# LUTHER'S PRIMARY WORKS

TOGETHER WITH HIS SHORTER AND LARGER CATECHISMS

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TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH

#### EDITED

With Theological and Historical Essays, by

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# PREFACE

THE present volume is designed to afford the English reader the means of becoming acquainted, from Luther himself, with the principles from which the Reformation started, and with the manner in which they were applied by the great Reformer in the renovation of Faith and Practice in the common life of Christians. The second of these subjects, although the later in historical development, has been exemplified first in these pages, by means of a translation of Luther's shorter and larger Catechisms. These two works exhibit the Reformer's practical teaching in its simplest and most direct form. They are still living forces in Germany, at least as much as the Catechism of the Book of Common Prayer is in England, and the editors believe they

deserve—the Larger Catechism especially—to have a wider influence in this country. They exhibit in the most vivid form Luther's strong grasp of the cardinal principles of the Christian Faith, and his wonderful power of clear and forcible exposition. The larger Catechism, at all events, does not appear to have been hitherto accessible to English readers, and it is hoped that the present translation will facilitate a due apprehension of it. The task of translating it has been one of extreme difficulty. It would not, perhaps, have been so difficult to convey the substantial meaning of Luther, as is done in the Latin translation which, in the Lutheran Symbolical Books, accompanies the German text. But Luther's object was to be simple and popular, and a great part, accordingly, of the characteristic value of the work depends on its homely and idiomatic style. The Editors have found it impracticable adequately to reproduce this inimitable style, but the greatest pains have been taken to render the translation as close a representation of the German as possible. After the work had been translated by Miss Buchheim, the additional assistance of Miss Dora Schmitz was obtained: and the translation thus provided was then revised, very carefully, first by Dr. Wace and then by Dr. Buchheim. The necessity of this minute and repeated revision has delayed the volume for some years; and the editors must express their thanks to the publishers for the patience they have been good enough to extend to them for this purpose. The Editors will feel their labours abundantly rewarded if the result is sufficiently successful to afford English readers some adequate conception of the strength and simplicity, the combined manliness and childlikeness, of the Reformer's faith and teaching, and if a more just understanding is thus secured of the grand services which he rendered both to his own country and to Europe, and of the profound value of the practical principles which he reasserted.

The three treatises which follow the Catechisms, as is more fully explained in the first of the essays in the Appendix, were all produced in the critical year 1520, when the Reformer appealed at the same moment to the Pope, to the Christian Nobility of his nation, to earnest

Christian men, and to Theologians, to promote a real Reform in the Church. Accordingly, the Treatise on Christian Liberty combines with an earnest appeal to the Pope an impressive statement of the cardinal Christian truths in which Luther's whole soul was absorbed, and which he longed to deliver from the obscurity in which they were imprisoned by the prevalent philosophy and theology. On the other hand. in the Address to the Nobility he exposed with tremendous power the practical abuses which prevailed Roman Church in Germany; and in the Treatise on the Babylonish Captivity he attacked the spiritual abuses which had grown up, like a huge canker, around the Christian Sacraments. His work in the latter treatise is avowedly somewhat tentative, and his views on some points were afterwards modified; but the main principles on which his reforming movement proceeded are asserted with great clearness and force.

But for a fuller explanation of the nature of these Treatises the essay in the Appendix, already mentioned, may be referred to. Here it is only necessary to state

that, of these three works, the Address to the Nobility of the German Nation, which was written in German, has been translated by Professor Buchheim from the text given in the Erlangen and Frankfort edition, collated with the edition recently published separately, as one of the publications of the Verein für Reformations Geschichte, by Professor Benrath. The translation of this work also presented very great difficulties, as it was written in Luther's earliest German style, with extraordinary idiomatic force, and before the language had been improved, and rendered comparatively definite, by his translation of the Bible. Dr. Buchheim has endeavoured to make his version as literal as was compatible with the genius of the English language, and with the necessity of modifying, now and then, some obscure or obsolete expressions; and he has offered a few annotations. He desires at the same time to express his great obligations to Dr. Wace, who carefully compared his translation with the original work, and whose suggestions have been of great service to him. The two Treatises on Christian Liberty and on the Babylonish

Captivity of the Church were translated from the original Latin texts, as given in the Frankfort edition, by the late Rev. R. S. Grignon, to whose generous assistance and accurate scholarship the Editors feel greatly indebted. To the same hand is due the translation of the Ninety-five Theses, which are appended to these Treatises on account of their profound interest as exhibiting the moral and spiritual convictions by which Luther's revolt against the prevalent abuses was prompted.

The three latter translations, with the Ninety-five Theses, were published thirteen years ago by Mr. Murray, as a contribution towards the celebration in this country of the fourth centenary of Luther's birth; and the Editors have to thank Mr. Murray for his kind permission to reprint them, in connexion with the translation, now first published, of the Catechisms. The opportunity has been taken, both by Dr. Buchheim and Dr. Wace, to revise the translations with care. Dr. Buchheim, in particular, has expended great pains upon the endeavour to correct the translation of the Address to the German

Nation by the lights of the latest German scholarship, and he has also carefully revised his historical sketch in the Appendix.

The Editors venture to hope that this attempt to let the voice of the great Reformer be heard more clearly in England may, for various reasons, be opportune at the present time, and that it may assist in the better apprehension of those cardinal principles on which, alike in England and in Germany, true "Christian Liberty" can alone be securely based.

King's College, London, October 1896.

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# ENCHIRIDION

A Short Catechism for the Use of Ordinary Pastors and Preachers

# PREFACE

Martin Luther to all faithful, pious pastors and preachers: Grace, mercy, and peace in Jesus Christ our Lord.

IN setting forth this Catechism or Christian doctrine in such a simple, concise, and easy form, I have been compelled and driven by the wretched and lamentable state of affairs which I discovered lately when I acted as inspector. Merciful God, what misery I have seen, the common people knowing nothing at all of Christian doctrine, especially in the villages! and unfortunately many pastors are well-nigh unskilled and incapable of teaching; and though all are called Christians and partake of the Holy Sacrament, they know neither the Lord's Prayer, nor the Creed, nor the Ten Commandments, but live like the poor cattle and senseless swine, though, now that the Gospel is come, they have learnt well enough how they may abuse their liberty.

O ye bishops, how will ye ever answer for it to Christ that ye have so shamefully neglected the people, and have not attended for an instant to your office? May all evil be averted from you! Ye forbid the taking of the

Sacrament in one kind, and insist on your human laws, but never inquire whether they know the Lord's Prayer, the Belief, the Ten Commandments, or any of the words

of God. Oh, we upon you for evermore!

Therefore I pray you for God's sake, my good masters and brethren who are pastors or preachers, to attend to your office with all your heart, to take pity on your people, who are commended to your charge, and to help us to introduce the Catechism among the people, especially among the young; and let those who cannot do better take these tables and forms, and instruct the people in them word for word; in this wise:—

First, the preacher must above all things beware of and avoid the use of various and different texts and forms of the Commandments, Lord's Prayer, Belief, Sacrament, etc.; he must take one form and keep to it, and constantly teach the same, year after year. For the young and simple folk must be taught one definite text and version, else they will easily become confused, if to-day we teach thus and next year thus, as though we wanted to improve it, and so all our labour and toil is lost.

This was clearly seen by the worthy fathers, who used the Lord's Prayer, the Belief, the Ten Commandments, all in one form. Therefore we must always teach the young and simple folk in such a manner that we do not alter one syllable, or preach to-morrow differently from

to-day.

Therefore choose whatever form thou wilt, and ever keep to it. But if thou preachest to scholars or wise men, thou mayest show thy skill, and vary these articles, and twist them as subtly as thou canst. But with the young keep always to one form, and teach them first of all these articles, namely, the Ten Commandments, the Belief, the Lord's Prayer, etc., according to the text, word for word, so that they may repeat them and learn them by heart.

But as for those who will not learn, let them be told that they deny Christ and are no Christians, and let them not be admitted to the Sacrament, be sponsors to any child, or enjoy any of the liberty of Christians, but be handed over simply to the Pope and his officers, yea, to the devil himself. Besides this, let their parents or masters refuse them food and drink, and tell them that the prince will have such rude people driven from the land.

For though we cannot and may not force any to believe, yet we must train and urge the multitude so that they may know what is right and wrong among those with whom they have their dwelling, food, and life. For whoever would dwell in a town must know and keep the law of which he would enjoy the privileges, whether he believe it, or be a rogue and good-for-nothing in his heart.

Secondly, when they know the text well, teach them next to understand it, so that they know what it means, and take once more the method of these tables, this or some other short method, whichever thou wilt, and keep to it, and do not alter one syllable, just as we said of the text, and take time and leisure over it. For it is not necessary to expound all at once, but one thing after the When they understand the First Commandment well, then take the Second, and so on, else they will be overwhelmed and retain none.

Thirdly, now when thou hast taught them this short Catechism, then take the larger Catechism, and give them a deeper and fuller explanation. Explain every commandment, petition, and article, with its various works and uses, its dangers and abuses, as thou wilt find them in abundance in the many little books written about them. And especially dwell on that commandment that is most neglected among thy people. For example, the Seventh\* Commandment, about stealing, must be vehemently urged among artisans, tradesmen, and also among peasants and servants, for among such people there is all manner of unfaithfulness and thieving. Again, the Fourth Commandment must be specially urged upon children and

<sup>\*</sup> I.e., the Eighth, as we number them; and so the Fourth, presently mentioned, is our fifth.

the common people, that they may be quiet, faithful, obedient, peaceful; and thou must always adduce many examples from the Bible of how God punished or blessed

such people.

Especially urge authorities and parents that they govern well and send the children to school, and admonish them how it is their duty to do this, and what an accursed sin they commit if they neglect it. For thereby they overthrow and desolate both God's kingdom and the world's, as the worst enemies both of God and man. Lay also great stress on the horrible injury they do, if they do not help to train children for pastors, preachers, clerks, etc., and that God will punish them terribly. For it is very necessary to preach on this subject. Parents and magistrates now sin in this matter more than we can say. The devil has also most evil

designs therein.

Finally, because the tyranny of the Pope is past, they will no longer come to the Sacrament, and despise it. Accordingly it is necessary to arge them, but with this caution: we must not force any one to belief or to the Sacrament, nor make any law prescribing time or place: but we ought to preach so that they come without our laws and, as it were, force us, their pastors, to give them the Sacrament. This we may do by saying to them, "Whoever does not seek or desire the Sacrament, or demand it, at least once or four times a year, it is to be feared that he despises the Sacrament and is no Christian, just as he is no Christian who does not believe in or listen to the Gospel; for Christ did not say. 'Omit or despise this,' but 'This do as oft as ye drink it,' etc." He will surely have it done, and on no account neglected or despised. "This do," He says.

But if there be any one who does not greatly prize the Sacrament, that is a sign that he has no sin, no flesh, no devil, no world, no death, no danger, no hell; that is, he believes in none, though he is head over ears therein and is doubly the devil's. On the other hand, he needs no mercy, life, paradise, kingdom of heaven, Christ, God,

or anything that is good. For if he believed that he had so much evil and needed so much good, he would not neglect the Sacrament, in which so much help is given against evil, and so much good is bestowed. We should not then need to drive him to the Sacrament by any law, but he would come running and hurrying thither of his own accord, constrain himself, and urge you, that

von should give him the Sacrament.

So thou must not establish any law herein like the Pope. Only dwell on the good and harm, necessity and blessing, the danger and salvation, in the Sacrament, and then they will come of their own accord, without your constraining them. But if they do not come, let them go their ways, and tell them they are the devil's, since they neither regard nor feel their own great need and God's gracious help. But if thou do not dwell on this, or if thou make a law and poison of it, then it is thy fault that they despise the Sacrament. How can they be otherwise than indifferent if thou sleep or keep silence? Therefore see to it, pastor and preacher! Our office has now become a different thing from what it was under the Pope: it has now become a real and saving office. Therefore it is more troublesome and full of labour, and is more encompassed by danger and temptation, and, moreover, brings little reward and thanks in this world. But Christ Himself will be our reward if we work faithfully. And so may the Father of all mercy help us, to whom be praise and thanks everlasting, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

# THE SHORT CATECHISM

# I.—THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

How the master of the house should teach them simply to his household.

#### THE FIRST COMMANDMENT.

THOU SHALT HAVE NONE OTHER GODS BUT ME.

What does that mean?

Answer. We are to fear, love, and trust God above all things:

# THE SECOND COMMANDMENT.

THOU SHALT NOT TAKE THE NAME OF THE LORD THY GOD IN VAIN.

What does that mean?

Answer. We are to fear and love God, so that we use not His name in cursing, swearing, witchcraft, lying, or deceiving, but in all our necessities call upon it, with prayer, praise, and thanks.

# THE THIRD COMMANDMENT.

REMEMBER THAT THOU KEEP HOLY THE SABBATH DAY.

What does that mean?

Answer. We are to fear and love God, that we despise not preaching nor His word, but keep that word holy, and gladly hear it and learn it.

#### THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT.

HONOUR THY FATHER AND THY MOTHER.

What does that mean?

Answer. We are to fear and love God, that we do not despise nor anger our parents and masters, but reverence, serve, obey, love, and honour them.

# THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT.

THOU SHALT DO NO MURDER.

What does that mean?

Answer. We are to fear and love God, that we do our neighbour no harm nor injury in his body, but help and further him in all bodily necessities.

## THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT.

THOU SHALT NOT COMMIT ADULTERY.

What does that mean?

Answer. We are to fear and love God, that we live chaste and modest in word and deed, and that every one love and honour his spouse.

# THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT.

THOU SHALT NOT STEAL.

What does that mean?

Answer. We are to fear and love God, that we take not our neighbour's money nor goods, nor seek to obtain them by false dealing or deceit, but help him to keep and improve his goods and his sustenance.

# THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT.

THOU SHALT NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS AGAINST THY NEIGHBOUR.

What does that mean?

Answer. We are to fear and love God, that we do not falsely deceive, betray, calumniate, nor slander our

neighbour, but excuse him, speak well of him, and turn everything to the best.

#### THE NINTH COMMANDMENT.

THOU SHALT NOT COVET THY NEIGHBOUR'S HOUSE.

What does that mean?

Answer. We are to fear and love God, that we do not covet our neighbour's inheritance nor his house, nor seek to obtain them by a semblance of right, but help him and further him in retaining what is his own.

# THE TENTH COMMANDMENT.

THOU SHALT NOT COVET THY NEIGHBOUR'S WIFE, NOR HIS SERVANT, NOR HIS MAID, NOR HIS OX, NOR HIS ASS, NOR ANYTHING THAT IS HIS.

What does that mean?

Answer. We are to fear and love God, that we do not seek to alienate or turn from our neighbour his wife, his servants, or his cattle, but exhort them to remain and do their duty to him.

Now what saith God of all these Commandments?

Answer. He saith thus:-

FOR I, THE LORD THY GOD, AM A JEALOUS GOD, AND VISIT THE SINS OF THE FATHERS UPON THE CHILDREN UNTO THE THIRD AND FOURTH GENERATION OF THEM THAT HATE ME, AND SHOW MERCY UNTO THOUSANDS IN THEM THAT LOVE ME AND KEEP MY COMMANDMENTS.

What does that mean?

Answer. God threatens to punish all who transgress these commandments. Wherefore we must fear His wrath and not break these commandments. But He promises His grace and all good things to all who keep these commandments. Wherefore we are to love and trust Him and gladly do according to His commandments.

## II.—THE CREED

How the master of the house is to explain it as simply as possible to his household.

THE FIRST ARTICLE: OF THE CREATION.

I BELIEVE IN GOD THE FATHER ALMIGHTY, MAKER OF HEAVEN AND EARTH.

What does that mean?

Answer. I believe that God has created me and all other creatures, and has given me, and preserves for me, body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my limbs, my reason and all my senses; and that daily He bestows on me clothes and shoes, meat and drink, house and home, wife and child, fields and cattle, and all my goods, and supplies in abundance all needs and necessities of my body and life, and protects me from all perils, and guards and defends me from all evil. And this He does out of pure fatherly and Divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in me; for all which I am bound to thank Him and praise Him, and, moreover, to serve and obey Him. This is a faithful saying.

# THE SECOND ARTICLE: OF THE REDEMPTION.

AND IN JESUS CHRIST, HIS ONLY SON, OUR LORD, WHO WAS CONCEIVED BY THE HOLY GHOST, BORN OF THE VIRGIN MARY; SUFFERED UNDER PONTIUS PILATE; WAS CRUCIFIED, DEAD, AND BURIED, HE DESCENDED INTO HELL; THE THIRD DAY HE ROSE AGAIN FROM THE DEAD; HE ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN, AND SITTETH AT THE RIGHT HAND OF THE FATHER ALMIGHTY: FROM THENCE HE SHALL COME TO JUDGE THE QUICK AND THE DEAD.

What does that mean?

Answer. I believe that Jesus Christ, very God, born of the Father in eternity, and also very man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord, who has redeemed me, a lost and damned man, and has won and delivered me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the

devil, not with gold and silver, but with His holy and precious blood and with His innocent passion and death, so that I might be His own, and might live under Him in His kingdom, and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessing, just as He rose from the dead, and lives and reigns in all eternity. This is a faithful saying.

## THE THIRD ARTICLE: OF THE SANCTIFICATION,

I BELIEVE IN THE HOLY GHOST, A HOLY CHRISTIAN CHURCH, THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS, THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS, THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY, AND THE LIFE EVERLASTING. AMEN.

What does that mean?

Answer. I believe that I cannot of my own understanding and strength believe in or come to Jesus Christ my Lord, but that the Holy Ghost has called me by the Gospel, and illuminated me with His gifts, and sanctified and preserved me in the true faith, just as He calls, gathers together, illuminates, sanctifies, and preserves in Jesus Christ all Christendom throughout the earth in the one true faith; in which Christendom He daily bestows abundantly on me and all believers forgiveness of sins; and on the last day He will awaken me and all the dead, and will give to me and all that believe in Christ eternal life. This is a faithful saying.

# III.—THE LORD'S PRAYER

How the master of the house should explain it as simply as possible to his household.

OUR FATHER, WHICH ART IN HEAVEN.

What does that mean?

Answer. With these words God invites us to believe that He is our true Father, and that we are His true children, so that we may pray to Him in confidence and in all trust, as little children do to their fathers.

#### THE FIRST PETITION.

HALLOWED BE THY NAME.

What does that mean?

Answer. God's name, indeed, is already holy in itself, but we pray in this prayer that it may also be holy among us.

How is this done?

Answer. Where the word of God is taught in all purity and sincerity, and we live a holy life in accordance with it, as the children of God. In which our dear Father in heaven help us! But he who teaches and lives otherwise than the word of God teaches, he profanes among us the name of God, from which defend us, heavenly Father.

#### THE SECOND PETITION.

THY KINGDOM COME.

What does that mean?

Answer. God's kingdom comes, indeed, of itself, without our prayer, but we ask in this prayer that it may also come to us.

How is this done?

Answer. When our heavenly Father gives us His Holy Spirit, that, through His mercy, we believe His holy word, and live a godly life, here for a time and for ever in heaven.

# THE THIRD PETITION.

THY WILL BE DONE ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN.

What does that mean?

Answer. God's good and gracious will is done indeed without our prayer, but we ask in this prayer that it may also be done among us.

How is this done?

Answer. When God destroys and overthrows all evil counsel and ill-will, which would not let us keep holy

the name of God or let His kingdom come, such as is the will of the devil, the world, and of our flesh; but strengthens and maintains us firmly in His word and faith unto our lives' end. That is His good and gracious will.

#### THE FOURTH PETITION.

GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD.

What does that mean?

Answer. God gives daily bread, without our intercession, to all evil men, but we ask in this prayer that He will let us acknowledge and receive with thanksgiving our daily bread.

What signifies daily bread?

Answer. All that appertains to the nourishment and wants of our bodies, such as food, drink, clothes, shoes, house and home, lands, cattle, money, goods, an honest wife, honest children, honest servants, honest, faithful magistrates, good government, good weather, peace, health, modesty, honour, good friends, faithful neighbours, and the like.

## THE FIFTH PETITION.

AND FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES, AS WE FORGIVE THEM THAT TRESPASS AGAINST US.

What does that mean?

Answer. We ask in this prayer that our Father in heaven may not regard our sin, and may not because of it reject our prayer, for we are not worthy of anything we ask, neither have we deserved it; but that He will grant all to us of His grace, for we sin greatly each day and deserve nothing but punishment. And in our turn we will heartily forgive and do good to all those who sin against us.

# THE SIXTH PETITION.

AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION.

What does that mean?

Answer. God, it is true, tempts no man, but we ask in this prayer that He will guard and preserve us, so

that the devil, the world, and our flesh may not deceive us nor lead us into unbelief, doubt, and other great sins and crimes, and that, though we be tempted therewith, we may at length overcome and be victorious.

#### THE SEVENTH PETITION.

BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL.

What does that mean?

Answer. We ask in this petition, as though to sum up, that our Father in heaven may deliver us from all evil of body, soul, goods, and honour; and that, finally, when our hour has come, He will grant us a blessed end, and in His mercy take us from this vale of tears to Himself in heaven.

AMEN.

What does that mean?

Answer. That I am to be assured that such prayers are acceptable to our Father in heaven and are heard by Him, for He Himself has commanded us so to pray, and has promised to hear us. Amen, Amen, that is, Yea, yea; thus shall it be.

# IV.—THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY BAPTISM

How the master of the house should explain it as simply as possible to his household.

# FIRSTLY.

What is baptism?

Answer. Baptism is not only simple water, but it is the water comprehended in God's commandment and united with God's word.

What then is this word of God?

Answer. What our Lord Christ says in the last chapter of St. Matthew: Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

#### SECONDLY.

What does baptism give us, and of what benefit is it? Answer. It effects the remission of sins, frees us from death and the devil, and gives blessedness everlasting to those who believe what the word and the promise of God declare.

What is this word and promise of God?

Answer. What our Lord Christ says in the last chapter of St. Mark: He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

#### THIRDLY.

How can water effect such great things?

Answer. Truly water cannot do it, but the word of God, which is with and on the water, and the faith which believes such word of God in the water. For without the word of God the water is simple water, and not baptism; but with the word of God it is a baptism, that is, a gracious water of life, and a washing of regeneration in the Holy Ghost, as St. Paul says to Titus in the third chapter: By the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour, that, being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. This is a faithful saying.

# FOURTHLY.

What signifies this baptism in water?

Answer. It signifies that the old Adam in us is to be drowned by daily repentance and penance, and is to die, with all sins and evil desires, and that daily is to arise and emerge a new man, who is to live before God in righteousness and purity for ever.

Where is this written?

Answer. St. Paul says to the Romans (chap. vi.), Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

# V.—HOW THE SIMPLE FOLKS SHOULD BE TAUGHT TO CONFESS

Confession consists of two parts: first, to confess our sins, and secondly, to receive the absolution or forgiveness bestowed by the confessor, as from God Himself, and not to doubt thereof, but firmly to believe that our sins are thereby forgiven in the sight of God in heaven.

What sins should we confess?

To God we are to confess all sins, even those that we do not recognise, as we do in the Lord's Prayer; but to the confessor we are only to confess such sins as we know and feel guilty of in our hearts.

Which are they?

Examine thyself according to the Ten Commandments, whether thou art father, mother, son, daughter, master, mistress, manservant or maidservant, and see if thou hast been disobedient, unfaithful, and idle, whether thou hast done any one an injury by word or deed, whether thou hast been dishonest, negligent, slothful, or hast otherwise caused harm.

I pray thee, friend, tell me a short form of confession.

Answer. Say thus to thy confessor: Worthy reverend master, I pray you hear my confession, and declare absolution to me for God's sake.

Say thus: I, a poor sinner, confess myself guilty of all sins before God; in particular I confess to you that I am a manservant or a maidservant, etc., but, alas! I serve my master unfaithfully, for at such and such a time I have not done what they bade me, but angered them and moved them to swear; I have neglected my work and caused damage; I have been froward in word and deed; I have been angry with my fellows, sullen to my wife, and I have sworn at her. All this I repent of, and I pray for mercy, and will seek to amend.

A master or mistress must say as follows:-

Especially I acknowledge to you that I have not faithfully trained my children and servants and my wife to the

glory of God; I have sworn, and given a bad example with unchaste words and deeds; I have done injury to my neighbour, spoken ill of him, sold too dear, given short measure and false weight—and whatever else he may have done contrary to the commandments of God and his state in life.

But if any shall find that he is not burdened with similar or greater sins, he shall not be anxious or seek or invent further sins, and thus turn confession into a torture, but he must recount the one or two sins that he may remember. Thus: I confess especially that once I swore, also that I used unseemly words, neglected this or that duty. Let this suffice.

But if thou know of none (though this is well-nigh impossible), then mention none in particular, but receive forgiveness upon the general confession which thou

makest to the confessor before God.

THEREUPON THE CONFESSOR SHALL SAY,-

God be merciful to thee, and strengthen thy faith. Amen.

Further:—

Dost thou believe that my forgiveness is God's forgiveness?

Answer. Yea, reverend sir.

THEN LET HIM SAY,-

As thou believest, so be it unto thee. And, by command of our Lord Jesus Christ, I forgive thee thy sins, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Amen. Go in peace.

But if any are sorely afflicted in their conscience, or sorely grieved and tempted, the confessor will know how to comfort them with various words of Scripture, and how to lead them to faith. This is merely to serve as a general mode of confession for the simple folk.

# VI.—THE SACRAMENT OF THE ALTAR

How the master of the house should explain it simply to his household.

What is the Sacrament of the Altar?

Answer. It is the very Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, under the Bread and Wine, for us Christians to eat and to drink, under the institution of Christ Himself.

Where is this written?

Answer. Thus say the holy Evangelists Matthew,

Mark, Luke, and St. Paul:

The Lord Jesus, in the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He brake it, and gave it to His disciples, and said, Take; eat. This is My body, which is given for you; this do in remembrance of Me.

After the same manner also He took the cup when He had supped, and gave it to them, saying, Take this and drink ye all of it. This cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins; this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me.

What avails it to eat and drink thus?

Answer. This is shown us by the words, "Given for you and shed for you for the remission of sins." That is to say, that in the Sacrament forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation are bestowed on us by these words. For where forgiveness of sins is, there is also life and salvation.

How can bodily eating and drinking accomplish these

great things?

Answer. Eating and drinking do not indeed accomplish this, but the words which stand there, "Given for you and shed for you for the remission of sins." These words, together with the bodily eating and drinking, are the most important part of this Sacrament, and

whoever believes these words, he has what they say, and as they speak, namely, remission of sins.

Who, then, are they who receive this Sacrament

worthily?

Answer. Fasting and bodily preparation are in truth a good external discipline, but he is truly worthy and prepared who believes the words, "Given for you and shed for the remission of sins." But he who does not believe them is unworthy and not prepared. For the words, "for you," demand truly believing hearts.

## APPENDIX I.

How the master of the house should teach his household to commend themselves to God both night and morning.

#### THE MORNING BLESSING.

In the morning, when thou risest from thy bed, sign thyself with the Holy Cross, and say,—

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy

Ghost. Amen.

Then, kneeling or standing, repeat the Creed and the Lord's Prayer. If thou wilt, thou mayest also say this

short prayer:—

I thank Thee, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Thy dear Son, that Thou hast preserved me through this night from all harm and danger, and I beseech Thee Thou wouldest protect me this day from sin and all evil, that all my deeds and my life may be pleasing in Thy sight. For I commend myself, my body and soul, and all, into Thy hands. Let Thy holy angel be with me, that the evil one may have no power over me. Amen.

And then go joyfully to thy work, and sing, if thou wilt, a hymn, the Ten Commandments, or whatever else thy devotion suggests.

#### THE EVENING BLESSING.

At night, when thou goest to bed, sign thyself with the Holy Cross, and say,—

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

Amen.

Then, kneeling or standing, repeat the Creed and the Lord's Prayer. If thou wilt, thou mayest add this

short prayer:

I thank Thee, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Thy dear Son, that Thou hast graciously protected me through this day; and I beseech Thee Thou wouldest forgive me all my sins wherever I have done wrong, and mercifully guard me this night. For I commend myself, my body and soul, and all, into Thy hands. Let Thy holy angel be with me, that the evil one may have no power over me. Amen.

And then to sleep quickly and cheerfully.

How the master of the house should teach his household to say the Benedicite and the Gratias.

The children and servants are to fold their hands,

modestly approach the table, and say,-

The eyes of all wait upon Thee, and Thou givest them their meat in due season. Thou openest Thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing.

Note.—Satisfaction signifies that all creatures get so much to eat that they are cheerful and happy over it, for care and greed prevent such satisfaction.

Then the Lord's Prayer and the following prayer:-

Lord God, our heavenly Father, bless us and these Thy gifts, which we accept from Thy merciful goodness, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## THE GRATIAS.

After the meal they shall do likewise, and speak modestly with folded hands.

Give thanks unto the Lord, for He is gracious, and His mercy endureth for ever. He giveth fodder unto the cattle, and feedeth the young ravens that call upon Him. He hath no pleasure in the strength of an horse, neither delighteth He in any man's legs. But the Lord's delight is in them that fear Him and put their trust in His mercy.

Then the Lord's Prayer and the following prayer:—
We thank Thee, Lord God our Father, through Jesus
Christ our Lord, for all Thy mercies, Thou who livest
and rulest for ever and ever. Amen.

# APPENDIX II.

#### THE HOME TABLE.

Some Texts for divers holy orders and estates, which may serve to admonish them respectively of their offices and duties.

# TO BISHOPS, PASTORS, AND CLERGY.

A bishop must be blameless; the husband of one wife; vigilant; sober; of good behaviour; given to hospitality; apt to teach; not given to wine; no striker; not greedy of filthy lucre, but patient; not a brawler; not covetous; one that ruleth well his own house; having his children in subjection with all gravity; not a novice; holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers (1 Tim. iii. and Titus i.).

# Quid debeant auditores episcopis suis.

Dominus ordinavit his, qui evangelium annuntiant, de evangelio vivere (1 Cor. ix. 4). Communicet doctori in omnibus bonis is qui docetur verbo (Gal. vi. 6). Qui bene præsunt presbyteri, duplici honore digni habeantur, maxime qui laborant in verbo et doctrina. Dicit enim scriptura; non obligabis os bovi trituranti. Et: Dignus

est operarius mercede sua (1 Tim. v. 17, 18). Obedite præpositis vestris et cedite eis. Ipsi enim vigilant, quasi rationem pro animabus vestris reddituri, ut cum gaudio hoc faciant, et non gementes, hoc enim non expedit vobis (Ebr. xiii. 17).

#### OF MAGISTRATES.

Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers, for there is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For he beareth not the sword in vain, for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil (Rom. xiii.).

# Quid subditi magistratibus debeant.

Reddite quæ sunt Cæsaris, Cæsari (Matt. xxii. 21). Omnis anima potestatibus sublimioribus subdita sit cet. Ideoque necessitate subditi estote, non solum propter iram, sed etiam propter conscientiam. Ideo enim et tributa præstatis. Ministri enim Dei sunt, in hoc ipsum servientes. Reddite ergo omnibus debita: cui tributum, tributum; cui vectigal, vectigal; cui timorem, timorem; cui honorem, honorem (Rom. xiii. 1-5 sqq.). Adhortor primum omnium fieri obsecrationes, orationes, interpellationes, gratiarium actiones pro omnibus hominibus, pro regibus, et omnibus qui in sublimitate constituti sunt, ut quietam et tranquillam vitam agamus cum omni pietate et gravitate (1 Tim. ii. 1 sqq.). Admone illos principibus et potestatibus subditos esse cet (Titus iii. 1). Subditi estote omni humanæ creaturæ propter Dominum, sive regi tamquam præcellenti, sive ducibus tamquam ab eo missis (1 Peter ii. 13 sqq.).

# TO HUSBANDS.

Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife as unto the

weaker vessel and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers be not hindered (1 Peter iii.). And be not bitter against them (Col. iii.).

#### TO WIVES.

Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands as unto the Lord, even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters ye are as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement (Eph. i.; 1 Peter iii.).

#### TO PARENTS.

Ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Eph. vi.).

## TO CHILDREN.

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honour thy father and thy mother, which is the first commandment with promise, namely, that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth (Eph. vi. 1, etc.).

## TO MENSERVANTS, MAIDSERVANTS, DAY-LABOURERS AND WORKMEN.

Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of heart as unto Christ, not with eye-service as men-pleasers, but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men, knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free (Eph. vi. 5, etc.).

# TO THE MASTER AND MISTRESS OF A HOUSEHOLD.

And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening, knowing that your Master also is in heaven, neither is there respect of persons with Him (Eph. vi. 9).

#### TO THE YOUNG IN GENERAL.

Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you, be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility, for God resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time (1 Peter v., etc.).

#### TO WIDOWS.

Now she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day; but she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth (1 Tim. v.).

#### TO ALL.

Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself; in this saying all commandments are comprehended (Rom. xiii.). I exhort therefore that first of all supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men (1 Tim. ii.).

"Let each one learn his lesson well; Then in the house content will dwell."

Gin jeber lern fein Lection So wird es wohl im Saufe Stohn.

Cuique sit imprimis magnæ sua lectio curæ Ut domus officiis stet decorata suis.

Πᾶς ἰδίην ἀνάγνωσιν έῆς πραπίδεσσιν ἀθρήσας Οἰκον ἔχει πυκινῶν ἐυπορέοντα καλῶν.

# Preface.

A CHRISTIAN, wholesome, and necessary preface, and faithful, serious exhortation addressed by Dr. Martin Luther to all Christians, but especially to all pastors and preachers, that they may daily practise themselves in the Catechism, which is a short summary and extract of the whole of the Scriptures, and con-

tinually insist upon it, etc.

That we so urgently press the use of the Catechism, and also beg and entreat others to do so, is for no slight reasons, since we see, alas! that many pastors and preachers are very negligent in this matter, and despise both their office and this teaching, some because of their great and wonderful skill, others merely from laziness and love of their bellies, who act as though they were pastors and preachers merely for their belly's sake, and had nothing to do but enjoy their goods, and live as they were wont to live under the Pope.

And though they can find all that they should teach and preach so abundantly, easily, and clearly set forth in many wholesome books and, as they called them formerly, the true Sermones per se loquentes, Dormi secure, Paratos et Thesauros, yet are they not pious and honest enough to buy such books, or even if they have them, yet they do not look at them nor read them. Alas! such men are no better than shameful gluttons and slaves of their bellies, who had better be swineherds and keepers of

dogs than curates of the soul and pastors.

If only, now that they are rid of the useless tedious mutterings of the seven canonical hours, they would undertake instead as much as reading morning, noon, and evening a page or two out of the Catechism, Prayerbook, New Testament, or else the Bible, and would repeat the Lord's Prayer for themselves and their parishioners, so as to show at least some honour and gratitude to the Gospel, by which they are freed from so many burdens and oppressions, and that they would feel a little ashamed that, like swine and dogs, they retain no more of the Gospel than such idle, hurtful, abominable carnal freedom! For unfortunately, as it is, the masses esteem the Gospel far too lightly, and we can accomplish next to nothing, though we use all our industry; how will it be then if we are idle and slothful, as we were under the papacy?

Added to this is the shameful vice and secret corruption of security and satiety, so that many think the Catechism is a common, simple doctrine, which they can grasp at a single glance, and then can throw the book into a corner,

and be almost ashamed to read it any more.

Indeed, we may find some boors and niggards even among the nobles, who pretend that henceforth neither pastors nor preachers are needed, since we have all that is required in books, and can learn it by ourselves, and who cheerfully let the benefices go to ruin and waste, so that both pastor and preacher suffer hunger and thirst enow, as perhaps is fitting for stupid Germans. For we Germans have such shameful people among us, and must endure them. But this I say for myself: I also am a doctor and a preacher, as learned and experienced as any who have shown such insolence and security; and yet I am still like a child that is taught the Catechism, and I read it and repeat it word for word each morning, and when I have time—the Ten Commandments, the Creed, Lord's Prayer, Psalms, etc.; and I must still daily read and study, and cannot excel as I should like to, and must ever remain a child and pupil of the Catechism, and am right willing to remain so. And these dainty, fastidious gentlemen think with one perusal straightway to be doctor above all doctors, to know everything, and

require nothing more. Sooth to say, this is a certain sign that they despise both their office, and the people's souls, yea also God and His word, and they need not fear falling, for they have already fallen most grievously. What they need is to become as children and begin to learn the alphabet, which they think they have put aside

with their leading strings.

Therefore I entreat such slow bellies or presumptuous saints that, for God's sake, they will be convinced and believe that really, really they are not so learned and such great doctors as they would believe, and must never imagine that they have learned all of this matter, or know enough of all things, however it may seem to them they know it all too well. For even though they did know and understand it most excellently (which is certainly not possible in this life), yet there is much use and profit behind if we read it daily and practise it in thought and speech, namely because the Holy Ghost is always present during such reading, speaking, and thinking, and always gives new and increased light and devotion for the purpose, so that it always tastes sweeter and sweeter and works within us, as Christ also promises: Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them (Matt. xviii.).

Then, too, it is a wonderfully efficacious remedy against the devil, the world, the flesh, and all evil thoughts, if we make use of God's word, speak of it, meditate on it; and so the First Psalm calls them blessed who meditate on God's law day and night. Without doubt, thou wilt find no incense or other odours so efficacious against the devil as if thou makest use of God's commands and words in this wise, and speakest, singest, and thinkest of them. That is indeed the true holy water and sign from which he flies, and with which he lets himself be driven away.

For this reason alone then thou shouldst desire to read these articles, speak of them, meditate on them, and handle them, even though thou hadst no other use and profit from them save that thus thou drivest away the devil and evil thoughts. For he cannot hear nor endure God's word; and God's word is not like foolish fables, such as that about Dietrich of Berne, etc., but, as St. Paul says (Rom. i.), the power of God, yea, truly a power of God which cruelly afflicts the devil, and strengthens,

comforts, and helps us beyond measure.

And what should I more say? If I were to tell all the use and profit which God's word bestows, where should I find paper and time enough? We call the devil him with the thousand arts, but how shall we call God's word, which drives away him with the thousand arts, with all his tricks and his power, and annihilates him? It must be more than a hundred thousand arts. And can we so lightly despise such power, use, profit, and strength, especially we who would be pastors and preachers? If so, not only ought we to receive nothing to eat, but we deserve to be hunted forth with dogs, because we not only daily require all this, like our daily bread, but daily need it against the daily attacks and ambuscades of the devil with the thousand arts.

And if this be not enough to admonish us to read the Catechism daily, God's command alone should be sufficient to make us, when He adjures us solemnly in Deut. vi. that His word should be always in our hearts, sitting, walking, standing, lying down, rising up, and that we bind it for a sign upon our hands and as frontlets between our eyes. Without doubt it is not for nothing that He commands and demands this so earnestly; but, because He knows our danger and need, and the devil's constant furious attacks and temptations, He would warn us against them, and arm and protect us, as with good armour, against his fiery arrows, and with good medicine against his evil, pestilential corruptions and promptings.

Oh, what mad insane fools are we, that we have always to dwell or lodge among such powerful foes as the devils, and yet should be willing to despise our weapons and arms, and be too lazy to look to them or think of them! And what are these dainty, daring saints about, who neither will nor may daily learn and read the Catechism, because they think themselves much more learned than

God Himself, with all His saints, angels, prophets, Apostles, and all Christians? For while God Himself is not ashamed to teach it daily, as One who knows of no better thing to teach, and always teaches it in the same way, and adds nothing new or different, and all the saints know nothing better nor different to learn, and cannot make an end of their learning, are we not very fine fellows to imagine that if we have read and heard it once, we know it all, and need neither read nor learn further, and can master in an hour what God Himself can never make an end of teaching, although He teaches it from the beginning of the world to the end, and all prophets and saints have had to learn it, and still remained, and ever must remain, scholars?

For this is certain, whoever knows the Ten Commandments cannot but know the whole Scripture, and will be able in all matters and cases to advise, help, comfort, judge, decide, both spiritual and temporal matters, and be a judge over all doctrines, ranks, minds, and laws, and whatever else there may be in the world. And what is the whole Psalter but merely thoughts and exercises on the First Commandment? Now I verily believe that those slow bellies and presumptuous minds do not understand a single Psalm, not to mention the whole Scriptures, and yet they pretend to know and despise the whole Catechism, which is a short summary

and epitome of the whole Scriptures.

Therefore I once more entreat all Christians, especially pastors and preachers, not to want to become doctors too soon, or let themselves fancy they know everything (much is lost in the end by fancies and fine feathers), but daily to exercise themselves well in these studies and always be busy in them. Besides, they must with all diligence and care protect themselves against the poisonous contagion of security and presumption, and always keep on with reading, teaching, learning, thinking, and meditating, and never cease until they have proved and are certain that they have taught the devil dead, and become more learned than God and all His saints.

If they are thus diligent, I will promise them, and they will experience, what profit they will thus acquire, and what fine people God will make of them, so that in time they will themselves confess that the longer and more diligently they study the Catechism, the less they know of it, and the more they have to learn in it, and that which they now, in their fulness and satiety, cannot endure to smell, will then, in their hunger and thirst, have a right sweet savour to them, which may God grant in His mercy. Amen.

# Short Preface of Dr. Martin Luther

THIS instruction is arranged and instituted so as to serve for the teaching of children and simple folk, wherefore from the earliest times it was called in Greek Catechism, that is, instruction for children, which every Christian must of necessity know, so that he who does not know it cannot be counted among Christians and cannot be admitted to any Sacrament, just as a working man who does not know the laws and customs of his trade is expelled and considered unfit. Therefore young people must be made to learn well and thoroughly all that belongs to the Catechism or children's sermon, and

be diligently exercised and practised therein.

Wherefore, too, it is the duty of the father of each household at least once a week to question his children and servants concerning what they know or learn of it. and if they do not know it, admonish them earnestly to attend to it. For I well remember the time, yea it still occurs daily, that ignorant old and aged people are found who knew and know nothing of all this; yet they go to Baptism and the Sacrament, and make use of all that Christians possess; whereas it is but right that those who go to the Sacrament should know more and have a fuller understanding of the Christian doctrine than children and new scholars. Nevertheless, for the common people we would let those three things suffice, which have belonged to Christianity from all times, though but seldom rightly taught and practised, till all are well versed and fluent in them, both young and old, who are called Christians, and would be Christians. And these are as follows :--

#### FIRSTLY.

## The Ten Commandments of God.

1. Thou shalt have none other gods but Me.

- 2. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.
  - 3. Remember that thou keep holy the sabbath day.

4. Honour thy father and thy mother.

5. Thou shalt do no murder.

6. Thou shalt not commit adultery.

7. Thou shalt not steal.

8. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

9. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house.

10. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his servant, nor his maid, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is his.

## SECONDLY.

# The Chief Articles of our Belief.

1. I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of

heaven and earth,

- 2. And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, dead, and buried; He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.
- 3. I believe in the Holy Ghost, a holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the flesh, and a life everlasting. Amen.

#### THIRDLY.

# The Prayer, or "Our Father," which Christ taught.

Our Father, which art in heaven,

1. Hallowed be Thy name.

2. Thy kingdom come.

3. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

4. Give us this day our daily bread,

5. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

6. And lead us not into temptation,
7. But deliver us from evil. Amen.

These are the most important articles, which must be learned first. They must be repeated word for word, and children must be trained to recite them daily, when they rise in the morning, when they go to meals, and when they lie down to rest at night; and they should be given neither meat nor drink unless they say them. master must also see to this with his household, men and maids, and he should not keep them if they do not know these things or will not learn. For it is not to be endured that any one should be so rude and wild as not to learn them, for in these three articles is included in brief and simple form all that we find in the Scriptures. For the good fathers or Apostles (whoever they may have been) have thus summed up the whole of Christian teaching, life, wisdom, and art, what they are, what they treat of, and what they deal with.

Now when these three articles have been learnt, it is also right that people should know how to speak of our Sacraments (which Christ Himself instituted) of Baptism and of the holy Body and Blood of Christ, as it is written by Matthew and Mark at the end of their Gospels how Christ gave His final blessing to His Apostles and sent

them forth.

## OF BAPTISM.

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

It is enough for simple folk to know so much of the Scriptures regarding baptism. The other Sacrament may be dealt with in the same way in a few simple words, as, for example, the text of St. Paul, 1 Cor. xi. 23, etc.

#### OF THE SACRAMENT

The Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread: and when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said, Take, eat, this is My body, which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of Me.

After the same manner also He took the cup when He had supped, saying, This cup is the New Testament in My blood, which is shed for you for the remission of sins; this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me.

Thus we have altogether five articles of the whole Christian doctrine, which we should always teach, and demand and hear recited word for word. For do not rely on young people learning and remembering from the sermon alone. When these articles have been well learnt, various psalms and hymns based upon them may be given, for an addition and strength to them, and thus the young may be brought to know the Scriptures and daily to go farther therein.

But it is not enough that the words alone are learnt and repeated, for the young people must also go to Church, especially at the times set apart for dealing with the Catechism, so that they may hear it expounded and learn to understand what each article signifies, so that they can repeat it as they have heard it, and can answer correctly when they are questioned, so that it may not be preached without profit and fruit. For this reason we diligently and frequently preach the Catechism, so that it may be impressed on young minds, not in deep and subtle words, but briefly and simply, that it may penetrate deeply and remain fixed in their memories.

We will therefore deal now with these articles in turn, and speak as clearly as possible about them, so far as is necessary.

#### THE FIRST PART

#### THE FIRST COMMANDMENT

THOU SHALT HAVE NONE OTHER GODS BUT ME.

That is, Thou shalt have Me alone for thy God. What is meant by these words, and how are they to be understood? What means it to have a God, or what is God? Answer: God is one from whom we expect all good, and in whom we can take refuge in all our needs, so that to have a God is nothing else than to trust and believe in Him with all our hearts; as I have often said, that trust and faith of the heart alone make both God and Idol. If the faith and trust are right, then thy God is also the right God, and, again, if thy trust is false and wrong, then thou hast not the right God. For the two, faith and God, hold close together. Whatever, then, thy heart clings to (I say), and relies upon, that is properly thy God.

Therefore, the meaning of this commandment is that it requires true faith and trust in our hearts, which shall find the one true God and cling to Him alone. And this is as much as to say, Look to it that I am thy sole God, and seek no other. That is, Whatever good is wanting to thee, look to Me for it, and seek it of Me, and whenever thou sufferest misfortune and evil, come to Me, and cling to Me. I, I will give thee enough, and will help thee out of thy necessity; only let not thy heart cling to nor rely on any other.

Now I must deal with this very plainly, so that it be understood and remembered, by means of common examples of the contrary. Many a one thinks he has God and an abundance of all things if he has money and goods. He relies on them, and boasts that he cares for no one. Lo, he has indeed a god, who is called

Mammon, that is, money and goods, on which he sets all his heart, and this is the commonest idol in the world. Whoever has money and goods deems himself secure, and is joyful and fearless, as though he were in the midst of paradise; and, on the other hand, he who has none doubts and despairs, as though he knew of no God For we shall find few enough who are glad of heart, and neither mourn nor lament, if they have no mammon. It sticks and clings to human nature till the grave.

So, again, whoever is confident and boastful because he has great skill, cleverness, power, favour, friendship, and honour, he also has a god, but not the one true God. Here thou mayest see again how confident, secure, and proud men feel when they have these things, and how timid and despairing if they have them not, or if they lose them. Therefore I say again that the primary meaning of this article is that to have a God means to have something in which the heart puts all its trust.

See, then, what we have done and practised till now in blindness under the papacy. If a man has a toothache, he fasts, and honours St. Apollonia; if he fears fire, he makes St. Lawrence his patron saint; if he fears pestilence, he makes a vow to St. Sebastian or St. Roch: and many other such abuses are there, so that each one chooses his own saint, worships him, and calls on him in his need. To these belong also those who act too grossly and make a bond with the devil, so that he may give them money enough, or help them in wantonness, preserve their cattle, restore their lost goods, etc., such as magicians and wizards. For they all put their faith and trust elsewhere than in the true God, expect no good from Him, and do not seek it of Him.

Hence thou canst easily understand what and how much this commandment demands, namely, the whole heart of man and perfect confidence in God alone, and in no one else. For if thou wilt have God, thou canst easily understand that He cannot be seized and held with our hands, nor put in a bag, nor locked in a box; but it is grasping Him when the heart holds Him and clings

to Him. But to cling to Him with the heart is nothing else but to rely on Him altogether. Therefore He desires to turn us from everything else that exists beside Him, and to draw us to Him, because He is the only eternal good. It is as though He said, What you sought before of the saints or expected from mammon or elsewhere, expect from Me, and look on Me as Him who can help you and heap on you all good things in abundance.

So now thou knowest what is the true honour and worship which pleases God, and which He demands on pain of His eternal wrath, namely, that the heart shall know no other comfort nor trust save in Him, that it shall not let itself be torn from Him, but venture and stake thereon all that is on earth. On the other hand thou wilt easily see and judge that the world practises nothing but false worship and idolatry. For no people were ever so reckless as not to set up or cultivate some form of worship; but every man sets up as his god that from which he hopes to obtain good, help, and comfort.

So the heathers, whose sole aim was power and dominion, made Jupiter their highest god, while the others selected Hercules, Mercury, or Venus, according as they desired wealth, fortune, or pleasure, and delight; and pregnant women chose Diana or Lucina, and so on; each one taking for his god what his heart desired, so that really, even in the opinion of all the heathen, to have a god means to trust and to believe. But they erred herein, that their faith was false and wrong, for it was not centred in the only God beside whom verily there is no god in heaven or earth. Wherefore the heathers make an idol of their own invented dream and fancy of a god, and so in reality they believe in nothing. Thus is it with all idolatry, for it consists not only in setting up an image and worshipping it, but more especially it dwells in the heart which turns elsewhere. seeks help and comfort of created beings, saints, and devils, and does not accept God nor look for so much goodness from Him as to believe that He will help us. and that the good which we receive comes from God.

Moreover, there exists another mode of false worship, which is the worst form of idolatry that we have practised till now, and which still rules in the world. All religious orders are based upon it; it concerns the conscience alone which seeks help, comfort, and salvation in its own works: it would gain heaven by force, and calculates what charities it has founded, how often it has fasted, how many masses it has said. It relies on this, and boasts of it, as though it would accept nothing from Him gratuitously, but would itself earn reward and do service over and above what is required; as if He must be our servant and debtor, and we His masters. What else is this but to turn God into an idol or wooden image, and to set up ourselves as a god? But this is a little too subtle, and not fitting for young scholars.

But we must impress on the simple that they must note well the meaning of this commandment, and remember that we must trust God alone, expect and await nothing but good from Him, for He gives us body, life, food, drink, nourishment, health, protection, peace, and all temporal and eternal goods that we can need. He preserves us from all misfortune, and if any ill betide us He succours and helps us out of it, so that it is God (as we have often said) from whom alone we receive all good, and who rescues us from all misfortunes. is, I ween, that we Germans have from all times called God by this name, which comes from the word "good" (and which is a more beautiful name than is found in any other language), because He is an eternal source which overflows with pure goodness and from whom all that is good and is called good flows forth.

For though much good is done us by men, it is all really received from God, for we receive it by His command and order. For our parents and all magistrates are bidden to show us all manner of good, and every one is bidden to treat his neighbour thus, so that we receive the good, not from them, but from God through them. For His creatures are only the hand, the channel, the instruments, the means by which God bestows all things

on us, just as He gives the mother breasts and milk for her child, and as He lets corn and all manner of plants grow on the earth for our food—blessings which no creature can create for itself.

Therefore let no man dare to take or give anything unless it be commanded by God, so that we recognise it as His gift and thank Him for it, as this commandment bids us do. For the same reason, these means of receiving good through the creatures are not to be refused, nor may we presumptuously seek other ways or means than those which God has commanded. For that would not be to receive from God, but to seek help for ourselves.

Therefore let each man have a care that he hold this commandment in high esteem and place it above all else, and let him not treat it as a light matter. Question and search well thine own heart; then wilt thou learn whether or no it depends on God alone. If thou hast such an heart as to expect nought but good from Him, especially in thy needs and necessities, and to be ready to let everything go which is not God, then thou hast the only true God. Again, if thy heart depends on other things, and looks to them for good and help rather than to God, and, instead of seeking Him, flies from Him when things go ill, then thou hast but another idol.

Wherefore, that ye may see that God will not that ye trifle with His commandment, which He would have most earnestly regarded, He has added a terrible threat and then a beautiful and comforting promise, which we must repeat and impress on the young, that they commit it to memory and remember it:—

For I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God, and visit the sins of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me, and show mercy unto thousands in them that love Me and keep My commandments.

Although these words refer to all commandments, as we shall hereafter find, they have been attached to this head and front of the commandments because what is the most important of all is that the head be right; for where the head is right the whole life must be right, and vice versa. So learn from these words how angry God is with those who rely on any but Him; again, how gracious and good He is to those who with all their hearts trust and believe in Him alone. His anger does not cease till the fourth generation, but His mercy and goodness are shown to many thousands, so that we must not go our way so securely and at all hazards, and, like the brutish hearts, think there is no such great importance in the matter. He is a God who will not leave unavenged our turning away from Him, and will not cease to be angry till the fourth generation, even until it is utterly rooted out. Therefore He will be feared, and not despised.

This He has proved to us in all histories and narratives. as the Scriptures abundantly prove and as daily experience can easily show us. For from the beginning He exterminated all idolatry, and because of it both heathens and Jews, just as in the present day He is overthrowing all false worship, so that at last all who cling to it must perish. Therefore, although we still find proud, mighty, and wealthy people who trust to their mammon, careless whether God is angry or pleased, as though they were ready to brave His wrath, yet will they not be able to carry it out, but before we expect it they will perish, with all to which they trusted, as all others have perished who thought themselves still safer and mightier.

And just because these obstinate minds think that, since He looks on and lets them go their way unhindered, He knows not what they do or does not heed it, He must therefore strike in and punish, and He cannot forget it, and visits their sins on their children, so that each may be impressed by it and see that He is in earnest. For it is these whom He means when He says, Those who hate Me, that is, those who keep up their defiance and pride. Whatever we preach or say to them they will not hear. If they are chastised, so that they may perceive their wickedness and amend their ways before the punishment begins, they become mad and foolish, so that they truly deserve His wrath, as we may daily observe in our princes and bishops.

But, terrible though these threats are, so much the more powerful comfort is there in the promise that they who trust to God alone may be certain of His mercy, that is, that He will show them all manner of goodness, and not only to them, but to their children's children to a thousand and again a thousand generations. should move and encourage us to turn our hearts to God with all trust and confidence if we desire to have all temporal and eternal good, for His glorious Majesty offers us so much, invites us so heartily, and promises so abundantly.

Therefore let each one take these words to heart, and let him not regard them as though uttered by man. For they signify to thee eternal bliss, happiness, and salvation, or eternal anger, misfortune, and suffering. What more wouldst thou have or desire than that He promises thee so lovingly, that He and all good things shall be thine that He will protect thee and help thee in all thy needs?

But unfortunately the world will not believe this nor look upon it as God's word, because it sees that those who trust God, and not mammon, suffer trouble and want, and the devil opposes and attacks them, so that they can keep neither money, favour, goods, honour, and hardly escape with their life; whereas those who serve mammon have power, favour, honour, goods, and comfort in the sight of the world. Therefore we must understand these words, which contradict this false seeming, and must know that they neither lie nor deceive, but that their truth will vet be made manifest.

Reflect for thyself, or inquire, and tell me what have they finally accomplished who have spent all their care and diligence in scraping together goods and wealth? Then thou wilt find that they lost their pains and their labour, or that, although they brought home great treasures, yet they are turned again to dust or vanished, so that they themselves did not enjoy their goods, which

were not inherited by the third generation.

Thou wilt find enough examples of this in all histories, and thou canst obtain them from old and experienced people. Only regard them well and pay attention to them.

Saul was a great king, chosen by God, and a pious man, but when he was firmly seated on his throne he turned his heart from God and clung to his crown and his power, and he perished, with all he had, so that even of his children none remained.

Again, David was a man poor and despised, banished and persecuted, so that he was nowhere sure of his life; yet was he protected from Saul, and became king. For these words had to be proved true, because God can neither lie nor deceive. Be not deceived by the devil and the world, with their false semblance, which lasts

perchance for a time, but in the end is nothing.

Therefore let us learn the First Commandment well, so that we may see that God will not endure any presumption, nor trust in anything else, and demands nothing higher from us than a heartfelt confidence in all good from Him. He desires that we go straight on our way, make no further use of all the goods that God gives us than a shoemaker makes of his needle, awl, and thread, which he lays aside when his work is done, or as a guest in an inn requires food and a bed. use them solely for our temporal needs, each in his own station according to God's commandment, and let none become our master or idol. Let this be enough for the First Commandment, which we have had to explain very fully, because it is the most important, so that (as we have already said) when the heart is turned to God, and this commandment is kept, the others will be kept also.

## THE SECOND COMMANDMENT

THOU SHALT NOT TAKE THE NAME OF THE LORD THY GOD IN VAIN.

As the First Commandment instructs the heart and teaches faith, so this commandment leads us forth and turns mouth and tongue towards God. For the first

thing that comes forth out of the heart and manifests itself, is words. As I have shown how to answer what is meant by having one God, so thou must now learn to understand simply and to say simply the meaning of this and of all the commandments.

If now thou art asked, How dost thou understand this Second Commandment, and what does it mean to abuse or take in vain God's name? answer thou thus most briefly: We abuse God's name if we use the name of God, the Lord, in any way whatever, for the purpose of lying or any vice. Therefore we are commanded not to employ or utter God's name if our heart knows or thinks that the matter is really different from what we say, as when men take an oath in a court of justice, and one side lies unto the other. For the worst abuse to which we can put God's name is to use it for lying or deceiving. Let that be the simple explanation of this commandment.

Now from this each can understand for himself when and how God's name is abused, although it is not possible to repeat all the methods of abuse. But, to be brief, abuse of the Divine name occurs firstly in worldly quarrels and affairs concerning money, goods, or honour, in public before the magistrate, or in the market-place, or when a man swears false oaths in God's name and perjures his soul. This occurs especially in marriages, when two persons secretly pledge themselves to each other, and then renounce their yows.

But most of all this abuse occurs in spiritual matters, appertaining to the conscience, when false preachers arise and put forth their lying doctrines as though they were God's word.

All this is simply using God's name to make a fine show or ornament, or to pretend we are in the right, whether in the gross affairs of this world, or in deep and subtle matters regarding faith and doctrine. And among the liars we must also place the blasphemers, not only the bold ones, known to all the world, who without shame abuse God's name, and with whom not we, but the hangman, must deal, but also those who publicly

rail at the truth and God's word, and deliver them to the devil. Of these there is no need to speak further at

present.

Now let us learn and comprehend in our hearts the great importance of this commandment, so that we watch ourselves diligently and shrink from all abuse of the holy name as the greatest sin which can be openly committed. For lying and deceiving is in itself a great sin; but it becomes far worse if, in order to justify it and to confirm our falsehood, we use God's name and make of it a covering for our shame, so that out of one

lie there grows a double, nay, a multiplied lie.

Therefore God has added a grave threat to this commandment, which says, For the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain. That is, none shall escape with impunity. For just as He will not leave us unpunished if we turn our heart from Him, so He will not permit His name to be used to cloke lies. Now unfortunately there are but very few in the world who do not use God's name for lies and all manner of evil, just as there are few who trust God alone with all their hearts.

For there is this fine virtue inherent in us all by nature: that when any man has committed a crime he would gladly hide and cloke his shame so that none may see or know it, and no man is so reckless that he will boast openly of the crime he has committed. They all want to do it secretly, before men are aware of it. If a man is accused, God must give His name and make the crime estimable, the shame honourable. That is the common way of the world, and, like a great deluge, it inundates all lands. Therefore we obtain as a reward what we all seek and deserve: pestilence; war; famine; fire; water; degenerate wife, children, and servants; and all manner of evil. How else should there be so much misery? It is a great enough mercy that the earth still bears and nourishes us.

Therefore the young must, above all things, be diligently taught and trained to keep this and all other command-

ments constantly before them, and if they transgress we must forthwith correct them with rods, and hold before them the commandment, and impress it so that they are trained, not only by means of punishment, but in the fear and reverence of God.

Now thou seest what is meant by taking God's name in vain, namely (to repeat it briefly), to use it as a covering for lies or false pretexts, or for cursing, swearing,

conjuring, and, in short, for any manner of evil.

In addition, thou must also learn how to use the name aright. For when He says, Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, He at the same time gives us to understand that we may make a good use of it. For it is revealed and given to us that it may be of constant use and benefit to us. Hence it is evident, if we are forbidden to use His holy name for lying or evil. we are, on the other hand, bidden to use it for truth and all good purposes: for instance, we are to swear by it truly, if it is necessary and required. So also when we teach aright; so too we are to appeal to His name in our needs, and praise and thank it for our benefits, etc. All this is summed up in the verse, Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me (Psalm 1.). For, again, in all these ways His name is used for truth and salvation, and thus His name is hallowed, as we pray in the Lord's Prayer.

Thus hast thou explained the whole commandment. And with this explanation the question has easily been answered with which many teachers have perplexed themselves: why the Gospel forbids us to swear, when Christ, St. Paul, and other saints often swore. The answer is briefly this: We are not to swear for evil, that is for lying, and when it is neither useful nor needful; but we may swear for good purposes, for the welfare of our neighbour. For it is a right good work, if God is praised, truth and justice confirmed, falsehood refuted, if people are reconciled, obedience is shown, and quarrels are settled. For so God Himself intervenes, and parts right from wrong, evil from good. If any swear falsely,

they have their judgment, so that they will not escape punishment; and though they escape for a time, they will not succeed in anything, so that all that they possess will vanish beneath their hands and can never be well enjoyed. And this I have noted in many who broke their marriage vow. Afterwards they had no happy hour and no good day, and so both body, soul, and goods

perished miserably.

Therefore I again exhort and admonish you to see that the children are taught betimes by warning, fear, and punishment to fear lying, and especially lying in God's name; for if they are allowed to escape unpunished, they will do no good, as it may now be seen that the world is worse than it has ever been. There is no government, obedience, loyalty, or faith, but the people are presumptuous and ungovernable, and neither teaching nor punishment will help them, and all this is God's anger and punishment for the bold contempt with which this commandment is treated.

Again, they must be persuaded and trained to honour God's name and constantly have it in their mouths, whatever happens to them or whatever they behold. For we honour His name rightly if we turn to it for all comfort and call upon it, so that the heart (as we before said) first pays honour to God by faith, and afterwards

the mouth honours Him by confession.

This is a blessed, useful habit, and a very powerful weapon against the devil, who is always near us, and watching how he may bring us to sin and shame, misery and need, but who listens unwillingly and cannot long remain when God's name is pronounced, and where God is invoked from the heart; and many a dreadful and terrible thing would befall us if God did not preserve us when we call on His name. I have myself often found and experienced that sudden and great misfortune has been averted and removed by such an appeal to God. To resist the devil (I repeat) we should ever have the holy name in our mouth, so that he may not hurt us, as he willingly would.

For the same purpose it is a great help if we accustom ourselves to commend daily to God body and soul, wife, child, servants, and all that we have, that He may save us from unexpected adversity. That is how the custom arose and remains of repeating every morning and evening the Benedicite, Gratias, and other prayers. Hence also the child's habit of crossing ourselves when we read or hear anything terrible and horrible, and saving, God forbid it, or, Help us, Lord Christ, etc. So, again, if anything good unexpectedly happens to any man, though it be but small, he should say, God be praised and thanked; God has given me that, etc. Just as formerly children were taught to fast in the name of St. Nicholas and other saints, and to pray to them. This is more pleasant and acceptable in the eyes of God than any monastic life or Carthusian holiness.

Thus the young mind is easily and gently trained in the fear and reverence of God, so that the First and Second Commandments may be diligently and constantly obeyed. Then so much good would take root in them and bear fruit that people would grow up who might make a whole land happy. That would be the right way to bring up children, because they can be trained thus by kindness, so that it is a pleasure to them. For when anything is enforced with rods and blows alone no good can follow: at the most they will only be good as long as the rod is held over them.

But by this means it will take root in the heart, so that they fear God more than rods and sticks. I say this simply for the children, so that it may be impressed on their minds; for if we preach to children, we must lisp with them. Thus we have guarded against the abuse of God's name and taught the right use thereof, which is not only to be shown in words, but in practice and in life, for we know that this is truly pleasing to God, and He will richly reward it, just as He will terribly chastise the abuse of His name.

#### THE THIRD COMMANDMENT

REMEMBER THAT THOU KEEP HOLY THE SABBATH DAY.

We have named the day of rest from the Hebrew word Sabbath, which properly denotes to rest, that is, to cease from work; hence we are accustomed to speak of keeping an "evening rest." \* Now in the Old Testament God chose and set apart the seventh day for men to keep, and commanded all men to keep it holy above all others, and, according to this external celebration, this commandment is given to the Jews alone: that they cease from all heavy labour and rest, and that both man and beast refresh themselves, and should not be weakened by constant work. But they gave it too restricted a meaning, and greatly abused it, so that they rebuked Christ and could not endure that He should do such things as even they themselves would have done on that day, as we read in the Gospels, just as though the commandment was fulfilled if we did no external labour; which, however, was not its meaning, which was that they should keep holy the Sabbath, or day of rest, as we shall hear. The literal meaning of this commandment, therefore, does not concern us Christians, for it is quite an external thing, like the other ordinances of the Old Testament, which refer to special customs, people, times, and places, from all which we are set free by Christ.

But to express a Christian meaning for simple folk respecting what God demands of us in this commandment, be it observed that we keep holy days not for the sake of intelligent and learned Christians—for they have no need of it—but firstly, on account of the requirements of the body, for nature teaches us that it is most necessary for the common people, men and maids, who have followed their avocations all the

<sup>\*</sup> The German feierabend machen of the original cannot be literally rendered, as the word feierabend has no exact equivalent in English.

week, to have a day on which to rest and refresh themselves.

But, further, and above all, we keep the Sabbath so that on this day of rest we make time and leisure (which otherwise we might not have) to attend Divine worship, that we assemble to hear and consider God's word, and

thereafter sing and praise God and pray to Him.

But this (I say) is not so restricted to a special time, as it was with the Jews, so that it must be done on an appointed day, for one day is no better than another, and it might be done at any day; but because the mass of the people cannot find time for it, one day in the week at least must be set apart. But, since from all times the Sunday has been appointed, let us keep to that day, so that all may be done decently and in order, and no disorder caused by unnecessary innovations.

Hence this is the simple meaning of this commandment: that as days of rest must be kept, such holy days be employed in learning God's word, so that the special purpose of the day must be the office of preaching, for the sake of the young and the poor people. But the holy day must not be so narrowly restricted in its use as that if by chance any necessary

work occur it should be forbidden.

Therefore, if thou art asked what these words mean, Thou shalt keep holy the sabbath day, then make answer, To hallow the day of rest signifies as much as to keep it holy. What is meant by "to keep holy"? Nothing else but to devote ourselves to holy words, works, and life. For the day requires no special hallowing: it is holy in itself; but God wills that it be holy to thee. Therefore it is holy or unholy in respect to thee, according as thy work is holy or unholy.

How, then, shall it be hallowed? Not by sitting by the fireside and doing no rough work, or by putting on a wreath and our best clothes, but (as was said) by turning to God's word and exercising ourselves therein.

And indeed we Christians ought always to keep each day holy and perform holy works; that is, we are daily

to use God's word and bear it in our heart and mouth. But because we have not (as was said above) always leisure, we must set apart several hours a week for the young, and at least one day for the common people, that they can use for this purpose alone, and on which they may study the Ten Commandments, the Articles of Belief, the Lord's Prayer, and thus direct our whole life and being by God's word. Whenever that is done, a truly holy day has been observed; and if this is not done, it cannot be called a Christian Sabbath. For the people who are no Christians can rest and be idle, like the whole swarm of our priests, who stand daily in the churches, sing and ring, but keep no Sabbath, for they neither preach nor practise God's word, but live and teach contrary to it.

For the word of God is the holy of holies—yea, the only holy thing that we Christians have and know. For though we possessed the bones of all the saints, or holy and consecrated garments piled up in a heap, that would avail us nothing; for these are all dead things that can make no one holy. But God's word is the treasure that makes all things holy, by which the saints themselves became holy. Whenever we teach, preach, read, or consider God's word, our person, the day, our work, are all thereby hallowed, not because of the external work, but because of the word which makes saints of us all. Therefore I always say that all our life and work must be according to the word of God, if they are to be pleasing to God and holy in His sight. Where that is the case, this commandment is fulfilled in all its power.

Again, those things or works which are not according to God's word are unholy before God, however splendid they seem, though they be adorned with sacred relics, like those invented religious orders, which do not know God's word, and seek holiness in their own works.

Therefore observe, the strength and power of this commandment does not consist in resting, but in hallowing, so that it is set apart for special holy exercises. For other work and business are not really holy exercises

unless the man be already holy. But such work must be done that a man himself becomes holy, and this (as was said) can only be done through God's word, and for this purpose, time, persons, and the whole external service of God have been appointed, so that all may be done regularly in public.

Since then God's word is of such importance that without it no holy day is hallowed, we must know that God will have this commandment strictly kept, and will punish all who despise His word, who will not hear it or learn it, especially at the time therefor

appointed.

Therefore not only do those sin against this commandment who shamefully abuse and profane the Sabbath, such as those who from avarice or wantonness neglect to hear God's word, or lie in the taverus, and are full of wine like swine; those also break the commandment who hear God's word as though it were some trifling matter, and go to the sermon from force of habit alone and go thence again, and at the end of the year are as ignorant as they were before. For till now men thought they hallowed the day if they heard a mass or the Gospel on the Sunday, but no one asked after God's word, just as no one taught it. Now that we have God's word, we do not leave off the abuse: we let men preach to us and exhort us, but we pay neither heed nor care.

Therefore know that thou must not only hear, but must also learn and remember; and think not that thou canst do as thou wilt, or that it is of little consequence, for it is God's commandment, and He will require of thee how thou hast heard, learned, and honoured His

word.

Therefore those fastidious people must be rebuked also who, when they have heard a sermon or two, grow weary and satiated, as though they knew it all themselves and needed no master. For that is the very sin which till now was reckoned among the deadly sins, and which is called  $\partial \kappa \eta \delta i a$ , that is, indolence and disgust, a hurtful injurious plague with which the devil bewitches and

deceives many hearts, that he may surprise us and secretly take from us God's word.

For be assured of this: even if thou knewest it well, and hadst mastered everything, thou art still daily in the devil's power, who rests neither day nor night so that he may take thee unawares, and may awaken unbelief and evil thoughts in thy heart against these and all other commandments. Therefore thou must always keep God's word in thy heart and mouth and let it sound in thine But where the heart is idle, and the word is not heard, he enters in and has done the mischief before we are aware of him. Again, where the word is earnestly studied, heard, and obeyed, it is full of power, so that it is never without fruit, but always awakens in us new understanding, delight, and devotion, and makes pure our hearts and thoughts, for the words are not corrupt and dead, but living and creative words. And though no other benefit and need impelled us, every one must be urged by this thought: that the devil is frightened and banished by this means, that this commandment is thus fulfilled, and this is more pleasing to God than all deceit and hypocrisy.

#### THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT

Till now we have learnt the first three commandments, which deal with our duty to God: first, that we trust, fear, and love Him with all our heart all the days of our life; then, that we do not abuse His holy name, nor use it for lying or other evil deeds, but only for the praise of God, the service and salvation of our neighbour and ourselves; thirdly, that on the holy day of rest we hear and practise God's word with diligence, that all our lives and acts may be in accordance therewith. Now follow the remaining seven, dealing with our duty to our neighbour, among which the first and highest is—

HONOUR THY FATHER AND THY MOTHER.

To the state of father and mother God has given a special importance above all other states that are under

Him, for He does not simply command us to love our parents, but also to honour them. Our brothers, sisters and neighbours in general, He simply commands us to love, so that He separates and distinguishes father and mother from all other people on earth, and places them next to Himself. For it is a much higher thing to honour than to love: it includes not only love, but also obedience, humility, and reverence, as though it were shown to some sovereignty hidden there; and it not only requires us to address them with affection and respect, but it requires especially that we treat them worshipfully both with our hearts and bodies, and show them that we esteem them highly, and after God look on them as the highest. For whomsoever we are to honour from our hearts, we must verily regard them as great and high.

So the young must be taught to reverence their parents in God's place, and even though they may be poor, inferior, sick, and eccentric, they are to remember that they are none the less father and mother, given them by God. Their condition or defect does not deprive them of their due honour. Therefore we must not regard their persons as they are, but God's will, who thus ordered and arranged things. Otherwise we are no doubt in God's eyes all equal, but among ourselves there must be some such inequality and regular distinction. Therefore God has commanded that thou obey me as thy father, and that I have authority over thee.

Thus lcarn, firstly, what is meant by honour to parents according to the requirements of this commandment—namely, that they are to be looked on as honourable above all others, and to be esteemed as the greatest treasure on earth. Accordingly we must be modest in words before them, not treat them unkindly, nor quarrel and dispute with them, but yield to them and be silent, even if they go too far. Thirdly, honour them with works, that is, show them such honour, both with our person and goods, that we serve, help, and care for them when they are old, sick, weak, poor, and not only do it gladly, but

with humility and reverence, as though it were done for God. For whosoever has the right feeling for them in his heart, he will not let them suffer want and hunger, but will put them above and beside himself, and share with them all he has.

Again, observe what a great, good, and holy task is here laid upon children; but unfortunately it is despised and thrown to the winds, and no one sees that God commands it, that it is a holy and Divine precept. For if we had looked on it as such, every one would have understood that they also were holy people who lived according to these words. They would not have needed to institute monastic life nor spiritual orders; if every child had kept this commandment, it would have been able to have a good conscience to God, and to say, If I am to do a good and holy work, I know of none better than to show my parents all honour and obedience. because God Himself has commanded it. For what God has commanded must be better and far nobler than all that we can imagine for ourselves, and since there is no higher or better master to be found than God, there can verily be no better teachings than those He utters. Now He teaches abundantly what we are to do, if we desire to perform truly good works; and in commanding it He shows that it pleases Him. If it is God who commands this, and who can set us no better task, I can never invent a better one.

In this way a pious child should have been properly instructed and brought up, and should have been kept at home and made obedient and useful to his parents, and then we should have seen goodness and joy. But God's commandment has not been thus commended to our care, but has been neglected and ignored, so that a child could not understand it, but gapes and wonders at what we have ourselves desired, without even asking God's leave.

Therefore let us learn, for God's sake, that young people must put all other things away from their eyes, and firstly turn to this commandment, if they would

serve God with truly good works, that they may learn to do what father and mother, or those who are in their place, desire. For whatever child knows this and does it, he shall have firstly great comfort in his heart, in that he will be able to say joyfully and confidently, in defiance of all who go about performing self-chosen tasks, Lo, this task pleases my God in heaven; that I know well. them put together all the many great, wearisome, difficult tasks they have accomplished and boast of them; and let us see if they can show us anything that is greater and nobler than obedience to father and mother, which God has placed after obedience to His own majesty, and regarding which He has commanded that wherever His word and will are fulfilled nothing is to be more highly regarded than the will and command of our parents, saving only that we remain in God's obedience, so that we do not break the former commandments.

Therefore thou must be glad and thank God that He has chosen thee, and made thee worthy to accomplish such a beautiful and pleasant task. And see that thou regard it as great and precious, although it be looked on as the lowest and most contemptible task, not because of our own dignity, but because it is comprehended in that holy treasure, God's word and commandment. Oh, how ready should all Carthusian monks and nuns be to pay a heavy price for this treasure, so that in the exercise of their religion they might show one single work which originated in His commandment, and might say with joyful heart to Him, Now I know that this task pleases Thee well! What will these poor miserable people do when they stand before God and the world, put to shame by a little child that has lived in this commandment, and when they must confess that they, with all their manner of living, are not worthy to hand him a cup of water? They well deserve, on account of the devilish perversity with which they have trampled God's commandment under foot, that they should torture themselves in vain with self-imposed tasks, and moreover reap scorn and trouble as their reward.

Should not our heart be ready to burst or swell with joy if it sets to work and does what is commanded, so as to be able to say, Lo, this is better than all Carthusian sanctity, although they fast even unto death, and pray on their knees without ceasing? For here thou hast a distinct text and a Divine testimony that He commanded this, but the other tasks are not ordered. Such is the misfortune and terrible blindness of the world that none will believe this, for the devil has charmed us with feigned holiness and with the show of our own works.

Therefore I would (I repeat) that ye would open your eves and ears, and take this to heart, so that we may not again be led astray from God's pure word to hearken to the lies of the devil. Then parents would enjoy a far greater happiness, love, friendship, and unity in their homes, and the children would enjoy all the love of their parents. But if they are obstinate and do not do what they should unless a stick is laid on their backs, they anger both God and their parents, and they deprive themselves of a great treasure and a joyful conscience, and lay up for themselves nothing but misfortune. Therefore it has now come to pass in the world, to the sorrow of all, that both young and old are wild and unrestrained, without reverence or respect; they do nothing unless driven by blows, and behind each other's backs they do what Therefore God punishes them, so that harm they may. they suffer all misfortune and calamity. The parents themselves can do nothing; one fool begets another; as they have lived, so will their children live after them.

This (I say) is the great reason which should impel us to keep this commandment; for the sake of which, if we had no father or mother, we should wish that God would give us stick or stone which we could call father or mother. How much more should we rejoice that He has given us living parents, and that we can show them honour and obedience, because we know that it is so pleasing to the great high God and the angels, and vexes the devils, and is the greatest work we can do after the high worship demanded in the former commandments; so that to give

alms and all other work for our neighbours is not equal to this. For God has placed this state above all others, yea, in His stead on earth. This will and good pleasure of God should be cause and inducement enough to make

us eagerly and joyfully do what we can.

Besides, we are bound before the world to be grateful for the kindness and benefits we have received from our parents. But there again the devil rules the world, so that children forget their parents, as we all forget God, and none remember how God has fed, protected, and cared for us, and how many benefits He has bestowed on our body and soul. Especially when an evil hour comes upon us, we wax wroth, complain impatiently, and forget all the good that was shown us all our lives. In the same way do we treat our parents, and there is no child that acknowledges and considers this, save by the grace of the Holy Ghost.

God knows well this degeneracy of the world, and admonishes us, and urges us in His commandments, that every one should consider what his parents have done for him, so will he find that he owes body and soul to them; that they have fed him and brought him up when otherwise he would have perished many a time. Therefore it was rightly and well said by the wise men of old, "Deo parentibus et magistris non potest satis gratiæ rependi," that is, God, parents, and teachers can never be sufficiently thanked and repaid. Whoever examines and considers this will without any urging show his parents all honour and respect, and will cherish them as those through whom God has bestowed all good upon him.

Besides all this, there is another great reason to draw us the more to this duty: that God has attached a temporal promise to this commandment, and says, That thy days may be long in the land that the Lord thy God

giveth thee.

Now thou canst see how seriously God regards this commandment, for He not only says that it pleaseth Him well, but He adds that it is for our benefit and good, that we may enjoy a pleasant and delightful life, with

abundance of good. Therefore St. Paul bears witness to this and extols it when he says in Eph. vi., Which is the first commandment with promise, that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. For although the other commandments have also a promise included, in none is the reward so clearly and emphatically

expressed.

There thou hast the fruit and the reward, that whoever keeps it shall enjoy happiness and all manner of good. The punishment for those who disobey is that they will perish sooner and not enjoy their life. For to live a long life means in the Bible not only to grow old, but to have all that appertains to a long life: health, wife and child, food, peace, good laws, etc., without which this life cannot be enjoyed nor be long. Wilt thou not obey thy father and mother, nor let them train thee? Then obey the hangman; if thou wilt not obey him, obey death. For this, in short, is what God will have, either that we obey and love and serve Him, so that He may abundantly repay us with all good, or if we anger Him He will send us death and the hangman.

How is it that there are so many rogues who are daily hanged, beheaded, broken on the wheel, but from disobediences; since they would not be led on the right path by kindness, by God's judgment they are brought to such a pass that misfortune and sorrow befalls them? For very rarely does it happen that such accursed people

die a natural or timely death.

But those who are virtuous and obedient enjoy this blessing: that they shall live long in peace and see their children (as we said before) to the third or fourth

generation.

For we know that when we see old and honoured families in a good position, with many children, it is because they were well trained and reverenced their parents before them. Again, it is written of the wicked, Let his posterity be cut off, and in the generation following let their name be blotted out (Psalm cix.). Therefore take good heed that God regards this same obedience as a

great thing, and therefore gives it so high a place, and showers rewards on those who are obedient, and severely

punishes those who disobey.

I say all this that it may be thoroughly impressed on the young. For no one will believe in the great importance of this commandment, and under the papacy it was neither taught nor respected. They are simple, easy words; each one thinks he knew them well before; therefore men neglect them and gape after other objects, but will not see and believe that they make God angry when they neglect them, and that they perform a great and acceptable task when they keep them.

While speaking of this commandment, we must further mention the various kinds of obedience to all who are over us, command us, and rule us. For all authority has its root and source in parental authority. For where a father is unable to bring up his child alone, he takes a teacher to teach him; if he is too weak, he takes his friend or neighbour to help him; when he departs this life, he gives authority to others who are chosen for the purpose. So he must also have servants, men and maids. under him for the household, so that all who are called master stand in the place of parents, and must obtain from them authority and power to command. Wherefore in the Bible they are all called fathers, because their office bestows on them the office of a father, and they ought to bear a fatherly heart to their people. In the olden times the Romans and others called the master and mistress of the house patres et matres familias, that is, house-father and house-mother. So also their princes and magistrates are called patres patriæ, that is, fathers of the whole land, and it is a great shame for us wouldbe Christians that we do not call them so, or at least treat them so, and honour them accordingly.

The duty a child owes to its parents is the duty of all who are included in the household. Therefore men and maids must see that they not only obey their masters and mistresses, but also honour them as their own parents, and do all that they know they are expected to do, not with repugnance and because they are forced, but with pleasure and delight, simply for the reason already mentioned: that it is God's commandment and pleases Him above all other work. For this reason they ought to be willing even to make payment themselves, and be glad that they can obtain masters and mistresses, and have such a joyous conscience, and know that they can do real golden works, which till now were not done and were despised, so that every one in the devil's name ran into convents, to pilgrimages and to indulgences, to their hurt and their bad conscience.

If we could only impress this on the poor people, a maid would go her ways with joy, and would praise God and thank Him, and by orderly work, for which she moreover obtains food and wages, she would earn a treasure the like of which is owned by none of those who are esteemed the greatest saints. Is it not a great thing to know this and be able to say to thyself, If thou doest thy daily work, it is better than all the sanctity and strict discipline of the monks? And, besides, thou hast the promise that all will go well and prosper with thee. How canst thou lead a happier and holier life as far as works are concerned? For it is faith alone that makes things holy in God's eyes, and alone serves Him, while works are for men. Then hast thou all good things: shelter and protection under the Lord, a good conscience and a gracious God, who will repay thee a hundredfold, and thou art a free man if thou art only virtuous and obedient. But if not, thou wilt earn only anger and disgrace from God, no peace in thy heart, and moreover all trouble and misfortune.

Whoever is not induced by this to become virtuous should be commended to the hangman and to death. Therefore let who can take advice know that this is no trifle with God, and know that God speaks to him and demands obedience. If thou obeyest Him, thou art His beloved child; if thou disobeyest Him, shame, sorrow, and suffering will be thy reward.

