

## ARTICLE XX.

## Of the Authority of the Church.

**The Church hath Power to Decree Rites or Ceremonies, and Authority in Matters of Faith. And yet it is not lawful for the Church to ordain any thing that is contrary to God's Word written; neither may it so expound one place of Scripture, that it be repugnant to another. Wherefore although the Church be a Witness and keeper of Holy Writ, yet as it ought not to decree any thing against the same, so besides the same ought it not to enforce any thing to be believed for necessity of Salvation.**

THIS Article consists of two parts; the first asserts a power in the church both to decree rites and ceremonies, and to judge in matters of faith: the second limits this power over matters of faith to the scriptures: so that it must neither contradict them, nor add any articles as necessary to salvation to those contained in them.\* This is suitable to some words that were once in

\* The question between us and the papal church in this point is, not whether the church has power to decree rites or ceremonies, and authority in matters of faith—this cannot be denied; every church has this power within itself—but whether the church has authority to enlarge the catholic and apostolic faith by decreeing as necessary to salvation certain articles, which by her own confession have not any other foundation except only her decree. This is the question at issue between the Reformed and the Church of Rome. Our articles are articles of church communion or church discipline, drawn up for the better furtherance of the faith of Christ, and rendered necessary for the reasons given by our author in his Introduction, p. 5. But it must ever be borne in mind, that so far from adding any thing to the faith of Christ, two of those articles, the 6th and 20th, declare the Bible to be the sole standard of faith; and that, as it is not lawful to decree any thing contrary to it, so it is not in the power of the church to add any thing, even though it be not contrary, to that revelation given in the inspired word of God. This which we reject is the power usurped by the church of Rome; in which matter she has not only daringly set at nought the solemn injunctions in the word of God, but also the decrees of councils which she professes to so highly reverence:—which conduct is well reprov'd by Bishop Taylor, in the following extract:

‘First, we allege that this very power of making new articles is a novelty, and expressly against the doctrine of the primitive church; and we prove it, first, by the words of the apostle, (Gal. i. 8.) saying, “If we, or an angel from heaven, shall preach unto you any other gospel (viz. in whole, or in part, for there is the same reason of them both) than that which we have preached, let him be anathema;” and, secondly, by the sentence of the Fathers in the third general council, that at Ephesus,† “That it shall not be lawful for any man to publish or compose another faith or creed than that which was defined by the Nicene Council: and that whosoever shall dare to compose or offer any such to any persons willing to be converted from paganism, Judaism, or heresy, if they were bishops, or clerks, they should be deposed; if laymen, they should be accursed!” And yet, in the church of Rome, faith and Christianity increase like the moon; Bromyard complained of it long since, and the mischief increases daily.’—ED.

† This is the decree of the council of Ephesus, to which Burnet refers in his Introduction: (see pp. 1, 3.)

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the fifth Article, but were afterwards left out; instead of which the first words of this Article were put in this place, according to the printed editions; though they are not in the original of the Articles signed by both houses of convocation, that are yet extant.

As to the first part of the Article, concerning the power of the church, either with relation to ceremonies or points of faith, the dispute lies only with those who deny all church power, and think that churches ought to be in all things limited by the rules set in scripture; and that where the scriptures are silent, there ought to be no rules made, but that all men should be left to their liberty; and, in particular, that the appointing new ceremonies looks like a reproaching of the apostles, as if their constitutions had been so defective, that those defects must be supplied by the inventions of men: which they oppose so much the more, because they think that all the corruptions of popery began at some rites which seemed at first not only innocent, but pious; but were afterwards abused to superstition and idolatry, and swelled up to that bulk as to oppress and stifle true religion with their number and weight.

A great part of this is in some respect true; yet that we may examine the matter methodically, we shall first consider, what power the church has in those matters; and then, what rules she ought to govern herself by in the use of that power. It is very visible, that in the Gospels and Epistles there are but few rules laid down as to ritual matters: in the Epistles there are some general rules given, that must take in a great many cases: such as, 'Let all things be done to edification, to order, and to peace;' and in the Epistles to Timothy and Titus, many rules are given in such general words, as, 'Lay hands suddenly on no man,' that in order to the guiding of particular cases by them, many distinctions and specialities were to be interposed to the making them practicable and useful. In matters that are merely ritual, the state of mankind in different climates and ages is apt to vary; and the same thing that in one scene of human nature may look grave, and seem fit for any society, may in another age look light, and dissipate men's thoughts. It is also evident that there is not a system of rules given in the New Testament about all these; and yet a due method in them is necessary to maintain the order and decency that become divine things. This seems to be a part of the gospel *liberty*, that it is not 'a law of ordinances;' these things being left to be varied according to the diversities of mankind.

The Jewish religion was delivered to one nation, and the main parts of it were to be performed in one place; they were also to be limited in rituals, lest they might have taken some practices from their neighbours round about them, and so by the use of their rites have rendered idolatrous practices more

Rom. xiv.  
19.  
1 Cor. xiv.  
40.Gal. ii. 4.  
—iv. 9.  
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familiar and acceptable to them: and yet they had many rites among them in our Saviour's time, which are not mentioned in any part of the Old Testament; such was the whole constitution of their synagogues, with all the service and officers that belonged to them: they had a baptism among them, besides several rites added to the paschal service. Our Saviour reproved them for none of these; he hallowed some of them to be the federal rites of his new dispensation; he went to their synagogues; and though he reproved them for overvaluing their rites, for preferring them to the laws of God, and making these void by their traditions, yet he does not condemn them for the use of them. And while of the greater precepts he says, 'These things ye ought to have done;' he adds concerning their rites and lesser matters, 'and not to have left the other undone.'

Matt. xxiii.  
23.

If then such a liberty was allowed in so limited a religion, it seems highly suitable to the sublimer state of the Christian liberty, that there should be room left for such appointments or alterations as the different state of times and places should require. In hotter countries, for instance, there is no danger in dipping; but if it is otherwise in colder climates, then since 'mercy is better than even sacrifice,' a more sparing use may be made of water; aspersion may answer the true end of baptism. A stricter or gentler discipline of offenders must be also proportioned to what the times will bear, and what men can be brought to submit to. The dividing of Christians into such districts, that they may have the best conveniences to assemble themselves together for worship, and for keeping up of order; the appointing the times as well as the places of worship, are certainly to be fixed with the best regard to present circumstances that may be. The bringing Christian assemblies into order and method, is necessary for their solemnity, and for preventing that dissipation of thought that a diversity of behaviour might occasion. And though a *kiss of peace*, and an order of deaconesses, were the practices of the apostolical time; yet when the one gave occasion to raillery, and the other to scandal, all the world was, and still is, satisfied with the reasons of letting both fall.

Hos. vi. 6.  
Matt. xii. 7

Now if churches may lay aside apostolical practices in matters that are ritual, it is certainly much easier to justify their making new rules for such things; since it is a higher attempt to alter what was settled by the apostles themselves, than to set up new rules in matters which they left untouched. Habits and postures are the necessary circumstances of all public meetings: the times of fasting and of prayer, the days of thanksgiving and communions, are all of the same nature. The public confession of sins by scandalous persons; the time and manner of doing it; the previous steps that some churches have made for the trial of those who were to be received into holy orders, that so by a longer inspection into

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their behaviour, while in lower orders, they might discover how fit they were to be admitted into the sacred ones; and chiefly the prescribing stated forms for the several acts of religious worship, and not leaving that to the capacities or humours, to the inventions, and often to the extravagancies, of those who are to officiate: all these things, I say, fall within those general rules given by the apostles to the churches in their time: where we find that the *apostles* had their *customs*, as well as *the churches of God*; which were then opposed to the innovating and the contentious humours of some factious men. And such a pattern have the apostles set us of complying with those things that are regularly settled, wheresoever we are, that we find 'they became all things to all men: to the Jews they became Jews;' though that was a religion then extinguished in its obligation, by the promulgation of the gospel; and was then fallen under great corruption: yet, in order to the gaining of some of them, such was the spirit of charity and edification with which the apostles were acted, that while they were among them they complied in the practice of those abrogated rites; though they asserted both the liberty of the Gentiles, and even their own, in that matter: it was only a compliance, and not a submission, to their opinions, that made them *observe days*, and distinguish *meats*, while among them. If then such rites, and the rites of such a church, were still complied with by inspired men, this is an infallible pattern to us; and let us see, upon how much stronger reasons we, who are under those obligations to unity and charity with all Christians, ought to maintain the *unity of the body*, and the decency and order that is necessary for *peace and mutual edification*.

Therefore, since there is not any one thing that Christ has enjoined more solemnly and more frequently than love and charity, union and agreement, amongst his disciples; since we are also required to assemble ourselves together, to constitute ourselves in a body, both for worshipping God jointly, and for maintaining of order and love among the society of Christians, we ought to acquiesce in such rules as have been agreed on by common consent, and which are recommended to us by long practice, and that are established by those who have the lawful authority over us. Nor can we assign any other bounds to our submission in this case, than those that the gospel has limited. We must 'obey God, rather than man;' and we must in the first place 'render to God the things that are God's,' and then 'give to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's.' So that if either church or state have power to make rules and laws in such matters, they must have this extent given them, that till they break in upon the laws of God and the gospel, we must be bound to obey them. A mean cannot be put here; either they have no power at all, or they have a power that must go to every thing that is not forbid by any law of

1 Cor. xi.  
16.1 Cor. ix.  
19-23.

Heb. x. 25.

Acts v. 29.  
Mat. xxii.  
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God. This is the only measure that can be given in this matter.

But a great difference is here to be made between those rules that both church and state ought to set to themselves in their enacting of such matters, and the measures of the obedience of subjects: the only question in the point of obedience must be, lawful or unlawful. For expedient or inexpedient ought never to be brought into question, as to the point of obedience; since no inexpediency whatsoever can balance the breaking of order, and the dissolving the constitution and society. This is a consideration that arises out of a man's apprehensions of the fitness or usefulness of things; in which though he might be in the right as to the antecedent fitness of them, and yet even there he may be in the wrong, and in common modesty every man ought to think that it is more likely that he should be in the wrong, than the governors and rulers of the society; yet, I say, allowing all this, it is certain that order and obedience are, both in their own nature, and in their consequences, to be preferred to all the particular considerations of expediency or inexpediency. Yet still those in whose hands the making of those rules is put, ought to carry their thoughts much further: they ought to consider well the genius of the Christian religion, and therefore they are to avoid every thing that may lead to idolatry, or feed superstition; every thing that is apt to be abused to give false ideas of God, or to make the world think that such instituted practices may balance the violation of the laws of God. They ought not to overcharge the worship of God with too great a number of them: the rites ought to be grave, simple, and naturally expressive of that which is intended by them. Vain pomp and indecent levity ought to be guarded against; and next to the honour of God and religion, the peace and edification of the society ought to be chiefly considered. Due regard ought to be had to what men can bear, and what may be most suitable to the present state of the whole; and finally, a great respect is due to ancient and established practices. Antiquity does generally beget veneration; and the very changing of what has been long in use does naturally startle many, and discompose a great part of the body. So all changes, unless the expediency of making them is upon other accounts very visible, labour under a great prejudice with the more staid sort of men; for this very reason, because they are changes. But in this matter, no certain or mathematical rules can be given: every one of these that has been named is capable of that variety, by the diversity of times and other circumstances; that since prudence and discretion must rule the use that is to be made of them, that must be left to the conscience and prudence of every person who may be concerned in the management of this authority. He must act as he will answer it to God and to the church; for he must be at liberty in

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applying those general rules to particular times and cases. And a temper must be observed: we must avoid a sullen adhering to things because they were once settled, as if points of honour were to be maintained here; and that it looked like a reproaching a constitution, or the wisdom of a former age, to alter what they did; since it is certain that what was wisely ordered in one time, may be as wisely changed in another: as, on the other hand, all men ought to avoid the imputation of a desultory levity; as if they loved changes for changes' sake. This might give occasion to our adversaries to triumph over us, and might also fill the minds of the weaker among ourselves with apprehensions and scruples.

The next particular asserted in this Article is, *That the church hath authority in matters of faith.* Here a distinction is to be made between an authority that is absolute, and founded on infallibility, and an authority of order. The former is very formally disclaimed by our church; but the second may be well maintained, though we assert no unerring authority. Every single man has a right to search the scriptures, and to take his faith from them; yet it is certain that he may be mistaken in it. It is therefore a much surer way for numbers of men to meet together, and to examine such differences as happen to arise; to consider the arguments of all hands, with the importance of such passages of scripture as are brought into the controversy; and thus to inquire into the whole matter: in which as it is very natural to think that a great company of men should see further than a less number; so there is all reason to expect a good issue of such deliberations, if men proceed in them with due sincerity and diligence; if pride, faction, and interest, do not sway their councils, and if they seek for truth more than for victory.

But what abuses soever may have crept since into the public consultations of the clergy, the apostles at first met and consulted together upon that controversy which was then moved concerning the imposing the Mosaical law upon the Gentiles: they ordered the pastors of the church to be able to convince gainsayers, and not to reject a man as a heretic, till after a first and a second admonition. The most likely method both to find out the truth, and to bring such as are in error over to it, is to consult of these matters in common; and that openly and fairly. For if every good man, that prays earnestly to God for the assistance and direction of his Spirit, has reason to look for it; much more may a body of pastors, brought together to seek out the truth, in any point under debate, look for it, if they bring with them sincere and unprejudiced minds, and do pray earnestly to God. In that case, they may expect to be directed and assisted of him. But this depends upon the purity of their hearts, and the earnestness of their endeavours and prayers.

When any synod of the clergy has so far examined a point,

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as to settle their opinions about it, they may certainly decree that such is their doctrine: and as they judge it to be more or less important, they may either restrain any other opinion, or may require positive declarations about it, either of all in their communion, or at least of all whom they admit to minister in holy things.

This is only an authority of order for the maintaining of union and edification: and in this a body does no more as it is a body, than what every single individual has a right to do for himself. He examines a doctrine that is laid before him, he forms his own opinion upon it, and pursuant to that he must judge with whom he can hold communion, and from whom he must separate.

When such definitions are made by the body of the pastors of any church, all persons within that church do owe great respect to their decision. Modesty must be observed in descending upon it, and in disputing about it. Every man that finds his own thoughts differ from it, ought to examine the matter over again, with much attention and care, freeing himself all he can from prejudice and obstinacy; with a just distrust of his own understanding, and an humble respect to the judgment of his superiors.

This is due to the considerations of peace and union, and to that authority which the church has to maintain it. But if, after all possible methods of inquiry, a man cannot master his thoughts, or make them agree with the public decisions, his conscience is not under bonds; since this authority is not absolute, nor grounded upon a promise of infallibility.

This is a tenet that, with relation to national churches and their decisions, is held by the church of Rome, as well as by us: for they place infallibility either in the pope, or in the universal church: but no man ever dreamt of infallibility in a particular or national church: and the point in this Article is only concerning particular churches; for the head of general councils comes in upon the next. *That no church can add any thing as necessary to salvation,* has been already considered upon the sixth Article.

It is certain, that as we owe our hopes of salvation only to Christ, and to what he has done for us; so also it can belong only to him, who procured it to us, to fix the terms upon which we may look for it: nor can any power on earth clog the offers that he makes us in the gospel, with new or other terms than those which we find made there to us. There can be no dispute about this: for unless we believe that there is an infallible authority lodged in the church, to explain the scripture, and to declare tradition; and unless we believe that the scriptures are both obscure and defective, and that the one must be helped by an infallible commentary, and the other supplied

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We own, after all, that the church is the depository of the whole scriptures, as the Jews were of the Old Testament: but in that instance of the Jews, we may see that a body of men may be faithful in the copying of a book exactly, and in the handing it down without corrupting it, and yet they may be mistaken in the true meaning of that which they preserve so faithfully. They are expressly called 'the keepers of the oracles of God;' and are nowhere reprov'd for having attempted upon this *depositum*: and yet for all that fidelity they fell into great errors about some of the most important parts of their religion: which exposed them to the rejecting the Messias, and to their utter ruin.

Rom. iii. 2.

The church's being called the witness of holy writ, is not to be resolv'd into any judgment that they pass upon it as a body of men that have authority to judge and give sentence, so that the canonicalness or the uncanonicalness of any book shall depend upon their testimony: but is resolv'd into this, that such successions and numbers of men, whether of the laity or clergy, have in a course of many ages had these books preserved and read among them; so that it was not possible to corrupt that upon which so many men had their eyes in all the corners and ages of Christendom.

And thus we believe the scriptures to be a book written by inspired men, and delivered by them to the church, upon the testimony of the church that at first received it; knowing that those great matters of fact, contained and appeal'd to in it, were true: and also upon the like testimony of the succeeding ages, who preserved, read, copied, and translated that book, as they had received it from the first.

The church of Rome is guilty of a manifest circle in this matter: for they say they believe the scriptures upon the authority of the church, and they do again believe the authority of the church, because of the testimony of the scripture concerning it.

This is as false reasoning as can be imagin'd: for nothing can be prov'd by another authority till that authority is first fixed and prov'd: and therefore if the testimony of the church is believ'd to be sacred, by virtue of a divine grant to it, and that from thence the scriptures have their credit and authority, then the credit due to the church's testimony is antecedent to the credit of the scripture; and so must not be prov'd by any passages brought from it; otherwise that is a manifest circle. But no circle is committed in our way, who do not prove the scriptures from any supposed authority in the church, that has handed them down to us; but only as they are vast companies of men, who cannot be presumed to

have been guilty of any fraud in this matter; it appearing further to be morally impossible for any that should have attempted a fraud in it, to have executed it. When therefore the scripture itself is prov'd by moral arguments of this kind, we may, according to the strictest rules of reasoning, examine what authority the scripture gives to the pastors of the church met in lesser or greater councils.

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## ARTICLE XXI.

## Of the Authority of General Councils.

General Councils may not be gathered together without the Commandment and will of Princes. And when they be gathered together (forasmuch as they be an Assembly of Men wherof all be not governed with the Spirit and Word of God) they may err, and sometimes have erred even in things pertaining unto God. Wherefore things ordained by them as necessary to Salvation, have neither Strength nor Authority, unless it may be declared that they are taken out of Holy Scriptures.

THERE are two particulars settled in this Article: the one is, the power of calling of councils, at least, an assertion that they cannot be called without the will of princes: the other is, the authority of general councils, that they are not infallible, and that some have erred: and therefore the inference is justly made, that whatever authority they may have in the rule and government of the church, their decisions in matters necessary to salvation ought to be examined by the word of God, and are not to be submitted to, unless it appears that they are conform to the scripture.

The first of these is thus proved: clergymen are subject to their princes, according to these words, 'Let every soul be subject to the higher powers:' if they are then subject to them, they cannot be obliged to go out of their dominions upon the summons of any other; their persons being under the laws and authority of that country to which they belong.

This is plain, and seems to need no other proof. It is very visible how much the peace of kingdoms and states is concerned in this point: for if a foreign power should call their clergy away at pleasure, they might be not only left in a great destitution as to religious performances, but their clergy might be practised upon, and sent back to them with such notions, and upon such designs, that, chiefly supposing the immunity of their persons, they might become, as they often were in dark and ignorant ages, the incendiaries of the world, and the disturbers and betrayers of their countries. This is confirmed by the practice of the first ages, after the church had the protection of Christian magistrates: in these the Roman emperors called the first general councils, which is expressly mentioned not only in the histories of the councils, but in their acts; where we find both the writs that summoned them, and their letters, sometimes to the emperors, and sometimes to the churches, which do all set forth their being summoned by the sacred authority of their emperors, without

mentioning any other. In calling some of these councils, it does not appear that the popes were much consulted; and in others we find popes indeed supplicating the emperors to call a council, but nothing that has so much as a shadow of their pretending to an authority to summon it themselves.

This is a thing so plain, and may be so soon seen into by any person who will be at the pains to turn to the editions of the first four general councils made by themselves, not to mention those that followed in the Greek church, that the confidence with which it has been asserted, that they were summoned by the popes, is an instance to shew us that there is nothing at which men, who are once engaged, will stick when their cause requires it. But even since the popes have got this matter into their own hands, though they summon the council, yet they do not pretend to it, nor expect that the world would receive a council as general, or submit to it, unless the princes of Christendom should allow of it, and consent to the publication of the bull. So that, by reason of this, councils are now become almost unpracticable things.

When all Christendom was included within the Roman empire, then the calling of a council lay in the breast and power of one man; and, during the ages of ignorance and superstition, the world was so subjected to the pope's authority, that princes durst seldom oppose their summons, or deny their bishops leave to go when they were so called. But after the scandalous schism in the popedom,\* in which there were

\* After the death of Gregory XI. (which happened in the year 1378) the cardinals assembled to consult about choosing a successor, when the people of Rome, fearing lest the vacant dignity should be conferred on a Frenchman, came in a tumultuous manner to the conclave, and with great clamours, accompanied with many outrageous threatenings, insisted that an Italian should be advanced to the popedom. The cardinals, terrified by this uproar, immediately proclaimed Bartholomew de Pergano, who was a Neapolitan, and archbishop of Bari, and assumed the name of Urban VI. This new pontiff, by his unpolite behaviour, injudicious severity, and intolerable arrogance, had made himself many enemies among people of all ranks, and especially among the leading cardinals. These latter, therefore, tired of his insolence, withdrew from Rome to Agnœni, and from thence to Fondi, a city in the kingdom of Naples, where they elected to the pontificate, Robert, count of Geneva, who took the name of Clement VII., and declared, at the same time, that the election of Urban was nothing more than a mere ceremony, which they had found themselves obliged to perform, in order to calm the turbulent rage of the populace. Which of these two is to be considered as the true and lawful pope, is, to this day, matter of doubt; nor will the records or writings, alleged by the contending parties, enable us to adjust that point with any certainty. Urban remained at Rome: Clement went to Avignon in France. His cause was espoused by France and Spain, Scotland, Sicily, and Cyprus, while all the rest of Europe acknowledged Urban to be the true Vicar of Christ.

Thus the union of the Latin church under one head was destroyed at the death of Gregory XI., and was succeeded by that deplorable dissension commonly known by the name of the Great Western Schism. This dissension was fomented with such dreadful success, and arose to such a shameful height, that, for the space of fifty years, the church had two or three different heads at the same time; each of the contending popes forming plots, and thundering out anathemas against their competitors.

The great purpose that was aimed at in the convocation of this grand assembly (the council of Constance, A. D. 1414) was the healing of the schism that had so long rent the papacy: and this purpose was happily accomplished. It was solemnly

for a great while two popes, and at last three at a time, councils began to pretend that the power of governing the church, and of censuring, depriving, and making of popes, was radically in them, as *representing the universal church*: so they fell upon methods to have frequent councils, and that whether both popes and princes should oppose it or not; for they declared both the one and the other to be fallen from their dignity, that should attempt to hinder it. Yet they carried the claim of the freedom of elections, and of the other ecclesiastical immunities, so high, that all that followed upon this was, that the popes being terrified with the attempts begun at Constance, and prosecuted at Basil and Pisa, took pains to have princes on their side, and then made bargains and *concordates* with them, by which they divided all the rights of the church, at least the pretensions to them, between themselves and the princes. Matters of gain and advantage were reserved to the see of Rome; but the points of power and jurisdiction were generally given up to the princes. The temporal authority has by that means prevailed over the spiritual, as much as the spiritual authority had prevailed over the temporal for several ages before. Yet the pretence of a general council is still so specious, that all those in the Roman communion that do not acknowledge the infallibility of their popes, do still support this pretension, that the infallibility is given by Christ to his church; and that in the interval of councils it is in the community of the bishops and pastors of the church; and that when a council meets, then the infallibility is lodged with it; according to that, 'It seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us.'

