—Chapters XXI, XXII, XXIII, XXIV.

Lastly, Since we are liable to various difficulties and troubles while exercised in the severe warfare which always attends the life of a Christian, it contends that this may be alleviated by meditating on the final resurrection; and therefore adds a discourse on that subject—Chapter XXV.

Chapter I

What Is Declared Concerning Christ Rendered Profitable to Us by the Secret Operation of the Spirit

1. What Christ has received from His Father is nothing to us, till we are united to Him. Though it is true that we obtain this by faith, we see that the communication of Christ, offered in the Gospel, is not embraced by all. This leads us to inquire into the secret energy of the Holy Spirit, by which we are introduced to the enjoyment of Christ and all His benefits.

In 1 John 5:6, it is declared that Christ came by water and blood that the Spirit may testify concerning Him. It is the Spirit that seals the ablution and sacrifice of Christ. For which reason Peter also says, that believers are “elect . . . through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ” (1 Pet 1:2). This passage suggests to us, that our souls are purified by the secret ablution of the Spirit, that the effusion of that sacred blood may not be in vain. For the same reason also Paul, when speaking of purification and justification, says, we enjoy both “in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Cor 6:11). The sum of all is this—that the Holy Spirit is the bond by which Christ efficaciously unites us to Himself.

2. For a further confirmation of this point, we must remember that Christ was endued with the Holy Spirit in a peculiar manner, and the Spirit is called “the spirit of holiness” (Rom 1:4), because He is the seed and root of a heavenly life within us.

Now the prophets prophesied that there would be coming a more exuberant effusion of the Spirit upon all flesh. The most remarkable passage is that of Joel: “I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh . . . in those days” (Joel 2:28, 29). Here, though the prophet seems to restrict the gifts of the Spirit to the exercise of the prophetic function, yet he signifies, in a figurative way, that God, by the illumination of His Spirit, will make those His disciples, who before were total strangers to the heavenly doctrine.

The Spirit is sometimes called the Spirit of the Father, and sometimes the Spirit of the Son. “Ye [says Paul] are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit,

if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his” (Rom 8:9). It must also be remarked that He is called the Spirit of Christ, not only because the eternal Word of God is united with the same Spirit as the Father, but also with respect to His character of Mediator. For, if he had not been endued with this power, His advent to us would have been altogether in vain. In which sense He is called “the second man [Adam] . . . the Lord from heaven,” “a quickening spirit” (1 Cor 15:47, 45). Thus in the Apostolic benediction is pronounced, not only “the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God,” but also “the communion of the Holy Ghost” (2 Cor 13:14). As he says in another place, “the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us” (Rom 5:5).

3. And here it is proper to notice the titles by which the Scripture distinguishes the Spirit, where it treats of the commencement, progress and completion of our salvation: First, he is called the “Spirit of adoption” (Rom 8:15), because He witnesses to us the gratuitous benevolence of God, with which God the Father has embraced us in His only begotten Son, that He might be a father to us; and animates us to pray “Abba, Father.” For the same reason, He is said to be “the earnest” and “seal” of our inheritance, making us certain of our salvation (2 Cor 1:22, Eph 1:13, 14). Whence He is said to be “life because of righteousness” (Rom 8:10); since, by His secret showers, He makes us fertile in producing fruits of righteousness. The Spirit is frequently called “water,” as Isaiah says, “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters” (Isa 55:1). Again Isaiah 44:3, “I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground.” To which corresponds Christ’s invitation, “If any man thirst, let him come unto me” (John 7:37; 4:14).

In Ezekiel, the cleansing energy of the Spirit is stressed, where the Lord promises to “sprinkle clean water” on His people to “cleanse” them from their impurities (Ezekiel 36:25). He is “unction” because He restores to life those whom He has anointed with the oil of His grace (1 John 2:20). He is called “fire” (Luke 3:16), because He burns up the vices of our concupiscence, and inflames our hearts with the love of God. He is described as “fountain,” whence we receive all the emanations of heavenly riches; and as the “hand of God,” by which He exerts His power, directing us to do good. It has been clearly stated, that till our minds are

fixed on the Spirit, Christ remains of no value to us. We know also that He benefits none but those who have Him for their “head” (Eph 4:15) and “firstborn among many brethren” (Rom 8:29), and who have “put on Christ” (Gal 3:27). This union alone, as also in sacred marriage, renders His advent in the character of a Saviour available to us. But it is only by His Spirit that He unites Himself with us.

4. But faith, being His principal work, is the object principally referred to in the most frequent expressions of His power and operation. Faith is the only medium by which He leads us into the light of the Gospel (John 1:12, 13). Faith is the supernatural gift of the Spirit to the otherwise unbelieving. Faith proceeds only from the Spirit as Paul tells the Thessalonians, that “God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth” (2 Thess 2:13).

Therefore Christ promised to send to His disciples, “the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive” (John 14:17). He ascribes to the Spirit the office of suggesting to their minds all the oral instructions which he had given them. It is by the Spirit’s illumination that our mental eyes are able to behold Him. The ministry of the Spirit is also highly commended by Paul (2 Cor 3:6).

As we have stated, complete salvation is found in the person of Christ. To make us partakers of this salvation, Christ “baptise[s]” us “with the Holy Ghost and with fire” (Luke 3:16), enlightening us unto the faith of the Gospel, regenerating us so that we become new creatures, and purging us from profane impurities, consecrates us as holy temples to God.

Chapter II

Faith Defined, And Its Properties Described

1. A great part of the world, when they hear the word **faith**, conceive it to be nothing more than a common assent to the evangelical history. And even those, who say God is the object of faith, tend to mislead miserable souls through their vain speculations. It is true, that faith relates to the one God; but there must be added a knowledge of Jesus Christ, whom He has sent. God Himself would be altogether concealed from us, if we were not illuminated by the brightness of Christ. Paul, when he speaks of faith in God, does not contradict his frequent inculcation of faith in Christ; and Peter most suitably connects them together, when he says, “by Him [we] do believe in God” (1 Pet 1:21).

2. The evil of concealing Christ must be attributed to the schoolmen. These schoolmen have not only concealed Christ, but fabricated the notion of implicit faith, that is, a blind faith of submitting their understanding to the Church. Implicit faith breeds ignorance and eradicates knowledge. But true faith is based on knowledge and understanding, yea, even explicit knowledge of the Divine goodness (Rom 10:10).

3. Faith consists in a knowledge of God and of Christ (John 17:3), not in reverence for the Church. But the ignorant, without discrimination, eagerly embrace as from God everything obtruded upon them under the name of the Church. It is even asserted, that persons are possessed of true faith, though they indulged in their own ignorance, provided they assent to the authority and judgment of the Church.

4. We grant that our faith is implicit, not only because many things are yet hidden from our view, but because our knowledge of everything is very imperfect. Thus Paul exhorts the faithful, if they differ from each other on any subject, to wait for further revelation (Phil 3:15). With the barrier of imperfect knowledge, God restrains us within the bounds of modesty, that even the most learned teacher may be ready to learn. We may observe eminent examples of this implicit faith in the disciples of Christ, before they were fully enlightened. For example, the women who went to embalm Jesus—their faith was in darkness until they were

astonished by the Risen Saviour. Whence they are said to have believed at length, when they saw the words of Christ verified by facts—not that their faith then commenced, but the seed of faith, which had been latent, then shot forth with additional vigour.

5. Implicit faith strictly is a preparation for faith. The nobleman, who believed the promise of Christ concerning the healing of his son, when he returned home, believed again (John 4:50–53). John gives us a similar example in the Samaritans, who believed the woman’s report, so as to run to Christ; but who, after having heard Him, said, “Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world” (John 4:42).

6. As it is the Gospel that guides us to Christ, faith therefore cannot be divorced from doctrine. Paul, connecting the two, says, “Ye have not so learned Christ; If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus” (Eph 4:20, 21). Faith has a perpetual relation to the Word, and can no more be separated from it, than the rays from the sun. That the Word is the fountain of faith, is evident from this language of John, “These are written, that ye might believe” (John 20:31).

7. But as the human heart is not excited to faith by every word of God, we must further inquire what part of the Word it is, with which faith is particularly concerned. Our present inquiry is, what faith finds in the Divine Word, upon which to rest its confidence. The answer is a certain knowledge of the Divine benevolence towards us, which, being founded on the truth of the promise in Christ, is both revealed to our minds, and confirmed to our hearts, by the Holy Spirit. Therefore we need a promise of grace, to assure us that He is our propitious Father; and it is upon that alone that we can securely depend. It would be of no avail to us to know the truth of God, if He did not allure us to Himself by His mercy.

8. But before I proceed any further, it is necessary to make some preliminary observations, for the solution of difficulties, which otherwise might prove obstacles in the way of the reader.

As I have mentioned at the outset, the schoolmen maintain faith to be a mere assent with whatever is contained in the Scripture. They also inquire, whether faith, which is formed by the superaddition of a quality,

be the same, or whether it be a new and different faith. They are trifling with faith in this manner. But if they would duly consider Paul's declaration, "with the heart man believeth unto righteousness" (Rom 10:10), they would cease from trifling about this superadded quality. I assert, that the assent, which we give to the Divine Word, which we call faith, is from the heart rather than from the head. For which reason it is called the "obedience to the faith" (Rom 1:5). Therefore it is an absurdity to say, that faith is formed by the addition of a pious affection to an assent of the mind; when in fact assent consists in a pious affection. But here is another argument, and a plainer one: Since faith accepts Christ as He is offered by the Father, and He is offered, not only for righteousness and remission of sins, but also for sanctification; it is certain no man can know Him aright, unless he receives the sanctification of the Spirit. Faith consists in a knowledge of Christ. Christ cannot be known without the sanctification of His Spirit. Consequently, faith is absolutely inseparable from pious affection.

9. Although the word "faith" is used in various senses, such as is used by Paul in 1 Corinthians 12 to denote powers (*dunamis*, *potestates*, *virtutes*), that is, a power in working miracles; and we allow that there are even various kinds of faith, yet we recognise only one faith in the pious, according to the Scripture. Many men certainly believe there is a God. They admit the evangelical history and the other parts of Scripture to be true. There are some who even esteem the Word of God as an undoubted revelation from heaven, and are in some measure affected by its denunciations and promises. To such persons, faith is attributed, but such faith is a mere shadow.

10. Such a shadowy faith is unworthy of the name of faith! Take the case of Simon Magus (Acts 8:13, 18, 19). He is said to have believed, who, nevertheless, just after, betrays his unbelief. His sort of faith is only of the lips, and not of the heart. Being overcome with the majesty of the Gospel, he did exercise a kind of faith, so as to profess himself a follower of Christ. But he is like those persons in the Gospel of Luke, who are said to believe for a time, in whom the seed of the Word is prematurely choked before it fructifies. This sort of faith is counterfeit faith, for it penetrates not the heart. Though it appears to have shot forth roots, yet there is no life in it.

11. Faith is also attributed to the reprobate; which properly belongs to the elect. For, the reprobate are sometimes affected with emotions very similar to those of the elect. Wherefore, it is said that a taste of heavenly gifts is ascribed to them by the Apostle, and a temporary faith by Christ (Heb 6:4). Nevertheless, there is a difference between the faith of the reprobate and that of the elect. It is in that confidence, so as boldly to cry “Abba, Father” (Gal 4:6). Therefore, as God regenerates forever the elect alone with incorruptible seed, so He firmly seals within them the grace of adoption. On the other hand, whereas the reprobate have received only an inferior operation of the Spirit, these have only a confused perception of grace, so that they embrace the shadow rather than the substance. The reprobate are not regenerated, though God has enlightened their minds; for only to the elect alone, He vouchsafes the living root of faith, that they may persevere to the very end.

12. The reprobate never go so far as to penetrate the secret revelation, which the Scripture confines to the elect. The reprobate are like a tree, not planted deeply enough to shoot forth living roots. In process of time, it withers. Conversely, howsoever diminutive and weak faith may be in the elect, His impression can never be erased from their hearts.

An example of the reprobate is Saul, who for a time had a pious disposition to love God, because of the paternal kindness he received. But as the paternal love is not radically fixed in the reprobate, so they love God not as children, but are influenced by a mercenary disposition.

Then, there are those who think they have faith, who are carried away with a sudden zeal, but who deceive themselves. Of these, it is said that “Jesus did not commit himself,” notwithstanding that they believed in Him, “because he knew all men, . . . for he knew what was in man” (John 2:24, 25). Thus, of them who have not the living root, Christ, in Matthew 15:13, says, “Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.”

13. Frequently, faith means purity of doctrine, as required by Paul, that deacons must hold “the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience” (1 Tim 3:9). Timothy, says Paul, had been “nourished up in the words of faith” (1 Tim 4:6), and exhorted to avoid “profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called: Which some professing have erred concerning the faith” (1 Tim 6:20, 21). Thus, also, when he directs

Titus, to “rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith” (Titus 1:13); by soundness, he means nothing more than that purity of doctrine.

14. What our mind apprehends by faith far exceeds all understanding. Wherefore Paul beautifully expresses it in these terms: “to comprehend . . . what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge” (Eph 3:18, 19). Therefore, faith is called “knowledge” by John, when he asserts that believers know that they are the sons of God (1 John 3:2). Such knowledge is not taught by any demonstration of reason, but by persuasion of the truth of God.

15. Faith relates to a full and fixed certainty, such as is obtained respecting things that have been tried and proved; in contrast with the unbelief that is so deeply rooted in our hearts. Hence our unhappy anxiety, doubting the promises of God. But “full assurance” (*plerophorias*) is always attributed to faith in the Scripture; which places the goodness of God, that is clearly revealed to us beyond all doubt. Hence the Apostle deduces from faith confidence, and from confidence boldness: “In whom [Christ] we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him” (Eph 3:12).

16. Faith is confidence, which is called “peace” in another place (Rom 5:1). It is a security, which makes the conscience calm and serene before the Divine tribunal. In short, no man is truly a believer, unless he be firmly persuaded, that God is a benevolent Father to him, and feels an undoubted expectation of salvation. He is no believer, I say, who does not rely on the security of his salvation, and confidently triumphs over the devil and death (Rom 8:38).

17. But some will object, that the experience of believers is far from this; for, while recognising God’s grace towards them, they are often disturbed with inquietude, and sometimes by the most distressing terrors. Now, when we say, that faith ought to be certain and secure, we conceive not of a certainty attended with no doubt, or of a security interrupted by no anxiety. We rather affirm, that believers have a perpetual conflict with their own diffidence, and are far from placing their consciences in a placid calm, never disturbed by any storms. Yet, on the other hand, we deny they may be so afflicted, that they will fall and depart from that certain

confidence which they have conceived in the Divine mercy. David's life illustrates our point. In the Psalms, we read of his many complaints; but when he rebukes his soul for turbulent emotions, is he not angry with his own unbelief (Ps 42:5)? But faith sustains the heart of the pious, and David ceases not to aspire to God, as he concludes at the end of his spiritual struggles, "Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD" (Ps 27:14).

18. To explain these tensions, it is necessary to go back to that division of the flesh and the spirit. The pious heart perceives a division in itself, being partly distressed with sorrow through a sense of its own calamity; partly relying on the promise of the Gospel, and partly trembling at the evidence of its own iniquity. However, from all these conflicts, faith emerges victorious.

19. Summing up, faith is progressive. A mind, illuminated by the knowledge of God, is at first involved in much ignorance, which is removed by slow degrees. As a man who is confined in a prison, into which the sun shines only partially through a small window, is deprived of a full view of the sun while clearly perceiving its splendour; so we, who are bound with terrestrial fetters, are nevertheless illuminated by the light of God, shining ever so feebly to discover His mercy.

20. By the words, "for we know in part . . . and see through a glass darkly" (1 Cor 13:9, 12), the Apostle implies, not only that faith remains imperfect as long as we groan under the burden of the flesh, but that an imperfection makes it necessary for us unremittingly to acquire further knowledge. On the other hand, the same Apostle shows what a sure and certain experience, of itself, even the smallest particle of faith gives us, when he says, "We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image" (2 Cor 3:18). However, since our hearts are inclined to unbelief, and our conscience oppressed by sin, we must find a means of defence from all these.

21. To sustain these attacks, faith arms and defends itself with the Word of God. Faith tells us, that God is merciful even when He afflicts, because chastisement proceeds rather from love than from wrath. Faith is never eradicated from a pious heart, but continues firmly fixed, however it may be shaken. Thus Job asserts, though God should slay him, he would

continue to trust in Him (Job 13:15). Faith is a shield that keeps David from being assailed by hostile spiritual weapons, “though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me” (Ps 23:4).

22. There is another species of fear and trembling that rather establishes our faith. It is the fear of the Lord. Thus when the Apostle teaches on the Divine vengeance on the impious, and alarms the fears of the Corinthians, lest they should fall in the same calamities (1 Cor 10:11), he in no respect weakens their confidence, but rather shakes off the indolence of the flesh.

23. Moreover, when he teaches us to “work out [our] own salvation with fear and trembling” (Phil 2:12), he wants us to accustom ourselves, with great self-humiliation, to look up to the power of the Lord. It is only in the diffidence of ourselves, that we are aroused to repose all confidence in the Lord. Solomon says, “Happy is the man that feareth alway: but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief” (Prov 28:14). He intends that fear will render us more cautious. How can fear and faith, it will be asked, both reside in the same mind? Our answer is: Piety produces a reverence of God, but also the sweetness of grace fills a man, that is dejected in himself, with fear and admiration; causing him to depend upon God, and humbly submit to His power.

24. Some semi-Papists erroneously teach a faith that fluctuates between hope and despair, a faith which rather depends on man, and not on Christ. If you consider Christ (say they), salvation is certain; if you return to yourself, condemnation is certain. They consider Christ as standing apart from us, and not as dwelling in us. Thus I retort to their argument: If you consider yourself, condemnation is certain; but since Christ, with all His benefits, is communicated to you, so that all He has becomes yours, and you become a member of Him, His righteousness covers your sins. His salvation supersedes your condemnation. He interposes with His merit, that your unworthiness may not appear in the Divine presence. Christ, therefore, is not outside us, but dwells within us; and by a certain wonderful communion coalesces daily more and more into one body with us. This being the case, though the light of our faith is sometimes smothered in the thick gloom of temptation, it never discontinues its efforts in seeking God.

25. Bernard reasons in a similar manner, when he discusses this subject, that he discovers in the soul two opposite characters: “If I view it as it is in itself and of itself . . . it is reduced to nothing. What need is there at present to enumerate all its miseries, how it is loaded with sins, enveloped in darkness, entangled with allurements, inflamed with inordinate desires, subject to passions, filled with illusions, always prone to evil, inclined to every vice, and finally full of ignominy and confusion? . . . Man is undoubtedly become like vanity; man is reduced to nothing; man is nothing. Yet how is he entirely nothing, whom God magnifies? How is he nothing, on whom the heart of God is fixed? . . . Thou calledst things which are not, as though they were; and therefore they are not, because thou calledst things which are not; yet they are, because thou calledst them. For though they are not, with reference to themselves, yet with thee they are; according to this expression of Paul: ‘Not of works, but of Him that calleth’ (Rom 9:11).”

26. Coming back to the fear of the Lord, which is sometimes called “the beginning of wisdom” (Ps 111:10), we see that it proceeds from a twofold apprehension of Him. For God requires the reverence of a Father and of a Master. “A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear?” (Mal 1:6). Let our godly fear therefore be a reverence mingled with this honour and fear.

27. It is to be noted, moreover, that there is a great difference between the godly and filial fear of believers and the servile fear of unbelievers. The impious fear God because they know Him to be armed with vindictive power, and tremble with horror at hearing of His wrath. They fear His wrath, because they apprehend it to be impending over them. But the faithful fear rather His displeasure than His punishment.

28. While faith, having apprehended the love of God, has promises for the present life, and a solid assurance of all blessings; its principal security consists in an expectation of the future life, which is placed beyond all doubt by the Word of God.

29. The foundation of faith is God’s gratuitous promise; for on that faith properly rests; it is not a conditional promise which sends us back to our own works. Therefore, if we wish our faith not to tremble and waver,

we must support it with the promise of salvation offered us by the Lord. Wherefore the Apostle denominates the Gospel “the word of faith” (Rom 10:8), a character which he denies both to the precepts and the promises of the law.

30. Faith is saving, when by it we are ingrafted into the body of Christ. Saving faith rests on the Divine mercy; but if a man merely believes only in the justice of the Divine commands and the truth of divine threatenings, must he therefore be called a believer?

31. There can be no faith without the illumination by Divine grace. Yet, those who are so illuminated, like Sarah and Rebecca, often have their faith mixed with errors. But though our imbecility obscures faith, yet it does not extinguish it. We should be reminded to attend to the declarations of God, for faith decays unless it is supported by the Word.

32. When any promise of God is presented us, our eyes must be directed to Christ, for Paul says that we are “accepted in the beloved” (Eph 1:6). It must therefore be communicated to us by His mediation (Rom 8:3). Wherefore the Apostle, in another place, calls Him “our peace” (Eph 2:14). Paul is correct in stating that all the promises of God are confirmed and accomplished in Him (Rom 15:8).

33. Faith is far superior to human intelligence. It comes from the illumination of the Holy Spirit. Faith, thus given by God, has a twofold aspect. It enlightens the mind to understand the truth of God, and establishes the heart in it. And the Holy Spirit not only originates faith, but increases it by degrees, till He conducts us by it all the way to heaven (2 Tim 1:14).

34. Therefore, as we can never come to Christ, unless we are drawn by the Spirit of God, so when we are drawn, we are raised both in mind and in heart above the reach of our own understanding. For, illuminated by Him, the soul receives, as it were, new eyes. The human intellect, irradiated by the light of the Holy Spirit, then begins to relish those things that pertain to the Kingdom of God. Even the Apostles, though taught by the Divine mouth, must wait for the coming of the Spirit, to instil in their minds the doctrine which they had heard with their ears.

35. Faith, which is possessed not by nature, but which is given us by the Spirit, is called by Paul the “spirit of faith” (2 Cor 4:13). In 2

Thessalonians 1:11, where faith is called “the work of faith,” he denies it to be the effect of human exertion. When he tells the Corinthians, that faith stands “not . . . in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God” (1 Cor 2:5), he speaks indeed of external miracles; but because the reprobate have no eyes to behold Him, he comprehends also the inward seal which he elsewhere mentions. Now, Christ, when he illuminates us with faith by the power of His Spirit, at the same time ingrafts us into His body, that we may become partakers of all His benefits.

36. It next remains, that what the mind has imbibed, be transfused into the heart. For the Word of God is not received by faith, if it floats on the surface of the brain. It needs to take deep root in the heart.

It is in the heart that the Holy Spirit acts, as a seal, to seal those promises, previously impressed in our minds. Says the Apostle, “After that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance” (Eph 1:13). To the Corinthians, he says, “He which . . . hath anointed us, is God; Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts” (2 Cor 1:21, 22).

37. I have earlier observed, that the faith of the pious, as experience also tells us, is often agitated by various doubts. But whatever assaults the minds of the pious may sustain, they either emerge from the gulf of temptation, or remain firm in their station. Faith is supported by this assurance, which is expressed such, as by the Psalmist, “I laid me down and slept; I awaked; for the LORD sustained me” (Ps 3:5). The Apostle to the Hebrews calls this assurance “patience” (Heb 10:36).

38. On the other hand, we have the pernicious dogma of the schoolmen, who make faith a conjecture depending on our works. Doubtless, if we are to determine by our works in what way the Lord is affected to us, I admit we cannot attain even to a slight conjecture. But since faith is founded on His unconditional promise, and not dependent on how pure our life is, there should be no ambiguity or conjecture in faith.

39. Further evidence of faith, as a certainty, and not a conjecture, is reflected in the Apostle’s exhortation to the Corinthians, “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?” (2 Cor 13:5). John says, “We know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us” (1 John 3:24).

40. Not satisfied with one attempt to destroy the stability of our faith, the schoolmen assail it from this angle: they argue, that though we may form a judgment as to God's favour to us, from our present state of righteousness, we are utterly ignorant of what may be our fate tomorrow. The knowledge of the final perseverance of saints remains in suspense. But Paul expresses a very different opinion: "I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom 8:38).

41. Faith, according to the Apostle to the Hebrews, is "the substance (*hypostasis*) of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb 11:1). By this word, *hypostasis*, he means to say that faith is a prop, as it were, on which the pious mind rests. Faith is a secure possession of those things which are promised by God. Faith is the evidence of things not apparent, the vision of things not seen, the perspicuity of things obscure, the presence of things absent, the demonstration of things concealed.

42. Faith thus produces hope. The want of hope would prove us to be utterly destitute of faith. Hope is no other than an expectation of those things which faith has believed to be truly promised by God. Thus faith believes the veracity of God, hope expects the manifestation of it in due time. Faith believes Him to be our Father, hope expects Him always to act towards us in this character. Faith believes that eternal life is given to us, hope expects it one day to be revealed. Faith is the foundation on which hope rests, hope nourishes and sustains faith. Finally, hope by continually renewing and restoring faith, causes it frequently to persevere with more vigour than hope itself (Rom 8:24).

43. On account of this union and affinity, Scripture sometimes uses the words faith and hope without any distinction (1 Pet 1:5). Sometimes they are joined together, as in a passage in the same Epistle, "that your faith and hope might be in God" (1 Pet 1:21). It is absurd, therefore, for Peter Lombard to lay a twofold foundation for hope—God's grace plus the merit of works. Hope can have no other object than faith; and the only object of faith, we have clearly stated to be the mercy of God.

Chapter III

On Repentance

1. Though we have shown how faith possesses Christ, and how by means of faith we enjoy His benefits, yet the subject would still be left in obscurity, unless we describe the effects which we experience. Faith must lead us to repentance.

2. The argument, that repentance rather goes before faith, is based on the preaching of Christ and John the Baptist, wherein they first exhort the people to repentance; and that the Apostles were commanded thus to preach (Acts 20:21).

Yet, when we speak of faith as the origin of repentance, we dream not of any space of time which it employs in producing it. Those who prescribe to their young converts certain days, to work out repentance before they could be admitted to the communion of evangelical grace, have erred. Anabaptists and Jesuits prescribe such a period for repentance which a Christian ought to extend throughout his whole life. These people also err in regarding repentance, merely as a product of terrors of conscience, without first having tasted a knowledge of grace. We say that a man cannot devote himself to repentance, unless he knows himself to be of God; and no man can know he is of God, until he has first received His grace.

3. Concerning repentance, some learned ancients have said that it consists of two parts—mortification and vivification. Mortification they explain to be the sorrow of the mind, and the terror experienced from a knowledge of sin and a sense of Divine judgment. This first part of repentance is also called contrition. Vivification they explain to be the consolation which is produced by faith; which contemplates the goodness of God, and the mercy and salvation bestowed through Christ. It is a feeling of re-invigoration, a recovery of courage. I cannot fully coincide with such an explanation of vivification, which should rather signify an ardent desire to live a holy life.

4. While there are those who see repentance as consisting of two parts, there are others who teach two kinds of repentance. One kind of repentance is called Legal, and the other Evangelical.

By Legal is meant that condition in a sinner, wounded by sin and harassed by fear of Divine wrath, in which he is deeply distressed, but has no power to extricate himself. Examples of such are Cain, Saul and Judas.

Evangelical repentance is discovered in all who have been distressed by a sense of sin in themselves, but have been raised from their depression, and re-invigorated by a confidence in the Divine mercy, and converted to the Lord. Examples of such are found in Hezekiah, the Ninevites and David.

5. Though these observations are true, the term *repentance*, as far as I can ascertain from Scripture, must have a different acceptation. Repentance cannot exist without faith. Now though these two cannot be separated, they ought to be distinguished; and while they are indissolubly united, they are connected and not confounded. I am also well aware, that under the term *repentance* is comprehended a complete conversion to God. The Hebrew word for repentance denotes conversion or return. The Greek word signifies a change of mind. Repentance itself corresponds very well with both etymologies, for it comprehends these two things—that, forsaking ourselves, we should turn to God, and laying aside our old mind, we should assume a new one.

6. But before we proceed further, let us explain the definition we have given, in which there are three points. In the first place, when we call repentance “a conversion of the life to God,” we require a transformation, not only of the external actions, but in the soul itself (Ezek 18:31). The prophets speak of the circumcision of the heart, and Jeremiah speaks more clearly, “If thou wilt return, O Israel, saith the LORD, return unto me: . . . Break up your fallow ground, and sow not among thorns. Circumcise yourselves to the LORD, and take away the foreskins of your heart” (Jer 4:1, 3, 4).

7. In the second place, we represented repentance as proceeding from a serious fear of God, a fear of the divine judgment. The fear of judgment should give man no interval of rest, but perpetually stimulates him to a new course of life, that he may be able to appear with security at judgment (Jer 4:4; Acts 17:30, 31).

Godly sorrow is, therefore, the cause of repentance. Godly sorrow is not only dread of punishment, but abhorrence of sin itself, from a

knowledge that it is displeasing to God. The fear of God is called the beginning of repentance also for another reason; because though a man's life were perfect in every virtue, if it be not devoted to the worship of God, it may be commended by the world, but in heaven it will be only an abomination. The principal branch of righteousness consists in rendering to God the honour due to Him.

8. In the third place, we need to explain our position on repentance as consisting of two parts—mortification of the flesh and the vivification of our own nature, which is full of wickedness and perverseness. Mortification reminds us, how difficult it is to forget our former nature. We cannot be formed to the fear of God, and learn the rudiments of piety, without being violently slain by the sword of the Spirit.

9. Now if we truly partake of Christ's death, our old man being crucified by its power, so that the corruption of our former nature loses all its vigour (Rom 6:5, 6); and we are partakers of the resurrection, we are raised by it to a newness of life which corresponds with the righteousness of God. Repentance is therefore equated with regeneration, the end of which is the restoration of the Divine image in us (2 Cor 3:18; Eph 4:23, 24).

Now this restoration is not accomplished in a single moment, or day, or year; but by continual and sometimes tardy advances. The race of repentance runs during our whole life.

10. Thus, the children of God are liberated by regeneration from the servitude of sin; not that they have already obtained the full possession of liberty, and experience no more trouble from the flesh, but there remains in them a perpetual cause of contention to exercise them. And not only to exercise them, but also to make them better acquainted with their own infirmity. All sound writers are agreed, that there still remains in a regenerate man a fountain of evil, continually producing irregular desires, which allure and stimulate him to the commission of sin. Augustine calls this, fountain of evil infirmity, which we, on the contrary, deem to be sin. We maintain, therefore, that sin always exists in the saints till death, because their flesh is the residence of that depravity of concupiscence.

11. But when God is said to "cleanse" His Church (Eph 5:26) from all sin, we refer this phrase to the guilt of sin, than to the existence of sin. It is owing to the mercy of God, that saints are delivered from this guilt,

who would otherwise be justly accounted sinners and guilty because of the continuing existence of sin in their bodies.

12. Sin has caused the natural appetites of God, implanted in us, to become insolent, and to resist the commands of God. Our appetites are therefore so corrupted, that disorder and intemperance are visible in all our actions. In a word, all the desires of men are evil; and they are considered sinful, not as they are natural, but because they are inordinate. And we affirm they are inordinate, because nothing pure or immaculate can proceed from a corrupted and polluted nature. Where Augustine says, “that the law of sin remains in the saints, and that only the guilt is abolished,” he sufficiently indicates that he is not averse to our opinion.

13. Augustine speaks more fully on the continuing existence of sin in the saints, in his second book against Julian, “This law of sin is both abolished in the spiritual regeneration, and continues in the mortal flesh; abolished, since guilt is removed in the sacrament, by which believers are regenerated; but continues, because it produces those desires against which also believers contend.” In his forty-first homily on John, he says even more explicitly, “If in the flesh you serve the law of sin, do what the apostle himself says—‘Let not sin reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof’ (Rom 6:12). He says not, let it not exist; but let it not reign. As long as you live, sin must necessarily exist in your members; let it at least be divested of its kingdom, so that its commands may not be fulfilled.”

14. Some Anabaptists imagine frantically, that the children of God are restored to a state of innocence and are, therefore, no longer obliged to restrain the licentiousness of the flesh. They ought rather merely to follow the leadings of the Spirit, under whose direction it is impossible to err. This is madness and sacrilegious presumption. In Christ, they say, there is no more the distinction in our behaviour between chastity and fornication, sincerity and knavery, truth and falsehood. Dismiss (they say) all vain fear; the Spirit will command you nothing that is evil, provided you securely and intrepidly resign yourself to His direction. But what do the Scriptures teach about the work of the Spirit? Is He not given for our sanctification, to purify us from all our pollutions, and lead us to obey the Divine righteousness? But the Anabaptists, hiding under the Spirit’s direction, would allow an unlimited licence. The truth is that, though we

are purified by His sanctification, we are nevertheless encompassed with numerous vices and great infirmity, as long as we are burdened with the body. Wherefore, being at a great distance from perfection, it behoves us to make continual advances; and strive against vices every day. Now the Apostle's testimony is that he was buffeted by "the messenger of Satan" (2 Cor 12:7, 9), that his strength might be "made perfect in weakness" (Rom 7), in his conflict between the flesh and the Spirit.

15. There are seven things which are connected with repentance according to the Apostle, whether they be causes or effects, or parts of it. These are carefulness, excuse, indignation, fear, vehement desire, zeal, revenge (2 Cor 7:11).

Carefulness, or *solicitude*, is produced by godly sorrow. One who has sinned against God is affected with a serious sense of displeasure, and stimulated to a diligence, that he may completely extricate himself from the snares of the devil.

Excuse, or *self-excuse*, signifies not a defence to escape God's judgment, either by denying his transgressions or extenuating his guilt, but an excuse in deprecation of punishment, an excuse to obtain pardon.

This is followed by *indignation*, in which the sinner laments within himself, expostulates with himself, and is angry with himself, while he recollects his perverseness and ingratitude to God.

The word *fear* denotes the trepidation with which our minds are penetrated, whenever we reflect upon our demerits, and on the terrible severity of Divine wrath against sinners.

Desire denotes the diligence in duty and alacrity of obedience, to which the knowledge of our faults ought to be a most powerful stimulus.

Zeal, which is immediately subjoined to desire, signifies the ardour with which we are inflamed by such thoughts as, "What have I done? Whither had I precipitated myself, if I had not been succoured by the mercy of God?"

The last is *revenge*, or *punishment*. The greater our severity is towards ourselves, so much the stronger hope that God will be merciful. Every soul, who is impressed with a dread of the Divine judgment, must inflict some punishment on himself. Truly pious persons experience what punishments are contained in shame, confusion, lamentation, displeasure

with themselves, which arise from a serious acknowledgement of their transgressions.

On this subject of the emotions connected with repentance, Bernard admonishes, “Sorrow for sin is necessary, if it be not perpetual. I advise you sometimes to quit the anxious and painful recollection of your own ways, and to arise to an agreeable and serene remembrance of the Divine blessings. Let us mingle honey with wormwood, that its salutary bitterness may restore our health.”

16. Now, with regard to the fruits of repentance, they are the duties of piety towards God, and of charity towards men, with purity in our whole life. The fruits of repentance must first come from the internal affection of the heart. Therefore, Joel says, “Rend your heart, and not your garments” (Joel 2:13), while in James it is thus expressed, “cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded” (Jas 4:8).

17. What is said above, by Joel and James, properly belongs to repentance; but weeping and fasting, which some consider to be the principal part of repentance, are rather as circumstances belonging to a particular case.

Whenever the Lord appears to threaten us with any calamity, it is right for the pastor to exhort his people to weeping and fasting; provided it is insisted on the principal point, that they must rend their hearts, and not their garments.

Fasting is not always concomitant of repentance, but is appointed for times of peculiar calamity. But the life of the pious ought at all times be regulated by frugality and sobriety, that it may appear to be a kind of perpetual fast.

18. As I have said above, that repentance is an internal conversion to God than an external profession; to repent “in sackcloth and ashes” (Matt 11:21) is only a public species of confession. It is not necessary, in all cases, publicly to make men witnesses of our repentance. A private confession to God is a branch of true penitence which cannot be omitted. And it is not only necessary to confess our sins from day to day; more grievous sinning should lead us to recall even those long buried in oblivion. We learn this from David’s example. Being ashamed of a recent crime, he examines himself back to the time of his conception, and

acknowledges that even then he was corrupted with carnal impurity (Ps 51:5).

19. Repentance and remission of sins are twin blessings of grace offered in the Gospel. Thus John “came, . . . preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins” (Luke 3:3, Mark 1:4). The Apostles also, after His resurrection, preached that Christ was exalted by God, “to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins” (Acts 5:31). Repentance is preached to show men they are corrupt; and, therefore, it is necessary for them to be born again. Remission of sins is preached, when men are taught that Christ is made unto them “wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption (1 Cor 1:30). Both these blessings, we have previously shown, are apprehended by faith. However, remission of sins should be carefully distinguished from repentance.

20. Wherefore, when God offers remission of sins, He requires repentance on the part of the sinner, even as hatred of sin is the commencement of repentance. It is necessary, if we desire to abide in Christ, to strive for this repentance all the days of our lives (Isa 59:20; 55:6, 7).

Plato says, that the life of a philosopher is a meditation of death. We may assert with more truth, that the life of a Christian is perpetually employed in the mortification of the flesh, till it is utterly destroyed, and the Spirit of God obtains the whole domination in us.

21. That repentance is a peculiar gift of God, from the doctrine just stated, precludes the necessity of a long discourse to prove it. That repentance is “given” is emphasized by Paul to Timothy (2 Tim 2:25, 26); and admired by the Church, as it is stated that “then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life” (Acts 11:18). Repentance is so “given” or “granted” by the efficacious working of the Spirit of regeneration. Hence we are called God’s “workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works” (Eph 2:10).

The Apostle, intending to exclude apostates from all hope of salvation, asserts, that “it is impossible . . . to renew them again unto repentance” (Heb 6:4–6). This passage describes God’s wrath in hardening the reprobate; and his vengeance against wilful apostates who, when they depart from the Gospel, trample on the blood of Christ. Again,

“if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment” (Heb 10:26, 27). The Apostle’s teaching is in harmony with our Lord’s, who affirms that “all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. . . . neither in this world, neither in the world to come” (Matt 12:31, 32).

22. The unpardonable sin of the reprobate against the Holy Ghost is committed by those who, though they are so overpowered with the splendour of the Divine truth that they cannot pretend ignorance, nevertheless, resist with determined malice. This they do merely for the sake of resisting it. Those who ignorantly revile Christ, but at the same time are open to the truth if revealed to them, are pardonable: “whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven Him” (Matt 12:32). But those who are convinced in their conscience, that what they have heard is God’s Word, and yet reject it, they are said to blaspheme against the Spirit. This is so, because they strive against the illumination they receive, which is the particular work of the Holy Spirit. Examples of those who unpardonably resist the Holy Spirit are found in the Pharisees whom the Lord rebukes.

23. The rejection of the illumination of the Holy Spirit, that is unpardonable, is not to be equated with those who transgress the Word of the Lord by a dissolute and licentious life. Those who are unpardonable are those who professedly renounce all His doctrines. These are they who, with deliberate impiety have smothered the light of the Spirit, rejected the taste of the heavenly gift, alienated themselves from the sanctification of the Spirit, and trampled on the Word of God and the powers of the world to come. This they have done “wilfully” (Heb 10:26).

24. There are those who object to the teaching above, as being too severe and inconsistent with the Divine clemency, that pardon should be refused to those who flee to the Lord. This is easily answered. For the Apostle affirms not that pardon is denied to them who turn to the Lord, but he absolutely denies the possibility of their attaining to repentance, who are stricken with eternal blindness by the righteous judgment of God, on account of their wilful rejection and ingratitude. Esau is such an example, who vainly endeavoured with weeping and tears to recover his

lost rights of primogeniture. “Though they shall cry unto me, I will not hearken unto them” (Jer 11:11). Such forms of expression signify neither conversion nor invocation of God, but the anxiety felt by the impious in extreme calamity. “Crying” and “weeping” only signify that dreadful torment, which excruciates the impious with the agonies of despair. The reprobate, in their crying and weeping, are never converted; and while they seem to seek God, at the same time they continue to flee from His approach.

25. But it is inquired, since the Apostle denies that God is appeased by a hypocritical repentance, how wicked Ahab had obtained pardon when he “humbleth himself before me [God],” with sackcloth (1 Kgs 21:27, 29)? I answer, it was nothing to rend his garments, while his heart remained perverse. Yet, we see how God is inclined to clemency. Hypocrites even are sometimes spared for a season, not so much for their sakes, as for a public example. Ahab’s “pardon” was merely a stay of execution of God’s wrath, which finally broke out over his family, while he himself, at the end of his life, went to his eternal doom. Nor is Esau’s temporal benediction granted, for his tears, any agreement for pardoning the reprobate. Therefore, let us learn to devote our exertions with more alacrity to sincere repentance; for God readily forgives those who are truly and cordially converted. But, what dreadful vengeance awaits all the obstinate, who, with impudent countenances and hardened hearts, despise and ridicule the Divine threatenings.

Chapter IV

The Sophistry and Jargon of the Schools Concerning Repentance, Very Remote from the Purity of the Gospel. On Confession and Satisfaction

1. I come now to a brief discussion of those things which have been advanced by the sophists of the schools concerning Repentance. According to the schoolmen, repentance is an austere discipline, which serves partly to subdue the flesh, partly to chastise and punish vices. But, concerning the internal renovation of the mind and a real reformation of life, they observe a wonderful silence! They torment souls with a multitude of scruples, and drive them to extreme anxiety; and try merely to heal the wounded heart by a slight sprinkling of ceremonies. They divide repentance into three parts—contrition of heart, confession of mouth, and satisfaction of work.

2. This examination of the schoolmen's teaching on repentance is no contention about an insignificant trifle. It is a question respecting a most serious subject—the remission of sins. Now it is their argument, that without contrition of heart, confession of mouth and satisfaction of work, there can be no remission.

3. The requirements of the schoolmen on contrition of heart have driven many into despair. We have said before, that forgiveness of sins is never enjoyed without repentance, but we have likewise added, that repentance is not the cause for the remission of sins. Those torments of soul, which they say are duties to be performed, we have laid aside. We have rather taught the sinner not to look on his heart, but rather fix both his eyes solely on the mercy of God. For it is Christ who is sent “to heal the brokenhearted” (Luke 4:18; Isa 61:1), and “to comfort all that mourn” (Isa 61:2).

4. Concerning confession, there has always been a great controversy between the canonists and the scholastic divines. The latter contend that confession is commanded by the Word of God, while the former maintain that it is enjoined only by the ecclesiastical constitutions. The theologians, in order to prove their point, have distorted all the Scriptures they have cited in favour of their argument.

5. Secondly, their arguments are also taken from allegories in the Scripture, as though allegories were sufficient for the confirmation of any dogma.

6. They come to a close contest, when they oppose us with what they take to be plain passages (Matt 3:6; Jas 5:16). But these passages, quoted by them, merely teach that sinners seeking forgiveness of sins in baptism naturally should confess their sins; and Christians should have mutual confession, when they sin one against another. But these have nothing to say about the prerogative of priests to receive confessions.

7. The argument that the confession, of which they speak, is of Divine appointment, is quite bold-faced. While the practice of confession is admittedly very ancient, we can easily prove that Christians were formerly quite at liberty as to the use of it. That there was no fixed law respecting it till Innocent III, is attested by none other than their own histories. This is less than 300 years old, a decree from the Council of Lateran.

Whatever be the arguments for confession, Christ was not the author of this law. Why should twelve centuries pass after Christ, before any such law was promulgated? There are plain testimonies from histories, which inform us, that this was a political discipline instituted by the bishops. Sozomen, in his Ecclesiastical History, relates that this ordinance was observed in all the Western Churches; but not a universal custom of all the churches. He says, only one of the Presbyters was appointed to this office, and not the whole sacerdotal order.

Sozomen in fact affirms that the custom of confession was not only at one time discontinued, but had become altogether disused down to his time. The Church at Constantinople, and all the Oriental Churches neglected this law, which is now maintained to be obligatory on all Christians!

8. This abrogation is plainly attested by Chrysostom: “Confess your sins (says he), that you may obliterate them. If you are ashamed to tell any one what sins you have committed, confess them daily in your soul. I say not, that you should confess to your fellow-servant, who may reproach you; confess them to God, who cures them. Confess your sins on your bed, that there your conscience may daily recognise its crimes. . . . Show

your wounds to the Lord, who is the best physician, and implore a remedy from Him; show them to Him, who upbraideth not, but most mercifully heals.”

9. Let us faithfully state what kind of confession is taught in the Word of God. One method of confession is prescribed; which is, that since it is the Lord who forgives and obliterates sins, we should confess our sins to Him, that we may obtain pardon. It is He who calls sinners; let us not delay to approach Him (Ps 42:4; 32:5; 51:1; 1 John 1:9).

10. Whoever from the heart confesses to God, will have a tongue to confess; not merely to whisper one’s secrets into the ear of an individual, but frequently and publicly, declare both his own ignominy and the magnificence of God’s glory. In this manner, when David was reproved by Nathan, he felt compunction of conscience and confessed his sin both to God and men (2 Sam 12:13). The secret confession to God is followed by a voluntary confession before men, whenever it contributes to the Divine glory or to our humiliation. For this reason, the Lord enjoined upon the Israelites, that all the people should confess their iniquities publicly in the temple, by the mouth of the priest (Lev 16:21).

11. This kind of confession ought to be both ordinary, in the Church; and extraordinary, to be practised in a particular manner whenever the people are chargeable with the guilt of any common crime. An example of the latter category is found in the public confession made under Ezra and Nehemiah.

Whenever a people is afflicted with pestilence, or war, or any other calamity, if it is our duty to resort to mourning, fasting and other expressions of guilt—confession itself, on which all these things depend, ought by no means be neglected.

The ordinary confession, which a minister makes on every Lord’s Day, in which he represents all as guilty of sin, and supplicates pardon from the Lord on behalf of all, is not only recommended by the Lord; but observed in all well-regulated churches. Confession in this way is the key to the gate of prayer, both to individuals in private, and in public to all the congregation.

12. Moreover, the Scripture sanctions two kinds of private confession. One for our own sake (Jas 5:16), and the other for the sake of our neighbour.

In the former species of confession, we are exhorted by James to “confess your faults one to another” (Jas 5:16), whereby, revealing our infirmities to one another, we should assist each other with mutual advice and consolation. Though James does not expressly appoint any one in the church to whom we may disburden ourselves in confession, we should logically choose to speak to our pastor. Although the office of mutual reproof is committed to all, pastors are more suitable than others in the church for this ministry, for they are designated by the Lord to instruct (Matt 16:19; 18:18; John 20:23). When a believer feels such secret anguish from a sense of his sins, that he cannot extricate himself without outside help, let him not neglect this remedy offered by the Lord—private confession with his pastor.

13. Concerning the latter species of confession, Christ says, “If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift” (Matt 5:23, 24). This is in order to pacify our neighbour, and reconcile him to us, if we have done him any injury.

In this kind of confession is comprehended the confession of those who have sinned against the whole Church. If the private offence of one man should bar the offender from the sacred ordinances, how much more serious is that which is committed to the injury of the whole Church. Acknowledgement of one’s guilt before the whole church as a means of reconciliation (2 Cor 2:6) is stated by Cyprian to have been practised by the ancient Church. “They repent (says he) in due time; and afterwards they come to the confession; and by imposition of the hands of the bishop and clergy, they receive a right to communion.” The Scripture knows nothing of any other method or form of confession; but the sheep should present themselves to their pastor, whenever they desire to partake of the Lord’s Supper, that those who experience distress of conscience may receive singular benefit from such an interview.

14. As we see, that pastors are constituted witnesses and sureties of the Divine mercy, they are given by God to assure our consciences of the remission of sins and to loose souls (Matt 16:19, 18:18; John 20:23). Now, the power of their keys is exercised in these three kinds of confession: (a) When the whole Church sins and implores pardon. (b)

When an individual sins and offends the community, and declares his repentance. (c) When an individual needs the pastor, because of a troubled conscience, discloses his infirmity to him.

15. But what is the doctrine of the Romish divines? They maintain, that all persons, of both sexes, should, once a year at least, confess all their sins to their priest. Without such confession, paradise is closed to them. The priest holds the power of the keys, with which he may loose the sinner or bind him (Matt 18:18). This is contrary to what Isaiah says, “I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no saviour. I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions” (Isa 43:11, 25).

16. Let me briefly reply to each of these things. First, their requirement of confessing, enumerating all sins, without which there remains no entrance to Paradise. This is intolerable! Must all sins be enumerated? David, who had often meditated the confession of his sins, nevertheless exclaims, “Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults” (Ps 19:12). David further declares the weight of his sins as being too heavy (Ps 88:15), and, therefore, he attempted not to detail his transgressions (Ps 143:3, 4). Who can think of recounting his sins, when he sees that David was unable to do so?

17. The souls of those who have been affected by any discovery of God, have been most cruelly tormented by this fatal delusion: They are made to divide their sins into boughs, branches, twigs, and leaves, according to the fine distinctions of their confessors. When the poor soul forgets and omits, this constitutes another species of sin which is inexcusable and further torments! I speak not of hypocrites, who, if they have noticed three or four gross sins, imagine they have discharged their duty; but of the true worshippers of God, who, truly tremble before the Judge, whose knowledge far exceeds our apprehension (1 John 3:20).

18. Such a law is absolutely impracticable; and, therefore, can only destroy, condemn, and precipitate into despair. In the next place, it diverts sinners from a true sense of their sins, and makes them hypocrites, ignorant both of God and of themselves. For while they are wholly employed in enumerating their sins, they forget, in the mean time, that latent source of vices, their inward pollutions. The most certain rule of confession, however, is to acknowledge and confess the abyss of our guilt

to be cast beyond comprehension. The publican's confession is according to this understanding, as he simply cries, "God be merciful to me a sinner" (Luke 18:13).

Now, we concede not in the least to their claim, that Paradise is shut to those who have neglected to confess them one by one. Among those who are said to have obtained remission of sins from Christ, none are said to have confessed in the ear of any priest. Indeed, there was no possibility of any such confession, when there were then no confessional priests and confession was unheard of for many ages after.

19. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, if we condemn this auricular confession. For it has occasioned so much impiety, sacrilege and error in the Church, e.g., in the idea entertained by some men, after they have made their confession to a priest, that they may wipe their mouth and say, "I have done no wickedness" (Prov 30:20). Such men only become more presumptuous in their sins throughout the year. Having done this, they think themselves to be exonerated of their burden, and to have transferred from God the judgment they have conferred on the priest. Those who go to confession are like being taken to prison, except perhaps the priests, who pleasantly entertain themselves with mutual narrations of their exploits, as with humorous anecdotes.

20. As to the power of the keys, claimed to be held by advocates of confession, let me tell them that Christ never conferred on His Apostles the power of binding and loosing, till after He had given the Holy Ghost. I deny therefore that the power of the keys belongs to any who have not previously received the Holy Ghost. They impudently pretend, that they have the Holy Ghost; but in reality they deny it. The Holy Ghost is the arbiter and governor of the keys. Then let me ask them if the Holy Ghost can err. This they will not dare to avow, though they obliquely insinuate it in their doctrine. We may justly infer, that no priests have the power of the keys, who, frequently loose what the Lord had designed to be bound, and bind what He commanded to be loosed.

21. When they see themselves convicted, on the clearest evidence of loosing and binding worthy and unworthy without distinction, they lay claim to power without knowledge. And though they dare not deny that knowledge is requisite for the proper use, they still affirm that the power itself has been given to improper dispensers of it.

But we recognise, that none can be bound or loosed, but such as are worthy to be bound or loosed. Preachers of the Gospel, and the Church, have the Word as the standard of worthiness. In this Word, the ministers of the Gospel may promise to all remission of sins in Christ through faith. They may denounce damnation against all and upon all who receive not Christ. In this Word, the Church pronounces, that fornicators, thieves, murderers, misers, extortioners have no part in the kingdom of God; and binds such with the firmest bonds. In the same Word, the Church looses and comforts those who repent (1 Cor 6:9–11).

22. The absolution, given by ministers of the Gospel, is not based on the absurdities of the Papal system. Our absolution is conditional, in such a way, that the sinner may be confident that God is propitious to him, provided he sincerely seeks an atonement in the sacrifice of Christ. Thus, it is impossible for him to err, who, according to his duty as a preacher, promulgates what he has been taught by the Divine Word. And the sinner may receive a clear absolution, simply on condition of embracing the grace of Christ, according to that general rule of our Lord—“According to your faith be it unto you” (Matt 9:29).

23. Those who advocate auricular confession add another mode of remission, that is, with an injunction of punishment and satisfaction. They arrogantly ascribe to their priests the power of dividing into two parts what God has everywhere promised as complete.

24. Now, when they prescribe as a necessary prerequisite to pardon that which God has chosen should be free, I maintain it is an intolerable sacrilege. I have already proved, that this tyranny was not introduced till the world was oppressed by the rudest barbarism.

25. The third place in repentance they assign to *satisfaction*. They say, it is not sufficient for a penitent to abstain from his former sins, unless he make satisfaction to God for the crimes committed. And that there are many helps to redeem sins, such as tears, fastings, oblations, and works of charity. By these we must merit pardon, for though God has remitted our sins, yet in the discipline of justice, He retains the punishment that must be redeemed by satisfaction. It is by the intervention of the merit of works, that the Divine justice may receive satisfaction which is due to it. But when the Lord proclaims by Isaiah, “I, even I, am he that blotteth out

thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins” (Isa 43:25), does He not declare that forgiveness comes merely from His own goodness? Besides, while the whole Scriptures bears testimony to Christ, that “remission of sins” is to be received “through his name” (Acts 10:43), does it not exclude all other names? How, then, do they teach that it is received through the name of *satisfactions*?

26. But, they reply that both remission of sins and reconciliation are obtained at once through Christ in baptism. If we fall after baptism, however, then we are to be raised up by *satisfactions*; and that the blood of Christ avails us nothing, any further than it is dispensed by the keys of the Church. Lombard, while confessing that Christ suffered the punishment of sins on the cross (1 Pet 2:24), adds that all temporal punishments of sins are remitted in baptism; but that after baptism they are diminished by repentance, so that our repentance cooperates with the cross of Christ. But John speaks differently, “If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins . . . I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake” (1 John 2:1, 2, 12). He certainly addresses believers, and when he exhibits Christ to them as the propitiation for sins, proves that there is no other satisfaction by which an offended God may be appeased.

27. In this connection, there are two things that demand our consideration—the honour, which belongs to Christ, should be preserved to Him entire and undiminished; and that consciences assured of the pardon of their sins, should have peace with God. Isaiah says, “The LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all,” and “with his stripes we are healed” (Isa 53:6, 5). Peter and Paul say the same things in different words (1 Pet 2:24; Rom 8:3; 2 Cor 5:21; Gal 3:13). We cannot listen to those foolish fictions; that after the initial purgation or baptism, none of us can have any further experience of the efficacy of the sufferings of Christ, than in proportion to a satisfactory repentance. Now, review their pestilent follies, “That the grace of God operates alone in the first remission of sins; but that if we afterwards fall, our works cooperate with it in impetration of a second pardon.” If these things be admitted, does Christ remain exclusively possessed of the honour we have before given Him?

28. Furthermore, they make foolish distinction between what are called *venial* and *mortal* sins. A great satisfaction is due for mortal sins; but those which are venial are purged away by easier remedies, such as the Lord's Prayer, aspersion of holy water and the absolution of the mass. But we maintain, that "the wages of sin is death" (Rom 6:23), and "the soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezek 18:20). We say that the sins of believers are venial, not because they are not deserving death, but because, through God's mercy, "there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus" (Rom 8:1), because they are not imparted to them, but obliterated by a pardon.

29. In propounding the doctrine of *satisfactions*, they invent a distinction between the guilt and the punishment. They acknowledge that, while guilt is forgiven, there still remains the punishment, which the Divine justice requires to be suffered. Therefore, *satisfactions* properly relate to the remission of the punishment. But everything in the Scripture concerning remission of sins is diametrically opposite to the distinction above. And though I think I have fully established this point already, I will subjoin some additional testimonies. Jeremiah prophesies, "I will make a new covenant [which God has made with us in Christ] . . . and I will remember their sin no more" (Jer 31:31–34). The import of these expressions is reflected in Ezekiel 18:24–28, and in such phrases as "cast . . . behind thy back" (Isa 38:17); "blotted out as a thick cloud" (Isa 44:22); "cast . . . into the depths of the sea" (Micah 7:19); "imputeth not," "covered" (Ps 32:2, 1).

30. In the work of redemption, Christ bore our punishment of sins (1 Pet 2:24; Isa 53:6). The significance of this truth is seen in the Greek word, *apolutrosis*, Paul uses (Rom 3:24), which means not merely redemption, but the price and satisfaction of redemption. Thus he says, that Christ "gave himself a ransom" (*antilyron*) for us (1 Tim 2:6). The same idea is portrayed in the sacrifices prescribed by Moses' law, where the whole compensation is required, though he specifies all the rites of expiation. How is it that He commands the expiation of sins without any works at all, requiring no other atonement than by sacrifices? Indeed, He intends in this way to declare, that there is only one kind of satisfaction by which justice is appeased. For the sacrifices then immolated by the

Israelites were not considered as the works of men, but were regarded according to their antitype, that is, the one sacrifice of Christ alone.

31. They reason from David's case, to prove their argument. David, after having been reprov'd by Nathan the prophet for adultery and murder, receives pardon for his sin. Yet, he is afterwards punished by the death of the son that was the fruit of adultery (2 Sam 12:13, 14). In this consideration of David, they have failed to see that there are two kinds of Divine judgment. In the correction of David, we see a species of punishment very different from that which may be called *vindictive*. In the vindictive judgment, God is taking vengeance on His enemies. In the other species, which we might call *disciplinary* judgment, God is not so severe as to be angry; and His punishment is not to destroy or bring to perdition. So, we cannot properly call David's suffering punishment or vengeance, but rather correction or admonition. The former is the part of a judge, the latter the part of a father.

32. To obtain a clear view of the whole subject, it is necessary to state two distinctions respecting it. The first is, whenever there is vindictive punishment, there is manifestation of God's curse and wrath. Chastisement, on the contrary, is both a blessing of God, and a testimony of His love. All the afflictions, which the impious endure in this present life, are represented to us as constituting a kind of antechamber of hell, and they are far from being reformed, or receiving benefit from this. On the contrary, the Lord repeatedly chastises His servants, yet does not deliver them to death (Job 5:17; Prov 3:11; Heb 12:5–11; Ps 118:18; 119:71). Wherefore, they confess that the strokes of His rod were highly beneficial to them.

33. The second distinction is, that when the reprobate are lashed by the scourges of God in this world, they already begin to suffer the vindictive punishments. On the contrary, the children of God are chastised, not to make satisfaction to Him for their sins, but that they may thereby be brought to repentance. Such chastisement, therefore, relate to the future rather than to the past. Chrysostom says, "For this reason God punishes us, not to take vengeance for our sins, but to correct us for the future." Thus also Augustine, "That which you suffer, and which causes you to mourn, is medicine to you, not a punishment; a chastisement, not a damnation."

34. In the anguish of afflictions, it is necessary that the faithful reflect upon them. The only one who receives any benefit from the Divine chastisements, is he who considers God as angry with his crimes, but benevolent towards his person. David, speaking of his paternal chastisements, in order to show that believers are rather assisted than oppressed by them, sings, “Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O LORD, and teachest him out of thy law; That thou mayest give him rest from the days of adversity, until the pit be digged for the wicked” (Ps 94:12, 13). For their consolation, he explains that the admonition of the law is for their salvation, but as for the reprobate, they are precipitated into their errors, which end in the pit.

35. Thus, while the Lord’s correction of David was proof of His extreme displeasure against murder and adultery; this was not a punishment, by which David was to render to God a satisfaction for his offences. This end we should keep in view also in the universal curse of mankind. Those who regard the calamities of the present life as punishments inflicted upon us, as satisfactions for the guilt of sin, are very unwise. Such afflictions are rather admonitions, showing how grievously God is displeased with the transgression of the Law; that, being thus humbled by a consciousness of our miserable condition, we may aspire with greater ardour after true blessedness. Our most wise Father uses this rod of correction, without exception on all His children. Apart from David’s correction, we have the examples of the publican who went down from the temple justified (Luke 18:14), and of Peter, who obtained pardon for his sins.

36. When Daniel exhorted Nebuchadnezzar to break off his sins by righteousness, and his iniquities by showing mercy to the poor (Dan 4:27), he meant not to intimate that righteousness and mercy propitiate God and atone for sins. God forbid that there should ever be any other redemption than the blood of Christ. And when Christ ridicules the Pharisees for having attended only to the cleansing of dishes, and neglected purity of heart, and commands them to give alms that all might be clean (Luke 11:39–41), neither is He exhorting them to make a satisfaction, but only teaching them what kind of purity obtains the Divine approbation.

37. In the parable of the two debtors (Luke 7:41), who owed a certain creditor 500 and 50 pence respectively, and were both forgiven,

Jesus asked the Pharisee which of the two loved the creditor more. The Pharisee answered, “He, to whom he forgave most.” To which the Lord rejoined, “[This woman’s] sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much” (Luke 7:47). In these words, we see that He makes love, not the cause of the remission of her sins, but the proof of it. By what means she obtained remission of sins, the Lord plainly declares, “Thy faith hath saved thee” (Luke 7:50). By faith, therefore, we obtain remission, by love, we give thanks and declare the goodness of the Lord.

38. Though the fathers have erred concerning *satisfaction*, their statements have been distorted by the schoolmen. For even in those times, the doctrine of satisfaction, as a compensation for sins committed, was universally rejected. Although Augustine somewhere calls works of mercy “remedies for obtaining remission of sins,” he explains himself more fully in another place, “The flesh of Christ is the true and sole sacrifice for sins, not only for those which are all obliterated in baptism, but also for those which afterwards creep in through infirmity; on account of which the whole Church at present exclaims, Forgive us our debts (Matt 6:12); and they are forgiven through that single sacrifice.”

39. But they most commonly used the word “satisfaction” to signify, not a compensation rendered to God, but a public testification, by which those who had been punished with ex-communication, when they wished to be readmitted to communion, gave the Church an assurance of their repentance. For there were enjoined on those penitents certain fastings, and other observances, by which they might prove themselves truly weary of their former life, and thus they were said to make satisfaction. From that ancient custom have originated the confessions and satisfactions which are used in the present age.

Chapter V

Indulgences and Purgatory. The Supplements to Their Doctrine of Satisfactions

1. The doctrine of *satisfaction* has given rise to *indulgences*. By indulgences they pretend, that the deficiency of our abilities to make satisfaction is supplied. They even define them to be the dispensation of the merits of Christ and of the martyrs, which the Pope distributes in his bulls.

For several ages, the people under them have been immersed in a deep night of errors. Lucrative bargains were made concerning the salvation of their souls. The price of salvation was fixed at a trifling sum. Under this pretext, contributions were extorted from them, which were vilely consumed on brothels and pimps. The greatest advocates of indulgences were the greatest despisers of them.

2. It is necessary to show not only the nature of indulgences as commonly used, but what they are in themselves, taking them in the proper and best form. There are the merits of Christ and of the holy Apostles and martyrs, which they style “the treasury of the Church.” The bishop of Rome has principal custody of this repository, who can either dispense himself, or through someone delegated. Hence from the Pope are received sometimes plenary indulgences, sometimes indulgences for a certain number of years; from Cardinals, a hundred days; from Bishops, forty days. To describe them correctly, they are a profanation of the blood of Christ, by which they seduce Christians from the grace of God. For how could the blood of Christ be more basely profaned, than when it is denied to be sufficient for the remission of sins? But Peter says, “To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins” (Acts 10:43). Yet, according to these who turn from the truth, indulgences dispense remission of sins through Peter, and Paul, and the martyrs! Indulgences make the martyrs’ blood the ablution of sins! Indulgences pronounce that Paul and others died for us! All these erroneous doctrines of indulgences are refuted by the following Scriptures: 1 John 1:7; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Corinthians 1:13; Acts 20:28; Hebrews 10:14; Revelation 7:14.