The same may be said of the obedience due to worldly

authority, which (as was said) falls under the same rule, and stretches very widely. For here we have not the father of a single family, but the father of as many people as are under him as vassals, citizens, and subjects; for God gives to us and preserves to us through them, as through our parents, our food and home, protection and safety. Therefore, since they bear these names and titles as their greatest glory and merit, we also must show them esteem, and honour them as the greatest treasures and most precious jewels on earth.

Whoever is obedient, willing, and useful on earth, and gladly does all that concerns his honour, knows that he is pleasing God, and will obtain joy and happiness for a reward. On the other hand, if he does not do this willingly, but despises this obedience, and sets himself against it, and rebels, he must know that he will receive neither mercy nor blessing; and if he thinks to obtain one florin by his conduct, he will lose ten elsewhere, or fall a prey to the hangman, or perish through war, pestilence, or famine, or his children will turn out badly, or his household. Neighbours, strangers, tyrants, will inflict loss, injustice, and violence on him, so that we are paid according to what we seek or deserve.

If only we could comprehend that such works are pleasing to God and will be richly rewarded, we should be surrounded by abundance, and have whatever our heart desires. But because God's word and commandment are so despised, as though some blasphemer had uttered them, let us see if thou art strong enough to overthrow Him. Will it be hard for Him to repay thee? Therefore it is far better for thee to live with God's favour in peace and happiness, than in disgrace and mis-What dost thou think is the reason that the world is so full of perfidy, shame, misery, and murder, if it be not that every one wishes to be his own master, and give no one anything, and do all that he desires? Therefore God punishes one rogue through another, so that if thou deceivest or despisest thy master, another comes who treats thee likewise, so that in thine own house thou

mayest suffer ten times more from wife, child, and household.

We certainly feel our misfortunes, and complain and murmur at the perfidy, violence, and injustice of the world, but we will not see that we ourselves are rogues, who truly deserve punishment, and are not improved by what we suffer. We deserve neither money nor happiness, and therefore we justly suffer misfortune and receive no mercy. There must yet be good people in the world, because God still leaves us so much good. As far as we are concerned, we do not deserve to retain a farthing in the house or a blade in the field. All this I have had to urge repeatedly, so that haply some might take it to heart, and we might rid ourselves of the blindness and misery in which we are sunk so deeply, and recognise God's word and will, and earnestly accept it. For from these we should learn how we could obtain joy, happiness, and salvation here on earth and in the life everlasting.

Thus according to this commandment we have two fathers appointed: a father by blood and a father by office, or a father of the household and a father of the land. Besides this there are spiritual fathers, not like those of the papacy, who have indeed applied this title to themselves, but have exercised no fatherly office, for those only are spiritual fathers who rule and teach us through God's word, as St. Paul calls himself a father: For in Jesus Christ I have begotten you through the Gospel (1 Cor. iv.). Because they are fathers we must honour them above all men. But they receive least honour, for the world so honours them that it drives them from the land and grudges them a piece of bread, and in short, as St. Paul says, they are the filth of the world and the offscouring of all things.

But this must be impressed on the people at large; that those who would be called Christians owe it to God to show double honour to those who watch over them and their souls. They must cherish them and care for them. Then God will give thee enough and not let thee want. But every one resists and objects. They all fear their

bellies will suffer, and we cannot provide for one sound preacher, though before we filled ten fat paunches. We deserve for this that God should deprive us of His word and blessing, and that He let lying preachers arise, who lead us to the devil, and suck our blood and marrow.

But those who keep God's word before them have His promise that they shall be richly repaid for what they spend both on their corporal and spiritual fathers, and for the honour they show them. They will not only have bread, clothes, and money for a year or two, but a long life, food, and peace, and they will be rich and happy for ever. Therefore do thy duty, and leave it to God to feed thee and provide for thee. He has promised it, and He has never lied, and He will not lie to thee now.

This should encourage us, and make our hearts over-flow with joy and love for those to whom we owe this honour, so that we should raise our hands and joyfully thank God who has given us such promises, that we should be ready to run to the end of the world to obtain their fulfilment. For although the whole world joined together, it could not give us one additional hour of life or one grain of corn from the earth. But God can and will give thee all things in abundance, according to thy heart's desire. Whoever despises and neglects this is not worthy to hear one word from God. So much then has been abundantly said to all who are subject to this commandment.

It would also be well to preach to parents and to those who fill their office, and to teach them how they should treat those whom they are commanded to rule. Though the duty of the parents is not mentioned in the Ten Commandments, it is frequently commanded in many passages in the Scriptures. God intends it to be included in this commandment when He mentions father and mother. For He has no intention of bestowing this office and authority on rogues and tyrants, and He does not give them the honour—that is, the power and right—to

rule, in order that they may gain worship for themselves. They are to remember that they are under God's obedience, and, above all things, must fill their office gladly and faithfully, and not only feed and provide for the bodies of their children, servants, subjects, etc., but especially they must bring them up in the praise and honour of God. Therefore do not think that all this rests on thy own pleasure and caprice, but that God has strictly commanded and exacted it, and thou wilt have to answer for thy conduct.

Here, indeed, is the great trouble of the world, that no one will acknowledge or respect this truth. behave as though God gave us children for our pleasure and delight, as if servants were made to be employed like our cow or our ass—solely for work—or as if our subjects were to be treated according to our own caprice. them go their ways as though it were nothing to us what they learn or how they live, and none will see that it is the commandment of the Almighty, who makes us responsible, and will punish our neglect, or that it is most necessary seriously to look after the young. For if we want skilful people, fit for worldly and spiritual rule, we must truly spare neither diligence, nor trouble, nor expense to teach and bring up our children, so that they may serve God and the world; and we must not only consider how we can gather money and wealth for them, for God can feed them and make them rich without us. as He daily does. But He has given us children, and this command, in order that we may train and rule them according to His word, else there would be no need of either father or mother. Therefore let each know that, on pain of the loss of Divine grace, it is his first duty to bring up his children in the fear and knowledge of God, and, when they are clever, to let them learn and study, so that men may make use of them when their services are needed.

If this were done, God would richly reward us and give us grace, so that we should bring up a race which would improve both land and people, and provide well-

conducted citizens, chaste domestic women, who would bring up virtuous children and servants. Consider what a mortal injury thou dost by neglecting this matter, and preventing thy child from being trained to be useful and a blessing. Thou bringest on thyself wrath and sin, and deservest hell through thine own children, although thou mayest be virtuous and holy in other things. Because this is despised, God punishes the world so terribly that there is neither discipline, government, nor peace; and we all lament this, but do not see that it is our fault, for as we bring them up, so we have bad and disobedient children and subjects. This is enough for exhortation; to explain more in detail must be reserved for another time.

#### THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT

THOU SHALT DO NO MURDER.

We have now dealt with both worldly and spiritual government, that is, with Divine and paternal authority and obedience. But now we go from our home to our neighbour, and learn how we are to live together both at home and among those who are nearest to us. Accordingly in this commandment neither God nor the magistrates are referred to, nor is the power to put to death, which they possess, taken from them. For God has delegated His right to punish malefactors to the magistrates in place of parents, who formerly, as we read in the books of Moses, were themselves obliged to bring their children to judgment and condemn them to death. Therefore what is forbidden here is forbidden to private persons, and not to magistrates.

This commandment is easy enough to understand, and is often handled, for it is yearly heard in the Gospel (Matt. v.), where Christ Himself explains it in brief summary: that we are not to kill either with hand, heart, mouth, sign, gesture, nor with assistance and counsel. Therefore every one is forbidden in this commandment to be angry, except (as we said before) those

who are in God's place, that is parents and magistrates. For it is the right of God, and of those who have His authority, to rebuke and punish, for the very sake of those who transgress this and other commandments.

But the cause and necessity for this commandment is that God knows well how wicked the world is, and how full this life is of misfortune. Therefore He has interposed this and other commandments between good and evil. As we are tempted to resist the other commandments, in like manner are we tempted regarding this commandment, for we are obliged to dwell among many people who wrong us, so that we have cause to be their enemies.

So when thy neighbour sees that thou hast a better house, more temporal goods and happiness from God than he, it vexes him, and he envies thee, and speaks no

good of thee.

So hast thou many enemies, through the tempting of the devil, who grudge thee all thy goods, temporal or spiritual. When we see such things, our heart is ready to rage and bleed, and seeks to avenge itself. Then arise swearing and fighting, which lead to misery and murder. Then God comes forward like a good father, and interposes, and tries to settle the quarrel, so that no misfortune may arise, and one may not destroy the other. And, in short, He will have every man to be protected, set free, and defended from the sin and violence of all others, and He wills that this commandment be put as rampart, citadel, and freedom, round our neighbour, so that we do him neither harm nor injury in his body.

The meaning, then, of this commandment is that no one is to injure his neighbour because of any evil he has done, although he may richly deserve it. For where murder is forbidden, everything is forbidden that could lead to murder. For many a man, although he may not commit murder, yet curses, and wishes that he against whom the curse is directed, might come to an untimely end. Now because we are all alike in this by nature, and it is a common custom that no

one will suffer any wrong from another, God's desire is to remove the root and source of the evil through which a man's heart is embittered against his neighbour, and He wishes to accustom us to have His commandment always before our eyes, to contemplate ourselves in its light, to regard it as His will, and to take our grievances to Him, calling on His name in heartfelt confidence, leaving those opposed to us to rage and storm in their hatred and do what they can. In this way a man will learn to control his anger, and bear a gentle, patient heart, especially towards those who give him cause for anger, that is, towards his enemies.

Therefore the whole sum and compass of this commandment, which must be most clearly explained to simple folk, is, Do not kill. Hence in the first place we are not to injure any one by word or deed; further, we are not to use our tongue to advise or to counsel murder. Besides which we are not to use, or to permit others to use, any means of giving offence. And again, our hearts are not to harbour hostile thoughts against any one, or to wish them evil, because of our wrath and hate; thus let your body and soul remain innocent towards all, but especially towards him who wishes you ill or aggrieves you. For to do ill to him who wishes you well and does you good is not human, but devilish.

Further, this commandment is broken not only by him who does an evil action, but also by him who might do good to his neighbour and avert danger from him, protect, defend, and save him from all bodily harm, and yet does not do so. If thou seest a naked man and mightst have clothed him, and clothest him not, thou hast let him die of cold; if thou seest any one suffer hunger and feedest him not, thou hast let him die of hunger. Again, if thou seest any man unjustly condemned to death or in danger of death, and savest him not when thou couldst have done so, thou hast killed him. It will avail thee nothing to excuse thyself by saying thou hast not done any harm by word or deed, for thou hast withheld thy

love from him, and thus deprived him of those benefits by means of which he might have continued to live.

Therefore God justly terms all such murderers, who do not help and counsel those who are in need and in peril of their lives, and a terrible condemnation will fall upon them on the day of judgment, as Christ Himself has declared in the words, For I was an hungered, and ye gave Me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave Me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took Me not in; sick and in prison, and ye visited Me not (Matt. xxv. 35, 36); which is the same thing as: ye would have let Me and Mine die of hunger, thirst, and cold, be torn by wild beasts, rot in prison, and perish in want. Is not this equivalent to calling them murderers and men of blood? For even though thou hast not actually done the deed, thou hast let thy neighbour perish in his misfortune by not assisting him as far as in thee lay. It would be the same thing were I to see a man struggling in deep water or falling into a fire, and did not put forth my hand to pull him out and save him, when I might have done so. Would not all the world regard me as a murderer and villain? Hence the final meaning of God's law is that we shall do no harm to any one, but show them all kindand love, and (as has been already said) this commandment refers more especially to those who are our enemies. For to do good to our friends is nothing but a mere heathen virtue, as Christ says (Matt. v. 46).

Thus here again we have the word of God, with which He seeks to urge and impel us to righteous, noble, and good work, such as showing gentleness and patience; in fact, to love and be kind to our enemies, and His desire is to remind us constantly of the First Commandment, which teaches that He is our God, who will help and protect us, and aid us in checking our desire to avenge ourselves.

If this law were urged and impressed on all minds, we should all have enough good work to do. But it would be useless to preach this to monks, and priests would consider us encroaching upon their domain, while Carthusian sanctimoniousness would feel itself aggrieved,

for it would be something like forbidding good works and doing away with monasteries. For, with such teaching, ordinary Christian conduct would come to be of equal worth, nay of far more value than all their doings, and people would see how the world is deceived and misled by false, hypocritical sanctimoniousness, by this and the other commandments being cast to the winds and considered unnecessary, as though they were not commandments, but mere advice; while at the same time they would insolently boast and proclaim their hypocritical ways and works as the most perfect form of life, in order that they may lead a calm and unruffled life, free from hindrance and trials of patience. they entered monasteries so as not to be harmed by others, but neither could they there do good unto others. Now learn and know that God's commandment is the truly righteous and Divine work, in which God and all the angels rejoice, compared with which human sanctimoniousness is offensive and vile, meriting nothing but anger and condemnation.

### THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT

THOU SHALT NOT COMMIT ADULTERY.

The following commandments are, in themselves, easy to understand from the preceding one, for they all teach that we must guard against doing any manner of harm to our neighbour; but they are set down in very careful order. In the first place they touch the person's own self; then the person nearest to him, his most cherished possession after his own body, namely his wedded wife, who is one flesh and blood with him, and hence nowhere else can he suffer greater harm. Therefore it is plainly expressed here that no one shall bring disgrace upon him through his wife. And it refers specially to adultery, for among the Jewish people it was commanded and decreed that every one must marry. Wherefore the young were betrothed betimes, unmarried women

were not held in esteem, and no public prostitutes and fornicators were tolerated as they are now. Therefore, among the Jews adultery was looked upon as the worst

kind of unchastity.

But as there is now such shameful confusion among us, such a confounding of all manner of iniquity and vice, this commandment is directed against every kind of unchastity, whatever names it may assume; and not only is the act itself forbidden, but every motive, temptation, and incentive, in order that heart, lips, and the whole body be kept chaste and may not give either help or advice in encouraging unchastity; and not only this, we are also to assist, protect, and save wherever there is need and danger, and to help and advise so that our neighbour may preserve his honour. For if thou omittest to do this when thou mightst have done it, or if thou connivest at it, though it concern thee not, thou art as guilty as the doer himself. To express it briefly, it is commanded that each one of us shall live a clean, chaste life, both as regards his own self and his neighbour, and shall help others to do the same; and by this commandment God further desires that a wife shall be guarded and protected, that none may sin against her.

Now this commandment speaks of marriage, and thus gives us an opportunity of speaking of this state; therefore learn thou and mark, firstly, that God holds this state in high honour and praise, for He ordains and protects it by His commandment. He ordains it in the Fourth Commandment by the words, Honour thy father and thy mother, whereas here (as we said above) He protects and guards it. Therefore He desires that we should honour it, uphold it, and treat it as a Divine and blessed state; and He places it above all other states, for which reason He created man and woman distinctively (as we see), not for mischievous purposes, but that they may dwell together, be fruitful, beget children, feed them, and bring them up to the glory of God. And accordingly God has blessed this state above all other states, and has made everything on earth subservient to and attendant upon it, and it is well and abundantly provided for. Accordingly marriage is not a jest or matter of curiosity, but an excellent thing and of Divine ordinance. For God sets a high value on our bringing up people who will serve Him in this world, and help us to a right understanding of His will, to a holy life and all the virtues, and to combat evil and the devil.

For this reason I have always taught that we must not look with contempt upon this state, or think it disreputable, as is done by the shortsighted world and our hypocritical clergy; it must be regarded in the light of God's word, so that it be beautified and sanctified. For this state not only equals other states, but ranks above and before all, be they emperors, princes, bishops, or what they will. For both spiritual and temporal estates must humble themselves, and take upon themselves this state, as we shall hear. Hence it is not a peculiar state, but the most general and the noblest state met with in Christendom, nay in the whole world.

Again, thou must know that it is not only an honourable but a necessary state, earnestly commanded by God, so that all men and women who are fit for it must take it upon themselves, although some (albeit a few) are excepted, whom God hath specially exempted, they not being fit for matrimony, or they are exempted by great and supernatural gifts, so that they can remain continent without entering upon this state. For where nature is as God made it, it is not possible to remain continent without matrimony; for flesh and blood remain flesh and blood, and the natural inclination and temptation is unchecked and unhindered, as every man knows Therefore, in order that it may be easier to and feels. avoid incontinency, God has instituted matrimony, so that each may have his appointed share, which shall suffice him; although the heart cannot be kept pure except by the grace of God.

From this thou canst see how the papal horde of priests, monks, and nuns oppose God's laws and com-

mandment in despising and forbidding matrimony, and by presuming to vow that they will for ever remain continent, thus deceiving simple folk with lying words and false appearances. For none possess as little desire and inclination for purity as they who most avoid matrimony under the pretence of great holiness. They commit fornication publicly and shamelessly, or in secret they do even worse things which may not be mentioned, as alas! has been too much experienced. In fact, although they may refrain from the act itself, yet their hearts are full of impure thoughts and evil desires, so that there is an eternal burning and secret suffering, which can be avoided by married life. Hence this commandment condemns all vows of chastity made apart from marriage, and permission is given to all poor captive consciences, that have been deceived by their monastic vows, to leave that impure state for matrimony, nay they are even commanded to do so, for even though in other respects monastic life were godly, yet it is not in their power to keep pure, and by remaining there they only increase their sin against God's commandment.

All this I speak of, only in order that the young may be urged to desire matrimony, and may know that it is a blessed state, pleasing to God. For thus it might come to pass in time that marriage would again be held in honour; and we should find less of the lewd, dissolute, licentious conduct now so rampant in the world, where every one commits open fornication and other abominations, which arise from this contempt for wedded life. Therefore it is the duty of parents and those in authority to see that the young are brought up in modesty and honesty, and when they are grown up to counsel them to consider God's law and their own honour. Then He will bestow on us His blessing and grace, and we shall rejoice and be glad.

Now to conclude, it is evident from the above that this commandment not only demands that every one shall live chastely in his actions, words, and thoughts, in his condition of life, that is, generally in matrimony, but he is to love and honour the wife given to him by God. For where conjugal purity is to be preserved, man and woman must, above all things, dwell together in love and unity, and cherish each other with all their heart and in all fidelity. For that is one of the chief things that produce the love and desire of chastity, for where these exist, purity will ensue of its own accord, without any command. Therefore St. Paul diligently admonishes married persons to love and honour each other. Here thou hast again a precious, yea a great and holy work, of which thou canst joyfully boast, in contrast to all such religious states of life as are instituted without God's sanction or command.

## THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT

THOU SHALT NOT STEAL.

Next to thine own person and thy wedded wife, thy worldly goods stand closest to thee, and God desires that they shall be secured to thee, and therefore commands that no one shall take away or lessen any portion of his neighbour's possessions. For stealing means the unlawful appropriation of another's goods, or, to give it briefly, to derive any sort of advantage from thy neighbour's disadvantage. Now this is a very common vice, but is so little heeded and regarded, and so exceeds all bounds, that if all those were hanged that are thieves and yet would not be called so, the world would soon be desolate, and there would not be either hangmen or gallows enough. For, as has been said, stealing not only signifies the emptying of chests and pockets, but also taking advantage of others at market, warehouses, wine and beer cellars, workshops, in short, wherever men transact business and take and give money for goods or labour.

Let us explain it somewhat more forcibly for common folk, that we may judge how virtuous we are. For instance, when a manservant or maidservant of the house do not do their duty faithfully, but injure or let others

injure their master's property when this might have been prevented, or when they neglect his goods and treat them carelessly, from idleness or malice, to spite or to annoy their master and mistress, as may be done wilfully—for I do speak not of what is done by accident and unwittingly—thirty or forty florins or more may in this way be lost to them in a year; whereas, had they secretly taken or carried off this sum, they would have swung on the gallows; yet, in this case, they are confident and insolent, and none may call them thieves.

I may say the same of workmen, journeymen, and daylabourers, who are full of arrogance, and scarcely know how they can sufficiently cheat those who hire them, by being indolent and unfaithful in their work. All these are far worse than clandestine thieves, who can be checked by bolts and bars, or seized and treated in such a fashion that they can do it no more. But no one can protect himself against these others, for no one may venture to look askance at them or to accuse them of theft; hence it would be ten times better to have things taken from one's purse. For in the other case, those who deceive me most are my neighbours, my supposed friends, my own servants, from whom I expected kindness only.

This dishonesty is likewise rampant and in full force at markets and in ordinary commerce. One man openly cheats the other with false merchandise, weights and measures, and money, and by his acuteness, clever financings, or ready invention defrauds his neighbour, or circumvents him in his purchase, overcharges and fleeces him at will. Who can name or remember all the various ways? In fact, it is the commonest proceeding, and this is the largest guild on earth. And if we were to examine all the different grades of society, we should find that they were nothing but a huge stable, full of great thieves. They are robbers in high position, land thieves and road thieves, not mere pillagers of chests and ordinary cunning thieves; they sit in high places. are looked up to as great folk, and rob and cheat honest, virtuous citizens under show of good appearance.

Yea, we might well let alone the lesser thieves, if we could only arrest the great, powerful arch-thieves, with whom princes and rulers associate, who daily ransack not one or two towns, but all Germany. Yea, what would become of the head and supreme protector of all thieves, the papal see at Rome, with all its belongings, which has appropriated by theft all our worldly possessions, and keeps them to this day? In short, it is the way of the world, that he who can steal and rob openly may go about safe and free, and not punished by any one, expecting moreover to be held in honour; whereas petty sly thieves, who may have only once done wrong, bear the shame and punishment, to make the others appear virtuous and respected. But let them know that they are the greatest thieves before God, who moreover will punish them as they deserve and merit.

Now as this commandment embraces so many points, as we have just shown, it must be well explained and expounded to the people, that they may not go about so freely and at ease; we must impress on them that they have always the fear of God's anger before them. For we must preach this not so much to Christians as to those scoundrels and villains who would verily be more properly preached at by judges, the pillory, and the hangman. Therefore let all men know that, on pain of God's displeasure, it is their duty not only to do no harm to their neighbour, but also not to take advantage of him, or to show him any perfidy or deceit in any purchase or commerce. They are faithfully to protect his possessions, and advance his interests, especially if they receive money, wages, or food therefor.

Now whoever wilfully disregards this commandment may perhaps escape punishment and the hangman, but he will not escape God's anger and chastisement, and if he persists long in his defiance and arrogance, he will remain a vagabond and a beggar, and have to endure all manner of trouble and misfortune. Thou mayst, indeed, go thy way when thou shouldst protect the goods of thy master and mistress, and mayst fill thy belly, and take thy money as a thief, letting thyself be honoured as a grand person; for there are many who still defy master and mistress and are unwilling to do anything for them, to protect them from harm. But look and see what thou gainest thereby, for when thou hast thine own property and comest to have thine own home, God will send thee all manner of misfortune, and it will search thee out, and thou wilt thus be requited, for where thou hast stolen a farthing or done any harm thou wilt have

to pay for it thirty-fold.

Thus will it be also with the workmen and daylabourers, whose intolerable insolence one meets with nowadays and has to put up with, as though they were grand folk on other people's property, and every one had to give them what they desired. Let them go on cheating as long as they can; God does not forget His commandment, and will reward them as they deserve, and will hang them, not on a green, but on a dry gallows, so that they will never thrive all their life long or accomplish anything. And indeed if there were a well-ordered government in the land, such insolence would soon be prevented and put to an end, as happened in times past with the Romans, when such persons were forthwith laid hold of, that they might serve others as a warning.

Thus shall it be with all who make the public market-place a mere fleecing-house and den of thieves, where the poor are daily cheated, new burdens imposed, extortions made, and every one makes use of the market in his own wilful way, proud and defiant, as though he had a good right to sell at as high a price as he chose, and none could interfere. Let us wait, and watch them cheating, despoiling, and coveting; we will trust in God, and when they have fleeced and plundered long enough, His blessing to them will be that their corn will spoil in the barn, their beer in the cellar, their cattle in the stall; yea, if they have cheated any one of a florin and taken advantage of him, the whole of their substance

shall be swept away and destroyed, so that they shall

never enjoy it.

We see this daily fulfilled before our eyes, and that no stolen or dishonestly acquired substance ever prospers. How many there are who work and slave day and night without being a farthing the richer! And even though they gather a good deal, they have so much vexation and misfortune, that they have no real enjoyment of it themselves, nor can they bequeath it to their children. as no one minds this, and all go their way as though it concerned them not, God has to punish us otherwise, and to teach us our morals by causing tax on tax to be levied, or a body of troopers to be our guests, and they in an hour will empty our chests and purses, and will not cease to plunder while we have a farthing left, and by way of gratitude end in burning and destroying our house and home, and dishonouring or slaving our wife and children.

In short, whatever thou stealest, this much is certain: that twice as much shall be stolen from thee, and whosoever robs with violence, and profits by another's loss, will find that he will have to endure like treatment from another. For as men all rob and cheat each other, God manages in a masterly way that one thief shall punish the other, else where should we find gallows or ropes

enough?

Now let those who are willing to listen know that this is God's commandment, and not a thing to be treated lightly. For though thou mayst despise, deceive, rob, and plunder us, we will yet bear with thee, as the Lord's Prayer directs, endure and suffer thy pride, and forgive and pity thee, for we know that the virtuous shall never want, and that thou art hurting thyself more than any one else. And be careful that when the poor, of whom there are so many nowadays, come to spend their daily penny, thou dost not treat them as though they held their lives by thy favour. Thou shalt not harass or worry them, and turn away in pride and arrogance from those whom thou shouldst support and help. They will

go their way downcast and miserable, and, because they cannot accuse any one, they cry unto Heaven. Beware of this (I say again), as though it were the devil himself; for such cries and lamentations are not to be trifled with, but will have effect and be too strong for thee and the world. For they will reach Him who pities the poor and the sorrowful, and He will not leave them unavenged. If, however, thou despise them, and art defiant, look to it what thou hast brought upon thyself. If things go well with thee and thou art prosperous, then thou mayst call God and me liars before all the world.

We have now sufficiently admonished, warned, and exhorted those who will not give heed or believe; let them go their way till they learn the truth for themselves. But let us impress it on the young, so that they may be careful and not follow the old, unruly rabble, but keep God's commandment before them, that God's anger may not fall on them. It is not our part to do more than to declare and to punish with God's word. This public wickedness must be repressed by princes and those in authority, who can use their eyes, and have courage to restore and keep order in trade and commerce, so that the poor be not oppressed and harassed, and they themselves be not burdened with other men's sins.

Enough has now been said of what is meant by stealing; we are not to make the meaning too narrow, but to take it widely, for the commandment refers to all our dealings with our neighbour. To give it briefly, as we did with the other commandments, we are forbidden, firstly, to harm or wrong our neighbour in any of the various ways that may be thought of, such as spoiling, defrauding him, or carrying off any of his property; nor are we to allow or permit others to do so, but to forbid and prevent them; and besides, we are commanded to further him and promote his good, and to help and advise him in his need, and to assist both friend and foe.

Now he who seeks and desires good works will find enough here that are pleasing and delightful to God, and that will be rewarded with great blessings, so that we shall be amply recompensed for whatever assistance or friendship we show our neighbours, as King Solomon says: He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord, and that which he hath given will He pay him again (Prov. xix. 17). There hast thou a rich Master, who will satisfy thee and will not let thee want, and with a cheerful conscience thou mayst enjoy a hundredfold more than thou wouldst have scraped together by injustice and wrong. And he who has no wish for this blessing will meet with anger and misfortune enough.

#### THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT

THOU SHALT NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS AGAINST THY NEIGHBOUR.

In addition to our body, our spouse, and our worldly goods, we have another treasure in our honour and good name, which we cannot dispense with; for we cannot live among people in public disgrace, despised by every one. Therefore God will as little permit us to injure or underrate our neighbour's good name, his character and uprightness, as He will allow us to deprive him of his goods and money, in order that every man may be held in honour by his wife, children, servants, and neighbours. And, in the first place, the most obvious meaning of this commandment is as the words say: Thou shalt not bear false witness in the public courts of justice, when a poor innocent man is accused and so oppressed by false witnesses, that he suffers in body, goods, or honour.

Now this might seem as though it concerned us but little, but among the Jews it was an excellent thing and of common use. For they were a well and properly governed people; and even now, where there is a like government, there is no escaping this sin. The cause is this: where judges, burgomasters, princes, or other magnates sit in judgment, people follow the way of the world, and are unwilling to offend any one; hence they

act hypocritically, and speak according to favour, money, hope, or friendship; and a poor man and his cause suffer injustice, oppression, and punishment. And it is a common grievance in the world that worthy people are seldom found occupying the seat of judgment. is necessary, above all things, that a judge should be a worthy man, and not only worthy, but wise and able, nay even bold and courageous; and in the same way a witness ought to be a brave and worthy man. For he who wishes to judge all things rightly and to carry out his judgment has often to face the anger of friends, relations, neighbours, as well as rich and powerful persons, who might be able to serve or injure him greatly. Hence he has to be pretty well blind, to close eyes and ears, and not to see or hear anything but what is brought before him, and he has to draw his conclusions from that alone.

Further, this commandment was given chiefly that each might help his neighbour to his right, and not hinder or prevent his obtaining it, but further his cause and to protect it, and that, whether he were judge or witness, without caring what might happen. And this applies especially to the proceedings of our lawyers, that they may be careful to be upright and honest in their dealings; to let right remain right, and not to prevent, obscure, or conceal it for the sake of money, goods, honour, or power. This is a part of and the simplest meaning of this commandment, above all as regards our courts of law.

But it has a far wider meaning, when we refer it to the spiritual judgment or government, for there likewise every one bears false witness against his neighbour. For where there are pious preachers and Christians, the world will proclaim them heretics, apostates, nay even rebellious and desperate malefactors. Moreover God's word is shamefully corrupted and maligned, perverted and misapplied. But let them go their way; it is the way of the blind world to denounce and persecute truth and God's children, accounting it no sin.

Thirdly, this commandment again concerns us by

forbidding all sins of the tongue by which we can injure or vex our neighbour. For to bear false witness is the work of the tongue. Now all the harm we do our neighbour with our tongue God wishes to prevent, whether it come from false preachers with their doctrines and blasphemy, or from false judges and witnesses with their tribunals, or from lies and slander outside the court. This includes more especially the detestable, shameful vice of calumniating or slandering, to which the devil drives us, and of which much might be said. For it is a common and mischievous plague that people would rather hear evil of their neighbour than good. though we ourselves are so bad that we cannot endure to have anything bad said of us, and wish that all the world would speak well of us, yet we cannot bear to hear good spoken of others.

Therefore we are to be careful to avoid such wickedness, for we may not condemn and punish our neighbour publicly, even though we see him do wroug, unless we have authority to judge and punish. For there is a great difference between the two, between condemning wrong-doing and knowing wrong-doing. Thou mayest indeed know it, but thou mayest not judge it. I may hear and see that my neighbour does wrong, but I have no authority to speak of it to others. And if I set about judging and condemning, I fall into a sin which is greater than my neighbour's sin. Hence if thou dost know of it, do nothing but make a grave of thine ears, and cover it up till thou art called upon to judge and to punish because of thine office.

Now such persons are called slanderers who are not satisfied with knowing, but who take it upon themselves to judge, and when they know anything against another, spread the report in every direction, worrying and burrowing to get at other people's trouble, like swine, who wallow in the mire, grubbing about in it with their snouts. This is nothing but interfering with God's authority and prerogative, and He judges and punishes it with the utmost severity. For no judge can punish

more severely or go further than by saying: this is a thief, a murderer, a traitor, etc. Therefore he who ventures to say this of his neighbour goes as far as an emperor or any one in authority; for even though thou mayest not wield the sword, thou hast used thy venomous tongue to disgrace and injure thy neighbour.

Therefore God forbids that a man speak ill of his neighbour, even though he be guilty and he knows it well; and still less may this be done if he is not sure of it and knows it only from hearsay. And if thou shouldst say: may I not speak of it if it be true? Answer: Why dost thou not go with it before the proper judge? You say, I cannot bear witness to it openly; I might be struck across the mouth for it and badly treated. Ah, my friend, thou smellest the roast. If thou canst not venture to appear before a proper tribunal and be responsible, then hold thy peace. But if thou art certain of it, be certain of it for thyself, not for another, for if thou repeatest it, even though it be true. thou appearest a liar, because thou canst not prove it; and moreover thou art acting a villainous part, for no one shall rob any one of his honour and good fame. unless this has first been done publicly.

Accordingly, to bear false witness is to say anything the truth of which cannot be proved. Therefore what cannot be asserted with sufficient proof is not to be revealed or declared to be truth; in brief, what is secret is to be left a secret or punished secretly, as we shall hear. Therefore wherever thou shalt find an idle tongue ready to slander and calumniate another, speak out to him to his face, that he may redden with shame; many will then hold their tongues who would otherwise bring a poor creature into evil repute, from which it would be difficult to get out again: for honour and good fame are easily taken from us, but not so easily restored.

So thou seest that, in fact, thou art forbidden to speak ill of thy neighbour in any way; exception being made to those acting under civil authority, and preachers, father or mother, for this commandment must be so understood that evil shall not go unpunished. Now according to the Fifth Commandment, no one's body is to be injured except by the hangman, whose office it is to do no good to his neighbour, but harm and injury, and yet does not break God's command, because, for His own sake, God has instituted this office, and has ordained that the hangman shall inflict the punishment with which He threatens us in the First Commandment. In the same way we are told here that no one is of himself to judge or to condemn another: and vet if those do not do it whose duty it is. they are as much to blame as those who do it without proper authority. For then it becomes a matter of necessity to speak of the evil, to bring forward accusations, to make enquiries and to bear witness, just as the physician who, if he is to perform a cure, must examine and handle secret parts. Hence those in authority, father and mother, nay even brothers and sisters and other good friends, owe it to each other to have evil punished where it is necessary.

Now the right way of doing this would be to act according to the Gospel, where Christ says, Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone (Matt. xviii. 15). Here thou hast a rare and excellent lesson to teach thee to rule thy tongue, which thou must take to heart against all misapplication. Act up to this, and see to it that thou dost not lightly defame and traduce thy neighbour when he is absent, but quietly admonish him, that he lead a better life. And act in this way also when any one brings a matter to thine ears regarding what this or that one has done; tell him to go and have the wrong-doing punished himself where he has seen it

committed, otherwise to hold his tongue.

This thou mayest also learn from the daily management of thy household. For the master of a house acts thus: when he sees that a servant does not do what he ought, he speaks to him himself. Were he foolish enough to leave the man at home and to go into the

streets to complain of him to the neighbours, it would certainly be said to him: Thou fool, what is it to us? Why dost thou not tell him this thyself? That would be acting like a brother, for evil would be punished, and thy neighbour would retain his honour. As Christ Himself hath said, If he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother, and thou wilt have performed a great and excellent work. For dost thou think it a trifling thing to win over thy brother? Let all monks and religious orders amass all their work and see whether they have anything to equal the merit of having gained a brother.

Christ teaches further: But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two or more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. Hence we are always to deal with the man himself, and not to speak ill of him without his knowledge. this does not avail, bring the matter openly before the community, before a civil or a spiritual tribunal. For here thou dost not stand alone, but hast witnesses with thee, through whom thou canst convict the wrong-doer, and on whose testimony the judge can support his sentence and punish him; thus all will be done properly and rightly, and the wrong-doer will be admonished or Whereas if we go about jabbering evil of others in every direction, stirring up filth, no one will be bettered; and thus when people are called upon to appear and bear witness, they maintain that they said nothing. Therefore it would serve such chatterers right if they were well cudgelled for their evil-speaking, and others were warned by their example. If thou hadst acted with a view to better thy neighbour, or for the sake of truth, thou wouldst not slink away secretly, or shun the light of day.

All the above refers to hidden wrong-doing. Where, however, the wrong-doing is open, so that the judge and all the world knows of it, then thou mayest avoid the evil-doer without doing wrong, thou mayest let him go his way as one who has brought disgrace upon himself, and thou mayest openly bear witness against him. For

when things are obvious as daylight, there can be no question of calumniating, or of false judges or false witnesses: for instance, when, as now, we chastise the Pope for his doctrines, which are published in books, and denounced before all the world. For where the sin is public it is just that the punishment be public, so that every one may know of it and guard himself against it.

Here we have the summary and simple explanation of this commandment, which is: that no one shall do his neighbour, whether friend or foe, any injury with his tongue or speak evil of him, be it true or false, unless it be done by order, or for his reformation; rather are we to use our tongue to speak good of every one, to hide our neighbour's sin and wrong-doing, to forgive him, and do what we can to increase and promote his honour. And our chief motive for so doing should be because of what Christ saith in the Gospel, Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them (Matt. vii. 12), which words comprise all the commandments concerning our neighbour.

Nature, too, teaches us this regarding our own bodies, as St. Paul saith: Those members of the body which seem to be more feeble are necessary; and those members of the body which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour, and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness (1 Cor. xii. 22, 23). Our face, eyes, nose, and mouth are never covered up; we have no need to do so, for they are the most honourable members we have; whereas the feeblest members, which we are ashamed of, we most diligently cover up: hands and eyes and our whole body have to help in concealing and hiding them. So in our conduct towards each other we are to hide what is dishonourable and weak in our neighbour, and do all we can to help, assist, and defend him from what would tend to his dishonour. It is a peculiarly good and noble virtue to be able to interpret and explain for the best all that

we hear said of our neighbour (where it is not publicly declared to be evil), or to be able to take his part against those poisonous-tongued jabberers who make it their business to dig and rake up something wherewith to accuse their neighbour, twisting and perverting things, as is now especially done to the precious word of God and His ministers.

Accordingly there are many great and good works included in this commandment, which please God in the highest degree and bring with them abundance of blessings, if only the blind world and false saints would recognise them. For there is no part of a man that can accomplish more good or produce more evil in spiritual as well as worldly things than his tongue, which is the smallest and weakest member of his body.

### THE NINTH AND TENTH COMMANDMENTS

THOU SHALT NOT COVET THY NEIGHBOUR'S HOUSE.

THOU SHALT NOT COVET THY NEIGHBOUR'S WIFE, NOR HIS MANSERVANT, NOR HIS MAIDSERVANT, NOR HIS OX, NOR HIS ASS, NOR ANYTHING THAT IS HIS.

These two commandments were more especially addressed to the Jews, although they also concern us in part. And they did not interpret them as referring to unchastity and theft, because these vices had already been sufficiently forbidden; they considered they were keeping all the commandments by doing or not doing the thing demanded. God therefore added these two. that it might further be regarded a sin and a thing forbidden to covet a neighbour's wife or goods, and in any way to strive to obtain them. This was especially necessary because under the Jewish rule menservants and maidservants were not, as now, free to serve for a wage as long as they themselves desired; they belonged to their master, in body as in all they had, like his cattle and other possessions; every man had it in his power openly to put away his wife by giving her a writing of divorcement, and to take another. So that among them arose the danger, that if a man cared for another woman, he would make some sort of excuse to put aside his own wife and to alienate the other man's from him, so that he might obtain her himself. Now this was not looked upon as any sin or disgrace among them, just as little as it would be now if a master were to dismiss his manservant or maidservant, or entice away his neighbour's servant.

Therefore they rightly interpreted (I say) the commandment (though it possesses a deeper and wider application) to mean: that no one was to covet or to obtain for himself any of another man's property, whether his wife, servant, house, fields, meadows, or cattle, and thus injure his neighbour, even though it were done under a seemingly good pretext. Above, in the Seventh Commandment, we are forbidden to appropriate another man's possessions or to withhold them from him, for we have no right to do this; and here we are likewise forbidden to deprive our neighbour of anything that is his, even though in the eyes of the world we might seem to have obtained it honourably, so that no one could accuse or blame us as though we had acquired it wrongfully.

For human nature is so constituted that none of us wish the other to have as much as himself, and each takes as much as he can, without considering his neigh-And yet we desire to be thought virtuous; we plume ourselves finely to hide our roguery, and seek and devise ingenious tricks and cunning frauds (such as are now daily devised most skilfully), pretending that they are lawful, and talk of them boastfully and arrogantly, and will not have our conduct called roguery, but cleverness and foresight. Lawvers and advocates help in this. for they turn and twist the law, quibbling over words to suit their purpose, regardless of justice and their neighbour's needs. And, in brief, he who is the sharpest and cleverest in such things is best helped by the law; for, as they themselves say, "Vigilantibus iura subveniunt."

Hence this last commandment is not addressed to the wicked people in the world, but to the most righteous, to those who wish to be praised and to be called honest and upright because they had not broken the earlier commandments; and this applied specially to the Jews, and to many other great folk, princes and rulers. For the Seventh Commandment deals more particularly with the common people, who do not much concern themselves whether they honestly and justly come by what they have.

Now this occurs most frequently in matters connected with the law, where the object is to defraud or swindle our neighbour of something, as for instance, when higgling and haggling about some large inheritance or landed estate, etc., we seek assistance to give the matter some appearance of right, pluming and priding ourselves when the law decides in our favour, and acquire the estate with its title in such a manner that no one can raise any dispute or further claim to it. Or, again, where a man covets a castle, town, province, or some other large estate, and contrives all sorts of financing among friends, or wherever he can, so that in the end the other man loses it, and it is declared to be his, and the judgment is confirmed by letter and seal, so that he is said to have acquired it honestly, the princely title as well.

The same thing takes place in ordinary commerce, where one man cunningly appropriates things belonging to another, the other having to submit, or else he is hurried and harassed whenever an opportunity offers, so that being perhaps hard pressed and unable to avoid debt or want, or escape without loss, in the end he loses half he possessed or more. And yet this is not said to have been wrongfully taken or stolen, but to have been honestly bought. Hence the saying: first come, first served; or again, let each look to his own chances, and the other take what he can. Who is clever enough to think out all the various ways there are of appropriating things with a fair appearance of right? The world does not think this wrong, and does not see that thereby our

neighbour is embarrassed and has to give up what he cannot forego without injury to himself; and yet no one will own to having done any harm, although it may easily be perceived that the expedients and pretexts are false.

Now this has always been the case also concerning women, for men knew of devices by which, if they took a liking for another man's wife, either they or another (for there are many ways and means) so arranged matters that her husband would take a dislike to her, or she herself would rebel against him and act in such a manner that he would be obliged to put her away and to leave her to go with the other man. This was undoubtedly a common thing among the Jews, for we read even in the Gospel (Matt. xiv. 3, 4) that King Herod coveted the wife of his own brother during the lifetime of the latter, and yet he desired to be held a good and virtuous man, as St. Mark (vi. 18, 19) testifies. But such examples will not, I trust, be found among us, because the New Testament forbids those who are married to separate, though it has happened that a man cunningly deprived another of a rich bride. But among us it is not an uncommon occurrence for a man to deprive another of his manservant or maidservant, or to create discord between them and entice them away with fair words.

Now, however all this may be, we are to know that God will not have us deprive our neighbour of anything that is his, so that he may not suffer want while we satisfy our greed, even though we may retain it with honour in the sight of the world; for it is a sly, underhand piece of wickedness, acting under cover, as it were, that we may not be perceived. For even if thou goest thy way as though thou hadst done no one an injury, thou hast been too near with thy neighbour; and though this may not be called stealing and deceiving, yet it is called coveting thy neighbour's possessions, for thou hast desired to deprive him of them without his consent, and thou hast grudged him what God bestowed on him. And though the judge and every one else has

to leave it to thee, God will not leave it to thee, for He has insight into thy wicked heart and the deceitfulness of the world; for where an inch is given, they will take an ell, and open injustice and violence are the result.

So let the commandment remain according to the ordinary understanding: firstly, we are commanded not to wish any harm to our neighbour, nor are we to help in causing him any injury; we are not to grudge him what he has, but to leave it him, and moreover to promote and protect what is of use and service to him, as we would have him do unto us; hence the commandment is directed chiefly against envy and avarice, and God's desire is to remove the cause and root from which arise all these things wherewith we injure our neighbour. Therefore He puts it plainly in the words: Thou shalt not covet, etc. For, above all, He desires that our hearts shall be pure; still, as long as we are here on earth, this cannot be accomplished, so that this commandment, like the others, is meant constantly to rebuke us and to show us how good we are in the sight of God.

# CONCLUSION TO THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

Thus we have in the Ten Commandments a summary of Divine instruction, telling us what we have to do to make our whole life pleasing to God, and showing us the true source and fountain from and in which all good works must spring and proceed; so that no work or anything can be good and pleasing to God, however great and costly it be in the eyes of the world, unless it is in keeping with the Ten Commandments. And now let us see what our great saints have to boast about concerning their holy orders, and the great and hard tasks which they have invented and set themselves, while neglecting the commandments as though these were far too trivial for them, or had long since become useless.

For my part, I fancy we should have work enough to do to keep them all: in showing a spirit of gentleness, patience, and love towards our enemies, chastity, benevolence and whatever else they may include. But such works are of no account or importance in the eyes of the world, for they do not appear extraordinary or pompous; and are not bound to any special times, places, rites, and ceremonies, but are the common work of everyday life in our intercourse with our neighbour, and accord-

ingly make no great show.

Other works may make one gape with open eyes and ears, and this is furthered by the show they make, the costliness and splendour of the buildings erected, and folk dress themselves out that all they do may dazzle and amaze. They burn incense, chant, jingle bells, light candles and tapers, so that one cannot see or hear anything because of them. For a priest standing in a golden surplice or a layman lying all day on his knees in church, this they call an admirable work that none can praise enough. But when a poor little maid attends to a young child and honestly does what is asked of her, that is considered nothing. Otherwise what would monks and nuns go into cloisters for?

Yet, consider, is this not detestable arrogance in those desperate saints, to presume to find a higher and better life or estate than what is taught us in the Ten Commandments? They give out (as has been said) that this is a simple life for common men, but that theirs is for saints and perfect men, and yet the poor blind people do not see that no man can go so far as to keep even one of the Ten Commandments as it ought to be kept; but two other things must come to his help, the Creed and the Lord's Prayer (as we shall hear), that he may be seech and beg for such grace; and receive it without ceasing. Accordingly their boast is much the same as though I were to boast and say: I have certainly not a farthing with which to pay you, but ten florins I can easily manage to pay.

This I say and urge, that we may rid ourselves of the great abuse which is so deeply rooted among us, and to which we all still cling, and that we may accustom ourselves in all estates on earth to turn to these precepts

alone and to take thought about them. For it will be long before any doctrine or fashion of life is invented equal to the Ten Commandments, because they are so great that no one can fulfil them through human power alone, and whoever fulfils them is a holy, angelic being, superior to all the sanctity on earth. Turn to them, and try with all thy strength and power to obey them; thou wilt then have so much to do that thou wilt not want or need any other kind of work or sanctity.

Let this suffice for the First Part of the common Christian doctrines both for teaching and admonishing; but in conclusion we must repeat the heading that belongs to them, and which we spoke of in connection with the First Commandment, so that we may learn how much God would have us strive to learn, to obey,

and to enforce the Ten Commandments:-

For I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God, and visit the sins of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me, and show mercy unto thousands, in them that love Me and keep

My commandments.

This addition (as we said before), although especially connected with the First Commandment, also bears upon all the other commandments, so that they all refer to it, and ought to be directed to it. Accordingly I have said that it is to be kept before the young, and well impressed on them, so that they may learn and remember it, and mark what it is that should impel and urge us to keep the Ten Commandments; and they must regard it as though it were specially placed before each commandment, and thus applies to them all.

Now (as was said before) these words include both an angry threat and a gracious promise, to frighten and warn us, also to persuade and to induce us, that we accept His Word as Divine earnestness, and esteem it greatly, inasmuch as He Himself tells us how greatly He desires us to do so, and how severely He will judge those who disregard it; namely, that He will inflict horrible and terrible punishments on all those who despise

and break His commandments; but, again, that He will richly reward, benefit, and grant all good things to those who greatly honour them and willingly act and live up to them. By this He wishes to impress upon us that all we do should come from hearts which fear God, and constantly bear Him in mind, and that because of this fear we should do nothing contrary to His will, that He be not angered; and, again, that we should trust Him alone, and do for His sake what He asks of us, because He shows Himself such a kind Father and

promises us His mercy and blessing.

This, then, is the meaning and right interpretation of the First and chief Commandment, from which all the others spring and proceed. So that the words: Thou shalt have none other gods, mean simply and demand no more than this: Thou shalt fear, love, and trust Me as thy one, true God. For where a heart feels this towards God, it has fulfilled this and all the other commandments; moreover, he who loves and fears anything else in heaven or on earth cannot keep this or any one of the commandments. And accordingly the Bible everywhere preaches and urges this commandment, above all laying stress on the two points: fear and faith in God; and the prophet David dwells especially on this when he says (Psalm exlvii. 11): The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear Him, in those that hope in His mercy, as though giving the whole commandment in the one verse. as much as to say: The Lord taketh pleasure in those who have no other gods.

Thus the First Commandment is to shine forth, and to cast its light over all the others. Therefore thou must let these words ring through all the other commandments, as the stem or stalk runs round a wreath, so that the end and the beginning may be joined together, and the whole be thus kept together; and they must be constantly repeated and not be forgotten, especially where, in the following commandment, we are told to fear God and not abuse His name by cursing, lying, deceiving, and other dishonest and wicked ways, but to

use it worthily and well in appealing to, praying, praising, and giving Him thanks, in all love and confidence, as desired by the First Commandment. And this fear, love, and confidence in Him shall so influence us that we shall not despise His word, but learn it, hear it, keep it holy, and honour it.

And throughout the following commandments dealing with our duty to our neighbour, everything is to be done by virtue of this First Commandment; and accordingly we are to honour father and mother, masters and those in authority, and to obey them, not for their sake, but for God's. For thou mayest not respect or fear father or mother too much, neither must thou do or leave undone anything only for their sake. But see that thou doest what God requires of thee and will certainly have done, and if thou neglectest it thou wilt find an angry Judge, whereas if thou obeyest, He will be a gracious Father. And in like manner thou art not to do thy neighbour any harm, injury, or violence, nor art thou to vex him in any way, whether it regard his body, wife, goods, honour, or rights, as has already been stated in due order, even though thou hadst opportunity and cause, and no one could punish thee for so doing. On the other hand, thou art to be kind to every one, to help and further their interests when and where thou canst, and for God's sake alone, in the belief that He will richly recompense thee for all thou doest. Mark, therefore, how the First Commandment is the source and fountain from which all the others spring, to which they all revert, on which they all depend, so that beginning and end are linked and bound together.

This it is necessary and useful (I say) to keep before the young always. They must be exhorted, admonished, and reminded of all this, in order that they may not be brought up with mere blows and violence, like cattle, but in the fear and reverence of God. For when this is considered and taken to heart, and we remember that it is not human vanity, but the commandment of the most high God, who sternly and angrily punishes those who despise them, whereas He requites with inestimable blessings those who keep them, we shall of our own accord be induced and drawn to do God's will.

Accordingly those are no useless words we meet with in the Old Testament (Deut. vi. 7, 8), where we are told that the Ten Commandments are to be written on every wall and corner, yea even on our garments; not that we are to be satisfied by their being written there and made a show, as did the Jews; but we are to keep them always before our eyes and constantly to bear them in mind, and to follow them in all our life and doings, and with every one they are to be a daily practice everywhere in all doings and dealings, as though they were written up in every place, wherever we looked, yea wherever we go or stand. We should then have sufficient cause, both at home in our house, and abroad in our dealings with our neighbours, to obey the Ten Commandments, and no one would need to search far for them.

From all this we see again how greatly these Ten Commandments are to be praised and extolled above all such decrees, commands, and works that are otherwise taught and practised. For here we can confidently say: let all the wise men and all the saints stand forth, and show us if they can produce any work like the Ten Commandments, the fulfilment of which God so sternly requires, and commands on pain of His dire wrath and punishment, but adds such glorious promises that He will overwhelm us with all manner of good and blessing if we obey Him. They are, therefore, to be taught above and before all other things, and to be valued and esteemed as the greatest treasure given to us by God.

# SECOND PART

#### THE CREED

Above we have heard the First Part of Christian doctrine, and there seen all that God would have us do and leave undone. It is followed in proper order now by the Creed, which tells us all that we must expect and receive from God; in brief, teaches us to know Him thoroughly. And this is all to enable us to act according to the Ten Commandments. For (as was said above) all human efforts are far too weak and inefficient to enable us to keep them. Therefore it is as necessary for us to learn about this part of the Catechism, as it is to learn the other, in order that we may know how, whence, and wherefrom we may derive the necessary strength. For if our own strength were sufficient to enable us to keep the Ten Commandments as they should be kept, we should not need anything else, either the Creed or the Lord's Prayer. But before we dwell on the use and need of the Creed, it will, first, be sufficient for very simple folk to get to know and understand the Creed in itself.

In the first place the Creed has hitherto been divided into twelve articles, although, if we were to take all the particular passages in the Scriptures which refer to the belief, we should find very many more, though not so plainly expressed or put in so few words. But, in order that it may be explained easily and simply for the instruction of children, we will briefly divide the whole Creed into three main portions, according to the Three Persons of the Godhead, to whom all that we believe is referred. Accordingly the first article, concerning the Father, speaks of the Creation, the second, concerning the Son, of the Redemption, the third, concerning the Holy Ghost, of the Sanctification. Hence the Creed might be most briefly summed up in the words: "I believe in God the Father, who created me; I believe in God the Son,

who redeemed me; I believe in God the Holy Ghost, who sanctifieth me"; one God and one belief, but Three Persons, and accordingly three articles or confessions. In this way we will now go briefly through the words.

#### THE FIRST ARTICLE

I BELIEVE IN GOD THE FATHER ALMIGHTY, CREATOR OF HEAVEN AND EARTH.

We have here the briefest account and picture of God the Father, His nature, His will and work. Now, as the Ten Commandments taught us that we are not to have more than one God, we might here ask: What kind of a person is God? What does He do? How can we praise, depict, and describe Him so that we may know Him? This we shall learn from the present and the following articles, so that the Creed is merely an answer and confession of Christians, founded on the First Commandment. It is the same as though we put the question to a young person, saying: Dear child, what kind of a God hast thou? What knowest thou of Him? The answer might run thus: In the first place, my God is the Father, who created heaven and earth. I believe in no other God, for there is none other who could have created heaven and earth.

For the learned and those more intimately acquainted with them, all of the three articles might be greatly enlarged, and divided into as many parts as there are words. But for young scholars it will suffice here to draw their attention to the more necessary points, namely (as we said) that this article refers to the Creation; hence that stress is laid upon the words, Creator of heaven and earth. But what is implied, or what dost thou understand by the words: I believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator, etc.? Answer: I understand and believe that I am God's creature, that is, that He gave me and preserves for me continually my body, my soul and life, the members of my body great and small,

all my senses, my reason and understanding, and so on, what I eat and drink, my clothes, sustenance, wife and child, servants, house and home, etc.; besides making all creatures serve for my use and the necessities of life: sun, moon, and stars in the heavens, day and night, air, fire, water, the earth and what it bears and brings forth, birds, fishes, beasts, corn and every kind of plant. And again, all personal and temporal goods, such as good government, peace, and safety. Accordingly we learn from this article that no one can, of himself, hold his life or any of the things named above or that might be named, nor can he retain it, small and insignificant though it be, for all is comprehended in the word Creator.

We further acknowledge that God the Father has not only given us all that we have and see with our eyes, but He also, day by day, guards and protects us from all manner of evil and misfortune, turning from us all kinds of danger and peril, and He does this from pure love and goodness, which we have not deserved, like a kind Father who cares for us, so that no evil may betide But to speak further hereof belongs to the two other words of this article: Father Almighty. from this it is self-evident, and follows, that, since all we possess and all that is in heaven and on earth comes to us day by day from God, is preserved and protected for us by Him, we are in duty bound to love, praise, and thank Him without ceasing, in short, to serve Him wholly and entirely, as He has demanded and required in the Ten Commandments.

Now there would be much to say were we to dwell on the fact of how few there are who believe in this article. For we all neglect it; we hear and repeat the words, but do not see and consider what the words require of us. For if we believed them with all our hearts, we should act in accordance with them, and not go about so arrogantly, pluming and priding ourselves as though we received our life, wealth, power, and honour of ourselves, and hence that we ourselves had to be feared and served; for this is the way of our wicked and perverse world, which in wilful blindness abuses all the blessings and gifts of God, to satisfy its own pride, greed, pleasure, and comfort, and does not even look up to God to thank Him, or to acknowledge Him as Lord and Creator.

This article, accordingly, should humble and terrify us if we believe it. For we sin daily with eyes, ears, hands, body and soul, goods and chattels, and with all that we possess, especially those who rebel against God's word. But Christians have this advantage: that they recognise it to be their duty to serve Him and to be

obedient.

Therefore we should practise this article day by day, study it, and remember it in everything that meets our eyes, and whenever any good thing happens to us; and where we escape danger or trouble, we must remember that God does all this for us, and gives us everything, so that we may know and feel His fatherly affection and unfathomable love for us. This would warm our hearts, and inflame them with a desire to offer up thanks, and to use all we possess in God's honour and praise. This, therefore, is the meaning of this article, given very briefly, and is all that simple folk need learn regarding what we have and receive from God, and what we owe Him in return. therefore a very great and excellent piece of knowledge, but a much more priceless treasure. For here we may see how the Father has given Himself to us, with all that He has created, and how abundantly He has cared for us in this life, besides which He has also overwhelmed us with unspeakable, everlasting blessings through His Son and the Holy Spirit, as we shall hear.

### THE SECOND ARTICLE

AND IN JESUS CHRIST, HIS ONLY SON, OUR LORD, WHO WAS CONCEIVED BY THE HOLY GHOST, BORN OF THE VIRGIN MARY; SUFFERED UNDER PONTIUS PILATE; WAS CRUCIFIED, DEAD, AND BURIED; HE DESCENDED INTO HELL; THE THIRD DAY HE ROSE AGAIN FROM THE DEAD; HE ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN, AND SITTETH AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD THE FATHER ALMIGHTY; FROM THENCE HE SHALL COME TO JUDGE THE QUICK AND THE DEAD.

Here we learn to know the Second Person of the Godhead, and we see what we have received from God besides the temporal goods already spoken of, namely, how He has poured out His whole self upon us, and kept back nothing, having bestowed everything upon us. Now this article has a deep and fruitful significance; but in order to treat it briefly and simply, let us take one phrase of it that comprises the whole, so that we may learn from it how we are redeemed; and let us rest on these words: In Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Now, when it is asked: What dost thou believe in this second article concerning Jesus Christ? answer most briefly thus: I believe that Jesus Christ, the true Son of God, has become my Lord. And what do the words to become thy Lord mean? They mean that He has redeemed me from sin, from the devil, from death and all misfortunes. For before I had no Lord and King, but was a prisoner in the power of the devil, condemned to death, and entangled in sin and blindness.

For when we were created, and had received all manner of blessings from God the Father, the devil came and led us into disobedience, sin, death, and all misfortunes, so that God's anger and wrath lay upon us, and we were condemned to eternal damnation, as we deserved and merited. There was no help or comfort till the only and eternal Son of God, in His unfathomable goodness, took pity on our misery and sorrow, and came to help us. And thus all those tyrants and taskmasters have been

banished, and in their stead is come Jesus Christ, the Lord of life, of justice, of goodness and salvation, and He has dragged us, poor lost creatures, from the jaws of hell, won us, freed us, and restored us to the favour and grace of God, and taken us under His shelter and protection as belonging to Him, so that He might reign over us in His mercy, wisdom, power, life, and salvation.

So the main point of this article is, that the little word Lord, taken in its simplest sense, means as much as Redeemer, that is, He who led us back from the devil to God, from death to life, from sin to righteousness, and holds us safe. And the points that follow in this article are simply a fuller explanation and expression of how this redemption was accomplished; that is, what He encountered, and what He had to do and dare to win us, and to bring us to His kingdom; namely He became Man, was conceived and born without sin by the Holy Ghost and the Virgin, that He might become Lord over all sin; He suffered, died, and was buried, and satisfied for me and paid what I owed, not with gold or with silver, but with His own most precious blood. And all this was done that He might become my Lord, for He would not have done this or been required to do it for Himself. that He rose again, conquered and subdued death, and in the end ascended into heaven, and took His place on the right hand of the Father; the devil and all his power must, therefore, be subject to Him and lie at His feet, till the Day of Judgment, when He will divide and separate us from the wicked world, the devil, death, sin, etc.

But to explain fully all these several points is not necessary in a short address to children; these belong rather to the longer sermons preached throughout the year at specially appointed times, set apart for dealing more fully with the articles of the birth, passion, resurrection, and ascension of Christ, etc. Moreover the whole Gospel, as we preach it, depends upon the proper understanding of this article, for on it rests all our salvation, and it is so rich and full in meaning that we have always enough to learn from it.

### THE THIRD ARTICLE

I BELIEVE IN THE HOLY GHOST, THE HOLY CHRISTIAN CHURCH, THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS, THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS, THE RESURRECTION OF THE FLESH, AND THE LIFE EVERLASTING. AMEN.

This article I cannot explain any better than, as was said, of Sanctification, that the Holy Spirit and His office are thereby described and expressed, namely, that He makes us holy. And we must take our stand on this word Holy Spirit, because it is so briefly comprehended in it that we need no other. For there are many other kinds of spirits mentioned in the Bible, such as human spirits, heavenly spirits, and evil spirits; but God's Spirit is alone called a Holy Spirit, that is One who has sanctified, and still sanctifies us. For as the Father is called a Creator, the Son a Redeemer, so the Holy Spirit, owing to His office, is to be called a Sanctifier or Hallower. But how is this hallowing accomplished? Answer: In the same way as the Son acquired His title of Lord, by redeeming us, through His birth, death, resurrection, etc., so the Holy Spirit accomplishes our sanctification by the following means: through the community (Gemeine) of saints or Christian Church, through the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting; that is, by leading us into His holy community, into the bosom of the Church, through which He teaches us and brings us to Christ.

For neither thou nor I could ever know aught of Christ, or believe in Him, or obtain Him for our Lord, were it not for the lessons given us in the Gospel by the Holy Spirit, to take to heart. That work is done and accomplished, for Christ has obtained and won the blessing for us by His passion, death, and resurrection, etc. Yet if the work had remained unrevealed, so that none knew of it, it would have all been in vain and lost. Now, in order that such a blessing should not remain

buried, but become of use and enjoyed, God caused His Word to be made known and proclaimed through the Holy Spirit, so that this blessing and redemption might be brought home to us and become ours. Therefore this sanctifying simply means that we are brought to the Lord Christ to receive this blessing, which we could not have obtained of ourselves.

Learn, therefore, most carefully to understand this article. If thou be asked: What meanest thou by the words, I believe in the Holy Spirit? thou mayest answer thus: I believe the Holy Spirit makes me holy, according to His name. How can He do this, or by what means can He accomplish this? Answer: Through the Christian Church, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the flesh, and the life everlasting. For, in the first place, He has a special community in the world, which is the mother that conceives and bears every Christian by the Word of God, which He reveals and preaches, and by which He illuminates and lights up all hearts, so that they understand and accept it, cling to it, and abide by it.

For where He does not have it preached and aroused in the heart, that we may understand it, it is lost; as happened under the Papacy, when the true belief was wholly shelved, and no one recognised Christ as Lord, or the Holy Spirit as the One who sanctifies; that is, none believed that Christ was our Lord, who had obtained for us such mercies without any merit of our own, and likewise made us pleasing to our Father. What, then, was wanting? That there was no Holy Spirit present to reveal and preach this; men, however, and evil spirits were there, and they taught that salvation and mercy could be attained through our own works. And hence there was no Christian Church, for where Christ is not preached, there is no Holy Spirit to form the Christian Church, to call and to gather it together, without which none can come to the Lord Christ.

Let this suffice for the general interpretation of this article. But as the various points in it may not be

quite clear for simple folk, we will take them up

separately.

The Creed calls the holy Christian Church Communionem Sanctorum, a communion (Gemeinschaft) of saints, for both mean one and the same thing. But formerly the latter phrase was not added, and it has been ill and incorrectly translated a communion (Gemeinschaft) of saints. In order to explain it clearly a different expression must be used in German, for the word ecclesia signifies no more than an assembly. Now we are accustomed to use the little word Church otherwise, and simple folk take it to mean, not the assembled congregation, but the consecrated house or building; although the building should not be called a Church unless because of the congregation assembled there. For we who assemble make or take a special place for ourselves, and give the house the name of the congregation.

So the word Church really signifies nothing but a congregation, and is a word of Greek origin (like the word ecclesia), for in their language they call it Kyria, and in Latin it is also called *Curia*. Therefore in good German and our mother tongue it should be translated a Christian community (Gemeine) or congregation, or best of all and most clearly, a holy Christendom. likewise the word Communio, which is attached to it, should not be translated communion (Gemeinschaft), but community (Gemeine). It is merely a definition or explanation to indicate what the Christian Church is. But those who did not know Latin or German turned it into communion (Gemeinschaft) of saints, although no German would use such an expression or understand But to speak plain German, we ought to say a community (Gemeine) of saints, that is a community consisting only of saints, or, better still, a holy com-I say all this that the words may be munitu. understood; they have taken such a firm hold among us that it is difficult to uproot them again, and it would be called heresy to alter a word.

Accordingly the simple meaning of the clause is: I

believe there is a small holy flock or community on earth, consisting of holy persons only, under one Head, Christ, called together by the Holy Spirit in one faith and understanding; possessing many gifts, but one in love, without sect or schism. Of it I too form a part, and am a member, a sharer and participator in all its blessings through the Holy Spirit, called thereto and incorporated with it because I have heard and believe in God's Word. which is the first step towards entering it. For before we did so we were the devil's, and knew nothing of God and of Christ. So the Holy Spirit will abide with the holy community, that is, with Christendom, till the last day, when He will deliver us: and He makes use of it to teach and to explain the Word by which He makes and increases this holiness, so that it may increase daily, and we may become strong in faith and the fruits it brings forth.

We further believe that through Christianity we obtain forgiveness of sins, which is accomplished by the Holy Sacrament and Absolution, besides all manner of comforting words throughout the Gospel. And accordingly what has to be said of the sacraments belongs here likewise, and indeed the whole Gospel, and all the functions of Christendom, which, in fact, must be exercised without intermission. For though God's grace is obtained through Christ, and sanctification by the Holy Spirit through God's Word in the union of the Christian Churches, still we are never without sin, be-

cause of our flesh, which encumbers us.

Hence everything in Christianity is so arranged that we daily obtain forgiveness of sins, by word or sign, to comfort and support our conscience, as long as we live here below. And what the Holy Spirit accomplishes is, that though we have sinned, our sins cannot harm us, because we are members of Christendom, where there is entire forgiveness of sins, so that God forgives us, and we forgive, bear with, and help one another.

Whereas outside Christendom, where the Gospel is not received, there is no forgiveness and can be no holiness. Therefore all those who do not seek for holiness

through the Gospel and forgiveness of sins, but try to merit it through their own works, have alienated and

separated themselves from Christendom.

But the sanctification, once begun, daily increases; we look for our flesh to perish and be buried with all its corruption, from which it will arise glorified, and in complete and perfect holiness in a new, eternal life. For now we are only in part pure and holy, so that the Holy Spirit is continually at work with us, by means of the Word of God, and daily bestowing forgiveness on us, till we reach that life where there is no more forgiveness. all persons there being pure and holy, full of piety and righteousness, delivered and freed from sin, death, and all misfortune, in a new, immortal, and transfigured Now all this is the office and work of the Holy Spirit: that He commences sanctification on earth, and daily increases it by means of two things: the Christian Church and the forgiveness of sins. And when we pass away He will in a moment accomplish this and keep us thus eternally by means of these two.

Now the words resurrection of the flesh are not well chosen words either, for when we Germans hear the word flesh we are apt to think only of the meat-market. In good German we say resurrection of the body or corpse, but this is not a very important matter, as long as the

words are rightly understood.

Now this article must always be and remain active. For the Creation is a past fact, and the Redemption is also accomplished. But the Holy Spirit carries on His work without intermission till the last day, for which purpose He appoints a community on earth, through which He speaks and accomplishes all things; for He has not yet gathered all His Christendom together, nor has He completely dispensed forgiveness. Therefore we believe in Him who daily draws us by the Word and gives us faith, which He increases and strengthens through that same Word and the forgiveness of sins; so that when He has accomplished all this, and we abide by it, renouncing the world and all evil, at last we shall be

made holy completely and everlastingly, and this we now

await in faith through the Word.

There thou hast the whole Divine being, will, and work most clearly delineated in brief yet fruitful words, in which all our wisdom consists, but which far exceed and rise beyond all human wisdom, comprehension, and understanding. For although all the world has most diligently endeavoured to know what God is, and what is His object and intention, yet we have never attained But here thou hast it all most fully this knowledge. explained, for in these three articles He Himself has revealed and exposed the very depth of His fatherly heart, and His complete and ineffable love. For He created us in order that He might redeem and sanctify us. And besides having bestowed on us all that is in heaven and on earth, He gave us also His Son and the Holy Spirit, through whom He brings us to Himself. For (as has been said above) we could never recognise the Father's grace and mercy except for our Lord Christ, who is a mirror of His Father's heart; without Him we should see nothing but an angry and terrible Judge, and of Christ we should know nothing were He not revealed to us through the Holy Spirit.

Hence these articles of the Creed divide and separate us Christians from all other people on earth. For those who are outside Christianity, be they heathens, Turks, Jews, or false Christians and hypocrites, and although they may believe in only one true God and worship Him, yet they do not know how He feels towards them, and cannot expect either love or any blessing from Him, and accordingly remain in eternal wrath and perdition; for they have not the Lord Christ, and are likewise not enlightened and blessed by any gifts from the Holy

Spirit.

From this thou seest that the Creed teaches a very different lesson from the Ten Commandments. They teach us what we have to do, whereas the Creed teaches us what God does for us and has given us. The Ten Commandments are moreover written in all men's hearts,

but the Creed no mere human wisdom can understand, and it can alone be taught by the Holy Spirit. Therefore the Commandments do not make us Christians, for God's wrath and displeasure are still upon us, because we cannot keep what God demands of us; whereas the Creed brings us full mercy, sanctifies us and makes us acceptable to God. For through this teaching we learn to love all the commandments of God, because we perceive how God has given Himself to us entirely, bestowing all He has upon us, to help and guide us in keeping the Ten Commandments: the Father gives us all things created, Christ all His works, and the Holy Spirit all His gifts.

Let this suffice now with regard to the Creed, and serve as a foundation for simple folk, that they be not over-burdened; so that when they understand this summary, they may themselves endeavour to study it further: and that what they learn in the Scriptures they may connect with this, and go on acquiring a fuller understanding of it. For day by day as long as we live

we have to preach and to study these things.

# THIRD PART

# THE LORD'S PRAYER

We have now heard what we are to do and to believe, in which the most blessed and righteous life consists. Now follows the Third Part, how we are to pray. For because it is so with us that no human being can altogether of himself keep the Ten Commandments, though we may have begun to believe, and to withstand the devil, the world, and our flesh with all our might, still nothing is more needful than that we should always appeal to God, constantly invoke Him and pray to Him, that He may enable us to believe the Creed and to fulfil the Ten Commandments, and to sustain and help us, and to remove all that lies in our way and hinders

us in this. But in order that we may know what and how we should pray, our Lord Christ has Himself taught

us and given us the words, as we shall see.

But before beginning to explain the various points of the Lord's Prayer, it is most necessary first of all to exhort and incite people to pray, as Christ (Luke xviii. 1; Matt. vii. 7) and the Apostles (1 Thess. v. 17; 1 Peter iv. 7: James i. 5) have done. And in the first place we are to know that by God's command it is our duty to pray. For in the Second Commandment we are told: Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain. and are thus bidden to praise the holy name, to call upon it and to invoke it in all need. And to invoke is nothing else but to pray; hence we are as strictly and solemnly commanded to pray as we are bidden to have no other god, not to commit murder, not to steal, etc. Let no one think it is all the same whether he pray or not, as common people are apt to think in their delusion, saving: Why should I pray? Who knows whether God hears and will attend to my prayer? If I do not pray, some one else will. And thus they get into the habit of never praying; and because we denounce false, hypocritical prayer, they take it upon themselves to say that we teach that no one need or ought to pray.

This much is true, that what has hitherto been offered up as prayer and been mumbled and muttered in church has been certainly no true prayer; such superficial doings may, when properly undertaken, serve as an exercise for the young, for school-children, and simple folk, and may be called singing or reading, but is not actual praying. But what the Second Commandment teaches is praying, namely, invoking God in all needs. This He requires of us, and it is not left to our own caprice, but we are bidden and told to pray if we want to be Christians, just as we are bidden and told to be obedient to father, mother, and all in authority. For by invocation and prayer the name of God is honoured and wisely used. This thou must mark above all things, that all such thoughts as would withhold or frighten us from prayer should be silenced

and thrust from us. For just as it is of no avail for a son to say to his father: What is the use of my being obedient? I will go and do as I please, it is all the same; but there is the commandment, Thou shalt and must obey; so, too, it has nothing to do with my own will whether I pray or not, I am required and have to pray on pain of God's wrath and displeasure.

This we must understand above all things, so that we may silence and repel those thoughts which deter and frighten us from prayer, making us think it is of little moment whether we pray or no, as if it were ordered for those who are more holy and more pleasing to God than we. The human heart is by nature so perverse that it always flies from God, and thinks He does not care for our prayer. because we are sinners and have only merited His anger. To silence such thoughts (I sav) we must reflect on this commandment and turn to God, so that we do not make Him more angry by such disobedience. For by this commandment He shows sufficiently that He does not reject our prayer, nor drive us from Him, although we are sinners; but that He rather wishes to draw us to Him, so that we may humble ourselves before Him, lament our misery and need, and ask for mercy. Therefore we read in the Scripures that He was angry with those who were punished for their sins, because they did not come to Him and soften His anger and seek mercy by prayer.

Now from the above we should conclude and remember that, since we are commanded so earnestly to pray, we should on no account despise prayer, but should think much of it and value it; and we are always to regard it as equivalent to the other commandments. A child shall on no account disregard obedience to father or mother, but always remember: the act is an act of obedience, and what I do, I do from no other motive than obedience to God's commandment; on this I can take my stand, and hold my action in high esteem, not because of my own worth, but because of its being a commandment. So here again: whenever and for whatsoever we pray, we are to consider it as demanded by God and done in obedience to

His command, and we are to think thus: so far as I am concerned it is nothing, but it has value because God has commanded it. Accordingly every one who has aught to pray for is always to come to God in obedience to this commandment.

Therefore we beg and exhort every one most urgently to take these words to heart, and in no wise to despise prayer: for hitherto folk have been so taught in the devil's name, that none esteemed it, and all thought it sufficient if their prayers were said, whether God heard them or That is treating prayer lightly, and muttering on the chance of being heard. And such prayers are worth nothing. We let ourselves be misled and deterred by such thoughts as these: I am not holy or worthy enough; if I were as pions and holy as St. Peter or St. Paul, I should pray. But away with such thoughts; for the very commandment that applied to St. Paul applies to me, and was made just as much for my sake as for his. and he could boast of no better or holier commandment. Therefore thou art to say: My prayer that I pray is as precious, holy, and pleasing to God as that of St. Paul and the holiest of saints. I willingly admit that he is holier in himself, but not because of his prayer; for God does not value the prayer because of the person, but because of his own Word and our obedience. upon the commandment, on which all saints base their prayers, that I base mine; and moreover I pray for that which they all asked or prayed for. So it is as precious. and more necessary, to me, than to those great saints.

The first and most necessary point, therefore, is this: that all our prayers be founded and based on obedience to God, regardless of our person, whether we be sinful or virtuous, worthy or unworthy. And we are to know that God will not have us trifle with this command, but will be angry and punish us unless we appeal to Him, just as He punishes all other acts of disobedience, and also as He will not allow our prayers to be made in vain or lost; for if He did not mean to hear us, He would not command

us to pray, and insist upon it so strongly.

Again, we are to be the more eager and ready to pray because God has added a promise, that shall verily and assuredly be fulfilled, as when He says in Psalm l. 15: Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me: and when Christ says in Matt. vii. 7: Ask, and it shall be given you, etc.: for every one that asketh receiveth. Such words should ever arouse and incite our hearts with the desire for and love of prayer, because His Word testifies that our prayers are truly pleasing to Him, and shall surely be heard and granted, in order that we may not disregard or neglect them, or pray in uncertainty. Thou mayest address Him thus, and say: I come to Thee, my Father, and pray to Thee, not of my own accord, or because of my own worthiness, but because of Thy command and promise, which cannot deceive or lie. Now. whosoever does not believe such promises let him know that he angers God as one who exceedingly dishonours Him and charges Him with lying.

That we may be the more tempted and induced to pray, God has not only given us the command and the promise. He has put in our mouth the very words as to how we are to pray, in order that we may perceive how sincerely He cares for our needs, and that we may never doubt that such prayers are acceptable to Him and shall assuredly be heard; and this is a very great advantage for all the other prayers that we may be inclined to invent For our conscience might constantly be in doubt and say: I have prayed, but who knows whether it will please Him, or whether I have hit upon the right method or measure? Accordingly there is no more admirable prayer on earth than the Lord's Prayer, because it brings with it such excellent testimony that God hears it most gladly, and it is one we should not exchange for all the wealth in the world. And it is so worded for us that we may perceive and remember the need which should urge and oblige us to pray without ceasing. For whoever wishes to pray must bring forward something, name it and ask for it, else it cannot be called a prayer.

It is for this reason that we justly reject the prayers of monks and priests, who howl and mutter offensively day and night; not one of them thinks of asking for the veriest trifle; and if all the Churches and their priests were gathered together, they would have to confess that they had never sincerely prayed for as much as a drop of wine. For not one of them ever undertook to pray by way of obedience to God, or because they believed in His promise, or considered there was any necessity for it; they had no further thought (to put the best construction on it) than of doing a good work, by which they might make a gift to God, as though they would take nothing from Him, but only offer things to Him.

But where there is to be true prayer we must be in earnest and feel our need, and a need which presses us and urges us to call out and clamour; then prayer will come of its own accord, as it should, and we shall not require to ask how to prepare for it or to become devout. But the necessity which should urge us and every one is to be found abundantly in the Lord's Prayer. Therefore it should serve to remind us of this necessity, to teach us to consider it and to take it to heart, that we may not grow weary of praying; for we all have wants enough, only we do not feel or perceive them. Wherefore God desires that we should feel and bewail our necessity, not because He does not know it, but in order that our hearts may be aroused the more strongly to desire more, and to open and spread out our cloaks wide to receive abundantly.

Therefore from youth upwards we are to accustom ourselves to pray daily in our necessity, whenever we feel that anything thwarts us, and also to pray for other people among whom we live, such as our pastors, those in authority, neighbours, servants; and (as has been said) we must always bear in mind God's command and promise, and remember that He will not have these disregarded. I say this because I would gladly see people do this again, and learn to pray properly, and not go their ways uncouthly and indifferently, daily becoming more and more unfitted for prayer; which is what the devil would like to

accomplish, and endeavours to bring about with all his might, for he knows well what harm and injury are done

to him where prayer is fervently offered.

For we are to know that our whole protection and defence lies in prayer alone. For we are far too weak to resist the devil with all his power and retinue, who so rise up against us that they might easily crush us under Therefore we must bethink ourselves and take to the weapons with which Christians ought to be armed to resist the devil. For what, thinkest thou, would have hitherto accomplished such great things, and resisted or overthrown the counsels of our enemies, their plans. murders, and rebellions, by which the devil meant to overthrow us and the Gospel, were it not that the prayers of pious people had stood between us and our foes like an iron rampart? Otherwise we should have seen a very different spectacle: the devil would have had all Germany destroyed in its own blood. But now let them laugh and mock as they will, we shall by our prayers alone be able to oppose both them and the devil. if we only keep diligent and do wax not weary. For whenever a good Christian prays, saying: My Father. Thy will be done, He will answer from above, Yea, dear child, so shall it be, in spite of the devil and all the world.

So much we have said in exhortation, that we may learn above all things to esteem prayer greatly, and to make a proper distinction between mere mumbling and praying. For we do not in any way denounce prayer, but we denounce loud and useless howling and, as Christ Himself denounced and forbade, long-winded prayers (Matt. xxiii. 14). We will now take the Lord's Prayer, and discuss it in the briefest and clearest manner. There are seven articles or petitions, dealing in order with all the necessities that incessantly beset us, and each petition is of such importance that it ought to induce us to pray it all our life long.

## THE FIRST PETITION

HALLOWED BE THY NAME.

Now, this is a little obscure, and not very good German; for in ordinary language we should say: Heavenly Father, help, that Thy name may be holv. Now, what do we mean by praying that His name should be hallowed? Was it not holy before? Answer: Yea. it was always holy in itself, but in our use it is not hallowed. For God's name has been given us because we became Christians and were baptised, so that we might be called God's children and enjoy the Sacrament by which He incorporates us with Himself; and accordingly that all that is God's may serve for our use. Now, it is most necessary, and we ought above all things to see to it, that His name be held in due honour, and be kept holy and hallowed as our greatest and most sacred treasure, and that, as good children, we should pray that His name, which is hallowed in heaven, may likewise be kept holy on earth by us and all the world.

Now, how can it be hallowed among us? The most direct answer is this: If both our teaching and life are godly and Christian. For, as in this prayer we call God our Father, we owe it to Him to behave and act like pious children everywhere, that He may not receive shame from us, but honour and glory. Now we profane His name with words or deeds (for what we do on earth must be by word or deed, speech or action); in the first place, therefore, in preaching, teaching, and speaking in God's name what is false and misleading, so that His name is taken to adorn our lie and make it pass current. This is the greatest disgrace and dishonour to God's name. Besides this, when the holy name is used as a cloak for swearing, cursing, sorcery, etc. Secondly, when it is used as a screen for open evil ways and work, when they who are called Christians and God's people are adulterers, drunkards, gluttons, jealous, and given to slander. Here again God's name is disgraced and dishonoured for our sakes; for just as it is a shame and disgrace to a human father to have a wicked and depraved child, who disobeys him in words and deeds, and is thus despised and scorned because of him, so it serves to God's dishonour if we, who are called by His name, and receive all manner of benefits from Him, do not teach, speak, and live as the virtuous children of a heavenly Father, and He hears it said of us: They ought not to be called God's children, but the devil's.

Accordingly thou seest that in this article we pray for what God demands of us in the Second Commandment—namely, that we are not to take His name in vain, that is, to use it in swearing, cursing, deceiving, lying, etc., but to use it only in the praise and honour of God. For whoever uses God's name in any dishonourable way unhallows and profanes the holy name; in the same way as formerly it was called desecrating a church if a murder or other crime were committed there, or if a sacrament or relic were profaned, for a thing holy in itself is rendered unholy by its use. Hence the clause is easy and simple, if only we understand the language; to hallow means much the same as to praise, extol, and honour by word and deed.

Now, mark how necessary such a prayer is. For since, as we see, the world is full of heresy and false teachers, who all use the holy name as a cover and pretext for their devil's teaching, we ought unceasingly to cry and clamour against all those who preach and believe false doctrines, and who persecute and seek to suppress all that concerns our Gospels and pure doctrine, such as bishops, tyrants, fanatics, etc. And again, we ought also to pray for ourselves, who have God's word, but are not grateful for it, and who do not live according to it as we should. Accordingly, if thou prayest thus from thy heart, thou mayest be certain that it will be pleasing to God, for nothing is more pleasing to Him than to hear that His honour and worth are set above all things, that His word is taught purely and greatly cherished and valued.

#### THE SECOND PETITION

THY KINGDOM COME.

Whereas in the first petition we pray concerning God's honour and name, that He will not allow the world to adorn its lies and wickedness therewith, but enable us to keep it holy and reverend in our teaching and in our life, so that we may praise and glorify it, we pray here that His kingdom may come. And in the same way as we pray that His name may be holy to us, although it is holy in itself, so also His kingdom would come of itself without our asking for it, and yet we are to pray that it may come to us—that is, that it may be around and with us, hence that we also may be a part of it, that His name may be hallowed thereby and His kingdom flourish.