The first thing to be settled in every question is the mean-

declared, in the fourth and fifth sessions of this council, by two decrees, that the Roman pontiff was inferior and subject to a general assembly of the universal church; and the authority of councils was vindicated and maintained by the same decrees in the most effectual manner. This vigorous proceeding prepared the way for the degradation of John XXIII., who, during the twelfth session, was unanimously deposed from the pontificate on account of several flagitious crimes that were laid to his charge, and more especially on account of the scandalous violation of a solemn engagement he had taken, about the beginning of the council, to resign the papal chair if that should appear necessary to the peace of the church; which engagement he broke some weeks after, by a clandestine flight. In the same year (1415) Gregory XII. sent to the council Charles de Malatesta, to make in his name, and as his proxy, a solemn and voluntary resignation of the pontificate. About two years after this, Benedict XIII. was deposed by a solemn resolution of the council, and Otto de Colonna raised, by the unanimous suffrages of the cardinals, to the high dignity of head of the church, which he ruled under the title of Martin V. Benedict, who resided still at Perpignan, was far from being disposed to submit either to the decree of the council which deposed him, or to the determination of the cardinals, with respect to his successor. On the contrary, he persisted until the day of his death, which happened in the year 1423, in assuming the title, the prerogatives, and the authority, of the papacy. And when this obstinate man was dead, a certain Spaniard, named Giles Munios, was chosen pope in his place, by two cardinals, under the auspicious patronage of Alphonsus king of Sicily, and adopted the title of Clement VIII.; but this sorry pontiff, in the year 1429, was persuaded to resign his pretensions to the papacy, and to leave the government of the church to Martin V. *Mosheim.*—[E.D.]

ing of the terms: so we must begin and examine what makes a general council; whether all the bishops must be present in person, or by proxy? And what share the laity, or the princes that are thought to represent their people, ought to have in a council? It is next to be considered, whether a general citation is enough to make a council general, were the appearance of the bishops ever so small at their first opening? It is next to be considered, whether any come thither and sit there as representing others; and if votes ought to be reckoned according to the numbers of the bishops, or of the others who depute and send them? And whether nations ought to vote in a body as integral parts of the church; or every single bishop by himself? And finally, whether the decisions of councils must be unanimous, before they can be esteemed infallible? or whether the major vote, though exceeding only by one, or if some greater inequality is necessary; such as two-thirds, or any other proportion? That there may be just cause of raising scruples upon every one of these, is apparent at first view. It is certain, a bare name cannot qualify a number of bishops sitting together, to be this general council. The number of bishops does it not neither. A hundred and fifty was a small number at Constantinople: even the famous three hundred and eighteen at Nice were far exceeded by those at Arimini. All the first general councils were made up for the most part of eastern bishops; there being a very inconsiderable number of the western among any of them; scarce any at all being to be found in some. If this had been the body to whom Christ had left this infallibility, it cannot be imagined but that some definition or description of the constitution of it would have been given us in the scripture: and the profound silence that is about it gives just occasion to think, that how wise and how good soever such a constitution may be, if well pursued, yet it is not of a divine institution; otherwise somewhat concerning so important a head as this is must have been mentioned in the scripture.

The natural idea of a general council, is a meeting of all the bishops of Christendom, or at least of proxies instructed by them and their clergy. Now if any will stand to this description, then we are very sure that there was never yet a true general council; which will appear to every one that reads the subscriptions of the councils. Therefore we must conclude, that general councils are not constituted by a divine authority; since we have no direction given us from God, by which we may know what they are, and what is necessary to their constitution. And we cannot suppose that God has granted any privileges, much less infallibility, which is the greatest of all, to a body of men, of whom, or of whose constitution, he has said nothing to us. For suppose we should yield that there were an infallibility lodged in general in the church diffusive, so that the church in some part or other shall be always pre-

served from error; yet the restraining this to the greater number of such bishops as shall happen to come to a council, they living perhaps near it, or being more capable and more forward to undertake a journey, being healthier, richer, or more active, than others; or, which is as probable, because it has often fallen out, they being picked out by parties or princes to carry on cabals, and manage such intrigues as may be on foot at the council; the restraining the infallibility, I say, to the greater number of such persons, unless there is a divine authority for doing it, is the transferring the infallibility from the whole body to a select number of persons, who of themselves are the least likely to consent to the engrossing this privilege to the majority of their body, it being their interest to maintain their right to it, free from intrigue or management.

We need not wonder if such things have happened in the latter ages, when Nazianzen laments the corruptions, the ambition, and the contentions, that reigned in those assemblies in his own time; so that he never desired to see any more of them. He was not only present at one of the general councils, but he himself felt the effects of jealousy and violence in it.

Further, it will appear a thing incredible, that there is an infallibility in councils because they are called general, and are assembled out of a great many kingdoms and provinces; when we see them go backward and forward, according to the influences of courts, and of interests directed from thence. We know how differently councils decreed in the Arian controversies; and what a variety of them Constantius set up against that at Nice. So it was in the Eutychian heresy, approved in the second council at Ephesus, but soon after condemned at Chalcedon. So it was in the business of images, condemned at Constantinople in the east; but soon after upon another change at court maintained in the second at Nice; and not long after condemned in a very numerous council at Francfort. And in the point in hand, as to the authority of councils, it was asserted at Constance and Basil, but condemned in the Lateran; and was upon the matter laid aside at Trent. Here were great numbers of all hands; both sides took the name of general councils.

It will be a further prejudice against this, if we see great violence and disorders entering into the management of some councils; and craft and artifice into the conduct of others. Numbers of factious and furious monks came to some councils, and drove on matters by their clamours; so it was at Ephesus. We see gross fraud in the second at Nice, both in the persons set up to represent the absent patriarchs, and in the books and authorities that were vouched for the worship of images. The intrigues at Trent, as they are set out even by cardinal Pallavicini, were more subtle, but not less apparent, nor less scandalous. Nothing was trusted to a session, till it was first

canvassed in congregations; which were what a committee of the whole house is in our parliaments; and then every man's vote was known; so that there was hereby great occasion given for practice. This alone, if there had been no more, shewed plainly that they themselves knew they were not guided by the Spirit of God, or by infallibility; since a session was not thought safe to be ventured on, but after a long previous canvassing.

Another question remains yet to be cleared, concerning their manner of proceeding; whether the infallibility is affixed to their vote, whatsoever their proceedings may be? or whether they are bound to discuss matters fully? The first cannot be said, unless it is pretended that they vote by a special inspiration. If the second is allowed, then we must examine both what makes a full discussion; and whether they have made it?

If we find opinions falsely represented; if books that are spurious have been relied on; if passages of scripture, or of the fathers, on which it appears the stress of the decision has turned, have been manifestly misunderstood and wrested, so that in a more enlightened age no person pretends to justify the authority that determined them, can we imagine that there should be more truth in their conclusions, than we do plainly see was in the premises out of which they were drawn? So it must either be said, that they vote by an immediate inspiration, or all persons cannot be bound to submit to their judgment till they have examined their methods of proceeding, and the grounds on which they went: and when all is done, the question comes, concerning the authority of such decrees after they are made; whether it follows immediately upon their being made, or must stay for the confirmatory bulls? If it must stay for the bull, then the infallibility is not in the council: and that is only a more solemn way of preparing matters in order to the laying them before the pope. If they are infallible before the confirmation, then the infallibility is wholly in the council; and the subsequent bull does, instead of confirming their decrees, derogate much from them: for to pretend to confirm them, imports that they wanted that addition of authority, which destroys the supposition of their infallibility, since what is infallible cannot be made stronger; and the pretending to add strength to it, implies that it is not infallible. Human constitutions may be indeed so modelled, that there must be a joint concurrence before a law can be made: and though it is the last consent that settles the law, yet the previous consents were necessary steps to the giving it the authority of a law.

And thus it is not to be denied, but that, as to the matters of government, the church may cast herself into such a model, that as by a decree of the council of Nice the bishops of a province might conclude nothing without the consent of the



metropolitan; so another decree might even limit a general council to stay for the consent of one or more patriarchs. But this must only take place in matters of order and government, which are left to the disposal of the church, but not in decisions about matters of faith. For if there is an infallibility in the church, it must be derived from a special grant made by Christ to his church: and it must go according to the nature of that grant, unless it can be pretended that there is a clause in that grant, empowering the church to dispose of it, and model it at pleasure. For if there is no such power, as it is plain there is not, then Christ's grant is either to a single person, or to the whole community: if to a single person, then the infallibility is wholly in him, and he is to manage it as he thinks best: for if he calls a council, it is only an act of his humility and condescension, to hear the opinions of many in different corners of the church, that so he may know all that comes from all quarters: it may also seem a prudent way to make his authority to be the more easily borne and submitted to, since what is gently managed is best obeyed: but after all, these are only prudential and discreet methods. The infallibility must be only in him, if Christ has by the grant tied him to such a succession. Whereas on the other hand, if the infallibility is granted to the whole community, or to their representatives, then all the applications that they may make to any one *see* must only be in order to the execution of their decrees, like the addresses that they make to princes for the civil sanction. But still the infallibility is where Christ put it. It rests wholly in their decision, and belongs only to that: and any other confirmation that they desire, unless it be restrained singly to the execution of their decrees, is a wound given by themselves to their own infallibility, if not a direct disclaiming of it.

When the confirmation of the council is over, a new difficulty arises concerning the receiving the decrees: and here it may be said, that if Christ's grant is to the whole community, so that a council is only the authentic declarer of the tradition, the whole body of the church that is possessed of the tradition, and conveys it down, must have a right to examine the decision that the council has made, and so is not bound to receive it, but as it finds it to be conformable to tradition.

Here it is to be supposed, that every bishop, or at the least all the bishops of any national church, know best the tradition of their own church and nation: and so they will have a right to re-examine things after they have been adjudged in a general council.

This will entirely destroy the whole pretension to infallibility: and yet either this ought to have been done after the councils at Arimini, or the second of Ephesus, or else the world must have received semi-Arianism, or Eutychianism,

implicitly from them. It is also no small prejudice against this opinion, that the church was constituted, the scriptures were received, many heresies were rejected, and the persecutions were gone through, in a course of three centuries; in all which time there was nothing that could pretend to be called a general council. And when the ages came, in which councils met often, neither the councils themselves, who must be supposed to understand their own authority best, nor those who wrote in defence of their decrees, who must be supposed to be inclined enough to magnify their authority, being of the same side; neither of these, I say, ever pretended to argue for their opinions, from the infallibility of those councils that decreed them.

They do indeed speak of them with great respect, as of bodies of men that were guided by the Spirit of God: and so do we of our reformers, and of those who prepared our Liturgy: but we do not ascribe infallibility to them, and no more did they. Nor did they lay the stress of their arguments upon the authority of such decisions; they knew that the objection might have been made as strong against them, as they could put the argument for them; and therefore they offered to wave the point, and to appeal to the scripture, setting aside the definitions that had been made in councils both ways.

To conclude this argument.

If the infallibility is supposed to be in councils, then the church may justly apprehend that she has lost it: for as there has been no council that has pretended to that title, now during one hundred and thirty years, so there is no great probability of our ever seeing another. The charge and noise, the expectations and disappointments, of that at Trent, has taught the world to expect nothing from one: they plainly see that the management from Rome must carry every thing in a council: neither princes nor people, no nor the bishops themselves, desire or expect to see one.

The claim set up at Rome for infallibility makes the demand of one seem not only needless there, but to imply a doubting of their authority, when other methods are looked after, which will certainly be always unacceptable to those who are in possession, and act as if they were infallible: nor can it be apprehended, that they will desire a council to reform those abuses in discipline, which are all occasioned by that absolute and universal authority of which they are now possessed.

So by all the judgments that can be made from the state of things, from the interests of men, and the last management at Trent, one may without a spirit of prophecy conclude, that, unless Christendom puts on a new face, there will be no more general councils. And so here infallibility

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Matt. xviii. 7. It remains that those passages should be considered that are brought to support this authority. Christ says, 'Tell the church; and if he neglects to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man, and a publican.'

These words in themselves, and separated from all that went before, seem to speak this matter very fully: but when the occasion of them, and the matter that is treated of in them, are considered, nothing can be plainer than that our Saviour is speaking of such private differences as may arise among men, and of the practice of forgiving injuries, and composing their differences. 'If thy brother sin against thee;' first, private endeavours were to be used; then the interposition of friends was to be tried; and finally, the matter was to be referred to the body, or assembly, to which they belonged: and those who could not be gained by such methods, were no more to be esteemed brethren, but were to be looked on as very bad men, like heathens. They might upon such refractoriness be excommunicated, and prosecuted afterwards in temporal courts, since they had by their perverseness forfeited all sort of right to that tenderness and charity that is due to true Christians.

This exposition does so fully agree to the occasion and scope of these words, that there is no colour of reason to carry them further.\*

1 Tim. iii. 15. The character given to the church of Ephesus, in St. Paul's Epistle to Timothy, that it was 'the pillar and ground of truth,' is a figurative expression: and it is never safe to build upon metaphors, much less to lay much weight upon them.

John xvi. 13. The Jews described their synagogues by such honourable characters, in which it is known how profuse all the eastern nations are. These are by St. Paul applied to the church of Ephesus: for he there speaks of the church where Timothy was then, in which he instructs him to behave himself well. It has visibly a relation to those inscriptions that were made on pillars which rested upon firm pedestals: but whatsoever the strict importance of the metaphor may be, it is a metaphor, and therefore it can be no argument. Christ's promise of the Spirit to his apostles, that should 'lead them into all

\* 'But the command to tell the offence of our private brother is not a command to tell it to the church catholic met in council; for then this precept could not have been obeyed for the first three centuries, no such council ever meeting till the time of Constantine. Then, secondly, the church must always be assembled in such a council, because doubtless there are, and will be always, persons thus offending against their Christian brethren. And thirdly, then every private person must be obliged, at what distance soever he be from it, and how unable soever he may be to do so, to travel to this council, and lay his private grievance before them: all which are palpable absurdities.' *Whitby*.—[Ed.]

truth,' relates visibly to that extraordinary inspiration by which they were to be acted, and that was, 'to shew them things to come;' so that a succession of prophecy may be inferred from these words, as well as of infallibility. A R T. XXI.

Those words of our Saviour, with which St. Matthew concludes his Gospel, 'Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world,' infer no infallibility, but only a promise of assistance and protection: which was a necessary encouragement to the apostles, when they were sent upon so laborious a commission, that was to involve them in so much danger. God's 'being with any,' his 'walking with them,' his 'being in the midst of them,' his 'never leaving nor forsaking them,' are expressions often used in the scripture, which signify no more but God's watchful providence, guiding, supporting, and protecting his people: all this is far from infallibility. Mat. xxviii. 20. 2 Cor. vi. 16. Heb. xiii. 5.

The last objection to be proposed is that which seems to relate most to the point in hand, taken from the decree made by a council at Jerusalem, which begins, 'It seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us:' from which they infer, that the Holy Ghost is present with councils, and that what seems good to them is also approved by the Holy Ghost. But it will not be easy to prove that this was such a council, as to be a pattern to succeeding ones to copy after it. We find *brethren* are here joined with the apostles themselves: now since these were no other than the laity, here an inference will be made, that will not easily go down. If they sat and voted with the apostles, it will seem strange to deny them the same privilege among bishops. By *elders* here it seems *presbyters* are meant, and this will give them an entrance into a general council, out of which they cannot be well excluded, if the laity are admitted. But here was no citation, no time given to all churches to send their bishops or proxies: it was an occasional meeting of such of the apostles as happened to be then at Jerusalem, who called to them the *elders* or *presbyters*, and other Christians at Jerusalem: for the Holy Ghost was then poured out so plentifully on so many, that no wonder if there were then about that truly *mother church* a great many of both sorts, who were of such eminence, that the apostles might desire them to meet and to join with them. Acts xv. 28.

The apostles were divinely assisted in the delivering that commission which our Saviour gave them in charge, 'To preach to every creature;' and so were infallibly assisted in the executing of it: yet when other matters fell in, which were no parts of that commission, they, no doubt, did as St. Paul, who sometimes *writ by permission*, as well as at other times *by commandment*: of which he gives notice, by saying, 'It is I, and not the Lord:' he suggested advices, which to him, according to his prudence and experience, seemed to be well Mark xvi. 15. 1 Cor. vii. 6, 12.

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 Ver. 40. founded; and he offered them with great sincerity; for though he had some reason to think that what he proposed, flowed from the 'Spirit of the Lord,' from that inspiration that was acting him; yet because that did not appear distinctly to him, he speaks with reserves, and says, he 'gives his judgment as one that had obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful.' So the apostles here, receiving no inspiration to direct them in this case, but observing well what St. Peter put them in mind of, concerning God's sending him by a special vision to preach to the Gentiles, and that God had poured out the Holy Ghost on them, even as he had done upon the apostles, who were  
 Ver. 25. Jews by nature, and that 'he did put no difference in that between Jews and Gentiles, purifying the hearts of the Gentiles by faith:' they upon this did by their judgment conclude from thence, that what God had done in the particular instance of Cornelius, was now to be extended to all the Gentiles. So by this we see that those words, 'seemed good to the Holy Ghost,' relate to the case of Cornelius; and those words, 'seemed good to us,' import that they resolved to extend that to be a general rule to all the Gentiles.

Acts xv. 9. This gives the words a clear and distinct sense, which agrees with all that had gone before; whereas it will otherwise look very strange to see them add their authority to that of the Holy Ghost; which is too absurd to suppose: nor will it be easy to give any other consisting sense to these words.

Here is no precedent of a council, much less of a general one: but a decision is made by men that were in other things divinely inspired, which can have no relation to the judgments of other councils. And thus it appears that none of those places, which are brought to prove the infallibility of councils, come up to the point: for so great and so important a matter as this is, must be supposed to be either expressly declared in the scriptures, or not at all.

The Article affirming, that *some general councils have erred*, must be understood of councils that pass for such; and that may be called general councils, much better than many others that go by that name: for that at Arimini was both very numerous, and was drawn out of many different provinces. As to the strict notion of a general council, there is great reason to believe that there was never any assembly to which it will be found to agree. And for the four general councils, which this church declares she receives, they are received only because we are persuaded from the scriptures that their decisions were made according to them: that the Son is truly God, of the same substance with the Father. That the Holy Ghost is also truly God. That the divine nature was truly united to the human in Christ; and that in one person. That both natures remained distinct; and that the human nature

was not swallowed up of the divine. These truths we find in the scriptures, and therefore we believe them. We reverence those councils for the sake of their doctrine; but do not believe the doctrine for the authority of the councils. There appeared too much of human frailty in some of their other proceedings, to give us such an implicit submission to them, as to believe things only because they so decided them.

## ARTICLE XXII.

## Of Purgatory.

The Romish Doctrine concerning Purgatory, Pardons, Worshipping and Adoration, as well of Images as of Relicks, and also Invocation of Saints, is a fond thing, vainly invented and grounded upon no Warrant of Scripture, but rather repugnant to the Word of God.

THERE are two small variations in this Article, from that published in king Edward's reign. What is here called the *Romish doctrine*, is there called the *doctrine of schoolmen*. The plain reason of this is, that these errors were not so fully espoused by the body of the Roman church, when those Articles were first published, so that some writers that softened matters threw them upon the schoolmen; and therefore the Article was cautiously worded, in laying them there: but before these that we have now were published, the *decree* and *canons* concerning the *mass* had passed at Trent, in which most of the heads of this Article are either affirmed or supposed; though the formal decree concerning them was made some months after these Articles were published.\* This will serve

\* This point deserves serious attention. Many of those articles against which we protest are so far from being Catholic doctrines, that they were not defined, and therefore not universally received even in the papal church until after the Reformation. This fact the champions of popery cannot deny. This subject is discussed by Stillingfleet with great ability in his 'Reformation of the Church of England justified,' in which he takes notice of the assertion that we have rejected catholic truth:—'According to your principles that which differenceth a catholic doctrine from a particular opinion, is the church's definition; before then the church had passed a definition in these points, they could not be held as catholic doctrines. To make this somewhat clearer, because it is necessary for undeceiving those who are told, as you tell us here, that at the Reformation we rejected such things which were universally owned for catholic doctrines, which is so far from being true, that it is impossible they should be owned for such by the church of Rome upon your own principles. For, I pray, tell us, are there not several sorts of opinions among you at this day, none of which are pretended to be catholic doctrines? and this you constantly tell us, when we object to you your dissensions about them. As for instance, the pope's personal infallibility, the superiority of popes over general councils, the immaculate conception of the blessed Virgin, the disputes about predestination, &c. When we tell you of your differences in these points, you answer, that these hinder not the unity of the church, because these are only in matters of opinion; and that it is not *de fide* that men should hold either way. When we demand the reason of this difference concerning these things, your answer is, that the church hath defined some things to be believed, and not others; that what the church hath defined, is to be looked on as catholic doctrine, and the deniers of it are guilty of heresy; but where the church hath not defined, those are not catholic doctrines, but only at best but pious opinions, and men may be good catholics and yet differ about them. I pray, tell me, is this your doctrine or is it not? If not, there may be heretics within your church, as well as without. If it be your doctrine, apply it to the matters in hand. Were these things defined by the church at the beginning of the Reformation? If they were, produce those definitions for all those things which

to justify that diversity. The second difference is only the leaving out of a severe word. *Perniciously repugnant to the word of God*, was put at first; but *perniciously* being considered to be only a hard word, they judged very right in the second edition of them, that it was enough to say *repugnant to the word of God*.

There are in this Article five particulars, that are all ingredients in the doctrine and worship of the church of Rome; purgatory, pardons, the worship of images, and of relics, and the invocation of saints; that are rejected not only as ill-grounded, brought in and maintained without good warrants from the scripture, but as contrary to it.

The first of these is purgatory; concerning which, the doctrine of the church of Rome is, that every man is liable both to temporal and to eternal punishment for his sins; that God, upon the account of the death and intercession of Christ, does indeed pardon sin as to its eternal punishment; but the sinner is still liable to temporal punishment, which he must expiate by acts of penance and sorrow in this world, together with such other sufferings as God shall think fit to lay upon him: but if he does not expiate these in this life, there is a state of suffering and misery in the next world, where the soul is to bear the temporal punishment of its sins; which may continue longer or shorter, till the day of judgment. And in order to the shortening this, the prayers and supererogations of men here on earth, or the intercession of the saints in heaven, but above all things, the sacrifice of the mass, are of great efficacy. This is the doctrine of the church of Rome, as asserted in the councils of Florence and Trent.\* What has been taught among

you say were owned as catholic doctrines then; that we may see, that at least in the judgment of your church they were accounted so. Tell us, when and where those doctrines were defined before the Council of Trent? and, I hope you will not say, that was before the beginning of the Reformation. If then there were no such definitions concerning them, they could not by your church be accounted as catholic doctrines; at the most, they could be but only pious opinions, as that of the pope's infallibility among you is, and consequently men might be catholics still, though they disputed or denied them. And how then come the Protestants to be accounted heretics in their reformation, if, upon your own principles, those things which they denied were then no catholic doctrines?—[E.]

