

## ARTICLE XIV.

### *Of Works of Supererogation.*

VOLUNTARY works, besides, over and above God's commandments, which they call Works of Supererogation, cannot be taught without arrogancy and impiety: for by them men do declare, that they do not only render unto God as much as they are bound to do, but that they do more for His sake than of bounden duty is required: whereas Christ saith plainly, When ye have done all that are commanded to you, say, We are unprofitable servants.

### *De Operibus Supererogationis.*

OPERA, quæ supererogationis appellant, non possunt sine arrogantia, et impietate prædicari. Nam illis declarant homines, non tantum se Deo reddere, quæ tenentur, sed plus in ejus gratiam facere, quàm deberent, cum apertè Christus dicat: Cum feceritis omnia quæcunque præcepta sunt vobis dicite, servi inutilis sumus.

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### SECTION I.—HISTORY.

THERE is nothing in the earliest fathers which bears much on the subject of this Article, unless it be that they appear to have attached more than due importance to martyrdom. Thus the baptism of blood was considered equivalent to baptism by water; and some perhaps, appear to have ascribed merit to it, such as to cancel sins. Hermas for instance speaks of the martyrs as having "all their offences blotted out, because they have suffered death for the name of the Son of God."<sup>1</sup> And again says of them, when compared with the rest of the redeemed, that they have "some glory above the others."<sup>2</sup> And so Tertullian says, that "all sins are forgiven to martyrdom."<sup>3</sup> But with reference to the last-named writer, it has been clearly shown, that with all his high esteem for martyrdom, he expressly maintained that it was impossible for martyrs to have an excess of holiness above what was required, as not being in themselves sinless. It was the custom in his days for persons who had lapsed in persecution to be restored to the communion of the Church, at the intercession of martyrs and confessors; a custom which was often much abused. Writing

<sup>1</sup> *Simil.* ix. 29.

<sup>2</sup> *Vts.* III. 23.

<sup>3</sup> *Omnia huic operi delicta donantur. Apł. sub. fin.*

on this subject, Tertullian says, "Who but the Son of God can by His own death relieve others from death? He, indeed, delivered the thief at the very moment of His passion; for He had come for this very end, that, being Himself free from sin and perfectly holy, He might die for sinners. You then, who imitate Christ in pardoning sins, if you are yourselves sinless, suffer death for me. But if you are yourself a sinner, how can the oil out of your cruise suffice both for you and me?"<sup>1</sup>

In this admiration, however, of the early Church for martyrdom, and in the admission of the intercession of the martyrs for the deliverance of others from church-censures, we may perhaps trace the germ of the doctrine of works of supererogation.<sup>2</sup>

In the respect which they paid to virginity we may find another source for the same error; for it is well known, that they gave the fullest latitude to those words of our Lord and of St. Paul, in which they speak of celibacy as a favourable state of life for the development of Christian graces, and for devotion to the service of the Cross.

On this subject especially St. Paul writes, "Concerning virgins, I have no commandment of the Lord; yet I give my advice" (1 Cor. vii. 25); *De virginibus autem præceptum Domini non habeo, sed consilium do.* From this expression it was very early inferred that the Scriptures made a distinction between *precepts*, which are binding on all men, and *counsels*, which it is desirable to follow, but which are not obligatory on the conscience. Thus St. Cyprian, speaking of celibacy, says, "The Lord does not command this, but exhorts to it. He lays not on a yoke of necessity, when the free choice of the will remains. But whereas he says, that in His Father's house are many mansions, He points out the way to the better mansions."<sup>3</sup> St. Augustine writes, "It is not said, Thou shalt not marry, as it is said, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill. The latter are exacted, the former is offered. If the one is observed, there is praise. If the other is neglected,

<sup>1</sup> *De Pudicitia*, Cap. 22. See Bishop Kaye, *Tertullian*, p. 336.

Like this is the language of Augustine, quoted by Bp. Beveridge on this Article: *Etsi fratres pro fratribus moriantur, tamen in peccatorum remissionem nullius sanguis martyris funditur, quod fecit Ille (i. e. Dominus Christus) pro nobis.* August. *In Joh.* tract 84.

<sup>2</sup> *Rogare legem*, to propose a law. *Erogare*, to make a law for paying a sum of money out of a public treasury. So the word is used for lending or paying out.

Hence *supererogare*, to pay over and above. In Luke x. 35, *προσθαπανάω* is in the Vulgate *supererogo*, to spend more. — Hey, III. p. 403.

<sup>3</sup> *Nec hoc jubet Dominus sed hortatur: nec jugum necessitatis imponit, quando maneat voluntatis arbitrium liberum. Sed cum habitationes multas apud Patrem suum dicat, melioris habitaculi hospitalia demonstrat: habitacula ista meliora vos petitis, carnis desideria castrantes, majoris præmium in cælestibus obtinetis.* — Cypr. *De Habitu Virginum*, p. 102.

there will be condemnation.”<sup>1</sup> And St. Jerome distinguishes between a precept and a counsel, as that the one involves necessity of obedience, the other leaves a liberty of accepting or refusing.<sup>2</sup>

The distinction thus early made may have had a legitimate foundation in Holy Writ. But, in process of time, there grew out of it the doctrine of works of supererogation, as connected with a belief in the merits of martyrdom, and of voluntary celibacy. The increase of monasticism, and the increasing respect paid to every kind of ascetic observance, cherished this belief. In the language of the confession of Augsburg, “The monks taught that their mode of life was a state of perfection, because they observed not precepts only, but counsels also. This error is greatly at variance with Gospel truth; for thus they pretended so to satisfy the commands of God as even to exceed them. And hence arose the grievous error, that they claimed merits of supererogation. These they applied to others, that they might be satisfactions for other men’s sins.”<sup>3</sup>

The full-grown form of the doctrine was, that a man may not only keep the law of God, so as to do all that is actually enjoined on him, but may be so full of the grace of God as even to do more than God’s law enjoins, and thereby deserve even more than his own salvation. This excess of merit, which was supposed to be attained by some of the greater saints, formed a deposit, which was intrusted to the Church, and which the Roman pontiff, the vicar of Christ, could for reasonable causes, by the power of the keys, unlock, and grant to the faithful, in the way of indulgences, and for the remission of temporal punishment.

In the Council of Trent, the last decrees read and approved were concerning the granting of indulgences. The council anathematized those who said they were unprofitable, and, though forbid-

<sup>1</sup> Non enim sicut *Non mæchaberis, non occides*, ita dici potest, non nubes. Illa exiguntur, ista offeruntur. Si fiunt ista, laudantur: nisi fiunt illa, damnantur. In illis Dominus debitum imperat vobis; in his autem si quid amplius supererogaveritis, in redeundo reddit vobis. — August. *De Sancta Virginitate*, cap. 30. *Opera*, Tom. VI. p. 355.

<sup>2</sup> Ubi consilium, ibi offerentis arbitrium, ubi præceptum datum, ibi necessitas est servientis. Hieron. ad Eustochium, *De Servanda Virginitate*. So in the Sermons *De Tempore*, ascribed to Augustine, Sermon LXI. *De Virginitate* dicitur, Qui potest capere, capiat. De justitia non dicitur, Qui potest facere,

sed Omnis arbor, quæ non facit fructum bonum excindetur, et in ignem mittetur. See these and some other passages quoted by Bellarmine, *De Monachis*, Lib. II. cap. 7, 11. Tom. II. pp. 363, 380.

The words of S. Chrysostom are much to this purpose on Rom. viii. : *οἱ πνευματικοὶ πάντα πράττουσιν ἐπιθυμίᾳ καὶ πόθῳ, καὶ τοῦτο δηλοῦσι τῷ καὶ ὑπερβαίνειν τὰ ὑποτάγματα*. Thus rendered by Bp. Jer. Taylor, “Spiritual men do their actions with much passion and holy zeal, and give testimony of it by expressing it in the uncommanded instances.” — *Rule of Conscience*, II. 3, 12; which see.

<sup>3</sup> *Sylloge*, p. 223.

ding their sale and other abuses, yet commanded that they should be retained as profitable for Christian people.<sup>1</sup> There is no express mention of works of supererogation.

It is scarcely necessary to add, that all the reformed Churches and sects, of whatever class or denomination, have rejected the doctrine of the Romanists concerning works of supererogation.

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## SECTION II.—SCRIPTURAL PROOF.

THE principal arguments in favour of the doctrine of the Roman Church on this subject may be found in the writings of Cardinal Bellarmine, in the second book of his treatise *De Monachis*. He assumes the principle, a principle which rightly understood need not be controverted, that in some passages of Scripture advice is given, where there is not a positive command: and then he infers that, “as our Lord distinguishes counsels from precepts, He plainly shows that men justified by the grace of God can not only fulfil the law, but even do some works most pleasing to God, which have not been commanded.”<sup>2</sup>

Now this inference may fairly be considered a *petitio principii*; for advice, when coming from our Lord or His Apostles, may be a counsel tending indeed to spiritual good, but yet, if followed, not enabling to do more than is commanded, but only putting in the road to obtain more grace and strength from above.

Bellarmino, besides referring to several passages of the fathers, some of which have been already quoted, brings forward very many texts of Scripture to prove his position. The greater number of these appear so little relevant, that I shall make no apology for considering those only which appear to have some weight.

1. The first which we may mention is the counsel given by our Lord to the man who came to Him, and asked, “Good Master, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?” Our Lord first replies, “Keep the commandments.” The young man then says that he has kept all these from his youth, and adds,

<sup>1</sup> Sarpi, p. 757.

<sup>2</sup> *Controvers. General. Lib. IV. De Indulgentiis*, Tom. III. p. 1124. Dominus consilia a præceptis distinguens, ostendit posse homines justificatos per gratiam

Dei non solum implere legem, sed etiam aliqua alia opera Deo gratissima facere, quæ imperata non sint. He quotes especially the case of the young man, Matt xix. 16, &c.

“What lack I yet?” Jesus said unto him, “If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in Heaven: and come and follow Me.”<sup>1</sup> Bellarmine argues that this last sentence of our Lord’s could not have been a command, but was a counsel of perfection, which, if obeyed, would have been more than was the young man’s duty, *i. e.* a work of supererogation. This he proves as follows: It was not a precept; for to the question, “What shall I do that I may have eternal life?” the answer is “If thou wilt enter into life keep the commandments.” Therefore the keeping the commandments would be sufficient for salvation. And the advice afterwards given tended to perfection, not to salvation.<sup>2</sup>

But if we attentively consider the whole conversation, we shall see that this interpretation will not satisfy the case. In the first place, the young man asks, “What good thing he should do to have eternal life;” to which our Lord gives the general reply, that, “if he would be saved, he must keep the commandments.” The young man, evidently not ill disposed (see Mark x. 21), but with an undue notion of his own strength and goodness, then says, that he has kept all the commandments from his youth, and, as though he could see no deficiency in his own conduct, asks again, “What lack I yet?” Now it was to this question, “What lack I?” that our Lord gave the reply now under consideration. That reply, therefore, was intended to show the young man what he *lacked*: and if he lacked something, it is quite clear that the supplying of that lack,

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xix. 16–21.

<sup>2</sup> Lib. 11. *De Monachis*, cap. 9, Tom. 11. p. 368, &c.

The cardinal replies to many arguments which have been brought against his interpretation of this history: *e. g.* St. Jerome and Bede considered the young man’s question as a tempting of our Lord, but Chrysostom refutes this opinion, by showing that none of the Evangelists blame him, and Bellarmine adds, that St. Mark (x. 21), says that “Jesus beholding him loved him.” Calvin (*Inst.* Lib. iv. cap. 13) had argued that our Lord could not have placed perfection in selling all things, since in 1 Cor. xiii. 3, we read “though I give all my goods to feed the poor . . . and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.” Calvin also observes, that the young man could not really have kept all the commandments, for one is, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart,” &c.; and he who does this will give up everything, and therefore, of

course, all his wealth, for Him. Peter Martyr too had said, that it could not be a counsel, but a precept, when our Lord said, “If thou wilt be perfect, sell all that thou hast;” for in Matt. v. 48, “Be ye perfect” is a precept; and therefore whatever teaches us to be perfect must be of the nature of a precept also.

To this Bellarmine tries to reply, that there are different kinds of perfection, some necessary for salvation, but a higher degree for a higher grade of glory. P. Martyr also says, that this command was given to the young man alone, and that therefore it was necessary for his perfection, but not for every one’s, for he is perfect who obeys God’s laws. Bellarmine answers, No! The command was, “If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments;” this was addressed to all. So we ought to infer that the saying, “If thou wilt be perfect, sell all that thou hast,” was equally addressed to all. He quotes Ambrose, Jerome, and Augustine, as agreeing with him in this view.

or deficiency, could not be a work of supererogation, but a work of duty or obligation. This is further proved by the conduct of the young man, who, when he had heard our Lord's reply, "went away sorrowful." That is to say, he felt not able and willing to do what our Lord had said was needful for him to do. He had asked what was necessary for his salvation. The first answer gave him satisfaction; for it did not fully convince him of his weakness. The second probed him to the quick, and showed him that the strength of purpose which he supposed himself to possess, was not such as to lead him to renounce all for the kingdom of God. And so, when he had gone away sorrowful, our Lord does not say, A rich man shall hardly become perfect, or do works of supererogation; but He says, "Verily I say unto you, that a rich man shall hardly *enter into the kingdom of Heaven*. And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to *enter into the kingdom of God*." It was unfitness for the kingdom of Heaven, not unfitness for a supereminent degree of glory, which the rich man showed, when, at our Lord's bidding, he could not sell all that he had.

Whence it appears, that this saying of our Lord's was a precept, and not a counsel. It was like the command given to Abraham to kill his son. It was a trial of his faith and of his readiness to obey. The faithful servant of God will give up all, even that he loves the best, for Him whom he serves. Abraham's dearest treasure was his son, and he was ready to sacrifice him. The young man's treasure was his wealth, and he went away sorrowful. The one was shown to be true and firm in the faith. The other's faith was proved to be doubtful and wavering.

Bellarmino, however, farther contends that, whereas it follows in the 27th verse, "Peter answered and said unto Him, Behold we have forsaken all, and followed Thee; what shall we have therefore?" if the command was only given to the young man, and not to all men, then our Lord would have said to Peter, "I will give nothing to you, I spoke only to this young man;" (*Nihil vobis dabo, nam soli illi juveni loquutus sum*); whereas the answer actually given is (*Amen dico vobis, &c.*) "Verily I say unto you, that ye who have followed Me . . . shall sit on twelve thrones . . . and every one who hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, shall receive an hundred-fold, and shall inherit everlasting life." The cardinal's conclusion is therefore, that to *all* men it is a precept, "keep the commandments," and to *all* men it is a coun-

sel, "sell that thou hast, and give to the poor." The Apostles obeyed the precept and the counsel both, and so did more than their duty; the young man kept only the precepts, and so won Heaven, but not more than Heaven.

There is evidently a fallacy here. No doubt, it is not commanded to all men to sell all that they have; for St. Paul bade Timothy "charge those who are rich in this world" (not to sell their possessions, but) "not to trust in uncertain riches," "to do good, to be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate" (1 Tim. vi. 17, 18). But though all men are not expressly called to sell all that they have, yet at the time of our Lord's presence upon earth, He did call all His immediate followers to give up everything for His sake; and the most obvious and decided way of giving proof of zeal for His service and love to Him, was to forsake parents and brethren, house and lands, and to follow Him who had no place to lay His head.<sup>1</sup> Thus, as Abraham evidenced his faith by being ready to slay his son, so the Apostles evidenced theirs by forsaking their homes; and the rich young man could not find it in his heart to sacrifice so much, because his faith was not so true. Here is no room for works of supererogation, nor even for counsels of perfection.

2. Another of Bellarmine's proofs<sup>2</sup> is drawn from 1 Cor. ix.; in which St. Paul asserts, that he might have received payment for his ministry, that he might have led about a wife at the expense of the Church; but that he would not do anything of this kind, lest his glorying should be made void. Taking the Latin version as his guide, Bellarmine reasons, that, though St. Paul might have fulfilled all his duty, if he had taken payment of the Church, yet he would not take reward, that he might obtain greater glory. And he argues against Peter Martyr (who interprets the *gloriam* of ver. 15 to "mean glorying before men") that St. Augustine had written, *Bonum est magis mihi mori, quam ut gloriam meam quis evacuet. Quam gloriam? nisi quam habere voluit apud Deum in Christo?*<sup>3</sup> But *pace tanti viri*, be it said, that the Greek word is *καύχημα*, which means *boasting*; and that a greater than St. Augustine has written that "no flesh should glory (or boast) in God's presence."<sup>4</sup> The passage in St. Paul can hardly mean anything

<sup>1</sup> We must remember that there was a perfectly general precept to this effect: "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me," Matt. x. 37. And again: "If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and

sisters, yea, and his own life also, he can not be my disciple." Luke xiv. 26.

<sup>2</sup> Tom. II. p. 378.

<sup>3</sup> *Lib. de Opere Monachorum*, c. 10.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Cor. i. 29. Comp. Rom. iii. 27; iv. 2. Eph. ii. 9.

but this: that, whereas he, as an Apostle, had a right to be chargeable to the Church, he had yet refused to be so, that he might have the more influence for good over those among whom he ministered. As he says in the nineteenth verse of the same chapter, "Though he was free from all men, yet he made himself the servant of all, that he might gain the more." Thus he was able to boast, that he had cost them nothing; and they therefore could not charge him with avarice or private views. To make his glorying in this respect void would have been to deprive him of his influence over them, and therefore of that power to do good which lay so near his heart.