Now, what is God's kingdom? Answer: Nothing else than what we heard above in the Creed,—that God sent His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, into the world, that He might redeem us and free us from the power of the devil, and bring us to Himself, to reign over us as a King of righteousness, of life, and of salvation, and to protect us from death, sin, and an evil conscience. Wherefore God also gave His Holy Spirit, to teach us this through His holy word, and through His power to enlighten and strengthen our faith. Therefore we pray here, firstly, that we may be strengthened in all this knowledge, that His name may be so honoured through the holy word of God and our Christian life, and that not only we who have accepted it may abide by it, daily increasing in faith, but that among other peoples it may gain followers and adherents, and advance in power throughout the world, so that many may thus enter the kingdom of righteousness and become participators in the redemption, brought thereto by the Holy Spirit, and remain thus together and for ever in the one kingdom now begun.

For God's kingdom comes to us in two ways: either temporally through the Word and Faith, or eternally through the revelation. Now, we pray for both: that

it may come to those to whom it has not yet come, and be daily strengthened in us who have received it, and remain ours henceforth in the life everlasting. This is nothing more than saying: Dear Father, we pray Thee, firstly, to give us Thy Word, that the Gospel may be conscientiously preached throughout the world, and, secondly, that it may be accepted through faith, and live and work in us; so that Thy kingdom may be among us, through the word and power of the Holy Spirit, that the devil's kingdom may be crushed, and that he have no further power or claim over us, till in the end he be quite overcome, and, sin, death and hell destroyed, so that we live everlastingly in perfect

righteousness and blessedness.

From this thou seest that here we do not ask for a mere piece of bread, for temporal, perishable goods, but for an eternal, inestimable treasure, and all that God alone can give; it would be far too great for any human heart to dare to ask it, were it not that He Himself has commanded us to ask for it. And because He is God. He takes upon Himself the honour of giving far more, and more abundantly than any one can understand; for He is like an everlasting and inexhaustible spring, which, the more it flows and runs over, the more it gives forth: and He desires nothing more of us than that we should ask many and great things of Him, and is vexed if we do not ask and demand with confidence. Much in the same way as though the richest and mightiest emperor bade a poor beggar ask for whatever he wanted, being ready to bestow great and royal gifts, and the poor fool asked for nothing but a cup of broth; he would justly be esteemed a rogue and a knave thus to make a jest of the royal command, and therefore not worthy to appear before his sovereign. In the same way it is a disgrace and dishonour to God if we, to whom He offers and promises inestimable blessings, despise them or do not confidently accept them, scarcely venturing even to ask for a piece of bread.

All this is due to that shameful unbelief which will not

allow us to expect as much from God as that He will fill our bellies; still less do we believe unhesitatingly that we may expect eternal blessings from God. Hence we are to strengthen ourselves against such unbelief, and let this be the first thing we pray for. Then indeed we shall have all else in abundance, as Christ teaches (Matt. vi. 33): But seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you. For how could He let us want and be without temporal things, when He promises us such eternal and heavenly blessings?

### THE THIRD PETITION

THY WILL BE DONE ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN.

We have thus far prayed that His name may be hallowed by us, and that His kingdom come among us, which two things include all that refers to God's honour and to our own salvation, that we may have God and all His blessings for our very own. But now the great necessity is that we should keep steadfastly to this, and not let ourselves be drawn away from it. For as under a good government there must not only be those who build up the laws and rule well, but also those who protect, defend, and keep all secure, so here likewise, when we have prayed for what is of most importance—for the Gospel. faith, and the Holy Spirit, that He may reign over us and release us from the devil's power—we have also to pray that God will let His will be done. For it will be wonderful how, if we abide by all this, we shall have to endure attacks and blows from all those who strive to hinder and thwart our first two petitions.

For no one can imagine how the devil tries to thwart and oppose these, for he cannot bear that any one should teach or believe aright, and it causes him infinite vexation when his lies and other abominations, done under the beautiful cloak of God's name, are disclosed and exposed in all their disgrace, and he himself is driven out of our hearts and a rift made in his kingdom. Therefore, like an angry foe, he rages and roars with all his strength and might, attracting all those that are subject to him, and bringing the world and our own flesh to his assistance. For our flesh is corrupt in itself and inclined to evil, although we have accepted God's word and faith; and the world being wicked and evil, the devil hounds, worries and harasses us so that he may hinder us, drive us back, overthrow us, and bring us into his power again. That is his one thought, aim, and desire, for which he strives day and night, and never rests an instant, employing every kind of trick, device, and means that he can think of.

Therefore we, who would be Christians, must assuredly remember and consider that we have the devil and all his angels, as well as the world, for our foes, preparing all manner of misfortune and sorrow for us. For where God's name is preached, accepted or believed in, and bears fruit, there will likewise be no want of persecution. And let no one think that he will ever be at peace, for he will have to risk all that he has on earth: property. honour, house and home, wife and child, body and soul. And this it is that will touch our flesh and rouse the old Adam in us, for it means that we shall have to keep firm, and suffer patiently whatever may be done to us, and let go whatever may be taken from us. Therefore it is as necessary in this case, as in every other, that we should pray without ceasing, and say: Let Thy will be done, O Father, not the will of the devil, or that of our foes, or of any of those who would persecute and overthrow Thy holy Word or hinder the coming of Thy kingdom; and grant that all we may have to endure through it may be borne with patience and overcome, so that our poor flesh may not yield or give way from weakness or laziness.

Now mark, in these three petitions we have all that concerns God Himself most simply expressed; and yet all for our own sakes: for what we pray for affects us alone, namely (as has been said) that these things may be done also in us, which otherwise would be done without us. For just as God's name must be hallowed, and

His kingdom must come, without our prayer, so likewise His will will be done and felt everywhere, although the devil and all his host storm and rage against it, in their endeavour to exterminate the Gospel. But for our own sakes we must pray that God's will may be done among us in spite of their raging, so that they accomplish nothing, and we may remain steadfast in spite of all violence and persecution, and submit ourselves to the will of God.

Such prayers are therefore to be our protection and defence, to repulse and overthrow all that the devil, the Pope, bishops, tyrants, and heretics raise against our Gospel. Let them all rage together, and do their utmost, in deliberating and resolving how to subdue and exterminate, so that their will and determination may hold sway. One or two Christians opposed to them with these few petitions will act as a rampart against which they would run only to destroy themselves. For we have this consolation and assurance, that the will of the devil and all our foes must and shall succumb, be subdued and annihilated, however proud, safe and powerful they think themselves; for if their will were not subdued and checked, God's kingdom could not come to us and remain on earth, nor could His name be hallowed.

## THE FOURTH PETITION

GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD.

Herewith we consider that poor bread-basket our body, and the necessities of our temporal life; and they are brief and simple words, but are very far-reaching. For when thou speakest and prayest for daily bread, thou art asking for all that is needful to enable thee to have and to enjoy thy daily bread, and appealing against all that hinders thy obtaining it. Wherefore thou must well open and extend thy thoughts, and not think only of the oven and flour-barrel, but also of the wide fields and the whole country which bears and produces our daily bread and all the rest of our food. For if God did not let it grow,

bless it, and preserve it in the ground, we should never have any bread to take out of the oven, or have any

to put on the table.

This petition includes, in brief, all that belongs to our whole life in this world, since it is only for the sake of this that we need daily bread. Now, this life requires not only bread, clothing, and other necessaries for our bodies, but also that we live in peace and quiet with the people around us, in our daily business and transactions, in short, in all that concerns both our domestic and neighbourly relations, or civil affairs and government. For where these two things are interfered with, and are not as they should be, the necessities of life are hindered, and life in the end cannot be maintained. And it is also most necessary to pray for our temporal rulers and governors, through whom God chiefly preserves for us our daily bread and all the comforts of this life. though we obtain an abundance of things from God, we can in no wise retain them or use them safely and cheerfully, unless He gives us a firm and peaceful government; for where discord and war prevail we are deprived of our daily bread or hindered in obtaining it.

For which reason it would be more fitting to place a loaf on the coat-of-arms of every good ruler instead of a lion or a wreath, or that the coins might bear it as their stamp, to remind our rulers, as well as ourselves, their subjects, that their office ought to bestow on us peace and protection, and that without these we should not have our daily bread to eat. Wherefore they are worthy of all honour, and we ought to do for them all we can, as those through whom we are enabled to enjoy in peace and quiet all that we possess, inasmuch as but for them we should not own a farthing. We are also to pray for them that God may bestow on us greater blessings and

good by their means.

Let us now very briefly point out and show how this prayer affects everything on earth. Out of it a long prayer might be made, by enumerating with many words all the various things pertaining to it: as, for instance,

when we ask God to give us food and drink, clothes, house and home, a sound body, the corn and fruits that grow in the fields, and that they may flourish; further, when we ask His help to manage our household affairs properly, and pray Him to give us a virtuous wife, children, and servants, and to preserve them to us; to allow our work, trade, or whatever we may have to do, to prosper and succeed; to give us faithful neighbours and good friends, etc. And again, when we ask Him to endow emperors, kings, and all the nobility, especially our own princes, counsellors, and all those in authority, with wisdom, strength, and good fortune, to govern us well and overcome the Turks and all our foes; to grant that their subjects, the common people, may live together in obedience, peace and unity; and also that He will protect us from all manner of harm, both as regards our bodies and our means of subsistence, also against thunderstorms, hail, fire, water, poison, pestilence, murrain, war, bloodshed, famine, savage beasts, wicked people, etc. It is good to impress all this on simple folk, that they may learn that all such things come from God and must be thought of in prayer.

But above all, this petition is directed against our supreme foe, the devil. For it is his one thought and desire to take away or prevent our obtaining all that God would give us, and it is not enough for him to hinder and destroy spiritual order by leading our souls astray with his lies and getting them into his power, but he tries to prevent the existence of any honest and peaceful dominion on earth. He causes endless quarrels, murders, rebellions and wars; also thunderstorms and hail to destroy the corn and cattle, to poison the air, etc. short, he is vexed when any one receives a piece of bread from God and enjoys it in peace; and if it were in his power, and our prayers (with God's help) did not hinder it, verily we should not have a blade in the field, not a farthing in the house, yea, not be able to enjoy an hour of our life, especially those who accept God's Word

and would fain be called Christians.

Now, mark, God wishes herewith to show us how He attends to all our needs and faithfully supplies all our bodily sustenance; and though He gives it abundantly and preserves it even for the godless and rogues, yet He desires that we shall ask for it, in order that we may acknowledge that we receive it from His hand, and thereby recognise His fatherly goodness towards us. For where He withdraws His hand nothing can thrive or prosper in the end, as we daily see and feel. What a plague we have now in the world with false coins alone! Yea. what trouble is caused by the daily exactions and taxes in ordinary commerce, marketings and work, by those who, in their insolence, oppress the poor, and take from them their daily bread! We have, it is true, to endure it; but let them look to it that they do not lose the benefit of this common petition, and take heed that this little bit of the Lord's Prayer may not come into conflict with them.

## THE FIFTH PETITION

AND FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES, AS WE FORGIVE THEM THAT TRESPASS AGAINST US.

This petition deals with our own poor and miserable life, for although we have God's Word and believe it, do His Will and submit to it, and are nourished by God's blessing and gifts, still we are not free from sin, for daily we stumble and transgress, because we live in the world among people who vex us sorely, and cause us to feel impatient, angry, revengeful, etc.; besides which, we have the devil at our back, attacking us on all sides, and fighting (as has been said) against all the above petitions, so that it is not possible always to stand firm in such a constant struggle. Therefore in this case also it is most necessary for us to pray and cry: O Father, forgive us our sins; not that He would not forgive us our sins without our prayers and before we uttered them-for He gave us the Gospel, with its absolute forgiveness, before we prayed for it or even thought of it—but it is necessary that we should recognise and accept His forgiveness. For because our flesh, in which we daily live, is so constituted that it will not trust and believe God, and is always stirred by evil desires and wickedness, so that daily we sin in word and deed, in what we do and in what we leave undone, and our conscience becomes restless, fearing God's anger and wrath, and thus loses comfort and faith in the Gospel, so it is necessary that we should constantly turn to Him and seek comfort to reassure our conscience.

But its purpose is also that God may break our pride and keep us in humility; for this privilege He reserves for Himself. So that when any one boasts of his virtue and despises others, let him look to himself and turn to this prayer, and he will find that he is no better than others; thus we must all lower our plumes before God and be glad to receive forgiveness. And let none think that we shall ever cease to require forgiveness as long as we live on earth. In fact, if God did not incessantly forgive us, we should be lost.

Hence the meaning of this prayer is, that God will not look upon and punish our sins as they daily deserve, but will be gracious to us and forgive us as He has promised, and thus give us a cheerful and courageous conscience, to come to Him with our prayers. For where the heart is not at peace with God, and cannot obtain such confidence, it will never venture to pray. But confidence and a joyful heart can never be ours unless we

know our sins are forgiven.

However, a necessary, and yet comforting, clause is added: As we forgive them that trespass against us. God has promised that all our sins shall be forgiven and remitted, and we are to feel assured of this, but only in so far as we forgive our neighbour. For we daily trespass much against God, and yet He forgives all in His mercy: in the same way we are also constantly to forgive our neighbours who may do us harm, violence, or wrong, and bear us malice, etc. Hence, if thou dost not forgive, do not imagine that God will forgive thee; but if thou

dost forgive, thou wilt have the comfort and certainty of knowing that thou wilt be pardoned in heaven: and not because of thy forgiveness—for God would do so in any case of His own accord, from pure loving-kindness, simply for the sake of His promise, as we learn from the Gospel -but by way of giving us confidence and encouragement, as a token in addition to the promise corresponding with this prayer: Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven (Luke vi. 37). Therefore Christ repeats the promise almost immediately after giving us the Lord's Prayer, and says: For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you (Matt. vi. 15).

Accordingly, that token is attached to this petition, so, that when we pray we may remember the promise, and think thus: O Father, I come and ask that Thou wilt forgive me, not that I can do enough or deserve it with any work of my own, but because Thou hast promised it and affixed Thy seal to it, in order that it may be as certain as though it had been received in absolution spoken by Thee. For what Baptism and the Sacrament accomplish, as outward signs, this sign may also accomplish, to strengthen and make glad our conscience; and besides other reasons it is appointed for this purpose that we may make use of it at all hours, and have it by us at all times.

### THE SIXTH PETITION

AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION.

We have now heard enough of what trouble and effort is required for us to receive and keep all we pray for, and we know that we cannot get on without sin and stumbling. Besides, although we obtain forgiveness and a good conscience and are wholly absolved, yet life is such, that although to-day we may stand, to-morrow we may fall. Therefore, although we may be virtuous and have an easy conscience before God, still we must pray that He will not let us fall back and yield to attack or temptation.

Now, temptation is of three kinds: of the flesh, the world, and the devil. For we dwell in the flesh, and the old Adam is always astir in us, and he incites us daily to wrong-doing, laziness, gluttony and drunkenness, to avarice, deceit, and fraud towards our neighbour; in fact, to all kinds of evil lusts, which are inborn in us and are aroused by companionship and example, by hearing and seeing what others do, and all this ofttimes injures and inflames an innocent heart.

Then comes the world, which offends us with words and deeds, and drives us to impatience and anger. In fact, there is around us nothing but hate and envy, enmity, violence and wrong-doing, perfidy, vengeance, swearing, abuse, slander, pride and arrogance, with luxurious adornment, honour, fame and power; for no one will be considered of inferior importance, all wish

the topmost place and to be seen of all men.

Then comes the devil, who worries and harasses us on all sides, but occupies himself especially with all that concerns the conscience and spiritual matters: for instance, his main object is to cause God's word and work to be neglected and despised, and thus to tear us from faith, hope and charity, and to lead us into unbelief, false confidence, and obstinacy; or else he drives us to despair, so that we deny God, blaspheme, and commit innumerable other kinds of wickedness. These are the snares and nets, yea, veritable fiery shafts that are shot, not by mere flesh and blood, but by the devil, into our hearts most venomously.

And every Christian has to face these perils and temptations, which are great and formidable, and would be even though they came alone; so we are forced to cry to God and to pray every hour, because we live amid this evil life, and are hounded, hunted, and driven on all sides; and we are obliged to pray that God will not let us grow weary and tired and fall back into sin, shame, and unbelief; otherwise it would be impossible for us to overcome the smallest temptation.

Now what the words Lead us not into temptation

mean, is that we ask God to give us strength and power to resist the temptation, not that the temptation is to be removed or done away with. No one can escape temptation or provocation, because we live in the flesh and have the devil about us, so it cannot be otherwise, and we have to suffer temptation and endure it; but we have to pray that we may not fall into it and be drowned in it.

Therefore it is a different matter to feel the provocation, and to yield to it or say yea to it. We all have to feel it, though not all in the same measure, for some are more sorely tempted: for instance, the young are tempted specially by the flesh; older people are tempted by the world; others again who are engaged in spiritual matters—that is, strong Christians—are tempted by the devil. But no one can be harmed by the mere feeling alone, since it is contrary to our wish and we would fain be rid of it. For if we did not feel it, it could not be called temptation. To yield to it, is to give it the reins, and neither to resist nor to pray against it.

Therefore we Christians must be armed against it, and daily expect to be incessantly attacked, so that none of us go our way in careless security as though the devil were far from us; we must everywhere expect his attacks and resist them. For though I may at the present moment be chaste, patient, gentle, and firm in my faith, the devil may this very hour shoot such a shaft into my heart that I may scarce be able to withstand it, for he is a foe who never ceases or wearies; and when one attack ceases, others constantly begin anew.

Accordingly there is no help or comfort but to take refuge in the Lord's Prayer and to appeal to God from our heart, saying: Dear Father, Thou hast bidden me pray; let me not fall away through temptation. Then thou wilt see that it must cease and at length be overcome. Whereas if thou seekest to help thyself by thine own thoughts and thine own counsel, thou wilt only make matters worse and give the devil more scope. For he has the head of a serpent, and where he finds a hole

into which he can slip, he wriggles his whole body in after it without hindrance; but prayer can oppose him and drive him back.

#### THE SEVENTH AND LAST PETITION

BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL. AMEN.

In Greek these words run thus: "Deliver, or guard, us from the evil or malicious one," and they would seem to refer to the devil, as though everything were here summed up, and the whole prayer were directed against our arch-foe. For he it is who hinders all we pray for: God's name or honour; God's kingdom and will; our daily bread; a good and joyful conscience, etc. And therefore, in summing up the whole, we say: Dear Father, help us that we may be rid of all this misfortune. But none the less it includes all the evil we encounter in the devil's kingdom—poverty, shame, death, in short, all accursed misery and sorrow, of which there is an infinity on earth. For the devil, because he is not only a liar but a murderer, unceasingly seeks to take our lives, and wreaks his anger on us wherever he can cause harm or injury to our bodies. Hence he breaks the neck of many a man, drives others out of their senses, drowns some in the water, and others he harasses so much that they take their own lives, and does many other frightful Therefore the only thing we can do on earth is to pray unceasingly against this arch-fiend, for if God did not support us we should not be safe from him one hour.

Accordingly thou seest that God desires we should pray to Him for all that concerns our bodily well-being, and that we should not seek or look for help except from Him. And this petition He has placed last, because if we are to be guarded and freed from evil, His name must first be hallowed among us, His kingdom be come to us and His will done. Thereupon He will protect us from sin and

shame and also from all that harms and hurts us.

Therefore God has briefly set forth all the necessities

that must ever beset us, so that we may have no excuse for not praying. But the strength of prayer lies in our learning to say, Amen, to it—that is, not doubting that it will assuredly be heard and fulfilled. For it is nothing else but a word expressing implicit faith, which does not pray by way of speculation, but knows that God does not deceive us when He has promised to hear us. Now, where there is no such faith there can be no true prayer.

Accordingly they are under a mischievous delusion who so pray as not to be able to say, Yea, with all their hearts, and be certain that God hears them, but remain in doubt, saying, How can I be so bold and presume to think that God hears my prayer? Am I not a miserable

sinner? etc.

This is because they do not consider God's promise, but their own work and worth, and thus despise God and charge Him with lying; wherefore they will receive nothing, for, as St. James says in his Epistle, i. 6: Let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavers is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord. See what importance God lays on the principle that we should feel certain we are not praying in vain, and that we do not in any way despise our prayers.

# FOURTH PART

## OF BAPTISM

We have now dealt with the three chief articles of the common Christian doctrine. In addition to these we must now speak of the two Sacraments instituted by Christ, of which every Christian must have, at least, a short and simple account, because without them no one can be a Christian, although unfortunately till now no instruction whatever about them has been given. In the first place we will take baptism, by which we are first received into Christianity. And in order that it may be well understood, we will speak of it plainly, and consider only what is needful for us to know. We leave the

learned to show how it can be maintained and protected

against heretics and sectarians.

In the first place it is necessary that we should be well acquainted with the words on which baptism is established, and on which all depends that we have to say of it—namely, Christ's own words at the end of the last chapter of St. Matthew: Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Also in the last chapter of St. Mark (xvi. 16): He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved: but he that believeth not shall be damned.

It must be observed firstly that these words contain God's command and ordinance, so that we may feel no doubt as to whether baptism is a Divine thing or merely devised and instituted by man. For just as I can assert that the Ten Commandments, the Creed, and the Lord's Prayer are not the outcome of any man's brains, but were given and revealed to us by God Himself, so I can maintain that baptism is no mere human device, but was ordained by God Himself; and, moreover, we are earnestly and strictly commanded to be baptised, otherwise we shall not obtain salvation, so that we are not to think it as light a matter as putting on a new red coat. For it is of the utmost consequence that it should be held in due and glorious estimation; and we have especially to fight and struggle for this, because of the world being full of sects who denounce it as merely an outward thing, and such outward things as of no use. whether it is an outward thing or not, here is God's word and command, which ordains, founds, and establishes baptism. And what God ordains and commands cannot be useless, but must be altogether a precious thing, even though in appearance it were less than a wisp of straw. Hitherto it has been esteemed a very great matter when the Pope granted absolution, or consecrated altars and churches by means of letters and bulls, and this merely because of the letters and seals: then surely we should esteem baptism a much higher and more precious thing, because God has commanded it. and it is done in His name; for the words given are Go and baptise, not in your own, but in God's name.

And to be baptised in *God's name* is to be baptised, not by man, but by God Himself. Therefore, though it is carried out by the hand of man, it is verily God's own work, from which each one of us can infer right well that it is of much greater value than any work done by any man or saint. For what kind of work can be greater than a work of God's?

But the devil sets to work here and deceives us with false appearances, and leads us from God's work to consider our own work. For it seems a much finer thing when a Carthusian monk accomplishes a number of great and difficult tasks, and we all think much more of what we ourselves do or deserve. But what the Scriptures teach is this: if we heaped up the works of all the monks, however precious and dazzling they might appear, they would not be as good or precious as one wisp of straw raised by God. Why? Because His Person is more excellent and better. And we are here not to esteem the person by the work, but the work by the person from whom it necessarily taketh its excellence. But our mad reason will not listen to this, and because God's work may not shine like ours, it is considered of no value.

Learn from this correctly to understand and properly to answer the question: What is baptism? namely, to answer thus: It is not mere common water, but a water comprised in God's word and commandment, and thereby sanctified, so that it becomes sacred water; not that the water is in itself better than other waters, but that God's word and ordinance have come upon it. Therefore it is rank wickedness, and the devil's wiles, that drive our new spirits to abuse baptism, to disregard God's ordinance, and to look upon it only as water taken from a well, and hence to use such twaddle as this: How shall a handful of water help the soul? Yea, my friend, who does not know that water is water if it be taken by itself? But how darest thou venture to interfere

with God's ordinance, and take away the most costly part which God has attached to it, and in which He has set it, and will not have separated from it? For that is the kernel in the water, God's Word or commandment and God's name, which is a treasure greater and more excellent than either heaven or earth.

Mark, then, this distinction: that baptismal water is a very different thing from other water, not because of the natural element, but because something nobler is added to it. for God Himself has bestowed upon it His honour. and given it His strength and power. Therefore it is not merely natural water, but a Divine, heavenly, holy and blessed water, and whatever else can be said in its praise, all for the sake of the Word, which is a heavenly, Divine Word, which none can glorify enough, for it is and can accomplish all that is of God. From thence also it derives its nature and is called a sacrament, as St. Augustine teaches: "Accedat verbum ad elementum. et fit sacramentum," which means, if the Word be added to the element or natural substance it becomes a sacrament, that is, a Divine and holy thing and token.

For this reason we teach always that the Sacraments and all other outward symbols which God has ordained and appointed are not to be judged by their common outward appearance, as we distinguish between the shell and a kernel, but we are to remember that they include God's Word. For we might speak in the same way of the state of father and mother and those in secular anthority, were we only to consider that they have noses, eyes, skin, hair, flesh and bone, just like Turks and heathens; and some might say: Why should I think more of them than of others? But because the commandment is given, Thou shalt honour thy father and mother. I behold a different man, adorned and clothed in the splendour and majesty of God. The commandment, I say, is the golden chain he bears about his neck. vea, is like a crown on his head, and shows me how and why I should honour this flesh and blood.

Hence thou shouldst honour and esteem baptism for

the sake of the Word, for God Himself has honoured it by word and deed, and confirmed it by miracles from heaven. For thinkest thou it was a light matter that the heavens opened when Christ allowed Himself to be baptised, and the Holy Spirit came down in visible form, manifesting the Divine glory and majesty? (Matt. iii. 16).

Accordingly I again exhort you on no account ever to consider the Word and the Water apart or to separate them. For when the Word is withheld, we have water only such as the maid uses to cook with, and such might as well be called a bath-baptism; but when treated as God has ordered, it is a sacrament, and is called Christian baptism. This is the first point respecting the nature

and value of the holy Sacrament.

In the second place, as we have now learned what baptism is and how we are to regard it, we must also learn why and wherefore it was instituted—that is, of what use it is, what it bestows and accomplishes. This cannot be done better than out of the words of Christ quoted above: He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved. Therefore, to express it in the simplest form, it may be understood to mean that the whole force, work, necessity, fruit and end of baptism is to confer salvation. For no one is baptised that he may be come a prince, but, as the words say, that he may be saved. Now, to be saved, as we know, is to be released from sin, death, and the devil, and to be brought into Christ's kingdom, and to live with Him there for ever.

Here again thou seest what a precious and important thing baptism is, because we obtain through it such an inestimable treasure; and this alone shows that it cannot be common ordinary water. For common water could not accomplish this; it is the Word that does it, and (as has been said above) because it contains God's name. And where God's name is there also is life and salvation, so that it is indeed sacred, blessed, profitable, and gracious water; for through the Word it receives the power to become a washing of regeneration, as St. Paul calls it,

in the third chapter of his Epistle to Titus.

But when our wiseacres, with their modern ideas, make out that faith alone will save us, and that work and outward things cannot effect anything, our answer is that assuredly nothing works in us but faith, as we shall see from what follows. But these blind leaders will not see that faith must have something to believe, that is, to which it can cling, on which it can stand and rest. So faith clings to the water, and believes that baptism confers salvation and life, not through the water (as has been sufficiently said), but because it embodies God's Word and Command, and because His name is attached to it. Now, in believing this, what else do I believe but on God, as on Him who has added His Word to it, and given us this outward sign, so that we may understand what a treasure we possess in it?

But there are some people mad enough to separate faith from the sign to which the faith is joined and attached, because it is an outward thing. Yea, it is and must be outward, in order that we may grasp it with our senses and understand it, and thus have it impressed on our hearts, just as the whole Gospel is an outward sermon by word of mouth. In brief, whatever God does and effects in us He accomplishes through such outward means. Now whenever He speaks, and wherever and through whatsoever He speaks, let faith look to and hold fast to it. Moreover we have the words: He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; and to what do they refer but to baptism, that is, to the water included in God's ordinance? it follows that whoever rejects baptism, rejects God's Word, faith, and Christ, who has directed us and bound us to baptism.

In the third place, having now seen the great use and power of baptism, let us further see what persons receive it, and what baptism gives them, and of what use it is. That, again, is most definitely and clearly expressed in the words: He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; that is, faith alone makes the person worthy usefully to receive the wholesome and holy water. For inasmuch as this is stated and promised in the words together with

the water, it cannot be received unless we believe it from our hearts. It will avail us nothing without faith, although in itself it be a Divine and inestimable treasure. Accordingly the few words, *He that believeth*, etc., are so pregnant that they exclude and reject all the works we ourselves may do with the idea of obtaining and deserving salvation. For it is agreed that what is not faith can contribute nothing and receives nothing.

But if they should say, as they are wont to: Is not baptism itself a work? and you say works alone are of no avail towards salvation: where then is faith? Answer: Verily, our own works will not be of any avail towards salvation, but baptism is not our work, but God's (for, as was said above, thou must make a great distinction between Christian baptism and mere bath-baptism); and God's works are wholesome and necessary for salvation, and do not exclude but demand faith, for without faith we could not lay hold of them. For merely to have the water poured over thee will not give thee baptism, to be of any use to thee; whereas it will be of use to thee if thou art baptised in the faith that it is God's command and ordinance, and in God's name, in order that thou mayest receive the promised salvation in the water. Now, neither our hand nor our body can accomplish this; our hearts must believe it.

Accordingly thou canst see clearly that this is not any work of ours, but a blessing which God gives us and faith comprehends; just as our Lord Christ on the cross is not a work, but a blessing comprehended in the Word, and offered to us and received through faith. Therefore those do us injustice who raise an outcry against us and say that we preach against faith; whereas we are always urging it as so essential, inasmuch as nothing can be

received or enjoyed without it.

These, therefore, are the three points which must be understood concerning this Sacrament, more especially that it is God's ordinance and must be held in all honour; and this alone should be sufficient, even though it is quite an outward thing. Just as in the case of the

commandment: Thou shalt honour thy father and thy mother, which is directed to flesh and blood; yet we do not consider the mere flesh and blood, but God's commandment in which they are comprehended, and for the sake of which the flesh and blood receive the names father and mother. Hence, if we had no more than the words: Go ye therefore and baptise, etc., we should have to accept and act upon it as God's ordinance. And we have not only the command and order, but also the promise; wherefore it is even more glorious than anything else that God has commanded and ordained; in short, so full of comfort and mercy that heaven and earth cannot grasp it. And it requires capacity to believe such a thing; the treasure is not wanting, but we want the power to comprehend and to hold by it.

Accordingly every Christian has enough to do all his life long to study and to exercise himself in baptism; for he has ever to take heed that he firmly believes what it promises and brings him-namely, victory over the devil and death, the forgiveness of sins, God's mercy, all Christ, and the Holy Spirit with His gifts. In short, it is so inestimable a blessing that if our foolish nature did but consider, it might well doubt whether it could all be true. Dost thou not think that, if there were a physician who knew the art of keeping people from dying, or if they died, gave them everlasting life afterwards, all the world would flock to him and shower their gold upon him, so that none could come near him because of the rich? But by baptism every one has a like blessing and medicine bestowed on him for nothing, one which will swallow up death and preserve us all in life.

It is thus we must look on baptism and make it useful to us, that we may be comforted and strengthened by its means when our sins and our conscience trouble us, and may say: Still, I am baptised, and being baptised I have received the promise that I shall be saved, and have eternal life for both body and soul. And this is why the two signs occur in baptism: the water is poured on

our body, which can grasp only the water, and the Word is spoken, that our soul may likewise grasp it. And as both Word and water constitute one baptism, so both body and soul shall be saved and live for ever, the soul through the Word in which it believes, the body because it is connected with the soul and receives baptism so far as it can receive it. Therefore we have no greater blessing for body and soul; because through it we are rendered most holy and blessed, which no other life or work on earth could obtain for us.

We have now said as much concerning the nature, use and object of baptism as is required here.

### OF THE BAPTISM OF INFANTS

There arises now a question with which the devil and his sects would confound the world: the question of the baptism of infants, whether they can have faith and be properly baptised? To which we say briefly: Let him who is simple cast the question aside, and refer it to those acquainted with the subject. However, if thou desirest to answer, answer thus: that the baptism of children is pleasing to Christ is sufficiently proved by His own actions, God having made many of them holy, and given the gift of the Holy Spirit to those who were thus baptised; and to this day there are many who show signs of possessing the gift of the Holy Spirit both in doctrine and in life; just as we, too, are enabled by God's grace to interpret the Scriptures and to know Christ, which we could not do without the aid of the Holy Spirit. Whereas if God did not accept infant baptism, He would not bestow on any of them the gift of the Holy Spirit or any portion of it; in short, from time immemorial to this day no one on earth could have been a Christian. But as God has confirmed baptism by the gift of His own Holy Spirit, as we perceive in various Fathers of the Church, such as St. Bernard, Gerson, John Huss and others, who were baptised in infancy; and the holy Christian Church will abide till the end of the world,

it will have to be admitted that such infant baptism is pleasing to God. For He can never act contrary to Himself or promote lies and wickedness, or bestow on these His grace and blessing. This is almost the best and strongest proof for ignorant, simple folk. For no one can take from us or overthrow this article: I believe in the Holy Christian Church, the Community of Saints, etc.

Further, we maintain that it is not of the utmost importance whether he who is baptised has faith or not, for this will not make the baptism wrong; everything depends on God's Word and command. This is perhaps a little boldly expressed, but it is based on what I have already said: that baptism is nothing but water and God's Word, in and with each other—that is, if the Word is with the water the baptism is right, although the faith be not present. For my faith does not make the baptism, but receives baptism. Now the baptism does not become wrong, although it may not be rightly received nor used, because (as has been said) it is not bound to our faith, but to the Word. For, even though a Jew were, to-day, to come to us with deceitful and evil purpose, and we were to baptise him in all seriousness, we should none the less have to admit that the baptism is right: for there was the water together with God's Word, although he did not receive it as he should have; in the same way as those who unworthily partake of the Sacrament receive the true Sacrament, although they have no faith in it.

Accordingly thou seest that the objections raised by these sectaries are of no value. For, as we said, even though children have not faith—which is not the case, as has been proved—yet the baptism would be right, and let no one baptise them again. In the same way the Sacrament itself is not affected, even though a man partake of it with evil purpose, and it could not be tolerated that, because of that abuse, he should at the same hour receive it again, as though he had not truly received the Sacrament: that would be to insult and dishonour the Sacrament in the worst possible

manner. How can we imagine that God's Word and ordinance could be wrong and of no value, because we

put them to a wrong use?

Wherefore I say, if thou hast not believed, believe now, and speak thus: the baptism was assuredly right, but unfortunately I did not receive it rightly. For I, and all who are baptised, must address God thus: I come to Thee in my faith and in that of others, yet cannot rely on my own faith or the prayers of those who pray for me: what I rely upon is, that it is Thy Word and command. Just as I go to the Sacrament, not because of my own faith, but because of Christ's words; whether I be strong or weak, I leave God to judge. I know, however, that He bids me go eat and drink, etc., and gives me His body and blood, and that this will never lie to me or deceive me.

Now it is thus also with infant baptism. We bring the child in the belief and hope that it has faith, and pray God to give it faith; but we do not baptise it on this account, but solely because God has commanded it. Why so? Because we know that God does not lie: I and my neighbour and all the world may err and deceive,

but God's Word cannot deceive.

Therefore it is only foolish, presumptuous persons who argue and infer that, where there is no faith, the baptism cannot be right. I might in the same way argue that, if I have no faith, Christ is nothing worth; or, if I am not obcdient, father and mother and my superiors are nothing worth. Is it a wise conclusion that because a man does not do what he ought to do, therefore the thing itself is of no consequence and of no value? My good friend, look at it differently, and rather reason thus: Baptism is a real thing and is right, but may have been wrongly received. For if it were not right in itself, we could not abuse it or sin against it. Wherefore it is said: "Abusus non tollit, sed confirmat substantiam," Abuse does not remove the substance, but confirms it. For gold is none the less gold because a harlot wears it in sin and shame.

Therefore let it be concluded that baptism is always right and retains its full force, even though only one man had been baptised and had no proper faith. For God's ordinance and Word cannot be made variable or be changed by mankind. But there are fanatics so blinded that they do not discern God's Word and command, and regard baptism as though it were but water in a brook or pot, and those in authority as though they were ordinary people; and because they see neither faith nor obedience, these things are to be considered of no value whatever. This is the work of a sly, rebellious devil, who would gladly tear the sceptre from those in authority, so that it might be trampled under foot, and otherwise perverts and destroys Therefore we must be God's work and ordinances. watchful and prepared, and not be turned or led astrav from the Word, so as to neglect baptism or regard it as an empty sign, as these fanatics fancy it to be.

Lastly, we must also know what baptism signifies, and why God has ordered such outward signs and actions to accompany the sacrament through which we are first received into Christianity. Now the function or action is that we are submerged in the water which flows over us, and we are then taken out again. These two actions. the submersion and the emersion, indicate the power and function of baptism, and are nothing else than the killing of the old Adam in us and the resurrection of the new man, both of which will continue in us all our life long; hence a Christian life is nothing else but a daily baptism, once begun and to be always continued. For it must be done without intermission, so that everything pertaining to the old Adam may be swept away, and all that pertains to the new man may come forth. But what is the old Adam? It is that which we inherit from Adam; all that is wrathful, hateful, envious, unchaste, avaricious, idle, presumptuous, yea, unbelieving; he is burdened with all sin—in fact, there is nothing good in Now, when we come into Christ's kingdom, all this should daily diminish in us, and we should gradually

become more gentle, more patient, kinder, and gradually overcome our avarice, hate, envy, and arrogance.

This is the right use of baptism among Christians, as indicated by baptism with water. Now, where this is not done, and the old Adam in us is left uncurbed, so that he becomes stronger, this is not only not making use of baptism, but is resisting baptism. For those who are outside Christ cannot but become daily worse. as the proverb says with truth: evil unchecked waxeth worse and worse. If a man has been proud and avaricious a year ago, he will be much more proud and avaricious this year; hence the vice of youth grows and increases. A young child has no special vice in itself, but when it grows up it becomes vicious and unchaste; if it attains full manhood, the real vices begin, and the more it yields the more they increase. Wherefore the old Adam in us goes unchecked unless he is restrained and curbed by the power of baptism. Again, when we become Christians, the old nature in us daily grows weaker, till at length it is altogether subdued. That means being well submerged in baptism and daily emerging again. So the outer sign is given, not only that it may work efficaciously, but also that it may signify something. Accordingly, where we have faith and its fruits, it is not a thing of empty signification, but the effect also is there; where there is no faith it remains a mere barren symbol.

And here thon seest that both in its power and its signification baptism includes the third Sacrament, which has been called Repentance, but which is really nothing else than baptism. For what does repentance mean but earnestly attacking the old Adam in us and beginning a new life? Therefore, if thou livest in repentance, thou art receiving baptism, which not only signifies a new life, but accomplishes it, starts it and hastens it; for by means of it we receive God's grace and spirit, and power to subdue the old Adam, so that the new man may arise in us and wax strong.

Therefore baptism will always hold good; and though some fall away and sin, they can always return to it in order to subdue again the old Adam. But we may not be re-baptised with water, for though we were submerged a hundred times in the water, it would be no more than one baptism, for the act and signification always remain and endure. So that repentance is nothing but a return and re-entry into baptism, that we may repeat what was once begun and let drop.

I say this that it may not be imagined, as has been done for some time past, that baptism loses its force and is no longer of any use after we have again fallen back into sin. This is because it is regarded only in the light of a work accomplished, and has, in fact, arisen from St. Jerome having written that: Repentance is the other sacrament by which we have to swim across and get ashore after the ship has foundered in which we entered the Christian Church. But this would be depriving baptism of its value by making it of no further use. Wherefore this is not rightly expressed: for the ship does not founder, because (as has been said) it is God's ordinance, not anything of our making; but what does happen is, that we slip and fall away. Hence, if any one fall away, let him see to it that he swim back again and hold on till he can enter again, and go on therein, as he did at first.

Thus we see what a truly excellent thing baptism is, which pulls us out of the devil's jaws, makes us God's own children, subdues and removes sin, daily strengthens the new man in us, and always remains with us till we pass from misery to everlasting glory. Therefore every one should regard baptism as a garment for every day use, which he should always have on, that he may ever be in the midst of faith and its fruits, in order to be able to subdue the old Adam and go forward in the new man. For if we would be Christians, we must adhere to the work which makes us Christians. If any one fall away, let him return again. For as Christ, on His mercy-seat, does not withdraw Himself from us, or refuse to let us return to Him, although we have sinned, so all His blessings and gifts remain with us. Now, as the forgive-

ness of sins is once for all received through baptism, it remains with us day by day as long as we live—that is, as long as we have the old Adam about us.

#### OF THE SACRAMENT OF THE ALTAR

In the same way as we have spoken of holy baptism, we must now speak of this other Sacrament, that is, these three things: what it is, what its use is, and who may receive it. And all this is based on the words with which Christ instituted it, and every one who would be a Christian and partake of the Sacrament should know them. For we are not disposed to grant or to bestow it on those who do not know what they seek in it, or why they come. The words are as follows:—

The Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread: and when He had given thanks, He brake it, and gave it to His disciples, and said: Tuke, eat; this is My body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance

of Me.

After the same manner also He took the cup, when He had supped, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying: Drink ye all of it. This cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you for the remission of sins; this do ye as oft as ye drink it in remembrance of Me (Matt. xxvi. 26, sqq.; Mark xiv. 22, sqq.; Luke xxii. 19,

sqq.; 1 Cor. xi. 23, sqq.

We do not mean, here, to dispute and argue with the blasphemers and abusers of this Sacrament, but in the first place to learn what is the point of chief weight in it, as we did with baptism, namely, that it is God's Word and ordinance or command; for it was not invented or instituted by any man, but was ordained by Christ without the advice or suggestion of any man. Therefore, as the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer and the Creed retain their power and value whether we keep the commandments or not, whether we pray or not, and whether we have faith or not, so this most holy Sacrament remains unalterable; it is not divested of anything, even

though we receive it and treat it unworthily. Dost thou think that God takes into consideration our actions and belief, so as to change His ordinances because of them? Everything in the world remains as God created and ordained it, however we may treat and use it. This must always be borne in mind, for with it we can reject almost all the babbling of the sectarians, for they regard the Sacrament apart from God's Word and as a thing that we do.

Now, what is the Sacrament of the Altar? Answer: It is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ in and under the bread and wine, through Christ's Word, appointed for us Christians to eat and drink. And, as we said when speaking of baptism, that it is not mere water, so we say again here that the Sacrament is bread and wine; but not mere bread and wine such as is ordinarily placed before us at meals, but bread and wine

comprehended in God's Word and bound up in it.

The Word (I say) is what makes and distinguishes the Sacrament, so that it is not mere bread and wine, but is, and is called, the body and blood of Christ; for it is written: "Accedat verbum ad elementum et fit sacramentum:" when the Word is added to the outward thing, it becomes a Sacrament. This saying of St. Augustine is so precise and well expressed that he has scarcely said anything better. The Word must make the element a sacrament, otherwise it remains a mere element. Now, it is the Word and ordinance, not of a prince or an emperor, but of the Most High God; wherefore all His creatures shall fall at His feet, saying, Yea, it shall be as He says, and shall be accepted in all honour, fear, and humility.

With these words thou canst strengthen thy conscience and say:—Even though a hundred thousand devils with all their fanatics were to come and ask: How can bread and wine be the body and blood of Christ, etc.?—yet I know that all the spirits and learned men together are not as wise as is the little finger of the Almighty. And we have here Christ's own words: Take, eat; this is My body: drink ye all of it; this is the new testament in My

blood. Let us hold to this, and see who can overcome Him, or make it different from what He said. It is certainly true that if the Word be omitted, or it be regarded without the Word, then we should have nothing but mere bread and wine, whereas if the Word remains where it should and must be, then by means of it we have the veritable body and blood of Christ. For as we have it from the mouth of Christ Himself, so it shall be, for He cannot lie or deceive.

It is therefore easy to meet all the various kinds of questions with which people vex themselves now-a-days. such as: whether a wicked priest may touch or administer the Sacrament, and other similar ones. For we must reason thus and say: Though it be a rogue who takes or gives the Sacrament, it is the right Sacrament—that is. Christ's body and blood—just as though he handled it with utmost reverence. For it is not based on the holiness of mankind, but upon God's Word; and since no saint on earth, yea, no angel in heaven, can make bread and wine into Christ's body and blood, so no one can change or alter it, although it be wrongly used. For neither the person nor the unbelief can falsify the Word by which it became a Sacrament and was instituted as such. For He did not say: If ye believe or are worthy, ye have My body and blood; but Take, eat and drink; this is My body and blood: this do (that is, what I do now institute, give you, and bid you take). This is as much as to say, whether thou art worthy or unworthy, thou hast here His body and blood by virtue of these words, which come to the bread and wine. Mark this and remember it well, for on these words is based our whole defence. protection and support against all errors and temptations which have ever arisen or may yet arise.

Thus we have here briefly the first part, which concerns the nature of the Sacrament. Now let us see further, wherein lies the power and use of the Sacrament, why it was instituted, and what is its most essential part, so that we may know what we are to seek in and obtain from it. Now, this is easily and clearly seen from the words already quoted: This is My body and blood, given for you and shed for the remission of sins. This is briefly as much as saying: we take the Sacrament to receive a treasure, through and in which we obtain forgiveness of sins. Why so? Because the words so stand, and confer it upon us; for this is why He bids me eat and drink, so that it may be mine and be of use to me as a certain sign and a pledge, yea, that very blessing, which was instituted for my benefit against my sins,

death, and all misfortune.

Wherefore it is well named food for the soul, which nourishes and strengthens the new man in us; for through baptism we are first born anew. But, as has been said before, we retain the old skin in our flesh and blood: the devil and the world so hinder and tempt us that we often grow weary and tired, and at times stumble. Wherefore it is given us for our daily need and nourishment, so that our faith may be strengthened and refreshed. and that we may not fall back in such struggles, but ever increase in strength. For the new life in us is to be so constituted that it shall ever increase and continue. Yet it shall have to endure a great deal; for the devil is such an angry foe, that when he sees that he is resisted, that we endeavour to subdue the old Adam in us, and that he cannot overcome us by violence, he sneaks and slinks about on all sides, trying all his arts, and never ceases till he has utterly wearied us out, so that we either drop our faith, prostrate ourselves before him, or grow out of heart and impatient. Wherefore this comfort is given us: that, when our heart feels too sorely pressed, it may draw renewed strength and comfort from the Sacrament.

But here our wiseacres, with all their great learning and wisdom, contort themselves in their loud outcries: How can bread and wine forgive sins or strengthen faith? They might hear and know that we do not say this of the bread and wine, where these are nothing but bread and wine, but of such bread and wine as are the body and blood of Christ, and wherein the Word is included. This it is, we repeat, that is the treasure and no other, through

which we obtain forgiveness of sins: in no other wise is it granted and given us than in the words, for you given and shed; herein thou seest both that it is Christ's body and blood, and that it is bestowed on thee as a treasure and gift. Now, Christ's body can never be a vain and profitless thing, effecting and accomplishing nothing. Still, however great the blessing is in itself, it must be contained in the Word, and be offered to us, else we could neither know of it nor seek it.

Wherefore it comes to nothing when they say: Christ's body and blood are not given or shed for us in the Lord's Supper, and therefore we cannot obtain forgiveness of sins in the Sacrament. For although the work was accomplished on the cross and the forgiveness of sins was obtained there, still it cannot come to us otherwise than through the Word. Else how should we have known that this had been done or been obtained for us, had we not been told of it in sermons, or heard of it by word of mouth? How could we know anything about it, or how could we conceive or comprehend anything about the forgiveness, if we did not accept and believe the Scriptures and the Gospel? Now the whole Gospel and the article of the Creed: I believe in one holy Christian Church, the forgiveness of sins, etc., is incorporated in the Sacrament by the Word and revealed to us. Why should we let such a blessing be torn as under from the Sacrament? They have to admit after all that these are the very words given us in the Gospel, and they cannot maintain that these words are of no use in the Sacrament, just as little as they can declare that the whole Gospel or the Word of God is of no use.

Thus we have the whole Sacrament, what it is in itself and what it bestows on us and accomplishes. Now let us see what persons can receive this strength and benefit. This can be most briefly stated, as we did above and elsewhere when speaking of baptism, by the words: Whoever believes has what the words promise and what they bring. For they are not spoken or addressed to stone or wood, but to those who hear them, and to whom

Christ says: Take and eat, etc. And because He offers and promises forgiveness of sins, it cannot be received otherwise than through faith. Such faith He Himself demands when He says: For you given and for you shed, as though He would have said: I give it you and bid you eat and drink, that you may accept it and enjoy it. Now, he who takes this to heart, and believes it to be true, has it; whereas he who does not believe, has it not, for he allows it to be offered to him in vain, and cannot enjoy the gracious blessing. The blessing is opened to us and at every one's door—yea, on every one's table; still it is necessary that thou accept it and believe it faithfully, as given by the words.

This is all that is required by a Christian, to prepare him for receiving the Sacrament worthily. For since this blessing is offered in the words, we cannot grasp or accept it otherwise with our hearts; with our hand we could not grasp such a gift and everlasting blessing. Fasting, praying, etc., may perhaps serve as an outward preparation, and a discipline for the simple, so that our body be kept chaste and reverent towards the body and blood of Christ, but that which is given in and with it cannot be comprehended or obtained by our body. But the faith of the heart does it, as it recognises the blessing, and desires it. This is sufficient for all ordinary instruction in this Sacrament; whatever else remains to be said, is for another occasion.

In conclusion, and because we have now the right understanding and knowledge of the Sacrament, it is necessary to add a warning and exhortation that this great blessing, which is daily administered amongst Christians, should not be offered in vain, that those who would be Christians should be prepared to receive the Holy Sacrament often. For it is evident that we are apt to grow lax and careless in the matter, and there are a great number of persons who accept the Gospel, but who, because the Pope's inventions are done away with, and they feel themselves freed from his authority and commands, go for a year, or even for two or three years,

without receiving the Sacrament, as though they were such strong Christians that they had no need of it; and many let themselves be deterred or frightened from it, because they have been taught that none should receive it unless they feel the necessary hunger and thirst that would urge them to partake of it. Others maintain that it is a matter of choice, not a necessity, and that it is sufficient if they have faith otherwise; the end being, that the greater number become so rude that they despise both the Sacrament and God's Word.

Now it is true, as has already been said, that we must neither compel nor force any one, for fear of committing a new soul-murder. But this, nevertheless, we must know: that such persons as reject or withdraw themselves for so long a time from the Sacrament are not to be looked on as Christians; for Christ did not institute it for us to make a spectacle of it, but it was His command to Christians that they should eat and drink it in remembrance of Him. And those who are true Christians and value and esteem the Sacrament ought, indeed, to urge and force themselves to receive it. But, in order that simpler and weaker folk, who would also gladly be Christians, may be more tempted to consider the reason and the necessity which should induce them to receive it, we will dwell on this point a little. For just as in other matters which concern faith, love, and patience, it is not sufficient merely to teach and instruct, but daily to admonish, so it is necessary, here likewise, to rouse people with sermons lest they grow lax or disheartened, because we know and feel that the devil for ever opposes this and all other Christian work, and hounds and harasses men as much as he can.

In the first place we have the plain text in the words of Christ: this do in remembrance of me. These words command and order all those who would be Christians to partake of the Sacrament. Therefore whoever would be one of Christ's followers, to whom the words are spoken; let him think of this and hold to it, not because he is forced by others, but because of his obedience and love

to Christ. Thou mayest say: but it is also written, as oft as ve do it, which shows that He forces none, but leaves it to free choice. Answer: True, but it is not said that we are never to partake of it; yea rather, when He says: As oft as ye do it, it is intimated that we should partake of it often, and the words are, in fact, added because He will have the Sacrament free, not bound to any special period of time like the paschal lamb of the Jews, which has to be eaten only once a year, and, indeed, on the evening of the fourteenth day of the first full moon, and not a day later (Numbers ix. 5). It is as though He meant to say, I institute an Easter feast or Supper for you, which you are to partake of, not only on this one evening once a year, but frequently, and when and where you choose, according to your opportunity and necessity, and in no way bound by any definite place or time; although the Pope has altered this, and turned it again into a Jewish feast.

Hence thou seest no freedom is granted thee to treat it with contempt. For I call it treating the Sacrament with contempt to allow a long time to pass without receiving it, when there is nothing to hinder us. If thou wouldst enjoy this freedom, thou canst have still more freedom, and cease being a Christian, and neither pray nor believe, for both are equally Christ's commandments. If thou wouldst be a Christian, thou must from time to time fulfil and obey this command; for it should move thee to enter into thyself and to reflect thus: What manner of Christian am I? Were I one, I should long

a little for that which my Master bade me do.

And since we so shirk it, it is clear what manner of Christians we must have been under the papacy, for we went to the Sacrament then simply because we were forced, and because we feared human commands, without any desire or love for it, and unmindful of Christ's command. Whereas now we force and compel no one, and no one may venture to partake of it merely to serve and please us. It should suffice to incite and urge thee that He desires it, and that it pleases Him. We should

not allow any man to force us to believe or to do any other good work. All we do is to speak and to admonish thee as to what thou shouldst do, not for our sake, but for thine own. He calls on us and urges us; if thou despisest His call, thou must answer for it thyself.

This is the first point we have to mention, especially for the cold and indifferent, that they may reflect and be aroused. For it is certainly true, as I have experienced in myself, and as every one will find out for himself, that if we withhold ourselves from it, we shall, day by day, grow ruder and colder, and soon cast it to the winds altogether. Whereas we ought to question heart and conscience, and act like men who would gladly do right before God. The more we do this, the more our hearts will be warmed and stirred within us, and never grow cold.

But shouldst thou say: What if I feel I am not prepared? Answer: This is also a delusion, due especially to the old custom under the Pope, when men tortured themselves to become quite pure, that God might find no flaw in them; and we all became so timid, that in our distress we exclaimed: Alas! I am not worthy. For then nature and reason begin to contrast our unworthiness with the great and priceless blessing, and it seems like a dark lantern compared with the clear bright sun, or like dung by the side of precious gems; and because they see this, people will not partake of it, or they wait till they become worthy, and thus week succeeds week, and one half-year the other. But if thou art for ever enquiring how good and pure thou art, and striving that conscience may never bite thee, thou wilt never come to the Sacrament.

Wherefore we must distinguish between people. To those who are insolent and unruly it should be said that they had better remain away, for they are not fit to receive forgiveness of sins, inasmuch as they show no desire for it and an unwillingness to act worthily. But others, who are not unruly or evil-minded persons, and who would like to act righteously, should not withdraw

from the Sacrament, even though they are weak and sinful. For, as St. Hilary says: If the sin committed be not one for which the transgressor is justly expelled from the congregation, he is not to abstain from the Sacrament, so that he may not be deprived of life. No one can ever attain such a state of excellence, that he will not retain many daily faults in flesh and blood.

Accordingly, such people must learn that the chief point is to know that the Sacrament does not depend on our own worthiness; for we do not have ourselves baptised as being holy and worthy, nor do we come to confession as though we were pure and without sin; but for the very opposite reason, as being poor, miserable beingsin fact, just because we are unworthy; unless, indeed, any one came who did not desire either absolution or mercy, and had no thought of improving himself. But those who desire mercy and comfort ought to urge themselves to partake, and not allow any one to frighten them from so doing, and speak thus: I would fain be worthy, but I do not come in my worthiness, but in Thy Word, because Thou hast commanded it, and I come as one who desires to be Thy disciple, whatever my own worthiness may be. Now, this is difficult; for it is always a stumbling-block and hindrance to us that we think more of ourselves than of Christ's Word and utterance. For human nature would like to rely and depend on itself; where it cannot do so, it will do nothing. Let this suffice for the first part.

In the second place, as has been said above, a promise is attached to the command which ought most strongly to urge and induce us. For we have the kind and friendly words: This is my body, given for you; this is my blood, shed for you for the remission of sins. These words, as I have said, are not preached to either stock or stone, but to me and thee, otherwise Christ might as well have been silent and not instituted any Sacrament. Therefore consider well, and bring thyself within the "you," that He may not speak to thee in vain.

For He there offers us all the blessings He brought

us from heaven, to which He invites us most graciously when He says, in the eleventh chapter of St. Matthew: Come unto Me, all ye that are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Now, it is a sin and shame that when He invites us so truly and heartily, and admonishes us for our highest and best good, we will not listen, but go our ways till we grow cold and hard, and at length feel neither desire nor love for it. We must not regard the Sacrament as a hurtful thing from which we must fly, but as an altogether wholesome and comforting medicine, which will help us, and give life to both body and soul. For where the soul is made whole, the body also is helped. Why, therefore, should we act as though it were poison, to partake of which would be our death?

It is indeed true that they who despise it, and lead unchristian lives, take it to their harm and damnation; to them it is neither good nor wholesome, much in the same way as though a sick man, in his wilfulness, ate and drank what his physician had forbidden. Those, however, who feel their weakness and would gladly be rid of it, and who desire help, must regard and use it as a precious antidote against the poison they have in themselves. For here in the Sacrament thou wilt receive from Christ's mouth forgiveness of sin, which includes and brings with it God's Grace, His Spirit, and all His gifts, protection, refuge, and strength against death, the devil, and all misfortunes.

Accordingly thou hast, on God's part, both Christ's command and promise; and for thine own sake thou shouldst be induced to partake of it by the need which weighs upon thee, and for the sake of which this command, inducement, and promise were given. For Christ Himself says: They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick—that is, those who are troubled and burdened with sin, fear of death, temptation of the flesh and the devil. If thou art burdened, and dost feel thy weakness, accept it cheerfully, and be refreshed, comforted, strengthened. For if thou thinkest to delay

till thou art rid of such feelings, so that thou mayest come pure and worthy to the Sacrament, then thou must ever remain away; for He has pronounced this judgment and said: If thou art pure and upright, then thou dost not need me, nor do I need thee. Therefore only those are unworthy, who do not feel their sins and will not

admit that they are sinners.

If, however, thou shouldst ask: What am I to do if I feel not this need, and neither hunger nor thirst for the Sacrament? Answer: For those who are so disposed that they feel no need, I know of no better counsel than that they look into their own bosoms and see whether they are not made of flesh and blood. If thou findest thou art, then refer to St. Paul and hear what he says in his Epistle to the Galatians (v. 19, 20) as to what manner of fruit thy flesh is: Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such-like. Wherefore, if thou canst not feel it, nevertheless must thou believe the Scriptures, which tell thee no falsehoods, and know thy flesh better than thou dost. Yea, St. Paul says further to the Romans (vii. 18), For I know that in me—that is, in my flesh—dwelleth no good thing. If St. Paul could say this of his flesh, we cannot pretend to be any better or more holy. And when we do not feel this. it is so much the worse, for it is a sign that our flesh is leprous flesh, which feels nothing, and yet is vicious and consumes what is around it. But (as has been said) if thou art so deadened, believe the Scriptures, which pronounce judgment on thee. In fact, the less thou feelest thy sins and weaknesses, the more cause hast thou to go to the Sacrament to seek help and medicine.

Further, look around thee and see if thou art in the world; or, if thou knowest it not, ask thy neighbour. And if thou art in the world, think not that sin and need will be absent. Then set to work, and act as though thou wouldst become pious, and hold to the

Gospel, and watch if no one be thy foe and do thee harm, wrong or violence, and give thee occasion for sin and wrong-doing. Hast thou not experienced this thyself, then know of it from the Bible, which bears witness and testimony of it to the world.

Besides which, thou wilt have the devil around thee, and thou wilt not get the better of him entirely, for Christ Himself did not escape him. Now, what is the devil? Nothing else than what the Scriptures call him: a liar and murderer (John viii. 44), a liar and deceiver, who entices the heart away from God's Word, so that thou canst not feel thy need nor come to Christ; a murderer, who grudges thee every minute of thy life. If thou couldst see the many knives, spears and arrows that are aimed at thee every moment, thou wouldst be glad to come to the Sacrament as often as thou couldst. And that we go our ways with such assurance and heedlessness is simply because we neither think nor believe that we are in the flesh and the wicked world, or under the devil's dominion.

Wherefore see to it, and practise this well, and examine thyself, or look around thee a little, and hold to the Scriptures. And if thou then feelest nothing, thou hast all the more need to lament, both to God and to thy brother. Let them counsel thee and pray for thee, and do not cease thy cry till the stone has rolled from thy heart. Then thou wilt be helped in thy need, and thou wilt see that thou hast fallen twice as low as any other poor sinner, and hast far more need of the Sacrament to protect thee from the misery which, alas! thou canst not see, but which through God's mercy thou mayest feel more and more, and become more hungry for it; especially because the devil so harasses thee and unceasingly attacks thee, in order to catch thee and ruin thee in body and soul, so that thou art not safe from him one hour. How suddenly might he plunge thee in misery and need, when thou wast least prepared to resist him!

Let this be said by way of exhortation, not only to those of us who are already grown up and old, but

especially to the young, who should be brought up in the Christian doctrine and a right understanding of it. For in this manner we can more readily bring the Ten Commandments, the Creed, and the Lord's Prayer to the young, so that they may receive them with pleasure and earnestness, and that they may practise them, and become accustomed to them from their youth upwards. For it is almost useless to try and alter things with old people; we must enlighten those who are to come after us, to fill our offices and to do our work, so that they in their turn may bring up their children profitably, to uphold God's Word and Christendom. Therefore let the head of a household know that he is bound by God's command and order to teach his children this, or to see that they are taught what they ought to know. For, having been baptised and received into the Christian faith, they ought likewise to enjoy the communion of the Sacrament, in order that they may serve us and be useful; for they must all help us to believe, to love, to pray, and to fight the devil.

# THE THREE PRIMARY WORKS OF DR. MARTIN LUTHER

I

To the Christian Mobility of the German Mation respecting the Reformation of the Christian Estate.

**JESUS** 

#### 1.—DEDICATORY LETTER

To the respected and worthy Nicolaus von Amsdorff, Licentiate in the Holy Scriptures and Canon of Wittenberg,\* my particular and affectionate friend.

## DR. MARTINUS LUTHER.

THE grace and peace of God be with you, respected, worthy Sir, and dear friend!

The time for silence is gone, and the time to speak has come, as we read in Ecclesiastes (iii. 7). I have, in conformity with our resolve, put together some few points concerning the reformation of the Christian estate, with the intent of placing the same before the Christian nobility of the German nation, in case it may please God to help His Church by means of the laity, inasmuch as the clergy, whom this task rather befitted, have become quite careless. I send all this to your worship, to judge and to amend where needed. I am well aware that I shall not escape the reproach of taking far too much upon me in presuming, insignificant and forsaken as I am, to address such high estates on such weighty and great subjects, as if there were no one in the world but Dr. Luther to have a care for Christianity and to give advice to such wise people.

Let who will blame me, I shall not offer any excuse. Perhaps I still owe God and the world another folly.

<sup>\*</sup> Nicolaus von Amsdorff (1483—1565) was a colleague of Luther at the university of Wittenberg, and one of his most zealous fellow-workers in the cause of the Reformation.

This debt I have now resolved honestly to discharge, as well as may be, and to be Court fool for once in my life; if I fail, I shall at any rate gain this advantage: that no one need buy me a fool's cap or shave my poll. But it remains to be seen which shall hang the bells on the other. I must fulfil the proverb, "When anything is to be done in the world, a monk must be in it, were it only as a painted figure." I suppose it has often happened that a fool has spoken wisely, and wise men have often done foolishly, as St. Paul says, "If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise" (1 Cor. iii. 18).

Now, inasmuch as I am not only a fool, but also a sworn doctor of the Holy Scriptures, I am glad that I have an opportunity of fulfilling my oath, just in this fool's way. I beg you to excuse me to the moderately wise, for I know not how to deserve the favour and grace of the supremely wise, which I have so often sought with much labour, but now for the future shall

neither have nor regard.

God help us to seek not our glory, but His alone. Amen.

Wittenberg, in the monastry of St. Augustine, on the eve of St. John the Baptist in the year 1520.

**JESUS** 

#### 2.—INTRODUCTION

To his most Serene and Mighty Imperial Majesty and to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation.

### Dr. MARTINUS LUTHER.

The grace and might of God be with you, Most Serene

Majesty, most gracious, well-beloved gentlemen!

It is not out of mere arrogance and perversity that I, an individual poor man, have taken upon me to address your lordships. The distress and misery that oppress all the Christian estates, more especially in Germany, have led not only myself, but every one else, to cry aloud and to ask for help, and have now forced me too to cry out and to ask if God would give His Spirit to any one to reach a hand to His wretched people. Councils have often put forward some remedy, but it has adroitly been frustrated, and the evils have become worse, through the cunning of certain men. Their malice and wickedness I will now, by the help of God, expose, so that, being known, they may henceforth cease to be so obstructive and injurious. God has given us a young and noble sovereign,\* and by this has roused great hopes in many hearts; now it is right that we too should do what we can, and make good use of time and grace.

The first thing that we must do is to consider the matter with great earnestness, and, whatever we attempt, not to trust in our own strength and wisdom alone, even if the power of all the world were ours; for God will not endure that a good work should be begun trusting to our own strength and wisdom. He destroys it; it is all useless, as we read in Psalm xxxiii., "There is no king saved by the multitude of a host; a mighty man is not delivered by much strength." And I fear it is for

<sup>\*</sup> Charles V. was at that time not quite twenty years of age.

that reason that those beloved princes the Emperors Frederick, the First and the Second, and many other German emperors were, in former times, so piteously spurned and oppressed by the popes, though they were feared by all the world. Perchance they trusted rather in their own strength than in God; therefore they could not but fall; and how would the sanguinary tyrant Julius II. have risen so high in our own days but that, I fear, France, Germany, and Venice trusted to themselves? The children of Benjamin slew forty-two thousand Israelites, for this reason: that these trusted to their own strength (Judges xx., etc.).

That such a thing may not happen to us and to our noble Emperor Charles, we must remember that in this matter we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers of the darkness of this world (Eph. vi. 12), who may fill the world with war and bloodshed. but cannot themselves be overcome thereby. We must renounce all confidence in our natural strength, and take the matter in hand with humble trust in God; we must seek God's help with earnest prayer, and have nothing before our eyes but the misery and wretchedness of Christendom, irrespective of what punishment the wicked may deserve. If we do not act thus, we may begin the game with great pomp; but when we are well in it, the spirits of evil will make such confusion that the whole world will be immersed in blood, and yet nothing be done. Therefore let us act in the fear of God and prudently. The greater the might of the foe, the greater is the misfortune, if we do not act in the fear of God and with humility. If popes and Romanists have hitherto, with the devil's help, thrown kings into confusion, they may still do so, if we attempt things with our own strength and skill, without God's help.

## 3.—THE THREE WALLS OF THE ROMANISTS

The Romanists have, with great adroitness, drawn three walls round themselves, with which they have hitherto

protected themselves, so that no one could reform them,

whereby all Christendom has fallen terribly.

Firstly, if pressed by the temporal power, they have affirmed and maintained that the temporal power has no jurisdiction over them, but, on the contrary, that the spiritual power is above the temporal.

Secondly, if it were proposed to admonish them with the Scriptures, they objected that no one may interpret

the Scriptures but the Pope.

Thirdly, if they are threatened with a council, they

pretend that no one may call a council but the Pope.

Thus they have secretly stolen our three rods, so that they may be unpunished, and intrenched themselves behind these three walls, to act with all the wickedness and malice, which we now witness. And whenever they have been compelled to call a council, they have made it of no avail by binding the princes beforehand with an oath to leave them as they were, and to give moreover to the Pope full power over the procedure of the council, so that it is all one whether we have many councils or no councils, in addition to which they deceive us with false pretences and tricks. So grievously do they tremble for their skin before a true, free council; and thus they have overawed kings and princes, that these believe they would be offending God, if they were not to obey them in all such knavish, deceitful artifices.

Now may God help us, and give us one of those trumpets that overthrew the walls of Jericho, so that we may blow down these walls of straw and paper, and that we may set free our Christian rods for the chastisement of sin, and expose the craft and deceit of the devil, so that we may amend ourselves by punishment and again

obtain God's favour.

## (a) THE FIRST WALL

That the Temporal Power has no Jurisdiction over the Spiritualty

Let us, in the first place, attack the first wall. It has been devised that the Pope, bishops, priests,

and monks are called the *spiritual estate*, princes, lords, artificers, and peasants are the *temporal estate*. This is an artful lie and hypocritical device, but let no one be made afraid by it, and that for this reason: that all Christians are truly of the spiritual estate, and there is no difference among them, save of office alone. As St. Paul says (1 Cor. xii.), we are all one body, though each member does its own work, to serve the others. This is because we have one baptism, one Gospel, one faith, and are all Christians alike; for baptism, Gospel, and faith, these

alone make spiritual and Christian people.

As for the unction by a pope or a bishop, tonsure, ordination, consecration, and clothes differing from those of laymen—all this may make a hypocrite or an anointed puppet, but never a Christian or a spiritual man. we are all consecrated as priests by baptism, as St. Peter says: "Ye are a royal priesthood, a holy nation" (1 Peter ii. 9); and in the book of Revelations: "and hast made us unto our God (by Thy blood) kings and priests" (Rev. v. 10). For, if we had not a higher consecration in us than pope or bishop can give, no priest could ever be made by the consecration of pope or bishop, nor could he say the mass, or preach, or absolve. Therefore the bishop's consecration is just as if in the name of the whole congregation he took one person out of the community, each member of which has equal power, and commanded him to exercise this power for the rest; in the same way as if ten brothers, co-heirs as king's sons, were to choose one from among them to rule over their inheritance, they would all of them still remain kings and have equal power, although one is ordered to govern.

And to put the matter even more plainly, if a little company of pious Christian laymen were taken prisoners and carried away to a desert, and had not among them a priest consecrated by a bishop, and were there to agree to elect one of them, born in wedlock or not, and were to order him to baptise, to celebrate the mass, to absolve, and to preach, this man would as truly be a priest, as if all the bishops and all the popes had consecrated him.

That is why in cases of necessity every man can baptise and absolve, which would not be possible if we were not all priests. This great grace and virtue of baptism and of the Christian estate they have quite destroyed and made us forget by their ecclesiastical law. In this way the Christians used to choose their bishops and priests out of the community; these being afterwards confirmed by other bishops, without the pomp that now prevails. So was it that St. Augustine, Ambrose,

Cyprian, were bishops.

Since, then, the temporal power is baptised as we are, and has the same faith and Gospel, we must allow it to be priest and bishop, and account its office an office that is proper and useful to the Christian community. For whatever issues from baptism may boast that it has been consecrated priest, bishop, and pope, although it does not be eem every one to exercise these offices. For, since we are all priests alike, no man may put himself forward or take upon himself, without our consent and election, to do that which we have all alike power to do. For, if a thing is common to all, no man may take it to himself without the wish and command of the com-And if it should happen that a man were appointed to one of these offices and deposed for abuses, he would be just what he was before. Therefore a priest should be nothing in Christendom but a functionary; as long as he holds his office, he has precedence of others; if he is deprived of it, he is a peasant or a citizen like Therefore a priest is verily no longer a priest after deposition. But now they have invented characteres indelebiles,\* and pretend that a priest after deprivation still differs from a simple layman. They even imagine that a priest can never be anything but a priest—that is, that he can never become a layman. All this is nothing but mere talk and ordinance of human invention.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>c</sup> In accordance with a doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church, the act of ordination impresses upon the priest an indelible character; so that he immutably retains the sacred dignity of priesthood,

It follows, then, that between laymen and priests, princes and bishops, or, as they call it, between spiritual and temporal persons, the only real difference is one of office and function, and not of estate; for they are all of the same spiritual estate, true priests, bishops, and popes, though their functions are not the same—just as among priests and monks every man has not the same functions. And this, as I said above, St. Paul says (Rom. xii.; 1 Cor. xii.), and St. Peter (1 Peter ii.): "We, being many, are one body in Christ, and severally members one of another." Christ's body is not double or twofold, one temporal, the other spiritual. He is one Head, and He has one body.

We see, then, that just as those that we call spiritual, or priests, bishops, or popes, do not differ from other Christians in any other or higher degree but in that they are to be concerned with the word of God and the sacraments—that being their work and office—in the same way the temporal authorities hold the sword and the rod in their hands to punish the wicked and to protect the good. A cobbler, a smith, a peasant, every man, has the office and function of his calling, and yet all alike are consecrated priests and bishops, and every man should by his office or function be useful and beneficial to the rest, so that various kinds of work may all be united for the furtherance of body and soul, just as the members of the body all serve one another.

Now see what a Christian doctrine is this: that the temporal authority is not above the clergy, and may not punish it. This is as if one were to say the hand may not help, though the eye is in grievous suffering. Is it not unnatural, not to say unchristian, that one member may not help another, or guard it against harm? Nay, the nobler the member, the more the rest are bound to help it. Therefore I say, Forasmuch as the temporal power has been ordained by God for the punishment of the bad and the protection of the good, therefore we must let it do its duty throughout the whole Christian

body, without respect of persons, whether it strike popes, bishops, priests, monks, nuns, or whoever it may be. it were sufficient reason for fettering the temporal power that it is inferior among the offices of Christianity to the offices of priest or confessor, or to the spiritual estate if this were so, then we ought to restrain tailors, cobblers, masons, carpenters, cooks, cellarmen, peasants, and all secular workmen, from providing the Pope or bishops, priests and monks, with shoes, clothes, houses, or victuals, or from paying them tithes. But if these laymen are allowed to do their work without restraint, what do the Romanist scribes mean by their laws? They mean that they withdraw themselves from the operation of temporal Christian power, simply in order that they may be free to do evil, and thus fulfil what St. Peter said: "There shall be false teachers among you, . . . and in covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you" (2 Peter ii. 1, etc.).

Therefore the temporal Christian power must exercise its office without let or hindrance, without considering whom it may strike, whether pope, or bishop, or priest:

whoever is guilty, let him suffer for it.

Whatever the ecclesiastical law has said in opposition to this is merely the invention of Romanist arrogance. For this is what St. Paul says to all Christians: "Let every soul" (I presume including the popes) "be subject unto the higher powers; for they bear not the sword in vain: they serve the Lord therewith, for vengeance on evildoers and for praise to them that do well" (Rom. xiii. 1—4). Also St. Peter: "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, . . . for so is the will of God" (1 Peter ii. 13, 15). He has also foretold that men would come who should despise government (2 Peter ii.), as has come to pass through ecclesiastical law.

Now, I imagine, the first paper wall is overthrown, inasmuch as the temporal power has become a member of the Christian body; although its work relates to the body, yet does it belong to the spiritual estate,

Therefore it must do its duty without let or hindrance upon all members of the whole body, to punish or urge, as guilt may deserve, or need may require, without respect of pope, bishops, or priests, let them threaten or excommunicate as they will. That is why a guilty priest is deprived of his priesthood before being given over to the secular arm; whereas this would not be right, if the secular sword had not authority over him

already by Divine ordinance.

It is, indeed, past bearing that the spiritual law should esteem so highly the liberty, life, and property of the clergy, as if laymen were not as good spiritual Christians, or not equally members of the Church. Why should your body, life, goods, and honour be free, and not mine, seeing that we are equal as Christians, and have received alike baptism, faith, spirit, and all things? If a priest is killed, the country is laid under an interdict\*: why not also if a peasant is killed? Whence comes this great difference among equal Christians? Simply from human laws and inventions.

It can have been no good spirit, either, that devised these evasions and made sin to go unpunished. For if, as Christ and the Apostles bid us, it is our duty to oppose the evil one and all his works and words, and to drive him away as well as may be, how then should we remain quiet and be silent when the Pope and his followers are guilty of devilish works and words? Are we for the sake of men to allow the commandments and the truth of God to be defeated, which at our baptism we vowed to support with body and soul? Truly we should have to answer for all souls that would thus be abandoned and led astray.

Therefore it must have been the arch-devil himself who said, as we read in the ecclesiastical law, If the Pope were so perniciously wicked, as to be dragging souls in

<sup>\*</sup> By the *Interdict*, or general excommunication, whole countries, districts, or towns, or their respective rulers, were deprived of all the spiritual benefits of the Church, such as Divine service, the administering of the sacraments, etc.

crowds to the devil, yet he could not be deposed. is the accursed and devilish foundation on which they build at Rome, and think that the whole world is to be allowed to go to the devil rather than they should be opposed in their knavery. If a man were to escape punishment simply because he is above the rest, then no Christian might punish another, since Christ has commanded each of us to esteem himself the lowest and the humblest (Matt. xviii. 4; Luke ix. 48).

Where there is sin, there remains no avoiding the punishment, as St. Gregory says, We are all equal, but guilt makes one subject to another. Now let us see how they deal with Christendom. They arrogate to themselves immunities without any warrant from the Scriptures, out of their own wickedness, whereas God and the Apostles made them subject to the secular sword; so that we must fear that it is the work of antichrist, or a sign of his near approach.

## (b) THE SECOND WALL

That no one may interpret the Scriptures but the Pope

The second wall is even more tottering and weak: that they alone pretend to be considered masters of the Scriptures; although they learn nothing of them all their life. They assume authority, and juggle before us with impudent words, saying that the Pope cannot err in matters of faith, whether he be evil or good, albeit they cannot prove it by a single letter. That is why the canon law contains so many heretical and unchristian, nay unnatural, laws; but of these we need not speak For whereas they imagine the Holy Ghost never leaves them, however unlearned and wicked they may be, they grow bold enough to decree whatever they like. But were this true, where were the need and use of the Holy Scriptures? Let us burn them, and content ourselves with the unlearned gentlemen at Rome, in whom the Holy Ghost dwells, who, however, can dwell in pious souls only. If I had not read it, I could never have believed that the devil should have put forth such

follies at Rome and find a following.

But not to fight them with our own words, we will quote the Scriptures. St. Paul says, "If anything be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace" (1 Cor. xiv. 30). What would be the use of this commandment, if we were to believe him alone that teaches or has the highest seat? Christ Himself says, "And they shall be all taught of God" (St. John vi. 45). Thus it may come to pass that the Pope and his followers are wicked and not true Christians, and not being taught by God, have no true understanding, whereas a common man may have true understanding. Why should we then not follow him? Has not the Pope often erred? Who could help Christianity, in case the Pope errs, if we do not rather believe another who has the Scriptures for him?

Therefore it is a wickedly devised fable—and they cannot quote a single letter to confirm it—that it is for the Pope alone to interpret the Scriptures or to confirm the interpretation of them. They have assumed the authority of their own selves. And though they say that this authority was given to St. Peter when the keys were given to him, it is plain enough that the keys were not given to St. Peter alone, but to the whole community. Besides, the keys were not ordained for doctrine or authority, but for sin, to bind or loose; and what they claim besides this from the keys is mere invention. But what Christ said to St. Peter: "I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not" (St. Luke xxii. 32), cannot relate to the Pope, inasmuch as the greater part of the Popes have been without faith, as they are themselves forced to acknowledge; nor did Christ pray for Peter alone, but for all the Apostles and all Christians, as He says, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word" (St. John xvii.). Is not this plain enough?

Only consider the matter. They must needs acknow-

ledge that there are pious Christians among us that have the true faith, spirit, understanding, word, and mind of Christ: why then should we reject their word and understanding, and follow a pope who has neither understanding nor spirit? Surely this were to deny our whole faith and the Christian Church. Moreover, if the article of our faith is right, "I believe in the holy Christian Church," the Pope cannot alone be right; else we must say, 'I believe in the Pope of Rome,' and reduce the Christian Church to one man, which is a devilish and damnable heresy. Besides that, we are all priests, as I have said, and have all one faith, one Gospel, one Sacrament; how then should we not have the power of discerning and judging what is right or wrong in matters of faith? What becomes of St. Paul's words, "But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man" (1 Cor. ii. 15), and also, "we having the same spirit of faith"? (2 Cor. iv. 13). Why then should we not perceive as well as an unbelieving pope what agrees or disagrees with our faith?

By these and many other texts we should gain courage and freedom, and should not let the spirit of liberty (as St. Paul has it) be frightened away by the inventions of the popes; we should boldly judge what they do and what they leave undone by our own believing understanding of the Scriptures, and force them to follow the better understanding, and not their own. Did not Abraham in old days have to obey his Sarah, who was in stricter bondage to him than we are to any one on earth? Thus, too, Balaam's ass was wiser than the prophet. If God spoke by an ass against a prophet, why should He not speak by a pious man against the Pope? Besides, St. Paul withstood St. Peter as being in error (Gal. ii.). Therefore it behoves every Christian to aid the faith by understanding and defending it and by condemning all

errors.

## (c) THE THIRD WALL

That no one may call a council but the Pope

The third wall falls of itself, as soon as the first two have fallen; for if the Pope acts contrary to the Scriptures, we are bound to stand by the Scriptures, to punish and to constrain him, according to Christ's commandment, "Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church; but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as a heather man and a publican" (St. Matt. xviii. 15-17). Here each member is commanded to take care for the other; much more then should we do this, if it is a ruling member of the community that does evil, which by its evil-doing causes great harm and offence to the others. If then I am to accuse him before the Church, I must collect the Church together. Moreover, they can show nothing in the Scriptures giving the Pope sole power to call and confirm councils; they have nothing but their own laws; but these hold good only so long as they are not injurious to Christianity and the laws of Therefore, if the Pope deserves punishment, these laws cease to bind us, since Christendom would suffer, if he were not punished by a council. Thus we read (Acts xv.) that the council of the Apostles was not called by St. Peter, but by all the Apostles and the elders. But if the right to call it had lain with St. Peter alone, it would not have been a Christian council, but a heretical conciliabulum. Moreover, the most celebrated council of all—that of Nicæa—was neither called nor confirmed by the Bishop of Rome, but by the Emperor Constantine; and after him many other emperors have done the same, and yet

the councils called by them were accounted most Christian. But if the Pope alone had the power, they must all have been heretical. Moreover, if I consider the councils that the Pope has called, I do not find that

they produced any notable results.

Therefore when need requires, and the Pope is a cause of offence to Christendom, in these cases whoever can best do so, as a faithful member of the whole body, must do what he can to procure a true free council. This no one can do so well as the temporal authorities, especially since they are fellow-Christians, fellow-priests, sharing one spirit and one power in all things, and since they should exercise the office that they have received from God without hindrance, whenever it is necessary and useful that it should be exercised. Would it not be most unnatural, if a fire were to break out in a city, and every one were to keep still and let it burn on and on, whatever might be burnt, simply because they had not the mayor's authority, or because the fire perchance broke out at the mayor's house? Is not every citizen bound in this case to rouse and call in the rest? How much more should this be done in the spiritual city of Christ, if a fire of offence breaks out, either at the Pope's government or wherever it may! The like happens if an enemy attacks a town. The first to rouse up the rest earns glory and thanks. Why then should not he earn glory that descries the coming of our enemies from hell and rouses and summons all Christians?

But as for their boasts of their authority, that no one must oppose it, this is idle talk. No one in Christendom has any authority to do harm, or to forbid others to prevent harm being done. There is no authority in the Church but for reformation. Therefore if the Pope wished to use his power to prevent the calling of a free council, so as to prevent the reformation of the Church, we must not respect him or his power; and if he should begin to excommunicate and fulminate, we must despise this as the doings of a madman, and, trusting in God, excommunicate and repel him as best we may. For this his

usurped power is nothing; he does not possess it, and he is at once overthrown by a text from the Scriptures. For St. Paul says to the Corinthians "that God has given us authority for edification, and not for destruction" (2 Cor. x. 8). Who will set this text at nought? the power of the devil and of antichrist that prevents what would serve for the reformation of Christendom. Therefore we must not follow it, but oppose it with our body, our goods, and all that we have. And even if a miracle were to happen in favour of the Pope against the temporal power, or if some were to be stricken by a plague, as they sometimes boast has happened, all this is to be held as having been done by the devil in order to injure our faith in God, as was foretold by Christ: "There shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders, insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect" (Matt. xxiv. 23); and St. Paul tells the Thessalonians that the coming of antichrist shall be "after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders" (2 Thess. ii. 9).