\* The council of Florence decreed, 'That if true penitents depart in the love of God, before they have satisfied for their sins of omission, or commission, by fruits of repentance, their souls go to purgatory to be purged.' The council of Trent has thus decreed concerning this doctrine:—

'*Decretum de purgatorio.*

'*Cum catholica ecclesia, spiritu sancto edocta, ex sacris litteris, et antiqua patrum traditione, in sacris conciliis, et novissime in hac œcumenica synodo docuerit, purgatorium esse; animasque ibi detentas, fidelium suffragiis, potissimum vero acceptabili altaris sacrificio juvari; præcipit sancta synodus episcopis, ut sanam de purgatorio doctrinam, a sanctis patribus et sacris conciliis traditam, a Christi fidelibus credi, teneri, doceri, et ubique prædicari diligenter studeant. Apud rudem vero plebem difficiliores ac subtiliores quaestiones, quæque ad edificationem non faciunt, et ex quibus plerumque nulla fit pietatis accessio, a popularibus concionibus secludantur. Incerta item, vel quæ specie falsi laborant, evulgari ac tractari non permittant. Ea vero quæ ad curiositatem quamdam aut superstitionem spectant, vel turpe lucrum sapiunt, tanquam scandala et fidelium officicula prohibeant. Curent autem episcopi ut fidelium vivorum suffragia, missarum scilicet*

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them concerning the nature and the degrees of those torments, though supported by many pretended apparitions and revelations, is not to be imputed to the whole body; and is indeed only the doctrine of schoolmen, though it is generally preached and infused into the consciences of the people. Therefore I shall only examine that which is the established doctrine of the whole Roman church. And first as to the foundation of it, that sins are only pardoned, as to their eternal punishment, to those 'who being justified by faith have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:' there is not a colour for it in the scriptures. Remission of sins is in general that with which the preaching of the gospel ought always to begin; and this is so often repeated, without any such reserve, that it is a high assuming upon God, and his attributes of goodness and mercy, to limit these when he has not limited them; but has expressly said, that this is a main part of the new covenant, that 'he will remember our sins and iniquities no more.' Now it seems to be a maxim, not only of the law of nations, but of nature, that all offers of pardon are to be understood in the full extent of the words, without any secret reserves or limitations; unless they are plainly expressed. An indemnity being offered by a prince to persuade his subjects to return to their obedience, in the fullest words possible, without any reserves made in it, it would be looked on as a very perfidious thing, if when the subjects come in upon it, trusting to it, they should be told that they were to be secured by it against capital punishments; but that, as to all inferior punishments, they were still at mercy. We do not dispute whether God, if he had thought fit so to do, might not have made this distinction; nor do we deny that the grace of the gospel had been infinitely valuable, if it had offered us only the pardon of sin with relation to its eternal punishment, and had left the temporal punishment on us, to be expiated by ourselves. But then we say, this ought to have been expressed: the distinction ought to have been made between temporal and eternal: and we ought not to have been drawn into a covenant with God, by words that do plainly import an entire pardon and oblivion, upon which there lay a limited sense that was not to be told the

sacrificia, orationes, eleemosynæ, aliaque pietatis opera, quæ a fidelibus pro aliis fidelibus defunctis fieri consueverunt, secundum ecclesiæ instituta pie et devote fiant; et quæ pro illis ex testatorum foundationibus, vel alia ratione debentur, non perfunctorie, sed a sacerdotibus, et ecclesiæ ministris, et aliis, qui hoc præstare tenentur, diligenter et accurate persolvantur.—*Sessio xxv.*

We see from the above how careful the council was not to entangle itself in the dispute respecting the nature of purgatory; the decree simply stating that there is such a place. Equally vague is the article in the creed of pope Pius IV. on this subject. The catechism of the council of Trent made, however, a bolder step, and has informed us that purgatory is a fire in which the souls of the faithful are tormented.

'Præterea est purgatorius ignis, quo piorum animæ ad definitum tempus cruciatae, expiantur ut eis in æternam patriam ingressus patere possit, in quam nihil coinquinatum ingreditur.' *Cat. ad Par. De Symbolo. Art. descendit ad inferos.* —[Eo.]

Rom. v. 1.

Jer. xxxi.  
34.  
Heb. viii.  
12.A R T.  
XXIII.

world till it was once well engaged in the Christian religion. Upon these reasons it is that we conclude, that this doctrine not being contained in the scriptures, is not only without any warrant in them, but that it is contrary to those full offers of mercy, peace, and oblivion, that are made in the gospel; it is contrary to the truth and veracity, and to the justice and goodness of God, to affirm that there are reserves to be understood for punishments, when the offers and promises are made to us in such large and unlimited expressions.

Thus we lay our foundation in this matter, which does very fully overthrow theirs. We do not deny but that God does in this world punish good men for those sins, which yet are forgiven them through Christ, according to those words in the Psalm, 'Thou wast a God that forgavest them, though thou tookest vengeance of their inventions:' but this is a consideration quite of another nature. God, in the government of this world, thinks fit, by his Providence, sometimes to interpose in visible blessings, as well as judgments, to shew how he protects and favours the good, and punishes the bad; and that the bad actions of good men are odious to him, even though he has received their persons into his favour. He has also in the gospel plainly excepted the government of this world, and the secret methods of his Providence, out of the mercy that he has promised, by the warnings that are given to all Christians to prepare for crosses and afflictions in this life. He has made faith and patience in adversities a main condition of this new covenant; he has declared, that these are not the punishments of an angry God, but the chastisements of a kind and merciful Father, who designs by them both to shew to the world the impartiality of his justice in punishing some crying sins in a very signal manner, and to give good men deep impressions of their odiousness, to oblige them to a severer repentance for them, and to a greater watchfulness against them; as also to give the world such examples of resignation and patience under them, that they may edify others by that, as much as by their sins they may have offended them. So that, upon all these accounts, it seems abundantly clear, that no argument can be drawn from the temporal punishments of good men for their sins in this world, to a reserve of others in another state. The one are clearly mentioned and reserved in the offers of mercy that are made in the gospel, whereas the others are not. This being the most plausible thing that they say for this distinction of those twofold punishments, it is plain that there is no foundation for it.

As for those words of Christ's, 'ye shall not come out till ye have paid the uttermost farthing;' from which they would infer, that there is a state in which, after we shall be cast into prison, we are paying off our debts: this, if an argument at all, will prove too much; that in hell the damned are clearing

Mat. v. 26.

scores; and that they shall be delivered when all is paid off. For by *prison* there, that only can be meant, as appears by the whole contexture of the discourse, and by other parables of the like nature. It is a figure taken from a man imprisoned for a great debt; and the continuance of it, till the last farthing is paid, does imply their perpetual continuance in that state, since the debt is too great to be ever paid off. From a phrase in a parable, no consequence is to be drawn, beyond that which is the true scope of the parable, which in this particular is only intended by our Saviour, to shew the severe punishment of those who hate implacably, which is a sin that does certainly deserve hell, and not purgatory.

Our Saviour's words concerning the *sin* against 'the Holy Ghost,' that 'it is neither forgiven in this life, nor in that which is to come,' is also urged to prove, that some sins are pardoned in the next life, which are not pardoned in this. But still this will seem a stronger argument against the eternity of hell-torments, than for purgatory; and will rather import, that the damned may at last be pardoned their sins, since these are the only persons whose sins are not pardoned in this world; for of those who are justified, it cannot be said that their sins are not forgiven them, and such only go to purgatory: therefore, either this is only a general way of speaking, to exclude all hopes of pardon, and to imply that God's judgments will pursue such blasphemers, both in this life, and in the next; or, if we will understand them more critically, by *this life*, or *this age*, and the *next*, according to a common opinion and phrase of the Jews, which is founded on the prophecies, are to be understood the *dispensation of the Law*, and the *dispensation of the Messias*; the *age to come* being a common phrase for the times of the Messias; according to those words in the Epistle to the Hebrews, 'He hath not put in subjection to angels the world to come.' By the Mosaical law, sacrifices were only received, and by consequence pardon was offered for sins of a less heinous nature; but those that were more heinous were to be punished by death, or by *cutting off* without mercy; whereas a full promise of the pardon of all sins is offered in the gospel: so that the meaning of these words of Christ's is, that such a blasphemy was a sin not only beyond the pardon offered in the Law of Moses, which was the *age* that then was; but that it was a sin beyond that pardon which was to be offered by the Messias in the *age to come*, that is, in the kingdom of heaven, that was then at hand. But these words can by no means be urged to prove this distinction of temporal and eternal punishment; therefore we must conclude, that since 'repentance and remission of sins' are joined together in the first commission to preach the gospel; and since life, peace, and salvation, are promised to such as believe, that all this is to be understood simply and plainly, without any other limitation or exception than that

which is expressed, which is only of such chastisements as God thinks fit to exercise good men with in this life.

In the next place, we shall consider what reason we have to reject the doctrine of purgatory; as we have already seen how weak the foundation is upon which it is built. The scripture speaks to us of two states after this life, of happiness, and misery; and as it divides all mankind into good and bad, into those that do good and those that do evil, into believers and unbelievers, righteous and sinners; so it proposes always the end of the one to be everlasting happiness and the end of the other to be everlasting punishment, without the least hint of any middle state after death. So that it is very plain there is nothing said in scripture of men too good to be damned, but not so good as to be immediately saved. Now, if there had been yet a great deal to be suffered after death, and that there were many very effectual ways to prevent and avoid, or at least to shorten those sufferings; and if the apostles knew this, and yet said not a word of it, neither in their first sermons nor in their Epistles; here was a great treachery in the discharge of their function, and that to the souls of men, not to warn them of their danger, nor to direct them to the proper methods of avoiding it; but, on the contrary, to speak and write to them, just as we can suppose impostors would have done, to terrify those who would not receive their gospel, with eternal damnation, but not to say a word to those who received it, of their danger, in case they lived not up to that exactness that their religion required, and yet upon the main adhered to it and followed it. This is a method that does not agree with common honesty, not to say inspiration. A fair way of proceeding, is to make men sensible of dangers of all sorts, and to shew them how to avoid them; the apostles told their converts, that 'through much tribulation we must enter into the kingdom of heaven;' they assured them, that 'their present sufferings were not worthy to be compared to the glory that was to be revealed;' and that 'those light afflictions, which are for a moment, wrought for them a more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.' Here, if they knew any thing of purgatory, a powerful consideration was passed over in silence, that by these afflictions they should be delivered from those torments.

This argument goes further than mere silence; though that is very strong. The scriptures speak always as if the one did immediately follow the other; and that the saints, or true Christians, pass from the miseries of this state to the glories of the next. So does our Saviour represent the matter in the parable of Lazarus and the rich glutton; whose souls were presently carried to their different abodes; the one to be *comforted*, as the other was *tormented*. He promised also to the repenting thief, 'To-day thou shalt be with me in paradise.' St. Paul comforts himself, in the apprehension of his dissolu-

Acts xiv.  
22.  
Rom. viii.  
18.  
2 Cor. iv.  
17.

Luke xvi.  
25.  
Luke xxiii.  
43.

ART  
XXII.2 Tim. iv.  
8.  
Phil. i. 23.  
2 Cor. v. 6,  
8.

v. 1, 2.

Heb. xi. 10.

Rev. xiv.  
13.2 Ep.  
John,  
ver. 8.  
1 Cor. xv.  
41.

tion that was approaching, with the prospect of the 'crown of righteousness that should be given him' after death; and so he states these two as certain consequents one of another, 'to be dissolved and to be with Christ, to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord:' and he makes it appear that it was no peculiar privilege that he promised to himself, but that which all Christians had a right to expect; for he says in general, this 'we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.' In the Epistle to the Hebrews the patriarchs under the old dispensation are represented as 'looking for that city whose builder and founder is God:' though in that state the manifestations of another life were more imperfect than in this; in which 'life and immortality are brought to light;' they being veiled and darkened in that state. And finally, St. John heard a voice commanding him to write, 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord (that is, being true Christians) from henceforth (or immediately): Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.' From the solemnity with which these words are delivered, they carry in them an evidence sufficient to determine the whole matter. So that we must have very hard thoughts of the sincerity of the writers of the New Testament, and very much disparage their credit, not to say their inspiration, if we can imagine that there are scenes of suffering, and those very dismal ones, to be gone through, of which they gave the world no sort of notice; but spoke in the same style that we do, who believe no such dismal interval between the death of good men and their final blessedness. The scriptures do indeed speak of a *full reward* and of different degrees of glory, 'as one star exceeds another.' They do also represent the day of judgment upon the resurrection of the body, as that which gives the full and entire possession of blessedness; so that from hence some have thought, upon very probable grounds, that the blessed, though admitted to happiness immediately upon their death, yet were not so completely happy as they shall be after the resurrection: and in this there arose a diversity of opinions, which is very natural to all who will go and form systems out of some general hints. Some thought that the souls of good men were at rest, and in a good measure happy, but that they did not see God before the resurrection. Others thought that Christ was to come down and reign visibly upon earth a thousand years before the end of the world; and that the saints were to rise and to reign with him, some sooner and some later. Some thought that the last conflagration was so to affect all, that every one was to pass through it, and that it was to give the last and highest purification to those bodies that were then to be glorified; but that the better Christians that any had been, they should feel the less of the pain of that

ART.  
XXII.Col. ii. 8.  
18.

last fire. These opinions were very early entertained in the church: an itch of intruding too far into things which men did not thoroughly understand, concerning angels, began to disturb the church even in the days of the apostles: which made St. Paul charge the Colossians to beware of vain philosophy. Plato thought there was a middle sort of men, who though they had sinned, yet had repented of it, and were in a curable condition, and that they went down for some time into hell, to be purged and absolved by grievous torments. The Jews had also a conceit, that the souls of some men continued for a year, going up and down in a state of purgation. From these opinions somewhat of a curiosity in describing the degrees of the next state began pretty early to enter into the church.

As for that opinion of the Platonists, and the fictions of Homer and Virgil, setting forth the complaints of souls departed, for their not being relieved by prayers and sacrifices, though these perhaps are the true sources of the doctrine of purgatory, and of redeeming souls out of it, yet we are not so much concerned in them, as in what is represented to us by the author of the second book of the Maccabees, concerning the sacrifice that was offered by Judas Maccabeus, for those, about whom, after they were killed, they found such things as shewed that they had defiled themselves with the idolatry of the heathens. All this is of less authority with us, who do not acknowledge that book to be canonical: according to what was set out in its proper place. And although we set a due value upon some of the apocryphal books, yet others are of a lower character. The first book of Maccabees is a very grave history, writ with much exactness and a true judgment; but the second is the work of a mean writer: he was an abridger of a larger work; and as he has the modesty to ask his readers pardon for his defects, so it is very plain to every one that reads him, that he needs often many grains of allowance. So that this book is one of the least valuable pieces of the Apocrypha; and there are very probable reasons to question the truth of that relation, concerning those who were thus prayed for. But because that would occasion too long a digression, we are to make a difference between the story that he relates, and the author's own reflections upon it; for as we ought not to make any great account of his reflections, these being only his private thoughts, who might probably have imbibed some of the principles of the Greek philosophy, as some of the Jews had done, or he might have believed that notion which is now very generally received by the Jews, that every Jew shall have a share in the world to come, but that such as have lived ill must be purged before they arrive at it. It is of much more importance to consider what Judas Maccabeus did; which even by that relation seems to be no more than this, that he finding some things consecrated to the idols of

2 Maccab.  
xii. 40.



the Jamnites, about the bodies of those who were killed, concluded that to have been the cause of their death: and upon this he and all his men betook themselves to prayer, and besought God that the sin might be wholly put out of remembrance: he exhorted his people to keep themselves, by that example, from the like sin; and he made a collection of a sum of money, and sent it to Jerusalem to offer a sin-offering before the Lord. So far the matter agrees well enough with the Jewish dispensation. It had appeared in the days of Joshua, how much guilt the sin of Achan, though but one person, had brought upon the whole congregation; and their law had upon another occasion prescribed a sin-offering for the whole congregation to expiate blood that was shed, when the murderer could not be discovered: that so the judgments of God might not come upon them, by reason of the cry of that blood. And by a parity of reason, Judas might have offered such an offering to free himself and his men from the guilt which the idolatry of a few might have brought upon greater numbers; such a sacrifice as this might, according to the nature of that law, have been offered: but to offer a *sin-offering* for the dead, was a new thing without ground, or any intimation of any thing like it in their law. So there is no reason to doubt, but that, if the story is true, Judas offered this sin-offering for the living, and not for the dead. If they had been alive then, by their law no sin-offering could have been made for them: for idolatry was to be punished by *cutting off*, and not to be expiated by sacrifice: what then could not have been done for them if alive, could much less be done for them after their death. So we have reason to conclude that Judas offered this sacrifice only for the living: and we are not much concerned in the opinion which so slight a writer, as the author of that book, had concerning it. But whatever might be his opinion, it was far from that of the Roman church. By this instance of the Maccabees, men who died in a state of mortal sin, and that of the highest nature, had sacrifices offered for them: whereas, according to the doctrine of the church of Rome, hell, and not purgatory, is to be the portion of all such: so this will prove too much, if any thing at all, that sacrifices are to be offered for the damned. The design of Judas's sending to make an offering for them, as that writer states it, was, that their sins might be forgiven, and that they might have a happy resurrection. Here is nothing of redeeming them out of misery, or of shortening or alleviating their torments: so that the author of that book seems to have been possessed with that opinion, received commonly among the Jews, that no Jew could finally perish; as we find St. Jerome expressing himself with the like partiality for all Christians. But whatever the author's opinion was, as that book is of no authority, it is highly probable that Judas's design in that oblation was misunderstood by the historian; and we are sure that even

his sense of it differs totally from that of the church of ART. XXII.  
Rome.

A passage in the New Testament is brought as a full proof of the fire of purgatory. When St. Paul in his Epistle to the Corinthians is reflecting on the divisions that were among them, and on that diversity of teachers that formed men into different principles and parties, he compares them to different builders. Some raised upon a rock an edifice like the temple at Jerusalem, of *gold and silver*, and noble *stones*, called *precious stones*; whereas others upon the same rock raised a mean hovel of *wood, hay, and stubble*; of both he says, 'every man's work shall be made manifest. For the day shall reveal it; because it shall be revealed by fire; for the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.' And he adds, 'If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward; and if any man's work shall be burnt, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire.' From the first view of these words it will not be thought strange if some of the ancients, who were too apt to expound places of scripture according to their first appearance, might fancy, that at the last day all were to pass through a great fire; and to suffer more or less in it: but it is visible that that opinion is far enough from the doctrine of purgatory. These words relate to a fire that was soon to appear, and that was to try every man's work. It was to be revealed, and in it every man's work was to be made manifest. So this can have no relation to a secret purgatory fire.\* The meaning of it can be no other, but that whereas some with the apostles were building up the church, not only upon the foundation of Jesus Christ, and the belief of his doctrine, but were teaching men doctrines and rules that were virtuous, good, and great; others at the same time were daubing with a profane mixture, both of Judaism and Gentilism, joining these with some of the precepts of Christianity; a *day* would soon appear, which probably is meant of the destruction of Jerusalem, and of the Jewish nation; or it may be applied to the persecution that was soon to break out; in that day, those who had true notions, generous principles, and suitable practices, would weather that storm: whereas others, that were entangled with weak and superstitious conceits, would then run a great risk, though their firm believing that Jesus was the Messiah would preserve them: yet the weakness and folly of

\* But whether we understand these words of that day (of the destruction of Jerusalem) or any other day of judgment, this is certain, that the apostle cannot be here supposed to speak of the *Roman purgatory fire*; (1) because the fire the apostle speaks of, as Origen hath noted, is not *πῦρ ὕλινος καὶ αἰσθητὸν, ἀλλὰ προσηγορικόν, fire properly, but metaphorically, so called*, as appears from those words, *he shall escape as by fire*. (2) Because this fire is to try *every man's work*, Paul and Apollos's, as well as theirs who built on the foundation hay and stubble; and sure they will not say Paul and Apollos went to purgatory. (3) This fire shall try *every man's work, of what sort it is*: now purgatory fire doth not try every man's works, but punishes them for them. *Whitby.*—[Ed.]



ART.  
XXII.

those teachers would appear, their opinions would involve them in such danger, that their escaping would be difficult; like one that gets out of a house that is all on fire round about him. So that these words cannot possibly belong to purgatory; but must be meant of some signal discrimination that was to be made, in some very dreadful appearances which would distinguish between the true and the false apostles; and that could be no other but either in the destruction of Jerusalem, or in the persecution that was to come on the church; though the first is the more probable.

It were easy to pursue this argument further, and to shew, that the doctrine of purgatory, as it is now in the Roman church, was not known in the church of God for the first six hundred years; that then it began to be doubtfully received. But in an ignorant age, visions, legends, and bold stories prevailed much; yet the Greek church never received it. Some of the fathers speak indeed of the last probatory fire; but though they did not think the saints were in a state of consummate blessedness, enjoying the vision of God, yet they thought they were in a state of ease and quiet, and that in heaven. St. Austin speaks in this whole matter very doubtfully; he varies often from himself; he seems sometimes very positive only for two states; at other times, as he asserts the last probatory fire, so he seems to think that good souls might suffer some grief in that sequestered state before the last day, upon the account of some of their past sins, and that by degrees they might arise up to their consummation. All these contests were proposed very doubtfully before Gregory the Great's days; and even then some doubts seem to have been made: but the legends were so copiously played upon all those doubts, that this remnant of paganism got at last into the western church. It was no wonder, that the opinions formerly mentioned, which began to appear in the second age, had produced in the third the practice of praying for the dead; of which we find such full evidence in Tertullian and St. Cyprian's writings, that the matter of fact is not to be denied. This appears also in all the ancient liturgies: and Epiphanius charges Aerius with this of rejecting all prayers for the dead, asking, why were they prayed for? The opinions that they fell into concerning the state of departed souls, in the interval between their death and the day of judgment, gave occasion enough for prayer; they thought they were capable of making a progress, and of having an early resurrection. They also had this notion among them; that it was the peculiar privilege of Jesus Christ to be above all our prayers; but that no men, not excepting the apostles, nor the blessed Virgin, were above the prayers of the church. They thought this was an act of church-communion, that we were to hold even with the saints in heaven, to pray for them. Thus in the Apostolical Constitutions, in the books of the Ecclesiastical

Aug. de  
Civit. Dei,  
l. 21. c.  
18. ad 22.  
Enchir. c.  
67, 68, 69.  
Ad Dul-  
cid.  
quæst.  
prima.

Tertul. de  
Cor. Mil.  
c. 3. de Ex-  
hor. c. 13.  
Cypr.  
Ep. 34, 37.  
Epiph.  
Hær. 75.  
l. 3. n. 3.

Dion. de  
Eccl. Hier.  
cap. 7.

ART.  
XXII.