3. But the most cogent argument from Scripture, in favour of works of supererogation, is drawn from the passages in which our Lord and St. Paul, whilst highly honouring marriage, yet give the preference to a life of celibacy. The passages in question are Matt. xix. 10, 11, 12, and 1 Cor. vii. *passim*, especially 7, 8, 25-28, 32-40.

On the first passage, Bellarmine observes, that to live a life of celibacy cannot be a precept, because of the high commendation which our Lord had just bestowed upon matrimony, and yet, he says, it is evident that it has a reward in Heaven, because our Lord declares that "some have made themselves eunuchs" (*i. e.* have lived a life of celibacy) "for the kingdom of Heaven's sake," and then adds, "He that is able to receive it, let him receive it" (Matt. xix. 12). In like manner, on 1 Cor. vii. he observes, that the advice to abstain from marriage is evidently a *counsel*; and that it is a counsel of not merely human wisdom, but proceeding from the Spirit of God; which he fully proves from ver. 25, 40; where the Apostle declares that, though there had been "no commandment of the Lord," yet he gave his judgment as one who had "obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful," ver. 25; and that in thus giving his judgment, he felt assured that he had the Spirit of God, ver. 40.<sup>1</sup>

Luther, he says, only admitted a temporal advantage to be attached to celibacy, and such has been the exposition of many Protestants; namely, that so a man may escape cares, and anxieties, and *that* especially in time of persecution. Against such Bellarmine quotes the words of St. Augustine;<sup>2</sup> who truly maintained,

<sup>1</sup> Δοκῶ δὲ κατὰ Πνεῦμα Θεοῦ ἔχειν, where, according to the well-known usage of St. Paul and others, *δοκεῖν* is far from implying doubt.

<sup>2</sup> *De Sancta Virginitate*, c. 13. Unde mirabiliter desipiunt, qui putant hujus

continentiæ bonum non esse necessarium propter regnum cælorum, sed propter præsens sæculum, quod scilicet conjugia terrenis curis pluribus atque arctioribus distenduntur, qua molestia virgines et continentes carent, &c.



that the Apostle spoke of spiritual as well as temporal benefits to be derived from celibacy.

From Luther, Bellarmine passes to Melancthon, who went farther than Luther, and admitted that some spiritual good might be derived from an unmarried state, such as more freedom and time for prayer and preaching.<sup>1</sup> But to the temporal benefits admitted by Luther, and to the spiritual benefits allowed by Melancthon, Bellarmine adds a third, namely, to please God and obtain greater reward. He observes that the words *propter instantem necessitatem*, "because of the present distress" (ver. 26), do not mean that we may escape present troubles, but that they rather mean, *propter brevitatem temporis*, "because of the shortness of the time;" as it is said (ver. 29), "But this I say, brethren, the time is short." Against Melancthon he says, that in ver. 34 the Apostle commends the state of an unmarried female, saying, that "she careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit;" and that this shows that virginity has of itself a sanctity both of body and spirit, according to the words of Jerome (lib. I. *Contra Jovinian*): *Illa virginitas hostia Christi est, cujus nec mentem cogitatio, nec carnem libido maculant*. From ver. 35, where St. Paul says he speaks thus "for that which is comely," *ad id quod honestum est*, Bellarmine argues that the apostle calls continence a thing *per se honestam et decoram et proinde Deo charam*, "a thing in its own nature comely and honourable, and therefore dear to God." And again, in ver. 40, the words "She is happier if she so abide," he says, plainly mean, she will be happier in the world to come.<sup>2</sup>

Now in this reasoning of the distinguished Romanist divine there appears a considerable mixture of truth and error. Let us admit, as we cannot doubt, that the Apostle wrote under the guidance of the Spirit; let us admit that he gave a *counsel*, not a *precept*; for plainly it is no commandment of God that men should not marry, but only that they should "abstain from fornication." Let us admit that both our blessed Lord and St. Paul spoke of abstaining from marriage, for the sake of some advantages which an unmarried life has, as regards spiritual employments and spiritual meditations. The divines of our own communion have admitted this as freely as those of the Roman Church.<sup>3</sup> There seems no reason to

<sup>1</sup> In Locis, cap. *De Castitate*.

<sup>2</sup> *Beatorum autem erit, si sic permanerit, id est, ut exponit, in futuro sæculo*. Bellarmine treats of Matt. xix. *Controv. Gener.* Tom. II. p. 367. Cf. 1 Cor. vii. Tom. II. p. 373.

<sup>3</sup> For example, see Bp. Burnet on

this Article, and Milner, *Hist. of the Church*, Cent. I. ch. XI.; Cent. II. ch. VIII.; divines of a school peculiarly disinclined from any concessions to the Romanists. On the proper distinction between precepts and counsels, the student may read with great advantage Bp. Jer. Taylor,

doubt, that both our Lord and St. Paul speak of some to whom a peculiar gift has been given, and who can, by living unmarried, devote themselves more unreservedly to the work of the Gospel, and the service of the Lord. Marriage brings with it the anxieties of family and worldly business, and many of those "cares of this life," which may, if not checked, choke the good seed. From all such celibacy is free. Therefore, though marriage be a state ordained of God, yet some, thinking to give their whole lives to religious employments, have abstained from marriage, "have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of Heaven's sake;" and such a determination, in such as are "able to receive it," our Lord has honoured with His sanction, "Let him receive it." And so it is with the counsel of St. Paul. He tells us, that "the time is short, it remaineth that they that have wives be as though they had none . . . that they who use this world, be as though they used it not;<sup>1</sup> for the fashion of this world passeth away." Accordingly, to such as have the gift of continence he gives his advice, that it may help them on more in their course of godliness, if they continue to live a life less burdened with the cares of this world than is the life of those who are united in marriage. Such a life is not indeed to be commended to all men, and the Apostle carefully guards himself against forcing the conscience, or "casting a snare upon" them. But it is a life which has many advantages. The unmarried have nothing to do but care for the things of the Lord; whilst the married cannot but be anxious to please not only God, but the partner of their earthly pilgrimage. Much therefore as there is of blessing in the married state, honourable as it is in all men, and a *κοίτη ἀμίαντος*, a state undefiled; still those who have contracted it are, like Martha, necessarily "cumbered about much serving," whilst the unmarried, like Mary, have more leisure to "sit at the feet of Jesus," able to "attend upon the Lord without distraction."<sup>2</sup> Therefore it is that the Apostle counsels an unmarried life, because of "the present distress;" because, it may be, of the distress and anxieties of this present life, which are much unfavourable to the attainment of holiness, and which especially beset those who are tied in the bond of matrimony.<sup>3</sup>

This exposition will fairly satisfy the language both of Christ and

*Rule of Conscience*, Book II. ch. III. Rule 12.

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. vii. 31: "As though they used it not," *ὡς μὴ καταχρῶμενοι*. *Καταχρῶσθαι* here probably signifies to use. Comp. 1 Cor. vii. 31; ix. 18.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. vii. 35. In the words *πρὸς τὸ ἐν πρόσεδρον τῷ Κυρίῳ ὑπερισπίστωσ*,

it has been thought that St. Paul especially alludes to Mary's "sitting at Jesus' feet," Luke x. 39.

<sup>3</sup> Propter instantem necessitatem.] Id est, præsentis vitæ sollicitudinem, quæ multum potest obesse justitiæ, et quæ præcipue juncti matrimonii implicantur. — Hieron. in 1 Cor. vii.

of His Apostle. But we deny that St. Paul, when instituting a comparison between marriage and celibacy, speaks of the latter as having more merit than the former; or that the one shall ensure a higher place in Heaven than the other. It may be to some persons a state more favourable for growth in grace, though, for obvious reasons, it may be a snare to others. But, as marriage is a thing holy in itself, so we do not learn that celibacy is holier. "One is not a better chastity than the other. Marriage is a *κοίτη ἀμίαντος*, an undefiled state, and nothing can be cleaner than that which is not at all unclean."<sup>1</sup> And therefore, though we fully admit the honour due to a holy celibacy, we yet deny that it has any merit at all, as nothing in man can merit from God; and still more do we deny that it can have merit of supererogation.<sup>2</sup>

The above are the only arguments from Scripture, adduced by Bellarmine, which can be considered as of weight or importance; and we may therefore fairly consider that, in answering them, we have shown that Scripture does not countenance the doctrine which our fourteenth Article condemns. It remains to show, that there are passages and statements in the Scriptures directly at variance with that doctrine, and utterly inconsistent with it.

1. In the first place Scripture shows that all men, even those under the dominion of grace, are still imperfect and full of infirmity. David says, that "there is none that doeth good, no not one" (Ps. xiv. 3); St. James says, that "in many things we offend, all" (Jas. iii. 2); and St. John says, that "if we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves" (1 John i. 8). But if it be true that all men have sinned and "in many things offend," then it is quite clear that no man can be so perfectly holy as not only to fulfil all God's law, but even to exceed it. And as the Psalmist spoke, in the four-

<sup>1</sup> Jer. Taylor, as above.

<sup>2</sup> A passage, not noticed by Bellarmine, may seem to countenance the doctrine that the sufferings of the saints were beneficial, not only to themselves, but to the Church; and that therefore their merits were more than enough for their own salvation. The passage is Col. i. 24, "Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His body's sake, which is the Church." But if we carefully consider the passage, we cannot suppose that the Apostle means that there was anything deficient in the sufferings of Christ, or that His infinite merits needed addition from the sufferings of His servant. The true meaning of the passage is this: Every

servant of Christ has need to be conformed to the likeness of the sufferings of his Lord. St. Paul considered, that there was somewhat lacking in him, that there was somewhat yet behind of "the affliction of Christ," before he could be thoroughly conformed to His likeness; and earnestly desiring to be made like his Lord, he gladly took every additional trial as only bringing him nearer to His image; and all these trials he endured for the sake of the Church, which he served, and to which he preached the Gospel of Christ. There is no mention of vicarious suffering on the part of St. Paul, of supererogatory merit, or of addition to the full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice of Christ upon the Cross.

teenth Psalm, "to those that were under the Law" (see Rom. iii. 10, 19), so St. James and St. John evidently spoke to those who were under grace; as the whole context evinces. Hence we must conclude that even under grace no man lives actually spotless in God's commandments.

2. But even if we could live wholly without spot, and never offend in thought, word, or deed, even so our Lord teaches us that such a spotless obedience would still leave us undeserving of reward. "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 xvii. 10). What room is there then for the doctrine which teaches, that a man may do enough for his salvation and attain to glory by keeping the precepts; and then by observing counsels may merit still more? Even if we could keep all the precepts, we should be unprofitable, having no right to reward, but merely to exemption from punishment.<sup>1</sup> Something more than obedience to precepts is required, even for salvation; and where, then, is the foundation on which to build still higher merit?

3. Again, in the parable of the ten virgins, when the five foolish virgins found their oil fail, they are represented as going to the wise virgins, and asking to borrow oil from them. But the wise answered that they had not enough for themselves and others too, showing that no one can have holiness or grace enough to supply another's deficiencies, but that each one must seek pardon and grace for himself (Matt. xxv. 9).

4. Then the precepts of the Gospel are so full and comprehensive that everything, even the highest degree of perfection, is contained in them. Under the Law, indeed, if the letter only was observed, the statutes contained but a certain express catalogue of duties: but the spiritual sense of the Law, as enforced by our Saviour, enjoins such an entire surrender of all the faculties of the body, soul, and spirit to the service of Christ, that nothing conceivable can exceed or overpass it. This will be quite apparent, if we read our Lord's exposition of the Law, in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. v. 27, *seq.*), where a thought or a look of evil is deadly sin; or His declaration that no one can be His disciple who hates not his

<sup>1</sup> Quod sub præcepto est, si non impleatur, punit. Impletum morte tantum caret; quia nihil ex se dat, sed quod debet, exsolvit. — Hieron. in 1 Cor. vii.

It is true, that the divines of the Roman communion always presuppose that it is the atonement of Christ which gives efficacy and merit to the works of the

saints. But we must remember that our Lord, in the passage from Luke xvii. 10, spoke to His own disciples, — those very saints who are supposed not only to have merited life, but to have laid up a store of good works, more than was needed for their salvation.

nearest friends and his own life, if need be, for Christ's service ; or His summary of the commandments — unbounded love to God, and perfect love to man (Matt. xxii. 37, 38, 39) ; “ Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind ; and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” We cannot conceive either saint or angel more perfect than this : and yet all this is *commanded* — is of the nature of a *precept*, not of counsels only. The language of St. Paul's exhortation is equally strong ; that we present ourselves “ as living sacrifices to God ” (Rom. xii. 1), that we “ cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, *perfecting* holiness in the fear of God ” (2 Cor. vii. 1). “ Finally, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report ; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things ” (Phil. iv. 8). Can anything go beyond these things which it is our duty to do ? But if any man seem to be contentious, St. Peter tells us, as a plain command, to aim “ to be holy as Christ is holy ” (1 Pet. i. 15, 16) : and Christ Himself concludes His teaching concerning the strict and spiritual nature of the Law with the words, “ Be ye therefore perfect, as your Father which is in heaven is perfect ” (Matt. v. 48). Till then we can learn that God's grace has ever made man as perfect as God, we can never believe that man has ever fully lived up to the *precepts* of the Gospel. Where is the room for higher graces still ?

5. Lastly, we may observe that the whole of the doctrine of works of supererogation arises from a false view of the principles of Christian obedience. If we look for merit, it must be to Christ. Christian obedience is not a task of so much work to be done, and so much reward to be expected. When it is sound and perfect, it springs from a true faith and a holy love. And as no degree of perfection can excel the obedience which would be yielded by perfect love, so nothing can excel that holiness at which every Christian is bound to aim. The obedience of the Gospel is not the task-work of a slave, but the perfect freedom of a son.

## ARTICLE XV.

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*Of Christ alone without Sin.*

CHRIST in the truth of our nature was made like unto us in all things, sin only except; from which He was clearly void, both in His flesh and in His Spirit. He came to be the lamb without spot, who, by sacrifice of himself once made, should take away the sins of the world; and sin (as St. John saith) was not in Him. But all we the rest, although baptized and born again in Christ, yet offend in many things; and if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

*De Christo, qui solus est sine peccato.*

CHRISTUS, in nostræ naturæ veritate, per omnia similis factus est nobis, excepto peccato, a quo prorsus erat immunis, tum in carne, tum in Spiritu. Venit ut Agnus, absque macula, qui mundi peccata per immolationem sui semel factam tolleret, et peccatum (ut inquit Johannes) in eo non erat: sed nos reliqui etiam baptizati, et in Christo regenerati, in multis tamen offendimus omnes. Et si dixerimus, quia peccatum non habemus, nos ipsos seducimus, et veritas in nobis non est.

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### SECTION I.—HISTORY.

THE history of the greater part of the doctrine contained in this Article may be considered as involved in the history of some of the preceding Articles, especially of the ninth. We spoke there of the Pelagian heresy, and observed that Pelagius held that it was possible for a man, even without the grace of God, to keep God's law, and live a life of perfect holiness. St. Augustine, we saw in his arguments against Pelagianism, still expressed unwillingness to discuss the question of the sinfulness of the blessed Virgin Mary, out of reverence to her Son and Lord. Pelagius had held that it was necessary for our religion that we should confess the Virgin to be sinless (*i. e.* that we might not hold our Saviour to be born in sin). St. Augustine answers, "Concerning the Virgin Mary, I am not willing, for the honour of our Lord, to hold any dispute, when we are talking about sin. For how do we know what more grace was bestowed on her to overcome all sin, who had the honour to conceive and bring forth Him who certainly had no sin?"<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> August. *De Natura et Gratia*. Wall, *Inf. BAPT.* i. p. 404. The passage from Augustine is from c. 42. Tom. x. p. 144:—

Excepta itaque sancta virgine Maria,

de qua propter honorem Domini nullam prorsus cum de peccatis agitur, haberi volo quæstionem. Unde enim scimus, quid ei plus gratiæ collatum fuerit ad vincendum omni ex parte peccatum? &c.

This scruple, which early prevailed about the Virgin, in the course of years grew into a doctrine. But for a length of time the doctrine was privately held, not publicly expressed. In the year 1136 the Canons of Lyons brought the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin into the ecclesiastical offices; for which act of rashness they were severely censured by St. Bernard. But about the year 1300, the celebrated Schoolman, John Duns Scotus, a Franciscan Friar, strenuously maintained the total exemption from sin of the Blessed Virgin, and grounded it upon the omnipotency of God, who could free her from sin, if He chose. Thenceforward the Scotists and Franciscans ever advocated the dogma of the Immaculate Conception.<sup>1</sup>

At the Council of Trent this question was hotly debated; the Franciscans excepting the Virgin from all taint of sin, the Dominicans labouring to comprehend her name under the common law. The pope commanded that the contention on the subject should be omitted, for fear of causing a schism. Both parties acquiesced in silence, on the condition that when the decrees were made it should merely be added that there was no intention to include the Blessed Virgin in the decrees concerning original sin.<sup>2</sup> It was therefore left an open question, although the Franciscans had the better reason of the two parties to be satisfied.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sarpi, *Council of Trent*, p. 178.

<sup>2</sup> Sarpi, pp. 164, 169, 171.

<sup>3</sup> [Some further historical details may properly be added, relating to the action of the papacy.