3. Leo, bishop of Rome, opposes these sacrilegious pretensions in his epistle to the Bishops of Palestine: “Although the death of many saints has been precious in the sight of the Lord, yet the murder of no innocent person has been the propitiation of the world—The righteous have received, not bestowed, crowns; and from the fortitude of the faithful have arisen examples of patience, not gifts of righteousness. For their deaths have been singular, nor has anyone by his death discharged the debt of another; for it is the Lord Christ alone, in whom all are crucified, dead, buried, and raised from the dead.” Yet it is erroneously taught that the martyrs have, in their death, merited from God such a superabundance of merits, that these are available for others. Their blood is commingled with the blood of Christ, and that both of these formed the treasury of the Church for the remission of sins. In this sense they interpret Paul’s declaration, “[I] fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body’s sake, which is the church” (Col 1:24).

4. But how maliciously they pervert this passage of Paul, where he says, that he fills up in his own flesh that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ! Paul refers that deficiency and supplement, not to the work of redemption, but to those afflictions, with which the members of Christ must necessarily be exercised as long as they live in the present state. He says, therefore, that this remains of the afflictions of Christ, that having once suffered in Himself, He daily suffers in His members. Christ honours us so far as to consider our afflictions His. When Paul adds that he suffered for the Church, he means not for the redemption of the Church, but for its edification and profit.

5. It is the Word of the Gospel, committed to our preaching, that brings reconciliation between God and man (2 Cor 5:18, 19). But indulgences, on the contrary, produce a certain allowance of grace from the Pope’s repository.

Indulgences seem to originate from an ancient custom. When more severe satisfactions were imposed on penitents than could possibly be borne by all, they who felt themselves oppressed beyond measure, petitioned the Church for some relaxation of rigour. The remission granted to such persons was called indulgence. These indulgences were converted into expiatory remedies, to deliver us from deserved punishments.

6. As to purgatory, it is a pernicious fiction of Satan, that makes void the cross of Christ. Purgatory is satisfaction for our sins paid after death by the souls of the deceased.

7. Certain passages of Scripture are twisted to suit their own purposes in the teaching of purgatory. One such passage is Matthew 12:32, where the Lord says that the sin against the Holy Ghost “shall not be forgiven . . . , neither in this world, neither in the world to come.” This implies, they say, that there is a forgiveness of some sins in the world to come.

8. They argue also from Paul, where he has affirmed, “that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth” (Phil 2:10). Things under the earth, say they, cannot refer to those who are consigned to eternal damnation. It follows, therefore, that they must be the souls in purgatory!

An argument for purgatory is drawn from the history of the Maccabees. Since this book is not in the sacred canon, I shall not honour with an answer. At any rate, when Judas Maccabeus sent to Jerusalem an oblation for the dead, he did not intend it to be a price of redemption, but that those in whose names it was offered might be partakers of eternal life with the rest of the faithful who had died in defence of their country and religion. This action was indeed superstitious.

9. But they find in Paul an invincible argument, “If any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is. . . . If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire” (1 Cor 3:12–15). What can this be, they ask, but purgatorial fire? Of a different opinion were most of the fathers, who regarded “fire” to mean tribulation, or the cross. I take the “fire” here rather to mean the Holy Spirit’s examination. The “wood, hay, stubble,” I take to be metaphors for human doctrines, which can stand little the fire-examination of the Holy Spirit. Conversely, the gold and silver, which becomes the purer as they get nearer to the fire, stand for Divine truth, which receives the stronger confirmation of its authority, in proportion to the strictness of spiritual examination. But how

are they saved by the fire, who suffer the loss of their work? Paul is here speaking of those who are builders of the Church, who retain their legitimate foundation, but raise the superstructure of unequal materials. They are such who do not deviate from the fundamentals of faith, but err in less important ones, mixing their own inventions with the Word of God. Such I say, must suffer the loss of their work, but they are themselves saved—not because their errors are approved by the Lord, but because they are purified from them by the grace and power of the Holy Spirit. Wherefore, whoever have corrupted the pure gold of the Divine Word with this filth of purgatory, must suffer the loss of their work.

10. The plea of an ancient tradition will not do. When our adversaries say that prayers for the dead have been offered for the last thirteen hundred years, I ask them, on the contrary, by what Word of God is it sanctioned? They have no answer from Scripture, nor any example from Scripture. Neither the fathers, who offered up prayers for the dead, could find a Divine command nor a legitimate example.

The Scripture, however, teaches “Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord,” and adds a reason, “that they may rest from their labours” (Rev 14:13). Now, since there is not a syllable, in all the law or the Gospel, which allows us to pray for the dead, it is a profane abuse of the Name of God, to attempt more than He enjoins.

Chapter VI

The Life of a Christian. Scriptural Arguments and Exhortations to It

1. We have said that the end of regeneration is, that the life of believers may exhibit a symmetry and agreement between the righteousness of God and their obedience. In this chapter, I wish to point out a method by which a pious man may be conducted to the right end in the regulation of his life, and assign a universal rule, by which he may properly estimate his duties.

2. This Scriptural plan, of which we are now treating, consists chiefly in these two things—(a) that a love of righteousness be instilled into our hearts; (b) that a rule be prescribed to prevent our deviating from the race of righteousness.

To begin with, our foundation is holiness, for our God is holy (Lev 19:2; 1 Pet 1:16). It is the peculiar property of God’s glory not to have any intercourse with iniquity and uncleanness. It is His purpose that we are delivered from the iniquity and pollution of the world; and that we would inhabit the holy city of Jerusalem (Isa 35:10). “Who shall abide in thy tabernacle? . . . He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness” (Ps 15:1, 2; 24:3, 4).

3. When the philosophers intend to exhort us to the sublimest virtue, they advance no argument but that we ought to live agreeably to nature. The Scripture, however, deduces its exhortation from the true source, to God the author and to Christ, by whom we have been reconciled, our pattern and example.

Since Christ has purified us in the laver of His blood, and has communicated this purification by baptism, how can we be defiled with fresh pollution? Since He has united us to His body, we should, as His members, solicitously beware lest we asperse ourselves with any blemish or disgrace. Since He who is our Head has ascended to heaven, we ought to divest ourselves of all terrestrial affection, and aspire heavenwards with our whole heart. Since the Holy Spirit has dedicated us as temples to God, we should exert our utmost, that the glory of God be displayed in us. These are the foundations of our holiness, for the proper regulation of our

life. The philosophers' exhortation to virtue, nevertheless, never rise above the natural dignity of man.

4. The Apostle denies that any one have rightly learned Christ, who have not been taught to put off the old man. Their knowledge of Christ is, then, proved to be a false and injurious pretence, though they may talk eloquently about the Gospel. If the philosophers are justly incensed against those who, while they profess an art which ought to be a rule of life, convert it into a sophistical loquacity—with how much more reason may we detest those sophists who have the Gospel on their lips, but not in their heart. Our knowledge of Christ is a doctrine not of the tongue, but of the life.

5. But I do not so vigorously require evangelical perfection as not to acknowledge as a Christian, one who has not yet attained to it. For, then all would be excluded from the Church! Nevertheless, let us set before our eyes that mark, to which alone our pursuit must be directed, even evangelical perfection. For it is not lawful for us to undertake a part of the duties prescribed to us in His Word, and to omit part of them, at our pleasure. In the first place, He every where recommends integrity as a principal branch of His worship. By this, He intends a sincere simplicity of heart, free from all guile and falsehood. Therefore, let us not cease to strive, that we may be incessantly advancing in the way of the Lord.

Chapter VII

Summary of the Christian Life. Self-Denial

1. The principle of self-denial, as required of Christians, is found in Romans 12:1, that believers should “present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God.” In this consists their legitimate worship of Him. From this is deduced the corollary, “Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Rom 12:2). Being consecrated to God, we may not think, speak, meditate or do anything but with a view to His glory. We are no more our own. Therefore, neither our reason nor our will should predominate in our deliberations and actions. Paul calls the transformation of our mind a renovation (Eph 4:23), which divests it of its natural carnality, and puts it wholly under the direction of the Holy Spirit. Such a transformation is not known to the philosophers.

2. The result of renovation of our mind should make us seek not our own things, but those which are agreeable to the will of God, for His glory. A Christian ought to be so disposed, as to reflect that he has to do with God every moment of his life. By the teachings of Scripture, he should erase from his mind the cupidity of wealth, the lust for power, the favour of men, ambition and all appetite for human glory. Such self-denial leaves room neither for pride nor avarice.

Those philosophers, who contend that virtue is desirable for its own sake, have done so for no other reason than to furnish them occasion for the exercise of pride. But God is far from being delighted, either with those who are ambitious of popular praise, or with hearts so full of pride and presumption, that He pronounces “they have their reward” (Matt 6:2) in this world, and presents harlots and publicans as nearer to the kingdom of heaven than such persons.

3. The same Apostle, in another place, gives a more distinct representation of all the parts of a well-regulated life: “The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the

glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works” (Titus 2:11–14). In this Scripture, the Apostle begins with the grace of God to prepare us to true worship. Then, he removes two obstacles, ungodliness and worldly lusts, which are our former propensities, to lead us to godliness. After this, we are reminded of the hope of a blessed immortality, that, as strangers and pilgrims in the world, we may not lose the heavenly inheritance.

4. In these words we perceive, that self-denial relates partly to men, but principally to God. For when the Scripture commands us to conduct ourselves in such a manner towards men, as in honour to prefer one another (Rom 12:10), it gives such commands as our heart can by no means receive, without having been divested of its natural bias. For we are so fascinated with self-love, that we undervalue all others who stand in competition with us. On the other hand, the vices in which we abound, we sedulously conceal from others. The poor yield to the rich, servants to masters, the illiterate to the learned; but there is no man who does not cherish within him some idea of his own excellence. Thus all men, in flattering themselves, carry, as it were, a kingdom in their own breast. It is only by the doctrine of Scripture, that the lust of ambition and self-love is eradicated.

5. The Christian life should be a life of self-denial, because, whatever favours we obtain from the Lord, they are intrusted to us with this condition, that we should dispense them to the common benefit of the Church and our neighbours. Let this be our rule, that whatever God has conferred on us, we are stewards of it, and must one day render an account of our stewardship.

To teach us that the dispensation of the gifts we receive from heaven ought to be regulated by this law, God anciently enjoined the same in regard to the smallest bounty of His liberality. For He commanded the people to offer Him the first-fruits of the corn, as a solemn avowal that it was unlawful for them to enjoy any blessings not previously consecrated to Him. Under the Gospel, however, alms are compared to sacred oblations, to show that these exercises of charity correspond to those offerings under the law.

6. Moreover, the Lord commands us to “do good” unto all men (Heb 13:16), to strangers and to the unworthy, even to our enemies. Though it is utterly contrary to the nature of man, to love them who hate us (Matt 5:44), and to return blessings for curses (Luke 17:3, 4), we are required not to reflect on the wickedness of men, but contemplate the Divine image in them. We must show forth the charity that “suffereth long, and . . . is not easily provoked.”

7. This mortification, therefore, will not take place in us unless we fulfil all the duties of charity. These are fulfilled, not externally, but from a sincere principle of love. There are some men who would be thought extremely liberal, and yet never bestow anything without upbraiding, either by pride of countenance, or by insolence of language. A Christian, however, should do something more than a display of cheerfulness of countenance, and more than render their benefactions amiable by civility of language. A Christian, in so doing, should be impelled by a sense of mercy and humanity, in a discharge of duty, as given by one member of the body to another. Every man, however great he may be, is a debtor to his neighbour.

8. Let us describe again the principal branch of self-denial, which we have said relates to God. Scripture calls us to resign ourselves and all that we have to the will of God, by first surrendering to Him the affections of our heart. We should avoid the snares of those restless minds, who try to accumulate riches and power. We should entertain no thought for prosperity, from any other cause than the Divine blessing. We should discern that His benediction alone finds a way, even through all impediments, so as to bring all our affairs to a joyful and prosperous conclusion.

9. Therefore, if we believe that all the cause of desirable prosperity consists in the Divine benediction alone, it follows that we should not strive for wealth and honours, either relying on our own diligence or depending, on the favour of men, or confiding in a vain imagination of chance. We should always regard the Lord, who directs to whatsoever lot he has provided for us. We shall not seize wealth or honours by unlawful and criminal actions. Lastly, if our success be not equal to our wishes, we shall be restrained from impatience, and from murmuring against God.

10. He whose mind is thus composed, will neither think himself miserable, nor complain against God on account of his lot. In the midst of calamities, he will contemplate the clemency and paternal goodness of God and bless His Name. Finally, whatever may happen, knowing it to be ordained of the Lord, he will receive it with a placid grateful heart.

In conclusion, the rule of piety in self-denial is, that God alone is the arbiter of all events, both prosperous and adverse, and he dispenses to us blessings and calamities with justice.

Chapter VIII

Bearing The Cross, Which Is a Branch of “Self-Denial”

1. Continuing our theme of “Self-Denial,” we should be prepared to “take up [the] cross” (Matt 16:24), as Christ required of His disciples. We ought to be prepared for a life of hardship. Having put Christ, His first begotten Son, to the Cross, our heavenly Father pursues this method towards all His children. Christ’s whole life was a perpetual cross, and the Apostle gives the reason, that it was necessary for Him to “[learn] obedience by the things which he suffered’ (Heb 5:8). The Apostle also teaches that it is destined of all of God’s children “to be conformed to . . . his Son” (Rom 8:29). In adversities and calamities that we go through, we partake of the sufferings of Christ. Now, Paul further teaches that when we know “the fellowship of his sufferings,” we also obtain “the power of his resurrection” (Phil 3:10).

2. There are many reasons for us to live under a continual cross. First, we are naturally too prone to rely on our carnal strength, and to think ourselves invincible amidst all difficulties. Therefore, it is necessary for Him to repress our arrogance, by afflicting us with ignominy, poverty, loss of relatives, disease, etc., that being thus humbled, we learn to invoke His strength (Ps 30:6, 7).

3. This is what Paul teaches, that “tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience” (Rom 5:3, 4). “And experience, hope.” What a series of benefits we derive from the cross! As we become diffident of ourselves through afflictions, we transfer our confidence to God and persevere to the end.

4. Another end in the affliction of God’s children is, to try their patience and teach them obedience. Hence these expressions, that “God did tempt Abraham” (Gen 22:1, 12). And Peter states that our faith is tried by tribulations, just as gold is tried by fire in a furnace (1 Pet 1:7). By the cross they are also, I say, instructed to obedience—because they are thus taught to live, not according to their own inclination, but according to the will of God. If everything succeeded with them according to their wishes, they would not know what it is to follow God. Seneca

mentions an ancient proverb, when they would exhort anyone to bear adversity with patience, “Follow God.” This implied that man submitted to the yoke of God, only when he resigned himself to His corrections.

5. Yet we do not perceive how necessary this obedience is to us, unless we reflect on the wantonness of our flesh to shake off the Divine yoke, as soon as we have been treated with a little tenderness and indulgence. We are like refractory horses, which, after having been pampered for some days in idleness, grow fierce and untameable, and bolt away from the rider (cf. Deut 32:15). Therefore, that we may not be made haughty by excessive wealth, that we may not become proud on being distinguished with honours, etc., the Lord uses the remedy of the cross on us, by opposing, restraining and subduing the haughtiness of our flesh.

6. To keep us in the course of obedience, our Father not only deals with us for the future, but also corrects our past offences. When we are afflicted, we ought to recollect the course of our past life, and admit that we deserve our present chastisement. Nevertheless, God afflicts us, not to destroy us, but rather to deliver us from the condemnation of the world (Prov 3:11, 12; Heb 12:8). The Scripture points out this difference between believers and unbelievers. The latter, as the slaves of an incurable iniquity, are rendered more wicked and obstinate by correction. The former, like ingenuous children, are led to a salutary repentance.

7. But it is a source of consolation when we suffer persecution “for righteousness’ sake” (Matt 5:10). Suffering for righteousness’ sake, not only consists of suffering in defence of the Gospel, but also in the vindication of any just cause. Such suffering may be poverty, exile, imprisonment and, finally, death. But with God’s favour, they are all conducive to our happiness (Acts 5:41).

8. Since the Scripture affords abundant consolation under all the calamity which we sustain in defence of righteousness, we are chargeable with extreme ingratitude, if we do not receive them from the Lord with cheerful resignation. Not only persecutions, but also *reproaches* await us “because we trust in the living God” (1 Tim 4:10). Being resigned to God, we have the fortitude to resist persecutions and reproaches, and the cheerfulness to withstand sadness and sorrow.

9. This conflict, which believers sustain against the natural emotions of sorrow, while they cultivate patience and moderation, Paul has described thus: “We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed” (2 Cor 4:8, 9). Patiently bearing the cross does not consist in an absolute stupefaction and privation of all sense of sorrow, according to the Stoics. There are modern Stoics amongst Christians, who think it sinful to groan and weep, and to be sad. But we have nothing to do with that iron-hearted philosophy, which our Lord condemned by His own example. For he mourned and wept both for His own calamities, and for those of others (John 16:20; Matt 5:4; Luke 22:44).

10. When a Christian comes under trial and affliction, he has a patience under the circumstances to rejoice. At the same time, there is that opposition in his heart, that the feelings of nature avoid and dread those things which they experience to be inimical to it. But the affection of piety struggles even through these difficulties to obey the Divine will. Thus, whatever kind of affliction we endure, we shall constantly retain our patience. Thus, when afflicted with disease, we shall groan and be disquieted, and pray for the restoration of health. Thus, when oppressed with poverty, we shall feel the stings of sorrow . . . thus, we shall shed the tears due to nature at the funerals of our friends; but we shall always recur to this conclusion: This affliction is appointed by the Lord, therefore let us submit to His will.

11. There is a difference between philosophical and Christian patience. Philosophers little know, that we are exercised with afflictions by the Divine hand, and that God is to be obeyed in these occurrences. Philosophers are rather resigned to the necessity of it. But we obey God, not merely out of necessity, but with the knowledge that the Divine will is just and equitable; and is directed to our salvation. Christians under affliction must conclude also, that none of these things happen without the appointment and providence of God.

Chapter IX

Meditation On The Future Life

1. With whatever kind of tribulation we may be afflicted, we should keep this always in view—to habituate ourselves to a contempt of the present life, that we may meditate in the future. For the Lord, knowing our strong inclination to love the world and that our pursuits are nothing but terrestrial, rouses our insensibility, and, by continual lessons of miseries, teaches us the vanity of the present life. He sends wars or tumults, robberies or other injuries, that we may not too avidly aspire after transient and uncertain riches. That we may not be too complacently delighted with conjugal blessings, He either causes us to be distressed with the wickedness of our wives, or humbles us with a wicked offspring, or afflict us with want or loss of children, etc.

2. Since this present life has so many blandishments to attract us, and much pleasure, beauty, and sweetness to delight us, it is to our highest interests, that we should be frequently called off by calamities. But we soon forget the misery of this life, and we undertake everything as though we were erecting for ourselves an immortality on earth. If a funeral pass by, or we walk among tombs, we philosophise in an admirable manner on the vanity of life. But even when this effect is produced, our philosophy is momentary, vanishing as soon as we withdraw.

3. But believers should accustom themselves to such a contempt of the present life, as may not generate either hatred of life, or ingratitude towards God. For this life, though it is full of miseries, is reckoned among the Divine blessings. To believers, whatever happens in this life is destined to the advancement of their salvation. Even nature itself exhorts us to give thanks to God, for having introduced us to the light of life, for granting us the use of it, and giving us all the necessary helps to its preservation. And it is a far superior reason for gratitude, if we consider that here we are being prepared for the glory of the heavenly kingdom.

4. It should be the object of believers, in judging this mortal life, that understanding it to be but misery, they may apply themselves wholly to meditate on the future and eternal life. For, if heaven is our country, what is the earth but a place of exile? If a departure out of this world is an

entrance into life, what is the world but a sepulchre? If deliverance from this body is an introduction into complete liberty, what is the body but a prison? Till we escape out of this world, “we are absent from the Lord” (2 Cor 5:6). Therefore, it becomes us to live and to die unto the Lord (Rom 14:7, 8). Let us leave the limits of our life and death to His decision.

5. But it is monstrous, that instead of this desire of death, there are many Christians who are filled with a dread of it. Paul, however, teaches believers to go with alacrity to death, “not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon” (2 Cor 5:4). But this we may positively conclude that no man has made any good proficiency in the school of Christ, but he who joyfully expects both the day of death and that of the final resurrection. Is it reasonable, that what He designed to excite us to exultation and alacrity should produce nothing but sorrow and consternation? Let us, therefore, acquire a sounder judgment; and notwithstanding the blind and stupid cupidity of the flesh, let us not hesitate ardently to desire the advent of the Lord, as of all events most auspicious.

6. It is certainly true, that the whole family of believers, as long as they dwell on the earth, must be “accounted as sheep for the slaughter” (Rom 8:36), that they may be conformed to Christ their Head. Their state, therefore, would be extremely deplorable, if they did not elevate their thoughts towards heaven, and look beyond present appearances (1 Cor 15:19). On the contrary, when they have once raised their heads above this world, although they see the impious flourishing in riches and honours, though they may also be harassed by their wickedness, and may receive from them any other lawless provocations, yet they will find no difficulty in supporting themselves even under such calamities as these. For they will keep in view that day when the Lord will receive His faithful servants into His peaceful kingdom; will wipe every tear from their eyes (Isa 25:8; Rev 7:17), and, in a word, honour them with a participation of His happiness.

To conclude in one word, the cause of Christ triumphs in the hearts of believers, over the devil and the flesh, over sin and impious men, only when their eyes are directed to the power of the resurrection.

Chapter X

The Right Use of the Present Life and Its Supports

1. By such principles, the Scripture also fully instructs us in the right use of terrestrial blessings. For we live on earth and we need the necessary supports of life. Nor can we avoid even those things which appear to subserve our pleasures.

Since the Lord teaches that His servants are on a pilgrimage to the celestial kingdom, we ought to make use of our earthly blessings, so as will assist than retard us in our journey. It is not without reason, that Paul advises us to use this world as though we used it not, and to buy with the same disposition with which we sell (1 Cor 7:30, 31).

With regard to the use of the present life and its supports, we must avoid two extremes. There are some who, in order to correct the evil of excesses, become so austere as to require abstinence from everything. According to them, it would be scarcely lawful to eat or drink anything but bread and water! Others are like Crates the Theban, who is said to have thrown his wealth into the sea, from a fear that, unless it were destroyed, he should himself be destroyed by it. On the contrary, there are those who desire to indulge in the licentiousness of the flesh, who assume that their liberty is not to be restricted by any limitation; but that it ought to be left to the conscience of every individual to use as much as he thinks lawful for himself. To keep from both extremes, let us go to the Scripture which delivers general rules for the use of earthly things.

2. It must be laid down as a principle, that the use of the gifts of God is not erroneous, when it is directed to the same end for which the Creator has appointed them for us. We will also discover that in the things God has created, He has intended them to provide not only for our necessity, but also for our pleasure. For example, in clothing, He has had in view not mere necessity, but propriety and decency. In herbs and trees and fruits, His design has been to gratify us by graceful forms and pleasant odours. But shall the Lord endue flowers with such beauty, to present itself to our eyes, with such sweetness of smell, to impress our sense of smelling; and shall it be unlawful for our eyes to be affected with such beautiful sight, or our olfactory nerves with the agreeable odour?

3. Let us discard, therefore, that inhuman philosophy which deprives us of the lawful enjoyment of the Divine beneficence. On the other hand, we must oppose the licentiousness of the flesh which transgresses every bound. Thus, in thanksgiving, we should not overcharge ourselves with dainties or wine so as to be stupefied. In clothing, we should not be so sumptuously attired as to admire ourselves and despise others, or with the beauty of it, we prepare ourselves for unchastity. Some are so delighted with marble, gold and pictures, that they themselves become like the statues they admire. Some become so stupefied by the flavour of meats or the sweetness of odours, that they have no relish for the spiritual. In order that we abuse not the Divine bounties, let us keep the rule of Paul, that we “make not provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof” (Rom 13:14).

4. From the rule of Paul, stated above, follow two rules. The first is, that “they that have wives be as though they had none; . . . and that they that buy, as though they possessed not; and that they that use this world, as not abusing it” (1 Cor 7:29, 30, 31). The second, that we should learn penury with tranquillity and patience, as well as enjoy abundance with moderation. He who commands us to use this world as though we used it not, prohibits not only all intemperance in eating and drinking, ambition, pride, fastidiousness in our furniture, our habitations, and our apparel, but every affection, which would seduce us from thoughts of the heavenly life. Cato observed that when there is a great concern about adorning the body, then there is a great carelessness about virtue.

5. The other rule is, that persons whose property is small should learn to be patient under their privations. For besides that an inordinate desire of earthly things is accompanied by most other vices, he who is impatient under penury, in abundance generally betrays the opposite passion. Let us learn, therefore, after the Apostolic example, “both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need” (Phil 4:12).

The Scripture has also a third rule which regulates our earthly things. It states, that while all things are given us by the Divine goodness, they are also deposits intrusted to our care (Luke 16:2). And we are to give an account to Him, who has so highly recommended abstinence, sobriety, frugality and modesty; and abhors profusion, pride, ostentation and vanity.

6. Lastly, it is to be remarked, that the Lord commands everyone of us to regard his vocation. Every individual's line of life is a post assigned him by the Lord, that he may not wander about in uncertainty all his days. Therefore, he that is in obscurity will lead a private life without discontent. It will also be no small alleviation of his cares, labours, troubles, when a man knows that in all these things he has God for his guide. The magistrate will execute his office with greater pleasure, the father of a family will continue himself to his duty with more satisfaction, and all, in their respective spheres of life, will bear and surmount the inconveniences, cares, disappointments, and anxieties which befall them.

Chapter XI

Justification by Faith. The Name and Thing Defined

1. Justification by faith has been discussed before this, but slightly, because it was necessary first to understand that the faith, by which alone we attain justification, is not unattended by good works. The subject of justification must now be fully discussed, with the recollection that it is the principal hinge by which religion is supported.

2. First let us explain the meaning of these expressions: *To be justified in the sight of God, to be justified by faith or by works.* *To be justified in the sight of God* means that a person is accepted, on account of his righteousness, before the Divine judgment; for iniquity is abominable to God, and no sinner can find favour in His sight. Thus he must be said to be *justified by works*, whose life shows such purity and holiness, as to deserve the character of righteousness before God. On the other hand, he will be *justified by faith*, who, being excluded from the righteousness of works, receives by faith the righteousness of Christ. Invested in Christ, he now appears in the sight of God, not as a sinner but as a righteous man. Thus we simply explain, that justification is God receiving us in His favour, esteeming us as righteous persons. This consists of the remission of sins and the imputation of the righteousness of Christ.

3. With respect to the present subject, where Paul says, “The scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, . . .” (Gal 3:8), what can we understand, but that God imputes righteousness through faith? Paul speaks on justification more plainly in his conclusion, in Romans, “Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth” (Rom 8:33). Here it is just as if he had said, “Who shall accuse them whom God absolves?” Justification is, therefore, no other than an acquittal from guilt of him who was accused, as though his innocence had been proved. Since God justifies us through the mediation of Christ, He acquits us, not by an admission of our personal innocence, but by an imputation of righteousness; so that we, who are unrighteous in ourselves, are considered righteous in Christ.

4. Paul describes justification as an acceptance, when he says to the Ephesians, “[God has] predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted” (Eph 1:5, 6). The meaning of this passage is the same as when, in another place, we are said to be “justified freely by his grace” (Rom 3:24).

5. Osiander errs gravely when he teaches an essential righteousness in man. Not content with that righteousness which has been procured for us by the obedience and sacrificial death of Christ, he imagines that we are substantially righteous in God, by the infusion of His essence as well as His character. He betrays his error again, when he says that we are not justified by the sole grace of the Mediator, and that righteousness is not simply and really offered to us in His person; but that we are made partakers of the Divine righteousness when God is essentially united with us.

6. Osiander teaches that righteousness is not a gratuitous imputation, but a sanctity inspired by the Divine essence which resides in us. Secondly, he resolutely denies that Christ is our righteousness, as having, in the character of a priest, expiated our sins and appeased the Father on our behalf, but as being the eternal God. Osiander confounds regeneration with justification, and contends they are one and the same thing when, in fact, there is a distinction between the two, like between light and heat.

7. In justification, the part that faith plays is like an empty vessel. Faith must receive Christ first, before it receives His righteousness. But faith itself is not Christ, as Osiander teaches, as though an earthen vessel were a treasure, because gold is concealed in it. Faith, although intrinsically it is of no value, justifies us by the application of Christ, just as a vessel full of money constitutes a man rich. Therefore, I maintain that faith, which is only the instrument by which righteousness is received, cannot be confounded with Christ, who is the material cause, and at once the author and dispenser of so great a benefit.

8. In justification, Osiander opines that, since Christ is both God and man, He is made righteousness to us, in respect of His Divine, not His human nature.

In justification, I say that, Christ was made righteousness when He assumed the form of a servant. He justifies us by His own obedience to the Father; and, therefore, He does this for us, not according to His Divine nature, but by reason of the dispensation committed to Him. For though God alone is the fountain of righteousness, and we are righteous only by a participation of Him, yet, because we have been alienated from His righteousness by the fall, we must be justified by Christ through His death and resurrection.

9. While it is true, that, without His Divine nature, Christ could neither purify our souls with His blood, nor appease the Father with His sacrifice, because human power would have been unequal to so great task; yet it is certain that He performed all these things in His human nature. If it be inquired, How are we justified? Paul replies, “By the obedience” of Christ (Rom 5:19). But has He obeyed in any other way than by assuming the form of a servant? Hence we infer, that righteousness is presented to us in the flesh. Paul places the source of righteousness wholly in the humanity of Christ, when he says, “He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Cor 5:21). We are justified in Christ, inasmuch as He was made an expiatory sacrifice for us; which is incompatible with his Divine nature. For this reason, when Christ designs to seal the righteousness He has presented us, He says through the sacraments, “My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed” (John 6:55). Thereby, He teaches that justification resides in His human nature. However, I do not deny that Christ justifies us, as He is God and man, and that this work is common also to the Father and the Spirit.

10. Now, when Christ imputes His righteousness to us, we do not contemplate Him at a distance out of ourselves; but rather that we have put Him on. We are ingrafted into His body, because He has deigned to unite us to Himself. Thus we refute the cavil of Osiander, that faith is considered by us as righteousness; as though we despoiled Christ of His right, when we affirm that by faith we come to Him. Now, we come to Him empty, that He alone may fill us with His grace.

But Osiander, despising this spiritual connection, insists on a gross mixture of Christ with believers, in what he teaches as “essential righteousness.” Essential righteousness, according to Osiander, is an

essential inhabitation of Christ in us. First, that God transfuses Himself into us by a gross mixture of Himself with us, as he pretends that there is a carnal eating in the sacred supper. Secondly, that God inspires His righteousness into us; since according to Osiander, such righteousness is really God Himself.

11. There is yet more latent poison in the second point, in which he maintains, that we are righteous together with God. Such teaching of a twofold righteousness so elevates us above the clouds, that we may not embrace by faith the grace of expiation.

Osiander ridicules those who say that justification is a forensic term, and he dislikes the doctrine of justification by gratuitous imputation. Osiander objects that it would be dishonourable to God and contrary to His nature, if He justified those who still remain impious. He confounds justification with sanctification. Now, while justification is inseparable from sanctification, they are distinctive from each other. The difference between justification and sanctification is beautifully expressed by Paul. Speaking of his real righteousness, or of the integrity which he possessed, to which Osiander gives the term “essential righteousness,” he sorrowfully exclaims, “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” (Rom 7:24). But, resorting to the righteousness which is founded on Divine mercy alone, he nobly triumphs over life and death, reproaches and famine, the sword and all adverse things and persons (Rom 8:33, 38, 39).

We affirm, therefore, that those who were undone are justified before God by the obliteration of their sins; because, sin, being the object of His hatred, He can love none but whom He justifies. But this is a wonderful justification that sinners, invested with righteousness of Christ, dread not the judgment which they have deserved. And that, while they justly condemn themselves, they are accounted righteous out of themselves.

12. Having contended that we do not obtain favour with God solely through the imputation of the righteousness of Christ, Osiander concludes that Christ is given to us for righteousness, not in respect of His human, but of His Divine nature. He argues that justification is a work that exceeds the power of angels and men. Though it is true that if angels offered satisfaction to God, it would be unavailing; the man Christ,

however, by God's appointment, was "made under the law, . . . [to] redeem us from the curse of the law" (Gal 4:4; 3:13).

Osiander accuses those who deny that Christ is our righteousness according to the Divine nature, of retaining only one part of Christ, and making two Gods out of Him. But we who call Christ the author of life in consequence of His having suffered death (Heb 2:14), do not deny the honour to His complete person, as God manifested in the flesh. We only state, with precision, the means by which the righteousness of God is conveyed to us. We do not deny that what is openly exhibited to us in Christ flows from God, nor do we deny that the righteousness conferred on us by Christ is the righteousness of God, but we maintain that we have righteousness in the death and resurrection of Christ.

13. Since many imagine righteousness to be composed of faith and works, let us prove that the righteousness of faith is so different from that of works, that if one be established, the other must necessarily be subverted. As long as there remains the least particle of righteousness in our works, we retain some cause for boasting. But if faith excludes all boasting, the righteousness of works can by no means be associated with the righteousness of faith. Paul speaks clearly in Romans 4, "If Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory." He adds, "but" he hath "not" whereof to glory "before God" (Rom 4:2). It follows, therefore, that he was not justified by works. Then he advances another argument from two opposites. "To him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt" (Rom 4:4). But righteousness is attributed to faith through grace. Therefore it is not from the merit of works.

14. The sophists argue that a man is justified both by faith and works, though the works are not properly his own, but the gifts of Christ and the fruits of regeneration. But they do not observe, that in the contrast of legal and evangelical righteousness, which Paul speaks in another place, all works are excluded. For he teaches that this is the righteousness of the law, that he who has fulfilled the command of the law shall obtain salvation (Rom 10:5, etc.); but that the righteousness of faith consists in believing that Christ died and is risen again (Gal 3:11). Whence it follows, that even spiritual works are not taken into account, when the power of justifying is attributed to faith.

15. Both the Papists and schoolmen regard faith to be a certainty of conscience in expecting from God a reward of merit, and the grace of God to be, not an imputation of gratuitous righteousness, but the Spirit assisting to the pursuit of holiness. Lombard represents justification by Christ as given us in two ways. He says, “The death of Christ justifies us, first, because it excites charity in our hearts, by which we are made actually righteous; secondly, because it destroys sin, by which the devil held us in captivity, so that it now cannot condemn us.” We see how he considers the grace of God in justification to consist in our being directed to good works by the grace of the Holy Spirit. This is an example of the schools running into worse and worse errors, till at length they have precipitated into a kind of Pelagianism.

16. The Scripture, when speaking on the righteousness of faith, leads us to something very different. It teaches us, that being diverted from the contemplation of our own works, we should regard nothing but the mercy of God and the perfection of Christ. According to Scripture, the order of justification is this: From the beginning God embraces sinful and miserable man with His gratuitous goodness; that he may affect the sinner himself with a sense of His mercy, losing all confidence in his own works. This is the sentiment of faith, by which the sinner comes to enjoy his salvation, when he knows from the Gospel that he is reconciled to God. Having obtained remission of sins, he is justified by the righteousness of Christ; and though regenerated by the Holy Spirit, he thinks, not in his good works, but solely in the righteousness of Christ.

17. Here let us recall the relation we have before stated between faith and the Gospel. The reason why faith is said to justify, is, that it receives the righteousness offered in the Gospel. Its being offered by the Gospel absolutely excludes all consideration of works (Rom 10:5, 6, 9). The righteousness of the Gospel is free from all legal conditions. The promises of the Gospel are different from the promises of the law, for those of the Gospel are gratuitous, whilst the promises of the law depend on the condition of works.

18. Apart from Romans 10 quoted above, the other passage of Scripture for consideration is Galatians 3:11, 12, “That no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith.

And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them.” It follows, therefore, that works are not required to the righteousness of faith. From this statement it appears, that they who are justified by faith, are justified without the merit of works; for faith simply receives that righteousness which the Gospel bestows, which rests entirely on the mercy of God (Rom 4:2, 3).

19. The sophists would agree that a man is justified by faith, but cavil at us when we say “by faith **only**,” because they say “only” is not in Scripture. Our answer is, does not He most completely attribute everything to faith alone, who denies everything to works? What do these expressions mean—“righteousness of God without the law is manifested” (Rom 3:21), “justified freely by his grace” (Rom 3:24), and “justified . . . without the deeds of the law” (Rom 3:28)?

20. If anyone should wonder why the Apostle does not mention **works** but rather **works of the law**, the reason is obvious. Works in themselves are of no value, unless they are approved by God; only when they are acts of obedience to God. Now, if “the works of the law” cannot be justification, so works of any kind, as when he says, “David describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works” (Rom 4:6).

21. Such a righteousness may, in one word, be denominated a remission of sins.

22. Thus, “forgiveness of sins” is connected with “justification” by the Apostle, to show that they are identically the same (Acts 13:38, 39).

23. In conclusion, we see that our righteousness is not in ourselves, but in Christ. And that all our title to it rests solely on our being partakers of Christ, for in possessing Him, we possess all His riches with Him.

Chapter XII

A Consideration of the Divine Tribunal, Necessary to a Serious Conviction of Gratuitous Justification

1. It is easy for anyone in the cloisters of the schools, to indulge himself in idle speculations on the merit of works to justify men. But when he comes into the presence of God, he must bid farewell to these speculations. For business transacted before God is serious, and no ludicrous logomachy is permitted. To face God at His tribunal, when called to give an account, let us not imagine Him in human terms, but prostrate before Him, as a criminal before the celestial Judge.

According to the Book of Job, He is one whose refulgence eclipses the stars, whose power melts the mountains, whose anger shakes the earth, whose wisdom takes the subtle in their own craftiness, whose purity makes all things appear polluted, whose righteousness even the angels are unable to bear, who acquits not the guilty, whose vengeance, when it is kindled, penetrates to the abyss of hell. “If thou, LORD, shouldst mark iniquities, O LORD, who shall stand?” (Ps 130:3). Again: “Behold, he putteth no trust in his saints; yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight. How much more abominable and filthy is man, which drinketh iniquity like water?” (Job 15:15, 16).

2. To this point our eyes ought to have been raised, that we might learn to tremble through fear. It is easy while the comparison is made between men; but when we ascend to the contemplation of God, that confidence is immediately lost. When our soul turns to God, it is like our eye directed to the sun; for we are dazzled and confounded with His overpowering brightness. Says Job again, “How should man be just with God? If he will contend with him, he cannot answer him one of a thousand” (Job 9:2, 3). If we are accused before Him for a thousand crimes, we cannot exculpate ourselves from one of them.

3. Augustine says, “The only hope of all the pious, who groan under this burden of corruptible flesh, and amidst the infirmities of this life, is, that we have a Mediator, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins.” If this is their only hope, where is any confidence

in works? Bernard also says, “My merit, therefore, is the compassion of the Lord: I am clearly not destitute of merit, as long as he is not destitute of compassions. But if the mercies of the Lord be a multitude of mercies, my merits are likewise equally numerous. Shall I sing my own righteousness? O Lord, I will remember Thy righteousness alone. For it is mine also, since he is made of God righteousness to me.”

4. This is the real truth. For if the stars, which appear most brilliant during the night, lose their splendour on the rising of the sun, what can we suppose will be the case with the most excellent innocence of man, when compared with the purity of God? “The Lord . . . will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts” (1 Cor 4:5). Persons who never look forward to such a spectacle, may, indeed, complacently compose for themselves a temporary righteousness, of which they will immediately be stripped at the Divine judgment; just as immense riches, accumulated by us in a dream, vanish as soon as we awake.

5. From this contemplation of Divine perfection, let us descend to take a view of ourselves, without blind self-love. “Every way of a man,” says Solomon, “is right in his own eyes” (Prov 21:2); but immediately it is added, “the LORD weigheth the spirits” (Prov 16:2). While men are congratulating themselves on account of the external mask of righteousness which they wear, the Lord is at the same time weighing in His own balance the latent impurities of their hearts. We have the greatest need of His light, to detect the recesses of our depravity, which otherwise are too deeply concealed. Job says, “If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me: if I say, I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse” (Job 9:20).

6. But what means have we of humbling ourselves, except by submitting, all poor and destitute, to the Divine mercy? Hitherto they have taught a pernicious hypocrisy, by connecting these two maxims—that we should entertain humble thoughts before God, and attach some dignity to our own righteousness. If we address to God a confession which is contrary to our real sentiments, we are guilty of telling him an impudent falsehood. Rather we should come before God overwhelmed by a weighty sense of misery and poverty. Isaiah says, “To this man will I look, even to

him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word (Isa 66:2).

7. The parable of the Pharisee and the Publican, in which the Publican, in true contrition of his sins, is accepted; and the Pharisee, trusting in his own righteousness, was rejected, should be a pictorial lesson to us all.

8. Therefore, if we would obey the call of Christ, let us dismiss all arrogance and carelessness from our minds. For multitudes of sinners, inebriated with criminal pleasures, and forgetful of the Divine judgment, are in a state of lethargic insensibility, so that they never aspire after the mercy which is offered them. But it is equally necessary for us to shake off such stupidity, and to reject all confidence in ourselves, in order that, being freed from every encumbrance, we may hasten to Christ as destitute and hungry, to be filled with His blessings. As far as any man is satisfied with himself, so far he raises an impediment to the exercise of the grace of God.

Chapter XIII

Two Things Necessary to be Observed in Gratuitous Justification

1. Here are two things to which we must always be attentive: to maintain the glory of the Lord, and to preserve in our own consciences a serene tranquillity before the Divine judgment. We see how frequently the Scripture exhorts us to render praise to God alone, when it treats of justification. The righteousness of God is not sufficiently illustrious, unless He alone be esteemed illustrious. For this reason it is His will “that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God” (Rom 3:19). As long as man has anything in his own defence, it detracts from the glory of God. Thus when Jeremiah proclaims, “Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in . . . the LORD” (Jer 9:23, 24), does he not suggest that the glory of God sustains some diminution, if any man glory in himself?

2. The truth is, that we never glory in Him, till we entirely renounce all glory to our own. On the contrary, they who glory in themselves, glory in opposition to God. Paul is of the opinion that the world is not “guilty before God” till men are deprived of all foundation of glorying (Rom 3:19?). Repeating, as it were, the same sentiment, he adds, “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast” (Eph 2:8, 9).

3. Now, if we inquire by what means the conscience can obtain peace before God, we shall find no other than our reception of gratuitous righteousness from His free gift. Let a man of the most perfect character retire into his own conscience, and enter into a scrutiny of his actions. Will he not be lacerated with terrible agonies, on perceiving in himself such ample cause for condemnation? If the conscience reflect on God, it must either enjoy a solid peace with His judgment, or be surrounded with the terrors of hell. When our souls will possess boldness before God, and receive His judgment without fear, then, and not before then, may we be assured to have found righteousness. It is not without reason that this subject is so largely insisted on by the Apostle: “For if they which are of

the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect” (Rom 4:14). He first infers, that faith is annulled, if the promise of righteousness depend on our observance of the law.

4. He adds likewise another consideration, that the promise would be void and of none effect. If the fulfilment of it depends on our merit, when shall we have such a progress as to deserve the favour of God? Besides, this second argument is a consequence of the former, since the promise will be fulfilled to those alone who shall exercise faith in it. Therefore, if faith be wanting, the promise will retain no force. “Therefore it [the inheritance] is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed” (Rom 4:16). It is abundantly confirmed, when it depends solely on the Divine mercy; and whatever God mercifully promises, He also faithfully performs. Bernard says, “The disciples of Christ asked, Who can be saved? He replied, With men this is impossible, but not with God. This is . . . the whole foundation of our hope.”

5. Paul says, “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom 5:1). And he also declares whence that certainty of salvation comes: It is “because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost” (Rom 5:5). With such confidence, he can exclaim on behalf of all believers, “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?” (Rom 8:35). With genuine faith, we are led to cry to God, “Abba, Father” (Gal 4:6). In another place, Paul expresses it more clearly, “In whom [Christ] we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him” (Eph 3:12). Being ingrafted into the body of Christ, we are gratuitously accounted righteous. For with respect to justification, faith is a thing merely passive, bringing nothing of our own to conciliate the favour of God, but receiving what we need from Christ.

Chapter XIV

The Commencement and Continual Progress of Justification

1. For the elucidation of this subject, let us examine what kind of righteousness can be found in men during the whole course of their lives. Let us divide them into four classes. They are: (a) idolators, (b) nominal Christians, (c) hypocrites, (d) born-again ones.

In the first of these classes, there will not be found a single spark of goodness, for “every imagination of the thoughts of his [man’s] heart . . . is evil from his youth” (Gen 6:5; 8:21). But if any among them discover any integrity in their conduct, which has some appearance of sanctity, we must penetrate to the secret springs of their actions.

2. I do not deny, that whatever excellences appear in unbelievers, they are the gifts of God. I am not at variance with the common opinion of mankind, as to contend that there is no difference between the moderation of Titus or Trajan, and the cruelty of Caligula or Nero. Such distinction as this, between virtuous and vicious actions, has not only been engraven by the Lord in the heart of every man, but has also been confirmed by providential dispensations. Whatever virtues they may be, they are the gifts of God.

3. Nevertheless the observation of Augustine is true—all who are strangers to the religion of the one true God, however they may be highly esteemed for their respected virtue, are rather deserving of punishment, because they perform these good works of God improperly. They are restrained from evil, not by a sincere attachment to virtue, but by mere ambition or self-love. These actions, being corrupted in their very source by the impurity of their hearts, are no more entitled to be classed among virtues. He concludes, therefore, that all the Fabricii, Scipios and Catos, in all their celebrated actions, were guilty of sin.

4. The Apostle John says, “He that hath not the Son of God hath not life” (1 John 5:12). Thus they who have no interest in Christ, whatever be their characters, their endeavours are constantly advancing to destruction and eternal death. On this argument is founded the observation of Augustine: “Our religion discriminates between the righteous and

unrighteous, not by the law of works, but by that of faith, without which works apparently good are perverted into sins.”

5. The Scripture invariably proclaims, that God finds nothing in man which can incite Him to bless him. But when God illuminates us with the knowledge of Himself, He is said to raise us from the dead, and to make us new creatures (John 5:25). In order to prove that we attain to the hope of salvation, not by works, but entirely by the grace of God, Paul says, “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them” (Eph 2:10). Furthermore: “Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace” (2 Tim 1:9).

6. Isaiah, after having described the universal ruin of mankind, properly subjoins the method of recovery, “The LORD saw it, and it displeased him that there was no judgment. And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him” (Isa 59:15, 16). Where are our righteousnesses, if it be true, as the prophet says, that no one assists the Lord in procuring his salvation? But the ignorant mass of mankind have only this notion of it—that no man has merited that Christ should effect our redemption; but that towards obtaining the possession of redemption, we derive some assistance from our own works. But, however we have been redeemed by Christ, yet till we are introduced into communion with Him by the calling of the Father, we are both heirs of darkness and death, and enemies to God.

7. The same reasoning may be applied to the second and third classes of men in the division stated above. For the impurity of the conscience proves, that they are neither of them yet regenerated by the Spirit of God; and their unregeneracy betrays also their want of faith: whence it appears, they are not yet reconciled to God, nor justified in His sight, since these blessings are only attained by faith. Yet all the impious, especially hypocrites, are inflated with foolish confidence. Though they know that their heart is full of impurity, if they perform any specious actions, they will arrogate to themselves some degree of righteousness. The greatest sinner, as soon as he has performed two or three duties of

the law, assumes they are accepted for righteousness. But the Lord asserts that all the works of sinners are contaminated by the impurity of their hearts. So, where is their righteousness?

8. He pursues the same argument in Isaiah: “Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me . . . Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings” (Isa 1:13, 16). We lay it down, therefore, that even the most splendid works of men not yet truly sanctified, are so far from righteousness in the Divine view, that they are accounted sin.

9. Let us now examine what degree of righteousness is possessed by those whom we have ranked in the fourth class. When God, by the interposition of the righteousness of Christ, reconciles us to Himself, and having granted us the remission of sins, esteems us as righteous persons, he adds another blessing. He dwells in us by His Holy Spirit, by whose power our carnal desires are daily more and more mortified. We are thus sanctified unto real purity of life, having our hearts moulded to obey His law, so that it is our prevailing inclination to submit to His will, and to promote His glory by all possible means. But even while under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we feel such remains of imperfection, as afford us abundant cause for humility. What kind of righteousness will believers obtain from their own works? I assert, the best of their performances are tarnished by some carnal impurity.

10. In the next place, even though it were possible for us to perform any works pure and perfect, yet one sin is sufficient to extinguish all remembrance of righteousness. James says, “Whosoever shall . . . offend in one point, he is guilty of all” (Jas 2:10). Since perfection is unattainable by us, as long as we are in this mortal body, it will always have condemnation against us, unless it be preceded by Divine mercy continually absolving us from sin.

11. We must insist on these two points—first, that there never was an action performed by a pious man, which, if examined by the scrutinising eye of Divine justice, would not deserve condemnation. And secondly, if any such thing be admitted, yet being contaminated by the sins, of which its performer is confessedly guilty, it loses every claim to the Divine favour. And this is the principal hinge on which our controversy with the Papists turns.

For the difference between us and them is that they say, a man, after having been reconciled to God through faith in Christ, is accounted righteous with God on account of his good works. But the Lord, on the contrary, declares “that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness” (Rom 4:9), not during the time while he yet remained a worshipper of idols, but after he had been eminent during many years for the sanctity of his life. Abraham had for a long time worshipped God; yet, after all, his righteousness consisted in faith. Hence we conclude with Paul, that it was not of works. So when the prophet says, “The just shall live by his faith” (Hab 2:4), he is not speaking of the impious, whom the Lord justifies by converting them to the faith; but his address is directed to believers, and they are promised life by faith.

12. The subterfuges, by which these schoolmen endeavour to evade these arguments, are unavailing. They admit, that the sufficiency of good works to justification arises not from their intrinsic merit, but from the grace through which they are accepted. Since they acknowledge the righteousness of works to be always imperfect, in order to supply the defects of their works, their deficiencies are compensated by works of supererogation. I reply, that what they denominate the grace through which ours works are accepted, is no other than the free goodness of the Father, when He invests us with the righteousness of Christ. Being furnished with this, we obtain by faith the perpetual remission of sins.

13. No works of ours can render us acceptable to God; for He acknowledges no righteousness of works, except in a perfect obedience of the law. This refutes the erroneous notion of a partial righteousness; nor is there any substance in their pretence of compensation for imperfections by works of supererogation. I only remark, all the righteousness of all mankind, accumulated in one mass, is insufficient to compensate for one single sin. For we see that man, on account of one offence, was rejected and abandoned by God. They are deprived, therefore, of the power of satisfaction. Our sins, therefore, must be covered and forgiven, before the Lord can regard any of our works. Whence it follows that the remission of sins is absolutely gratuitous, and that it is blasphemed by those who obtrude with any *satisfactions*.

14. But how is the pretence of works of supererogation consistent with this injunction, “When ye shall have done all those things which are

commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do” (Luke 17:10). Here the Lord teaches us, that our services to Him are none of them gratuitous, but merely the performance of indispensable duties.

15. These schoolmen, who advance the doctrine of works of supererogation, try to use Paul’s alleged boasting, that among the Corinthians he voluntarily receded from what he might have claimed as his right, and not only did what was incumbent on him to do, but afforded them his gratuitous services beyond the requisitions of duty. But they ought to attend to the reason there assigned, that he acted thus, “lest [he] should hinder the gospel” (1 Cor 9:12). I confess that the Apostle performed for the Lord a work of supererogation; but if this was justly required of a prudent minister of the Gospel, I maintain that he did what was his duty to do. Chrysostum says, “All that we have is on the same tenure as the possession of slaves, which the law pronounces to be the property of their masters.”

16. On this subject, let us be guarded against two pernicious principles—that we place no confidence in the righteousness of our works, and that we ascribe no glory to them. How true is Job’s statement, “If I be wicked, woe unto me; and if I be righteous, yet will I not lift up my head” (Job 10:15). Our minds therefore will then be properly purified, when they shall in no degree confide nor glory in our works. But foolish men are led into such a false and delusive confidence, by the error of always considering their works as the cause of their salvation.

17. According to the four kinds of causes, which philosophers direct us to consider in the production of effects, we shall find none of them consistent with works in the accomplishment of our salvation. But the Scripture proclaims, the Father to be the efficient cause of our salvation by His gratuitous love; the Son, the material cause by His obedience; and faith, the instrumental cause. These three causes John comprehends in one sentence when he says, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). The fourth and final cause the Apostle declares to be, both the demonstration of the Divine righteousness and the praise of the Divine goodness, in a passage in which he also mentions the other three causes. In Romans 3:23, 24, he says, “For all have sinned, and

come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by His grace”: here we have the original source of our salvation, which is the gratuitous mercy of God towards us. It follows, “through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Rom 3:24): here we have the matter of our justification. “Through faith in his blood” (Rom 3:25), here he points out the instrumental cause, by which the righteousness of Christ is revealed to us. Lastly, he subjoins the end of all, when he says, “To declare . . . his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus” (Rom 3:26). And to suggest, by the way, that this righteousness consists in reconciliation or propitiation, he expressly asserts that Christ was “set forth to be a propitiation” (Rom 3:25). So also in the first chapter of Ephesians, he teaches that we are received into the favour of God through His mere mercy; that it is accomplished by the mediation of Christ; that it is apprehended by faith; and that the end of all is, that the glory of the Divine goodness may be fully displayed (Eph 1:5–7, 13). When we see that every part of our salvation is accomplished without us, what reason have we to glory in our works?

18. The saints often console themselves with the remembrance of their own innocence, and sometimes even proclaiming it. This is done for two reasons: (a) In comparing their good cause with the bad of the impious, they derive an assurance of victory, not so much by the commendation of their own righteousness, as by the condemnation of their adversaries. (b) While they examine themselves before God, the purity of their consciences affords them some consolation.

19. When the saints derive rejoicing from the integrity of their consciences, they only conclude, that they have been adopted by the Lord as His children. They declare the benefits of God, but in such a way as not to turn away from His gratuitous favour, in which Paul assures us there is “breadth, and length, and depth, and height” (Eph 3:18); as though he had said, Which way soever the pious turn their views, how high soever they ascend, how widely soever they expiate, yet they ought not to go beyond the love of Christ, but employ themselves wholly in meditating on it, because it comprehends itself in all dimensions. So also in another place, when he glories that believers are victorious in every conflict, he immediately adds, as the reason of it, “through him that loved us” (Rom 8:37).

20. We see now, that the confidence which the saints have in their works is not such as either ascribes anything to the merit of them, or derogates the least from the gratuitous righteousness which we obtain in Christ. This is concisely represented by Augustine, “I do not say to the Lord, Despise not the works of my hands. . . . I say, . . . Despise not the works of thy hands. Behold in me thy work, not mine. . . . Because whatever good works I have, they are from thee.”

21. The remaining objection is, that the Scripture represents the good works of believers as the causes for which the Lord blesses them. But this must be understood so as not to affect what we have before proved: The efficient cause of our salvation is the love of God the Father. The material cause, the obedience of the Son. The instrumental cause, the illumination of the Spirit, that is, faith. And the final cause, the glory of the infinite goodness of God. No obstacle arises from these things to prevent the good works from being considered by the Lord as inferior causes.

Chapter XV

Boasting of the Merit of Works, Equally Subversive of God's Glory in the Gift of Righteousness, and of the Certainty of Salvation

1. We have clearly demonstrated that the righteousness of works consists only in a perfect observance of the law. Whence it follows, that no man is justified by works, but he who cannot be convicted of the least transgression. This, therefore, is a different question, whether, although works be utterly insufficient for the justification of men, they do not, nevertheless, merit the grace of God.

2. With regard to the term **merit**, its usage has obscured the Divine grace, and tainted the minds of men with presumptuous arrogance. Augustine has used this word, not prejudicial to the truth, "Let human merit, which was lost by Adam, here be silent, and let the grace of God reign through Jesus Christ." Again: "The saints ascribe nothing to their own merits; they will ascribe all, O God, only to thy mercy."

3. Nevertheless, the good works which the Lord has conferred on us, He denominates our own, and declares He will not only accept, but also reward them. It is our duty to be animated by so great a promise, that we "not be weary in well doing" (Gal 6:9). But, whatever is laudable in our works proceeds from the grace of God. If we seriously acknowledge this truth, all idea of merit immediately vanishes. We do not, like the sophists, divide the praise of good works between God and man, but we preserve it to the Lord complete, uncontaminated.

Good works, therefore, are pleasing to God, and not unprofitable to the authors of them; and they will moreover receive the most ample blessings from God as their reward—not because they merit them, but because God has freely appropriated them this reward.

4. I cannot admit the distinction laid down by some, that good works merit the graces which are conferred on us in this life, and that eternal salvation is the reward of faith alone; because the Lord almost always places the reward of labours and the crown of victory in heaven.

5. If these points had been handled in proper order in former ages, there would never have arisen so many dissensions. Paul says, that in erecting the superstructure of Christian doctrine, it is necessary to retain that foundation, which is Jesus Christ (1 Cor 3:10, 11). What kind of foundation have we in Christ? Has He begun our salvation, that we may complete it ourselves? And has He merely opened a way for us to proceed in our own powers? By no means; but, as the Apostle before stated, when we acknowledge Him, He “is made unto us . . . righteousness” (1 Cor 1:30). For we were chosen in Him from eternity, not on account of any merit of ours, but according to the purpose of the Divine will (Eph 1:3–5). All that is His belongs to us, and that we have everything in Him, but nothing in ourselves. On this foundation, it is necessary for us to build.

6. But the world has been taught a different lesson. The sophists say that He has merited for us the first grace; that is, the opportunity of meriting, and that now it is our part not to miss the offered opportunity. That is to say, that the only benefit received from Christ is, that a way is opened for all men to justify themselves.

7. Thus the Sorbonic schools have deprived us of justification by faith, which is the substance of all piety. They grant, that a man is justified by faith; but this they afterwards explain to be, because faith renders good works effectual to justification. They rob God of part of the praise of good works, and transfer it to man. They contend, that though grace be the principal cause of them, yet that this is not to the exclusion of free will, from which all merit originates.

8. Wherefore let us not be seduced from the only foundation, on which, when it is laid, wise architects erect a firm and regular superstructure. We do not justify men by works before God; but we say, that all who are of God are regenerated and made new creatures, that they may depart from the kingdom of sin into the kingdom of righteousness. By this testimony they ascertain their vocation (2 Pet 1:10), and like trees, are judged by their fruits.

Chapter XVI

A Refutation of the Injurious Calumnies of the Papists Against This Doctrine

1. Some impious persons accuse us of destroying good works, when we say that they are not justified by works, nor saved by their own merit. Secondly, they accuse us of making too easy a road to righteousness, when we teach that it consists of a gratuitous remission of sins. This, they say, entices man to the practice of sin.

In reply to these accusations, let me state that we never teach a faith destitute of good works, nor of a justification unattended by them. This is the sole difference, that while we acknowledge a necessary connection between faith and good works, we attribute justification not to works, but to faith.

Why are we justified by faith? Because it is by faith that we apprehend the righteousness of Christ, which is the only medium of our reconciliation to God. But justification is joined to sanctification, for he “is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption” (1 Cor 1:30). Christ therefore justifies no one whom he does not also sanctify. For these benefits are perpetually and indissolubly connected. Do you then wish to obtain righteousness in Christ? You must first possess Christ; but you cannot possess Him without sanctification—He cannot be divided. Thus we see how true it is that we are justified, not without works, yet not by works.

2. It is also false, that the minds of men are seduced from an inclination to virtue, by our divesting them of all ideas of merit. When they say that there will be no concern about the proper regulation of our life without a hope of reward being proposed, they deceive themselves! If they only mean that men serve God in expectation of a reward, they gain but little; for He will be freely worshipped and freely loved. He approves of that worshipper who, after being deprived of all hope of receiving any reward, still ceases not to worship Him.

If men require to be stimulated, it is impossible to urge more forcible arguments than those which arise from the end of our redemption. This is adduced by the Word of God, when it inculcates, that it is the greatest

ingratitude not reciprocally to “love him, because he first loved us” (1 John 4:10, 19). That by “the blood of Christ, . . . your conscience [is purged] from dead works to serve the living God” (Heb 9:14); that it is a horrible sacrilege, after having been once purged, to defile ourselves with new pollutions, and to profane that sacred blood (Heb 10:29); that we have been “delivered out of the hand of our enemies,” that we “might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life” (Luke 1:74, 75); that we are made “free from sin,” that with a free spirit we “became the servants of righteousness” (Rom 6:18); “that our old man is crucified” (Rom 6:6), that “we should walk in newness of life” (Rom 6:4). Again: “If ye then be risen with Christ” (Col 3:1), as His members indeed are, “seek those things which are above” (Col 3:1), and conduct yourself as “pilgrims on the earth” (Heb 11:13; 1 Pet 2:11); that you may aspire towards heaven, where your treasure is. That “the grace of God . . . hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:11–13).

3. These few instances, indeed, I have given as a specimen; for if I were disposed to quote every particular passage, I should produce a large volume. The Apostles are quite full of admonitions, exhortations, and reproofs; “that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Tim 3:17), and that without any mention of merit. But they rather deduce their principal exhortations from this consideration, That our salvation depends not on any merit of ours, but merely on the mercy of God. As Paul, after having very largely shown that we can have no hope of life, but from the righteousness of Christ, when he proceeds to exhortations, beseeches us “by the mercies of God,” with which we have been favoured (Rom 12:1). And indeed this one reason ought to be enough; that God may be glorified in us (Matt 5:16).

4. But the most futile of all their calumnies is, that men are encouraged to the practice of sin by our maintaining the gratuitous remission of sins. For we say that so great a blessing could never be compensated by any virtue of ours, and that therefore it could never be obtained, unless it were gratuitously bestowed. Moreover, that it is

gratuitous to us indeed, but not so to Christ, whom it cost so much, even his own most sacred blood. Besides, we learn that such is our pollution, that it can never be washed away, except in the fountain of this immaculate blood. Must not persons who hear these things conceive a greater horror of sin, than if it were said to be cleansed by a sprinkling of good works? And if they have any fear of God, will they not dread, after being once purified, to plunge themselves again into the mire, and thereby to infect the purity of this fountain? “I have washed my feet” (says the believing soul in Solomon), “how shall I defile them?” (Song 5:3). Now, it is plain which party better deserves the charge of degrading the value of remission of sins. They pretend that God is appeased by their frivolous *satisfactions*, which are no better than dung. We assert, that the guilt of sin is too atrocious to be expiated by such insignificant trifles; that the displeasure of God is too great to be appeased by these worthless satisfactions; and therefore that this is the exclusive prerogative of the blood of Christ. They say, that righteousness, if it ever be defective, is restored and repaired by works of satisfaction. We think it so valuable that no compensation of works can be adequate to it; and therefore that for its restitution we must have recourse to the mercy of God alone. The remaining particulars that pertain to the remission of sins may be found in the next chapter.