Hierarchy, and in the Liturgies that are ascribed to St. Basil and St. Chrysostom, they offer unto God these prayers, which they thought their reasonable service, for those who were at rest in the faith, their forefathers, fathers, patriarchs, prophets, and apostles; preachers, evangelists, martyrs, confessors, religious persons, and for every spirit perfected in the faith; especially for our most holy, immaculate, most blessed Lady, the mother of God, the ever Virgin Mary. Particular instances might also be given of this out of St. Cyprian, St. Ambrose, Nazianzen, and St. Austin; who in that famous and much cited passage concerning his mother, Monica, as he speaks nothing of any temporal pains that she suffered, so he plainly intimates his belief that God had done all that he desired. Thus it will appear to those who have examined all the passages which are brought out of the fathers, concerning their prayers for the dead, that they believed they were then in heaven, and at rest; and by consequence, though these prayers for the dead did very probably give the chief rise to the doctrine of purgatory; yet, as they then made them, they were utterly inconsistent with that opinion. Tertullian, who is the first that is cited for them, says, we make oblations for the dead, and we do it for that second nativity of theirs (*natalitia*) once a year. The signification of the word *natalitia*, as they used it, was the saint's day of death, in which they reckoned he was born again to heaven: so, though they judged them there, yet they offered up prayers for them: and when Epiphanius brings in Aerius asking, why those prayers were made for the dead? though it had been very natural, and indeed unavoidable, if he had believed purgatory, to have answered, that it was to deliver them from thence: yet he makes no such answer, but only asserts, that it had been the practice of the church so to do. The Greek church retains that custom, though she has never admitted of purgatory. Here then an objection may be made to our constitution, that in this of praying for the dead we have departed from the practice of the ancients: we do not deny it, both the church of Rome and we in another practice, of equal antiquity, of giving the eucharist to infants, have made changes, and let that custom fall. The curiosities in the second century seem to have given rise to those prayers in the third; and they gave the rise to many other disorders in the following centuries. Since, therefore, God has commanded us, while we are on earth, to pray for one another, and has made that a main act of our charity and church-communion, but has nowhere directed us to pray for those that have finished their course; and since the only pretence that is brought from scripture, of St. Paul's praying, that 'Onesiphorus might find mercy in the day of the Lord,'<sup>2 Tim. 1.</sup> cannot be wrought up into an argument, for it cannot be proved that he was then dead; and since the fathers reckon this of praying for the dead only as one of their customs, for

Aug. conf.  
l. 9. c. 13De Cor.  
Mil.

2 Tim. 1.

18.

which they vouch no other warrant but practice; since, also, this has been grossly abused, and has been applied to support a doctrine totally different from theirs; we think that we have as good a plea for not following them in this, as we have for not giving infants the sacrament, and therefore we think it no imputation on our church, that we do not in this follow a groundless and a much abused precedent, though set us in ages which we highly reverence.

The greatest corruption of this whole matter comes in the last place to be considered; which is, the methods proposed for redeeming souls out of purgatory. If this doctrine had rested in a speculation, we must still have considered it as derogatory to the death of Christ, and the truth of the gospel: but it raises our zeal a little more, when we consider the use that was made of it; and that fears and terrors being by this means infused into men's minds, new methods were proposed to free them from these. The chief of which was the saying of *masses* for departed souls. It was pretended, that this being the highest act of the communion of Christians, and the most sublime piece of worship, therefore God was so well pleased with the frequent repetition of it, with the prayers that accompanied it, and with those that made provisions for men who should be constantly employed in it, that this was a most acceptable sacrifice to God. Upon this followed all those vast endowments for saying *masses* for departed souls; though in the institution of that sacrament, and in all that is spoken of it in the scripture, there is not an hint given of this. Sacraments are positive precepts, which are to be measured only by the institution, in which there is not room left for us to carry them further. We are 'to take, eat and drink, and thereby shew forth the Lord's death till his second coming:' all which has no relation to the applying this to others who are gone off the stage; therefore if we can have any just notions either of superstition, or of will-worship, they are applicable here. Men will fancy that there is a virtue in an action, which we are sure it has not of itself, and we cannot find that God has put in it; and yet they, without any authority from God, do set up a new piece of worship, and imagine that God will be pleased with them in every thing they do or ask, only because they are perverting this piece of worship, clearly contrary to the institution, to a solitary mass. In the primitive church, where all the service of the whole assembly ended in a communion, there was a roll read, in which the names of the more eminent saints of the catholic church, and of the holy bishops, martyrs, or confessors of every particular church, were registered. This was an honourable remembrance that was kept up of such as had died in the Lord. When the soundness of any person's faith was brought in suspicion, his name was not read till that point was cleared, and then either his name continued to be read, or it was quite dashed out. This was

thought an honour due to the memory of those who had died in the faith: and in St. Cyprian's time, in the infancy of this practice, we see he counted the leaving a man's name out as a thing that only left a blot upon him, but not as a thing of any consequence to his soul; for when a priest had died, who had by his last will named another priest the tutor (or guardian) of his children, this seemed to him a thing of such ill example, to put those secular cares upon the minds of the clergy; that he appointed that his name should be no more read in the daily sacrifice: which plainly shews, unless we will tax St. Cyprian with a very unreasonable cruelty, that he considered that only as a small censure laid on his memory, but not as a prejudice to his soul. This gives us a very plain view of the sense that he had of this matter. After this roll was read, then the general prayer followed, as was formerly acknowledged, for all their souls; and so they went on in the communion service. This has no relation to a mass said by a single priest to deliver a soul out of purgatory.

Here, without going far in tragical expressions, we cannot hold saying what our Saviour said upon another occasion, Mark xi. 17. 'My house is a house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves.' A trade was set up on this foundation. The world was made to believe, that by virtue of so many masses, which were to be purchased by great endowments, souls were redeemed out of purgatory; and scenes of visions and apparitions, sometimes of the tormented, and sometimes of the delivered souls, were published in all places: which had so wonderful an effect, that in two or three centuries endowments increased to so vast a degree, that if the scandals of the clergy on the one hand, and the statutes of *mortmain* on the other, had not restrained the profuseness that the world was wrought up to upon this account, it is not easy to imagine how far this might have gone; perhaps to an entire subjecting of the temporality to the spirituality. The practices by which this was managed, and the effects that followed on it, we can call by no other name than downright impostures; worse than the making or vending false coin: when the world was drawn in by such arts to plain bargains, to redeem their own souls, and the souls of their ancestors and posterity, so many masses were to be said, and forfeitures were to follow upon their not being said: thus the masses were really the price of the lands. An endowment to a religious use, though mixed with error or superstition in the rules of it, ought to be held sacred, according to the decision given concerning the censures of those that were in the rebellion of Corah: so that we do not excuse the violation of such from sacrilege; yet we cannot think so of endowments, where the only consideration was a false opinion first of purgatory, and then of redemption out of it by masses; this being expressed in the very deeds themselves. By the same reasons, by which private persons

**ART. XXII.** are obliged to restore what they have drawn from others by base practices, by false deeds, or counterfeit coin; bodies are also bound to restore what they have got into their hands by such fraudulent practices; so that the states and princes of Christendom were at full liberty upon the discovery of these impostures, to void all the endowments that had followed upon them; and either to apply them to better uses, or to restore them to the families from which they had been drawn, if that had been practicable, or to convert them to any other use. This was a crying abuse, which those who have observed the progress that this matter made from the eighth century to the twelfth, cannot reflect on without both amazement and indignation. We are sensible enough that there are many political reasons and arguments for keeping up the doctrine of purgatory. *But we have not so learned Christ.* We ought not to lie even for God, much less for ourselves, or for any other pretended ends of keeping the world in awe and order: therefore all the advantages that are said to arise out of this, and all the mischief that may be thought to follow on the rejecting of it, ought not to make us presume to carry on the ends of religion by unlawful methods. This were to call in the assistance of the Devil to do the work of God; if the just apprehensions of the wrath of God, and the guilt of sin, together with the fear of everlasting burnings, will not reform the world, nor restrain sinners, we must leave this matter to the wise and unsearchable judgments of God.

The next particular in this Article is the condemning the Romish doctrine concerning *pardons*: that is founded on the distinction between the temporal and eternal punishment of sin; and the pardon is of the temporal punishment, which is believed to be done by a power lodged singly in the pope, derived from those words, 'Feed my sheep,' and 'To thee will I give the keys of the kingdom of heaven.' This may be by him derived, as they teach, not only to bishops and priests, but to the inferior orders, to be dispensed by them; and it excuses from penance, unless he who purchases it thinks fit to use his penance in a medicinal way, as a preservative against sin. So the virtue of indulgences\* is the applying

\* The system of indulgences had its foundation in the early ages of Christianity, when many of those who had apostatized under the persecution of Decius were anxious to be re-admitted to the communion of the church, 'without submitting to that painful course of penitential discipline, which the ecclesiastical laws indispensably required. The bishops were divided upon this matter: some were for shewing the desired indulgence, while others opposed it with all their might. In Egypt and Africa, many, in order to obtain more speedily the pardon of their apostacy, interested the martyrs in their behalf, and received from them letters of reconciliation and peace, i. e. a formal act, by which they (the martyrs) declared in their last moments, that they looked upon them as worthy of their communion, and desired, of consequence, that they should be restored to their place among the brethren.—*Mosheim.*

The subsequent scandalous abuse of this practice, and the iniquitous traffic in indulgences which called forth the zeal of Martin Luther, are too well known to require any further remarks.—[Ed.]

the treasure of the church upon such terms as popes shall think fit to prescribe, in order to the redeeming souls from purgatory, and from all other temporal punishments, and that for such a number of years as shall be specified in the bulls; some of which have gone to thousands of years; one I have seen to ten hundred thousand: and as these indulgences are sometimes granted by special tickets, like tallies struck on that treasure; so sometimes they are affixed to particular churches and altars, to particular times, or days, chiefly to the year of jubilee; they are also affixed to such things as may be carried about, to *Agnus Dei's*, to medals, to rosaries and scapularies; they are also affixed to some prayers, the devout saying of them being a mean to procure great indulgences. The granting these is left to the pope's discretion, who ought to distribute them as he thinks may tend most to the honour of God, and the good of the church; and he ought not to be too profuse, much less to be too scanty, in dispensing them.

This has been the received doctrine and practice of the church of Rome since the twelfth century; and the council of Trent\* in a hurry, in its last session, did in very general words approve of the practice of the church in this matter, and decreed that indulgences should be continued; only they restrained some abuses, in particular that of selling them; yet even those restraints were wholly referred to the popes themselves: so that this crying abuse, the scandal of which had occasioned the first beginnings and progress of the Reformation, was upon the matter established; and the correcting the excesses in it was trusted to those who had been the authors of them, and the chief gainers by them. This point of their doctrine is more fully opened than might perhaps seem necessary, if it were not that a great part of the confutation of some doctrines is the exposing of them. For though in ages and places of ignorance these things have been, and still are,

\* *Decretum de Indulgentiis.*

'Cum potestas conferendi indulgentias a Christo ecclesiæ concessa sit; atque hujusmodi potestate, divinitus sibi tradita, antiquissimis etiam temporibus illa usa fuerit: sacrosancta synodus indulgentiarum usum, Christiano populo maxime salutarem, et sacrorum conciliorum auctoritate probatum, in ecclesia retinendum esse docet et præcipit; eosque anathemate damnat, qui aut inutiles esse asserunt, vel eas concedendi in ecclesia potestatem esse negant: in his tamen concedendis moderationem, juxta veterem et probatam in ecclesia consuetudinem, adhiberi cupit; ne nimia facilitate ecclesiastica disciplina enervetur. Abusus vero, qui in his irrepserunt, et quorum occasione insigne hoc indulgentiarum nomen ab hæreticis blasphematur, emendatos et correctos cupiens, præsentis decreto generaliter statuit pravos quæstus omnes pro his consequendis, unde plurima in Christiano populo abusu causa fluxit, omnino abolendos esse. Cæteros vero, qui ex superstitione, ignorantia, irreverentia, aut aliunde quomodocumque provenerunt, cum ob multiples locorum et provinciarum, apud quas hi committuntur, corruptelas commode nequeant specialiter prohiberi; mandat omnibus episcopis, ut diligenter quisque hujusmodi abusus ecclesiæ suæ colligat, eosque in prima synodo provinciali referat: ut aliorum quoque episcoporum sententia cogniti, statim ad summum romanum pontificem deferantur: cujus auctoritate et prudentia, quod universali ecclesiæ expedit, statuatur; ut ita sanctorum indulgentiarum munus, pie, sancte, et incorrupte omnibus fidelibus dispensetur. *Sessio xxv.*—[Ed.]

practised with great assurance, and to very extravagant excesses; yet in countries and ages of more light, when they come to be questioned, they are disowned with an assurance equal to that with which they are practised elsewhere. Among us some will perhaps say, that these are only exemptions from penance, which cannot be denied to be within the power of the church; and they argue, that though it is very fit to make severe laws, yet the execution of these must be softened in practice. This is all that they pretend to justify, and they give up any further indulgences as an abuse of corrupt times. Whereas at the same time a very different doctrine is taught among them, where there is no danger, but much profit, in owning it. All this is only a pretence; for the episcopal power, in the inflicting, abating, or commuting of penance, is stated among them as a thing wholly different from the power of indulgences. They are derived from different originals; and designed for ends totally different from one another. The one is for the outward discipline of the church, and the other is for the inward quiet of consciences, and in order to their future state. The one is in every bishop, and the other is asserted to be peculiar to the pope. Nor will they escape by laying this matter upon the ignorance and abuses of former times. It was published in bulls, and received by the whole church: so that if either the pope, or the diffusive body of the church are infallible, there must be such a power in the pope; and the decree of the council of Trent confirming and approving the practice of the church in that point, must bind them all. For if this doctrine is false, then their infallibility must go with it; for in every hypothesis in which infallibility is said to be lodged, whether in the pope or in councils, this doctrine has that seal to it.

As for the doctrine itself, all that has been already said against the distinction of temporal and eternal punishment, and against purgatory, overthrows it; since the one is the foundation on which it is built, and the other is that which it pretends to secure men from: and therefore this falls with those. All that was said upon the head of the sufficiency of the scriptures comes also in here; for if the scriptures ought to be our rule in any thing, it must be chiefly in those matters which relate to the pardon of sin, to the quiet of our consciences, and to a future state. Therefore a doctrine and practice that have not so much as colours from scripture in a matter of such consequence, ought to be rejected by us upon this single account. If from the scripture we go to the practice and tradition of the church, we are sure that this was not thought on for above ten centuries; all the indulgences that were then known being only the abatements of the severity of the penitentiary canons; but in the ages in which aspiring and insolent popes imposed on ignorant and superstitious multitudes, a jumble was made of indulgences for-

merly granted, of purgatory, and of the papal authority, that was then very implicitly submitted to; and so out of all that mixture this arose; which was as ill managed as it was ill grounded. The natural tendency of it is not only to relax all public discipline, but also all secret penance, when shorter methods to peace and pardon, may be more easily purchased. The vast application to the executing the many trifling performances to which indulgences are granted, has brought in among them such a prostitution of holy things, that either it must be said that those are public cheats, and that they were so from the beginning, or that their virtue is now exhausted, though the bulls that grant them are perpetual; or else a man may on very easy terms preserve himself and redeem his friends out of purgatory. If the saying a prayer before a privileged altar, or the visiting some churches in the time of jubilee, with those slight devotions that are then enjoined, have such efficacy in them, it is scarce possible for any man to be in danger of purgatory.

The *third* head rejected in this Article is the worshipping of images. Here those of the church of Rome complain much of the charge of idolatry, that our church has laid upon them, so fully and so severely in the Homilies. Some among ourselves have also thought that we must either renounce that charge, or that we must deny the possibility of salvation in that church, and in consequence to that conclude, that neither the baptism nor the orders of that church are valid: for since idolaters are excluded from the kingdom of heaven, they argue, that if there can be no salvation where idolatry is committed by the whole body of a church, then that can be no church, and in it there is no salvation. But here we are to consider, before we enter upon the specialities of this matter, that idolatry is a general word, which comprehends many several sorts and ranks of sins under it. As lying is capable of many degrees, from an officious lie to the swearing falsely against the life of an innocent man in judgment: the one is the lowest, and the other is the highest act of that kind; but all are lying: and yet it would appear an unreasonable thing to urge every thing that is said of any act in general, and which belongs to the highest acts of it, as if all the inferior degrees did necessarily involve the guilt of the highest. There is another distinction to be made between actions, as they signify either of themselves, or by the public constructions that are put on them, by those who authorize them, and those same actions as they may be privately intended by particular persons. We, in our weighing of things, are only to consider what actions signify of their own nature, or by public authority, and according to that we must form our judgments about them, and in particular in the point of idolatry: but as for the secret thoughts or intentions of men, we must leave these to the judgment of God, who only knows them, and who being

infinitely gracious, slow to anger, and ready to forgive, will, we do not doubt, make all the abatements in the weighing men's actions that there is reason for. But we ought not to enter into that matter; we ought neither to aggravate nor to mollify things too much: we are to judge of things as they are in themselves, and to leave the case of men's intentions and secret notions to that God who is to judge them. As for the business of images, we know that the heathens had them of several sorts. Some they believed were real resemblances of those deities that they worshipped: those divinities had been men, and the statues made for them resembled them. Other images they believed had a divine virtue affixed to them, perhaps from the stars, which were believed to be gods; and it was thought that the influences of their aspects and positions were by secret charms called down, and fastened to some figures. Other images were considered as emblems and representations of their deities: so that they only gave them occasion to represent them to their thoughts. These images, thus of different sorts, were all worshipped; some more, some less: they kneeled before them; they prayed to them, and made many oblations to them; they set lights before them, and burnt incense to them; they set them in their temples, market-places, and highways; and they had them in their houses: they set them off with much pomp, and had many processions to their honour. But in all this, though it is like the vulgar among them might have gross thoughts of those images, yet the philosophers, not only after the Christian religion had obliged them to consider well of that matter, and to express themselves cautiously about it; but even while they were in the peaceable possession of the world, did believe that the deity was not in the image, but was only represented by it; that the deity was worshipped in the image, so that the honour done the image did belong to the deity itself. Here then were two false opinions: the one was concerning those deities themselves; the other was concerning this way of worshipping them; and both were blamed; not only the worshipping a false god, but the worshipping that god by an image. If idolatry had only consisted in the acknowledging a false god, and if the worshipping the true God in an image had not been idolatry, then all the fault of the heathenish idolaters should have consisted in this, that they worshipped a false god; but their worshipping images should not of itself have been an additional fault. But in opposition to this, what can we think of those full and copious words, in which God did not only forbid the having of false gods, but the making of

Ex. xx. 4, 5. 'a graven image, or the likeness of any thing in heaven, in earth, or under the earth?' The 'bowing down to it, and the worshipping it,' are also forbid. Where, besides the copiousness of these words, we are to consider, that Moses, in the rehearsal of that law in Deuteronomy, does over and over

again add and insist on this, that 'they saw no manner of similitude,' when God spoke to them, 'lest they should corrupt themselves, and make to them a graven image;' an enumeration is made of many different likenesses; and after that comes another species of idolatry, 'the worshipping the host of heaven;' and therefore Moses charges them in that chapter again and again 'to take heed, to take good heed to themselves, lest they should forget the covenant of the Lord their God, and make them a graven image:' and he lays the same charge a third time upon them in the same chapter. A special law is also given against the most innocent of all the images that could be made: they were required not only not to have idols, nor graven images, but 'not to rear up a standing image or pillar; nor to set up any image of stone, or any carved stone;' such were the *Baitulia*; the least tempting or ensnaring of all idols: 'they were not to bow down before it;' and the reason given is, 'For I am the Lord your God.' The importance of those laws will appear clearer, if they are compared with the practice of those times, and particularly in those symbolical images, which were sacred emblems and hieroglyphics, that were not meant to be a true representation of the Divine Being, but were a combination of many symbols, intended to represent at once to the thoughts of the worshipper many of the perfections of God: these were most particularly practised in Egypt, and to them the copiousness of the Second Commandment seems to have a particular respect, such having been the images which they had lately seen, and which seem the most excusable of all others: when, I say, all this is laid together, with the commandment itself, and with those other laws that accompany and explain it, nothing seems more evident, than that God intended to forbid all outward representations, that should be set up as the objects of worship. It is also very plain, that the prophets expostulated with the people of Israel for their carved and molten images, as well as for their false gods: and among the reasons given against images, one is often repeated, 'To whom will ye liken me?' which seems to import, that by these images they represented the living God. And Isaiah often, as also both Jeremiah and Habakkuk, when they set forth the folly of making an image, of praying to it, and trusting in it, bring in the greatness and glory of the living God, in opposition to these images. Now though it is possible enough to apprehend, how that the Jews might make images in imitation of the heathen, to represent that God whom they served; yet it is no way credible that they could have fallen into such a degree of stupidity, as to fancy that a piece of wood, which they had carved into such a figure, was a real deity. They might think it a god by representation, as the heathens thought their idols were; but more than this cannot be easily apprehended. So that it is most reasonable to think, that they knew the God they had thus

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made, and prayed to, was only a piece of wood; but they might well fall into that corruption of many of the heathen, of thinking that they honoured God by serving him in such an image. If the sin of the Jews was only their having other gods; and if the worshipping an image was only evil, because a false deity was honoured by it, why is image-worship condemned, with reasons that will hold full as strong against the images of the true God, as of false gods, if it had not been intended to condemn simply all image-worship? Certainly, if the prophets had intended to have done it, they could not have expressed themselves more clearly and more fully than they did.

To this it is to be added, that it seems very clear from the history of the golden calf, that the Israelites did not intend, by setting it up, to cast off the true Jehovah, that 'had brought them out of Egypt.' They plainly said the contrary, and appointed a feast to Jehovah. It is probable they thought Moses was either burnt or starved on Mount Sinai, so they desired some visible representation of the Deity to go before them; they intended still to serve him; but since they thought they had lost their prophet and guide, they hoped that this should have been perhaps as a *teraphim* to them; yet for all this, the calf is called an *idol*: and they are said 'to have changed their glory into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass.' So that here an emblem of the Deity is called an idol. They could take the *calf* for no other, but as a visible sign or symbol in which they intended to worship their God or Elohim, and the Lord or Jehovah. Such very probably were also the calves of Dan and Bethel, set up by Jeroboam, who seemed to have no design to change the object of their worship, or the nature of their religion; but only to divert them from going up to Jerusalem, and to furnish them with conveniences to worship the living God nearer home. His design was only to establish the kingdom to himself; and in order to that, we must think, that he would venture on no more than was necessary for his purpose. Besides, we do clearly see an opposition made between the calves set up by Jeroboam, and the worship of Baal brought from Tyrus by Ahab. Those who hated that idolatry, such as Jehu and his family, yet continued in the sin of Jeroboam; and they are represented as 'zealous for Jehovah,' though they worshipped the calves of Dan and Bethel. These are called *idols* by Hosea. From all which it seems to be very evident that the ten tribes still feared and worshipped the true Jehovah. This appears yet more clear from the sequel of their history, when they were carried away by the kings of Assyria; and new inhabitants were sent to people the country, who brought their idols along with them, and did not acknowledge 'Jehovah the true God;' but upon their being plagued with lions, to prevent this, the king of Assyria sent one of the priests, that had been

Ex. xxxii.  
1, 4, 5.Acts vii. 41.  
Psal. cvi.  
19, 20.1 Kings  
xii. 27—  
33.1 Kings  
xvi. 31.  
2 Kings x.  
28, 29.Hos. viii. 4,  
5.

carried out of the country, who taught them how they should 'fear the Lord;' out of which that mixture arose, that they 'feared the Lord, and served their own images.' This proves, beyond all contradiction, that the ten tribes did still worship Jehovah in those calves that they had at Dan and Bethel: and thus it appears very clear, that, through the whole Old Testament the use of all images in worship was expressly forbid; and that the worshipping them, even when the true God was worshipped by them, was called idolatry. The words in which this matter is expressed are copious and full, and the reasons given for the precept are taken from the nature of God, who could be likened to nothing, and who had shewed no similitude of himself when he appeared to their fathers, and delivered their law to them.