Therefore let us hold fast to this: that Christian power can do nothing against Christ, as St. Paul says, "For we can do nothing against Christ, but for Christ" (2 Cor. xiii. 8). But, if it does anything against Christ, it is the power of antichrist and the devil, even if it rained and hailed wonders and plagues. Wonders and plagues prove nothing, especially in these latter evil days, of which false wonders are foretold in all the Scriptures. Therefore we must hold fast to the words of God with an assured faith: then the devil will soon cease his wonders.

And now I hope the false, lying spectre will be laid with which the Romanists have long terrified and stupefied our consciences. And it will be seen that, like all the rest of us, they are subject to the temporal sword; that they have no authority to interpret the Scriptures by force without skill; and that they have no power to prevent a council, or to pledge it in accordance with their pleasure, or to bind it beforehand, and

deprive it of its freedom; and that if they do this, they are verily of the fellowship of antichrist and the devil, and have nothing of Christ but the name.

## 4.—OF THE MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED IN THE COUNCILS.

Let us now consider the matters which should be treated in the councils, and with which popes, cardinals, bishops, and all learned men should occupy themselves day and night, if they love Christ and His Church. But if they do not do so, the people at large and the temporal powers must do so, without considering the thunders of their excommunications. For an unjust excommunication is better than ten just absolutions, and an unjust absolution is worse than ten just excommunications. Therefore let us rouse ourselves, fellow-Germans, and fear God more than man, that we be not answerable for all the poor souls that are so miserably lost through the wicked, devilish government of the Romanists, and that the dominion of the devil should not grow day by day, if indeed this hellish government can grow any worse, which, for my part, I can neither conceive nor believe.

1. It is a distressing and terrible thing to see that the head of Christendom, who boasts of being the vicar of Christ and the successor of St. Peter, lives in a worldly pomp that no king or emperor can equal, so that in him that calls himself most holy and most spiritual there is more worldliness than in the world itself. He wears a triple crown, whereas the mightiest kings only wear one crown. If this resembles the poverty of Christ and St. Peter, it is a new sort of resemblance. They prate of its being heretical to object to this; nay, they will not even hear how unchristian and ungodly it is. But I think that if he should have to pray to God with tears, he would have to lay down his crowns; for God will not endure any arrogance. His office should be nothing else than to weep and pray constantly for Christendom and to be an example of all humility.

However this may be, this pomp is a stumbling-block,

and the Pope, for the very salvation of his soul, ought to put it off, for St. Paul says, "Abstain from all appearance of evil" (1 Thess. v. 21), and again, "Provide things honest in the sight of all men" (2 Cor. viii. 21). A simple mitre would be enough for the Pope: wisdom and sanctity should raise him above the rest: the crown of pride he should leave to antichrist, as his predecessors did some hundreds of years ago. They say, He is the ruler of the world. This is false; for Christ, whose vicegerent and vicar he claims to be, said to Pilate, "My kingdom is not of this world" (John xviii. 36). But no vicegerent can have a wider dominion than his Lord, nor is he a vicegerent of Christ in His glory, but of Christ crucified, as St. Paul says, "For I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified" (2 Cor. ii. 2), and "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Himself the form of a servant" (Phil. ii. 5, 7). Again, "We preach Christ crucified" (1 Cor. i.). Now they make the Pope a vicegerent of Christ exalted in heaven, and some have let the devil rule them so thoroughly that they have maintained that the Pope is above the angels in heaven and has power over them, which is precisely the true work of the true antichrist.

2. What is the use in Christendom of the people called "cardinals"? I will tell you. In Italy and Germany there are many rich convents, endowments, fiefs, and benefices, and as the best way of getting these into the hands of Rome, they created cardinals, and gave them the sees, convents, and prelacies, and thus destroyed the service of God. That is why Italy is almost a desert now: the convents are destroyed, the sees consumed, the revenues of the prelacies and of all the churches drawn to Rome; towns are decayed, the country and the people ruined, because there is no more any worship of God or preaching; why? Because the cardinals must have all the wealth. No Turk could have thus desolated Italy and overthrown the worship of God.

Now that Italy is sucked dry, they come to Germany and begin very quietly; but if we look on quietly Germany will soon be brought into the same state as Italy. We have a few cardinals already. Romanists mean thereby the drunken Germans \* are not to see until they have lost everything—bishoprics, convents, benefices, fiefs, even to their last farthing. Antichrist must take the riches of the earth, as it is written (Dan. xi. 8, 39, 43). They begin by taking off the cream of the bishoprics, convents, and fiefs; and as they do not dare to destroy everything as they have done in Italy, they employ such holy cunning to join together ten or twenty prelacies, and take such a portion of each annually that the total amounts to a considerable sum. The priory of Würzburg gives one thousand guilders; those of Bamberg, Mayence, Treves, and others also contribute. In this way they collect one thousand or ten thousand guilders, in order that a cardinal may live at Rome in a state like that of a wealthy monarch.

After we have gained this, we will create thirty or forty cardinals on one day, and give one St. Michael's Mount,† near Bamberg, and likewise the see of Würzburg, to which belong some rich benefices, until the churches and the cities are desolated; and then we shall say, We are the vicars of Christ, the shepherds of Christ's flocks; those mad, drunken Germans must submit to it. I advise, however, that there be made fewer cardinals, or that the Pope should have to support them out of his own purse. It would be amply sufficient if there were twelve, and if each of them had an annual income of one thousand guilders.

What has brought us Germans to such a pass that we have to suffer this robbery and this destruction of our property by the Pope? If the kingdom of France

<sup>\*</sup> The epithet "drunken" was formerly often applied by the Italians to the Germans.

<sup>†</sup> Luther alludes here to the Benedictine convent standing on the Mönchberg, or St. Michael's Mount.

has resisted it, why do we Germans suffer ourselves to be fooled and deceived? It would be more endurable if they did nothing but rob us of our property; but they destroy the Church and deprive Christ's flock of their good shepherds, and overthrow the service and word of God. Even if there were no cardinals at all, the Church would not perish, for they do nothing for the good of Christendom; all they do is to traffic in and quarrel about prelacies and bishoprics, which any robber could do as well.

3. If we took away ninety-nine parts of the Pope's Court and only left one hundredth, it would still be large enough to answer questions on matters of belief. Now there is such a swarm of vermin at Rome, all called papal, that Babylon itself never saw the like. There are more than three thousand papal secretaries alone; but who shall count the other office-bearers, since there are so many offices that we can scarcely count them, and all waiting for German benefices, as wolves wait for a flock of sheep? I think Germany now pays more to the Pope than it formerly paid the emperors; nay, some think more than three hundred thousand guilders are sent from Germany to Rome every year, for nothing whatever; and in return we are scoffed at and put to Do we still wonder why princes, noblemen, cities, foundations, convents, and people grow poor? We should rather wonder that we have anything left to eat.

Now that we have got well into our game, let us pause a while and show that the Germans are not such fools as not to perceive or understand this Romish trickery. I do not here complain that God's commandments and Christian justice are despised at Rome; for the state of things in Christendom, especially at Rome, is too bad for us to complain of such high matters. Nor do I even complain that no account is taken of natural or secular justice and reason. The mischief lies still deeper. I complain that they do not observe their own fabricated canon law, though this is in itself rather mere tyranny,

avarice, and worldly pomp, than a law. This we shall now show.

Long ago the emperors and princes of Germany allowed the Pope to claim the annates\* from all German benefices; that is, half of the first year's income from every benefice. The object of this concession was that the Pope should collect a fund with all this money to fight against the Turks and infidels, and to protect Christendom, so that the nobility should not have to bear the burden of the struggle alone, and that the priests should also contribute. The popes have made such use of this good simple piety of the Germans that they have taken this money for more than one hundred years, and have now made of it a regular tax and duty; and not only have they accumulated nothing, but they have founded out of it many posts and offices at Rome, which are paid by it yearly, as out of a ground-rent.

Whenever there is any pretence of fighting the Turks, they send out some commission for collecting money, and often send out indulgences under the same pretext of fighting the Turks. They think we Germans will always remain such great and inveterate fools that we will go on giving money to satisfy their unspeakable greed, though we see plainly that neither annates, nor absolution money, nor any other—not one farthing—goes against the Turks, but all goes into the bottomless sack. They lie and deceive, form and make covenants with us, of which they do not mean to keep one jot. And all this

is done in the holy name of Christ and St. Peter.

This being so, the German nation, the bishops and princes, should remember that they are Christians, and should defend the people, who are committed to their government and protection in temporal and spiritual affairs, from these ravenous wolves in sheep's clothing, that profess to be shepherds and rulers; and since the annates are so shamefully abused, and the covenants con-

<sup>\*</sup> The duty of paying annates to the Pope was established by John XXII. in 1319.

cerning them not carried out, they should not suffer their lands and people to be so piteously and unrighteously flayed and ruined; but by an imperial or a national law they should either retain the annates in the country, or abolish them altogether. For since they do not keep to the covenants, they have no right to the annates; therefore bishops and princes are bound to punish this thievery and robbery, or prevent it, as justice demands. And herein should they assist and strengthen the Pope, who is perchance too weak to prevent this scandal by himself, or, if he wishes to protect or support it, restrain and oppose him as a wolf and tyrant; for he has no authority to do evil or to protect evil-doers. Even if it were proposed to collect any such treasure for use against the Turks, we should be wise in future, and remember that the German nation is more fitted to take charge of it than the Pope, seeing that the German nation by itself is able to provide men enough, if the money is forthcoming. This matter of the annates is like many other Romish pretexts.

Moreover, the year has been divided among the Pope and the ruling bishops and foundations in such wise that the Pope has taken every other month—six in all—to give away the benefices that fall in his month; in this way almost all the benefices are drawn into the hands of Rome, and especially the best livings and dignities. those that once fall into the hands of Rome never come out again, even if they never again fall vacant in the Pope's month. In this way the foundations come very short of their rights, and it is a downright robbery, the object of which is not to give up anything again. Therefore it is now high time to abolish the Pope's months and to take back again all that has thereby fallen into the hands of Rome. For all the princes and nobles should insist that the stolen property shall be returned, the thieves punished, and that those who abuse their powers shall be deprived of them. If the Pope can make a law on the day after his election by which he takes our benefices and livings to which he has no right, the Emperor Charles should so much the more have a right to issue a law for all Germany on the day after his coronation\* that in future no livings and benefices are to fall to Rome by virtue of the Pope's month, but that those that have so fallen are to be freed and taken from the Romish robbers. This right he possesses authoritatively by virtue of his temporal sword.

But the see of avarice and robbery at Rome is unwilling to wait for the benefices to fall in one after another by means of the Pope's month; and in order to get them into its insatiable maw as speedily as possible, they have devised the plan of taking livings and benefices in three

other ways :---

First, if the incumbent of a free living dies at Rome or on his way thither, his living remains for ever the property of the see of Rome, or I rather should say, the see of robbers, though they will not let us call them robbers, although no one has ever heard or read of such

robbery.

Secondly, if a "servant" of the Pope or of one of the cardinals takes a living, or if, having a living, he becomes a "servant" of the Pope or of a cardinal, the living remains with Rome. But who can count the "servants" of the Pope and his cardinals, seeing that if he goes out riding, he is attended by three or four thousand mule-riders, more than any king or emperor? For Christ and St. Peter went on foot, in order that their vicegerents might indulge the better in all manner of pomp. Besides, their avarice has devised and invented this: that in foreign countries also there are many called "papal servants," as at Rome; so that in all parts this single crafty little word "papal servant" brings all benefices to the chair of Rome, and they are kept there for ever. Are not these mischievous, devilish devices? Let us only wait a while. Mayence, Magdeburg, and Halberstadt will fall very nicely to Rome, and we shall have to pay dearly for

<sup>\*</sup> At the time when the above was written—June, 1520—the Emperor Charles had been elected, but not yet crowned.

our cardinal.\* Hereafter all the German bishops will be made cardinals, so that there shall remain nothing to ourselves.

Thirdly, whenever there is any dispute about a benefice; and this is, I think, well-nigh the broadest and commonest road by which benefices are brought to Rome. For where there is no dispute numberless knaves can be found at Rome who are ready to scrape up disputes, and attack livings wherever they like. In this way many a good priest loses his living, or has to buy off the dispute for a time with a sum of money. These benefices, confiscated by right or wrong of dispute, are to be for ever the property of the see of Rome. It would be no wonder, if God were to rain sulphur and fire from heaven and cast Rome down into the pit, as He did formerly to Sodom and Gomorrah. What is the use of a pope in Christendom, if the only use made of his power is to commit these supreme villainies under his protection and assistance? Oh noble princes and sirs, how long will you suffer your lands and your people to be the prey of these ravening wolves?

But these tricks did not suffice, and bishoprics were too slow in falling into the power of Roman avarice. Accordingly our good friend Avarice made the discovery that all bishoprics are abroad in name only, but that their land and soil is at Rome; from this it follows that no bishop may be confirmed until he has bought the "Pall" † for a large sum, and has with a terrible oath

<sup>\*</sup> Luther alludes here to the Archbishop Albert of Mayence, who was, besides, Archbishop of Magdeburg and administrator of the bishopric of Halberstadt. In order to be able to defray the expense of the archiepiscopal tax due to Rome, amounting to thirty thousand guilders, he had farmed the sale of the Pope's indulgences, employing the notorious Tetzel as his agent and sharing the profits with the Pope. In 1518 Albert was appointed cardinal. See Ranke, Deutsche Geschichte, etc., vol. i., p. 309, etc.

<sup>†</sup> The Pallium was since the fourth century the symbol of archiepiscopal power, and had to be redeemed from the Pope by means of a large sum of money and a solemn oath of obedience.

bound himself a servant of the Pope. That is why no bishop dare oppose the Pope. This was the object of the oath, and this is how the wealthiest bishoprics have come Mayence, I am told, pays twenty thouto debt and ruin. These are true Roman tricks, it seems to sand guilders. me. It is true that they once decreed in the canon law that the Pall should be given free, the number of the Pope's servants diminished, disputes made less frequent, that foundations and bishops should enjoy their liberty; but all this brought them no money. They have therefore reversed all this: bishops and foundations have lost all their power; they are mere ciphers, without office, authority, or function; all things are regulated by the chief knaves at Rome, even the offices of sextons and bell-ringers in all churches. All disputes are transferred to Rome; each one does what he will, strong through the Pope's power.

What has happened in this very year? The Bishop of Strasburg, wishing to regulate his see in a proper way and reform it in the matter of Divine service, published some Divine and Christian ordinances for that purpose. But our worthy Pope and the holy chair at Rome overturn altogether this holy and spiritual order on the requisition of the priests. This is what they call being the shepherd of Christ's sheep—supporting priests against their own bishops and protecting their disobedience by Divine decrees. Antichrist, I hope, will not insult God in this open way. There you have the Pope, as you have chosen to have him; and why? Why, because if the Church were to be reformed, there would be danger that it would spread further, so that it might also reach Rome. Therefore it is better to prevent priests from being at one with each other; they should rather, as they have done hitherto, sow discord among kings and princes, and flood the world with Christian blood, lest Christian unity should trouble the holy Roman see with reforms.

So far we have seen what they do with the livings that fall vacant. Now there are not enough vacancies for this delicate greed; therefore it has also taken prudent account of the benefices that are still held by their incumbents, so that they may become vacant, though they are in fact not vacant, and this they effect in many

ways.

First, they lie in wait for fat livings or sees which are held by an old or sick man, or even by one afflicted by an imaginary incompetence; him the Roman see gives a coadjutor, that is an assistant without his asking or wishing it, for the benefit of the coadjutor, because he is a papal servant, or pays for the office, or has otherwise earned it by some menial service rendered to Rome. Thus there is an end of free election on the part of the chapter, or of the right of him who had presented to the

living; and all goes to Rome.

Secondly, there is a little word: commendam, that is, when the Pope gives a rich and fat convent or church into the charge of a cardinal or any other of his servants, just as I might command you to take charge of one hundred guilders for me. In this way the convent is neither given, nor lent, nor destroyed, nor is its Divine service abolished, but only entrusted to a man's charge, not, however, for him to protect and improve it, but to drive out the one he finds there, to take the property and revenue, and to install some apostate\* runaway monk, who is paid five or six guilders a year, and sits in the church all day and sells symbols and pictures to the pilgrims; so that neither chanting nor reading in the church goes on there any more. Now if we were to call this the destruction of convents and abolition of Divine service we should be obliged to accuse the Pope of destroying Christianity and abolishing Divine service for truly he is doing this effectually—but this would be thought harsh language at Rome; therefore it is called a commendam, or an order to take charge of the convent. In this way the Pope can make commendams of four or more convents a year, any one of which produces a

<sup>\*</sup> Monks who forsook their order without any legal dispensation were called "apostates."

revenue of more than six thousand guilders. This is the way Divine service is advanced and convents kept up at Rome. This will be introduced into Germany as well.

Thirdly, there are certain benefices that are said to be incompatible; that is, they may not be held together according to the canon law, such as two cures, two sees, and the like. Now the Holy See and avarice twists itself out of the canon law by making "glosses," or interpretations, called Unio, or Incorporatio; that is, several incompatible benefices are incorporated, so that one is a member of the other, and the whole is held to be one benefice: then they are no longer incompatible, and we have got rid of the holy canon law, so that it is no longer binding, except on those who do not buy those glosses of the Pope and his Datarius.\* Unio is of the same kind: a number of benefices are tied together like a bundle of faggots, and on account of this coupling together they are held to be one benefice. Thus there may be found many a "courtling" at Rome who alone holds twenty-two cures, seven priories, and forty-four prebends, all which is done in virtue of this masterly gloss, so as not to be contrary to law. Any one can imagine what cardinals and other prelates may hold. In this way the Germans are to have their purses emptied and their conceit taken out of them.

There is another gloss called Administratio; that is, that besides his see a man holds an abbey or other high benefice, and possesses all the property of it, without any other title but administrator. For at Rome it is enough that words should change, and not deeds, just as if I said, a procuress was to be called a mayoress, yet may remain as good as she is now. Such Romish rule was foretold by St. Peter, when he said, "There shall be false

<sup>\*</sup> The papal office for the issue and registration of certain documents was called Dataria, from the phrase appended to them, Datum apud S. Petrum. The chief of that office, usually a cardinal, bore the title of Datarius, or Prodatarius.

teachers among you, . . . and through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you"

(2 Peter ii. 1, 3).

This precious Roman avarice has also invented the practice of selling and lending prebends and benefices on condition that the seller or lender has the reversion, so that if the incumbent dies, the benefice falls to him that has sold it, lent it, or abandoned it; in this way they have made benefices heritable property, so that none can come to hold them unless the seller sells them to him, or leaves them to him at his death. Then there are many that give a benefice to another in name only, and on condition that he shall not receive a farthing. It is now, too, an old practice for a man to give another a benefice and to receive a certain annual sum, which proceeding was formerly called simony. And there are many other such little things which I cannot recount; and so they deal worse with the benefices than the heathers by the cross dealt with Christ's clothes.

But all this that I have spoken of is old and common at Rome. Their avarice has invented other device, which I hope will be the last and choke it. The Pope has made a noble discovery, called Pectoralis Reservatio, that is, "mental reservation"—et proprius motus, that is, "and his own will and power." The matter is managed in this way: Suppose a man obtains a benefice at Rome, which is confirmed to him in due form; then comes another. who brings money, or who has done some other service of which the less said the better, and requests the Pope to give him the same benefice: then the Pope will take it from the first and give it him. If you say, that is wrong, the Most Holy Father must then excuse himself, that he may not be openly blamed for having violated justice; and he says "that in his heart and mind he reserved his authority over the said benefice," whilst he never had heard or thought of the same in all his life. Thus he has devised a gloss which allows him in his proper person to lie and cheat and fool us all, and all this impudently and in open daylight, and nevertheless

he claims to be the head of Christendom, letting the

evil spirit rule him with manifest lies.

This wantonness and lying reservation of the popes has brought about an unutterable state of things at Rome. There is a buying and a selling, a changing, blustering and bargaining, cheating and lying, robbing and stealing, debauchery and villainy, and all kinds of contempt of God, that antichrist himself could not rule worse. Venice, Antwerp, Cairo, are nothing to this fair and market at Rome, except that there things are done with some reason and justice, whilst here things are done as the devil himself could wish. And out of this ocean a like virtue overflows all the world. Is it not natural that such people should dread a reformation and a free council, and should rather embroil all kings and princes, than that their unity should bring about a council? Who would like his villainy to be exposed?

Finally, the Pope has built a special house for this fine traffic—that is, the house of the *Datarius* at Rome. Thither all must come that bargain in this way for prebends and benefices; from him they must buy the glosses and obtain the right to practise such prime villainy. In former days it was fairly well at Rome, when justice had to be bought, or could only be put down by money; but now she has become so fastidious that she does not allow any one to commit villainies unless he has first bought the right to do it with great sums. If this is not a house of prostitution, worse than all houses of prostitution that can be conceived, I do not

know what houses of prostitution really are.

If you bring money to this house, you can arrive at all that I have mentioned; and more than this, any sort of usury is made legitimate for money; property got by theft or robbery is here made legal. Here vows are annulled; here a monk obtains leave to quit his order; here priests can enter married life for money; here bastards can become legitimate; and dishonour and shame may arrive at high honours; all evil repute and disgrace is knighted and ennobled; here a marriage is

suffered that is in a forbidden degree, or has some other defect. Oh, what a trafficking and plundering is there! one would think that the canon laws were only so many money-snares, from which he must free himself who would become a Christian man. Nay, here the devil becomes a saint, and a god besides. What heaven and earth might not do may be done by this house. Their ordinances are called *compositions*—compositions, forsooth! confusions rather.\* Oh, what a poor treasury is the toll on the Rhine † compared with this holy house!

Let no one think that I say too much. It is all notorious, so that even at Rome they are forced to own that it is more terrible and worse than one can say. I have said and will say nothing of the infernal dregs of private vices. I only speak of well-known public matters, and yet my words do not suffice. Bishops, priests, and especially the doctors of the universities, who are paid to do it, ought to have unanimously written and exclaimed against it. Yea, if you will turn the leaf, you will discover the truth.

I have still to give a farewell greeting. These treasures, that would have satisfied three mighty kings, were not enough for this unspeakable greed, and so they have made over and sold their traffic to Fugger ‡ at Augsburg, so that the lending and buying and selling sees and benefices, and all this traffic in ecclesiastical property, has in the end come into the right hands, and spiritual and temporal matters have now become one business. Now I should like to know what the most cunning would devise for Romish greed to do that it has not done, except that Fugger might sell or pledge his two trades, that have now become one. I think they must have come to the end of their devices. For what they have stolen and yet steal in all countries by bulls of indul-

<sup>\*</sup> Luther uses here the expressions compositiones and confusiones as a kind of pun.

<sup>†</sup> Tolls were levied at many places along the Rhine.

<sup>‡</sup> The commercial house of Fugger was in those days the wealthiest in Europe.

gences, letters of confession, letters of dispensation,\* and other confessionalia, all this I think mere bungling work, and much like playing toss with a devil in hell. Not that they produce little, for a mighty king could support himself by them; but they are as nothing compared to the other streams of revenue mentioned above. I will not now consider what has become of that indulgence money; I shall inquire into this another time, for Campofiore † and Belvedere; and some other places pro-

bably know something about it.

Meanwhile, since this devilish state of things is not only an open robbery, deceit, and tyranny of the gates of hell, but also destroys Christianity body and soul, we are bound to use all our diligence to prevent this misery and destruction of Christendom. If we wish to fight the Turks, let us begin here, where they are worst. If we justly hang thieves and behead robbers, why do we leave the greed of Rome so unpunished, that is the greatest thief and robber that has appeared or can appear on earth, and does all this in the holy name of Christ and St. Peter? Who can suffer this and be silent about it? Almost everything that they possess has been stolen or got by robbery, as we learn from all histories. the Pope never bought those great possessions, so as to be able to raise well-nigh ten hundred thousand ducats from his ecclesiastical offices, without counting his gold mines described above and his land. He did not inherit it from Christ and St. Peter; no one gave it or lent it him; he has not acquired it by prescription. Tell me, where can he have got it? You can learn from this what their object is when they send out legates to collect money to be used against the Turk.

<sup>\*</sup> Luther uses the word Butterbriefe, i.e., letters of indulgence allowing the enjoyment of butter, cheese, milk, etc., during Lent. They formed part only of the confessionalia, which granted various other indulgences.

<sup>†</sup> A public place at Rome. ‡ Part of the Vatican.

## 5. TWENTY-SEVEN ARTICLES RESPECTING THE REFORMATION OF THE CHRISTIAN ESTATE

Now though I am too lowly to submit articles that could serve for the reformation of these fearful evils, I will yet sing out my fool's song, and will show, as well as my wit will allow, what might and should be done by

the temporal authorities or by a general council.

- 1. Princes, nobles, and cities should promptly forbid their subjects to pay the annates to Rome and should even abolish them altogether. For the Pope has broken the compact, and turned the annates into robbery for the harm and shame of the German nation; he gives them to his friends; he sells them for large sums of money and founds benefices on them. Therefore he has forfeited his right to them, and deserves punishment. In this way the temporal power should protect the innocent and prevent wrong-doing, as we are taught by St. Paul (Rom. xiii.) and by St. Peter (1 Peter ii.) and even by the canon law (16. q. 7. de Filis). That is why we say to the Pope and his followers, Tu ora! "Thou shalt pray"; to the Emperor and his followers, Tu protege! "Thou shalt protect, to the commons, Tu labora! "Thou shalt work." Not that each man should not pray, protect, and work; for if a man fulfils his duty, that is prayer, protection, and work; but every man must have his proper task.
- 2. Since by means of those Romish tricks, commendams, coadjutors, reservations, expectations, pope's months, incorporations, unions, Palls, rules of chancellery, and other such knaveries, the Pope takes unlawful possession of all German foundations, to give and sell them to strangers at Rome, that profit Germany in no way, so that the incumbents are robbed of their rights, and the bishops are made mere ciphers and anointed idols; and thus, besides natural justice and reason, the Pope's own canon law is violated; and things have come to such a pass that prebends and benefices are sold at Rome to

vulgar, ignorant asses and knaves, out of sheer greed, while pious learned men have no profit by their merit and skill, whereby the unfortunate German people must needs lack good, learned prelates and suffer ruin-on account of these evils the Christian nobility should rise up against the Pope as a common enemy and destroyer of Christianity, for the sake of the salvation of the poor souls that such tyranny must ruin. They should ordain, order, and decree that henceforth no benefice shall be drawn away to Rome, and that no benefice shall be claimed there in any fashion whatsoever; and after having once got these benefices out of the hands of Romish tyranny, they must be kept from them, and their lawful incumbents must be reinstated in them to administer them as best they may within the German nation. And if a courtling came from Rome, he should receive the strict command to withdraw, or to leap into the Rhine, or whatever river be nearest, and to administer a cold bath to the Interdict, seal and letters and all. Thus those at Rome would learn that we Germans are not to remain drunken fools for ever, but that we, too, are become Christians, and that as such we will no longer suffer this shameful mockery of Christ's holy name, that serves as a cloke for such knavery and destruction of souls, and that we shall respect God and the glory of God more than the power of men.

3. It should be decreed by an imperial law that no episcopal cloak and no confirmation of any appointment shall for the future be obtained from Rome. The order of the most holy and renowned Nicene Council must again be restored, namely that a bishop must be confirmed by the two nearest bishops or by the archbishop. If the Pope cancels the decrees of these and all other councils, what is the good of councils at all? Who has given him the right thus to despise councils and to cancel them? If this is allowed, we had better abolish all bishops, archbishops and primates, and make simple rectors of all of them, so that they would have the Pope alone over them, as is indeed the case now: he deprives bishops, arch-

bishops, and primates of all the authority of their office, taking everything to himself, and leaving them only the name and the empty title; more than this, by his exemption he has withdrawn convents, abbots, and prelates from the ordinary authority of the bishops, so that there remains no order in Christendom. The necessary result of this must be, and has been, laxity in punishing and such a liberty to do evil in all the world that I very much fear one might call the Pope "the man of sin" (2 Thess. ii. 3). Who but the Pope is to blame for this absence of all order, of all punishment, of all government, of all discipline, in Christendom? By his own arbitrary power he ties the hands of all his prelates, and takes from them their rods, while all their subjects have their hands

unloosed, and obtain licence by gift or purchase.

But, that he have no cause for complaint, as being deprived of his authority, it should be decreed that in cases where the primates and archbishops are unable to settle the matter, or where there is a dispute among them, the matters shall then be submitted to the Pope, but not every little matter, as was done formerly, and was ordered by the most renowned Nicene Council. His Holiness must not be troubled with small matters, that can be settled without his help; so that he may have leisure to devote himself to his prayers and study and to his care of all Christendom, as he professes to do, as indeed the Apostles did, saying, "It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. . . . But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word" (Acts vi. 2, 4). But now we see at Rome nothing but contempt of the Gospel and of prayer, and the service of tables, that is the service of the goods of this world; and the government of the Pope agrees with the government of the Apostles as well as Lucifer with Christ, hell with heaven, night with day; and yet he calls himself Christ's vicar and the successor of the Apostles.

4. Let it be decreed that no temporal matter shall be submitted to Rome, but all shall be left to the jurisdiction

of the temporal authorities. This is part of their own canon law, though they do not obey it. For this should be the Pope's office: that he, the most learned in the Scriptures and the most holy, not in name only, but in fact, should rule in matters concerning the faith and the holy life of Christians; he should make primates and bishops attend to this, and should work and take thought with them to this end, as St. Paul teaches (1 Cor. vi.), severely upbraiding those that occupy themselves with the things of this world. For all countries suffer unbearable damage by this practice of settling such matters at Rome, since it involves great expense; and besides this, the judges at Rome, not knowing the manners, laws, and customs of other countries, frequently pervert the matter according to their own laws and their own opinions, thus causing injustice to all parties. Besides this, we should prohibit in all foundations the grievous extortion of the ecclesiastical judges; they should only be allowed to consider matters concerning faith and good morals; but matters concerning money, property, life, and honour should be left to the temporal judges. Therefore the temporal authorities should not permit excommunication or expulsion except in matters of faith and righteous living. It is only reasonable that spiritual authorities should have power in spiritual matters; spiritual matters, however, are not money or matters relating to the body, but faith and good works.

Still we might allow matters respecting benefices or prebends to be treated before bishops, archbishops, and primates. Therefore when it is necessary to decide quarrels and strifes let the Primate of Germany hold a general consistory, with assessors and chancellors, who would have the control over the signaturas gratiæ and justitiæ,\* and to whom matters arising in Germany might be submitted by appeal. The officers of such court should be paid out of

<sup>\*</sup> At the time when the above was written the function of the signatura gratiæ was to superintend the conferring of grants, concessions, favours, etc., whilst the signatura justitiæ embraced the general administration of ecclesiastical matters.

the annates, or in some other way, and should not have to draw their salaries, as at Rome, from chance presents and offerings, whereby they grow accustomed to sell justice and injustice, as they must needs do at Rome, where the Pope gives them no salary, but allows them to fatten themselves on presents; for at Rome no one heeds what is right or what is wrong, but only what is money and what is not money. They might be paid out of the annates, or by some other means devised by men of higher understanding and of more experience in these things than I have. I am content with making these suggestions and giving some materials for consideration to those who may be able and willing to help the German nation to become a free people of Christians, after this wretched, heathen, unchristian misrule of the

Pone.

5. Henceforth no reservations shall be valid, and no benefices shall be appropriated by Rome, whether the incumbent die there, or there be a dispute, or the incumbent be a servant of the Pope or of a cardinal; and all courtiers shall be strictly prohibited and prevented from causing a dispute about any benefice, so as to cite the pious priests, to trouble them, and to drive them to pay compensation. And if in consequence of this there comes an interdict from Rome, let it be despised, just as if a thief were to excommunicate any man because he would not allow him to steal in peace. Nay, they should be punished most severely for making such a blasphemous use of excommunication and of the name of God, to support their robberies, and for wishing by their false threats to drive us to suffer and approve this blasphemy of God's name and this abuse of Christian authority, and thus to become sharers before God in their wrong-doing, whereas it is our duty before God to punish it, as St. Paul (Rom. i.) upbraids the Romans for not only doing wrong, but allowing wrong to be But above all that lying mental reservation (pectoralis reservatio) is unbearable, by which Christendom is so openly mocked and insulted, in that its head

notoriously deals with lies, and impudently cheats and fools every man for the sake of accursed wealth.

6. The cases reserved\* (casus reservati) should be abolished, by which not only are the people cheated out of much money, but besides many poor consciences are confused and led into error by the ruthless tyrants, to the intolerable harm of their faith in God, especially those foolish and childish cases that are made important by the bull In Cana Domini, and which do not deserve the name of daily sins, not to mention those great cases for which the Pope gives no absolution, such as preventing a pilgrim from going to Rome, furnishing the Turks with arms, or forging the Pope's letters. They only fool us with these gross, mad, and clumsy matters: Sodom and Gomorrah, and all sins that are committed and that can be committed against God's commandments, are not reserved cases; but what God never commanded and they themselves have invented—these must be made reserved cases, solely in order that none may be prevented from bringing money to Rome, that they may live in their lust without fear of the Turk, and may keep the world in their bondage by their wicked useless bulls and briefs.

Now all priests ought to know, or rather it should be a public ordinance, that no secret sin constitutes a reserved case, if there be no public accusation; and that every priest has power to absolve from all sin, whatever its name, if it be secret, and that no abbot, bishop, or pope has power to reserve any such case; and, lastly, that if they do this, it is null and void, and they should, moreover, be punished as interfering without authority in God's judgment and confusing and troubling without cause our poor witless consciences. But in respect to

<sup>&</sup>quot;Reserved cases" refer to those great sins for which the Pope or the bishops only could give absolution.

<sup>†</sup> The celebrated papal bull known under the name of In Cana Domini, containing anathemas and excommunications against all those who dissented in any way from the Roman Catholic creed, used until the year 1770 to be read publicly at Rome on Maundy Thursday

any great open sin, directly contrary to God's commandments, there is some reason for a "reserved case"; but there should not be too many, nor should they be reserved arbitrarily without due cause. For God has not ordained tyrants, but shepherds, in His Church, as

St. Peter says (1 Peter v. 2).

7. The Roman see must abolish the papal offices, and diminish that crowd of crawling vermin at Rome, so that the Pope's servants may be supported out of the Pope's own pocket, and that his court may cease to surpass all royal courts in its pomp and extravagance; seeing that all this pomp has not only been of no service to the Christian faith, but has also kept them from study and prayer, so that they themselves know hardly anything concerning matters of faith, as they proved clumsily enough at the last Roman Council,\* where, among many childishly trifling matters, they decided "that the soul is immortal," and that a priest is bound to pray once every month on pain of losing his benefice. † How are men to rule Christendom and to decide matters of faith who, callous and blinded by their greed, wealth, and worldly pomp, have only just decided that the soul is immortal? It is no slight shame to all Christendom that they should deal thus scandalously with the faith at Rome. If they had less wealth and lived in less pomp, they might be better able to study and pray, that they might become able and worthy to treat matters of belief, as they were once, when they were content to be bishops, and not kings of kings.

8. The terrible oaths must be abolished which bishops are forced, without any right, to swear to the Pope, by which they are bound like servants, and which are

<sup>\*</sup> The council alluded to above was held at Rome from 1512 to 1517.

<sup>†</sup> Luther's objection is not, of course, to the recognition of the immortality of the soul; what he objects to is (1) that it was thought necessary for a council to decree that the soul is immortal, and (2) that this question was put on a level with trivial matters of discipline.

arbitrarily and foolishly decreed in the absurd and shallow chapter Significasti.\* Is it not enough that they oppress us in goods, body, and soul by all their mad laws, by which they have weakened faith and destroyed Christianity; but must they now take possession of the very persons of bishops, with their offices and functions. and also claim the investiture + which used formerly to be the right of the German emperors, and is still the right of the King in France and other kingdoms? matter caused many wars and disputes with emperors until the popes impudently took the power by force, since which time they have retained it, just as if it were only right for the Germans, above all Christians on earth, to be the fools of the Pope and the Holy See, and to do and suffer what no one beside would suffer or Seeing then that this is mere arbitrary power, robbery, and a hindrance to the exercise of the bishop's ordinary power, and to the injury of poor souls, therefore it is the duty of the Emperor and his nobles to prevent and punish this tyranny.

9. The Pope should have no power over the Emperor, except to anoint and crown him at the altar, as a bishop crowns a king; nor should that devilish pomp be allowed that the Emperor should kiss the Pope's feet or sit at his feet, or, as it is said, hold his stirrup or the reins of his mule, when he mounts to ride; much less should he pay homage to the Pope, or swear allegiance, as is impudently demanded by the popes, as if they had a right to it. The chapter Solite,‡ in which the papal authority is exalted above the imperial, is not worth a farthing, and so of all those that depend on it or fear it; for it does nothing but pervert God's holy words from their true meaning, according to their own imaginations, as I have

proved in a Latin treatise.

<sup>\*</sup> The above is the title of a chapter in the Corpus Juris Canonici.
† The right of investiture was the subject of the dispute between Gregory VII. and Henry IV., which led to the Emperor's submission at Canossa.

<sup>†</sup> The chapter Solite is also contained in the Corpus Juris Canonici.

All these excessive, over-presumptuous, and most wicked claims of the Pope are the invention of the devil, with the object of bringing in antichrist in due course and of raising the Pope above God, as indeed many have done and are now doing. It is not meet that the Pope should exalt himself above temporal authority, except in spiritual matters, such as preaching and absolution; in other matters he should be subject to it, according to the teaching of St. Paul (Rom. xiii.) and St. Peter (1 Peter iii.), as I have said above. He is not the vicar of Christ in heaven, but only of Christ upon earth. For Christ in heaven, in the form of a ruler, requires no vicar, but there sits, sees, does, knows, and commands all things. He requires him "in the form of a servant" to represent Him as He walked upon earth, working, preaching, suffering, and dying. But they reverse this: they take from Christ His power as a heavenly Ruler, and give it to the Pope, and allow "the form of a servant" to be entirely forgotten (Phil. ii. 7). He should properly be called the counter-Christ, whom the Scriptures call antichrist; for his whole existence, work, and proceedings are directed against Christ, to ruin and destroy the existence and will of Christ.

It is also absurd and puerile for the Pope to boast for such blind, foolish reasons, in his decretal Pastoralis, that he is the rightful heir to the empire, if the throne be vacant. Who gave it to him? Did Christ do so when He said, "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, but ye shall not do so" (Luke xxii. 25, 26)? Did St. Peter bequeath it to him? It disgusts me that we have to read and teach such impudent, clumsy, foolish lies in the canon law, and, moreover, to take them for Christian doctrine, while in reality they are mere devilish lies. Of this kind also is the unheard-of lie touching the "donation of Constantine." \* It must

<sup>\*</sup> In order to legalise the secular power of the Pope, the fiction was invented during the latter part of the eighth century, that Constantine the Great had made over to the popes the dominion over Rome and over the whole of Italy.

have been a plague sent by God that induced so many wise people to accept such lies, though they are so gross and clumsy that one would think a drunken boor could lie more skilfully. How could preaching, prayer, study, and the care of the poor consist with the government of the empire? These are the true offices of the Pope, which Christ imposed with such insistence that He forbade them to take either coat or scrip (Matt. x. 10), for he that has to govern a single house can hardly perform these duties. Yet the Pope wishes to rule an empire and to remain a pope. This is the invention of the knaves that would fain become lords of the world in the Pope's name, and set up again the old Roman empire, as it was formerly, by means of the Pope and name of

Christ, in its former condition.

10. The Pope must withdraw his hand from the dish. and on no pretence assume royal authority over Naples and Sicily. He has no more right to them than I, and yet claims to be the lord—their liege lord. They have been taken by force and robbery, like almost all his other possessions. Therefore the Emperor should grant him no such fief, nor any longer allow him those he has, but direct him instead to his Bibles and Prayer-books, so that he may leave the government of countries and peoples to the temporal power, especially of those that no one has given him. Let him rather preach and pray! The same should be done with Bologna, Imola, Vicenza, Ravenna, and whatever the Pope has taken by force and holds without right in the Ancontine territory, in the Romagna, and other parts of Italy, interfering in their affairs against all the commandments of Christ and St. Paul. For St. Paul says "that he that would be one of the soldiers of heaven must not entangle himself in the affairs of this life" (2 Tim. ii. 4). Now the Pope should be the head and the leader of the soldiers of heaven, and yet he engages more in worldly matters than any king or emperor. He should be relieved of his worldly cares and allowed to attend to his duties as a soldier of heaven. Christ also, whose vicar he claims to be, would have

nothing to do with the things of this world, and even asked one that desired of Him a judgment concerning his brother, "Who made Me a judge over you?" (St. Luke xii. 14). But the Pope interferes in these matters unasked, and concerns himself with all matters, as though he were a god, until he himself has forgotten what this Christ is whose vicar he professes to be.

11. The custom of kissing the Pope's feet must cease. It is an unchristian, or rather an anti-Christian, example that a poor sinful man should suffer his feet to be kissed by one who is a hundred times better than he. If it is done in honour of his power, why does he not do it to others in honour of their holiness? Compare them together: Christ and the Pope. Christ washed His disciples' feet and dried them, and the disciples never washed His. The Pope, pretending to be higher than Christ, inverts this, and considers it a great favour to let us kiss his feet; whereas, if any one wished to do so, he ought to do his utmost to prevent him, as St. Paul and Barnabas would not suffer themselves to be worshipped as gods by the men at Lystra, saying, "We also are men of like passions with you" (Acts xiv. 14 seq.). But our flatterers have brought things to such a pitch that they have set up an idol for us, until no one regards God with such fear or honours Him with such marks of reverence as he does the Pope. This they can suffer, but not that the Pope's glory should be diminished a single hair's-breadth. Now if they were Christians and preferred God's honour to their own, the Pope would never be pleased to have God's honour despised and his own exalted, nor would be allow any to honour him until he found that God's honour was again exalted above his own.

It is of a piece with this revolting pride that the Pope is not satisfied with riding on horseback or in a carriage, but though he be hale and strong, is carried by men like an idol in unheard-of pomp. My friend, how does this Lucifer-like pride agree with the example of Christ, who went on foot, as did also all His Apostles? Where has there been a king who has ridden in such worldly pomp as

he does, who professes to be the head of all whose duty it is to despise and flee from all worldly pomp—I mean, of all Christians? Not that this need concern us for his own sake, but that we have good reason to fear God's wrath, if we flatter such pride and do not show our discontent. It is enough that the Pope should be so mad and foolish; but it is too much that we should sanction and approve it.

For what Christian heart can be pleased at seeing the Pope when he communicates sit still like a gracious lord and have the Sacrament handed to him on a golden reed by a cardinal bending on his knees before him? Just as if the Holy Sacrament were not worthy that a pope, a poor miserable sinner, should stand to do honour to his God, although all other Christians, who are much more holy than the Most Holy Father, receive it with all reverence! Could we be surprised if God visited us all with a plague for that we suffer such dishonour to be done to God by our prelates, and approve it, becoming partners of the Pope's damnable pride by our silence or flattery? It is the same when he carries the Sacrament in procession. He must be carried, but the Sacrament stands before him like a cup of wine on a table. short, at Rome Christ is nothing, the Pope is everything; yet they urge us and threaten us, to make us suffer and approve and honour this anti-Christian scandal, contrary to God and all Christian doctrine. Now may God so help a free council that it may teach the Pope that he too is a man, not above God, as he makes himself out to be.

12. Pilgrimages to Rome must be abolished, or at least no one must be allowed to go from his own wish or his own piety, unless his priest, his town magistrate, or his lord has found that there is sufficient reason for his pilgrimage. This I say, not because pilgrimages are bad in themselves, but because at the present time they lead to mischief; for at Rome a pilgrim secs no good examples, but only offence. They themselves have made a proverb, "The nearer to Rome, the farther from Christ," and accordingly men bring home contempt of God and of God's commandments. It is said, "The first time one

goes to Rome, he goes to seek a rogue; the second time he finds him; the third time he brings him home with him." But now they have become so skilful that they can do their three journeys in one, and they have, in fact, brought home from Rome this saying: "It were better never to have seen or heard of Rome."

And even if this were not so, there is something of more importance to be considered; namely, that simple men are thus led into a false delusion and a wrong understanding of God's commandments. For they think that these pilgrimages are precious and good works; but this is not true. It is but a little good work, often a bad, misleading work, for God has not commanded it. But He has commanded that each man should care for his wife and children and whatever concerns the married state, and should, besides, serve and help his neighbour. Now it often happens that one goes on a pilgrimage to Rome, spends fifty or one hundred guilders, more or less, which no one has commanded him, while his wife and children, or those dearest to him, are left at home in want and misery; and yet he thinks, poor foolish man, to atone for this disobedience and contempt of God's commandments by his self-willed pilgrimage, while he is in truth misled by idle curiosity or the wiles of the devil. This the popes have encouraged with their false and foolish inventions of Golden Years,\* by which they have incited the people, have torn them away from God's commandments and turned them to their own delusive proceedings, and set up the very thing that they ought to have forbidden. But it brought them money and strengthened their false authority, and therefore it was allowed to continue, though against God's will and the salvation of souls.

<sup>\*</sup> The Jubilees, during which plenary indulgences were granted to those who visited the churches of St. Peter and St. Paul at Rome, were originally celebrated every hundred years and subsequently every twenty-five years. Those who were unable to go to Rome in person could obtain the plenary indulgences by paying the expenses of the journey to Rome into the papal treasury.

That this false, misleading belief on the part of simple Christians may be destroyed, and a true opinion of good works may again be introduced, all pilgrimages should be done away with. For there is no good in them, no commandment, but countless causes of sin and of contempt of God's commandments. These pilgrimages are the reason for there being so many beggars, who commit numberless villainies, learn to beg without need and get accustomed to it. Hence arises a vagabond life, besides other miseries which I cannot dwell on now. If any one wishes to go on a pilgrimage or to make a vow for a pilgrimage, he should first inform his priest or the temporal authorities of the reason, and if it should turn out that he wishes to do it for the sake of good works, let this vow and work be just trampled upon by the priest or the temporal authority as an infernal delusion, and let them tell him to spend his money and the labour a pilgrimage would cost on God's commandments and on a thousandfold better work, namely, on his family and his poor neighbours. But if he does it out of curiosity, to see cities and countries, he may be allowed to do so. If he have vowed it in sickness, let such vows be prohibited, and let God's commandments be insisted upon in contrast to them; so that a man may be content with what he vowed in baptism, namely, to keep God's commandments. Yet for this once he may be suffered, for a quiet conscience' sake, to keep his silly vow. No one is content to walk on the broad high-road of God's commandments; every one makes for himself new roads and new vows, as if he had kept all God's commandments.

13. Now we come to the great crowd that promises much and performs little. Be not angry, my good sirs; I mean well. I have to tell you this bitter and sweet truth: Let no more mendicant monasteries be built! God help us! there are too many as it is. Would to God they were all abolished, or at least made over to two or three orders! It has never done good, it will never do good, to go wandering about over the country. Therefore my advice is that ten, or as many as may be required, be

put together and made into one, which one, sufficiently provided for, need not beg. Oh! it is of much more importance to consider what is necessary for the salvation of the common people, than what St. Francis, or St. Dominic, or St. Augustine,\* or any other man, laid down, especially since things have not turned out as they expected. They should also be relieved from preaching and confession, unless specially required to do so by bishops, priests, the congregation, or other authority. For their preaching and confession has led to nought but mere hatred and envy between priests and monks, to the great offence and hindrance of the people, so that it well deserves to be put a stop to, since its place may very well be dispensed with. It does not look at all improbable that the Holy Roman See had its own reasons for encouraging all this crowd of monks: the Pope perhaps feared that priests and bishops, growing weary of his tyranny, might become too strong for him, and begin a reformation unendurable to his Holiness.

Besides this, one should also do away with the sections and the divisions in the same order which, caused for little reason and kept up for less, oppose each other with unspeakable hatred and malice, the result being that the Christian faith, which is very well able to stand without their divisions, is lost on both sides, and that a true Christian life is sought and judged only by outward rules, works, and practices, from which arise only hypocrisy and the destruction of souls, as every one can see for himself. Moreover, the Pope should be forbidden to institute or to confirm the institution of such new orders; nay, he should be commanded to abolish several and to lessen their number. For the faith of Christ, which alone is the important matter, and can stand without any particular order, incurs no little danger lest men should be led away by these diverse works and manners rather to live for such works and practices than

<sup>\*</sup> The above-mentioned saints were the patrons of the well-known mendicant orders: Franciscans, Dominicans, and Augustines.

to care for faith; and unless there are wise prelates in the monasteries, who preach and urge faith rather than the rule of the order, it is inevitable that the order should be injurious and misleading to simple souls, who have

regard to works alone.

Now, in our own time all the prelates are dead that had faith and founded orders, just as it was in old days with the children of Israel: when their fathers were dead, that had seen God's works and miracles, their children, out of ignorance of God's work and of faith, soon began to set up idolatry and their own human works. In the same way, alas I these orders, not understanding God's works and faith, grievously labour and torment themselves by their own laws and practices, and yet never arrive at a true understanding of a spiritual and good life, as was foretold by the Apostle, saying of them, "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof, . . . ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge" of what a true spiritual life is (2 Tim. iii. 2-7). Better to have no convents which are governed by a a spiritual prelate, having no understanding of Christian faith to govern them; for such a prelate cannot but rule with injury and harm, and the greater the apparent holiness of his life in external works, the greater the harm.

It would be, I think, necessary, especially in these perilous times, that foundations and convents should again be organised as they were in the time of the Apostles and a long time after, namely when they were all free for every man to remain there as long as he wished. For what were they but Christian schools, in which the Scriptures and Christian life were taught, and where folk were trained to govern and to preach? as we read that St. Agnes went to school, and as we see even now in some nunneries, as at Quedlinburg and other places. Truly all foundations and convents ought to be free in this way: that they may serve God of a free will, and not as slaves. But now they have been bound round with vows and turned into cternal prisons, so that these vows are regarded even more than the vows of baptism.

But what fruit has come of this we daily see, hear, read, and learn more and more.

I daresay that this my counsel will be thought very foolish, but I care not for this. I advise what I think best, reject it who will. I know how these vows are kept, especially that of chastity, which is so general in all these convents,\* and yet was not ordered by Christ, and it is given to comparatively few to be able to keep it, as He says, and St. Paul also (Col. ii. 20). I wish all to be helped, and that Christian souls should not be held in bondage, through customs and laws invented by men

14. We see also how the priesthood is fallen, and how many a poor priest is encumbered with a woman and children and burdened in his conscience, and no one does anything to help him, though he might very well be helped. Popes and bishops may let that be lost that is being lost, and that be destroyed which is being destroyed, I will save my conscience and open my mouth freely, let it vex popes and bishops or whoever it may be; therefore I say, According to the ordinances of Christ and His Apostles, every town should have a minister or bishop, as St. Paul plainly says (Titus i.), and this minister should not be forced to live without a lawful wife, but should be allowed to have one, as St. Paul writes, saying that "a bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, ... having his children in subjection with all gravity" (1 Tim. iii.). For with St. Paul a bishop and a presbyter are the same thing, as St. Jerome also con-But as for the bishops that we now have, of these the Scriptures know nothing; they were instituted by common Christian ordinance, so that one might rule over many ministers.

Therefore we learn from the Apostle clearly, that every town should elect a pious learned citizen from the congregation and charge him with the office of

<sup>\*</sup> Luther alludes here of course to the vow of celibacy, which was curiously styled the 'vow of chastity'; thus indirectly condemning marriage in general.

minister; the congregation should support him, and he should be left at liberty to marry or not. He should have as assistants several priests and deacons, married or not, as they please, who should help him to govern the people and the congregation with sermons and the ministration of the sacraments, as is still the case in the Greek Church. Then afterwards, when there were so many persecutions and contentions against heretics, there were many holy fathers who voluntarily abstained from the marriage state, that they might study more, and might be ready at all times for death and conflict. Now the Roman see has interfered of its own perversity, and has made a general law by which priests are forbidden to marry. This must have been at the instigation of the devil, as was foretold by St. Paul, saying that "there shall come teachers giving heed to seducing spirits, . . . forbidding to marry," etc. (1 Tim. iv. 1, 2, seq.). This has been the cause of so much misery that it cannot be told, and has given occasion to the Greek Church to separate from us, and has caused infinite disunion, sin, shame, and scandal, like everything that the devil does or suggests. Now what are we to do?

My advice is to restore liberty, and to leave every man free to marry or not to marry. But if we did this we should have to introduce a very different rule and order for property; the whole canon law would be overthrown, and but few benefices would fall to Rome. am afraid greed was a cause of this wretched, unchaste chastity, for the result of it was that every man wished to become a priest or to have his son brought up to the priesthood, not with the intention of living in chastityfor this could be done without the priestly state—but to obtain his worldly support without labour or trouble, contrary to God's command, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat thy bread" (Gen. iii.); and they have given a colour to this commandment as though their work was praying and reading the mass. I am not here considering popes, bishops, canons, clergy, and monks who were not ordained by God; if they have laid burdens on themselves, they may bear them. I speak of the office of parish priest, which God ordained, who must rule a congregation with sermons and the ministration of the sacraments, and must live with them and lead a domestic life. These should have the liberty given them by a Christian council to marry and to avoid danger and sin. For as God has not bound them, no one may bind them, though he were an angel from heaven, let alone the Pope; and whatever is contrary to this in the canon law is mere idle talk and invention.

My advice further is, whoever henceforth is ordained priest, he should in no wise take the vow of chastity, but should protest to the bishop that he has no authority to demand this vow, and that it is a devilish tyranny to demand it. But if one is forced, or wishes to say, as some do, "so far as human frailty permits," let every man interpret that phrase as a plain negative, that is, "I do not promise chastity"; for "human frailty does not allow men to live an unmarried life," but only "angelic fortitude and celestial virtue." In this way he will have a clear conscience without any vow. I offer no opinion, one way or the other, whether those who have at present no wife should marry, or remain unmarried. be settled by the general order of the Church and by each man's discretion. But I will not conceal my honest counsel, nor withhold comfort from that unhappy crowd who now live in trouble with wife and children, and remain in shame, with a heavy conscience, hearing their wife called a priest's harlot, and the children bastards. And this I say frankly, in virtue of my good right.

There is many a poor priest free from blame in all other respects, except that he has succumbed to human frailty and come to shame with a woman, both minded in their hearts to live together always in conjugal fidelity, if only they could do so with a good conscience, though as it is they live in public shame. I say, these two are surely married before God. I say, moreover, that when two are so minded, and so come to live together, they

should save their conscience; let the man take the woman as his lawful wife, and live with her faithfully as her husband, without considering whether the Pope approve or not, or whether it is forbidden by canon law, or temporal. The salvation of your soul is of more importance than their tyrannous, arbitrary, wicked laws, which are not necessary for salvation, nor ordained by God. You should do as the children of Israel did who stole from the Egyptians the wages they had earned, or as a servant steals his well-earned wages from a harsh master; in the same way do you also steal your wife and child from the Pope.

Let him who has faith enough to dare this only follow me courageously: I will not mislead him. I may not have the Pope's authority, yet I have the authority of a Christian to help my neighbour and to warn him against his sins and dangers. And here there is good reason for

doing so.

(a) It is not every priest that can do without a woman, not only on account of human frailty, but still more for his household. If therefore he takes a woman, and the Pope allows this, but will not let them marry, what is this but expecting a man and a woman to live together and not to fall? Just as if one were to set fire to straw,

and command it should neither smoke nor burn.

(b) The Pope having no authority for such a command, any more than to forbid a man to eat and drink, or to digest, or to grow fat, no one is bound to obey it, and the Pope is answerable for every sin against it, for all the souls that it has brought to destruction, and for all the consciences that have been troubled and tormented by it. He has long deserved to be driven out of the world, so many poor souls has he strangled with this devil's rope, though I hope that God has shown many more mercy at their death than the Pope did in their life. No good has ever come and can ever come from the papacy and its laws.

(c) Even though the Pope's laws forbid it, still, after the married state has been entered, the Pope's laws are

superseded, and are valid no longer, for God has commanded that no man shall put asunder husband and wife, and this commandment is far above the Pope's laws, and God's command must not be cancelled or neglected for the papal commands. It is true that mad lawyers have helped the Pope to invent impediments or hindrances to marriage, and thus troubled, divided, and perverted the married state, destroying the commandments of God. What need I say further? In the whole body of the Pope's canon law, there are not two lines that can instruct a pious Christian, and so many false and dangerous ones that it were better to burn it.

But if you object that this would give offence, and that one must first obtain the Pope's dispensation, I answer that if there is any offence in it, it is the fault of the see of Rome, which has made unjust and unholy laws. It is no offence to God and the Scriptures. Even where the Pope has power to grant dispensation for money by his covetous tyrannical laws, every Christian has power to grant dispensation in the same matter for the sake of Christ and the salvation of souls. For Christ has freed us from all human laws, especially when they are opposed to God and the salvation of souls, as St. Paul teaches (Gal. v. 1 and 1 Cor. viii. 9, 10).

15. I must not forget the poor convents. The evil spirit, who has troubled all estates of life by human laws, and made them unendurable, has taken possession of some abbots, abbesses, and prelates, and led them so to rule their brothers and sisters that they do but go soon to hell, and live a wretched life even upon earth, as is the case with all the devil's martyrs. For they have reserved in confession all, or at least some, deadly sins, which are secret, and from these no brother may on pain of excommunication and on his obedience absolve another. Now we do not always find angels everywhere, but men of flesh and blood, who would rather incur all excommunication and menace than confess their secret sins to a prelate or the confessor appointed for them; consequently they receive the Sacrament with these sins

on their conscience, by which they become irregular\* and suffer much misery. Oh blind shepherds! Oh foolish prelates! Oh ravenous wolves! Now I say that in cases where a sin is public and notorious it is only right that the prelate alone should punish it, and such sins, and no others, he may reserve and except for himself; over private sins he has no authority, even though they may be the worst that can be committed or imagined. And if the prelate excepts these, he becomes

a tyrant and interferes with God's judgment.

Accordingly I advise these children, brothers and sisters: If your superiors will not allow you to confess your secret sins to whomsoever you will, then take them yourself, and confess them to your brother or sister, to whomsoever you will; be absolved and comforted, and then go or do what your wish or duty commands; only believe firmly that you have been absolved, and nothing more is necessary. And let not their threats of excommunication, or *irregularity*, or what not, trouble or disturb you; these only apply to public or notorious sins, if they are not confessed: you are not touched by them. How canst thou take upon thyself, thou blind prelate, to restrain private sins by thy threats? Give up what thou canst not keep publicly; let God's judgment and mercy also have its place with thy inferiors. He has not given them into thy hands so completely as to have let them go out of His own; nay, thou hast received the smaller portion. Consider thy statutes as nothing more than thy statutes, and do not make them equal to God's judgment

16. It were also right to abolish annual festivals, processions, and masses for the dead, or at least to diminish their number; for we evidently see that they have become no better than a mockery, exciting the anger of God and having no object but money-getting, gluttony, and

<sup>\*</sup> Luther uses the expression *irregulares*, which was applied to those monks who were guilty of heresy, apostacy, transgression of the vow of chastity, etc.

carousals. How should it please God to hear the poor vigils and masses mumbled in this wretched way, neither read nor prayed? Even when they are properly read, it is not done freely for the love of God, but for the love of money and as payment of a debt. Now it is impossible that anything should please God or win anything from Him that is not done freely, out of love for Him. Therefore, as true Christians, we ought to abolish or lessen a practice that we see is abused, and that angers God instead of appeasing Him. I should prefer, and it would be more agreeable to God's will, and far better for a foundation, church, or convent, to put all the yearly masses and vigils together into one mass, so that they would every year celebrate, on one day, a true vigil and mass with hearty sincerity, devotion, and faith for all their benefactors. This would be better than their thousand upon thousand masses said every year, each for a particular benefactor, without devotion and faith. My dear fellow-Christians, God cares not for much prayer, but for good prayer. Nay, He condemns long and frequent prayers, saying, "Verily I say unto you, they have their reward" (Matt. vi. 2, seq.). But it is the greed that cannot trust God by which such practices are set up: it is afraid it will die of starvation.

17. One should also abolish certain punishments inflicted by the canon law, especially the interdict, which is doubtless the invention of the evil one. Is it not the mark of the devil to wish to better one sin by more and worse sins? It is surely a greater sin to silence God's word and service, than if we were to kill twenty popes at once, not to speak of a single priest or of keeping back the goods of the Church. This is one of those gentle virtues which are learnt in the spiritual law; for the canon or spiritual law is so called because it comes from a spirit, not, however, from the Holy Spirit, but

from the evil spirit.

Excommunication should not be used except where the Scriptures command it, that is, against those that have not the right faith, or that live in open sin, and not in matters of temporal goods. But now the case has been inverted: each man believes and lives as he pleases, especially those that plunder and disgrace others with excommunications; and all excommunications are now only in matters of worldly goods, for which we have no one to thank but the holy canonical injustice. But of

all this I have spoken previously in a sermon.

The other punishments and penalties—suspension, irregularity, aggravation, reaggravation, deposition,\* thundering, lightning, cursing, damning, and what not—all these should be buried ten fathoms deep in the earth, that their very name and memory may no longer live upon earth. The evil spirit, who was let loose by the spiritual law, has brought all this terrible plague and misery into the heavenly kingdom of the holy Church, and has thereby brought about nothing but the harm and destruction of souls, that we may well apply to it the words of Christ, "But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men, for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in" (Matt. xxiii, 13).

18. One should abolish all saints' days, keeping only Sunday. But if it were desired to keep the festivals of Our Lady and the greater saints, they should all be held on Sundays, or only in the morning with the mass; the rest of the day being a working day. My reason is this: with our present abuses of drinking, gambling, idling, and all manner of sin, we vex God more on holy days than on others. And the matter is just reversed; we have made holy days unholy, and working days holy, and do no service, but great dishonour, to God and His saints with all our holy days. There are some foolish prelates that think they have done a good deed, if they establish a festival to St. Otilia or St. Barbara, and the

<sup>\*</sup> Luther enumerates here the various grades of punishment inflicted on priests. The aggravation consisted of a threat of excommunication after a thrice-repeated admonition, whilst the consequence of reaggravation was immediate excommunication.

like, each in his own blind fashion, whilst he would bedoing a much better work to turn a saint's day into a

working day, in honour of a saint.

Besides these spiritual evils, these saints' days inflict bodily injury on the common man in two ways: he loses a day's work, and he spends more than usual, besides weakening his body and making himself unfit for labour, as we see every day, and yet no one tries to improve it. One should not consider whether the Pope instituted these festivals, or whether we require his dispensation or permission. If anything is contrary to God's will and harmful to men in body and soul, not only has every community, council, or government authority to prevent and abolish such wrong without the knowledge or consent of pope or bishop, but it is their duty, as they value their soul's salvation, to prevent it, even though pope and bishop (that should be the first to do so) are unwilling to see it stopped. And first of all we should abolish church wakes, since they are nothing but taverns, fairs, and gaming places, to the greater dishonour of God and the damnation of souls. It is no good to make a talk about their having had a good origin and being good Did not God set aside His own law that He had given forth out of heaven when He saw that it was abused, and does He not now reverse every day what He has appointed, and destroy what He has made, on account of the same perverse misuse, as it is written in Psalm xviii. (ver. 26), "With the froward Thou wilt show Thyself froward "?

19. The degrees of relationship in which marriage is forbidden must be altered, such as so-called spiritual relations \* in the third and fourth degrees; and where the Pope at Rome can dispense in such matters for money, and make shameful bargains, every priest should have the power of granting the same dispensations freely for the salvation of souls. Would to God that all those

<sup>\*</sup> Those, namely, between sponsors at baptism and their god-children.

things that have to be bought at Rome, for freedom from the golden snares of the canon law, might be given by any priest without payment, such as indulgences, letters of indulgences, letters of dispensation, mass letters, and all the other religious licences and knaveries at Rome by which the poor people are deceived and robbed! For if the Pope has the power to sell for money his golden snares, or canon nets (laws, I should say), much more has a priest the power to cancel them and to trample on them for God's sake. But if he has no such power, then the Pope can have no authority to sell them in his shameful fair.

Besides this, fasts must be made optional, and every kind of food made free, as is commanded in the Gospels (Matt. xv. 11). For whilst at Rome they laugh at fasts, they let us abroad consume oil which they would not think fit for greasing their boots, and then sell us the liberty of eating butter and other things, whereas the Apostle says that the Gospel has given us freedom in all such matters (1 Cor. x. 25, seq.). But they have caught us in their canon law and have robbed us of this right, so that we have to buy it back from them; they have so terrified the consciences of the people that one cannot preach this liberty without rousing the anger of the people, who think the eating of butter to be a worse sin than lying, swearing, and unchastity. We may make of it what we will; it is but the work of man, and no good can ever come of it.

20. The country chapels and churches must be destroyed, such as those to which the new pilgrimages have been set on foot: Wilsnack, Sternberg, Treves, the Grimmenthal, and now Ratisbon, and many others. Oh, what a reckoning there will be for those bishops that allow these inventions of the devil and make a profit out of them! They should be the first to stop it; they think that it is a godly, holy thing, and do not see that the devil does this to strengthen covetousness, to teach false beliefs, to weaken parish churches, to increase drunkenness and debauchery, to waste money and labour, and

simply to lead the poor people by the nose. If they had only studied the Scriptures as much as their accursed canon law, they would know well how to deal with the matter.

The miracles performed there prove nothing, for the evil one can also show wonders, as Christ has taught us (Matt. xxiv. 24). If they took up the matter earnestly and forbade such doings, the miracles would soon cease; or if they were done by God, they would not be prevented by their commands. And if there were nothing else to prove that these are not works of God, it would be enough that people go about turbulently and irrationally like herds of cattle, which could not possibly come from God. God has not commanded it; there is no obedience, and no merit in it; and therefore it should be vigorously interfered with, and the people warned against For what is not commanded by God and goes beyond God's commandments is surely the devil's own work. In this way also the parish churches suffer: in that they are less venerated. In fine, these pilgrimages are signs of great want of faith in the people; for if they truly believed, they would find all things in their own churches, where they are commanded to go.

But what is the use of my speaking? Every man thinks only how he may get up such a pilgrimage in his own district, not caring whether the people believe and live rightly. The rulers are like the people: blind leaders of the blind. Where pilgrimages are a failure, they begin to glorify their saints, not to honour the saints, who are sufficiently honoured without them, but to cause a concourse, and to bring in money. Herein pope and bishops help them; it rains indulgences, and every one can afford to buy them: but what God has commanded no one cares for; no one runs after it, no one can afford any money for it. Alas for our blindness, that we not only suffer the devil to have his way with his phantoms, but support him! I wish one would leave the good saints alone, and not lead the poor people astray. What spirit gave the Pope authority to "glorify" the saints? Who tells him whether they are holy or not holy? Are there not enough sins on earth as it is but we must tempt God, interfere in His judgment, and make money-bags of His saints? Therefore my advice is to let the saints glorify themselves. Nay, God alone should be glorified, and every man should keep to his own parish, where he will profit more than in all these shrines, even if they were all put together into one shrine. Here a man finds baptism, the Sacrament, preaching, and his neighbour, and these are more than all the saints in heaven, for it is by God's word and sacrament that they have all been hallowed.

Our contempt for these great matters justifies God's anger in giving us over to the devil to lead us astray, to get up pilgrimages, to found churches and chapels, to glorify the saints, and to commit other like follies, by which we are led astray from the true faith into new false beliefs, just as He did in old time with the people of Israel, whom He led away from the Temple to countless other places, all the while in God's name, and with the appearance of holiness, against which all the prophets preached, suffering martyrdom for their words. But now no one preaches against it; for if he did, bishops, popes, priests, and monks would perchance combine to martyr him. In this way Antonius of Florence and many others are made saints, so that their holiness may serve to produce glory and wealth, which served before to the honour of God and as a good example alone.

Even if this glorification of the saints had been good once, it is not good now, just as many other things were good once and are now occasion of offence and injurious, such as holidays, ecclesiastical treasures and ornaments. For it is evident that what is aimed at in the glorification of saints is not the glory of God nor the bettering of Christendom, but money and fame alone; one Church wishes to have an advantage over another, and would be sorry to see another Church enjoying the same advantages. In this way they have in these latter days abused the goods of the Church so as to gain the goods of the world;

so that everything, and even God Himself, must serve their avarice. Moreover, these privileges cause nothing but dissensions and worldly pride; one Church being different from the rest, they despise or magnify one another, whereas all goods that are of God should be common to all, and should serve to produce unity. This, too, is much liked by the Pope, who would be sorry to see all Christians equal and at one with one another.

Here must be added that one should abolish, or treat as of no account, or give to all Churches alike, the licences, bulls, and whatever the Pope sells at his flayingground at Rome. For if he sells or gives to Wittenberg, to Halle, to Venice, and, above all, to his own city of Rome, special permissions, privileges, indulgences, graces, advantages, faculties, why does he not give them to all Churches alike? Is it not his duty to do all that he can for all Christians without reward, solely for God's sake, nay, even to shed his blood for them? Why then, I should like to know, does he give or sell these things to one Church and not to another? Or does this accursed gold make a difference in his Holiness's eyes between Christians who all alike have baptism, Gospel, faith, Christ, God, and all things? Do they wish us to be blind, when our eyes can see, to be fools, when we have reason, that we should worship this greed, knavery, and delusion? is a shepherd, for sooth—so long as you have money, no further; and yet they are not ashamed to practise all this knavery right and left with their bulls. They care only for that accursed gold, and for nought besides.

Therefore my advice is this: If this folly is not done away with, let all pious Christians open their eyes, and not be deceived by these Romish bulls and seals and all their specious pretences; let them stop at home in their own churches, and be satisfied with their baptism, Gospel, faith, Christ, and God (who is everywhere the same), and let the Pope continue to be a blind leader of the blind. Neither pope nor angel can give you as much as God gives you in your own parish; nay, he only leads you away from God's gifts, which you have for nothing,

to his own gifts, which you must buy, giving you lead for gold, skin for meat, strings for a purse, wax for honey, words for goods, the letter for the spirit, as you can see for yourselves though you will not perceive it. If you try to ride to heaven on the Pope's wax and parchment, your carriage will soon break down, and you will fall into hell, not in God's name.

Let this be a fixed rule for you: Whatever has to be bought of the Pope is neither good, nor of God. For whatever comes from God is not only given freely, but all the world is punished and condemned for not accepting it freely. So is it with the Gospel and the works of God. We have deserved to be led into these errors, because we have despised God's holy word and the grace of baptism, as St. Paul says, "And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thess. ii. 11, 12).

21. It is one of the most urgent necessities to abolish all begging in Christendom. No one should go about begging among Christians. It would not be hard to do this, if we attempted it with good heart and courage: each town should support its own poor and should not allow strange beggars to come in, whatever they may call themselves, pilgrims or mendicant monks. Every town could feed its own poor; and if it were too small, the people in the neighbouring villages should be called upon to contribute. As it is, they have to support many knaves and vagabonds under the name of beggars. If they did what I propose, they would at least know who were really poor or not.

There should also be an overseer or guardian who should know all the poor, and should inform the town-council, or the priest, of their requirements; or some other similar provision might be made. There is no occupation, in my opinion, in which there is so much knavery and cheating as among beggars; which could easily be done away with. This general, unrestricted

begging is, besides, injurious for the common people. I estimate that of the five or six orders of mendicant monks each one visits every place more than six or seven times in the year; then there are the common beggars, emissaries, and pilgrims; in this way I calculate every city has a blackmail levied on it about sixty times a year, not counting rates and taxes paid to the civil government and the useless robberies of the Roman see; so that it is to my mind one of the greatest of God's miracles how we manage to live and support ourselves.

Some may think that in this way the poor would not be well cared for, and that such great stone houses and convents would not be built, and not so plentifully, and I think so too. Nor is it necessary. If a man will be poor, he should not be rich; if he will be rich, let him but his hand to the plough, and get wealth himself out of the earth. It is enough to provide decently for the poor, that they may not die of cold and hunger. It is not right that one should work that another may be idle, and live ill that another may live well, as is now the perverse abuse, for St. Paul says, "If any would not work, neither should he eat" (2 Thess. iii. 10). God has not ordained that any one should live of the goods of others, except priests and ministers alone, as St. Paul says (1 Cor. ix. 14), for their spiritual work's sake, as also Christ says to the Apostles, "The labourer is worthy of his hire" (Luke x. 7).

22. It is also to be feared that the many masses that have been founded in convents and foundations, instead of doing any good, arouse God's anger; wherefore it would be well to endow no more masses and to abolish many of those that have been endowed; for we see that they are only looked upon as sacrifices and good works, though in truth they are sacraments like baptism and confession, and as such profit him only that receives them. But now the custom obtains of saying masses for the living and the dead, and everything is based upon them. This is the reason why there are so many, and

that they have come to be what we see.

But perhaps all this is a new and unheard-of doctrine, especially in the eyes of those that fear to lose their livelihood, if these masses were abolished. I must therefore reserve what I have to say on this subject until men have arrived at a truer understanding of the mass, its nature and use. The mass has, alas! for so many years been turned into means of gaining a livelihood, that I should advise a man to become a shepherd, a labourer, rather than a priest or monk, unless he knows what the mass is.

All this, however, does not apply to the old foundations and chapters, which were doubtless founded in order that since, according to the custom of Germany, all the children of nobles cannot be landowners and rulers, they should be provided for in these foundations, and these serve God freely, study, and become learned themselves, and help others to acquire learning. I am speaking only of the new foundations, endowed for prayers and masses, by the example of which the old foundations have become burdened with the like prayers and masses. making them of very little, if of any, use. Through God's righteous punishment, they have at last come down to the dregs, as they deserve—that is, to the noise of singers and organs, and cold, spiritless masses, with no end but to gain and spend the money due to them. Popes, bishops, and doctors should examine and report on such things; as it is they are the guiltiest, allowing anything that brings them money; the blind ever leading the blind. This comes of covetousness and the canon law.

It must, moreover, not be allowed in future that one man should have more than one endowment or prebend. He should be content with a moderate position in life, so that others may have something besides himself; and thus we must put a stop to the excuses of those that say that they must have more than one office to enable them to live in their proper station. It is possible to estimate one's "proper station" in such a way that a whole kingdom would not suffice to maintain it. So it is that

covetousness and want of faith in God go hand in hand, and often men take for the requirements of their "proper station" what is mere covetousness and want of faith.

23. As for the fraternities, together with indulgences, letters of indulgence, dispensations for Lent, and masses, and all the rest of such things, let them all be drowned and abolished; there is no good in them at all. If the Pope has the authority to grant dispensation in the matter of eating butter and hearing masses, let him allow priests to do the same; he has no right to take the power from them. I speak also of the fraternities in which indulgences, masses, and good works are distributed. My friend, in baptism you joined a fraternity of which Christ, the angels, the saints, and all Christians are members; be true to this, and satisfy it, and you will have fraternities enough. Let others make what show they wish; they are as counters compared to coins. But if there were a fraternity that subscribed money to feed the poor or to help others in any way, this would be good, and it would have its indulgence and its deserts in heaven. But now they are good for nothing but gluttony and drunkenness.

First of all we should expel from all German lands the Pope's legates, with their faculties, which they sell to us for much money, though it is all knavery—as, for instance, their taking money for making goods unlawfully acquired to be good, for freeing from oaths, vows, and bonds, thus destroying and teaching others to destroy truth and faith mutually pledged, saying the Pope has authority to do so. It is the evil spirit that bids them talk thus, and so they sell us the devil's teaching, and take money for teaching us sins and leading us to hell.

If there were nothing else to show that the Pope is antichrist, this would be enough. Dost thou hear this, O Pope! not the most holy, but the most sinful? Would that God would hurl thy chair headlong from heaven, and cast it down into the abyss of hell! Who gave you the power to exalt yourself above your God; to break and to loose what He has commanded; to teach Christians,

more especially Germans, who are of noble nature, and are famed in all histories for uprightness and truth, to be false, unfaithful, perjured, treacherous, and wicked? God has commanded to keep faith and observe oaths even with enemies; you dare to cancel this command, laying it down in your heretical, anti-Christian decretals that you have power to do so; and through your mouth and your pen Satan lies as he never lied before, teaching you to twist and pervert the Scriptures according to your own arbitrary will. O Lord Christ, look down upon this; let Thy day of judgment come and destroy the devil's lair at Rome. Behold him of whom St. Paul spoke (2 Thess. ii. 3, 4) that he should exalt himself above Thee and sit in Thy Church, showing himself as God-the man of sin and the child of damnation. What else does the Pope's power do but teach and strengthen sin and wickedness, leading souls to damnation in Thy name?

The children of Israel in old times were obliged to keep the oath that they had sworn, in ignorance and error, to the Gibeonites, their enemies; and King Zedekiah was destroyed utterly, with his people, because he broke the oath that he had sworn to the King of Babylon; and among us, a hundred years ago, the noble King Ladislaus V. of Poland and Hungary was slain by the Turk, with so many of his people, because he allowed himself to be misled by papal legates and cardinals and broke the good and useful treaty that he had made with the Turk. The pious Emperor Sigismond had no good fortune after the Council of Constance, in which he allowed the knaves to violate the safe-conduct that he had promised to John Huss and Jerome; from this has followed all the miserable strife between Bohemia and ourselves. And in our own time, God help us! how much Christian blood has been shed on account of the oath and bond which Pope Julius made and unmade between the Emperor Maximilian and King Louis of France! How can I tell all the misery the popes have caused by such devilish insolence, claiming the power of breaking oaths between great lords, causing a shameful scandal for the sake of money? I hope the day of judgment is at hand; things cannot and will not become worse than the dealings of the Roman chair. The Pope treads God's commandments under foot and exalts his own; if this is not antichrist, I do not know what is. But of this, and to more purpose, another time.

24. It is high time to take up earnestly and truthfully the cause of the Bohemians, to unite them with ourselves and ourselves with them, so that all mutual accusations, envy, and hatred may cease. I will be the first, in my folly, to give my opinion, with all due deference to those

of better understanding.

First of all, we must honestly confess the truth, without attempting self-justification, and own one thing to the Bohemians, namely that John Huss and Jerome of Prague were burnt at Constance in violation of the papal, Christian, and imperial oath and safe-conduct, and that thus God's commandment was broken and the Bohemians excited to great anger. And though they may have deserved such great wrong and disobedience to God on our part, they were not obliged to approve it and think it right. Nay, even now they should run any danger of life and limb rather than own that it is right to break an imperial, papal, Christian safe-conduct and act faithlessly in opposition to it. Therefore, though the Bohemians may be to blame for their impatience, yet the Pope and his followers are most to blame for all the misery, all the error and destruction of souls, that followed this council of Constance.

It is not my intention here to judge John Huss's belief and to defend his errors, although my understanding has not been able to find any error in him, and I would willingly believe that men who violated a safe-conduct and God's commandment (doubtless possessed rather by the evil spirit than by the Spirit of God) were unable to judge well or to condemn with truth. No one can imagine that the Holy Ghost can break God's commandments; no one can deny that it is breaking God's commandments to violate faith and a safe-conduct, even though it were promised to the devil himself, much more then in the case of a heretic; it is also notorious that a safe-conduct was promised to John Huss and the Bohemians, and that the promise was broken and Huss was burnt. I have no wish to make a saint or a martyr of John Huss (as some Bohemians do), though I own that he was treated unjustly, and that his books and his doctrines were wrongfully condemned; for God's judgments are inscrutable and terrible, and none but Himself may reveal or explain them.

All I say is this: Granting he was a heretic, however bad he may have been, yet he was burnt unjustly and in violation of God's commandments, and we must not force the Bohemians to approve this, if we wish ever to be at one with them. Plain truth must unite us, not obstinacy. It is no use to say, as they said at the time. that a safe-conduct need not be kept, if promised to a heretic; that is as much as to say, one may break God's commandments in order to keep God's commandments. They were infatuated and blinded by the devil, that they could not see what they said or did. God has commanded us to observe a safe-conduct; and this we must do though the world should perish: much more then where it is only a question of a heretic being set free. We should overcome heretics with books, not with fire, as the old Fathers did. If there were any skill in overcoming heretics with fire, the executioner would be the most learned doctor in the world; and there would be no need to study, but he that could get another into his power could burn him.

Besides this, the Emperor and the princes should send to Bohemia several pious, learned bishops and doctors, but, for their life, no cardinal or legate or inquisitor, for such people are far too unlearned in all Christian matters, and do not seek the salvation of souls; but, like all the papal hypocrites, they seek only their own glory, profit, and honour; they were also the leaders in that calamitous affair at Constance. But those envoys should inquire into the faith of the Bohemians, to ascertain

whether it would be possible to unite all their sects into one. Moreover, the Pope should (for their souls' sake) for a time abandon his supremacy and, in accordance with the statutes of the Nicene Council, allow the Bohemians to choose for themselves an archbishop of Prague, this choice to be confirmed by the Bishops of Olmütz in Moravia or of Gran in Hungary, or the Bishop of Gnesen in Poland, or the Bishop of Magdeburg in Germany. It is enough that it be confirmed by one or two of these bishops, as in the time of St. Cyprian. And the Pope has no authority to forbid it; if he forbids it, he acts as a wolf and a tyrant, and no one should obey him, but answer his excommunication by excommunicating him.

Yet if, for the honour of the chair of St. Peter, any one prefers to do this with the Pope's knowledge, I do not object, provided that the Bohemians do not pay a farthing for it, and that the Pope do not bind them a single hair'sbreadth, or subject them to his tyranny by oath, as he does all other bishops, against God and justice. If he is not satisfied with the honour of his assent being asked, leave him alone, by all means, with his own rights, laws, and tyrannies; be content with the election, and let the blood of all the souls that are in danger be upon his head. For no man may countenance wrong, and it is enough to show respect to tyranny. If we cannot do otherwise, we may consider the popular election and consent as equal to a tyrannical confirmation; but I hope this will not be necessary. Sooner or later some Romans, or pious bishops and learned men, must perceive and avert the Pope's tyranny.

Î do not advise that they be forced to abandon the Sacrament in both kinds, for it is neither unchristian nor heretical. They should be allowed to continue in their present way; but the new bishop must see that there be no dissensions about this matter, and they must learn that neither practice is actually wrong, just as there need be no disputes about the priests not wearing the same dress as the laity. In the same way, if they do not wish to submit to the canon laws of the Roman Church,

we must not force them, but we must content ourselves with seeing that they live in faith and according to the Scriptures. For Christian life and Christian faith may very well exist without the Pope's unbearable laws; nay, they cannot well exist until there are fewer of those laws or none. Our baptism has freed us and made us subject to God's word alone; why then should we suffer a man to make us the slaves of his words? As St. Paul says, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the

yoke of bondage" (Gal. v. 1).

If I knew that the only error of the Hussites\* was that they believe that in the Sacrament of the altar there is true bread and wine, though under it the body and the blood of Christ-if, I say, this were their only error, I should not condemn them; but let the Bishop of Prague see to this. For it is not an article of faith that in the Sacrament there is no bread and wine in substance and nature, which is a delusion of St. Thomas and the Pope; but it is an article of faith that in the natural bread and wine there is Christ's true flesh and blood. We should accordingly tolerate the views of both parties until they are at one: for there is not much danger whether you believe there is or there is not bread in the Sacrament. For we have to suffer many forms of belief and order that do not injure the faith; but if they believe otherwise, it would be better not to unite with them, and vet to instruct them in the truth.