Chapter XVII

The Harmony Between the Promises of the Law and Those of the Gospel

1. Satan attempts to destroy or weaken justification by faith, by returning to the legal promises which the Lord gave to the observers of His law. Now Moses says that in the law are proposed “a blessing and a curse, . . . life and . . . death” (Deut 11:26; 30:15). We have shown how the Lord promises nothing, except to the perfect observers of His law, of which description not one is to be found. The consequence is, that all mankind are proved by the law to be liable to the curse of God.

2. All the promises of the law would be vain, unless we were assisted by the goodness of God in the Gospel. Now, the Lord affords this assistance not by leaving a part of righteousness in our works, and supplying a part from His mercy, but by appointing Christ alone for the completion of righteousness. We are justified by Christ “and not . . . by the works of the law” (Gal 2:16).

3. What then, were those promises given, to vanish away without producing any effect? I assert, they are of no efficacy with respect to us as long as they are referred to the merit of works. Wherefore, considered in themselves, they are in some sense abolished. Thus that grand promise, “Keep my statutes and my judgments: which if a man do, he shall live in them” (Lev 18:5), the Apostle maintains to be of no value to us, if we rest upon it. But when these are superseded by the evangelical promises, which proclaim the gratuitous remission of sins, the consequence is, that not only our persons, but also our works are accepted by God. The works of believers are rewarded by those things which the Lord has promised in the law to the followers of righteousness and holiness.

4. From Peter’s remarks in Acts 10:34, 35, “Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him,” they conclude the grace of God is not the sole cause of salvation. But we say, man is destitute of all good, when he is first received by God. Let us reject all vain imagination of merits in man. As to the angel’s declaration to Cornelius, “Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God” (Acts 10:4), they pervert to prove that the practice of good works

prepares a man to receive the grace of God. We say, Cornelius must have been illuminated with the Spirit of wisdom, since he was endued with the fear of God; and he must have been sanctified by the same Spirit. It was from the grace of God, then, that he derived all these things in which he is said to please God.

5. After the Lord has recovered a man from the abyss of perdition, and separated him to Himself by the grace of adoption, He now receives him as a new creature, with the gifts of His Spirit. This is the acceptance mentioned by Peter, in which even the works of believers after their vocation are approved by God. But it must be remembered that they are accepted by God; only because, for the favour which He bears to them, He accepts what He has communicated to their works. Thus, David, though He declares that He had been rewarded for the purity of his hands, does not overlook the original source I have mentioned: “He delivered me, because he delighted in me” (2 Sam 22:20, 21).

6. By the way, it is useful to remark what difference there is between what have been expressed in the preceding paragraphs and the legal promises. By legal promises, we mean not only all those that are contained in the books of Moses, inasmuch as the books of Moses contain many evangelical ones. Nevertheless, it must be noted again, that legal promises differ from evangelical promises, in that a reward is to be bestowed, on condition that we perform what is commanded.

7. But there appears to be much greater difficulty in those places which dignify good works with the title of **righteousness**, and assert that a man is justified by them. For example, the zeal of Phinehas in avenging the disgrace of Israel “was counted unto him for righteousness” (Ps 106:30, 31). Therefore the Pharisees of our day suppose these passages afford ample ground for their cry against us. For when we say, that if the righteousness of faith be established, there is an end of justification by works,—they argue, in the same manner, that if righteousness be by works, then it is not true that we are justified by faith alone. We acknowledge, that the perfect obedience of the law is righteousness; but we deny that such a kind of righteousness anywhere exists. Therefore we reject the righteousness of the law—on account of the debility of our flesh (Rom 8:3).

8. Now I proceed to the second class of texts, in which the principal difficulty lies. Where it is asserted by Paul, that “Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness” (Rom 4:3; Gal 3:6), there is the text that, by the action of Phinehas, it is also counted for righteousness unto him (Ps 106:31). We may, therefore, also use the same argument concerning works, which Paul insists on respecting faith.

Now, if we are to determine the value of works by their own worthiness, there is nothing in our works of which we can glorify before God. If a person’s works are accounted righteous, they can come about only after he has been admitted to communion with Christ, and by grace reconciled to God; with remission of sins previously received, so that their imperfections are covered by the perfection of Christ.

9. If anyone continues to object to the doctrine of the righteousness of faith, I will ask him, Whether a man is reputed righteous on account of one or two holy works, who in the other actions of life is a transgressor of the law. I shall next inquire, While he is reputed righteous on account of many good works, he is found guilty of one instance of transgression. These, my adversary will not be able to answer in the light of the law, which denounces a curse on all those who do not fulfil every one of its precepts. Indeed, justification by faith is the beginning, foundation, cause, motive and substance of the righteousness of works. So we say, a man is so justified by faith, that he is not only righteous himself, but that his works are account righteous beyond what they deserve.

10. In this way we will admit, not only a partial righteousness of works, but such as is approved by God, as though it were perfect and complete. No work is ever acceptable, till it be received with pardon. So we may justly assert, that not only our persons, but even our works, are justified by faith alone.

11. But our adversaries now counter with James, who declares that “Abraham [was] . . . justified by works” (Jas 2:21), and that we are all “by works . . . justified, and not by faith only” (Jas 2:24). What then, will they draw Paul into a controversy with James? The Spirit is not inconsistent with Himself, who speaks by Paul and James. What James is saying is, there were those in the Church who neglected and omitted the proper duties of believers, which betrayed their infidelity. James does not

diminish, in any respect, the virtue of true faith. The faith James talks about was false faith, which was worse than the knowledge of devils. James even calls it a *dead* faith.

12. Moreover what James means by “justify,” is in a different signification from that which is used by Paul. What then was his meaning? He evidently appears to speak of a declaration of righteousness before men, and not of an imputation of it in the sight of God; as though he had said, They who are justified by true faith prove their justification, not by a barren and imaginary resemblance of faith, but by obedience and good works. In a word, he is not disputing concerning the method of justification, but requiring of believers a righteousness manifested in good works. As Paul contends for justification independent of works, so James will not allow those to be accounted righteous, who are destitute of good works. The principal mistake of our adversaries consists in supposing, that James describes the method of justification, while he only endeavours to destroy the corrupt security of those who make vain pretences to faith, in order to excuse their contempt of good works.

13. Nor can they derive the least support from a similar passage which they cite from Paul, that “Not the hearers of the law . . . , but the doers of the law shall be justified” (Rom 2:13). Here the Apostle is demolishing the foolish confidence of Jews, who boasted of possessing the exclusive knowledge of the law, whilst they were the greatest despisers of it. We certainly do not question that the righteousness of the law consists in works, nor that this righteousness consists in the worthiness and merit of works. But still it cannot be proved we are justified by works, unless some person be produced who has fulfilled the law.

14. Our adversaries proceed to adduce those passages in which the faithful boldly offer their righteousness to the examination of the Divine justice, for example: “Judge me, O LORD, according to my righteousness, and according to mine integrity that is in me” (Ps 7:8). I have already spoken of the confidence which saints appear to derive from their works. Insofar as such a verse is concerned, it refers to a particular cause to be judged; and he attributes a righteousness to himself, not with reference to the Divine perfection, but in comparison with men of impious character.

15. There are likewise other passages, similar to the preceding, on which some person may yet insist. Solomon says, “The just man walketh in his integrity” (Prov 20:7). Thus also Ezekiel declares, that he who “do that which is lawful and right; . . . he shall surely live” (Ezek 33:14, 15). We neither deny nor obscure any of these. But let one of the sons of Adam produce such an integrity. Nevertheless, I shall not contend with any person who chooses to attribute to the saints the character of perfection, provided he also defines it in the words of Augustine: “When we denominate the virtue of saints perfect, to this perfection itself belongs the acknowledgement of imperfection, both in truth and in humility.”

Chapter XVIII

Justification from Works Not to be Inferred from the Promise of a Reward

1. Let us now proceed to those passages which affirm that God “will render to every man according to his deeds” (Rom 2:6), that “every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad” (2 Cor 5:10), etc. And with these let us also connect those which represent eternal life as the reward of works, such as: “The recompense of a man’s hands shall be rendered unto him” (Prov 12:14), and “He that feareth the commandment shall be rewarded” (Prov 13:13). The declaration, that God will render to everyone according to his works, is easily explained. For that phrase indicates the order of events, rather than the cause of them. The Lord proceeds to the consummation of our salvation by these several gradations of mercy: “Whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified” (Rom 8:30).

2. We have no reason to infer from the term **reward**, that good works are the cause of salvation. For the kingdom of heaven is not the stipend of servants, but the inheritance of children, “for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman” (Gal 4:30). Therefore, in the same passages in which the Holy Spirit promises eternal life as the reward of works, by expressly denominating it “an inheritance,” he proves it to be from another cause. Thus Christ enumerates the works which he compensates by the reward of heaven, when He calls the elect to possess it; but He adds, that it is to be enjoyed by right of inheritance (Matt 25:34). So Paul also calls it “reward of the inheritance” (Col 3:24).

3. The parable of the vineyard (Matt 20:1–16) shows that the reward promised by our Lord is not according to merit. An ancient writer, by the name of Ambrose, expounds the parable as follows, “By the example of this comparison, the Lord has shown a variety of manifold vocation pertaining to the same grace. They who, having been admitted into the vineyard at the eleventh hour, are placed on an equality with them who laboured the whole day, represent the state of those whom, to magnify

the excellence of grace, God, in His mercy, has rewarded in the decline of the day, and at the conclusion of life; not paying them the wages due to their labour, but sending down the riches of His goodness, in copious effusions, on them whom He had chosen without works; that even they who laboured the most, and have received no more than the last, may understand theirs to be the reward of grace, not of works.”

4. The whole tendency is rather to repress our arrogance, and to inspire us with humility and contrition. But such promises assist our weakness, which otherwise would slide and fall. To preserve them from sinking under these afflictions, the Lord encourages them to raise their heads, by assuring them to find in Him that blessed news which they cannot see in the world. This blessedness He calls a **reward**, a **recompense**; not attributing any merit to works, but a compensation for their sufferings.

5. Therefore, when the Scripture says, that “the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give” to His people “a crown of righteousness” (2 Tim 4:8), I reply with Augustine, “To whom could the righteous Judge have given a crown, if the Father of mercies had not given grace? And how would it have been an act of righteousness, if not preceded by that grace which justifies the ungodly? How could these due rewards be rendered, unless those unmerited blessings were previously bestowed?”

6. By such passages, as “Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations” (Luke 16:9), and “Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, . . . That they do good, that they be rich in good works” (1 Tim 6:17–18); good works are compared to riches, which we may enjoy in eternal life. And how shall we transmit our riches to heaven? By bestowing them on the poor, and whatever is bestowed upon them, the Lord considers as given to Him (Prov 19:17). But we must not infer from this exhortation to good works the error of gaining merit from works.

7. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews says, “God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints” (Heb 6:10). Here, the righteousness refers rather to the truth of the Divine promise,

than to the equity of rendering to us anything that is our due. Augustine puts it this way, “The Lord is faithful, who has made himself our debtor, not by receiving anything from us, but by promising all this to us.”

8. Our Pharisees adduce the following passages of Paul: “Though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing” (1 Cor 13:2). Again: “Now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity” (1 Cor 13:13). From these two passages, they contend we are justified rather by charity than by faith. But this argument is easily overturned. For what is mentioned in the first passage has no reference to true faith at all. The second signifies true faith, than which he calls charity greater, not as being more meritorious, but because it is more fruitful. Charity is perpetual in its duration, whereas the use of faith is temporary. But let us suppose that charity excels faith in all respects. Yet, who would argue from this that it has a greater concern in justification? The power of justifying, attached to faith, consists not in the worthiness of the act. Our justification depends solely on the mercy of God and the merit of Christ, which when faith apprehends, it is said to justify us.

9. Another favourite passage, relied upon by the modern Sorbonists, is the lawyer, who asked Christ what was necessary to salvation; to which He replied, “If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments” (Matt 19:17). Our answer is, Christ adapted His reply to those with whom he conversed. Here a doctor of the law inquires the methods of obtaining happiness, what men must **do** in order to attain to it. Both the character of the speaker and the inquiry itself induced the Lord to make this reply. The inquirer, persuaded of the righteousness of the law, possessed a blind confidence in his works. He is, therefore, justly referred to the law, which contains a perfect mirror of righteousness. We also declare, that if life be sought by works, it is indispensably requisite to keep the commandments. This doctrine is necessary to be known by Christians; for how should they flee to Christ, if they did not acknowledge themselves to have fallen from the way of life upon the precipice of death? It is then, that Christ is presented to them as the asylum of salvation, when they perceive the vast difference between their own lives and the Divine righteousness. If we seek salvation by works, we must keep the commandments; but to keep the commandments is a task to which none

of us are equal. Being excluded from the righteousness of the law, we are under the necessity of resorting to faith in Christ.

10. By subtleties and sophisms, our adversaries cavil that faith is in some places called a work (John 6:29), as though faith procured righteousness for us by its intrinsic merit, as an act of obedience to the Divine will, and not rather by embracing the Divine mercy.

I would like to conclude, that incredulity is the root of all evils. For it is the original defection from God, which is afterwards followed by particular transgressions of the law. We cannot be righteous by works, unless we follow the straight line of perfect obedience to the law throughout the whole of our lives. Hence it appears that righteousness arises not from one or a few works, but from an indefatigable observance of the law. But the rule of unrighteousness is very different. “Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all” (Jas 2:10). But it will be a weak argument to infer, on the contrary, that one good work will reconcile a man to God.

Chapter XIX

On Christian Liberty

1. Christian Liberty is an appendix to justification. But there are some who, under pretext of this liberty, cast off all obedience to God, and precipitate themselves into the most unbridled licentiousness. Others despise this liberty, supposing it to be subversive of all moderation and morality. In spite of such difficulties arising from this doctrine, we must exert to understand it, in order to obtain internal peace of mind.

2. Christian liberty consists of three parts. The first part is, when seeking justification before God, we should be delivered from the righteousness of the law. Dismissing all thought of our own works to attain justification, let us turn our eyes solely on Christ.

While we are delivered from the claims of the law, before the tribunal of God through justification in Christ; the law, however, remains useful to believers. It continues to instruct, exhort and stimulate us to duty and holiness.

3. On this point turns almost the whole argument of the Epistle of the Galatians. While Paul, in Galatians, is contending for liberty from the Mosaic ceremonies, his principal argument is, that no one can obtain righteousness before God by any works of the law.

4. The second part of Christian liberty, which is dependent on the first, is that we do not observe the law, as being under any legal obligation. Being liberated from the yoke of the law, we rather yield a voluntary obedience to the will of God.

5. They who are bound by the yoke of the law are like slaves. Being delivered from this yoke, we are like children who, with all our faulty works, are confident that our obedience will be accepted, by our indulgent Father. This is confirmed to us by the prophet: "I will spare them," saith He, "as a man spareth his own son that serveth him" (Mal 3:17).

6. This is the reason why the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews refers to faith, and estimates only by faith, all the good works which are recorded of the holy patriarchs (Heb 11:2). On this liberty, Paul reasons, in Romans 6:14, that sin ought not to have dominion over us, because we

are “not under the law, but under grace.” In this consolation furnished by their liberty from the law, their works, though imperfect, are accepted of the Father, because Christian liberty is to lead us to virtue and not back to sin.

7. The third part of Christian liberty teaches us, that we are not bound respecting external things. We have liberty to use some and liberty to omit others. The knowledge of this liberty is very necessary for us; for without it we shall have no tranquillity of conscience, nor will there be any end to superstitions.

8. “I know,” says Paul, “that there is nothing unclean of itself; but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean” (Rom 14:14). In these words he makes all external things subject to our liberty, provided that our minds have regard to this liberty before God. But if any superstitious notion cause us to scruple, those things which are naturally pure become contaminated to us. Wherefore he subjoins, “Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin” (Rom 14:22, 23). By this liberty, without any scruple of conscience or perturbation of mind, we should devote the gifts of God to that use for which He has given us. This comprehends all ceremonies, the observation of which is left free, that the conscience may not be bound by any obligation to observe them.

9. Christian liberty is a spiritual thing in all its branches. Wherefore they are guilty of perverting its meaning, who either make it a pretext for their irregular appetites, or, in the exercise of it, totally disregard their weak brethren. The former of these sins is the more common in the present age. To be immersed in sensual delights, to inebriate the heart and mind with present pleasures, and perpetually to grasp at new ones—these things are very remote from a legitimate use of the Divine blessings. For God confers His blessings on them for the support of life, not for luxury. Here is a law on Christian liberty from the Apostle Paul: “I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need” (Phil 4:11, 12).

10. Many persons err likewise in this respect, that they make an imprudent use of their Christian liberty, which offends their weak brethren.

Christian liberty consists in abstinence as well as its use. Though it is right to assert our liberty before men, yet the greatest caution must be observed lest we offend the weak.

11. Offences, in this regard, may be divided into two species. The first species of offence affects none but the weak, and the second, the Pharisees. As to the weak, we have a genuine duty to discharge, that no man put a stumbling-block in a brother's way (Rom 14:1, 13). As to an offence taken by the Pharisees, we learn from the Lord's injunction, "Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind" (Matt 15:14).

12. But the subject is still pending in uncertainty, unless we know whom we are to account weak, and whom we are to consider as Pharisee. Without which distinction, I see no use of liberty in the midst of offences, but such as must be attended with the greatest danger. But Paul appears to me to have very clearly decided, both by doctrine and examples, how far our liberty should be either moderated or asserted on the occurrence of offences. When he made Timothy his associate, he circumcised him (Acts 16:3); but could not be induced to circumcise Titus (Gal 2:3). Here was a difference in his proceedings, but no change of mind or purpose. In the circumcision of Timothy, he says: "Though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all," and says he, "Unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; . . . I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some" (1 Cor 9:19, 20, 22). Thus we have a proper moderation of liberty, if it may be indifferently restricted with any advantage. His reason for refraining from circumcising Titus was: "But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised: And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you" (Gal 2:3-5). We also are under the necessity of vindicating our liberty, if it be endangered in weak consciences by the iniquitous requisitions of false Apostles (1 Cor 10:23, 24). Nothing can be plainer than this rule, that our liberty should be used, if it conduces to our

neighbour's edification; but that if it be not beneficial to our neighbour, it should be abridged.

13. But whatever I have advanced respecting the avoidance of offences, I wish to be referred to indifferent and unimportant things. For necessary duties must not be omitted through fear of any offence. As our liberty should be subjected to love, so love itself ought to be subservient to the purity of faith. It is important to have love, but we must not offend God for the love of our neighbour.

14. Now, since the consciences of believers, being privileged with the liberty we have described, we conclude that they are exempt from all human authority. Paul hesitates not to assert, that Christ's death is rendered vain, if we suffer our souls to be in subjection to men (Gal 5:1, 4). In Galatians, Paul asserts that Christ is obscured or rather abolished, if we, who have found liberty in Him, should be ensnared in the bonds of laws and ordinances put up at the pleasure of men (cf. 1 Cor 7:23).

15. To prevent anyone from falling into this error, let us consider, in the first place, that man is under two kinds of government—one spiritual, by which the conscience is formed in piety to the service of God; the other political, by which a man is instructed in the duties of humanity and civility. The former has its seat in the interior of the mind, whilst the latter only directs the external conduct. This distinction will prevent what the Gospel inculcates concerning spiritual liberty from being misapplied to political regulations. Of civil government and ecclesiastical laws, a full discussion of them will appear in the Fourth Book.

16. As works are in respect of men, so conscience is linked to God. A good conscience is no other than inward integrity of heart. In which sense Paul says, that "the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned" (1 Tim 1:5). Afterwards, he shows how widely it differs from understanding, saying, that "some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck" (1 Tim 1:19). These words indicate that it is a lively inclination to the service of God and a sincere pursuit of piety of life. It is that a law, which simply binds a man without relation to other men, is said to bind the conscience. Things in themselves indifferent are to be guided by other considerations.

It is our duty to abstain from them, if they tend to the least offence, yet without violating of liberty of conscience. Christian liberty—liberty of conscience.

Chapter XX

On Prayer, the Principal Exercise of Faith, and the Medium of Our Daily Reception of Divine Blessings

1. From the subjects discussed, we perceive how utterly destitute man is of every good. Wherefore, if he seek for relief in his necessities, he must go out of himself, and obtain it from some other quarter. But since we have been taught to acknowledge, that whatever we want for the supply of our necessities is in God and our Lord Jesus Christ, it remains for us to seek Him, and by prayer to implore of Him.

2. By means of prayer, we penetrate to those riches which are reserved with our heavenly Father for our use. By prayer we dig out those treasures, which the Gospel discovers to our faith. Now, the necessity of the exercise of prayer no language can sufficiently explain. But our heavenly Father declares, that the only fortress of salvation consists in invocation in His name; by which we call to our aid the presence of His providence. Our consciences derive peace; for when the affliction which oppressed us is represented to the Lord, we feel abundant composure—that none of our troubles are concealed from Him.

3. But some will say, Does He not, without information, know both our troubles and our necessities? But the Lord's teaching His people to pray is not so much for His own sake as for ours. It is His pleasure that His right be rendered to Him, by their considering Him as the Author of all that is desired, and by their acknowledging this in their prayers. The greater the confidence, therefore, with which the ancients glorified in the Divine benefits, with so much more earnestness were they incited to pray. By prayer our heart may be always inflamed with an ardent desire of seeking, loving, and worshipping Him. By prayer, we may be more prepared to receive His blessings with true gratitude of soul.

4. For conducting prayer in a proper manner, the first rule is that our heart be composed to a suitable frame. Our mind should be divested of all carnal cares and thoughts, and be fervently kindled, especially when we utter our complaints to the Lord from the abysses of affliction.

5. Whoever engages in prayer should apply all his faculties, and not to be distracted with wandering thoughts. And this is indicated by the ceremony of lifting up the hands, that men may remember they are at a great distance from God, as it is also expressed in the psalm, “Unto thee, O LORD, do I lift up my soul” (Ps 25:1). Our second proposition is, that we must pray for no more than God permits. Therefore, we ought to remember this passage in John, “If we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us” (1 John 5:14). To assist our imbecility, God gives us the Spirit, to be the director of our prayers, exciting with us confidence, desires, and sighs.

6. Let this be the second rule: That in our supplications we should have a real sense of our poverty. For that multitudes carelessly recite a form of prayer, and that they perform this merely in compliance with duty, is evident from the coldness of their hearts.

7. We ought to be “praying always” (Eph 6:18), because how great soever we may believe the prosperity of our affairs, yet there is no moment of time in which our necessity does not furnish incitements to prayer.

Legitimate prayer requires repentance. Whence it is frequently said in Scripture, that God hears not the wicked. Those who shut up their hearts should find the ears of God closed against them.

8. To these must be added a third rule—that whosoever presents himself before God in prayer must renounce every idea of his own glory. Daniel says, “We do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies. O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; . . .” (Dan 9:18, 19).

9. Finally, even the introduction to praying is a supplication for pardon. Even the holiest of men cannot obtain any blessing of God till he be freely reconciled to Him. David sets us the example: “Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions: according to thy mercy remember thou me for thy goodness’ sake, O LORD” (Ps 25:7). Indeed, under the law, prayers are required to be consecrated by an atonement of blood, to remind the people that they were unworthy of so great a privilege.

10. But when the saints sometimes appear to plead their righteousness, as when David says, “Preserve my soul; for I am holy” (Ps 86:2), their only design is, from their regeneration to prove themselves sons of God. This way of addressing the Almighty is observed, when they compare themselves with their enemies, from whose iniquity they desire Him to deliver them.

11. The fourth and last rule is, that thus prostrate with true humility, we should nevertheless pray with certain hope of obtaining our requests. I do not mean a confidence which delivers the mind from all sense of anxiety; for such a placid satisfaction belongs to those whose prosperity is equal to their wishes, who are affected by no care, corroded by no desire, and alarmed by no fear. But the saints have an excellent stimulus to calling upon God, when their perplexities harass them. Finally, it is faith that obtains what is granted. They avail nothing, who call upon God in doubt, and are uncertain whether they shall be heard or not.

12. The value of that assurance is chiefly learned by prayer. This assurance of obtaining what we implore is also commanded of the Lord, and taught by the example of saints. We must not only pray with faith, but if I may use the expression, from a “presumption of faith,” which is “confidence” and “boldness.” The Psalmist introduces the same idea: “This I know: for God is for me” (Ps 56:9). From these words we gather, that prayers are but empty words, if unattended by hope, from which, as from a watch-tower, we quietly look out for God.

13. The command to pray is precisely given by the Psalmist, “Call upon me in the day of trouble” (Ps 50:15). The precept is further reinforced by our Lord, “Ask, and it shall be given you; . . . knock, and it shall be opened to you” (Matt 7:7). To which there is also annexed a promise. These two positions being proved, those who turn their backs on God are, not only guilty of disobedience, but also convicted of unbelief.

14. Since the command to pray is common to us all, though we may not equal the sanctity of the holy patriarchs, prophets and Apostles, if we rely on the Divine Word, we are associated with them in this privilege. Only let us possess sincerity of heart, self-abhorrence, humility, and faith, and our Father will not reject us.

15. Several questions however arise, where the Scripture relates that the Lord has complied with some prayers, which did not arise from a calm and regulated heart. Jotham, though from a just cause, but from the impulse of revenge, prayed for the destruction of the inhabitants of Shechem, which afterwards fell upon them (Judg 9:20). The Lord, by fulfilling this curse, seems to approve of such disorderly sallies of passion. Whence it seems deducible, that prayers not conformable to the rules of Divine Word, are nevertheless efficacious. I reply, first, that a permanent rule is not annulled by particular examples. Secondly, that peculiar emotions have sometimes been excited in a few individuals, causing a distinction between them and men in general. As far as examples are concerned, we have undeniable evidences of the Scripture doctrine, that He succours the miserable, and hears the groans of those who are under the pressure of injustice.

16. The things I have delivered, concerning the four rules for praying aright, are not required of God with such extreme rigour as to cause the rejection of all prayers. God bears with our lispings, and pardons our ignorance; and certainly without this indulgence there can be no freedom of prayer.

17. To deliver us from shame and fear, the Father has given us His Son to be our Advocate and Mediator. With such an Intercessor, nothing we ask in His name will be denied us. Christ the Mediator changes the throne of dreadful glory into a “throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Heb 4:16). “Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, . . . At that day ye shall ask in my name: . . . that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son” (John 16:24, 26; 14:13).

18. Though Christ says, “At that day [after His ascension to heaven] ye shall ask in my name”; from the beginning no prayer had been heard but for the sake of the Mediator. For this reason the Lord had appointed in the law, that the priest alone should enter the sanctuary, bearing on his shoulders the names of the tribes of Israel, and the same number of precious stones before his breast; but that the people should stand without in the court, and there unite their prayers with the priests (Exod 28). The meaning of that shadowy ceremony was, that we are all banished from

the presence of God, and therefore need a Mediator to appear in our name. Why then, does Christ assign a new period, when His disciples shall begin to pray in His name, but because His grace, being now become more illustrious, deserves to be more strongly recommended to us?

19. Since He is the only way of access to God, to them who deviate from this road, there remains no other way. Thus Christ is appointed as the one Mediator, by whose intercession the Father is rendered propitious to us. All the intercessions of the whole Church should be directed to that principal One, in our mutual intercessions for one another.

20. The cavil of the sophists is quite frivolous, that Christ is the Mediator of redemption, but believers of intercession. But Augustine says, “Christian men in their prayers mutually recommend each other to the Divine regard. That person, for whom no one intercedes, while he intercedes for all, is the true and only Mediator.” Though the Apostle Paul is a principal member under the Head, he recommends himself to the prayers of believers. Neither does he make himself a mediator between God and the people, but exhorts all members of the body of Christ to pray for one another. Only Christ is the One who mediates for the whole Church, “For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Tim 2:5).

21. With respect to the saints who are dead in the flesh, but alive in Christ, if we attribute intercession to them, let us not imagine they have any other way of praying to God than by Christ. But it has been practised in some ages, and is now practised wherever Popery prevails, to pray through the saints. By this, they dishonour Christ, and rob Him of the character of the only Mediator. They defraud Him of the praise which is due to Him. They reject the goodness of God, who exhibits Himself as their Father; for He is not a Father to them, unless they acknowledge Christ as brother. Ambrose says of Christ being the sole Mediator, “He is our mouth, with which we address the Father; our eye, by which we behold the Father; our right hand, by which we present ourselves to the Father. Without whose mediation, neither we, nor any other saints, have the least intercourse with God.”

22. After men had begun to regard the intercession of saints, they gave to each his particular attributes. They chose each his particular saint, to whose protection they committed as to the care of tutelary gods. At

length multitudes invoke them, not as subordinate promoters, but as principal agents, in their salvation. Prostrate before the statue or image of Barbara, Catharine, for example, they mutter *Pater Noster*, “Our Father.” They supplicate the holy Virgin to command her Son to grant their petitions.

23. They include dead saints with angels, whom God has appointed to attend to our salvation, whence they frequent the sacred assemblies, and the Church is to them a theatre, in which they admire the various and “manifold wisdom of God” (Eph 3:10). Those who transfer to others that which is peculiar to them, certainly confound the order established by God.

24. When they talk of the pious dead, of what refulgence of the Divine countenance irradiating them, in which, as in a mirror, they behold from heaven the affairs of men, they are forcibly penetrating into the secret appointments of God, without the authority of His Word. The fact is, when the Lord has removed the dead from our society, He has left us no intercourse with them.

25. In defence of the false doctrine of praying to the dead, they adduce, from Scripture, the testimony of Jacob’s prayer, that his own name, and the names of Abraham and Isaac, be named on his posterity (Gen 48:16). Let us inquire the calling on their names among the Israelites: they do not pray to their fathers to assist them; but they rather beseech God to remember His servants Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Their example is, therefore, no vindication of those who address the saints themselves. When Isaiah prayed, “Thou art our father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: thou, O LORD, art our father, our redeemer;” (Isa 63:16), he entertains not a thought of any intercession through the dead.

26. Those, who advocate the intercession of the dead, misquote Psalm 32:6, “For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found.” This is but one of David’s numerous testimonies of his prayers being answered. The lessons we can learn from the ancients, being heard in their prayers, are, that we should follow their example. And an experience of God granting our requests should confirm our faith in His promise to answer our prayers.

27. Let us conclude their argument in the following manner: No prayer can be directed to any other. God will only be involved in faith, and prayers are to conform to the rule of His Word. Since faith, founded on His Word, is the source of true prayer, as soon as the least deviation is made from the Word, there must necessarily be an immediate corruption to prayer. No prayer is acceptable to God, unless it be sanctified by Christ the Mediator; and though believers mutually pray to God for their brethren, this derogates nothing from the sole intercession of Christ. Concerning intercession of the dead, Scripture has not a syllable to say about it.

28. Though prayer is restricted to wishes and petitions, there is a great affinity between petition and thanksgiving. In petitions, we pour out our desires before God. In thanksgiving, we celebrate His beneficence towards us with due praises. Therefore, David has connected these two parts together: “Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me” (Ps 50:15). Again, “What shall I render unto the LORD for all his benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the LORD” (Ps 116:12, 13). And this is followed by the Church in another Psalm: “Save us, O LORD our God, . . . to give thanks unto thy holy name, and to triumph in thy praise” (Ps 106:47). Thus Paul concurs: “In every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God” (Phil 4:6).

29. From private prayers, we proceed to the public prayers of the Church. It is necessary to fix certain hours for the benefit of all; and, if need be, more often. While Christ does not forbid us to pray long or frequently, or with great fervour and affection; He forbids praying in our ability and garrulous loquacity, like the hypocrites. In order that the common prayers might not sink into contempt, God called the temple a “house of prayer” (Isa 56:7). By this expression, He taught both that the duty of prayer is a principal part of worship, and that the temple had been erected as a standard for believers.

30. Inasmuch as God has commanded believers to unite in common prayers, even where two or three are gathered (Matt 18:20); so it is necessary that public temples be appointed for them. But we must not consider them to be the proper habitations of God, where He may be nearer to hear our prayers. As we are the true temples, we must pray

within ourselves, if we wish to invoke Him in His holy temple. Let us, who worship the Lord “in spirit and in truth” (John 4:23), without any difference of place, relinquish those gross ideas of religion to the Jews or pagans. There was a temple dedicated, by Divine command, to the oblation of prayers and sacrifices, when the truth was concealed under such shadows. But now, having been plainly revealed to us, it no longer permits an exclusive attachment to any material temple. Therefore Isaiah and Stephen have sharply reprehended those who suppose that God dwells “in temples made with hands” (Isa 66:1; Acts 7:48).

31. Moreover it is evident, that neither voice nor singing, if used in prayer, has any validity unless it proceeds from the innermost desire of the heart (Isa 29:13, 14). Nor do we condemn the use of voice or singing, but rather highly recommend them, for they exercise the mind in Divine meditation, and fix the attention of the heart. Our tongues are created for the express purpose of declaring and celebrating the Divine praises, that with one common voice, and, as it were, with the same mouth, we may all at once proclaim the glory of God.

32. The custom of singing in the churches not only appears to be very ancient, but, that it was used even by the Apostles, may be concluded from these words of Paul, “I will pray with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also” (1 Cor 14:15). Singing is very efficacious in exciting the mind to ardour of devotion. On the reverse, whatever music is composed only to delight the ear, is unbecoming of the majesty of the Church, and cannot but be displeasing to the Lord.

33. Public prayers are to be composed, not in Greek among the Latins, nor in Latin among the French or English; but in the vernacular tongue. For it ought to be conducted to the edification of the whole Church. “When thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest? For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified” (1 Cor 14:16, 17). The corporeal gestures usually observed in prayer, such as kneeling and uncovering the head, should increase our reverence to God.

34. From the rules of praying, let us consider the form which is given in the Lord’s Prayer (Matt 6:9–13; Luke 11:2–4); which is conducive to

our benefit, and all that is necessary to ask. Plato, borrowing an ancient poet, pronounces this to be the best method of praying, “King Jupiter, give us those things which are best, whether we pray for them or not; but command evil things to remain at a distance from us, even though we implore them.”

35. Now, the Lord’s Prayer is composed of six petitions. The first three are devoted particularly to the glory of God. The remaining three concern ourselves.

36. **Our Father who art in heaven, etc.** By saying “Our Father,” we certainly plead the name of Christ, since no other name can recommend our prayer to His regard. It shows we are sons of God, His adopted children through grace in Christ. Though all the fathers in the world should leave their children destitute, He shall never forsake us, being our heavenly Father. “He cannot deny himself” (2 Tim 2:13).

37. He, who is “the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort” (2 Cor 1:3), is more than willing to hear the cries of His children, even as it is portrayed in the parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11–32). If we be Christians, He will be called not only “Father,” but expressly “Our Father.”

38. Since we are taught to call God “our Father” in common, we should have a strong affection for one another among ourselves, and pray for one another. This is a debt we owe to our Father Himself, for he, who loves any father, feels likewise a love for the whole household. Let a Christian, therefore, regulate his prayers by this rule, that they be common, and comprehend all who are his brethren in Christ; all men in the world, but particularly “them who are of the household of faith” (Gal 6:10).

39. In praying for all men, it is impossible but that particular reference will be made of ourselves, and those whose needs are known to us, as in the giving of alms. Yet it is also true, that we may assist by our prayers, beyond giving of alms, even the greatest strangers and those with whom we are not acquainted, how distant soever they may be. This is done by that general form of prayer, which comprehends all the children of God, among whom they are numbered.

40. It is added that **He is in Heaven**. This is not that God is circumscribed within the circumference of heaven, even as Solomon

confesses, that “the heaven of heavens” cannot contain Him (1 Kgs 8:27). God is represented as beyond all place, that when we seek Him we may be elevated above all reach of body and soul. He is exalted above all possibility of corruption or mutation. He comprehends the whole world, and governs the universe by His power.

41. The first petition is **That God’s name may be hallowed**. By this, we wish God to receive all honour and reverence that He deserves, to which is opposed that profanation which always has been too common in the world.

42. The second petition is **That the Kingdom of heaven may come**. This kingdom consists of two parts: the one, God’s correcting by the power of His Spirit all our carnal and depraved appetites, which oppose Him in great numbers; the other, His forming all our powers to an obedience to His commands. We are commanded to pray that He will subdue the hearts and minds of all men to a voluntary obedience to it. God therefore erects His kingdom on the humiliation of the whole world. It ought to be the object of our daily wishes, that God would collect churches for Himself from all countries that He would enlarge their numbers, enrich them with gifts; that He would overthrow all the enemies with the pure doctrine and religion, even Antichrist, “with the brightness of his coming” (2 Thess 2:8).

43. The third petition is **That the will of God may be done on earth as it is in heaven**. The Divine will here, is that to which voluntary obedience corresponds; and therefore he even is expressly compared with the earth. In praying for this, we renounce our carnal desires; that God may rule us according to His pleasure.

44. Next follows the second part of our prayer, in which we descend to our own interests. **Give us this day our daily bread**. This is a general request to supply all our corporeal wants in the present state, that we may eat our bread in peace. We surrender ourselves to His care and providence, down to a crumb of bread and a drop of water. The expression “this day” restrains the inordinate desire for transitory things, and that even what we have in our possession is not our own; any further than as He hourly bestows on us some portion of it and grants us the use of it. For “man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth

out of the mouth of the LORD” (Deut 8:3; Matt 4:4). It teaches us to acquire by just and innocent labour, and not procure by acts of deception or rapine.

45. **Forgive us our debts.** Sins He calls debts, because we owe the penalty of them—a debt we are altogether incapable of discharging, unless we are released by His remission, being satisfied by His own mercy in Christ. Those who rely on their own merits, or the merits of others, and persuade themselves that remission of sins is purchased by these satisfactions, receive no forgiveness but rather condemnation. Those who teach the doctrine of attaining perfect innocence, so that one may be delivered from all sin, make God a liar (1 John 1:10).

Lastly, we pray that we may be forgiven **as we forgive our debtors.** Can forgiveness consist of divesting the mind of anger, enmity, and desire of revenge, and losing the memory of injuries by a voluntary forgetfulness? But if we retain any enmities in our minds, meditate acts of revenge, and seek opportunities of annoyance, we beseech God not to grant us remission of sins. It must also be observed, that this is not a condition, that He would forgive us as we forgive our debtors, because we can merit His forgiveness of us by our forgiveness of others. By this expression, the Lord intended, partly to comfort the weakness of our faith, that we may be assured of remission of sins granted by Him, as we grant it to others.

46. The sixth petition is, **Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.** This suggests to us, not only the need of the grace of the Spirit within us, to soften our hearts to obedience to God; but also of His aid to oppose all the stratagems and assaults of Satan. Now, the forms of temptations are many, such as the corrupt conception of the mind, and even things not evil in themselves, but become temptations through the subtlety of the devil. These temptations are either from prosperous or adverse events. From prosperous ones, as riches, power, honours. From unpropitious ones, as poverty, reproaches, afflictions, despondency. But the temptations of God are widely different from those of Satan. Satan tempts to overthrow, condemn, destroy. But God, that, by proving His people, He may make a trial of their sincerity, to confirm their strength by exercising it, to mortify and purify their flesh, which, without such restrains, would run into the greatest excesses. “God . . . will with the

temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it” (1 Cor 10:13). By the word *evil*, whether we understand the devil or sin, is of little importance. Satan is the enemy and sin is his weapon. Our petition therefore is, that we may not be overwhelmed and conquered by any temptations, but that we may stand in the power of the Lord, against all adverse powers that assault us; that we rise superior to sin, death, the gates of hell, and the whole kingdom of the devil. This is being delivered from evil.

47. These three petitions, in which we particularly commend to God ourselves, evidently prove that the prayers of Christians ought to be in public, and to regard the public edification of the Church and the advancement of the communion of believers.

Though not found in the Latin copies, the concluding sentence, namely, **His is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever**, appears too apposite to this place to be omitted. This is a solid basis for our faith; for if our prayers were to be recommended to God by our own merit, who could dare to utter a word in His presence? As our Father can never be deprived of His kingdom, power and glory, the whole is concluded with AMEN, which expresses our ardent desire to obtain the blessings supplicated by God, and confirms our hope that all these things are already obtained.

48. Whatever we ought to seek from God, is stated in this model and directory for prayer. Tertullian has called this a *legitimate prayer*, tacitly implying, that all others are irregular and unlawful.

49. This does not mean that we are confined to this form of prayer, without the liberty of changing a word or syllable. For the Scripture contains many prayers, expressed in words very different from this, yet written by the same Spirit. We only mean, that no one should seek for anything that is not summarily comprehended in this prayer. It is certain all prayers contained in the Scripture, or proceeding from pious hearts are referred to this. To conclude: this is the teaching of Divine wisdom, which taught what it willed, and willed what is needful.

50. To assist our weakness, we should appoint regular, particular hours for prayer, such as when we rise in the morning, before we enter on the business of the day, when we sit down to meat, and after eating,

when we retire to rest. When we are oppressed, or see others oppressed, we should immediately resort to Him in prayer. We should always give thanks for His goodness, leaving everything to His will.

51. Governed by the laws of Divine Providence, we shall learn to persevere in prayer, knowing that He is always near us, and in His own time, He will answer.

52. But if after long waiting, our sense neither understands what advance we have made by praying, yet our faith will assure us, what cannot be perceived by sense. He will cause us to possess abundance in poverty, and consolation in affliction. Although all things fail us, yet God will never forsake us. Besides, though God grants our prayers, He does not always answer them according to the express form of the request; but seeming to keep us in suspense, shows by unknown means that our prayers were not in vain (1 John 5:15).

Chapter XXI

Eternal Election, Or God's Predestination of Some to Salvation, and of Others to Destruction

1. The Gospel not being equally preached to all, and among those to whom it is preached not always finding the same reception, this leads us to inquire into the doctrine of God's eternal election. In the opinion of many, this is a perplexing subject; for they consider nothing more unreasonable, than that of the common mass of mankind, some should be predestinated to salvation and others to destruction. On our part, we shall never understand fully our salvation as flowing from the fountain of God's free mercy, until we know His eternal election. The knowledge of God's eternal election is productive of the most delightful benefit; but ignorance of this principle detracts from the Divine glory, and diminishes real humility. According to Paul, what is so necessary to be known, can never be known, unless God, without regard to works, chooses those whom He has decreed. "At this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work" (Rom 11:5, 6).

In ascribing the salvation of the remnant of the people to the election of grace, Paul clearly testifies, that it is then known that God saves whom He will of His mere good pleasure. They who shut the gates to prevent anyone from tasting this doctrine, do no less injury to man than to God. But before I enter on the subject itself, I must address some preliminary observations to two sorts of persons. The discussion of predestination is very perplexed, which no barriers can restrain from wandering into forbidden labyrinths. As we see multitudes everywhere guilty of this arrogance, it is proper to admonish them of the bounds of their duty on this subject. Let them remember they are penetrating the inmost recesses of Divine wisdom, into those things that the Lord has hidden in Himself. Only the secret of His will which He determined to reveal to us, He has declared in His Word.

2. If we consider that the Word of the Lord is the only way to lead us to an investigation of all that ought to be believed concerning Him, this

consideration will preserve us from all presumption. When we have exceeded the limits of His Word, we shall get into a darksome course, in which errors will be inevitable. Let us not be ashamed to be ignorant of some things relative to the subject in which there is a kind of learned ignorance.

3. Others, desirous of remedying this evil, will teach men to avoid every question concerning it as they would a precipice. To observe, therefore, the legitimate boundary on this side, we must recur to the Word of the Lord, even as the Scripture is the school of the Holy Spirit, in which, as nothing necessary to be known is omitted, so nothing is taught which is not beneficial to know. “The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law” (Deut 29:29).

4. Predestination, by which God adopts some to the hope of life, and adjudges others to eternal death, no one dares absolutely to deny. But it is involved in many cavils, by those who make foreknowledge the cause of it. We maintain that both belong to God.

5. Predestination we call the eternal decree of God, by which He has determined in Himself, what He would have to become of every individual of mankind. Eternal life is foreordained for some, and eternal damnation for others. A specimen of it is given in the whole posterity of Abraham. “When the Most High divided to the nations . . . , when he separated the sons of Adam, . . . the LORD’s portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance” (Deut 32:8, 9). In the person of Abraham, one people is chosen to the rejection of others. No reason is given, except that Moses, to deprive their posterity of all occasion of glorying, teaches them that their exaltation is wholly from God’s gratuitous love. “The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: But because the LORD loved you” (Deut 7:7, 8). And the more to demolish all pride, He reproaches them with having deserved no favour, being “a stiffnecked people . . . [who] have been rebellious” (Deut 9:6, 7).

6. From election, we must now proceed to a second degree of election, in which the Divine grace was displayed in a more special manner. Even in the same race of Abraham, God rejected some, and by

nourishing others, proved that He retained them. Ishmael is cut off, Isaac is retained. After Isaac, Esau is cut off, and Jacob is retained. God exhibited a similar example in the rejection of Saul, which is reflected by the Psalmist, “He refused the tabernacle of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of Ephraim: But chose the tribe of Judah” (Ps 78:67, 68). I grant, it was their own crime and guilt that Ishmael, Esau, and persons of similar characters, fell from adoption. Yet it was a peculiar favour of God, that He preferred them to other nations; but I have said there are two degrees. Both Esau and Jacob come under the election of Isaac, but in their generation, Jacob, not Esau, was chosen (Mal 1:2, 3).

7. While in the election of Abraham’s family, we find many of his posterity cut off as patriarch members; in the election of members of the body of Christ, however, there is a manifestation of the superior efficacy of grace. These who truly belong to Christ, Paul observes, are called “a remnant.” For, experience proves, that of a great multitude the most part fall away and disappear, so that often only a small portion remains. The general adoption of the seed of Abraham was a visible representation of a greater blessing, which God conferred on a few out of the multitude. This is the reason Paul so carefully distinguishes the descendants of Abraham according to the flesh, from his spiritual children called after the example of Isaac. From clear doctrine of Scripture, we assert, that by an eternal and immutable counsel, God has once for all determined, both whom He would admit to salvation, and whom He would condemn to destruction. In the elect, we consider calling as an evidence of election, and justification as another token of its manifestation, till they arrive in glory, which constitutes its completion. As God seals His elect by vocation and justification, so by excluding the reprobate from the knowledge of His name and the sanctification of His Spirit, He indicates the judgment that awaits them.

Chapter XXII

Testimonies of Scripture in Confirmation of This Doctrine

1. Against the doctrine of gratuitous election of believers is the common notion that God, foreseeing what would be the merits of each individual, makes a corresponding distinction between different persons. And He adopts as children such as He foreknows will be deserving of His grace. Conversely, He condemns to death others, whose disposition He sees will be inclined to wickedness. Thus they obscure the doctrine of election with the veil of foreknowledge. God's sovereign election of some, and preterition of others, they make the subject of formal accusation against Him.

2. That election is not based on foreknowledge of merit, is the statement that we were chosen "before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him" (Eph 1:4, 5). For what could be the reason for discrimination between those who yet had no existence, and whose condition was afterward to be the same in Adam? Now, if they are chosen in Christ, it follows, not only that each individual is chosen out of himself, but also that some are separated from others. The next clause, stating them to have been "chosen . . . that [they might] be holy," refutes the error which derives election from foreknowledge; since Paul, on the contrary, declares that all the virtue discovered in men is the effect of election, even as God has "predestinated . . . according to the good pleasure of his will" (Eph 1:5).

3. Wherever this decree of God reigns, there can be no consideration of works. "Who hath . . . called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began" (2 Tim 1:9). The declaration of Christ to His disciples is universally applicable to all believers: "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you" (John 15:16); which not only excludes past merits, but signifies that they had nothing in themselves to cause their election.

4. In Romans, where he goes to the bottom of this argument, he says, "They are not all Israel, which are [born] of Israel" (Rom 9:6);

though all were blessed by hereditary right, yet the succession did not pass on all alike. Paul, though he admits the posterity of Abraham to be holy in consequence of the covenant, yet contends that most of them are strangers to it; and that not only because they degenerate, from legitimate children becoming spurious ones, but because the sovereignty belongs to God's special election. He pursues the subject further under the example of Jacob and Esau, to indicate the election of one and the reprobation of the other. "The children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth; It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated" (Rom 9:11–13).

5. We have the Apostle's authority, that the salvation of believers is founded solely on the decision of Divine election, and that favour is not procured by works, but proceeds from gratuitous calling. Jacob and Esau are brothers, begotten of the same parents, still enclosed in the same womb. There is in all respects a perfect equality between them. Yet the judgment of God concerning them is different; for He takes the younger and rejects the elder. In other instances, God also appears to have treated primogeniture with contempt, to cut off from the flesh all occasion of boasting. He rejects Ishmael, and favours Isaac. He degrades Manasseh and honours Ephraim.

6. If you inquire the cause, the Apostle assigns the following: "For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion" (Rom 9:15). When God assigns you His mere mercy, why will you have recourse to your own merits?

7. Let the supreme Master decide the whole matter. Seeing such obduracy, in His hearers, to the sermons He preached, He exclaims, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; . . . And this is the Father's will . . . , that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing" (John 6:37, 39). Observe, the origin is from the donation of the Father, that we are given into the custody and protection of Christ. Again: "No man can come to me, except the Father . . . draw him Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me" (John

6:44, 45). If all men promiscuously submitted to Christ, election would be common: now the fewness of believers discovers a manifest distinction. Having asserted His disciples, who were given to Him, to be the peculiar portion of the Father, Christ adds, "I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine" (John 17:9). This shows that the whole world does not belong to its Creator. Only grace delivers, from the curse and wrath of God, a few who would otherwise perish. At the same time, though Christ introduces Himself in the mediatorial capacity, yet He claims to Himself the right of election, in common with the Father. "I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen" (John 13:18).

His enumeration of Judas among the elect, though he was a devil, only refers to the apostolical office.

8. But it will be said, Ambrose, Origen, Jerome believed God dispenses His grace among men, according to His foreknowledge of the good use which every individual will make of it. Augustine was also once of the same sentiment; but when he had made a greater proficiency in Scriptural knowledge, he not only retracted, but powerfully confuted it. Rebuking the Pelagians for persisting in this error, Augustine pointed out that God said nothing about foreseeing the merits of those children yet unborn, "but resorts to the decrees and mercies of God."

9. We shall not dwell on the sophistry of Thomas Aquinas. For since the Lord allows us to contemplate nothing in election but His mere goodness, the desire of anyone to see anything more is a preposterous disposition.

10. It is objected by some, that God will be inconsistent with Himself, if He invites all men universally to come to Him, and receives only a few elect. Thus, according to them, the universality of the promises destroys the discrimination of special grace. How the Scripture reconciles these two facts, that by the external preaching all are called to repentance and faith, and yet the spirit of repentance and faith is not given to all, I have elsewhere stated. What they assume, I deny as being false in two respects. For He who threatens drought to one city which it rains upon another, and who denounces to another place a famine of doctrine (Amos 4:7; 8:11), lays Himself under no positive obligation to call all men alike. And He

who, forbidding Paul to preach the Word in Asia, and suffering him not to go into Bithynia, calls him into Macedonia (Acts 16:6–10), demonstrates His right to distribute His treasure to whom He pleases. At present let this suffice, that though the voice of the Gospel addresses all men generally, yet the gift of faith is bestowed on few.

11. Now, with respect to the reprobate, as Jacob is made the object of grace, so Esau is accounted an object of hatred (Rom 9:13). Now, Paul asserts the one to have been elected and the other rejected while they had not done any good or evil; in order to prove the foundation of Divine predestination not to be in works. Secondly, when he raises the objection whether God is unjust, he never touches on His justice, that God rewarded Esau according to his wickedness; but rather, that the reprobate are raised up that the glory of God may be displayed by their means. Lastly, he subjoins a concluding observation, that God “hath . . . mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth” (Rom 9:18). You see how he attributes both to the mere will of God. If, therefore, we can assign no reason why he grants mercy to His people but because such is His pleasure, neither shall we find any other cause but His will for the reprobation of others. For when God is said to harden or show mercy to whom He pleases, men are taught to seek no cause but His will.

Chapter XXIII

A Refutation of the Calumnies Generally, But Unjustly, Urged Against This Doctrine

1. When the human mind hears these things, as stated in the previous chapter, its petulance breaks all restraint. Many would admit election in such a way as to deny that anyone is reprobated. We say, whom God passes by, therefore, He reprobates, and from no other cause than His determination to exclude them from the inheritance which He predestines for His children. Unlike the persons I have mentioned, Paul never strives to excuse God. He only declares that it is unlawful for a thing formed to quarrel with his Maker (Rom 9:20). Christ declares it this way, “Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up” (Matt 15:13).

2. Another objection put forward by our adversaries is, by what right the Lord is angry with His creatures, who had not provoked Him by any previous offence. For that to devote to destruction whom He pleases, is more like the caprice of a tyrant than the lawful sentence of a judge. We reply: How presumptuous it is for them to inquire into the causes of the Divine will; which is, in fact, the cause of everything that exists. For the will of God is the highest rule of justice. When it is inquired, why the Lord did so, the answer must be, Because He would. But if you go further, and ask why He so determined, you are in search of something greater than the will of God, which can never be found. Now, we represent not God as lawless. Plato says, laws are necessary to men, who are the subjects of evil desires. But the will of God is, not only pure from every fault, but the highest standard of perfection, even the law of all laws.

3. If anyone should ask, Why God has from the beginning predestined some men to death, who, not yet being brought into existence, could not yet deserve the sentence of death—we will reply, what they suppose God owes to man, if He chooses to judge him from his own nature. As we are all corrupted by sin, we must be odious to God, and that not from tyrannical cruelty, but in the most equitable estimation of justice. If all whom the Lord predestinates to death are in their natural condition liable to the sentence of death, what injustice do they complain of receiving from Him?

4. They further object, Were they not, by the decree of God, antecedently predestinated to that corruption which is now stated as the cause of condemnation? Is He not unjust, therefore, in treating His creatures with such cruel mockery? I confess, indeed, that all the descendants of Adam fell by the Divine will into that miserable condition in which they are now involved; but it follows not that God is liable to this reproach. For Paul has answered thus: “O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?” (Rom 9:20, 21). In this context, we must ask, who God is? He is the Judge of the world, and, if so, how could He commit any injustice? Observes Solomon thus, “The great God that formed all things both rewardeth the fool, and rewardeth transgressors” (Prov 26:10). For he is proclaiming the greatness of God, whose will it is to punish fools and transgressors. And men betray madness in desiring to comprehend immensity within the limits of their reason.

5. I say, with Augustine, that the Lord created those who, He certainly foreknew, would fall into destruction, and that this was actually so because He willed it. But of His will it is not for us to demand the reason, which we are incapable of comprehending. Nor is it reasonable that the Divine will should be made the subject of controversy with us. For God’s will is the highest rule of justice.

Of the immensity of God’s judgments, they are called “a great deep.” What advantage do you gain from plunging yourselves into an abyss that reason itself pronounces will be fatal to you? Advises Augustine, “You, a man, expect an answer from me, who am also a man. Let us, therefore, both hear him who says, O man, who art thou? Faithful ignorance is better than presumptuous knowledge. . . . Paul . . . calls the judgments of God unsearchable; and are you come to scrutinise them? . . .” We shall do no good by proceeding any further; and the Lord needs no other defence than what He has employed by His Spirit, speaking by the mouth of Paul; and we forget to speak well when we cease to speak with God.

6. A second objection tends, not so much to the crimination of God, as to the vindication of the sinner: Why should God impute as a fault to

man those things which were rendered necessary by His predestination? What should they do? Should they resist His decrees? Therefore they are not justly punished for those things of which God's predestination is the principal cause. Let us see how this difficulty should be solved. The declaration of Solomon ought to be admitted, that "The LORD hath made all things for himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil" (Prov 16:4). Observe: all things being at God's disposal, and the decision of salvation or death belonging to Him, He orders all things by His counsel in such a manner, that some men are born to certain death, that His Name may be glorified in their destruction. Valla, a man otherwise not much versed in theology, shows superior acuteness in this observation, that both life and death are acts of God's will, rather than of His foreknowledge.

7. They further maintain, that as Adam possessed free choice, God decreed nothing more than to treat him according to his desert. If so weak a scheme as this be received, what will become of God's omnipotence? But whether they wish it or dread it, predestination exhibits itself in Adam's posterity. For the loss of salvation by the whole race through the guilt of one parent, was an event that did not happen by nature. The Scripture proclaims, that all men were, in the person of their father, sentenced to death. This, not being attributable to nature, it must have proceeded from the wonderful counsel of God. I inquire again, how the fall of Adam should involve so many nations with their infant children in eternal death, but because such was the will of God. It is an awful decree; but no man can deny that God foreknew the future final fate of man before He created him, and that He did foreknow because it was appointed by His own decree. Augustine says, "The God and Lord of all things, who created every thing very good, and foreknew that evil would arise out of good, and knew that it was more suitable to his almighty goodness to bring good out of evil than not to suffer evil to exist, ordained the life of angels and men in such a manner as to exhibit in it, first, what freewill was capable of doing, and afterwards, what could be effected by the blessings of grace, and the sentence of his justice."

8. Then, they argue that God permits the destruction of the impious, but does not will it. I shall not hesitate, to confess with Augustine, "that the will of God is the necessity of all things, and what he has willed will

necessarily come to pass; as those things are really about to happen which he has foreseen.”

Man falls, according to the appointment of Divine Providence; but he falls by his own fault. The Lord had a little before pronounced “everything that he had made” to be “very good.” Whence, then, comes the depravity of man’s revolt? By his own wickedness, he corrupted his nature which he had received pure from God; and by his fall he drew all his posterity with him into destruction. Wherefore let us rather contemplate the evident cause of condemnation, which is nearer to us in the corrupt nature of mankind, than search after a hidden and altogether incomprehensible one in the predestination of God. To be ignorant of things which it is neither possible nor lawful to know, is to be learned.

9. The reprobate wish to be thought excusable in sinning, because they cannot avoid a necessity of sinning; especially since this necessity is laid upon them by the ordination of God. But we deny this to be a just excuse; because the ordination of God is guided by equity, unknown indeed to us, but indubitably certain. The ground of it he has derived from himself, not from God; since he is ruined solely in consequence of his having degenerated from the pure creation of God to vicious depravity.

10. A third objection to predestination is, that God is a respecter of persons. But Scripture denies that God is a respecter of persons, in a different sense from that which they understand. By the word *person*, it signifies not a man, but rather those things in a man, which usually conciliate favour, honour, and dignity, or attract hatred, contempt, and disgrace. Thus Peter and Paul declare that God is not a respecter of persons, because He makes no difference between the Jew and Greek (Acts 10:34; Rom 2:11; Gal 3:28). So James uses the same language when he asserts, that God in His judgment pays no regard to riches (Jas 2:5). There will, therefore, be no contradiction in our affirming that God chooses whom He will as his children, irrespective of all merit, while He rejects and reprobates others. They ask how it happens, that of two persons distinguished from each other by no merit, God, in His election, leaves one and takes the other. I, on the other hand, ask them, whether they suppose him that is taken, to possess anything that can attract the favour of God. If they confess that he has not, it will follow that God looks

not at man, but derives His motive to favour him from His own goodness. “Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: . . . That no flesh should glory to his presence” (1 Cor 1:26–29).

11. Some people charge God with a violation of equal justice, because He observes not the same uniform course of proceeding towards all. If He finds all guilty, let Him punish all alike. If innocent, let Him withhold the rigour of justice from all. We confess the guilt to be common, but we say, that some are relieved by Divine mercy. While God rewards those whom He rejects with deserved punishment, and to those whom He calls, freely gives undeserved grace, He is liable to no accusation, inasmuch as a creditor has power to release one, and enforce his demands on another.

12. Another argument urged against predestination is, that its establishment would destroy all exertion for rectitude of conduct. Since no action of man can impede or promote the predestination of God, all will abandon themselves in despair, and run into every excess to which their sinfulness may lead them. They profess, also, to go on securely in their vices; because if they are of the number of the elect, such conduct will not prevent their being finally saved. But Paul declares the end of our election to be, that we may lead a holy and blameless life (Eph 1:4). If the object of election be holiness, it should rather stimulate us to a cheerful practice of it. They carry their argument further, by asserting, that anyone who is reprobated by God will labour to no purpose if he endeavours to approve himself to Him by innocence and integrity of life. We say, whoever are of the number of the reprobate cease not to provoke the Divine wrath against themselves by continual transgressions.

13. This doctrine is calumniated by others, as subversive of all exhortations to piety of life; and ought not to be preached to the people. But if we examine Paul’s sermons, we see the preacher on gratuitous election more fervent than others, in such exhortation: “God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but . . . that every one should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour” (1 Thess 4:7, 4). Again: “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them” (Eph 2:10).

Augustine says, “If the apostles and the succeeding teachers of the Church both piously treated of God’s eternal election, and held believers under the discipline of a pious life, what reason have our opponents, when silenced by the invincible force of truth, to suppose themselves right in maintaining that what is spoken of predestination, although it be true, ought not to be preached to the people?”

14. If any one address the people in such a way as this, If you believe not, it is because you are by a Divine decree already destined to destruction,—he not only cherishes slothfulness, but even encourages wickedness. If anyone extends the declaration into the future, that they who hear will never believe because they are reprobated,—this would be rather imprecation than instruction. Such persons, as foolish teachers and ominous prophets, Augustine charges to depart from the Church. “Because,” he concludes, “we know not who belongs, or does not belong, to the number of the predestinated, it becomes us affectionately to desire the salvation of all.”

Chapter XXIV

Election Confirmed by the Divine Call. The Destined Destruction of the Reprobate Procured by Themselves

1. Though by choosing His people the Lord has adopted them as His children, yet we see that they enter not on the possession of so great a blessing till they are called. On the other hand, as soon as they are called, they immediately enjoy some communication of election (Rom 8:29, 30). On this account, Paul calls the Spirit received by them both “the Spirit of adoption” (Rom 8:15, 16), and the seal and “earnest of our inheritance” (Eph 1:13, 14). Because, by His testimony, He confirms and seals to their hearts the certainty of their future adoption. By calling, He introduces them into His family, and unites them to Himself, that they may be one. By connecting calling with election, the Scripture evidently suggests that nothing is requisite to it but the free mercy of God.

2. This point is further demonstrated by the very nature of calling, which consists not in the mere preaching of the Word, but in the accompanying illumination of the Spirit. This illumination or efficacious influence of the Spirit is the internal call that is a pledge of our salvation. “Hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us” (1 John 3:24). Of this fact, Luke gives us an eminent example, where Jews and Gentiles in common heard the preaching of Paul and Barnabas, but “as many as were ordained to eternal life believed” (Acts 13:48).

3. Here two errors are to be avoided. For some suppose man to be a cooperator with God. Thus, according to them, the will of man is superior to the counsel of God, as though the Scripture taught, that we are only given an ability to believe, and not faith itself. Others, not thus enervating the grace of the Holy Spirit, suspend election on that which is subsequent to faith. That this is the confirmation *to us* is very clear; that it is the manifestation of God’s secret counsel before concealed, we have already seen. What was before unknown is verified and, as it were, ratified with a seal.

4. As it is erroneous to suspend the efficacy of election upon the faith of the Gospel, so we shall observe the best order, if, in seeking an

assurance of our election, we confine ourselves to those subsequent signs which are certain attestations of it. To inquire whether we are elected, we must begin and end with the calling of God. They, who are called, can perceive the daily blessings received from His hand, so that to them, not only good things, but evil ones also cooperate for good. Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is sufficient for me to possess His favour alone, against whom alone I have sinned (Bernard).