The new dispensation does in all respects carry the ideas of God and of true religion much higher, and raises them much above those compliances that were in the old, to men's senses, and to sensitive natures; and it would seem to contradict the whole design of it, if we could imagine that such things were allowed in it, which were so expressly forbid in the old. Upon this occasion it is remarkable, that the two fullest passages in the New Testament concerning images, are written upon the occasion of the most refined idolatry that was then in the world, which was at Athens. When St. Paul was there, his spirit was moved within him, when he saw that city 'full of idols:' he upon that charges them for thinking that the 'Godhead was like unto gold or silver, or stone graven by art or man's device:' he argues from the majesty of God, who made the world and all things therein, and was the Lord of heaven and earth, and therefore was not to be 'shipped by men's hands (that is; images made by them), who needed nothing, since he gives us life, breath (or the continuance of life), and all things.' He therefore condemns that way of worship as an effect of *ignorance*, and tells them, 'of a day in which God will judge the world.' It is certain that the Athenians at that time did not think their images were the proper resemblances of the Divinity. Tully, who knew their theology well, gives us a very different account of the notion that they had of their images. Some images were of no figure at all, but were only stones and pillars that had no particular shape; others were hieroglyphics made up of many several emblems, of which some signified one perfection of the Deity, and some another; and others were indeed the figures of men and women; but even in these the wiser among them said, they worshipped one Eternal Mind, and under him some inferior beings, demons, and men; who they believed were subordinate to God, and governed this world. So it could not be said of such worshippers, that they thought that the Godhead was like unto their images; since the best writers among them tell us plainly that they thought no such thing.

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xvii. 28.  
32, 41.Acts xvii.  
16, 24—  
29.Cic.deNat.  
Deor. l. i.  
cap. 27.





with Pythagoras, Plato, and Aristotle: nor are they only blamed for worshipping the images of Christ, together with these of the philosophers; but they are particularly blamed for having several sorts of images, and worshipping these as the heathens did; and that among these there was an image of Christ, which they pretended to have had from Pilate. Besides these corrupters of Christianity, there were no others among the Christians of the first ages that worshipped images. This was so well known to the heathens, that they bring this, among other things, as a reproach against the Christians, that they had no images: which the first apologists are so far from denying, that they answered them, that it was impossible for him who knew God, to worship images. But as human nature is inclined to visible objects of worship, so it seems some began to paint the walls of their churches with pictures, or at least moved for it. In the beginning of the fourth century this was condemned by the council of Eliberis, Can. 36. *It pleases us to have no pictures in churches, lest that which is worshipped should be painted upon the walls.* Towards the end of that century, we have an account given us by Epiphanius, of his indignation occasioned by a picture that he saw upon a veil at Anablatha. He did not much consider whose picture it was, whether a picture of Christ or of some saint; he positively affirms it was against the authority of the scriptures, and the Christian religion, and therefore he tore it, but supplied that church with another veil. It seems, private persons had statues of Christ and the apostles; which Eusebius censures, where he reports it as a *remnant of heathenism*.\* It is plain enough from some passages in St. Austin, that he knew of no images in churches in the beginning of the fifth century. It is true, they began to be brought before that time into some of the churches of Pontus and Cappadocia, which was done very probably to

Epiph. Ep.  
ad Joan.  
Hieros.

Euseb.  
Hist. Eccl.  
l. vii. c. 18.  
Aug. in.  
Ps. cxlii.  
de Moribus  
Eccl. Cath.  
c. 34.

\* The following is the passage from Eusebius referred to by our author:

'In so much as we have made mention of this city, Paneas, I think I shall offend if I pass over with silence a certain history worthy to be related to the posterity. The report goeth, that the woman whose bloody flux we learn to have been cured by our Saviour in the gospel, was of the aforesaid city, and that her house is there to be seen, and a worthy monument yet there to continue of the benefit conferred by our Saviour upon her. That there standeth over an high stone, right over against the door of her house, an image of brass resembling the form of a woman kneeling upon her knees, holding her hands before her, after the manner of supplication. Again, that there standeth over against this another image of a man molten of the same metal, comely arrayed in a short vesture, stretching forth his hand unto the woman, at whose feet in the same pillar there groweth up from the ground a certain unknown kind of herb in the height unto the hem of the brazen image's vesture, curing all kinds of maladies. This picture of the man, they report to be the image of Jesus. It hath continued unto our time, and is to be seen of travellers that frequent the same city. Neither is it any marvel at all, that they which of the Gentiles were cured by our Saviour, made and set up such things, for that we have seen the pictures of his apostles, to wit, of Paul, of Peter, and of Christ himself, being graven in their colours, to have been kept and revered. For the men of old of a heathenish custom, were wont to honour after this manner such as they counted saviours.'—[Ed.]

draw the heathens, by this piece of conformity to them, to like the Christian worship the better. For that humour began to work, and appeared in many instances of other kinds as well as in this.

It was not possible that people could see pictures in their churches long, without paying some marks of respect to them, which grew in a little time to the downright worship of them. A famous instance we have of this in the sixth century: Serenus, bishop of Marseilles, finding that he could not restrain his people from the worship of images, broke them in pieces; upon which pope Gregory writ to him, blaming him indeed for breaking the images, but commending him for not allowing them to be worshipped: this he prosecutes in a variety of very plain expressions; *It is one thing to worship an image, and another thing to learn by it what is to be worshipped*: he says they were set up, not to be worshipped, but to instruct the ignorant, and cites our Saviour's words, 'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve,' to prove that it was not lawful to worship the work of men's hands. We see by a fragment cited in the second Nicene council, that both Jews and Gentiles took advantages from the worship of images, to reproach the Christians soon after that time. The Jews were scandalized at their worshipping images, as being expressly against the command of God. The Gentiles had also by it great advantages of turning back upon the Christians all that had been written against their images in the former ages.

Greg.  
Epist. l. ix.  
Eo. 9.

At last, in the beginning of the eighth century, the famous controversy about the having or breaking of images grew hot. The churches of Italy were so set on the worshipping of them, that pope Gregory the Second\* gives this for the reason of their rebelling against the emperor, because of his opposition to images. And here in little more than an hundred years the see of Rome changed its doctrine, pope Gregory the Second being as positive for the worshipping them, as the first of that name had been against it. Violent contentions arose upon this head. The breakers of images were charged with Judaism, Samaritanism, and Manicheism; and the worshippers of them were charged with Gentilism and idolatry. One general council at Constantinople, consisting of about three hundred and thirty-eight bishops, condemned the worshipping them as idolatrous: but another at Nice, of three hundred and fifty bishops, though others say they were only three hundred, asserted the worship of them. Yet as soon as this was known in the west, how active soever the see of Rome was for establishing their worship, a council of about three hundred bishops met at Frankfurt, under Charles the

\* This is owned by all the historians of that age, Anastasius, Zonaras, Cedrenus, Glycas, Theophanes, Sigetert, Otho, Fris. Urspergensis, Sigonius, Rubens, and Ciaconius.



Great, which condemned the Nicene council, together with the worship of images. The Gallican church insisted long upon this matter; books were published in the name of Charles the Great against them. A council held at Paris under his son did also condemn image-worship as contrary to the honour that is due to God only, and to the commands that he has given us in scripture. The Nicene council was rejected here in England, as our historians tell us, because it asserted the adoration of images, *which the church of God abhors*. Agobard, bishop of Lyons, and Claud of Turin, writ against it; the former writ with great vehemence: the learned men of that communion do now acknowledge, that what he writ was according to the sense of the Gallican church in that age: and even Jonas of Orleans, who studied to moderate the matter, and to reconcile the Gallican bishops to the see of Rome, yet does himself declare against the worship of images.

We are not concerned to examine how it came that all this vigorous opposition to image-worship went off so soon. It is enough to us, that it was once made so resolutely; let those who think it so incredible a thing, that churches should depart from their received traditions, answer this as they can. As for the methods then used, and the arguments that were then brought to infuse this doctrine into the world, he who will read the history and acts of the Nicene council, will find enough to incline him to a very bad opinion, both of the men and of their doctrine; though he were ever so much inclined to think well of them. After all, though that council laid the foundation of image-worship, yet the church of Rome has made great improvements in it since. Those of Nice expressed a detestation of an image made to represent the Deity; they go no higher than the images of Christ and the saints; whereas since that time the Deity and the Trinity have been represented by images and pictures: and that not only by connivance, but by authority in the church of Rome. Bellarmine,\* Suarez, and others, prove the lawfulness of such images from the general practice of the church. Others go further, and from the caution given in the decree of the council of Trent, concerning the images of God, do infer, that they are allowed by that council, provided they be decently made. Directions are also given concerning the use of the image of the Trinity in public offices among them. In a word, all their late doctors agree, that they are lawful, and reckon the calling that in question to be not only rashness, but an error; and such as have held it unlawful to make such images were especially condemned at Rome, December 17, 1690. The varieties of those images, and the boldness of them, are things apt to give horror to modest minds, not accustomed to

\* Bellarm. l. ii. c. 8. De Relig. et imagin. Sanct. Suarez. M. 3. Ysambert de Mist. Incarn. ad quæst. 25. dis. 3. Vasquez in 3 Aquin. disp. 113. c. 3. et disp. clix. cc. 3. 4. Cajetan. in 3 Aquin. quæst. 25. A. 3.

such attempts. It must be acknowledged, that the old emblematical images of the Egyptians, and the grosser ones now used by the Chinese, are much more instructing, and much less scandalous figures.

As the Roman church has gone beyond the Nicene council in the images that they allow of, so they have also gone beyond them in the degrees of the worship that they offer to them. At Nice the worship of images was very positively decreed, with anathemas against those who did it not: \* a bare honour they reckoned was not enough. They thought it was a very valuable argument, that was brought from those words of Christ to the Devil, 'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve;' that here service is only appropriated to God, but not worship. Among the acts of worship they reckon the oblation of incense and lights; and the reason given by them for all this is, because the *honour of the image, or type, passes to the original, or prototype*; so that plain and direct worship was to terminate on the image itself: and Durandus passed for little less than a heretic, because he thought that images were worshipped only improperly and abusively, because at their presence we call to mind the object represented by them, which we worship before the image, as if the object itself were before us.

The council of Nice did plainly assert the direct worship of images, but they did as positively declare, † that they meant

\* Nice 2, Act. 1. *Labbei et Cossartii*, vol. vii. p. 60. Paris, 1671. *Adrian I. Pope*, anno 787.

† Sanctæ et universali synodo Theodosius exiguus Christianus. Confiteor, et polliceor, et recipio amplector atque adoro principaliter intemeratam iconam domini Nostri Jesu Christi veri Dei Nostri, et iconam Dei genericis, quæ illum sine semine peperit; et auxilium et protectionem ejus, et intercessionem illius unaquaque die ac nocte invoco ut peccator in adjutorium meum, tanquam eam, quæ habeat confidentiam apud Christum Dominum Nostrum, qui ex ea natus est. Pari modo sanctorum et laudabilissimorum Apostolorum, prophetarum, et martyrum, et patrum atque cultorum eremi iconas recipio et adoro, non tanquam deos (absit) sed affectum et amorem animæ meæ, quem habebam prius in eos, etiam nunc ostendens, rogo cunctos illos ex tota anima ut intercedant pro me ad Deum, quatenus det mihi per intercessionem eorum invenire misericordiam penes se in die judicii. Similiter et lipsana sanctorum adoro et honoro, et amplector, tanquam eorum qui decertaverint pro Christo, et acceperint gratiam ab ipso ad sanitatis efficiendas, et languores curandos, et dæmones ejiciendos, quemadmodum ecclesia Christianorum suscepit a sanctis Apostolis et patribus, et usque ad nos. Pingi autem consentio in ecclesiis sanctorum principaliter iconam domini Nostri Jesu Christi et sanctæ Dei genericis, ex varia materia auri et argenti, et omni colore: ut carnea dispensatio ipsius omnibus innotescat.—His qui non adorant, anathema. His qui audent detrahere, &c. vel vocare illas idola, anathema. His qui non docent diligenter cunctum Christi amatorem populum adorare venerabiles iconas, &c. &c. anathema.—[Ep.]

† Act 7. Vol. vii. p. 556.

‡ Definimus in omni certitudine ac diligentia, sicut figuram preciosæ ac vivificæ crucis, ita venerabiles ac sanctas imagines proponendas, tam quæ de coloribus et tessellis, quam quæ ex alia materia congruentur in sanctis Dei ecclesiis, et sacris vasis, et vestibus, et in parietibus ac tabulis, domibus et viis: tam videlicet imaginem domini Dei et salvatoris nostri Jesu Christi quam intemeratæ dominæ nostræ sanctæ Dei genericis, honorabiliumq. angelorum, et omnium sanctorum simul et aliorum virorum. Quanto enim frequentius per imaginalem formationem videntur, tanto qui huc contemplantur, alacrius eriguntur ad primitivorum earum memoriam et desi-

A R T.  
XXII.Con. Nic.  
Act. 2.

only that it should be an honorary adoration, and not the true *latria*, which was only due to God. And whatever some modern representers and expositors of the Roman doctrine may say, to soften the harshness of the worship of images, it is very copiously proved, both from the words of the council of Nice, and from all the eminent writers in that communion, even from the time of Aquinas,\* and of the modern schoolmen, and writers of controversy, that direct worship ought to be offered to the image itself: this reserve of the *latria* to God, being an evident proof, that all inferior acts of worship were allowed them. But this reserve does no way please the later writers; for Aquinas, and many from him do teach, that the same acts and degrees of worship which are due to the original, are also due to the image; they think an image has such a relation to the original, that both ought to be worshipped by the same act, and that to worship the image with any other sort of acts, is to worship it on its own account, which they think is idolatry. Whereas others adhering to the Nicene doctrine, think that the image is to be worshipped with an inferior degree, that otherwise idolatry must follow. So here the danger of idolatry is threatened of both sides; and since one of them must be chosen, thus it will follow, that let a man do what he can, he must commit idolatry, according to the opinion of some very subtle and learned men among them.

Con. Trid.  
Sess. 25.

The council of Trent did indeed decline to give a clear decision in this matter, and only decreed, that *due worship* should be given to images;† but did not determine what that *due*

derium, et ad osculum, et ad honorariam his adorationem tribuendam. Non tamen ad veram latriam, quæ secundum fidem est, quæq. solam divinam naturam decet, impartiendam: ita ut istis, sicuti figuræ preciosæ ac vivificæ crucis et sanctis evangelii et reliquis sacris monumentis, incensurum et luminum oblatio ad harum honorem efficiendum exhibeatur, quemadmodum et antiquis piæ consuetudinis erat. Imaginis enim honor ad primitivum transit: et qui adorat imaginem, adorat in ea depicti subsistentiam.

And in the same council we have the following adoration of the cross—see Act VII. p. 583. ‘Crucem tuam adoramus domine, et adoramus lauceam quæ aperuit vivificum latus tuæ bonitatis.’—[Ed.]

\* Aquin. 2. p. q. 25. art. 3. See to the same purpose, Alex. Hales, Bonaventuræ, Ricardus de Media villa palud. Almans. Biel Summa Angelica, and many more cited by bishop Stillingfleet’s Defence of the Charge of Idolatry, part II. chap. 2.

† The following is the decree of the council of Trent concerning the worship of relics and images:

‘Sanctorum quoque martyrum, et aliorum cum Christo viventium sancta corpora, quæ viva membra fuerunt Christi, et templum Spiritus sancti, ab ipso ad æternam vitam suscitanda et glorificanda, a fidelibus venerande esse: per quæ multa beneficia a Deo hominibus præstantur: ita ut affirmantes, sanctorum reliquiis venerationem atque honorem non deberi; vel eas aliaque sacra monumenta a fidelibus inutiliter honorari; atque eorum opis impetrandæ causa sanctorum memorias frustra frequentari; omnino damnandos esse, prout jam pridem eos damnavit, et nunc etiam damnat ecclesia. Imagines pro Christo, deiparæ Virginis, et aliorum sanctorum, in templis præsertim habendas et retinendas, usque debitum honorem et venerationem impertiendam; non quod credatur inesse aliqua in iis divinitas, vel virtus, propter quam sint colendæ; vel quod ab eis sit aliquid petendum; vel quod fiducia in imaginibus sit figenda, veluti olim fiebat a gentilibus, quæ in idolis spem

A R T.  
XXII.See bishop  
Stilling-  
fleet, ut su-  
pra.Pont.  
Rom. Ordo  
ad Recip.  
Imper.  
Rubri.

*worship* was. And though it appears by the decree, that there were abuses committed among them in that matter, yet they only appoint some regulations, concerning such images as were to be suffered, and that others were to be removed; but they left the divines to fight out the matter concerning the *due worship* that ought to be given to images. They were then in haste, and intended to offend no party; and as they would not justify all that had been said or done concerning the worship of images, so they would condemn no part of it: yet they confirmed the Nicene council, and in particular made use of that maxim of theirs, that the *honour of the type goes to the prototype*; and thus they left it as they found it. So that the dispute goes on still as hot as ever. The practice of the Roman church is express for the *latria* to be given to images: and therefore all that write for it do frequently cite that hymn, *Cruce Ave spes unica, auge piis justitiam, reisque dona veniam*. It is expressly said in the Pontifical, *Cruci debetur latria*, and the prayers used in the consecration of a cross; it is prayed,\* that the *blessing of that cross, on which Christ hung, may be in it, that it may be a healthful remedy to mankind, a strengthener of faith, an increaser of good works, the redemption of souls, and a comfort, protection, and defence, against the cruelty of our enemies*. These with all the other acts of adoration used among them, seem to favour those who are for a *latria* to be given to all those images, to the originals of which it is due; and in the like proportion for *dulia* and *hyperdulia* to other images. It is needless to prosecute this matter further.

It seemed necessary to say so much, to justify our church, which has in her Homilies laid this charge of idolatry very severely on the church of Rome; and this is so high an imputation, that those who think it false, as they cannot, with a good conscience, subscribe, or require others to subscribe the Article concerning the Homilies, so they ought to retract their own subscriptions, and to make solemn reparations in justice and honour, for laying so heavy an imputation unjustly upon that whole communion.

There is nothing that can be brought from scripture, that

quam collocabant; sed quoniam honos, qui eis exhibetur, refertur ad prototypa, quæ illæ representant: ita ut per imagines, quas osculamur, et coram quibus caput aperimus et procumbimus, Christum adoremus, et sanctos, quorum illæ similitudinem gerunt veneremur; id quod conciliorum, præsertim vero secundæ Nicænæ synodi, decretis contra imaginum oppugnatores est sancitum.’ Sessio xxv. In this Sessio the council of Trent, it will be observed, appeals to the authority of the second Nicene council on the subject of image-worship.—[Ed.]

\* In benedictione novæ Crucis.

Rogamus te Domine, sancte Pater, omnipotens sempiternæ Deus, ut digneris benedicere hoc lignum Crucis tuæ, ut sit remedium salutari generi humano, sit soliditas fidei, profectus bonorum operum, redemptio animarum, sit solamen et protectio ac tutela contra sæva jacula inimicorum. Per Dom.

Sanctificetur lignum istud in nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti, et benedictio illius ligni in quo membra sancta Salvatoris suspensa sunt sit in isto ligno, ut orantes inclinantesque se propter Deum ante istam crucem inveniant corporis et animæ sanitatem per eundem.

ART.  
XXII.Heb. ix. 3,  
5, 7.Psal. xcix.  
5, 9.

has a show of an argument for supporting image-worship, unless it be that of the cherubims that were in the 'holiest of all;' and they, as is supposed, were worshipped, at least by the high-priest when he went thither, once a year, if not by the whole people. But first there is a great difference to be made between a form of worship immediately prescribed by God, and another form that not only has no warrant for it, but seems to be very expressly forbidden. It is plain, the cherubims were not seen by the people, and so they could be no visible object of worship to them. They were scarce seen by the high-priest himself, for the holiest of all was quite dark; no light coming into it, but what came through the veil from the holy place; and even that had very little light. Nor is there a word concerning the high-priest's worshipping either the ark or the cherubim. It is true, there is a place in the Psalms that seems to favour this; as it is rendered by the Vulgar, 'worship his footstool, for it is holy;' but both the Hebrew and the Septuagint have it, as it is in our translation, 'worship at his footstool, for he is holy;' and all the Greek fathers cite these words so. Many of the Latin fathers do also cite them according to the Greek; and the last words of the Psalm, in which the same words are repeated, make the sense of it evident: for there it is thus varied, 'Exalt ye the Lord our God, and worship at his holy hill, for the Lord our God is holy.' These words coming so soon after the former, are a paraphrase to them, and determine their sense. No doubt the high-priest worshipped God, who dwelt between the cherubims, in that cloud of glory in which he shewed himself visibly present in his temple; but there is no sort of reason to think, that in so majestic a presence, adoration could be offered to any thing else; or that after the high-priest had adored the divine essence so manifested, he would have fallen to worship the ark and the cherubims. This agrees ill with the figure that is so much used in this matter of a king and his chair of state; for in the presence of the king, all respects terminate in his person, whatsoever may be done in his absence.

And thus, this being not so much as a precedent, much less an argument, for the use of images; and there being nothing else brought from scripture, that with any sort of wresting can be urged for it, and the sense and practice of the whole church being so express against it, the progress of it having been so long and so much disputed, the tendency of it to superstition and abuse being by their own confession so visible; the scandal that it gives to Jews and Mahometans being so apparent, and it carrying in its outward appearances such a conformity (to say at present no more) to heathenish idolatry, we think we have all possible advantages in this argument. We adhere to that purity of worship which is in both Testaments so much insisted on; we avoid all scandal,

ART.  
XXII.

and make no approaches to heathenism, and follow the pattern set us by the primitive church. And as our simplicity of worship needs not be defended, since it proves itself; so no proofs are brought for the other side, but only a pretended usefulness in outward figures, to raise the mind by the senses to just apprehensions of spiritual objects; which, allowing it true, will only conclude for the historical use of images, but not for the directing our worship towards them. But the effect is quite contrary to the pretence; for, instead of raising the mind by the senses, the mind is rather sunk by them into gross ideas.