All other errors and dissensions to be found in Bohemia should be tolerated until the Archbishop has been reinstated, and has succeeded in time in uniting the whole people in one harmonious doctrine. We shall never unite them by force, by driving or hurrying them. We must be patient, and use gentleness. Did not Christ have to walk with His disciples, suffering their unbelief, until

<sup>\*</sup> Luther uses here the word Pikarden, which is a corruption of Begharden, i.e. "Beghards," a nickname frequently applied in those days to the Hussites.

they believed in His resurrection? If they had but once more a regular bishop and good government without

Romish tyranny, I think matters would mend.

The temporal possessions of the Church should not be too strictly claimed; but since we are Christians and bound to help one another, we have the right to give them these things for the sake of unity, and to let them keep them, before God and the world; for Christ says, "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." Would to God we helped on both sides to bring about this unity, giving our hands one to the other in brotherly humility, not insisting on our authority or our rights! Love is more, and more necessary, than the papacy at Rome, which is without love, and love can exist without the papacy. I hope I have done my best for this end. If the Pope or his followers hinder this good work, they will have to give an account of their actions for having, against the love of God, sought their own advantage more than their neighbours'. The Pope should abandon his papacy, all his possessions and honours, if he could save a soul by so doing. But he would rather see the world go to ruin than give up a hair's-breadth of the power he has usurped; and yet he would be our most holy father. Herewith I am excused.

25. The universities also require a good, sound reformation. I must say this, let it vex whom it may. The fact is that whatever the papacy has ordered or instituted is only designed for the propagation of sin and error. What are the universities, as at present ordered, but, as the book of Maccabees says, "schools of 'Greek fashion' and 'heathenish manners'" (2 Macc. iv. 12, 13), full of dissolute living, where very little is taught of the Holy Scriptures and of the Christian faith, and the blind heathen teacher, Aristotle, rules even further than Christ? Now, my advice would be that the books of Aristotle, the *Physics*, the *Metaphysics*, *Of the Soul*, *Ethics*, which have hitherto been considered the best, be altogether abolished, with all others that profess to

treat of nature, though nothing can be learned from them, either of natural or of spiritual things. Besides, no one has been able to understand his meaning, and much time has been wasted and many noble souls vexed with much useless labour, study, and expense. I venture to say that any potter has more knowledge of natural things than is to be found in these books. My heart is grieved to see how many of the best Christians this accursed, proud, knavish heathen has fooled and led astray with his false words. God sent him as a plague for our sins.

Does not the wretched man in his best book, Of the Soul, teach that the soul dies with the body, though many have tried to save him with vain words, as if we had not the Holy Scriptures to teach us fully of all things of which Aristotle had not the slightest perception? Yet this dead heathen has conquered, and has hindered and almost suppressed the books of the living God; so that, when I see all this misery, I cannot but think that

the evil spirit has introduced this study.

Then there is the *Ethics*, which is accounted one of the best, though no book is more directly contrary to God's will and the Christian virtues. Oh that such books could be kept out of the reach of all Christians! Let no one object that I say too much, or speak without knowledge. My friend, I know of what I speak. I know Aristotle as well as you or men like you. I have read him with more understanding than St. Thomas or Scotus, which I may say without arrogance, and can prove if need be. It matters not that so many great minds have exercised themselves in these matters for many hundred years. Such objections do not affect me as they might have done once, since it is plain as day that many more errors have existed for many hundred years in the world and the universities.

I would, however, gladly consent that Aristotle's books of Logic, Rhetoric, and Poetry should be retained, or they might be usefully studied in a condensed form, to practise young people in speaking and preaching; but the notes

and comments should be abolished, and, just as Cicero's Rhetoric is read without note or comment, Aristotle's Logic should be read without such long commentaries. But now neither speaking nor preaching is taught out of them, and they are used only for disputation and toil-Besides this, there are languages—Latin, Greek, and Hebrew—the mathematics, history; which I recommend to men of higher understanding: and other matters, which will come of themselves, if they seriously strive after reform. And truly it is an important matter, for it concerns the teaching and training of Christian youths and of our noble people, in whom Christianity Therefore I think that pope and emperor still abides. could have no better task than the reformation of the universities, just as there is nothing more devilishly mischievous than an unreformed university.

Physicians I would leave to reform their own faculty; lawyers and theologians I take under my charge, and say firstly that it would be right to abolish the canon law entirely, from beginning to end, more especially the decretals. We are taught quite sufficiently in the Bible how we ought to act; all this study only prevents the study of the Scriptures, and for the most part it is tainted with covetousness and pride. And even though there were some good in it, it should nevertheless be destroyed. for the Pope having the canon law in scrinio pectoris,\* all further study is useless and deceitful. At the present time the canon law is not to be found in the books, but in the whims of the Pope and his sycophants. You may have settled a matter in the best possible way according to the canon law, but the Pope has his scrinium pectoris, to which all law must bow in all the world. Now this scrinium is oftentimes directed by some knave and the devil himself, whilst it boasts that it is directed by the Holy Ghost. This is the way they treat Christ's poor people, imposing many laws and keeping none, forcing others to keep them or to free themselves by money.

<sup>\*</sup> In the shrine of his heart.

Therefore, since the Pope and his followers have cancelled the whole canon law, despising it and setting their own will above all the world, we should follow them and reject the books. Why should we study them to no purpose? We should never be able to know the Pope's caprice, which has now become the canon law. Let it fall then in God's name, after having risen in the devil's Let there be henceforth no doctor decretorum, but let them all be doctores scrinii papalis, that is the Pope's sycophants. They say that there is no better temporal government than among the Turks, though they have no canon nor civil law, but only their Koran; we must at least own that there is no worse government than ours, with its canon and civil law, for no estate lives according to the Scriptures, or even according to natural reason.

The civil law, too, good God! what a wilderness it is become! It is, indeed, much better, more skilful, and more honest than the canon law, of which nothing is good but the name. Still there is far too much of it. Surely good governors, in addition to the Holy Scriptures, would be law enough, as St. Paul says, "Is it so that there is not a wise man among you, no, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren?" (1 Cor. vi. 5). I think also that the common law and the usage of the country should be preferred to the law of the empire, and that the law of the empire should only be used in cases of necessity. And would to God that, as each land has its own peculiar character and nature, they could all be governed by their own simple laws, just as they were governed before the law of the empire was devised, and as many are governed Elaborate and far-fetched laws are only even now! burdensome to the people, and a hindrance rather than a help to business. But I hope that others have thought of this, and considered it to more purpose than I could.

Our worthy theologians have saved themselves much trouble and labour by leaving the Bible alone and only

reading the Sentences.\* I should have thought that young theologians might begin by studying the Sentences, and that doctors should study the Bible. Now they invert this: the Bible is the first thing they study; this ceases with the Bachelor's degree; the Sentences are the last. and these they keep for ever with the Doctor's degree. and this, too, under such sacred obligation that one that is not a priest may read the Bible, but a priest must read the Sentences; so that, as far as I can see, a married man might be a doctor in the Bible, but not in the Sentences. How should we prosper so long as we act so perversely, and degrade the Bible, the holy word of God? Besides this, the Pope orders with many stringent words that his laws be read and used in schools and courts: while the law of the Gospel is but little considered. The result is that in schools and courts the Gospel lies dusty underneath the benches, so that the Pope's mischievous laws may alone be in force.

Since then we hold the name and title of teachers of the Holy Scriptures, we should verily be forced to act according to our title, and to teach the Holy Scriptures and nothing else. Although, indeed, it is a proud, presumptuous title for a man to proclaim himself teacher of the Scriptures, still it could be suffered, if the works confirmed the title. But as it is, under the rule of the Sentences, we find among theologians more human and heathenish fallacies than true holy knowledge of the Scriptures. What then are we to do? I know not. except to pray humbly to God to give us Doctors of Doctors of Arts, of Medicine, of Law, of the Sentences, may be made by popes, emperors, and the universities; but of this we may be certain: a Doctor of the Holy Scriptures can be made by none but the Holy Ghost, as Christ says, "They shall all be taught of God" (John vi. 45). Now the Holy Ghost does not consider

<sup>\*</sup> Luther refers here to the "Sentences" of Petrus Lombardus, the so-called magister sententiarum, which formed the basis of all dogmatic interpretation from about the middle of the twelfth century down to the Reformation.

red caps or brown, or any other pomp, nor whether we are young or old, layman or priest, monk or secular, virgin or married; nay, He once spoke by an ass against the prophet that rode on it. Would to God we were worthy of having such doctors given us, be they laymen or priests, married or unmarried! But now they try to force the Holy Ghost to enter into popes, bishops, or doctors, though there is no sign to show that He is in them.

We must also lessen the number of theological books, and choose the best, for it is not the number of books that makes the learned man, nor much reading, but good books often read, however few, make a man learned in the Scriptures and pious. Even the Fathers should only be read for a short time as an introduction to the Scriptures. As it is we read nothing else, and never get from them into the Scriptures, as if one should be gazing at the sign-posts and never follow the road. These good Fathers wished to lead us into the Scriptures by their writings, whereas we lead ourselves out by them, though the Scriptures are our vineyard, in which we should all work and exercise ourselves.

Above all, in schools of all kinds the chief and most common lesson should be the Scriptures, and for young boys the Gospel; and would to God each town had also a girls' school, in which girls might be taught the Gospel for an hour daily, either in German or Latin! In truth, schools, monasteries, and convents were founded for this purpose, and with good Christian intentions, as we read concerning St. Agnes and other saints\*; then were there holy virgins and martyrs; and in those times it was well with Christendom; but now it has been turned into nothing but praying and singing. Should not every Christian be expected by his ninth or tenth year to know all the holy Gospels, containing as they do his very name and life? A spinner or a seamstress teaches her daughter her trade while she is young, but now

<sup>\*</sup> See above, pp. 205, seq.

even the most learned prelates and bishops do not know

the Gospel.

Oh, how badly we treat all these poor young people that are entrusted to us for discipline and instruction! and a heavy reckoning shall we have to give for it that we keep them from the word of God; their fate is that described by Jeremiah: "Mine eyes do fail with tears, my bowels are troubled, my liver is poured upon the earth, for the destruction of the daughter of my people, because the children and the sucklings swoon in the streets of the city. They say to their mothers, Where is corn and wine? when they swooned as the wounded in the streets of the city, when their soul was poured out into their mothers' bosom" (Lam. ii. 11, 12). We do not perceive all this misery, how the young folk are being pitifully corrupted in the midst of Christendom, all for want of the Gospel, which we should always read and study with them.

However, even if the High Schools studied the Scriptures diligently we should not send every one to them, as we do now, when nothing is considered but numbers, and every man wishes to have a Doctor's title; we should only send the aptest pupils, well prepared in the lower schools. This should be seen to by princes or the magistrates of the towns, and they should take care none but apt pupils be sent. But where the Holy Scriptures are not the rule, I advise no one to send his child. Everything must perish where God's word is not studied unceasingly; and so we see what manner of men there are now in the High Schools, and all this is the fault of no one but of the Pope, the bishops, and the prelates, to whom the welfare of the young has been entrusted. For the High Schools should only train men of good understanding in the Scriptures, who wish to become bishops and priests, and to stand at our head against heretics and the devil and all the world. But where do we find this? I greatly fear the High Schools are nothing but great gates of hell, unless they diligently study the Holy Scriptures and teach them to the young people.

26. I know well the Romish mob will object and loudly pretend that the Pope took the holy Roman empire from the Greek emperor and gave it to Germany, for which honour and favour he is supposed to deserve submission and thanks and all other kinds of returns from the Germans. For this reason they will perhaps assume to oppose all attempts to reform them, and will let no regard be paid to anything but those donations of the Roman empire. This is also the reason why they have so arbitrarily and proudly persecuted and oppressed many good emperors, so that it were pity to tell, and with the same cleverness have they made themselves lords of all the temporal power and authority, in violation of the holy Gospel; and accordingly I must speak of this matter also.

There is no doubt that the true Roman empire, of which the prophets (Num. xxiv. 24 and Daniel ii. 44) spoke, was long ago destroyed, as Balaam clearly fore-told, saying, "And ships shall come from the coast of Chittim, and shall afflict Asshur, and shall afflict Eber, and he also shall perish for ever" (Num. xxiv. 24).\* And this was done by the Goths, and more especially since the empire of the Turks was formed, about one thousand years ago, and so gradually Asia and Africa were lost, and subsequently France, Spain, and finally Venice arose, so that Rome retains no part of its former power.

Since then the Pope could not force the Greeks and the emperor at Constantinople, who is the hereditary Roman emperor, to obey his will, he invented this device to rob him of his empire and title, and to give it to the Germans, who were at that time strong and of good repute, in order that they might take the power of the Roman empire and hold it of the Pope; and this is what actually has happened. It was taken from the emperor at Constantinople, and the name and title were given to us Germans, and therewith we became subject

<sup>\*</sup> Luther here follows the Vulgate, translating the above verse: "Es werden die Römer kommen und die Juden verstören: und hernach werden sie auch untergehen."

to the Pope, and he has built up a new Roman empire on the Germans. For the other empire, the original,

came to an end long ago, as was said above.

Thus the Roman see has got what it wished: Rome has been taken possession of, and the German emperor driven out and bound by oaths not to dwell in Rome. He is to be Roman emperor and nevertheless not to dwell in Rome, and, moreover, always to depend on the Pope and his followers, and to do their will. We are to have the title, and they are to have the lands and the cities. For they have always made our simplicity the tool of their pride and tyranny, and they consider us as stupid Germans, to be deceived and fooled by them as they choose.

Well, for our Lord God it is a small thing to toss kingdoms and principalities hither and thither; He is so free with them that He will sometimes take a kingdom from a good man and give it to a knave, sometimes through the treachery of false, wicked men, sometimes by inheritance, as we read concerning Persia, Greece, and nearly all kingdoms; and Daniel says, "Wisdom and might are His; and He changes the times and the seasons, and He removeth kings and setteth up kings" (Dan. ii. 20, 21). Therefore no one need think it a grand matter if he has a kingdom given to him, especially if he be a Christian; and so we Germans need not be proud of having had a new Roman empire given us. For in His eyes it is a poor gift, that He sometimes gives to the least deserving, as Daniel says, "And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; and He does according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth " (Dan. iv. 35).

Now, although the Pope has violently and unjustly robbed the true emperor of the Roman empire, or its name, and has given it to us Germans, yet it is certain that God has used the Pope's wickedness to give the German nation this empire and to raise up a new Roman empire, that exists now, after the fall of the old empire. We gave the Pope no cause for this action, nor did we

understand his false aims and schemes; but still, through the craft and knavery of the popes, we have, alas! all too dearly, paid the price of this empire with incalculable bloodshed, with the loss of our liberty, with the robbery of our wealth, especially of our churches and benefices, and with unspeakable treachery and insult. We have the empire in name, but the Pope has our wealth, our honour, our bodies, lives, and souls, and all that we have. This was the way to deceive the Germans, and to deceive them by shuffling. What the popes wished was to become emperors; and as they could not do this, they put themselves above the emperors.

Since, then, we have received this empire through God's providence and the schemes of evil men, without our fault, I would not advise that we should give it up, but that we should govern it honestly, in the fear of God, so long as He is pleased to let us hold it. For, as I have said it is no matter to Him how a kingdom is come by, but He will have it duly governed. If the popes took it from others dishonestly, we at least did not come by it dishonestly. It was given to us through evil men, under the will of God, to whom we have more regard than the false intentions of the popes, who wished to be emperors and more than emperors and to fool and mock us with the name.

The King of Babylon obtained his kingdom by force and robbery; yet God would have it governed by the holy princes Daniel, Ananias, Asarias, and Misael. Much more then does He require this empire to be governed by the Christian princes of Germany, though the Pope may have stolen, or robbed, or newly fashioned it. It is all God's ordering, which came to pass before we knew of it.

Therefore the Pope and his followers have no reason to boast that they did a great kindness to the German nation in giving them this Roman empire; firstly because they intended no good to us in the matter, but only abused our simplicity to strengthen their own power against the Roman emperor at Constantinople, from

whom, against God and justice, the Pope has taken what

he had no right to.

Secondly, the Pope sought to give the empire, not to us, but to himself, and to become lord over all our power, liberty, wealth, body and soul, and through us over all the world, if God had not prevented it, as he plainly says in his decretals, and has tried with many mischievous tricks in the case of many German emperors. Thus we Germans have been taught in plain German: whilst we expected to become lords, we have become the servants of the most crafty tyrants; we have the name, title, and arms of the empire, but the Pope has the treasure, authority, law, and freedom; thus, whilst the Pope eats the kernel, he leaves us the empty shells to play with.

Now may God help us (who, as I have said, assigned us this kingdom through crafty tyrants, and charged us to govern it) to act according to our name, title, and arms, and to secure our freedom, and thus let the Romans see at last what we have received of God through them. If they boast that they have given us an empire, well, be it so, by all means; then let the Pope give up Rome, all he has of the empire, and free our country from his unbearable taxes and robberies, and give back to us our liberty, authority, wealth, honour, body, and soul, rendering to the empire those things that are the empire's, so as to act in accordance with his words and pretences.

But if he will not do this, what game is he playing with all his falsehoods and pretences? Was it not enough to lead this great people by the nose for so many hundred years? Because the Pope crowns or makes the Emperor, it does not follow that he is above him; for the prophet, St. Samuel, anointed and crowned King Saul and David, at God's command, and was yet subject to them. And the prophet Nathan anointed King Solomon, and yet was not placed over him; moreover, St. Elisha let one of his servants anoint King Jehu of Israel, yet they obeyed him. And it has never yet happened in the whole world that any one was above the king because he consecrated or crowned him, except in the case of the Pope.

Now he is himself crowned pope by three cardinals; yet they are subject to him, and he is above them. Why, then, contrary to his own example and to the doctrine and practice of the whole world and the Scriptures, should he exalt himself above the temporal authorities, and the empire, for no other reason than that he crowns, and consecrates the Emperor? It suffices that he is above him in all Divine matters—that is, in preaching, teaching, and the ministration of the Sacrament—in which matters, however, every priest or bishop is above all other men, just as St. Ambrose in his chair was above the Emperor Theodosius, and the prophet Nathan above David, and Samuel above Saul. Therefore let the German emperor be a true free emperor, and let not his authority or his sword be overborne by these blind pretences of the Pope's sycophants, as if they were to be exceptions, and be above the temporal sword in all things.

27. Let this be enough about the faults of the spiritual estate, though many more might be found, if the matter were properly considered; we must now consider the defects of the temporal estates. In the first place, we require a general law and consent of the German nation against profusion and extravagance in dress, which is the cause of so much poverty among the nobles and the Surely God has given to us, as to other nations, enough wool, fur, flax, and whatever else is required for the decent clothing of every class; and it cannot be necessary to spend such enormous sums for silk, velvet, cloth of gold, and all other kinds of outlandish stuff. that even if the Pope did not rob us Germans with his unbearable taxes, we should be robbed more than enough by these secret thieves, the dealers in silk and velvet. As it is, we see that every man wishes to be every other man's equal, and that this causes and increases pride and envy among us, as we deserve, all which would cease, with many other misfortunes, if our self-will would but let us be gratefully content with what God has given us.

It is similarly necessary to diminish the use of spices, which is one of the ships in which our gold is sent away from Germany. God's mercy has given us more food, and that both precious and good, than is to be found in other countries. I shall probably be accused of making foolish and impossible suggestions, as if I wished to destroy the great business of commerce. But I am only doing my part; if the community does not mend matters, every man should do it himself. I do not see many good manners that have ever come into a land through commerce, and therefore God let the people of Israel dwell far from the sea and not carry on much trade.

But without doubt the greatest misfortune of the Germans is buying on usury. But for this, many a man would have to leave unbought his silk, velvet, cloth of gold, spices, and all other luxuries. The system has not been in force for more than one hundred years, and has already brought poverty, misery, and destruction on almost all princes, foundations, cities, nobles, and heirs. If it continues for another hundred years Germany will be left without a farthing, and we shall be reduced to eating one another. The devil invented this system, and the Pope has done an injury to the whole world by sanctioning it.

My request and my cry therefore is this: Let each man consider the destruction of himself and his family, which is no longer at the door, but has entered the house; and let emperors, princes, lords, and corporations see to the condemnation and prohibition of this kind of trade, without considering the opposition of the Pope and all his justice and injustice, nor whether livings or endowments depend upon it. Better a single fief in a city based on a freehold estate or honest interest, than a hundred based on usury; yea, a single endowment on usury is worse and more grievous than twenty based on freehold estate. Truly this usury is a sign and warning that the world has been given over to the devil for its sins, and that we are losing our spiritual and temporal welfare alike; yet we heed it not.

Doubtless we should also find some bridle for the Fuggers and similar companies. Is it possible that in

a single man's lifetime such great wealth should be collected together, if all were done rightly and according to God's will? I am not skilled in accounts, but I do not understand how it is possible for one hundred guilders to gain twenty in a year, or how one guilder can gain another, and that not out of the soil, or by cattle, seeing that possessions depend not on the wit of men, but on the blessing of God. I commend this to those that are skilled in worldly affairs. I as a theologian blame nothing but the evil appearance, of which St. Paul says, "Abstain from all appearance of evil" (1 Thess. v. 22). All I know is that it were much more godly to encourage agriculture and lessen commerce; and that they do the best who, according to the Scriptures, till the ground to get their living, as we are all commanded in Adam: "Cursed is the ground for thy sake. . . . Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee. . . . In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread" (Gen. iii. 17-19). There is still much ground that is not ploughed or tilled.

Then there is the excess in eating and drinking, for which we Germaus have an ill reputation in foreign countries, as our special vice, and which has become so common, and gained so much the upper hand, that sermons avail nothing. The loss of money caused by it is not the worst; but in its train come murder, adultery, theft, blasphemy, and all vices. The temporal power should do something to prevent it; otherwise it will come to pass, as Christ foretold, that the last day shall come as a thief in the night, and shall find them eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, planting and building; buying and selling (Matt. xxiv. 38; Luke xvii. 26), just as things go on now, and that so strongly that I apprehend lest the day of judgment be at hand, even now when we least expect it.

Lastly, is it not a terrible thing that we Christians should maintain public brothels, though we all vow chastity in our baptism? I well know all that can be said on this matter: that it is not peculiar to one nation, that it would be difficult to demolish it, and that it is

better thus than that virgins, or married women, or honourable women should be dishonoured. But should not the spiritual and temporal powers combine to find some means of meeting these difficulties without any such heathen practice? If the people of Israel existed without this scandal, why should not a Christian nation be able to do so? How do so many towns and villages manage to exist without these houses? Why should not

great cities be able to do so?

In all, however, that I have said above, my object has been to show how much good temporal authority might do, and what should be the duty of all authorities, so that every man might learn what a terrible thing it is to rule and to have the chief place. What boots it though a ruler be in his own person as holy as St. Peter, if he be not diligent to help his subjects in these matters? His very authority will be his condemnation; for it is the duty of those in authority to seek the good of their subjects. But if those in authority considered how young people might be brought together in marriage, the prospect of marriage would help every man and protect him from temptations.

But as it is every man is induced to become a priest or a monk; and of all these I am afraid not one in a hundred has any other motive but the wish of getting a livelihood and the uncertainty of maintaining a family. Therefore they begin by a dissolute life and sow their wild oats (as they say), but I fear they rather gather in a store of wild oats.\* I hold the proverb to be true, "Most men become monks and priests in desperation." That is why things are as we see them.

But in order that many sins may be prevented that are becoming too common, I would honestly advise that no boy or girl be allowed to take the vow of chastity or to enter a religious life before the age of thirty years. For this requires a special grace, as St. Paul says. Therefore,

<sup>\*</sup> Luther uses the expression ausbuben in the sense of sich austoben viz., "to storm out one's passions," and then coins the word sich einbuben, viz., "to storm in one's passions."

unless God specially urge any one to a religious life, he will do well to leave all vows and devotions alone. I say further, If a man has so little faith in God as to fear that he will be unable to maintain himself in the married state, and if this fear is the only thing that makes him become a priest, then I implore him, for his own soul's sake, not to become a priest, but rather to become a peasant, or what he will. For if simple trust in God be necessary to ensure temporal support, tenfold trust in God is necessary to live a religious life. If you do not trust to God for your worldly food, how can you trust to Him for your spiritual food? Alas! this unbelief and want of faith destroys all things, and leads us into all misery, as we see among all conditions of men.

Much might be said concerning all this misery. Young people have no one to look after them, they are left to go on just as they like, and those in authority are of no more use to them than if they did not exist, though this should be the chief care of the Pope, of bishops, lords, and councils. They wish to rule over everything, everywhere, and yet they are of no use. Oh, what a rare sight, for these reasons, will a lord or ruler be in heaven, though he might build a hundred churches to

God and raise all the dead!

But this may suffice for the present. For of what concerns the temporal authority and the nobles I have, I think, said enough in my tract on Good Works. For their lives and governments leave room enough for improvement; but there is no comparison between spiritual and temporal abuses, as I have there shown. I daresay I have sung a lofty strain, that I have proposed many things that will be thought impossible, and attacked many points too sharply. But what was I to do? I was bound to say this: if I had the power, this is what I would do. I had rather incur the world's anger than God's; they cannot take from me more than my life. I have hitherto made many offers of peace to my adversaries; but, as I see, God has forced me through them to open my mouth wider and

wider, and, because they do not keep quiet, to give them enough cause for speaking, barking, shouting, and writing. Well, then, I have another song still to sing concerning them and Rome; if they wish to hear it, I will sing it to them, and sing with all my might. Do you understand, my friend Rome, what I mean?

I have frequently offered to submit my writings for inquiry and examination, but in vain, though I know, if I am in the right, I must be condemned upon earth and justified by Christ alone in heaven. For all the Scriptures teach us that the affairs of Christians and Christendom must be judged by God alone; they have never yet been justified by men in this world, but the opposition has always been too strong. My greatest care and fear is lest my cause be not condemned by men, by which I should know for certain that it does not please God. Therefore let them go freely to work, pope, bishop, priest, monk, or doctor; they are the true people to persecute the truth, as they have always done. God grant us all a Christian understanding, and especially to the Christian nobility of the German nation true spiritual courage, to do what is best for our unhappy Church. Amen I

At Wittenberg, in the year 1520.

## ſΤ

## Concerning Christian Liberty

## LETTER OF MARTIN LUTHER TO POPE LEO X.

Among those monstrous evils of this age with which I have now for three years been waging war, I am sometimes compelled to look to you and to call you to mind. most blessed father Leo. In truth, since you alone are everywhere considered as being the cause of my engaging in war, I cannot at any time fail to remember you; and although I have been compelled by the causeless raging of your impious flatterers against me to appeal from your seat to a future council—fearless of the futile decrees of your predecessors Pius and Julius, who in their foolish tyranny prohibited such an action—vet I have never been so alienated in feeling from your Blessedness as not to have sought with all my might, in diligent prayer and crying to God, all the best gifts for you and for your see. But those who have hitherto endeavoured to terrify me with the majesty of your name and authority, I have begun quite to despise and triumph over. One thing I see remaining which I cannot despise, and this has been the reason of my writing anew to your Blessedness: namely, that I find that blame is cast on me, and that it is imputed to me as a great offence, that in my rashness I am judged to have spared not even your person.

Now, to confess the truth openly, I am conscious that, whenever I have had to mention your person, I have said

nothing of you but what was honourable and good. If I had done otherwise, I could by no means have approved my own conduct, but should have supported with all my power the judgment of those men concerning me, nor would anything have pleased me better, than to recant such rashness and impiety. I have called you Daniel in Babylon; and every reader thoroughly knows with what distinguished zeal I defended your conspicuous innocence against Silvester, who tried to stain it. Indeed, the published opinion of so many great men and the repute of your blameless life are too widely famed and too much reverenced throughout the world to be assailable by any man, of however great name, or by any arts. I am not so foolish as to attack one whom everybody praises; nay, it has been and always will be my desire not to attack even those whom public repute disgraces. I am not delighted at the faults of any man, since I am very conscious myself of the great beam in my own eye, nor can I be the first to cast a stone at the adulteress.

I have indeed inveighed sharply against impious doctrines, and I have not been slack to censure my adversaries on account, not of their bad morals, but of their And for this I am so far from being sorry that I have brought my mind to despise the judgments of men and to persevere in this vehement zeal, according to the example of Christ, who, in His zeal, calls His adversaries a generation of vipers, blind, hypocrites, and children of the devil. Paul, too, charges the sorcerer with being a child of the devil, full of all subtlety and all malice; and defames certain persons as evil workers. dogs, and deceivers. In the opinion of those delicateeared persons, nothing could be more bitter or intemperate than Paul's language. What can be more bitter than the words of the prophets? The ears of our generation have been made so delicate by the senseless multitude of flatterers that, as soon as we perceive that anything of ours is not approved of, we cry out that we are being bitterly assailed; and when we can repel the truth by no other pretence, we escape by attributing bitterness, impatience, intemperance, to our adversaries. What would be the use of salt if it were not pungent, or of the edge of the sword if it did not slay? Accursed is the man who does the work of the Lord deceitfully.

Wherefore, most excellent Leo, I beseech you to accept my vindication, made in this letter, and to persuade yourself that I have never thought any evil concerning your person; further, that I am one who desires that eternal blessing may fall to your lot, and that I have no dispute with any man concerning morals, but only concerning the word of truth. In all other things I will yield to any one, but I neither can nor will forsake and deny the word. He who thinks otherwise of me, or has taken in my words in another sense, does not think

rightly, and has not taken in the truth.

Your see, however, which is called the Court of Rome, and which neither you nor any man can deny to be more corrupt than any Babylon or Sodom, and quite, as I believe, of a lost, desperate, and hopeless impiety, this I have verily abominated, and have felt indignant that the people of Christ should be cheated under your name and the pretext of the Church of Rome; and so I have resisted, and will resist, as long as the spirit of faith shall live in me. Not that I am striving after impossibilities, or hoping that by my labours alone, against the furious opposition of so many flatterers, any good can be done in that most disordered Babylon; but that I feel myself a debtor to my brethren, and am bound to take thought for them, that fewer of them may be ruined, or that their ruin may be less complete, by the plagues of For many years now, nothing else has overflowed from Rome into the world—as you are not ignorant than the laying waste of goods, of bodies, and of souls, and the worst examples of all the worst things. These things are clearer than the light to all men; and the Church of Rome, formerly the most holy of all Churches, has become the most lawless den of thieves, the most shameless of all brothels, the very kingdom of sin, death, and hell; so that not even antichrist, if he were to come,

could devise any addition to its wickedness.

Meanwhile you, Leo, are sitting like a lamb in the midst of wolves, like Daniel in the midst of lions, and, with Ezekiel, you dwell among scorpions. What opposition can you alone make to these monstrous evils? to yourself three or four of the most learned and best of the cardinals. What are these among so many? would all perish by poison before you could undertake to decide on a remedy. It is all over with the Court of Rome; the wrath of God has come upon her to the uttermost. She hates councils: she dreads to be reformed: she cannot restrain the madness of her impiety; she fills up the sentence passed on her mother, of whom it is said, "We would have healed Babylon, but she is not healed: let us forsake her." It had been your duty and that of your cardinals to apply a remedy to these evils, but this gont laughs at the physician's hand, and the chariot does not obey the reins. Under the influence of these feelings, I have always grieved that you, most excellent Leo, who were worthy of a better age, have been made pontiff in this. For the Roman Court is not worthy of you and those like you, but of Satan himself, who in truth is more the ruler in that Babylon than you are.

Oh, would that, having laid aside that glory which your most abandoned enemies declare to be yours, you were living rather in the office of a private priest or on your paternal inheritance! In that glory none are worthy to glory, except the race of Iscariot, the children of perdition. For what happens in your court, Leo, except that, the more wicked and execrable any man is, the more prosperously he can use your name and authority for the ruin of the property and souls of men, for the multiplication of crimes, for the oppression of faith and truth and of the whole Church of God? Oh, Leo! in reality most unfortunate, and sitting on a most perilous throne, I tell you the truth, because I wish you well; for if Bernard felt compassion for his Anastasius at a time when the Roman see, though even then most corrupt, was as yet

ruling with better hope than now, why should not we lament, to whom so much further corruption and ruin has been added in three hundred years?

Is it not true that there is nothing under the vast heavens more corrupt, more pestilential, more hateful, than the Court of Rome? She incomparably surpasses the impiety of the Turks, so that in very truth she, who was formerly the gate of heaven, is now a sort of open mouth of hell, and such a mouth as, under the urgent wrath of God, cannot be blocked up; one course alone being left to us wretched men: to call back and save some few, if we can, from that Roman gulf.

Behold, Leo, my father, with what purpose and on what principle it is that I have stormed against that seat of pestilence. I am so far from having felt any rage against your person that I even hoped to gain favour with you and to aid in your welfare by striking actively and vigorously at that your prison, nay, your hell. For whatever the efforts of all minds can contrive against the confusion of that impious Court will be advantageous to you and to your welfare, and to many others with you. Those who do harm to her are doing your office; those who in every way abhor her are glorifying Christ; in short, those are Christians who are not Romans.

But, to say yet more, even this never entered my heart: to inveigh against the Court of Rome or to dispute at all about her. For, seeing all remedies for her health to be desperate, I looked on her with contempt, and, giving her a bill of divorcement, said to her, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still," giving myself up to the peaceful and quiet study of sacred literature, that by this I might be of use to the brethren living about me.

While I was making some advance in these studies, Satan opened his eyes and goaded on his servant John Eccius, that notorious adversary of Christ, by the unchecked lust for fame, to drag me unexpectedly into the arena, trying to catch me in one little word concerning the primacy of the Church of Rome, which had fallen

from me in passing. That boastful Thraso, foaming and gnashing his teeth, proclaimed that he would dare all things for the glory of God and for the honour of the holy apostolic seat; and, being puffed up respecting your power, which he was about to misuse, he looked forward with all certainty to victory; seeking to promote, not so much the primacy of Peter, as his own pre-eminence among the theologians of this age; for he thought it would contribute in no slight degree to this, if he were to lead Luther in triumph. The result having proved unfortunate for the sophist, an incredible rage torments him; for he feels that whatever discredit to Rome has arisen through me has been caused by the fault of himself alone.

Suffer me, I pray you, most excellent Leo, both to plead my own cause, and to accuse your true enemies. I believe it is known to you in what way Cardinal Cajetan, your imprudent and unfortunate, nay unfaithful, legate, acted towards me. When, on account of my reverence for your name, I had placed myself and all that was mine in his hands, he did not so act as to establish peace, which he could easily have established by one little word, since I at that time promised to be silent and to make an end of my case, if he would command my adversaries to do the same. But that man of pride, not content with this agreement, began to justify my adversaries, to give them free licence, and to order me to recant, a thing which was certainly not in his commission. Thus indeed, when the case was in the best position, it came through his vexatious tyranny into a much worse one. Therefore whatever has followed upon this is the fault, not of Luther, but entirely of Cajetan, since he did not suffer me to be silent and remain quiet, which at that time I was entreating for with all my might. What more was it my duty to do?

Next came Charles Miltitz, also a nuncio from your Blessedness. He, though he went up and down with much and varied exertion, and omitted nothing which could tend to restore the position of the cause thrown

into confusion by the rashness and pride of Cajetan, had difficulty, even with the help of that very illustrious prince the Elector Frederick, in at last bringing about more than one familiar conference with me. In these I again yielded to your great name, and was prepared to keep silence, and to accept as my judge either the Archbishop of Treves, or the Bishop of Naumburg; and thus it was done and concluded. While this was being done with good hope of success, lo! that other and greater enemy of yours, Eccius, rushed in with his Leipsic disputation, which he had undertaken against Carlstadt, and, having taken up a new question concerning the primacy of the Pope, turned his arms unexpectedly against me, and completely overthrew the plan for peace. Meanwhile Charles Miltitz was waiting, disputations were held, judges were being chosen, but no decision was arrived at. And no wonder! for by the falsehoods, pretences, and arts of Eccius the whole business was brought into such thorough disorder, confusion, and festering soreness, that, whichever way the sentence might lean, a greater conflagration was sure to arise; for he was seeking, not after truth, but after his own credit. this case too I omitted nothing which it was right that I should do.

I confess that on this occasion no small part of the corruptions of Rome came to light; but, if there was any offence in this, it was the fault of Eccius, who, in taking on him a burden beyond his strength, and in furiously aiming at credit for himself, unveiled to the whole world the disgrace of Rome.

Here is that enemy of yours, Leo, or rather of your Court; by his example alone we may learn that an enemy is not more baneful than a flatterer. For what did he bring about by his flattery, except evils which no king could have brought about? At this day the name of the Court of Rome stinks in the nostrils of the world, the papal authority is growing weak, and its notorious ignorance is evil spoken of. We should hear none of these things, if Eccius had not disturbed the plans of

Militiz and myself for peace. He feels this clearly enough himself in the indignation he shows, too late and in vain, against the publication of my books. He ought to have reflected on this at the time when he was all mad for renown, and was seeking in your cause nothing but his own objects, and that with the greatest peril to you. The foolish man hoped that, from fear of your name, I should yield and keep silence; for I do not think he presumed on his talents and learning. Now, when he sees that I am very confident and speak aloud, he repents too late of his rashness, and sees—if indeed he does see it—that there is One in heaven who resists

the proud, and humbles the presumptuous.

Since then we were bringing about by this disputation nothing but the greater confusion of the cause of Rome, Charles Miltitz for the third time addressed the Fathers of the Order, assembled in chapter, and sought their advice for the settlement of the case, as being now in a most troubled and perilous state. Since, by the favour of God, there was no hope of proceeding against me by force, some of the more noted of their number were sent to me, and begged me at least to show respect to your person and to vindicate in a humble letter both your innocence and my own. They said that the affair was not as yet in a position of extreme hopelessness, if Leo X., in his inborn kindliness, would put his hand to it. On this I, who have always offered and wished for peace, in order that I might devote myself to calmer and more useful pursuits, and who for this very purpose have acted with so much spirit and vehemence, in order to put down by the strength and impetuosity of my words, as well as of my feelings, men whom I saw to be very far from equal to myself-I, I say, not only gladly yielded, but even accepted it with joy and gratitude, as the greatest kindness and benefit, if you should think it right to satisfy my hopes.

Thus I come, most blessed Father, and in all abasement beseech you to put to your hand, if it is possible, and impose a curb upon those flatterers who are enemies

of peace, while they pretend peace. But there is no reason, most blessed Father, why any one should assume that I am to utter a recantation, unless he prefers to involve the case in still greater confusion. Moreover, I cannot bear with laws for the interpretation of the word of God, since the word of God, which teaches liberty in all other things, ought not to be bound. Saving these two things, there is nothing which I am not able, and most heartily willing, to do or to suffer. I hate contention; I will challenge no one; in return I wish not to be challenged; but, being challenged, I will not be dumb in the cause of Christ my Master. For your Blessedness will be able by one short and easy word to call these controversies before you and suppress them, and to impose silence and peace on both sides—a word which I have ever longed to hear.

Therefore, Leo, my Father, beware of listening to those sirens who make you out to be not simply a man, but partly a god, so that you can command and require whatever you will. It will not happen so, nor will you prevail. You are the servant of servants, and, more than any other man, in a most pitiable and perilous position. Let not those men deceive you who pretend that you are lord of the world; who will not allow any one to be a Christian without your authority; who babble of your having power over heaven, hell, and purgatory. These men are your enemies and are seeking your soul to destroy it, as Isaiah says, "My people, they that call thee blessed are themselves deceiving thee." They are in error who raise you above councils and the universal Church; they are in error who attribute to you alone the right of interpreting Scripture. All these men are seeking to set up their own impieties in the Church under your name, and, alas! Satan has gained much through them in the time of your predecessors.

In brief, trust not in any who exalt you, but in those who humiliate you. For this is the judgment of God: "He hath cast down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble." See how unlike Christ was

to His successors, though all will have it that they are His vicars. I fear that in truth very many of them have been in too serious a sense His vicars, for a vicar represents a prince who is absent. Now if a pontiff rules while Christ is absent and does not dwell in his heart, what else is he but a vicar of Christ? And then what is that Church but a multitude without Christ? indeed is such a vicar but antichrist and an idol? much more rightly did the Apostles speak, who call themselves the servants of a present Christ, not the vicars of an absent one!

Perhaps I am shamelessly bold in seeming to teach so great a head, by whom all men ought to be taught, and from whom, as those plagues of yours boast, the thrones of judges receive their sentence; but I imitate St. Bernard in his book concerning Considerations addressed to Eugenius, a book which ought to be known by heart by every pontiff. I do this, not from any desire to teach, but as a duty, from that simple and faithful solicitude which teaches us to be anxious for all that is safe for our neighbours, and does not allow considerations of worthiness or unworthiness to be entertained, being intent only on the dangers or advantage of others. For since I know that your Blessedness is driven and tossed by the wayes at Rome, so that the depths of the sea press on you with infinite perils, and that you are labouring under such a condition of misery that you need even the least help from any the least brother, I do not seem to myself to be acting unsuitably if I forget your majesty till I shall have fulfilled the office of charity. I will not flatter in so serious and perilous a matter; and if in this you do not see that I am your friend and most thoroughly your subject, there is One to see and judge.

In fine, that I may not approach you empty-handed, blessed Father, I bring with me this little treatise, published under your name, as a good omen of the establishment of peace and of good hope. By this you may perceive in what pursuits I should prefer and be able to occupy myself to more profit, if I were allowed, or had been hitherto allowed, by your impious flatterers. It is a small matter, if you look to its exterior, but, unless I mistake, it is a summary of the Christian life put together in small compass, if you apprehend its meaning. I, in my poverty, have no other present to make you, nor do you need anything else than to be enriched by a spiritual gift. I commend myself to your Paternity and Blessedness, whom may the Lord Jesus preserve for ever. Amen.

Wittenberg, 6th September, 1520.

## CONCERNING CHRISTIAN LIBERTY

CHRISTIAN faith has appeared to many an easy thing; nay, not a few even reckon it among the social virtues, as it were; and this they do because they have not made proof of it experimentally, and have never tasted of what efficacy it is. For it is not possible for any man to write well about it, or to understand well what is rightly written, who has not at some time tasted of its spirit, under the pressure of tribulation; while he who has tasted of it, even to a very small extent, can never write, speak, think, or hear about it sufficiently. For it is a living fountain, springing up unto eternal life, as Christ calls it in John iv.

Now, though I cannot boast of my abundance, and though I know how poorly I am furnished, yet I hope that, after having been vexed by various temptations, I have attained some little drop of faith, and that I can speak of this matter, if not with more elegance, certainly with more solidity, than those literal and too subtle disputants who have hitherto discoursed upon it without understanding their own words. That I may open then an easier way for the ignorant—for these alone I am trying to serve—I first lay down these two propositions, concerning spiritual liberty and servitude:—

A Christian man is the most free lord of all, and subject to none; a Christian man is the most dutiful servant of

all, and subject to every one.

Although these statements appear contradictory, yet, when they are found to agree together, they will make excellently for my purpose. They are both the statements of Paul himself, who says, "Though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all" (1 Cor. ix. 19), and "Owe no man anything, but to love one another" (Rom. xiii. 8). Now love is by its own nature dutiful and obedient to the beloved object. Thus even Christ, though Lord of all things, was yet made of a woman; made under the law; at once free and a servant; at once in the form of God and in the form of a servant.

Let us examine the subject on a deeper and less simple principle. Man is composed of a twofold nature, a spiritual and a bodily. As regards the spiritual nature, which they name the soul, he is called the spiritual, inward, new man; as regards the bodily nature, which they name the flesh, he is called the fleshly, outward, old man. The Apostle speaks of this: "Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day" (2 Cor. iv. 16). The result of this diversity is that in the Scriptures opposing statements are made concerning the same man, the fact being that in the same man these two men are opposed to one another; the flesh lusting against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh (Gal. v. 17).

We first approach the subject of the inward man, that we may see by what means a man becomes justified, free, and a true Christian; that is, a spiritual, new, and inward man. It is certain that absolutely none among outward things, under whatever name they may be reckoned, has any influence in producing Christian righteousness or liberty, nor, on the other hand, unrighteousness or slavery. This can be shown by an easy argument.

What can it profit the soul that the body should be in good condition, free, and full of life; that it should

eat, drink, and act according to its pleasure; when even the most impious slaves of every kind of vice are prosperous in these matters? Again, what harm can ill-health, bondage, hunger, thirst, or any other outward evil, do to the soul, when even the most pious of men, and the freest in the purity of their conscience, are harassed by these things? Neither of these states of things has to do with the liberty or the slavery of the soul.

And so it will profit nothing that the body should be adorned with sacred vestments, or dwell in holy places, or be occupied in sacred offices, or pray, fast, and abstain from certain meats, or do whatever works can be done through the body and in the body. Something widely different will be necessary for the justification and liberty of the soul, since the things I have spoken of can be done by any impious person, and only hypocrites are produced by devotion to these things. On the other hand, it will not at all injure the soul that the body should be clothed in profane raiment, should dwell in profane places, should eat and drink in the ordinary fashion, should not pray aloud, and should leave undone all the things above mentioned, which may be done by hypocrites.

And, to cast everything aside, even speculations, meditations, and whatever things can be performed by the exertions of the soul itself, are of no profit. One thing, and one alone, is necessary for life, justification, and Christian liberty; and that is the most holy word of God, the Gospel of Christ, as He says, "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in Me shall not die eternally" (John xi. 25), and also, "If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John viii. 36), and, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matt. iv. 4).

Let us therefore hold it for certain and firmly established that the soul can do without everything except the word of God, without which none at all of its wants

are provided for. But, having the word, it is rich and wants for nothing, since that is the word of life, of truth, of light, of peace, of justification, of salvation, of joy, of liberty, of wisdom, of virtue, of grace, of glory, and of every good thing. It is on this account that the prophet in a whole Psalm (Psalm cxix.), and in many other places, sighs for and calls upon the word of God with so many groanings and words.

Again, there is no more cruel stroke of the wrath of God than when He sends a famine of hearing His words (Amos viii. 11), just as there is no greater favour from Him than the sending forth of His word, as it is said, "He sent His word and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions" (Psalm cvii. 20). Christ was sent for no other office than that of the word; and the order of Apostles, that of bishops, and that of the whole body of the clergy, have been called and instituted for

no object but the ministry of the word.

But you will ask, What is this word, and by what means is it to be used, since there are so many words of I answer, The Apostle Paul (Rom. i.) explains what it is, namely the Gospel of God, concerning His Son, incarnate, suffering, risen, and glorified through the Spirit, the Sanctifier. To preach Christ is to feed the soul, to justify it, to set it free, and to save it, if it believes the preaching. For faith alone, and the efficacious use of the word of God, bring salvation. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead. thou shalt be saved " (Rom. x. 9); and again, "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth" (Rom. x. 4), and "The just shall live by faith" (Rom. i. 17). For the word of God cannot be received and honoured by any works, but by faith alone. Hence it is clear that as the soul needs the word alone for life and justification, so it is justified by faith alone. and not by any works. For if it could be justified by any other means, it would have no need of the word, nor consequently of faith.

But this faith cannot consist at all with works; that is, if you imagine that you can be justified by those works, whatever they are, along with it. For this would be to halt between two opinions, to worship Baal, and to kiss the hand to him, which is a very great iniquity, as Job says. Therefore, when you begin to believe, you learn at the same time that all that is in you is utterly guilty, sinful, and damnable, according to that saying, "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. iii. 23), and also: "There is none righteous, no, not one; they are all gone out of the way; they are together become unprofitable: there is none that doeth good, no, not one "(Rom. iii. 10—12). When you have learnt this, you will know that Christ is necessary for vou, since He has suffered and risen again for you, that, believing on Him, you might by this faith become another man, all your sins being remitted, and you being justified by the merits of another, namely of Christ alone.

Since then this faith can reign only in the inward man, as it is said, "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness" (Rom. x. 10); and since it alone justifies, it is evident that by no outward work or labour can the inward man be at all justified, made free, and saved; and that no works whatever have any relation to him. And so, on the other hand, it is solely by impiety and incredulity of heart that he becomes guilty and a slave of sin, deserving condemnation, not by any outward sin or work. Therefore the first care of every Christian ought to be to lay aside all reliance on works, and strengthen his faith alone more and more, and by it grow in the knowledge, not of works, but of Christ Jesus, who has suffered and risen again for him. as Peter teaches (1 Peter v.) when he makes no other work to be a Christian one. Thus Christ, when the Jews asked Him what they should do that they might work the works of God, rejected the multitude of works, with which He saw that they were puffed up, and commanded them one thing only, saying, "This is the work of God:

that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent, for Him hath God the Father sealed "(John vi. 27, 29).

Hence a right faith in Christ is an incomparable treasure, carrying with it universal salvation and preserving from all evil, as it is said, "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned " (Mark xvi. 16). Isaiah, looking to this treasure, predicted, "The consumption decreed shall overflow with righteousness. For the Lord God of hosts shall make a consumption, even determined (verbum abbreviatum et consummans), in the midst of the land" (Isa. x. 22, 23). As if he said, "Faith, which is the brief and complete fulfilling of the law, will fill those who believe with such righteousness that they will need nothing else for justification." Thus, too, Paul says, "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness" (Rom. x. 10).

But you ask how it can be the fact that faith alone justifies, and affords without works so great a treasure of good things, when so many works, ceremonies, and laws are prescribed to us in the Scriptures? I answer, Before all things bear in mind what I have said: that faith alone without works justifies, sets free, and saves, as I shall

show more clearly below.

Meanwhile it is to be noted that the whole Scripture of God is divided into two parts: precepts and promises. The precepts certainly teach us what is good, but what they teach is not forthwith done. For they show us what we ought to do, but do not give us the power to do it. They were ordained, however, for the purpose of showing man to himself, that through them he may learn his own impotence for good and may despair of his own strength. For this reason they are called the Old Testament, and are so.

For example, "Thou shalt not covet," is a precept by which we are all convicted of sin, since no man can help coveting, whatever efforts to the contrary he may make. In order therefore that he may fulfil the precept, and not covet, he is constrained to despair of himself and to seek

elsewhere and through another the help which he cannot find in himself; as it is said, "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in Me is thine help" (Hosea xiii. 9). Now what is done by this one precept is done by all; for all are equally impossible of fulfilment by us.

Now when a man has through the precepts been taught his own impotence, and become anxious by what means he may satisfy the law—for the law must be satisfied, so that no jot or tittle of it may pass away, otherwise he must be hopelessly condemned—then, being truly humbled and brought to nothing in his own eyes, he finds in

himself no resource for justification and salvation.

Then comes in that other part of Scripture, the promises of God, which declare the glory of God, and say, "If you wish to fulfil the law, and, as the law requires, not to covet, lo! believe in Christ, in whom are promised to you grace, justification, peace, and liberty." All these things you shall have, if you believe, and shall be without them if you do not believe. For what is impossible for you by all the works of the law, which are many and yet useless, you shall fulfil in an easy and summary way through faith, because God the Father has made everything to depend on faith, so that whosoever has it has all things, and he who has it not has "For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all" (Rom. xi. 32). Thus the promises of God give that which the precepts exact, and fulfil what the law commands; so that all is of God alone, both the precepts and their fulfilment. He alone commands; He alone also fulfils. Hence the promises of God belong to the New Testament; nay, are the New Testament.

Now, since these promises of God are words of holiness, truth, righteousness, liberty, and peace, and are full of universal goodness, the soul, which cleaves to them with a firm faith, is so united to them, nay, thoroughly absorbed by them, that it not only partakes in, but is penetrated and saturated by, all their virtues. For if the touch of Christ was healing, how much more does that most tender

spiritual touch, nay, absorption of the word, communicate to the soul all that belongs to the word! In this way therefore the soul, through faith alone, without works, is from the word of God justified, sanctified, endued with truth, peace, and liberty, and filled full with every good thing, and is truly made the child of God, as it is said, "To them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name" (John i. 12).

From all this it is easy to understand why faith has such great power, and why no good works, nor even all good works put together, can compare with it, since no work can cleave to the word of God or be in the soul. Faith alone and the word reign in it; and such as is the word, such is the soul made by it, just as iron exposed to fire glows like fire, on account of its union with the It is clear then that to a Christian man his faith suffices for everything, and that he has no need of works for justification. But if he has no need of works, neither has he need of the law; and if he has no need of the law, he is certainly free from the law, and the saving is true, "The law is not made for a righteous man" (1 Tim. This is that Christian liberty, our faith, the effect of which is, not that we should be careless or lead a bad life, but that no one should need the law or works for justification and salvation.

Let us consider this as the first virtue of faith; and let us look also to the second. This also is an office of faith: that it honours with the utmost veneration and the highest reputation Him in whom it believes, inasmuch as it holds Him to be truthful and worthy of belief. For there is no honour like that reputation of truth and right-eousness with which we honour Him in whom we believe. What higher credit can we attribute to any one than truth and righteousness, and absolute goodness? On the other hand, it is the greatest insult to brand any one with the reputation of falsehood and unrighteousness, or to suspect him of these, as we do when we disbelieve him.

Thus the soul, in firmly believing the promises of God, holds Him to be true and righteous; and it can attribute

to God no higher glory than the credit of being so. The highest worship of God is to ascribe to Him truth, right-eousness, and whatever qualities we must ascribe to one in whom we believe. In doing this the soul shows itself prepared to do His whole will; in doing this it hallows His name, and gives itself up to be dealt with as it may please God. For it cleaves to His promises, and never doubts that He is true, just, and wise, and will do, dispose, and provide for all things in the best way. Is not such a soul, in this its faith, most obedient to God in all things? What commandment does there remain which has not been amply fulfilled by such an obedience? What fulfilment can be more full than universal obedience? Now this is not accomplished by works, but by faith alone.

On the other hand, what greater rebellion, impiety, or insult to God can there be, than not to believe His promises? What else is this, than either to make God a liar, or to doubt His truth—that is, to attribute truth to ourselves, but to God falsehood and levity? In doing this, is not a man denying God and setting himself up as an idol in his own heart? What then can works, done in such a state of impiety, profit us, were they even angelic or apostolic works? Rightly hath God shut up all, not in wrath nor in lust, but in unbelief, in order that those who pretend that they are fulfilling the law by works of purity and benevolence (which are social and human virtues) may not presume that they will therefore be saved, but, being included in the sin of unbelief, may either seek mercy, or be justly condemned.

But when God sees that truth is ascribed to Him, and that in the faith of our hearts He is honoured with all the honour of which He is worthy, then in return He honours us on account of that faith, attributing to us truth and righteousness. For faith does truth and righteousness in rendering to God what is His; and therefore in return God gives glory to our righteousness. It is true and righteous that God is true and righteous; and to confess this and ascribe these attributes to

Him, this it is to be true and righteous. Thus He says, "Them that honour Me I will honour, and they that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed" (1 Sam. ii. 30). And so Paul says that Abraham's faith was imputed to him for righteousness, because by it he gave glory to God; and that to us also, for the same reason, it shall be imputed for righteousness, if we believe

(Rom. iv.).

The third incomparable grace of faith is this: that it unites the soul to Christ, as the wife to the husband, by which mystery, as the Apostle teaches, Christ and the soul are made one flesh. Now if they are one flesh, and if a true marriage—nay, by far the most perfect of all marriages—is accomplished between them (for human marriages are but feeble types of this one great marriage), then it follows that all they have becomes theirs in common, as well good things as evil things; so that whatsoever Christ possesses, that the believing soul may take to itself and boast of as its own, and whatever belongs to the soul, that Christ claims as His.

If we compare these possessions, we shall see how inestimable is the gain. Christ is full of grace, life, and salvation; the soul is full of sin, death, and condemnation. Let faith step in, and then sin, death, and hell will belong to Christ, and grace, life, and salvation to the soul. For, if He is a Husband, He must needs take to Himself that which is His wife's, and, at the same time, impart to His wife that which is His. For, in giving her His own body and Himself, how can He but give her all that is His? And, in taking to Himself the body of His wife, how can He but take to Himself all that is hers?

In this is displayed the delightful sight, not only of communion, but of a prosperous warfare, of victory, salvation, and redemption. For, since Christ is God and man, and is such a Person as neither has sinned, nor dies, nor is condemned, nay, cannot sin, die, or be condemned, and since His righteousness, life, and salvation are invincible, eternal, and almighty,—when, I say, such a Person, by the wedding-ring of faith, takes a share in the sins,

death, and hell of His wife, nay, makes them His own, and deals with them no otherwise than as if they were His, and as if He Himself had sinned; and when He suffers, dies, and descends to hell, that He may overcome all things, and since sin, death, and hell cannot swallow Him up, they must needs be swallowed up by Him in stupendous conflict. For His righteousness rises above the sins of all men; His life is more powerful than all death; His salvation is more unconquerable than all hell.

Thus the believing soul, by the pledge of its faith in Christ, becomes free from all sin, fearless of death, safe from hell, and endowed with the eternal righteousness, life, and salvation of its Husband Christ. Thus He presents to Himself a glorious bride, without spot or wrinkle, cleansing her with the washing of water by the word; that is, by faith in the word of life, righteousness, and salvation. Thus He betrothes her unto Himself "in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies" (Hosea ii. 19, 20).

Who then can value highly enough these royal nuptials? Who can comprehend the riches of the glory of this grace? Christ, that rich and pious Husband, takes as a wife a needy and impious harlot, redeeming her from all her evils and supplying her with all His good things. It is impossible now that her sins should destroy her, since they have been laid upon Christ and swallowed up in Him, and since she has in her Husband Christ a righteousness which she may claim as her own, and which she can set up with confidence against all her sins, against death and hell, saying, "If I have sinned, my Christ, in whom I believe, has not sinned; all mine is His, and all His is mine," as it is written, "My beloved is mine, and I am His" (Cant. ii. 16). This is what Paul says: "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ," victory over sin and death, as he says, "The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law" (1 Cor. xv. 56, 57).

From all this you will again understand why so much importance is attributed to faith, so that it alone can

fulfil the law and justify without any works. For you see that the First Commandment, which says, "Thou shalt worship one God only," is fulfilled by faith alone. If you were nothing but good works from the soles of your feet to the crown of your head, you would not be worshipping God, nor fulfilling the First Commandment, since it is impossible to worship God without ascribing to Him the glory of truth and of universal goodness, as it ought in truth to be ascribed. Now this is not done by works, but only by faith of heart. It is not by working, but by believing, that we glorify God, and confess Him to be true. On this ground faith alone is the rightcousness of a Christian man, and the fulfilling of all the commandments. For to him who fulfils the first the task of fulfilling all the rest is easy.

Works, since they are irrational things, cannot glorify God, although they may be done to the glory of God, if faith be present. But at present we are inquiring, not into the quality of the works done, but into him who does them, who glorifies God, and brings forth good works. This is faith of heart, the head and the substance of all our righteousness. Hence that is a blind and perilous doctrine which teaches that the commandments are fulfilled by works. The commandments must have been fulfilled previous to any good works, and good

works follow their fulfilment, as we shall see.

But, that we may have a wider view of that grace which our inner man has in Christ, we must know that in the Old Testament God sanctified to Himself every first-born male. The birthright was of great value, giving a superiority over the rest by the double honour of priesthood and kingship. For the first-born brother was priest and lord of all the rest.

Under this figure was foreshown Christ, the true and only First-born of God the Father and of the Virgin Mary, and a true King and Priest, not in a fleshly and earthly sense. For His kingdom is not of this world; it is in heavenly and spiritual things that He reigns and acts as Priest; and these are righteousness, truth.

wisdom, peace, salvation, etc. Not but that all things, even those of earth and hell, are subject to Him—for otherwise how could He defend and save us from them?—but it is not in these, nor by these, that His kingdom stands.

So, too, His priesthood does not consist in the outward display of vestments and gestures, as did the human priesthood of Aaron and our ecclesiastical priesthood at this day, but in spiritual things, wherein, in His invisible office, He intercedes for us with God in heaven, and there offers Himself, and performs all the duties of a priest, as Paul describes Him to the Hebrews under the figure of Melchizedek. Nor does He only pray and intercede for us; He also teaches us inwardly in the spirit with the living teachings of His Spirit. Now these are the two special offices of a priest, as is figured to us in the case of fleshly priests by visible prayers and sermons.

As Christ by His birthright has obtained these two dignities, so He imparts and communicates them to every believer in Him, under that law of matrimony of which we have spoken above, by which all that is the husband's is also the wife's. Hence all we who believe on Christ are kings and priests in Christ, as it is said, "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light" (1 Peter ii. 9).

These two things stand thus. First, as regards kingship, every Christian is by faith so exalted above all things that, in spiritual power, he is completely lord of all things, so that nothing whatever can do him any hurt; yea, all things are subject to him, and are compelled to be subservient to his salvation. Thus Paul says, "All things work together for good to them who are the called" (Rom. viii. 28), and also, "Whether life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours; and ye are Christ's" (1 Cor. iii. 22, 23).

Not that in the sense of corporeal power any one

among Christians has been appointed to possess and rule all things, according to the mad and senseless idea of certain ecclesiastics. That is the office of kings, princes, and men upon earth. In the experience of life we see that we are subjected to all things, and suffer many things, even death. Yea, the more of a Christian any man is, to so many the more evils, sufferings, and deaths is he subject, as we see in the first place in Christ the

First-born, and in all His holy brethren.

This is a spiritual power, which rules in the midst of enemies, and is powerful in the midst of distresses. And this is nothing else than that strength is made perfect in my weakness, and that I can turn all things to the profit of my salvation; so that even the cross and death are compelled to serve me and to work together for my salvation. This is a lofty and eminent dignity, a true and almighty dominion, a spiritual empire, in which there is nothing so good, nothing so bad, as not to work together for my good, if only I believe. And yet there is nothing of which I have need—for faith alone suffices for my salvation—unless that in it faith may exercise the power and empire of its liberty. This is the inestimable power and liberty of Christians.

Nor are we only kings and the freest of all men, but also priests for ever, a dignity far higher than kingship, because by that priesthood we are worthy to appear before God, to pray for others, and to teach one another mutually the things which are of God. For these are the duties of priests, and they cannot possibly be permitted to any unbeliever. Christ has obtained for us this favour, if we believe in Him: that just as we are His brethren and co-heirs and fellow-kings with Him. so we should be also fellow-priests with Him, and venture with confidence, through the spirit of faith, to come into the presence of God, and cry, "Abba, Father!" and to pray for one another, and to do all things which we see done and figured in the visible and corporeal office of priesthood. But to an unbelieving person nothing renders service or works for good. He himself is in

servitude to all things, and all things turn out for evil to him, because he uses all things in an impious way for his own advantage, and not for the glory of God. And thus he is not a priest, but a profane person, whose prayers are turned into sin, nor does he ever appear in the presence of God, because God does not hear sinners.

Who then can comprehend the loftiness of that Christian dignity which, by its royal power, rules over all things, even over death, life, and sin, and, by its priestly glory, is all-powerful with God, since God does what He Himself seeks and wishes, as it is written, "He will fulfil the desire of them that fear Him; He also will hear their cry, and will save them"? (Psalm cxlv. 19). This glory certainly cannot be attained by any works,

but by faith only.

From these considerations any one may clearly see how a Christian man is free from all things; so that he needs no works in order to be justified and saved, but receives these gifts in abundance from faith alone. Nay, were he so foolish as to pretend to be justified, set free, saved, and made a Christian, by means of any good work, he would immediately lose faith, with all its benefits. Such folly is prettily represented in the fable where a dog, running along in the water and carrying in his mouth a real piece of meat, is deceived by the reflection of the meat in the water, and, in trying with open mouth to seize it, loses the meat and its image at the same time.

Here you will ask, "If all who are in the Church are priests, by what character are those whom we now call priests to be distinguished from the laity?" I reply, By the use of these words, "priest," "clergy," "spiritual person," "ecclesiastic," an injustice has been done, since they have been transferred from the remaining body of Christians to those few who are now, by a hurtful custom, called ecclesiastics. For Holy Scripture makes no distinction between them, except that those who are now boastfully called popes, bishops, and lords, it calls

ministers, servants, and stewards, who are to serve the rest in the ministry of the word, for teaching the faith of Christ and the liberty of believers. For though it is true that we are all equally priests, yet we cannot, nor, if we could, ought we all to, minister and teach publicly. Thus Paul says, "Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God" (1 Cor. iv. 1).

This bad system has now issued in such a pompous display of power and such a terrible tyranny that no earthly government can be compared to it, as if the laity were something else than Christians. Through this perversion of things it has happened that the knowledge of Christian grace, of faith, of liberty, and altogether of Christ, has utterly perished, and has been succeeded by an intolerable bondage to human works and laws; and, according to the Lamentations of Jeremiah, we have become the slaves of the vilest men on earth, who abuse our misery to all the disgraceful and ignominious purposes of their own will.

Returning to the subject which we had begun, I think it is made clear by these considerations that it is not sufficient, nor a Christian course, to preach the works, life, and words of Christ in a historic manner, as facts which it suffices to know as an example how to frame our life, as do those who are now held the best preachers, and much less so to keep silence altogether on these things and to teach in their stead the laws of men and the decrees of the Fathers. There are now not a few persons who preach and read about Christ with the object of moving the human affections to sympathise with Christ, to indignation against the Jews, and other childish and womanish absurdities of that kind.

Now preaching ought to have the object of promoting faith in Him, so that He may not only be Christ, but a Christ for you and for me, and that what is said of Him, and what He is called, may work in us. And this faith is produced and is maintained by preaching why Christ came, what He has brought us and given to us, and to

what profit and advantage He is to be received. This is done when the Christian liberty which we have from Christ Himself is rightly taught, and we are shown in what manner all we Christians are kings and priests, and how we are lords of all things, and may be confident that whatever we do in the presence of God is pleasing and acceptable to Him.

Whose heart would not rejoice in its inmost core at hearing these things? Whose heart, on receiving so great a consolation, would not become sweet with the love of Christ, a love to which it can never attain by any laws or works? Who can injure such a heart, or make it afraid? If the consciousness of sin or the horror of death rush in upon it, it is prepared to hope in the Lord. and is fearless of such evils, and undisturbed, until it shall look down upon its enemies. For it believes that the righteousness of Christ is its own, and that its sin is no longer its own, but that of Christ; but, on account of its faith in Christ, all its sin must needs be swallowed up from before the face of the righteousness of Christ, as I have said above. It learns, too, with the Apostle, to scoff at death and sin, and to say, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. xv. 55-57). For death is swallowed up in victory, not only the victory of Christ, but ours also, since by faith it becomes ours, and in it we too conquer.

Let it suffice to say this concerning the inner man and its liberty, and concerning that righteousness of faith which needs neither laws nor good works; nay, they are even hurtful to it, if any one pretends to be justified by them.

And now let us turn to the other part: to the outward man. Here we shall give an answer to all those who, taking offence at the word of faith and at what I have asserted, say, "If faith does everything, and by itself

suffices for justification, why then are good works commanded? Are we then to take our ease and do no works, content with faith?" Not so, impious men, I reply; That would indeed really be the case, if we were thoroughly and completely inner and spiritual persons; but that will not happen until the last day, when the dead shall be raised. As long as we live in the flesh, we are but beginning and making advances in that which shall be completed in a future life. On this account the Apostle calls that which we have in this life the firstfruits of the Spirit (Rom. viii. 23). In future we shall have the tenths, and the fulness of the Spirit. To this part belongs the fact I have stated before: that the Christian is the servant of all and subject to all. For in that part in which he is free he does no works. but in that in which he is a servant he does all works. Let us see on what principle this is so.

Although, as I have said, inwardly, and according to the spirit, a man is amply enough justified by faith, having all that he requires to have, except that this very faith and abundance ought to increase from day to day, even till the future life, still he remains in this mortal life upon earth, in which it is necessary that he should rule his own body and have intercourse with men. Here then works begin; here he must not take his ease; here he must give heed to exercise his body by fastings, watchings, labour, and other regular discipline, so that it may be subdued to the spirit, and obey and conform itself to the inner man and faith, and not rebel against them nor hinder them, as is its nature to do if it is not kept under. For the inner man, being conformed to God and created after the image of God through faith, rejoices and delights itself in Christ, in whom such blessings have been conferred on it, and hence has only this task before it: to serve God with joy and for nought in free love.

But in doing this he comes into collision with that contrary will in his own flesh, which is striving to serve the world and to seek its own gratification. This the spirit of faith cannot and will not bear, but applies itself with cheerfulness and zeal to keep it down and restrain it, as Paul says, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man; but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin" (Rom. vii. 22, 23), and again, "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (I Cor. ix. 27), and "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts" (Gal. v. 24).

These works, however, must not be done with any notion that by them a man can be justified before Godfor faith, which alone is righteousness before God, will not bear with this false notion—but solely with this purpose: that the body may be brought into subjection, and be purified from its evil lusts, so that our eves may be turned only to purging away those lusts. For when the soul has been cleansed by faith and made to love God, it would have all things to be cleansed in like manner, and especially its own body, so that all things might unite with it in the love and praise of God. Thus it comes that, from the requirements of his own body, a man cannot take his ease, but is compelled on its account to do many good works, that he may bring it into subjection. Yet these works are not the means of his justification before God; he does them out of disinterested love to the service of God; looking to no other end than to do what is well-pleasing to Him whom he desires to obey most dutifully in all things.

On this principle every man may easily instruct himself in what measure, and with what distinctions, he ought to chasten his own body. He will fast, watch, and labour, just as much as he sees to suffice for keeping down the wantonness and concupiscence of the body. But those who pretend to be justified by works are looking, not to the mortification of their lusts, but only to the works themselves; thinking that, if they can accomplish as many works and as great ones as possible.

all is well with them, and they are justified. Sometimes they even injure their brain, and extinguish nature, or at least make it useless. This is enormous folly, and ignorance of Christian life and faith, when a man seeks,

without faith, to be justified and saved by works.

To make what we have said more easily understood, let us set it forth under a figure. The works of a Christian man, who is justified and saved by his faith out of the pure and unbought mercy of God, ought to be regarded in the same light as would have been those of Adam and Eve in paradise and of all their posterity if they had not sinned. Of them it is said, "The Lord God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it" (Gen. ii. 15). Now Adam had been created by God just and righteous, so that he could not have needed to be justified and made righteous by keeping the garden and working in it; but, that he might not be unemployed, God gave him the business of keeping and cultivating paradise. would have indeed been works of perfect freedom, being done for no object but that of pleasing God, and not in order to obtain justification, which he already had to the full, and which would have been innate in us all.

So it is with the works of a believer. Being by his faith replaced afresh in paradise and created anew, he does not need works for his justification, but that he may not be idle, but may exercise his own body and preserve it. His works are to be done freely, with the sole object of pleasing God. Only we are not yet fully created anew in perfect faith and love; these require to be increased, not, however, through works, but through themselves.

A bishop, when he consecrates a church, confirms children, or performs any other duty of his office, is not consecrated as bishop by these works; nay, unless he had been previously consecrated as bishop, not one of those works would have any validity; they would be foolish, childish, and ridiculous. Thus a Christian, being consecrated by his faith, does good works; but he is not by these works made a more sacred person, or more a

Christian. That is the effect of faith alone; nay, unless he were previously a believer and a Christian, none of his works would have any value at all; they would

really be impious and damnable sins.

True, then, are these two sayings: "Good works do not make a good man, but a good man does good works"; "Bad works do not make a bad man, but a bad man does badworks." Thus it is always necessary that the substance or person should be good before any good works can be done, and that good works should follow and proceed from a good person. As Christ says, "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit" (Matt. vii. 18). Now it is clear that the fruit does not bear the tree, nor does the tree grow on the fruit; but, on the contrary, the trees bear the fruit, and the fruit grows on the trees.

As then trees must exist before their fruit, and as the fruit does not make the tree either good or bad, but, on the contrary, a tree of either kind produces fruit of the same kind, so must first the person of the man be good or bad before he can do either a good or a bad work; and his works do not make him bad or good, but he him-

self makes his works either bad or good.

We may see the same thing in all handicrafts. A bad or good house does not make a bad or good builder, but a good or bad builder makes a good or bad house. And in general no work makes the workman such as it is itself; but the workman makes the work such as he is himself. Such is the case, too, with the works of men. Such as the man himself is, whether in faith or in unbelief, such is his work: good if it be done in faith; bad if in unbelief. But the converse is not true that, such as the work is, such the man becomes in faith or in unbelief. For as works do not make a believing man, so neither do they make a justified man; but faith, as it makes a man a believer and justified, so also it makes his works good.

Since then works justify no man, but a man must be justified before he can do any good work, it is most evident

that it is faith alone which, by the mere mercy of God through Christ, and by means of His word, can worthily and sufficiently justify and save the person; and that a Christian man needs no work, no law, for his salvation; for by faith he is free from all law, and in perfect freedom does gratuitously all that he does, seeking nothing either of profit or of salvation—since by the grace of God he is already saved and rich in all things through his faith—

but solely that which is well-pleasing to God.

So, too, no good work can profit an unbeliever to justification and salvation; and, on the other hand, no evil work makes him an evil and condemned person, but that unbelief, which makes the person and the tree bad, makes his works evil and condemned. Wherefore, when any man is made good or bad, this does not arise from his works, but from his faith or unbelief, as the wise man says, "The beginning of sin is to fall away from God"; that is, not to believe. Paul says, "He that cometh to God must believe" (Heb. xi. 6); and Christ says the same thing: "Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt" (Matt. xii. 33),—as much as to say, He who wishes to have good fruit will begin with the tree, and plant a good one; even so he who wishes to do good works must begin, not by working, but by believing, since it is this which makes the person good. For nothing makes the person good but faith, nor bad but unbelief.

It is certainly true that, in the sight of men, a man becomes good or evil by his works; but here "becoming" means that it is thus shown and recognised who is good or evil, as Christ says, "By their fruits ye shall know them" (Matt. vii. 20). But all this stops at appearances and externals; and in this matter very many deceive themselves, when they presume to write and teach that we are to be justified by good works, and meanwhile make no mention even of faith, walking in their own ways, ever deceived and deceiving, going from bad to worse, blind leaders of the blind, wearying themselves

with many works, and yet never attaining to true righteousness, of whom Paul says, "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof, ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the

truth" (2 Tim. iii. 5, 7).

He then who does not wish to go astray, with these blind ones, must look further than to the works of the law or the doctrine of works; nay, must turn away his sight from works, and look to the person, and to the manner in which it may be justified. Now it is justified and saved, not by works or laws, but by the word of God—that is, by the promise of His grace—so that the glory may be to the Divine majesty, which has saved us who believe, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy, by the word of His grace.

From all this it is easy to perceive on what principle good works are to be cast aside or embraced, and by what rule all teachings put forth concerning works are to be understood. For if works are brought forward as grounds of justification, and are done under the false persuasion that we can pretend to be justified by them, they lay on us the yoke of necessity, and extinguish liberty along with faith, and by this very addition to their use they become no longer good, but really worthy of condemnation. For such works are not free, but blaspheme the grace of God, to which alone it belongs to justify and save through faith. Works cannot accomplish this, and yet, with impious presumption, through our folly, they take it on themselves to do so; and thus break in with violence upon the office and glory of grace.

We do not then reject good works; nay, we embrace them and teach them in the highest degree. It is not on their own account that we condemn them, but on account of this impious addition to them and the perverse notion of seeking justification by them. These things cause them to be only good in outward show, but in reality not good, since by them men are deceived and deceive others, like ravening wolves in sheep's clothing. Now this leviathan, this perverted notion about works, is invincible when sincere faith is wanting. For those sanctified doers of works cannot but hold it till faith, which destroys it, comes and reigns in the heart. Nature cannot expel it by her own power; nay, cannot even see it for what it is, but considers it as a most holy will. And when custom steps in besides, and strengthens this pravity of nature, as has happened by means of impious teachers, then the evil is incurable, and leads astray multitudes to irreparable ruin. Therefore, though it is good to preach and write about penitence, confession, and satisfaction, yet if we stop there, and do not go on to teach faith, such teaching is without doubt deceitful and devilish. For Christ, speaking by His servant John, not only said, "Repent ye," but added, "for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. iii. 2).

For not one word of God only, but both, should be preached; new and old things should be brought out of the treasury, as well the voice of the law as the word of grace. The voice of the law should be brought forward, that men may be terrified and brought to a knowledge of their sins, and thence be converted to penitence and to a better manner of life. But we must not stop here; that would be to wound only and not to bind up, to strike and not to heal, to kill and not to make alive, to bring down to hell and not to bring back, to humble and not to exalt. Therefore the word of grace and of the promised remission of sin must also be preached, in order to teach and set up faith, since without that word contrition, penitence, and all other duties, are performed and taught in vain.

There still remain, it is true, preachers of repentance and grace, but they do not explain the law and the promises of God to such an end, and in such a spirit, that men may learn whence repentance and grace are to come. For repentance comes from the law of God, but faith or grace from the promises of God, as it is said, "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. x. 17), whence it comes that a man, when

humbled and brought to the knowledge of himself by the threatenings and terrors of the law, is consoled and raised up by faith in the Divine promise. Thus "weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning" (Psalm xxx. 5). Thus much we say concerning works in general, and also concerning those which the Christian

practises with regard to his own body.

Lastly, we will speak also of those works which he performs towards his neighbour. For man does not live for himself alone in this mortal body, in order to work on its account, but also for all men on earth; nay, he lives only for others, and not for himself. For it is to this end that he brings his own body into subjection, that he may be able to serve others more sincerely and more freely, as Paul says, "None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord" (Rom. xiv. 7, 8). Thus it is impossible that he should take his ease in this life, and not work for the good of his neighbours, since he must needs speak, act, and converse among men, just as Christ was made in the likeness of men and found in fashion as a man, and had His conversation among men.

Yet a Christian has need of none of these things for justification and salvation, but in all his works he ought to entertain this view and look only to this object—that he may serve and be useful to others in all that he does; having nothing before his eyes but the necessities and the advantage of his neighbour. Thus the Apostle commands us to work with our own hands, that we may have to give to those that need. He might have said, that we may support ourselves; but he tells us to give to those that need. It is the part of a Christian to take care of his own body for the very purpose that, by its soundness and well-being, he may be enabled to labour, and to acquire and preserve property, for the aid of those who are in want, that thus the stronger member may serve the weaker member, and we may be children of God, thoughtful and busy one for another,

bearing one another's burdens, and so fulfilling the law of Christ.

Here is the truly Christian life, here is faith really working by love, when a man applies himself with joy and love to the works of that freest servitude in which he serves others voluntarily and for nought, himself abundantly satisfied in the fulness and riches of his own faith.

Thus, when Paul had taught the Philippians how they had been made rich by that faith in Christ in which they had obtained all things, he teaches them further in these words: "If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on

others" (Phil. ii. 1—4).

In this we see clearly that the Apostle lays down this rule for a Christian life: that all our works should be directed to the advantage of others, since every Christian has such abundance through his faith that all his other works and his whole life remain over and above wherewith to serve and benefit his neighbour of spontaneous goodwill.

his own things, but every man also on the things of

To this end he brings forward Christ as an example, saying, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death" (Phil. ii. 5—8). This most wholesome saying of the Apostle has been darkened to us by men who, totally misunderstanding the expressions "form of God," "form of a servant," "fashion," "likeness of men," have transferred them to the natures of Godhead

and manhood. Paul's meaning is this: Christ, when He was full of the form of God and abounded in all good things, so that He had no need of works or sufferings to be just and saved—for all these things He had from the very beginning—yet was not puffed up with these things, and did not raise Himself above us and arrogate to Himself power over us, though He might lawfully have done so, but, on the contrary, so acted in labouring, working, suffering, and dying, as to be like the rest of men, and no otherwise than a man in fashion and in conduct, as if He were in want of all things and had nothing of the form of God; and yet all this He did for our sakes, that He might serve us, and that all the works He should do under that form of a servant might become ours.

Thus a Christian, like Christ his Head, being full and in abundance through his faith, ought to be content with this form of God, obtained by faith; except that, as I have said, he ought to increase this faith till it be perfected. For this faith is his life, justification, and salvation, preserving his person itself and making it pleasing to God, and bestowing on him all that Christ has, as I have said above, and as Paul affirms: "The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God" (Gal. ii. 20). Though he is thus free from all works, yet he ought to empty himself of this liberty, take on him the form of a servant, be made in the likeness of men, be found in fashion as a man, serve, help, and in every way act towards his neighbour as he sees that God through Christ has acted and is acting towards him. All this he should do freely, and with regard to nothing but the good pleasure of God, and he should reason thus:—

Lo! my God, without merit on my part, of His pure and free mercy, has given to me, an unworthy, condemned, and contemptible creature, all the riches of justification and salvation in Christ, so that I no longer am in want of anything, except of faith to believe that this is so. For such a Father, then, who has overwhelmed me with

these inestimable riches of His, why should I not freely, cheerfully, and with my whole heart, and from voluntary zeal, do all that I know will be pleasing to Him and acceptable in His sight? I will therefore give myself, as a sort of Christ, to my neighbour, as Christ has given Himself to me; and will do nothing in this life except what I see will be needful, advantageous, and wholesome for my neighbour, since by faith I abound in all good

things in Christ.

Thus from faith flow forth love and joy in the Lord, and from love a cheerful, willing, free spirit, disposed to serve our neighbour voluntarily, without taking any account of gratitude or ingratitude, praise or blame, gain or loss. Its object is not to lay men under obligations, nor does it distinguish between friends and enemies, or look to gratitude or ingratitude, but most freely and willingly spends itself and its goods, whether it loses them through ingratitude, or gains goodwill. For thus did its Father, distributing all things to all men abundantly and freely, making His sun to rise upon the just and the unjust. Thus, too, the child does and endures nothing except from the free joy with which it delights through Christ in God, the Giver of such great gifts.

You see, then, that, if we recognise those great and precious gifts, as Peter says, which have been given to us, love is quickly diffused in our hearts through the Spirit, and by love we are made free, joyful, all-powerful, active workers, victors over all our tribulations, servants to our neighbour, and nevertheless lords of all things. But, for those who do not recognise the good things given to them through Christ, Christ has been born in vain; such persons walk by works, and will never attain the taste and feeling of these great things. Therefore just as our neighbour is in want, and has need of our abundance, so we too in the sight of God were in want, and had need of His mercy. And as our heavenly Father has freely helped us in Christ, so ought we freely to help our neighbour by our body and works, and each should become to other a sort of Christ, so that we may be

mutually Christs, and that the same Christ may be in all

of us; that is, that we may be truly Christians.

Who then can comprehend the riches and glory of the Christian life? It can do all things, has all things, and is in want of nothing; is lord over sin, death, and hell, and at the same time is the obedient and useful servant of all. But alas! it is at this day unknown throughout the world; it is neither preached nor sought after, so that we are quite ignorant about our own name, why we are and are called Christians. We are certainly called so from Christ, who is not absent, but dwells among us -provided, that is, that we believe in Him and are reciprocally and mutually one the Christ of the other, doing to our neighbour as Christ does to us. But now, in the doctrine of men, we are taught only to seek after merits, rewards, and things which are already ours, and we have made of Christ a taskmaster far more severe than Moses.

The Blessed Virgin, beyond all others, affords us an example of the same faith, in that she was purified according to the law of Moses, and like all other women, though she was bound by no such law and had no need of purification. Still she submitted to the law voluntarily and of free love, making herself like the rest of women, that she might not offend or throw contempt on them. She was not justified by doing this; but, being already justified, she did it freely and gratuitously. Thus ought our works too to be done, and not in order to be justified by them; for, being first justified by faith, we ought to do all our works freely and cheerfully for the sake of others.

St. Paul circumcised his disciple Timothy, not because he needed circumcision for his justification, but that he might not offend or contemn those Jews, weak in the faith, who had not yet been able to comprehend the liberty of faith. On the other hand, when they contemned liberty and urged that circumcision was necessary for justification, he resisted them, and would not allow Titus to be circumcised. For, as he would not offend or

contemn any one's weakness in faith, but yielded for the time to their will, so, again, he would not have the liberty of faith offended or contemned by hardened self-justifiers, but walked in a middle path, sparing the weak for the time, and always resisting the hardened, that he might convert all to the liberty of faith. On the same principle we ought to act, receiving those that are weak in the faith, but boldly resisting these hardened teachers of works, of whom we shall hereafter speak at more length.