In 1476, Sixtus IV. issued the Bull *Cum Præcelsa*. In it he encouraged the celebration of the Festival of the Immaculate Conception. In 1488, by the Bull *Grave nimis*, he forbade that either those who hold the opinion of the immaculate conception, or those who hold its contrary, should be charged with heresy or mortal sin. These two Bulls were formally accepted by the Council of Trent. *Sess. V. Decree concerning Original Sin.*

In 1570, Pius V. issued the Bull *Super Speculam*. This Bull allowed either opinion, and forbade all controversy in public, though it allowed discussion in the schools.

In 1617, Paul IV. issued the Bull *Beati pacifici*, in which, under heavy penalties, he renewed the constitutions of Sixtus IV. and Pius V.

In 1622, Gregory XV. took a step in advance, by forbidding any one, till it should be otherwise ordered, to assert *in public* that the Virgin was conceived in original sin, though he declared that he

did not deny or controvert the opinion that she was. At the same time he allowed any one to assert the immaculate conception, only not attacking the other opinions, while, *without permission from the Holy See*, no one was permitted to assert the conception in original sin at all. In the same year another Bull, *Eximii atque Singularis*, allowed the Dominicans, in their own schools, to discuss the opinion.

Alexander VII., in 1671, issued the Bull *Solicitude omnium Ecclesiarum*, which, while it favoured the opinion of the immaculate conception, yet forbade those who held the opposite opinion to be charged with heresy.

Finally, on the 8th of December, 1854, Pius IX. by the Bull *Ineffabilis*, created this opinion into an Article of the Faith, without even the pretence of consulting a General Council, consolidating and concentrating in himself a power, *in spiritualibus*, which neither Hildebrand nor Innocent had ever attempted to exercise, and accepting, or rather demanding, assent to the most *ultramontane* theory of the papal authority. There the matter rests at present, but the end is not yet.

Already the claim is advanced, that the Blessed Virgin *me ited* this grace of

It was also decreed in the Council of Trent that all the taint of original sin is washed away in baptism.<sup>1</sup> And the Lutherans were condemned for saying that God's commands were not possible to the just.<sup>2</sup> From these canons of the council it might naturally follow, that a person baptized and justified may fully keep God's commands, and live a life of spotless holiness. But what is even more to the purpose still, is the Romish doctrine of works of supererogation. For, if such works are possible, it must first be possible that he who does them should be perfectly sinless. Otherwise he could not do, not only his duty, but more than his duty. Accordingly this Article of our Church, "Of Christ alone without sin," follows immediately on that concerning Works of Supererogation. The one is very probably intended as a supplement and strengthener to the other; so that, whereas in the last Article it was said that no man can do more than God's law requires, so in this it is added, that no man in this life can fully live up to its requirements, but *all* offend many times; and none, even of the baptized and regenerate, is quite free from sin.

That part of the Article which alleges that Christ was free from sin need not be considered historically, for none but those who deny His Divinity can deny His sinlessness. And the greatest heretics, even mere Humanitarians, have respected the Saviour as a pure and holy Being.

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## SECTION II.—SCRIPTURAL PROOF.

THE subjects treated on in the Article are,—

I. That Christ was without sin, although in all other things made like unto us.

II. That all other men (even though baptized and born again in Christ) yet offend in many things.

I. That Christ, though perfect man, was yet free from sin, prop-

the immaculate conception, because of her holiness in a *pre-existent state*. How long will it take to extend that pre-existence to *eternity*, and then to argue from eternal existence, *participation in the Divine Nature?*

The Abbè Laborde, *On the Impossibility*

*of the Immaculate Conception*, may well be consulted; while, to see the weakness of the arguments in defence of this fearful novelty, one need only read the *Treatise* of the Cardinal Lambruschini. — J. W.]

<sup>1</sup> Sess. v. Can. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Sess. vi. Can. 18.



erly forms a part of the doctrine of the Incarnation, and is therefore intimately connected with Article II.

The eternal Son of God, the second Person in the Godhead, took into that Person the perfect nature of man. That nature of man had become defiled and debased. And it was that He might purify and restore it that He took it into Himself. But the question is, whether, when He took the nature, He was obliged to take its corruption with it. If so, we may well believe that the Incarnation would have been impossible. God is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity. Much less can we suppose that God would take iniquity and corruption to Himself, into union with His own spotless purity and holiness.

But though human nature, in all naturally engendered of Adam, is stained with the sin of Adam, yet sin is not a *part* of human nature, but a *fault* of it.<sup>1</sup> The Manicheans held that matter was essentially evil, and so human nature was evil, because matter was a part of it. But matter as well as spirit comes from God, and so is of itself, like all His creatures, "very good." Sin, therefore, which we all inherit, is a corruption and evil addition to our nature, not an essential and integral part of it. Whether it consists in a withdrawal of the indwelling and presence of God, and a consequent rebellion of the lower principles of man's nature,<sup>2</sup> or whether there be moreover a kind of taint or poison, which, working in him, produces sin, and renders him liable to death; in either case original sin is not human nature, but an accident of that nature; a quality as distinct from humanity as is any particular bodily disease, such as madness, or consumption, or neuralgia.

When therefore Christ took our nature, it was not essential to its perfection that He should take our sinfulness. Sin not being a part, but a fault of nature, He might be "made in all things like unto us," even though sin were excepted. Our *liability* to sin indeed He must have taken; for else He could not have been "in all things tempted like as we are." Adam had a liability to sin, and therefore was susceptible of temptation, before he was

<sup>1</sup> The Manichees held that sin was a *natura non a culpa*: *i. e.* because they thought one portion of our nature (*i. e.* the body) essentially evil. But the fathers taught that it was not *της φύσεως*, *ἀλλὰ της κακής προαιρέσεως*: "not of nature, but of an evil determination of the will:" (see History of Art. ix. note). And our ninth Article teaches, not that it is part of our nature, but "the fault and corruption of our nature."

<sup>2</sup> "Man's corruption consists, first, in the deprivation of the Divine guidance, which he has rejected, for "the light shined in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not;" and secondly, in the correspondent rebellion of the lower principles of his body and his soul." — Wilberforce on *The Incarnation*, p 74.

actually guilty of sin, and so defiled and corrupted by it. And Christ, who was the second Adam, who came on purpose that He might conquer where Adam had fallen, and so restore that nature which Adam had debased, was, by the constitution of that nature which He adopted, liable to be assailed by the same dangers that Adam had been assailed by. But His own essential holiness and the supporting power of his Godhead enabled Him to endure temptation, and so made it impossible that He should fall under it. Thus He became a fit representative of our race, as much as Adam was. He had all our nature, with all its natural weaknesses; and all that He lacked was that which was no proper part of, but only a vicious addition to our nature, namely, our sin. Nay, He even condescended to take our sicknesses. He was liable to hunger and weariness, and death. Many indeed of our sicknesses are the natural results of sin, of gluttony or intemperance, anger or passion. These He, who had no sin, could not have. Yet He took, not only human nature, but mortal nature; and though He was too holy to defile Himself with our sin, yet He was not too glorious to submit to our death.

The passages of Scripture which prove this part of the doctrine of the Article, are sufficiently numerous and familiar. Thus it is announced to Mary, "That *Holy Thing* which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Luke i. 35). "The prince of this world," said our Lord, "hath nothing in Me" (John xiv. 30). He was "the Holy One, and the just" (Acts iii. 14). God "made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin" (2 Cor. v. 21). "He was in all things tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. iv. 15). "An High Priest, holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;" not like those "high priests who have infirmity," and needing to "offer up sacrifices, first for their own sins, and then for the people's" (Heb. vii. 26, 27, 28). He "did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth" (1 Pet. ii. 22). He "was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him is no sin" (1 John iii. 5).

The words of the Article, that "He came to be the Lamb without spot" are from the following:—

"He was led as a Lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth" (Isai. liii. 7). "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world" (John i. 29). "Christ, who through the Eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God" (Heb. ix. 14). Redeemed "with

the precious Blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Pet. i. 19. Comp. Exod. xii. 5; Lev. xxii. 19, 20, 21).

II. The second part of the Article, that "all other men offend in many things, even though baptized and born again," has been already considered at some length under the ninth Article. It was there shown that the taint of sin pervaded the whole human race, and that every one naturally born of Adam was subject to it; that even the regenerate had still the remains of such corruption; and that that concupiscence, which still remains in them, has the nature of sin.<sup>1</sup>

It may be sufficient here to recite a few of the passages of Scripture on which more especially the proof of this assertion depends.

"If they sin against thee," says Solomon, "for there is no man that sinneth not" (1 Kings viii. 46). "In Thy sight," says David, "shall no man living be justified" (Ps. cxliii. 2). "Who can say," asks the wise man, "I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?" (Prov. xx. 9). "We have proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin" (Rom. iii. 9). "Death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Rom. v. 12). "The Scripture hath concluded all under sin" (Gal. iii. 22). "In many things we offend, all" (James iii. 2). "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (1 John i. 8). "Let not sin reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof" (Rom. vi. 12). "I had not known sin but by the Law: for I had not known lust except the Law had said, Thou shalt not covet" (Rom. vii. 7). So "the flesh lusteth against the Spirit" (Gal. v. 17).

The last two passages show that lust or concupiscence hath the nature of sin.

2. The principal objections which may be urged against this part of the doctrine of the Article, are such as the following.

In some passages of Scripture people are called blameless: as (Luke i. 6), Zacharias and Elizabeth are spoken of as "both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, blameless." In a like manner St. Paul speaks of himself as having "lived in all good conscience before God to this day" (Acts xxiii. 1); as exercising himself "to have a con-

<sup>1</sup> Ἀνθρώπων οὐδεὶς ἀναμάρτητος, ἐνὶ γὰρ μαρτυρεῖται, ὅτι ἁμαρτίαν οὐκ ἐποίησε. Basil. M. *Orat. de Pœnitentia*. Suicer. i. 207.

science void of offence toward God and toward man" (Acts xxiv. 16); as having been before his conversion, "touching the righteousness which is in the Law, blameless" (Phil. iii. 6).

Such passages seem to argue *blameless* perfection. But we may answer that Zacharias could not have been perfect, or he would not have disbelieved the Angel when he promised him a son, and so have been smitten with dumbness for his want of faith (Luke i. 20). St. Paul, when he speaks of himself as blameless touching the righteousness of the Law, was a persecutor of the Church, and though he did it ignorantly in unbelief, and so obtained mercy, yet we can hardly consider it as consistent with perfection; and though he speaks of himself as exercising himself to have a conscience void of offence, yet we know that he did "not count himself to have apprehended," that he was sensible of "infirmities" (see 2 Cor. xi. 30; xii. 10, &c.); that he felt it necessary to "keep under his body, and bring it into subjection" (1 Cor. ix. 27). Nay, we know that he was liable to infirmity, for so sharp a contention rose between him and Barnabas, that they could not continue together in the work of the Gospel, but were obliged to separate one from another. We must therefore understand the word *blameless* in a more popular sense, not as if those of whom it is predicated were free from all stain of sin, but as meaning that they lived an upright, godly life, ever striving to keep a conscience free from offence, and never yielding to those wilful sins which offend society, or destroy the work of God's grace in the soul, or even give cause of deep and bitter regret to him who yields to them.

Again, it is said of the Christian under grace, that "the law of the Spirit of life makes him free from the law of sin and death" (Rom. viii. 2). This is true of all good Christians, but it does not mean that they are made perfect and wholly free from sin, but that the Spirit of God sets them free from the *bondage* and *slavery* of sin, and gives them freedom and strength to "fulfil the righteousness of the Law."

The same reasoning nearly applies to the words of St. John, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin" (1 John iii. 9). This is true of every regenerate man as regards his new nature, the new man created in him. That new man is pure and holy, hating sin and avoiding it. Still however there are the remains of the old man, causing in him those infirmities which more or less are common to all. A regenerate man does not live in admitted sin. If he does, his new life has failed and is stifled. But, he still "in many things offends," and, "if he says he has no sin, he deceives

himself ;” because, in this world, the old nature may be kept in subjection and bondage, but is never thoroughly extinguished, until the last enemy has been destroyed, and all things are put in subjection under the feet of Christ.

It is true, we are bid to be holy, as Christ is holy (1 Pet. i. 15) ; to “be perfect, as our Father which is in Heaven is perfect” (Matt. v. 48). But we can infer from these exhortations no more than this. It is our part to set before us the highest possible standard at which to aim. Christ took our nature, that He might make us partakers of His nature ; and we are never to be satisfied, unless we grow daily more and more like to Him. But it does not follow, that we shall ever attain to such perfect conformity to His Image, until we become “like Him, by seeing Him as He is.”

We come, lastly, to consider the case of the Blessed Virgin. That she was a person of most singular holiness, most highly honoured of God, and most affectionately beloved by her Divine Son, no candid reader of Scripture can doubt. The Angel salutes her, “Hail, thou that art highly favoured: <sup>1</sup> the Lord is with thee ; Blessed art thou among women” (Luke i. 28). Her cousin Elizabeth saluted her, by the Holy Ghost, saying, “Blessed art thou among women ;” and though she was her near kinswoman, yet wondered at the honour done to herself in that “the Mother of her Lord should come unto her” (Luke i. 42, 43). Mary herself said of herself, that “all generations should call her blessed” (Luke i. 48). The Lord in His youth was subject to her (Luke ii. 51). At His death, and with His dying accents, He commended her to the care and guardianship of His most devoted and best loved disciple (John xix. 26, 27). We learn of her, that she was the first who, hearing the blessed teaching of her Son, “kept all His sayings in her heart” (Luke ii. 51). We find her following Him, with unwearied and dauntless affection, to the foot of His Cross (John xix. 25) ; and, when all but His most faithful followers were dispersed, continuing with the Apostles “with one accord in prayer and supplication” (Acts i. 14).

All this is but what we should expect. Doubtless among women there never lived a holier than she who was chosen to the highest honour that ever befel created being. That honour, indeed, to be ‘the tabernacle of Incarnate Godhead, to cherish the infant years, minister to the wants, and soothe, if such there were, the early sufferings of the Redeemer of mankind, to be the only earthly

<sup>1</sup> *Κεχαριστωμένη*. The margin has “Or, graciously accepted, or, much graced.”

instrument by which God wrought the mystery of the Incarnation, is an honour so high that we can hardly wonder if ages of ignorance gave undue reverence to her who had such favour of God.<sup>1</sup>

Yet it has been remarked that on three separate occasions our Lord and her Lord used of, and to her, language at least bordering on censure. At the marriage in Cana, the words, "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" (John ii. 4) (though not scounding so strong in the Greek as in the English language) have been esteemed in all ages as words of rebuke.<sup>2</sup> Before this, when He was but twelve years old (Luke ii. 49), as His mother and Joseph sought for Him, He reproves them for not knowing the high mission on which He came: "How is it that ye sought Me? Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" Lastly, when His mother and His brethren sought to speak with Him, the answer to those who told Him of it was, "Who are My mother and My brethren? And He stretched forth His hand towards His disciples and said, Behold My mother and My brethren! For, whosoever shall do the will of My Father which is in Heaven, the same is My brother, and sister, and mother" (Matt. xii. 48, 49, 50).

Very similar to this was that saying, when a certain woman "lifted up her voice and said unto Him, Blessed is the womb that bare Thee, and the paps which Thou hast sucked. But He said, Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it" (Luke xi. 27, 28). There was indeed no denial of the blessedness of being His mother; still less was there any denial that His mother was blessed. But the privilege of being the mother of Jesus was not in itself so great as the blessing of doing the will of God. Now those who argue that the Virgin was perfectly free from sin, argue so from the very fact of her being the mother of the Immaculate Saviour. But surely, if the fact of being His

<sup>1</sup> "Man is a creature of extremes . . . . Because Papists have made too much of things, Protestants have made too little of them . . . . Because one party has exalted the Virgin Mary to a divinity, the other can scarcely think of that most highly favoured among women with common respect." — *Remains of the Rev. Richard Cecil*, p. 364. Ninth Edition. Lond. 1830.

<sup>2</sup> *τί ἐμοὶ καὶ σοὶ γύναι*; the word *γύναι* may easily be used as a term of respect, and might as well have been rendered "lady" as "woman." Every one knows

that ladies of the highest rank would have been so addressed in Greek. But the fathers all acknowledged rebuke in the sentence. *ἐπέκλητε τῇ μητρί*, says Athanasius (*Contra Arian. Orat. 4*); *ἐπετίμησεν ἀκαιρῶς αἰτούση*, says Chrysostom (*In Matt. hom. 45*); *Ὁ δὲ ἐπιτιμᾷ αὐτῇ οὐκ ἄλόγως*, says Theophylact. See Beveridge on this Article. Epiphanius says that these words were used that no one might esteem the Blessed Virgin of a higher nature than woman, with special view to the heresies which would one day arise (*Heres. 79, Collyridiani*).

mother proved that she was sinless, it would have brought with it, or have been the proof of, a blessing so great that there could have been no room for the "Yea! rather blessed."

We may conclude, therefore, that the Virgin Mary, though "highly favoured," "blessed among women," and, doubtless, unusually sanctified, was yet no exception to the rule that all mankind, Christ only excepted, are stained with sin, and liable to offend in many things.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The subject of the Perpetual Virginity of the Virgin Mary, which has some affinity to the question discussed in the text, may be seen treated at length by Pearson *On the Creed*, Article, "Born

of the Virgin Mary." See especially the notes. See also Jer. Taylor's *Life of Christ*, § 2. Bp. Bull's *Works*, I. Sermon. iv.; and Professor Mill's *Accounts of our Lord's Brethren*.