The bias of human nature lies to sense, and to form gross imaginations of incorporeal objects; and therefore, instead of gratifying these, we ought to wean our minds from them, and to raise them above them all we can. Even men of speculation and abstraction feel nature in this grows too hard for them; but the vulgar is apt to fall so headlong into these conceits, that it looks like the laying of snares for them, to furnish them with such methods and helps for their having gross thoughts of spiritual objects. The fondness that the people have for images, their readiness to believe the most incredible stories concerning them, the expense they are at to enrich and adorn them, their prostrations before them, their confidence in them, their humble and tender embracing and kissing of them, their pompous and heathenish processions to do them honour, the fraternities erected for particular images, not to mention the more universal and established practices of directing their prayers to them, of setting lights before them, and of incensing them; these, I say, are things too well known, to such as have seen the way of that religion, that they should need to be much enlarged on; and yet they are not only allowed of, but encouraged. Those among them who have too much good sense that they should sink into those foolish apprehensions themselves, yet must not only bear with them, but often comply with them to avoid the giving of scandal, as they call it; not considering the much greater scandal that they give, when they encourage others by their practice to go on in these follies. The enlarging into all the corruptions occasioned by this way of worship would carry me far; but it seems not necessary, the thing is so plain in itself.

The next head in this Article is a full instance of it, which is, the worship of relics. It is no wonder that great care was taken in the beginnings of Christianity, to shew all possible respect and tenderness even to the bodies of the martyrs. There is something of this planted so deep in human nature, that though the philosophy of it cannot be so well made out, yet it seems to be somewhat more than an universal custom; humanity is of its side, and is apt to carry men to the profusions of pomp and cost: all religions do agree in this, so that we need not wonder if Christians, in the first fervour of

A R T.  
XXII.Ep. Ecc.  
Smyrn.  
apud Eu-  
seb. l. 4.  
c. 15. Jul.  
Ap. Cyril.  
lib. vi. lib.  
x. Ennap.  
in vita  
Ædessa.Aug. de  
opere mo-  
nach. c. 28.Hieron.  
adv. Vigi-  
lant.

their religion, believing the resurrection so firmly as they did, and having a high sense of the honour done to Christ and his religion by the sufferings of the martyrs; if, I say, they studied to gather their bones and ashes together, and bury them decently. They thought it a sign of their being joined with them in one body, to hold their assemblies at the places where they were buried: this might be also considered as a motive to encourage others to follow the example that they had given them, even to martyrdom: and therefore all the marks of honour were put even upon their bodies that could be thought on, except worship. After the ages of persecution were over, a fondness of having and keeping their relics began to spread itself in many places. Monks fed that humour by carrying them about. We find in St. Austin's works, that superstition was making a great progress in Afric upon these heads, of which he complains frequently. Vigilantius had done it to more purpose in Spain; and did not only complain of the excesses, but of the thing in itself. St. Jerome fell unmercifully upon him for it, and sets a high value upon relics, yet he does not speak one word of worshipping them; he denies and disclaims it, and seems only to allow of a great fondness for them; and, with most of that age, he was very apt to believe, that miracles were oft wrought by them. When superstition is once suffered to mix with religion, it will be still gaining ground, and it admits of no bounds: so this matter went on, and new legends were invented; but when the controversy of image-worship began, it followed that as an accessory. The enshrining of relics occasioned the most excellent sort of images; and they were thought the best preservatives possible both for soul and body; no presents grew to be more valued than relics; and it was an easy thing for the popes to furnish the world plentifully that way, but chiefly since the discovery of the catacombs, which has furnished them with stores not to be exhausted. The council of Trent did in this, as in the point of images; it appointed *relics* to be *venerated*, but did not determine the degree;\* so it left the world in possession of a most excessive dotage upon them. They are used every where by them as sacred charms, kissed, and worshipped, they are served with lights and incense.

In opposition to all this, we think, that all decent honours are indeed due to the bodies of the saints, which were once the 'temples of the Holy Ghost:' but since it is said, that God took that care of the *body of Moses*, so as to bury it in such a manner that no man knew of his sepulchre, there seems to have been in this a peculiar caution guarding against that superstition, which the Jews might very probably have fallen into with relation to his body. And this seems so clear an indication of the will of God in this matter, that we reckon we

1 Cor. vi.  
19.  
Deut.  
xxxiv. 6.

\* For the decree concerning relic-worship, see note, p. 313.—[Ed.]

A R T.  
XXII.

are very safe when we do no further honour to the body of a saint, than to bury it. And though that saint had been ever so eminent, not only for his holiness, but even for miracles wrought by him, by his shadow, or even by looking upon him; yet the history of the *brazen serpent* shews us, that a fondness even on the instruments, that God made use of to work miracles by, degenerates easily to the superstition of burning incense to them; but when that appears, it is to be checked, even by breaking that which was so abused. Hezekiah is commended for breaking in pieces that noble remain of Moses's time till then preserved; neither its antiquity, nor the signal miracles once wrought by it, could balance the ill use that was then made of it: that good king broke it, for which he might have had a worse name than an *iconoclast*, if he had lived in some ages. It is true, miracles were of old wrought by Aaron's rod, by Elisha's bones after his death, and the one was preserved, but not worshipped; nor was there any superstition that followed on the other. Not a word of this fondness appears in the beginnings of Christianity; though it had been an easy thing at that time to have furnished the world with pieces of our Saviour's garments, hair, or nails; and great store might have been had of the Virgin's and the apostles' relics: St. Stephen's and St. James's bones might have been then parcelled about: and if that spirit had then reigned in the church; which has been in the Roman church now above a thousand years, we should have heard of the relics that were sent about from Jerusalem to all the churches. But when such things might have been had in great abundance, and have been known not to be counterfeits, we hear not a word of them. If a fondness for relics had been in the church upon Christ's ascension, what care would have been taken to have made great collections of them!

Then we see no other care about the body of St. Stephen but to bury it; and not long after that time upon St. Polycarp's martyrdom, when the Jews, who had set on the prosecution against him, suggested, that, if the Christians could gain his body, they would perhaps forsake Christ and worship him; they rejected the accusation with horror; for in the epistle which the church of Smyrna writ upon his martyrdom, after they mention this insinuation, they have those remarkable words, which belong both to this head, and to that which follows it of the invocation and worship of saints. *These men know not that we can neither forsake Christ, who suffered for the salvation of all that are saved, the innocent for the guilty, nor worship any other; Him truly being the Son of God we adore: but the martyrs, and disciples, and followers of the Lord, we justly love, for that extraordinary good mind, which they have expressed toward their King and Master, of whose happiness God grant that we may partake, and that we may learn by their examples.* The Jews had so persuaded the

2 Kings  
xviii. 4.2 Kings  
xiii. 21.Ep. Euseb.  
l. iv. c. 15.

Gentiles of Smyrna of this matter, that they burnt St. Polycarp's body; but the Christians gathered up his bones with much respect, so that it appeared how they honoured them, though they could not worship them; and they buried them in a convenient place,\* which they intended to make the place where they *should hold, by the blessing of God, the yearly commemoration of that birth-day of his martyrdom, with much joy and gladness, both to honour the memory of those who had overcome in that glorious engagement, and to instruct and confirm all others by their example.* This is one of the most valuable pieces of true and genuine antiquity; and it shews us very fully the sense of that age both concerning the relics, and the worship of the saints. In the following ages, we find no characters of any other regard to the bones or bodies of the saints, but that they buried them very decently, and did annually commemorate their death, calling it their *birth-day*. And it may incline men strongly to suspect the many miracles that were published in the fourth century, as wrought at the tombs, or memories of the martyrs, or by their relics, that we hear of none of those in the former three centuries; for it seems there was more occasion for them during the persecution, than after it was over; it being much more necessary then to furnish Christians with so strong a motive as this must have been, to 'resist even to blood,' when God was pleased to glorify himself so signally in his saints. This, I say, forces us to fear, that credulity and imagination, or somewhat worse than both these, might have had a large share in those extraordinary things that are related to us by great men in the fourth century. He must have a great disposition to believe wonderful things, that can digest the extraordinary relations that are even in St. Basil, St. Ambrose, and St. Austin; and most signally in St. Jerome: for instance, that after one had stolen Hilarion's body out of Cyprus, and brought it to Palestine, upon which Constantia, that went constantly to his tomb, was ready to have broke her heart; God took such pity on her, that as the true body wrought

Basil.  
Hom. xix.  
in Sanct.  
quadra-  
gint.  
Martyr. in  
Hom. xxiii.  
in Sanct.  
Mart.  
Maman.  
Paul. in  
vita  
Ambros.  
Aug. de  
Civit. Dei,  
lib. xxii.  
c. 8.

\* In reference to this subject, Dr. Milner, in his 'End of Religious Controversy,' thus writes:—

'The whole history of the martyrs, from St. Ignatius and St. Polycarp, the disciples of the apostles, whose relics, after their execution, were carried away by the Christians, as "more valuable than gold and precious stones," down to the latest martyr, incontestably proves the veneration which the church has ever entertained for these sacred objects.' We might fairly conclude from these words that the early Christians held the popish doctrine of the worship of relics; and indeed Dr. Milner refers with such confidence to Eusebius, that one not acquainted with the sophistry and dishonesty of the advocates of popery would unhesitatingly conclude that the historian of the early church had clearly established this position. But what is the fact? Let Eusebius himself speak: 'So we gathered his (Polycarp's) bones, more precious than pearls, and better tried than gold, and buried them in the place that was fit for that purpose,' &c. This is the passage to which Dr. M. refers; and those marked are the words which immediately follow the Doctor's quotation from Eusebius, but which, in his defence of relic-worship, have been so carefully suppressed.—[Ed.]

great miracles in Palestine, so likewise very great miracles continued still to be wrought at the tomb, where it was at first laid. One, in respect to those great men, is tempted to suspect that many things might have been foisted into their writings in the following ages. A great many practices of this kind have been made manifest beyond contradiction.\* Whole books have been made to pass for the writings of fathers, that do evidently bear the marks of a much later date, where the fraud was carried too far not to be discovered. At other times parcels have been laid in among their genuine productions, which cannot be so easily distinguished; they not being liable to so many critical inquiries, as may be made on a larger work. It is a little unaccountable how so many marvellous things should be published in that age; and yet that St. Chrysostom, who spent his whole life between two of the publickest scenes of the world, Antioch and Constantinople, and was an active and inquisitive man, should not so much as have heard of any such wonderful stories; but should have taken pains to remove a prejudice out of the minds of his hearers, that might arise from this, that whereas they heard of many miracles that were wrought in the times of the apostles, none were wrought at that time; upon which, he gives very good reason why it was so. His saying so positively, *That none were wrought at that time*, without so much as a *salvo* for what he might have heard from other parts, shews plainly, that he had not heard of any at all. For he was orator enough to have made even looser reports look probable. This does very much shake the credit of those amazing relations that we find in St. Jerome, St. Ambrose, and St. Austin. It is true, there seems to have been an opinion very generally received both in the east and the west, at that time, which must have very much heightened the growing superstition for relics. It was a remnant both of Judaism and Gentilism, that the souls of the martyrs hovered about their tombs, called their memories; and that therefore they might be called upon, and spoke to there. This appears even in the council of Elliberis, where the superstition of lighting candles about their tombs in daylight is forbidden: the reason given is, because the *spirits were not to be disquieted*. St. Basil, and the other fathers, that do so often mention the going to their memories, do very plainly insinuate their being present at them, and hearing themselves called upon. This may be the reason why, among all the saints that are so much magnified in that age, we never find the blessed Virgin so much as once mentioned. They knew not where her body was laid, they had no tomb for her, no nor any of her relics

Chrysost.  
Hom. 6. in  
1 ad Cor.ii.

Basil.  
Hom. xix.  
in Sanct.  
quadra-  
gint.  
Martyr.

\* The reader will find valuable information on this subject in Dr. James's 'Treatise of the Corruptions of Scripture, Councils, and Fathers, by the Prelates, Pastors, and Pillars of the church of Rome, for maintenance of Popery,' in which the bastardy of the false Fathers and the corruption of the true Fathers are demonstrated beyond the possibility of contradiction.—[Ed.]

or utensils. But upon the occasion of Nestorius's denying her to be the *mother of God*, and by carrying the opposition to that too far, a superstition for her was set on foot; it made a progress sufficient to balance the slowness of its beginning; the whole world was then filled with very extravagant devotions for her.

The great noise we find concerning relics in the end of the fourth century, has all the characters of novelty possible in it; for those who speak of it, do not derive it from former times. One circumstance in this is very remarkable, that neither Trypho, Celsus, Lucian, nor Cecilius, do object to the Christians of their time their fondness for dead bodies, or praying about their tombs, which they might well have alleged in opposition to what the Christians charged them with, if there had been any occasion for it. Whereas this custom was no sooner begun, than both Julian and Eunapius reproach the Christians for it. Julian, it is true, speaks only of their calling on God over sepulchres: Eunapius writ after him; and it seems, in his time, that which Julian sets forth as a calling upon God, was advanced to an invocation of them. He says, they *heaped together the bones and skulls of men that had been punished for many crimes* (it was natural enough for a spiteful heathen to give this representation of their martyrdom), *holding them for gods*: and after some scurrilous invectives against them, he adds, *they are called martyrs, and made the ministers and messengers of prayer to the gods*. This seems to be a very evident proof of the novelty of this matter. As for the adoring them, when Vigilantius asked, *Why dost thou kiss and adore a little dust put up in fine linen?* St. Jerome, though excessively fond of them, denies this very positively, and that in very injurious terms, being offended at the injustice of the reproach. Yet as long as the bodies of the martyrs were let lie quietly in their memories, the fond opinion of their being present, and hearing what was said to them, made the invoking them look like one man's desiring the assistance of another good man's prayers; so that this step seemed to have a fair colour. But when their bodies were pulled asunder, and carried up and down, so that it was believed miracles abounded every where about them; and when their bones and relics grew to increase and multiply, so that they had more bones and limbs than God and nature had given them; then new hypotheses were to be found out to justify the calling upon them every where, as their relics were spread. St. Jerome, in his careless way, says, *they followed the Lamb whithersoever he went*, and seems to make no doubt of their being, if not every where, yet in several places at once. But St. Austin, who could follow a consequence much further in his thoughts, though he doubted not but that men were much the better for the prayers of the martyrs, yet he confesses that it passed the strength of his understanding to

Ap. Cyr.  
lib. 10.  
con. Julian.  
Eunap. in  
vita  
Aidess.

Hieron.  
adv. Vigilant.  
Aug.  
cura pro  
mortuis,  
c. 16.

determine, whether they heard those who called upon them at their memories, or wheresoever else they were believed to have appeared, or not. But the devotions that are spoken of by all of that age, are related as having been offered at their memories; so that this seems to have been the general opinion, as well as it was the common practice of that age, though it is no wonder if this conceit once giving some colour and credit to the invoking them, that did quickly increase itself to a general invocation of them every where. And thus a fondness for their relics, joined with the opinion of their relation and nearness to them, did in a short time grow up to a direct worshipping of them; and, by the fruitfulness that always follows superstition, did spread itself further, to their clothes, utensils, and every thing else that had any relation to them.

There was cause given in St. Austin's time to suspect that many of the bones which were carried about by monks, were none of their bones, but impostures, which very much shakes the credit of the miracles wrought by them, since we have no reason to think that God would support such impostures with miracles; as, on the other hand, there is no reason to think that false relics would have passed upon the world, if miracles had been believed to accompany true ones, unless they had their miracles likewise to attest their value: so let this matter be turned which way it may, the credit both of relics, and of the miracles wrought by them, is not a little shaken by it. But in the following ages we have more than presumptions, that there was much of this false coin that went abroad in the world. It was not possible to distinguish the false from the true. The freshness of colour and smell, so often boasted, might have been easily managed by art; the varieties of those relics, the different methods of discovering them, the shinings that were said to be about their tombs, with the smells that broke out of them, the many apparitions that accompanied them, and the signal cures that were wrought by them, as they grew to fill the world with many volumes of legends, many more lying yet in the manuscripts in many churches, than have been published: all these, I say, carry in them such characters of fraud and imposture on the one hand, and of cruelty and superstition on the other; so much craft, and so much folly, that they had their full effect upon the world, even in contradiction to the clearest evidence possible; the same saints having more bodies and heads than one, in different places, and yet all equally celebrated with miracles. A great profusion of wealth and pomp was laid out in honouring them, new devotions were still invented for them: and though these things are too palpably false to be put upon us now, in ages of more light, where every thing will not go down because it is confidently affirmed; yet as we know how great a part of the devotion of the Latin church this continued to be for many ages before the Reformation, so the same trade is still

Aug. de  
opere mo-  
nach. c. 28.



carried on, where the same ignorance, and the same superstition, does still continue.

I come now to consider the last head of this Article, which is the invocation of saints,\* of which much has been already said by an anticipation: for there is that connection between the worship of relics and the invocation of saints, that the treating of the one does very naturally carry one to say somewhat of the other. It is very evident that saints were not invoked in the Old Testament. God being called so oft the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, seems to give a much better warrant for it, than any thing that can be alleged from the New Testament. Moses was their lawgiver, and their mediator and intercessor with God; and his intercession, as it had been very effectual for them, so it had shewed itself in a very extraordinary instance of his desiring that his name might be 'blotted out of the book which he had written,' rather than the people should perish; when God had offered to him, that he would raise up a new nation to himself, out of his posterity God had also made promises to that nation by him: so that it might be natural enough, considering the genius of superstition, for the Jews to have called to him in their miseries, to obtain the performance of those promises made by him to them. We may upon this refer the matter to every man's judgment, whether Abraham and Moses might not have been much more reasonably invoked by the Jews according to what we find in the Old Testament, than any saint can be under the New: yet we are sure they were not prayed to. Elijah's going up to heaven in so miraculous a manner, might also have been thought a good reason for any to have prayed to him: but nothing of that kind was then practised. They understood prayer to be a part of that worship which they owed to God only: so that the praying to any other, had been to a certain degree the having another God *before*, or besides the *true Jehovah*. They never prayed to any other, they called upon him, and made mention of no other: the rule was without exception, 'Call upon me in the time of trouble; I will hear thee, and thou shalt glorify me.' Upon this point there is no dispute.

\* The council of Trent thus decreed in the matter of saint-worship:—'Mandat sancta synodus omnibus episcopis, et cæteris docendi munus curamque sustinentibus, ut, juxta catholicæ et apostolicæ ecclesiæ usum, a primævis Christianæ religionis temporibus receptum, sanctorumque patrum consensionem, et sacrorum conciliorum decreta, in primis de sanctorum intercessione, invocatione, reliquiarum honore, et legitimo imaginum usu, fideles diligenter instruant, docentes eos, sanctos, una cum Christo regnantes, orationes suas pro hominibus Deo offerre, bonum atque utile esse suppliciter eos invocare; et ob beneficia impetranda a Deo per Filium ejus Jesum Christum, Dominum nostrum qui solus noster redemptor et salvator est, ad eorum orationes, opem, auxilium confugere: illos vero qui negant sanctos æterna felicitate in cælo fruantes, invocandos esse; aut qui asserunt, vel illos pro hominibus non orare, vel eorum, ut pro nobis etiam singulis orent, invocationem esse idololatram; vel pugnare cum verbo Dei, adversarique honori unitus mediatoris Dei et hominum Jesu Christi; vel stultum esse, in cælo regnantibus voce vel mente supplicare; impie sentire.' *Sessio xxv.*—[E.D.]

In the New Testament we see the same method followed, with this only exception, that Jesus Christ is proposed as our Mediator; and that not only in the point of redemption, which is not denied by those of the church of Rome, but even in the point of intercession; for when St. Paul is treating concerning the prayers and supplications that are to be offered 'for all men,' he concludes that direction in these words: 'For there is one God and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus.' We think the silence of the New Testament might be a sufficient argument for this: but these words go further, and imply a prohibition to address our prayers to God by any other mediator. All the directions that are given us of trusting in God, and praying to him, are upon the matter prohibitions of trusting to any other, or of calling on any other. Invocation and faith are joined together: 'How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?' So that we ought only to pray to God, and to Christ, according to those words, 'Ye believe in God, believe also in me.' We do also know that it was a part of heathenish idolatry to invoke either demons or departed men, whom they considered as good beings subordinate to the Divine Essence, and employed by God in the government of the world; and they had almost the same speculations about them, that have been since introduced into the church, concerning angels and saints. In the condemning all idolatry, no reserve is made in scripture for this, as being faulty, only because it was applied wrong; or that it might be set right when directed better. On the contrary, when some men, under the pretence of 'humility and of will-worship,' did, according to the Platonic notions, offer to bring in the 'worship of angels' into the church of Colosse, pretending, as is probable, that those spirits who were employed by God in the ministry of the gospel, ought, in gratitude for that service, and out of respect to their dignity, to be worshipped: St. Paul condemns all this, without any reserves made for lower degrees of worship; he charges the Christians to 'beware of that vain philosophy,' and not to be deceived by those shows of *humility*, or the speculations of men, who pretended to explain that which they did not know, as 'intruding into things which they had not seen, vainly puffed up by their fleshly mind.' If any degrees of invoking saints or angels had been consistent with the Christian religion, this was the proper place of declaring them: but the condemning that matter so absolutely, looks as a very express prohibition of all sort of worship to angels. And when St. John fell down to worship the angel, that had made him such glorious discoveries upon two several occasions, the answer he had was, 'See thou do it not: worship God: I am thy fellow-servant.' It is probable enough that St. John might imagine, that the angel, who had made such discoveries to him, was *Jesus*.

Exod.  
xxxii. 32.

Psal. l. 15.

1 Tim. ii. 5.

Rom. x. 14.

John xiv. 1.

Col. ii. 18.

Ver. 8, 9,

10.

Rev. xix.

10.

Rev. xxii.

9.

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*Christ*: but the answer plainly shews, that no sort of worship ought to be offered to angels, nor to any but God. The reason given excludes all sorts of *worship*, for that cannot be among fellow-servants.

As angels are thus forbid to be worshipped, so no mention is made of worshipping or invoking any saints that had died for the faith, such as St. Stephen and St. James. In the Heb. xiii. 7. Epistle to the Hebrews, they are required to 'remember them which had the rule over them, and to follow their faith;' but not a word of praying to them. So that if either the silence of the scriptures on this head, or if plain declarations to the contrary, could decide this matter, the controversy would soon be at an end. Christ is always proposed to us as the 'only person by whom we come unto God: and when St. Paul speaks against the worshipping of angels, he sets Christ out in his glory in opposition to it. 'For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily; and ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power;' pursuing that reason in a great many particulars.

Col. ii. 9,  
10.Clem.  
Protrep.  
c. 16.  
Tertul  
Apol. c. 17.

From the scriptures, if we go to the first ages of Christianity, we find nothing that favours this, but a great deal to the contrary. Irenæus disclaims the invocation of angels. The memorable passage of the church of Smyrna, formerly cited, is a full proof of their sense in this matter. Clemens Alexandrinus and Tertullian do often mention the worship that was given to God only by prayer: and so far were they at that time from praying to saints, that they prayed for them, as was formerly explained: they thought they were not yet in the presence of God, so they could not pray to them as long as that opinion continued. That form of praying for them is in the Apostolical Constitutions. In all that collection, which seems to be a work of the fourth or fifth century, there is not a word that intimates their praying to saints. In the council of Laodicea,\* there is an express condemnation of those who invoked angels;† this is called *a secret idolatry, and a forsaking of our Lord Jesus Christ*. The first apologists for Christianity do arraign the worship of demons, and of such as had once lived on earth, in a style that shewed they did not apprehend that the argument could be turned against them, for their worshipping either angels or departed saints. When the Arian controversy arose, the invocation of Christ is urged by Athanasius, Basil, Cyril, and other fathers, as an evident

\* Con. Laod. c. 35. Just. Mart. Apol. 2. Iren. 1. 2. c. 35. Orig. con. Cels. 1. 8. Tert. de Orat. c. 1. Athanas. ad adelph. frat. et confess. cont. Arian. epist. Greg. Nazianz. in sanct. Lumin. Orat. orat. 30. Greg. Niss. in Basil. cont. Eunap. Basil. Hom. in sanct. Christ. generat. cont. Eunom. 1. 4. Epiph. Hæres. 64. 69. 78. 79. Theod. de Hæer. Fabul. 1. 5. c. 3. Chrysost. de Trinit.