5. Now, what is the end of election, but that, being adopted as children, we may by God's favour obtain salvation and immortality? The persons whom God has adopted as His children, He is said to have chosen, not in themselves, but in Christ. If we are chosen in Him, we shall find no assurance of our election in ourselves; nor even in God the Father, considered alone, abstractedly from the Son. Christ, therefore, is the mirror, in which we should contemplate our election. If we have communion with Christ, we are written in the book of life.

6. There is another confirmation of election, which, we have said, is connected with calling. Christ loudly proclaims that all whose salvation was designed by the Father, had been delivered by Him into His protection (John 6:37, 39; 17:6, 12). He freely offers Himself to be our Shepherd and declares, if we hear His voice, we shall be numbered among His sheep. "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand" (John 10:27–29). In a word, perseverance is a confirmation of our election.

7. But it daily happens, that they who appeared to belong to Christ, fall away from Him again. Even in that very place, where He asserts that none perish of those who were given to Him by the Father, He excepts the son of perdition. This is true; but it is equally certain, that such persons never adhered to Christ with that confidence of heart which, we say, gives us assurance of our election. "They went out from us," says John, "but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us" (1 John 2:19). I dispute not their having similar signs of calling with the elect; but I am far from admitting them to possess that

certain assurance of election which I enjoin believers to seek from the Word of the Gospel. Wherefore, let not such examples move us from a tranquil reliance on our Lord's promise, that all who receive Him by faith were given Him by the Father, and not one of them shall perish.

8. The declaration of Christ, that "many are called, but few are chosen" (Matt 22:14), is very improperly understood. There will be no ambiguity, if we remember that there are two kinds of calling. There is the universal call, by which God, in the external preaching of the Word, invites all to come to Him. There is the special call, when, by the illumination of the Spirit, He causes the Word preached to sink into their hearts. Yet, sometimes He also communicates to those whom He enlightens for a season, and afterwards forsakes on account of their ingratitude, and strikes with greater blindness. These are the hypocrites in the Church.

9. The same reasoning applies to the exception lately cited, where Christ says, that "none of them is lost, but the son of perdition" (John 17:12). For he was never reckoned among the sheep of Christ, but only as he occupied the place of one. When the Lord declares he was chosen by Himself with the other Apostles, it only refers to the ministerial office "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" (John 6:70). That is, He had chosen him to the office of an Apostle. But when He speaks of election to salvation, He excludes him from the number of the elect.

10. Now, the elect are not gathered into the fold of Christ by calling, immediately from their birth, nor all at the same time, but according as God is pleased to dispense His grace to them. Before they are gathered to that Chief Shepherd, they go astray, scattered in the common wilderness, and differing in no respect from others, except in being protected by the special mercy of God from rushing down the precipice of eternal death.

11. Even the elect, before their call, were contaminated with various pollutions. For example, Rahab the harlot (Josh 2), and the thief who repented in his dying moments (Luke 23:40–42). "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way" (Isa 53:6). Those whom the Lord has determined to rescue from perdition, He defers till

His appointed season; before which He only preserves them from falling into unpardonable blasphemy.

12. As the Lord, by His effectual calling of the elect, completes the salvation to which He predestinated them, so He has His judgments against the reprobate. Those whom he has created to a life of shame and destruction, that they might be instruments of His wrath, He causes to reach their appointed end, sometimes depriving them of hearing the Word, sometimes by the preaching of it, increasing their blindness and stupidity.

Of the former, there are many examples. Let us select one that is more evident than the rest. Before the advent of Christ, there passed about four thousand years, in which the Lord concealed the light of salvation from all the Gentiles. If it be replied, that He withheld from them the participation of so great a blessing, their posterity will be found equally unworthy of it. The truth of this is sufficiently attested by Malachi, who follows his reproofs of unbelief by an immediate prediction of the coming of the Messiah. Why, then, is He given to the posterity rather than to their ancestors? He will torment himself in vain, who seeks for any cause of this beyond the secret counsel of God.

Of the second class, we have the example of the same sermon being addressed to a hundred persons, where twenty receive it with faith. The others despise, or ridicule, or condemn it. If it be replied, that the difference proceeds from their wickedness, this will afford no satisfaction; because the minds of others would have been influenced by the same wickedness, but for the correction of Divine goodness.

13. Why, then, in bestowing grace upon some, does He pass over others? Luke assigns a reason for the former, that they “were ordained to eternal life” (Acts 13:48). What conclusion should we draw respecting the latter, but that they are vessels of wrath to dishonour? Augustine says, “God could convert to good the will of the wicked, because he is omnipotent. It is evident that he could. Why, then, does He not? Because He would not. Why he would not, remains with himself.”

14. It remains now to be seen why the Lord does that which it is evident He does. If it is replied, that this is done because men have deserved it by their impiety, it will be a just observation. But as we have not yet discovered the reason of this diversity, why some persist in

obduracy while others are inclined to obedience, the discussion will lead us to the remark that Paul has quoted from Moses concerning Pharaoh, “Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth” (Rom 9:17). That the reprobate obey not the Word of God, when made known to them, is justly imputed to the wickedness of their hearts, provided it be at the same time stated, that they are abandoned to this depravity because they have been raised up, by a just but inscrutable judgment of God, to display His glory in their condemnation (1 Sam 2:25; John 12:37, 38).

15. Objections are raised from some passages of Scripture, in which God seems to deny that the destruction of the wicked is caused by His decree, but that, in opposition to His remonstrances, they voluntarily bring ruin upon themselves. Now, what does it mean, when it is declared by the prophet, “I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live” (Ezek 33:11)? It is, to assure the pious of God’s readiness to pardon them immediately on their repentance, and to show the impious, the aggravation of their sin in rejecting such a great compassion and kindness of God.

16. Another passage adduced is from Paul, where he states that God “will have all men to be saved” (1 Tim 2:4). This means, God has not closed the way of salvation against any order of men, but has diffused His mercy in such a way that He would have none without it.

Peter’s declaration, that “the Lord is . . . not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Pet 3:9), is another verse for discussion. The second clause furnishes an immediate solution of the difficulty. For the willingness that they should come to repentance must be understood in consistence with the general tenor of Scripture, that repentance depends not on the will of man, but on God; even as Paul has said, “If God peradventure will give them repentance” (2 Tim 2:25). And if God, whose voice exhorts all men to repentance, did not draw the elect to it by the secret operation of His Spirit, Jeremiah would not have said, “Turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the LORD my God. Surely after that I was turned, I repented” (Jer 31:18, 19).

17. If this be correct, it will be said there can be but little faith in the promises of the Gospel, which, in declaring the will of God, assert that

He wills what is repugnant to His inviolable decree. But this is far from a just conclusion.

For if we turn our attention to the effect of the promises of salvation, we shall find that their universality is not at all inconsistent with the predestination of the reprobate. We know the promises to be effectual to us only when we receive them by faith. On the contrary, the annihilation of faith is at once an abolition of the promises. If this is their nature, we may perceive there is no discordance between these two things—God’s having appointed from eternity on whom He will bestow His favour and exercise His wrath, and His proclaiming salvation indiscriminately to all. Indeed, I maintain, there is the most perfect harmony between them. For His sole design in thus promising, is to offer His mercy to all who desire and seek it, which none do but those whom He enlightened, and He enlightens all whom He has predestinated to salvation. These persons experience the unshaken truth of the promises; so that it cannot be pretended that there is the least contrariety between God’s eternal election and the testimony of grace offered to believers. But why does he mention all? It is in order that the consciences of the pious may enjoy the more secure satisfaction, seeing that there is no difference between sinners, provided they have faith. On the other hand, that the impious may not plead the want of any asylum to flee from the bondage of sin, while they reject that which is offered to them. When the mercy of God is offered to both by the Gospel, it is faith, that is, the illumination of God, which distinguishes between the pious and impious; so that the former experience the efficacy of the Gospel, but the latter derive no benefit from it.

Chapter XXV

The Final Resurrection

2. None of the ancient philosophers, except Plato, acknowledge the chief good of man to consist in his union with God. But of the nature of this union, Plato had not the smallest idea. We know what is the only and perfect happiness even in this earthly pilgrimage; but it daily inflames our hearts with increasing desires after it, till we shall be with its full fruition—the resurrection.

3. Let the importance of the object sharpen our pursuit. Paul argues, that if there be no resurrection of the dead, the whole Gospel is vain and fallacious; for we should be “of all men most miserable” (1 Cor 15:13–19). To this subject, the most important of all, let us give attention never to be wearied by the length of time.

It is a thing difficult to be believed, that bodies, after having been consumed by corruption, shall at length be raised again. Therefore, while many philosophers asserted the immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the body was admitted by few. To enable faith to surmount so great an obstacle, the Scripture supplies us with two assistance: one consists in the similitude of Christ, the other in the omnipotence of God. Christ is the pledge of future resurrection to us; for He neither fell under the power of death, nor triumphed over it in His resurrection, for Himself as a private individual; but that all this was a commencement in the Head of what must be fulfilled in all the members. Now, that we may have no doubt of our fellowship with Christ in the resurrection, Paul affirms the design of His advent in the character of Judge at the last day, is to “change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body” (Phil 3:21). Indeed, Christ rose again, that we may be companions of His future life. He was raised by the Father, inasmuch as He was the Head of the Church. He was raised by the power of the Holy Spirit, who is given to us for the purpose of quickening us. In a word, He was raised that He might be “the resurrection, and the life” (John 11:25). We must not be wearied by the long delay before His return, but wait patiently for God’s establishment of His Kingdom in His appointed time. To this purpose is the expression of Paul: “Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming” (1 Cor 15:23).

Scorners of the resurrection might ridicule the evangelists' account of the message, brought by some frightful women, and afterwards confirmed by the disciples half dead with fear. Why does not Christ rather prove Himself by appearing in the temple and the public places that all might see? Insofar as we are concerned, we rest assured in the eyewitness accounts of His disciples, but we have also the witness of the soldiers and of the angels. Moreover, Christ allowed Himself to be handled, and spent time discoursing with His disciples concerning mysteries of the Kingdom of God. Finally, they gathered to see Him off in the Ascension, and "he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once" (1 Cor 15:6). He appeared also to Paul on the Damascus road (Acts 9:3), and to Stephen to overcome the fear of death by an assurance of life (Acts 7:55). To refuse credit to testimonies so numerous, is unreasonable obstinacy.

4. Against the stupidity of unbelief, Paul adduces an example from nature, "Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die" (1 Cor 15:36). He tells us that the seed sown displays an image of the resurrection. Even Isaiah exclaims, "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust" (Isa 26:19). Job says, "I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, . . . and not another" (Job 19:25–27). Ezekiel saw a field full of dry bones, which God commanded to be clothed with flesh and nerves (Ezek 37:1–14). Though this figure is intended to inspire the people with a hope of restoration, he borrows the argument for it from the resurrection. This is to us also the principal model of all deliverances which believers experience in the world. So Christ, after having declared that the voice of the Gospel communicates life, immediately adds, "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth" (John 5:28, 29).

5. "A living dog is better than a dead lion" (Eccl 9:4) is a common saying Solomon has quoted from a world, that makes death the destruction of man and the end of all things. This brutish stupidity has infected all ages of the world, and even forced its way into the Church. The Sadducees had the audacity publicly to profess, that there is no resurrection. But the very instinct of nature has always set before the eyes

of unbelievers an image of the resurrection, by interring the dead, even from the ancient days of the holy fathers.

After Paul, there arose Millenarians, who limited the reign of Christ to a thousand years. The Revelation passage (Rev 20:4), they quote, refers not to the eternal blessedness of the Church, but to the various agitations which awaited the Church in its militant state upon earth.

When sin is abolished, and death swallowed up, then will begin the eternal state of everlasting rewards and punishments.

6. In regard to the future, two other errors are introduced. Some have supposed that the whole man dies, and that souls are raised together with bodies. Others, admitting the immortality of souls, supposed they will be clothed with new bodies, and thereby deny the resurrection of the flesh. It is a brutish error to represent the spirit, formed after the image of God, as a fleeting breath which animates the body only during this perishable life. If souls separated from bodies did not retain their existence, Christ would not have said to the thief, “To day shalt thou be with me in paradise” (Luke 23:43).

The question respecting place is equally senseless and futile; because we know the soul has no dimensions like the body. Let us be content within these limits which God prescribes to us—that the souls of pious men depart into a state of blessed rest, till Christ appears as the Redeemer. The condition of the reprobate is the same as Jude assigns to devils, who are bound in chains till they are brought forth to the punishment to which they are doomed (Jude 6).

7. Equally monstrous is the error, that souls will not resume the bodies which at present belong to them, but will be furnished with others altogether different. This is based on the Manichaeans, who taught that flesh which is so impure would never rise again. When Paul gives us this exhortation, “Glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Cor 6:20), he certainly does not countenance consigning to eternal corruption, that which he asserts to be consecrated to God. Christ rose; was it by making Himself a new body? No, but according to his prediction, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up” (John 2:19).

Immediately on Christ’s resurrection, “the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose” (Matt 27:52). This was a

prelude, or rather an earnest, of the final resurrection. Enoch and Elias, whom Tertullian speaks of as “the candidates of the resurrection” were taken into the immediate care of God, with an entire exemption from corruption in body and soul.

8. Baptism is spoken of by Paul as a seal of our future resurrection (Col 2:12), and we are clearly invited to this confidence by the sacred Supper, when we receive into our mouths the symbols of spiritual grace. Paul’s exhortation, to “yield . . . your members as instruments of righteousness unto God” (Rom 6:13), would lose all force, if unaccompanied by what he subjoins, “He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies” (Rom 8:11). For what would it avail to devote our feet, hands, eyes, and tongues to the service of God, if they were not to participate the benefit and reward? This is confirmed by another passage of Paul, “The body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body. And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power” (1 Cor 6:13, 14). Hence also that exaltation, “We look for the Saviour [from heaven], . . . Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body” (Phil 3:20, 21).

The burial by Abraham, of his wife, demonstrates his hope of the resurrection (Gen 23:3–19). An example of this hope is in Jacob, who commands his bones to be reconveyed to the promised land (Gen 47:30). The resurrection of the body is implied in the word “sleeping.” Hence the word *cemetery*, which means a *sleeping place* for the body, a place of burial, in hope of the resurrection.

There is a difference between those who shall have been already dead, and those whom that day shall find alive. “We shall not all sleep,” says Paul, “but we shall all be changed” (1 Cor 15:51); that is, there will be no necessity for any distance of time to intervene between death and the commencement of the next life. Where the state of the nature is changed, it is a species of death. So there is a perfect consistence between these things, that all will be removed by death when they put off the mortal body, but that a separation of body and soul will not be necessary, where there will be an instantaneous change.

9. A question of greater difficulty arises: How can the resurrection, which is a peculiar benefit of Christ, be common to the impious? Is Christ

to bestow life promiscuously to all mankind? As God “maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good” (Matt 5:45), so resurrection is extended to the impious; not to become their legitimate possession, but to render them more inexcusable. The impious frequently experience God’s beneficence, which sometimes exceed the blessings of the pious, but which are the means of aggravating their condemnation. When Paul has stated to Felix, “that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust” (Acts 24:15); one will be a resurrection to the life, the other to judgment. The impious will be raised, in order to be dragged to the tribunal of Christ, to receive the punishment due to their rebellion.

10. As “death is swallowed up in victory” (1 Cor 15:54), then, let us rather reflect on eternal felicity as the end of the resurrection. There is not only the promise of eternal life generally to believers, but also a special reward for each individual.

11. There are vain men, thirsting after useless knowledge, that inquire what will be the distance between prophets and Apostles, Apostles and martyrs; and how many degrees of difference will there be between the married and the celibate, etc. For myself, I not only refrain as an individual from the unnecessary investigation, but think it my duty to be cautious. I reply, there will be such great pleasantness in the very prospect, and such exquisite sweetness in the mere knowledge, that this felicity will far exceed all the accommodations afforded us in the present state. As to inquiry into that future state of bliss, the best rule for our conduct is to content ourselves with seeing “through a glass darkly,” till we shall see “face to face” (1 Cor 13:12).

12. Now, as no description can equal the severity of the Divine vengeance on the reprobate, their torments are represented to us under corporeal images; as darkness, weeping and gnashing of teeth, unextinguishable fire, a worm incessantly gnawing the heart (Matt 3:12; 8:12; 22:13; Mark 9:43, 44; Isa 66:24). It is, therefore, no trivial threatening denounced by the Apostle, that unbelievers “shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power” (2 Thess 1:9). How great and severe, then, is the punishment to endure the never ceasing effects of His wrath!

BOOK IV

Book IV

On the External Means or Aids by Which God Calls Us Into Communion with Christ, and Retains Us in It

CONTENTS

Three parts of the Apostles' Creed, respecting God the Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, have been explained in the former books. This last book is an exposition of what remains, relating to the Holy Catholic Church, and the Communion of Saints.

The chapters contained in it may be conveniently arranged in three grand divisions:

- I. The Church.
- II. The Sacraments.
- III. Civil Government.

The First Division, extending to the end of the thirteenth chapter, contains many particulars, which, however, may all be referred to four principal heads:

- I. The marks of the Church, or the criteria by which it may be distinguished; since we must cultivate union with it—Chapters I–II.
- II. The government of the Church—Chapters III–VII.
 1. The order of government in the Church—Chapter III.
 2. The form practised by the ancient Christians—Chapter IV.
 3. The nature of the present ecclesiastical government under the Papacy—Chapter V. The primacy of the Pope—Chapter VI. And the degrees of his advancement to this tyrannical power—Chapter VII.
- III. The power of the Church—Chapters VIII–XI.
 1. Relating to articles of faith,—which resides either in the respective bishops—Chapter VIII.—or in the church at large, represented in councils—Chapter IX.
 2. In making laws—Chapter X.

3. In ecclesiastical jurisdiction—Chapter XI.
- IV. The discipline of the Church—Chapters XII–XIII.
 1. The principal use of it—Chapter XII.
 2. The abuse of it—Chapter XIII.

The Second Division, relating to the sacraments, contains three parts.

- I. The sacraments in general—Chapters XIV.
- II. Each sacrament in particular—Chapters XV–XVIII.
 1. Baptism—Chapter XV. Distinct discussion of Pædobaptism—Chapter XVI.
 2. The Lord’s Supper—Chapter XVII.—and its profanation—Chapter XVIII.
- III. The five other ceremonies, falsely called sacraments—Chapter XIX.

The Third Division regards civil government—Chapter XX.

- I. This government in general.
- II. Its respective branches.
 1. The magistrates.
 2. The laws.
 3. The people.

Chapter I

The True Church, and the Necessity of Our Union with Her, Being the Mother of All the Pious

1. This last book is an exposition of the last portion of the Apostle's Creed. It relates to the Church and the Communion of Saints.

We shall study under three main headings: (a) The Church. (b) The Sacraments. (c) Civil Government.

The Church is the mother of all believers of all ages, even as the Apostle has declared, the new and heavenly Jerusalem to be "the mother of us all" (Gal 4:26).

2. That article of the Creed, in which we profess to believe THE CHURCH, refers not only to the visible Church of which we are now discussing, but also to all the elect, including both the dead and the living.

The Church is called CATHOLIC or universal. The Church is one. There could not be two or three churches, without Christ being divided. All the elect of God are so connected with each other in Christ, that as they depend upon one head, so they grow together as into one body, through the Divine Spirit.

3. This article of the Creed relates in some measure to the external Church, that everyone of us may maintain a brotherly agreement with all the children of God, may pay due deference to the authority of the Church. Therefore, THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS is added to express the character of the Church. The saints are united in the fellowship of Christ, that they should mutually communicate with each other. The community asserted is such as Luke describes, that "the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul" (Acts 4:32). Paul exhorts the Ephesians to be "one body, and one Spirit, even as [they were] called in one hope" (Eph 4:4).

4. From the title **mother**, as given to the Church, we are to learn that we are conceived by her, born of her, nourished at her breast, and continually preserved under her care and government to the end of our lives. Out of her bosom, there can be no hope of remission of sins, or any

salvation, according to Joel and Isaiah (Isa 37:35; Joel 2:32). This is confirmed by Ezekiel, when he denounces that those whom God excludes from the heavenly life, shall not be enrolled among his people (Ezek 13:9).

5. It is the Church that educates her children. This is effected through Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers (Eph 4:10–13). The preaching of the heavenly doctrine is assigned to the pastors (Isa 59:21). In former ages, God commanded solemn assemblies to be held in the sanctuary, that the doctrine taught by the mouth of the priest might maintain the unity of the faith. And as formerly He was not content with the written law, but appointed priests as interpreters, so, in the present day, He not only requires us to be attentive to reading, but has appointed teachers for our assistance. Now, there are many who are urged by pride to read and meditate in private, and to despise public assemblies, and consider preaching as unnecessary. Since these break the bond of unity, they are involved in pestilent errors. We hold those apostates, who cause divisions in churches.

6. There are two extreme views at present, respecting the ministry discussed above. Some exaggerate its dignity beyond measure. Others contend it is criminal to transfer to mortal man of what properly belongs to the Holy Spirit.

From a careful study of Scripture passages, we see it is God, the Author of preaching, who gives success. Ministers, though necessary, are nothing considered in themselves: “Neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase” (1 Cor 3:7). Again, “I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me” (1 Cor 15:10). Now, while God ascribes to Himself the illumination of the mind and renovation of the heart, and thereby declares it to be sacrilege for man to arrogate to himself any share in either, yet there is this ministry of man appointed by God to teach. Believers are to listen to their teaching in modesty.

7. The word **Church** is used in two senses. In the first sense, the *Church* is the sum total of the elect, who have lived from the beginning of the world. In the second sense, the *Church* refers to the whole multitude of believers dispersed all over the world, who profess to worship God and Jesus Christ, who are initiated into the Faith by baptism, who partake of the sacred Supper, and who consent to the Word of the Lord. In this

Church are included many hypocrites, many persons ambitious, avaricious, and dissolute in their lives, who are tolerated for a time. This is because they cannot be convicted by a legitimate process, or because discipline is not maintained with sufficient vigour. Despite these anomalies, this Church which is *visible* to men, we are commanded to honour, and to maintain communion with it.

8. Since it is God Himself who “knoweth them that are his” (2 Tim 2:19), we should not make presumptuous judgments on others. For those who seemed the most abandoned, are recalled by His goodness into the right way; while some, who seemed to stand better than others, fall into perdition. “According to the secret predestination of God,” Augustine observes, “there are many sheep without the pale of the Church, and many wolves within.”

9. The visible Church is where the Word of God is purely preached, and the sacraments are administered according to the institution of Christ. This is a Church of God, for “where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (Matt 18:20).

The universal Church is the whole multitude, collected from all nations, who, though dispersed in countries, nevertheless consent to the same truth of Divine doctrine, and are united by the bond of the same religion. In this universal Church are comprehended particular local churches, distributed in towns and villages. Each of these respectively is justly distinguished by the name and authority of a church.

10. We have stated that the marks by which the Church is to be distinguished are the preaching of the Word and the administration of sacraments.

The Church is called “the house of God, . . . the pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Tim 3:15). Here, the Church is seen as the faithful guardian of the truth.

The Church is also called the spouse of Christ, chosen and separated, “not having spot, or wrinkle” (Eph 5:27). She is “his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all” (Eph 1:23). Hence it follows, that a departure from the Church is a renunciation of God and Christ. To leave the Church is to violate the conjugal relation that Christ has condescended to form with us!

11. Satan would like to destroy the Church by effacing those marks that distinguish a Church. By his subtlety, it has happened in some ages, that the pure preaching of the Word has altogether ceased. The other tactic of his to destroy the Church is to inspire us with contempt of the Church, and drive us out by an open separation.

12. But, as long as a Church continues in the pure ministry of the Word and pure order in the celebration of the sacraments, although in other respects it may be chargeable with many faults, such a society should never be rejected.

Fundamentals of the faith are to be firmly adhered to, but there are some lesser doctrines that are controverted among churches, yet without destroying the unity of the faith. A diversity of opinion respecting nonessential points ought not to be a cause of discord among Christians. While I would not be understood to plead for any errors, I maintain we ought not to abandon the Church on account of every trivial difference of sentiment. In the meantime, if we endeavour to correct what we disapprove, we are acting in this case according to our duty.

13. In bearing with imperfections of life, we ought to carry our indulgence a great deal further. For there are those who fall into Satan's trap, who, from a false notion of perfect sanctity, despise the society of all men, in whom they could discover any remains of human infirmity. Such, in ancient times, were the Cathari, and the Donatists, and, in the present day, some of the Anabaptists. There are others who err, more from an inconsiderate zeal for righteousness, than from this unreasonable pride. Supposing it impossible for the Church to exist, where there is not a perfect purity of life, they depart from the true Church, while they imagine themselves to be withdrawing from the factions of the wicked. This attitude is too severe in contrast with our Lord's, who requires the exercise of mercy. For the visible Church is composed of good and bad men, mingled together as found in our Lord's parable of the net of fishes, and no separation is made till they are exposed on the shore (Matt 13:47–48). This truth is taught further in the parable of the wheat and tares (Matt 13:24–30), and the parable of the threshing floor (Matt 3:12).

14. The judgment of the Apostle, on the Church of Corinth, is likewise. Among the Corinthians dreadful crimes were committed. Does

the Apostle separate them and reject them from the kingdom of Christ? He did none of these things, but, on the contrary, speaks of them as a Church of Christ. If such a bad Church as Corinth be not rejected, who can refuse the name of a Church to those who cannot be charged with a tenth part of those crimes?

15. Though the Church may be deficient in its duty to deal with offenders, it does not follow it is the place of every individual to pass judgment of separation for himself. I admit it is the duty of a pious man to withdraw himself from all private intimacy with the wicked; but it is one thing to avoid intercourse with the wicked, and another thing, from hatred of them, to renounce the communion of the Church. Every member partaking the Lord's Supper is exhorted not to examine the whole Church but rather himself (1 Cor 11:28, 29). It ought not, therefore, to be left to the judgment of every individual who ought to be admitted into the Church, and who ought to be expelled from it. This authority belongs only to the whole Church.

16. Those, who are most daring in promoting a separation from the Church, have in general no other motive than to make an ostentatious display of their own superior excellence. Lest some should destroy the communion of the Church, merely on account of some wicked men in her; let them consider, in the first place, that in a great multitude there are many who escape their observation, who are truly holy in the sight of God. Secondly, let them consider, that of those who appear wicked, there are many who are oftentimes aroused with a serious fear of God. Thirdly, let them consider that judgment ought not to be pronounced upon a man from a single act, since the holiest persons have sometimes most grievous falls. Fourthly, let them consider, that the ministry of the Word and participation of the sacraments, have too much influence in preserving the unity of the Church, to admit of its being destroyed by the guilt of a few impious men. Lastly, let them consider, that in forming an estimate of the Church, the judgment of God is of more weight than that of man.

17. While it is true that Paul tells us, "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing" (Eph

5:25–27); it is nevertheless equally true, that the Lord works from day to day in smoothing its wrinkles, and purging away its spots. Whence it follows, that its holiness is not yet perfect. The Church, therefore, is daily improving, but has not arrived at perfection.

18. Of this truth Christ Himself, the Apostles and almost all the prophets, have given us an example. Dreadful are those descriptions in which Isaiah, Jeremiah, Joel, Habakkuk, and others, deplore the disorders of the Church of Jerusalem. There was such corruption in the people, in the magistrates, and priests, that Isaiah does not hesitate to compare Jerusalem with Sodom and Gomorrah. Their manners were generally disgraced by thefts, robberies, treacheries, murders, and similar crimes. Nevertheless, the prophets on this account neither raised themselves new churches, nor built new altars. If the prophets were restrained by a sense of duty from forsaking the Church on account of the crimes that were practised, it is extreme arrogance in us, if we presume immediately to withdraw from the communion of the Church where the conduct of all the members is not compatible either with our judgment.

19. In the days of Christ and the Apostles, the impiety of the Pharisees, and the dissolute lives led by the people, could not prevent them from using the same sacrifices, and assembling in the same temple with others, for the public exercise of religion.

Let these two points, then, be considered as decided: First, that he who voluntarily deserts the external communion of the Church is without excuse. Secondly, that the faults, either of few persons or of many, form no obstacles to a due profession of our faith in the use of ceremonies instituted of God.

20. In the Creed, **the communion of saints** is immediately followed by the **forgiveness of sins**. This forgiveness can only be obtained by the members of the Church (Isa 33:24). Our first entrance, therefore, into the Church and kingdom of God, is the remission of sins, without which we have no covenant or union with God. To demand a sinless perfection of the Church, and, at the same time, to teach her members to groan under the burden of sins and to seek pardon all their lifetime, is a diabolical invention.

21. God not only receives us into His Church by the remission of sins, but also preserves us in it by the same mercy. God has called us to

eternal salvation. We ought, therefore, to believe that His grace is always ready to pardon their sins. Wherefore, it ought to be held as a certain conclusion, that from the Divine liberality, by the intervention of Christ, pardon of sins has been, and is daily, bestowed upon us, who have been engrafted into the body of the Church.

22. It was to dispense this blessing to us, that the keys were given to the Church (Matt 16:19; 18:18). When Christ conferred on the Apostles the power of remitting sins (John 20:23), it was not with an intention that they should merely absolve from their sins those who were converted to the Christian faith, but rather that they should exercise this office among the faithful. This is taught by Paul, in the message of reconciliation committed to the ministers of the Church (2 Cor 5:18–20). In the communion of saints, therefore, sins are continually remitted to us by the ministry of the Church, when presbyters or bishops confirm pious consciences, by the preaching of the Gospel, or in the administration of the sacraments. This is the principal exercise of the power of the keys.

23. But there are those who would rob the Church of this sole anchor of salvation—the Anabaptists whom I had mentioned above. Like the Novatians, who disturbed the ancient Churches, the Anabaptists imagine that by baptism the people of God are regenerated to a pure and angelic life, which cannot be contaminated by any impurities of the flesh. And if any be guilty of sin after baptism, they leave him no prospect of escaping the inexorable judgment of God. In short, they encourage no hope of pardon in anyone who sins after having received the grace of God; because they acknowledge no other remission of sins than that by which we are first regenerated. But what does our Lord teach in the Lord's Prayer (Matt 6:12)? He requires from the saints a confession of sins, and that daily as long as they live, and He promises them pardon. What presumption is it either to assert that they are exempt from sin, or, if they have fallen, to exclude from all grace! If we are commanded to pardon our brethren, seventy times seven in imitation of His clemency, how much more, surely, will God pardon us!

24. That there is pardon of sins, even of heinous crimes, may be taken from the examples in the infant Church, during the times of the patriarchs. The sin of conspiracy to murder Joseph by his brothers, of selling him away as a slave (Gen 37:18, 28), is well known. The murder of the

inhabitants of Sichem by Simeon and Levi (Gen 34:25); the sin of incest, by Reuben (Gen 35:22) and Judah (Gen 38:16), is also recorded. Yet these patriarchs were constituted heads of the nation. What shall we say of David and his notorious crimes? Without further dwelling on other particular examples, the numerous promises of Divine mercy to Israel are so many proofs of God's placability to the offences of His people—if they would return to Him (Deut 30:3, 4).

25. And what sin is worse than rebellion? It is described as a divorce between God and the Church: Yet this is overcome by the goodness of God. Jeremiah says, "If a man put away his wife, and she go from him, and become another man's, shall he return unto her again? shall not that land be greatly polluted? but thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; . . . and thou hast polluted the land with thy whoredoms and with thy wickedness. Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the LORD; and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, saith the LORD, and I will not keep anger for ever" (Jer 3:1, 2, 12). The offer of forgiveness to the repentant is reiterated by Solomon (1 Kgs 8:46–50), in the dedication of the Temple. Nor was it without cause that in the law the Lord ordained daily sacrifices for sins; for unless He had foreseen that His people would be subject to the maladies of daily sins, He would never have appointed these remedies (Num 28:3).

26. If God has so abundantly pardoned His people in the Old Testament, how much will He the more pardon His children with the advent of Christ. Examples to prove this are not wanting. Did not Peter deny Christ three times, even with execrations? Yet he was not refused pardon. Nor does Peter drive Simon Magus to despair, but rather directs him to cherish a favourable hope, when he persuades him to pray for forgiveness (Acts 8:22).

27. What are we to say of cases in which the most enormous sins have sometimes seized the whole Church? From this situation Paul rather mercifully reclaimed them, than abandoned them to the curse. The defection of the Galatians were no trivial offence (Gal 1:6; 3:1; 4:9). The Corinthians were still less excusable (1 Cor 1:11, 12; 5:1; 2 Cor 12:21). Yet neither are excluded from the mercy of the Lord. Finally, the order of the Creed teaches us that pardon of sins ever continues in the Church of

Christ, because, after having mentioned the Church, it adds **the forgiveness of sins**.

28. Some persons argue, that while sins of ignorance are pardonable, those committed by voluntary transgression, with the full exercise of one's knowledge and will, are unpardonable. But as the Lord, in the law, commanded some sacrifices to be offered to expiate the voluntary sins of believers, and others to atone for sins of ignorance, what presumption it is to deny that there is any pardon for voluntary transgression! I maintain, that the one sacrifice of Christ is available for the remission of the voluntary sins of saints. Christ is the fulfilment of all the legal sacrifices, with so many types.

29. In the ancient Church, a distinction was made of private offences and public crimes which are attended with great scandal in the Church. When the ancient Church made it a difficulty for them, who had committed anything deserving of ecclesiastical censure, to obtain forgiveness, they did not mean no pardon absolutely from the Lord. They only intended by this severity to deter others from rashly running into crimes, which would justly be followed by their exclusion from the communion of the Church. The Word of the Lord, which is our only rule, certainly prescribes greater moderation. For it teaches, that the vigour of discipline ought not to be carried to such an extent, as to overwhelm with sorrow the person whose benefit we are required to regard as its principal object; as we have before shown more at large.

Chapter II

The True and False Church Compared

1. The true Church is one where the Word of God is faithfully preached and the sacraments properly administered. But as soon as falsehood has made a breach in the fundamentals of religion, and the use of the sacraments fails, the certain consequence is the ruin of the Church. Christ declares the Church to be “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone” (Eph 2:20). If the foundation of the Church be the doctrine of the prophets and Apostles, which enjoins believers to place their salvation in Christ alone, how can the edifice stand any longer, when that doctrine is taken away?

2. As this is the state of things under the Papacy, it is easy to judge how much of the Church remains there. Instead of the ministry of the Word, there reigns a corrupt government, by which the light is extinguished. An execrable sacrilege has been substituted for the Lord’s Supper. The worship of God is deformed with a multifarious mass of superstitions. The doctrine, without which Christianity cannot exist, has been entirely forgotten or exploded. In withdrawing ourselves from all these enormities, there is no danger of separating ourselves from the Church of Christ.

The Papists, however, claim their Church to be the only one, and all who dare to withdraw, are branded schismatics and heretics. And the reason they give to prove theirs to be the true Church is, their perpetual succession of bishops, traced to ancient times. This plea of uninterrupted succession is a vain pretence. If their argument is correct, why are the Greeks also called schismatics, among whom there has never been any interruption of that succession of bishops?

3. The pretensions of the Romanists are no other than those which appear to have been formerly set up by the Jews, in their blindness and idolatry. For as they boasted of the temple, the ceremonies, and the priesthood, in which things they firmly believed the Church to consist; so, instead of the Church, the Papists produce certain external forms, which are often at a great distance from the Church. We need no other argument to refute them, than that which was urged by Jeremiah against

the foolish confidence of the Jews: “Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, are these” (Jer 7:4). For the Lord acknowledges no place as His temple, where His Word is not heard and devoutly observed. So, though the glory of God resided between the two cherubim in the sanctuary, yet when the priests had completed His worship by perverse superstitions, He departed. If that temple could be forsaken, there can be no reason for their pretending that God is so attached to persons or places, as to be constrained to remain among those who have nothing but the name and appearance of the Church.

In regard to the government of the Church, nothing can be more frivolous than to place the succession in the persons, to the neglect of the doctrine. The Church does not exist by a kind of hereditary right, but rather by a maintenance of pure doctrine.

4. The true Church is not characterised by the vain glitter, with which the Romanists dazzle the eyes of the simple, but by the voice of the good Shepherd speaking in it: “Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. . . . ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God” (John 18:37; 8:47). In fine, as the Church is the kingdom of Christ, and He reigns only by His Word, those who are destitute of His Word cannot qualify to be His Church.

5. For withdrawing from the Roman Catholic Church to establish separate assemblies, where we preach a different doctrine from theirs and administer baptism and the Lord’s Supper, we have been branded heretics and schismatics. Augustine says, heretics are those who corrupt the purity of the faith by false doctrines, and schismatics are those that break the bond of affection. But the communion of the Church is preserved by us, in the agreement of sound doctrine, and by brotherly love. This communion, however, must be in Christ our foundation, as exhorted by the Apostle Paul (Eph 4:5). All union which is formed without the Word of the Lord, is a faction of the impious, and not on association of believers.

6. Cyprian also, after Paul’s example, deduces the origin of all ecclesiastical concord from the supreme bishopric of Christ. He says, “There is but one Church, which is widely extended into a multitude by

the offspring of its fertility. Just as there are many rays of the sun, but the light is one; and a tree has many branches, but only one trunk, fixed on a firm root. And when many rivers issue from one source, though by its exuberant abundance the stream is multiplied into numerous currents, yet the unity of the foundation still remains. . . .” No representation could be more elegant to express that inseparable connection which subsists between all the members of Christ.

Though the Romanists have expelled us as heretics with anathemas, because we have withdrawn from their Church, we have done so because theirs cannot possibly be the pure profession of the truth. It was necessary for us to withdraw from them, in order to approach Christ.

7. There was a true Church among the Jews and Israelites, while they continued to observe the laws of the covenant. They were initiated into the Church by circumcision, and were exercised in other sacraments for the confirmation of the faith. There is no doubt that the commendations, with which the Lord has honoured His Church, truly belonged to their society. But after they deserted the law, and fell into idolatry and superstition, they partly lost this privilege. On the other hand, who would dare to give the appellation of a Church to that society where the Word of God is openly trampled under foot?

8. The Jews adopted many corrupt ceremonies in the time of Rehoboam, yet the doctrine of the law, and the rites of the priesthood, were still preserved at Jerusalem. The Jewish Church in its defection degenerated by degrees.

As for Jeroboam, who made the calves in opposition to the express prohibition of God, in this case religion was totally corrupted.

9. The state of religion of the Papists is as corrupt as it was in Israel in the time of Jeroboam. Indeed, they practise a grosser idolatry, and their doctrine is equally, if not more, impure. Therefore, we can scarcely assemble with them on a single occasion, without polluting ourselves with open idolatry. The principal bond of their communion is the mass, which we abominate as the greatest sacrilege.

10. The Papists demand that whatever honour, power and jurisdiction Christ has conferred upon His Church, we should attribute the same to theirs. In the steps of Elijah and Micaiah of Israel and of Isaiah,

Jeremiah and Hosea of Judah, who withdrew from the company of the false prophets and priests, it is necessary for us also to separate from communion with the Papists.

11. Nevertheless, as in former times the Jews continued in possession of some peculiar privileges of the Church, the Papists of the present day retain some vestiges of the Church, which remain among them even after its removal. When God had once made His covenant with the Jews, it continued among them, rather because it was supported by its own stability, than in consequence of their observance of it. So, after He had deposited His covenant in France, Italy, Germany, Spain and England, when those countries were oppressed by the Antichrist, still, in order that the covenant might remain inviolable, He preserved baptism among them. He also caused other vestiges of the Church to remain, that it might not be entirely lost.

12. While we refuse to allow the Papists the title of Church, we do not deny that there are Churches among them. We only contend for the true and legitimate constitution of the Church, which requires not only a communion in the sacraments, but above all an agreement in doctrine.

Daniel and Paul had predicted that Antichrist would sit in the temple of God (Dan 9:27; 2 Thess 2:3, 4). The head of that abominable kingdom, in the Western Church, we affirm to be the Pope. Nevertheless, under his tyranny, Churches may exist; though he had profaned them by sacrilegious impiety, and corrupted them by false doctrines. In such Churches, Christ lies half buried, the Gospel is suppressed, piety exterminated, and the worship of God almost abolished. Amidst such confusions, whereby they exhibit a picture of Babylon, rather than the holy city of God, there are still Churches, in as much as God had preserved among them a remnant of His people.

Chapter III

The Teachers and Ministers of the Church; Their Election and Office

1. It is the Lord's will that, for the government of His Church, He uses, as His instruments, men whom He appoints as His delegates. There are several reasons why He prefers making use of them. (a) By this method He declares His kindness towards us, since He chooses from among men those who are to be His ambassadors to the world, to be interpreters of His secret will, and even to act as His personal representatives. (b) This method trains us to humility. If He were Himself to speak from heaven, there would be no wonder if His sacred oracles were instantly received with reverence. But when a contemptible mortal, addresses us in the name of God, we give the best evidence of our reverence towards God, if we readily submit to be instructed by His minister. (c) Finally, this method promotes brotherly love. It fosters a bond of mutual connection of men, while one is constituted pastor to teach all the rest, and they who are commanded to be disciples, receive common doctrine from the same mouth. The classic passage on this ministry of men over the Church is given by St. Paul in Ephesians 4:4–16, in which he says, “And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ . . .”

2. In this passage, he shows that the ministry of men, which God employs in His government of the Church, is the principal bond holding believers together in one body. By means of ministers (Eph 4:10), Christ distributes His gifts to the Church. Thus is the body of Christ edified; thus we grow up unto Him who is the head in all things, and are united with each other.

3. In order that we might hold this order in the highest estimation, Christ has called the Apostles “the light of the world” (Matt 5:14) and “the salt of the earth” (Matt 5:13). He further says to them, “He that heareth you heareth me” (Luke 10:16). But there is no passage more remarkable than that in Paul's Second Epistle to the Corinthians, where

he contends, there is nothing more excellent than the ministry of the Gospel in the Church. For, it is the ministration of the Spirit, and of righteousness, and of eternal life (2 Cor 3:6, etc.). This doctrine is further illuminated by example in the sending of Peter to preach to Cornelius the way of salvation and to baptise him.

4. Those who preside over the government of the Church, according to the institution of Christ, through the Apostle Paul, are: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers (Eph 4:11). Of these, only the last two sustain an office in the Church: the others were such as the Lord raised up at the commencement of His kingdom, and such as He raises up on particular occasions, when required by the necessity of the times.

The nature of the Apostolic office is manifest from this command: “Go . . . preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15). No certain limits are prescribed, but the whole world is assigned to them. The “apostles,” therefore, were “missionaries,” to establish God’s kingdom by universally preaching the Gospel.

“Prophets” refer not to all interpreters of the Divine will, but only to those who were honoured with some special revelation. Of these, there are none in our day, or they are less conspicuous.

“Evangelists” were inferior to the Apostles in dignity, but next to them in office, who performed special functions. Such were Luke, Timothy, Titus, and perhaps the seventy disciples. Those three offices were not instituted of permanent continuance in the Church; though I do not deny that God has sometimes raised up apostles and evangelists in their stead, as He has done in our own time.

Next follow “pastors” and “teachers,” who are always indispensable to the Church. The difference between the two is, that teachers have no official concern with the discipline, or the administration of sacraments, but only with interpretation of Scripture.

5. Pastors bear the same resemblance to the Apostles, as our teachers do to the ancient prophets. The province of pastors is the same as that of the Apostles, except that they preside over particular Churches respectively committed to each of them. Now, although according to the

meaning and etymology of the word, all the ministers of the Church may be called apostles, it was necessary that those twelve, together with Paul, should be distinguished beyond all others.

6. Of the nature of their functions, let us now proceed to a more detail statement. Our Lord commissioned the Apostles to preach the Gospel, and to baptise all believers for the remission of sins (Matt 28:19). Hence, we conclude, those who neglect both these duties have no just pretensions to the character of apostles. From such passages as 1 Corinthians 4:1 and Titus 1:7, 9, we may infer that preaching the Gospel, and administering the sacraments, constitute the two principal parts of the pastoral office. The pastoral office is not a respectable sinecure, but one which involves not only public discourses, but also private admonitions, and the maintaining of proper discipline. What the Apostles did for the whole world, that every individual pastor ought to do for his whole flock to which he is appointed.

7. A pastor who is connected with one Church may assist others, especially when disputes arise or when his advice is asked upon any difficult subject. Otherwise, he should resort to his appointed place, and not invade the province of another. For we read of Paul and Barnabas, how they “ordained them elders in every church” of Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch (Acts 14:21, 23), and Paul himself directed Titus to “ordain elders in every city” (Titus 1:5).

8. In calling those who preside over Churches by the appellations of bishops, elders, pastors, and ministers, without any distinction, I have followed the usage of Scripture, which applies all these terms to express the same meaning (Titus 1:5; Phil 1:1; Acts 20:17, 28).

In Romans and 1 Corinthians, Paul enumerates others as “miracles,” “gifts of healing,” “diversities of tongues,” “governments,” “helps” (1 Cor 12:28). Those functions which were merely temporary, I omit, as foreign to our present subject. But there are two which perpetually remain—“governments” and “helps” [“the care of the poor”]. “Governors” I take to have been persons of advanced years, selected from the people, to unite with the bishops in exercising discipline (Rom 12:8). The office of government is necessary in every age.

9. The care of the poor was committed to “deacons” (Rom 12:8). There are two distinct orders of deacons, those who administered alms, and those who cared for the poor and sick, such as the widows mentioned by Paul to Timothy (1 Tim 5:9, 10). The origin of deacons is described in Acts 6:1–3).

10. Now, as “all things” in the Church are required to “be done decently and in order” (1 Cor 14:40), restless and turbulent persons may not intrude themselves into the office of teaching and governing. It is expressly provided that no one shall assume any public office in the Church without a call. Paul refers to this call in his Apostleship, together with his fidelity in the execution of that office.

11. With regard to the call, there are four branches to be discussed. (a) What are the qualifications of ministers. (b) In what manner they are to be chosen. (c) By whom they ought to be appointed. (d) With what ceremony are they to be introduced into office.

There is an external and public call by the Church, and there is that secret call, of which every minister is conscious himself before God. The secret call is the honest testimony of our heart, that we accept the office offered to us, not from ambition or avarice, but from a sincere fear of God. For those whom the Lord has destined to so important an office, He first furnishes with those talents which are needed for its execution, that they may not enter upon it unprepared (1 Cor 12:7–11). This is the first point of our discussion.

12. Furthermore, Paul teaches in 1 Timothy 3:1–7, and Titus 1:7–14, that bishops are to be men of sound doctrine and a holy life. The same rule is laid down for deacons and governors.

The question relating to the *manner* in which they are to be chosen, I refer not to the form of election, but to the religious awe which ought to be observed in it. Hence the fast and prayer, which Luke states to have been practised at the ordination of elders (Acts 14:23).

13. The third inquiry we proposed was, by whom ministers are to be chosen. As for the Apostles, they were not chosen by men, but called and appointed by the Lord Himself. Hence when they wish to substitute another in the place of Judas, they nominate two, that the Lord may

declare, by lot, which of them He wills to be his successor (Acts 1:23–26). In the same sense must be understood the declaration by Paul, that he had been created “an apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father” (Gal 1:1).

14. But that the election and appointment of bishop by men is necessary to constitute a legitimate call to the office, no sober person will deny. For though an Apostle was appointed directly by the Lord, yet this appointment was accompanied with the form of an ecclesiastical call, with the laying on of hands (Acts 13:2, 3).

15. But, what is to be discussed here in regard to a minister’s appointment is, whether he should be chosen by the whole Church, or only by the other ministers and the elders who preside over the discipline, or whether he may be appointed by an individual. Those who attribute this right to any one man, quote Paul’s injunctions to Titus and Timothy (Titus 1:5; 1 Tim 5:22). They are mistaken in this view, as I can prove from the way elders were ordained by Paul and Barnabas. From Acts 14:23, according to the Greek reading, their ordination was by the suffrages or votes of the people. Those two Apostles ordained them, but the whole multitude, according to the custom observed in elections among the Greeks, declared by the elevation of their hands who was the object of their choice.

16. There remains the Form of ordination, which is the last point that we have mentioned relative to the call of ministers. It is by the imposition of hands. This rite, I believe, descended from the custom of the Hebrews. When Jacob blessed Ephraim and Manasseh, he laid his hands upon their heads (Gen 48:14). This custom was followed by our Lord, when He prayed over infants (Matt 19:15). It is with the same design, that the Jews were directed in the law to lay their hands upon their sacrifices. Wherefore the imposition of hands of the Apostle was an indication that they offered to God the person whom they introduced into the ministry. This imposition of hands was made, not only on pastors and teachers, but also deacons.

Finally, the imposition of hands on the ministers was not the act of the whole multitude, but was confirmed to the pastors. While more than one pastor performed this ceremony (Acts 6:6; 13:3), Paul speaks of himself as having laid hands upon Timothy (2 Tim 1:6).

Chapter IV

The State of the Ancient Church, and the Mode of Government Practised Before the Papacy

1. Hitherto we have treated of the mode of government in the Church, as it has been delivered to us by the pure Word of God, and of the offices in it, as they were instituted by Christ. Now, let us examine what was the form of the ancient Church, in these particulars.

As we have stated that there are three kinds of ministers recommended to us in Scripture, so the ancient Church divided all the ministers it had into three orders. From the order of presbyters, they chose some for pastors and teachers. The others presided over the discipline and corrections. To the deacons was committed the care of the poor and the distribution of alms. *Readers* and *Acolytes* were not names of certain offices, but young men, to whom they also gave the name of *clergy*. These were trainees for a future office, as I shall soon discuss more fully. Jerome enumerates five orders of the Church—bishops, presbyters, deacons, the believers at large, and catechumens. He assigns no particular place to the clergy and the monks.

2. To guard the general consequence of equality, the presbyters in each city chose one of their own number, whom they distinguished by the title **bishop**. The bishop was not superior to the rest in honour and dignity, as to have dominion over his colleagues. He merely presided at proceedings, to carry out what had been decreed by the general voice. Jerome, commenting on the Epistle to Titus, says, “A presbyter is the same as a bishop. And before dissensions in religion were produced by the instigation of the devil, and one said, I am of Paul, and another, I am of Cephas, the Churches were governed by a common council of presbyters. Afterwards, in order to destroy the seeds of dissension, the whole charge was committed to one. Therefore, as the presbyters know that according to the custom of the Church they are subject to the bishop who presides over them, so let the bishops know that their superiority to the presbyters is more from custom than from the appointment of the Lord, and they ought to unite together in the government of the Church.”

If the territory placed under a bishop was too extensive to manage, presbyters were appointed to act as his deputies in things of minor importance. These were called *chorepiscopi* or *country bishops*.

3. But with respect to the office of which we are now treating, the bishops and presbyters were equally required to employ themselves in the dispensation of the Word and sacraments. Up to the days of Gregory, when the Church had considerably degenerated from its ancient purity, bishops continued in the ministry of preaching. Gregory says, “A priest dies, if his sound is not heard” (Exod 28:35). It was therefore long maintained in the Church, that the principal office of a bishop was to feed the people with the Word of God.

4. The establishment of the archbishop over all the bishops of each province, and the appointment of patriarchs superior to archbishops, at the Council of Nice, were regulations for the preservation of discipline. The principal reason for the institution of these orders was, that if anything should take place in any Church which could not be settled by a few persons, it might be referred to a provincial synod. If such a difficulty could not be resolved, the patriarchs were called to unite with the synods, and from them there could be no appeal but to a general council. This constitution of government some called a *hierarchy*—a name not used in the Scripture. However, the ancient bishops had no intention of contriving a form of government for the Church, different from that which God has prescribed in His Word.

5. Until the days of Gregory, deacons still faithfully discharged their duties of distributing the daily contributions of believers and the annual revenues of the Church to the support of ministers and of the poor, at the direction of the bishops.

It is probable that subdeacons were first attached to deacons, to assist them in transacting the business of the poor. Archdeacons were first erected when the extent of the property required a new and more accurate mode of administration. Archdeacons were appointed to read the Gospel, and to exhort the people to pray, and their admission to the administration of the cup in the sacred supper, were intended to help them execute their stewardship with deeper dedication to God.

6. Hence it is easy to judge what use was made of the property of the Church, and in what manner it was dispensed.

“Whatever the Church possessed, whether in lands or in money, was the patrimony of the poor.” The bishops and deacons are continually reminded that they are not managing their own treasures, but funds to supply the necessity of the poor. If they unfaithfully withhold or embezzle, they will be guilty of murder.

Since it is sanctioned by the law of the Lord, that those who are employed in the service of the Lord should be maintained at the public expense of the Lord, the distribution was such, that neither were the ministers left without support, nor were the poor neglected. But, care was taken that the ministers themselves, who ought to set an example of frugality to others, should not live in splendour. Jerome says that those of the clergy who take what belongs to the poor beyond their own patrimony are guilty of sacrilege, and eat and drink judgment to themselves.

7. In order to correct abuses, canons were made, which divided the Church revenues into four parts: (a) To the clergy, (b) To the poor, (c) To the repair of Churches, (d) To poor strangers. Although some canons assign the last part to the bishop the intention was that it should not be used by him, for his own consumption, but rather for hospitality as required by St. Paul (1 Tim 3:2, 3). If any bishop began to transgress in this matter, living in luxury and pomp, he was immediately admonished by his colleagues. If he would not comply with the admonition, he was deposed from office.

8. The portion which they applied to ornament the sacred edifices, at first was very small. Priority was given to the care of the poor. When famine prevailed in the province of Jerusalem, Cyril sold the vessels and vestments, to buy food for the stricken.

9. Having enumerated the offices of the ancient Church, let us consider others which are mentioned by historians, though these are preparations, and not offices.

In order to train future ministers of the Church, those holy men took under their charge youths, with consent of their parents, to educate them from an early age. Those who were thus trained were called the *clergy*.

This name given them is not very appropriate, for Peter calls the whole Church **the clergy**, i.e., **the inheritance of the Lord** (1 Pet 5:3).

The clergy in training were charged with the opening and shutting of temples. So they were called *ostiarii*, or door-keepers. Afterwards they were called *acoluthi*, or followers, waiting upon the bishop in domestic services, and accompanying him on all occasions, whereby they might learn to speak before the people. By degrees, they were promoted, till they were made subdeacons.

10. In the ancient Church, in the matter of determining the qualifications of a bishop, they ran into one error of immoderate severity, and that was the requirement of the celibacy. As to the consent of the people being required in the admission to the clergy, this rule began to be relaxed in process of time, since those admitted to the clergy took a long probation, and this was not to a high office. Afterwards, in the other offices also, except the episcopate, the people generally left the judgment and choice to the bishop and presbyters. With considerable time given to training and probation, a subdeacon would be constituted a deacon. A deacon who conducted himself with fidelity would obtain the rank of a presbyter. The election of presbyters, however, always required the consent of the inhabitants of the place. And all ordinations took place at stated times of the year, that no one might be introduced clandestinely.

11. The right of voting in election of bishops was retained by the people for a long time. The Council of Antioch decreed this, and Leo the First confirmed the same: "Let him who is to preside over all, be chosen by all."

12. On the other hand, an election should not be left entirely to the populace, for it scarcely ever happens that so many heads concur in one opinion for the settlement of any business. To remedy this situation, the clergy alone made their choice and presented the chosen person to the magistracy. They deliberated on the election, and if it appeared to them a proper one, confirmed it. Otherwise, they chose another person whom they preferred. Then the business was referred to the multitude, though they were not bound to concur in these previous opinions. Or, if the business commenced with the multitude, this method was adopted in order to discover who was the principal object of their wishes. After

hearing the wishes of the people, the clergy proceeded to the election. Thus the clergy were neither at liberty to elect whom they pleased, nor under a necessity of complying with the foolish desires of the people. This order is stated by Leo in another place, “It is requisite to have the votes of the citizens, the testimonies of the people, the authority of the governors, and the election of the clergy.”

13. This mode of election was still practised in the time of Gregory, and it is probable that it continued long after. Within the last five hundred years, Pope Nicholas made this decree respecting the Roman pontiff, that the cardinals should take the lead, that in the next place they should unite with them the rest of the clergy, and lastly that the election should be confirmed by the people. The consent of the emperor, as far as I can discover, was required only in two Churches, at Rome and Constantinople, because they were the two capitals of the empire. This by no means allowed a king to supersede all canonical election by appointing a bishop at his own pleasure. It only gives the emperor the honour of confirming a legitimate election by his authority.

14. It remains for us to state by what ceremony the ministers of the ancient Churches, were initiated into office. This the Latins have called *ordination*. The Greeks called it *cheirotomia*, **extension or elevation of hands**, and sometimes *cheirothesia*, **imposition of hands**. The former word signifies that kind of election in which the suffrages are declared by the lifting up of the hands. There is a decree of the Council of Nice, that the metropolitan should meet with all the bishops of the province, to ordain him who shall have been elected. But if any of them be prevented by the length of the journey, or by sickness, at least three should meet, and those who are absent should testify their consent by letters.

The reason why all were commanded to be present, was that there might be more solemn examination into the learning and moral of the person to be ordained. For the ordination was not effected without examination.

15. This was the universal practice, without any exception. By degrees a different custom was introduced, and the persons elected went to the metropolitan city to seek ordination. This change arose from ambition and a corruption of the ancient institution. Not long after, when

the authority of the see of Rome had increased, almost all the bishops of Italy went to Rome to be consecrated.

Presbyters and deacons were also ordained solely by imposition of hands. But every bishop ordained his own presbyters, in conjunction with the assembly of the other presbyters of his diocese. Now, though they all united in the same act, yet because the bishop took the lead, therefore it was called his ordination. The ancient writers noted that a presbyter differed from a bishop in no other respect, than that he did not possess the power of ordination.

Chapter V

The Ancient Form of Government Entirely Subverted by the Papal Tyranny

1. A comparison between the ancient Church and the Papal system will show what kind of a Church there is among those who arrogate to themselves this exclusive title.

We shall first consider what kind of men are called into the ministry, beginning with the bishop. It is a shame that bishops are chosen from lawyers, who understand pleading in a court, than preaching in a Church. For a hundred years, scarcely one in a hundred that has been chosen had any knowledge of Holy Scripture!

As to their morals, we find among them drunkards, fornicators, gamblers, hunters and fowlers. Boys, scarcely ten years of age, have by permission of the pope, been made bishops.

2. All the right of the people to choose has been entirely taken away. All the power is transferred to the canons. They confer the bishopric on whom they please. Bishoprics often are the rewards of adulterers and panders.

3. This abuse in the choice of bishops arose from the negligence of the people. Left to the presbyters, the latter usurped the power which they afterwards confirmed to themselves by new canons. Under these disorderly circumstances, occasion was given to princes to assume the presentation of bishops to themselves. Courtiers are made bishops and sent from the court to seize upon the Churches.

4. Bishops claim apostolic succession. The power of creating presbyters, they say, belong exclusively to them. Presbyters are ordained not to rule and feed the people, but are made priests to offer sacrifices. Deacons are consecrated, who have nothing to do with their proper office, but only to certain ceremonies about the chalice and patine.

In the Council of Chalcedon, however, it was decreed that there should be no absolute ordinations, that is, without some place being at the same time assigned to the persons ordained, where they were to exercise their office. This decree was highly useful, that the Church might not be

burdened with an unnecessary charge and, secondly, that the persons ordained might consider themselves not as promoted to an honour, but as intrusted with a sacred office.

But the Romish doctors, who think their belly ought to be all their care, explain the requisite title to consist in an income sufficient for their support, whether arising from their own patrimony or from a benefice. Therefore, when they ordain a deacon or presbyter, without giving themselves any concern where he is to officiate, they readily admit him, if he be rich enough to maintain himself. This sort of business gives rise to a thousand frauds, as when some falsely exhibit empty titles of benefices. Others, under a secret stipulation, borrow benefices which they promise to return immediately, but which, in many instances, are never returned. But even though these abuses were removed, is it not absurd to ordain a presbyter without assigning him any station?

5. As to their ordination, they adorn with many pompous ceremonies, that its appearance may gain the veneration of the simple. The bishops have their vicars, to examine the learning of the candidates, before ordination. All they interrogate them, are whether they can read masses, whether they can decline some common noun or conjugate a verb. None are rejected from the priesthood, who are deficient even in their puerile elements, if they bring some present or recommendation to favour.

6. I maintain that scarcely one benefice in a hundred, in all the Papacy, is at present conferred without simony. I do not say that they all purchase with ready money. But show me one in twenty who obtains a benefice without any indirect recommendation. Some are promoted by relationship, others by alliance, others by the influence of parents, others gain favour by services. In short, the end for which sacerdotal offices are conferred, is not to provide for Churches, but for the persons to whom they are given. And therefore they call them *benefices*, a name by which they declare that they view them as donatives of princes, by which they conciliate the favour of their soldiers, or reward their services. These rewards are conferred upon barbers, cooks, muleteers and other dregs of the people. Infants just beginning to lisp succeeded to it as an inheritance transmitted by their uncles and cousins, and sometimes even by fathers to their illegitimate children.

7. It is still more monstrous that one man should preside over the government of five or six Churches. Young men there are, who hold one archbishopric, two bishoprics and three abbeys. And it is a common thing for canons to be loaded with five, six or seven benefices, of which they take not the least care, except in receiving revenues. Both these things are execrable enormities, utterly repugnant to God, to nature, and to the government of the Church—that one robber should engross several Churches at once, and that the name of *pastor* should be given to one who could not be present with his flock.

8. Now, let us see how faithfully they exercise their office, which is the second mark by which we are to judge of a legitimate pastor. Of the priests whom they create, some are *monks*, others are called *seculars*.

The former were unknown to the ancient Church, and to hold such a place in the Church was incompatible with the monastic profession, that anciently, when anyone was chosen from a monastery to be one of the clergy, he ceased to be a monk. For of the monks, some are mendicants and a few of the others preach. All the rest of the monks either chant or mutter over masses in their cloisters.

While the Scripture testifies it is the duty of a presbyter to govern his own Church (Acts 20:28), is it not a profanation to transfer to another object, or rather to make a total change in, God's sacred institution? For when they are ordained monks, they are expressly forbidden to do things which the Lord enjoins upon all presbyters. Let a monk be content in his cloister, and not presume to administer the sacraments, or to execute any other branch of public duty.

9. I proceed to the seculars, of whom some are called *beneficiaries*, that is, they have benefices by which they are maintained. Others hire themselves to say mass or sing, and live on the wages which they gain from these employments. So benefices are either attended with bishoprics or parishes, or they are stipends of delicate men, who gain a livelihood by chanting. But in the confusion which has been introduced, abbeys and priories are conferred not only on secular priests, but also on boys.

Now, if it be the duty of a presbyter to feed the Church and administer the spiritual kingdom (1 Cor 4:1), all those priests who have no work or wages, except in making merchandise of masses, not only fail of

executing their office, but have no legitimate office to execute. There is no place assigned to them to teach. They have no people to govern. In short, nothing remains to them but the altar upon which to offer Christ in sacrifice. This is a sacrificing to demons, as we shall see in another place.

10. Canons, deans, chaplains, provosts and all who are supported by sinecures are to be considered in the same light. These have discarded the preaching of the Word, the superintendence of discipline and the administration of sacraments, as employments attended with too much labour and trouble. They have chanting and pomp of ceremonies, but to what purpose? While they claim to be presbyters we shall find their whole profession is most foreign and remote from the office of presbyters. Since chaplains, canons, deans, provosts and other idlers of this description do not even with their little fingers touch a particle of that duty which is necessarily required in presbyters, it is not to be endured that they should usurp the honour and thus violate the sacred institution of Jesus Christ.