Christ also, when His disciples were asked for the tribute money, asked of Peter whether the children of a king were not free from taxes. Peter agreed to this; yet Jesus commanded him to go to the sea, saying, "Lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast a hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money; that take, and give unto them for Me

and thee " (Matt. xvii. 27).

This example is very much to our purpose; for here Christ calls Himself and His disciples free men and children of a King, in want of nothing; and yet He voluntarily submits and pays the tax. Just as far, then, as this work was necessary or useful to Christ for justification or salvation, so far do all His other works or those of His disciples avail for justification. They are really free and subsequent to justification, and only done to serve others and set them an example.

Such are the works which Paul inculcated, that Christians should be subject to principalities and powers and ready to every good work (Titus iii. 1), not that they may be justified by these things—for they are already justified by faith—but that in liberty of spirit they may thus be the servants of others and subject to powers,

obeying their will out of gratuitous love.

Such, too, ought to have been the works of all colleges, monasteries, and priests; every one doing the works of his own profession and state of life, not in order to be justified by them, but in order to bring his own body into subjection, as an example to others, who themselves also

need to keep under their bodies, and also in order to accommodate himself to the will of others, out of free love. But we must always guard most carefully against any vain confidence or presumption of being justified, gaining merit, or being saved by these works, this being the part

of faith alone, as I have so often said.

Any man possessing this knowledge may easily keep clear of danger among those innumerable commands and precepts of the Pope, of bishops, of monasteries, of churches, of princes, and of magistrates, which some foolish pastors urge on us as being necessary for justification and salvation, calling them precepts of the Church, when they are not so at all. For the Christian freeman will speak thus: I will fast, I will pray, I will do this or that which is commanded me by men, not as having any need of these things for justification or salvation, but that I may thus comply with the will of the Pope, of the bishop, of such a community or such a magistrate, or of my neighbour as an example to him; for this cause I will do and suffer all things, just as Christ did and suffered much more for me, though He needed not at all to do so on His own account, and made Himself for my sake under the law, when He was not under the law. And although tyrants may do me violence or wrong in requiring obedience to these things, yet it will not hurt me to do them, so long as they are not done against God.

From all this every man will be able to attain a sure judgment and faithful discrimination between all works and laws, and to know who are blind and foolish pastors, and who are true and good ones. For whatsoever work is not directed to the sole end either of keeping under the body, or of doing service to our neighbour—provided he require nothing contrary to the will of God—is no good or Christian work. Hence I greatly fear that at this day few or no colleges, monasteries, altars, or ecclesiastical functions are Christian ones; and the same may be said of fasts and special prayers to certain saints. I fear that in all these nothing is being sought but what is already ours; while we fancy that by these things

our sins are purged away and salvation is attained, and thus utterly do away with Christian liberty. This comes

from ignorance of Christian faith and liberty.

This ignorance and this crushing of liberty are diligently promoted by the teaching of very many blind pastors, who stir up and urge the people to a zeal for these things, praising them and puffing them up with their indulgences, but never teaching faith. Now I would advise you, if you have any wish to pray, to fast, or to make foundations in churches, as they call it, to take care not to do so with the object of gaining any advantage, either temporal or eternal. You will thus wrong your faith, which alone bestows all things on you, and the increase of which, either by working or by suffering, is alone to be cared for. What you give, give freely and without price, that others may prosper and have increase from you and from your goodness. you will be a truly good man and a Christian. For what to you are your goods and your works, which are done over and above for the subjection of the body, since you have abundance for yourself through your faith, in which God has given you all things?

We give this rule: the good things which we have from God ought to flow from one to another, and become common to all, so that every one of us may, as it were. put on his neighbour, and so behave towards him as if he were himself in his place. They flowed and do flow from Christ to us; He put us on, and acted for us as if He Himself were what we are. From us they flow to those who have need of them; so that my faith and righteousness ought to be laid down before God as a covering and intercession for the sins of my neighbour, which I am to take on myself, and so labour and endure servitude in them, as if they were my own; for thus has Christ done for us. This is true love and the genuine truth of Christian life. But only there is it true and genuine where there is true and genuine faith. Hence the Apostle attributes to charity this quality: that she seeketh

not her own.

We conclude therefore that a Christian man does not live in himself, but in Christ and in his neighbour, or else is no Christian: in Christ by faith; in his neighbour by love. By faith he is carried upwards above himself to God, and by love he sinks back below himself to his neighbour, still always abiding in God and His love, as Christ says, "Verily I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man" (John i. 51).

Thus much concerning liberty, which, as you see, is a true and spiritual liberty, making our hearts free from all sins, laws, and commandments, as Paul says, "The law is not made for a righteous man" (1 Tim. i. 9), and one which surpasses all other external liberties, as far as heaven is above earth. May Christ make us to under-

stand and preserve this liberty. Amen.

Finally, for the sake of those to whom nothing can be stated so well but that they misunderstand and distort it, we must add a word, in case they can understand even There are very many persons who, when they hear of this liberty of faith, straightway turn it into an occasion of licence. They think that everything is now lawful for them, and do not choose to show themselves free men and Christians in any other way than by their contempt and reprehension of ceremonies, of traditions, of human laws; as if they were Christians merely because they refuse to fast on stated days, or eat flesh when others fast, or omit the customary prayers; scoffing at the precepts of men, but utterly passing over all the rest that belongs to the Christian religion. On the other hand, they are most pertinaciously resisted by those who strive after salvation solely by their observance of and reverence for ceremonies, as if they would be saved merely because they fast on stated days, or abstain from flesh, or make formal prayers; talking loudly of the precepts of the Church and of the Fathers, and not caring a straw about those things which belong to our genuine faith. Both these parties are plainly culpable, in that, while they neglect matters which are of weight and necessary for salvation, they contend noisily about

such as are without weight and not necessary.

How much more rightly does the Apostle Paul teach us to walk in the middle path, condemning either extreme and saying, "Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth" (Rom. xiv. 3)! You see here how the Apostle blames those who, not from religious feeling. but in mere contempt, neglect and rail at ceremonial observances, and teaches them not to despise, since this "knowledge puffeth up." Again, he teaches the pertinacious upholders of these things not to judge their For neither party observes towards the other that charity which edifieth. In this matter we must listen to Scripture, which teaches us to turn aside neither to the right hand nor to the left, but to follow those right precepts of the Lord which rejoice the heart. For just as a man is not righteous merely because he serves and is devoted to works and ceremonial rites, so neither will he be accounted righteous merely because he neglects and despises them.

It is not from works that we are set free by the faith of Christ, but from the belief in works, that is from foolishly presuming to seek justification through works. Faith redeems our consciences, makes them upright, and preserves them, since by it we recognise the truth that justification does not depend on our works, although good works neither can nor ought to be absent, just as we cannot exist without food and drink and all the functions of this mortal body. Still it is not on them that our justification is based, but on faith; and yet they ought not on that account to be despised or neglected. Thus in this world we are compelled by the needs of this bodily life; but we are not hereby justified. "My kingdom is not hence, nor of this world," says Christ; but He does not say, "My kingdom is not here, nor in this world." Paul, too, says, "Though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh "(2 Cor. x. 3), and "The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the

faith of the Son of God" (Gal. ii. 20). Thus our doings, life, and being, in works and ceremonies, are done from the necessities of this life, and with the motive of governing our bodies; but yet we are not justified by

these things, but by the faith of the Son of God.

The Christian must therefore walk in the middle path. and set these two classes of men before his eyes. He may meet with hardened and obstinate ceremonialists. who, like deaf adders, refuse to listen to the truth of liberty, and cry up, enjoin, and urge on us their ceremonies, as if they could justify us without faith. Such were the Jews of old, who would not understand, that they might act well. These men we must resist, do just the contrary to what they do, and be bold to give them offence, lest by this impious notion of theirs they should deceive many along with themselves. Before the eyes of these men it is expedient to eat flesh, to break fasts, and to do in behalf of the liberty of faith things which they hold to be the greatest sins. We must say of them, "Let them alone; they be blind leaders of the blind" (Matt. xv. 14). In this way Paul also would not have Titus circumcised, though these men urged it; and Christ defended the Apostles, who had plucked ears of corn on the Sabbath day; and many like instances.

Or else we may meet with simple-minded and ignorant persons, weak in the faith, as the Apostle calls them, who are as yet unable to apprehend that liberty of faith, even if willing to do so. These we must spare, lest they should be offended. We must bear with their infirmity, till they shall be more fully instructed. For since these men do not act thus from hardened malice, but only from weakness of faith, therefore, in order to avoid giving them offence, we must keep fasts and do other things which they consider necessary. This is required of us by charity, which injures no one, but serves all men. It is not the fault of these persons that they are weak, but that of their pastors, who by the snares and weapons of their own traditions have brought them into bondage and wounded their souls when they ought to have been

set free and healed by the teaching of faith and liberty. Thus the Apostle says, "If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth" (1 Cor. viii. 13); and again, "I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself; but to him that esteemeth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean. It is evil for that man

who eateth with offence" (Rom. xiv. 14, 20).

Thus, though we ought boldly to resist those teachers of tradition, and though the laws of the pontiffs, by which they make aggressions on the people of God, deserve sharp reproof, yet we must spare the timid crowd. who are held captive by the laws of those impious tyrants, till they are set free. Fight vigorously against the wolves, but on behalf of the sheep, not against the sheep. And this you may do by inveighing against the laws and lawgivers, and yet at the same time observing these laws with the weak, lest they be offended, until they shall themselves recognise the tyranny, and understand their own liberty. If you wish to use your liberty, do it secretly, as Paul says, "Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God" (Rom. xiv. 22). But take care not to use it in the presence of the On the other hand, in the presence of tyrants and obstinate opposers, use your liberty in their despite, and with the utmost pertinacity, that they too may understand that they are tyrants, and their laws useless for justification, nay that they had no right to establish such laws.

Since then we cannot live in this world without ceremonies and works, since the hot and inexperienced period of youth has need of being restrained and protected by such bonds, and since every one is bound to keep under his own body by attention to these things, therefore the minister of Christ must be prudent and faithful in so ruling and teaching the people of Christ, in all these matters, that no root of bitterness may spring up among them, and so many be defiled, as Paul warned the Hebrews; that is, that they may not lose the faith,

and begin to be defiled by a belief in works as the means of justification. This is a thing which easily happens, and defiles very many, unless faith be constantly inculcated along with works. It is impossible to avoid this evil, when faith is passed over in silence, and only the ordinances of men are taught, as has been done hitherto by the pestilent, impious, and soul-destroying traditions of our pontiffs and opinions of our theologians. An infinite number of souls have been drawn down to hell by these snares, so that you may recognise the work of antichrist.

In brief, as poverty is imperilled amid riches, honesty amid business, humility amid honours, abstinence amid feasting, purity amid pleasures, so is justification by faith imperilled among ceremonies. Solomon "Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned?" (Prov. vi. 27). And yet as we must live among riches, business, honours, pleasures, feastings, so must we among ceremonies, that is among perils. Just as infant boys have the greatest need of being cherished in the bosoms and by the care of girls, that they may not die, and yet, when they are grown, there is peril to their salvation in living among girls, so inexperienced and fervid young men require to be kept in and restrained by the barriers of ceremonies, even were they of iron, lest their weak minds should rush headlong into vice. And yet it would be death to them to persevere in believing that they can be justified by these things. They must rather be taught that they have been thus imprisoned, not with the purpose of their being justified or gaining merit in this way, but in order that they might avoid wrong-doing, and be more easily instructed in that righteousness which is by faith, a thing which the headlong character of youth would not bear unless it were put under restraint.

Hence in the Christian life ceremonies are to be no otherwise looked upon than as builders and workmen look upon those preparations for building or working which are not made with any view of being permanent or anything in themselves, but only because without them there could be no building and no work. When the structure is completed, they are laid aside. Here you see that we do not contemn these preparations, but set the highest value on them; a belief in them we do contemn, because no one thinks that they constitute a real and permanent structure. If any one were so manifestly out of his senses as to have no other object in life but that of setting up these preparations with all possible expense, diligence, and perseverance, while he never thought of the structure itself, but pleased himself and made his boast of these useless preparations and props, should we not all pity his madness and think that, at the cost thus thrown away, some great building might have been raised?

Thus, too, we do not contemn works and ceremonies—nay, we set the highest value on them; but we contemn the belief in works, which no one should consider to constitute true righteousness, as do those hypocrites who employ and throw away their whole life in the pursuit of works, and yet never attain to that for the sake of which the works are done. As the Apostle says, they are "ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (2 Tim. iii. 7). They appear to wish to build, they make preparations, and yet they never do build; and thus they continue in a show of godliness, but never attain to its power.

Meanwhile they please themselves with this zealous pursuit, and even dare to judge all others, whom they do not see adorned with such a glittering display of works; while, if they had been imbued with faith, they might have done great things for their own and others' salvation, at the same cost which they now waste in abuse of the gifts of God. But since human nature and natural reason, as they call it, are naturally superstitious, and quick to believe that justification can be attained by any laws or works proposed to them, and since nature is also exercised and confirmed in the same view by the practice of all earthly lawgivers, she can never of her own power

free herself from this bondage to works, and come to a

recognition of the liberty of faith.

We have therefore need to pray that God will lead us and make us taught of God, that is, ready to learn from God; and will Himself, as He has promised, write His law in our hearts; otherwise there is no hope for us. unless He Himself teach us inwardly this wisdom hidden in a mystery, nature cannot but condemn it and judge it to be heretical. She takes offence at it, and it seems folly to her, just as we see that it happened of old in the case of the prophets and Apostles, and just as blind and impious pontiffs, with their flatterers, do now in my case and that of those who are like me, upon whom, together with ourselves, may God at length have mercy, and lift up the light of His countenance upon them, that we may know His way upon earth and His saving health among all nations, who is blessed for evermore. Amen. In the year of the Lord MDXX.

## Ш

## On the Babylonish Captivity of the Church

## JESUS

MARTIN LUTHER, of the Order of St. Augustine, salutes his friend Hermann Tulichius.

Whether I will or not, I am compelled to become more learned day by day, since so many great masters vie with each other in urging me on and giving me practice. I wrote about indulgences two years ago, but now I extremely regret having published that book. At that time I was still involved in a great and superstitious respect for the tyranny of Rome, which led me to judge that indulgences were not to be totally rejected, seeing them as I did to be approved by so general a consent among men; and no wonder, for at that time it was I alone who was rolling this stone. Afterwards, however, with the kind aid of Sylvester and the friars, who supported indulgences so strenuously, I perceived that they were nothing but mere impostures of the flatterers of Rome, whereby to make away with the faith of God and the money of men. And I wish I could prevail upon the booksellers, and persuade all who have read them, to burn the whole of my writings on indulgences, and in place of all I have written about them to adopt this proposition: Indulgences are wicked devices of the flatterers of Rome.

After this Eccius and Emser, with their fellow-conspirators, began to instruct me concerning the primacy of the Pope. Here, too, not to be ungrateful to such learned men, I must confess that their works helped me on greatly; for, while I had denied that the papacy had any Divine right, I still admitted that it had a human right. But after hearing and reading the supersubtle subtleties of those coxcombs, by which they so ingeniously set up their idol-my mind being not entirely unteachable in such matters—I now know and am sure that the papacy is the kingdom of Babylon and the power of Nimrod, the mighty hunter. Here, moreover, that all may go prosperously with my friends, I entreat the booksellers, and entreat my readers, to burn all that I have published on this subject, and to hold to the following proposition :--

The papacy is the mighty hunting of the Bishop of

Rome.

This is proved from the reasonings of Eccius, of

Emser, and of the Leipzig lecturer on the Bible.

At the present time they are playing at schooling me concerning communion in both kinds, and some other subjects of the greatest importance. I must take pains not to listen in vain to these philosophical guides of mine. A certain Italian friar of Cremona has written a Revocation of Martin Luther to the Holy See; that is to say, not that I revoke, as the words imply, but that he revokes me. This is the sort of Latin that the Italians nowadays are beginning to write. Another friar, a German of Leipzig, lecturer, as you know, on the whole canon of the Bible, has written against me concerning the Sacrament in both kinds, and is about, as I hear, to do still greater and wonderful wonders. The Italian, indeed, has cantiously concealed his name, perhaps alarmed by the examples of Cajetan and Sylvester. man of Leipzig, however, as befits a vigorous and fierce German, has set forth in a number of verses on his titlepage his name, his life, his sanctity, his learning, his office, his glory, his honour, almost his very shoe-lasts. From him no doubt I shall learn not a little, since he writes a letter of dedication to the very Son of God, so familiar are these saints with Christ, who reigns in heaven. In short, three magpies seem to be addressing me: one, a Latin one, well; another, a Greek one, still better; the third, a Hebrew one, best of all. What do you think I have to do now, my dear Hermann, but to prick up my ears? The matter is handled at Leipzig by

the Observants of the Holy Cross.

Hitherto I have foolishly thought that it would be an excellent thing, if it were determined by a general council that both kinds in the Sacrament should be administered to the laity. To correct this opinion, this more than most learned friar says that it was neither commanded nor decreed, whether by Christ or by the Apostles, that both kinds should be administered to the laity: and that it has therefore been left to the judgment of the Church which we are bound to obey, what should be done or left undone on this point. Thus speaks he. You ask perhaps what craze has possession of the man, or against whom he is writing, since I did not condemn the use of one kind, and did leave it to the judgment of the Church to ordain the use of both kinds. And this he himself endeavours to assert, with the object of combating me by this very argument. I reply that this kind of argument is a familiar one with all who write against Luther; namely, either to assert the very thing which they attack, or to set up a figment that they may attack it. Thus did Sylvester, Eccius, Emser, the men of Cologne too, and those of Louvain. If this friar had gone back from their spirit, he would not have written against Luther.

A greater piece of good fortune, however, has befallen this man than any of the others. Whereas he intended to prove that the use of one kind had neither been commanded nor decreed, but left to the decision of the Church, he brings forward Scriptures to prove that, by the command of Christ, the use of one kind was ordained for the laity. Thus it is true, according to this new interpreter of Scripture, that the use of one kind was not commanded, and at the same time was commanded, by Christ. You know how specially those logicians of Leipzig employ this new kind of argument. Does not Emser also, after having professed in his former book to speak fairly about me, and after having been convicted by me of the foulest envy and of base falsehoods, confess, when about to confute me in his later book, that both were true, and that he had written of me in both an unfair and a fair spirit? A good man indeed, as you know!

But listen to our specious advocate of one species, in whose mind the decision of the Church and the command of Christ are the same thing, and, again, the command of Christ and the absence of His command are the same thing. With what dexterity he proves that only one kind should be granted to the laity, by the command of Christ, that is by the decision of the Church! He marks it with capital letters in this way: "AN INFALLIBLE FOUNDATION." Next, he handles with incredible wisdom John vi., in which Christ speaks of the bread of heaven and the bread of life, which is Himself. These words this most learned man not only misapplies to the Sacrament of the Altar, but goes farther, and, because Christ said, "I am the living bread," and not "I am the living cup," he concludes that in that passage the Sacrament in only one kind was appointed for the laity. But the words that follow, "My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed," and again, "Unless ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink His blood "since it was evident to this friar's brains that they tell irrefutably in favour of reception in both kinds, and against that in one kind—he evades very happily and learnedly in this way: "That Christ meant nothing else by these words, than that he who should receive one kind should receive under this both the body and the blood." This he lays down as his infallible foundation of a structure so worthy of holy and heavenly reverence. Learn now, along with me, from this man, that in

John vi. Christ commands reception in one kind, but in such a manner that this commanding means leaving the matter to the decision of the Church; and further that Christ in the same chapter speaks of the laity only, not of the presbyters. For to us this living bread from heaven—that is, the Sacrament in one kind—does not belong, but perchance the bread of death from hell. Now what is to be done with the deacons and sub-deacons? As they are neither laymen nor priests, they ought, on this distinguished authority, to use neither one nor both kinds. You understand, my dear Tulichius, this new and observant manner of handling Scripture. But you must also learn this: that Christ, in John vi., is speaking of the Sacrament of the Eucharist, though He Himself teaches us that He is speaking of faith in the incarnate Word by saying, "This is the work of God: that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent." But this Leipzig professor of the Bible must be permitted to prove whatever he pleases out of any passage of Scripture he pleases. For he is an Anaxagorean, nay an Aristotelian theologian. to whom names and words when transposed mean the same things and everything. Throughout his whole book he so fits together the testimonies of Scripture that, if he wishes to prove that Christ is in the Sacrament, he ventures to begin thus: "The Lesson of the Book of the Revelation of the Blessed John." And as suitably as this would be said, so suitably does he say everything. and thinks, like a wise man, to adorn his rayings by the number of passages he brings forward.

I pass over the rest, that I may not quite kill you with the dregs of this most offensive drain. Lastly, he adduces Paul (1 Cor. xi.), who says that he had received from the Lord and had delivered to the Corinthians the use both of the bread and of the cup. Here again, as everywhere else, our advocate of one species handles the Scriptures admirably, and teaches that in that passage Paul permitted—not "delivered"—the use of both kinds. Do you ask how he proves it? Out of his own head, as in the case of John vi.; for it does not become this lecturer

to give a reason for what he says, since he is one of those whose proofs and teachings all come from their own visions. Here then we are taught that the Apostle in that passage did not write to the whole Church of Corinth, but only to the laity, and that therefore he gave no permission to the priests, but that they were deprived of the whole Sacrament; and next, that, by a new rule of grammar, "I have received from the Lord" means the same thing as "It has been permitted by the Lord," and "I delivered to you" the same thing as "I permitted to you." I beg you especially to note this. For it follows hence that not only the Church, but every worthless fellow anywhere, will be at liberty, under the teaching of this master, to turn into permissions the whole body of the commandments, institutions, and

ordinances of Christ and the Apostles.

I see that this man is possessed by an angel of Satan, and that those who act in collusion with him are seeking to obtain a name in the world through me, as being worthy to contend with Luther. But this hope of theirs shall be disappointed, and, in my contempt for them, I shall leave them for ever unnamed, and shall content myself with this one answer to the whole of their books. If they are worthy that Christ should bring them back to a sound mind, I pray Him to do so in His mercy. they are not worthy of this, then I pray that they may never cease to write such books, and that the enemies of the truth may not be permitted to read any others. It is a common and true saying, "This I know for certain: that if I fight with filth, whether I conquer or am conquered, I am sure to be defiled." In the next place, as I see that they have plenty of leisure and of paper, I will take care that they shall have abundant matter for writing, and will keep in advance of them, so that while they, in the boastfulness of victory, are triumphing over some one heresy of mine, as it seems to them, I shall meanwhile be setting up a new one. For I too am desirous that these illustrious leaders in war should be adorned with many titles of honour. And so, while they are murmuring that I approve of communion in both kinds, and are most successfully engaged on this very important subject, so worthy of themselves, I shall go farther, and shall now endeavour to show that all who deny to the laity communion in both kinds are acting To do this the more conveniently, I shall impiously. make a first essay on the bondage of the Church of Rome, with the intention of saying very much more in its own proper time, when those most learned Papists shall have got the better of this book.

This, moreover, I do in order that no pious reader who may meet with my book may be disgusted at the dross I have handled, and have reason to complain that he finds nothing to read which can cultivate or instruct his mind, or at least give occasion for instructive reflection. know how dissatisfied my friends are that I should occupy myself with the paltry twistings of these men. say that the very reading of their books is an ample confutation of them, but that from me they look for better things, which Satan is trying to hinder by means of them. I have determined to follow the advice of my friends, and to leave the business of wrangling and

inveighing to those hornets.

Of the Italian friar of Cremona I shall say nothing. He is a simple and unlearned man, who is endeavouring to bring me back by some thongs of rhetoric to the Holy See, from which I am not conscious of having ever withdrawn, nor has any one proved that I have. His principal argument in some ridiculous passages is that I ought to be moved for the sake of my profession and of the transfer of the imperial power to the Germans. seems indeed altogether to have meant, not so much to urge my return, as to write the praises of the French, and of the Roman pontiff; and he must be allowed to testify his obsequiousness to them by this little work, such as He neither deserves to be handled severely, since he does not seem to be actuated by any malice, nor to be learnedly confuted, since through pure ignorance and inexperience he trifles with the whole subject.

In the first place, I must deny that there are seven sacraments, and must lay it down, for the time being, that there are only three, Baptism, Penance, and the Bread, and that by the Court of Rome all these have been brought into miserable bondage, and the Church despoiled of all her liberty. And yet, if I were to speak according to the usage of Scripture, I should hold that there was only one sacrament, and three sacramental signs. I shall speak on this point more at length at the proper time; but now I speak of the Sacrament of the Bread, the first of all.

I shall say then what advance I have made as the result of my meditations in the ministry of this Sacrament. For at the time when I published a discourse on the Eucharist I was still involved in the common custom, and did not trouble myself either about the rightful or the wrongful power of the Pope. But now that I have been called forth and become practised in argument, nay, have been dragged by force into this arena, I shall speak out freely what I think. Let the Papists laugh

or lament, even if they are all against one.

In the first place, John vi. must be set aside altogether, as not saying a single syllable about the Sacrament, not only because the Sacrament had not vet been instituted, but much more because the very sequence of the discourse and of its statements shows clearly that Christ was speaking—as I have said before—of faith in the incarnate Word. For He says, "My words are spirit and life," showing that He was speaking of that spiritual cating wherewith he who eats lives; while the Jews understood Him to speak of a carnal eating, and therefore raised a dispute. But no eating gives life except the eating of faith, for this is the really spiritual and living eating, as Augustine says, "Why dost thou prepare thy stomach and thy teeth? Believe, and thou hast eaten." A sacramental eating does not give life, since many eat unworthily; so that Christ cannot be understood to have spoken of the Sacrament in this passage.

There are certainly some who have misapplied these words to the Sacrament, as did the writer of the decretals some time ago, and many others. It is one thing, however, to misapply the Scriptures, and another to take them in their legitimate sense; otherwise when Christ says, "Except ve eat My flesh and drink My blood, ve have no life in you," He would be condemning all infants, all the sick, all the absent, and all who were hindered, in whatever manner, from a sacramental eating, however eminent their faith, if in these words He had meant to enjoin a sacramental eating. Thus Augustine, in his second book against Julianus, proves from Innocentius that even infants, without receiving the Sacrament, eat the flesh and drink the blood of Christ; that is, partake by the same faith as the Church. Let this then be considered as settled: that John vi. has nothing to do with the matter. For which reason I have written elsewhere that the Bohemians could not rightfully depend upon this passage in their defence of reception in both kinds.

## CONCERNING THE LORD'S SUPPER.

There are two passages which treat in the clearest manner of this subject, at which let us look: the statements in the Gospels respecting the Lord's Supper and the words of Paul (1 Cor. xi.). Matthew, Mark, and Luke agree that Christ gave the whole Sacrament to all His disciples; and that Paul delivered both parts of it is so certain that no one has yet been shameless enough to assert the contrary. Add to this that, according to the relation of Matthew, Christ did not say concerning the bread, "Eat ye all of this," but did say concerning the cup, "Drink ye all of this." Mark also does not say, "They all ate," but "They all drank of it." Each writer attaches the mark of universality to the cup, not to the bread, as if the Spirit foresaw the schism that should come, which would forbid to some that communion in the cup which Christ would have common to

all. How furiously would they rave against us, if they had found the word "all" applied to the bread, and not to the cup! They would leave us no way of escape, would clamour us down, pronounce us heretics, condemn us as schismatics. But when the word stands on our side against them, they allow themselves to be bound by no laws of logic, these men of freest will, in changing, and changing again, and throwing into utter confusion

even the things which are of God.

But suppose me to be standing on the other side and questioning my lords the Papists. In the Supper of the Lord, the whole Sacrament, or the Sacrament in both kinds, was either given to the presbyters alone, or at the same time to the laity. If to the presbyters alone (for thus they will have it to be), then it is in no wise lawful that any kind should be given to the laity; for it ought not to be rashly given to any to whom Christ did not give it at the first institution. Otherwise, if we allow one of Christ's institutions to be changed, we make the whole body of His laws of no effect; and any man may venture to say that he is bound by no law or institution of Christ. For in dealing with Scripture one special exception does away with any general statement. If, on the other hand, it was given to the laity as well, it inevitably follows that reception in both kinds ought not to be denied to the laity; and in denying it to them when they seek it, we act impiously, and contrary to the deed. example, and institution of Christ.

I confess that I have been unable to resist this reasoning, and have neither read, heard of, nor discovered anything to be said on the other side, while the words and example of Christ stand unshaken, who says—not by way of permission, but of commandment—"Drink ye all of this." For if all are to drink of it—and this cannot be understood as said to the presbyters alone—then it is certainly an impious deed to debar the laity from it when they seek it, were it even an angel from heaven who did so. For what they say of its being left to the decision of the Church which kind should be administered is said without

rational ground, is alleged without authority, and is as easily contemned as proved, nor can it avail against an adversary who opposes to us the word and deed of Christ, and whose blows must therefore be returned with

the word of Christ; and this we do not possess.

If, however, either kind can be denied to the laity, then by the same decision of the Church a part of baptism or of penance might be taken from them, since in each case the reason of the matter and the power are alike. Therefore as the whole of baptism and the whole of absolution are to be granted to all the laity, so is the whole Sacrament of the bread, if they seek it. I am much astonished, however, at their assertion that it is wholly unlawful, under pain of mortal sin, for presbyters to receive only one kind in the mass, and this for no other reason than that (as they all unanimously say) the two kinds form one full sacrament, which ought not to be divided. Let them tell me then why it is lawful to divide it in the case of the laity, and why they alone should not be granted the entire Sacrament. Do they not admit, on their own showing, that either both kinds ought to be granted to the laity, or that it is no lawful sacrament which is granted to them under one kind? How can the one kind be a full sacrament in the case of the laity, and not a full one in the case of the presbyters? Why do they vaunt the decision of the Church and the power of the Pope in this matter? The words of God and the testimonies of truth cannot thus be done away with.

It follows further that, if the Church can take from the laity the one kind, the wine, she can also take from them the other kind, the bread, and thus might take from the laity the whole Sacrament of the Altar, and deprive the institution of Christ of all effect in their case. But, I ask, by what authority? If, however, she cannot take away the bread, or both kinds, neither can she the wine. Nor can any possible argument on this point be brought against an opponent, since the Church must necessarily have the same power in regard to either

kind as in regard to both kinds; if she has it not as regards both kinds, she has it not as regards either. I should like to hear what the flatterers of Rome may

choose to say on this point.

But what strikes me most forcibly of all, and thoroughly convinces me, is that saying of Christ, "This is My blood, which is shed for you and for many, for the remission of sins." Here you see most clearly that the blood is given to all for whose sins it is shed. Now who will dare to say that it was not shed for the laity? Do you not see whom He addresses as He gives the cup? Does He not give it to all? Does He not say that it was shed for all? "For you," He says. Let us grant that these are priests. "And for many," He con-These cannot be priests; and yet He says, "Drink ye all of it." I also could easily trifle on this point, and turn the words of Christ into a mockery by my words, as that trifler my opponent does. But those who rest upon the Scriptures in arguing against us must be refuted by the Scriptures. These are the reasons which have kept me from condemning the Bohemians, who, whether they be good or bad men, certainly have the words and deeds of Christ on their side, while we have neither, but only that idle device of men, "The Church hath thus ordered it"; while it was not the Church, but the tyrants of the Churches, without the consent of the Church—that is, of the people of God who have thus ordered it.

Now where, I ask, is the necessity, where is the religious obligation, where is the use, of denying to the laity reception in both kinds—that is, the visible sign—when all men grant them the real grace of the Sacrament without the sign? If they grant the reality, which is the greater, why do they not grant the sign, which is the less? For in every sacrament the sign, in so far as it is a sign, is incomparably less than the reality itself. What then, I ask, should hinder the granting of the lesser thing, when the greater is granted—unless, indeed, as it seems to me, this has happened by the permission

of God in His anger, to be the occasion of a schism in the Church; and to show that, having long ago lost the reality of the Sacrament, we are fighting on behalf of the sign, which is the lesser thing, against the reality, which is the greatest and only important thing, just as some persons fight on behalf of ceremonies against charity? This monstrous perversion appears to have begun at the same time at which we began in our folly to set Christian charity at nought for the sake of worldly riches, that God might show by this terrible proof that we think signs of greater consequence than the realities themselves. What perversity it would be, if you were to concede that the faith of baptism is granted to one seeking baptism, and yet deny him the sign of that very

faith, namely water?

Last of all stand the irrefutable words of Paul, which must close every mouth, "I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you" (1 Cor. xi.). He does not say, as this friar falsely asserts out of his own head, "I permitted to you." Nor is it true that he granted the Corinthians reception in both kinds on account of the contentions among them. In the first place, as the text itself shows, the contention was not about the reception in both kinds, but about the contemptuousness of the rich and the envy of the poor, as is clear from the text, which says, "One is hungry, and another is drunken," and "Ye shame them that have not." Then, too, he is not speaking of what he delivered as if it were for the first time. He does not say, "I receive from the Lord, and I deliver to you," but "I have received, and I have delivered," namely at the beginning of his preaching, long before this contention arose, thus signifying that he had delivered to them the reception in both kinds. This "delivering" means "enjoining," as he elsewhere uses the same word. Thus the smoke clouds of assertion which this friar heaps together concerning permission, without Scripture, without reason, and without cause, go for nothing. His opponents do not ask what his dreams are, but what the judgment of Scripture is on these points; and out of it he can produce not a tittle in support of his dream, while they can bring forward so many thunderbolts in defence of their belief.

Rise up then in one body, all ye flatterers of the Pope; be active; defend yourselves from the charge of impicty, tyranny, and treason against the Gospel, and wrongful calumniation of your brethren, ye who proclaim as heretics those who cannot approve of the mere dreams of your brains, in opposition to such plain and powerful Scriptures. If either of the two are to be called heretics and schismatics, it is not the Bohemians, not the Greeks, since they take their stand on the Gospels, but you Romans who are heretics and impious schismatics, you who presume upon your own figments alone, against the

manifest teaching of the Scriptures of God.

But what can be more ridiculous, or more worthy of the head of this friar, than to say that the Apostle wrote thus and gave this permission to a particular Church, that of Corinth, but not to the universal Church? Whence does he prove this? Out of his usual store: his own impious head. When the universal Church takes this epistle as addressed to itself, reads it, and follows it in every respect, why not in this part of it? If we admit that any one epistle of Paul, or one passage in any one epistle, does not concern the universal Church, we do away with the whole authority of Paul. The Corinthians might say that what he taught concerning faith, in writing to the Romans, did not concern them. What could be more blasphemous or more mad than this mad idea? Far be it from us to imagine that there can be one tittle in the whole of Paul which the whole of the universal Church ought not to imitate and keep. Not thus thought the Fathers, nor any until these perilous times, in which Paul foretold that there should be blasphemers, blind and senseless men, among whom this friar is one, or even the foremost.

But let us grant this intolerably wild assertion. If Paul gave permission to a particular Church, then, on your own showing, the Greeks and the Bohemians are acting

rightly, for they are particular Churches, and therefore it is enough that they are not acting against the teaching of Paul, who at least gives them permission. Furthermore, Paul had not power to permit of anything contrary to the institution of Christ. Therefore, on behalf of the Greeks and the Bohemians, I set up these sayings of Christ and of Paul against thee, Rome, and all thy flatterers; nor canst thou show that power has been given thee to change these things by one hair's-breadth, much less to accuse others of heresy because they disregard thy presumptuous pretensions. It is thou who deservest to be accused of

inpiety and tyranny.

We also read the words of Cyprian, who by himself is powerful enough to stand against all the Romanists, and who testifies in his discourse concerning the lapsed in the fifth book that it had been the custom in that Church for both kinds to be administered to laymen and even to children, yea for the body of the Lord to be given into their hands, as he shows by many instances. Among other things, he thus reproves some of the people: "And because he does not immediately receive the body of the Lord with unclean hands or drink the blood of the Lord with polluted mouth, he is angry with the priests as sacrilegious." You see that he is here speaking of certain sacrilegious laymen, who wished to receive from the priests the body and the blood. Have you here, wretched flatterer, anything to gabble? Say that this holy martyr. this teacher of the Church, so highly endowed with the apostolic spirit, was a heretic, and availed himself of a permission in his particular Church!

He relates in the same place an incident which had occurred in his own sight and presence, when he writes in the plainest terms that as deacon he had given the cup to an infant girl, and when the child struggled against it, had even poured the blood of the Lord into its mouth. We read the same thing of St. Donatus, whose broken cup how dully does this wretched flatterer try to get rid of. "I read," he says, "that the cup was broken; I do not read that the blood was given." What wonder that

he who perceives in the Holy Scriptures what he wills to perceive should also read in historical narratives what he wills to read! But can he in this way at all establish the power of the Church to decide, or can he thus confute heretics? But enough said on this subject; for I did not begin this treatise in order to answer one who is unworthy of an answer, but in order to lay open the truth of the matter.

I conclude, then, that to deny reception, in both kinds to the laity is an act of impiety and tyranny, and one not in the power of any angel, much less of any pope or council whatever. Nor do I care for the Council of Constance, for, if its authority is to prevail, why should not also that of the Council of Basle, which decreed, on the other hand, that the Bohemians should be allowed to receive in both kinds?—a point which was carried there after long discussion, as the extant annals and documents of that council prove. This fact that ignorant flatterer brings forward on behalf of his own dreams, so wisely does he handle the whole matter.

The first bondage, then, of this Sacrament is as regards its substance or completeness, which the tyranny of Rome has wrested from us. Not that they sin against Christ who use one kind only, since Christ has not commanded the use of any, but has left it to the choice of each individual, saying, "This do ye, as oft as ye shall do it, in remembrance of Me"; but they sin who forbid that both kinds should be given to those who desire to use this freedom of choice, and the fault is not in the laity, but in the priests. The Sacrament does not belong to the priests. but to all; nor are the priests lords, but servants, whose duty it is to give both kinds to those who seek them, as often as they seek them. If they have snatched this right from the laity and forcibly denied it to them, they are tyrants; and the laity are free from blame, whether they go without one or both kinds, for meanwhile they will be saved by their faith and by their desire for a complete sacrament. So, too, the ministers themselves are bound to grant baptism and absolution to him who seeks

them; if they do not grant them, the seeker has the full merit of his own faith, while they will be accused before Christ as wicked servants. Thus of old the holy Fathers in the desert passed many years without communicating in either kind of the Sacrament.

I am not therefore advocating the seizing by force on both kinds, as if we were of necessity commanded and compelled to receive them; but I am instructing the conscience, that every man should suffer the tyranny of Rome, knowing that he has been forcibly deprived of his right in the Sacrament on account of his sins. This only I would have: that none should justify the tyranny of Rome. as if she had done right in denying one kind to the laity, but that we should abhor it and withhold our consent from it, though we may bear it, just as if we were in bondage with the Turk, where we should not be at liberty to use either kind. For this reason I have said that it would be a fine thing, in my opinion, if this bondage were done away with by the decree of a general council, and Christian liberty restored to us out of the hands of the tyrant of Rome, and if to each man were left his own free choice of seeking and using, as is left in the case of baptism and penance. Now, however, by the same tyranny, he compels one kind to be received year by year, so extinct is the liberty granted us by Christ, and such are the deserts of our impious ingratitude.

The other bondage of the same Sacrament is a milder one, so far as regards the conscience, but one which it is by far the most perilous of all things to touch, much more to condemn. Here I shall be a Wickliffite, and a heretic under six hundred names. What then? Since the Bishop of Rome has ceased to be a bishop and has become a tyrant, I fear absolutely none of his decrees, since I know that neither he nor even a general council has power to establish new articles of the faith.

Formerly, when I was imbibing the scholastic theology, my lord the Cardinal of Cambray gave me occasion for reflection by arguing most acutely, in the fourth book of the Sentences, that it would be much more probable, and that

I quite consent, then, that whoever chooses to hold either opinion should do so. My only object now is to remove scruples of conscience, so that no man may fear being guilty of heresy if he believes that real bread and real wine are present on the altar. Let him know that he is at liberty, without peril to his salvation, to imagine, think, or believe in either of the two ways, since here there is no necessity of faith. Yet I now give my own opinion. In the first place, I will not hear or take account of those who will cry out that this doctrine is

Wickliffite, Hussite, heretical, and opposed to the decisions of the Church. None will do this but those whom I have convicted of being themselves in many ways heretical: in the matter of indulgences, of freewill and the grace of God, of good works and sins, etc. If Wickliff was once a heretic, they are themselves ten times heretics; and it is an excellent thing to be blamed and accused by heretics and perverse sophists, since to please them would be the height of impiety. Besides, they can give no other proof of their own opinions, nor have they any other way of disproving the contrary ones, than by saying, "This is Wickliffite, Hussite, heretical." This feeble argument, and no other, is always at the tip of their tongue; and if you ask for Scripture authority, they say, "This is our opinion, and the Church (that is, we ourselves) has decided it thus." To such an extent do men who are reprobate concerning the faith and unworthy of belief dare to propose to us their own fancies, under the authority of the Church, as articles of the faith.

There is, however, very much to be said for my opinion; in the first place this: that no violence ought to be done to the words of God, neither by man nor by angel, but that as far as possible they ought to be kept to their simplest meaning, and not to be taken, unless the circumstances manifestly compel us to do so, out of their grammatical and proper signification, that we may not give our adversaries any opportunity of evading the teaching of the whole Scriptures. For this reason the ideas of Origen were rightly rejected when, in contempt of the plain grammatical meaning, he turned the trees and all other objects described as existing in paradise into allegories, since hence it might be inferred that trees were not created by God. So in the present case. since the Evangelists write clearly that Christ took bread and blessed it, and since the book of Acts and the Apostle Paul also call it bread, real bread and real wine must be understood, just as the cup was real. For even these men do not say that the cup is transubstantiated. Since then it is not necessary to lay it down that a transubstantiation is effected by the operation of Divine power, it must be held as a figment of human opinion; for it rests on no support of Scripture or of reason. It is forcing on us a novel and absurd usage of words to take bread as meaning the form or accidents of bread, and wine as the form or accidents of wine. Why do they not take all other things as forms or accidents? Even if everything else were consistent with this idea, it would not be lawful thus to enfeeble the word of God and to deprive

it so unjustly of its proper meaning.

The Church, however, kept the right faith for more than twelve centuries, nor did the holy Fathers ever or anywhere make mention of this transubstantiation (a portentous word and dream indeed) until the counterfeit Aristotelian philosophy began to make its inroads on the Church within these last three hundred years, during which many other erroneous conclusions have also been arrived at such as that the Divine essence is neither generated nor generates, that the soul is the substantial form of the human body, and other like assertions, which are made absolutely without reason or cause, as the Cardinal of Cambray himself confesses.

They will say perhaps that we shall be in peril of idolatry if we do not admit that bread and wine are not really there. This is truly ridiculous, for the laity have never learnt the subtle philosophical distinction between substance and accidents, nor, if they were taught it, could they understand it; and there is the same peril, if we keep the accidents, which they see, as in the case of the substance, which they do not see. For if it is not the accidents which they adore, but Christ concealed under them, why should they adore the substance, which

they do not see?

But why should not Christ be able to include His body within the substance of bread, as well as within the accidents? Fire and iron, two different substances, are so mingled in red-hot iron that every part of it is both fire and iron. Why may not the glorious body of Christ much more be in every part of the substance of the bread?

Christ is believed to have been born of the inviolate womb of His mother. In this case, too, let them say that the flesh of the Virgin was for a time annihilated, or, as they will have it to be more suitably expressed, transubstantiated, that Christ might be enwrapped in its accidents and at length come forth through its accidents. The same will have to be said respecting the closed door and the closed entrance of the tomb, through which He entered, and went out without injury to them. But hence has sprung that Babylon of a philosophy concerning continuous quantity, distinct from substance, till things have come to such a point that they themselves do not know what are accidents and what is substance. For who has ever proved to a certainty that heat and cold, colour, light, weight, and form are accidents? Lastly, they have been driven to pretend that God creates a new substance additional to those accidents on the altar, on account of the saving of Aristotle that the essence of an accident is to be in something, and have been led to an infinity of monstrous ideas, from all of which they would be free, if they simply allowed the bread on the altar to be real bread. I rejoice greatly that at least among the common people there remains a simple faith in this Sacrament. They neither understand nor argue whether there are accidents in it or substance. but believe with simple faith that the body and blood of Christ are truly contained in it, leaving to these men of leisure the task of arguing as to what it contains.

But perhaps they will say that we are taught by Aristotle that we must take the subject and predicate of an affirmative proposition to signify the same thing, or, to quote the words of that monster himself in the sixth book of his *Metaphysics*, "an affirmative proposition requires the composition of the extremes," which they explain as their signifying the same thing. Thus in the words, "This is my body," they say that we cannot take the subject to signify the bread, but the body of Christ.

What shall we say to this? Whereas we are making Aristotle and human teachings the censors of such

sublime and Divine matters, why do we not rather cast away these curious inquiries and simply adhere to the words of Christ, willing to be ignorant of what is done in this Sacrament and content to know that the real body of Christ is present in it by virtue of the words of consecration? Is it necessary to comprehend altogether the

manner of the Divine working?

But what do they say to Aristotle, who applies the term "subject" to all the categories of accidents, although he takes the substance to be the first subject? Thus, in his opinion, "this white," "this great," "this something," are subjects, because something is predicated of them. If this is true, and if it is necessary to lay down a doctrine of transubstantiation in order that it may not be asserted of the bread that it is the body of Christ, why, I ask, is not a doctrine of transaccidentation also laid down, that it may not be affirmed of an accident that it is the body of Christ? For the same danger remains, if we regard "this white thing" or "this round thing" as the subject. On whatever principle transubstantiation is taught, on the same ought transaccidentation to be taught, on account of the two terms of the proposition, as is alleged. signifying the same thing.

If, however, by a high effort of understanding, you make abstraction of the accident, and refuse to regard it as signified by the subject in saying, "This is My body," why can you not as easily rise above the substance of the bread, and refuse to let it be understood as signified by the subject, so that "This is My body" may be true in the substance no less than in the accident, especially so since this is a Divine work of almighty power, which can operate to the same extent and in the same way in

the substance, as it can in the accident?

But, not to philosophise too far, does not Christ appear to have met these curious inquiries in a striking manner when He said concerning the wine, not "Hoc est sanguis meus," but "Hic est sanguis meus"? He speaks much more clearly still when He brings in the mention of the cup, saying, "This cup is the new testament in My blood" (1 Cor. xi.). Does He not seem to have meant to keep us within the bounds of simple faith, just so far as to believe that His blood is in the cup? If. for my part, I cannot understand how the bread can be the body of Christ, I will bring my understanding into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and firmly believe, in simple adherence to His word, not only that the body of Christ is in the bread, but that the bread is the body of Christ. For so shall I be kept safe by His words, where it is said, "Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and said, Take, eat, this "(that is, this bread, which He had taken and broken) "is My body." Paul also says, "The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" He does not say that the communion is in the bread, but that the bread itself is the communion of the body of Christ. What if philosophy does not understand these things? The Holy Spirit is greater than Aristotle. Does it even understand the transubstantiation which these men speak of, seeing that they themselves confess that all philosophy breaks down on this point? The reason why, in the Greek and Latin, the pronoun this is referred to the body, is that the genders are alike; but in the Hebrew, where there is no neuter gender, it is referred to the bread; so that we might properly say, "This" (bread) "is My body." Both the usage of language and common sense prove that the subject points to the bread, and not to the body, when He says, "Hoc est corpus meum," that is, "This bread is My bodv."

As then the case is with Christ Himself, so is it also with the Sacrament. For it is not necessary to the bodily indwelling of the Godhead that the human nature should be transubstantiated, that so the Godhead may be contained beneath the accidents of the human nature. But each nature is entire, and we can say with truth, This Man is God; this God is man. Though philosophy does not receive this, yet faith receives it, and greater is the authority of the word of God than the capacity of our intellect. Thus, too, in the Sacrament it is not necessary

to the presence of the real body and real blood that the bread and wine should be transubstantiated, so that Christ may be contained beneath the accidents; but while both bread and wine continue there, it can be said with truth, "This bread is My body; this wine is My blood," and conversely. Thus for the present will I understand this matter in honour of the holy words of God, which I will not allow to have violence done them by the petty reasonings of men, or to be distorted into meanings alien to them. I give leave, however, to others to follow the other opinion, which is distinctly laid down in the decretal, provided only (as I have said) they do not press us to accept their opinions as articles of faith.

The third bondage of this same Sacrament is that abuse of it—and by far the most impious—by which it has come about that at this day there is no belief in the Church more generally received or more firmly held than that the mass is a good work and a sacrifice. This abuse has brought in an infinite flood of other abuses, until faith in the Sacrament has been utterly lost, and they have made this Divine Sacrament a mere subject of traffic, huckstering, and money-getting contracts. Hence communions, brotherhoods, suffrages, merits, anniversaries, memorials, and other things of that kind are bought and sold in the Church, and made the subjects of bargains and agreements; and the entire maintenance of priests and monks depends upon these things.

I am entering on an arduous task, and it may perhaps be impossible to uproot an abuse which, strengthened by the practice of so many ages and approved by universal consent, has fixed itself so firmly among us that the greater part of the books which have influence at the present day must needs be done away with, and almost the entire aspect of the churches be changed, and a totally different kind of ceremonies be brought in, or rather brought back. But my Christ lives, and we must take heed to the word of God with greater care than to all the intellects of men and angels. I will perform my part, will bring forth the subject into the light, and will impart

the truth freely and ungrudgingly as I have received it. For the rest, let every one look to his own salvation; I will strive, as in the presence of Christ my Judge, that no man may be able to throw upon me the blame of his own

unbelief and ignorance of the truth.

To begin, if we wish to attain safely and prosperously to the true and free knowledge of this Sacrament, we must take the utmost care to put aside all that has been added by the zeal or the notions of men to the primitive and simple institution, such as vestments, ornaments, hymns, prayers, musical instruments, lamps, and all the pomp of visible things, and must turn our eyes and our attention only to the pure institution of Christ, and set nothing else before us but those very words of Christ with which He instituted and perfected that Sacrament and committed it In that word, and absolutely in nothing else, lies the whole force, nature, and substance of the mass. the rest are human notions, accessory to the word of Christ: and the mass can perfectly well subsist and be kept up without them. Now the words in which Christ instituted this Sacrament are as follows: "While they were at supper Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to His disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is My body which is given for you. And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of this; this cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you and for many for the remission of sins: do this in remembrance of Me."

These words the Apostle Paul (1 Cor. xi.) also delivers to us and explains at greater length. On these we must rest, and build ourselves up as on a firm rock, unless we wish to be carried about with every wind of doctrine, as we have hitherto been, through the impious teachings of men who pervert the truth. For in these words nothing has been omitted which pertains to the completeness, use, and profit of this Sacrament, and nothing laid down which it is superfluous or unnecessary for us to know. He who passes over these words in his meditations or teachings concerning the mass will teach monstrous

impieties, as has been done by those who have made an opus operatum and a sacrifice of it.

Let this then stand as a first and infallible truth: that the mass or Sacrament of the altar is the testament of Christ, which He left behind Him at His death, to be distributed to those who believe in Him. For such are His words: "This cup is the new testament in My blood." Let this truth, I say, stand as an immovable foundation, on which we shall erect all our arguments. You will see how we shall thus overthrow all the impieties of men. imposed upon this sweetest Sacrament. The truthful Christ then says with truth that this is the new testament in His blood, shed for us. It is not without cause that I urge this; the matter is no small one, but must be received into the depths of our minds.

If then we inquire what a testament is, we shall also learn what the mass is, what are its uses, advantages, abuses. A testament is certainly a promise made by a man about to die, by which he assigns his inheritance and appoints heirs. Thus the idea of a testament implies, first, the death of the testator, and, secondly, the promise of the inheritance and the appointment of an heir. In this way Paul (Rom. iv.; Gal. iii., iv.; Heb. ix.) speaks at some length of testaments. We also see this clearly in those words of Christ. Christ testifies of His own death when He says, "This is My body which is given; this is My blood which is shed"; He assigns and points out the inheritance when He says, "For the remission of sins"; and He appoints heirs when He says, "For you and for many," that is, for those who accept and believe the promise of the Testator, for it is faith which makes us heirs, as we shall see.

You see then that the mass, as we call it, is a promise of the remission of sins made to us by God, and such a promise as has been confirmed by the death of the Son of For a promise and a testament only differ in this: that a testament implies the death of the promiser. testator is a promiser who is about to die; and a promiser is, so to speak, a testator who is about to live. This

testament of Christ was prefigured in all the promises of God from the beginning of the world; yea, whatsoever value the ancient promises had lay in that new promise which was about to be made in Christ, and on which they depended. Hence the words "agreement," "covenant," "testament of the Lord," are constantly employed in the Scriptnres; and by these it was implied that God would some day die. "For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator" (Heb. ix. 16). God having made a testament, it was necessary that He should die. Now He could not die unless He became a Man; and thus in this one word "testament" the incarnation and the death of Christ are

both comprehended.

From all this it is now self-evident what is the use, and what the abuse, of the mass, what is a worthy or an unworthy preparation for it. If the mass is a promise, as we have said, we can approach to it by no works, no strength, no merits, but by faith alone. For where we have the word of God, who promises, there we must have faith on the part of man, who accepts; and it is thus clear that the beginning of our salvation is faith, depending on the word of a promising God, who, independently of any efforts of ours, prevents us by His free and undeserved mercy, and holds out to us the word of His promise. "He sent His word and healed them" (Psalm cvii. 20). He did not receive our works and so save us. First of all comes the word of God; this is followed by faith, and faith by love, which in its turn does every good work; because it worketh no evil, yea, it is the fulfilling of the law. There is no other way in which man can meet or deal with God but by faith. It is not man by any works of his, but God by His own promise, who is the Author of salvation; so that everything depends, is contained and preserved in the word of His power, by which He begat us, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creation.

Thus, when Adam was to be raised up after the Fall, God gave him a promise, saying to the serpent, "I will place enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; she shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise her heel." In this word of promise, Adam, with his posterity, was, as it were, borne in the bosom of God and preserved by faith in Him, waiting patiently for the woman who should bruise the head of the serpent, as God had promised. In this faith and waiting he died, not knowing when and how the promise would be accomplished, but not doubting that it would be accomplished. For such a promise, being the truth of God, preserves even in hell those who believe and wait for it. promise was followed by another, made to Noah; the bow in the cloud being given as a sign of the covenant, believing in which he and his posterity found God propitious. After this God promised to Abraham that in his seed all the kindreds of the earth should be blessed. This is that bosom of Abraham into which his posterity have been received. Lastly, to Moses and to the children of Israel, especially to David, God gave a most distinct promise of Christ; and thus at length revealed what had been the meaning of the promise made to them of old time.

Thus we come to the most perfect promise of all, that of the new testament, in which life and salvation are freely promised in plain words, and are bestowed on those who believe the promise. Christ conspicuously distinguishes this testament from the old one by calling it the "new testament." The old testament given by Moses was a promise, not of remission of sins, nor of eternal blessings, but of temporal ones, namely, those of the land of Canaan; and by it no one could be renewed in spirit and fitted to receive a heavenly inheritance. Hence it was necessary that, as a figure of Christ, an unreasoning lamb should be slain, in the blood of which the same testament was confirmed; thus, as is the blood, so is the testament: as is the victim, so is the promise. Now Christ says, "The new testament in My blood," not in another's, but in His own blood, by which grace is promised through the Spirit for the remission of sins, that we may receive the inheritance.

The mass then, as regards its substance, is properly nothing else than the aforesaid words of Christ, "Take, eat," etc. He seems to say, "Behold, O man, sinner and condemned as thou art, out of the pure and free love with which I love thee, according to the will of the Father of mercies, I promise to thee in these words, antecedently to any merits or prayers of thine, remission of all thy sins and eternal life. That thou mayest be most certain of this My irrevocable promise, I will confirm it by My very death; I will give My body and shed My blood, and will leave both to thee, as a sign and memorial of this very promise. Which as often as thou shalt repeat, remember Me; declare and praise My love and bounty to thee; and give thanks."

From this you see that nothing else is required for a worthy reception of the mass than faith, resting with confidence on this promise, believing Christ to be truthful in these words of His, and not doubting that these immeasurable blessings have been bestowed upon us. On this faith a spontaneous and most sweet affection of the heart will speedily follow, by which the spirit of the man is enlarged and enriched; that is, love, bestowed through the Holy Spirit on believers in Christ. believer is carried away to Christ, that bounteous and beneficent Testator, and becomes altogether another and a new man. Who would not weep tears of delight, nay almost die for joy in Christ, if he believed with unhesitating faith that this inestimable promise of Christ belonged to him? How can he fail to love such a Benefactor, who of His own accord offers, promises, and gives the greatest riches and an eternal inheritance to an unworthy sinner, who has deserved very different treatment?

Our one great misery is this: that, while we have many masses in the world, few or none of us recognise, consider, or apprehend the rich promises set before us in them. Now in the mass the one thing that demands our greatest, nay our sole, attention is to keep these words and promises of Christ, which indeed constitute the mass

itself, constantly before our eyes, that we should meditate on and digest them, and exercise, nourish, increase, and strengthen our faith in them by this daily commemoration. This is what Christ commands when He says, "Do this in remembrance of Me." It is the work of an evangelist faithfully to present and commend that promise to the people, and to call forth faith in it on their part. As it is—to say nothing of the impious fables of those who teach human traditions in the place of this great promise how many are there who know that the mass is a promise of Christ? Even if they teach these words of Christ, they do not teach them as conveying a promise or a testament, and therefore call forth no faith in them.

It is a deplorable thing in our present bondage that nowadays the utmost care is taken that no layman should hear those words of Christ, as if they were too sacred to be committed to the common people. We priests are so mad that we arrogate to ourselves alone the right of secretly uttering the words of consecration, as they are called, and that in a way which is unprofitable even to ourselves, since we never look at them as promises, or as a testament for the increase of faith. Under the influence of some superstitious and impious notion, we do reverence to these words instead of believing them. In this our misery Satan so works among us that, while he has left nothing of the mass to the Church, he yet takes care that every corner of the earth shall be full of masses, that is, that the world shall be more and more heavily burdened with abuses and mockeries of the testament of God, and the gravest sins of idolatry, to increase its greater damnation. For what more grievous sin of idolatry can there be, than to abuse the promises of God by our perverse notions and either neglect or extinguish all faith in them?

God (as I have said) never has dealt, or does deal, with men otherwise than by the word of promise. Again, we can never deal with God otherwise than by faith in the word of His promise. He takes no concern with our works. and has no need of them,—though it is by these we deal with other men and with ourselves ;—but He does require to be esteemed by us truthful in His promises, and to be patiently trusted as such, and thus worshipped in faith, hope, and love. And thus it is that He is glorified in us when we receive and hold every blessing not by our own efforts, but from His mercy, promise, and gift. This is that true worship and service of God which we are bound to render in the mass. But when the words of the promise are not delivered to us, what exercise of faith can there be? And without faith who can hope? who can love? without faith, hope, and love, what service can there be? There is no doubt therefore that at the present day the whole body of priests and monks, with their bishops and all their superiors, are idolaters and living in a most perilous state, through their ignorance, abuse, and mockery of the mass, or sacrament, or promise of God.

It is easy for any one to understand that two things are necessary at the same time: the promise and faith. Without a promise we have nothing to believe; while without faith the promise is useless, since it is through faith that it is established and fulfilled, whence we easily conclude that the mass, being nothing else than a promise, can be approached and partaken of by faith alone, without which whatever prayers, preparations, works, signs, or gestures are practised, are rather provocations to impiety than acts of piety. It constantly happens that when men have given their attention to all these things they imagine that they are approaching the altar lawfully, and yet in reality could never be more unfit to approach it, because of the unbelief which they bring with them. What a number of sacrificing priests you may daily see everywhere who, if they have committed some trifling error, by unsuitable vestments or unwashed hands, or by some hesitation in the prayers, are wretched, and think themselves guilty of an immense crime! Meanwhile, as for the mass itself—that is, the Divine promise—they neither heed nor believe it; yea, are utterly unconscious of its existence. Oh, unworthy religion of our age, the most impious and ungrateful of all ages!

There is then no worthy preparation for the mass, or rightful use of it, except faith, by which it is believed in as a Divine promise. Wherefore let him who is about to approach the altar or to receive the Sacrament take care not to appear before the Lord his God empty. Now he will be empty, if he has not faith in the mass, or in this new testament; and what more grievous impiety can he commit against the truth of God than by this unbelief? far as in him lies, he makes God a liar, and renders His promises idle. It will be safest then to go to the mass in no other spirit than that in which thou wouldst go to hear any other promise of God; that is, to be prepared, not to do many works and bring many gifts, but to believe and receive all that is promised thee in that ordinance, or is declared to thee through the ministry of the priest as promised. Unless thou comest in this spirit. beware of drawing near; for thou wilt surely draw near unto indement.

I have rightly said, then, that the whole virtue of the mass consists in those words of Christ in which He testifies that remission is granted to all who believe that His body is given and His blood shed for them. There is nothing, then, more necessary for those who are about to hear mass than to meditate earnestly and with full faith on the very words of Christ; for unless they do this, all else is done in vain. It is certainly true that God has ever been wont, in all His promises, to give some sign, token, or memorial of His promise, that it might be kept more faithfully and tell more strongly on men's minds. Thus when He promised to Noah that the earth should not be destroyed by another deluge He gave His bow in the cloud, and said that He would thus remember His covenant. To Abraham, when He promised that his seed should inherit the earth, He gave circumcision as a seal of the righteousness which is by faith. Thus to Gideon He gave the dry and the dewy fleece, to confirm His promise of victory over the Midianites. Thus to Ahaz He gave a sign through Isaiah, to confirm his faith in the promise of victory over the kings of Syria and Samaria.

We read in the Scriptures of many such signs of the

promises of God.

So, too, in the mass, that chief of all promises, He gave a sign in memory of so great a promise, namely, His own body and His own blood in the bread and wine, saying, "Do this in remembrance of Me." Thus in baptism He adds to the words of the promise the sign of immersion Whence we see that in every promise of God in water. two things are set before us: the word and the sign. The word we are to understand as being the testament, and the sign as being the Sacrament; thus in the mass the word of Christ is the testament: the bread and wine are the Sacrament. And as there is greater power in the word than in the sign, so is there greater power in the testament than in the Sacrament. A man can have and use the word or testament without the sign or Sacrament. "Believe," saith Augustine, "and thou hast eaten"; but in what do we believe except in the word of Him who promises? Thus I can have the mass daily, nay hourly, since, as often as I will, I can set before myself the words of Christ, and nourish and strengthen my faith in them; and this is in very truth spiritual eating and drinking.

Here we see what and how much the theologians of the Sentences have done for us in this matter. In the first place, not one of them handles that which is the sum and substance of the whole, namely, the testament and word of promise; and thus they do away with faith and the whole virtue of the mass. In the next place, the other part of it -namely, the sign or Sacrament-is all that they deal with; but they do not teach faith even in this, but their own preparations, opera operata, participations and fruits of the mass. At length they have reached the very depth of error, and have involved themselves in an infinity of metaphysical triflings concerning transubstantiation and other points; so that they have done away with all faith, and with the knowledge and true use, as well of the testament as of the Sacrament, and have caused the people of Christ, as the prophet says, to forget their God for

many days. But do thou leave others to recount the various fruits of hearing mass, and apply thy mind to saying and believing, with the prophet, that God has prepared a table before thee in the presence of thine enemies—a table at which thy faith may feed and grow strong. Now it is only on the word of the Divine promise that thy faith can feed; for man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God (Matt. iv. 4). Wherefore in the mass thou must look above all things most closely to the word of promise as to a most sumptuous banquet, full of every kind of food and holy nourishment for thy soul; this thou must esteem above all things; in this thou must place all thy trust, and cleave firmly to it, even in the midst of death and all thy sins. If thou dost this, thou wilt possess not only those drops, as it were, and littlenesses of the fruits of the mass, which some have superstitiously invented, but the main fount of life itself, namely, faith in the word, from which every good thing flows, as Christ said, "He that believeth on Me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water" (John vii. 38), and again, "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John iv. 14).

There are two difficulties which are wont to beset us. and prevent our receiving the benefits of the mass. one is that we are sinners and unworthy, from our utter vileness, of such great blessings; the other is, even if we were worthy, the very greatness of the blessings themselves, which are such that weak nature cannot dare to seek or hope for them. Who would not be struck, in the first place, with amazement rather than with the desire for the remission of sins and eternal life, if he rightly estimates the greatness of the blessings which come through these -namely, the having God as his Father and being a child of God and heir of all good things? To meet this double weakness of nature, thou must take hold of the word of Christ, and fix thine eyes much more strongly on that, than on these cogitations of thine own infirmity. For the works of the Lord are great, and He is mighty to give, beyond all that we can seek or comprehend. Indeed, unless His works surpassed our worthiness, our capacity, our whole comprehension, they would not be Divine. Thus, too, Christ encourages us, saying, "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke xii. 32). This incomprehensible exuberance of God's mercy, poured out on us through Christ, makes us in our turn to love Him above all things, to cast ourselves upon Him with the most perfect trust, to despise all things, and be ready to suffer all things for Him. Hence this Sacrament has been

rightly called the fountain of love.

Here we may draw an example from human affairs. If some very rich lord were to bequeath a thousand pieces of gold to any beggar, or even to an unworthy and bad servant, such a one would certainly demand and receive them confidently, without regard either to his own unworthiness or to the greatness of the legacy. If any one were to set these before him as objections, what do you think he would reply? He would certainly answer, "What is that to you? It is not by my deserving, nor by any right of my own, that I receive what I do receive. I know that I am unworthy of it, and that I am receiving much more than I deserve; nay, I have deserved the very contrary. But what I claim, I claim by right of a testament and of the goodness of another: if it were not unworthy of him to leave such a legacy to me, who am so unworthy, why should my unworthiness make me hesitate to accept it? Nay, the more unworthy I am, the more readily do I embrace this free favour from another." With such reasonings we must arm our own consciences against all their scruples and anxieties, that we may hold this promise of Christ with unhesitating We must give the utmost heed not to approach faith. in any confidence in our own confessions, prayers, and preparations; we must despair of all these, and come in a lofty confidence in the promise of Christ-since it

is the word of promise which alone must reign here, in pure faith, which is the one and sole sufficient

preparation.

We see from all this how great the wrath of God has been which has permitted our impious teachers to conceal from us the words of this testament, and thus, as far as in them lay, to extinguish faith itself. It is selfevident what must necessarily follow this extinction of faith: namely, the most impious superstitions about works. For when faith perishes, and the word of faith is silent, then straightway works and traditions of works rise up in its place. By these we have been removed from our own land, as into a Babylonian bondage, and all that was dear to us has been taken from us. Even thus it has befallen us with the mass, which, through the teaching of wicked men, has been changed into a good work, which they call opus operatum, and by which they imagine that they are all-powerful with God. Hence they have gone to the extreme of madness; and, having first falsely affirmed that the mass is of avail through the force of the opus operatum, they have gone on to say that even if it be hurtful to him who offers it impiously, yet it is none the less useful to others. On this basis they have established their applications, participations, fraternities, anniversaries, and an infinity of lucrative and gainful business of that kind.

You will scarcely be able to stand against these errors. many and strong as they are, and deeply as they have penetrated, unless you fix what has been said firmly in your memory and give the most steadfast heed to the true nature of the mass. You have heard that the mass is nothing else than the Divine promise or testament of Christ, commended to us by the Sacrament of His body and blood. If this is true, you will see that it cannot in any way be a work, nor can any work be performed in it, nor can it be handled in any way but by faith alone; and faith is not a work, but the mistress and life of all works. Is there any man so senseless as to call a promise he has received, or a legacy that has been bestowed on him.

a good work done on his part towards the testator? What heir is there who thinks that he is doing a service to his father when he receives the testamentary documents along with the inheritance bequeathed to him? Whence then this impious rashness of ours: that we come to receive the testament of God as if we were doing a good work towards Him? Is not such ignorance of that testament, and such a state of bondage of that great Sacrament, a grief beyond all tears? Where we ought to be grateful for blessings bestowed on us, we come in our pride to give what we ought to receive, and make a mockery, with unheard-of perversity, of the mercy of the Giver. We give to Him as a work of ours what we receive as a gift from Him; and we thus make the Testator no longer the Bestower of His good gifts on us, but the Receiver

of ours. Alas for such impiety!

Who has ever been so senseless as to consider baptism a good work? What candidate for baptism has ever believed he was doing a work which he might offer to God on behalf of himself and others? If then in one sacrament and testament there is no good work communicable to others, neither can there be any in the mass, which is itself nothing but a testament and a sacrament. Hence it is a manifest and impious error to offer or apply the mass for sins, for satisfactions, for the dead, or for any necessities of our own or of others. The evident truth of this statement you will easily understand, if you keep closely to the fact that the mass is a Divine promise, which can profit no one, be applied to no one, be communicated to no one, except to the believer himself, and that solely by his own faith. Who can possibly receive or apply for another a promise of God which requires faith on the part of each individual? Can I give another man the promise of God, if he does not believe it; or can I believe for another man; or can I make another believe? Yet all this I must be able to do if I can apply and communicate the mass to others; for there are in the mass only these two things: God's promise, and man's faith which receives that promise. If I can do all this, I

can also hear and believe the Gospel on behalf of other men, I can be baptised for another man, I can be absolved from sin for another man, I can partake of the Sacrament of the altar for another man; nay, to go through the whole list of their sacraments, I can also marry for another man, be ordained priest for another man, be confirmed for another man, receive extreme unction for another man.

Why did not Abraham believe on behalf of all the Jews? Why was every individual Jew required to exercise faith in the same promise which Abraham believed? Let us keep to this impregnable truth: where there is a Divine promise, there every man stands for himself; individual faith is required; every man shall give account for himself, and shall bear his own burdens; as Christ says, "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned " (Mark xvi. 16). Thus every man can make the mass useful only to himself. by his own faith, and can by no means communicate it to others, just as a priest cannot administer a sacrament to any man on behalf of another, but administers the same Sacrament to each individual separately. The priests in their work of consecration and administration act as ministers for us; not that we offer up any good work through them, or communicate actively; but by their means we receive the promise and its sign, and are communicated passively. This idea continues among the laity; for they are not said to do a good work, but to receive a gift. But the priests have gone after their own impieties and have made it a good work that they communicate. and make an offering out of the Sacrament and testament of God, whereas they ought to have received it as a good gift.

But you will say, "What? will you overthrow the practices and opinions which for so many centuries have rooted themselves in all the churches and monasteries, and all that superstructure of anniversaries, suffrages, applications, and communications, which they have established upon the mass, and from which they have drawn

the amplest revenues?" I reply, It is this which has compelled me to write concerning the bondage of the Church. For the venerable testament of God has been brought into a profane servitude to gain, through the opinions and traditions of impious men, who have passed over the word of God, and have set before us the imaginations of their own hearts, and thus have led the world astray. What have I to do with the number or the greatness of those who are in error? Truth is stronger than all. If you can deny that Christ teaches that the mass is a testament and a sacrament, I am ready to justify those men. Again, if you can say that the man who receives the benefit of a testament, or who uses for this purpose the Sacrament of promise, is doing a good work, I am ready and willing to condemn what I have said. But since neither is possible, why hesitate to despise the crowd which hastens to do evil, whilst you give glory to God and confess His truth, namely, that all priests are perversely mistaken who look on the mass as a work, by which they may aid their own necessities or those of others, whether dead or alive? My statements, I know, are unheard of and astounding. But if you look into the true nature of the mass, you will see that I speak the These errors have proceeded from that oversecurity which has kept us from perceiving that the wrath of God was coming upon us.

This I readily admit: that the prayers which we pour forth in the presence of God, when we meet to partake of the mass, are good works or benefits, which we mutually impart, apply, and communicate, and offer up for one another, as the Apostle James teaches us to pray for one another that we may be saved. Paul also exhorts that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men, for kings, and for all that are in authority (1 Tim. ii. 1, 2). These things are not the mass, but works of the mass—if, indeed, we can call the prayers of our hearts and our lips works—because they spring from the existence and growth of faith in the Sacrament. The mass or promise of God is not completed

by our prayers, but only by our faith; and in faith we pray and do other good works. But what priest sacrifices with the intention and idea of only offering up prayers? They all imagine that they are offering Christ Himself to God the Father as an all-sufficient Victim; and that they are doing a good work on behalf of all men, who, as they allege, will profit by it. They trust in the opus operatum. and do not attribute the effect to prayer. Thus, by a gradual growth of error, they attribute to the Sacrament the benefit which springs from prayer; and they offer to God what they ought to receive as a gift from Him.

We must therefore make a clear distinction between the testament and Sacrament itself and the prayers which we offer at the same time. And not only so, but we must understand that those prayers are of no value at all, either to him who offers them or to those for whom they are offered, unless the testament has been first received by faith, so that the prayer may be that of faith, which alone is heard, as the Apostle James teaches us. So widely does prayer differ from the mass. I can pray for as many persons as I will; but no one receives the mass unless he believes for himself, and that only so far as he believes; nor can it be given either to God or to men, but it is God alone who by the ministry of the priest gives it to men, and they receive it by faith alone, without any works or merits. No one would be so audaciously foolish as to say that, when a poor and needy man comes to receive a benefit from the hand of a rich man, he is doing a good work. Now the mass is the benefit of a Divine promise, held forth to all men by the hand of the priest. It is certain therefore that the mass is not a work communicable to others, but the object of each man's individual faith, which is thus to be nourished and strengthened.

We must also get rid of another scandal, which is a much greater and a very specious one: that is, that the mass is universally believed to be a sacrifice offered to With this opinion the words of the canon of the mass appear to agree, such as "these gifts; these offerings; these holy sacrifices"; and again, "this oblation." There is also a very distinct prayer that the sacrifice may be accepted like the sacrifice of Abel. Hence Christ is called the Victim of the altar. To this we must add the sayings of the holy Fathers, a great number of authorities, and the usage that has been constantly observed throughout the world.

To all these difficulties, which beset us so pertinaciously, we must oppose with the utmost constancy the words and example of Christ. Unless we hold the mass to be the promise or testament of Christ, according to the plain meaning of the words, we lose all the Gospel and our whole comfort. Let us allow nothing to prevail against those words, even if an angel from heaven taught us Now in these words there is nothing about a Again we have the example of Christ work or sacrifice. on our side. When Christ instituted this Sacrament and established this testament in the Last Supper, He did not offer Himself to God the Father, or accomplish it as a good work on behalf of others, but, as He sat at the table, He declared the same testament to each individual present and bestowed on each the sign of it. Now, the more any mass resembles and approaches that first mass of all which Christ celebrated at the Last Supper, the more Christian it is. But that mass of Christ was most simple, without any display of vestments, gestures, hymns, and other ceremonies; so that if it had been necessary that it should be offered as a sacrifice. His institution of it would not have been complete.

Not that any one ought rashly to blame the universal Church, which has adorned and extended the mass with many other rites and ceremonies; but we desire that no one should be so deceived by showy ceremonies, or so perplexed by the amount of external display, as to lose the simplicity of the mass and, in fact, pay honour to a sort of transubstantiation, as will be the case if we pass by the simple substance of the mass, and fix our minds on the manifold accidents of its outward show. For whatever has been added to the mass beyond the word and example

of Christ is one of its accidents; and none of these ought we to consider in any other light than we now consider monstrances, as they are called, and altar cloths, within which the host is contained. It is a contradiction in terms that the mass should be a sacrifice, since we receive the mass but give a sacrifice. Now the same thing cannot be received and offered at the same time, nor can it be at once given and accepted by the same person. This is as certain as that prayer and the thing prayed for cannot be the same, nor can it be the same thing to pray and to

receive what we pray for.

What shall we say then to the canon of the mass and the authority of the Fathers? First of all, I reply, If there were nothing to be said, it would be safer to deny their authority altogether, than to grant that the mass is a work or a sacrifice, and thus to deny the word of Christ and to overthrow faith and the mass together. However. that we may keep the Fathers too, we will explain (1 Cor. xi.) that the believers in Christ, when they met to celebrate the mass, were accustomed to bring with them portions of food and drink, called "collects," which were distributed among the poor, according to the example of the Apostles (Acts iv.), and from which were taken the bread and wine consecrated for the Sacrament. Since all these gifts were sanctified by the word and prayer after the Hebrew rite, in accordance with which they were lifted on high, as we read in Moses, the words and the practice of elevation, or of offering, continued in the Church long after the custom had died out of collecting and bringing together the gifts which were offered or elevated. Thus Hezekiah (Isa. xxxvii. 4) bids Isaiah to lift his praver for the remnant that is left. Again, the Psalmist says, "Lift up your hands to the holy place," and "To Thee will I lift up my hands," and again, "That men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands" (1 Tim. ii. 8). Hence the expressions "sacrifice" or "oblation" ought to be referred, not to the Sacrament and testament, but to the "collects" themselves. Hence, too, the word "collect" has remained in use for the prayers said in the mass.

For the same reason the priest elevates the bread and the cup as soon as he has consecrated them; but the proof that he is not therein offering anything to God is that in no single word does he make mention of a victim or an oblation. This too is a remnant of the Hebrew rite. according to which it was customary to elevate the gifts which, after being received with giving of thanks, were brought back to God. Or it may be considered as an admonition to us, to call forth our faith in that testament which Christ on that occasion brought forward and set before us, and also as a display of its sign. The oblation of the bread properly corresponds to the words, "This is My body"; and Christ, as it were, addresses us bystanders by this very sign. Thus, too, the oblation of the cup properly corresponds to these words: "This cup is the new testament in My blood." The priest ought to call forth our faith by the very rite of elevation. And as he openly elevates the sign or Sacrament in our sight, so I wish that he also pronounced the word or testament with loud and clear voice in our hearing, and that in the language of every nation, that our faith might be more efficaciously exercised. Why should it be lawful to perform mass in Greek and Latin and Hebrew, and not also in German or in any other language?

Wherefore, in this abandoned and most perilous age, let the priests who sacrifice take heed, in the first place, that those words of the major and minor canon, with the collects, which speak only too plainly of a sacrifice, are to be applied, not to the Sacrament, but either to the consecration of the bread and wine themselves, or to their own prayers. For the bread and wine are presented beforehand to receive a blessing, that they may be sanctified by the word and prayer. But after being blessed and consecrated, they are no longer offered, but are received as a gift from God. And in this matter let the priest consider that the Gospel is to be preferred to all canons and collects composed by men: and the Gospel, as we have seen, does not allow the mass to be a sacrifice.

In the next place, when the priest is performing mass

publicly, let him understand that he is only receiving and giving to others the communion in the mass; and let him beware of offering up at the same moment his prayers for himself and others, lest he should seem to be presuming to offer the mass. The priest also who is saying a private mass must consider himself as administering the communion to himself. A private mass is not at all different from, nor more efficient than, the simple reception of the communion by any layman from the hand of the priest, except for the prayers, and that the priest consecrates and administers it to himself. In the matter itself of the mass and the Sacrament, we are

all equal, priests and laymen.

Even if he is requested by others to do so, let him beware of celebrating votive masses, as they are called, and of receiving any payment for the mass or presuming to offer any votive sacrifice; but let him carefully refer all this to the prayers which he offers, whether for the dead or the living. Let him think thus: I will go and receive the Sacrament for myself alone, but while I receive it I will pray for this or that person, and thus, for purposes of food and clothing, receive payment for my prayers, and not for the mass. Nor let it shake thee in this view, though the whole world is of the contrary opinion and practice. Thou hast the most certain authority of the Gospel; and relying on this, thou mayest easily contemn the ideas and opinions of men. If, however, in despite of what I say, thou wilt persist in offering the mass, and not thy prayers only, then know that I have faithfully warned thee, and that I shall stand clear in the day of judgment, whilst thou wilt bear thine own sin. I have said what I was bound to say to thee, as a brother to a brother, for thy salvation; it will be to thy profit if thou takest heed to my words, to thy hurt if thou neglectest them. And if there are some who will condemn these statements of mine, I reply in the words of Paul: "Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse." deceiving and being deceived" (2 Tim. iii. 13).

Hence any one may easily understand that often-

quoted passage from Gregory, in which he says that a mass celebrated by a bad priest is not to be considered of less value than one by a good priest, and that one celebrated by St. Peter would not have been better than one celebrated by the traitor Judas. Under cover of this saving some try to shelter their own impiety, and have drawn a distinction between the opus operatum and the opus operans, that they might continue secure in their evil living, and yet pretend to be benefactors to others. Gregory indeed speaks the truth, but these men pervert his meaning. It is most true that the testament and Sacrament are not less effectively given and received at the hands of wicked priests than at those of the most holy. Who doubts that the Gospel may be preached by wicked men? Now the mass is a part of the Gospel. nay the very sum and compendium of the Gospel. For what is the whole Gospel but the good news of the remission of sins? Now all that can be said in the most ample and copious words concerning the remission of sins and the mercy of God is all briefly comprehended in the word of the testament. Hence also sermons to the people ought to be nothing else but expositions of the mass, that is, the setting forth of the Divine promise of this testament. This would be to teach faith, and truly to edify the Church. But those who now expound the mass make a sport and mockery of the subject by figures of speech derived from human ceremonies.

As therefore a wicked man can baptise—that is, can apply the word of promise and the sign of water to the person baptised—so can he also apply and minister the promise of this Sacrament to those who partake of it, and partake himself with them, as the traitor Judas did in the supper of the Lord. Still the Sacrament and testament remains always the same; it performs in the believer its own proper work: in the unbeliever it performs a work foreign to itself. But in the matter of oblations the case is quite different; for since it is not the mass, but prayers, which are offered to God, it is evident that the oblations of a wicked priest are of no value. As

Gregory himself says, when we employ an unworthy person as an advocate, the mind of the judge is prejudiced against us. We must not therefore confound these two things: the mass and prayer; sacrament and work; testament and sacrifice. The one comes from God to us through the ministry of the priest, and requires faith on our part; the other goes forth from our faith to God through the priest, and requires that He should hear us: the one comes down; the other goes upwards. The one therefore does not necessarily require that the minister should be worthy and pious, but the other does require it. because God does not hear sinners. He knows how to do us good by means of wicked men, but He does not accept the works of any wicked man, as He showed in the case of Cain. It is written, "The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord" (Prov. xv. 8), and again, "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Rom. xiv. 23).

We shall now make an end of this first part of the subject, but I am ready to produce further arguments when any one comes forward to attack these. From all that has been said we see for whom the mass was intended, and who are worthy partakers of it; namely, those alone who have sad, afflicted, disturbed, confused, and erring consciences. For since the word of the Divine promise in this Sacrament holds forth to us remission of sins, any man may safely draw near to it who is harassed either by remorse for sin, or by temptation to sin. testament of Christ is the one medicine for past, present, and future sins, provided thou cleavest to it with unhesitating faith, and believest that that which is signified by the words of the testament is freely given to thee. thou dost not so believe, then nowhere, never, by no works, by no efforts, wilt thou be able to appeare thy conscience. For faith is the sole peace of conscience, and unbelief the sole disturber of conscience.

## CONCERNING THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to the riches of His mercy, has at least preserved this one Sacrament in His Church uninjured and uncontaminated by the devices of men, and has made it free to all nations and to men of every class. He has not suffered it to be overwhelmed with the foul and impious monstrosities of avarice and superstition, doubtless having this purpose: that He would have little children, incapable of avarice and superstition, to be initiated into this Sacrament and to be sanctified by perfectly simple faith in His word. To such, at the present day, baptism is of the chiefest advantage. this Sacrament had had to be given to adults and those of full age, it seems as if it could have hardly preserved its efficacy and its glory, in the presence of that tyranny of avarice and superstition which has supplanted all Divine ordinances among us. In this case too, no doubt, fleshly wisdom would have invented its preparations, its worthinesses, its reservations, its restrictions, and other like nets for catching money; so that the water of baptism would be sold no cheaper than parchments are now.