## ARTICLE XVI.

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### *Of Sin after Baptism.*

Nor every deadly sin willingly committed after baptism is sin against the Holy Ghost, and unpardonable. Wherefore the grant of repentance is not to be denied to such as fall into sin after baptism. After we have received the Holy Ghost we may depart from grace given and fall into sin, and by the grace of God we may arise again and amend our lives. And therefore they are to be condemned which say they can no more sin as long as they live here, or deny the place of forgiveness to such as truly repent.

### *De Peccato Post Baptismum.*

NON omne peccatum mortale post baptismum voluntarie perpetratum, est peccatum in Spiritum Sanctum, et irremissibile. Proinde lapsis a baptismo in peccata, locus pœnitentiæ non est negandus. Post acceptum Spiritum Sanctum possumus a gratia data recedere, atque peccare, denuoque per gratiam Dei resurgere, ac resipiscere; ideoque illi damnandi sunt, qui se, quamdiu hic vivant, amplius non posse peccare affirmant, aut vere resipiscentibus veniæ locum denegant.

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### SECTION I. — HISTORY.

THE Article as it now stands is very nearly the same as the fifteenth Article of A. D. 1552. But in the Articles of 1552, the sixteenth Article followed out the subject of the fifteenth, and treated expressly of Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost.

The Article which we now have, treats of, or alludes to

I. Deadly sin after baptism, and the possibility of repentance for such sin.

II. The sin against the Holy Ghost.

III. The possibility of falling from grace.

The first of these three divisions is that which forms the main subject of the Article; the other two being incidentally alluded to. The third, however, is spoken of in somewhat decided terms, and being a point on which there has been no little controversy, requires to be considered.

I. As regards the possibility of repentance and forgiveness for sins committed after baptism and the grace of God, there was some stir even in early ages of the Church.

Some of the Gnostics, who affected great asceticism, appear to have held also very rigid notions of the divine justice and the irre-



missibility of sins. Clement of Alexandria says that Basilides taught that "not all sins, but only sins which were committed involuntarily or through ignorance, were forgiven."<sup>1</sup>

The Church itself in early times was very severe in its censures against heinous crimes, and very slow in admitting offenders to Church-communion. It appears that in the second and third centuries, persons who committed small sins might be admitted frequently to repentance, but that great and flagrant offenders were put to penance and reconciled to the Church but once. In the case indeed of some very grievous, deadly, and often-repeated sins, the Church seems to have refused communion even at the last hour. The meaning of which severity doubtless was, that offenders might not mock God and the Church with feigned repentance, turning again to sin like the swine to their wallowing in the mire.<sup>2</sup>

The Montanists carried this rigour much farther than the Catholics; for they not only refused repeated penances and reconciliation, but did not allow to the Church the power of forgiving great sins after baptism, even once. Tertullian, in those writings which he composed before he became a Montanist, speaks of grievous sins as once, and but once, remitted by the Church. After he had joined the sect of the Montanists, he distinguishes between venial sins, (such as causeless anger, evil speaking, rash swearing, falsehood,) and sins of a heinous and deadly character, such as murder, idolatry, fraud, denying Christ, blasphemy, adultery, fornication. Of these latter he says there is no remission, and that even Christ will not intercede for them.<sup>3</sup>

St. Clement of Alexandria in one place seems to say that there is no repentance but once after baptism.<sup>4</sup> It is probable that he refers to a passage in the *Pastor* of Hermas, where we read that there is but one penitence, namely, when we descend into the water, and so receive remission of sins.<sup>5</sup> But whereas it is pretty certain that Hermas speaks of the repentance and remission of sins in baptism to be once given and never repeated, but does not thereby

<sup>1</sup> Clem. Alex. *Strom.* iv. p. 634, Potter; Mosheim, *De Rebus ante Constant.* sæc. 2, c. 48; King, *On the Creed*, p. 358; Bp. Kaye's *Clem. Alex.* p. 269.

<sup>2</sup> See this subject fully considered by Bingham, *Eccles. Antiq.* Bk. xvi. c. x.; Bk. xviii. c. iv. He quotes Hermas, Clem. Alex., Tertull., Origen, the Council of Eliberis, Ambros., Augustine, &c.; see especially Bk. xviii. c. iv. § 1.

<sup>3</sup> Bp. Kaye's *Tertullian*, pp. 20, 254, 339; Tertullian, *De Pudicitia*, c. 19; see also Lardner, *Hist. of Heretics*, Bk. 11.

ch. xix. sect. 8; Mosheim, *Ecc. Hist.* Cent. 11. pt. 11. ch. v.

<sup>4</sup> Ὁ μὲν οὖν ἐξ ἔθνῶν καὶ τῆς προβιότητος ἐκείνης ἐπὶ τὴν πίστιν ὁμῆσας, ἅπαξ ἔτυχεν ἀφέσεως ἁμαρτιῶν. ὁ δὲ καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα ἁμαρτήσας, εἴτα μετανοῶν, κἂν συγγνώμης τυγχάνῃ, αἰδέσθαι ὀφείλει, μηκέτι λουόμενος εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν . . . δόκησις τοῖνυν μετανοίας, οὐ μετάνοια, τὸ πᾶλλῃκις αἰτεῖσθαι συγγνώμην, ἐφ' οἷς πλημμελοῦμεν πᾶλλῃκις. — *Stromat.* 11. § 13, p. 460.

<sup>5</sup> Herm. *Past. Mandat.* iv. 3; Cotel. p. 96.

mean to exclude from repentance after baptism ;<sup>1</sup> so it appears that Clement of Alexandria speaks either of one *public* penance, which might be conceded by the Church,<sup>2</sup> or that he simply means that to repent and return again continually to former sins proves the repentance not to have been real, but feigned and hypocritical. Yet some have thought that the language both of Hermas and Clement prepared the way for the severity of Origen and the errors of the Novatians.

Origen appears to have thrown out the opinion, that persons who had once embraced the Gospel and been baptized, and then denied the faith, could not be readmitted to repentance nor obtain pardon of sin.<sup>3</sup>

The sect of the Novatians arose about the middle of the third century. Novatian, their founder, a presbyter of Rome, had on a former occasion been chosen by the Church of that city to write to Cyprian on the subject of restoring the lapsed to communion.<sup>4</sup> In the year 251, Cornelius was elected Bishop of Rome, a post to which Novatian aspired. Novatian had himself secured three bishops, ignorant and inexperienced men, to consecrate him to the bishopric. But not succeeding in his hopes of holding possession of the see, he set up a schismatical communion. He does not appear to have held any heretical doctrine ; but he denied to the Church the power of restoring to communion those who had lapsed in persecution. Eusebius indeed says, that he denied to them the hope of salvation ;<sup>5</sup> but it seems more probable, from the language of Cyprian and others, that he exhorted them to repent, and to seek for pardon, but refused to offer them any consolation, or to admit them again to any church-privilege in this life.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Consult Cotelarius's note on this passage of Hermas.

<sup>2</sup> So his words are explained by Lumper, *Hist. Theolog. Crit.* Tom. iv. p. 388. Bp. Jeremy Taylor writes, "Whereas some of them" (*i. e.* of the fathers) "use to say that after baptism, or after the first relapse, they are 'unpardonable,' we must know that in the style of the Church, 'unpardonable' signifies such to which, by the discipline and customs of the Church, pardon may not be ministered. They were called 'unpardonable,' not because God would not pardon them, but because He alone could." — *On Repentance*, ch. ix. § 3. All that is said in this section about the fathers' doctrine of repentance is well worth reading.

<sup>3</sup> Origen. *Tract.* 35 in *Matthæum* ; see Abp. Potter's note on the before-cited passage of Clem. Alex.

<sup>4</sup> The letter is in the collection of the letters of Cyprian, Epis. xxx.

<sup>5</sup> *H. E.* vi. 48 ; *ὡς μηκέτ' ὄσης αὐτοῖς σωτηρίας ἐλπίδος*. So Epiphanius. *Adv. Hær.* Hær. xxxix. *λέγων μὴ εἶναι σωτηρίαν, ἀλλὰ μίαν μετάνοιαν*.

<sup>6</sup> *Epist.* 55, *juxta finem*. There he describes the Novatians as urging repentance, but excluding from peace : "hortari ad satisfactionis pœnitentiam, et subtrahere de satisfactione medicinam ; dicere fratribus nostris, plange et lacrymas funde, et diebus ac noctibus ingemisce, et pro abluendo et purgando delicto tuo largiter et frequenter operare, sed extra ecclesiam post omnia ista morieris : quæcumque ad pacem pertinent, facies, sed nullam pacem, quam quæris, accipies."

Whether he extended this severity to heinous sins in general is not apparent; but it seems that the sect of the Novatians, who owed their origin to him, refused communion to the penitent after other heavy offences besides lapsing in persecution.<sup>1</sup> The Novatians arrogated to themselves the title of *Cathari*, or *pure*; and refused to acknowledge the baptism of those Churches which admitted the lapsed to penance and communion.

The Church Catholic, however, rejected at once the severity of Novatian's sentiments. Eusebius, on the authority of Cornelius, mentions a council of bishops, who met at Rome and condemned the folly of Novatian.<sup>2</sup> Still the sect of the Cathari continued, and appears to have flourished throughout the fourth and part of the fifth century. But the fathers of the Church uniformly esteemed them heretics, and expressed their belief in the remissibility of sin, on repentance, after baptism.<sup>3</sup>

St. Cyprian says, that to a lapsed Christian, who repents, prays, and exerts himself, God gives pardon and restores his arms, so that he may fight again, strengthened for the conflict by the very sorrow for his sins. And he, thus strengthened by the Lord, may make glad the Church, which he had saddened, and obtain not only pardon, but a crown.<sup>4</sup> St. Gregory Nazianzen calls penitence another baptism, but rougher and more troublesome; and says that owning the infirmity and fickleness of man, he gratefully accepts for himself, and willingly imparts to others, this grace of repentance; aware that he himself is compassed with infirmities, and that with that measure he metes it shall be measured to him again. The Novatian he calls the modern Pharisee, and asks if he would not have allowed the repentance of David, or the return of Peter after he had denied his Lord, or the contrition of the incestuous Corinthian, to whom St. Paul confirmed his love.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Igitur, hoc nullum habet dubium, adultam ecclesiam Novatianam non modo perfidos Christianos, verum etiam omnium capitalium criminum reos alienos a se voluisse." — Mosheim, *De Rebus ante Constant. Magnum*, sæc. tertium, § xvi.

<sup>2</sup> *H. E.* vi. 43, *juxta finem*.

<sup>3</sup> See Cyprian, Eusebius, and Epiphanius, as above; Mosheim, *De Rebus ante Constant. Magnum*, sæc. iii. §§ xv. xvi.; Lardner, iii. pt. 11. ch. 47; Cave, *Histor. Liter.* Tom. i. p. 91.

<sup>4</sup> "Pœnitenti, operanti, roganti, potest (Deus) clementer ignoscere . . . dat Ille et arma rursus quibus victus armetur, reparat et corroborat vires, quibus fides instaurata vegetetur. Repetet certamen

suum miles, iterabit aciem, provocabit hostem, et quidem factus ad prælium fortior per dolorem. Qui sic Deo satisfecerit, qui pœnitentia facti sui, qui pudore delicti, plus et virtutis et fidei de ipso lapsus sui dolore conceperit, exauditus et adjutus a Domino, quam contristaverat nuper, lætam faciet Ecclesiam: nec jam solam Dei veniam merebitur, sed coronam." Cypr. *De Lapsis*, fin. p. 188.

<sup>5</sup> Οἶδμι καὶ πέμπτον (βάπτισμα) ἐτι τῶν δακρύων, ἀλλ' ἐπιπονώτερον. ὡς ὁ λούων καθ' ἐκάστην ἰσχύα τὴν κλίνην αὐτοῦ, καὶ τὴν στρωμενὴν τοῖς δάκρυον . . . ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν (ἄνθρωπος εἶναι γὰρ ὁμολογῶ ζῶον τρεπτόν καὶ βευστῆς φύσεως) καὶ ἄχομαι τοῦτο προθύμως, καὶ προσκυνῶ τῷ δεδωκότῃ, καὶ τοῖς

St. Ambrose says, that, as our blessed Lord calls all that are weary and heavy laden to come unto Him, those cannot be reckoned as His disciples, who, whilst they have need of mercy themselves, yet deny it to others.<sup>1</sup> The Novatians granted pardon to smaller, not to greater crimes; but God, says St. Ambrose, makes no such distinction, who has promised His mercy to all, and gives to all His priests the power of loosing without any exception. Only, if the crime be great, so must be the repentance.<sup>2</sup>

Other early heretics are mentioned, as agreeing with the Novatians in their severity against the lapsed. The Apostolici are reckoned by Epiphanius as an offset from the Encratites or Cathari. Their opinions concerning marriage and all worldly indulgences were highly ascetic, and they refused to receive those who once fell.<sup>3</sup> The Meletians were an Egyptian sect. They arose about the time of Diocletian's persecution. Meletius, their founder, was Bishop of Lycopolis in the Thebaid. He was deposed by Peter, Bishop of Alexandria, and set up a schismatical communion under Alexander, the successor of Peter. They ultimately joined the Arians, as being the great enemies of Alexander. Epiphanius and Augustine ascribe to them the same severity to the lapsed which characterized the Novatians.<sup>4</sup> The Luciferians, who followed Lucifer, Bishop of Cagliari in Sardinia, avoided communion with those who had lapsed to Arianism, and with those bishops who restored the lapsed. It should seem from Jerome that the Luciferians did not altogether exclude laymen who had lapsed from returning to communion, but would on no account receive repentant bishops and presbyters; arguing from our Lord's words, "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost its savour, where-with shall it be salted."<sup>5</sup>

ἄλλοις μεταδίδομι καὶ προεσιφέρω τοῦ ἔλεον τῶν ἔλεον. Οἶδα γὰρ καὶ αὐτοὺς ἀσθένειαν περικείμενος. καὶ ὡς ἂν μετρήσω, μετρηθῆσόμενος. Σὺ δὲ τί λέγεις; τί νομοθετεῖς, ὡ νεὲ φαρσαῖε, καὶ καθαρὴ τὴν προσηγορίαν, οὐ τὴν προαίρεσιν, καὶ φουσῶν ἡμῖν Ναυατοὺ τὰ μετὰ τῆς αὐτῆς ἀσθενείας; οὐ δέχῃ μετανοίαν; οὐ δίδως ὀδυρμοῖς χώραν; οὐ δακρύεις δάκρυν; Μὴ σὺ γε τοιοῦτου κριτοῦ τύχους . . . οὐδὲ τὸν Δαβὶδ δέχῃ μετανοοῦντα, ὡ καὶ τὸ προφητικὸν χάρισμα ἢ μετάνοια συνετήρησεν; οὐδὲ Πέτρον τὸν μέγαν παθόντά τι ἀνθρώπων περὶ τὸ σωτήριον πάθος; . . . οὐδὲ τὸν ἐν Κορίνθῳ παρανομήσαντα; Παῦλος δὲ καὶ ἀγίαπην ἐκύρωσεν, ἐπειδὴ τὴν διώθωσιν εἶδε, καὶ τὸ αἴτιον, ἵνα μὴ τῆ περισσοτέρᾳ λύπῃ καταποθῆ ὁ τοιοῦτος. — Greg. Naz. Orat. 89, Tom. 1. p. 634, Col. 1690.

<sup>1</sup> "Unde liquet eos inter Christi dis-

cipulos non esse habendos, qui dura pro mitibus, superba pro humilibus sequenda opinantur: et cum ipsi quaerant Domini misericordiam, alii eam denegant; ut sunt doctores Novatianorum, qui mundos se appellant." — *De Pœnitentia*, Lib. 1. c. 1.

<sup>2</sup> "Sed Deus distinctionem non facit, qui misericordiam suam promisit omnibus, et relaxandi licentiam omnibus sacerdotibus suis sine ulla exceptione concessit. Sed qui culpam exaggeravit, exaggeret etiam pœnitentiam." — *Ibid.* c. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Epiphani. *Hæres.* 61.

<sup>4</sup> Epiphani. *Hæres.* 63; August. *Pæres* 48.

<sup>5</sup> Hieron. *Adv. Luciferianos*, Tom. 1 v pt. 11. p. 290, seq.

At the period of the Reformation, it appears that some of the sects which then arose, most probably the Anabaptists in particular, revived in some degree the Novatian errors. The XIth Article of the Confession of Augsburg, which is the source of the XVIth Article of the Church of England, condemns the Novatians by name, for refusing repentance to the lapsed, and afterwards condemns the Anabaptists, though for another error, namely, the denial that persons once justified ever lose the grace of God.<sup>1</sup> Dr. Hey thinks that both the German and English reformers had chiefly in view the Anabaptists, in their condemnation of this extreme rigour against the lapsed.<sup>2</sup>

In the fourteenth session of the Council of Trent, several decrees and canons were drawn up upon penance, whereby it was defined that, for sins after baptism, the sacrament of penance was essential and sufficient; the form of the sacrament being contrition, confession, and satisfaction. It was determined that it was necessary to pardon that every mortal sin should be confessed, but not every venial sin.<sup>3</sup>

The continental reformers were very express in asserting the efficacy of repentance for remission of sin after baptism. Thus, the Confession of Augsburg says, that "Remission of sins may be granted to those who lapse after baptism, at any time when they turn to God. And the Church ought to grant absolution to such."<sup>4</sup> The Helvetic Confession declares, that "there is access to God and pardon for all who believe, with the exception of those guilty of the sin against the Holy Ghost; therefore the old and new Novatians are to be condemned."<sup>5</sup>

The sentiments of the English Reformers appear plainly, both in the wording of this Article, and in several of the Homilies. For example, in the First Book of Homilies we read, "They, which in act or deed do sin after baptism, when they turn again to God unfeignedly, they are likewise washed by this sacrifice from their sins, in such sort that there remaineth not any spot of sin that shall be imputed to their damnation."<sup>6</sup> "We must trust only in

<sup>1</sup> *Confess. Augs.* Art. xi.; *Sylloge*, p. 172.