11. Bishops and rectors of parishes, who wish to be considered pastors, however, desert the churches committed to them, and transfer the care of them to others. They act as if the office of a pastor consisted in doing nothing. Many of them, all their lifetime, devour the revenues of Churches, which they never approach even to look at them. Treating the Churches as no other than farms, they place over them their vicars as bailiffs. Pastors only in name, they never saw one of the sheep!

12. Some seeds of this evil appear to have sprung up in Gregory's time. He heavily complains, "The world is full of priests; but yet there are few labourers found in the harvest." Again: "Because they have no bowels of charity, they wish to be considered as lords; they do not acknowledge themselves to be fathers. They change the place of humility into an aggrandizement of dominion." Gregory used this language against those who were only chargeable with a want of diligence in their office. What would he have said, had he seen scarcely any of the bishops, one in a hundred, ascend a pulpit once in their lives?

13. The whole form of ecclesiastical government, which exists today under the Papacy, is a nest of the most lawless and ferocious banditti in the world. While those in high position claim to be pillars of the Church, and the vicars of Christ, because they have succeeded to the power and

authority of the Apostles, they have nothing in common with the Apostles, especially in the office of preaching, which they so carefully avoid. Bishops for the most part are illiterate asses, while rectors of Churches think no more of feeding the flock, than a shoemaker does of ploughing.

14. What if we proceed to inquire into their manners? Are they salt and light as Christ requires of them? There is no class of men in the present day more infamous for profusion, delicacy, luxury and profligacy of every kind. No class of men contains more apt or expert masters of every species of imposture, fraud, treachery and perfidy. Nowhere can be found equal cunning or audacity in the commission of crime. I say nothing of their pride, haughtiness, rapacity and cruelty; I say nothing of the abandoned licentiousness of every part of their lives.

15. Deacons today no more are in charge of the sacred distribution, which they have, of the property of the Church. Deacons are created rather to serve at the altar or chant the Gospel. Deacons are one step below the priesthood.

Of the alms given at present, no more reaches the poor than if they were thrown into the sea. Like robbers, these men have made a division of it, and everyone has seized as large a share as he could.

16. The principal part of this plunder was seized by the bishops and the presbyters of cities, who, being enriched by it, were converted into canons. These have taken care that not a penny of all the property of the Church should reach the poor, who were entitled at least to half of it.

17. But in the ancient Church, according to a single expression from the Council of Aquileia, at which Ambrose presided, "Poverty is honourable in the priests of the Lord." It is true that the bishops at that time had some wealth, but knowing that there was nothing more inconsistent with the office of pastors, than to display themselves on the luxury of their tables, the splendour of their apparel, etc., they maintained the humility, and even the poverty which Christ has consecrated in all His ministers.

18. In the present dispensation, or rather dissipation of the property of the Church, there is that portion which is employed in the ornaments of the temples, which is grossly misapplied. But there is no concern for

the living temples, for they would suffer thousands of the poor to perish with hunger, rather than convert the smallest chalice or silver pitcher into money to relieve their wants.

The people are induced superstitious motives to take what ought to be bestowed upon the poor, and to apply it to the building of temples, the erection of statues, the purchase of chalices and shrines for relics, and the provision of costly vestments. This is the gulf which swallows the daily alms.

19. In conclusion, let me cite those ancient decrees of councils, by which it is ordained that a bishop shall have a small house near the Church, a frugal table, and humble furniture, which declare poverty to be honourable in the priests of the Lord. Jerome says to one Nepotian, that poor persons and strangers, and Christ among them, should be familiar guests at his table.

But bishops and abbots emulate the pomp of princes, in the number of their attendants, the splendour of their palaces. In mentioning all these things, my intention is to show, that the legitimate office of deacon has long been entirely abolished among them, to prevent their continuing to pride themselves on this title.

Chapter VI

The Primacy of the Roman See

1. The Romanists accuse us of schism because we have separated from their Church, while they claim that the only bond of the unity of the Church is adherence to the see of Rome. Their notion is that the Church is like a mutilated and headless body, unless it be subject to the Roman see as its head. They boast that the Roman pontiff is the vicar of Christ, the Head of the Church, presiding over the universal Church in His stead.

2. To claim pre-eminence for Rome, the Romanists allege the high-priesthood ordained in the law, and the supreme jurisdiction of the high-priest which God appointed at Jerusalem. Our answer is there is no reason for extending to the whole world what was useful in a single nation. But there is another reason why this ought not to be made a precedent for imitation. For everyone knows that the Jewish high-priest was a type of Christ. Now that the priesthood has been transferred, that right must also be transferred. To whom, then, is it to be transferred? Certainly not to the pope, but to Christ, who exercises that office alone without vicar or successor.

3. From the New Testament, they adduce in support of their opinion what Christ said to Peter, “Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church” (Matt 16:18). Again: “Simon, . . . lovest thou me? . . . Feed my sheep” (John 21:16). To render these proofs substantial, it is necessary for them to show that he who is commanded to feed the flock of Christ is invested with authority over all Churches, and that binding and loosing are no other than governing the whole world. But as Peter had received the Lord’s command to feed the Church, so he exhorts all other presbyters to do the same (1 Pet 5:2). Peter received no particular conferment beyond others. In regard to *binding* and *loosing*, namely, “remitting and retaining sins” (John 20:23), neither is this power given exclusively to Peter. Paul says, that the ministers of the Gospel have received a commission to reconcile men to God (2 Cor 5:18), and that they have authority to inflict punishment on those who shall reject this favour (2 Cor 10:6).

4. In respect of “the keys of the kingdom of heaven,” Christ promised to Peter, He said, “Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be

bound in heaven” (Matt 16:19). If we can agree respecting the word *keys*, and the manner of *binding*, all dispute will immediately cease. Since it is the Gospel that opens heaven to us, it is expressed by the metaphorical appellation of *keys*. Then, there is no other way in which men are *bound* and *loosed*, than when some are reconciled to God by faith, and others are bound by their unbelief. If the definition above, which I have given, be admitted, then here is nothing given to Peter that was not also common to his colleagues. For they can never prove, but that as the preaching of the same Gospel was enjoined upon all the Apostles, so they were all equally armed with the power of binding and loosing. They allege that Christ, when He promised to give the keys to Peter, constituted him head of the universal Church.

But what He there promised to one, He in another passage confers upon all the rest together, and delivers it, as it were, into their hands (Matt 18:18; John 20:23).

5. But this declaration, “Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church” (Matt 16:18), they say, is nowhere to be found addressed to any other. To the contrary, Peter claims not this declaration for himself, since he enjoins us to be “as lively stones,” who, being founded on that “corner stone, elect, precious” (1 Pet 2:5, 6), are by this connection united to our Lord and to each other. Paul also states of “Christ . . . the chief cornerstone,” to be that upon which they are built, who grow “unto a holy temple in the Lord” (Eph 2:21, 22). I readily allow Peter the honour of being placed among the first in the structure of the Church, but I will not permit them to infer from this that he possessed a primacy over the rest.

6. For the present, I only mean to show that they have no solid argument, when they wish to erect an empire over the universal Church upon no other foundation than the name of Peter.

But Peter, in his own name and that of his brethren, had confessed Christ was “the Son of the living God” (Matt 16:16). Upon the rock of this confession, Christ builds His Church, because it is the only foundation, as Paul says, “other” than which “can no man lay” (1 Cor 3:11).

7. On further examination of the Scripture itself, we shall only find that Peter was one of the twelve, equal to the rest, their companion, not their master. Peter obeys what is determined by the rest of the Apostles in council (Acts 15:6–29). When he writes to pastors, he does not command them with authority like a superior; but makes them his colleagues (1 Pet 5:1). Commanded by his colleagues to go with John to Samaria, he refuses not (Acts 8:14, 15). In Galatians, Paul devotes nearly two chapters to show he was equal to Peter in the dignity of the Apostleship (Gal 1, 2).

8. Granted that Peter was chief of the Apostles, should they convert a particular instance into a universal rule? If there be one president over twelve men, will it therefore follow that there ought to be but one president over a hundred thousand men?

In arguing that the whole economy of nature teaches us, that there should be one supreme head over all, they adduce the example of cranes and bees, which always choose for themselves one leader, and no more. I admit the examples they produce, but do bees collect together from all parts of the world to choose one king? Each king is content with his own hive. So, among cranes, every flock has its own leader. What will they prove from this, but that every Church ought to have its own bishop?

9. The Church has Christ for its sole Head, under whose sovereignty we are all united together. They offer a gross insult to Christ, therefore, when they assign the pre-eminence over the universal Church to one man. For “the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body” (Eph 4:15, 16). Though the Romanists admit Christ is properly styled the sole Head, they argue for another *ministerial head*, as the phrase is, to act as His vicegerent on earth.

10. But Paul, while giving us a lively description of the Church on various occasions, never mentions its having one head upon earth. There is “one Lord,” Paul says, “in you all. . . . But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers” (Eph 4:5–7, 11). Why does He not say, that He has

appointed one to preside over all as His vicegerent? Why has he not added, “one supreme pontiff to preserve the Church in unity”?

11. For the sake of argument, granted that the primacy of the Church was established in Peter, and to be continued by a perpetual succession, how will they prove that its seat was fixed at Rome? By what right do they restrict to one place this dignity, which was conferred without the mention of any place? Peter, they say, lived and died at Rome. What shall we say of Christ Himself? Was it not at Jerusalem that He exercised the office of a bishop while He lived, and fulfilled the priestly office by His death? The Head of the Church could not obtain this honour for the place where He lived and die; how then could Peter, who was inferior to Him?

12. If it is true that the Church in which Peter settled ought to have the privilege of primacy, then I infer that the Church of Antioch, where Peter was first stationed, to be justly entitled to the primacy. They confess that Antioch was originally the first, but allege that Peter, on his removal from it, transferred the honour which was attached to him to Rome.

13. Let us suppose that the primacy was, as they pretend, transferred from Antioch to Rome. Why did not Antioch retain the second place? How came Alexandria to have pre-eminence over Antioch? Is it reasonable that the Church of a mere disciple should be superior to the see of Peter? If honour be due to every Church according to the dignity of its founder, what shall we say of the other Churches? Paul mentions three Apostles, “James, Cephas [Peter] and John, who seemed to be pillars” (Gal 2:9). If the first place be given to the see of Rome, in honour of Peter, are not the second and third places due to Ephesus and Jerusalem, the sees of John and James?

But among the patriarchates, Jerusalem had the last place. Ephesus could not be allowed even the farthest corner. Other Churches also, as well as those founded by Paul, and those over which the other Apostles presided, were left without distinction. The see of Mark, who was only one of the disciples, obtained the honour.

14. All that they say of the settlement of Peter in the Church of Rome appears to me of a questionable authority. The statement of Eusebius, that he presided there twenty five years, may be refuted without any difficulty, from the first and second chapters of Galatians. Peter was at Jerusalem

for about twenty years after the death of Christ, and from thence he went to Antioch. If he continued long at Antioch, he could not have resided at Rome except for a very short time. Paul's Epistle to the Romans was written four years before his arrival at Rome. Yet it contains no mention of Peter; which ought, on no account, to have been omitted, if he had presided over the Church. Nor did Paul mention Peter at the conclusion of the Epistle, where he enumerates all that were known to him.

15. Again, when Paul was afterwards brought to Rome, Luke says he was received by the brethren, but says nothing of Peter (Acts 28:15). From Rome, Paul wrote to several Churches. In some of these epistles he introduces salutations, in the names of certain brethren, but they contain not a single word implying that Peter was there at that time. Where was Peter then? For if they say that he was at Rome, how deep is the ignominy which Paul fixes on him, that he was a deserter of the Gospel, since in his letter to Timothy, he said, "all men forsook me" (2 Tim 4:16).

Another discrepancy concerning the claim that Peter held the see at Rome is, the disagreement among ancient writers in regard to Peter's successors. Some say it was Linus. Others, Clement. Yet, in consequence of this agreement of the ancient writers, I will not dispute his having died at Rome; but that he was bishop there, and especially for any length of time, is what I cannot be persuaded to believe. Nor am I anxious respecting this point, because Paul testifies that the Apostleship of Peter particularly belonged to the Jews, and that his own was directed to us. We should, therefore, rather look up to the Apostleship of Paul, than to that of Peter.

16. As to the ancient writers uniformly giving great honour to the Roman Church, I consider as arising from three causes. (a) That it had been founded and settled by the ministry of Peter operated very powerfully to gain credit and authority. (b) Rome was the capital of the empire. (c) While the Eastern and Greek Churches, and even those in Africa, were agitated by numerous dissensions of opinions among themselves, the Church of Rome was more peaceable and less disturbed. Hence it happened, that pious and holy bishops, on being expelled from their sees, resorted thither.

17. Jerome, writing to Nepotian, says concerning the hierarchy of the Church, "Every Church," he says, "has its distinct bishop,

archpresbyter, and archdeacon, and all the order of the Church depends upon its governors.” This is the language of a Roman priest, recommending unity in the order of the Church. Why does he not mention that all Churches are connected together under one head? Jerome’s view is most excellently described by Cyprian, “There is only one bishopric, of which every bishop holds an integral part; and there is but one Church, which is widely extended into a multitude by the offspring of its fertility. As the sun has many rays, but only one light; as a tree has many branches and only one trunk, fixed on a firm root . . . so also the Church, illuminated with the light of the Lord, extends its rays over the whole earth, yet it is one and the same light which is universally diffused, nor is the unity of the body destroyed. It stretches its branches, it pours out its ample streams, all over the world. Yet there is but one root, and one source.” We see how he attributes the universal bishopric to Christ alone, and says that integral portions of it are confided to all those who discharge the episcopal office under his head. Where is the primacy of the see of Rome, if the universal bishopric is vested in Christ alone, and every bishop hold an integral portion of it?

Chapter VII

The Rise and Progress of the Papal Power to Its Present Eminence, Attended with the Loss of Liberty to the Church, and the Ruin of all Moderation

1. In support of the antiquity of the primacy of the see of Rome, there is nothing to be found before the Council of Nice (AD 325), by which the bishop of Rome is allotted the first place among the patriarchs.

2. When the Council of Chalcedon was held in AD 451, Leo managed to persuade Marcian, the emperor, to let him occupy first place; since the Eastern bishops, who presided at the Council of Ephesus before this, were unsteady and disorderly. This shows that the bishop of Rome had the first place in the Council of Chalcedon, not because it was the right of his see, but because the Council was in want of a suitable president.

When Leo's successor sent his legates to the fifth Council of Constantinople, he contended not for the first seat, which was yielded to Menna, patriarch of Constantinople.

So in the Council of Carthage, at which Augustine was present, the place of president was filled by Aurelius, archbishop of the city, and not by the legates of the Roman see.

Moreover, there was a general council held in Italy, at which the Bishop of Rome was not present. This was the Council of Aquileia, at which Ambrose presided, whose dignity caused the see of Milan at that time to have the precedence above that of Rome.

3. The Council of Carthage prohibited that any one should be called "the prince of priests," or "the first bishop." In more ancient records, the bishop of Rome was content to be addressed "brother." Nothing was heard of a supreme pontiff or a sole head of the Church on earth. Even Jerome, who was a Roman presbyter, declared, "Wherever there is a bishop, whether at Rome, at Engubium, at Constantinople, or at Rhegium, he is of the same dignity and of the same priesthood. The power of riches, or the abasement of poverty, makes no bishop superior or inferior to each other."

4. Respecting the title of *universal bishop*, the first contention arose in the time of Gregory, and was occasioned by the ambition of John, bishop of Constantinople. In the controversy, Gregory said of John, “But what does this pride of his indicate, but that the times of Antichrist are already at hand?”

5. I now come to the jurisdiction which the Roman pontiff asserts that he holds over all churches. How it is exalted to assume jurisdiction over other Churches happened thus: When the Eastern Churches were divided by the Arians, in the reign of Constantius and Constans, sons of Constantine the Great, and Athanasius, the principal leader defender of the orthodox faith, was driven from his see, this calamity drove him to Rome. By the authority of the Roman see, he hoped to repress the rage of his enemies, and to confirm the faithful. He was honourably received by Julius, then bishop of Rome, and prevailed on the West to undertake the defence of his cause. The pious in the Eastern Churches, finding themselves in great want of foreign aid, and seeing that their principal succour was to be obtained from Rome, readily ascribed to it all the authority they possibly could. This dignity, gathering around Rome, was augmented by men of wicked and abandoned lives, who fled there to escape punishment. For example, as soon as any wicked man was convicted before the ordinary tribunal in Africa, he would fly to Rome and bring accusations against his superiors. The see of Rome was always ready to interpose, with culpable eagerness, considering it a kind of extraordinary power to interfere in the concerns of distant Churches.

6. But however this might be, let us examine what jurisdiction the Roman see then possessed. Now, ecclesiastical power consists in (a) the ordination of bishops, (b) the calling of councils, (c) the hearing of appeals and (d) corrective admonitions or censures. All the ancient councils command bishops to be ordained by their own metropolitans. They never direct the bishop of Rome to be called to this office except in his own province. By degrees, however, a custom was introduced for all the bishops of Italy to go to Rome to be consecrated, except the metropolitans, who did not suffer to be subjected to this bondage.

7. Next follow admonitions or censures, which, as the bishops of Rome formerly employed them towards others, they also received from

others in their turn. Irenaeus, bishop of Lyons, sharply reproved Victor, bishop of Rome, for having raised a pernicious dissension in the Church on subjects of no importance. Victor submitted to the reproof without any opposition. He, in like manner, when occasion required, admonished others of their duty, and reproved them of their faults.

8. With respect to the calling of councils, it was the duty of every metropolitan, at stated seasons, to summon a provincial synod. There the bishop of Rome had no authority. But a universal council could only be called by the emperor.

9. There remains the fourth kind of ecclesiastical power, which consists in appeals. It is true many often appealed to the bishop of Rome; and he also attempted to assume cognizance of the causes. But he always became an object of derision whenever he exceeded his proper limits. The bishop of France resisted him, when he discovered an inclination to usurp authority over them. So did the Africans deny the claims to authority by the bishop of Rome, even in the time of Augustine.

10. A single transaction, related by Augustine, will be sufficient to show what kind of jurisdiction was anciently possessed by the bishop of Rome. Donatus, bishop of Casae Nigrae, had accused Caecilianus, bishop of Carthage. The matter was brought before the Emperor Constantine. The Emperor referred the matter to Melchiades, the bishop of Rome, with whom he associated other bishops from Italy, France, and Spain. If it was Rome's jurisdiction to hear an appeal, why did her bishop suffer any colleagues to be appointed with him at the behest of the Emperor? Why didn't he undertake the business from his own authority?

11. Of those ancient pontiffs of Rome, who extolled the majesty of their see, Leo was one who had an immoderate thirst for glory and dominion. Many were offended at his ambition and resisted his claims.

12. In the time of Gregory, this ancient custom had already undergone a considerable change. When the empire was convulsed and torn asunder, and Africa almost ruined with incessant calamities; in order to preserve the unity of the faith from destruction, all the bishops round about connected themselves more closely with the bishop of Rome.

The consequence was that the power of the Roman see was greatly enhanced. The see of Rome was held in such reverence, that its authority

would repress the refractory and obstinate. Gregory proudly boasted, “I know no bishop who is not subject to the apostolic see, when he is found at fault.” Those who were willing consented to it. Others who disapproved of it, opposed it. These were formed the majority. Nevertheless, Gregory was appointed by the emperor to decide these causes.

13. The power possessed by the bishop of Rome, at this time, was to oppose rebellious and refractory persons. He was to assist, and not to hinder, other bishops. He gave his command to other bishops involved, not from his own authority, but by the mandate of the emperor. Nor did he act the sole judge, but promised to assemble a synod to judge the whole affair.

14. The bishop of Constantinople, as we have already stated, was at that time engaged in a contest with the bishop of Rome, respecting the primacy. For after the seat of empire was fixed at Constantinople, the majesty of the government seemed to require that the Church be the next in dignity to the Church of Rome.

In the Council of Turin, it was decreed, that those which were the chief cities of the respective provinces in the civil government, should be the principal sees of bishops; and that if the honour of the civil government should happen to be transferred from one city to another, the seat of the metropolitan should be removed to the same place.

15. According to this ancient ordinance, it was decreed in the first Council of Constantinople (AD 381), that the bishop of that city should have the next rank and dignity to the bishop of Rome, because that was the new Rome. But when a similar decree was passed long after in the Council of Chalcedon, Leo strenuously opposed it. He foresaw what actually came to pass not long after, that as the glory of Rome was declining, Constantinople would not be content with the second place, but would contend for the primacy. Yet all his clamour was unavailing. The decree of the Council was confirmed.

16. But after a while, John, who presided over the Church of Constantinople while Gregory was bishop of Rome, had the arrogance to assume the title of *universal patriarch*. Gregory, not afraid of defending his see in a good cause, resolutely opposed this assumption. Now, Gregory did not claim to himself what he denied to another; but execrated

the title, by whomsoever it might be usurped, as wicked and impious. Gregory's was a good and honourable cause; but John, being supported by the favour of Mauritius the emperor, could not be diverted from his purpose. Cyriacus, his successor, was equally inflexible.

17. At length Phocas, who ascended the throne after the murder of Mauritius, being more favourable to the Romans, granted to Boniface the Third what Gregory had never demanded—that Rome should be the head of all Churches. Thus the controversy between Rome and Constantinople was decided. Yet this grant of the emperor could not have been so much to the advantage of the see of Rome, if it had not been followed by other things. For Greece and all Asia soon after separated from its communion. Nor was it reduced to entire subjection, till Pepin had usurped the crown with the help of Zachary, the Roman pontiff. From a similar cause, the supremacy of Rome was confirmed by Charlemagne, in years to come. Charlemagne was indebted to the Roman pontiff, for his exertions in raising him to the dignity of emperor.

18. From that time, as things daily became worse and worse, the tyranny of the Roman see was gradually established, and that was partly through the ignorance, and partly through the indolence of the bishops. We see, therefore, a horrible profanation of everything sacred, at Rome, in the days of Bernard. He complains that the ambitious, the avaricious, the simoniacal, the sacrilegious, the adulterous, the incestuous, from every part of the world, resorted to Rome in order to procure or to retain ecclesiastical honours by the apostolic authority; and that fraud and violence were generally practised.

19. From the middle ages, let us come to our present day. The Romanists designate the pope no otherwise than was the supreme head of the Church on earth, and universal pope of the whole world. And when the pontiffs speak, they command that all their decrees are to be received as if they were confirmed by the voice of St. Peter. For want of their presence, provincial synods have no authority. They have the power to ordain priests and deacons for all Churches. The sum of them all comes to this: that the Roman pontiff alone has the supreme cognizance of all ecclesiastical causes, whether in judging and determining doctrines, in enacting laws, in regulating discipline, or in exercising jurisdiction. Their

arrogance is beyond all bounds, and claiming. “The judge shall not be judged, either by the emperor or by kings, or by all the clergy, or by the people.” Again: “The actions of our subjects are judged by us; but ours by God alone.”

20. To add weight to their edicts, they have falsely substituted the names of ancient pontiffs, as if things had been so regulated from the beginning; when in fact they were a recent fabrication. Through such fabrication have proceeded those famous axioms, which today are universally received by them as oracles: That the pope cannot err; that the pope is superior to all councils; that the pope is the universal bishop of all Churches, and supreme head of the Church upon earth.

21. But let the advocates of the Roman see answer me, with what face they can dare to defend the title of *universal bishop*, which they find to have been so often anathematised by Gregory, to be that of Antichrist. By extending his jurisdiction without limits, the pope does a grievous and atrocious injury, not only to other bishops, but to all other Churches. But when he exempts himself from all the judgments of others, and determines to reign in such a tyrannical manner as to have no law but his own pleasure, this is certainly so foreign from the order of the Church, that it is altogether intolerable and incapable of any defence.

22. The state of the Papacy today is evidently a hundred times more corrupt than it was in the times of Gregory and Bernard. We find no sermons preached, no attention to discipline, no concern for Churches, no spiritual function performed. In a word, nothing but the world.

23. Supposing, therefore, all these things to be true, which, however, we have already refuted—that, by the voice of Christ, Peter had been constituted head of the universal Church, that the honour vested in him he had committed to the Roman see, that this had been established by the ancient Church, and confirmed by long usage; yet I reply, that none of them would be of any avail, unless there be at Rome a Church and a bishop.

But where will they show us any form or appearance of a Church? And I should wish to know what resemblance the pontiff himself bears to a bishop. The first duty of a bishop is to instruct the people from the Word of God. The second duty is to administer the sacraments. The third is to

admonish, exhort, and reprove those who offend. Which of these duties does he perform? Let them tell me, then, upon what principle they require him to be considered as a bishop, who never, even in appearance, with his little finger touches the least portion of the duty.

24. The case of a bishop is different from that of a king, who still retains the title of a king, though he execute none of the royal functions. I deny that the Roman pontiff is the chief of bishops, because he is not a bishop himself.

Furthermore, as the Roman pontiff violently rages against the revived doctrine of the Gospel, and exerts all his power to crush it, in order to preserve his own domain; shall he not have declared himself to be the Antichrist?

25. Some persons think us too censorious, when we call the Roman pontiff Antichrist. But we speak, after the Apostle Paul, who says that Antichrist “sitteth in the temple of God” (2 Thess 2:4). Now, though all the heresies and schisms, which have existed from the beginning belong to the kingdom of Antichrist, yet when Paul predicts an approaching apostasy, he signifies by this description that the seat of abomination shall then be erected, when a universal defection shall have seized the Church, notwithstanding many members, dispersed in many places, persevere in the unity of faith. But when he adds, that even in his days “the mystery of iniquity” did “already work” (2 Thess 2:7), he gives us to understand that this calamity was neither to be introduced by one man, nor to terminate with one man. Now, when he designates Antichrist, that he would rob God of his honour, this is the principal indication which we ought to follow in our inquiries after Antichrist. As it is evident that the Roman pontiff has impudently transferred to himself some of the exclusive prerogatives of God and Christ, it cannot be doubted he is the leader of this abominable kingdom.

26. There is also the immense difference between the pope’s chancery, and a well regulated administration of the Church. The episcopal office consists chiefly in lead and bulls, in frauds and chicaneries. The Roman Church has long ago been converted into a secular court, which is all that is now to be seen at Rome.

27. If we proceed to examine the persons, who claim to be vicars for Christ, and their theology, we will find that the first article of their religion is that there is no God! The second is, that all that is written and preached concerning Jesus Christ is falsehood. The third is that the doctrine of a future life, and that of the final resurrection, are mere fables. This opinion, I confess, is not entertained by all, yet it long ago began to be the ordinary religion of the pontiffs.

28. There was one John XXII, who publicly maintained that souls are mortal, and that they perish together with the bodies till the day of resurrection. Now, not one of the cardinals resisted this capital error; but the university of Paris urged the king to compel the pope to a retraction. This example disproves the Romanist claim to inerrancy, respecting the faith.

29. The Roman pontiffs for a long time have either been totally indifferent to religion, or have shown themselves its greatest enemies. They are no more made the vicars of Christ, by the see which they occupy, than an idol is to be taken for God, because it is placed in His temple.

Their claim to be vicars of Christ is further vitiated by the abandoned living they are given, to all kinds of debauchery and obscenity, that they resemble monsters rather than men. I shall not proceed to a further disclosure of their turpitude, for it is unpleasant to meddle with such pollution, and it is necessary that I spare chaste ears.

30. With respect to the *cardinals*, as they are called, I know not how it has come to pass that they have so suddenly risen to such high dignity. In the time of Gregory, this title was exclusively applied to **bishops**; for whenever he mentions cardinals, he speaks of them not only as belonging to the Church of Rome, but to any other Churches; so that, in short, a cardinal priest is no other than a bishop. I find no such title at all in the writers of any preceding age; and at that time, I observe, they were far inferior to bishops, to whom they are now so far superior.

And there is no doubt but they rose by degrees, together with their head, till they reached their present high dignity.

Chapter VIII

The Power of the Church Respecting Articles of Faith, and Its Licentious Perversion, Under the Papacy, to the Corruption of All Purity of Doctrine

1. The next subject is the power of the Church, which is to be considered as residing, partly in the respective bishops, partly in the councils. I speak only of the spiritual power. This consists either in doctrine, in legislation, or jurisdiction. The subject of doctrine contains two parts—the authority to establish doctrines, and the explication of them.

2. It is necessary to remember, that whatever authority and dignity is attributed by the Holy Spirit, in the Scripture, either to the priests and prophets under the law, or to the Apostles and their successors, it is given, in a sense, not to the persons themselves, but to the ministry over which they are appointed. They are not invested with authority to teach, but in the name and Word of the Lord. The Lord shows on what condition they were to be heard, when He says, “My covenant might be with Levi, . . . The law of truth was in his mouth.” And just afterwards, “The priest’s lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts” (Mal 2:4–7). Therefore, if a priest would be heard, it was necessary for him to prove himself the messenger of God, by faithfully communicating the commands which he had received from his Master.

3. The power of the prophets is beautifully described in Ezekiel, “Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me” (Ezek 3:17). When he is commanded to hear from the mouth of the Lord, is he not prohibited to invent anything of himself? The Lord expresses the same thing in other words in Jeremiah, “The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully” (Jer 23:28). He permits no one to teach more than he has been commanded.

4. If we advert to the Apostles, and since they were called Apostles, they were not to declaim according to their own pleasure, but to deliver with strict fidelity the commands of Him who had sent them. And the language of Christ is sufficiently clear, in which He commissions them, “Go ye . . . , and teach all nations, . . . whatsoever I have commanded you” (Matt 28:19, 20). Christ even received and imposed on Himself the same law, “My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me” (John 7:16). The power of the Church, therefore, is not unlimited, but subject to the Word of the Lord.

5. The fountain of all knowledge of God is in His Son, according to Christ’s assertion, “No man knoweth the Son, but the Father; . . . and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him” (Matt 11:27). From this fountain Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and others, drew all the knowledge which they possessed of the heavenly doctrine. From this fountain the prophets themselves drew all the celestial oracles which they spoke and wrote. But this wisdom has not always manifested itself in the same way. With the patriarchs God employed secret revelations. What the patriarchs had received, they transmitted from hand to hand to their posterity. Succeeding generations knew what they heard was from heaven, and not from the earth.

6. But when it pleased God to raise up a more visible form of a church, it was His will that His word be committed to writing. After the promulgation of the law, the priests were commanded to teach “out of the mouth of the LORD,” that is, they should teach nothing extraneous, or different from the system of doctrine which the Lord had comprised in the law. Afterwards followed the prophets, by whom God published new oracles, which were added to the law. Yet they were not so new but that they proceeded from the law. The prophets were merely interpreters of the doctrine of the law, and added nothing except prophecies of things to come. These prophecies were also committed to writing. To these were added histories, composed by the prophets under the dictation of the Holy Spirit. I class the Psalms with the prophecies. So, the whole body of Scripture, consisting the Law, the Prophets, the Psalms, and the Histories, was the Word of God, from which the priests and teachers, even to the coming of Christ, were bound to conform their doctrine; nor was it lawful for them to deviate either to the right hand or to the left.

7. But when, at length, the Wisdom of God was manifested in the flesh, it openly declared to us all that the human mind is capable of comprehending, concerning the heavenly Father. Since Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, has shone upon us, we enjoy the full splendour of the Divine truth, resembling the brightness of the noonday sun. And when the Apostle said, that “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son” (Heb 1:1, 2); he declares that God will not in future, as in ages past, speak from time to time by one and another, that He will not add any more revelation. Therefore, we are neither to invent anything new or beyond ourselves, nor to receive any such thing from the invention of others.

8. Let us lay down this, then, as an undoubted axiom, that nothing ought to be admitted in the Church as the Word of God, but what is contained first in the law and prophets, and secondly in the writings of the Apostles, and that there is no other method of teaching aright in the Church than according to the direction and standard of that Word.

9. Therefore, Peter, who had been fully taught by his Master how far this office extended, represents nothing as left for himself or others, but to dispense the doctrine committed to them by God. “If any man speak,” says he, “let him speak as the oracles of God” (1 Pet 4:11). What is this but rejecting all the inventions of the human mind, in order that the Word of God may be taught and learned in the Church of believers? This is the extent of the power with which the pastors of the Church ought to be invested—that by the Word of God they may venture to do all things with confidence; may constrain the world to obey His majesty; supported by this power, he may govern all mankind; may build up the house of Christ, and subvert the house of Satan.

Between the Apostles and their successors, there is this difference—that the Apostles were the amanuenses of the Holy Spirit, and therefore their writings are to be received as the oracles of God; but succeeding ministers have no other office than to teach what is revealed and recorded in the sacred Scriptures. We conclude, then, that it is not now left to faithful ministers to frame any new doctrine, but it behoves them simply to adhere to the doctrine to which God has made all subject, without any exception. God denies to man the right of promulgating any new articles

of faith, in order that He alone may be our Master in spiritual doctrine. This reason is no less applicable to the whole church than to every individual believer.

10. But if this power, which we have shown to belong to the Church, be compared with that which has now for some ages past been claimed over the people of God by the spiritual tyrants who have falsely called themselves bishops, there will be no more resemblance than there is between Christ and Belial. It is not my intention here to expose the shameful methods in which they have exercised their tyranny: I shall only state the doctrine which they defend in the present age not only by their writings, but also by fire and sword. They claim also that a universal council, being a true representative of the church and under the immediate direction of the Holy Spirit cannot err. Now as they themselves influence the councils and even constitute them, they wish our faith, therefore, to stand or fall at their pleasure. They fabricate doctrines which they require all to believe and pretend that the Church has authority to make new articles of faith.

11. To substantiate their claims to this authority, they say the Church, being the spouse of Christ, will be led by His Spirit into all truth (John 16:13). We contend, however, that their verse, quoted from John, is given not only to the Apostles considered as a body, but to everyone of the number, and even to the other disciples whom He had already received, or who were afterwards to be added to them. However, all who are guided by His Spirit are to confine themselves within the limits of the Word of God, and not to proceed far by their own sense and, therefore, wander from the right way.

12. But they will object, that whatever is partially attributed to everyone of the saints, completely and perfectly belongs to the whole Church. But the riches of the Church are always such as to be very far from that consummate perfection boasted by our adversaries. How vain and visionary is it to imagine the Church already perfectly holy and immaculate, while all its members are the subjects of corruption and impurity!

13. When they assert that the Church cannot err, their meaning is, as they explain it, that as it is governed by the Spirit of God, it may safely

proceed without the Word. They claim, whatever the Church thinks or speaks, it cannot think or speak anything that is not true. If it determines anything beyond or beside the Divine Word, the same is to be considered in no other light than as a certain oracle of God.

This then is the difference between us. They ascribe to the Church an authority independent of the Word. We maintain it to be annexed to the Word, and inseparable from it. How great is the error of our adversaries, who boast of the Holy Spirit for no other purpose than to recommend, under His name, doctrine strange and inconsistent with the Word of God, whereas it is His determination to be connected with the Word by an indissoluble bond. Christ has forbidden the Church to add anything to His Word, or to diminish anything from it. This is the inviolable decree of God and of the Holy Spirit, which our adversaries endeavour to abrogate, when they pretend that the Church is governed by the Spirit without the Word.

14. Here, they cavil that it was necessary for the Church to add some things to the writings of the Apostles, because Christ declared to them, “I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now” (John 16:12), and that these are the ordinances which have been received of usage and custom without the Scripture. Let us grant our opponents what they ask: only let them enumerate those things which require to be revealed, and are not contained in the Apostolical writings. If they dare to attempt this, I will reply in the words of Augustine, “Where the Lord has been silent, which of us can say, These things or those are intended; and if he dare to say so, how will he prove it?”

15. Nor ought it to be esteemed too contentious in me to insist strenuously on this point—That it is not lawful for the Church to invent any new doctrine, or to teach and deliver, as of Divine authority, anything more than the Lord has revealed in His Word. All persons of sound judgment perceive how exceedingly dangerous it would be if so much power were once granted to any man. How wide a door is opened to the impious, if we allow the decisions of men to be received by Christians as articles of faith.

Chapter IX

Councils; Their Authority

1. Before I enter on the discussion of this question, it is necessary for me to premise two observations. First, if in this chapter I am rather severe on our opponents, it is not that I would show the ancient councils less honour than they deserve. Secondly, when I attribute to the councils less than our adversaries require, it is not from any fear that the councils would favour their cause and oppose us.

2. Let us come to the subject itself. If it is inquired what is the authority of councils according to the Scripture, there is no promise more explicit than Christ's declaration, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt 18:20). But this belongs no less to every particular congregation than to a general council.

Councils of bishops a thousand times, who claim they are directed by the Holy Spirit, are of little authority, until they are assembled in the name of Christ. For it is equally possible for impious and unfaithful bishops to conspire against Christ, as for pious and upright bishops to assemble in His name.

3. History shows us that those in high places of the Church have apostatised. In the days of Isaiah, the prophet spoke of the priests in the following manner, "His watchmen are blind: they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber. . . . they are shepherds that cannot understand: they all look to their own way, every one for his gain, from his quarter" (Isa 56:10, 11). Denunciations of false priests and prophets were made also by Hosea (Hos 9:8), by Jeremiah (Jer 14:14), and Ezekiel (Ezek 22:25, 26, 28).

4. But it will be said, though such may have been the case among the Jews, our age is exempt from so great a calamity. I sincerely wish that it were so; but the Holy Spirit has denounced, through Peter, that "there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies" (2 Pet 2:1). So did Christ predict that the greatest dangers would be brought

upon the Church by its pastors (Matt 24:11, 24)! Paul expressly denounces that Antichrist “sitteth in the temple of God” (2 Thess 2:4).

5. I am not trying to weaken the authority of pastors, and bring it into contempt by any means. I only mean to suggest the necessity of discriminating between some pastors and others, that we may not immediately consider persons as pastors because they bear that title. But the pope and all his bishops, casting off all obedience to the Word of God, confound everything at their own pleasure; while they try to persuade us that the Spirit of God perpetually resides in them, and that with them the Church lives and dies. They speak exactly like those who resisted Jeremiah in opposition to the truth, “Come, and let us devise devices against Jeremiah; for the law shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet” (Jer 18:18).

6. That a whole body of prophets have erred is remarkably exemplified in the council convoked by Ahab. Four hundred prophets were present. But because they were assembled with no other intention than to flatter that impious monarch, Satan was sent by the Lord to be a lying spirit in all their mouths (1 Kgs 22:6, 22, 24, 27). There the truth was rejected with one consent. Micaiah was condemned as a heretic. Jeremiah received the same treatment, and other prophets experienced similar injustice.

7. But one example, which is more memorable than the rest, to show that a council can err is, that convened at Jerusalem by the chief priests and Pharisees against Christ. Christ was condemned, and His doctrine rejected. But, it will be said, there is no danger of such a circumstance happening to us. Who has assured us of this? The Spirit, rather, has expressly predicted, by the mouth of Paul, that there shall come an apostasy, which cannot take place without the pastors being the first to revolt from God (2 Thess 2:3; 1 Tim 4:1). Wherefore, it is by no means to be conceded, that the Church consists in the assembly of pastors, respecting whom God has nowhere promised that they should always be good. On the contrary, He has denounced they would sometimes be wicked.

8. What, then, it will be said, shall the decisions of councils have no authority? Yes, certainly; for I am not contending that all councils ought

to be condemned. Whenever a decree of any council is brought forward, I would wish, first, that a diligent inquiry should be made, at what time, for what cause, and with what design it was held, and what kind of persons were present. Secondly, that the subject discussed should be examined by the standard of Scripture. Upon this principle, those ancient councils, such as the Council of Nice, of Constantinople, etc., which were held for the condemnation of errors, we cheerfully receive and revere as sacred, as far as respects the articles of faith which they have defended. For they contain nothing but the pure and natural interpretation of the Scripture.

But as the progress of the world is generally from bad to worse, it is easy to see, from the more recent councils, how much the Church has gradually degenerated from the purity of that golden age. Where opinions prevail according to their number, and not according to the weight of argument by which they are supported, the better part of the assembly must of necessity be frequently overcome by the majority. And councils have certainly issued many decrees.

It is here unnecessary to produce particular examples, as this will carry us to too great a length.

9. Now, what need is there to enumerate the repugnances between councils and councils, and how decrees passed by one have been rescinded by another? How shall we determine which council is right and which is wrong? From the Scripture! About nine hundred years ago, the Council of Constantinople decreed that all images placed in churches should be thrown down. Soon after, the Council of Nice, which the empress Irene convened in opposition to the former, decreed that they should be restored. Which of these two shall we acknowledge as a legitimate council? We shall never be able to discriminate between the numerous councils, which dissent from and contradict each other, unless we examine them all by the Word of God, which is the universal standard for men and angels.

10. Even in the earliest and purest councils there is something to complain of—for being men, they were liable to ignorance and error; and to give vent to their passions. For though they had to contend with Arius, their enemy, and that harmony should be maintained among those who

came to confute the error of Arius; they began to counteract themselves with intestine dissensions. The foulest accusations were heard, and there would be no end of the contentions till they had murdered one another, if it had not been for the interference of the emperor Constantine.

11. Now, though our adversaries have confessed councils might err in things not essential to salvation, this they have done so merely in words. In practice, they obtrude upon us the decision of every council on every subject, without discrimination, as an oracle of the Holy Spirit. This is tantamount to saying that councils cannot err, or that, if they err, it is unlawful for us to discover the truth, or to refuse assent to errors? From these facts, I rather conclude that the Holy Spirit governed pious and Christian councils in such a manner, as at the same time to permit them to betray something of human infirmity, that we might not place too much confidence in men. This sentiment is far more favourable than that of Gregory of Nazianzum, “that he never saw a good end of any council.”

12. But the Romanists, when they find all the supports of reason fail them in the defence of their cause, have recourse to that last and wretched subterfuge—that although the persons themselves betray the greatest stupidity in their understandings and pleas, and act from the most iniquitous motives, still the Word of God remains, which commands us to obey our governors (Heb 13:17). But what if I deny that such persons are our governors? Let those who would govern over us be like Joshua, who was inaugurated into his gubernatorial office under this condition, “This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, . . . turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest” (Josh 1:8, 7). We shall consider them as our spiritual governors, therefore, who deviate not from the Word of God, either to the right hand or to the left. If the doctrine of all pastors ought to be received without any hesitation, why have we such frequent and earnest admonitions from the mouth of the Lord Himself, not to listen to the speeches of false prophets? (Jer 23:16; Matt 7:15; 1 John 4:1; Matt 15:14). Does this not sufficiently declare, that it is of the highest importance what kind of pastors are heard, and they are not all entitled to the same attention? Impressed by these warnings, both of precepts and of examples, no names of pastors, bishops, councils, which are as capable of being falsely claimed as rightly assumed, ought

ever to prevent us from examining all the spirits by the rule of the Divine Word, in order to “try . . . whether they are of God.”

13. Having proved that the Church has received no power to frame any new doctrine, let us now speak of the power which our opponents attribute to the interpretation of the Scripture. We have not the least objection to admit, that if a controversy arise respecting any doctrine, there is no better or more certain remedy than to assemble a council of true bishops, in which the controverted doctrine may be discussed. Thus, when Arius arose, the Council of Nice was assembled, and by its authority defeated the pernicious attempts of that impious man, restored peace to the Churches which he had disturbed, and asserted the eternal deity of Christ in opposition to his sacrilegious dogma. Some time after, when Eunomius and Macedonius raised new contentions, their frenzy was opposed with a similar remedy by the Council of Constantinople. The impiety of Nestorius was condemned in the first Council of Ephesus. In short, this has been the ordinary method of the Church from the beginning, for the preservation of unity, whenever Satan has begun to make any attempt against it. But, let it be remembered, that neither every age, nor every place, can produce an Athanasius, a Basil, a Cyril and other such champions of the true doctrine, as the Lord raised up at those periods. Let us also be recollected what happened at the second Council of Ephesus, in which the heresy of Eutyches prevailed. Flavianus, a bishop of irreproachable memory, was banished, because it was Dioscorus, a factious man, and not the Spirit of the Lord, that presided in that council.

14. But the Romanists have a further design in maintaining that councils possess the power of interpreting Scripture, and that without appeal. It is a false pretence, when everything that has been determined in councils is called an interpretation of Scripture. Of purgatory, the intercession of saints, auricular confession, the Scriptures contain not a similar syllable.

Chapter X

The Power of Legislation, in Which the Pope and His Adherents Have Most Cruelly Tyrannized Over the Minds, and Tortured the Bodies, of Men

1. We now proceed to the second branch of the power of the Church, which the Romanists represent as consisting in legislation—a source from which have issued innumerable human traditions. And like the scribes and Pharisees, they “lay them [burdens] on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers” (Matt 23:4; Luke 11:46). This power is now to be examined—whether the Church has authority to make laws which shall bind the consciences of men.

This question has nothing to do with political order. The only objects of our present attention are, that God may be rightfully worshipped according to the rule He prescribed, and that our spiritual liberty which relates to God might be preserved entire. Whatever edicts have been issued by men respecting the worship of God, independently of His Word, it has been customary to call *human traditions*.

2. These sapient legislators pretend that their constitutions are laws of liberty. On the contrary, they have enforced such constitutions with the denunciation of eternal death, and require that they be most minutely observed as necessary to salvation. Such constitutions can only bring torture to the conscience, with extreme anxiety and terror, so that my design, at present, is to oppose them.

3. In treating this subject, it is first of all necessary to understand what is conscience. The definition may be derived from the etymology of the word. *Science*, or *knowledge*, is the apprehension which men have of things in their mind and understanding. So, when they have an apprehension of the judgment of God, as a witness that suffers them not to conceal their sins, this apprehension is called **conscience**. It is something between God and man, which permits not a man to suppress what he knows within himself, but pursues him till it brings him to a sense of his guilt. This is what Paul means, when he speaks of men's

“conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another” (Rom 2:15) before God. This sentiment, which places man before the tribunal of God, is like a keeper appointed over man, to watch and observe all his secrets. Hence that old proverb, that conscience is equal to a thousand witnesses. On the other hand, when Peter speaks of “the answer of a good conscience toward God” (1 Pet 3:21), it denotes a tranquillity of mind, that is without fear before God.

4. A good conscience, therefore, is no other than an internal purity of heart (1 Tim 1:5). A good conscience applies not only in our relation with God (1 Tim 1:19), but also with man (Acts 24:16). Strictly speaking, the conscience has respect to God alone, which simply binds a man without any observation or consideration of other men. For example, God not only commands the heart to be preserved chaste and pure from every libidinous desire, but prohibits all obscenity of language and external lasciviousness. My conscience is bound to observe the law, even though not another man existed in the world. The person, therefore, who commits any breach of chastity, not only sins by setting a bad example to his brethren, but brings his conscience into a state of guilt before God.

5. Let us return to human laws. If they are designed to introduce any scruple into our minds, as though the observance of them were essentially necessary, we assert, that they are unreasonable impositions on the conscience. For our consciences have to do, not with men, but with God alone.

6. Such are the *Ecclesiastical Constitutions*, as they are now called, in the Papacy, which are obtruded as necessary to the true worship of God. But I say, that the legislators of these constitutions have no authority to enjoin upon the observance of the Church anything that they may have invented themselves, independently of the Word of God. As this power was unknown to the Apostles, and was so often interdicted to the ministers of the Church by the mouth of the Lord, I wonder how they dared to usurp it, and still dare to maintain it contrary to the example of the Apostles, and a defiance of the express prohibition of God.

7. Everything pertaining to the perfect rule of a holy life, the Lord has comprehended in His law, so that there remains nothing for man to

add to that summary. If we duly consider this point, that it is not lawful to transfer to man that which God appropriates solely to Himself, we shall understand that this cuts off all the power which is claimed by those who wish to exalt to themselves to command anything in the Church, unsanctioned by the Word of God.

8. There are two reasons why God asserts the power exclusively to Himself. The first is, that His will may be received as the perfect rule of all righteousness and holiness, and so that an acquaintance with it may be all the knowledge necessary to a good life. The second is, that with respect to the mode of worshipping Him aright, He may exercise the sole empire over our souls. When these two reasons are kept in view, it will be easy to judge what constitutions of men are contrary to the Word of God. All human laws are to be weighed in this balance, if we would have a certain and infallible test. The first of these reasons is urged by Paul in his Epistle to the Colossians, in opposition to the false apostles. In a similar argument, in the Epistle to the Galatians, he insists more on the second reason. In the Epistle to the Colossians, he contends that the doctrine of the true worship of God is not to be sought from men, because the Lord has fully instructed us how we ought to worship Him. The passages in Galatians, in which he argues that snares ought not to be imposed on consciences, which are subject to the government of God alone, are too plain to be mistaken; especially in Chapter 5 (Gal 5:1–18).

9. Applying this doctrine to our own times, we affirm that the Ecclesiastical Constitutions are pernicious and impious. These constitutions are of two classes: some regard rites and ceremonies, others have more relation to discipline.

10. When men have begun to place religion in such vain figments, then they come under the reproach Christ directed at the Pharisees, “Ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition” (Matt 15:6). For example, our modern legislators esteem it infinitely more criminal, to have omitted auricular confession at a stated time of the year, than to have lived a most iniquitous life for a whole year together; to have tasted animal food on a Friday, than to have polluted the whole body by committing fornication. “The beggarly elements . . . of the world” (Gal 4:9; Col 2:8), as Paul calls them, are esteemed of more force than the celestial oracles of God. He who is absolved in adultery, is condemned in

meat. He who is allowed a harlot, is interdicted from a wife. This is the fruit of that prevaricating obedience, which recedes from God in proportion as it inclines to men.

11. There are two other faults, which we charge on these Constitutions. The first is, that they prescribe for the most part useless, and sometimes even foolish observances. The second is, that pious consciences are oppressed with the immense number of them, and being carried back to a species of Judaism, are so occupied with shadows as to be prevented from coming to Christ. These are the things which Paul describes as having “a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh” (Col 2:23).

12. So, not only the unlearned, but those who are inflated with worldly wisdom, are captivated with the pomp of ceremonies. These ceremonies, which the Roman doctors contend to conceal great mysteries, are but mere mockeries. These ceremonies are taken from the reveries of the heathen, and from the ancient rites of the Mosaic law. Such a heterogeneous compound has no other use than stupefying the people, instead of instructing them.

13. Augustine complained that, in his time, the commands of God were so neglected, that a person was more severely censured for having touched the ground with his bare feet within eight days of his baptism, than having drowned his senses in intoxication. In our time, the number of ordinances is ten times greater, and every title is enforced with a hundred times more rigour, than in his time. In their superstition, they first forbid to eat; and when they have carried this point, they next forbid to taste; and after this is submitted to them, they pronounce it even unlawful to touch with a finger (Col 2:20, 21)!

14. What shall I say of the ceremonies, which have half buried Christ, and caused us to return to Jewish figures? “Christ our Lord,” says Augustine, “has connected together the society of the new people with sacraments, very few in number, most excellent in signification, and very easy to observe.” The immense distance of this simplicity from the multitude of rites, in which we see the Church now involved, can hardly be stated in terms sufficiently strong.

No more children, like the Jews, who were instructed with emblems and figures, but adults, who have left that state of tuition and guardianship, we have no need of puerile discipline. It is foolish, therefore, to pretend to benefit the ignorant by reviving Judaism, which has been abrogated by Christ. The new worshippers differ from the ancient in this respect, that under Moses, the spiritual adoration was concealed, and in some degree embarrassed with many ceremonies, which being now abolished, He is worshipped with greater simplicity. Wherefore those who confound this difference, subvert the order instituted and established by Christ. Therefore, to observe the proper bounds, it is necessary to retain that paucity in number, which consists in simplicity. That this has not been done is visible to all.

15. The ceremonies practised in the Papacy have no connection with doctrine. They confine men to mere signs, destitute of all signification. It is evident that many of them are the invention of avaricious priests, as contrivances for the extortion of money.

16. Whether the gross abuses we have described are practised in this age or another, these are a curse, which God denounces that He will strike with blindness and stupidity all those who worship Him with the doctrines of men (Isa 29:13, 14).

17. I hear them answer, that their traditions are not from themselves, but from God. Since the Church, they say, is directed by the Holy Spirit, it cannot err. When this point is gained, it immediately follows, that their traditions are the revelations of the Holy Spirit, which cannot be despised without contempt of God. And they wish it to be believed that the greatest part of their observances have descended from the Apostles.

But our reply is, that whatever is practised by the Church must conform to the law, which was once for all given to the Church. “What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it” (Deut 12:32). And again, “Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar” (Prov 30:6). Human invention relating to the worship of God cannot be defended merely by the so called authority of the Church.

18. For this reason we censure the tyranny of human tradition, which is imposed upon the world under the name of the Church. Furthermore,

to attribute to the Apostles the origin of the traditions, which have hitherto oppressed the Church, is a mere imposture. For, the doctrine of the Apostles was, that men's consciences should not be burdened with new observances, or the worship of God contaminated with human inventions. The Apostles not only never knew, but never even heard of that which is ascribed to them.

19. To avoid too much prolixity in composing a catalogue of them all, we shall content ourselves with one example. In the administration of the Lord's Supper, the Apostles used great simplicity. Their immediate successors, to adorn the dignity of the mystery, added some forms. Afterwards followed those foolish imitators, who, by adding various fragments from time to time, at length formed those vestments of priests, those ornaments of the altar, those gesticulations, etc., which we see at the mass.

20. As to use of the holy water, which they claim also to have originated from the Apostles, I shall never admit it to have been a dictate of the spirit of the Apostles. That baptism should be recalled to the memory by a daily ablution, would be little else than a repetition of it.

21. Our adversaries try to excuse their own tyranny, by alleging this example of the Apostles. The Apostles and elders of the primitive Church, they say, passed a decree without the command of Christ, enjoining all the Gentiles to "abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled" (Acts 15:29). If this was lawful for them, why may it not be lawful for their successors, to imitate their conduct? But I deny that the Apostles, on that occasion, decreed anything new. What the Apostles decreed added nothing new of their own to the eternal law of God.

22. In exhorting Gentile Christians not to eat those things that are eaten in sacrifice to idols, the Apostle Paul, in 1 Corinthians 8:4, 7, 9, rather exhorts against using their Christian liberty, whereby it might become a stumbling block to them that are weak. Far from making a new law, his object was to guard against offences expressly forbidden by the Lord. He who shall have duly considered these things, will not afterwards be deceived by the fallacy of those who attempt to justify their tyranny by the example of the Apostles.

23. But it is contended, that though the ecclesiastical laws should be unjust to us, yet they ought to be obeyed without any exception. The point here is not that we should consent to errors, but that we, who are subjects, should fulfil even the severe commands of our governors. But here likewise the Lord interposes with the truth of His Word, and delivers us from such bondage, and established us in the liberty which He has procured for us by His sacred blood.

What is to be considered of greater importance is the government of God's Kingdom. This government is taken away from Him whenever He is worshipped with laws of human invention, whereas He requires Himself to be honoured as the sole legislator of His own worship. "In vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matt 15:9).

24. The Lord abominates such corrupt services, which are rendered to Him according to the caprice of the human mind. This is the reason why Paul requires us to be particularly cautious against being deceived by the traditions of men (Col 2:4, 8, 18, 23), and will-worship, that is, voluntary worship invented by men, without the Word of God. This was the conduct of men in former ages; the same has happened within our own remembrance, and still happens in those places where the authority of the creature is more regarded than that of the Creator.

25. When it is argued, that Samuel sacrificed in Ramah without the direction of the law, and yet it was acceptable to God (1 Sam 7:17), our answer is, that this was not the erection of a second altar, in opposition to the one already erected. For, as there had yet been no fixed place assigned for the ark of the covenant, He appointed the town which he inhabited for the oblation of sacrifices as the most convenient place. It certainly was not the intention of Samuel to make any innovation in worship. But of the Lord's utter abomination of all the contrivances of mortals in His worship, we have the example of Gideon's ephod which produced fatal consequences, not only to himself and family, but to all the people (Judg 8:27).

26. Why, then, it is inquired, was it the will of Christ that men should submit to those intolerable burdens which were imposed upon them by the scribes and Pharisees (Matt 23:3)?

But this, Christ did not intend that the consciences of His disciples should be harassed by the traditions of the Pharisees. What our Lord meant was, that though they would see nothing in their lives worthy of imitation, yet they should practise those things which were taught by them, when they were sitting in the chair of Moses, expounding the law. Christ's design was to guard the people against being induced to despise the doctrine by the bad examples of those who taught it. Augustine says, concerning this matter, "Is not this equivalent to saying, Hear the voice of the Shepherd through the hirelings; for, sitting in the chair of Moses, they teach the law of God; therefore, God teaches by them; but if they choose to teach anything of their own, neither attend to it, nor practise it?"

27. But, as many ignorant persons, when they hear that the consciences of men ought not to be bound by human tradition, conclude the same rule to be applicable to all the laws which regulate the order of the Church, we must also refute their error. In every society of men, we see the necessity of some polity in order to preserve the common peace. The same ought to be observed in Churches, which are best supported by a well-ordered regulation of all their affairs and which without concord are no Churches at all. Wherefore, if we would make a proper provision for the safety of the Church, we ought to pay the strictest attention to Paul's injunction, that "all things be done decently and in order" (1 Cor 14:40). The laws, therefore, which promote this end, we are far from condemning. Their abolition would result in total disorganisation and dispersion of the Churches.

28. Legitimate regulations of the Church are always directed to one of these two ends, or to both together, that all things may be conducted with **decorum**, that the community may be kept in **order**.

The end of **decorum** is, that while ceremonies are employed to conciliate veneration to sacred things, we may be excited to piety by such aids. In **order**, the first point is, that those who preside should be acquainted with the rule and order of good government; the second is, that when the Church is in a well regulated state, care should be taken to preserve its peace and tranquillity.

29. We shall not call that **decorum**, therefore, which is a frivolous spectacle, such as we see in the theatrical apparatus employed by the

Papists in their services. But we shall esteem that as **decorum**, which shall be so adopted to inspire reverence of holy mysteries as to be calculated for an exercise of piety.

In like manner, we do not place **order** in those nugatory pomps which have nothing but a vain appearance of splendour, but in that well regulated polity, which excludes all confusion, incivility, obstinacy, clamours, and dissensions. Of the first kind, examples are furnished by Paul; as that profane banquets should not be connected with the Lord's Supper; that women should not appear in public without being veiled (1 Cor 11:5; 14:34). Of the second sort are the hours appointed for public prayers, sermons and sacraments; quietness and silence under sermons; the days fixed for the Lord's Supper (1 Cor 11:20–22). Thus all the constitutions of the Church which we receive as holy and useful, may be classed under two heads: some refer to ceremonies, others to discipline and peace.

30. Under the principle, that no human constitutions should be approved, except such as are founded on the authority of God, and deduced from Scripture, let us examine the practice of kneeling during solemn prayers. The question is, whether it be a human tradition, which every one is at liberty to reject. I answer that it is at once both human and Divine. It is of God, as it forms a branch of that decorum which is recommended by the Apostle. It is of men, as it particularly designates that which had in general been rather hinted than clearly expressed.

From this single example, it is easy to judge what opinion ought to be entertained of all the rest. In external ceremonies, the Lord has not given us minute directions what we ought to do in every particular case, foreseeing that this would depend on the different circumstances of different periods. With a variety suitable to the manners of each age and nation, it will be right to change and abolish former regulations, and to institute new ones.

31. In these things, the customs and laws of the country we inhabit, the dictates of modesty, and even humanity itself, will direct us what to do, and what to avoid.

32. To prevent the intrusion of any error which may corrupt this pure use of ecclesiastical regulations, this end will be secured, if all the forms carry the appearance of manifest utility, and are accompanied with the

instructions of a faithful pastor. We should not esteem the worship of God to be improved by a multitude of ceremonies, and that one Church should not despise another on account of a variety of external discipline.

Chapter XI

The Jurisdiction of the Church, and Its Abuse Under the Papacy

1. We come now to the third branch of the power of the Church—jurisdiction. This relates to the discipline of manners. For this end, there were from the beginning appointed judiciaries in the Churches, to take cognizance of manners, to pass censures on vices, and to preside over the use of keys in excommunication (1 Cor 12:28; Rom 12:8; 1 Tim 5:17; Matt 18:15–18).

The use of “the keys of the kingdom of heaven,” in *binding* and *loosing* (Matt 16:19), is the same as the remission and retention of sins, as promised in John 20:22, 23. This power is given to the ministry of the Word, for what is the sum of the Gospel, but that, being all slaves of sin and death, we are loosed and delivered by the redemption, which is in Jesus Christ; and those who never receive Christ as Deliverer are condemned to eternal chains? The power of the keys is none other than preaching of the Gospel, and that, considered with regard to men, it is not so much authoritative as ministerial.

2. The other passage, relating to the power of binding and loosing, is in Matthew 18, where Christ says, “If he [any brother] neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven” (Matt 18:17, 18). This passage differs somewhat from the former one in that it relates to discipline, which is committed to the Church. The Church binds him whom it excommunicates; not that it consigns him to perpetual ruin, but because it condemns his life and manners. On the other hand, the Church looses him whom it receives into its communion, because it makes him a partaker of the unity, which it has in Christ.

From these two passages, which I think I have correctly explained, these unreasonable men, under the influence of misguided zeal, endeavour to establish auricular confession, excommunication, jurisdiction, right to legislation, and indulgences. The former passage they allege to support the primacy of the Roman see. They are so expert in

fitting their keys to any locks and doors they please, that it should seem as if they had followed the business of locksmiths all their lifetime.

3. In carrying out its duty, the Church has no power of the sword to punish or to coerce, no authority to compel, no prisons, fines, or other punishments, like those inflicted by the civil magistrate. But as it is the duty of the magistrate, by punishment and corporal coercion, to purge the Church from offences, so it behoves the minister of the Word, on his part, to relieve the magistrate by preventing the multiplication of offenders. Their respective operations ought to be so connected as to be an assistance, and not an obstruction to each other.

4. This spiritual jurisdiction of the Church is a perpetual order, and not a temporary regulation. For Christ has instituted nothing new, but followed the custom always observed in the ancient Church of His own nation. And this has been confirmed by the consent of all ages. When emperors and magistrates began to assume the profession of Christianity, the spiritual jurisdiction was not, in consequence, abolished. A pious magistrate will not exempt himself from the common subjection of the children of God. “For what is more honourable,” says Ambrose, “than for the emperor to be called the son of the Church? For a good emperor is within the Church, not above the Church.”

5. On the other hand, it is worthwhile to examine what was the true use of the jurisdiction of the Church, and what a great abuse of it has been introduced.

In the use of it, two things require to be considered. First, that this spiritual power be entirely separated from the power of the sword. Secondly, that it be administered, not at the pleasure of one man, but by a legitimate assembly. Both these things were observed in the purer ages of the Church. The holy bishops never exercised their authority by fines or imprisonment; but, employing the Word, would not go beyond the Church’s ultimate punishment, which is excommunication (2 Cor 10:5, 6; 1 Cor 5:12).

6. This power was not in the hands of one man, but resided in the hands of elders. The council of presbyters was divided into two classes—those ordained to the office of teaching, and the others, censors of

manners. This institution gradually degenerated from its original establishment; so that, in the time of Ambrose, the judicial administration of the Church was wholly in the hands of the clergy. Today, the bishop has usurped and deprived the Church of its rights, abolishing an assembly appointed by the Spirit of Christ.

7. But, as one evil produces another, bishops, disdainful of this charge as unworthy of their attention, have delegated it to others. Hence, the creation of officials to discharge that duty. These differ in no respect from civil judges; yet they still call it a spiritual jurisdiction, where all the contention is about secular affairs. Does a poor man owe a sum of money? He is cited. If he appears, he is condemned. After condemnation, if he does not pay, he is admonished. After the second admonition, they proceed to excommunication. But acts of fornication and drunkenness are tolerated, and even practised by the clergy themselves. Such is the Romanist type of spiritual jurisdiction, so contrary to the order appointed by Christ.