Yet though Satan has not been able to extinguish the virtue of baptism in the case of little children, still he has had power to extinguish it in all adults; so that there is scarcely any one nowadays who remembers that he has been baptised, much less glories in it, so many other ways having been found of obtaining remission of sins and going to heaven. Occasion has been afforded to these opinions by that perilous saying of St. Jerome, either misstated or misunderstood, in which he calls penitence the second plank of safety after shipwreck, as if baptism were not penitence. Hence, when men have fallen into sin, they despair of the first plank, or the ship, as being no longer of any use, and begin to trust and depend only on the second plank, that is, on penitence. Thence have sprung those infinite loads of vows, religious dedications, works, satisfactions, pilgrimages, indulgences, and systems, and from them those oceans of books and of human questionings, opinions, and traditions, which the whole world nowadays cannot contain. Thus this tyranny

possesses the Church of God in an incomparably worse form than it ever possessed the synagogue or any nation under heaven.

It was the duty of bishops to remove all these abuses and to make every effort to recall Christians to the simplicity of baptism, that so they might understand their own position, and what as Christians they ought to do. But the one business of bishops at the present day is to lead the people as far as possible away from baptism and to plunge them all under the deluge of their own tyranny, and thus, as the prophet says, to make the people of Christ forget Him for ever. Oh wretched men who are called by the name of bishops! they not only do nothing and know nothing which bishops ought, but they are even ignorant what they ought to know and They fulfil the words of Isaiah, "His watchmen are blind; they are all ignorant; they are shepherds that cannot understand; they all look to their own way, every one for his gain, from his quarter" (Isa. lvi. 10, 11).

The first thing, then, we have to notice in baptism is the Divine promise which says, "He who believes and is baptised shall be saved." This promise is to be infinitely preferred to the whole display of works, vows, religious orders, and whatever has been introduced by the invention On this promise depends our whole salvation, and we must take heed to exercise faith in it, not doubting at all that we are saved, since we have been baptised. Unless this faith exists and is applied, baptism profits us nothing; nay, it is hurtful to us, not only at the time when it is received, but in the whole course of our afterlife. For unbelief of this kind charges the Divine promise with falsehood; and to do this is the greatest of all sins. If we attempt this exercise of faith, we shall soon see how difficult a thing it is to believe this Divine promise. For human weakness, conscious of its own sinfulness, finds it the most difficult thing in the world to believe that it is saved, or can be saved; and yet, unless it believes this, it cannot be saved, because it does not believe the Divine truth which promises salvation.

This doctrine ought to have been studiously inculcated upon the people by preaching; this promise ought to have been perpetually reiterated; men ought to have been constantly reminded of their baptism: faith ought to have been called forth and nourished. When this Divine promise has been once conferred upon us, its truth continues even to the hour of our death; and thus our faith in it ought never to be relaxed, but ought to be nourished and strengthened, even till we die, by a perpetual recollection of the promise made to us in baptism. when we rise out of our sins and exercise penitence, we are simply reverting to the efficacy of baptism and to faith in it, whence we had fallen: and we return to the promise then made to us, but which we had abandoned through our sin. For the truth of the promise once made always abides, and is ready to stretch out the hand and receive us when we return. This, unless I mistake, is the meaning of that obscure saying that baptism is the first of sacraments and the foundation of them all, without which we can possess none of the others.

Thus it will be of no little profit to a penitent, first of all, to recall to mind his own baptism and to remember with confidence that Divine promise which he had deserted. rejoicing that he is still in a fortress of safety, in that he has been baptised, and detesting his own wicked ingratitude in having fallen away from the faith and truth of baptism. His heart will be marvellously comforted, and encouraged to hope for mercy, if he fixes his eyes upon that Divine promise once made to him, which could not lie, and which still continues entire, unchanged, and unchangeable by any sins of his, as Paul says, "If we believe not, yet He abideth faithful; He cannot deny Himself" (2 Tim. ii. 13). This truth of God will preserve him; and even if all other hopes perish, this, if he believes it, will not fail him. Through this truth he will have something to oppose to the insolent adversary; he will have a barrier to throw in the way of the sins which disturb his conscience: he will have an answer to the dread of death and judgment; finally, he will have a

consolation under every kind of temptation in being able to say, God is faithful to His promise; and in baptism I received the sign of that promise. If God is for me, who

can be against me?

If the children of Israel, when returning to God in repentance, first of all called to mind their exodus from Egypt, and in remembrance of this turned back to God, who had brought them out—a remembrance which is so often inculcated on them by Moses and referred to by David-how much more ought we to remember our exodus from Egypt, and in remembrance of it to return to Him who brought us out through the washing of the new birth! Now this we can do most advantageously of all in the Sacrament of the bread and wine. old these three sacraments, penitence, baptism, and the bread, were often combined in the same act of worship; and the one added strength to the other. Thus we read of a certain holy virgin who, whenever she was tempted, relied on her baptism only for defence, saying, in the briefest words, "I am a Christian." The enemy forthwith felt the efficacy of baptism and of the faith which depended on the truth of a promising God, and fled from her.

We see then how rich a Christian, or baptised man, is, since, even if he would, he cannot lose his salvation by any sins however great, unless he refuses to believe; for no sins whatever can condemn him but unbelief alone. All other sins, if faith in the Divine promise made to the baptised man stands firm or is restored, are swallowed up in a moment through that same faith, yea, through the truth of God, because He cannot deny Himself, if thou confessest Him, and cleavest believingly to His promise; whereas contrition, and confession of sins, and satisfaction for sins, and every effort that can be devised by men, will desert thee at thy need, and will make thee more miserable than ever, if thou forgettest this Divine truth and puffest thyself up with such things as these. For whatever work is wrought apart from faith in the truth of God is vanity and vexation of spirit,

We also see how perilous and false an idea it is that penitence is a second plank of refuge after shipwreck, and how pernicious an error it is to suppose that the virtue of baptism has been brought to an end by sin, and that this ship has been dashed to pieces. That ship remains one, solid, and indestructible, and can never be broken up into different planks. In it all are conveyed who are carried to the port of salvation, since it is the truth of God giving promises in the sacraments. What certainly does happen is that many rashly leap out of the ship into the sea and perish; these are they who abandon faith in the promise and rush headlong into sin. But the ship itself abides, and passes on safely in its course : and any man who, by the grace of God, returns to the ship, will be borne on to life, not on a plank, but on the solid ship itself. Such a man is he who returns by faith to the fixed and abiding promise of God. Thus Peter charges those who sin with having forgotten that they were purged from their old sins (2 Peter i. 9); doubtless meaning to reprove their ingratitude for the baptism they had received and the implety of their unbelief.

What profit then is there in writing so much about baptism, and yet not teaching faith in the promise? All the sacraments were instituted for the purpose of nourishing faith, and yet so far are they from attaining this object that men are even found impious enough to assert that a man ought not to be sure of the remission of sins or of the grace of the sacraments. impious doctrine they delude the whole world, and utterly extinguish, or at least bring into bondage, that sacrament of baptism, in which the first glory of our conscience stands. Meanwhile they senselessly persecute wretched souls with their contritions, their anxious confessions, their circumstances, satisfactions, works, and an infinity of such trifles. Let us then read with caution, or rather despise, the Master of Sentences (Book iv.), with all his followers, who, when they write their best, write only about the matter and form of the sacraments, and so handle only the dead and perishing letter of those sacraments, while they do not even touch upon their spirit, life, and use; that is, the truth of the Divine

promise and faith on our part.

See then that thou be not deceived by the display of works and by the fallacies of human traditions, and so wrong the truth of God and thine own faith. If thou wilt be saved, thou must begin by faith in the sacraments, without any works. Thy faith will be followed by these very works; but thou must not hold faith cheap, for it is itself the most excellent and most difficult of all works. and by it alone thou wilt be saved, even if thou wert compelled to be destitute of all other works. For it is a work of God, not of man, as Paul teaches. All other works He performs with us and by us; this one work He performs in us and without us.

From what has been said we may clearly distinguish between man, the minister, and God, the Author, of Man baptises, and does not baptise: he baptises, because he performs the work of dipping the baptised person; he does not baptise, because in this work he does not act upon his own authority, but in the place of God. Hence we ought to receive baptism from the hand of man just as if Christ Himself, nay, God Himself, were baptising us with His own hands. For it is not a man's baptism, but that of Christ and God, though we receive it by the hand of a man. Even so any other creature which we enjoy through the hand of another is really only God's. Beware then of making any such distinction in baptism, as to attribute the outward rite to man, and the inward blessing to God. Attribute both of them to God alone, and consider the person of him who confers baptism in no other light than as the vicarious instrument of God, by means of which the Lord sitting in heaven dips thee in the water with His own hands, and promises thee remission of sins upon earth, speaking to thee with the voice of a man through the mouth of His minister.

The very words of the minister tell thee this when he says, "I baptise thee in the name of the Father, and of

the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen." He does not say, "I baptise thee in my name," but says, as it were, "What I do, I do not by my own authority, but in the place and in the name of God; and thou must look upon it as if the Lord Himself did it in visible shape. The Author and the minister are different, but the work of both is the same; nay, rather it is that of the Author alone through my ministry." In my judgment the expression, "in the name," relates to the person of the Author, so that not only is the name of the Lord brought forward and invoked in the doing of the work, but the work itself is performed, as being that of another, in the name and in the place of another. By the like figure Christ says, "Many shall come in My name" (Matt. xxiv. 5). And again, "By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for His name" (Rom. i. 5).

I most gladly adopt this view, because it is a thing most full of consolation, and an effective aid to faith, to know that we have been baptised, not by a man, but by the very Trinity itself through a man, who acts towards us in its name. This brings to an end that idle contention which is carried on about the "form" of baptism, as they call the words themselves, the Greeks saving, "Let the servant of Christ be baptised," the Latins, "I baptise." Others also, in their pedantic trifling, condemn the use of the expression, "I baptise thee in the name of Jesus Christ"-though it is certain that the Apostles baptised in this form, as we read in the Acts of the Apostles—and will have it that no other form is valid than the following: "I baptise thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen." But they strive in vain; they prove nothing; they only bring forward their own dreams. In whatever manner baptism is administered, provided it is administered, not in the name of a man, but in the name of the Lord, it truly saves us. Nay, I have no doubt that if a man received baptism in the name of the Lord even from a wicked minister who did not give it in the name of the Lord, he

would still be truly baptised in the name of the Lord. For the efficacy of baptism depends not so much on the faith of him who confers it, as of him who receives it. Thus we read an instance of a certain player who was baptised in jest. These and similar narrow questions and disputes have been raised for us by those who attribute nothing to faith and everything to works and ceremonies. On the contrary, we owe nothing to ceremonies and everything to faith alone, which makes us free in spirit from all these scruples and fancies.

Another thing which belongs to baptism is the sign or Sacrament, which is that dipping into water whence it takes its name. For in Greek to baptise signifies to dip, and baptism is a dipping. We have said already that, side by side with the Divine promises, signs also are given us, to represent by a figure the meaning of the words of the promise; or, as the moderns say, the Sacrament has an effectual significance. What that significance is we shall see. Very many have thought that in the word and the water there is some occult spiritual virtue, which works the grace of God in the soul of the recipient. Others deny this, and declare that there is no virtue in the sacraments, but that grace is given by God alone, who, according to His covenant, is present at the sacraments instituted by Himself. All, however, agree in this: that the sacraments are effectual signs of grace. They are led to this conclusion by this one argument: that it does not otherwise appear what pre-eminence the sacraments of the new law would have over those of the old, if they were only signs. Hence they have been driven to attribute such efficacy to the sacraments of the new law that they have stated them to be profitable even to those who are in mortal sin, and have declared that neither faith nor grace are requisite, but that it is sufficient that we do not place any impediment in the way—that is, any actual purpose of sinning afresh.

We must carefully avoid and fly from these doctrines, for they are impious and unbelieving, repugnant to faith and to the nature of the sacraments. It is a mistake to

suppose that the sacraments of the new law differ from the sacraments of the old law as regards the efficacy of their significance. Both are on an equality in their significance: for the same God who now saves us by baptism and the bread saved Abel by his sacrifice, Noah by the Ark, Abraham by circumcision, and all the other Patriarchs by their own proper signs. There is no difference then between a sacrament of the old and of the new law, as regards their significance, provided we understand by the old law all the dealings of God with the Patriarchs and other Fathers in the time of the law. For those signs which were given to the Patriarchs and Fathers are completely distinct from the legal figures which Moses instituted in his law, such as the rites of the priesthood, in relation to vestments, vessels, food, houses, and the like. These are as different as possible, not only from the sacraments of the new law, but also from those signs which God gave from time to time to the Fathers who lived nuder the law, such as that given to Gideon in the fleece, to Manoah in his sacrifice, such also as that which Isaiah offered to Ahaz. In all these cases alike, some promise was given which required faith in

In this then the figures of the law differ from signs new or old: that the figures of the law have no word of promise annexed to them requiring faith, and therefore are not signs of justification, inasmuch as they are not sacraments of faith, which alone justify, but only sacraments of works. Their whole force and nature lay in works, not in faith; for he who did them fulfilled them even if his work were without faith. Now our signs or sacraments and those of the Fathers have annexed to them a word of promise which requires faith, and can be fulfilled by no other work. Thus they are signs or sacraments of justification, because they are sacraments of justifying faith, and not of works; so that their whole efficacy lies in faith itself, not in working. He who believes them fulfils them, even though he do no work. Hence the saying, It is not the Sacrament, but faith in

the Sacrament, which justifies. Thus circumcision did not justify Abraham and his seed; and yet the Apostle calls it a seal of the righteousness of faith, because faith in that promise with which circumcision was connected did justify, and fulfilled the meaning of circumcision. Faith was that circumcision of the heart in spirit which was figured by the circumcision of the flesh in the letter. Thus it was evidently not the sacrifice of Abel which justified him, but the faith by which he offered himself entirely to God, of which faith the outward sacrifice was a figure.

Thus it is not baptism which justifies any man or is of any advantage, but faith in that word of promise to which baptism is added; for this justifies, and fulfils the meaning of baptism. For faith is the submerging of the old man and the emerging of the new man. Hence it cannot be that the new sacraments differ from the ancient sacraments, for they both alike have Divine promises and the same spirit of faith; but they differ incomparably from the ancient figures, on account of the word of promise, which is the sole and most effective means of differ-Thus at the present day the pomps of vestments. localities, meats, and an infinite variety of ceremonies, doubtless figure excellent works to be fulfilled in the spirit; and yet, since no word of Divine promise is connected with them, they can in no way be compared with the signs of baptism and the bread. Nor can they justify men nor profit them in any way, since their fulfilment lies in the very practice or performance of them without faith, for when they are done or performed they are fulfilled. Thus the Apostle speaks of those things "which all are to perish with the using, after the commandments and doctrines of men" (Col. ii. 22). Now the sacraments are not fulfilled by being done, but by being believed.

Thus it cannot be true that there is inherent in the sacraments a power effectual to produce justification, or that they are efficacious signs of grace. These things are said in ignorance of the Divine promise and to the

great detriment of faith, unless indeed we call them efficacious in this sense: that, if along with them there be unhesitating faith, they do confer grace most certainly and most effectually. But that it is not this kind of efficacy which those writers attribute to them is evident from this: that they assert them to be profitable to all men, even the wicked and unbelieving, provided they put no obstacle in the way, as if unbelief itself were not the most persistent of all obstacles and the most hostile to grace. Thus they have endeavoured to make out of the sacrament a precept, and out of faith a work. For if a sacrament confers grace on me merely because I receive it, then it is certainly by my own work, and not by faith, that I obtain grace, nor do I apprehend any promise in the sacrament, but only a sign instituted and commanded by God. It is evident from this how utterly the sacraments are misunderstood by these theologians of the Sentences, inasmuch as they make no account either of faith or of the promise in the sacraments, but cleave only to the sign and the use of the sign, and carry us away from faith to works, from the word to the sign. as I have said, they have not only brought the sacraments into bondage, but, as far as in them lay, have entirely done away with them.

Let us then open our eyes, and learn to look more to the word than the sign, more to faith than to the work or use of the sign; and let us understand that wherever there is a Divine promise, there faith is required, and that both of these are so necessary that neither can be of any effect without the other. We can neither believe unless we have a promise, nor is the promise effectual unless it is believed; while if these two act reciprocally, they produce a real and sure efficacy in the sacraments. Hence to seek efficacy in the Sacrament independently of the promise and of faith is to strive in vain and to fall into condemnation. Thus Christ says, "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark xvi. 16). Thus He shows that in the Sacrament faith is so necessary that it can save us

even without the Sacrament; and on this account when He says, "He that believeth not," He does not add, "and is not baptised."

Baptism then signifies two things: death and resurrection; that is, full and complete justification. When the minister dips the child into the water, this signifies death; when he draws him out again, this signifies life. Thus Paul explains the matter: "Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Rom. vi. 4). This death and resurrection we call a new creation, a regeneration, and a spiritual birth: and these words are not only to be understood allegorically, as they are by many, of the death of sin and the life of grace, but of real death and resurrection. For baptism has no fictitious meaning, nor does sin die or grace rise fully within us until the body of sin which we bear in this life is destroyed; for, as the Apostle says, as long as we are in the flesh, the desires of the flesh work in us and are worked upon. Hence, when we begin to believe, we begin at the same time to die to this world and to live to God in a future life: so that faith is truly a death and resurrection. that is, that spiritual baptism in which we are submerged and emerge.

When, then, the washing away of sins is attributed to baptism, it is rightly so attributed; but the meaning of the phrase is too slight and weak to fully express baptism, which is rather a symbol of death and resurrection. this reason I could wish that the baptised should be totally immersed, according to the meaning of the word and the signification of the mystery; not that I think it necessary to do so, but that it would be well that so complete and perfect a thing as baptism should have its sign also in completeness and perfection, even as it was doubtless instituted by Christ. For a sinner needs not so much to be washed as to die, that he may be altogether renewed into another creature, and that there may thus be a correspondence in him to the death and resurrection of Christ, along with whom he dies and rises again in baptism. For though we may say that Christ was washed from His mortality when He died and rose again, yet it is a weaker expression than if we said that He was totally changed and renewed; and so there is more intensity in saying that death and resurrection to eternal life are signified to us by baptism, than that we are washed from sin.

Here again we see that the Sacrament of baptism, even in respect to the sign, is not the mere business of a moment, but has a lasting character. For though the transaction itself passes quickly, the thing signified by it lasts even until death, yea, till the resurrection at the last day. For as long as we live we are always doing that which is signified by baptism: that is, we are dying and rising again. We are dying, I say, not only in our affections and spiritually, by renouncing the sins and vanities of the world, but in very deed we are beginning to leave this bodily life and to apprehend the future life, so that there is a real (as they call it) and also a bodily

passing out of this world to the Father.

We must therefore keep clear of the error of those who have reduced the effect of baptism to such small and slender dimensions that, while they say that grace is infused by it, they assert that this grace is afterwards, so to speak, effused by sin; and that we must then go to heaven by some other way, as if baptism had now become absolutely useless. Do not thou judge thus, but understand that the significance of baptism is such that thou mayest live and die in it, and that neither by penitence, nor by any other way, canst thou do aught but return to the effect of baptism, and do afresh what thou wert baptised in order to do and what the baptism signified. Baptism never loses its effect, unless in desperation thou refuse to return to salvation. Thou mayest wander away for a time from the sign, but the sign does not on that account lose its effect. Thus thou hast been baptised once for all sacramentally, but thou needest continually to be baptised by faith, and must continually die and

continually live. Baptism hath swallowed up thy whole body and given it forth again; and so the substance of baptism ought to swallow up thy whole life, in body and in soul, and to give it back in the last day, clothed in the robe of brightness and immortality. Thus we are never without the sign as well as the substance of baptism; nay, we ought to be continually baptised more and more,

until we fulfil the whole meaning of the sign at the last day.

We see then that whatever we do in this life tending to the mortifying of the flesh and the vivifying of the spirit is connected with baptism; and that the sooner we are set free from this life, the more speedily we fulfil the meaning of our baptism, and the greater the sufferings we endure, the more happily do we answer the purpose of baptism. The Church was at its happiest in those days when martyrs were daily put to death and counted as sheep for the slaughter; for then the virtue of baptism reigned in the Church with full power, though now we have quite lost sight of it for the multitude of human works and doctrine. The whole life which we live ought to be a baptism and to fulfil the sign or Sacrament of baptism, since we have been set free from all other things and given up to baptism alone, that is, to death and resurrection.

To whom can we assign the blame that this glorious liberty of ours and this knowledge of baptism are nowadays in bondage, except only to the tyranny of the Roman pontiff? He most of all men, as becomes a chief shepherd, ought to have been the preacher and the asserter of this liberty and this knowledge, as Paul says, "Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God" (1 Cor. iv. 1). But his sole object is to oppress us by his decrees and laws, and to ensnare us into bondage to his tyrannical power. Not to speak of the impious and damnable way in which the Pope fails to teach these mysteries, by what right, I ask, has he established laws over us? Who has given him authority to bring into bondage this liberty of

ours, given us by baptism? One purpose, as I have said, we ought to carry out in our whole lives, namely, to be baptised, that is, to be mortified and to live by faith in Christ. This faith alone ought to have been taught, above all by the chief shepherd: but now not a word is said about faith, but the Church is crushed by an infinite number of laws concerning works and ceremonies; the virtue and knowledge of baptism are taken away; the faith of Christ is hindered.

I say then, neither pope, nor bishop, nor any man whatever has the right of making one syllable binding on a Christian man, unless it is done with his own consent. Whatever is done otherwise is done in a spirit of tyranny; and thus the prayers, fastings, almsgiving, and whatever else the Pope ordains and requires in the whole body of his decrees, which are as many as they are iniquitous, he has absolutely no right to require and ordain; and he sins against the liberty of the Church as often as he attempts anything of the kind. Hence it has come to pass that while the Churchmen of the present day are strenuous defenders of Church liberty—that is, of wood, stone, fields, and money (for in this day things ecclesiastical are synonymous with things spiritual)—they yet by their false teaching not only bring into bondage the true liberty of the Church, but utterly destroy it. yea, more than the Turk himself could, contrary to the mind of the Apostle, who says, "Be not ye the servants of men" (1 Cor. vii. 23). We are indeed made servants of men when we are subjected to their tyrannical ordinances and laws.

This wicked and flagitious tyranny is aided by the disciples of the Pope, who distort and pervert to this end the saying of Christ, "He who heareth you heareth Me." They swell out these words into a support for their own traditions; whereas this saying was addressed by Christ to the Apostles when they were going forth to preach the Gospel, and therefore ought to be understood as referring to the Gospel alone. These men, however, leave the Gospel out of sight, and make this saying fit in with their

own inventions. Christ says, "My sheep hear My voice, but they know not the voice of strangers." For this cause the Gospel was bequeathed to us: that the pontiffs might utter the voice of Christ; but they utter their own voice, and are determined to be heard. The Apostle also says of himself that he was not sent to baptise, but to preach the Gospel; and thus no man is bound to receive the traditions of the pontiff, or to listen to him, except when he teaches the Gospel and Christ: and he himself ought to teach nothing but the freest faith. Since, however, Christ says, "He who hears you hears Me," why does not the Pope also hear others? Christ did not say to Peter alone, "he who hears thee." Lastly, where there is true faith, there must also of necessity be the word of faith. Why then does not the unbelieving Pope listen to his believing servant who has the word of faith? Blindness, blindness, reigns among the pontiffs.

Others, however, far more shamelessly, arrogate to the Pope the power of making laws; arguing from the words, "Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven (Matt. xvi. 19). Christ is speaking there of the binding and loosing of sins, not of bringing the whole Church into bondage and making laws to oppress it. Thus the papal tyranny acts in all things on its own false maxims, while it forcibly wrests and perverts the words of God. I admit indeed that Christians must endure this accursed tyranny, as they would any other violence inflicted on them by the world, according to the saying of Christ, "Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also" (Matt. v. 39). But I complain of this: that wicked pontiffs boast that they have a rightful power to act thus, and pretend that in this Babylon of theirs they are providing for the interests of Christendom, an idea which they have persuaded all men to adopt. If they did these things in conscious and avowed impiety and tyranny, or if it were simple violence that we endured, we might meanwhile quietly reckon up the advantages thus afforded us for the mortification of this life and the fulfilment of baptism, and should retain the full right of glorying in conscience at the wrong done us. As it is, they desire so to ensnare our consciences in the matter of liberty that we should believe all that they do to be well done, and should think it unlawful to blame or complain of their iniquitous actions. Being wolves, they wish to appear shepherds; being antichrists, they wish to be honoured like Christ.

I cry aloud on behalf of liberty and conscience, and I proclaim with confidence that no kind of law can with any justice be imposed on Christians, whether by men or by angels, except so far as they themselves will, for we are free from all. If such laws are imposed on us. we ought so to endure them as still to preserve the consciousness of our liberty. We ought to know and steadfastly to protest that a wrong is being done to that liberty, though we may bear and even glory in that wrong, taking care neither to justify the tyrant nor to murmur against the tyranny. "Who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?" (1 Peter iii, 13). All things work together for good to the elect of God. Since, however, there are but few who understand the glory of baptism and the happiness of Christian liberty, or who can understand them for the tyranny of the Pope, I, for my part, will set free my own mind and deliver my conscience by declaring aloud to the Pope and to all Papists that unless they shall throw aside all their laws and traditions, and restore liberty to the Churches of Christ, and cause that liberty to be taught. they are guilty of the death of all the souls which are perishing in this wretched bondage, and that the papacy is in truth nothing else than the kingdom of Babylon and of very antichrist. For who is the man of sin and the son of perdition but he who by his teaching and his ordinances increases the sin and perdition of souls in the Church, while he yet sits in the Church as if he were All these conditions have now for many ages been fulfilled by the papal tyranny. It has extinguished

faith, darkened the sacraments, crushed the Gospel: while it has enjoined and multiplied without end its own laws. which are not only wicked and sacrilegious, but also most unlearned and barbarous.

Behold then the wretchedness of our bondage. "How doth the city sit solitary that was full of people! is she become as a widow! She that was great among the nations and princess among the provinces, how is she become tributary! Among all her lovers she hath none to comfort her; all her friends have dealt treacherously with her" (Lam. i. 1, 2). There are at this day so many ordinances, so many rites, so many parties, so many professions, so many works, to occupy the minds of Christians, that they forget their baptism. For this multitude of locusts, caterpillars, and cankerworms, no man is able to remember that he was baptised, or what it was that he obtained in baptism. We ought to have been like babes when they are baptised, who, being preoccupied by no zeal and by no works, are free for all things, at rest and safe in the glory of their baptism alone. We also ourselves are babes in Christ, unremittingly baptised.

In opposition to what I have said, an argument will perhaps be drawn from the baptism of infants, who cannot receive the promise of God, or have faith in their baptism; and it will be said that therefore either faith is not requisite, or infants are baptised in vain. To this I reply, what all men say, that infants are aided by the faith of others, namely that of those who bring them to baptism. For as the word of God, when it is preached, is powerful enough to change the heart of a wicked man, which is not less devoid of sense and feeling than any infant, so through the prayers of the Church which brings the child in faith, to which prayers all things are possible, the infant is changed, cleansed, and renewed by faith infused into it. Nor should I doubt that even a wicked adult, if the Church were to bring him forward and pray for him, might undergo a change in any of the sacraments, just as we read in the Gospel that the paralytic man was healed by the faith of others.

this sense, too, I should readily admit that the sacraments of the new law are effectual for the bestowal of grace, not only on those who do not place any obstacle in the way, but on the most obstinate of those who do. What difficulty cannot the faith of the Church and the prayer of faith remove, when Stephen is believed to have converted the Apostle Paul by this power? But in these cases the sacraments do what they do, not by their own virtue, but by that of faith, without which, as I have

said, they have no effect at all.

A question has been raised whether a child yet unborn, but of which only a hand or a foot appears, can be baptised. On this point I would give no hasty judgment, and I confess my own ignorance. Nor do I know whether the reason on which they base their opinion is sufficient, namely, that the whole soul exists in every part of the body; for it is not the soul, but the body, which is outwardly baptised. On the other hand, I cannot pronounce that, as some assert, he who has not yet been born cannot be born again, though it is a very strong argument. I leave this question to the decision of the Spirit, and meanwhile would have every man to be fully persuaded in his own mind.

I will add one thing of which I wish I could persuade every one: that is, that all vows, whether those of religious orders, or of pilgrimages, or of works of any kind, should be entirely done away with, or at least avoided, and that we should remain in the liberty of baptism, full as it is of religious observances and of good works. It is impossible to express to what an extent this far too much extolled belief in vows detracts from baptism, and obscures the knowledge of Christian liberty, not to mention the unspeakable and infinite danger to souls which is daily increased by this immoderate passion for vows thoughtless rashness in making them. Oh ye most wicked bishops and most unhappy pastors, who slumber at your ease and disport yourselves with your own desires, while ye have no pity for the grievous and perilous affliction of Joseph!

It would be well either to do away by a general edict with all vows, especially those which are perpetual, and to recall all men to their baptismal vows, or at least to admonish all to take no vow rashly, and not only to invite no vows, but to place delays and difficulties in the way of their being taken. We make an ample vow at baptism, a greater one than we can fulfil; and we shall have enough to do if we give all our efforts to this alone. But now we compass sea and land to make many proselytes; we fill the world with priests, monks, and nuns: and we imprison all these in perpetual vows. We shall find those who will argue on this point, and lay it down that works performed under the sanction of a vow are better than those performed independently of vows, and will be preferred in heaven and meet with far higher Blind and impious Pharisees, who measure righteousness and holiness by the greatness and number of works, or by some other quality in them, while in God's sight they are measured by faith alone, since in His sight there is no difference between works, except so far as there is a difference in faith!

By this inflated talk wicked men create a great opinion of their own inventions, and puff up human works, in order to allure the senseless multitude, who are easily led by a specious show of works, to the great ruin of faith, forgetfulness of baptism, and injury to Christian liberty. As a vow is a sort of law and requires a work, it follows that as vows are multiplied, so laws and works are multiplied; and by the multiplication of these, faith is extinguished, and the liberty of baptism is brought into bondage. Not content with these impious allurements, others go further, and assert that entrance into a religious order is like a new baptism, which may be successively renewed as often as the purpose of a religious life is renewed. Thus these devotees attribute to themselves alone righteousness, salvation, and glory, and leave to the baptised absolutely no room for comparison with them. The Roman pontiff, that fountain and author of all superstitions, confirms, approves, and embellishes these ideas by grandly worded bulls and indulgences; while no one thinks baptism worthy even of mention. By these showy displays they drive the easily led people of Christ into whatever whirlpools of error they will; so that, unthankful for their baptism, they imagine that they can do better by their works than

others by their faith.

Wherefore God also, who is froward with the froward, resolving to avenge Himself on the pride and unthankfulness of these devotees, causes them either to fail in keeping their vows, or to keep them with great labour and to continue immersed in them, never becoming acquainted with the grace of faith and of baptism. As their spirit is not right with God, He permits them to continue to the end in their hypocrisy, and to become at length a laughing-stock to the whole world, always following after righteousness and never attaining to it; so that they fulfil that saying, "Their land also is full of idols" (Isa. ii. 8).

I should certainly not forbid or object to any vow which a man may make of his own private choice. I do not wish altogether to condemn or depreciate vows; but my advice would be altogether against the public establishment or confirmation of any such mode of life. enough that every man should be at liberty to make private vows at his own peril; but that a public system of living under the constraint of vows should be inculcated, I consider to be a thing pernicious to the Church and to all simple souls. In the first place, it is not a little repugnant to the Christian life, inasmuch as a vow is a kind of ceremonial law and a matter of human tradition or invention, from all which the Church has been set free by baptism, since the Christian is bound by no law, except that of God. Moreover, there is no example of it in the Scriptures, especially of the vow of perpetual chastity, obedience, and poverty. Now a vow of which we have no example in the Scriptures is a perilous one, which ought to be urged upon no man, much less be established as a common and public mode of life, even

if every individual must be allowed to venture upon it at his own peril, if he will. There are some works which are wrought by the Spirit in but few, and these ought by no means to be brought forward as an example or as a manner of life.

I greatly fear, however, that these systems of living under vows in the religious are of the number of those things of which the Apostle foretold: "Speaking lies in hypocrisy, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving" (1 Tim. iv. 2, 3). Let no one cite against me the example of St. Bernard, St. Francis. St. Dominic, and such-like authors or supporters of religious orders. God is terrible and wonderful in His dealings with the children of men. He could preserve Daniel, Ananias, Azarias, and Misael holy even ministers of the kingdom of Babylon, that is, in the very midst of wickedness; He may also have sanctified the men of whom I have spoken in their perilous mode of life, and have guided them by the special working of His Spirit; while yet He would not have this made an example for other men. It is certain that not one of these men was saved by his vows or his religious order, but by faith alone, by which all men are saved, but to which these showy servitudes of vows are especially hostile.

In this matter let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. I shall carry out my undertaking, and speak on behalf of the liberty of the Church and of the glory of baptism; and I shall state for the general benefit what I have learnt under the teaching of the Spirit. And, first, I counsel those who are in high places in the Church to do away with all those vows and the practice of living under vows, or at the least not to approve or extol them. If they will not do this, then I earnestly advise all who desire to make their salvation the safer, particularly growing youths and young men, to keep aloof from all vows, especially from such as are extensive and lifelong. I give this advice, in the first place, because this mode of life, as I have already said, has no evidence or example

in the Scriptures, but rests only on the bulls of the pontiffs, who are but men; and secondly, because it tends to lead men into hypocrisy through its singularity and showy appearance, whence arise pride and contempt of the ordinary Christian life. If there were no other cause for doing away with these vows, this one by itself would have weight enough: that by them faith and baptism are depreciated, and works are magnified. Now these cannot be magnified without ruinous consequences, for among many thousands there is scarcely one who does not look more to his works as a member of a religious order, than to faith; and under this delusion they claim superiority over each other as being stricter or laxer, as they call it.

Hence I advise no man, vea. I dissuade every man from entering into the priesthood or any religious order, unless he be so fortified with knowledge as to understand that, however sacred and lofty may be the works of priests or of the religious orders, they differ not at all in the sight of God from the works of a husbandman labouring in his field, or of a woman attending to her household affairs, but that in His eves all things are measured by faith alone, as it is written, "In all thy work believe with the faith of thy soul, for this is the keeping of the commandments of God " (Ecclus. xxxii. 23). Nay, it very often happens that the common work of a servant or a handmaiden is more acceptable to God than all the fastings and works of a monk or a priest when they are done without faith. Since then it is likely that at the present day vows only tend to increase men's pride and presumption in their own works, it is to be feared that there is nowhere less of faith and of the Church than in priests, monks, and bishops; and that these very men are really Gentiles and hypocrites, who consider themselves to be the Church or the very heart of the Church, spiritual persons, and rulers of the Church, when they are very far indeed from being so. These are really the people of the captivity, among whom all the free gifts bestowed in baptism have been brought into bondage;

while the poor and slender remnant of the people of the

land appear vile in their eyes.

From this we perceive two conspicuous errors on the part of the Roman pontiff. The first is that he gives dispensations in the matter of vows, and does this as if he alone possessed authority beyond all other Christians. So far does the rashness and andacity of wicked men extend. If a vow can be dispensed with, any brother can dispense for his neighbour, or even for himself. If he cannot grant such dispensations, neither has the Pope any right to do so. Whence has he this authority? From the keys? They are common to all, and only have power over sins. But since the Pope himself confesses that yows have a Divine right, why does he cheat and ruin wretched souls by giving dispensations in a matter of Divine right, which admits of no dispensation? He prates of the redemption of vows, and declares that he has power to change vows, just as under the law of old the firstborn of an ass was exchanged for a lamb; as if a vow, which requires to be fulfilled everywhere and constantly, were the same thing with the firstborn of an ass, or as if, because God in His own law ordered an ass to be exchanged for a lamb, therefore the Pope, who is but a man, had the same power with respect to a law which is not his, but God's. It was not a pope who made this decretal, but an ass which had been exchanged for a pope, so utterly mad and impious was he.

The Pope commits a second great error again in decreeing that the bond of marriage may be broken through if one of the parties, even against the will of the other, desires to enter a monastery, provided the marriage has not yet been consummated. What devil inspires this portentous decree of the Pope? God commands men to keep faith and observe truth towards one another, and that every man should bring gifts out of his own substance; for He hates robbery for burnt-offering, as He declares by the mouth of Isaiah. Now husband and wife owe fidelity to each other by their compact, a fidelity which can be dissolved by no law. Neither can say, "I

belong to myself," or can do without robbery whatever is done against the will of the other. Else why not also have a rule that a man who is in debt, if he enter into a religious order, shall be freed from his debts and be at liberty to deny his bond? Ye blind! ye blind! Which is greater—good faith, which is a command of God, or a vow, invented and chosen by men? Art thou a shepherd of souls, O Pope? Are ye doctors of sacred theology who teach in this way? Why do ye teach thus? Because ye extol a vow as being a better work than marriage; but it is not faith, which itself alone can magnify anything, that ye magnify, but works, which in the sight of God are nothing, or at least all equal as concerns their merit.

I cannot doubt then that from such yows as it is right to make neither men nor angels can give a dispensation. But I have not been able to convince myself that all the vows made in these days fall under the head of rightful vows, such as that ridiculous piece of folly when parents devote their child yet unborn, or an infant, to a life of religion or to perpetual chastity. Nay, it is certain that this is no rightful vow; it appears to be a mockery of God, since the parents vow what it is in no wise in their power to perform. I come now to members of the religious orders. The more I think of their three vows. the less I understand them, and the more I wonder how the exaction of such vows has grown upon us. do I understand at what period of life such vows can be taken so as to be legitimate and valid. In this all are agreed: that such vows, taken before the age of puberty, are not valid. And yet in this matter they deceive a great number of youths, who know as little of their own age as of what it is they are vowing. The age of puberty is not looked to when the vows are taken, but consent is supposed to follow afterwards, and the professed are held in bondage and devoured by dreadful scruples of conscience, as if a vow in itself void could become valid by the progress of time.

To me it seems folly that any limit to a legitimate vow

should be laid down by others who cannot lay one down in their own case, nor do I see why a vow made in a man's eighteenth year should be valid, but not if made in his tenth or twelfth year. It is not enough to say that in his eighteenth year a man feels the impulses of the flesh. What if he scarcely feels them in his twentieth or thirtieth year, or feels them more strongly in his thirtieth year than in his twentieth? Why, again, is not a similar limitation placed on the vows of poverty and obedience? What time shall we assign for a man to feel himself avaricious or proud, when even the most spiritually-minded men have a difficulty in detecting these affections in themselves? There will never be any sure and legitimate vow until we shall have become thoroughly spiritual, and so have no need of vows. We see then that vows are most uncertain and perilous things. would be a salutary course to leave this lofty manner of living under yows free to the spirit alone, as it was of old, and by no means to convert it into a perpetual mode of life. We have now, however, said enough on the subject of baptism and liberty. The time will perhaps come for treating more fully of vows, and in truth they greatly need to be treated of.

## CONCERNING THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE.

In this third part I shall speak of the Sacrament of penance. By the tracts and disputations which I have published on this subject I have given offence to very many. and have amply expressed my own opinions. I must now briefly repeat these statements, in order to unveil the tyranny which attacks us on this point as unsparingly as in the Sacrament of the bread. In these two sacraments gain and lucre find a place, and therefore the avarice of the shepherds has raged to an incredible extent against the sheep of Christ; while even baptism, as we have seen in speaking of vows, has been sadly obscured among adults, that the purposes of avarice might be served.

The first and capital evil connected with this Sacrament is, that they have totally done away with the Sacrament itself, leaving not even a vestige of it. Whereas this, like the other two sacraments, consists of the word of the Divine promise on one side and of our faith on the other, they have overthrown both of these. adapted to the purposes of their own tyranny Christ's word of promise when He says, "Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matt. xvi. 19); and "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ve shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matt. xviii. 18); and again, "Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them: and whose soever sins ve retain. they are retained " (John xx. 23). These words are meant to call forth the faith of penitents, that they may seek and obtain remission of their sins. But these men. in all their books, writings, and discourses, have not made it their object to explain to Christians the promise conveyed in these words and to show them what they ought to believe and how much consolation they might have, but to establish in the utmost length, breadth, and depth their own powerful and violent tyranny. At last some have even begun to give orders to the angels in heaven, and to boast, with an incredible frenzy of impiety. that they have received the right to rule in heaven and on earth and have the power of binding even in heaven. Thus they say not a word about the saving faith of the people, but talk largely of the tyrannical power of the pontiffs; whereas Christ's words do not deal at all with power, but entirely with faith.

It was not principalities, powers, and dominions that Christ instituted in His Church, but a ministry, as we learn from the words of the Apostle, "Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God" (1 Cor. iv. 1). When Christ said, "Whosoever believeth and is baptised shall be saved," He meant to call forth faith on the part of those

seeking baptism; so that, on the strength of this word of promise, a man might be sure that, if he believed and were baptised, he would obtain salvation. No sort of power is here bestowed on His servants, but only the ministry of baptism is committed to them. In the same way, when Christ says, "Whatsoever ye shall bind," etc., He means to call forth the faith of the penitent, so that, on the strength of this word of promise, he may be sure that, if he believes and is absolved, he will be truly absolved in heaven. Evidently nothing is said here of power, but it is the ministry of absolution which is spoken of. It is strange enough that these blind and arrogant men have not arrogated to themselves some tyrannical power from the terms of the baptismal promise. If not, why have they presumed to do so from the promise connected with penitence? In both cases there is an equal ministry, a like promise, and the same character in the Sacrament; and it cannot be denied that, if we do not owe baptism to Peter alone, it is a piece of impious tyranny to claim the power of the keys for the Pope alone.

Thus also when Christ says, "Take, eat, this is My body which is given for you; this is the cup in My blood," He means to call forth faith in those who eat, that their conscience may be strengthened by faith in these words, and that they may feel sure that when they eat they receive remission of sins. There is nothing here which speaks of power, but only of a ministry. The promise of baptism has remained with us, at least in the case of infants, but the promise of the bread and the cup has been destroyed or brought into servitude to avarice, and faith has been turned into a work and a testament into a sacrifice. Thus also the promise of penance has been perverted into a most violent tyranny, and into the establishment of a dominion that is more than temporal.

Not content with this, our Babylon has so utterly done away with faith as to declare with shameless front that it is not necessary in this Sacrament; nay, in her

antichristian wickedness, she pronounces it a heresy to assert the necessity of faith. What more is there that that tyranny could do, and has not done? Verily "by the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down; yea, we wept when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof" (Psalm cxxxvii. 1, 2). May the Lord curse the barren willows of those rivers! Amen. The promise and faith having been blotted out and overthrown, let us see what they have substituted for them. They have divided penitence into three parts: contrition, confession, and satisfaction; but in doing this they have taken away all that was good in each of these, and have set up in each their own tyranny and caprice.

In the first place, they have so taught contrition as to make it prior to faith in the promise, and far better, as not being a work of faith, but a merit; nay, they make no mention of faith. They stick fast in works and in examples taken from the Scriptures, where we read of many who obtained pardon through humility and contrition of heart. but they never think of the faith which wrought this contrition and sorrow of heart, as it is written concerning the Ninevites, "The people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth" (Jonah iii. 5). These men, worse and more audacious than the Ninevites. have invented a certain "attrition," which, by the virtue of the keys (of which they are ignorant), may become contrition; and this they bestow on the wicked and unbelieving, and thus do away entirely with contrition. Oh unendurable wrath of God that such things should be taught in the Church of Christ! So it is that, having got rid of faith and its work, we walk heedlessly in the doctrines and opinions of men, or rather perish in them. A contrite heart is a great matter indeed, and can only proceed from an earnest faith in the Divine promises and threats—a faith which, contemplating the unshakable truth of God, makes the conscience to tremble, terrifies and bruises it, and, when it is thus contrite, raises it up again, consoles and preserves it. Thus the truth of the threatening is the cause of contrition and the truth of the promise is the cause of consolation when it is believed; and by this faith a man merits remission of sins. Therefore faith above all things ought to be taught and called forth; when faith is produced, contrition and consolation will follow of their own accord by an inevitable consequence.

Hence, although there is something in the teaching of those who assert that contrition is to be brought about by the collection, as they call it, and contemplation of our own sins, still theirs is a perilous and perverse doctrine, because they do not first teach the origin and cause of contrition, namely, the unshakable truth of the Divine threatenings and promises, in order to call forth faith, that so men might understand that they ought to look with much more earnest attention to the truth of God, by which to be humbled and raised up again, than to the multitude of their own sins, which, if they be looked at apart from the truth of God, are more likely to renew and increase the desire for sin, than to produce I say nothing of that insurmountable chaos of labour which they impose upon us, namely, that we are to frame a contrition for all our sins, for this is impossible. We can know but a small part of our sins; indeed, even our good works will be found to be sins, as it is written, "Enter not into judgment with Thy servant, for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified" (Psalm cxliii. 2). It is enough that we sorrow for those sins which vex our conscience at the present moment, and which are easily recognised by an effort of our memory. He who is thus disposed will without doubt be ready to feel sorrow and fear on account of all his sins, and will feel sorrow and fear when in future they are revealed to him.

Beware then of trusting in thine own contrition, or attributing remission of sins to thy own sorrow. It is not because of these that God looks on thee with favour, but because of the faith with which thou hast believed His threatenings and promises, and which has wrought that sorrow in thee. Therefore whatever good there is in

penitence is due, not to the diligence with which we reckon up our sins, but to the truth of God and to our faith. All other things are works and fruits which follow of their own accord, and which do not make a man good, but are done by a man who has been made good by his faith in the truth of God. Thus it is written, "Because He was wroth, there went up a smoke in His presence" (Psalm xviii. 8). The terror of the threatening comes first, which devours the wicked; but faith, accepting the threatening, sends forth contrition as a cloud of smoke.

Contrition, though it has been completely exposed to wicked and pestilent doctrines, has yet given less occasion to tyranny and the love of gain. But confession and satisfaction have been turned into the most noted workshops for lucre and ambition. To speak first of confession. There is no doubt that confession of sins is necessary, and is commanded by God. "They were baptised of John in Jordan, confessing their sins" (Matt. iii, 6). "If we confess our sins. He is faithful and just to forgive us our If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us" (1 John i. 9, 10). the saints must not deny their sin, how much more ought those who are guilty of great or public offences to confess them! But the most effective proof of the institution of confession is given when Christ tells us that an offending brother must be told of his fault, brought before the Church, accused, and finally, if he neglect to hear the Church, excommunicated. He "hears" when he yields to reproof, and acknowledges and confesses his sin.

The secret confession, however, which is now practised, though it cannot be proved from Scripture, is in my opinion highly satisfactory, and useful or even necessary. I could not wish it not to exist; nay, I rejoice that it does exist in the Church of Christ, for it is the one great remedy for afflicted consciences, when, after laying open our conscience to a brother and unveiling all the evil which lay hid there, we receive from the mouth of that brother the word of consolation sent forth from God:

receiving which by faith we find peace in a sense of the mercy of God, who speaks to us through our brother. What I protest against is the conversion of this institution of confession into a means of tyranny and extortion by the bishops. They reserve certain cases to themselves as secret, and then order them to be revealed to confessors named by themselves, and thus vex the consciences of men; filling the office of bishop, but utterly neglecting the real duties of a bishop, which are to preach the Gospel and to minister to the poor. Nay, these impious tyrants chiefly reserve to themselves the cases which are of less consequence, while they leave the greater ones everywhere to the common herd of priests-cases such as the ridiculous inventions of the Bull "In cana Domini." That the iniquity of their perverseness may be yet more manifest, they not only do not reserve those things which are offences against the worship of God, against faith, and against the chief commandments, but even approve and teach them, such as those journeyings hither and thither on pilgrimage, the perverted worship of saints, the lying legends of saints, the confidence in and practice of works and ceremonies, by all which things the faith of God is extinguished, and idolatry is nourished, as it is at this day. The pontiffs we have nowadays are such as those whom Jeroboam established at Dan and Beersheba as ministers of the golden calves—men who are ignorant of the law of God, of faith, and of all that concerns the feeding of the sheep of Christ, and who only thrust their own inventions upon the people by terror and power.

Although I exhort men to endure the violence of these reservers, even as Christ bids us to endure all the tyrannical conduct of men and teaches us to obey such extortioners, still I neither admit nor believe that they have any right of reservation. By no jot or tittle can thev prove this; while I can prove the contrary. In the first place, if, in speaking of public offences, Christ says that we have gained our brother if he hears us when told of his fault, and that he is not to be brought before the Church unless he has refused to hear us, and that offences

may thus be set right between brethren, how much more true will it be concerning private offences that the sin is taken away when brother has voluntarily confessed it to brother, so that he need not bring it before the Church, that is, before a prelate or priest, as these men say in their foolish interpretation! In support of which opinion we have again the authority of Christ, when He says in the same passage, "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matt. xviii. 18). This saying is addressed to all Christians and to every Once more He says to the same effect: Christian. "Again I say unto you that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven" (Matt. xviii. 19). Now a brother, laying open his secret sins to a brother and seeking pardon, certainly agrees with that brother on earth in the truth, which is Christ. confirmation of what He had said before, Christ says still more clearly in the same passage, "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. xviii. 20).

From all this I do not hesitate to say that whosoever voluntarily confesses his sins privately in the presence of any brother, or, when told of his faults, asks pardon and amends his life, is absolved from his secret sins, since Christ has manifestly bestowed the power of absolution on every believer in Him, with whatever violence the pontiffs may rage against this truth. Add also this little argument: that if any reservation of hidden sins were valid, and there could be no salvation unless they were remitted, the greatest hindrance to salvation would lie in those things which I have mentioned above, even those good works and idolatries which we are taught at the present day by the pontiffs. While, if these most weighty matters are not a hindrance, with how much less reason are those lighter offences so foolishly reserved! It is by the ignorance and blindness of the pastors that these portents are wrought in the Church. Wherefore I would

warn these princes of Babylon and bishops of Beth-aven to abstain from reserving cases of any kind whatever, but to allow the freest permission to hear confessions of secret sins to all brethren and sisters; so that the sinner may reveal his sin to whom he will, with the object of seeking pardon and consolation, that is, the word of Christ uttered by the mouth of his neighbour. effect nothing by their rash presumption but to ensuare needlessly the consciences of the weak, to establish their own wicked tyranny, and to feed their own avarice on the sins and perdition of their brethren. Thus they stain their hands with the blood of souls, and children are devoured by their parents, and Ephraim devours Judah, and Syria Israel, as Isaiah says.

To these evils they have added circumstances—mothers. daughters, sisters, relatives, branches, fruits of sins, all devised at complete leisure by the most subtle of men, who have set up, even in the matter of sins, a sort of tree of consanguinity and affinity. So fertile of results are ignorance and impiety: for these devices of some worthless fellow have passed into public law, as has happened in many other cases. So vigilantly do the shepherds watch over the Church of Christ that whatever dreams of superstition or of new works these senseless devotees indulge they forthwith bring forward, and dress them up with indulgences, and fortify them with bulls. are they from prohibiting these things and protecting the simplicity of faith and liberty for the people of God; for what has liberty to do with the tyranny of Babylon?

I should advise the total neglect of all that concerns Among Christians there is but one circumstances. circumstance, and that is that a brother has sinned. character is to be compared to Christian brotherhood, nor has the observation of places, times, days, and persons, or any other such superstitious exaggeration, any effect but to magnify things which are nothing, at the expense of those things which are everything. As if there could be anything greater or more weighty than the glory of Christian brotherhood, they so tie us down to places and days and persons that the name of brother is held cheap, and instead of being freemen we are slaves in bondage—we to whom all days, places, persons, and all

other outward things, are equal.

How unworthily they have treated the matter of satisfaction, I have abundantly shown in the case of indulgences. They have abused it notably, to the destruction of Christians in body and in soul. In the first place, they have so taught it that the people have not understood the real meaning of satisfaction, which is a change Furthermore, they so urge it and represent it as necessary that they leave no room for faith in Christ; but men's consciences are most wretchedly tortured by scruples on this point. One runs hither, another thither: one to Rome, another into a convent, another to some other place; one scourges himself with rods; another destroys his body with vigils and fasting; while all, under one general delusion, say, Here is Christ, or there, and imagine that the kingdom of God, which is really within us, will come with observation. These monstrous evils we owe to thee, see of Rome, and to thy homicidal laws and rites, by which thou hast brought the world to such a point of ruin that they think they can make satisfaction to God for their sins by works, while it is only by the faith of a contrite heart that He is satisfied. faith thou not only compellest to silence in the midst of these tumults, but strivest to destroy, only in order that thy avarice, that insatiable leech, may have some to whom to cry, Bring, bring, and may make a traffic of sins.

Some have even proceeded to such a length in framing engines of despair for souls, as to lay it down that all sins for which the satisfaction enjoined has been neglected must be gone over afresh in confession. What will not such men dare, men born for this end: to bring everything ten times over into bondage? Moreover, I should like to know how many people there are who are fully persuaded that they are in a state of salvation, and are making satisfaction for their sins, when they murmur

over the prayers enjoined by the priest with their lips alone, and meanwhile do not even think of any amendment of life. They believe that by one moment of contrition and confession their whole life is changed, and that there remains merit enough over and above to make satisfaction for their past sins. How should they know better, when they are taught nothing better? There is not a thought here of mortification of the flesh; the example of Christ goes for nothing, who, when He absolved the woman taken in adultery, said to her, "Go, and sin no more"; thereby laying on her the cross of mortification of the flesh. No slight occasion has been given to these perverted ideas by our absolving sinners before they have completed their satisfaction, whence it comes that they are more anxious about completing their satisfaction, which is a thing that lasts, than about contrition, which they think has been gone through in the act of confession. On the contrary, absolution ought to follow the completion of satisfaction, as it did in the primitive Church, whence it happened that, the work being over, they were afterwards more exercised in faith and newness of life. On this subject, however, it must suffice to have repeated so far what I have said at greater length in writing on indulgences. Let it also suffice for the present to have said this much in the whole respecting these three sacraments, which are treated of and not treated of in so many mischievous books of Sentences and of Law. It remains for me to say a few words about the remaining sacraments also, that I may not appear to have rejected them without sufficient reason.

## OF CONFIRMATION.

It is surprising how it should have entered any one's mind to make a sacrament of confirmation out of that laying on of hands which Christ applied to little children, and by which the Apostles bestowed the Holy Spirit, ordained presbyters, and healed the sick, as the Apostle writes to Timothy, "Lay hands suddenly on no man"

(1 Tim. v. 22). Why not also make a confirmation out of the Sacrament of bread, because it is written, "And when he had received meat, he was strengthened" (Acts ix. 19), or again, "Bread which strengtheneth man's heart"? (Psalm civ. 15). Thus confirmation would include three sacraments: of bread, of orders, and of confirmation itself. But if whatever the Apostles did is a sacrament, why has not preaching rather been made into a sacrament?

I do not say this because I condemn the seven sacraments, but because I deny that they can be proved from the Scriptures. I would there were in the Church such a laying on of hands as there was in the time of the Apostles, whether we chose to call it confirmation or healing. As it is, however, none of it remains, except so much as we have ourselves invented in order to regulate the duties of the bishops, that they may not be entirely without work in the Church. For when they had left the sacraments which involved labour, along with the word, to their inferiors, as being beneath their attention (on the ground, forsooth, that whatever institutions the Divine majesty has set up must needs be an object of contempt to men), it was but right that we should invent some easy duty, not too troublesome for the daintiness of these great heroes, and by no means commit it to inferiors, as if it were of little importance. What human wisdom has ordained ought to be honoured by men. Thus such as the priests are, such should be the ministry and office which they hold. For what is a bishop who does not preach the Gospel, or attend to the cure of souls. but an idol in the world, having the name and form of a bishop?

At present, however, we are inquiring into the sacraments of Divine institution; and I can find no reason for reckoning confirmation among these. To constitute a sacrament we require in the very first place a word of Divine promise, on which faith may exercise itself. But we do not read that Christ ever gave any promise respecting confirmation, although He Himself laid hands

upon many, and although He mentions among the signs that should follow them that believe, "They shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover" (Mark xvi. 18). No one, however, has interpreted these words of a sacrament, or could do so. It is enough then to consider confirmation as a rite or ceremony of the Church, of like nature to those other ceremonies by which water and other things are consecrated. For if every other creature is sanctified by the word and prayer, why may not man much more be sanctified by the same means, even though they cannot be called sacraments of faith, inasmuch as they contain no Divine promise? Neither do these work salvation: while sacraments save those who believe in the Divine promise.

## OF MATRIMONY.

It is not only without any warrant of Scripture that matrimony is considered a sacrament, but it has been turned into a mere mockery by the very same traditions which vaunt it as a sacrament. Let us look a little into this. I have said that in every sacrament there is contained a word of Divine promise, which must be believed in by him who receives the sign; and that the sign alone cannot constitute a sacrament. Now we nowhere read that he who marries a wife will receive any grace from God, neither is there in matrimony any sign divinely instituted, nor do we anywhere read that it was appointed of God to be a sign of anything, although it is true that all visible transactions may be understood as figures and allegorical representations of invisible things. But figures and allegories are not sacraments, in the sense in which we are speaking of sacraments.

Furthermore, since matrimony has existed from the beginning of the world, and still continues even among unbelievers, there are no reasons why it should be called a sacrament of the new law, and of the Church alone. The marriages of the patriarchs were not less sacred than ours, nor are those of unbelievers less real than those of believers; and yet no one calls them a sacrament. Moreover, there are among believers wicked husbands and wives worse than any Gentiles. Why should we then say there is a sacrament here, and not among the Gentiles? Shall we so trifle with baptism and the Church as to say, like those who rave about the temporal power existing only in the Church, that matrimony is a sacrament only in the Church? Such assertions are childish and ridiculous, and by them we expose our ignorance and rashness to the laughter of unbelievers.

It will be asked, however, Does not the Apostle say that "they two shall be one flesh," and that "this is a great sacrament"; and will you contradict the plain words of the Apostle? I reply that this argument is a very dull one, and proceeds from a careless and thoughtless reading of the original. Throughout the Holy Scriptures this word sacramentum has not the meaning in which we employ it, but an opposite one. For it everywhere signifies, not the sign of a sacred thing, but a sacred thing which is secret and hidden. Thus Paul says, "Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries" (that is, sacraments) "of God" (1 Cor. iv. 1). Where we use the Latin term "sacrament," in Greek the word "mystery" is employed; and thus in Greek the words of the Apostle are, "They two shall be one flesh; this is a great mystery." It is this which has led men to consider marriage as a sacrament of the new law, which they would have been far from doing if they had read the word "mystery" as it is in the Greek.

Thus the Apostle calls Christ Himself a "sacrament," saying, "And without controversy great is the sacrament" (that is, mystery) "of godliness. God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory" (1 Tim. iii. 16). Why have they not deduced from this an eighth sacrament of the new law, under such clear authority from Paul? Or, if they restrained themselves in this case, where they might so suitably have

been copious in the invention of sacraments, why are they so lavish of them in the other? It is because they have been misled by their ignorance as well of things as of words; they have been caught by the mere sound of the words and by their own fancies. Having once, on human authority, taken a sacrament to be a sign, they have proceeded, without any judgment or scruple, to make the word mean a sign wherever they have met with it in the sacred writings, just as they have imported other meanings of words and human habits of speech into the sacred writings, and transformed these into dreams of their own, making anything out of anything. Hence their constant senseless use of the words "good works," "bad works," "sin," "grace," "righteousness," "virtue," and almost all the most important words and things. They use all these at their own discretion, founded on the writings of men, to the ruin of the truth of God and of our salvation.

Thus sacrament and mystery, in Paul's meaning, are the very wisdom of the Spirit, hidden in a mystery, as he says, "Which none of the princes of this world knew; for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory" (1 Cor. ii. 8), and there remains to this day this folly, this stone of stumbling and rock of offence, this sign which shall be spoken against. Paul calls preachers the stewards of these mysteries, because they preach Christ, the power and wisdom of God, but so preach Him that unless men believe, they cannot understand. a sacrament means a mystery and a hidden thing, which is made known by words, but is received by faith of heart. Such is the passage of which we are speaking at present: "They two shall be one flesh; this is a great mystery." These men think that this was said concerning matrimony; but Paul brings in these words in speaking of Christ and the Church, and explains his meaning clearly by saying, "I speak concerning Christ and the Church." See how well Paul and these men agree. Paul says that he is setting forth a great mystery concerning Christ and the Church, while they set it forth as concerning male and

female. If men may thus indulge their own caprices in interpreting the sacred writings, what wonder if anything can be found in them, were it even a hundred sacraments?

Christ then and the Church are a mystery, that is, a great and hidden thing, which may indeed and ought to be figured by matrimony, as in a sort of real allegory: but it does not follow that matrimony ought to be called The heavens figuratively represent the a sacrament. Apostles, the sun Christ, the waters nations, but these things are not therefore sacraments; for in all these cases the institution is wanting, and the Divine promise: and these it is which make a sacrament complete. Hence Paul is either, of his own spirit, applying to Christ the words used in Genesis concerning matrimony, or else he teaches that, in their general sense, the spiritual marriage of Christ is also there declared, saying, "Even as the Lord cherisheth the Church; for we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the Church " (Eph. v. 29-32). We see that he means this whole text to be understood as spoken by him about Christ. He purposely warns the reader to understand the "Sacrament" as in Christ and the Church, not in matrimony.

I admit, indeed, that even under the old law, nay, from the beginning of the world, there was a sacrament of penitence; but the new promise of penitence and the gift of the keys are peculiar to the new law. As we have baptism in the place of circumcision, so we now have the keys in the place of sacrifices or other signs of penitence. I have said above that, at different times, the same God has given different promises and different signs for the remission of sins and the salvation of men, while yet it is the same grace that all have received. As it is written, "We, having the same spirit of faith, believe, and therefore speak" (2 Cor. iv. 13); "Our fathers did all eat the same spiritual meat, and did all drink the same spiritual

drink, for they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ" (1 Cor. x. 3, 4); "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect "(Heb. xi. 13, 40). Christ Himself, the same vesterday and to-day and for ever, is the Head of His Church from the beginning even to the end of the world. There are then different signs, but the faith of all believers is the same, since without faith it is impossible to please God; and by it Abel pleased Him.

Let then matrimony be a figure of Christ and the Church; yet the sacrament was not Divinely instituted, but one invented in the Church by men led astray by their ignorance alike of things and of words. So far as this invention is not injurious to the faith, it must be borne with in charity, just as many other devices of human weakness and ignorance are borne with in the Church so long as they are not injurious to faith and to the sacred writings. But we are now contending for the firmness and purity of faith and of Scripture, lest if we affirm anything to be contained in the sacred writings and in the articles of our faith, and it is afterwards proved not to be so contained, we should expose our faith to mockery, be found ignorant of our own special business, cause scandal to our adversaries and to the weak, and, moreover, not advance the authority of Holy Scripture. For we must make the widest possible distinction between those things which have been delivered to us from God in the sacred writings and those which have been invented in the Church by men, of however eminent authority from their holiness and their learning.

Thus far I have spoken of matrimony itself. But what shall we say of those impious human laws by which this Divinely appointed manner of life has been entangled and tossed up and down? Good God! it is horrible to look upon the temerity of the tyrants of Rome, who thus, according to their own caprices, at one time annul marriages and at another time enforce them. Is the human race given over to their caprice for nothing but to be mocked and abused in every way, and that these men may do what they please with it for the sake of their own fatal

gains?

There is a book in general circulation, and held in no slight esteem, which has been confusedly put together out of all the dregs and filth of human traditions, and entitled The Angelic Summary; while it is really a more than diabolical summary. In this book, among an infinite number of monstrous statements, by which confessors are supposed to be instructed, while they are in truth most ruinously confused, eighteen impediments to matrimony are enumerated. If we look at these with the just and free eye of faith, we shall see that the writer is of the number of those of whom the Apostle foretold that they should "give heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; forbidding to marry" (1 Tim. iv. 1-3). What is forbidding to marry, if this is not forbidding it: to invent so many impediments and to set so many snares that marriages cannot be contracted. or, if they are contracted, must be dissolved? Who has given this power to men? Granted that such men have been holy and led by a pious zeal, why does the holiness of another encroach upon my liberty? Why does the zeal of another bring me into bondage? Let whosoever will be as holy and as zealous as he will, but let him not injure others or rob me of my liberty.

I rejoice, however, that these disgraceful laws have at length attained the glory they deserve, in that by their aid the men of Rome have nowadays become common traders. And what do they sell? The shame of men and women, a merchandise worthy of these traffickers, who surpass all that is most sordid and disgusting in their avarice and impiety. There is not one of those impediments which cannot be removed at the intercession of mammon, so that these laws seem to have been made for no other purpose than to be nets for money and snares for souls in the hands of those greedy and rapacious Nimrods, and in order that we might see in the holy place, in the

Church of God, the abomination of the public sale of the shame and ignominy of both sexes. A business, alas! worthy of our pontiffs and fit to be carried on by men who. with the utmost disgrace and baseness, are given over to a reprobate mind, instead of that ministry of the Gospel which, in their avarice and ambition, they despise.

But what am I to say or do? If I were to enter upon every particular, this treatise would extend beyond all bounds; for the subject is in the utmost confusion, so that one cannot tell where to begin, how far to go, or where to stop. This I know: that no commonwealth can be prosperously administered by mere laws. If the magistrate is a wise man, he will govern more happily under the guidance of nature than by any laws; if he is not a wise man, he will effect nothing but mischief by laws, since he will not know how to use them or to adapt them to the wants of the time. In public matters, therefore, it is of more importance that good and wise men should be at the head of affairs, than that any laws should be passed; for such men will themselves be the best of laws, since they will judge cases of all kinds with living equity. If, together with natural wisdom, there be learning in Divine things, then it is clearly superfluous and mischievous to have any written laws; and charity, above all things, has absolutely no need of laws. I say, however, and do all that in me lies, admonishing and entreating all priests and friars, if they see any impediment with which the Pope can dispense, but which is not mentioned in Scripture. to consider all those marriages valid which have been contracted, in whatever way, contrary to ecclesiastical or pontifical laws. Let them arm themselves with the Divine law which says, "What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." The union of husband and wife is one of Divine right, and holds good however much against the laws of men it may have taken place, and the laws of men ought to give place to it, without any scruple. For if a man is to leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife, how much more ought he to tread under foot the frivolous and unjust laws of men, that he may cleave to his wife? If the Pope, or any bishop or official, dissolves any marriage, because it has been contracted contrary to the papal laws, he is an antichrist, does violence to nature, and is guilty of treason against God, because this sentence stands: "Whom God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."

Besides this, man had no right to make such laws, and the liberty bestowed on Christians through Christ is above all the laws of men, especially when the Divine law comes in as Christ says, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath; therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath" (Mark ii. 27, 28). Again, such laws were condemned beforehand by Paul, when he foretold that those should arise who would forbid to marry. Hence in this matter all those rigorous impediments derived from spiritual affinity, or legal relationship and consanguinity, must give way as far as is permitted by the sacred writings, in which only the second grade of consanguinity is prohibited, as it is written in the book of Leviticus, where twelve persons are prohibited, namely, mother, step-mother, full sister, half-sister by either parent, grand-daughter, father's sister, mother's sister, daughter-in-law, brother's wife, wife's sister, step-daughter, uncle's wife. In these only the first grade of affinity and the second of consanguinity are prohibited, and not even these universally, as is clear when we look carefully; for the daughter or granddaughter of a brother and sister are not mentioned as prohibited, though they are in the second grade. Hence if at any time a marriage has been contracted outside these grades, than which no others have ever been prohibited by God's appointment, it ought by no means to be dissolved on account of any laws of men. mony, being a Divine institution, is incomparably above all laws, and therefore it cannot rightfully be broken through for the sake of laws, but rather laws for its sake.

Thus all those fanciful spiritual affinities of father. mother, brother, sister, or child ought to be utterly done away with in the contracting of matrimony. What but the superstition of man has invented that spiritual relationship? If he who baptises is not permitted to marry her whom he has baptised, or a godfather his god-daughter, why is a Christian man permitted to marry a Christian woman? Is the relationship established by a ceremony or by the sign of the Sacrament stronger than that established by the substance itself of the Sacrament? Is not a Christian man the brother of a Christian sister? Is not a baptised man the spiritual brother of a baptised woman? How can we be so senseless? If a man instructs his wife in the Gospel and in the faith of Christ, and thus becomes truly her father in Christ, shall it not be lawful for her to continue his wife? Would not Paul have been at liberty to marry a maiden from among those Corinthians all of whom he declares that he had begotten in Christ? See then how Christian liberty has been crushed by the blindness of human superstition.

Much more idle still is the doctrine of legal relationship; and yet they have raised even this above the Divine right of matrimony. Nor can I agree to that impediment which they call disparity of religion, and which forbids a man to marry an unbaptised woman, neither simply nor on condition of converting her to the faith. Who has prohibited this, God or man? Who has given men authority to prohibit marriages of this kind? Verily the spirits that speak lies in hypocrisy, as Paul says, of whom it may be truly said, "The wicked have spoken lies to me, but not according to Thy law." Patricius, a heathen, married Monica, the mother of St. Augustine, who was a Christian; why should not the same thing be lawful now? A like instance of foolish, nay wicked, rigour is the impediment of crime, as when a man marries a woman previously polluted by adultery, or has plotted the death of a woman's husband, that he may be able to marry her. Whence, I ask, a severity on

the part of men against men such as even God has never exacted? Do these men pretend not to know that David, a most holy man, married Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, though both these crimes had been committed; that is, though she had been polluted by adultery and her husband had been murdered? If the Divine law did this, why do tyrannical men act thus against their fellow-servants?

It is also reckoned as an impediment when there exists what they call a bond—that is, when one person is bound to another by betrothal. In this case they conclude that if either party have subsequently had intercourse with a third, the former betrothal comes to an end. I cannot at all receive this doctrine. judgment, a man who has bound himself to one person is no longer at his own disposal, and therefore, under the prohibitions of the Divine right, owes himself to the former, though he has not had intercourse with her, even if he have afterwards had intercourse with another. It was not in his power to give what he did not possess; he has deceived her with whom he has had intercourse, and has really committed adultery. That which has led some to think otherwise is that they have looked more to the fleshly union than to the Divine command, under which he who has promised fidelity to one person is bound to observe it. He who desires to give ought to give of that which is his own. God forbid that any man should go beyond or defraud his brother in any matter; for good faith ought to be preserved beyond and above all traditions of all men. Thus I believe that such a man cannot with a safe conscience cohabit with a second woman, and that this impediment ought to be entirely reversed. If a vow of religion deprives a man of his power over himself, why not also a pledge of fidelity given and received, especially since the latter rests on the teaching and fruits of the Spirit (Gal. v.), while the former rests on human choice? And if a wife may return to her husband, notwithstanding any vow of religion she may have made, why should not a betrothed woman return to her betrothed.

even if connection with another have followed? We have said, however, above that a man who has pledged his faith to a maiden is not at liberty to make a vow of religion, but is bound to marry her, because he is bound to keep his faith, and is not at liberty to abandon it for the sake of any human tradition, since God commands that it should be kept. Much more will it be his duty to observe his pledge to the first to whom he has given it, because it was only with a deceitful heart that he could give it to a second; and therefore he has not really given it, but has deceived his neighbour, against the law of God. Hence the impediment called that of error takes effect here, and annuls the marriage with the second woman.

The impediment of holy orders is also a mere contrivance of men, especially when they idly assert that even a marriage already contracted is annulled by this cause. always exalting their own traditions above the commands of God. I give no judgment respecting the order of the priesthood, such as it is at the present day; but I see that Paul commands that a bishop should be the husband of one wife, and therefore the marriage of a deacon, of a priest, of a bishop, or of a man in any kind of orders, cannot be annulled, although Paul knew nothing of that kind of priests and those orders which we have at the present day. Perish then these accursed traditions of men, which have come in for no other end than to multiply perils, sins, and evils in the Church! Between a priest and his wife, then, there is a true and inseparable marriage, approved by the Divine command. What if wicked men forbid or annul it of their own mere tyranny? Be it that it is unlawful in the sight of men, yet it is lawful in the sight of God, whose commandment, if it be contrary to the commandments of men, is to be preferred.

Just as much a human contrivance is the so-called impediment of public propriety, by which contracted marriages are annulled. I am indignant at the audacious impiety which is so ready to separate what God has joined together. You may recognise antichrist in this

opposition to everything which Christ did or taught. What reason is there, I ask, why, on the death of a betrothed husband before actual marriage, no relative by blood, even to the fourth degree, can marry her who was betrothed to him? This is no vindication of public propriety, but mere ignorance of it. Why among the people of Israel, which possessed the best laws, given by God Himself, was there no such vindication of public propriety? On the contrary, by the very command of God, the nearest relative was compelled to marry her who had been left a widow. Ought the people who are in Christian liberty to be burdened with more rigid laws than the people who were in legal bondage? And to make an end of these figments rather than impediments. I will say that at present it is evident to me that there is no impediment which can rightfully annul a marriage already contracted except physical unfitness for habiting with a wife, ignorance of a marriage previously contracted, or a vow of chastity. Concerning such a vow, however, I am so uncertain, even to the present moment, that I do not know at what time it ought to be reckoned valid, as I have said above in speaking of baptism. Learn then, in this one matter of matrimonv. into what an unhappy and hopeless state of confusion, hindrance, entanglement, and peril all things that are done in the Church have been brought by the pestilent. unlearned, and impious traditions of men. There is no hope of a remedy, unless we can do away once for all with all the laws of all men, call back the Gospel of liberty, and judge and rule all things according to it alone. Amen.

It is necessary also to deal with the question of physical incapacity. But be it premised that I desire what I have said about impediments to be understood of marriages already contracted, which ought not to be annulled for any such causes. But with regard to the contracting of matrimony I may briefly repeat what I have said before: that if there be any urgency of youthful love, or any other necessity, on account of which the Pope grants a

dispensation, then any brother can also grant a dispensation to his brother, or himself to himself, and thus snatch his wife, in whatever way he can, out of the hands of tyrannical laws. Why is my liberty to be done away with by another man's superstition and ignorance? or if the Pope gives dispensation for money, why may not I give a dispensation to my brother or to myself for the advantage of my own salvation? Does the Pope establish laws? Let him establish them for himself, but let my liberty be untouched.

The question of divorce is also discussed, whether it be lawful. I, for my part, detest divorce, and even prefer bigamy to it; but whether it be lawful I dare not define. Christ Himself, the chief of shepherds, says, "Whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery; and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery" (Matt. v. 32). Christ therefore permits divorce only in the case of fornication. Hence the Pope must necessarily be wrong as often as he permits divorce for other reasons. nor ought any man forthwith to consider himself safe because he has obtained a dispensation by pontifical audacity rather than power. I am more surprised, however, that they compel a man who has been separated from his wife by divorce to remain single, and do not allow him to marry another. For if Christ permits divorce for the cause of fornication, and does not compel any man to remain single, and if Paul bids us rather to marry than to burn, this seems plainly to allow of a man's marrying another in the place of her whom he has put away. I wish that this subject were fully discussed and made clear, that provision might be made for the numberless perils of those who at the present day are compelled to remain single without any fault of their own-that is, whose wives or husbands have fled and deserted their partner, not to return for ten years, or perhaps never. I am distressed and grieved by these

cases, which are of daily occurrence, whether this happens by the special malice of Satan, or from our neglect of the word of God.

I cannot by myself establish any rule contrary to the opinion of all; but, for my own part, I should exceedingly wish at least to see applied to this subject the words, "But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases" (1 Cor. vii. 15). Here the Apostle permits that the unbelieving one who departs should be let go, and leaves it free to the believer to take another. Why should not the same rule hold good, if a believer—that is, a nominal believer, but in reality just as much an unbeliever—deserts husband or wife, especially if with the intention of never returning? I cannot discover any distinction between the two cases. In my belief, however, if in the Apostle's time the unbeliever who had departed had returned, or had become a believer, or had promised to live with the believing wife, he would not have been received, but would himself have been authorised to marry another Still I give no definite opinion on these questions, though I greatly wish that a definite rule were laid down, for there is nothing which more harasses me and many others. I would not have any rule on this point laid down by the sole authority of the Pope or the bishops; but if any two learned and good men agreed together in the name of Christ and pronounced a decision in the spirit of Christ, I should prefer their judgment even to that of councils, such as are assembled nowadays, which are celebrated simply for their number and authority, independently of learning and holiness. therefore suspend my utterances on this subject until I can confer with some better judge.

#### OF ORDERS.

Of this Sacrament the Church of Christ knows nothing: it was invented by the Church of the Pope. It not only has no promise of grace, anywhere declared, but not a

word is said about it in the whole of the New Testament. Now it is ridiculous to set up as a sacrament of God that which can nowhere be proved to have been instituted by God. Not that I consider that a rite practised for so many ages is to be condemned; but I would not have human invention established in sacred things, nor should it be allowed to bring in anything as Divinely ordained which has not been Divinely ordained, lest we should be objects of ridicule to our adversaries. We must endeavour that whatever we put forward as an article of the faith should be certain and uncorrupt and established by clear proofs from Scripture: and this we cannot show even in the slightest degree in the case of the present Sacrament.

The Church has no power to establish new Divine promises of grace, as some senselessly assert, who say that, since the Church is governed by the Holy Spirit, whatever she ordains has no less authority than that which is ordained of God. The Church is born of the word of promise through faith, and is nourished and preserved by the same word; that is, she herself is established by the promises of God, not the promise of God by her. The word of God is incomparably above the Church, and her part is not to establish, ordain, or make anything in it, but only to be established, ordained, and made as a creature. What man begets his own parent? Who establishes the authority by which he himself exists?

This power the Church certainly has: that she can distinguish the word of God from the words of men. Augustine confesses that his motive for believing the Gospel was the anthority of the Church, which declared it to be the Gospel. Not that the Church is therefore above the Gospel, for, if so, she would also be above God, in whom we believe, since she declares Him to be God; but, as Augustine says elsewhere, the soul is so taken possession of by the truth that thereby it can judge of all things with the utmost certainty, and yet cannot judge the truth itself, but is compelled to say with an infallible certainty that this is the truth. For example, the mind pronounces with infallible certainty that three and seven are ten, and yet can give no reason why this is true, while it cannot deny that it is true. In fact, the mind itself is taken possession of, and, having truth as its judge, is judged rather than judges. Even such a perception is there in the Church, by the illumination of the Spirit, in judging and approving of doctrines, a perception which she cannot demonstrate, but which she holds as most sure. Just as among philosophers no one judges of the common conceptions, but every one is judged by them, so is it among us with regard to that spiritual perception which judgeth all things, yet is

judged of no man, as the Apostle says.

Let us take it then for certain that the Church cannot promise grace, to do which is the part of God alone, and therefore cannot institute a sacrament. And even if she had the most complete power to do so, it would not forthwith follow that orders are a sacrament. knows what is that Church which has the Spirit, when only a few bishops and learned men are usually concerned in setting up these laws and institutions? It is possible that these men may not be of the Church, and may all be in error, as Councils have very often been in error, especially that of Constance, which has erred the most impiously of all. That only is a proved article of the faith which has been approved by the universal Church. and not by that of Rome alone. I grant therefore that orders may be a sort of Church rite, like many others which have been introduced by the Fathers of the Church, such as the consecration of vessels, buildings, vestments, water, salt, candles, herbs, wine, and the like. In all these no one asserts that there is any sacrament, nor is there any promise in them. Thus the anointing of a man's hands, the shaving of his head, and other ceremonies of the kind, do not constitute a sacrament, since nothing is promised by these things, but they are merely employed to prepare men for certain offices, as in the case of vessels or instruments.

But it will be asked, What do you say to Dionysius, who reckons up six sacraments, among which he places orders, in his Hierarchy of the Church? My answer is, I know that he is the only one of the ancients who is considered as an anthority for seven sacraments, although, by the omission of matrimony, he has only given six. We read nothing at all in the rest of the Fathers about these sacraments, nor did they reckon them under the title of sacrament when they spoke of these things, for the invention of such sacraments is modern. too-if I may be rash enough to say so-it is altogether unsatisfactory that so much importance should be attributed to this Dionysius, whoever he was, for there is almost nothing of solid learning in him. By what authority or reason, I ask, does he prove his inventions concerning angels in his Celestial Hierarchy, a book on the study of which curious and superstitious minds have spent so much labour? Are they not all fancies of his own, and very much like dreams, if we read them and judge them freely? In his mystic theology indeed. which is so much cried up by certain very ignorant theologians, he is even very mischievous, and follows Plato rather than Christ, so that I would not have any believing mind bestow even the slightest labour on the study of these books. You will be so far from learning Christ in them that, even if you know Him, you may lose Him. I speak from experience. Let us rather hear Paul, and learn Jesus Christ and Him crucified. For this is the way, the truth, and the life; this is the ladder by which we come to the Father, as it is written, "No man cometh unto the Father but by Me."

So in his Hierarchy of the Church what does he do but describe certain ecclesiastical rites, amusing himself with his own allegories, which he does not prove, just as has been done in our time by the writer of the book called the Rationale of Divine Things? This pursuit of allegories is only fit for men of idle minds. Could I have any difficulty in amusing myself with allegories about any created thing whatever? Did not Bonaventura

apply the liberal arts allegorically to theology? It would give me no trouble to write a better *Hierarchy* than that of Dionysius, as he knew nothing of popes, cardinals, and archbishops, and made the bishops the highest order. Who, indeed, is there of such slender wits that he cannot venture upon allegory? I would not have a theologian bestow any attention upon allegories until he is perfectly acquainted with the legitimate and simple meaning of Scripture; otherwise, as happened to Origen, his theological speculations will not be without danger.

We must not then immediately make a sacrament of anything which Dionysius describes; otherwise why not make a sacrament of the procession which he describes in the same passage, and which continues in use even to the present day? Nay, there will be as many sacraments as there are rites and ceremonies which have grown up in the Church. Resting, however, on this very weak foundation, they have invented and attributed to this sacrament of theirs certain indelible characters, supposed to be impressed on those who receive orders. Whence, I ask, such fancies? By what authority, by what reasoning, are they established? Not that we object to their being free to invent, learn, or assert whatever they please; but we also assert our own liberty, and say that they must not arrogate to themselves the right of making articles of the faith out of their own fancies, as they have hitherto had the presumption to do. It is enough that, for the sake of concord, we submit to their rights and inventions, but we will not be compelled to receive them as necessary to salvation, when they are not necessary. Let them lay aside their tyrannical requirements, and we will show a ready compliance with their likings, that so we may live together in mutual peace. For it is a disgraceful, unjust, and slavish thing for a Christian man, who is free, to be subjected to any but heavenly and Divine traditions.

After this they bring in their very strongest argument, namely, that Christ said at the Last Supper, "Do this in remembrance of Me," "Behold!" they say, "Christ

ordained them as priests." Hence, among other things, they have also asserted that it is to priests alone that both kinds should be administered. In fact, they have extracted out of this text whatever they would, like men who claim the right to assert at their own free choice whatsoever they please out of any words of Christ, wherever spoken. But is this to interpret the words of God? Let us reply to them that in these words Christ gives no promise, but only a command that this should be done in remembrance of Him. Why do they not conclude that priests were ordained in that passage also where Christ, in laying upon them the ministry of the word and of baptism, said, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost"? It is the peculiar office of priests to preach and to baptise. Again, since at the present day it is the very first business of a priest, and, as they say, an indispensable one, to read the canonical Hours, why have they not taken their idea of the Sacrament of orders from those words in which Christ commanded His disciples -as He did in many other places, but especially in the garden of Gethsemane-to pray that they might not enter into temptation? Unless indeed they evade the difficulty by saying that it is not commanded to pray, for it suffices to read the canonical Hours; so that this cannot be proved to be a priestly work from any part of Scripture, and that consequently this praying priesthood is not of God, as indeed it is not.