<sup>2</sup> *Lectures*, III. p. 436.

<sup>3</sup> *Conc. Trid.* Sess. xiv. Can. i. iv. &c.; Sarpi, p. 326.

<sup>4</sup> "De pœnitentia docent, quod lapsus post baptismum contingere possit remissio peccatorum, quocunque tempore cum convertuntur. Et quod ecclesia talibus redeuntibus ad pœnitentiam impertire absolutionem debeat." — *Conf. August.* Art. xi.; *Syll.* p. 172.

<sup>5</sup> "Docemus interim semper et omnibus peccatoribus aditum patere ad Deum, et hunc omnino omnibus fidelibus condonare peccata, excepto uno illo peccato in Spiritum Sanctum. Ideoque damnamus et veteres et novos Novatianos atque Catharos." — *Confess. Helvet.* Art. xiv.; *Syllog.* p. 50.

<sup>6</sup> *Homily of Salvation*, pt. i.

God's mercy, and that sacrifice which our High Priest and Saviour, Christ Jesus the Son of God, once offered upon the Cross, to obtain thereby God's grace and remission, as well of our original sin in baptism as of all actual sin committed by us after our baptism, if we truly repent and turn to Him unfeignedly again."<sup>1</sup> And in the Second Book of Homilies we are told, "Repentance is never too late, so that it be true and just."<sup>2</sup> "Although we do, after we be once come to God, and grafted in his Son Jesus Christ, fall into great sins . . . yet if we rise again by repentance, and with a full purpose of amendment of life do flee unto the mercy of God, taking sure hold thereon, through faith in his Son Jesus Christ, there is an assured and infallible hope of pardon and remission of the same, and that we shall be received again into the favour of our heavenly Father."<sup>3</sup>

II. Concerning the sin against the Holy Ghost, the language of our Article is directed against an opinion, which was first broached by Origen.

Origen and Theognostus taught, that the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost was, when those who in baptism had received the gift of the Spirit, returned again to sin; and that such had never forgiveness. Origen, we are told, assigned as a reason for this, that, whereas God the Father pervades and embraces all things, animate and inanimate, and the power of God the Son extends more immediately to the rational creatures of God, among whom are heathen men who have never yet believed; the Spirit of God, on the contrary, is in those only who have received the grace of baptism. Hence, when Gentiles and unbelievers sin by blasphemy, they sin against the Son, who is in them, yet they can be forgiven. But when baptized Christians sin, their iniquity proceeds to the Spirit of God, who dwells in their hearts, and therefore they have never forgiveness.

St. Athanasius wrote a treatise expressly on the subject, in which he first states, and then examines and confutes, this notion of Origen's. He observes, that the occasion of our Lord's speaking of the sin against the Holy Ghost was the blasphemy of the Pharisees, who disbelieved the miracles of Christ, and ascribed them to Beelzebub. They, he remarks, had never been baptized, and yet they had either committed, or were in imminent danger of committing, the sin against the Holy Ghost.

Athanasius himself appears to maintain, that the blasphemy

<sup>1</sup> *Homily of Salvation*, pt. 11.

<sup>2</sup> *Homily of Repentance* pt. 1.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

against the Son of Man was the disbelieving and blaspheming against our blessed Lord, when as yet only His human nature was manifested; but that blasphemy against the Holy Spirit was continuing to deride and speak evil of Him, when He had given plain and irrefragable proofs of His Godhead and Divine nature.<sup>1</sup> The author, under his name, of the Questions to Antiochus, says, that they blasphemed the Holy Spirit, that is, the Divine nature of the Son who said that He cast out devils by Beelzebub. To them, he says, there is no remission in this world, nor in the next. But, he adds, we must understand this, not that he who blasphemes and repents, but that he who blasphemes and does not repent, shall never be forgiven; for no sin is unpardonable in the presence of God to those who holily and worthily repent; and then he adds, that there are three baptisms which purge away sin: the baptism of water, the baptism of blood, *i. e.* martyrdom, and the baptism of tears, *i. e.* repentance; and that many, who had defiled by backsliding their holy baptism, have yet been cleansed and accepted by the baptism of tears.<sup>2</sup>

Many, both ancient and modern, have followed in the steps of Athanasius, and given a like interpretation of the blasphemy against the Spirit. St. Chrysostom appears to take the same view; namely, that blasphemy was irremissible, which was uttered after the discovery and experimental proof of the Spirit's working. But then he appears to deny remission of such sin, not only to the impenitent, but even to those who repent.<sup>3</sup>

St. Augustine has some very excellent observations on the subject. He shows that neither Jews nor Gentiles were kept from pardon, because they had blasphemed Christ and the Holy Spirit in their unconverted state; nor yet that persons who had been baptized in infancy, and had grown up in ignorance, were refused forgiveness, because in their state of ignorance they resisted the Spirit and spoke against Him. He shows too, that even baptized persons lapsing, or becoming heretics, were yet admitted to the peace of the Church on their conversion and repentance; and enumerates among such heretics, Sabellians, Arians, Manichæans, Cataphrygians, Donatists. And then concludes, that the sin against the Spirit of God, which hath never forgiveness, is a final and obdurate continuance in wickedness, despite of all the calls

<sup>1</sup> Athanas. *In Illud Evangelii, Quicumque dixerit.*

<sup>2</sup> Athan. *Questiones ad Antiochum, Quæst. LXXI. LXXII.*

<sup>3</sup> οὐκ ἄφεθήσεται οὐδὲ μετανοῶσι. — Chrysost. *Homil. xli. in Matt. ap. Suic. Tom. i. p. 700.*

of God to repentance, joined with a desperation of the mercy of God.<sup>1</sup>

That the Church at large rejected the theory of Origen, though the Novatians appear to have adopted it, is plain from their admitting offenders after baptism, even the most heinous, to penance and absolution. They did not indeed restore them readily and lightly, as we do at present, but after a long term of penitence and exclusion from church-privileges; yet still, after sufficient satisfaction had been given to the Church, all offenders were ecclesiastically pardoned, and the sinner restored to peace and communion. For example, for fornication, the offender was expelled three years from the public service of the Church, three years more he was in the station of hearers, three years more in the station of the prostrate, and then was received to full communion. The term was double for adultery, and three times as long for murder. There was, however, some discretion allowed to the bishop, who might contract the term of discipline upon just ground of reason; and especially if there was imminent danger of death, the clemency of the fathers determined that the sinner should not be permitted to enter on his long last journey without provision for it, and without participation in the holy sacraments.<sup>2</sup> These rules were not the same in all dioceses and all parts of the Church. Thus the council of Ancyra enjoins seven years' penance for adultery;<sup>3</sup> for such as had sacrificed, three years of prostration, and two years more as communicants without oblation;<sup>4</sup> and for those who had sacrificed two or three times, it enjoins a penance of six years.<sup>5</sup> But the diversity in the measure of penance only proves identity of principle.

### III. The question of the possibility of falling from grace may be

<sup>1</sup> Augustin. *Epist. ad Romanos Expositio inchoata*, 14-23. Tom. 111. par. 11. p. 933-940. See especially, c. 22. p. 939: "Si ergo nec Paganis, nec Hebræis, nec hæreticis, nec schismaticis nondum baptizatis ad baptismum Christi aditus clauditur, ubi condemnata vita priore in melius commutentur; quamvis Christianitati et Ecclesiæ Dei adversantes antequam Christianis sacramentis abluerentur, etiam Spiritui Sancto quanta poterunt infestatione resisterint; si etiam hominibus, qui usque ad sacramentorum perceptionem veritatis scientiam percepserint, et post hæc lapsi Spiritui Sancto resisterunt, ad sanitatem redeuntibus et pacem Dei pœnitendo quærentibus, auxilium misericordiæ non negatur; si denique de illis ipsis, quibus blasphemiam in

Spiritum Sanctum ab eis prolatam Dominus objecit, si qui resipiscentes ad Dei gratiam confugerunt, sine ulla dubitatione sanati sunt: quid aliud restat nisi, ut peccatum in Spiritum Sanctum, quod neque in hoc sæculo neque in futuro dimitti Dominus dicit, nullum intelligatur nisi perseverantia in nequitia et in malignitate, cum desperatione indulgentiæ Dei?"

<sup>2</sup> See Marshall's *Penitential Discipline*, especially ch. 11. pt. 11. § 1, and Appendix, Num. 1.; Gregory Nyssen's *Canonical Epistle to Letoius*.

<sup>3</sup> Concil. Ancyrani, Can. xx.; Beveridge, *Pandect.* Tom. 1. p. 397.

<sup>4</sup> Can. vi.; Beveridge, I. p. 380.

<sup>5</sup> Can. viii.; Beveridge, I. 382.



considered as intimately connected with the doctrine of God's predestination, and therefore might properly come under the XVIIth Article. Yet, as it is certainly in some degree treated of in this Article, and may be separated from the question of predestination, we may not refuse to consider it here.

The earliest fathers, Clement, Ignatius, Justin Martyr, Irenæus, and others, speak of God's election and of predestination to grace and life. But, as we shall see in the next Article, it is not immediately certain in what sense they use this language of holy Scripture. The controversies which afterwards arose concerning the Pelagian heresy, and the predestinarian doctrines of St. Augustine, induced persons to use more accurate terms: and Augustine himself argues that the fathers did not teach his doctrines, because no heresy had arisen which made it necessary to expound them.<sup>1</sup> It seems, however, tolerably certain that the fathers of the second century spoke of the possibility of falling away from grace, and held that those who had received the gift of the Holy Spirit might afterwards reject it and be lost. Justin Martyr says, that "God will accept the penitent, as if he had never sinned, and will treat him who turns from godliness to impiety, as a sinner and unjust. Wherefore our Lord Jesus Christ says, "In whatsoever I find you, I will judge you." <sup>2</sup> Irenæus says, that whereas God gives grace, those who profit by it will receive glory, but those who reject it will be punished.<sup>3</sup> He compares children of God, who disobey Him, to sons of men who are disinherited by their fathers; and says that if we disobey God, we shall be cast off by Him.<sup>4</sup> Clement of Alexandria speaks of his Gnostic or perfect Christian, as praying for the permanence and continuance of that good which he already possesses.<sup>5</sup> Tertullian indeed, in his later treatises, especially after he had become a Montanist, seems to say that a person who fell away from grace

<sup>1</sup> *De Prædestinatione*, § 27, Tom. x. p. 808; *De Dono Perseverantiae*, § 58, Tom. x. p. 851.

<sup>2</sup> *Didog.* p. 267.

<sup>3</sup> "Dedit ergo Deus bonum, quemadmodum et Apostolus testificatur in eadem epistola, et qui operantur quidem illud, gloriam et honorem percipient, quoniam operati sunt bonum, cum possint non operari illud; hi autem qui illud non operantur, judicium justum recipient Dei, quoniam non sunt operati bonum, cum possint operari illud." — *Adv. Hær.* iv. 71.

<sup>4</sup> "Quemadmodum enim in hominibus indicto audientes patribus filii abdicati, natura quidem filii eorum sunt, lege vero

alienati sunt, non enim hæredes fiunt naturalium parentum: eodem modo apud Deum, qui non obediunt Eï, abdicati ab Eo, desiderunt filii Ejus esse . . . Verum quando credunt et subjecti esse Deo perseverant et doctrinam Ejus custodiunt, filii sunt Dei; cum autem abscesserint, et transgressi fuerint, Diabolo adscribuntur principi, ei qui primo sibi, tunc et reliquis causa abscessionis factus est." — *Ibid.* iv. 80. See also Beaven's *Irenæus*, p. 166.

<sup>5</sup> Ὁ γνωστικὸς δὲ ὧν μὲν κέχρηται παραμονῆν, ἐπιτηδεϊότητα δὲ εἰς ἃ μέλλει ἀποβαίνειν, καὶ αἰδιότητα ὧν λήφεται, ἀτήσεται. — *Strom.* Lib. vii. 7, p. 857.

had never been a Christian. In his tract *De Præscriptione* even, which was probably written before his Montanism, he speaks of no one as a Christian, but such as endured to the end.<sup>1</sup> But in his tract *De Pudicitia*, which was written when he had become a Montanist, in commenting on those words of St. John, "He who is born of God sinneth not," he argues that venial sins, such as causeless anger, rash swearing, &c., all Christians are liable to; but that deadly sin, such as murder, idolatry, blasphemy, impiety, no good Christian, no child of God, will commit.<sup>2</sup> Bishop Kaye even thinks that the language of Tertullian in his *later* writings is directly opposed to the doctrine of our XVIth Article. But he observes that as there was no controversy on the subject of perseverance in his days, we must not construe his expressions too strictly.<sup>3</sup> The time when this question really came to be discussed was after the rise of Pelagianism, and when St. Augustine had stated his predestinarian opinions. Perseverance was a natural part of his doctrine of predestination; for, whereas he taught that some men were predestinated to eternal salvation, whilst others were permitted to fall by their own sins into condemnation, it followed of necessity that he should believe some to be predestinated to final perseverance, and others not. In his work *De Correptione et Gratia*, he calls those elect who were predestinated to eternal life;<sup>4</sup> and observes that those who did not persevere were not properly to be called elect, for they were not separated from the mass of perdition by the foreknowledge and predestination of God; and though, when they believed and were baptized and lived according to God, they might be called elect, yet it was by those who knew not the future, not by God, who saw that they would not persevere.<sup>5</sup>

The clergy of Marseilles and other parts of Gaul, being offended at the predestinarianism expressed in this and other treatises of Augustine, Prosper and Hilary wrote to him a statement of their objections. These letters of Hilary and Prosper called forth a reply from St. Augustine, in two books; the former on the Predestination of the Saints, the other on the Gift of Perseverance. In the latter, he asserts perseverance to be the gift of God, not given equally to all, but only to the predestinated. Whether a person has received this gift must in this life ever be uncertain; for, however long he may have persevered in holiness, yet if he does not persevere to the end, he cannot have received the grace of perse-

<sup>1</sup> "Nemo autem Christianus, nisi qui ad finem usque perseveraverit." — *De Præscript. Hæretic.* c. 3.

<sup>2</sup> *De Pudicitia*, c. 19.

<sup>3</sup> Bp. Kaye's *Tertullian*, p. 340.

<sup>4</sup> *De Corrept. et Grat.* § 14.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* § 16.

verance.<sup>1</sup> He says, that of two infants equally born in sin, by God's will one is taken, one left; that, of two grown persons, one follows God's call, another refuses to follow it; and all this is from the inscrutable judgments of God. And so, of two pious persons, why to one is granted final perseverance, to another it is not granted, is to be resolved into the still more inscrutable judgments of God.<sup>2</sup>

It appears plainly that St. Augustine held two distinct predestinations: one predestination to regeneration and a state of grace, the other predestination to perseverance and to final reward. We find him continually speaking of persons predestinated to be brought into the Church, and so by God's grace brought to baptism, and therein regenerate, but not necessarily on that account persevering to the end. Nay, he speaks of persons continuing in a state of grace for many years, but yet finally falling away.<sup>3</sup> Such were predestinated to regeneration, and to receive grace and sanctification, but for some unknown though doubtless just cause, they were not predestinated to final perseverance. God is pleased to mix those who will not persevere with those who will, for good and wise reasons, on purpose that he who thinketh he standeth should take heed lest he fall.<sup>4</sup> In this life it was utterly impossible for any one to know whether he would persevere or not.<sup>5</sup> He might live ten years and persevere for five, and yet for the last five fall away.<sup>6</sup> We may see examples of God's hidden counsels in the case of some infants who die unregenerate, others who die regenerate; the former lost, the latter saved. And of those who are regenerate and grow up, some persevering to the end, others permitted to live on till they lapsed and fell away, and so are lost, who if they had died just before they lapsed, would have been saved; and again others, who had lapsed, preserved in life till they repented again, who, if they had been taken away before repentance, would have been damned.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *De Dono Perseverantiæ, Opp.* Tom. x. p. 822. See especially §§ 1, 6, 7, 10, 15, 19.

<sup>2</sup> "Ex duobus autem piis, cur huic donetur perseverantia usque ad finem, illi non donetur, inscrutabiliora sunt iudicia Dei . . . Nonne postremo utriusque vocati fuerant, et vocantem secuti, utriusque ex impiis justificati, et per lavacrum regenerationis utriusque renovati? Sed si hæc audiret ille, qui sciebat, procul dubio quod dicebat, respondere posset et dicere: Vera sunt hæc, secundum hæc omnia ex nobis erant; verumtamen secundum

aliam quamdam discretionem non erant ex nobis, nam si fuissent ex nobis, mansissent utique nobiscum." — *Ibid.* § 21.

<sup>3</sup> See especially *De Corrupt. et Grat.* 20, 22; *De Dono Perseverantiæ*, 1, 21, 32, 33, &c.