8. The power of the sword, which they also claim is excluded by Christ, when He said, “the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, . . . But it shall not be so among you” (Matt 20:25, 26; Luke 22:25, 26). For by these words, He signifies, not only that the office of pastor is distinct from the office of a prince, but they are so different, that they can never be properly united in one man. Even Moses, who held both these offices, at once resigned the priesthood to his brother, as soon as God prescribed a certain form of government; for it is beyond the ability of nature for one man to be capable of sustaining the burden of both.

9. In the statement, “Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?” (Luke 12:14), we see He refuses to act the part of a judge, which He would not have done, had it been a thing consistent with his office. Will not His servants allow themselves to be reduced to that rank, to which our Lord voluntarily submitted Himself? And, since the Apostles thought it not right for them to “leave the word of God, and serve tables” (Acts 6:2), this must confound those who are reluctant to admit, that it is not in the power of the same man to be at the same time a good bishop and a good prince. Yet we see it has been done. The unavoidable consequence has been the desertion of their own functions, and intrusion into those which belonged to others.

10. It has been from small beginnings, that they have gradually risen to such eminence. In early times, if any controversy arose, the believers, in order to avoid the necessity of litigation, used to refer it to the decision of their bishop. In a subsequent period, when cities and countries were oppressed with various distresses, they had recourse to the patronage of their bishops. Succeeding bishops, by wonderful artifice of protectors, have made themselves lords.

11. At length, the Roman pontiff, not content with small provinces, first laid hand on kingdoms, and then seized upon the empire. To retain possession, he sometimes boasts that he holds it by Divine right, sometimes pretends the donation from Constantine, and sometimes pleads some other title. But, he cannot establish it by any Apostolic right. Notwithstanding, the Roman pontiff was not ashamed, at the Council of Arles, to decree, that the supreme power of both swords belonged to him by Divine right.

12. With respect to the donation of Constantine, persons who have only a moderate acquaintance with the histories of those times, know how ridiculous such a claim is. Gregory, who lived four hundred years after Constantine, is alone a competent witness of this absurdity. For whenever he speaks of the emperor, he gives him the title of Most Serene Lord, and calls himself his unworthy servant. From Gregory's testimony, I have shown my readers, by the way, what a puerile falsehood it is of the Romanists, to attempt to claim a temporal sovereignty for their pontiff.

13. If anyone inquires the time when this fictitious empire began to arise, there have not yet elapsed five hundred years since the pontiffs were still in subjection to emperors, and no pontiff was created without the emperor. The first occasion of innovation in this order was given to Gregory VII, by the emperor Henry, a man of unsteady disposition and dissolute life. Gregory VII usurped the emperor's power, and succeeding popes continued in this supremacy over emperors, who resembled Henry than Julius Caesar. This historical development of pontiffs usurping imperial powers refutes the pope's claim to the donation of Constantine, by which he pretends himself to have been invested with the sovereignty of the Western empire.

14. From Gregory VII, the pontiffs have never ceased encroaching on the jurisdiction, and seizing on the territories of others, using fraud,

treachery, and even open war. Even the city of Rome, which was free until 130 years ago, was compelled to submit to their dominion. As the prophet has said, “with force and with cruelty have [they] ruled” (Ezek 34:4).

15. With jurisdiction is connected the immunity which the Roman ecclesiastics arrogate themselves. They consider it a degradation to appear before the civil judge in personal causes. They imagine the Church to be exempt from the common judicature and laws.

But the ancient bishops, who in other respects were the most rigid assertors of the rights of the Church, esteemed it no injury to themselves, or to their order, to be subject to lay judges in civil causes. Nor does Gregory entirely exclude the emperor from judging priest, though he observes that there are certain causes, which he ought to leave to the decision of the Church.

16. In this exception, the sole object of these holy men was to prevent the tyrannical violence and caprice of princes less favourable to religion, from obstructing the Church in the discharge of its duty. For they did not disapprove of the occasional interpretation of princes in ecclesiastical affairs, provided they would exert their authority for the preservation of the order of the Church, not for the disturbance of it. It is part of kings and princes to support religion by law.

Chapter XII

The Discipline of the Church; Its Principal Use in Censures and Excommunication

1. The discipline of the Church depends chiefly on the power of the keys, and the spiritual jurisdiction. It consists of (a) the common discipline, to which all clergy and people ought to be subject, and (b) the discipline peculiar to the clergy. The word *clergy* is used for those who execute the public ministry of the Church.

2. The first foundation of discipline consists in the use of private admonitions. Pastors and presbyters, especially, should be vigilant in the discharge of this duty, according to Paul's example (Acts 20:20, 26, 31). If anyone, guilty of some sin, rejects such admonition given privately; after a second admonition in the presence of witnesses, Christ directs him to be summoned before the tribunal of the Church. If this does not overcome him, and he still perseveres in his iniquity, our Lord then commands him, as a despiser of the Church, to be excluded from the society of believers (Matt 18:15–17).

3. But Jesus, in this passage, is speaking only of private faults. It is necessary, therefore, to make this distinction—that some sins are private, and others public or notorious. With respect to the former, Christ says to every private individual, “Tell him his fault between thee and him alone” (Matt 18:15). With respect to those which are notorious, Paul says to Timothy, “Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear” (1 Tim 5:20). Paul himself exemplified in his conduct to Peter (Gal 2:11, 14).

4. It is also necessary to make another distinction between different sins. Some are small delinquencies, others are flagitious or enormous crimes. For atrocious crimes, recourse must be had to a severer remedy; as Paul shows, when he does not content himself with censuring the incestuous Corinthian, but pronounces sentence of excommunication.

5. There are three ends proposed by the Church in those corrections, and in excommunication. The first is, that those who lead scandalous lives, may not be numbered among Christians. Here it is also necessary to have particular regard to the Lord's Supper, that it may not

be profaned by a promiscuous administration. The second end is, that it may not be corrupted by constant association with the wicked. Evil examples seduce us from rectitude of conduct, for “a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump” (1 Cor 5:6). The third end is, that those who are censured or excommunicated, may be led to repentance (2 Thess 3:14). Of the incestuous Corinthian, Paul says again, “I . . . have judged . . . to deliver such an one unto Satan . . ., that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord” (1 Cor 5:3, 5).

6. In dealing with public sins, these should receive severer punishment than private sins. He who has offended the Church by an atrocious crime, ought to be immediately deprived of the communion of the Lord’s Supper, till he shall have given evidence of repentance. There were certain solemn rites enjoined upon those who had fallen, in the ancient Church, as signs of repentance. When the sinner had performed those, he was then readmitted to the communion, by the imposition of hands.

7. From this discipline, none was exempted. Princes and plebeians yielded to the same submission. Thus Theodosius, when Ambrose excluded him from communion, on account of a massacre perpetrated at Thessalonica, laid aside the ensigns of royalty and publicly bewailed his sin. In excommunicating an offender, it is pointed out by Paul, that the procedure adopted should not only involve the elders, but also the whole Church. The multitude of the Church is to watch over it as witnesses and guardians.

8. However, it is to be remembered that such action must be tempered with a spirit of gentleness, “lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow” (2 Cor 2:7).

9. According to Paul’s injunction, to “confirm [their] love toward him” (2 Cor 2:8), it is not for us to expunge from the number of elect any one who has fallen, or to despair of them as already lost. Let us leave the final judgment to God. For, whenever it seems good to Him, the worst of men are changed into the best.

10. Excommunication differs from anathema. The latter, which ought to be rarely or never used, precludes all pardon, execrates a person,

and devotes him to eternal perdition; whereas excommunication rather censures and punishes his conduct. In excommunication, the Apostle teaches that we are not to count the offender as an enemy, “but admonish him as a brother” (2 Thess 3:15).

11. Commenting on the exercise of Church discipline, Augustine says, “All the pious order and method of ecclesiastical discipline ought constantly to regard the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace; which the apostle commands to be kept by mutual forbearance; and without the preservation of which, the medicine of chastisement is not only superfluous, but even becomes pernicious, and consequently is no longer a medicine.” Augustine recommends it to be done with the prudence required by our Lord, “lest while” they “gather up the tares,” they “root up also the wheat with them” (Matt 13:29). Hence, he concludes with Cyprian, “Let a man, therefore, in mercy correct what he can; what he cannot, let him patiently bear and affectionately lament.”

12. These remarks of Augustine were made in consequence of the rigour of the Donatists, who rebelling against the bishops for not excommunicating certain offenders, separated themselves by an impious schism from the flock. The same conduct is pursued today by the Anabaptists, who seek for angelic perfection in the Church. Thus, Satan transforms himself as an angel of light, when from just severity he takes occasion to persuade men to inhuman cruelty, resulting in the destruction of peace and unity.

13. Augustine continues, “For schemes of separation are pernicious and sacrilegious, because they proceed from pride and impiety, and disturb the good who are weak, more than they correct the wicked who are bold.” Yet, he does not mean that bishops should connive or be silent, because they cannot inflict severe punishments for public crimes. He explains that the correction should be tempered with such moderation, as to be salutary rather than injurious to the body (1 Cor 5:13; Eph 4:2, 3).

14. The remaining part of the discipline, which is not strictly included in the power of the keys, consists in this—that the pastors, according to the necessity of the times, should exhort the people to fastings or to other exercises of humility and repentance. The observation of these things was practised by the ancient Church from the days of the Apostles, who

derived the example from the law and the prophets. Whenever a controversy arises respecting religion; whenever a minister is to be chosen; when any tokens of the Divine wrath are discovered, such as famine, pestilence and war; it is the pastor's duty to exhort the people to public fasts and prayers.

15. Fasting is directed to three ends. (a) To restrain the flesh from licentiousness. (b) To prepare for prayers and meditation. (c) As a testimony of our humiliation before God.

16. As a sign of humiliation, fasting is of more frequent use in public, than among individuals in private.

When the believers at Antioch considered to send forth Paul and Barnabas, they "fasted and prayed" (Acts 13:2, 3). So did Paul and Barnabas, when they ordained "elders in every church" (Acts 14:23). In this kind of fasting, their only object was, that they might be more lively in prayer. Other examples of fasting are found in Luke 2:37; Nehemiah 1:4; 1 Corinthians 7:5.

17. Joel called the people to fast (Joel 2:12), to have recourse to sackcloth and ashes, in view of coming judgment. So did the inhabitants of Nineveh (Jonah 3:5). What cause, then, is there, why we should not practise them?

18. Let us define what fasting is. Fasting is no mere abstinence in eating and drinking, but something more. The life of believers should be so regulated by frugality and sobriety, as to appear a perpetual fast.

19. Above all things, we must guard against superstition in fasting. Joel says, "Rend your heart, and not your garments" (Joel 2:13). God sets no value on fasting, unless it is accompanied with a corresponding disposition of heart, a real displeasure against sin, and unfeigned grief from a fear of God. We must refrain from the hypocrisy of the Jews (Isa 58:5). Fasting is no meritorious act, or a species of divine service. The third error is to enforce it with extreme encomiums, as did the ancient fathers.

20. The observance of Lent, in holy imitation of Christ, is superstitious; for Christ fast, not to set an example to others, but in order to prepare for the preaching of the Gospel. Christ did not fast after this. It

is nothing but a vain affectation, to dignify the fasting of Lent with the pretext of an imitation of Christ.

21. In fasting, abstinence from animal food becomes the highest worship of God. To taste bacon or salted meat and brown bread, they deem an act of the vilest impiety. Jerome relates, there were some persons in his time, who abstained from drinking water, but drank delicious and costly liquors. They fast for no other purpose than to feast with more than sumptuousness and delicacy.

22. The second part of the discipline of the Church relates to the clergy. It is contained in the canons which the ancient bishops imposed on themselves. No ecclesiastic should employ his time in hunting, gambling, or feasting. No one should engage in usury or commerce. The clergy was forbidden to be present at dissolute dances. How all these have become obsolete, it is unnecessary to relate, when nothing can be imagined more licentious and dissolute than this order of men in the present day. Their profligacy has gone to such a length, that the whole world is exclaiming against them.

23. In one instance, they are too rigorous, that is, in not permitting priests to marry. The interdiction of marriage to priests was certainly an act of impious tyranny, not only contrary to the Word of God, but at variance with every principle of justice (1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:6). The Holy Spirit has spoken from the beginning, to forearm the Church against what is called a “doctrine of devils” (1 Tim 4:1, 3). But, our adversaries imagine themselves to have evaded this charge, when they misapply it to Montanus, the Tatianists, and Encratites. It refers, say they, to those who have condemned marriage altogether.

24. While Paul places marriage among the virtues of a bishop, these men teach that it is a vice to be tolerated in the clergy. And, Christ has been pleased to put such honour upon marriage, as to make it an image of His sacred union with the Church.

25. Their argument against a married clergy is taken from Scriptural injunctions to the Levitical priests not to cohabit with their wives, that they might be pure to perform the sacrifices. But the evangelical ministry and the Levitical priesthood are not the same office. The Levitical priests were antitypes, representing Christ, who, as Mediator was to reconcile the

Father to us by his perfect purity. Now, they were recommended to purify themselves in a manner beyond what is common among men, whenever they approached the sanctuary; because on those occasions they properly represented Christ. As the pastors of the Church sustain no such office, the comparison is nothing to the purpose. The Apostles themselves have proved, by their own example, that marriage is honourable, for Paul testifies, that they not only retained their wives, but took them about with them (1 Cor 9:5).

26. The matter of celibacy was agitated in the Council of Nice. But the Council coincided with the opinion of Paphnutius, who pronounced that “a man’s cohabitation with his own wife is chastity.” Therefore, marriage continued to be held sacred among them, who were in the ministry.

27. Afterwards followed times distinguished by a too superstitious admiration of celibacy. Hence developed those canons, which prohibited the contraction of marriage by those who had already entered on the office of priests; and succeeding ones, which prohibited the admission to that office by any but those who had never married. Because these things seemed to add respectability to the priesthood, they were received, even in early times with great applause.

28. Therefore, whenever the advocates of this modern tyranny attempt to defend their celibacy with the pretext of antiquity, we shall not fail to reply, that they ought to restore the ancient chastity in their priest, to remove all adulterers and fornicators, and deliver the Church from this turpitude.

Chrysostom, though a principal admirer of virginity, says, “The first degree of chastity is pure virginity; the second is faithful marriage. Therefore the second species of virginity is the chaste love of matrimony.”

Chapter XIII

Vows: the Misery of Rashly Making Them

1. What is styled a **promise** among men, in reference to God is called a **vow**. Now, we promise to men either such things as we think will be agreeable to them, or such as we owe them on the ground of duty. There is a need, therefore, of far greater care respecting vows, which are addressed to God Himself.

But, here superstition has prevailed, in all ages, to a wonderful degree, so that men have precipitately vowed to God whatever was uppermost in their minds. Hence those monstrous absurdities of vows, by which the heathens have trifled with their gods. And, Christians have imitated them in such audacity!

2. To judge what vows are legitimate, and what are preposterous, it is necessary to consider three things: (a) To whom vows are to be addressed. (b) Who we are that make vows. (c) With what intention vows are made.

The first consideration calls us to reflect, that we have to do with God. Now, God abominates all voluntary services invented by us without His command. It follows that nothing can be acceptable to Him, except that is approved by His Word.

Let this, then, be our first rule in what to vow—never attempt vowing anything without a previous conviction of conscience, that we are attempting nothing rashly. And, our conscience will be secure from all danger of rashness, when it shall have God for its guide, dictating,, as it were, by His Word, what it is proper or useless to do.

3. The second consideration calls us to measure our strength, to contemplate our calling, and not to neglect the liberty which God has conferred on us. He who vows what is not in his power, is chargeable with rashness. Let us consider the measure of grace which we have received from God (Rom 12:3; 1 Cor 12:11).

Examples of rash vows are found in the would-be assassins of Paul (Acts 23:12), and in Jephthah (Judg 11:30–40).

In vows of this class, that of celibacy holds the pre-eminence (Deut 6:16; Matt 4:7).

4. I proceed now to the third consideration, that it is of great importance with what intention a vow is made. There are four ends to which our vows may be rightly directed. Two of them refer to the time past, and the other two to the future.

To the time past belong those vows by which we either testify our gratitude to God for benefits received, or, in order to deprecate His wrath, inflict punishment on ourselves for sins we have committed. The former may be called vows of thanksgiving. The latter, vows of penitence. Of the former, we have an example in Jacob, who vowed to give to God the tithes (Gen 28:20–22). Vows of this kind may also be now used among us, whenever God delivers us from any great calamity.

As to the second species of vows, if a person has fallen into any crime through the vice of intemperance, nothing prevents him from correcting that vice by a temporary renunciation of all delicacies, and enforcing this abstinence by a vow, to lay himself under a stronger obligation. A vow of this kind is lawful.

5. Vows with regard to the future have, for their object, partly to render us more cautious of danger, partly to stimulate us to the performance of duty. Such vows are helps to infirmity, and may be used with advantage by the inexperienced and imperfect. These are lawful, if they be supported by the approbation of God, if they be limited by the ability of grace which God has given us.

6. There is one vow common to all believers, which is made in baptism, and confirmed and established by us in the Catechism, and in the Lord's Supper. For the sacraments resemble covenants, by which God conveys His mercy on us, and we, on the other hand, promise Him obedience. Now, the sum of the vow is, that renouncing Satan, we devote ourselves to the service of God, to obey His holy commandments and not to follow the corrupt inclinations of the flesh. This vow being sanctioned by the Scripture, it ought not to be doubted that it is holy and useful.

7. On the other hand, such vows, as total abstinence from wine or meat on certain days, as though these were a service in themselves to God, are superstitious. It was also esteemed great wisdom to vow pilgrimages to places of more than common holiness, and to perform the journey either on foot, or with the body half naked, that the merit might be augmented

by the fatigue. Examined by the rules which we have laid down, these will be found to be vain and nugatory. God holds nothing in greater abomination than services of human invention.

8. Since monastic vows are held in very high veneration, it is proper to make a few remarks respecting them. Monachism, as it exists today, is very different from what it was in ancient times. Monasteries were the retreats of those who wished to habituate themselves to the greatest austerity and patience. They slept on grounds without any beds. They drank nothing but water. Their food consisted entirely of bread, herbs, and roots. Their principal dainties were oil, peas, and beans. It was by such probationary discipline that they prepared themselves for higher offices. The monastic colleges were the seminaries, from which the Church was furnished with ministers. Gregory of Nazianzum, Basil, and Chrysostum were some of them.

9. Augustine defends the sanctity of Monachism, but he also inveighs against degenerate monks. He gives a good description of monastic life in his book, "*On the Labour of Monks.*"

10. When Augustine gives us a description of holy and legitimate Monachism, he excludes from it all rigid exaction in imposition of those things which the Lord, in His Word, has left us free. But, today they consider it a crime for anyone to deviate in the minutest particular from the rules prescribed in the colour or shape of their apparel, the kind of food, or other frivolous ceremonies. Augustine contends, it is not lawful for monks to live in idleness at the expense of others. The present day monks, however, place the principal part of their sanctity in idleness.

11. Moreover, present day monks dignify their order alone with the title of *perfection*, and deny this character to all the other callings appointed by God. When they wish to elevate themselves in the estimation of the people, and to assert their privileges, they boast of being in a state of perfection. They retain the admiration of the people, as though the monastic life, and that alone, were perfect and purified from every blemish. Under this pretext, they carry on a most lucrative traffic.

12. In claiming perfection above others, they openly teach that they take upon themselves a greater burden than Christ laid upon His disciples, because they promise to keep the evangelical counsels, which inculcate

the love of our enemies, and prohibit the desire of revenge and profane swearing. These, they say, are not binding on Christians at large. In short, they pretend to teach some rule of life that may be imagined more perfect than the common one given by God to all the Church.

13. They boast that they have been made perfect by forsaking all that they have, inasmuch as Christ required of the rich young ruler to “sell that thou hast, and give to the poor” (Matt 19:21). If the whole perfection consist in this, what does Paul mean, when he says, “though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, . . . and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing” (1 Cor 13:3)? These words of Christ, to the rich young ruler, were misunderstood by some of the fathers, and their misconstruction gave rise to an affectation of voluntary poverty; so that they were supposed to be the only happy persons.

14. By introducing such a standard of perfection for themselves, these hooded sophisters have virtually set up two kinds of Christianity. The monastic profession becomes a species of second baptism, whereby all who retire into monasteries separate themselves from the Church. This was not the case with the monks of ancient times.

In erecting a private altar for themselves today, what have the present monks done, but broken the bond of unity? All the present monasteries I maintain to be so many conventicles of schismatics. Instead of the name of Christians, some are called Benedictines, some Franciscans, and others Dominicans.

15. The difference between the ancient monks and those of the present age, relate not to manners, but to the profession itself. It is obvious, that there is no order of men more polluted with all the turpitude of vice; none more disgraced by factions, animosities, cabals, and intrigues. It is scarcely possible to find one convent in ten which is not rather a brothel than a sanctuary of chastity. What frugality is there in their food? They are exactly like so many swine fattening in a sty. Even Augustine complained, at a time, when monks were so eminent for the strictest chastity, that there were many vagabonds among them, who, by impostures, extorted money and sold bones of dead men as the relics of martyrs. As Augustine declares that he had seen no better men than those who had been improved in monasteries, so he complains that he had seen no worse men than those who had been corrupted in monasteries.

16. Even in the ancient system, which Augustine commends, there is something which I cannot altogether approve. It seemed a good thing to forsake their property in order to exempt themselves from all earthly solicitude; but God sets a higher value on pious exertions for the government of a family, when a holy father of a family, free from all avarice, ambition, and other corrupt passions, devotes himself to serve God in a particular calling. It is a beautiful thing to live the life of a philosopher in retirement. But, it is not the part of Christian charity for a man to act as if he hated all mankind, withdrawing himself to the solitude of a desert, and abandoning the duties which the Lord has commanded.

17. Let us now examine the nature of the vows by which monks today are initiated. In the first place, their design is to merit the favour of God. Therefore I conclude, from the principles already established, that whatever they vow is abomination in the sight of God. Secondly, without any regard to the calling of God, and without any approbation from Him, they invent for themselves a new mode of life, in conformity to their own inclinations. Thirdly, they bind themselves to many corrupt services, comprehended in the monachism of the present day. They are consecrated not to God, but to the devil (Deut 32:17). Now, what is the nature of their vows? They promise to God to maintain perpetual virginity, though it is declared that it is not given to all men (Matt 19:11), so that we have no right to entertain a confidence that we shall receive the special gift. For those who are denied the gift of continence, are undoubtedly called by the voice of God to marriage.

18. They endeavour still to show that vows of this kind were in use in the times of the Apostles, because Paul says that widows who, after having been received into the public service of the Church, married, had “cast off their first faith” (1 Tim 5:12). Such argument is irrelevant to our condemnation of the vow of celibacy for no other reason, but because it is unjustly considered as a service acceptable to God, and is rashly made by those who have not the power to keep it.

19. But, how was it possible to apply this passage of Paul to nuns? For widows were appointed deaconesses, not to charm God by songs or unintelligible murmurs, and to spend the rest of their time in idleness; but to serve the poor on behalf of the whole Church. They made a vow of widowhood, not with a view or performing any service to God in

abstaining from marriage, but merely that they might be more at liberty for the discharge of their office. And, they made their vows consistent with safety and piety, since it is observed, that it was not allowable for women to be admitted to make vows of continence before the age of sixty (1 Tim 5:9, 14). The subsequent admission of this vow at the age of forty-eight, then forty, and then thirty, can by no means be excused.

I shall not oppose the other two vows, made by monks and nuns, of poverty and obedience.

20. In conclusion, I remark that all vows, not legitimate or rightly made, ought to have no force with us. For this remains a fixed principle: “whatsoever is not of faith is sin” (Rom 14:23).

21. This solution will furnish an answer to the calumnies of the wicked, in defence of those who leave monachism for some honourable way of life. If the cross of Christ possesses such efficacy as to deliver us from the curse, under which we were held by the law of God, how much more, then, shall it extricate us from other bonds, which are nothing but delusive snares of Satan!

Chapter XIV

The Sacraments

1. A sacrament may be briefly defined as a testimony of the grace of God towards us, confirmed by an outward sign, with a reciprocal attestation of our piety towards Him. Augustine says a sacrament is “a visible sign of a sacred thing,” or a “visible form of invisible grace.”

2. The word “sacrament” is derived from the Latin *sacramentum*, which translates the Greek word *mysterion*, where it is related to Divine things (Eph 1:9; 3:2, 3; Col 1:26, 27; 1 Tim 3:16). The author of the old common version would not use the word *arcanum* or **secret**, lest he would appear to degrade the majesty of the subject. Therefore, he has used the word “**sacrament**” for a sacred or Divine secret. In this signification, it frequently occurs in the writings of the fathers. Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, which the Latins denominate **sacraments**, are called **mysteries** by the Greeks. Hence, the word **sacrament** came to be applied to those signs which contained a representation of sublime and spiritual things.

3. These sacraments are given by God, to support our weak and slender faith. Being corporeal, and cleaving to terrestrial and carnal objects, our Lord accommodates Himself to our capacity and, by these earthly elements, present to us a mirror of spiritual blessings.

4. A sacrament consists of the word and the outward sign. The *word* is not some magical incantation, supposed to consecrate the elements, but of the Gospel preached. That which is practised by the pope, therefore, involves a gross profanation of the mysteries; for they have thought it sufficient for the priest to mutter over the form of consecration, while the people are gazing in ignorance. They have pronounced the consecration in Latin, before illiterate men; and carried superstition to such a pitch as to consider it not rightly performed, unless it be done in a hoarse murmur, which few could hear. Contrary to this corrupt practice, Augustine says of the sacramental word, “Let the word be added to the element, that it will become a sacrament. For whence does the water derive such great virtue, as at once to touch the body and purify the heart, except from the word? Not because it is spoken, but because it is believed.” “[This is] the word of faith, which we preach” (Rom 10:8), and

God purifies “their hearts by faith” (Acts 15:9). Augustine concludes: “This is the word of faith which we preach, by which baptism is consecrated to endue it with a purifying virtue.”

5. Baptism, like circumcision, is like a *seal* (Rom 4:11). The promise of God is sealed by the sacraments, which have the peculiarity beyond the word, that they give us a lively presentation of them, as in a picture.

6. Sacraments are, therefore, exercises which increase and strengthen our faith in the Word of God. Augustine calls a sacrament “a visible word,” because it represents the promises of God portrayed as in a picture, and places before our eyes an image of them. Sacraments are likened to *pillars*, as an edifice rests on its foundation, and yet, from the addition of pillars placed under it, receives and increased stability, so faith rests on the Word of God as its foundation; but when sacraments are added to it as pillars, they bring them an accession of strength. Sacraments have also been earlier likened to mirrors.

7. Sacraments are truly called testimonies of the grace of God, and are seals of the benevolence He bears to us, which, by confirming it to our minds, sustain and increase our faith.

8. God deals with us by a threefold favour. First, He instructs us by His Word. Secondly, He confirms us by His sacraments. Lastly, He illuminates our minds by the light of the Holy Spirit, and opens an entrance into our hearts for the Word and sacraments, which otherwise would only strike the ears and present themselves to the eyes, without producing the least effect upon the mind.

9. With respect to the confirmation and increase of faith, I assign this office to the sacraments, not from an opinion of their possessing a perpetual inherent virtue; but because they have been instituted by the Lord for the express purpose of promoting its establishment and augmentation. But, they only perform their office aright when they are accompanied by the Spirit, that internal Teacher, by whose energy an entrance is opened for the sacraments into our souls. If He be absent, the sacraments can produce no more effect upon our minds than the splendour of the sun on blind eyes. The sacraments are mere instruments, which,

without His agency, are vain and useless, but which, when He acts and exerts His power in the heart, are fraught with surprising efficacy. According to this opinion, the faith of a pious mind is confirmed by the sacraments; as the eyes see by the light of the sun. The sacraments, therefore, are attended with no benefit without the influence of the Holy Spirit.

10. This work also the Spirit effects within us. Lest the Word should assail our ears in vain, lest the sacraments should in vain strike our eyes, He shows us that it is God who addresses us in them. He softens the hardness of our hearts, and forms them to that obedience which is due to the Word of the Lord. Finally, He conveys those external words and sacraments from the ears into our soul. Our faith, therefore, is confirmed, both by the Word and by the sacraments, when they place before our eyes the goodwill of our heavenly Father towards us. The Spirit confirms it, when He engraves it upon our mind.

11. The ministry of the Spirit is an indissoluble connection between the word of the preacher and the illumination of our minds (1 Cor 2:4; 2 Cor 3:6, 8). The Apostles, then, in their preaching, exerted the power of the Spirit, as far as God made use of the instruments appointed by Himself for the exhibition of His spiritual grace. But, we must always keep in view this distinction, that we may remember how far the power of man extends, and what is exclusively the work of God.

12. God uses such means and instruments as He sees will be suitable, in order that all things will be subservient to His glory, as He is the Lord and Ruler of all. He has chosen to nourish our faith in a spiritual manner by the sacraments; but it is important that our faith should rather rise to Him, who is the Author of the sacraments.

13. When the ancient fathers gave our signs the name of the *sacraments*, they were not at all guided by the previous use of this word in Latin writers; one of which was the military oath new soldiers bound themselves to their commander. Rather, they gave it a new sense, simply denoting sacred signs. By the sacraments, the Lord promises that He will be our God, and that we shall be His people. The first object of them is, to assist our faith towards God. The second, to testify our confession before men.

14. One grave error the sophistical schools have maintained, whereby the simple are deceived, is that the sacraments justify and confer grace, provided we do not obstruct their operation by any mortal sin. By promising justification without faith, by representing the sacraments as the cause of justification, they lead the ignorant to trust in the exhibition of the corporeal object rather than in God Himself. But the confidence of salvation does not depend on the participation of the sacraments, which we know to be placed in Christ alone, and to be communicated to us no less by the preaching of the Gospel than by the sealing of the sacraments. Augustine says, that invisible sanctification may exist without the visible sign, and, on the contrary, that the visible sign may be used without real sanctification.

15. As stated by Augustine, there is a difference between a sacrament and the matter of a sacrament. Speaking of the Lord's Supper, he says, "The sacrament is one thing and the power of the sacrament is another . . . For the morsel of bread given by the Lord to Judas was poison; not because Judas received an evil thing, but because, being a wicked man, he received a good thing in a sinful manner." A little after: "The sacrament . . . is thence received, by some to life, by others to destruction. But the thing signified by this sacrament is received, not to destruction, but to life, by every one who partakes of it." Before this, he says, "He shall not die, who eats; I refer not to the visible sacrament, but to the power of the sacrament; who eats internally, not externally; he who eats in his heart, not he who presses with his teeth." Thus, it is necessary to apprehend by faith the word which is contained in it. In proportion to the communion we have with Christ, by means of the sacraments, will be the advantage which we shall derive from them.

16. I affirm Christ is the matter, or substance, of all the sacraments!

17. Wherefore let us conclude, that the office of the sacraments is precisely the same as that of the Word of God, which is to offer and present Christ to us. But they confer no advantage or profit without being received by faith; just as wine, or oil, though it poured plentifully on a vessel will overflow and be lost, unless the mouth of the vessel be open. Nor do they impart any benefit, unless they are accompanied by the Holy Spirit to open our minds and hearts, and render us capable to receive this

testimony. The Holy Spirit, whom the sacraments do not promiscuously impart to all but whom God confers upon His servants, is He who gives the sacraments admission into our hearts, and causes them to bring forth fruit in us.

18. The term “sacrament,” as we have hitherto treated of its nature, comprehends generally all the signs which God has ever given to men, to assure them of the truth of His promises. These He has been pleased to place in natural things, and sometimes to exhibit in miracles. Examples of the former kind are the tree of life, given to Adam and Eve, as a pledge of immortality (Gen 2:9, 16, 17), and “the bow in the cloud” God set as a token to Noah, that there “shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh” (Gen 9:12–17). Not that the tree would actually communicate immortality to them, or that the rainbow would have an efficacy in restraining of the waters. They are signs and seals only of God’s covenants.

Examples of the second kind were exhibited, when God showed Abraham “a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp” (Gen 15:17); when He watered the fleece with dew while the earth remained dry, and afterwards bedewed the earth without wetting the fleece, to promise victory to Gideon (Judg 6:37–40); and when “he brought the shadow ten degrees backward, . . . in the dial” (2 Kgs 20:11), to promise recovery to Hezekiah.

19. But our present design is to treat particularly of those sacraments which the Lord has appointed to be ordinarily used in His Church. Now, they consist not of mere signs, like the rainbow and the tree of life, but in ceremonies. As we have before observed, as they are testimonies of grace and salvation on the part of the Lord, so on our part they are badges of our profession, by which we publicly devote ourselves to God, and swear obedience and fidelity to Him. Chrysostom properly calls them *compacts*, by which God covenants with us, as we bind ourselves to purity of life.

20. The sacraments have been different according to the varieties of different periods, and corresponding to the dispensation by which it has pleased the Lord to manifest Himself in different ways to mankind. For Abraham, circumcision was commanded. To which the law of Moses added ablutions and sacrifices. These were the sacraments of the Jews

till the coming of Christ. Then, these were abrogated, and substituted by the two, which are now used in the Christian Church, viz., baptism and the Lord's Supper. There is only one difference between those sacraments and ours: they prefigured Christ; ours present Him as already come and manifested.

21. Circumcision was a sign to the Jews, to teach them that whatever is produced from human seed is corrupt, and requires to be pruned. It is likewise a testification to confirm them in the promise given to Abraham. Wherefore, circumcision was the same to them as Paul declares to have been to Abraham, even "a seal of the righteousness of the faith" (Rom 4:11). That is, a seal for the further assurance that their faith, with which they expected that seed, would be imputed by God to them for righteousness. Ablutions and purifications placed before their eyes their uncleanness and pollution, by which they were naturally contaminated. Their sacrifices convicted them of the iniquity, and taught the necessity of some satisfaction to be made to the Divine justice, and that there would come a great High Priest, who was to satisfy the justice of God by sacrifice. This great High Priest was Christ, who shed His own blood, and was Himself the victim.

22. Our two sacraments present us with a clearer exhibition of Christ. Baptism testifies our own purgation and ablution. The eucharistic Supper testifies our redemption. These things are both found in Christ, who, as John says, "came by water and blood" (1 John 5:6), that is, to purify and redeem. Of this, the Spirit of God is a witness; or, rather, "there are three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood" (1 John 5:8). This sublime mystery was strikingly exhibited on the cross, when blood and water issued from Christ's sacred side; which, on this account, Augustine has justly called "the fountain of our sacraments."

23. The doctrine of the schools, which asserts such a wide difference between the sacraments of the old and new law, ought to be altogether exploded! For the Apostle speaks in a manner equally honourable to the former as of the latter. When he states that the fathers, in the time of Moses, "did all eat the same spiritual meat" (1 Cor 10:3) with us, he explains that meat to be Christ. Nor is it right to attribute to our baptism anything more than he attributes to circumcision, when he calls it "a seal

of the righteousness of the faith” (Rom 4:11). Whatever is presented to us in the present day in our sacraments, was anciently received by the Jews in theirs—even Christ and His spiritual riches.

24. But they will allege what Paul says of the “circumcision . . . in the letter” (Rom 2:25–29; 1 Cor 7:19; Gal 6:15), that it is no estimation with God; that confers no advantage. For such a representation, they conceive to degrade it far below baptism. But this is not true. For all that he says of circumcision might justly be affirmed of baptism. Both Paul and Peter show that God regards not the external ablution, unless the heart be purified within (1 Pet 3:21). In the Colossians 2:11–12 passage, where Paul talks of being “buried with him [Christ] in baptism,” he signifies that baptism is to Christians what circumcision was to the ancient believers, and consequently that circumcision cannot be imposed upon Christians without injury to baptism.

25. A proper appraisal of the ancient ceremonies, a subject much debated upon by sophists, may be summarised in these three observations: (a) That all the ceremonies of the law of Moses, unless they were directed to Christ, were vain and useless. (b) That they had reference to Christ, so that when He was manifested in the flesh, they received their accomplishment. (c) It was necessary for them to be abolished at his advent, as a shadow vanishes in the clear light of the sun.

26. A final comparison of the old sacraments with the sacraments today is taken from Augustine: “The law and prophets had sacraments announcing something future; but what they celebrated as about to come, the sacraments of our time announce as already come . . .

The sacraments of the Jews were different from ours in the signs; in the thing signified, they were equal; different in visible form, equal in spiritual efficacy.”

Chapter XV

Baptism

1. Baptism is a sign of initiation, by which we are admitted into the Church. As a sacrament, firstly, it promotes our faith towards God, and secondly, it testifies our confession before men.

It is more than a mark or a sign, by which we profess our religion, as soldiers wear the insignia of their sovereign as a mark of their profession. It rather resembles a legal instrument properly attested, by which God assures us that all our sins are cancelled. For He commands all who believe to be baptised (Mark 16:16), for the remission of their sins.

2. In this sense, we are to understand what is said by Paul, that Christ cleanses the Church “with the washing of water by the word” (Eph 5:26), and “according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost” (Titus 3:5), and by Peter, that “baptism doth also now save us” (1 Pet 3:21). It was not Paul’s intention to signify that our ablution and salvation are completed by water, or that water contains in itself the virtue to purify and regenerate. Nor did Peter mean it was the cause of salvation, but only that the knowledge and assurance of it, is received in this sacrament. Baptism promises us no other purification than by the sprinkling of the blood of Christ; which is emblematically represented by water, on account to its resemblance to washing and cleansing.

3. Nor must it be supposed that baptism is administered only for the time past, so that for sins in which we fall after baptism, it would be necessary to seek other new remedies of expiation. In consequence of this error, there were some persons who would not be baptised, except at the close of their life. But we ought to conclude, that at whatever time we are baptised, we are washed for the whole life. For, the purity of Christ is offered to us in it; and that always retains its virtue, is never overcome by any blemishes, but purifies and obliterates all our defilements. Now, from this doctrine we ought not to take a license for the commission of future sins.

4. I know the common opinion is, that remission of sins, which at our first regeneration we receive by baptism alone, is afterwards obtained

by repentance and the benefit of the keys. But, the advocates of this opinion have fallen into error, for want of considering that the power of the keys is so dependent on baptism that it cannot by any means be separated from it.

This error has produced the imaginary sacrament of penance, as if baptism itself were not a sacrament of repentance. But, if repentance is enjoined upon us as long as we live, the virtue of baptism ought to be extended to the same period.

5. Baptism also shows our mortification in Christ, and our new life in Him. “. . . so many of us as were baptised into Jesus Christ were baptised into his death. Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: . . . even so we also should walk in newness of life” (Rom 6:3, 4). By baptism, Christ has made us partakers of His death, in order that we may be ingrafted into it.

6. The last advantage which our faith receives from baptism, is the certain testimony it affords us, that we are not only ingrafted into the life and death of Christ, but are so united as to be partakers of all His benefits. For this reason, He sanctified baptism in His own body, that He might have it in common with us, as a most firm bond of union with us. Paul proves from this, that we are children of God, because we have put on Christ in baptism (Gal 3:26, 27). For all the gifts of God, which are presented, are found in Christ alone.

7. The baptism of John was precisely the same as that which was afterwards committed to the Apostles. This is proved by the sameness of their doctrine. John and the Apostles both baptised to repentance, both to remission of sins, both baptised in the name of Christ (cf. John 1:29). If there is any difference between their baptism, the only difference that will be found is, that John baptised in the name of Him who was to come, the Apostles in the name of Him who had already come.

8. The more abundant effusion of the graces of the Spirit, after the resurrection of Christ, contributes nothing to establish a diversity of baptisms.

When John declared that he “baptise . . . with water,” but that Christ would come to “baptise . . . with the Holy Ghost, and with fire” (Matt 3:11), he did not mean to distinguish one baptism from the other. He was

merely comparing himself with Christ; that while he was a minister of water, Christ was the giver of the Holy Ghost, and would display the power by a visible miracle at Pentecost. Those who baptise are merely ministers of the outward sign, and Christ is the author of the inward grace.

9. These things, which we have stated respecting mortification and ablution, were adumbrated in the people of Israel, who were “baptised . . . in the cloud and in the sea” (1 Cor 10:2). Mortification was represented in the deliverance of Israel from the captivity of Egypt, from the servitude of sin; and in the drowning of Pharaoh, a type of the Devil, in the Red Sea, though he ceases not to harass us. In the cloud, there is an emblem of ablution. As the Lord covered the Israelites with a cloud, affording them refreshment, so, in baptism, we are covered and protected by the blood of Christ, that the severity of God, like an intolerable flame, may not fall upon us.

10. There is a false notion, that, by baptism, we are delivered and exempted from original sin, and are restored to the same righteousness which Adam would have obtained if he had continued in the integrity in which he was first created. Teachers of this doctrine have not understood the nature of original sin. Original sin is the corruption of our nature, which renders us liable to the wrath of God, and, then, produces in us “works of the flesh” (Gal 5:19). Thus infants, though they have not produced fruits of sin, bring with them the seed of sin, and are condemned before God. By baptism, believers are certified that this condemnation is removed from them. They also receive righteousness, that is, only by imputation, as the Lord, in His mercy, accepts them as righteous and innocent.

11. The other thing to be remarked is, that this depravity never ceases in us, but is perpetually producing new fruits. Concupiscence never dies, until, by death, we are delivered from the body of death. Baptism, indeed, promises us the submersion of our Pharaoh and the mortification of sin, yet not so that it no longer exists, but only that it may not overcome us. Now, these things are said, in order not to give sleep to those who are prone to evil, but rather that those who are tempted may not become despondent. Let them fight manfully, and press forward to complete victory! We conclude, we are baptised into the mortification of the flesh, which we must pursue from day to day, until we pass out of this life.

12. Here, we say nothing different from what is most clearly stated by Paul in Romans 6 and 7. He says that, in a regenerate man, there is a perpetual conflict with the relics of his corruption, and that he is bound with a miserable servitude, which prevents his entire consecration of himself to an obedience of the Divine law. So, he is constrained to exclaim, “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” (Rom 7:24). But, “there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus” (Rom 8:1). Though surrounded and assaulted with sin, while they persevere in the faith of Christ, they are absolved from guilt and condemnation.

13. Baptism also serves for our confession before men. It is a mark by which we openly profess our desire to be numbered among the people of God, by which we make a public declaration of our faith.

14. On the other hand, baptism is a sign by which the Lord testifies that it is He who purifies us, obliterates the remembrance of our sins; makes us partakers of His death, demolishes Satan’s kingdom, weakens the power of our corrupt propensities, and even makes us one with Him.

15. We may see this exemplified in Cornelius, who, after having received the remission of sins and the visible grace of the Holy Spirit, was baptised—not with a view by baptism to obtain a more ample remission of sins, but a stronger exercise of faith. It is not my design to diminish the efficacy of baptism. Nevertheless, from this sacrament, as from all others, we obtain nothing except what we receive by faith. If faith be wanting, it will be a testimony of our ingratitude, to render us guilty before God, because we have not believed in the promise given in the sacrament.

16. Now, if it be true, that a sacrament is to be considered received, not so much from the hand of him by whom it is administered, as from the hand of God Himself, we may conclude it is not capable of any addition or diminution from the dignity of the person by whose hand it is delivered. This fully refutes the Donatists, who measured the virtue of the sacrament by the worthiness of the minister. Such, in our present day, are the Anabaptists, who deny we are rightly baptised, because we were baptised by the idolatrous ministers in the kingdom of the pope. So, they urge us to baptise again. But, we have a strong argument against them, if we consider we are baptised not in the name of any man, but in the Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

17. When they ask us what faith we had for many years after our baptism, in order to show that our baptism was vain, (since baptism is not sanctified to us except by the word of promise received in faith)—to this question is our answer: Though unbelieving for a long time, the promise of God in the baptism nevertheless remained firm and true. Now, since, by God’s grace, we have begun to repent, and God’s promise in the baptism never expired, let us, therefore, embrace it by faith. Wherefore, when God exhorts the Jews to repent, He does not require them to be re-circumcised. He only urges conversion of the heart.

18. But, our adversaries argue further, that Paul rebaptised some who had previously been baptised with the baptism of John (Acts 19:1–6). But I take the words, “they were baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus,” to be the baptism of the Holy Spirit, that is, of the visible grace of the Spirit given by imposition of hands. It is not uncommon in the Scripture to designate those graces by the appellation of *baptism*; as at Pentecost, the Apostles are said to have remembered the Word of the Lord respecting the baptism of the Spirit and of fire. Nor is this interpretation inconsistent with what is stated afterwards, that “when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them.” The latter clause describes the kind of baptism intended in the former.

19. As to the external symbol of water, men have polluted it with the addition of an incantation, and later with a wax taper with chrism. Exorcism seemed to open the gate to baptism. Then, spittle, salt and other fooleries, were introduced to the further reproach of baptism.

As to the mode of baptism, the Church should be left at liberty to act according to the difference of countries, to practise it whether by whole immersion, thrice or once, or whether by pouring or sprinkling. These differences are of no importance.

20. But, it is not right for private persons to take upon themselves the administration of baptism; for this, as well as the Lord’s Supper, is a part of the public administration of the Church. Christ never commanded women, or men in general, to baptise, but the Apostles. The custom, which has been practised for many ages past, for baptism to be performed by laymen, in cases where death was impending, and no minister was present in time, it appears to me impossible to defend by any good reason. For, even Augustine was not sure of this himself. Respecting women, it

was decreed without exception, in the Council of Carthage, that they should not presume to baptise at all, on pain of excommunication.

“That those who happen to die without baptism” are lost and “baptism is necessary to salvation” are false notions.

21. Our position on women, in respect of the administration of baptism, was upheld before Augustine, by Tertullian and Epiphanius. Epiphanius observed that the liberty of administering baptism was not granted even to the mother of Christ.

22. The example of Zipporah is alleged, but it is not applicable to this case. This was a single act, which ought not to be considered as a general example.

Whoever baptises without a legitimate call intrudes into another person’s office. Female baptism, being an open violation of the rule delivered by Christ, is a still greater sin. I would only request my readers to consider that nothing was further from the design of Zipporah, than to perform a service to God. For seeing her son in danger, she murmured, and cast the foreskin on the ground, reproaching her husband in such a manner as to betray anger against God (Exod 4:25).

Infants are not excluded from the kingdom of heaven, who happen to die before they have the privilege of baptism. Since the sacrament is afterwards added as a seal, not to give efficacy to the promise of God, but only to confirm it to us. Whence it follows, that the children of believers are received into the Church by a solemn sign, because they already belonged to the body of Christ by virtue of the promise. If the omission of the sign be not occasioned by indolence or contempt, we are safe from all danger.

Chapter XVI

Paedobaptism Perfectly Consistent with the Institution of Christ and the Nature of the Sign

1. Infant baptism has been attacked with the argument, that it is not founded on any institution of Christ.

2. In answering this argument, we must first acknowledge, that the right consideration of sacramental signs consists not merely in the external ceremonies, but rather in the promise and mysteries which the Lord has appointed those ceremonies to represent. On the other hand, he who contemptuously disregards these things, and confines his attention entirely to the visible ceremony, will understand neither the force nor propriety of baptism, nor even the meaning or use of the water.

From the promises given in baptism, Scripture shows that the first thing represented in it is the remission and purgation of sins, which we obtain in the blood of Christ. Second is the mortification of the flesh, which consists in the participation of His death, by which believers are regenerated to newness of life, and so into communion with Him.

Baptism is also a sign, by which we testify our religion before men.

3. Since the people of God, before the institution of baptism, had circumcision instead, let us examine the similarity and difference between these two signs. From the command God gave Abraham in circumcision (Gen 17:1–14), and Christ's interpretation that Abraham's God was God of the living, and not the dead (Matt 22:32), we see therein the promise of eternal life. Now, since the first entrance to immortal life is the remission of sins, it follows that this promise corresponds with the promise of baptism respecting our purgation.

The Lord then stipulated with Abraham, that he should walk before Him in sincerity and purity of heart: this belongs to mortification, or regeneration. And, to preclude any doubt that circumcision is a sign of mortification, Moses exhorts the Israelites to circumcise their hearts (Deut 10:16). Thus, in circumcision, we see a spiritual promise was given to the patriarchs, the very same which is given to us in baptism. Moreover, as we have shown that, Christ, in whom both these things are obtained, is

the foundation of baptism, the same must be evident of circumcision. For He was promised to Abraham, and in Him the blessing of nations. And the sign of circumcision was added in confirmation of this grace.

4. There is now no difficulty in discovering what similarity or what difference there is between these two signs. The promise, in which we have stated the virtue of the signs to consist, is the same in both—the paternal favour of God, remission of sins, and eternal life. In the next phase, the thing signified also is one and the same—regeneration. The foundation, in which the accomplishment of these things rests, is the same in both.

All the difference lies in the external ceremony, which is the smallest portion of it. We may conclude, that whatever belongs to circumcision, except this external difference, belongs also to baptism. Indeed, baptism has taken the place of circumcision in the New Testament.

5. Now, if it be inquired, whether baptism may be rightly administered to infants, we must also inquire if circumcision was given to infants. The Lord expressly pronounces that the circumcision of a little infant should serve as a seal for the confirmation of the covenant. But, if the covenant remains firm and unmoved, it belongs to the children of Christians now, as much as it did to the infants of the Jews under the Old Testament. For, if they are partakers of the thing signified, why shall they be excluded from the sign? While the word of baptism is directed to infants, why shall the sign, which is an appendix to the word, be prohibited to them? This one reason, if there were no others, would be abundantly sufficient for the refutation of all opposers!

6. The covenant which the Lord once made with Abraham continues as much in force with Christians in the present day. Consequently, that word is not less applicable to Christians than it was to the Jews. Now, as the Lord, after having made the covenant with Abraham, commanded it to be sealed in infants by an external sacrament, what cause will Christians assign why they should not testify and seal the same in their children?

7. Christ kindly received the infants that were presented to Him, and blessed them; chiding His disciples who endeavoured to forbid their approach to Him. Christ commanded infants to be brought to Him, and

added, as a reason for this command, “for of such is the kingdom of heaven” (Matt 19:14). If it be reasonable for infants to be brought to Christ, why is it not allowable to admit them to baptism, the symbol for our communion and fellowship with Christ? But, some will object, What resemblance does this embrace of Christ bear to baptism?

8. From this objection, we come to the baptism of households or families. Though it is argued, that nowhere is it stated that even a single infant was baptised, can anyone rationally exclude them from the baptism of any family? If there were any force in such arguments, women might as well be forbidden from the Lord’s Supper, because we have no account of their having been admitted to it in the days of the Apostles!

9. It now remains for us briefly to show what advantage results from this ceremony, both to the believing parents, and the infants presented for baptism. Paedobaptism works like a seal, impressed on the child, confirming the promise given to the pious parents, declaring that the Lord will be a God, not only to them, but also to their seed. God is determined to exercise His goodness and grace, not only towards the parents, but towards their posterity, even to a thousand generations. When the children grow up, this baptism operates upon them as a powerful stimulus to the worship of God, by whom they were accepted as His children through the solemn symbol of adoption, before they were capable of knowing Him as their Father.

10. Those who dispute with paedobaptism, labour to establish a considerable difference between circumcision and baptism. They claim that different things are signified; the covenant is entirely different; and, lastly, that the children are mentioned in a different manner. On the first point, these disputants allege that circumcision was a figure of mortification, and not of baptism. This is an excellent argument in our favour, since we have stated that baptism and circumcision are equally signs of mortification. Hence, we conclude that baptism was introduced in place of circumcision.

In asserting a difference of the covenant, they contend that the covenant made with the Jews was limited to a temporary life, and corporeal enjoyments! Circumcision to them is a literal sign, and the promises connected with it were all carnal.

11. Our reply to the dispute above, in respect of the covenant, is, that the promises of the Old Testament were spiritual, and had reference to eternal life. We do not deny the terrestrial and carnal advantages, by which we also maintain that their hopes of spiritual promises were confirmed.

As to their statement, that circumcision was a literal sign, the same opinion must be formed of baptism. For the Apostle makes one no more spiritual than the other. He says to the Colossians, “In whom [Christ] also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh,” and this he calls “the circumcision of Christ”—being “buried with him [Christ] in baptism” (Col 2:11, 12). What is the meaning of this language, but that the accomplishment and truth of baptism is the same with the accomplishment and truth of circumcision, since they both represent the same thing? Paul’s design is to show that baptism was to Christians the same that circumcision has before been to the Jews.

12. In the mention of the children, they state that under the Old Testament, those were called the children of Abraham, who derived their natural descent from him; but now this name is given to those who imitate his faith. Therefore, that carnal infancy, that was ingrafted into the Church by circumcision, prefigured those spiritual infants in the New Testament. There is some truth in this. But they must not stop short at this, and suppose that no spiritual blessing was ever promised by God to the carnal seed of Abraham. It must be pointed out that the Lord promised to Abraham, that he should have a Seed, in whom all the nations of the earth were to be blessed. All those, who by faith received Christ, are heirs of the promise, and are, therefore, denominated “children of Abraham.”

13. After the resurrection of Christ, the boundaries of the kingdom of God began to be extended far and wide into all nations, without distinction. In order to prove that the Gentiles are children of Abraham as well as the Jews, the Apostle expresses himself in the following manner: “faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness . . . when he was . . . in uncircumcision. And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that . . . righteousness might be imputed unto them also: and the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, . . . which he

had being yet uncircumcised” (Rom 4:9–12). Do not we see that equal dignity is attributed to the Jews and Gentiles? To give the Gentiles an entrance into the kingdom of God, Abraham became also their father, and that without circumcision. Now, instead of circumcision, the Gentiles have baptism.

14. And, in objection to this, another passage is adduced from the same Apostle, in which he says, “They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed” (Rom 9:7, 8). Examples of this principle are taken from some of Abraham’s children: Ishmael and Esau, though they were the true offsprings of Abraham according to the flesh, were rejected as if they were strangers, whereas the blessing remained with Isaac and Jacob. Salvation, therefore, depends on the mercy of God, which He imparts to whom He pleases.

Nevertheless, though in the course of history, the Jews, descendants of Abraham, were rebellious and violators of the covenant, God calls them holy. As the first-born in the family of God, the Gospel was first announced to them, and honour was still given them, until they rejected the offer of it and, by ingratitude, caused it to be transferred to the Gentiles. Whatever be the obstinacy, with which they persist in opposing the Gospel, on no account are they to be despised by us (Rom 11:29).

15. See now, the importance of the promise given to the posterity of Abraham, as is attested by the seal of circumcision. The same reason is applicable to the Christian Church. For as Paul argues that the children of the Jews were sanctified by their parents, so he teaches that the children of Christians derive the same sanctification from their parents (1 Cor 7:14).

16. The other differences which they endeavour to establish between baptism and circumcision, are that baptism belongs to the first day of the spiritual conflict, but circumcision to the eighth, when mortification is already completed. Immediately forgetting this, they change their story, and call circumcision a sign of the mortification of the flesh, and baptism a symbol of burial, to which more are to be consigned but those who are already dead. What a levity of self-contradiction! For, according to their first proposition, baptism ought to precede circumcision. According to the second, it ought to follow it.

Nor is there any more propriety to the objection, that, if it be necessary to conform baptism to circumcision, women ought not to be baptised. For, if it be evident, that the sign of circumcision testified with the sanctification of the seed of Israel, there can be no doubt that it was given equally for the sanctification of both males and females. And, though only the males were circumcised, they alone being capable of it, the females were in a certain sense partakers of their circumcision.

17. They consider themselves as advancing a powerful argument for excluding infants from baptism, when they allege, that by reason of their age they are not capable of understanding the mystery signified in it—that is, spiritual regeneration, which cannot take place in early infancy. Therefore, they are to be considered in no other view than as children of Adam, till they have attained an age which admits a second birth.

Our reply is, that it is certain that some infants are saved; and that they are previously regenerated by the Lord, is beyond all doubt. The sanctifying of John the Baptist in his mother’s womb is an example. John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Spirit, even before he was born.

18. For this reason, Christ was sanctified from His earliest infancy, that He might sanctify in Himself all His elect. If Christ exhibits a perfect exemplar of all the graces which God bestows upon His children, He will also furnish us with a proof, that the age of infancy is not altogether incompatible with sanctification. We consider, that not one of the elect is called out of the present life, without having been previously regenerated and sanctified by the Spirit.

19. Our opponents argue that salvation comes through faith and “faith cometh by hearing” (Rom 10:17). Now, infants, they say, are not capable of knowing God through such a process. Our reply is that when the Apostle makes hearing the source of faith, he only describes the ordinary economy and dispensation of the Lord, which He generally observes in the calling of His people. This does not preclude His employment of any other method, which He has certainly used in the calling of many, by illumination of His Spirit, without the intervention of any preaching.

20. Our opponents allege, that baptism is a sacrament of repentance and faith. Therefore, neither of these can be exercised in infancy. Our

answer is, that circumcision also was a sign of repentance (Jer 4:4), and Paul calls it “a seal of the righteousness of the faith” (Rom 4:11). Since God formerly communicated to infants the rite of circumcision, which was a sacrament of repentance and faith, it appears no absurdity for them now to be admitted to baptism. For though infants, at the time of their circumcision, did not understand the meaning of that sign, they were truly circumcised into the mortification of their corrupt nature, which they were to pursue in mature years. Similarly, infants are baptised into future repentance and faith.

21. Our opponents fall into their error of maintaining that the thing signified should always precede the sign, so that infants who can neither repent nor exercise faith should not be baptised. We reply, from the reasons given above, that all the present efficacy to be required in the baptism of infants, is to ratify and confirm the covenant made with them by the Lord. The remaining signification of the sacrament will follow afterwards, at the time foreseen and appointed by the Lord.

22. They object to infant baptism, because the sign is for the remission of sins. This objection, we consider to be completely in our favour! For, being born sinners, we need pardon and remission even from our birth. Now, as the Lord does not exclude infants from the hope of mercy, and they are called heirs of the kingdom of heaven, why should they be excluded from the sacrament? Infants, whom our Lord numbers among His members, ought therefore be baptised, that they be not separated from His body.

23. Our opponents stress the need to return to the practice of the Apostolic age, when the persons to be baptised must first repent (Acts 2:37, 38). Quoting the instance of Philip and the eunuch (Acts 8:37, 38), they demand faith as another prerequisite. We agree, that in these circumstances, repentance and faith were both required of the candidates for baptism. But, I contend, there are other passages of Scripture which must be consulted. That infants ought to be ranked in a different class, is sufficiently evident.

24. Let us learn from the process of the giving of the sacrament of circumcision. Why did the Lord require circumcision of Abraham after the manifestation of his faith, but to Isaac, it was given when an infant?

Because it is reasonable that a person, who at an adult age is admitted to the fellowship of a covenant, should first learn the conditions of it. But, this is not necessary in the case of an infant, who, by hereditary right, according to the form of promise, is already included in the covenant from its very birth.

Therefore, persons of adult age who embrace Christianity, having been aliens to the covenant, are not to receive baptism without the intervention of faith and repentance. But, the infant children of Christian parents, being admitted by God to the inheritance of the covenant as soon as they are born, are also to be admitted to baptism.

25. By quoting John 3:5, our opponents consider regeneration was requisite to baptism, “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” Since infants, they say, are incapable of regeneration, they should not be baptised.

My answer is, that the water required in John 3:5 is not the water of baptism, but rather the water of the Holy Spirit.

26. Our opponents adjudge all unbaptised persons to eternal death. With such argument, they would sentence all infants to eternal death by denying them baptism, which, according to their own confession, is necessary to salvation. This is in opposition to Christ, who adjudges the kingdom of heaven to little children.

27. The strongest argument in their favour, they boast to be contained in the great commission (Matt 28:19, 20; Mark 16:16), where our Lord clearly requires teaching to precede baptism. They even quote our Lord’s example, that He was not baptised till He was “about thirty years of age” (Luke 3:23). To argue as they do, why may we not, on the other hand, reply, that baptising ought to precede teaching, since Christ says, “baptising them . . . teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you”?

28. But, I have no inclination to escape with such sophistical and trivial arguments. The principal command which Christ gives to the Apostles, is to preach the Gospel, to which He subjoins the administration of baptism as an appendage. Besides, He says nothing of baptism, any otherwise than as its administration is subordinate to the office of teaching. Christ is here stressing the bringing in of men who, before, were lost by

the preaching of the Gospel. But, what men? It is certain, they are those who are capable of receiving instruction. He afterwards adds, that such are to be baptised, and subjoins a promise, “He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved” (Mark 16:16). Is there even a single syllable respecting infants? What kind of argumentation, is that with which they assail us? Persons of *adult* age are to be instructed, in order that they may believe before they are to be baptised. Therefore, it is lawful to administer baptism to infants!

29. By the same reason, well might we exclude infants from any food, since the Apostle says, “that if any would not work, neither should he eat” (2 Thess 3:10).

30. At length, they object that there is not more reason why infants should be admitted to baptism than to the Lord’s Supper, as though the Scriptures did not make a considerable difference between the two cases in every respect.

Infant communion was practised in the ancient Church, as appears from Cyprian and Augustine; but the custom has very properly been discontinued. For baptism is an initiation into the Church, by which we are enrolled among the people of God. On the contrary, the Supper is appointed for those of riper years, who, having passed the state of infancy, are capable of bearing solid meat. This difference is very evidently marked in the Scripture; in which, as far as relates to baptism, the Lord makes no distinction of age, whereas He does not present the Supper to the participation of all alike, but to those who are capable of discerning the body and blood of the Lord, etc. (1 Cor 11:24–29). Between these two signs, therefore, there is a considerable difference; such as we observe also between similar signs under the Old Testament. Circumcision, which is known to correspond with our baptism, was destined for infants. The Passover, which has now been succeeded by the sacred Supper, did not admit guests of all description promiscuously, but was rightly eaten by those who were of sufficient age to be able to inquire into its significance.

Chapter XVII

The Lord's Supper and Its Advantages

1. After God has once received us into His family, in order to fulfil the part of a most excellent Father, He also undertakes to nourish us. By the hand of His only begotten Son, He has favoured the Church with another sacrament, a spiritual banquet, in which Christ testifies Himself to be the bread of life.

The signs of this sacrament are bread and wine, which represent to us the invisible nourishment which we receive from the body and blood of Christ. As in baptism, God regenerates us, incorporates us into His Church, and makes us His children by adoption. So, we have said, that He is a provident Father, in constantly supplying us with food. Now, the only food of our souls is Christ. Since our participation of Christ, whereby we may gain fresh vigour from day to day, is a mystery, He exhibits a figure and image of it in visible signs. These signs teach us, that our souls are nourished by Christ, just as the life of the body is fed by bread and wine. By these signs, we are assured that the body of Christ was once offered as a sacrifice for us, so that we may now feed upon it, and experience within us the efficacy of the one sacrifice.

2. From this sacrament, pious souls may derive the benefit of considerable satisfaction and confidence; because it affords us a testimony that we are incorporated into one body with Christ. The result of this is, that we are assured of eternal life, of which He is the heir, and of the kingdom of Heaven, into which He has already entered. We now cannot be condemned by our sins, from the guilt of which He has absolved us. Submitting to our poverty, He has transferred to us His riches. Assuming our weaknesses, He has strengthened us by His power. Accepting our mortality, He has conferred us His immortality. Taking on Himself the load of iniquity with which we were oppressed, He has clothed us with His righteousness. Descending to earth, He has prepared a way for our ascending to heaven. Becoming with us the Son of man, He has made us, with Himself, the sons of God.