† Council of Laodicea, c. 25. s. 24. decreed, 'That we ought not to forsake the church of God, and depart aside, and invoke angels (Ἀγγέλους ἰσομαΐσιν), and make meetings, which are things forbidden: if any man therefore be found to give himself to this privy idolatry, let him be accursed, because he hath forsaken our Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God, and betaken himself to idolatry'—[Ed.]

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argument that he was neither made nor created; since they did not pray to angels, or any other creatures; from whence they concluded that Christ was God. These are convincing proofs of the doctrine of the three first, and of a good part of the fourth century.

It is true, as was confessed upon the former head, they began with martyrs in the end of the fourth century. They fancied they heard those that called to them; and upon that it was no wonder if they invoked them, and so private prayers to them began. But, as appears both by the Constitutions, and several of the writers of that time, the public offices were yet preserved pure. St. Austin says plainly, *The Gentiles built temples, raised altars, ordained priests, and offered sacrifices to their gods: but we do not erect temples to our martyrs, as if they were gods; but memories as to dead men, whose spirits live with God; nor do we erect altars, upon which we sacrifice to martyrs; but to one God only do we offer, to the God of martyrs, and our God; at which sacrifice they are named in their place and order, as men of God, who in confessing him have overcome the world; but they are not invoked by the priest that sacrifices*. It seems the form of praying for the saints mentioned in the Constitutions, was not used in the churches of Afric in St. Austin's time: he says very positively, that they did not pray for them, but did praise God for them: and he says in express words, *Let not the worship of dead men be any part of our religion; they ought so to be honoured, that we may imitate them, but not worshipped*. God was indeed prayed to, in the fifth century, to hear the intercession of the saints and martyrs; but there is a great difference between praying to God to favour us on their account, and praying immediately to them to hear us.

Aug. con.  
Serm. Ar.  
c. 29. con.  
Max. 1. 13.c. 4.  
Aug. de  
Civ. Dei,  
1. 22. c. 10.  
1. 8. c. 27.Aug. de  
vera Rel.  
c. 55.

The praying to them imports either their being every where, or their knowing all things; and as it is a blasphemous piece of idolatry to ascribe that to them without a divine communication; so it is a great presumption in any man to fancy that they may be prayed to, and to build so many parts of worship upon it, barely upon some probabilities and inferences, without an express revelation about it. For the saints may be perfectly happy in the enjoyment of God without seeing all things in him; nor have we any reason to carry that further than the scripture has done. But as the invoking of martyrs grew from a calling to them at their memories, to a general calling to them in all places; so from the invoking martyrs, they went on to pray to other saints; yet that was at first ventured on doubtfully, and only in funeral orations; where an address to the dead person to pray for those that were then honouring his memory, might, perhaps, come in as a figure of pompous eloquence; in which Nazianzen, one of the first that uses it, did often give himself a very great compass; yet he and others



soften such figures with this, *If there is any sense or knowledge of what we do below.*

From prayers to God to receive the intercessions of martyrs and saints, it came in later ages to be usual to have litanies to them, and to pray immediately to them; but at first this was only a desire to them to pray for those who did thus invoke them, *Ora pro nobis*. But so impossible is it to restrain superstition, when it has once got head, and has prevailed, that in conclusion all things that were asked either of God or Christ, came to be asked from the saints in the same humility both of gesture and expression; in which if there was any difference made, it seemed to be rather on the side of the blessed Virgin and the saints, as appears by the ten *Ave's* for one *Pater*, and that humble prostration in which all fall down every day to worship her: the prayer used constantly to her, *Maria, Mater gratiæ, Mater misericordiæ, tu nos ab hoste protege, et hora mortis suscipe*, is an immediate acknowledgment of her as the giver of these things; such are, *Solve vincla reis, profer lumen cæcis*; with many others of that nature. The collection of these swells to a huge bulk, *Jure Matris impera Redemptori*, is an allowed address to her; not to mention an infinity of most scandalous ones, that are not only tolerated, but encouraged, in that church.\* Altars are consecrated to her honour, and to the honour of other saints; but which is more, the sacrifice of the mass is offered up to her honour, and to the honour of the saints: and in the form of absolution, the pardon of sins, the increase of grace, and eternal life, are prayed for to the penitent by the virtue of the passion of Christ, and the merits of the blessed Virgin, and of all the saints. The pardon of sins and eternal life are also prayed for from angels, *Angelorum concio sacra, archangelorum turma inclyta, nostra diluant jam peccata, præstando supernam*

\* We pass over the many proofs of this idolatry to be found in the writings of papal divines; and extract two from works in which we are sure to find the most moderate statement of their views on this subject. The first, from the catechism of the council of Trent, is as follows:—

'*Jure autem sancta Dei ecclesia huic gratiarum actioni preces etiam et implorationem sanctissimæ Dei Matris adjunxit, qua pie atque suppliciter ad eam confugeremus, ut nobis peccatoribus sua intercessione conciliaret Deum, bonaque tum ad hanc, tum ad æternam vitam necessaria impetraret. Ergo nos exules, filii Evæ, qui hanc lacrymarum vallem incolimus, assidue misericordiæ matrem, ac fidelis populi advocatam invocare debemus, ut oret pro nobis peccatoribus, ab eaque hac prece opem et auxilium implorare, ejus et præstantissima merita apud Deum esse, et summam voluntatem juvandi humanum genus, nemo, nisi impie et nefarie, dubitare potest.*' *Cat. ad Paroch. De oratione, Pro quibus orandum sit.* The other is given according to the translation in the Laity's Directory (a popish publication) for the year 1833. 'We select for the date of our letter this most joyful day on which we celebrate the solemn festival of the most blessed Virgin's triumphant assumption into heaven, that she who has been through every great calamity our patroness and protectress, may watch over us writing to you, and lead our mind by her heavenly influence to those counsels which may prove most salutary to Christ's flock.'

But that all may have a successful and happy issue, let us raise our eyes to the most blessed Virgin Mary, who alone destroys heresies, who is our greatest hope, yea, the entire ground of our hope.' *Encyclical Letter of pope Gregory XVI. (the present pontiff.)*—[E.D.]

*cæli gloriam.* Many strains of this kind are to be found in the hymns and other public offices of that church: and though in the late corrections of their offices, some of the more scandalous are left out, yet those here cited, with a great many more to the same purpose, are still preserved. And the council of Trent did plainly intend to connive at all these things, for they did not restrain the invocation of saints, only to be an address to them to pray for us, which is the common disguise with which they study to cover this matter: but by the decree of the council, the flying to *their help and assistance*, as well as to their *intercession*, is encouraged; which shews that the council would not limit this part of their devotion to a bare *Ora pro nobis*; that might have seemed flat and low, and so it might have discouraged it; therefore they made use of words that will go as far as superstition can carry them. So that if the invoking them, if the making vows to them, the dedicating themselves to them; if the flying to them in all distresses, in the same acts, and in the same words, that the scriptures teach us to fly to God with; and if all the studied honours of processions and other pompous rites towards their images, that are invented to do them honour; if, I say, all this does amount to idolatry, then we are sure they are guilty of it; since they *honour the creature* not only *besides*, but (in the full extent of that phrase) *more than the Creator*.

Rom. i. 25.

And now let us see what is the foundation of all these devotions, against which we bring arguments, that, to speak modestly of them, are certainly such that there should be matters of great weight in the other scale to balance them. Nothing is pretended from scripture, nor from any thing that is genuine, for above three hundred and fifty years after Christ. In a word, the practice of the church, since the end of the fourth century, and the authority of tradition, of popes and councils, must bear this burden. These are consequences that do not much affect us; for though we pay great respect to many great men that flourished in the fourth and fifth centuries, yet we cannot compare that age with the three that went before it. Those great men give us a sad account of the corruptions of that time, not only among the laity, but the clergy; and their being so flexible in matters of faith, as they appeared to be in the whole course of the Arian controversy, gives us very just reason to suspect the practices of that age, in which the protection and encouragements that the church received from the first Christian emperors, were not improved to the best advantage.

The justest abatement that we can offer for this corruption, which is too manifest to be either denied or justified, is this, they were then engaged with the heathens, and were much set on bringing them over to the Christian religion. In order to that it was very natural for them to think of all methods

A R T.  
XXII.1 Cor. ix.  
20, 21, 22.

possible to accommodate Christianity to their taste. It was, perhaps, observed how far the apostles complied with the Jews, that they might gain them. St. Paul had said, that to 'the Jews he became a Jew;' and 'to them that were without law,' that is, the Gentiles, 'as one without law; that by all means he might gain some.' They might think that if the Jews, who had abused the light of a revealed religion, who had rejected and crucified the Messiah, and persecuted his followers, and had in all respects corrupted both their doctrine and their morals, were waited on and complied with, in the observance of that very law which was abrogated by the death of Christ, but was still insisted on by them as of perpetual obligation; and yet that after the apostles had made a solemn decision in the matter, they continued to conform themselves to that law; all this might be applied with some advantages to this matter. The Gentiles had nothing but the light of nature to govern them; they might seem willing to become Christians, but they still despised the nakedness and simplicity of that religion. And it is reasonable enough to think that the emperors and other great men might in a political view, considering the vast strength of *heathenism*, press the bishops of those times to use all imaginable ways to adorn Christianity with such an exterior form of worship, as might be most acceptable to them, and might most probably bring them over to it.

The Christians had long felt the weight of persecution from them, and were, no doubt, much frightened with the danger of a relapse in Julian's time. It is natural to all men to desire to be safe, and to weaken the numbers of their implacable enemies. In that state of things we do plainly see they began to comply in lesser matters: for whereas in the first ages the Christians were often reproached with this, that they had no temples, altars, sacrifices, nor priests, they changed their dialect in all those points: so we have reason to believe that this was carried further. The vulgar are more easily wrought upon in greater points of speculation, than in some small ritual matters; because they do not understand the one, and so are not much concerned about it: but the other is more sensible, and lies within their compass. We find some in Palestine kept images in their houses, as Eusebius tells us; others began in Spain to light candles by daylight, and to paint the walls of their churches: and though these things were condemned by the council of Elliberis; yet we see by what St. Jerome has cited out of Vigilantius, that the spirit of superstition did work strongly among them: we hear of none that writ against those abuses besides Vigilantius; yet Jerome tells us, that many bishops were of the same mind with him, with whom he is so angry as to doubt, whether they deserved to be called bishops. Most of these abuses had also specious beginnings, and went on insensibly: where they made greater steps, we find an opposition to them. Epiphanius is very severe upon the Colly-

Epiph.  
Hæres. 79.A R T.  
XXXII.Theod. de  
cur. Gr.  
affect. l. 8.  
de Martyr.

ridians, for their worshipping the blessed Virgin. And though they did it by offering up a cake to her, yet if any will read all that he says against that superstition, they will clearly see, that no prayers were then offered up to her by the orthodox; and that he rejects the thought of it with indignation. But the respect paid the martyrs, and the opinion that they were still hovering about their tombs, might make the calling to them for their prayers, seem to be like one man's desiring the prayers of other good men; and when a thing of this kind is once begun, it naturally goes on. Of all this we see a particular account in a discourse writ on purpose on this argument, of curing the affections and inclinations of the Greeks, by Theodoret, who may be justly reckoned among the greatest men of antiquity, and in it he insists upon this particular of proposing to them the saints and martyrs, instead of their gods. And there is no doubt to be made, but that they found the effects of this compliance; many heathens were every day coming over to the Christian religion. And it might then perhaps be intended to lay those aside, when the heathens were once brought over.

To all which this must be added, that the good men of that time had not the spirit of prophecy, and could not foresee what progress this might make, and to what an excess it might grow; they had nothing of that kind in their view: so that between charity and policy, between a desire to bring over multitudes to their faith, and an inclination to secure themselves, it is not at all to be wondered at, by any who considers all the circumstances of those ages, that these corruptions should have got into the church, and much less, having once got in, they should have gone on so fast, and be carried so far.

Thus I have offered all the considerations that arise from the state of things at that time, to shew how far we do still preserve the respect due to the fathers of those ages, even when we confess that they were men, and that something of human nature appeared in this piece of their conduct. This can be made no argument for later ages, who having no heathens among them, are under no temptations to comply with any of the parts of heathenism, to gain them. And now that the abuse of these matters is become so scandalous, and has spread itself so far, how much soever we may excuse those ages, in which we discern the first beginnings, and as it were the small heads, of that which has since overflowed Christendom; yet we can by no means bear even with those beginnings, which have had such dismal effects; and therefore we have reduced the worship of God to the simplicity of the scripture times, and of the first three centuries: and for the fourth, we reverence it so much on other accounts, that for the sake of these we are unwilling to reflect too much on this.

Another consideration urged for the invocation of saints is, that, they seeing God, we have reason to believe that they see in him, if not all things, yet at least all the concerns of the church, of which they are still parts; and they being in a most perfect state of charity, they must certainly love the souls of their brethren here below: so that if saints on earth, whose charity is not yet perfect, do pray for one another here on earth, they in that state of perfection do certainly pray most fervently for them. And as we here on earth do desire the prayers of others, it may be as reasonable and much more useful to have recourse to their prayers, who are both in a higher state of favour with God, and have a more exalted charity: by which their intercessions will be both more earnest, and more prevalent. They think also that this honour paid the saints, is an honour done to God, who is glorified in them: and since he is the acknowledged fountain of all, they think that all the worship offered to them ends and terminates in God. They think, as princes are come at by the means of those that are in favour with them; so we ought to come to God by the intercession of the saints: that all our prayers to them are to be understood to amount to no more than a desire to them, to intercede for us; and finally, that the offering of sacrifice is an act of worship, that can indeed be made only to God, but that all other acts of devotion and respect may be given to the saints: and the sublimest degrees of them may be offered to the blessed Virgin, as the mother of Christ, in a peculiar rank by herself. For they range the order of worship into *latria*, that is due only to God; *hyperdulia*, that belongs to the blessed Virgin; and *dulia*, that belongs to the other saints.

It were easy to retort all this, by putting it into the mouth of a heathen; and shewing how well it would fit all those parts of worship, that they offered to demons or intelligent spirits, and to deified men among them. This is obvious enough, to such as have read what the first apologists for Christianity have writ upon those heads. But to take this to pieces; we have no reason to believe that the saints see all the concerns of the church. God can make them perfectly happy without this; and if we think the seeing them is a necessary ingredient of perfect happiness, we must from thence conclude, that they do also see the whole chain of Providence: otherwise they may seem to be in some suspense, which, according to our notions, is not consistent with perfect happiness. For if they see the persecutions of the church, and the miseries of Christians, without seeing on to the end, in what all that will issue, this seems to be a stop to their entire joy. And if they see the final issue, and know what God is to do, then we cannot imagine that they can intercede against it, or indeed for it. To us, who know not the hidden counsels of God, prayer is necessary and commanded: but it

seems inconsistent with a state in which all these events are known. This which they lay for the foundation of prayers to saints, is a thing concerning which God has revealed nothing to us, and in which we can have no certainty. God has commanded us to pray for one another, to join our prayers together, and we have clear warrants for desiring the intercession of others. It is a high act of charity, and a great instance of the mutual love that ought to be among Christians: it is a part of the communion of the saints: and as they do certainly know, that those, whose assistance they desire, understand their wants when they signify them to them; so they are sure that God has commanded this mutual praying one for another. It is a strange thing therefore to argue from what God has commanded, and which may have many good effects, and can have no bad one, to that which he has not commanded; on the contrary, against which there are many plain intimations in scripture, and which may have many bad effects, and we are not sure that it can have any one that is good. Beside, that the solemnity of devotion and prayer is a thing very different from our desiring the prayers of such as are alive; the one is as visibly an act of religious worship, as the other is not. God has called himself 'a jealous God, that will not give his glory to another.' And through the whole scripture, prayer is represented as a main part of the service due to him; and as that in which he takes the most pleasure. It is a sacrifice, and is so called: and every other sacrifice can only be accepted of God, as it is accompanied with the internal acts of prayers and praises; which are the spiritual sacrifices with which God is well pleased. The only thing, which the church of Rome reserves to God, proves to be the *sacrifice of the mass*: which, as shall appear upon another Article, is a sacrifice that they have invented, but which is no where commanded by God; so that if this is well made out, there will be nothing reserved to God to be the act of their *latria*: though it is not to be forgotten, that even the Virgin and the saints have a share in that sacrifice.

The excusing this, from the addresses made to princes by those that are in favour with them, is as bad as the thing itself; it gives us a low idea of God, and of Christ, and of that goodness and mercy, that is so often declared to be infinite, as if he were to be addressed to by those about him, and might not be come to without an interposition: whereas the scriptures speak always of God, as a *hearer of prayer*, and as ready to accept of and answer the prayers of his people: to seek to other assistances, looks as if the mercies of God were not infinite, or the intercessions of Christ were not of infinite efficacy. This is a corrupting of the main design of the gospel, which is to draw our affections wholly to God, to free us from all low notions of him, and from every thing that may incline us to idolatry and superstition.

Isa. xlii. 8.

Ps. cxli. 2.

Hos. xiv. 2.

Ps. lxxv. 2.

Thus I have gone through all the heads contained in this Article. It seemed necessary to explain these with a due copiousness; they being not only points of speculation, in which errors are not always so dangerous, but practical things, which enter into the worship of God, and that run through it. And certainly it is the will of God, that we should preserve it pure, from being corrupted with heathenish or idolatrous practices. It seems to be the chief end of revealed religion to deliver the world from idolatry; a great part of the Mosaical law did consist of rites of which we can give no other account, that is so like to be true, as, that they were fences and hedges, that were intended to keep that nation in the greatest opposition, and at the utmost distance possible from idolatry: we cannot therefore think that in the Christian religion, in which we are carried to higher notions of God, and to a more spiritual way of worshipping him, there should be such an approach to some of the worst pieces of Gentilism, that it seems to be outdone by Christians in some of its most scandalous parts; such as the worship of subordinate gods, and of images. These are the chief grounds upon which we separate from the Roman communion; since we cannot have fellowship with them, unless we will join in those acts, which we look on as direct violations of the First and Second Commandments. God is a jealous God, and therefore we must rather venture on their wrath, how *burning* soever it may be, than on his, who is a *consuming fire*.

## ARTICLE XXIII.

## Of Ministering in the Congregation.

*It is not lawful for any Man to take upon him the Office of public Preaching or Ministering the Sacraments in the Congregation, before he be lawfully called and sent to execute the same. And those we ought to judge lawfully called and sent, which be chosen and called to this Work by Men, who have public Authority given unto them, in the Congregation, to call and send Ministers into the Lord's Vineyard.\**

WE have two particulars fixed in this Article: the *first* is against any that shall assume to themselves, without a lawful vocation, the authority of dispensing the things of God: the *second* is, the defining, in very general words, what it is that makes a lawful call. As to the first, it will bear no great difficulty: we see in the old dispensation, that the family, the age, and the qualifications, of those that might serve in the priesthood, are very particularly set forth. In the New Testament our Lord called the twelve apostles, and sent them out: he also sent out upon another occasion seventy disciples: and before he left his apostles, he told them, that 'as his Father <sup>John xx.</sup> had sent him, so he sent them:' which seems to import, that 21. as he was sent into the world with this, among other powers, that he might send others in his name; so he likewise empowered them to do the same: and when they went planting churches, as they took some to be companions of labour with themselves, so they appointed others over the particular churches in which they fixed them: such were Epaphras, or Epaphroditus at Colosse, Timothy at Ephesus, and Titus in Crete. To them the apostles gave authority: otherwise it was a needless thing to write so many directions to them, in order to their conduct. They had the *depositum* of the faith, with <sup>2 Tim. i.</sup> which they were chiefly intrusted: concerning the succession <sup>13.</sup> in which that was to be continued, we have these words of St. Paul: 'The things which thou hast heard of me, among many <sup>2 Tim. ii. 2.</sup> witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.' To them directions are given, concerning all the different parts of their worship; 'supplications, <sup>1 Tim. ii. 1.</sup> prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks:' and also the keep- <sup>2, 3. ii. 12.</sup>

\* On the question of Holy Orders, the reader should examine Mason's celebrated work in Defence of the Orders of the Church of England. He will also find this point ably discussed in a work undertaken by the command of archbishop Sancroft, and entitled, 'A Legacy to the Church of England, vindicating her orders from the objections of Papists and Dissenters,' by the Rev. Luke Milbourn. This subject is also handled by bishop Taylor in his 'Episcopacy Asserted.'—[Ed.]

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1 Tim. iii. are directed all the qualifications of such as might be made either *bishops* or *deacons*: they were to examine them according to these, and either to receive or reject them. All this

1 Tim. iii. 15. 1 Tim. v. 1, 3, 17, 19, 22. was directed to Timothy, that he might know how he ought to 'behave himself in the house of God.' He had authority given him to *rebuke* and *intreat*, to *honour* and to *censure*. He was to order what widows might be received into the *number*, and who should be refused. He was to *receive accusations against elders*, or presbyters, according to directed methods, and was either to censure some, or to lay hands on others, as should agree with the rules that were set him; and in conclusion, he

1 Tim. vi. 20. 2 Tim. ii. 15. 2 Tim. iv. 2, 5. Tit. i. 5, 9, 13. is very solemnly charged, to 'keep that which was committed to his trust.' He is required rightly to 'divide the word of truth,' to 'preach the word,' to 'be instant in season and out of season,' to 'reprove, rebuke, and exhort, and to do the work of an evangelist, and to make full proof of his ministry.' Some of the same things are charged upon Titus, whom St. Paul had left in Crete, to 'set in order the things that were wanting, and to ordain elders in every city:' several of the characters by which he was to try them are also set down: he is charged to *rebuke the people sharply*, and to *speak the things that became sound doctrine*: he is instructed concerning the doctrines which he was to *teach*, and those which he was to *avoid*; and also how to

Tit. iii. 10. censure an heretic: he was to *admonish him twice*; and if that did not prevail, he was to *reject him*, by some public censure.

These rules given to Timothy and Titus do plainly import, that there was to be an authority in the church, and that no man was to assume this authority to himself; according to that maxim, that seems to be founded on the light of nature, as well as it is set down in scripture, as a standing rule agreed to in all times and places: 'no man taketh this honour to himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.'