<sup>4</sup> *De Don. Persev.* 19.

<sup>5</sup> "Utrum quisque hoc munus acciperit, quam diu hanc vitam ducit, incertum est. Si enim prius quam moriatur cadat, non perseverasse utique dicitur, et verissime dicitur." — *Ibid.* § 1.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* § 32

It is of considerable importance to observe the nature of St. Augustine's doctrine of perseverance, as it materially differs from the doctrine most generally held by later predestinarians. St. Augustine did not hold that persons who had once received the gift of God's Spirit could never lose it, or at least, could never be finally lost. On the contrary, he plainly taught that persons might receive the gift of regeneration, and might persevere in holiness for a time, and yet, if they had not the gift of perseverance, might fall away at the last. In short, he held that predestination to grace did not necessarily imply predestination to glory. A person might receive the grace of God and act upon it, and yet not persevere to the end; and hence it was that he held that, even if a person had all the signs and tokens of a child of God, it was quite impossible in this life to say whether he was predestinated to persevere to the end.<sup>1</sup>

The question of final perseverance, and of the falling from grace, thenceforth became a natural part of discussions concerning predestination.

At the time of the Reformation all these subjects were hotly discussed. The Council of Trent found nothing to condemn in the writings of Luther, or of the Lutheran divines, on the subject of predestination, or of final perseverance; <sup>2</sup> but from the writings of the Zuinglians several articles were drawn out which were considered deserving of condemnation. Among these there were, (5) That the justified cannot fall from grace. (6) That those who are called, and are not in the number of the predestinated, do never receive grace. (8) That the justified is bound to believe for certain that in case he fall from grace he shall receive it again.<sup>3</sup>

The divines of Trent, though not entirely at one concerning some questions of predestination, agreed to censure these concerning final perseverance, with admirable concord. They said that it had always been an opinion in the Church, that many receive grace and keep it for a time, who afterwards lose it, and are damned at the last. They alleged the examples of Saul, Solomon, and Judas, of whom our Lord said, "Of those whom thou hast given me have I lost none save the son of perdition." To these they added Nicholas, one of the deacons, and for a conclusion of all, the fall of Luther.<sup>4</sup>

The language of Luther, on all the subjects connected with predestination, varies a good deal. Earlier in his life he was a

<sup>1</sup> See *ante*, note 5, p. 375, and *De Dono Perseverantiæ*, *passim*.

<sup>2</sup> Sarpi, p. 197.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*. p. 200.

high predestinarian ; but later he seems to have materially changed his views. In his commentary on the 17th chapter of St. John, he speaks of all disputes on predestination as having sprung from their author the devil.<sup>1</sup> In his commentary on the Galatians (ch. v. 4), he speaks plainly of falling from grace, and says that “ he who falls away from grace, loses expiation, remission of sins, righteousness, liberty, life, &c., which Christ by His death and resurrection deserved for us ; and, in their room, acquires wrath and God’s judgment, sin, death, slavery to the devil, and eternal damnation.”<sup>2</sup>

The XIth Article of the Confession of Augsburg, which is clearly the source of our own XVIth Article, condemns the Anabaptists, who say that persons once justified cannot again lose the Holy Spirit.<sup>3</sup> From which we may conclude, first, that such was the teaching of the Anabaptists ; and secondly, that the Lutherans viewed it altogether as an Anabaptist error.

The Calvinist divines, on the contrary, have generally believed that grace once given was indefectible ; and this is in fact their doctrine of perseverance. Calvin himself held, that our Lord and St. Paul taught us to confide that we should always be safe, if we were once made Christ’s ; and that those who fall away may have had the outward signs, but had not the inward truth of election.<sup>4</sup>

The English reformers, as we have already seen, adopted in this Article the language, not of the Zuinglians and Calvinists, but of the Confession of Augsburg and the Lutherans. This is apparent from the wording of the Article itself, which evidently follows the wording of the Confession of Augsburg ; and also from the Homilies, and other documents, both before and after the drawing up of the Articles. “ The Necessary Doctrine ” has been appropriately cited, which says, “ It is no doubt, but although we be once justified, yet we may fall therefrom . . . And although we be illuminated, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and be made partakers of the Holy Ghost, yet we may fall and displease God.”<sup>5</sup> The whole of the Homily “ Of Falling from God ” holds language of the same character. It should be read throughout, being a practical discourse, from which extracts would fail to give a right impression. It is impossible to doubt, that the doctrine contained in it is, that

<sup>1</sup> *Opp. Tom. v. p. 197.*

<sup>2</sup> *Opp. Tom. v. p. 405.*

<sup>3</sup> “ *Damnant et Anabaptistas, qui negant semel justificatos iterum posse amittere Spiritum Sanctum.*” — *Sylloge*, p. 173.

<sup>4</sup> “ *Quid hinc nos discere voluit Christus, nisi ut confidamus perpetuo nos fore salvos, quia illius semel facti sumus ?*” &c. — *Instit. Lib. III. c. xxiv. 6, 7.*

<sup>5</sup> *Formularies of Faith in the Reign of Henry the Eighth*, p. 367.

we may once receive the grace of God, and yet finally fall away from Him. These were documents drawn up at the period of the Reformation, shortly before the putting forth of the Articles. The second book of Homilies, written early in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and of nearly the same date with the final revision of the Articles, breathes the same spirit throughout. The language of the Homily called "The First Part of the Information of certain parts of Scripture" may be referred to as a specimen. After reciting examples from Scripture of the sins of good men, it continues, "We ought then to learn by them this profitable lesson, that if so godly men as they were, which otherwise felt inwardly of God's Holy Spirit influencing their hearts with the fear and love of God, could not by their own strength keep themselves from committing horrible sin, but did so grievously fall that without God's mercy they had perished everlastingly; how much more ought we then, miserable wretches, which have no feeling of God within us at all, continually to fear, not only that we may fall as they did, but also be overcome and drowned in sin, as they were not."

The Homily on the Resurrection has the following: "Ye must consider that ye be therefore cleansed and renewed that ye should henceforth serve God in holiness and righteousness all the days of your life, that ye may reign with Him in everlasting life (Luke i.) If ye refuse so great grace whereto ye be called, what other thing do ye than heap to you damnation more and more, and so provoke God to cast His displeasure upon you, and to revenge this mockage of His holy sacraments in so great abusing of them? Apply yourselves, good friends, to live in Christ, that Christ may still live in you," &c.

Similar is the tone breathed by the Liturgy itself. In the Baptismal Service we are taught to pray, that the baptized child "may ever remain in the number of God's faithful and elect children." In the Catechism the child, after speaking of himself as in a state of salvation, adds, "I pray unto God to give me His grace that I may continue in the same unto my life's end." And in the Burial Service we pray that God will "suffer us not at our last hour for any pains of death to fall from" Him.

In the reign of Queen Elizabeth the sympathy which had sprung up with the Calvinistic reformers of the continent made the teaching of our English divines approximate more nearly to the teaching of the Calvinists. Near the end of that reign a dispute arose at Cambridge, originating in the teaching of Barret, a fellow of Caius College, who preached *ad clerum* against Calvin's

doctrines about predestination and falling from grace. Barret was complained of to Archbishop Whitgift, who at first took his part; but at last, at the earnest request of the heads of Colleges, sent for him to Lambeth, where he was directed not to teach like doctrines again. The dispute so originating was continued between Dr. Whitaker, the Regius Professor, and Dr. Baro, the Margaret Professor, of Divinity. Whitaker, who took the high Calvinistic side, was sent by his party to Lambeth, where he proposed to the Archbishop to send down to Cambridge a series of Articles, nine in number, stamped with the authority of the archbishops and bishops, in order to check the progress of what he called Pelagianism. Archbishop Whitgift was thus induced to call a meeting of bishops and other clergy. The theses of Whitaker were submitted to them, and with some few alterations, which however were of considerable importance, they were passed by the meeting and sent down to Cambridge. The Queen censured Whitgift for the whole proceeding; and he promised to write to Cambridge, that the Articles might be suppressed. These were the famous *Lambeth Articles*. The fifth and sixth concerned falling from grace and certainty of salvation. The fifth as proposed by Whitaker ran thus, "True, living, and justifying faith, and the influence of the Spirit of God, is not extinguished, nor fails, nor goes off, in those who have once been partakers of it, either totally or finally." The divines at Lambeth erased the words "in those who have once been partakers of it," and substituted for them "in the elect;" thus making the doctrine more nearly correspond with Augustine's, rather than, as it did in Whitaker's draught of it, with Calvin's. The sixth Article, in Whitaker's draught, said that "A man who truly believes, that is, who has justifying faith, is sure, from the certainty of faith, concerning the remission of his sins and his eternal salvation through Christ." For "certainty of faith" the Lambeth divines substituted "full assurance of faith," using that word as signifying, not a full and absolute certainty, such as is the certainty of matters of science or of the principles of the faith, but rather a lesser degree of certainty, such as is obtained in matters of judicial evidence and legal trials.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Vth and VIth Articles as drawn by Whitaker were, —

"V. Vera, viva, et justificans fides et Spiritus Dei Sanctificans non extinguitur, non excidit, non evanescit in iis qui semel ejus participes fuerunt, aut totaliter aut finaliter.

"VI. Homo vere fidelis, id est fide

justificante præditus, certus est certitudine fidei, de remissione peccatorum suorum et salute sempiterna sua per Christum."

In the Vth the Lambeth Divines for *in iis qui semel ejus participes fuerunt*, substituted *in electis*.

In the VIth for *certitudine* they substi-

Soon after the accession of James I., A. D. 1604, the conference was held at Hampton Court. Dr. Reynolds, the speaker for the Puritans, moved, among other things, that the Articles be explained and enlarged. For example, whereas in Art. XVI. the words are these: "After we have received the Holy Ghost, we may depart from grace," he wished that there should be added, "yet neither totally nor finally;" and also that "the nine assertions orthodoxal concluded at Lambeth might be inserted into that book of Articles." On this point he was answered by the Bishop of London; no alteration of the kind was conceded, the Articles remaining as they were before, and the Lambeth Articles never having received any sanction of the Church or the Crown.<sup>1</sup>

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## SECTION II.—SCRIPTURAL PROOF.

THE first thing we have to show from holy Scripture is, that "every deadly sin committed after baptism is not unpardonable," and that "the place of forgiveness is not to be denied to such as truly repent."

To prove this proposition, it will be desirable (1) to show that sins after baptism are not generally unpardonable. (2) To consider those texts of Scripture, which are thought to prove the great heinousness and unpardonable nature of some sins, especially if committed after baptism.

I. First, then, sins after baptism are not generally incapable of being pardoned.

Baptism is the first step in the Christian life, by which we are admitted into the covenant, and to a share of the pardoning love of God in Christ. Under the Jewish dispensation there was no such thing as baptism ordained by God; but circumcision admitted into God's covenant with Abraham, and to a participation in the blessings of the congregation or Church of the Jews. Now it is a truth universally admitted, that the blessings we receive under the Gospel are greater than those which the Jews received under the Law. Especially, under the Gospel and in the Church of Christ, there is

tuted *plerophoria*. — See Strype's *Whitgift*, L. iv. c. 17.

<sup>1</sup> Cardwell, *Hist. of Conferences*, p. 178.



a fuller fountain of mercy and grace opened to all. "There is a fountain open for sin and for uncleanness," such as the Jews had only in figure. "The Law was given by Moses, but *grace* and truth came by Jesus Christ" (Joh. i. 17). Yet under the Law it is quite certain that there was a continual sacrifice offered for the sins both of priests and people, and a continual promise of pardon to the returning and penitent sinner. The prophet Ezekiel (ch. xxxiii. 12-20) by God's commandment clearly expounds to the Israelites, that, of those within the covenant, if the righteous man turn from his righteousness, he shall surely die; but if the wicked "turn from his sin, and do that which is lawful and right," "none of his sins that he hath committed shall be mentioned unto him; he hath done that which is lawful and right; he shall surely live." So the prophet David, after deliberate murder and adultery, was yet at once restored on his repentance. If then under the Law those who sinned were admitted to pardon, but under the Gospel, that is to say after baptism, those who sin are not admitted to pardon, then is the Gospel a state of less, instead of greater, grace than the Law; then those who have been made partakers of Christ, have been admitted to a sterner law and a less merciful covenant than those who were baptized into Moses, and admitted to that carnal commandment, which made nothing perfect.

It is true, indeed, that the greater God's mercies are, the heavier will be the punishment of those who slight them. "If they who despised Moses' law died without mercy, of how much sorer punishment shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God?" (Heb. x. 28, 29). Yet, that the slighting of God's mercies should be of so great guilt, results from the fact that those mercies are so great: and, if the grant of repentance be withheld from the Christian, which was conceded to the Jew, then we may say, that God's mercies under the Law were greater than are His mercies under the Gospel.

Thus then we may naturally infer that pardon of sin would be given to Christians, and that sin committed after baptism would not in general exclude the sinner from all hope of repentance. Such reasoning is fully confirmed by the language of the new Testament. The Lord's Prayer was ordained for the use of those who might call Almighty God their Father. We therefore may clearly see that it was to be used only by children of God. Now in baptism we are made children of God. In the Lord's Prayer, then, God's baptized children are taught to pray that their sins should be forgiven them. And our blessed Lord comforts us with the

assurance, that, “if we forgive men their trespasses, our heavenly Father will also forgive our trespasses” (Matt. vi. 14). So in the parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke xv.), it is a *son* that leaves his *father*, and who on his repentance is welcomed home and pardoned. The parable plainly sets before us, that, if we, as sons of God, leave our Father’s home and revel in all iniquity, still on true and earnest repentance we shall be received, pardoned, comforted.

To the chief ministers of His Church our Lord gave the power of binding and loosing; binding by censure upon sin, but loosing again by absolution and reconciliation (Matt. xviii. 18); and to confirm this power to them the more strongly He declared: “Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained” (John xx. 23). If the reconciliation of offenders to the Church be so sanctioned in Heaven, can there be a doubt that there is also pardon in Heaven for such as, having so offended, have repented and been reconciled?

We have instances in the new Testament of the Apostles giving hope of pardon, and restoring communion to those who had sinned most heavily after baptism. Thus Simon Magus, just after he was baptized, showed himself to be “in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity;” yet St. Peter urged him to repent of his wickedness, and to pray God, if perhaps the thought of his heart might be forgiven him<sup>1</sup> (Acts viii. 22, 23). Even of the man who after baptism had committed incest, and whom St. Paul (1 Cor. v. 1–5) bids the Corinthians to excommunicate, he yet gives hope that “his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus” (ver. 5). And when the incestuous man had given signs of true sorrow for his sin, but a very short time after his excommunication, the Apostle ordered him to be restored to communion, declares that he ministerially pardoned his offences in the name and as the minister of Christ (2 Cor. ii. 10); recommends the Corinthians to comfort him, that he should not be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow (ver. 7); and assures them, with reference to the same subject, that “godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of” (2 Cor. vii. 10). Nay! he expressly says that the object of excommunicating the guilty man was that his “spirit might be saved” (1 Cor. v. 5).

Again, St. Paul exhorts the Galatian Church. “Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault (*ἐν τινὶ παραπτώματι*) you, which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.” The words made use of are

<sup>1</sup> καὶ δεήθητι Θεοῦ, εἰ ἄρα ἀφεθήσεται σοὶ ἡ ἐπίμια τῆς καρδίας σου.

perfectly general, and we may infer from them, as a general rule, that a man entrapped or overtaken by any kind of transgression or backsliding is, on his repentance, to be restored to communion. In the latter part of the second Epistle to the Corinthians (xii. 20, 21), the Apostle speaks of his apprehension that he shall be grieved at the state of the Corinthian Church, for he feared that many of the Corinthian Christians had committed all those sins which most grievously defile the temple of God (*ἀκαθάρσια, πόρνευα, ἀσελγεία*), even every kind of uncleanness; but then the way in which he adds *καὶ μὴ μετανοησάντων*, “and have not repented,” seems clearly to indicate that the poignancy of his grief was derived from their impenitence; and that for those who repented there was still room for pardon and hope.

St. Peter tells us, that God “is long-suffering to usward” (meaning, as we may suppose, to Christians), “not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Pet. iii. 9). St. John says that, as all men are sinners, so “if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.” And when he writes to Christians, calling them his “little children,” and exhorting them that they sin not, he yet adds, “If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He is the propitiation for our sins.” Here we have an evident address to those who were members of Christ’s Church by baptism, an earnest exhortation to them not to sin, yet an encouragement to those who fall into sin, not to despair, as there is yet an Advocate, yet propitiation, through Jesus Christ (1 John i. 9; ii. 1, 2). St. James (James v. 13–15) enjoins, that if any member of the Church be sick, he should send for the clergy, the elders of the Church, to pray over him, and, among other blessings, promises that “if he have committed sins they shall be forgiven him.” Lastly, in the Apocalypse, referring to men who had been seduced from their faith to all the abominations of the worst kind of heresy, our blessed Lord speaks of “giving time to repent;” and threatens heavy punishment, “unless they repent of their deeds” (Rev. ii. 20–22).

The general promises to repenting sinners do not, of course, belong to our present inquiry. Such promises may have been made to such as had not been baptized, and may be performed only in baptism. But those now adduced all evidently concern Christians, who had been brought to Christ by baptism, and who had afterwards fallen into sin. And they seem clearly to prove, that not even the deadliest sin committed by a baptized person

makes it utterly impossible that, on hearty repentance and true faith, he should be forgiven.