3. Of all these things, we have such a complete attestation in this sacrament, that as if Christ Himself were presented to our eyes, and

touched by our hands. By commanding us to take, He signifies that He is ours. By commanding us to eat and drink, He signifies that He has become one substance with us. The body and blood of Christ are represented to us by bread and wine, to teach us they are destined for the support of our spiritual life. By the corporeal objects, which are presented in the sacrament, we are conducted to those which are spiritual.

4. The principal object of the sacrament is to seal that promise, where He declares that His “flesh is meat indeed, and [His] blood is drink indeed” (John 6:55), by which we are nourished for eternal life. By this seal and confirmation, we are sent to the cross of Christ, for we never rightly feed on Christ, except as crucified, and after we have a lively apprehension of the efficacy of His death.

5. The sacrament is, to recall to our remembrance, that He has been made the bread of life, and assures us, that whatever Christ has done or suffered, was for the purpose of giving life to us; and that this life will never end. His body would be as bread to us, for the spiritual life of our soul; and it is given to us to feed upon it, when He makes us partakers of it by faith.

Some define, that to eat the flesh of Christ and drink His blood, is no other than to believe in Christ Himself. But, I conceive that, He intended to teach something more striking and sublime. At the same time, we confess there is no other eating than by faith. While my opponents consider the eating to be the very same as believing, I say that it is to be rather a consequence of faith. The difference is small in words, but in the thing itself it is considerable.

6. When Augustine said that we eat the body of Christ by believing in Him, it was with no other meaning than to show that this eating is not of a corporeal nature, but solely by faith. This I admit; but at the same time I add, that we embrace Christ by faith, not as appearing at a distance, but as uniting Himself with us, to become our Lord, and to make us His members.

“Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, . . . ye have no life in you” (John 6:53). This is a figure which, according to Augustine, enjoins a participation of the sufferings of our Lord, and a sweet recollection in the memory, that His flesh was crucified for us. Again, according to

Augustine, our souls are much refreshed by the communion of the body of Christ, as our bodies are by the bread which we eat. The same idea is conveyed by Chrysostom, when he says, “That Christ makes us his body, not only by faith, but also in reality.” Such statements are to preclude a supposition, that faith is speculative apprehension.

7. Nor am I satisfied with those who represent us merely as partakers of His Spirit; as though there were no meaning in the expression, “For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.” Those who represent us merely as partakers of the Spirit, are hyperbolical doctors who deprive Him of His real body, and metamorphose Him into a mere phantom.

Nevertheless, this subject is a high mystery, which I find myself incapable of properly comprehending, even in my mind; and no person is able to measure its sublimity by my inadequate representation of it. As for myself, whenever I handle this subject, I am conscious of having said but very little, in comparison of its excellence. Nothing remains for me, but to break forth in admiration of that mystery, which the mind is unable to understand, or the tongue to express. I will nevertheless state the substance of my opinion, which I trust will also be received with approbation by godly minds.

8. In the first place, we learn from the Scriptures, that Christ was from the beginning that life-giving Word of the Father. He is the fountain and origin of life, from which all things have ever derived their existence. Yet, the Apostle John, who writes of the “Word of Life,” qualifies that “the life was manifested” then, and not before, when the Son of God, by assuming our flesh, rendered Himself visible to our eyes. For though He diffused His influence over all the creatures before that period, yet, because man was alienated from God by sin, had lost the participation of life, and saw nothing but impending death, it was necessary to his recovery, that he should be received into the communion of that Word.

Now, since He, who is the fountain of life, has taken up His residence in our flesh, He remains no more concealed at a distance from us, but is openly exhibited to our participation. He also makes the very flesh in which He resides the means of giving life to us, that, by a participation of

it, we may be nourished to immortality (John 6:51). Here, then, we enjoy peculiar consolation, that we find life in our own flesh.

9. I agree with Cyril, in understanding that declaration of Christ, “as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself” (John 5:26). In this passage, He is not speaking of the attributes which He possessed with the Father from the beginning, but of the gifts with which He was adorned in the flesh. Therefore, He showed that the fullness of life dwelt in His humanity, that whoever partake of His flesh and blood might enjoy a participation of life. The flesh of Christ is like an inexhaustible fountain, which receives the life flowing from Divinity, and conveys it to us.

10. We conclude, that our souls are fed by the flesh and blood of Christ, just as our corporeal life is sustained by bread and wine. Now, that holy participation of His flesh and blood, by which Christ communicates His life to us, in the Sacred Supper, He also testifies and seals; and that not by the exhibition of a vain or ineffectual sign, but by the exertion of the energy of His Spirit.

I grant, indeed, that the breaking of the bread is symbolical, and not the substance itself. Yet, from the exhibition of the symbol, we may justly infer the exhibition of the substance. Therefore, if, by the breaking of bread, the Lord truly represents the participation of His body, it ought not to be doubted that He truly presents and communicates it. In receiving the symbol of this body, we at the same time truly receive the body itself.

11. The Sacred mystery of the Supper consists of two parts: the corporeal signs, which present to us invisible things in a manner adapted to the weakness of our capacities; and the spiritual truth, which is at the same time typified and exhibited by those symbols. It includes the signification; the substance, which follows from both. The signification consists in the promises which are interwoven with the sign. What I call the substance, is Christ, with His death and resurrection. By the effect, I mean redemption, righteousness, sanctification, eternal life.

12. I now proceed to the hyperbolical additions which superstition has made to this sacrament. For, here Satan has exerted amazing subtlety to withdraw the minds of men from heaven, and involve them in a preposterous error, by persuading them that Christ is attached to the

element of the bread. In the first place, we must be careful not to dream of such a presence of Christ in the sacrament, as the ingenuity of the Romanists has invented—as if the body of Christ were exhibited, by a local presence, to be felt by the hand, bruised by the teeth, and swallowed by the throat.

The bond of union with Christ is not by Christ's corporeal presence everywhere, as we have not the least doubt that Christ's body is finite, and is contained in heaven. Rather, it is by the Spirit of Christ, that conveys to us the communion of His body and blood; like the sun's rays, darting from the sun, transmit its substance to nourish the earth. In Romans 8:9, 11, Paul represents Christ as dwelling in us no otherwise than by His Spirit. It is solely by the agency of the Spirit, that we possess Christ, with all His benefits, and have Him dwelling with us.

13. There is a view equally fallacious, as that expressed earlier above by the schoolman, with greater subtlety. While they admit that Christ is not contained in the bread and wine in a local or corporeal manner, they say that Christ is to be sought in the form of bread. When they say that the substance of bread is transmuted into Christ, do they not attach his substance to the whiteness, which they pretend is all that remains of the bread? That which before was bread now becomes Christ, by the consecration, so that the substance of Christ is concealed under the colour of bread. The consequence of this ingenious subtlety, therefore, we find to be this, that bread has been taken for God.

14. Hence proceeded that pretended transubstantiation, for which they now contend with more earnestness than for all the other articles of their faith. Such a dogma has no support from the authority of the ancients. It is comparatively but of recent invention, for it was not known in those better times when the doctrine of religion still flourished in its purity.

15. They would never have been so shamefully deluded by Satan, if they had not been previously fascinated with this error—that the body of Christ contained in the bread was received in a corporeal manner into the mouth, and actually swallowed. The cause of such a stupid notion was, that they considered the consecration as a kind of magical incantation. But, they did not know this principle, that the bread is a sacrament only to those to whom the word is addressed; as the water of baptism is not changed in

itself, but on the annexation of the promise, begins to be to us that which was not before. This will be further elucidated by the example of a similar sacrament—the water which flowed from the rock in the wilderness, was to the fathers a token and sign of the same thing which is represented to us by the wine of the sacred Supper. For, Paul says, “[They] did all drink the same spiritual drink” (1 Cor 10:4). Now, the same water served also their flocks and herds. Hence, it is easily inferred, that when earthly elements are applied to a spiritual use, no other change takes place in them than with regard to *men*, to whom they become seals of the promises.

16. Then, there are others that acknowledge, that the bread in the sacred Supper is the true substance of that earthly and corruptible element, and undergoes no change in itself. But they maintain that it has the body of Christ included under it. By placing the body itself in the bread, they attribute ubiquity to it, and by stating it to be *under the bread*, represent it as lying concealed in it. They maintain the body of Christ, therefore, to be invisible and infinite, that it may be concealed under the bread; because they suppose it to be impossible to partake of Him, any otherwise than by His descending into the bread. Thus, they are contending for a local presence of Christ, because they cannot conceive of any other participation of His flesh and blood, except what would consist in local conjunction and contact.

17. To defend the error which they have once embraced, some of them affirm that Christ’s body extended to the whole heaven and earth. Now, what is this but to raise Marcion from the dead? For, if such were the condition of Christ’s body, everyone must perceive it to have been a mere phantom, without any real substance. According to the error of Marcion, the body of Christ appeared in one place mortal and mean, and in another was received as immortal and glorious. And, on their principle, this happens everyday. They say that the body of Christ is visible in itself, while at the same time, it is invisibly concealed under the symbol of bread.

18. If they are determined to fasten the body and blood of the Lord to the bread and wine, one must of necessity be severed from the other. For as the bread is presented separately from the cup, the body being united to the bread, must consequently be divided from the blood contained in the cup. Their pretence, that the blood is in the body, and the body in the blood, by what they call *concomitance*, is perfectly frivolous.

But, if we elevate our views and thoughts towards heaven, to seek Christ there in the glory of His kingdom, as the symbols invite us to Him entire; under the symbol of bread, we shall eat His body, under the symbol of wine, we shall distinctly drink His blood, so that we shall thus enjoy Him entire.

19. It is necessary to establish such a presence of Christ in the sacred Supper, as neither, on the one hand, to fasten Him to the element of bread, or to enclose Him in it, or in any way to circumscribe Him, which would derogate from His celestial glory; nor, on the other hand, to deprive Him of His corporeal dimensions, or to represent His body as in different places at once, or to assign it an immensity diffused through heaven and earth, which would be clearly inconsistent with the reality of His human nature.

20. Now, before we proceed any further, it is requisite to discuss the institution itself, with an exposition of the Word. The account given by three of the evangelists, and by Paul, informs us, that, “Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins” (Matt 26:26–28; cf. Mark 14:20–24; Luke 22:19, 20; 1 Cor 11:23–25).

From these words given by the three evangelists, and by Paul, there are those who state, “the bread is the body,” in the literal sense; and others who state, “the body is with the bread.” From the authority of Paul and Luke, I understand the bread to be the body of Christ, because it is the covenant of His body. It is necessary to understand what is meant by “the testament in the body and blood of Christ”; because we should derive no benefit from the covenant ratified by the sacrifice of His death, if it were not followed by that secret communication by which we become one with Him.

21. It remains for us, therefore, to acknowledge that, on account of the affinity which the things signified have with their symbols, the name of the substance has been given to the sign, in a figurative sense. I observe this is a metonymical form of expression, which is commonly used in Scripture in reference to sacraments. Thus, circumcision is called “my covenant” (Gen 17:10), the paschal lamb is “the LORD’s passover” (Exod

12:11). The legal sacrifices were expiations, or atonements (Lev 17:11; cf. Heb 9:22); the rock, from which water issued in the desert, “that Rock was Christ” (1 Cor 10:4); etc. Though there is an essential difference between the symbol and the thing signified, the former being corporeal, terrestrial, and visible, and the latter spiritual, celestial, and invisible, yet, as the symbol is not a mere adumbration of the thing signified, why may not the name of that which it signifies be justly applied to it? So great, therefore, is the similitude and affinity of the one to the other, that there is nothing at all unnatural in such a mutual interchange of appellations.

22. Some obstinate man, when quoting His expression, “**This is my body,**” allege that the verb substantive is too emphatical to admit of any figure. If we grant this, the verb substantive is also used by Paul, where he says, “The bread which we break, **is** it not the **communion** of the body of Christ?” (1 Cor 10:16). But, the communion of the body is something different from the body itself. In almost all cases of sacraments, we find the same word used—“**this is my covenant**” (Gen 17:10), “**It is the LORD’s passover**” (Exod 12:11). And, to mention no more, when Paul says, “that Rock **was** Christ” (1 Cor 10:4), why do they consider the verb substantive less emphatical in that passage than in the speech of Christ?

23. To show themselves men of letters, these good doctors prohibit even the least departure from the literal signification. Did the disciples of the Lord’s table concur with such an interpretation? By eating the bread without hesitation, it appears they understood the words of Christ in the same sense that we do, considering that it is common in all sacraments for the name of the sign to be transferred to the thing signified.

24. For departing from the literal signification, we have been accused of being so devoted to human reason, as to limit the power of God. Against such iniquitous aspersions, I appeal to the doctrine which I have maintained; which will evince that I am far from measuring this mystery by the capacity of human reason, or subjecting it to the laws of nature. I would again request my readers to consider our doctrine, whether it depends on human reason, or on the wings of faith, which ascends to heaven.

We say that Christ descends to us both by the external symbol and by His Spirit, that He may truly vivify our souls with the substance of His flesh and blood. He who perceives not that many miracles are

comprehended in these few words, is more than stupid. For the question here respects not what God could do, but what He has chosen to do.

25. On their part, they imagine a miracle the most distant from Christ's intention, when He said, "This is my body." Thus, according to them, the body of Christ is visible in heaven, and yet is on earth concealed in an invisible manner under innumerable pieces of bread. They say necessity requires this, in order that the body of Christ be given in the Supper. This we assert is an error like that of the Anthropomorphites in past ages who represent God to be corporeal. It is like that of Marcion and the Manicheans, who attributed to Christ a celestial or visionary body.

26. To confirm the faith of true believers, let us state, from the pure Word of God and from the Holy Spirit, that the body of Christ, since its resurrection, is limited, and received into heaven till the last day. In His absence, He has substituted with the Holy Spirit. So it is impossible for Christ to dwell with us, according to His flesh, in the same manner in which He sends His Spirit.

Christ's presence with us is presented to us by Augustine, in these respects—in His majesty, His providence and His ineffable grace. Under the last, I comprehend the wonderful communion of His body and blood; only we must understand this to be effected by the power of the Spirit, and not by a fictitious enclosure of His body under the bread.

27. Does not the term **ascension** signify a removal from one place to another? The evangelists expressly state that He was received up into heaven (Mark 16:19; Luke 24:51; Acts 1:9). This also is affirmed by Paul, who teaches us to expect Him from Heaven (Phil 3:20). For this reason, the angels admonished the disciples, "Why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11).

These facts, they also deny. By their sophistry, they consider Christ's exaltation as denoting the majesty of His empire. They also argue, that as Christ was concealed from their sight by an interposing cloud, this was to teach believers that, henceforth, He would not be visible to us in the world.

28. In order to bolster themselves, our adversaries allege that, in various parts of Augustine's works, he states the flesh and blood of Christ

to be dispensed in the sacred Supper. This is a frivolous observation, since Augustine also calls the consecrated symbols either “the eucharist” or “the sacrament of Christ’s body and blood.” In what sense he uses the words “*flesh*” and “*blood*,” it is unnecessary to make any long inquiry. For he explains himself by saying, “that sacraments take their names from the similitude of those things which they signify, and, therefore, in some sense, the sacrament of the body is *the body*.” With this corresponds another well known passage: “The Lord hesitated not to say, This is my body, when He delivered the sign of it.” Furthermore, Augustine says, “Christ has given immortality to His body, but has not deprived it of its nature. In corporeal form, therefore, he is not to be considered as universally diffused; for we must beware of asserting his Divinity in such a way as to destroy the truth of His body. It does not follow, that, because God is every where, all that in him is every where also.” The reason is immediately added—”For one person is God and man, and both constitute one Christ; as God, he is every where; as man, he is in heaven.” What stupidity would it have betrayed not to except the mystery of the Supper, if it contained anything inconsistent with the doctrine he was maintaining! Yet, if anyone will attentively read what follows, he will find, that under that general doctrine, the Lord’s Supper is also comprehended. To unite Christ with His Church, we see He does not bring down His body from heaven; which He certainly would have done, if that body could not become our food without being enclosed under bread.

29. Our adversaries maintain that He is in all places, but without any form. They object that it is unreasonable to subject the nature of a glorified body to the laws of nature. But this objection leads to the extravagant notion of Servetus, that the body of Christ, after His ascension, was absorbed in His Divinity. My answer to this notion is, that if Christ’s glorified body fills all places in an invisible manner, then its corporeal substance must be destroyed, and no difference will be left between His Divinity and His humanity. With far greater propriety Tertullian argues, that the body of Christ was a true and natural body, because of His glorified body; Christ said, “Handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have” (Luke 24:39).

30. Some of our adversaries are so carried away with the heat of contention, as to affirm that, on account of the union of the two natures of

Christ, wherever His Divinity is, His flesh is there also. This is as though that union had mingled the two natures so as to form some intermediate kind of being, which is neither God nor man. This notion was entertained by Eutyches, and since his time by Servetus. But it is already ascertained from the Scriptures, that in the one person of Christ, the two natures are united in such a manner, that each retains its peculiar properties undiminished. That Eutyches was justly condemned as a heretic, our adversaries will not deny. It is surprising that they overlook the cause of his condemnation, which was, that by taking away the difference between the two natures, and on insisting on the unity of the person, he made the Divinity human, and deified the humanity. What absurdity it is, therefore, to mingle heaven and earth together, rather than not to draw the body from the celestial sanctuary!

31. They are exceedingly deceived, who cannot conceive any presence of the flesh of Christ in the Supper, except it be attached to the bread. On this principle, they leave nothing to the secret operation of the Spirit, which unites us to Christ.

The only question between us, therefore, respects the manner of His presence; because they place Christ in the bread, and we think it unlawful for us to bring Him down from heaven. Let the reader judge on which the truth lies.

32. If anyone inquire of me the manner, I shall not be ashamed to acknowledge that it is a mystery too sublime for me to be able to express, or even to comprehend. I rather experience it, than understand it. Since He pronounces His flesh to be the food, and His blood the drink, of my soul, I offer my soul to be nourished with such aliment. In His sacred Supper, He commands me, under the symbols of bread and wine, to take, and eat, and drink, His body and blood. I doubt not that He truly presents, and I receive them. To use the words of Augustine, "This mystery, as well as others, is celebrated by man, but in a Divine manner. It is administered on earth, but in a heavenly manner."

This sacrament affords our minds, not only an undoubted confidence of eternal life, but also an assurance of the resurrection and immortality of our bodies. But, I reject that mixture of the flesh of Christ with our souls, or that transfusion of it into us, which our adversaries teach. It is

sufficient that Christ inspires life into our souls from the substance of His flesh, and even infuses His own life into us, though His flesh never actually enters into us.

33. The mystery of the Lord's Supper, such as we have represented it, was understood by the ancient Church for four hundred years. But sophisticated men charge that all we teach respecting a spiritual participation, is contrary to what they call a true and real participation. For this foolish imagination, of which Lombard was the author, has perverted their minds, while they have supposed the sacrament to consist in eating the flesh of Christ. Hence proceeded a false idea of sacramental eating, because they supposed the body of Christ to be eaten by impious men, notwithstanding they were strangers to Him. But the flesh of Christ itself, in the mystery of the Supper, is as much a spiritual thing, as our eternal salvation. Whence we conclude, that persons who have not the Spirit of Christ, can no more eat the flesh of Christ, than drink wine which has no taste. Here is the perfection of the sacrament, that the flesh and blood of Christ are as truly given to the unworthy, as to the faithful; but it is likewise true, that as the rain, falling upon a hard rock, runs off from it without penetrating into the stone, thus the wicked, by their obduracy, repel the grace of God so that it does not enter their hearts.

34. Now, because Augustine has asserted, that the sacraments sustain no diminution, and that the grace which they represent is not frustrated by the unbelief or wickedness of men, it will be useful to quote his own words, which will prove that those who expose the body of Christ to be eaten by dogs (Matt 7:6), are chargeable with a culpable perversion of His meaning, in applying it to the present argument. Sacramental eating, according to them, is that which the wicked receive the body and blood of Christ without any influence of His Spirit, or any effect of His grace. Augustine, carefully examining these words, "Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life" (John 6:54), says, on the contrary, "This is the virtue of the sacrament, not the mere visible sacrament; and that internally, and not externally. He who eats with his heart, and not with his teeth"; from which he concludes that the sacrament of the union, which we have with the body and blood of Christ, is presented in the sacred Supper, to some to life, to others to perdition. But the thing signified by the sacrament is only given to life to all who partake

of it, and in no case to perdition. A little after, Augustine says, “Therefore he who abides not in Christ, and in whom Christ does not abide, spiritually neither eats his flesh nor drinks his blood, though he may carnally and visibly possess the sign of the body and the blood with his teeth.” Here, again, we find the visible sign opposed to the spiritual eating; which contradicts that error, that the invisible body of Christ is really eaten sacramentally, though it be not eaten spiritually. Thus, Augustine observes, that the other disciples ate *the bread which was the Lord*, but Judas merely ate *the Lord’s bread*. In another place, Augustine says, “Prepare not your jaws, but your heart. It is for this that the Supper is enjoined. Behold, we believe in Christ when we receive him by faith. In receiving him, we know what we think. We take a bit of bread, and our hearts are satisfied. We are fed, therefore, not by what we see, but by what we believe.”

35. By the perverse temerity of some, there is introduced into the sacrament a carnal adoration in this manner: if the body be there, the soul and the Divinity are there together with the body. Therefore, Christ ought to be adored there. But as Christ speaks distinctly of His body and blood, without specifying the nature of the presence, how can they establish what they wish by that which is doubtful? But if, with becoming humility, they had kept their thoughts in subjection to the Word of God, they would certainly have listened to what Christ said, “Take, eat, drink,” and would have obeyed His command, which enjoins the sacrament to be taken, not to be adored. Those who receive it without adoration, are assured they do not deviate from the Divine command. They have the example of the Apostles, not that they prostrated themselves in adoration, but that, as they were sitting at the table, they took, and did eat.

36. Is this not superstitious worship, when men prostrate before a piece of bread to adore Christ in it? There is no doubt that the Council of Nice intended to guard against this evil, when it prohibited Christians from having their attention humbly fixed on the visible signs. The ancient Church had a custom, that before the consecration, one of the deacons should, with an audible voice, admonish the people to have their **hearts above**. According to this rule, it was our duty to adore Him spiritually in the glory of heaven. To worship the gifts, instead of the Giver Himself, is idolatry. In this, they have committed a double sin, for the honour has

been taken away from God to be transferred to the creature; and God Himself has been dishonoured by the pollution and profanation of the gift, when the holy sacrament has been made an execrable idol.

37. Apart from adoration of the sacrament, they have wandered farther. They consecrate their *host*, as they call it, to carry it about in procession, to display it in pomp, and to exhibit it in a box, to be seen, adored, and invoked by the people.

Instead of such a superstitious practice, we should rather celebrate it with thanksgiving. Therefore, when He gave the institution of the sacrament to the Apostles, He says, “this do in remembrance of me” (Luke 22:19), which Paul explains to be showing the Lord’s death (1 Cor 11:26), that is, publicly, to confess that all our confidence of life and salvation rests on His death; we glorify Him by our confession; and by our example, may exhort others to give Him the same glory. This is the second use of the sacrament, which relates to the external confession.

38. In the third place, the Lord intended it to serve as an exhortation to purity of life, as well as to charity, peace, and concord. For these, the Lord communicates His body to us, so that He becomes completely one with us, and we become one with Him, and consequently one with another. This union is represented by the bread, which is exhibited in the sacrament. As the bread is composed of many grains, mixed together in such a manner that one cannot be separated from another, so, we ought to be united together. “For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread” (1 Cor 10:17). Therefore, it is not without reason that Augustine calls this sacrament “the bond of charity.” For, what more powerful stimulus could be employed to excite mutual charity among us?

39. There is also true administration of the sacrament with the Word. Whether we are to be confirmed in faith, exercised in confession, or excited to duty, there is need of preaching. Nothing more preposterous can be done with respect to the Supper, than to convert it into a mute action, as we have seen under the tyranny of the pope. And this is the truth. We are not to imagine any magical incantation, or think it sufficient to have muttered over the words, as if they were heard by the elements, but we are to understand the words, by which its elements are consecrated, to be

a lively preaching, which edifies the hearers. These considerations clearly show that the reservation of the sacraments, for the purpose of extraordinary distribution to the sick, is perfectly useless; that is, when they receive it without any recital of the instruction of Christ. Indeed, if nothing be said, it is an abuse and corruption. If the promises are respected and the mystery declared, that those who are about to receive it may communicate with advantage, we have no reason to doubt that this is the true consecration.

40. Now, as we perceive this sacred bread to be spiritual food, salutary to the sincere worshippers of God, who, in the participation of it, experience Christ to be our life; so, on the contrary, it is changed into a most noxious poison to those whose faith it does not nourish and confirm. For, as corporeal food, when it offends a diseased stomach, becoming itself corrupted, is found rather noxious than nutritious, so this spiritual food, when it meets with a soul polluted by iniquity, only precipitates it into a more dreadful ruin. Not, indeed, from any fault in the food, but because, “unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure” (Titus 1:15), however, it may be sanctified by the blessing of the Lord. As Paul says, “whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body” (1 Cor 11:27, 29). By their unworthy eating, they receive their own condemnation.

41. In general, when they prepare persons for this worthy participation of the sacrament, they have tortured miserable consciences, and yet have not mentioned a single thing which the case required. They have said that those “eat worthily,” who are in a state of grace. To be in a state of grace, they have explained to consist in being pure and cleansed from all sin—a doctrine which would exclude all men who live from the benefit of this sacrament. For if it be necessary to derive our worthiness for ourselves, we are undone. To heal this wound, they have contrived a method of attaining worthiness; which is, having, as far as we can, examined our conscience, we should purge ourselves by contrition, confession, and satisfaction. I observe that these consolations are too unsubstantial for consciences disturbed, distressed, and dejected, and overwhelmed by a sense of their sins. For if the Lord, by His express

interdiction, admits none to a participation of the Supper, but those who are righteous and innocent, it requires no little care in any individual to attain an assurance of his possession of that righteousness, which he finds to be required of God. While no assurance of our unworthiness can be thus obtained, the entrance to the sacrament will always remain closed by that dreadful interdiction, that “he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself.”

42. Such doctrine, as prevails in the Papacy, is no more a compendious method of ruining men, than from the devil. That we may not fall into this abyss, let us remember that this sacred banquet is medicine to the sick, comfort to the sinner, alms to the poor; but that it would confer no advantage to the healthy, the righteous, and the rich. Wherefore, the only worthiness we can present to God, is our vileness, that He may make us worthy of His mercy; to despair in ourselves, that we may find consolation in Him; to accuse ourselves, that we may be justified by Him. As He makes us all to be one in Himself, so it should be our desire that we may all have one mind, one heart, and one tongue. If we have these things well considered, though we may be disturbed, we shall never be subverted by such reflections as this: Needy and destitute of any good, defiled with pollution of sin, how could we worthily eat of the Lord’s body? We shall rather consider, that we come as paupers to the liberal Benefactor, as patients to the Physician, as sinners to the Author of Righteousness; that the worthiness required by God consists principally of faith in Christ.

43. With respect to the external ceremonial, whether believers take the bread in their hands or not; whether they divide it between them; whether they return the cup into the hand of the deacon, or deliver to the person who is next; whether the bread be leavened or unleavened; whether the wine be red or white; is of the least importance.

Leaving all this mass of ceremonies, let us remark, that the Lord’s Supper might be most properly administered, if it were set before the Church, at least once in every week in the following manner: The service shall commence with public prayer. In the next place, a sermon should be delivered. Then, the bread and wine being placed upon the table, the minister should recite the institution of the Lord’s Supper, and declare the promises which are left for us in it, and, at the same time, should

excommunicate all those who are excluded from it by the prohibition of the Lord. After this, prayer should be offered, that with the same benignity with which our Lord has given us the sacred food, He would also teach and enable us to receive it in faith and gratitude of heart, and that, as of ourselves we are not worthy, He would in His mercy make us worthy of such a feast. Then either some psalms should be sung, or a portion of Scripture shall be read, and believers should participate of the sacred banquet, the ministers breaking the bread and distributing it, and presenting the cup to the people. After the conclusion of the Supper, an exhortation should be given to sincere faith, and a confession of the same; to charity, and a deportment worthy of Christians. Finally, thanksgiving should be rendered, and praises sung, to God; and to close the whole, the Church should be dismissed in peace.

44. According to the present practice, the sacrament is being received once a year, and that in a careless and formal manner. That such was not the practice of the Apostolic Church, is mentioned by Luke, when he says that believers “continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Acts 2:42). The invariable custom was, that no assembly of the Church should be held without the Word being preached, prayers being offered, the Lord’s Supper administered, and alms given. The ancient canons that are ascribed to the Apostles, say, “that those who continue not to the end, and receive not the sacrament, ought to be corrected as disturbers of the Church.” Such injunctions are given also in the Council of Antioch, and in the First Council of Toledo.

45. These decrees were evidently passed by the holy fathers to retain and perpetuate the frequent celebration of the communion. Augustine testifies respecting the age in which he lived, “The sacrament of this thing, that is, of the unity of the body of our Lord, is prepared on the table of the Lord, in some places daily, in other places on appointed days, at stated intervals of time; and is thence received by some to life, by others to destruction.”

46. Augustine and Ambrose unite in condemning the practice which in their time had been adopted in the Eastern Churches, for the people to attend as spectators, and not to partake of it. That custom, of believers communicating once a year, is unquestionably an invention of the devil,

whoever were the persons by whom it was introduced. It is said that Zepherinus, bishop of Rome, was the author of that decree.

47. From the same source proceeded another regulation, which has deprived God's people of one half of the sacred Supper. I mean the symbol of the blood, which has been interdicted to the laity and the profane. For, by these titles, they distinguish the Lord's heritage—and has become the special privilege of the few who have received ecclesiastical unction and tonsure. The ordinance of God is, "Drink ye all of it" (Matt 26:27), but man has abrogated by a new and contrary law, ordaining that all shall not drink of it. The reason, given by the legislators for withholding the cup to the laity, is the dangers which might result if the sacred cup were indiscriminately presented to all. In the next place, they argue with great subtlety, that one is sufficient for both. For, if it be the body, they say, it is the whole Christ, who cannot be separated from His body. And the body, therefore, contains the blood. See how human reason is at variance with God, when it has once been left to its own vagaries.

48. The second subterfuge for denying the cup to the laity is, that Christ admitted none but the Apostles to the Supper, whom He had chosen and admitted into the order of sacrificing priests. But, I have five questions for them to answer, from which they shall not be able to escape. (a) The Scripture mentions twelve who sat down with Jesus; but it does not obscure the dignity of Christ so as to call them sacrificing priests. (b) Why, in that purer period, for almost a thousand years after the Apostles, were all, without exception, admitted to the participation of both symbols?

49. Let any one read all the Greek and Latin fathers, and he will find them abound with such testimonies. Gregory, the last bishop of Rome, shows that it was observed in his time. He says, "You have now learned what the blood of the Lamb is, not by hearing, but by drinking. His blood is drunk by the faithful." And, it even continued four hundred years after his death.

50. (c) Why did Christ, when He presented the bread, simply says, "Take, eat," but when he presented the cup, "Drink ye **all** of it"? (d) If our Lord admitted to His Supper none but sacrificing priests, what man can be found so presumptuous as to invite to a participation of it strangers from whom the Lord has excluded? And, to participate of that gift, over

which they could have no power, without any command from Him who alone could give it? And, with what confidence do they now take upon them to distribute to the people the symbol of the body of Christ, if they have neither the command nor example of the Lord? (e) Did Paul affirm what was false, when he said to the Corinthians, “I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you” (1 Cor 11:23)? If Paul had “received of the Lord,” that all were to be admitted without any distinction, let them consider, from whom they have received, who exclude almost all the people of God.

Chapter XVIII

The Papal Mass Not Only a Sacrilegious Profanation of the Lord's Supper, but a Total Annihilation of It

1. I am now combating that opinion with which the Roman antichrist and his agents have infected the whole world; namely, that the mass is an act by which the priest who offers Christ, and others who participate in the oblation, merit the favour of God; or that it is an expiatory victim by which they reconcile God to them. The act is so ordered, as to be a kind of expiation, to make satisfaction to God for the sins of the living and the dead.

I know how deeply this pest has stricken its roots, what a plausible appearance of goodness it assumes, how it shelters itself under the name of Christ, and how multitudes believe the whole substance of faith to be comprehended under the single word **mass**. But, when it shall have been most clearly demonstrated by the Word of God, that this mass offers the greatest insult to Christ, suppresses and conceals His cross, consigns His death to oblivion, and destroys the sacrament which was left as a memorial of His death; will there be any root too deep for the most powerful axe—I mean the Word of God—to cut in pieces and eradicate?

2. In the first place, that mass offers an intolerable blasphemy to Christ. For He was constituted by His Father a high priest, not for a limited time, like those under the Old Testament; but Christ, who is immortal, requires no vicar to be substituted in His place. Therefore, He was designated by the Father as “a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec” (Gen 14:18; Ps 110:4; Heb 5:5, 6, 10; 7:17, 21, 23, 24; 9:11; 10:21), that He might for ever execute a permanent priesthood. Now, those who sacrifice every day must necessarily appoint priests to conduct the oblations, and those priests must be substituted in the room of Christ, as his successors and vicars. By this substitution, they despoil Christ of His due honour, and rob Him of the prerogative of an eternal priesthood. And what effrontery to arm themselves with the example of Melchisedec in defence of their impiety. For, because he is said to have “brought forth bread and wine” (Gen 14:18), they conclude this to have

been a prefiguration of the mass. Melchisedec gave bread and wine to Abraham and his companions, to refresh them when they were fatigued on their return from battle. What has this to do with a sacrifice?

3. Secondly, the mass suppresses and conceals the cross and passion of Christ. But this is what the Apostle says, that Christ, “now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself” (Heb 9:26). Again: “By the which will [God’s] we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (Heb 10:10). Again: “For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified” (Heb 10:14). To which he subjoins this marvellous observation: “Now where remission of these [iniquities] is, there is no more offering for sin” (Heb 10:18). This was likewise signified by the last words of Christ, when, with His expiring breath, He said, “It is finished” (John 19:30). Christ, at the moment of His death, testifies that, by His own sacrifice, every thing necessary to our salvation had been accomplished and finished. But, what is the tendency of the mass, which admits of a hundred thousand sacrifices being offered everyday, except it be to obscure and suppress the passion of Christ, by which He offered Himself as the alone sacrifice to the Father?

4. To argue for the mass, they apply the prophecy of Malachi, in which the Lord promises, that “from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same . . . incense shall be offered unto **my** name, and a pure offering” (Mal 1:11). The prophecy, which they adduce, is similar to another prediction of Isaiah, where he foretells the erection of three altars in Assyria, Egypt, and Judea (Isa 19:19, 23, 24). I ask the Romanist, firstly, whether they do not admit this prediction to have been accomplished in the kingdom of Christ; secondly, where are these altars; thirdly, whether they think that those two kingdoms were destined to have their respective temples, like that at Jerusalem. A due consideration of these things will induce them to acknowledge, that the prophet, under types adapted to his own time, was predicting the spiritual worship of God, which was to be propagated all over the world. This is our solution of the passage they adduce from Malachi. They are miserably deceived, in acknowledging no sacrifice but that of the mass; whereas believers do, in reality, now sacrifice to the Lord, and offer a pure oblation, of which we shall presently treat.

5. I now proceed to the third view of the mass, under which it obliterates, from the memory of mankind, the true and alone death of Jesus Christ. For, as among man, the confirmation of a testament depends on the death of the testator, so also our Lord, by His death, had confirmed the testament in which He has given us remission of sins, and everlasting righteousness. Those who dare to attempt any variation, or innovation in this testament, thereby deny His death, and represent it as of no value. Now, what is the mass, but a new and totally different testament? For does not every separate mass promise a new remission of sins, and a new acquisition of righteousness; so that there are now as many testaments as masses?

6. The fourth property of the mass is, to prevent us from perceiving and reflecting on the death of Christ, and thereby to deprive us of the benefit resulting from it. For who can consider himself as redeemed by the death of Christ, when he sees a new redemption in the mass? Who can be assured that his sins are remitted, when he sees another remission?

7. I come now to the concluding observation, that the sacred Supper, in which our Lord had left us the memorial of His passion has, by the erection of the mass, been destroyed. For while the Supper is a gift of God, the sacrifice of the mass is pretended to be a price given to God, and received by Him as a satisfaction. The sacrifice of the mass proclaims, that it is necessary for Christ to be sacrificed everyday, in order to be of any advantage to us. The sacrifice of the mass destroys the communion, by which we are all connected together in Christ Jesus. A way was opened for the admission of private masses, when the mass-priest separates himself from the whole congregation of believers, to devour the sacrifice alone.

8. With respect to the word *mass* itself, I have never been able to determine whence it originated. But to forbear all controversy respecting the term, I say that private masses are diametrically repugnant to the institution of Christ, and are consequently an impious profanation of the sacred Supper. The words of Christ, and of Paul are clear, that, whenever there is no breaking of bread for common distribution among believers, there is not the Supper of the Lord, but a false imitation of it. Private masses are an impious abuse; and, as one abuse in religion soon produces another, after the introduction of offering without communicating, they

began to have innumerable masses in all corners of the temples, and thus to divide the people from each other, who ought to have united in one assembly, to celebrate the mystery of their union. Now, let the Romanists deny, if they can, that they are guilty of idolatry in exhibiting bread in the masses, to be worshipped instead of Christ.

9. In purer times of the Church, this corruption was unknown. But before I conclude this subject, I will ask our advocates for masses, since they know that “the LORD” has not “as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD,” and that “to obey is better than sacrifice” (1 Sam 15:22), how can they believe this kind of sacrificing to be acceptable to God, for which they have no command? Moreover, since they hear the Apostle say, that “no man taketh” the name and “honour” of the priesthood “unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron,” and that even “Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest,” but obeyed the call of His Father (Heb 5:4, 5); either they must prove God to be the author of their priesthood, or they must confess the honour not to be of God, into which they have presumptuously obtruded themselves, without any call.

10. If any should bring forward extracts, from the writings of the fathers, to contend with the representations we have given of the sacred Supper, and to support the notion of a sacrifice, which the Papists have invented in the mass, let me point out that the ancient fathers are very far from countenancing such a sacrilege. They do, indeed, use the word **sacrifice**, but they at the same time fully declare, that they mean nothing more than the commemoration of Christ’s sacrifice, as our only Priest, completed on the cross. Augustine, in his Treatise, on Faith, addressed to Peter the Deacon, says, “Hold this most firmly, and admit not the least doubt, that the only begotten Son of God himself, being made flesh for us, hath offered himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour; to whom, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, animals were sacrificed in the time of the Old Testament; and to whom now, with the Father and Holy Spirit (with whom he has one and the same Divinity), the holy Church, throughout the world, ceases not to offer sacrifice of bread and wine. For in those carnal victims there was a prefiguration of the flesh of Christ, which he himself was to offer for our sins, and of his blood, which he was to shed for the remission of our sins.

But in the present sacrifice, there is a thanksgiving and commemoration of the flesh of Christ, which he has offered, and of his blood, which he has shed for us.” Hence, Augustine himself, in various passages, explains it to be nothing more than a sacrifice of praise. In other portions of his writings, the Lord’s Supper is often called a sacrifice, for no other reason than that it is a memorial, image, and attestation. Chrysostom also speaks to the same purpose. And they ascribe the honour of the priesthood so exclusively to Christ, that Augustine declares, that if any one should set up a bishop as an intercessor between God and man, it would be the language of Antichrist.

11. Though the ancient fathers had retained orthodox and pious sentiments of this whole mystery, and not detecting them of having intended the least derogation from the one and alone sacrifice of Christ, I dare not condemn them for impiety. Yet, I think it impossible to exculpate them from having committed some error in the external form. For they initiated the Jewish mode of sacrificing, more than Christ had commanded, or the nature of the Gospel admitted. The censure which they have deserved, therefore, is for this preposterous conformity to the Old Testament, that, not content with the simple and genuine institution of Christ, they have symbolised too much with the shadows of the law.

12. If any man will attentively examine, he will observe this distinction clearly marked by the Word of the Lord, between the Mosaic sacrifices and our eucharist. The Jewish priests were commanded to prefigure the sacrifice which was to be accomplished by Christ. A victim was presented in place of Christ Himself. There was an altar on which it was to be immolated. But, since that sacrifice has been accomplished; therefore, He has given us a table instead, at which we feast, not an altar upon which any victim is to be offered: He has not consecrated priests to offer sacrifices, but ministers to distribute the sacred banquet.

13. Under the Mosaic Law, though there were various kinds of sacrifices, yet they may be referred to two classes. There were oblations made for sin, in a way of satisfaction, by which guilt was expiated before God; or they were symbols of Divine worship and attestations of devotion and thanksgiving.

A sacrifice of expiation is that which is offered to appease the wrath of God, to satisfy His justice. Such a sacrifice was not sufficient to effect

the restoration of the favour of God, or the obliteration of iniquity, but because it prefigured that true sacrifice which, at length, was accomplished by Christ alone; and so perfect, as to leave no room for any other sacrifice afterwards.

14. Wherefore, I conclude, that it is a most intolerable blasphemy, both against Christ Himself, and against the sacrifice which He completed on our behalf by His death on the cross, for any man to repeat any oblation with a view to procure the pardon of sins, propitiate God, and obtain righteousness. But what is the object of the mass, except it be that by the merit of a new oblation we may be made partakers of the passion of Christ? But not for the whole Church, but rather to everyone who was willing to purchase such a commodity with ready money. Now, Judas sold Jesus for thirty pieces of silver. These men sell Him, in French money, for thirty pieces of copper. Judas sold Him but once; they sell Him as often as they meet with the purchaser.

15. There is a beautiful passage in Plato, in which he treats of the ancient expiations among the heathen, and ridicules the confidence of profligate men, who thought that such guises would conceal their crimes from the view of their gods. And, as if they had made a compromise with their gods, indulged themselves in their vices with greater security. This passage seems to have been written with a view to the missal expiation as it is now practised in the world. Plato afterwards goes on to ridicule the gross stupidity of those who expect, by such expiations, to be delivered from the punishments which they would otherwise have to suffer in hell. And, what is the design of the obits, or anniversary obsequies, and the greater part of the masses, but that those who all their lifetime have been the most cruel tyrants, the most rapacious robbers, as if redeemed with this price, may escape the fire of purgatory?

16. Under the other kind of sacrifices, which we have called *the sacrifice of thanksgiving*, are included all the offices of charity, which when we perform to our brethren, we honour the Lord in His members. Everything that we do in the service of God is dependent on the greater sacrifice. This kind of sacrifice has no tendency to appease the wrath of God. Its sole object is to magnify and exalt the glory of God. This is so necessary to the Church as to be altogether indispensable. Therefore, it will continue to be offered forever, even as Paul enjoins is to “present”

our “bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God,” which is our “reasonable service” (Rom 12:1). So, “to do good and to communicate” are called “sacrifices [with which] God is well pleased” (Heb 13:16). So, all the good works of believers are spiritual sacrifices.

17. Under the law and the prophets, those carnal sacrifices contained a reality which is common to the Christian Church, as well as to the Jews. Thus, David prays, “Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice” (Ps 141:2). Hosea calls thanksgiving “the calves of our lips” (Hos 14:2), which David calls “thanksgiving” offered and “praises” offered (Ps 50:14, 23). In imitation of the Psalmist, the Apostle himself says, “Let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually,” and, by way of explanation, adds, “that is, the fruit of our lips,” confessing or “giving thanks to his name” (Heb 13:15). This kind of sacrifice is indispensable in the Supper of the Lord. From this sacrificial employment, all Christians are called “a royal priesthood” (1 Pet 2:9).

18. In contrast with the spiritual sacrifice stated above, even the blind can see what abomination is their mass, by which Satan has never employed a more powerful engine to assail the kingdom of Christ. This is the Helen, for which the enemies of the truth contend with cruelty and fury; a Helen, indeed, with which they so pollute themselves with spiritual fornication. I need not mention every disgusting corruption, which is universally notorious. From beginning to its end, the mass is full of every species of impiety, blasphemy, idolatry, and sacrilege.

19. I have collected, into a brief summary, almost every thing that I have thought important respecting these two sacraments; that is to say, baptism to be a kind of entrance into the Church, and the Lord’s Supper to be a continual nourishment, with which Christ spiritually feeds His family of believers. There is “one baptism” that is never repeated; but the Supper is frequently distributed, that we may be continually nourished. Beyond these two, there are no other sacraments.

20. While the Jews, besides the ordinary sacraments given, had several others such as the manna, water issuing from the rock, the brazen serpent, they were admonished not to rest in such figures, which were of short duration, but to expect something better. But, our case is very

different, for Christ has been revealed to us, “in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Col 2:3). We must hunger after Christ, and learn from Him alone, till He comes again. But, we see, in the sacraments we observed in the present day, how very far they have degenerated from their original purity. Everywhere there is an excess of pageantries, ceremonies, and gesticulations; but no mention of the Word of God. The ceremonies which have been instituted of God are not to be discerned among such a multitude of others, by which they are overwhelmed. In baptism, how little is seen of that which ought to be the only conspicuous object—I mean baptism itself? And the Lord’s Supper has been completely buried since it has been transformed into the mass; except that it is exhibited once a year, but in a partial and mutilated form.

Chapter XIX

The Five Other Ceremonies, Falsely Called Sacraments, Proved Not to be Sacraments; Their Nature Explained

1. The preceding discussion respecting the sacraments might satisfy persons of sober minds, that they ought not to receive any other sacraments beside those two. But as the opinion of seven sacraments has pervaded the minds of men from its antiquity, I have thought I should enter into a closer and distinct examination of the five ceremonies, which are commonly numbered among the true sacraments of the Lord. For, those who maintain seven sacraments, give them all the same definition—that they are visible forms of invisible grace.

2. But, we must strenuously maintain, what we have already established by irrefragable argument, that the power to institute sacraments belongs to God alone. A sacrament is a seal, by which the testament or promise of God is sealed. Therefore, man cannot institute a sacrament. “The Word of God must precede,” as is excellently remarked by Augustine, “in order to make a sacrament to be a sacrament.” There is a definite distinction between a sacrament and other ceremonies.

3. If they wish to press us with the authority of the ancient Church, I assert that this is a groundless pretence. For the number of seven sacraments can nowhere be found in the ecclesiastical writers, nor is it clear when it was introduced. Augustine mentions to Januarius, that the sacraments were “very few in number . . . such are baptism, consecrated in the name of the Trinity, and the communion of the body and blood of the Lord.” Again, in his treatise “*On the Christian Doctrine*,” Augustine mentions baptism and the Lord’s Supper. Why does he make no mention here of the septenary number? Wherefore, I affirm that these advocates for seven sacraments are neither supported by the Word of God, nor by the consent of the ancient Church. Let us proceed to the particular ceremonies.

Confirmation

4. It was an ancient custom in the Church for children of Christians, after they were come to years of discretion, to be presented to the bishop.

These were placed among the catechumens till, being daily instructed in the mysteries of Christianity, they would make a profession of their faith publicly. This was confirmation. That this exercise might have the greater dignity, the bishop would practise the ceremony of imposition of hands. This custom was mentioned by Leo, the pope, and by Jerome against the Luciferians!

5. Succeeding times have almost obliterated that ancient practice, and introduced I know not what counterfeit confirmation as a sacrament of God. They have pretended that the virtue of confirmation is to give the Holy Spirit for the augmentation of grace; to strengthen for warfare those who, in baptism, had been generated to life. This confirmation is performed by unction and the following forms of words: "I sign thee with the sign of the cross, and confirm thee with the chrism of salvation, in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." All this sounds very beautiful, but where is the Word of God which promises the Holy Spirit in this ceremony? They cannot allege a single iota. How will they assure us that their chrism is the vessel of the Holy Spirit? We see oil, a thick and viscid liquid, and nothing besides. The first law of a minister is to undertake nothing without a command. Let them produce any command for this service, and I will not add another word on the subject.

6. In the imposition of hands, in the so-called sacrament of confirmation, they defend themselves by the example of the Apostles. But, what was the practice of the Apostles? Luke relates, that "when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost" (Acts 8:14–17). It was the Lord's will, that those visible graces of the Holy Spirit, which He then poured out upon His people, should be administered by the Apostles with imposition of hands. But this outpouring of the Holy Spirit, with imposition of hands, has ceased today, though it was given for a season, to establish the Church at its commencement. Why, then, do they boast they have the example of the Apostles, by the imposition of hands, when what the Apostles had done was for a totally different purpose?

7. To follow their argument, this is just as reasonable for anyone to affirm, that the Lord's breathing upon His disciples was a sacrament by which the Holy Spirit was conferred (John 20:22). But, though the Lord did it once, He never directed it to be done by us. In the same manner, the Apostles practised imposition of hands during that period in which the Lord was pleased to dispense the visible graces of the Holy Spirit in compliance with their prayers; not that persons in succeeding times might counterfeit a useless sign. Even if they could prove themselves rightly to imitate the Apostles in the imposition of hands, whence do they derive their oil, which they call the oil of salvation? Who has taught them to attribute to it the property of imparting spiritual strength? I fearlessly pronounce, not from myself, but from the Lord, that those who call oil the oil of salvation, abjure the salvation which is in Christ.

8. Let us examine how many more monsters are fostered by this oil. These dispensers of it say, that the Holy Spirit is given, in baptism for innocence; in confirmation for an augmentation of grace. In baptism, we are generated to life; by confirmation we are armed for warfare. They deny that baptism can be rightly performed without confirmation. But, Paul asks if we are not "buried with him [Christ] by baptism . . . planted together in the likeness of his death," that we may be "also in the likeness of his resurrection" (Rom 6:4–5)? Now, this fellowship with the death and life of Christ, Paul explains to consist in the mortification of the flesh and the vivification of the Spirit, "that our old man is crucified with him" (Rom 6:6), that "we also should walk in newness of life" (Rom 6:4). What is it to be armed for the spiritual warfare, if this is not? Does not the following decrees of the Council of Milevum contradict them also: "Whoever asserts that baptism is only given for the remission of sins, and not for assistance of future grace, let him be accursed."

When Luke, in a passage which we have cited above, speaks of some having been baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus (Acts 8:16; 19:5), who had not received the Holy Ghost, he does not absolutely deny that any gift of the Spirit had been imparted on those persons who had believed in Christ with the heart. He meant the gift of the Spirit, which communicated His manifest powers and visible graces. So the Apostles are said to have received the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost; though Christ had long before declared, "It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father

which speaketh in you” (Matt 10:20; cf. Acts 2:4). The Word of God is, that “as many of you as have been baptised into Christ have put on Christ” (Gal 3:27), with His gifts. Confirmation is a manifest insult against baptism. It is oil polluted with falsehood of the devil.

9. They further assert that all believers, after baptism, ought to receive the Holy Ghost by imposition of hands; so that no one can be altogether a Christian, who is not anointed with episcopal confirmation. Without oil, it is not complete. Such a sentiment condemns all the Apostles, and a number of martyrs who, it is certain, had never received this unction.

10. In the last place, they determine that this sacred unction ought to be held in greater reverence than baptism; because it is dispensed by the hands of the greatest prelates, whereas baptism is administered by the priests. But, if any one inquire of them how such a privilege has been conferred on bishops, what reason will they assign but their own pleasure? They allege that the Apostles alone exercised that right. Are bishops the only apostles, or are they Apostles at all? But Ananias was not an Apostle. Yet, to him Paul was sent, that he might receive his sight, be baptised, and be filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 9:17, 18).

11. How foolish is the second reason, that confirmation excels baptism; because, in confirmation, the forehead is anointed with oil, whereas in baptism the crown of the head; as though baptism were performed with oil, and not with water! By their passing over the water without the least notice, it appears that the only thing important to them, in baptism, is their own oil. On the contrary, we affirm, that in baptism the forehead is also laved with water. All their oil is worthless, whether in baptism or confirmation.

In the third reason, they pretend that a great augmentation of virtues is conferred in confirmation than in baptism. The Apostles, by imposition of hands, dispensed the visible graces of the Spirit. In what respect does their unction appear to be productive of any advantage?

12. Now, when they find themselves stripped of the Word of God, and of every probable argument, they resort to their usual pretext, that it is a very ancient usage. Though this allegation be true, it would not serve their cause. A sacrament is not from man, but from God alone. Moreover,

the so-called sacraments, advanced by our adversaries, were never acknowledged to be sacraments by the ancients. The fathers speak of imposition of hands; but do they call it a sacrament? Augustine speaks of imposition of hands as prayer over a man.

13. I sincerely wish that we retained the custom, which was practised among the ancients before this abortive image of a sacrament made its appearance; for it was only a catechetical exercise, in which children used to deliver an account of their faith before the Church. Now, it would be best, if a formulary were written for this purpose, stating all the articles of our religion, in which the universal Church of believers ought to agree, without any controversy. A boy of ten might present himself to make a confession of his faith. If this discipline were observed in the present day, it would certainly sharpen the inactivity of some parents.

Penance

14. In the next place, they add penance as another sacrament. As practised in the ancient Church, persons who had completed the satisfaction enjoined upon them, were reconciled to the Church by solemn imposition of hands. This was a sign of absolution. To increase the importance of this act, it was ordained that it should be done by a bishop. But, Cyprian states that it was not the bishop alone who laid hands on the penitent, but that all the clergy were united in this act. In the process of time, the custom was corrupted, so that they used this ceremony in private absolutions, without any public expression of penitence. I consider the ancient custom, mentioned by Cyprian, to have been holy and useful to the Church. We see, however, the imposition of hands on repentance is a ceremony of human, not of Divine, institution. It ought to hold a station far below the sacraments.

15. Let those who bear in mind the definition of a sacrament, which we have given, apply it to the examination of this pretended sacrament. They will find, it is not an external ceremony instituted of God for the confirmation of our faith. Augustine, whom they regard with greatest reverence, says, “Visible sacraments are instituted for carnal persons, that by the steps of the sacraments they may be led from those things which are visible to the eye, to those which are intelligible to the mind.” Again, says Augustine, “It is therefore called a sacrament, because one thing is

seen, another is understood in it. That which is seen has corporeal form; that which is understood has spiritual fruit.” These things are not applicable to the sacrament of penance.

16. Now, if any sacrament is to be sought here, would it not be far more plausible to say that the sacrament consists in the absolution of the priest, rather in penance? For, it would be easy to say, that this is a ceremony appointed for the confirmation of our faith in the remission of sins, and has what they call the promise of the keys: “Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven” (Matt 18:18). But, some would have objected, that many, who are absolved by the priests, derive no such benefits from their absolution; whereas, upon their principle, the sacraments of the new law actually accomplish that which they represent. To this it might be replied, that, as in the eucharist, there is a twofold eating—sacramental, which is equally common to the good and the wicked; and spiritual, which is peculiar to the good—why might they not also imagine the reception of the twofold absolution? Here, for the sake of argument, I only mean to show that this difficulty is no objection to their calling sacerdotal absolution a sacrament.

17. In whatever part they place their sacrament, I deny it ought to be considered a sacrament at all. Firstly, because it is not accompanied by any special promise of God, which is the only foundation of a sacrament. Secondly, all the ceremony exhibited here is the invention of men. This counterfeit sacrament, they have adorned with a suitable title, calling it “a second plank after shipwreck”; for that, if anyone by sin has soiled the garment of innocence received in baptism, he may purify it by penance, as if baptism were effaced by sin. We shall speak with the greater propriety, if we call baptism the sacrament of penitence. Augustine, in the treatise of “*Faith Addressed to Peter*,” called baptism “the sacrament of faith and repentance.” Nothing can be required more explicit than what is recited by the evangelists, that John did preached “the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins” (Luke 3:3; cf. Matt 3:1–6).

Extreme Unction

18. The third counterfeit sacrament is extreme unction; which is never performed but by a priest, and that, in the last moments of life, with

oil consecrated by a bishop, and the following words, “By this holy unction, and by his most tender mercy, may God pardon thee whatever sin thou hast committed by sight, by hearing, by smell, by taste, and by touch.” They pretend that it has two virtues—remission of sins, and relief from bodily disease, or otherwise the salvation of the soul. They say that the institution of it is by James (Jas 5:14, 15). This unction is of the same kind as we have already proved their imposition of hands to be. It is related by Mark, that the Apostles raised the dead, “cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them” (Mark 6:13). It is common in the Scriptures for the Holy Spirit and His gifts to be signified by oil. But, that grace of healing has disappeared, which the Lord was pleased to exhibit for a time.

19. What greater reason have they to make a sacrament of this unction than all the other signs or symbols which are mentioned in the Scriptures? Why do they not appoint some pool of Siloam, in which the sick may bathe themselves at certain seasons (cf. John 9:7)? Why is not clay, composed of spittle and dust, converted into a sacrament? Now, they boast they are endued with the gift of healing. The Lord is undoubtedly present with His people and, whenever necessary, He heals their diseases as much as He did in ancient times. But, He does not display those visible powers, because that gift was only of temporary duration, and was soon lost, in some measure, by the ingratitude of men.

20. Those who represent the Holy Spirit with a fetid oil, destitute of all efficacy as His power, do a great injury to Him. That the promise which they presumptuously boast of in their unction is not given to us, we have clearly proved, and they themselves declare by experience.

21. Even if they had established that the injunction of James respecting unction is applicable to the present age, these men bedaub, with their unguent, not sick persons, but half-dead corpses, when their souls are at the point of departing from them. James directs, that the sick person be anointed by the elders of the Church. These men admit no anointer but a priest. James intends no unction than the common, nor is any other mentioned in Mark. These men use no oil which has not been consecrated by the bishop; that is, warmed with his breath, enchanted by his muttering, and nine times saluted by him on bended knees: three times, Hail, holy oil; three times, Hail, holy chrism; three times, Hail, holy balm.

In contradistinction, their own history relates of Pope Innocent, who presided over the Church of Rome in the time of Augustine, decreed that not only elders, but also all Christians, should use oil, in case of illness, to anoint themselves or their friends.

Ecclesiastical Orders

22. The fourth place in their catalogue is occupied by the sacrament of orders; but this is so fertile that it is the parent of seven little sacraments which arise out of it. Now, it is ridiculous for them to affirm seven sacraments, and when they proceed to specify them, do enumerate thirteen. There are seven ecclesiastical orders or degrees, which they dignify with the name of a sacrament. They are beadle, readers, exorcists, acolythists, subdeacons, deacons, priests. They are seven, on account of the sevenfold grace of the Holy Spirit, with which those who are promoted to them ought to be endued. Now, the number itself is consecrated from Isaiah 11:2, 3. Other persons limit not the orders to seven, but extend them to nine, in resemblance, they say, of the Church triumphant. This is the harmony of men, when they discuss Divine subjects without the Word of God.

23. In every one of their orders, they make Christ a colleague with them. First, they say, He executed the office of a beadle, when He drove all the buyers and sellers out of the Temple. He assumed the place of a reader, when He read a passage of Isaiah in the synagogue. He discharged the function of an exorcist, when He applied spittle to the ears and tongue of a man who was deaf and dumb. He declared Himself to be an acolythist in these words, "He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness" (John 8:12). He discharged the duty of a subdeacon, when He girded Himself and washed the feet of His disciples. He sustained the character of a deacon, when He distributed His body and blood in the Supper. He acted the part of a priest, when He offered Himself on the cross, a sacrifice to the Father.

24. Now, while they have created, with great pomp, their readers, beadle, acolythists, to discharge those offices, they, on the other hand, have employed boys and laymen on their behalf. For, who lights the wax tapers, pour wine and water out of the flagon, but a boy, or some mean layman, who gets his livelihood by it? Do not the same persons chant?

Do they not open and shut the doors of the churches? Nobody saw, in their temples, an acolothist or beadle performing his office. What need have they to be consecrated by sacraments, and to receive the Holy Spirit. It is that they may do nothing. Of the ancient acolothists, beadles, readers, we have spoken already, when we discussed the order of the Church. Our present design is only to combat that novel invention of a sevenfold sacrament in ecclesiastical orders—found among those sapient theologians, the Sorbonists and Canonists.

25. Let us now examine the ceremonies which they employ. In the first place, all whom they enrol in their army, they initiate into the rank of the clergy by a common sign. They shave them on the crown of the head, that the crown may denote regal dignity; because ecclesiastics ought to be kings. They assign other reasons: that the top of their head is laid bare, to show that their mind is free to the Lord, and can contemplate the glory of God. Or, the tonsure of the crown signifies the renunciation of temporal things. Ecclesiastics, by shaving of a few hairs, signify that they have relinquished an abundance of temporal possessions, to be at liberty to contemplate the glory of God, and that they have mortified the inordinate propensities of their ears and eyes. But, there is no class of man so rapacious, ignorant, and libidinous.

26. When they say that their clerical tonsure derives its origin from the Nazarites, what is this but declaring that their mysteries have sprang from Judaism? But, when they add that Priscilla, Aquila, and Paul, after having made a vow, shaved their heads to purify themselves, they betray their ignorance. For, this is nowhere said of Priscilla (Acts 18:18). As to Paul, he never shaved his head with a view to any sanctity, but merely to accommodate himself to the weakness of his brethren. When these men desire to imitate the purification of the Nazarites, what is it but raising up a new Judaism, emulating that which was abolished?

27. The true origin of the clerical tonsure is very evident from the testimony of Augustine. In that age, no persons suffered their hair to grow long, but such as were effeminate. It was thought it would be a bad example to permit this custom in the clergy. They were, therefore, commanded to shave their heads.

Beadles received the keys of the Church, as a sign that the custody is committed to them. Readers are presented with the Holy Bible. To

exorcists are given the forms of exorcism, to be used over catechumens and maniacs. Acolothists receive their tapers and flagons. These are the ceremonies which, if we believe them, contain such secret virtues as to be, not only signs and tokens, but even causes, of an invisible grace. And these are numbered among the sacraments.

28. There remain three orders, which they call greater orders: of which subdeacons was transferred to this class after the number of lesser orders began to increase. They denominate these *holy orders*.

We will begin with the order of presbyters, or priests; whose office is to offer the sacrifice of the body and blood of Christ upon the altar, to say prayers, and to pronounce benediction on the gifts of God. At their ordination, they receive a chalice, with the patine and host, as symbols of the power committed to them to offer expiatory sacrifices to God. Their hands are anointed with oil, to show they are invested with power to consecrate. It was impossible for them to have introduced a viler corruption of the order instituted of God, to have thus injured Christ, who alone was consecrated by the Father, a priest after the order of Melchisedec, and without a successor. In Him we are all priests; but it is only to offer God praises and thanksgivings, in short, ourselves and all that belongs to us. It was His province alone, to appease God and expiate our sins. When men usurp that office to themselves, what follows, but that their priesthood is chargeable with sacrilege. In the ordination of true presbyters and ministers of the Church, which may be considered the third among sacraments, since it is taken from Scripture, and declared by Paul a faithful symbol of spiritual grace (1 Tim 4:14), Christ has commanded them rather to dispense His Gospel, and not to offer sacrifices.

29. There is an excellent correspondence between the ceremonies and the thing itself. When our Lord breathed on His disciples (John 20:22), He imparted to them the power of the Holy Spirit by that symbol. But, when these sapient theologians mutter over the priests whom they ordain, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," they are far from producing a similar effect. Their mimicry is a mockery of Christ. I condemn the ceremony, which ought not to be practised, since it was used by Christ as a special sign of a particular miracle.

30. But, from whom have they received the unction? Their answer is, they have received it from the sons of Aaron, from whom also their

order derived its origin. But they do not realise that, in professing themselves successors of the sons of Aaron, they do injury to the priesthood of Christ. But, if they are delighted with the Mosaic ceremonies, why do they not take oxen and lambs, and offer them as sacrifices? While they desire to be imitations of the Levites, they become apostates from Christ, and renounce the office of pastors.