Rom. xii. 6, 7, 8. 1 Cor. xii. 28. Eph. iv. 11, 12, 13, 16. St. Paul, in his Epistles to the Romans and Corinthians, did reckon up the several orders and functions that God had set in his church, and in his Epistle to the Ephesians he shews, that these were not transient but lasting constitutions; for there, as he reckons the *apostles*, *prophets*, *evangelists*, *pastors*, and *teachers*, as the *gifts* which Christ at his ascension had given to men; so he tells the ends for which they were given; 'for the perfecting the saints,' (by perfecting seems to be meant the initiating them by holy mysteries, rather than the compacting or putting them in joint; for as that is the proper signification of the word, so it being set first, the other things that come after it make that the strict sense of *perfecting*; that is, *completing* does not so well agree with the period,) 'for the work of the ministry,' (the whole ecclesiastical or

sacred services,) 'for the edifying the body of Christ,' (to which instructing, exhorting, comforting, and all the other parts of preaching may well be reduced;) and then the duration of these gifts is defined, 'Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man.' This seems to import the whole state of this life.

We cannot think that all this belonged only to the infancy of the church, and that it was to be laid aside by her when she was further advanced; for when we consider that in the beginnings of Christianity there was so liberal an effusion of the Holy Spirit poured out upon such great numbers, who had very extraordinary credentials, miracles, and the gift of tongues, to prove their mission; it does not seem so necessary in such a time, or rather for the sake of such a time only, to have settled those functions in the church, and that the apostles should have 'ordained elders in every church.' Those extraordinary gifts that were then, without any authoritative settlement, might have served in that time to have procured to men so qualified all due regards. We have therefore much better reason to conclude, that this was settled at that time, chiefly with respect to the following ages, which as they were to fall off from that zeal and purity that did then reign among them, so they would need rule and government to maintain the unity of the church, and the order of sacred things. And for that reason chiefly we may conclude, that the apostles settled order and government in the church, not so much for the age in which they themselves lived, as once to establish and give credit to constitutions, that they foresaw would be yet more necessary to the succeeding ages.

This is confirmed by that which is in the Epistle to the Hebrews, both concerning those 'who had ruled over them,' and those who were then their guides. St. Peter gives directions to the elders of the churches to whom he writ, how they ought both to 'feed and govern the flock;' and his charging them not to do it out of covetousness, or with ambition, insinuates that either some were beginning to do so, or that, in a spirit of prophecy, he foresaw that some might fall under such corruptions. This is hint enough to teach us, that, though such things should happen, they could furnish no argument against the function. Abuses ought to be corrected, but upon that pretence the function ought not to be taken away.

If from the scriptures we go to the first writings of Christians, we find that the main subject of St. Clemens' and St. Ignatius' Epistles is to keep the churches in order and union, in subjection to their pastors, and in the due subordination of all the members of the body one to another. After the first age the thing grows too clear to need any further proof. The argument for this from the standing rules of order, of decency, of the authority in which the holy things ought to be maintained, and the care that must be taken to repress vanity

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Acts xiv  
23.

Heb. xiii.  
7, 17.  
1 Pet. v.  
2, 3.

and insolence, and all the extravagancies of light and unguided fancies, is very clear. For if every man may assume authority to preach and perform holy functions, it is certain religion must fall into disorder, and under contempt. Hot-headed men of warm fancies and voluble tongues, with very little knowledge and discretion, would be apt to thrust themselves on to the teaching and governing others, if they themselves were under no government. This would soon make the public service of God to be loathed, and break and dissolve the whole body.

A few men of livelier thoughts, that begin to set on foot such ways, might for some time maintain a little credit; yet so many others would follow in at that breach which they had once made on public order, that it could not be possible to keep the society of Christians under any method, if this were once allowed. And therefore those who in their heart hate the Christian religion, and desire to see it fall under a more general contempt, know well what they do, when they encourage all those enthusiasts that destroy order; hoping, by the credit which their outward appearances may give them, to compass that which the others know themselves to be too obnoxious to hope that they can ever have credit enough to persuade the world to. Whereas those poor deluded men do not see what properties the others make of them. The morals of infidels shew that they hate all religions equally, or with this difference, that the stricter any are, they must hate them the more; the root of their quarrel being at all religion and virtue. And it is certain, as it is that which those who drive it on see well, and therefore they drive it on, that if once the public order and national constitution of a church is dissolved, the strength and power, as well as the order and beauty, of all religion will soon go after it: for, humanly speaking, it cannot subsist without it.

I come in the next place to consider the second part of this Article, which is the definition here given of those that are lawfully called and sent: this is put in very general words, far from that magisterial stiffness in which some have taken upon them to dictate in this matter. The Article does not resolve this into any particular constitution, but leaves the matter open and at large for such accidents as had happened, and such as might still happen. They who drew it had the state of the several churches before their eyes, that had been differently reformed; and although their own had been less forced to go out of the beaten path than any other, yet they knew that all things among themselves had not gone according to those rules that ought to be sacred in regular times: necessity has no law, and is a law to itself.

This is the difference between those things that are the means of salvation, and the precepts that are only necessary, because they are commanded. Those things which are the means, such as faith, repentance, and new obedience, are in-

dispensable; they oblige all men, and at all times alike; because they have a natural influence on us, to make us fit and capable subjects of the mercy of God: but such things as are necessary only by virtue of a command of God, and not by virtue of any real efficiency which they have to reform our natures, do indeed oblige us to seek for them, and to use all our endeavours to have them. But as they of themselves are not necessary in the same order with the first, so much less are all those methods necessary in which we may come at the regular use of them. This distinction shall be more fully enlarged on when the sacraments are treated of. But to the matter in hand. That which is simply necessary as a mean to preserve the order and union of the body of Christians, and to maintain the reverence due to holy things, is, that no man enter upon any part of the holy ministry, without he be chosen and called to it by such as have an authority so to do; that, I say, is fixed by the Article: but men are left more at liberty as to their thoughts concerning the subject of this lawful authority.

That which we believe to be *lawful authority*, is that rule which the body of the pastors, or bishops and clergy of a church, shall settle, being met in a body under the due respect to the powers that God shall set over them: rules thus made, being in nothing contrary to the word of God, and duly executed by the particular persons to whom that care belongs, are certainly the *lawful authority*. Those are the pastors of the church, to whom the care and watching over the souls of the people is committed; and the prince, or supreme power, comprehends virtually the whole body of the people in him: since, according to the constitution of the civil government, the wills of the people are understood to be concluded by the supreme, and such as are the subject of the legislative authority. When a church is in a state of persecution under those who have the civil authority over her, then the *people*, who receive the faith, and give both protection and encouragement to those that labour over them, are to be considered as the body that is governed by them. The natural effect of such a state of things, is to satisfy the people in all that is done, to carry along their consent with it, and to consult much with them in it. This does not only arise out of a necessary regard to their present circumstances, but from the rules given in the gospel, of not ruling as the kings of the several nations did; nor *lording* it, or carrying it with a high authority over *God's heritage* (which may be also rendered over their several *lots* or portions). But when the church is under the protection of a Christian magistrate, then he comes to be in the stead of the whole people; for they are concluded in and by him; he gives the protection and encouragement, and therefore great regard is due to him, in the exercise of his lawful authority, in which he has a great share, as shall be explained in its

A R T. XXIII. proper place. Here, then, we think this authority is rightly lodged, and set on its proper basis.

And in this we are confirmed, because, by the decrees of the first general councils, the concerns of every province were to be settled in the province itself; and it so continued till the usurpations of the papacy broke in every where, and disordered this constitution. Through the whole Roman communion the chief jurisdiction is now in the pope; only princes have laid checks upon the extent of it; and by *appeals* the secular court takes cognizance of all that is done either by the pope or the clergy. This we are sure is the effect of usurpation and tyranny: yet since this authority is in fact so settled, we do not pretend to annul the acts of that power, nor the missions or orders given in that church; because there is among them an order *in fact*, though not as it ought to be, *in right*. On the other hand, when the body of the clergy comes to be so corrupted that nothing can be trusted to the regular decisions of any synod or meeting, called according to their constitution, then if the prince shall select a peculiar number, and commit to their care the examining and reforming both of doctrine and worship, and shall give the legal sanction to what they shall offer to him; we must confess that such a method as this runs contrary to the established rules, and that therefore it ought to be very seldom put in practice; and never, except when the greatness of the occasion will balance this irregularity that is in it. But still here is an authority both *in fact* and *in right*; for if the magistrate has a power to make laws in sacred matters, he may order those to be prepared, by whom, and as he pleases.

Finally, if a company of Christians find the public worship where they live to be so defiled that they cannot with a good conscience join in it, and if they do not know of any place to which they can conveniently go, where they may worship God purely, and in a regular way; if, I say, such a body finding some that have been ordained, though to the lower functions, should submit itself entirely to their conduct, or finding none of those, should by a common consent desire some of their own number to minister to them in holy things, and should upon that beginning grow up to a regulated constitution, though we are very sure that this is quite out of all rule, and could not be done without a very great sin, unless the necessity were great and apparent; yet if the necessity is real and not feigned, this is not condemned or annulled by the Article; for when this grows to a constitution, and when it was begun by the consent of a body, who are supposed to have an authority in such an extraordinary case, whatever some hotter spirits have thought of this since that time; yet we are very sure, that not only those who penned the Articles, but the body of this church for above half an age after, did, notwithstanding those irregularities, acknowledge the

foreign churches so constituted, to be true churches as to all the essentials of a church, though they had been at first irregularly formed, and continued still to be in an imperfect state. And therefore the general words in which this part of the Article is framed, seem to have been designed on purpose not to exclude them.

Here it is to be considered, that the high-priest among the Jews was the chief person in that dispensation; not only the chief in rule, but he that was by the divine appointment to officiate in the chief act of their religion, the yearly expiation for the sins of the whole nation; which was a solemn renewing their covenant with God, and by which atonement was made for the sins of that people. Here it may be very reasonably suggested, that since none besides the high-priest might make this atonement, then no atonement was made, if any other besides the high-priest should so officiate. To this it is to be added, that God had by an express law fixed the high-priesthood in the eldest of Aaron's family; and that therefore, though that being a theocracy, any prophets empowered of God might have transferred this office from one person or branch of that family to another; yet without such an authority no other person might make any such change. But after all this, not to mention the Maccabees, and all their successors of the Asmonean family, as Herod had begun to change the high-priesthood at pleasure; so the Romans not only continued to do this, but in a most mercenary manner they set this sacred function to sale. Here were as great nullities in the high-priests that were in our Saviour's time, as can be well imagined to be; for, the Jews keeping their genealogies so exactly as they did, it could not but be well known in whom the right of this office rested; and they all knew that he who had it, purchased it, yet these were in fact high-priests: and since the people could have no other, the atonement was still performed by their ministry. Our Sa-

John xi.  
51. xviii.  
22, 23.

vour owned Caiaphas, the sacrilegious and usurping high-priest, and as such he *prophesied*. This shews that where the necessity was real and unavoidable, the Jews were bound to think that God did, in consideration of that, dispense with his own precept. This may be a just inducement for us to believe, that whensoever God by his providence brings Christians under a visible necessity of being either without all order and joint worship, or of joining in an unlawful and defiled worship, or finally, of breaking through rules and methods in order to the being united in worship and government; that of these three, of which one must be chosen, the last is the least evil, and has the fewest inconveniences hanging upon it, and that therefore it may be chosen.

Our reformers had also in view two famous instances in church-history of laymen that had preached and converted nations to the faith. It is true, they came, as they ought to



have done, to be regularly ordained, and were sent to such as had authority so to do. So Frumentius preached to the Indians, and was afterwards made a priest and a bishop by Athanasius. The king of the Iberians, before he was baptized himself, did convert his subjects; and, as says the historian, he became the apostle of his country before he himself was *initiated*. It is indeed added, that he sent an embassy to Constantine the emperor, desiring him that he would send priests for the further establishment of the faith there.

These were regular practices; but if it should happen that princes or states should take up such a jealousy of their own authority, and should apprehend that the suffering their subjects to go elsewhere for regular ordinations, might bring them under some dependance on those that had ordained them, and give them such influence over them, that the prince of such a neighbouring and regular church should by such ordinations have so many creatures spies, or instruments in their own dominions; and if upon other political reasons they had just cause of being jealous of that, and should thereupon hinder any such thing in that case, neither our reformers, nor their successors for near eighty years after those Articles were published, did ever question the constitution of such churches.

We have reason to believe that none ought to baptize but persons lawfully ordained; yet since there has been a practice so universally spread over the Christian church, of allowing the baptism, not only of laics, but of women, to be lawful, though we think that this is directly contrary to the rules given by the apostles; yet since this has been in fact so generally received and practised, we do not annul such baptisms, nor rebaptize persons so baptized; though we know that the original of this bad practice was from an opinion of the indispensable necessity of baptism to salvation. Yet since it has been so generally received, we have that regard to such a common practice, as not to annul it, though we condemn it. And thus what thought soever private men, as they are divines, may have of those irregular steps, the Article of the church is conceived in such large and general words, that no man, by subscribing it, is bound up from freer and more comprehensive thoughts.

## ARTICLE XXIV.

Of speaking in the Congregation in such a Tongue as the People understandeth.

It is a thing plainly repugnant to the Word of God, and the Custom of the Primitive Church, to have Public Prayer in the Church, or to minister the Sacraments, in a Tongue not understood of the People.

This Article, though upon the matter very near the same, yet was worded much less positively in those at first set forth by king Edward.

It is most fit, and most agreeable to the Word of God, that nothing be read or rehearsed in the Congregation in a Tongue not known unto the People; which St. Paul hath forbidden to be done, unless some be present to interpret.

In king Edward's Articles they took in *preaching* with *prayer*, but in the present Article this is restrained to *prayer*. The former only affirms the use of a known tongue to be most fit and agreeable to the word of God; the latter denies the worship in an unknown tongue to be lawful, and affirms it to be repugnant to the *word of God*; to which it adds, *and the custom of the primitive church*.

THIS Article seems to be founded on the law of nature. The worship of God is a chain of acts by which we acknowledge God's attributes, rejoice in his goodness, and lay claim to his mercies. In all which the more we raise our thoughts, the more seriousness, earnestness, and affection that animates our mind, so much the more acceptably do we serve God, who is a *spirit*, and will be worshipped in 'spirit and in truth.' John iv. 23, 24. All the words used in devotion are intended to raise in us the thoughts that naturally belong to such words. And the various acts, which are as it were the breaks in the service, are intended as rests to our minds, to keep us the longer without weariness and wandering in those exercises. One great end of continuance in worship is, that, by the frequent repeating and often going over of the same things, they may come to be deeply rooted in our thoughts. The chief effect that the worship of God has by its own efficiency, is the in-fixing those things, about which the branches of it are employed, the deeper on our minds; upon which God gives his blessing as we grow to be prepared for it, or capable of it. Now all this is lost, if the worship of God is a thread of such



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sounds, as makes the person who officiates a barbarian to the rest. They have nothing but noise and show to amuse them, which how much soever they may strike upon and entertain the senses, yet they cannot affect the heart, nor excite the mind: so that the natural effect of such a way of worship is to make religion a pageantry, and the public service of God an opera.

If from plain sense, and the natural consequences of things, we carry on this argument to the scriptures, we find the whole practice of the Old Testament was to worship God, not only in a tongue that was understood, for it may be said there was no occasion then to use any other; but that the expressions used in the prayers and psalms that we find in the Old Testament, shew they were intended to affect those who were to use them; and if that is acknowledged, then it will clearly follow that all ought to understand them; for who can be affected with that which he does not understand? So this shews that the end of public devotion is the exciting and inflaming those who bear a share in it. When Ezra and Nehemiah were instructing the people out of the law, they took care to have it read 'distinctly, one giving the sense of it.' After they were long in captivity, though it had not worn out quite the knowledge of the Hebrew, yet the Chaldee was more familiar to them, so a paraphrase was made of the Hebrew into that language, though it was rather a different dialect than another language; and by the forms of their prayers, we see that one cried with a loud voice, 'Stand up, and bless the Lord your God for ever and ever;' which shews that all did understand the service. When the Syriac tongue became more familiar to them, the Jews had their prayers in Syriac; and they did read the law in their synagogues in Greek, when that language was more familiar to them; when they read the law in Greek, we have reason to believe that they prayed likewise in it. In the New Testament, we see the gift of tongues was granted to enable the apostles, and others, to go every where preaching the gospel, and performing holy functions in such a language as might be understood: the world was amazed when every man heard them speak in his own language.

One of the general rules given by St. Paul, with relation to the worship of God, is, 'Let every thing be done to edification.' Since then the speaking either to God in the name of the people, or to the people in the name of God, in an unknown tongue, can edify no person; then by this rule it is to be understood to be forbidden. When some who had the gift of tongues did indiscreetly shew it in the church of Corinth, St. Paul was so offended at that, and thought it would appear to the world so undecent, as well as unfruitful, that he bestows a whole chapter upon it; and though a great part of the discourse is against the pretending to teach the

Neh. viii.  
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Neh. ix. 5.

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people in an unknown tongue, which yet is not near so bad as the reading the word of God to them in a tongue not understood by them, it being much more important that the people should understand the words of the living God than the expositions of men; yet there are many passages in that chapter that belong to prayer: the reason of the thing is common to both, since, unless the words were understood, they who uttered them spoke only to the air; and how should it be known what was spoken? For if the meaning of the voice was not known, they would be barbarians to one another. As to prayer, he says, 'If I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit (that is, the inspiration or gift that is in me) prayeth; but my understanding (that is, my rational powers) is unfruitful;' and therefore he concludes that he will both *pray* and *give thanks* with the *spirit*, and with the *understanding also*; he will do it in such a manner, that the inspiration with which he was acted and his rational powers should join together. The reason given for this seems evident enough to determine the whole matter: 'Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say *Amen* at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest? For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified.' In which words it is plain that the people, even the most unlearned among them, were to join in the prayers and praises, and to testify that by saying *Amen* at the conclusion of them; and in order to their doing this as became reasonable creatures, it was necessary that they should understand what that was which they were to confirm by their *Amen*. It is also evident that St. Paul judged, that the people ought to be edified by all that was said in the church; and so he says a little after this, 'Let all things be done to edifying.' After such plain authorities from scripture, supporting that which seems to be founded on the light of nature, we need go no further to prove that which is mainly designed by this Article.

The custom of the primitive church is no less clear in this point. As the Christian religion was spread to different nations, so they all worshipped God in their own tongue. The Syriac, the Greek, and the Latin, were indeed of that extent, that we have no particular history of any churches that lay beyond the compass of those languages; but there was the same reason for putting the worship of God in other languages, that there was for these: that which is drawn from the three languages, in which the title on our Saviour's cross was written, is too trifling a thing to deserve an answer; as if a humour of Pilate's were to be considered as a prophetic warrant, what he did being only designed to make that title to be understood by all who were then at Jerusalem. There are very large passages both in Origen and St. Basil, which mention every tongue's *praising of God*; and that the gospel beir

1 Cor. xiv.  
14.

Ver. 15.

Ver. 16,  
17.

Ver. 26.

Cont. Cel.  
sum. l. 8.  
p. 402.  
Cantab.

A. R. T.  
XXIV.epist. ad  
clericos  
Næocesa-  
rien.Johan. 8.  
Ep. 247.  
Concil.  
tom. 9.

spread to many nations, he was in every nation praised in the language of that nation. This continued so long to be the practice even of the Latin church,\* that in the ninth century, when the Slavons were converted, it was considered at Rome by pope John VIII. in what language they should be allowed to worship God. And, as it is pretended, a voice was heard, *Let every tongue confess to God*; upon which that pope wrote both to the prince and to the bishop of the Slavons, allowing them to have their public service in their own tongue. But in the other parts of the western church, the Latin tongue continued to be so universally understood by almost all sorts of people, till the tenth or eleventh century, that there was no occasion for changing it; and by that time the clergy were affecting to keep the people in ignorance, and in a blind dependance upon themselves; and so were willing to make them think that the whole business of reconciling the people to God lay upon them, and that they were to do it for them. A great part of the service of the mass was said so low, that even they who understood some Latin could not be the better for it, in an age in which there was no printing, and so few copies were to be had of the public offices. The scriptures were likewise kept from the people, and the service of God was filled with many rites, in all which the clergy seemed to design to make the people believe that these were sacred charms, of which they only had the secret. So that all the edification which was to be had in the public worship was turned to pomp and show, for the diversion and entertainment of the spectators.

Con. Trid.  
Cap. 8.  
Sess. 22.

In defence of this worship in an unknown tongue, the main argument that is brought is the authority and infallibility of the church, which has appointed it; and since she ought to be supposed not to have erred, therefore this must be believed to be lawful. We are not much moved with this, especially with the authority of the later ages; so the other arguments must be considered, which indeed can scarce be called arguments. The modern tongues change so fast, that they say, if the worship were in them, it must either be often changed, or

\* That such was the practice of the Latin church even in the thirteenth century appears from the following decree of the fourth Lateran council, held under pope Innocent III., A. D. 1215.

‘4th Lateran, Innocent III., 1215. Can. ix. p. 161, Labb. vol. xi.

‘Quoniam in plerisque partibus intra eandem civitatem atque diœcesim permixti sunt populi diversarum linguarum, habentes sub una fide varios ritus et mores: districtè præcipimus, ut pontifices hujusmodi civitatum sive diœcesim provideant viros idoneos, qui secundum diversitates rituum et linguarum Divina officia illis celebrent, et ecclesiastica sacramenta ministrent, instruendo eis verbo pariter et exemplo.’—*De diversis ritibus in eadem fide.*

With this the following canon of the council of Trent affords a curious contrast: ‘Si quis dixerit ecclesiæ Romanæ ritum, quo summissa voce pars canonis, et verba consecrationis proferuntur, damnandum esse; aut lingua tantum vulgari missam celebrari debere: aut aquam non miscendam esse vino in calice offerendo, eo quod sit contra Christi institutionem: anathema sit.’—[Ed.]

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the phrases would grow old, and sound harshly. A few alterations once in an age will set this matter right; besides, that the use of such forms does fix a language, at least as to those phrases that are used in it, which grow to be so familiar to our ears by constant use, that they do not so easily wear out. It is above eighty years since the present translation of the Bible was made, and above one hundred and forty since our Liturgy was compiled, and yet we perceive no uncouthness in the phrases. The simplicity, in which such forms must be drawn, makes them not so subject to alteration as other compositions, of rhetoric or poetry; but can it be thought any inconveniency now and then to alter a little the words or phrases of our service? Much less can that be thought of weight enough to balance the vaster prejudice of keeping whole nations in ignorance, and of extinguishing devotion by entertaining it with a form of worship that is not understood.

Nor can this be avoided by saying, that the people are furnished with forms in their own language, into which the greatest part of the public offices are translated: for as this is not done but since the Reformation began, and in those nations only where the scandal that is given by an unknown language might have, as they apprehend, ill effects; so it is only an artifice to keep those still in their communion, whom such a gross practice, if not thus disguised, might otherwise drive from them. But still the public worship has no edification in it; nor can those who do not understand it say *Amen*, according to St. Paul. Finally, they urge the *communion of saints*, in order to which they think it is necessary that priests, wheresoever they go, may be able to officiate, which they cannot do if every nation worships God in its own language. And this was indeed very necessary in those ages in which the see of Rome did by provisions, and the other inventions of the canonists, dispose of the best benefices to their own creatures and servants. That trade would have been spoiled, if strangers might not have been admitted till they had learned the language of the country; and thus, instead of taking care of the people that ought to be edified by the public worship, provision was made at their cost for such vagrant priests as have been in all ages the scandals of the church, and the reproaches of religion.