There are indeed some passages of Scripture, and some very serious considerations, which have led to the belief that deadly sin after baptism has never forgiveness; and these we must take into account.

The fact that St. Paul speaks of the whole Church and every individual Christian as temples of the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. iii. 16; vi. 19; 2 Cor. vi. 16; Eph. ii. 22), joined with many similar considerations, shows that at our baptism we are set apart and consecrated to be temples of God. And then St. Paul declares that "if any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are" (1 Cor. iii. 17). In like manner, we know that in baptism we are made members of Christ (see Gal. iii. 27; Ephes. iv. 15, 16, &c.). And St. Paul, reminding the Corinthians of this, says: "What, know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid" (1 Cor. vi. 15). Such sayings prove, with exceeding force, the great wickedness of sin, and especially of sins of uncleanness, when committed by a baptized Christian; who thereby "sinneth against his own body" (1 Cor. vi. 18), and against the Holy Ghost, whose temple his body has been made. So our blessed Saviour, speaking of Christians as branches of the Vine, whose root and stem is Christ, says that, "If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered" (John xv. 6).

These passages, however, though they show the great guilt of sinning against grace, do not prove such sins to be unpardonable, though probably they suggested the opinion that sin after baptism was the sin against the Holy Ghost, which hath never forgiveness.

There are strong and very fearful passages in the first Epistle of St. John, which have still more led to some of the opinions disclaimed by the Article we are now considering. In 1 John iii. 6, 8, 9, we read that, "Whosoever abideth in Him, sinneth not. . . . He that committeth sin is of the devil. . . . Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." This passage led Jovinian to teach that a baptized Christian could never sin; and has been one argument from which it has been inferred, that, if by any means this high estate of purity should be lost, it would be lost irrevocably. Jerome, in his answer to Jovinian,<sup>1</sup> well explains the

<sup>1</sup> *Adv. Jovinian. Lib. II. circ. init. Tom. IV. pt. II. p. 193.*

general tenour of St. John's reasoning. He remarks that St. John exhorts those whom he addresses as little children, to keep themselves from idols (1 John v. 21) ; showing that they were liable to be tempted like others, and to fall ; that he writes to them not to sin ; and assures them still that, if they sin, they have an Advocate in the Lord Jesus Christ (1 John ii. 1, 2) ; that their best way of knowing that they know Christ is to keep His commandments (ver. 4) ; that he, who says he abides in Him, ought to walk as He walked (ver. 6). "Therefore," he continues, "St. John says, 'I write unto you, little children,' since 'every one who is born of God sinneth not,' that ye sin not, and that ye may know that ye abide in the generation of God, so long as ye do not sin ; yea, those who continue in God's generation cannot sin. For what communion hath Christ with Belial ? If we have received Christ as a guest into our hearts, we put to flight the devil. But if we sin again, the devil enters through the door of sin, and then Christ departs." This seems a correct account of St. John's reasoning, and shows that what he means is, that the regenerate man, so long as he continues in the regenerate state, overcomes sin and casts it out ; but if he falls from the regenerate state and sins, then he becomes again the servant of the devil. But it neither proves, that the regenerate man cannot sin, nor that, if he does, his fall is irrecoverable.

But St. John (1 John v. 16, 17) speaks of the distinction between "sin unto death," and "sin not unto death ;" and encourages us to pray for the latter, but not for the former. Bp. Jeremy Taylor has some good remarks on this verse. "Every Christian," he says, "is in some degree in the state of grace, so long as he is invited to repentance, and so long as he is capable of the prayers of the Church. This we learn from those words of St. John, 'All unrighteousness is sin, and there is a sin not unto death ;' that is, some sorts of sin are so incident to the condition of men, and their state of imperfection, that the man who hath committed them is still within the methods of pardon, and hath not forfeited his title to the promises and covenant of repentance ; but 'there is a sin unto death ;' that is, some men proceed beyond the measures and economy of the Gospel, and the usual methods and probabilities of repentance, by obstinacy, and preserving a sin, by a wilful, spiteful resisting, or despising the offers of grace and the means of pardon ; for such a man St. John does not encourage us to pray ; if he be such a person as St. John described, our prayers will do him no good ; but because no man can tell the last minute or period of

pardon, nor just when a man is gone beyond the limit; and because the limit itself can be enlarged, and God's mercies stay for some longer than for others, therefore St. John left us under the indefinite restraint and caution; which was decretory enough to represent that sad state of things in which the refractory and impenitent have immersed themselves, and yet so indefinite and cautious, that we may not be too forward in applying it to particulars, nor in prescribing measures to the Divine mercy, nor in passing final sentences upon our brother, before we have heard our Judge Himself speak. 'Sinning a sin not unto death' is an expression fully signifying that there are some sins which though they be committed and displeased God, and must be repented of, and need many and mighty prayers for their pardon, yet the man is in the state of grace and pardon, that is, he is within the covenant of mercy; he may be admitted, if he will return to his duty: so that being in a state of grace is having a title to God's loving-kindness, a not being rejected of God, but a being beloved of Him to certain purposes of mercy, and that hath these measures and degrees."

Again, "Every act of sin takes away something from the contrary grace, but if the root abides in the ground, the plant is still alive, and may bring forth fruit again. 'But he only is dead who hath thrown off God for ever, or entirely with his very heart.' So St. Ambrose. To be 'dead in trespasses and sins,' which is the phrase of St. Paul (Eph. ii. 1), is the same with that expression of St. John, of 'sinning a sin unto death,' that is, habitual, refractory, pertinacious, and incorrigible sinners, in whom there is scarcely any hope or sign of life. These are they upon whom, as St. Paul's expression is, (1 Thess. ii. 16,) 'the wrath of God is come upon them to the uttermost, *eis τὸ τέλος*, unto death.' So was their sin, it was a sin unto death; so is their punishment."<sup>1</sup>

But by far the most terrible passages in Scripture, on the danger of backsliding and the difficulty or impossibility of renewal, are to be found in the Epistle to the Hebrews. We learn indeed from Tertullian (*De Pudicitia*), that the difficulty of the 6th chapter of that Epistle was the main reason why the Roman Church was so long in admitting it into the Canon.

In the 10th chapter we read that, "if we sin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins; but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law, perished without mercy under two or three wit

<sup>1</sup> *Of Repentance*, ch. iv § 2

nesses ; of how much sorer punishment, think ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the Blood of the Covenant an unholy thing, and hath done despite to the Spirit of Grace ? ” (Heb. x. 26–29). The peculiar strength of this passage is in the words, “ If we sin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.” The word “ *sin* ” in the first clause, is here supposed by many to mean “ apostatize.” So in IIos. xiii. 2, we read וְעַתָּה יוֹסִפוּ לְחַטָּא “ Now they add moreover to sin ; ” where the sin spoken of is a revolting from God, and apostatizing to Baal. And, as regards the “ remaining no more sacrifice for sin,” the Apostle had been showing, throughout the early verses of the chapter, that the priests under the Law kept constantly offering sacrifices, year by year and day by day (vv. 1–11). But Christ offered but *one* sacrifice for sin, and by that one sacrifice hath perfected all that are sanctified (vv. 12–14). So then, if we reject the sacrifice of Christ, and after a knowledge of its saving efficacy, apostatize willingly<sup>1</sup> from the faith, there are not now fresh sacrifices, “ offered year by year continually ; ” and by rejecting the one sacrifice of Christ, we cut ourselves off from the benefit of His death ; and since we have chosen sin instead of God, there is no new sacrifice to bring us to God.

Another of the hard sentences, which has led to a belief in the irremissibility of post-baptismal sin, is Heb. xii. 17. The Apostle, warning against the danger of falling from grace, bids us take heed, lest there be “ any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited a blessing, he was rejected ; for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.” There can be no doubt, that Esau is here propounded to us as a type of those who, having been made sons of God by baptism, and so, having a birthright and promised inheritance, by thoughtlessness and sensuality, “ for one morsel of meat,” throw themselves out of God’s favour, and, leaving God’s family, return to the condition of mere sons of Adam. St. Paul reminding us that, when Esau had sold his birthright, he found no place for repentance, even when he sought it with tears, puts us on our guard against the like folly, by fear of the like fate. Yet it does not follow of course, that every person who lives unworthily of his baptismal privileges, shall be denied access to repentance. We can

<sup>1</sup> ἄκροβυστος בְּיַד רַמְיָא with a high hand, and Rosenmüller thereon ; Kuinoel on presumptuously. See Numb. xv. 29, 30 ; Heb. x. 26.

never, when we yield to sin, know that God will give us repentance; and we may die in our sin. And even if we repent, our repentance, like Esau's, may be too late; after the door is shut, and when it will not do to knock. We are told elsewhere of those who came and cried, "Lord, Lord, open unto us," and who received no answer but, "I know you not" (Matt. xxv. 11, 12). Such a late repentance is that of those who would repent in the grave, perhaps of some who seek only on the bed of death. But if we follow out the history of Esau, we may gain at least this comfort from it, that, even late as he had put off his seeking repentance, so late that he could never be fully restored, yet, though not to the same position as before, he was still restored to favour and to blessing (Gen. xxvii. 38, 39). So that we may hope from this history, as set forth to us for a type, that, though such as cast away their privileges as Christians find it hard to be reinstated in the position from which they fell, and may, perhaps, never in this world attain to like blessedness and assurance as if they had never fallen, still the door of repentance is not shut against them. Their place in their Father's house may be lower; but still it is not hopeless that there may, and shall, be a place for them.

The strongest passage, and that on which the Novatians most rested their doctrines, remains yet to be considered. It is Heb. vi. 4, 5, 6: "It is impossible for those, who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again to repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame."

The Syriac Version, Theodoret, Theophylact, and others of the ancients, who are followed by Ernesti, Michaelis, and many learned men of our own times, understand by the word "enlightened" (*ἀπαξ φωτισθέντας*) here, and in Heb. x. 32, "*baptized*." Clement of Rome, Justin Martyr, and others of the very earliest Christians, used the word in this sense.<sup>1</sup> But whether we admit this to be the right interpretation or not, we must allow the passage to teach that a person, after baptism and Christian blessing and enlightenment, may so fall away that it may be impossible to renew him to repentance. The words made use of seem to say that persons once baptized, endued with God's Holy Spirit, made partakers of the Christian Church,<sup>2</sup> if they despise all these blessings, rejecting,

<sup>1</sup> See Suicer, s. v. *φωτίζω, φωτισμός*.  
Also Bingham, *E. A. i.* iv. 1, xi. i. 4

<sup>2</sup> *δυνάμεις μέλλοντος αἰῶνος*, the very phrase used in the LXX. (cf. *Isai. ix. 6*)



and, as it were, afresh crucifying the Son of God, cannot be again restored to repentance. The difficulty of the passage lies almost wholly in two words, *παραπεσόντας*, "having fallen away," and *ἀνακαινίζειν*, "to renew." Most commentators consider the word "fall away," which occurs here only in the New Testament, to signify total apostasy from the faith.<sup>1</sup> If indeed the other two participles (*ἀνασταυρούοντας* and *παραδειγματίζοντας*) be to be coupled with it, as in apposition to, and explanation of it, then we may well conclude that it can mean no less. It is the case of those "who sin wilfully after they have received the knowledge of the truth," of him from whom one devil had been cast out, but to whom it had returned with seven worse devils. Rejecting their faith and their baptism, they fall away from Christ, reproach and crucify Him afresh, as much reject Him for their Saviour as they who actually nailed Him to the Cross. Bishop Taylor describes them as persons, who, "without cause or excuse, without error or infirmity, choosing, willingly, knowingly, called Christ an impostor, and would have crucified Him again if He were alive; that is, they consented to His death by believing that He suffered justly. This is the case here described, and cannot be drawn to anything else but its parallel; that is, a malicious renouncing charity, or holy life, as these men did the faith, to both which they have made their solemn vows in baptism; but this can no way be drawn to the condemnation and final excision of such persons who fall into any great sin, of which they are willing to repent."<sup>2</sup>

And for the other word of difficulty, *ἀνακαινίζειν*, "to renew," some think we must understand *to rebaptize*. The Church has no power to rebaptize those who fall away; and so, as first they were washed in the waters of baptism from original sin, to wash them again from their guilt of apostasy.<sup>3</sup> Others understand *to admit by absolution to the fellowship of the Church*, and so restore them to repentance and penance, when they have once thoroughly apostatized.<sup>4</sup> Others understand, that, whereas they have rejected the

of the Christian Church. See Hammond, *in loc.* Rosenmüller and Kuinoel both understand these words of the Kingdom of Christ, the Reign of Messiah. Hence "the powers of the world to come" would be the blessed effects of Christ's kingdom and gospel.

<sup>1</sup> *παραπίπτειν* is the translation of the LXX. for *פָּרַץ* Ezek. xxii. 4, and *פָּרַץ* Ezek. xiv. 13. Schleusner compares 2 Chron. xxix. 19, where the LXX. translate *פָּרַץ*, *ἐν ἀποστασία αὐτοῦ*.

<sup>2</sup> *On Repentance*, ch. ix. sect. 4.

<sup>3</sup> Dr. Hammond, *in loc.* observes that, as *ἐγκαίνισεν* is to dedicate, consecrate, so, *ἀνακαινίζειν* is to reconsecrate. Persons utterly apostate could not be reconsecrate. There was no power to repeat their baptism, nor, if utterly apostate, could the Church readmit them by penance to Church-communication.

<sup>4</sup> Many understand *ἀνακαινίζειν* as applied to the ministers of the Church. It is "impossible for the ministers of Christ to renew them again;" that is, there is

Gospel and all its means of grace, their case has become hopeless, because no other covenant can be provided for them: "There remaineth no more sacrifice for sins." No new method of salvation will be devised for them; and as they have utterly given up the one already provided, rejected Christ, and despised His Spirit, so it is impossible that any other should renew them. "Other foundation can no man lay, save that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ;" "for there is no means of salvation but this one; and this one they hate, and will not have; they will not return to the old, and there is none left by which they can be *renewed*, and therefore their condition is desperate."<sup>1</sup>

On the whole, there can be no doubt of the awful severity of the language of this passage, and of the warning it gives us against falling from grace; but, when we compare it with other passages somewhat like it, and contrast with it those which assure us of God's readiness to receive the penitent sinner, and to give repentance even to those who sin after grace given; we can hardly fail to conclude that it concerns particularly extreme cases, and not those of ordinary occurrence; and that, though it proves the heinousness of sinning against light and grace, and shows that we may so fall after grace as never to recover ourselves, yet it does not prove that there is no pardon for such baptized Christians as sin grievously, and then seek earnestly for repentance.

The fact that our Lord left to His Church the power of the keys, allowing its chief pastors to excommunicate for sin and restore on repentance, and that the Apostles and first bishops ever exercised that power, shows that even great sins (for none other led to excommunication) do not exclude from pardon. Nay, "Baptism is *εἰς μετάνοια*, the admission of us to the covenant of faith and repentance; or as Mark the anchorite called it, *πρόφασίς ἐστὶ τῆς μετάνοίας*, the introduction of repentance, or that state of life that is full of labour and care, and amendment of our faults; for that is the best life that any man can live; and therefore repentance hath its progress after baptism, as it hath its beginning before; for first, 'repentance is unto baptism,' and then 'baptism unto repentance.' . . . Besides, our admission to the holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is a perpetual entertainment of our hopes, because then and there is really exhibited to us the Body that was broken and the Blood that was 'shed for the remission

no other sacrament by which we can restore offenders to the same position in which they were before their fall, and in

which they were once placed by the sacrament of baptism.

<sup>1</sup> Bishop Jeremy Taylor, as above

of sins.' Still it is applied, and that application could not be necessary to be done anew, if there were not new necessities; and still we are invited to do actions of repentance, 'to examine ourselves, and so to eat.' All which, as things are ordered, would be infinitely useless to mankind, if it did not mean pardon to Christians falling into foul sins even after baptism."<sup>1</sup>

We may therefore conclude that, severe as some passages of Scripture are against those who sin wilfully against light and grace, and strict as the discipline of the early Church was against all such offenders, there is yet nothing to prove that heinous sin committed after baptism cannot be pardoned on repentance. The strongest and severest texts of Scripture seem to apply, not to persons who have sinned and seek repentance, but to apostates from the faith, who are stout in their apostasy, and hardened in sin.

## II. Our next consideration is the "Sin against the Holy Ghost."

The statements of Scripture already considered have, as we have seen, been supposed by some to show that the sin against the Holy Ghost must be falling grievously after baptism. For, as it has been supposed that these statements make deadly sin after baptism the unpardonable sin, and our Lord makes blasphemy against the Holy Ghost to be unpardonable, and both our Lord and St. John (1 John v. 16) seem to speak as if there were but one unpardonable sin, therefore deadly sin after baptism and the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost must be identical. The foregoing arguments seem sufficiently to have shown that this hypothesis is untrue.

If we examine the circumstances under which our Lord uttered His solemn warnings concerning blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, we may probably the better understand the nature of that sin. He had been casting out a devil, thereby giving signal proof of His Godhead. But the Pharisees, instead of believing and acknowledging His heavenly mission, ascribed His power to Satan and Beelzebub (Matt. xii. 24). Those who thus resisted such evidence were plainly obstinate and hardened unbelievers, such as, we may well believe, were given over to a reprobate mind, and such as no evidence of the truth could move to faith and penitence. Accordingly, many believe that by thus rejecting the faith, and ascribing the works of our Lord's Divinity to the power of evil spirits, they had committed the sin against the Holy Ghost.