31. This is their consecrated oil, which it is pretended, impresses a character never to be effaced; as though oil could not be cleansed away with dust and salt, or, if it is more adhesive, with soap. They have forgotten an observation, which they often quote from Augustine, “If the word be separated from the water, it will be nothing but water, and that it is the word which makes it a sacrament.” Now, what Word will they show in their unction? If they love to be sprinkled, why are they sprinkled with oil and not with blood, which is the Mosaic practice which they rely upon?

32. Respecting the order of deacons, I have no controversy with them, if the office were restored to its primitive purity. Now, they say that it belongs to deacons to assist the priests, to minister in everything that is done in the sacraments, as in baptism, in chrisms, to pour the wine in the chalice, to place the bread in the patine; to lay the oblations upon the altar, to prepare and cover the table of the Lord, to bear the cross, to read and chant the Gospel and epistles to the people. Is there, in all these, a single word of the true duty of deacons?

Now, let us hear how they are inaugurated. On the deacon who is ordained, the bishop alone lays his hand. On his left shoulder, the bishop places a stole, to teach him he has taken the light yoke of the Lord, to subject to the fear everything that belongs to the left side. He gives him the text of the Gospel, that he may know himself to be a herald of it. What have these things to do with deacons? Let them never again falsely represent those as deacons, whom they merely appoint to act a part in their farcical exhibitions. The very name, which deacons bear, sufficiently declares the nature of their office.

33. In ancient times, subdeacons had the care of the poor. But, under the Romanists, they are to bring the chalice and the patine, the flagon with water, and the towel to the altar, to pour out water for washing the hands of the priests, and similar services. With this office, the ceremony of their initiation perfectly corresponds: they receive from the bishop the patine

and chalice, from the archdeacon the flagon with water, etc. To come to an end, we may draw the same conclusion respecting them as respecting the rest. And of all the ceremonies which they use, not one appears to have been instituted of God. Therefore, there can be no sacrament.

Matrimony

34. The last of their sacraments is matrimony which, in the time of Gregory, was enjoined as a sacrament. It is alleged to be a good and holy ordinance of God; and so agriculture, architecture, shoemaking and many other things are legitimate ordinances of God, and yet they are not sacraments. For, it is required in a sacrament, not only it is a work of God, but that it be an external ceremony appointed of God for the confirmation of a promise. That there is nothing of this kind in matrimony, even children can judge.

35. They obtrude on us the language of Paul, in which, they say, he expressly called matrimony a sacrament. The word translated “sacrament,” in the Vulgate, is “mystery” in the context of Ephesians 5:28–32, where Paul concludes with an exclamation, “This is a great mystery.” That no one be deceived by an ambiguity of language, he expressly states, that he intends not the conjugal union of man and woman, but the spiritual marriage of Christ and His Church: “I speak concerning Christ and the church” (Eph 5:32).

36. They have been deceived by the word *sacrament* in the Vulgate version. But, after having dignified matrimony with the title of a sacrament, they stigmatise it with the character of impurity, pollution and carnal defilement! What an absurdity to exclude priests from the sacrament!

37. Matrimony, being a spiritual thing, and not to be meddled with before lay judges, they have made laws for the confirmation of their tyranny; and some of them manifestly impious towards God, others most unjust towards men. For example, that it is unlawful for a man, who has repudiated his wife for adultery, to marry another; that spiritual relatives be not united in marriage; that no marriages be celebrated from Septuagesima, or the third Sunday before Lent, to the octave of Easter, or eight days after that festival; etc. I think I have gained some advantage of stripping these asses, in some manner, of their lion’s skin.

Chapter XX

On Civil Government

1. Having stated that man is the subject of two kinds of government, and having discussed that which relates to eternal life, we are, in this chapter, to say something of the other kind, which relates to civil government. The reason for this discussion is, that there are barbarous men who endeavour to subvert this ordinance established by God; and there are flatterers of princes, extolling their power beyond all just limits, who oppose the authority of God Himself. Unless both these errors be resisted, the purity of the faith will be destroyed.

Some men, when they hear that the Gospel promises a liberty that acknowledges no king, but submits to Christ alone, think they can enjoy no advantage of their liberty, while they see any power exalted above them. These imagine that the whole world should do away with tribunals, laws, and magistrates! But, he who can distinguish between body and soul, between the present life and the future eternal one, will find no difficulty in understanding, that the spiritual kingdom of Christ and civil government belong to two different spheres.

2. Though civil government is distinct from the reign of Christ, they are not at variance with each other. As long as we live, this civil government is designed to support the eternal worship of God, to preserve the pure doctrine of religion, to defend the constitution of the Church, and to establish general peace.

3. To entertain a thought of its extermination is inhuman barbarism; for it is as necessary to mankind as bread and water. The object of civil government are also, that idolatry, sacrileges against the name of God, blasphemies against the truth, may not openly appear and be disseminated among the people; that the public tranquillity may not be disturbed; that everybody may enjoy his property without molestation; etc.; in short, that there may be a public form of religion among Christians, and that humanity may be maintained among men.

There are three branches in the system of civil administration: the magistrate, the law, the people.

4. The Lord has not only testified of the approbation of the function of magistrates, but has commended it to us, by dignifying it with the most honourable titles, even calling them “gods” (Ps 82:1, 6). For magistrates are God’s representatives (John 10:35). The authority possessed by kings and governors is of the providence and holy ordinance of God. In writing to the Corinthians about “governments” (1 Cor 12:28), there is no doubt that Paul recommends to us every kind of just authority. For, he says again, “There is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God” (Rom 13:1). This is corroborated by the examples of holy men, of whom some have been kings, as David, Josiah, and Hezekiah.

5. Those who would introduce anarchy, argue, that though kings and judges ruled in ancient times over a rude people, that servile kind of government is now quite incompatible with the perfection which accompanies the Gospel of Christ. This is contrary to Paul’s admonishing Timothy that, in the public congregation, “supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for . . . kings, and for all that are in authority” (1 Tim 2:1, 2). And the reason is “that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty” (1 Tim 2:2).

6. This consideration ought to occupy the magistrates themselves, since it is calculated to furnish them with a powerful stimulus, by which they may be excited to their duty. If they remember they are the vicegerents of God, it behoves them to watch with all care, and diligence, that, in their administration, they may exhibit to men an image of the goodness and justice of God. They are employed in a most sacred function, inasmuch as they execute a Divine commission.

7. Those who reject magistrates, in fact, reject God, “that I [God] should not reign over them” (1 Sam 8:7). Such was the case with Israel, when they refused the government of Samuel. Though they are various forms of magistracy, we should receive them all as ordinances of God, for Paul comprehends them all together, when he says, “there is no power but of God” (Rom 13:1).

8. For private men, who have no authority to deliberate on the regulation of public affairs, it would be vain for them to dispute which would be the best form of government in the place where they live.

The forms of civil government are considered to be of three kinds: (a) Monarchy, which is the dominion of one person, whether called king, or duke. (b) Aristocracy, or the dominion of the principal persons of a nation. (c) Democracy, or popular government, in which its power resides in the people. Transition is easy from monarchy to despotism. It is not much more difficult from aristocracy to oligarchy, or the faction of a few. But, it is most easy of all from democracy to sedition. The vice of men renders it safer for the government to be in the hands of many; that they may afford each other mutual assistance; that, if one arrogates to himself more than is right, the many may act as censors to restrain his ambition. The Lord confirmed it, when He established a government of this kind among the people of Israel, till He exhibited in David a type of Christ.

If we take a comprehensive survey of the whole world, we shall find it a wise arrangement of Divine Providence, that various countries are governed by various forms of civil polity. If it be His pleasure to appoint kings over kingdoms, and senators over free cities, it is our duty to be obedient to any governor whom God has exhibited over the place in which we reside.

9. Let us learn a lesson from heathen writers. Not one of them has treated of the office of magistrates, and civil government, without beginning with religion and Divine worship. Therefore, as religion holds the first place among philosophers, and as this has been regarded by the universal consent of all nations, Christian princes and magistrates ought to be ashamed of their indolence, if they do not make it the object of their most serious case. So, the commendations given in Scripture to the good kings are for having restored the worship of God, when it had been corrupted or abolished. On the contrary, sacred history represents it as one of the evils of anarchy, that when “there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes” (Judg 21:25).

With respect to the second table, Jeremiah admonishes kings: “Execute ye judgment and righteousness, and deliver the spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor: and do no wrong, do no violence to the stranger, the fatherless, nor the widow, neither shed innocent blood” (Jer 22:3). Of these virtues, David declares he will be an example: “I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: . . . I will not know a wicked person. . . he that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me” (Ps 101:3–6).

Experience fully verifies the observation of Solon: “That all states are supported by reward and punishment. And that when these two things are removed, all the discipline of human societies is broken and destroyed.”

10. But, here arises a difficult question. If the law of God forbids to kill (Exod 20:13), how can it be compatible with piety for magistrates to shed blood? But, if we understand, that in the infliction of punishments, the magistrate does not act from himself, but merely executes the judgments of God, we shall not be embarrassed with his scruple. In order that homicide may not go unpunished, the Legislator Himself puts the sword into the hands of His ministers. Paul says of the magistrate, that “he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil” (Rom 13:4).

11. Now, as it is sometimes necessary for kings and nations to take up arms for the infliction of such public vengeance, the same reason will lead us to infer the lawfulness of wars, which are undertaken for this end. Princes are armed, not only to restrain the crimes of private individuals by judicial punishments, but also to defend territories committed to their charge by going to war against any hostile aggression. The Holy Spirit, in many passages of Scripture, declares such wars to be lawful.

12. If it is objected that in the New Testament contains no precept or example, which proves war to be lawful to Christians, I answer, that the reason of waging war, which existed in ancient times, is equally valid in the present age; and that, on the contrary, there is no cause to prevent princes from defending their subjects. But here all magistrates ought to be very cautious, that they follow not, in any respect, the impulse of their passions. They ought, as Augustine says, “to commiserate our common nature even in him whom they punish for his crime.” If there is the saying of that heathen writer, that the object of war is for the restoration of peace, certainly we ought to make every other attempt, before we have recourse to the decision of arms.

13. In the last place, tributes and taxes are the legitimate revenues of princes; which they ought to employ in sustaining public expenses of their office, but which they may likewise use for the support of their domestic splendour, which is closely connected with the dignity of government. On the other hand, princes themselves ought to remember, that their finances

are not so much private incomes, and therefore cannot be lavished without manifest injustice.

14. From the magistracy, we proceed to the laws, which, according to a saying Cicero has borrowed from Plato, are the “souls of states.” The law is a silent magistrate, and the magistrate a speaking law. Without law, a magistrate cannot subsist. Without magistrate, laws are of no force.

There are some who say that a state is not well constituted, which neglects the polity of Moses, and is governed by the common laws of nations. This is false and foolish. For the law of Moses consists of moral, ceremonial, and judicial laws; and these different kinds of laws are to be distinctly examined, that we may ascertain what belongs to us, and what does not. Even the ancients, who made this distinction, realised there were two kinds of precepts, one which might be abrogated without affecting the morality of actions.

15. As to the moral law, which comprises our duty of worship towards God, and the other, love for our fellowmen—this law, I say, is the eternal rule of righteousness, prescribed to men of all ages and nations. As to the ceremonial law, it was the pupilage of the Jews, whereby the people, during a state resembling childhood, were confined till the “fullness of the time” should come (Gal 3:24; 4:4). The judicial law taught them equity and justice. As the ceremonies might be abrogated without any injury of piety, so the precepts and duties of love remain of perpetual obligation, though these judicial ordinances are also abolished. If this is true, all nations are at liberty to enact such laws as they shall find to be expedient; provided they be framed according to the perpetual rule of love. Though they vary in form, they have the same end.

16. In all laws, we must consider two things—the constitution of the law and its equity. The constitution of law is founded on its equity. Equity, being natural, is the same to all mankind. Consequently, all laws ought to have the same equity for their end. Particular enactments, being connected with circumstances, may be different in different cases without any impropriety, provided they are all equally directed to the same object of equity. The law of God, which we call moral law, is no other than a declaration of natural law, and of that conscience which has been graven by God on the minds of men, the whole rule of this equity. This equity,

therefore, must be the scope, and rule, and end, of all laws. Whatever laws shall be framed according to that rule, there is no reason why we should censure them, however they may differ from the Jewish law or from each other.

17. It now remains for us to examine what advantage Christians derive from laws, judgment, and magistrates. Many persons suppose the office of magistracy to be of no use among Christians, for they cannot apply for their assistance, because they are forbidden to have recourse to litigation.

On the contrary, Paul testifies that the magistrate is “the minister of God to thee for good” (Rom 13:4). From this, we understand he is Divinely appointed, that we may be defended by his power against the malice of wicked men. Thus we may appeal to him, and apply for his aid.

18. Judicial processes are lawful to them who use them rightly. While the plaintiff, being injured, has recourse to the protection of the magistrate, he should make a just and equitable claim, but without any ardour for contention, but rather be prepared to waive his right, than to cherish enmity against his adversary. The defendant, while defending his cause by the best arguments, should do so without bitterness, but with the desire of maintaining his right. It ought to be an established maxim with all Christians, that however just a cause may be, no lawsuit can be carried on in a proper manner by any man, who does not feel as much benevolence towards his adversary, as if the dispute had already been terminated by an amicable adjustment.

19. Those who positively condemn all controversies at law, reject a holy ordinance of God. When Paul was maliciously calumniated by his accusers, he asserted his right to the privileges of a Roman citizen; and when he found it necessary, appealed from an unjust governor to the tribunal of Caesar. In a civil cause, no man proceeds in the right way, who does not commit his cause to the judge as to a public guardian. It may probably be objected, that we should wait only on the Lord, who promises He will revenge the oppressed, and therefore, those who seek the magistrate anticipate the vengeance of the celestial protector. This is far from the truth, because the vengeance of the magistrate is to be considered, not the vengeance of man, but of God.

20. Nor do we oppose the injunction of Christ, “Resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. . . .” (Matt 5:39, 40). In this passage, Christ is teaching His servants not to take revenge, but rather to suffer the repetition of an injury against themselves. Nor do we dissuade them from this patience. Christians are taught to “overcome evil with good” (Rom 12:21). With this disposition, we will not demand “an eye for an eye” (Matt 5:38), as the Pharisees taught their disciples to desire revenge. However, the equanimity in a Christian does not hinder him to avail himself of the assistance of the magistrate, for the preservation of his property; or, from zeal for the public good, to bring a pestilent offender to justice.

21. The objection which is frequently alleged, that lawsuits are universally condemned by Paul, has no foundation in truth (1 Cor 6:1–8). It may be easily understood, from his words, that in the Church of the Corinthians, there was an immoderate rage for litigation, so that they exposed the Gospel of Christ, and all the religion they professed, to the reproaches of the impious. The next thing was, they had such altercations among them, brethren with brethren. It was against that rage for litigation, that he inveighed, and not absolutely against all controversies.

22. The first duty of subjects towards their magistrates is to entertain the most honourable sentiments of their function, as God’s ministers, even as Peter commands us, to “honour the king” (1 Pet 2:17). It is also a remarkable commendation of magistrates given by Paul, when he says, we “must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake” (Rom 13:5). Thus, obedience which is rendered to princes and magistrates is rendered to God.

23. Hence, follows another duty: subjects, in submitting to their edicts, should pay taxes, and bear burdens which relate to the common defence. “Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. . . . Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God” (Rom 13:1, 2). Paul, moreover, teaches subjects to pray to God for the safety and prosperity of those under whose government they live. If there be anything in the public administration which requires to be corrected, let them not raise any tumults, but let them refer to the cognisance of the magistrate.

24. A good magistrate is the father of his country, and, as the poet calls him, the pastor of his people, the guardian of peace, the protector of

justice, the avenger of innocence. Bad magistrates, as it has happened in almost all ages, who give themselves up to their pleasures, and even plunder the public of wealth, violating virgins and matrons, and murdering infants, are naturally hated by the people.

25. But, if we direct our attention to the Word of God, it will carry us much further—to submit not only to princes who discharge their duty, but also to those who are otherwise; since these have the power of government from Him. We perceive, that those who rule in a tyrannical manner are raised up by God to punish the iniquity of the people. In their capacities, as those who hold the sovereign power by Divine authority, they ought to be regarded by their subjects, with the same reverence which they would show to the best of kings.

26. Daniel says, “he [God] changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings” (Dan 2:21). Again: “that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will” (Dan 4:17). Now, it is known, the character of Nebuchadnezzar, who conquered Jerusalem, was an invader and depopulator of the territories of others. Yet, by the mouth of Ezekiel, the Lord declares that He had given him the land of Egypt, as a reward for the service which he had in devastating Tyre (Ezek 29:18–20). When we hear that Nebuchadnezzar was placed on the throne by God, let us call to mind the celestial edicts which command us to fear and honour the king; and we shall not hesitate to regard the most iniquitous tyrant with the honour due to the station in which the Lord deigned to place him.

27. But, the most remarkable passage of all is in the prophecy of Jeremiah, which clearly decides the whole question: “I have made the earth, the man and the beast that are upon the ground, by my great power and by my outstretched arm, . . . And now have I given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant; . . . And all nations shall serve him, and his son, and his son’s son, until the very time of his land come: . . . And it shall come to pass, that the nation and kingdom which will not serve the same Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, . . . that nation will I punish, saith the LORD, with the sword, and with the famine, and with the pestilence, . . . serve him [the king of Babylon] and . . . and live” (Jer 27:5–9, 12).

28. In vain will anyone object that this was a special command given to the Israelites. To whomsoever, therefore, a kingdom shall evidently be given, we have no room to doubt that subjection is due to him. And, as soon as He exalts any person to royal dignity, He gives us a declaration of His pleasure that he shall reign. The prophet Jeremiah likewise records another command of the Lord to his people: “Seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the LORD for it: for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace” (Jer 29:7).

29. Finally, we owe these sentiments of affection to all our rulers, whatever their characters may be. Wherefore, if we are inhumanely harassed by a carnal prince, let us first call to mind our transgressions against God, which He undoubtedly chastises by these scourges. Let us, in the next place, consider that it is not our province to remedy these evils, and that nothing remains for us, but to implore the aid of the Lord, in whose hands are the hearts of kings and the revolutions of kingdoms.

30. And, here is displayed His wonderful goodness, power, and providence; for sometimes He raises up some of His servants to public avengers, and arms them with His commission to punish unrighteous domination, and to deliver from their distressing calamities a people who have been unjustly oppressed. Sometimes, He accomplishes this end by the fury of men who meditate something altogether different. Thus, He liberated the Israelites from the tyranny of Pharaoh by Moses; from the oppression of Chusan by Othniel; and from other yokes by other kings and judges. Thus, He subdued the pride of Tyre by the Egyptians; the insolence of the Egyptians by the Assyrians; etc. These were all the executioners of His vengeance, but not all in the same manner. The former, being armed with authority from Heaven, they punished an inferior power by a superior one, as it is lawful for kings to punish their inferior officers. The latter, though they were guided by the hand of God, performed His work without being conscious of it, nevertheless, contemplated in their hearts nothing but evil.

31. But whatever opinion be found of the acts of men, yet the Lord equally executed His work by them, when He broke the sanguinary sceptres of insolent kings, and overturned tyrannical governments. But, insofar as we are concerned, let us not despise or violate the authority of magistrates.

32. But, in the obedience, which we have shown to be due to governors, it is always necessary to make one exception—that it does not seduce us from obedience to Him, who is above all. The Lord, therefore, is the King of kings. In its next place, we are subject to those men who preside over us; but no otherwise than in Him. If they command anything against Him, it ought not to have the least attention. On this principle, Daniel denied that he had committed any crime against the king in disobeying his impious decree (Dan 6:22). On the other hand, the Israelites were condemned for having been too submissive to the impious edict of their king, the golden calves that Jeroboam had made (Hos 5:11; 1 Kgs 12:28–30). By the word of Peter, “We ought to obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29). Let us console ourselves with this thought, that we truly perform the obedience which God requires of us, when we suffer anything, rather than deviate from piety. And, that our heart may not fail us, Paul stimulates us with another consideration—that Christ has redeemed us at the immense price which our redemption cost Him, that we may not be submissive to the corrupt desires of men, much less be slaves to their impiety (1 Cor 7:23).

END OF THE INSTITUTES
GOD BE PRAISED

GLOSSARY

Glossary

A

abasement state of humiliation.

abbot the head of an abbey.

abettor one who incites by encouragement or aid (in a bad sense).

abhorrence extreme hatred.

abjure to repudiate; to reject.

ablution ceremonial washing.

abomination extreme aversion; anything disgusting or detestable.

absolution remission of sins, declared officially by a priest, or by the use of a formula.

abstinence a refraining, especially from some indulgence.

abstractedly separately.

absurdity the quality of being obviously unreasonable or false.

acolythist an inferior church officer; an attendant of assistant (*cf.*, *acolyte*).

acolyte an inferior follower, next below subdeacon.

acquittal a judicial discharge from an accusation.

acuteness keenness; shrewdness.

adduce to bring forward in discussion.

adhesive apt to adhere or attach.

adjudge to decide; to award.

adumbration a foreshadow.

adventitious accidental.

advert to turn the mind to.

affectation pretence.

affinity agreement.

aggrandisement act of making greater in power, rank, or honour.

aggravation a making worse; an exaggeration.

agitate to stir violently; to discuss, or keep up the discussion of a question.

alacrity cheerful readiness.

aliment provision for maintenance; food.

allege to assert with a view to subsequent proof, hence without proof.

allegorise to narrate symbolically.

allure to entice, seduce or attract.

alms relief given out of pity to the poor.

altercation contention; controversy.

amanuensis one who writes to dictation; a copyist.

ambiguity uncertainty of meaning.

amicable friendly.

Anabaptist one who holds that baptism ought to be administered only to adults (by immersion); and, therefore, that those baptised in infancy must be baptised again.

anarchy the want of government in a state.

anathema solemn ecclesiastical curse or denunciation involving excommunication.

animate to give life to.

annihilate to put out of existence.

anomaly deviation from rule.

antecedent going before in time; prior.

antechamber room leading to the chief apartment.

antediluvian existing before Noah's Flood.

antiquity great age; ancient times, especially the times of the ancient Greeks and Romans.

antitype that which corresponds to the type; that which is prefigured by the type, as Christ by the paschal lamb.

apostatise to abandon one's religion; to revolt from ecclesiastical obedience, from a religious profession.

appellation that by which anything is called.

appendage something appended.

appendix something added; a supplement.

opposite apt; suitable.

apprehension a laying hold of by the intellect.

apprise to inform.

approbation approval; confirmation.

appropriate to take to one's self as one's own.

apt liable; ready for or prone to anything.

ardour enthusiasm; eagerness.

aristocracy government by the men of best birth or condition.

arrogance undue assumption of importance.

arrogate to claim proudly or unduly.

artifice crafty trick.

aspersion slander; a shower or spray.

assertion affirmation; the act of claiming one's rights.

assiduous constant or unwearied in application.

assumption the thing supposed, a proposition.

atrocious extremely cruel or wicked; very grievous.

attestation testimony.

attribute to ascribe, assign, or consider as belonging.

audacity boldness.

augment to increase; to make larger.

auricular pertaining to the ear.

austere harsh; severe in self-discipline.

austerity severe simplicity of style, dress, or habits.

avarice eager desire for wealth.

avenge to vindicate.

avidity greed.

avowal a positive declaration; a frank confession.

axiom a self-evident truth; a universally received principle.

B

bailiff an agent.

banditti a body of bandits or outlaws.

barbarous uncivilised; rude; savage.

beadle a petty officer of a church or parish.

bedaub to daub over or smear.

benefice any kind of church promotion, especially with the cure of souls.

beneficiary a legal term to denote a person who enjoys, or has the prospect of enjoying, any interest or estate held in trust by others.

benignity goodness of disposition; kindness.

bias a leaning to one side; prejudice.

blandishments winning expressions or actions.

bolt to rush away.

breach a breaking of the law.

broach to open up; to utter.

brothel a house of ill-fame.

buffet to contend against.

bull an edict of the pope, which has his seal fixed.

C

cabal small party united for some secret design.

calumny false accusation; slander.

canon the books of Scripture accepted as the standard or rule of faith by the Christian Church.

- (*RC context*) a clerical dignitary belonging especially to a cathedral, enjoying special emoluments, and obliged to reside there part of the year.
- canonist** one thoroughly skilled in the canon law.
- caprice** change of opinion without reason.
- cardinal** one of the seventy princes of the church constituting the sacred college at Rome, to whom pertains the right of electing a new pope.
- caricature** a likeness of anything, so distorted as to appear ridiculous.
- catalogue** a list of names, books, etc.
- catechumen** one who is being taught the rudiments of Christianity.
- cavil** to use false arguments; to make empty, trifling objections.
- celibacy** an unmarried state.
- ensorious** fault-finding.
- censure** an unfavourable judgment; reproof; criticism.
- chalice** a communion bowl.
- chancery** the highest court of justice.
- chicanery** trickery, especially in legal proceedings.
- chrism** consecrated or holy oil.
- circumference** the line surrounding anything; distance round.
- civility** politeness.
- clamour** uproar; any loud noise.
- cloister** a monastery; an enclosed place.
- coalesce** to grow together or unite in one body.
- cognizance** knowledge; observation.
- cohabitation** dwelling together.
- colleague** one associated with others in some employment.
- commingle** to mingle or mix with.
- commiserate** to feel or express compassion for.
- compendious** short; concise.
- compendium** an abridgment.
- compunction** regret; remorse.
- concede** to cede or give up; to surrender; to admit.
- conception** the formation in the mind of an idea; the act of conceiving.
- concomitant** going along with.
- concord** state of being of the same heart or mind; harmony; agreement.
- concupiscence** sexual appetite; lust; violent desire.
- concupiscible** of a violent desire, sexual appetite; lustful.
- conferment** a thing bestowed.
- conform** to make like or of the same form with; to adapt.
- conjecture** an opinion without proof.
- conjugal** pertaining to marriage.
- conjugate** to give the various inflections or parts of a verb.
- connive** to take no notice.
- consistent** agreeing together; uniform in thought or action.
- consonant** consistent.
- conspiracy** a banding together for an evil purpose; a plot.
- consternation** dismay; terror which throws into confusion.
- consummate** complete; supreme.
- contagion** transmission of a disease by direct contact with an infected person or object.
- contaminate** to defile by touching or mixing with; to pollute; to corrupt.
- contemptible** worthless; despicable.

contemptuous scornful.
contenance self-restraint or abstinence, especially sexual.
contingence a chance happening.
contradistinction distinction by contrast.
contrariety inconsistency; opposition.
contrition deep sorrow from sin.
contrive to plan; to bring about.
controvert to argue against.
contumacy obstinate opposition or resistance.
conventicle secret, illegal or forbidden religious meeting.
convoke to assemble.
convulse to agitate violently.
copiously overflowing.
corollary a result or consequence.
corporeal having a body or substance.
countenance to approve.
courtier one who frequents courts or palaces.
creed a summary of articles of religious belief.
crimination accusation.
culpable faulty; criminal.
cupidity covetousness.
cursorily running over quickly.

D

dainty that which is pleasant to the palate or delicate.
debauchery habitual lewdness.
debility weakness or slackness.
decorum that which is becoming in outward appearance.
deduce to infer a truth or opinion from what precedes or from premises.
defection failure; a falling away from duty.

defective imperfect; faulty.
deference submission.
defiance act of defying; contempt of opposition.
deficient wanting.
deform to alter or injure the form of.
degrade to deprive of office or dignity; to lower in character, or value, or position; to disgrace.
dejected cast down; dispirited.
delicacy anything delicate or dainty.
denominate to give a name to.
denounce to inform against or accuse publicly.
deplorable lamentable; sad.
depopulator one who deprive of a population, who destroys.
deportment behaviour.
deprecate to try to ward off by prayer; to argue or protest against.
depression a lowering; abasement.
derision mockery.
derogate to lessen by taking away.
despoil to strip; to rob.
despondent wanting in hope.
despotism absolute power.
detract to take away.
deviate to go from the way; to err.
diabolical devilish.
diametrically exactly.
diffidence modesty; want of confidence.
diffuse to send out in all directions.
diminution a lessening; a degradation.
diocese extent of a bishop's jurisdiction.
disapprobation disapproval.
disciplinary of the nature of discipline.

discourse to reason.
discrepancy disagreement; variance of facts or sentiments.
discriminate to note the difference; to distinguish.
disdain to think unworthy; to reject as unsuitable.
dispensation the act of dealing out; various methods or stages of God's dealing with His creatures.
dissension disagreement in opinion.
dissipation dispersion; scattered attention.
dissolute loose in morals.
diversity difference; variation.
divest to reveal.
docility readiness to learn.
dominion lordship; sovereignty.
dregs the vilest part of anything.

E

earnest money given in token of a bargain made.
economy a system of rules or ceremonies; regular operations, as of nature.
edict something proclaimed by authority; an order issued by a king or law-giver.
edifice a large building.
educe to draw out.
efface to rub out.
effeminate womanish.
efficacy virtue; energy.
effrontery shamelessness.
elucidate to throw light upon.
elude to escape by stratagem.
emanation flowing out.
embezzle to appropriate fraudulently what has been entrusted.

emblem a type or symbol.
emblematical symbolical; representing.
emulate to strive to equal or excel; to imitate.
encomium high commendation.
encompass to surround or enclose.
Encratite one of a heretical sect in the early church, who abstained from marriage, and from flesh and wine.
encroach to seize on the rights of others; to intrude.
endue to put on.
enervate deprive of strength or energy.
engraft to fix deeply; to introduce something.
engross to occupy wholly; to absorb.
enhance to add to, increase.
enjoin to lay upon, as an order; to prohibit by injunction.
ensign a sign distinguishing a nation or a regiment.
enumerate to count the number of.
ephod a kind of linen surplice worn by the Jewish priest.
episcopate the office of a bishop.
epithet a descriptive term.
equanimity equality or evenness of mind or temper.
equity the spirit of justice which enables us to interpret laws rightly; fairness.
eradicate to pull up by the roots; to destroy.
err to sin; to wander from the right way.
estimable that can be estimated or valued; worthy of esteem.
eucharistic of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.
eulogium praise; a speech or writing in praise.
evanescent fleeting; vanishing.

evince to show clearly.
exemplar a pattern, model.
excruciate to torture.
exculpate to absolve; to clear from the charge of a crime.
execrable of low quality; detestable.
execrate to denounce evil against.
exonerate to acquit; to free from the burden of blame or obligation.
exorcism act of expelling evil spirits by certain ceremonies.
exorcist the third of minor orders (*in Roman Catholic context*).
expedient suitable; advisable.
explication an explanation.
explicit not implied merely, but distinctly stated; clear.
expostulate to reason earnestly with a person on some impropriety of his conduct.
expunge to wipe out.
exquisite extremely beautiful; of superior quality.
extenuate to lessen.
extol to magnify.
extortion illegal or oppressive exaction.
extraneous external; not essential.
extricate to set free.
exuberant overflowing.

F

fable any tale in literary form, not necessarily probable in its incidents, intended to instruct or amuse.
fabrication a story; a falsehood.
faction a company of persons associated or acting together, mostly used in a bad sense.
fallacy deceptive appearance.
fallow left unsowed for a time.

farcical ridiculous.
fastidiousness a superior taste.
fatigue weariness from labour of body and mind.
felicity happiness; blessing.
fetid stinking; having a strong offensive odour.
fictitious imaginary; not real.
fideliy faithful performance of duty; honesty.
figment fabrication or invention.
flagitious grossly wicked.
flagon a vessel with a narrow neck for holding liquids.
flatter to please with false hopes or undue praise.
fluctuate to cause to move hither and thither.
formulary a book of precedents.
fortitude mental power of endurance; firmness in meeting danger; strength, power of resistance or attack.
frivolous trifling; silly.
frucify to bear fruit.
frugality economy in use of means.
fruition fulfilment.

G

garrulous talkative.
genii from the word *genius*; a good or evil spirit, supposed to preside over each person, place and thing, and especially to preside over a man's destiny from his birth.
gesticulation act of making gestures in speaking.
gloss brightness or lustre.
Godhead state of being God; Divine nature.
gratuitous done or given for nothing.
gross shameful; whole; stupid; sensual.
gubernatorial of government or rule.

H

habituate to cause to acquire a habit; to accustom.

hallow to make holy; to reverence.

heinous wicked in a high degree.

heresiarch a leader in heresy.

heterogeneous composed of different kinds or parts.

hierarchy the body of the clergy; rule in sacred matter.

hoarse harsh.

homicide one who kills another.

homily a plain expository sermon.

hood to cover with a hood; to blind.

host a thin circular wafer of unleavened bread that is consecrated (*in RC context*).

hyperbolic of obvious exaggeration.

hypotaxis substance; essence.

I

idler one who is not occupied.

ignominy public disgrace.

illiterate not learned; uninstructed.

illusion a mocking; false conception; delusion.

illustrious distinguished; morally bright.

imbecility quality of mentally feeble; weakness of mind.

immaculate pure; spotless.

immolate to offer in sacrifice.

impede to hinder or obstruct.

impediment obstacle.

impel to urge forward; to excite to action; to instigate.

impertinent not pertaining to the matter at hand.

impetration act of obtaining by petition.

impetuosity acting with headlong violence.

impious wanting in veneration for God.

implicit implied; relying entirely, unquestioning.

imposition a laying on.

imposture a fraud.

imprecation a prayer that a curse may fall on someone.

impropriety an unsuitable act or expression.

imprudent bold; wanting shame or modesty; rude.

imputation act of attributing vicariously; act of reckoning as belonging to or charging.

incantation a formula of words said for purpose of enchantment.

incessant uninterrupted; continual.

incestuous guilty of incest.

incivility impoliteness.

inconsiderate thoughtless; inattentive.

incredulity not believing; scepticism.

inculcate to enforce by frequent repetitions.

incumbent lying on as a duty.

indefatigable that cannot be wearied out.

indissoluble inseparable; binding for ever.

indolent lazy.

indubitable that cannot be doubted.

indulgence a grant of religious liberty.

inebriate to make drunk.

ineffable incapable of expressing in words.

inexorable not to be removed by earnest prayer.

infamous having a reputation of the worst kind; disgraceful.

infatuate to inspire with foolish passion.

infer to deduce, to derive, as a consequence; to prove or imply.

inflated swollen or blown out.

inflexible rigid; unyielding.

ingenious of good natural abilities; skilful in inventing.

ingenuity facility in combining ideas.

ingenuous frank; honourable; free from deception.

ingraft (*engraft*) to introduce something.

inimical like an enemy, not friendly; contrary.

iniquitous unjust; unreasonable; wicked.

initiation act of admitting to any society, by instructing in its rules and ceremonies.

injudicious unwise.

innovation something new introduced.

innumerable that cannot be numbered; countless.

inordinate beyond usual bounds; immoderate; unrestrained.

inquietude disturbance of body or mind.

inscrutable that cannot be searched into and understood.

insidious watching an opportunity to ensnare.

insignia a sign or badge of office, occupation, etc.; a sign by which anything is known.

insinuate to introduce gently or artfully; to hint, especially a fault.

insolent overbearing; insulting; rude.

instigation the act of inciting; impulse, especially to evil.

instil to drop into; to infuse slowly into the mind.

institute a book of precepts, principles or rules.

integral entire or whole; belonging as a part to the whole.

intemperance want of due restraint; excess of any kind.

inter to bury.

intercede to act as peacemaker between two; to plead for one.

interdict to prohibit.

interpose to place or come between.

intestine (*adjective*) internal; not foreign.

intimacy state of being closely acquainted; close familiarity.

intolerable that cannot be endured.

intrepidly bravely.

intrinsic inherent; inward; essential, belonging to the point at issue.

intrusion act of entering into a place without welcome or invitation.

invalidate to render of no effect.

inveigh to make an attack with words.

invest to confer or give; to place in office or authority.

inveterately stubbornly; rootedly hostile.

invincible that cannot be overcome.

inviolable that cannot be injured or profaned.

invocation act or form of addressing in prayer or supplication.

iota a jot.

irascible susceptible to ire or anger.

irrefragable that cannot be opposed; unanswerable.

irreproachable free from blame; upright; innocent.

irretrievably not to be recovered.

irruption a bursting or breaking in.

J

Jesuit a member of the famous religious order, the Society of Jesus, founded in 1534 by Ignatius Loyola.

judicature a court.

judicious wise.

jurisdiction the distribution of justice; extent of power.

K

knavery dishonesty.

L

labyrinth a place full of entangled windings.

lacerate to afflict; to tear.

lascivious exciting sensual emotions.

latent concealed; not visible or apparent.

laudable worthy of being praised.

lave to wash.

lead direction (*in context*).

legate an ambassador, especially from the pope.

legitimate lawful; authorised by usage.

Lent the time from Ash Wednesday to Easter as a time of fasting in commemoration of Christ's fast in the wilderness (*Matt 4:2*).

lethargic unnaturally sleepy; dull.

levity lightness of conduct.

libidinous having a strong sexual desire.

licentiousness state of indulging in excessive freedom.

lineament distinctive feature.

lisp to speak imperfectly, as a child.

litigation contest in law.

logomachy contention about words or in words merely.

loquacity talkativeness.

Luciferian of or pertaining to Lucifer (Satan).

ludicrous that serve for sport; laughable.

lustre brightness.

M

machination intrigue; plot.

magnanimity greatness of soul.

magnificence greatness in deeds.

malady illness; disease, either of the body or of the mind.

mandate a charge; a command from a superior official or judge to an inferior, ordering him how to act, especially from the pope to a legate, etc.

maniac a person affected with violent madness.

Manichean follower of Manichaeus who taught that everything sprang from 2 chief principles, light and darkness, or good and evil.

mass the Eucharist (like the Christian's Lord's Supper) in the Roman Catholic churches.

maxim a general principle, serving as a rule or guide; a proverb.

meddle to interfere unnecessarily.

medium any intervening means, instrument, or agency.

mendicant beggar.

mercenary done for money.

meridian midday.

metamorphose to develop in another form.

metonymical of a word used in a transferred sense.

metropolitan the mother church; chief centre.

militant fighting.

Millenarian one believing in the millennium.

mimicry act of imitating.
ministerial pertaining to the work of a servant; pertaining to the office of a minister.
misconstruction a mistaking of the true meaning.
missal the book which contains the complete service for mass throughout the year.
mockery derision; fruitless labour; false show.
mole a small insectivorous animal with very small eyes, which burrows in the ground.
molestation state of being troubled.
mollify to soften.
monachism monastic life; state of religious seclusion under vows.
monstrous out of the common course of nature; horrible.
mortification subduing of the passions and appetites by penance or abstinence.
muleteer a mule-driver.
multifarious made up of many parts.
munificence bountifulness.
mutilate to cut off; to remove a material part of.
mutter to utter words in a low voice; to murmur.
myriad ten thousand; an immense number.

N

necromancy art of revealing future events by calling up and questioning the spirits of the dead.
nefarious wicked in the extreme.
nominate to name; to appoint; to propose by name, as for an office or for an appointment.
noxious hurtful.
nugatory worthless; unavailing.

nullify nothingness.
nutritious nourishing; promoting growth.

O

obduracy hardness of heart that cannot be overcome.
obduration indifference to or unmoved by human feelings.
obit anniversary of a person's death, or service at such time.
oblation solemn offering in memorial before God of the consecrated elements.
obligation the power which binds to a promise, a duty, etc.; any act which binds one to do something for another.
oblique not straightforward; obscure.
obliquity divergence from moral standards.
obliterate to blot out, so as not to be readable; to destroy; to reduce to a very low state.
obloquy reproachful language.
obnoxiousness liableness (to hurt, punishment, or censure); subjection to the authority; offensiveness.
obsequies funeral rite.
obstreperous clamorous; unruly.
obtrude to thrust upon.
odious offensive; hateful; repulsive.
olfactory pertaining to, or used in, smelling.
oligarchy government by a small exclusive class.
ominous pertaining to or containing an omen.
opine to suppose.
oracle the answer spoken or uttered by the gods; (*plural*) the revelations made to the prophets; the Word of God.

ostentation display to draw attention or admiration; boasting.

P

pacify to bring back peace to.

pageantry splendid display.

pale to make dim.

paltry not worthy of considering.

pander one who procures for another the means of gratifying his base passions; a pimp.

parish a district assigned by a church to a priest.

parricidal murder of a parent or near relative.

paschal pertaining to the Passover, or to Easter.

patine a communion plate (*old form of paten*).

patriarch the head of families from Adam downwards to Abraham, Jacob, and his sons.

patrimony church estate; an inheritance.

paucity smallness of number.

pauper very poor person; one supported by charity or by some public provision.

Pelagian follower of Pelagius, a 4th century British monk, who denied original sin.

penance act of mortification undertaken to manifest sorrow of sin.

penury great poverty.

perdition hell; utter loss of happiness in a future state.

perfidy basely violating of faith.

perjury false swearing.

pernicious holding obstinately to an opinion or purpose; destructive.

perpetrate to perform or commit (usually in a bad sense).

perpetual never ceasing; not temporary.

perspicuity state of clear understanding.

perturbation act of disturbing greatly or state of being agitated; disquiet of mind.

pest deadly disease; anything destructive.

phantom a vain, airy appearance.

pimp one who procures gratifications for the lust of others.

pitch height.

placability willingness to forgive.

plausible seemingly worthy of praise.

plebeian common people.

plenary full; complete.

polity political organisation; civil constitution.

pomp a splendid procession.

posterity those coming after; succeeding generations.

pravity wickedness.

precedent going before in order of time.

precipice a very steep place.

precipitately headlong; without due thought.

preclude to shut out beforehand; to prevent from taking place.

prejudicial causing prejudice or injury; tending to obstruct.

prelate a holder of high office in a church, with his own rights of jurisdiction, not derived from any superior official.

premature happening before the proper time.

premise that which is stated at the outset; a proposition previously stated or proved for after-reasoning.

preposterous contrary to the order of reason; absurd.

prerogative a peculiar privilege shared by no other; a right arising out of one's rank, position, or nature.

presage to warn of something as yet to come.

prescience foreknowledge.

presumption supposition; confidence grounded on something not proved.

presumptuous going beyond the bounds of right or duty; bold and confident.

pretension act of pretending; false or fictitious appearance.

prevaricate to move from side to side, to evade the truth.

primacy state of being first in order of time, rank, etc.

primogeniture the right of the eldest son to inherit his father's estates.

priory a convent of either sex subject to an abbey.

privation state of being deprived of something, especially of what is necessary for comfort.

probationary relating to probation or trial.

procurer one who contrives to obtain.

prodigal wasteful; spending without necessity.

profligacy a vicious course of life.

profligate without virtue or decency.

profusion state of being liberal to excess; extravagance.

progenitor forefather.

prolix long and wordy; longwinded.

promiscuous confusedly or indiscriminately mixed.

promulgate to publish; to make widely known.

promulgation first official open declaration of a new law.

prop anything on which a weight rest for support.

propensity inclination of mind.

propitiation atoning sacrifice.

propitious favourable.

province a person's calling or business (*in context*).

provost one in high position set over a cathedral.

prurience state of being uneasy with desire.

puerile childish; silly.

pupilage the time during which one is a pupil.

purgation a purging; a clearing away of impurities.

purgatory a place in which souls are, after death, purified from venial sins.

putrefy to cause to rot.

putrescence incipient rottenness.

putrid rotten.

R

ramification branching.

rapacity greed.

rapine plundering; violence.

ratify to approve or sanction; to settle.

recourse access.

rectitude uprightness; correctness.

rector a clergyman of a parish; a ruler.

refractory unruly; perverse; breaking through rules.

refulgence brightness.

regal belonging to a king; kingly.

reinvigoration state of being invigorated again.

remit to relax; to pardon.

remonstrance strong statement of reasons against an act.

remunerate to pay for service rendered.

renunciation rejection; abandonment.
repose to lay at rest; to place in trust.
repository a place where anything is laid up for safe keeping.
reprehend to reprove.
repress to restrain; to quell.
reprobate one rejected by God; an abandoned or profligate person; depraved; given over to sin.
repugnant hostile.
requisite required; needful.
rescind to cut away or off; to annul.
resolute determined; having a fixed purpose.
retard to keep back; to delay; to defer.
retraction act of drawing back.
retribution giving in return.
revenue the income of a state.
revere to regard with respectful awe; to venerate.
revery irregular train of thoughts in meditation.
rigour the quality of being rigid or severe; strictness.
rudiment a first principle or element.

S

sacerdotal priestly.
sacrament an holy ordinance instituted by Christ as an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace.
sacrilege a profanation of anything holy.
sagacity keenness in perception or thought.
sally outburst.
salutary beneficial; wholesome.
salutation act of addressing with kind wishes.
sanguinary bloody; attended with much blood-shed.

sapient wise; discerning (*sometimes used ironically*).
sceptre the staff or baton borne by kings as an emblem of authority; royal power.
schismatic one who separates from a church on account of difference of opinion
schoolman philosopher or theologian.
scourge to whip severely; to punish in order to correct.
scruple a small weight; a difficulty or consideration usually moral, obstructing action.
scrupulousness offering of moral objections.
scurrilous coarsely or vulgarly abusive.
secular lay, or civil.
sedition open and active opposition to the execution of the law.
seduce to entice; to corrupt.
see a throne, especially of a bishop's.
sensory the seat of sensation in the brain; the mind; the nervous system.
septenary consisting of seven.
servile pertaining to a servant; meanly submissive.
simoniacal pertaining to, or guilty of, or involving simony.
simony buying and selling of a benefice (*from Simon Magus, Acts 8*).
sinecure an office without work.
sobriety state or habit of being sober; gravity; calmness.
solicitude anxiety or uneasiness of mind.
solitude a being alone; a lonely place.
sophism an apparently genuine but really illogical argument.
sophist one of a class of public teacher of rhetoric, philosophy, etc., in ancient Greece.

sophister a student at the university in his second or third year.

sophistry appearing actual but fallacious reasoning.

Sorbonist a doctor of Sorbonne, a famous medieval university of Paris, founded in 1253 by Robert of Sorbonne; exclusively devoted to theology; its teachings and dogmatic decisions controlled the intellectual life of Europe till the 15th century.

species a group under a higher class, a kind or sort, a distinct constituent part.

specimen a portion of anything to show the kind and quality of the whole; a sample, a typical individual.

specious looking well at first sight.

spittle saliva.

spurious illegitimate; not born in wedlock.

stability state of being stable; steadiness.

statuary a sculptor.

stigmatise to brand with a mark of public disgrace.

stimulate to incite; to instigate.

stipulate to contract; to settle terms.

Stoic one indifferent to pleasure or pain (opposed to Epicureanism).

stole a long robe reaching to the feet.

stratagem a plan for deceiving the enemy or gaining an advantage.

strenuous active; vigorous; bold.

stupefaction stupidity.

stupefy to make stupid or senseless.

sty a pen for swine; any place of gross debauchery.

sublime exalted.

subservience help in a subordinate way.

subsistence real being.

substantive expressing existence; of real, independent importance.

subterfuge an evasive device, especially in discussion; that to which one resorts for escape.

subtlety shrewdness; extreme acuteness.

subvert to overthrow from the foundation.

succour to relieve or assist.

suffrage sanction, supporting opinion; a voting paper.

sumptuous costly; magnificent.

sundry separate; several; divers.

superabundance state of being more than enough.

superaddition something added over and above.

supererogation that which is more than necessary for salvation.

[In the Roman Catholics context, "works of supererogation" are works not absolutely required of each individual for salvation, but which may be done for the sake of surplus merits to add to the deficient merit of others.]

superfluous above what is enough.

supersede to take the place of by reason of superior right, power, etc.; to displace, set aside, render unnecessary.

superstructure anything erected on a foundation.

surety a sponsor.

swine pigs collectively.

syllable several letters taken together so as to form one sound.

symmetry harmony or adaptation of parts to each other.

T

- tacitly** silently.
- tantamount** amounting to so much or to the same; equal in value or meaning.
- taper** to become gradually smaller towards one end.
- tardy** slow, late, sluggish; out of season.
- tautology** use of words that say the same thing.
- temerity** rashness; unreasonable contempt of danger.
- tenet** opinion, principle or doctrine which a person holds or maintain as true.
- tenor** general run; continuity of state.
- testator** one who leaves a will.
- testification** act of bearing witness.
- thralldom** bondage; slavery.
- tonsure** shaven part of head.
- torpid** sluggish.
- trample** to tread under foot; to treat with pride, to insult; to tread with contempt.
- transfuse** to cause to pass from one to another.
- transmute** to change to another form or substance.
- trifle** to act or talk lightly; to waste or spend idly or unprofitably.
- trinal** three.
- trivial** that may be found anywhere, of little importance; common.
- turpitude** villainess.
- tutelage** guardianship.
- tyrant** one who uses his power arbitrarily or oppressively.

U

- ubiquity** existence everywhere at the same time.

- unequivocal** not doubtful.
- unfeigned** real; sincere.
- unguent** ointment.
- unregeneracy** state of not being renewed in heart through regeneration, unreconciled to God.
- unremittingly** continually.
- unsanctioned** not sanctioned or confirmed.
- upbraid** to charge with something wrong or disgraceful.
- utility** usefulness; profit.

V

- vagabond** wandering; driven to and fro; unsettled.
- vagary** digression; a change of opinion without reason.
- vehement** passionate; very eager or urgent.
- veneration** the highest degree of respect and reverence.
- venial** allowed; excusable; pardonable.
- vent** small opening or outlet; escape.
- verify** to make out or show to be true; to establish the truth or authenticity of.
- vernacular** belonging to the country of one's birth.
- vestige** a surviving trace of what has almost disappeared.
- vestment** something put on, a garment; a long robe.
- vicar** one who holds authority as the substitute of another.
- vicarious** filling the place of another.
- vicegerent** one ruling in place of a superior.
- vicious** of depravity of manners; of immoral conduct.
- vicissitude** change of fortune.

vile worthless; morally impure;
wicked.

vindicative tending to vindicate.

visionary existing in imagination only;
not real.

vitiate to spoil; to make less pure.

vivify to endue with life.

volition act of willing or choosing.

vouchsafe to condescend to grant.

W

waive to relinquish for the present; to
give up claim to.

wanton unruly.

whoredom unlawful sexual inter-
course; idolatry.

wormwood bitterness.

*(The “Chambers’s Twentieth Century Dic-
tionary,” edited by Rev Thomas Davidson,
was the main source for the above Glossary.)*

INDEX
OF THE
PRINCIPAL MATTERS

Index of the Principal Matters

The first number indicates the Book; the second, the Chapter

- Adam's fall, the cause of the curse inflicted on all mankind, and of their degeneracy from their primitive condition, II. 1.
- Angels, their creation, nature, names, and offices, I. 14.
- Articles of faith, power of the Church relating to them, IV. 8, 9.
- Ascension of Christ, I. 15.
- Baptism, a sacrament, its institution, nature, administration, and uses, IV. 15.
——— of infants perfectly consistent with the institution of Christ and the nature of the sign, IV. 16.
- Celibacy, of priests, IV. 12.
——— of monks and nuns, IV. 13.
- Christ, proved to be God, I. 13.
——— necessity of His becoming man in order to fulfil the office of a Mediator, II. 12.
——— His assumption of real humanity, II. 13.
——— the union of the two natures constituting His one person, II. 14.
——— the only Redeemer of lost man, II. 6.
——— the consideration of His three offices, prophetic, regal, and sacerdotal, necessary to our knowing the end of His mission from the Father, and the benefits He confers on us, II. 15.
——— His death, resurrection, and ascension to heaven, to accomplish our salvation, II. 16.
——— truly and properly said to have merited the grace of God and salvation for us, II. 17.
——— imperfectly revealed to the Jews under the law, II. 7, 9.
——— clearly revealed only in the Gospel, II. 9.
- Christian liberty, its nature and advantages, III. 19.
- Christian life, scriptural arguments and exhortations to it, III. 6.
——— summary of it, III. 7.
- Church, the necessity of our union with the true Church, IV. 1.
——— true and false compared and distinguished, IV. 2.
——— teachers and ministers of the Church, their election and office, IV. 3.
——— power of the; relating to articles of faith, IV. 8, 9.
——— in making laws, IV. 10.
——— in jurisdiction, IV. 11.
——— discipline of the; censures and excommunication, IV. 12.

Church, state of the ancient; and the mode of government practised before the Papacy, IV. 4.

——— ancient form of its government entirely subverted by the Papal tyranny, IV. 5.

Confession, auricular, III. 4.

——— true, III. 4.

Confirmation, Papal, IV. 19.

Conscience, its nature and obligations, III. 19.

Councils, their authority, IV. 9.

Creation, of the world—of angels; this clearly distinguishes the true God from all fictitious deities, I. 14.

Cross, bearing of; a branch of self-denial, III. 8.

Death of Christ, II. 15.

Depravity, human, total, II. 3.

Descent of Christ into hell, II. 16.

Devils, their existence, power, subtlety, malignity, I. 14.

Discipline of the Church, IV. 12.

Election eternal, or God's predestination of some to salvation, and of others to destruction, III. 21.

——— testimonies of Scripture in confirmation of this doctrine, III. 22.

——— a refutation of the calumnies generally but unjustly urged against this doctrine, III. 23.

——— confirmed by the Divine call, III. 24.

Excommunication, IV. 12.

Extreme unction, IV. 19.

Faith, defined, and its properties described, III. 2.

——— justification by faith, III. 11.

——— prayer its principal exercise, III. 20.

Fanaticism of discarding the Scripture, under the pretence of resorting to immediate revelations, subversive of every principle of piety, I. 9.

Fasting, its use and abuse, IV. 12.

Free-will, lost by the fall; man in his present state miserably enslaved, II. 2.

——— a refutation of the objections commonly urged in support of free-will, II. 5.

God, truly known only from the Scriptures, I. 6.

——— what kind of being God is; exclusively opposed in the Scripture to all the heathen deities, I. 10.

——— contradistinguished from idols as the sole and supreme object of worship, I. 12.

God, ascription of a visible form to, unlawful, and all idolatry a defection from the true, I. 11.

- the Creator of the universe, I. 14.
- His preservation and support of the world by His power, and His government of every part of it by His providence, I. 16.
- the proper use and advantages of this doctrine, I. 17.
- His operations in the hearts of men, II. 4.
- His use of the agency of the wicked, without the least stain of His perfect purity, I. 18.
- one Divine essence containing three persons, I. 13.

Gospel and law compared and distinguished, II. 9, 10, 11.

Government of the Church, IV. 3, 4, 5.

Government, civil; its nature, dignity, and advantages, IV. 20.

Holy Spirit, proved to be God, I. 13.

- His testimony requisite to the confirmation of the Scripture, and the establishment of its authority, I. 7.
- His secret and special operation necessary to our enjoyment of Christ and all His benefits; this operation the foundation of faith, newness of life, and all holy exercises, III. 1.
- the sin against, III. 3.

Humility of believers, III. 12.

Idolatry a defection from the true God; all worship of images idolatry, I. 1.

Image of God in man, I. 15.

Imposition of hands, IV. 15.

Indulgences and pardons, III. 5.

Intercession of saints, III. 20.

Judgment, last, III. 25.

Jurisdiction of the Church, IV. 11.

Justification by faith, the name and thing defined, III. 11.

Justification, a consideration of the Divine tribunal necessary to a serious conviction of gratuitous, III. 12.

- things necessary to be observed in gratuitous, III. 13.
- commencement and continual progress of, III. 14.
- boasting of the merit of works equally subversive of God's glory in gratuitous, and of the certainty of salvation, III. 15.
- a refutation of the injurious calumnies of the Papists against the doctrine here maintained, III. 16.
- by works, the promise of a reward no argument for, III. 17.

Kingdom of Christ, II. 15.

Knowledge of Christ, imperfect under the law, II. 7, 9.

Knowledge of Christ, clearly unfolded under the Gospel, II. 9.
 Knowledge of God, connected with the knowledge of ourselves, I. 1.
 ——— nature and tendency of it, I. 2.
 ——— naturally implanted in the human mind, I. 3.
 ——— extinguished or corrupted, partly by ignorance, partly by wickedness,
 I. 4.
 ——— conspicuous in the formation and government of the world, I. 5.
 ——— effectually attained only from the Scripture, I. 6.

Law of Moses; its office, use, and end, II. 7.
 Laws given to the Jews; moral, ceremonial, and judicial, IV. 20.
 Law, moral, an exposition of, II. 8.
 Law and Gospel, compared and distinguished, II. 9, 10, 11.
 Laws, ecclesiastical, IV. 10.
 ——— civil and political, IV. 20.
 Liberty, Christian, III. 19.
 Life, Christian, III. 6, 7, 8.
 ——— present, and its support, right use of, III. 10.
 ——— future, meditation on, III. 9.
 Lord's prayer, exposition of, III. 20.
 Lord's Supper, its institution, nature, and advantages, III. 17.
 ——— not only profaned, but annihilated by the Papal mass, III. 18.

Man, his state at his creation, the faculties of his soul, the Divine image, free-will,
 and the original purity of his nature, I. 15.
 ——— in his present state, despoiled of freedom of will, and subjected to a
 miserable slavery, II. 2.
 ——— every thing that proceeds from his corrupt nature worthy of condemnation,
 II. 3.
 ——— his mind naturally furnished with the knowledge of God, I. 3.
 ——— the knowledge of God in the human mind extinguished or corrupted by
 ignorance and wickedness, I. 4.

Magistracy, IV. 20.
 Marriage, II. 8.
 Matrimony, falsely called a sacrament, IV. 19.
 Mass, the Papal, not only a sacrilegious profanation of the Lord's Supper, but a
 total annihilation of it, IV. 18.
 Mediator, *see* Christ, II. 14.
 Merit of Christ, II. 17.
 Merit of works disproved, III. 15, 18.
 Monks, IV. 13.

Neighbour, love of our, II. 8.
 Nuns, IV. 13.

Oaths, II. 8.
 Offences given and taken; what to be avoided, III. 19.
 Orders, ecclesiastical, no sacrament, IV. 19.
 Original sin, the doctrine of, II. 1.

Paedobaptism, *see* Baptism, IV. 16.

Papacy, its entire subversion of the ancient form of ecclesiastical government, IV. 5.
 ——— its rise and progress to its present eminence attended with the loss of liberty to the Church, and the ruin of all moderation, IV. 7.
 ——— its licentious perversion of the power of the Church respecting articles of faith, to the corruption of all purity of doctrine, IV. 8.
 ——— its sophistry and jargon concerning repentance utterly inconsistent with the Gospel, III. 4.
 ——— its corrupt tenets respecting indulgences and purgatory, III. 5.
 ——— its assumption of the power of legislation, tyranny over men's minds, and tortures of their bodies, IV. 10.
 ——— its abuse of the jurisdiction of the Church, IV. 11.
 ——— its corrupt discipline, censures, and excommunications, IV. 12.
 ——— its unscriptural vows, IV. 13.
 ——— its sacrilegious mass an annihilation of the Lord's Supper, IV. 18.
 ——— its five ceremonies falsely called sacraments, proved not to be sacraments, IV. 19.
 ——— its characteristics of a false Church, IV. 2.

Penance no sacrament, IV. 19.

Prayer, the principal exercise of faith, and the medium of our daily reception of Divine blessings, III. 20.

Predestination, *see* Election, III. 21–24.

Priesthood of Christ, II. 15.

Promises of the law and Gospel, harmony between them, III. 17.

Prophetical office of Christ, II. 15.

Providence of God, governs the world, I. 16.
 ——— proper application and utility of this doctrine, I. 17.
 ——— contracts no impurity from its control and use of the agency of the wicked, I. 18.

Purgatory exposed and disproved, III. 5.

Reason furnishes proofs to establish the authority of the Scripture, I. 8.

Redemption, necessary in consequence of the fall, II. 1, 6.
 ——— to be sought only in Christ, II. 6.

Redemption, accomplished by the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ, II. 6.

Regeneration, III. 3.

Repentance, true, always accompanies true faith; its origin, nature, and effects, III. 3.

——— comprises mortification of the flesh and vivification of the spirit, III. 6–10.

——— the sophistry and jargon of the schools on this subject very remote from the purity of the Gospel, III. 4.

Reprobates, the destruction of, procured by themselves, III. 24.

Resurrection of Christ, II. 16.

Resurrection, final, III. 25.

Reward promised, no proof of justification by works, III. 18.

Roman See, primacy of, IV. 6.

Sabbath, II. 8.

Sacraments, in general, IV. 14.

——— in particular, IV. 15, 16.

——— ceremonies falsely so called, IV. 19.

Sacrifices, legal, II. 7.

——— none propitiatory under the Gospel since that of Christ, IV. 18.

Saints, invocation and intercession of, III. 20.

Salvation, for lost man to be sought only in Christ, II. 6.

——— procured by Christ, II. 16.

Satisfactions exposed, III. 4.

Schismatics, IV. 1.

Scripture, the guidance and teaching of it necessary to lead to the knowledge of God, I. 6.

——— the testimony of the Spirit requisite to its confirmation and establishment of its authority, I. 7.

——— the dependence of its authority on the judgment of the Church an impious fiction, I. 7.

——— rational proofs to establish its authority, I. 8.

——— rejection of it, under the pretence of resorting to immediate revelations subversive of every principle of piety, I. 9.

——— exclusively opposes the true God to all the heathen deities, I. 10.

——— clearly distinguishes the true God from all fictitious ones, in the creation of the universe, I. 14.




























——— teaches the unity of God, and the existence of three persons in the Divine essence, I. 13.

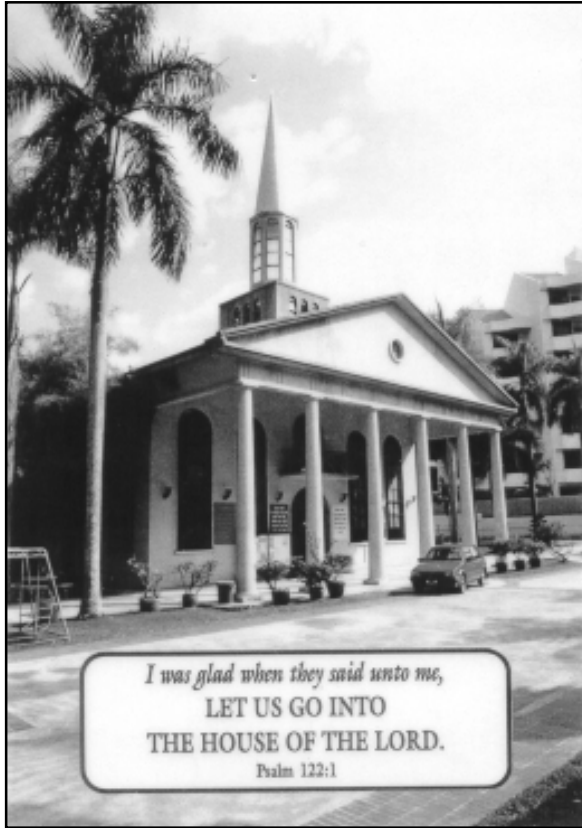
Temptation, III. 20.
Testament, Old, II. 7.
——— New, II. 9.
——— similarity of the Old and New, II. 10.
——— difference of the Old and New, II. 11.
——— harmony between the promises of the Old and New, III. 17.
——— sacraments of the Old and New, IV. 14.
Traditions, human, IV. 10.
Transubstantiation exposed, IV. 10.

Vocation confirms election, III. 24.
Vows; the misery of rashly making them, IV. 13.
Wicked, the agency of, controlled and used by God, I. 18.
Works merit no favour from God, III. 15.
World, created by God, I. 14.
——— preserved by His power, and governed by His providence, I. 16.

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*I was glad when they said unto me,
LET US GO INTO
THE HOUSE OF THE LORD.
Psalm 122:1*

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ISBN 981-00-9335-7