<sup>1</sup> Jeremy Taylor, *On Repentance*, ch. ix. sect. 2.

That they were *very near* committing that sin there can be little doubt. They had stepped upon the confines, they had uttered daring and desperate blasphemy. They had reviled the holy Son of God. They had called His works of love and goodness the works of the devil, thereby confounding light with darkness. But still our Lord consents to reason with them. He still puts forth parables, by which to convince them that they were in error (Matt. xii. 23-30). And He would scarce do this, if there were no hope that they might repent, no possibility that they might be forgiven. And then He warns them. Warning and reasoning are for those who may yet take warning and conviction, not for those to whom they would be useless.

And of what nature is His warning? They had just blasphemed Him, disbelieved His mission, disregarded His miracles. Yet He tells them in gracious goodness, that all manner of sin and blasphemy which men commit shall be forgiven them, that even blasphemy against Himself, the Son of Man, shall be forgiven; but then He adds, that, if they went farther still, and committed the same sin moreover against the Spirit of God, it should never be forgiven, neither in this world, nor in the world to come (vv. 31, 32).

Now Christ was then present with them as the Son of Man. The glory of His Godhead was veiled under the likeness of sinful flesh. Those were "the days of the Son of Man;" and "the Spirit was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified." There is no doubt, that it must have been deadly wickedness which led men to doubt the truth of His doctrine when taught with such power from His sacred lips, and proved so mightily by the works which He wrought. But the full power of the Gospel had not been put forth; especially the Spirit had not been poured on the Church, — a blessing so great, that it made it expedient for His disciples that even Jesus should go away from them in order that He might give it to them (John xvi. 7). But when the Spirit was poured forth, then all the means of grace were used; Jesus working without, and the Spirit pleading within. And in those who received the word and were baptized, the Spirit took up His dwelling, and moved and ruled in their hearts. This then was a state of greater grace, and a more convincing state of evidence to the world and to the Church, than even the bodily presence of the Saviour as the Son of Man. Accordingly, resistance to the means of grace, after the gift of the Spirit, was worse than resistance during the bodily presence of Christ. Resisting the former, re-

fusing to be converted by it, rejecting its evidence, and obstinate impenitence under its influence, was blasphemy against the Son of Man. Still even this could be forgiven; for farther and yet greater means of grace were to be tried, even on those who had rejected Christ. "The Gospel was to be preached unto them, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven" (1 Pet. i. 12). But this mission of the Comforter was the last and highest means ever to be tried, the last and greatest dispensation of the grace of God. Those, therefore, who after this still remained obstinate, still rejected Christ in His kingdom, as they had rejected Him in His humility, still refused to be converted, ascribed the gifts of His Apostles and the graces of His Church, not to the Spirit of God, but to the spirit of evil, such men blasphemed not only the Son of Man — the Word of God when veiled in human flesh — but they rejected and blasphemed the Spirit of God, and so had never forgiveness.

This seems the true explanation of the sin against the Holy Ghost, namely, obstinate, resolute, and wilful impenitence, after all the means of grace and with all the strivings of the Spirit, under the Christian dispensation as distinguished from the Jewish, and amid all the blessings and privileges of the Church of Christ.

And this view of the subject does not materially differ from the statement of St. Athanasius, namely, that blasphemy against Christ, when His manhood only was visible, was blasphemy against the Son of Man; but that, when His Godhead was manifested, it became blasphemy against the Holy Ghost: nor from that of St. Augustine, that the sin against the Spirit of God is a final and obdurate continuance in wickedness, despite of the calls of God to repentance, joined with a desperation of the mercy of God.<sup>1</sup>

III. The last subject to which we come is the question of Final Perseverance, or the Indefectibility of Grace.

The Article says, "After we have received the Holy Ghost, we may depart from grace given and fall into sin, and by the grace of God we may arise again and amend our lives." The arguments which have been already gone into, concerning the grant of repentance and pardon to those who sin after baptism and the grace of God, sufficiently prove the latter clause of the above statement. Indeed the former clause may be considered as proved also; for if there is a large provision in the Gospel and the Church for forgiveness of sins and reconciliation of those who, having received the Spirit, have fallen away, then must it be possible, that, "after

<sup>1</sup> See the statement of their opinions in Sect. I.

we have received the Holy Ghost, we may yet depart from grace and fall into sin." Jovinian indeed held that every truly baptized person could sin no more. But such an error has been very uncommon in the Church, so uncommon that it is scarcely needful to prove that a person may have received grace and yet be tempted and fall into sin; as David so grievously fell in the matter of Uriah, or as St. Peter, when he denied his Lord. But the question, whether a person who has once received grace can ever fall finally and irrecoverably, has been much agitated since the days of Zuingle and Calvin; and though possibly not expressly determined by the wording of this Article, it yet properly comes to be considered here.

The doctrine of the Zuinglians and high Calvinists has been, that if a man has once been regenerate and endued with the Holy Ghost, he may fall into sin for a time, but will surely be restored again, and can never finally be lost. We have seen, on the contrary, that St. Augustine and the more ancient predestinarians held that grace might have been given, but yet, if a person was not *predestinated to perseverance*, he might fall away. We have seen that the Lutherans held that grace given might yet be lost utterly. We have seen that the reformers of the Church of England, whether following St. Augustine in his views of predestination or not, appear clearly to have agreed with him, and with Luther and the Lutherans, in holding that grace might be lost, not only for the time, but finally.

1. The passages of Scripture most in favour of the doctrine that those who have once been regenerate can never finally fall from grace, are such as follow.

Matt. xxiv. 24, which must be set aside, if rightly translated.<sup>1</sup> Luke xxii. 32, which shows that our Lord prays for His servants. John vi. 39; John x. 27, 28; but these last must be compared with John xvii. 12, which shows, that though the true sheep of Christ never perish, yet some may, like Judas, be given Him for a time, and yet finally be sons of perdition. Rom. viii. 38, 39, xi. 29, show that God is faithful, and will never repent of His mercy to us, and that, if we do not wilfully leave Him, no created power shall be able to pluck us out of His hand. They *prove* no more than this.

Stronger by far are such passages as 1 Cor. i. 8, 9; Phil. i. 6;

<sup>1</sup> The English version translates *ei* Calvinistic theory is in the words *it were*, *δυνατόν* "if it were possible." The whole which are not in the Greek. Render it strength of the passage as favouring the "if possible," and the argument is gone.

2 Thess. iii. 3. Yet they are addressed to whole Churches, all the members of which are not certainly preserved blameless to the end. The confidence expressed concerning the Philippians (Phil. i. 6) cannot have meant that it was impossible for any of them to be lost; for St. Paul afterwards exhorts them to “work out their salvation with fear and trembling” (ii. 12), and to “stand fast in the Lord” (iv. 1). So that we must necessarily understand the Apostle’s confident hope to result from a consideration of the known goodness and grace of God, and also of the Philippians’ own past progress in holiness. “He conjectured,” as Theophylact says, “from what was past, what they would be for the future.”<sup>1</sup>

The passages which speak of Christians as *sealed*, and having the “earnest of the Spirit,” (see 2 Cor. i. 21, 22; Ephes. i. 13; iv. 30,) are thought to teach the indefectibility of grace; because what is sealed is kept and preserved. But sealing probably only signifies the ratifying of a covenant, which is done in baptism. And though the giving of the Spirit is indeed the *earnest* of a future inheritance, it does not follow that no unfaithfulness in the Christian may deprive him of the blessing, of which God has given him the earnest and pledge, because a covenant always implies two parties, and if either breaks it, the other is free.

So again Jas. i. 17 tells us of the unchangeableness of God, and 2 Tim. ii. 19 shows that He “knoweth them that are His.” But neither proves that *we* may not change, nor that all who are now God’s people will continue so to the end, though he knoweth who will and who will not.

The expression “full assurance of hope” (Heb. vi. 11) has been thought to prove that we may be always certain of continuance, if we have once known the grace of God. But the Apostle does not ground the “assurance of hope” on such a doctrine. His words are: “We desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope to the end; that ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.” This shows, that our assured hope will spring from a close walk with God, and that slothfulness, or a lack of diligence, is likely to impair our hope and disturb our assurance. The more diligent we are, the more hope we shall have; our hope not being grounded on the indefectibility of grace, but on the evidences of our faith given by a consistent growth in grace.

<sup>1</sup> ἰπὸ τῶν παρελθόντων καὶ περὶ τῶν μελλόντων στοχαζόμενος.—Theophyl. in loc. quoted by Whitby, whom see.

Again, 1 Pet. i. 4, 5, speaks of an inheritance "reserved in heaven for those who are *kept* by the power of God, through faith unto salvation." The word "*kept*" is in the Greek *φρουρουμένων*, *i. e.* "guarded as in a garrison." The figure represents believers as attacked by evil spirits and wicked men, but defended by the power of God, through the influence of their faith. It does not show that all believers are kept from falling away; but that they are guarded by God through the instrumentality of their faith. "If" then "they continue in the faith" (Col. i. 23), "if they hold the beginning of their confidence steadfast unto the end" (Heb. iii. 14), then will "their faith be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one" (Eph. vi. 16), and will "overcome the world" (1 John v. 4). But, as it is expressly said that it is "through faith" that they are "kept" or "guarded," we cannot infer that their faith itself is so guarded that it can by no possibility fail.<sup>1</sup>

But the strongest passage on this side of the question is 1 John iii. 9: "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." From this Jovinian inferred that a regenerate man could never sin again; but the Zuinglian and Calvinist infer, that the regenerate man having the seed of life in him, may indeed fall into sin, but is sure to recover himself again, and to be saved at the last. If the text proves anything about indefectibility of grace, it plainly proves Jovinian's rather than Calvin's position; namely, that the regenerate man never falls into sin at all, not merely that he does not fall finally.

The truth is, the Apostle is simply contrasting the state of the regenerate with that of the unregenerate, and tells us, that sin is the mark of the latter, holiness of the former. "He that doeth righteousness is righteous . . . he that committeth sin is of the devil" (vv. 7, 8). Here is the antithesis. It is like the statement, "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit" (Matt. vii. 18). This does not mean, that a good tree can never cease to be good, and so cease to bear good fruit.<sup>2</sup> So it is with that of St. Paul, "The carnal mind cannot be subject to the law of God" (Rom. viii. 7). But it is not meant, that a man of carnal mind may not be converted, and then love holiness and God's law. So Ignatius writes, "Spiritual men can-

<sup>1</sup> See Whitby and Macknight on 1 Pet. — Hieron. *In Matt.* vii. 18, Tom. iv. pt. i. 4, 5. II. p. 25, cited by Dr. Hammond on 1 John iii. 9.

<sup>2</sup> "Bona arbor non fert malos fructus, quamdiu in bonitatis studio perseverat."



not do the things of the flesh ;”<sup>1</sup> that is, obviously, so long as they continue spiritual.

Just so St. John. He points out the difference between the righteous and the wicked ; namely, that the former do righteousness, the latter commit sin. Then he says, “ Every one that is born of God<sup>2</sup> cannot sin, because of the seed of God which is in him.” He is righteous, and therefore doeth righteousness ; he is a good tree, and therefore cannot bring forth bad fruit ; he is spiritual, and therefore cannot do carnal things. But this does not prove that he may not fall from grace, and so lose his title to be a son of God, and also that seed of God in his heart which keeps him from sin. “ The regenerate man,” says Jerome, “ cannot sin so long as he continues in the generation of God . . . but, if we admit sin, and the devil enters into the door of our hearts, Christ goes away.”<sup>3</sup>

2. So much of the arguments from Scripture by which the doctrine that grace in the regenerate can never fail has been maintained. Against this doctrine many passages of Scripture are alleged.

(1) There are frequent statements of the condemnation and rejection of such as, having been in a state of grace, fall away from it, and which it is hard to believe are only meant to frighten us away from an impossible danger. Such are

Ezek. xviii. 24 ; xxxiii. 18. Matt. v. 13. Matt. xxiv. 46–51, comp. Luke xxi. 34–36. Heb. x. 26–29, 38. 2 Pet. ii. 20–22.

(2) There are declarations, that those only “ *who endure to the end*” shall be saved, those “ *who keep their garments*” shall be blessed ; that “ *if we continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away,*” we shall be presented holy in the sight of God.

Matt. x. 22. Col. i. 22, 23. Heb. iii. 6. Rev. xvi. 15.

Thus final salvation is promised not merely to present, but to continuing and persevering faith.

<sup>1</sup> Ignat. *Ad Eph.* c. viii.

<sup>2</sup> πᾶς ὁ γεγεννημένος. Rosenmüller says that it is the same as γεννητός גֵּנְיָתִי, Job xiv. 1, or τεκνόν, as in ver. 10. And Dr. Hammond observes, that the perfect participle indicates that we must not refer the words “ born of God ” to the moment or instant of regeneration, but to the continuing state of regeneration. It indicates not a transient, but a permanent condition.

<sup>3</sup> He thus explains the passage in St. John : “ Propterea, inquit, scribo vobis,

filioli mei ; omnis, qui natus est ex Deo, non peccat, ut non peccetis ; et tamdiu sciatis vos in generatione Domini permanere quamdiu non peccaveritis. Immo, qui in generatione Domini perseverant peccare non possunt. Quæ enim communicatio luci et tenebris ? Christo et Belial ? . . . Si susceperimus Christum in hospitio nostri pectoris, illico fugamus Diabolum. Si peccaverimus, et per peccati januam ingressus fuerit Diabulus, protinus Christus recedit.”—Hieron. *Adv. Jovin.* Lib. II. *init.* Tom. IV. Par. II. p. 193.

(3) Accordingly, there are numerous warnings against falling away, exhortations to stand fast, and prayers for perseverance and against falling.

Rom. xi. 20, 21. 1 Cor. x. 1-10, 12. 1 Cor. xvi. 13. Col. ii. 6, 7, 8, 1 Thess. v. 19. Heb. iii. 12; xii. 15, 16. 2 Pet. iii. 17. Jude 20, 21, 24. Rev. xvi. 15.

All these passages speak of the danger of falling away, and of the final condemnation of such as fall, and warn and pray against falling. The advocates for the doctrine of final perseverance say, that although all grace comes only from God, yet He ordains means to be used for obtaining grace; so, although perseverance is the gift of God, and never withholden from such as receive grace at all; yet warnings against backsliding, and declarations concerning the punishment of backsliders, are useful and necessary means to keep believers in a state of watchfulness, and therefore are instruments in God's hands to work in them the grace of perseverance, which however could as easily be given without them, and will assuredly be given to all who have once been regenerate. Their opponents reply, that such reasoning is an evident attempt to explain away the obvious sense of Scripture; God's threatenings could never be denounced against a sin which was impossible. If utter falling away in the regenerate is, in God's counsels, a thing which cannot occur, then can we believe that God would give the most solemn warnings to be found in the whole of Scripture against it? Would the Apostle put up the most earnest prayers against it? Would the condemnation pronounced upon it be so severe and so terrible? But it is argued farther, that,

(4) There are express and positive statements, that men may, nay, do, fall away from grace given and accepted, and so do finally perish.

The parable of the sower (Matt. xiii. Mark iv. Luke viii.) contains a statement of this kind. Four different kinds of hearers are there described. Of these, one, the way-side hearer, disregards it altogether; one, compared to good ground, receives and profits by it, and brings forth fruit to life eternal. But two kinds, those like the stony ground, and those like the thorny ground, embrace it and profit by it for a time, and *then fall away*. The seed in the stony ground springs up (Matt. xiii. 5). Such hearers received the seed with joy (ver. 20), but they last only for a while (ver. 21); they "for a while believe, but in time of temptation fall away" (Luke viii. 13). So the seed which falls among thorns springs up; but the thorns spring up with it, and choke it. "The cares of

this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word' (Matt. xiii. 22).

Again, the parable of the Vine and the Branches (John xv. 1-10) teaches the same thing. Christ's disciples are compared to branches of a Vine, the Lord Himself being that Vine. "Every branch," He says, "in Me that beareth not fruit, He" (*i. e.* God the Father) "taketh away" (ver. 2). "I am the Vine, ye are the branches; he that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without Me ye can do nothing. *If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered, and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned*" (vv. 5, 6).

Heb. vi. 4-8, seems to contain a positive statement that men do sometimes so fall away from grace already received as to fall not only finally but hopelessly: "It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame," &c.

So 2 Pet. ii. 21, 22. The Apostle is evidently speaking of persons who *had* fallen away from grace, apostates from the faith of Christ. For though, in ver. 20, he speaks only hypothetically, "If after they have escaped the pollutions of the world," &c., yet in vv. 21, 22, he speaks of their apostasy as having actually occurred: "It had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But *it is happened* (*συμβέβηκε*) unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire."

(5) Finally, it is contended that, with all these proofs from Scripture that grace given may be lost, the doctrine of the indefectibility of grace would never have been thought of, but that it fell naturally into a system. Accordingly, the more ancient predestinarians, like Augustine, though they believed in the irrelative and immutable decrees of God, yet did not teach the doctrine of absolutely indefectible grace. But Calvin's great characteristic was his logical acuteness, which led him to form all his doctrines into harmonious systems. He could never leave mysterious doctrines in their mystery, on the principle that our finite intellects

are permitted to grasp only part of the great plans of infinite Wisdom. The doctrine of final perseverance seemed necessary to the harmony and completeness of the predestinarian scheme ; and on that account, not because Scripture taught it, it was adopted and received.