Which of the ancient Fathers has asserted that by these words priests were ordained? Whence then this new interpretation? It is because it has been sought by this device to set up a source of implacable discord, by which clergy and laity might be placed farther asunder than heaven and earth, to the incredible injury of baptismal grace and confusion of evangelical communion. Hence has originated that detestable tyranny of the clergy over the laity in which, trusting to the corporal unction by which their hands are consecrated, to their tonsure, and to their vestments, they not only set themselves above the body of lay Christians, who have been anointed with the Holy Spirit, but almost look upon them as dogs, unworthy to be numbered in the Church along with themselves. Hence it is that they dare to command, exact, threaten, drive, and oppress, at their will. In fine, the Sacrament of orders has been and is a most admirable engine for the establishment of all those monstrous evils which have hitherto been wrought, and are yet being wrought, in the Church. In this way Christian brotherhood has perished; in this way shepherds have been turned into wolves, servants into tyrants, and ecclesiastics into something more than men of the world.

How if they were compelled to admit that we all, so many as have been baptised, are equally priests? We are so in fact, and it is only a ministry which has been entrusted to them, and that with our consent. They would then know that they have no right to exercise command over us, except so far as we voluntarily allow of it. Thus it is said, "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation" (1 Peter ii. 9). Thus all we who are Christians are priests; those whom we call priests are ministers chosen from among us to do all things in our name; and the priesthood is nothing else than a ministry. Thus Paul says, "Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God" (1 Cor. iv. 1).

From this it follows that he who does not preach the word, being called to this very office by the Church, is in no way a priest, and that the Sacrament of orders can be nothing else than a ceremony for choosing preachers in the Church. This is the description given of a priest: "The priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth; for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts" (Mal. ii. 7). Be sure then that he who is not a messenger of the Lord of hosts, or who is called to anything else than a messenger-ship—if I may so speak—is certainly not a priest, as it is written. "Because thou hast rejected knowledge. I will

also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to Me" (Hos. iv. 6). They are called pastors because it is their duty to give the people pasture, that is, to teach them. Therefore those who are ordained only for the purpose of reading the canonical Hours and offering up masses are popish priests indeed, but not Christian priests, since they not only do not preach, but are not even called to be preachers; nay, it is the very thing intended that a priesthood of this kind shall stand on a different footing from the office of preacher. Thus they are priests of Hours and missals, that is, a kind of living images, having the name of priests, but very far from being really so—such priests as those whom Jeroboam ordained in Beth-aven, taken from the lowest dregs of

the people, and not from the family of Levi.

See then how far the glory of the Church has departed. The whole world is full of priests, bishops, cardinals, and clergy, of whom, however (so far as concerns their official duty), not one preaches—unless he be called afresh to this by another calling besides his sacramental orders —but thinks that he amply fulfils the purposes of that Sacrament if he murmurs over, in a vain repetition, the prayers which he has to read, and celebrates masses. Even then he never prays these very Hours, or, if he does pray, he prays for himself; while, as the very height of perversity, he offers up his masses as a sacrifice, though the mass is really the use of the Sacrament. Thus it is clear that those orders by which, as a sacrament, men of this kind are ordained to be clergy, are in truth a mere and entire figment, invented by men who understand nothing of Church affairs, of the priesthood, of the ministry of the word, or of the sacraments. Such as is the Sacrament, such are the priests it makes. To these errors and blindnesses has been added a greater degree of bondage in that, in order to separate themselves the more widely from all other Christians, as if these were profane, they have burdened themselves with a most hypocritical celibacy.

It was not enough for their hypocrisy and for the

working of this error to prohibit bigamy, that is, the having two wives at the same time, as was done under the law—for we know that that is the meaning of bigamy but they have interpreted it to be bigamy, if a man marries two virgins in succession, or a widow once. Nay, the most sanctified sanctity of this most sacrosanct sacrament goes so far that a man cannot even become a priest if he have married a virgin as long as she is alive as his wife. And, in order to reach the very highest summit of sanctity, a man is kept out of the priesthood if he have married one who was not a pure virgin, though it were in ignorance and merely by an unfortunate chance. But he may have polluted six hundred harlots or corrupted any number of matrons or virgins, or even kept many Ganymedes, and it will be no impediment to his becoming a bishop or cardinal, or even pope. Then the saying of the Apostle, "the husband of one wife." must be interpreted to mean "the head of one Church," unless that magnificent dispenser the Pope, bribed with money or led by favour—that is to say, moved by pious charity and urged by anxiety for the welfare of the Churcheschooses to unite to one man three, twenty, or a hundred wives, that is, Churches.

Oh, pontiffs, worthy of this venerable Sacrament of orders! Oh, princes not of the Catholic Churches, but of the synagogues of Satan, yea, of very darkness! We may well cry out with Isaiah, "Ye scornful men, that rule this people which is in Jerusalem!" (Isa. xxviii. 14). and with Amos, "Woe to them that are at ease in Zion, and trust in the mountain of Samaria, which are named chief of the nations, to whom the house of Israel came!" (Amos vi. 1). Oh, what disgrace to the Church of God from these monstrosities of sacerdotalism! Where are there any bishops or priests who know the Gospel, not to say preach it? Why then do they boast of their priesthood? why do they wish to be thought holier and better and more powerful than other Christians, whom they call the laity? What unlearned person is not competent to read the Hours? Monks, hermits, and

private persons, although laymen, may use the prayers of the Hours. The duty of a priest is to preach, and unless he does so, he is just as much a priest as the picture of a man is a man. Does the ordination of such babbling priests, the consecration of churches and bells, or the confirmation of children, constitute a bishop? Could not any deacon or layman do these things? It is the ministry of the word that makes a priest or a bishop.

Fly then, I counsel you; fly, young men, if ye wish to live in safety; and do not seek admission to these holy rites, unless ye are either willing to preach the Gospel, or are able to believe that ye are not made any better than the laity by this Sacrament of orders. To read the Hours is nothing. To offer the mass is to receive the Sacrament. What, then, remains in you which is not to be found in any layman? Your tonsure and your vestments? Wretched priesthood, which consists in tonsure and vestments! Is it the oil poured on your fingers? Every Christian is anointed and sanctified in body and soul with the oil of the Holy Spirit, and formerly was allowed to handle the Sacrament no less than the priests now do, although our superstition now imputes it as a great crime to the laity if they touch even the bare cup or the corporal, and not even a holy nun is allowed to wash the altar cloths and sacred napkins. When I see how far the sacrosanct sanctity of these orders has already gone. I expect that the time will come when the laity will not even be allowed to touch the altar, except when they offer money. I almost burst with anger when I think of the impious tyrannies of these reckless men, who mock and ruin the liberty and glory of the religion of Christ by such frivolous and puerile triflings.

Let every man then who has learnt that he is a Christian recognise what he is, and be certain that we are all equally priests, that is, that we have the same power in the word, and in any sacrament whatever, although it is not lawful for any one to use this power, except with the consent of the community or at the call of a superior. For that which belongs to all in common no individual

can arrogate to himself until he be called. And therefore the Sacrament of orders, if it is anything, is nothing but a certain rite by which men are called to minister in the Church. Furthermore, the priesthood is properly nothing else than the ministry of the word—I mean the word of the Gospel, not of the Law. The diaconate is a ministry, not for reading the Gospel or the Epistle, as the practice is nowadays, but for distributing the wealth of the Church among the poor, that the priests may be relieved of the burden of temporal things, and may give themselves more freely to prayer and to the word. It was for this purpose, as we read in the Acts of the Apostles, that deacons were appointed. Thus he who does not know the Gospel, or does not preach it, is not only no priest or bishop, but a kind of pest to the Church, who, under the false title of priest or bishop, as it were in sheep's clothing, hinders the Gospel, and acts the part of the wolf in the Church.

Wherefore those priests and bishops with whom the Church is crowded at the present day, unless they work out their salvation on another plan—that is, unless they acknowledge themselves to be neither priests nor bishops, and repent of bearing the name of an office the work of which they either do not know or cannot fulfil, and thus deplore with prayers and tears the miserable fate of their hypocrisy—are verily the people of eternal perdition. concerning whom the saying will be fulfilled, "My people are gone into captivity, because they have no knowledge; and their honourable men are famished, and their multitude dried up with thirst. Therefore hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure; and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth shall descend into it" (Isa. v. 13, 14). word of dread for our age, in which Christians swallowed up in such an abyss of evil!

As far then as we are taught from the Scriptures, since what we call the priesthood is a ministry, I do not see at all for what reason a man who has once been made priest cannot become a layman again, since he differs in no wis from a layman, except by his ministerial office. But it is so far from impossible for a man to be set aside from the ministry that even now this punishment is constantly inflicted on offending priests, who are either suspended for a time, or deprived for ever of their office. For that fiction of an indelible character has long ago become an object of derision. I grant that the Pope may impress this character, though Christ knows nothing of it, and for this very reason the priest thus consecrated is the lifelong servant and bondsman, not of Christ, but of the Pope, as it is at this day. But, unless I deceive myself, if at some future time this Sacrament and figment fall to the ground. the papacy itself will scarcely hold its ground; and we shall recover that joyful liberty in which we shall understand that we are all equal in every right, and shall shake off the voke of tyranny, and know that he who is a Christian has Christ, and he who has Christ has all things that are Christ's, and can do all things; on which I will write more fully and more vigorously when I find that what I have here said displeases my friends the Papists.

## ON THE SACRAMENT OF EXTREME UNCTION.

To this rite of anointing the sick our theologians have made two additions well worthy of themselves. One is that they call it a sacrament, the other that they make it extreme, so that it cannot be administered except to those who are in extreme peril of life. Perhaps, as they are keen dialecticians, they have so made it in relation to the first unction of baptism and the two following ones of confirmation and orders. They have this, it is true, to throw in my teeth: that, on the authority of the Apostle James, there are in this case a promise and a sign, which two things, I have hitherto said, constitute a sacrament. He says, "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him" (James v. 14, 15). Here, they say, is the promise of remission of sins and the sign of the oil.

I, however, say that if folly has ever been uttered, it has been uttered on this subject. I pass over the fact that many assert, and with great probability, that this Epistle was not written by the Apostle James, and is not worthy of the apostolic spirit, although, whosesoever it is, it has obtained authority by usage. Still, even if it were written by the Apostle James, I should say that it was not lawful for an Apostle to institute a sacrament by his own authority; that is, to give a Divine promise with a sign annexed to it. To do this belonged to Christ alone. Thus Paul says that he had received the Sacrament of the Eucharist from the Lord; and that he was sent, not to baptise, but to preach the Gospel. Nowhere, however, in the Gospel do we read of this Sacrament of extreme unction. But let us pass this over, and let us look to the words themselves of the Apostle, or of whoever was the author of this Epistle, and we shall at once see how those men have failed to observe their true meaning who have thus increased the number of sacraments.

In the first place, if they think the saying of the Apostle true and worthy to be followed, by what authority do they change and resist it? Why do they make an extreme and special unction of that which the Apostle meant to be general? The Apostle did not mean it to be extreme, and to be administered only to those about He says expressly, "Is any sick among you?" He does not say, "Is any dying?" Nor do I care what Dionysius's Ecclesiastical Hierarchy may teach about this; the words of the Apostle are clear, on which he and they alike rest, though they do not follow them. Thus it is evident that by no authority, but at their own discretion, they have made, out of the ill-understood words of the Apostle, a sacrament and an extreme unction: thus wronging all the other sick, whom they have deprived on their own authority of that benefit of anointing which the Apostle appointed for them.

But it is even a finer argument that the promise of the Apostle expressly says. "The prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up." Apostle commands the use of anointing and prayer for the very purpose that the sick man may be healed and raised up, that is, may not die, and that the unction may not be extreme. This is proved by the prayers which are used even at this day during the ceremony of anointing, and in which we ask that the sick man may be restored. They say, on the contrary, that unction should not be administered except to those on the point of departing; that is, that they may not be healed and raised up. If the matter were not so serious, who could refrain from laughing at such fine, apt, and sound comments on the words of the Apostle? Do we not manifestly detect here that sophistical folly which, in many other cases as well as in this, affirms what Scripture denies, and denies what it affirms? Shall we not render thanks to these distinguished teachers of ours? I have said rightly then that nowhere have they displayed wilder folly than in this instance.

Further, if this unction is a sacrament, it must be beyond doubt an effectual sign (as they say) of that which it seals and promises. Now it promises health and restoration to the sick, as the words plainly show: "The prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up." Who does not see, however, that this promise is seldom, or rather never, fulfilled? Scarcely one among a thousand is restored; and even this no one believes to be effected by the Sacrament, but by the help of nature or of medicine; while to the Sacrament they attribute a contrary effect. What shall we say, then? Either the Apostle is deceiving us in this promise, or this unction is not a sacrament; for a sacramental promise is sure, while this in most cases disappoints us. Nay, to recognise another example of the prudence and carefulness of these theologians, they will have the unction to be extreme in order that that promise may not stand; that is, that the Sacrament may not be a sacrament. If the unction is

extreme, it does not heal, but yields to the sickness; while if it heals, it cannot be extreme. Thus, according to the interpretation of these teachers, James must be understood to have contradicted himself, and to have instituted a sacrament on purpose not to institute a sacrament; for they will have it to be extreme unction, in order that it may not be true that the sick are healed by it, which is what the Apostle ordained. If this is not

madness, what, I ask, is madness?

The words of the Apostle, "Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say nor whereof thev affirm" (1 Tim. i. 7), apply to these men, with so little judgment do they read and draw conclusions. With the same stupidity they have inferred the doctrine of auricular confession from the words of the Apostle James, "Confess your faults one to another." They do not even observe the command of the Apostle that the elders of the Church should be called for, and that they should pray over the sick. Scarcely one priest is sent now, though the Apostle would have many to be present, not for the purpose of anointing, but for that of prayer, as he says, "The prayer of faith shall save the sick." Moreover, I am not sure that he means priests to be understood in this case, since he says presbyters, that is, elders. Now it does not follow that an elder must be a priest or a minister, and we may suspect that the Apostle intended that the sick should be visited by the men of greater age and weightier character in the Church, who should do this as a work of mercy, and heal the sick by the prayer of faith. At the same time it cannot be denied that of old the Churches were ruled by the older men, chosen for this purpose on account of their age and long experience of life, without the ordinations and consecrations now used.

I am therefore of opinion that this is the same anointing as that used by the Apostles, of whom it is written, "They anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them" (Mark vi. 13). It was a rite of the primitive Church, long since obsolete, by which they did miracles

for the sick, just as Christ says of them that believe, "They shall take up serpents; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover" (Mark xvi. 18). It is astonishing that they have not made sacraments out of these words also, since they have a like virtue and promise with those words of James. This pretended extreme unction then is not a sacrament, but a counsel of the Apostle James, taken, as I have said, from the Gospel of Mark, and one which any one who will may follow. I do not think that it was applied to all sick persons—for the Church glories in her infirmities, and thinks death a gain—but only to those who bore their sickness impatiently and with little faith, and whom the Lord therefore left that on them the miraculous power and the efficacy of faith might be conspicuously shown.

James, indeed, has carefully and intentionally provided against this very mistake in that he connects the promise of healing and of remission of sins, not with the anointing, but with the prayer of faith; for he says, "The prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him" (James v. 15). Now a sacrament does not require prayer or faith on the part of him who administers it, for even a wicked man may baptise and consecrate the elements without prayer; but it rests solely on the promise and institution of God, and requires faith on the part of him who receives But where is the prayer of faith in our employment of extreme unction at the present day? Who prays over the sick man with such faith as not to doubt of his Such is the prayer of faith which James restoration? here describes, that prayer of which he had said at the beginning of the Epistle, "Let him ask in faith, nothing wavering," and of which Christ says, "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them "(Mark xi. 24).

There is no doubt at all that if even at the present day such prayer were made over the sick-that is, by grave and holy elders and with full faith—as many as we would might be healed. For what cannot faith do? We however, leave out of sight that faith which apostolic authority requires in the very first place; and, moreover, by elders, that is, men superior to the rest in age and in faith, we understand the common herd of priests. Furthermore, out of a daily or free anointing we make an extreme unction; and lastly, we not only do not ask and obtain that result of healing promised by the Apostle, but we empty the promise of its meaning by an opposite result. Nevertheless we boast that this Sacrament, or rather figment, of ours, is founded on and proved by the teaching of the Apostle, from which it is as widely separated as pole from pole. Oh, what theologians!

Therefore, without condemning this our sacrament of extreme unction, I steadily deny that it is that which is enjoined by the Apostle James, of which neither the form, nor the practice, nor the efficacy, nor the purpose agrees with ours. We will reckon it, however, among those sacraments which are of our own appointing, such as the consecration and sprinkling of salt and We cannot deny that, as the Apostle Paul teaches us, every creature is sanctified by the word of God and prayer; and so we do not deny that remission and peace are bestowed through extreme unction, not because it is a sacrament Divinely instituted, but because he who receives it believes that he obtains these benefits. For the faith of the receiver does not err, however much the minister may err. For if he who baptises or absolves in jest-that is, does not absolve at all as far as the minister's part is concerned—vet does really absolve or baptise, if there be faith on the part of the absolved or baptised person, how much more does he who administers extreme unction bestow peace, even though in reality he bestows no peace if we look to his ministry, since there is no sacrament! The faith of the person anointed receives that blessing which he who anointed him either could not, or did not intend to, give. It is enough that the person anointed hears and believes the word; for whatever we believe that we shall receive, that we do really receive, whatever the minister may do

or not do, whether he play a part, or be in jest. For the saying of Christ holds good, "All things are possible to him that believeth," and again, "As thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee." Our sophists, however, make no mention of this faith in treating of the sacraments, but give their whole minds to frivolous discussions on the virtues of the sacraments themselves; ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

It has been of advantage, however, that this unction has been made extreme, for, thanks to this, it has been of all sacraments the least harassed and enslaved by tyranny and thirst for gain; and this one mercy has been left to the dying: that they are free to be anointed, even if they have not confessed or communicated. Whereas if it had continued to be of daily employment, especially if it had also healed the sick, even if it had not taken away sins, of how many worlds would not the pontiffs by this time have been masters—they who, on the strength of the one Sacrament of penance, and by the power of the keys, and through the Sacrament of orders, have become such mighty emperors and princes? But now it is a fortunate thing that as they despise the prayer of faith, so they heal no sick, and out of an old rite have formed for themselves a new sacrament.

Let it suffice to have said thus much concerning these four sacraments. I know how much it will displease those who think that we are to inquire about the number and use of the sacraments, not from the Holy Scriptures, but from the see of Rome, as if the see of Rome had given us those sacraments and had not rather received them from the schools of the universities, to which, without controversy, it owes all that it has. The tyranny of the popes would never have stood so high if it had not received so much help from the universities; for among all the principal sees there is scarcely any other which has had so few learned bishops. It is by force, fraud, and superstition alone that it has prevailed over the rest; and those who occupied that see a

thousand years ago are so widely diverse from those who have grown into power in the interim that we are compelled to say that either the one or the other were not

pontiffs of Rome.

There are besides some other things which it may seem that we might reckon among sacraments—all those things. namely, to which a Divine promise has been made, such as prayer, the word, the cross. For Christ has promised in many places to hear those that pray, especially in Luke xi., where He invites us to prayer by many parables. the word He says, "Blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it" (Luke xi. 28). And who can reckon up how often He promises succour and glory to those who are in tribulation, suffering, and humiliation? Nay, who can count up all the promises of God? For it is the whole object of all Scripture to lead us to faith, on the one side urging us with commandments and threatenings, on the other side inviting us by promises and consola-Indeed, all Scripture consists of either commandments or promises. Its commandments humble the proud by their requirements; its promises lift up the humble by their remissions of sin.

It has seemed best, however, to consider as sacraments, properly so called, those promises which have signs annexed to them. The rest, as they are not attached to signs, are simple promises. It follows that, if we speak with perfect accuracy, there are only two sacraments in the Church of God, baptism and the bread, since it is in these alone that we see both a sign Divinely instituted and a promise of remission of sins. The Sacrament of penance, which I have reckoned along with these two, is without any visible and Divinely appointed sign; and is nothing else, as I have said, than a way and means of return to baptism. Not even the schoolmen can say that penitence agrees with their definition, since they themselves ascribe to every sacrament a visible sign, which enables the senses to apprehend the form of that effect which the Sacrament works invisibly. Now penitence or absolution has no such sign; and therefore they will be compelled by their own definition either to say that penitence is not one of the sacraments, and thus to diminish their number, or else to bring forward another definition of a sacrament.

Baptism, however, which we have assigned to the whole of life, will properly suffice for all the sacraments which we are to use in life: while the bread is truly the Sacrament of the dying and departing, since in it we commemorate the departure of Christ from this world, that we may imitate Him. Let us then so distribute these two sacraments that baptism may be allotted to the beginning and to the whole course of life, and the bread to its end and to death; and let the Christian while in this vile body exercise himself in both, until, being fully baptised and strengthened, he shall pass out of this world as one born into a new and eternal life and destined to eat with Christ in the kingdom of His Father, as He promised at the Last Supper, saying, "I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God shall come" (Luke xxii, 18). Thus it is evident that Christ instituted the Sacrament of the bread that we might receive the life which is to come; and then, when the purpose of each sacrament shall have been fulfilled. both baptism and the bread will cease.

I shall here make an end of this essay, which I readily and joyfully offer to all pious persons, who long to understand Scripture in its sincere meaning and to learn the genuine use of the sacraments. It is a gift of no slight importance to "know the things that are freely given to us of God" and to know in what manner we ought to use those gifts. For if we are instructed in this judgment of the Spirit, we shall not deceive ourselves by leaning on those things which are opposed to it. Whereas our theologians have nowhere given us the knowledge of these two things, but have even darkened them, as if of set purpose, I, if I have not given that knowledge, have at least succeeded in not darkening it, and have given others an occasion to think out something better. It has at least been my endeavour to explain the meaning

of both sacraments, but we cannot all do all things. On those impious men, however, who in their obstinate tyranny press on us their own teachings as if they were God's, I thrust these things freely and confidently, caring not at all for their ignorance and violence. even to them I will wish sounder sense, and will not despise their efforts, but will only distinguish them from those which are legitimate and really Christian.

I hear a report that fresh bulls and papal curses are being prepared against me, by which I am to be urged to recant, or else be declared a heretic. If this is true. I wish this little book to be a part of my future recantation, that they may not complain that their tyranny has puffed itself up in vain. The remaining part I shall shortly publish, Christ being my Helper, and that of such a sort as the see of Rome has never yet seen or heard, thus abundantly testifying my obedience in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

> "Hostis Herodes impie, Christum venire quid times? Non arripit mortalia Qui regna dat cœlestia."

# THE NINETY-FIVE THESES

### INTRODUCTORY LETTER

To the most Reverend Father in Christ and most illustrious Lord, Albert, Archbishop and Primate of the Churches of Magdeburg and Mentz, Marquis of Brandenburg, etc., his lord and pastor in Christ, most gracious and worthy of all fear and reverence—

#### JESUS.

The grace of God be with you, and whatsoever it is and can do.

Spare me, most reverend Father in Christ, most illustrious Prince, if I, the very dregs of humanity, have dared to think of addressing a letter to the eminence of your sublimity. The Lord Jesus is my witness that, in the consciousness of my own pettiness and baseness, I have long put off the doing of that which I have now hardened my forehead to perform, moved thereto most especially by the sense of that faithful duty which I feel that I owe to your most reverend Fatherhood in Christ. May your Highness then in the meanwhile deign to cast your eyes upon one grain of dust, and, in your pontifical clemency, to understand my prayer.

Papal indulgences are being carried about, under your most distinguished authority, for the building of St. Peter's. In respect of these I do not so much accuse the extravagant sayings of the preachers, which I have not heard, but I grieve at the very false ideas which the people conceive from them, and which are spread abroad in common talk on every side—namely, that unhappy souls believe that, if they buy letters of indulgences, they are sure of their salvation; also, that, as soon as they

have thrown their contribution into the chest, souls forthwith fly out of purgatory; and furthermore, that so great is the grace thus conferred, that there is no sin so great—even, as they say, if, by an impossibility, any one had violated the Mother of God—but that it may be pardoned; and again, that by these indulgences a man

is freed from all punishment and guilt.

O gracious God! it is thus that the souls committed to your care, most excellent Father, are being taught unto their death, and a most severe account, which you will have to render for all of them, is growing and increasing. Hence I have not been able to keep silence any longer on this subject, for by no function of a bishop's office can a man become sure of salvation, since he does not even become sure through the grace of God infused into him, but the Apostle bids us to be ever working out our salvation in fear and trembling. (Phil. ii. 12.) Even the righteous man—says Peter—shall scarcely be saved. (1 Peter iv. 18.) In fine, so narrow is the way which leads unto life, that the Lord, speaking by the prophets Amos and Zachariah, calls those who are to be saved brands snatched from the burning, and our Lord everywhere declares the difficulty of salvation.

Why then, by these false stories and promises of pardon, do the preachers of them make the people to feel secure and without fear? since indulgences confer absolutely no good on souls as regards salvation or holiness, but only take away the outward penalty which

was wont of old to be canonically imposed.

Lastly, works of piety and charity are infinitely better than indulgences, and yet they do not preach these with such display or so much zeal; nay, they keep silence about them for the sake of preaching pardons. And yet it is the first and sole duty of all bishops, that the people should learn the Gospel and Christian charity: for Christ nowhere commands that indulgences should be preached. What a dreadful thing it is then, what peril to a bishop, if, while the Gospel is passed over in silence, he permits nothing but the noisy outcry of indulgences

to be spread among his people, and bestows more care on these than on the Gospel! Will not Christ say to them: "Straining at a gnat, and swallowing a camel"?

Besides all this, most reverend Father in the Lord, in that instruction to the commissaries which has been put forth under the name of your most reverend Fatherhood it is stated—doubtless without the knowledge and consent of your most reverend Fatherhood—that one of the principal graces conveyed by indulgences is that inestimable gift of God, by which man is reconciled to God, and all the pains of purgatory are done away with; and further, that contrition is not necessary for those who thus redeem souls or buy confessional licences.

But what can I do, excellent Primate and most illustrious Prince, save to entreat your reverend Fatherhood, through the Lord Jesus Christ, to deign to turn on us the eye of fatherly care, and to suppress that advertisement altogether and impose on the preachers of pardons another form of preaching, lest perchance some one should at length arise who will put forth writings in confutation of them and of their advertisements, to the deepest reproach of your most illustrious Highness. It is intensely abhorrent to me that this should be done, and yet I fear that it will happen, unless the evil be speedily remedied.

This faithful discharge of my humble duty I entreat that your most illustrious Grace will deign to receive in a princely and bishoplike spirit—that is, with all clemency—even as I offer it with a most faithful heart, and one most devoted to your most reverend Fatherhood, since I too am part of your flock. May the Lord Jesus keep your most reverend Fatherhood for ever and ever. Amen.

From Wittemberg, on the eve of All Saints, in the year 1517.

If it so please your most reverend Fatherhood, you may look at these Disputations, that you may perceive how dubious a matter is that opinion about indulgences, which they disseminate as if it were most certain.

To your most reverend Fatherhood.

MARTIN LUTHER.

# DISPUTATION OF DR. MARTIN LUTHER CON-CERNING PENITENCE AND INDULGENCES

In the desire and with the purpose of elucidating the truth, a disputation will be held on the underwritten propositions at Wittemberg, under the presidency of the Reverend Father Martin Luther, Monk of the Order of St. Augustine, Master of Arts and of Sacred Theology, and ordinary Reader of the same in that place. He therefore asks those who cannot be present and discuss the subject with us orally, to do so by letter in their absence. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

1. Our Lord and Master Jesus Christ, in saying "Repent ye," \* etc., intended that the whole life of believers

should be penitence.

2. This word cannot be understood of sacramental penance, that is, of the confession and satisfaction which are performed under the ministry of priests.

3. It does, not, however, refer solely to inward penitence; nay such inward penitence is naught, unless it outwardly

produces various mortifications of the flesh.

4. The penalty † thus continues as long as the hatred of self—that is, true inward penitence—continues: namely, till our entrance into the kingdom of heaven.

5. The Pope has neither the will nor the power to remit any penalties, except those which he has imposed by his

own authority, or by that of the canons.

6. The Pope has no power to remit any guilt, except by declaring and warranting it to have been remitted by God; or at most by remitting cases reserved for himself;

† I.e. "Pana," the connection between "pana" and "panitentia"

being again suggestive.

<sup>\*</sup> In the Latin, from the Vulgate, "agite panitentiam," sometimes translated "Do penance." The effect of the following theses depends to some extent on the double meaning of "panitentia"—penitence and penance.

in which cases, if his power were despised, guilt would certainly remain.

7. God never remits any man's guilt, without at the same time subjecting him, humbled in all things, to the

authority of his representative the priest.

8. The penitential canons are imposed only on the living, and no burden ought to be imposed on the dying, according to them.

9. Hence the Holy Spirit acting in the Pope does well for us, in that, in his decrees, he always makes exception

of the article of death and of necessity.

10. Those priests act wrongly and unlearnedly, who, in the case of the dying, reserve the canonical penances for purgatory.

11. Those tares about changing of the canonical penalty into the penalty of purgatory seem surely to

have been sown while the bishops were asleep.

12. Formerly the canonical penalties were imposed not after, but before absolution, as tests of true contrition.

13. The dying pay all penalties by death, and are already dead to the canon laws, and are by right relieved from them.

14. The imperfect soundness or charity of a dying person necessarily brings with it great fear; and the less

it is, the greater the fear it brings.

15. This fear and horror is sufficient by itself, to say nothing of other things, to constitute the pains of purgatory, since it is very near to the horror of despair.

16. Hell, purgatory, and heaven appear to differ as

despair, almost despair, and peace of mind differ.

17. With souls in purgatory it seems that it must needs be that, as horror diminishes, so charity increases.

- 18. Nor does it seem to be proved by any reasoning or any scriptures, that they are outside of the state of merit or of the increase of charity.
- 19. Nor does this appear to be proved, that they are sure and confident of their own blessedness, at least all of them, though we may be very sure of it.

20. Therefore the Pope, when he speaks of the plenary

remission of all penalties, does not mean simply of all,

but only of those imposed by himself.

21. Thus those preachers of indulgences are in error who say that, by the indulgences of the Pope, a man is loosed and saved from all punishment.

22. For in fact he remits to souls in purgatory no penalty which they would have had to pay in this life

according to the canons.

23. If any entire remission of all penalties can be granted to any one, it is certain that it is granted to none but the most perfect—that is, to very few.

24. Hence the greater part of the people must needs be deceived by this indiscriminate and high-sounding

promise of release from penalties.

25. Such power as the Pope has over purgatory in general, such has every bishop in his own diocese, and every curate in his own parish, in particular.

26. The Pope acts most rightly in granting remission to souls, not by the power of the keys (which is of no

avail in this case), but by the way of suffrage.

27. They preach man, who say that the soul flies out of purgatory as soon as the money thrown into the chest rattles.

28. It is certain that, when the money rattles in the chest, avarice and gain may be increased, but the suffrage

of the Church depends on the will of God alone.

29. Who knows whether all the souls in purgatory desire to be redeemed from it, according to the story told of Saints Severinus and Paschal?

30. No man is sure of the reality of his own contrition,

much less of the attainment of plenary remission.

31. Rare as is a true penitent, so rare is one who truly

buys indulgences—that is to say, most rare.

32. Those who believe that, through letters of pardon, they are made sure of their own salvation, will be eternally damned along with their teachers.

33. We must especially beware of those who say that these pardons from the Pope are that inestimable gift of

God by which man is reconciled to God.

34. For the grace conveyed by these pardons has respect only to the penalties of sacramental satisfaction, which are of human appointment.

35. They preach no Christian doctrine, who teach that contrition is not necessary for those who buy souls out

of purgatory or buy confessional licences.

36. Every Christian who feels true compunction has of right plenary remission of pain and guilt, even without letters of pardon.

37. Every true Christian, whether living or dead, has a share in all the benefits of Christ and of the Church

given him by God, even without letters of pardon.

38. The remission, however, imparted by the Pope is by no means to be despised, since it is, as I have said, a declaration of the Divine remission.

39. It is a most difficult thing, even for the most learned theologians, to exalt at the same time in the eyes of the people the ample effect of pardons and the necessity of true contrition.

40. True contrition seeks and loves punishment; while the ampleness of pardons relaxes it, and causes men to hate it, or at least gives occasion for them to do so.

41. Apostolical pardons ought to be proclaimed with caution, lest the people should falsely suppose that they

are placed before other good works of charity.

42. Christians should be taught that it is not the mind of the Pope that the buying of pardons is to be in any way compared to works of mercy.

43. Christians should be taught that he who gives to a poor man, or lends to a needy man, does better than if

he bought pardons.

44. Because, by a work of charity, charity increases and the man becomes better; while, by means of pardons, he does not become better, but only freer from punishment.

45. Christians should be taught that he who sees any one in need, and passing him by, gives money for pardons, is not purchasing for himself the indulgences of the Pope, but the anger of God.

46. Christians should be taught that, unless they have

superfluous wealth, they are bound to keep what is necessary for the use of their own households, and by no means to lavish it on pardons.

47. Christians should be taught that, while they are

free to buy pardons, they are not commanded to do so.

48. Christians should be taught that the Pope, in granting pardons, has both more need and more desire that devout prayer should be made for him, than that money should be readily paid.

49. Christians should be taught that the Pope's pardons are useful, if they do not put their trust in them; but most hurtful, if through them they lose the fear of

God.

50. Christians should be taught that, if the Pope were acquainted with the exactions of the preachers of pardons, he would prefer that the Basilica of St. Peter should be burnt to ashes, than that it should be built up with the skin, flesh and bones of his sheep.

51. Christians should be taught that, as it would be the duty, so it would be the wish of the Pope, even to sell, if necessary, the Basilica of St. Peter, and to give of his own money to very many of those from whom the

preachers of pardons extract money.

52. Vain is the hope of salvation through letters of pardon, even if a commissary—nay, the Pope himself—were to pledge his own soul for them.

53. They are enemies of Christ and of the Pope who, in order that pardons may be preached, condemn the word

of God to utter silence in other churches.

54. Wrong is done to the word of God when, in the same sermon, an equal or longer time is spent on pardons than on it.

- 55. The mind of the Pope necessarily is, that if pardons, which are a very small matter, are celebrated with single bells, single processions, and single ceremonies, the Gospel, which is a very great matter, should be preached with a hundred bells, a hundred processions, and a hundred ceremonies.
  - 56. The treasures of the Church, whence the Pope

grants indulgences, are neither sufficiently named nor

known among the people of Christ.

57. It is clear that they are at least not temporal treasures, for these are not so readily lavished, but only

accumulated, by many of the preachers.

58. Nor are they the merits of Christ and of the saints, for these, independently of the Pope, are always working grace to the inner man, and the cross, death, and hell to the outer man.

59. St. Lawrence said that the treasures of the Church are the poor of the Church, but he spoke according to the

use of the word in his time.

60. We are not speaking rashly when we say that the keys of the Church, bestowed through the merits of Christ, are that treasure.

61. For it is clear that the power of the Pope is alone sufficient for the remission of penalties and of reserved

cases.

62. The true treasure of the Church is the Holy Gospel of the glory and grace of God.

63. This treasure, however, is deservedly most hateful,

because it makes the first to be last.

64. While the treasure of indulgences is deservedly most acceptable, because it makes the last to be first.

65. Hence the treasures of the gospel are nets, where-

with of old they fished for the men of riches.

66. The treasures of indulgences are nets, wherewith

they now fish for the riches of men.

67. Those indulgences, which the preachers loudly proclaim to be the greatest graces, are seen to be truly such as regards the promotion of gain.

68. Yet they are in reality in no degree to be compared

to the grace of God and the piety of the cross.

69. Bishops and curates are bound to receive the commissaries of apostolical pardons with all reverence.

70. But they are still more bound to see to it with all their eyes, and take heed with all their ears, that these men do not preach their own dreams in place of the Pope's commission.

71. He who speaks against the truth of apostolical

pardons, let him be anathema and accursed.

72. But he, on the other hand, who exerts himself against the wantonness and licence of speech of the preachers of pardons, let him be blessed.

73. As the Pope justly thunders against those who use any kind of contrivance to the injury of the traffic

in pardons,

74. Much more is it his intention to thunder against those who, under the pretext of pardons, use contrivances to the injury of holy charity and of truth.

75. To think that Papal pardons have such power that they could absolve a man even if—by an impossibility—

he had violated the Mother of God, is madness.

76. We affirm, on the contrary, that Papal pardons cannot take away even the least of venial sins, as regards its guilt.

77. The saying that, even if St. Peter were now Pope, he could grant no greater graces, is blasphemy against

St. Peter and the Pope.

78. We affirm, on the contrary, that both he and any other Pope have greater graces to grant—namely, the Gospel, powers, gifts of healing, etc. (1 Cor. xii. 9.)

79. To say that the cross set up among the insignia of the Papal arms is of equal power with the cross of Christ,

is blasphemy.

80. Those bishops, curates, and theologians who allow such discourses to have currency among the people, will

have to render an account.

81. This licence in the preaching of pardons makes it no easy thing, even for learned men, to protect the reverence due to the Pope against the calumnies, or, at

all events, the keen questionings of the laity.

82. As for instance: —Why does not the Pope empty purgatory for the sake of most holy charity and of the supreme necessity of souls—this being the most just of all reasons—if he redeems an infinite number of souls for the sake of that most fatal thing, money, to be spent on building a basilica—this being a very slight reason?

83. Again: why do funeral masses and anniversary masses for the deceased continue, and why does not the Pope return, or permit the withdrawal of the funds bequeathed for this purpose, since it is a wrong to pray for those who are already redeemed?

84. Again: what is this new kindness of God and the Pope, in that, for money's sake, they permit an impious man and an enemy of God to redeem a pious soul which loves God, and yet do not redeem that same pious and beloved soul, out of free charity, on account of its own

need?

85. Again: why is it that the penitential canons, long since abrogated and dead in themselves in very fact and not only by usage, are yet still redeemed with money, through the granting of indulgences, as if they were full of life?

86. Again: why does not the Pope, whose riches are at this day more ample than those of the wealthiest of of the wealthy, build the one Basilica of St. Peter with his own money, rather than with that of poor believers?

87. Again: what does the Pope remit or impart to those who, through perfect contrition, have a right to

plenary remission and participation?

88. Again: what greater good would the Church receive if the Pope, instead of once, as he does now, were to bestow these remissions and participations a hundred times a day on any one of the faithful?

89. Since it is the salvation of souls, rather than money, that the Pope seeks by his pardons, why does he suspend the letters and pardons granted long ago, since

they are equally efficacious?

90. To repress these scruples and arguments of the laity by force alone, and not to solve them by giving reasons, is to expose the Church and the Pope to the ridicule of their enemies, and to make Christian men unhappy.

91. If, then, pardons were preached according to the spirit and mind of the Pope, all these questions would be

resolved with ease—nay, would not exist.

92. Away, then, with all those prophets who say to the people of Christ, "Peace, peace," and there is no peace!

93. Blessed be all those prophets who say to the people of Christ, "The cross, the cross," and there is no cross !

94. Christians should be exhorted to strive to follow

Christ their Head through pains, deaths, and hells,

95. And thus trust to enter heaven through many tribulations, rather than in the security of peace.

#### PROTESTATION.

I, Martin Luther, Doctor, of the Order of Monks at Wittemberg, desire to testify publicly that certain propositions against pontifical indulgences, as they call them, have been put forth by me. Now although, up to the present time, neither this most celebrated and renowned school of ours, nor any civil or ecclesiastical power has condemned me, yet there are, as I hear, some men of headlong and audacious spirit, who dare to pronounce me a heretic, as though the matter had been thoroughly looked into and studied. But on my part, as I have often done before, so now too, I implore all men, by the faith of Christ, either to point out to me a better way, if such a way has been divinely revealed to any, or at least to submit their opinion to the judgment of God and of the Church. For I am neither so rash as to wish that my sole opinion should be preferred to that of all other men, nor so senseless as to be willing that the word of God should be made to give place to fables, devised by human reason.

### ESSAYS

Ι

ON THE PRIMARY PRINCIPLES OF LUTHER'S
LIFE AND TEACHING
BY DR. WACE

II

ON THE POLITICAL COURSE OF THE REFORMA-TION IN GERMANY (1517-1546)
BY DR. BUCHHEIM

### On the Primary Principles of Luther's Life and Teaching

THE present publication was offered as a contribution to the due L celebration in this country of the fourth centenary of Luther's birth, in 1883. Much has been written about him, and the general history of his life and work has been sketched by able pens. But no adequate attempt has yet been made to let him speak for himself to Englishmen by his greatest and most characteristic writings. The three works which, together with the Ninety-five Theses, are included in this volume, are well known in Germany as the Drei Grosse Reformations-Schriften, or "The Three Great Reformation Treatises" of Luther; but they seem never yet to have been brought in this character before the English public. The Treatise on Christian Liberty has indeed been previously translated, though not of late vears. But from an examination of the catalogue in the British Museum, it would appear that no English translation is accessible. even if any has yet been published, of the Address to the German Nobility or of the Treatise on the Babylonish Captivity of the Church. Yet, as is well understood in Germany, it is in these that the whole genius of the Reformer appears in its most complete and energetic form. They are bound together in the closest dramatic unity. They were all three produced in the latter half of the critical year 1520, when nearly three years' controversy, since the publication of the Theses, on Oct. 31st. 1517, had convinced Luther of the falseness of the Court of Rome and the hollowness of its claims; and they were immediately followed by the bull of excommunication in the winter of the same year and the summons to the Diet of Worms in 1521. Luther felt, as he says at the commencement of his Address to the German Nobility, that "the time for silence had passed, and the time for speech had come." He evidently apprehended that reconciliation between himself and the

Court of Rome was impossible; and he appears to have made up his mind to clear his conscience, whatever the cost. Accordingly, in these three works, with a full heart and with the consciousness that his life was in his hand, he spoke out the convictions which had been forced on him by the conduct of the papacy and of the papal theologians.

Those convictions had been slowly, and even reluctantly, admitted; but they had gradually accumulated in intense force in Luther's mind and conscience: and when "the time for speech had come" they burst forth in a kind of volcanic eruption. Their maturity is proved by the completeness and thoroughness with which the questions at issue are treated. An insight into the deepest theological principles is combined with the keenest apprehension of practical details. In the Treatise on Christian Liberty, we have the most vivid of all embodiments of that life of faith to which the Reformer recalled the Church, and which was the mainspring of the Reformation. In the Appeal to the German Nobility, he first asserted those rights of the laity and of the temporal power without the admission of which no reformation would have been practicable, and he then denounced with burning moral indignation the numerous and intolerable abuses which were upheld by Roman authority. In the third Treatise, on the Babylonish Captivity of the Church, he applied the same cardinal principles to the elaborate sacramental system of the Church of Rome, sweeping away by means of them the superstitions with which the original institutions of Christ had been overlaid, and thus releasing men's consciences from a vast network of ceremonial oundage. The rest of the Reformation, it is not too much to say. was but the application of the principles vindicated in these three They were applied in different countries with varying wisdom and moderation; but nothing essential was added to them. Luther's genius—if a higher word be not justifiable—brought forth at one birth, "with hands and feet," to use his own image, and in full energy, the vital ideas by which Europe was to be regenerated. He was no mere negative controversialist, attacking particular errors in detail. His characteristic was the masculine grasp with which he seized essential and eternal truths, and by their

It occurred therefore to my colleague and myself that a permanent service might perhaps be rendered to Luther's name, and

central light dispersed the darkness in which men were groping.

towards a due appreciation of the principles of the Reformation, if these short but pregnant Treatises were made more accessible to the English public; and although they might well be left to speak for themselves, there may perhaps be some readers to whom a few explanatory observations on Luther's position, theologically and politically, will not be unacceptable. My colleague, in the Essay which follows this, has dealt with the political course of the Reformation during Luther's career; and in the present remarks an endeavour will simply be made to indicate the nature and the bearings of the central principles of the Reformer's life and work, as exhibited in the accompanying translations.

It is by no mere accident of controversy that the Ninety-five Theses mark the starting-point of Luther's career as a Reformer. The subject with which they dealt was not only in close connection with the centre of Christian truth, but it touched the characteristic thought of the Middle Ages. From the beginning to the end, those ages had been a stern school of moral and religious discipline. under what was universally regarded as the Divine authority of the Church. St. Anselm, with his intense apprehension of the Divine righteousness and of its inexorable demands, is at once the noblest and truest type of the great school of thought of which he was the founder. The special mission of the Church since the days of Gregory the Great had been to tame the fierce energies of the new barbarian world, and to bring the wild passions of the Teutonic races under the control of the Christian law. It was the task to which the necessities of the hour seemed to summon the Church. and she roused herself to the effort with magnificent devotion. Monks and schoolmen performed prodigies of self-denial and selfsacrifice, in order to realise in themselves, and to impose as far as possible on the world at large, the laws of perfection which the Church held before their vision. The glorious cathedrals which arose in the best period of the Middle Ages are but the visible types of those splendid structures of ideal virtues, which a monk like St. Bernard, or a schoolman like St. Thomas Aquinas, piled up by laborious thought and painful asceticism. Such men felt themselves at all times surrounded by a spiritual world, at once more glorious in its beauty and more awful in its terrors than either the pleasures or the miseries of this world could adequately represent. The great poet of the Middle Ages affords perhaps the most vivid representation of their character in this respect. The

horrible images of the Inferno, the keen sufferings of purification in the Purgatorio, form the terrible foreground behind which the Paradiso rises. Those visions of terror and dread and suffering had stamped themselves on the imagination of the mediæval world. and lay at the root of the power with which the Church overshadowed it. In their origin they embodied a profound and noble truth. It was a high and Divine conception that the moral and spiritual world with which we are encompassed has greater heights and lower depths than are generally apprehended in the visible experience of this life: and Dante has been felt to be in a unique degree the poet of righteousness. But it is evident, at the same time, what a terrible temptation was placed in the hands of a hierarchy who were believed, in whatever degree, to wield power over these spiritual realities. It was too easy to apply them, like the instruments of physical torture with which the age was familiar. to extort submission from tender consciences, or to make a bargain with selfish hearts. But in substance the menaces of the Church appealed to deep convictions of the human conscience, and the mass of men were not prepared to defy them.

Now it was into this world of spiritual terrors that Luther was born, and he was in an eminent degree the legitimate child of the The turning-point in his history is that the awful Middle Ages. visions of which we have spoken, the dread of the Divine judgments, brought home to him by one of the solemn accidents of life. checked him in a career which promised all worldly prosperity, and drove him into a monastery. There, as he tells us, he was driven almost frantic by his vivid realisation of the demands of the Divine righteousness on the one hand, and of his own incapacity to satisfy them on the other. With the intense reality characteristic of his nature, he took in desperate earnest all that the traditional teaching and example of the Middle Ages had taught him of the unbending necessities of Divine justice. But for the very reason that he accepted those necessities with such earnestness, he did but realise the more completely the hopelessness of his struggles to bring himself into conformity with them. It was not because he was out of sympathy with St. Anselm or St. Bernard or Dante that he burst the bonds of the system they represented, but, on the contrary, because he entered even more deeply than they into the very truths they asserted. Nothing was more certain to him than that Divine justice is inexorable; no conviction was more deeply fixed in his

heart than that righteousness is the supreme law of human life. But the more he realised the truth, the more terrible he found it. for it seemed to shut him up in a cruel prison, against the bars of which he beat himself in vain. In one of his most characteristic passages, in the Introduction to his Latin Works, he describes how he was repelled and appalled by the statement of St. Paul respecting the Gospel that "therein is the righteousness," or justice, "of God revealed." For, he says, "however irreprehensible a life I had lived as a monk. I felt myself before God a sinner, with a most restless conscience, and I could not be confident that He was appeared by my satisfaction. I could not therefore love—nay, I hated—a God who was just and punished sinners: and if not with silent blasphemy, certainly with vehement murmuring, I was indignant against God. As if, I said, it were not enough that sinners. miserable and eternally ruined by original sin, should be crushed with all kind of calamity by the law of the Decalogue, but God in the Gospel must needs add grief to grief, and by the Gospel itself must inflict still further on us His justice and anger. I raged with this savage and disturbed conscience, and I knocked importunately at Paul in that place, with burning thirst to know what St. Paul could mean." Such an experience is not a mere revolt against the Middle Ages. In great measure it is but the full realisation of their truest teaching. It is Dante intensified, and carried to the inevitable development of his principles.

But if this be the case, what it meant was that the Middle Ages had brought men to a deadlock. They had led men up to a gate so strait that no human soul could pass through it. In the struggle, men had devised the most elaborate forms of self-torture, and had made the most heroic sacrifices, and in the very desperation of their efforts they had anticipated the more vivid insight and experience The effort, in fact, had been too much for human nature, and the end of it had been that the Church had condescended to human weakness. The most obvious and easy way out of the difficulty was to modify, by virtue of some dispensing authority, the extreme requirements of Divine justice, and by a variety of half-unconscious, half-acknowledged devices, to lessen the severity of the strait gate and of the narrow way. Such a power, as has been said, was an enormous temptation to unscrupulous Churchmen, and at length it led to the hideous abuses of such preaching of indulgences as that of Tetzel. In this form the

matter came before Luther in his office as parish priest and confessor; and it will be apparent from the Theses that what first revolts him is the violation involved of the deepest principles which the Church of his day had taught him. He had learned from it the inexorable character of the Divine law, the necessity and blessedness of the Divine discipline of punishment and suffering; he had learned, as his first Thesis declares, that the law of Christian life is that of lifelong penitence; and he denounced Tetzel's teaching as false to the Church herself, in full confidence that he would be supported hy his ecclesiastical superiors. When he found that he was notwhen, to his surprise and consternation, he found that the papal theologians of the day, under the direct patronage of the Pope and the bishops, were ready to support the most flagrant evasions of the very principles on which their power had originally been based—then at length, though most rejuctantly, he turned against them, and directed against the corrupted Church of the close of the Middle Ages the very principles he had learned from its best representatives and from its noblest institutions.

Luther, in the course of his spiritual struggles, had found the true deliverance from what we have ventured to call that deadlock to which the grand vision of Divine righteousness had led him. He realised that the strait gate was impassable by any human virtue: but he had found the solution in the promise of a supernatural deliverance which was offered to faith. To quote again his words in the preface to his Latin works already referred to: "At length by the mercy of God, meditating days and nights, I observed the connection of the words, namely, 'Therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith, as it is written, The just shall live by faith.' Then I began to understand the justice of God to be that by which the just man lives by the gift of God, namely, by faith, and that the meaning was that the Gospel reveals that justice of God by which He justifies us beggars through faith, as it is written, 'The just shall live by faith.' Here I felt myself absolutely born again; the gates of heaven were opened, and I had entered paradise itself. From thenceforward the face of the whole Scriptures appeared changed to me. I ran through the Scriptures. as my memory would serve me, and observed the same analogy in other words-as, the work of God, that is, the work which God works in us; the strength of God, that with which He makes us strong; the wisdom of God, that with which He makes us wise;

the power of God, the salvation of God, the glory of God. And now as much as I had formerly hated that word the justice of God, so much did I now love it and extol it as the sweetest of words to me : and thus that place in Paul was to me truly the gate of In other words, Luther had realised that the Gospel. while reasserting the inexorable nature of the moral law and deepening its demands, had revealed a supernatural and Divine means of satisfying and fulfilling it. All barriers had thus been removed between God and man, and men had been placed in the position of children living by faith on His grace and bounty. He offers to bestow upon them the very righteousness He requires from them, if they will but accept it at His hands as a free gift. Their true position is no longer that of mere subjects living under a law which they must obey at their peril. They may, indeed, by their own act remain in that condition, with all its terrible consequences. But God invites them to regard Him as their Father. to live in the light of His countenance, and to receive from Him the daily food of their souls. The most intimate personal relation is thus established between Himself and them; and the righteousness which by their own efforts they could never acquire He is ready to create in them if they will but live with Him in faith and trust. That faith, indeed, must needs be the beginning, and the most essential condition, of this Divine life. Faith is the first condition of all fellowship between persons; and if a man is to live in personal fellowship with God, he must trust Him absolutely. believe His promises, and rest his whole existence here and hereafter upon His word. But let a man do this, and then God's law ceases to be like a flaming sword, turning every way, with too fierce an edge for human hearts to bear. It assumes the benignant glow of a revelation of perfect righteousness which God Himself will bestow on all who ask it at His hands.

This belief is essentially bound up with a distinction on which great stress is laid in the Theses. It touches a point at once of the highest theological import and of the simplest practical experience. This is the distinction between guilt and punishment, or, in other words, between personal forgiveness and the remission of the consequences of sins. In our mutual relations, a son may be forgiven by his father, a wrong-doer by the person whom he has injured, and yet it may neither be possible nor desirable that the offender should be at once released from the consequences of his offence. But to

all generous hearts the personal forgiveness is infinitely more precious than the remission of the penalty, and Luther had learned from the Scriptures to regard our relation to God in a similar light. He realised that he must live, here and hereafter, in personal relationship to God; and the forgiveness of God, the removal from him, in God's sight, of the imputation and the brand of guilt, his reception into God's unclouded favour-this was the supreme necessity of his spiritual existence. If this were assured to him. not only had he no fear of punishment, but he could welcome it. whatever its severity, as part of the discipline of the Divine and loving hand to which he had trusted himself. His deepest indignation, consequently, was aroused by preaching which, under official sanction, urged men to buy indulgence from punishment, of whatever kind, as practically the greatest spiritual benefit they could obtain; and he devoted his whole energy to assert the supreme blessing of that remission from guilt of which the preachers of indulgences said practically nothing. It is this remission of guilt, this personal forgiveness, which is the essential element in the justification of which he spoke. It involves of course salvation from the final ruin and doom which sin, and the moral corruption of our nature, would naturally entail; but its chief virtue does not consist in deliverance from punishment, nor does it in any way derogate from the truth that "we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." What it taught men was to accept all God's judgments and discipline in perfect peace of soul, as being assured of His love and favour.

No divine, in fact, has ever dwelt with more intense conviction on the blessedness of the discipline of suffering and of the Cross. The closing Theses express his deepest feelings in this respect, and a passage in one of his letters, written before the controversy about indulgences had arisen, affords a most interesting illustration of the manner in which the principles he came forward to assert had grown out of his personal experience. "Away," he says in the Ninety-second and Ninety-third Theses, "with all those prophets who say to the people of Christ, 'Peace, peace,' and there is no peace. Blessed be all those prophets who say to the people of Christ, 'The Cross, the Cross,' and there is no cross." These somewhat enigmatic expressions are at once explained in the letter referred to, written

to a prior of the Augustinian order on the 22nd of June, 1516.\* He says,—

"You are seeking and craving for peace, but in the wrong order. For you are seeking it as the world giveth, not as Christ giveth. Know you not that God is 'wonderful among His saints,' for this reason: that He establishes His peace in the midst of no peace, that is, of all temptations and afflictions? It is said, 'Thou shalt dwell in the midst of thine enemies.' The man who possesses peace is not the man whom no one disturbs—that is the peace of the world; he is the man whom all men and all things disturb, but who bears all patiently, and with joy. You are saying with Israel, 'Peace, peace,' and there is no peace. Learn to say rather with Christ, 'The Cross, the Cross,' and there is no cross. For the Cross at once ceases to be the Cross as soon as you have joyfully exclaimed, in the language of the hymn,—

"' Blessed Cross, above all other, One and only noble tree.'"

One other extract of the same import it may be well to quote from these early letters, as it is similarly the germ of one of the noblest passages in Luther's subsequent explanation of the Ninety-five Theses.† The letter was addressed to a brother Augustinian on the 15th of April, 1516. Luther says.—

"The Cross of Christ has been divided throughout the whole world, and every one meets with his own portion of it. Do not you therefore reject it, but rather accept it as the most holy relic, to be kept, not in a gold or silver chest, but in a golden heart, that is, a heart imbued with gentle charity. For if, by contact with the flesh and blood of Christ, the wood of the Cross received such consecration that its relics are deemed supremely precious, how much more should injuries, persecutions, sufferings, and the hatred of men, whether of the just or of the unjust, be regarded as the

<sup>\*</sup> Letters, edited by De Wette, i. 27.

<sup>†</sup> It is a pleasure to be able to refer for this passage to the first volume of the new Critical Edition of Luther's Works, now in course of publication, in Germany, p. 613, line 21. This magnificent edition, prepared under the patronage of the German Emperor, is the best of all contributions to the Commemoration of 1883. It must supersede all other editions, and it ought to find a place in all considerable libraries in England. A translation of the passage in question will be found in the Bampton Lectures of the present writer, p. 186.

most sacred of all relics—relics which, not by the mere touch of His flesh, but by the charity of His most bitterly tried heart and of His Divine will, were embraced, kissed, blessed, and abundantly consecrated; for thus was a curse transformed into a blessing, and injury into justice, and passion into glory, and the Cross into joy."\*

The few letters, in fact, in our possession, written by Luther before he came forward in 1517, are sufficient to afford the most vivid proof both of the mature thought and experience in which his convictions were rooted, and of their being prompted, not by the spirit of reckless confidence to which they have sometimes been ignorantly ascribed, but by the deepest sympathy with the lessons The purport of his characteristic doctrine of justification by faith was not to give men the assurance of immunity from suffering and sorrow, as the consequence of sin, but to give them peace of conscience and joy of heart in the midst of such punishments. What it proclaimed was that, if men would but believe it, they could at any moment grasp God's forgiveness, and live henceforth in the assured happiness of His personal favour and love. Of this blessing His promise was the only possible warrant, and, like all other promises, it could only be accepted by faith. Every man is invited to believe it, since it is offered to all for Christ's sake : but, by the nature of the case, none can enjoy it who do not believe it.

The ground, however, on which this promise was based affords another striking illustration of the way in which Luther's teaching was connected with that of the Middle Ages. Together with that keen apprehension of the Divine judgments and of human sin just mentioned, the awful vision of our Lord's sufferings and of His atonement overshadowed the whole thought of those times. St. Anselm, in the Cur Deus Homo, had aroused deeper meditation on this subject than had before been bestowed upon it; and in this, as in other matters, he is the type of the grand school of thought which he founded. As in his mind, so throughout the Middle Ages, in proportion to the apprehension of the terrible nature of the Divine justice is the prominence given to the sacrificial means for averting the Divine wrath. The innumerable masses of the later Middle Ages were so many confessions of the deep-felt need of atonement; and, formal as they ultimately became, they were in

<sup>\*</sup> Letters, edited by De Wette, i. 19.

intention so many cries for forgiveness from the terror-struck consciences of sinful men and women. Luther was a true child of the Church in his keen apprehension of the same need, and it was precisely because he realised it with exceptional truth and depth that he was forced to seek some deeper satisfaction than the offering of masses could afford. He reasserted the truth that the need had been met and answered once for all by the sacrifice on the Cross; and by proclaiming the sufficiency of that one eternal offering he swept away all the "sacrifices of masses," while at the same time he provided the answer to the craving to which they testified. The doctrine of the Atonement, as asserted at the Reformation, is the true answer to that cry of the human conscience which the Church of the preceding age had vainly endeavoured to satisfy. The Sacrament, of which the Mass was a perversion, was thus restored to its true character as a pledge and an instrument of blessings bestowed by God, instead of a propitiatory offering on the part of men. The cross of Christ, the favourite symbol of the mediæval Church, was thus held aloft by the Reformer in still deeper reality, as the central symbol of the Church's message, and as the one adequate ground for the faith to which he called men.

Now the view of the Christian life involved in this principle of justification by faith found its most complete and beautiful expression in the treatise On Christian Liberty, translated in this volume; and a brief notice of the teaching of that treatise will best serve to explain the connection between Luther's cardinal doctrine and the other principles which he asserted. As is explained at the close of the introductory letter to Leo X. (p. 255), he designed it as a kind of peace-offering to the Pope, and as a declaration of the sole objects he had at heart, and to which he desired to devote "It is a small matter," he says, "if you look to its bulk, but unless I mistake, it is a summary of the Christian life in small compass, if you apprehend its meaning." In fact, it presents the most complete view of Luther's theology, alike in its principles and in its practice, almost entirely disembarrassed of the controversial elements by which, under the inevitable pressure of circumstances, his other works, and especially those of a later date, were disturbed. Perhaps the only part of his works to compare with it in this respect is the precious collection of his House-postills, or Exposition of the Gospels for the Sundays of the Christian Year. They were delivered within his domestic

circle, and recorded by two of his pupils, and though but imperfectly reported, they are treasures of evangelical exposition, exhibiting in a rare degree the exquisitely childlike character of the Reformer's faith, and marked by all the simplicity and the poetry of feeling by which his mind was distinguished. It is by such works as these, and not simply by his controversial treatises or commentaries, that Luther must be judged, if we wish either to understand his inner character, or to comprehend the vast personal influence he exerted. But in its essence the Gospel which he preached, the substance of what he had learned from the temptations, the prayers, the meditations—tentationes, orationes, meditationes—of his life as a monk, is sufficiently embodied in the short Treatise on Christian Liberty.

The argument of the treatise is summed up, with the antithetical force so often characteristic of great genius, in the two propositions laid down at the outset: "A Christian man is the most free lord of all and subject to none; a Christian man is the most dutiful servant of all and subject to every one." The first of these propositions expresses the practical result of the doctrine of justification by faith. The Christian is in possession of a promise of God which in itself, and in the assurance it involves, is a greater blessing to him than all other privileges or enjoyments whatever. Everything sinks into insignificance compared with this word and Gospel. "Let us," he says, "hold it for certain and firmly established that the soul can do without everything except the word of God, without which none of its wants are provided for. But, having the word, it is rich and wants for nothing, since it is the word of life, of truth, of light, of peace, of justification, of salvation, of joy, of liberty, of wisdom, of virtue, of grace, of glory, and of every good thing." If it be asked, "What is this word?" he answers that the Apostle Paul explains it, namely, that "it is the Gospel of God concerning His Son, incarnate, suffering, risen, and glorified through the Spirit, the Sanctifier. To preach Christ is to feed the soul, to justify it, to set it free, and to save it, if it believes the preaching. . . . For the word of God cannot be received and honoured by any works, but by faith alone." This is the cardinal point around which not merely Luther's theology. but his whole life, turns. God had descended into the world, had spoken to him by His Son, His Apostles, the Scriptures, and the voice of the Church, and promised him forgiveness in the present.

and final deliverance from evil in the future, if he would but trust Him. The mere possession of such a promise outweighed in Luther's view all other considerations whatever, and absolute faith was due to it. No higher offence could be offered to God than to reject or doubt His promise, and at the same time no higher honour could be rendered Him than to believe it. The importance and value of the virtue of faith is thus determined entirely by the promise on which it rests. These "promises of God are words of holiness, truth, righteousness, liberty, and peace, and are full of universal goodness, and the soul which cleaves to them with a firm faith is so united to them, nay, thoroughly absorbed by them, that it not only partakes in, but is penetrated and saturated by, all their virtue. For if the touch of Christ was health, how much more does that most tender spiritual touch, nay, absorption of the word, communicate to the soul all that belongs to the word! In this way therefore the soul through faith alone, without works, is by the word of God justified, sanctified, endued with truth, peace, and liberty, and filled full with every good thing, and is truly made the child of God. . . . As is the word, such is the soul made by it, just as iron exposed to fire glows like fire on account of its union with the fire." Moreover, just as it is faith which unites husband and wife, so faith in Christ unites the soul to Him in indissoluble union. For "if a true marriage, nav. by far the most perfect of all marriages, is accomplished between them-for human marriages are but feeble types of this one great marriage—then it follows that all they have becomes theirs in common, as well good things as evil things; so that whatsoever Christ possesses the believing soul may take to itself and boast of as its own, and whatever belongs to the soul Christ claims as His. . . . Thus the believing soul, by the pledge of its faith in Christ, becomes free from all sin, fearless of death, safe from hell, and endowed with the eternal righteousness, life and salvation of its Husband Christ."

It is essential to dwell upon these passages, since the force of the Reformer's great doctrine cannot possibly be apprehended as long as he is supposed to attribute the efficacy of which he speaks to any inherent quality in the human heart itself. It is the word and promise of God which is the creative force. But this summons a man into a sphere above this world, bids him rest upon the Divine love which speaks to him, and places him on the eternal foundation of a direct covenant with God Himself in Christ. As in the Theses, so in this treatise, Luther reiterates that it in no way implies exemption from the discipline of suffering. "Yea," he says, "the more of a Christian any man is, to so many the more evils, sufferings, and deaths is he subject, as we see in the first place in Christ the first-born and in all His holy brethren." The power of which he speaks is a spiritual one "which rules in the midst of enemies, in the midst of distresses. It is nothing else than that strength is made perfect in my weakness, and that I can turn all things to the profit of my salvation; so that even the cross and death are compelled to serve me and to work together for my salvation." "It is a lofty and eminent dignity, a true and almighty dominion, a spiritual empire, in which there is nothing so good, nothing so bad, as not to work together for my good, if only I believe."

If we compare this language with those conceptions of spiritual terror by which Luther had been driven into a monastery, and under which, like so many in his age, he had groaned and struggled in despair, we can appreciate the immense deliverance which he had experienced. The Divine promise had lifted him "out of darkness and out of the shadow of death, and had broken his bonds in sunder." It is this which is the source of the undaunted and joyful faith which marks the whole of the Reformer's public "Whose heart," he exclaims, "would not rejoice in its inmost core at hearing these things? Whose heart, on receiving so great a consolation, would not become sweet with the love of Christ, a love to which it can never attain by any laws or works? Who can injure such a heart, or make it afraid? If the consciousness of sin or the horror of death rush in upon it, it is prepared to hope in the Lord, and is fearless of such evils and undisturbed. until it shall look down upon its enemies." Such a conviction. uttered in such burning language, lifted the same cloud of darkness and fear from the hearts of the common people of that day, and was welcomed as good tidings of great joy by multitudes of burdened and terror-stricken hearts. Nothing is more characteristic of Luther's preaching, and of the Reformers who follow him, than the sense they display that they have before them souls "weary and heavy-laden." Their language presupposes the prevalence of that atmosphere of spiritual apprehension and gloom already described, and their grand aim is to lead men out of it into the joy and peace and liberty of the Gospel. The consequence is that

a new confidence, hope, and energy is infused into the moral and spiritual world of that day. The tone of unbounded joy and hope which marks the earliest Christian literature, particularly in the Apostolic Fathers, reappears in such a treatise as we are considering, and in the whole religious thought of the Reformers; and it would almost seem as if the long agony of the Middle Ages had but enhanced the joy of the final deliverance.

It is unnecessary, for our present purpose, to dwell long upon the second point of the treatise, in which Luther illustrates his second proposition: that "a Christian man is the most dutiful servant of all and subject to every one." It will be enough to observe that Luther is just as earnest in insisting upon the application of faith in the duties of charity and, self-discipline, as upon the primary importance of faith itself. The spirit of faith, he says, "applies itself with cheerfulness and zeal" to restrain and repress the impulses of the lower nature. "Here works begin; here a man must not take his ease: here he must give heed to exercise his body by fastings, watchings, labour, and other reasonable discipline. so that it may be subdued to the spirit, and obey and conform itself to the inner man and to faith." Similarly he will give himself up to the service of others, and it is partly with a view to rendering them such service that he will discipline his body and keep it in due energy and soundness. He starts from the belief that God, without merit on his part, has of His pure and free mercy bestowed on him, an unworthy creature, all the riches of justification and salvation in Christ, so that he is no longer in want of anything except of faith to believe that this is so. For such a Father then, who has overwhelmed him with these inestimable riches of His, must be not freely, cheerfully, and from voluntary zeal, do all that he knows will be pleasing to Him and acceptable in His sight? "I will therefore," he says, "give myself as a sort of Christ to my neighbour, as Christ has given Himself to me; and will do nothing in this life except what I see will be needful, advantageous, and wholesome for my neighbour, since by faith I abound in all good things in Christ." These practical considerations will afford the measure by which a man determines the discipline to which he subjects himself and the ceremonies which he observes. They will not be observed for their own sake, but as means to an end, and therefore will never be practised in excess, as though there were some merit in the performance of them. They are like the

scaffoldings of builders, valuable only as a temporary assistance in the construction of the building itself. "We do not condemn works and ceremonies; nay, we set the highest value on them. We only condemn that opinion of works which regards them as constituting true righteousness." In asserting these principles, Luther was certainly putting the axe to the root of the portentous growth of ascetic and ceremonial observances which prevailed in his day, and which were too generally regarded as of the very essence of religion. He enabled men, as it were, to look on such ceremonies from the outside, as a thing external to them, and to reduce or rearrange them with a simple view to practical usefulness. But no more earnest exhortations to due self-discipline, and to true charity could well be found than are contained in the second part of the De Libertate.

It will be evident, however, what a powerful instrument of reformation was placed in men's hands by the principles of this treatise. Every Christian man, by virtue of the promise of Christ. was proclaimed free, so far as the eternal necessities of his soul were concerned, from all external and human conditions whatever. Nothing, indeed, was further from Luther's intention or inclination than the overthrow of existing order, or the disparagement of any existing authority which could be reasonably justified. His letter to Pope Leo, prefixed to the treatise we have been considering, shows that, while denouncing unsparingly the abuses of the Court of Rome, he was sincere in his deference to the see of Rome itself. principle of Justification by Faith enabled him to proclaim that if that see or any existing Church authority misused its power, and refused to reform abuses, then, in the last resort, the soul of man In that day at all events—and perhaps in our could do without it. own to a greater extent than is sometimes supposed—this conviction supplied the fulcrum which was essential for any effectual reforming movement. As is observed by the Church historian Gieseler, in his admirable account of the early history of the Reformation, the papacy had ever found its strongest support in the people at large. In spite of all the discontent and disgust provoked by the corruption of the Church and the clergy, an enormous though indefinite authority was still popularly attributed to the Pope and the ecclesiastical hierarchy. The Pope was believed to be in some sense or other the supreme administrator of spiritual powers which were effectual in the next world as well as in the present; and consequently

when any controversy with the Church came to a crisis men shrank from direct defiance of the papal authority. They did not feel that they had any firm ground on which they could stand if they incurred its formal condemnation; and thus it always had at its command, in the strongest possible sense, the ultima ratio of rulers. The convictions to which Luther had been led at once annihilated these pretensions. "One thing, and one alone," he declared, "is necessary for life, justification, and Christian liberty; and that is the most holv word of God, the Gospel of Christ." As we have seen, he proclaimed it "for certain, and firmly established, that the soul can do without everything except the word of God." It is the mission of the Christian ministry, in its administration of the word and sacraments, to convey this Gospel to the soul, and to arouse a corresponding faith. But the promise is not annexed indissolubly to that administration, and the only invariable rule of salvation is that "the just shall live by faith." By this principle, that vague fear of the spiritual powers of the hierarchy was removed, and men were endowed with real Christian liberty.

But the principle went still further; for it vindicated for the laitv the possession of spiritual faculties and powers the same in kind as those of the clergy. All Christian men are admitted to the privilege of priesthood, and are "worthy to appear before God to pray for others, and to teach one another mutually the things which are of God." In case of necessity, as is universally recognised, baptism can be validly administered by lay hands; and English divines, of the most unimpeachable authority on the subject, have similarly recognised that the valid administration of the Holy Communion is not dependent on the ordination of the minister by episcopal authority.\* Luther urges accordingly that all Christians possess virtually the capacities which, as a matter of order, are commonly restricted to the clergy. Whether that restriction is properly dependent upon regular devolution from apostolic authority, or whether the ministerial commission can be sufficiently conferred by appointment from the Christian community or congregation as a whole, becomes on this principle a secondary point. Luther prononnced with the utmost decision in favour of the latter alternative; but the essential element of his teaching is independent of this

<sup>\*</sup> See, for instance, Bishop Cosin's Works, Appendix, vol. i., p. 31, in the Library of Anglo-Catholic Theology.

question. By whatever right the exercise of the ministry may be restricted to a particular body of men, what he asserted was that the functions of the clergy are simply ministerial, and that they do but exercise, on behalf of all, powers which all virtually possess. This principle Luther proceeded to assert in the first of the treatises translated in this volume: the Address to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation respecting the Reformation of the Christian Estate. This treatise is perhaps the one which appealed most widely and directly to the German nation at large. Luther completed it at the very moment when the bull of excommunication against him was being prepared, and it contributed, perhaps more than anything, to paralyse the influence of that bull with the mass of the people and their lay leaders. It appeared in August, 1520, and by the 18th of that month more than four thousand copies had been already dispersed—a prodigious circulation, considering the state of literature at that day. The reader, however, will not be surprised at this popularity of the treatise, when he sees with what astonishing vigour, frankness, humour, good sense, and at the same time intense moral indignation. Luther denounces in it the corruptions of the Church, and the injuries inflicted by the Court of Rome on the German people. So tremendous an indictment. sustained with such intense and concentrated force, could hardly be paralleled in literature. The truth of the charges alleged in it could be amply sustained by reference to Erasmus's works alone. particularly to the Encomium Moriæ; but Erasmus lacked alike the moral energy necessary to rouse the action of the laity, and the spiritual insight necessary to justify that action. Luther possessed both; and it was the combination of the two which rendered him so mighty a force. It is this perhaps which essentially distinguishes him from previous reformers. They attacked particular errors and abuses, and deserve unbounded honour for the protests they raised; and Wycliffe, in particular, merits the homage of Englishmen as one of the chief motive powers in the first reforming movement. But they did not assert, at least with sufficient clearness, the central principles without which all reform was impracticable—that of the equal rights of laity and clergy, and that of the soul's independence of all human power, by virtue of the truth of justification by faith. Luther's doctrine of Christian liberty was the emancipation alike of individuals and of the laity at large. It vindicated for the whole lay estate, and for all ranks and conditions of lay life, a spiritual

dignity, and a place in the spiritual life of the Church. It restored a sense of independent responsibility to all natural authorities; and it reasserted the sacredness of all natural relations. Practically, even if not theoretically, the Roman system had disparaged the ordinary relations of life as compared with the so-called "religious" or ecclesiastical. Luther, by placing all men and women on the same spiritual standing-ground, swept away any such priviléges; and gave men as clear a conscience, and as great a sense of spiritual dignity, in the ordinary duties of marriage, of fatherhood, of government, and in the common offices of life, as in any ecclesiastical order.

The Address to the Nobility of the German Nation exhibits these principles, and their application to the practical problems of the day, in the most vigorous and popular form; and if some expressions appear too sweeping and violent, due allowance must be made for the necessity which Luther must have felt of appealing with the utmost breadth and force to the popular mind. But it remains to consider a further aspect of these principles which is illustrated by the third treatise translated in this volume: that on the Babulonish Captivity of the Church. Luther, as has been seen, was appealing to laity and clergy alike, on the ground of their spiritual freedom, to abolish the abuses of the Roman Church. But it became at once a momentous question by what principles the exercise of that liberty was to be guided, and within what limits it was to be exerted. In a very short time fanatics sprang up who claimed to exercise such liberty without any restrictions at all, and who refused to recognise any standard but that of their own supposed inspiration. But the service which Luther rendered in repelling such abuses of his great doctrine was only second to that of establishing the doctrine itself. The rule of faith and practice on which he insisted was, indeed, necessarily involved in his primary principle. Faith, as has been seen, was with him no abstract quality, but was simply a response to the word and promise of God. That word, accordingly, in its various forms, was in Luther's mind the sole creative power of the Christian life. In the form of a simple promise, it is the basis of justification and of our whole spiritual vitality: and similarly in its more general form. as recorded in the Holy Scriptures, it contains all truths, alike of belief and of practice, which are essential to salvation here and hereafter. The word of God, in whatever form, whether a simple promise or a promise embodied in a sacrament, or a series of revelations made by God's Spirit to the soul of man, as recorded in the Bible, is the grand reality which, in Luther's view, dwarfed all other realities on earth. It must needs do so, if it be a reality at all; but scarcely any one has grasped this truth with such intense insight as Luther. Consequently, in his view, the Anabaptist, who held himself emancipated from the authority of God's word on the one side, was as grievously in error as the Romanist on the other, who superseded its authority by that of the Church; and in applying his great principle and working out the Reformation, Luther's task consisted in upholding the due authority of the Scriptures against the extremes on both sides.

Now in the treatise on the Babylonish Captivity of the Church he applies this rule, in connection with his main principle, to the elaborate sacramental system of the Church of Rome. Of the seven sacraments recognised by that Church, be recognises, strictly speaking, only two: Baptism and the Lord's Supper; and the connection of this conclusion with the central truth he was asserting is a point of deep interest. Here, too, the one consideration which, in his view, overpowers every other is the supreme import of a promise or word of God. But there are two institutions under the Gospel which are distinguished from all others by a visible sign, instituted by Christ Himself, as a pledge of the Divine promise. A sign so instituted, and with such a purpose, constitutes a peculiarly precious form of those Divine promises which are the life of the soul; and, for the same reason that the Divine word and the Divine promise are supreme in all other instances, so must these be supreme and unique among ceremonies. The distinction, by which the two sacraments acknowledged by the Reformed Churches are separated from the remaining five of the Roman Church, was thus no question of names. but of things. It was a question whether a ceremony instituted by Christ's own command, and embodying His own promise in a visible pledge, could for a moment be put on the same level with ceremonies, however edifying, which had been established solely by the authority or custom of the Church. It was of the essence of Luther's teaching to assert a paramount distinction between these classes of ceremonies, and to elevate the two Divine pledges of forgiveness and spiritual life to a height immeasurably superior to all other institutions. He hesitates, indeed, whether to allow an exception in favour of absolution, as conveying undoubtedly a direct promise from Christ; but he finally decides against it, on the ground that it is without any visible and Divinely appointed sign, and is after all only an application of the Sacrament of baptism.

If, moreover, the force of his argument on this subject is to be apprehended, due attention must be paid to the efficacy which he thus attributes to the two sacraments. The cardinal point on which he insists in respect to them is that they are direct pledges from God, through Christ, and thus contain the whole virtue of the most solemn Divine promises. They are, as it were, the sign and seal of those promises. They are messages from God, not mere acts of devotion on the part of man. In baptism the point of importance is not that men dedicate themselves or their children to Him, but that He, through His minister, gives them a promise and a pledge of His forgiveness and of His fatherly goodwill. Similarly in the Holy Communion the most important point is not the offering made on the part of man, but the promise and assurance of communion with the body and blood of Christ made on the part of God. It is this which constitutes the radical distinction between the Lutheran and the so-called Zwinglian view of the sacraments. Under the latter view they are ceremonies which embody and arouse due feelings on the part of men. On the former principle, they are ceremonies which embody direct messages and promises from God.

It may be worth while to observe in passing the position which Luther assumes towards the doctrine of Transubstantiation. What he is concerned to maintain is that there is a real presence in the Sacrament. All he is concerned to deny is that transubstantiation is the necessary explanation of that presence. In other words, it is not necessary to believe in transubstantiation in order to believe in the Real Presence. There seems a clear distinction between this view and the formal doctrine of consubstantiation as afterwards elaborated by Lutheran divines; and Luther's caution, at least in this treatise, in dealing with so difficult a point, is eminently characteristic of the real moderation with which he formed his views. as distinguished from the energy with which he asserted them. Another interesting point in this treatise is the urgency with which he protests against the artificial restraints upon the freedom of marriage which had been imposed by the Roman see. It would have been too much to expect that in applying, single-handed, to so difficult a subject as marriage, the rule of rejecting every restriction not expressly declared in the Scriptures, Luther should

have avoided mistakes. But they are at least insignificant in comparison with the value of the principle he asserted that all questions of the marriage relation should be subjected to the authority of Holy Scripture alone. That principle provided, by its inherent force, a remedy for any errors in particulars which Luther or any individual divine might commit. The Roman principle, on the contrary, admitted of the most scandalous and unlimited elasticity; and of all the charges brought by Roman controversialists against Luther's conduct, none is marked by such effrontery as their accusations on this point. While there are few dispensations which their Church is not prepared, for what it considers due causes, to allow, Luther recalled men's consciences to the Divine law on the subject. He reasserted the true dignity and sanctity of the marriage relation, and established the rule of Holy Scripture as the standard for its due control.

Such are the main truths asserted in the treatises translated in this volume, and it is but recognising a historical fact to designate them "first principles of the Reformation." From them, and by means of them, the whole of the subsequent movement was worked out. They were applied in different countries in different ways: and we are justly proud in this country of the wisdom and moderation exhibited by our Reformers. But it ought never to be forgotten that for the assertion of the principles themselves we. like the rest of Europe, are indebted to the genius and the courage of Luther. All of those principles—justification by faith, Christian liberty, the spiritual rights and powers of the laity, the true character of the sacraments, the supremacy of the Holy Scriptures as the supreme standard of belief and practice—were asserted by the Reformer, as the treatises in this volume bear testimony, almost simultaneously, in the latter half of the year 1520. At the time he asserted them, the Roman Church was still in full power; and in the next year he had to face the whole authority of the papacy and of the empire, and to decide whether, at the risk of a fate like that of Huss, he would stand by these truths. These were the truths—the cardinal principles of the whole subsequent Reformation-which he was called on to abandon at Worms; and his refusal to act against his conscience at once translated them into vivid action and reality. It was one thing for Englishmen, several decades after 1520, to apply these principles with the wisdom and moderation of which we are proud: it was another thing to be

the Horatius of that vital struggle. These grand facts speak for themselves, and need only to be understood in order to justify the honours now paid to the Reformer's memory.

It may not, however, be out of place to dwell in conclusion upon one essential characteristic of the Reformer's position, which is in danger at the present day of being disregarded. The general effect of this teaching upon the condition of the world is evident. It restored to the people at large, to rulers and to ruled, to clergy and to laity alike, complete independence of the existing ecclesiastical system. within the limits of the revelation contained in the Holy Scriptures. In a word, in Luther's own phrase, it established Christian Liberty. But the qualification is emphatic, and it would be to misunderstand Luther utterly if it were disregarded. Attempts are made at the present day to represent him as a pioneer of absolute liberty. and to treat it as a mere accident of his teaching and his system that he stopped short where he did. But, on the contrary, the limitation is of the very essence of his teaching, because that teaching is based on the supremacy and sufficiency of the Divine word and the Divine promise. If there were no such word and promise, no such Divine revelation, and no living God to bring it home to men's hearts and to enforce His own laws. Luther felt that his protest against existing authority, usurped and tyrannical as it might be, would have been perilous in the extreme. But when men shrank from the boldness of his proclamation, and urged that he was overthrowing the foundations of society, his reply was that he was recalling them to the true foundations of society, and that God, if they would have faith in Him, would protect His own word and will. The very essence of his teaching is summed up in the lines of his great Psalm.

> "Das Wort sie sollen lassen stalu Und kein Dank dazu haben, Er ist bei uns wohl auf dem Pian Mit seinem Geist und Gaben."

Luther believed that God had laid down the laws which were essential to the due guidance of human nature, that He had prescribed sufficiently the limits within which that nature might range, and had indicated the trees of which it could not safely eat. To erect any rules beyond these as of general obligation, to restrict the free play of nature by any other limitations, he treated as an

unjust violation of liberty, which would provoke a dangerous reaction. But let men be brought face to face with God, and with His reasonable and merciful laws, let them be taught that He is their Father, that all His restrictions are for their benefit, all His punishments for their reformation, all His restraints on liberty for their ultimate good, and you have then established an authority which cannot be shaken, and under which human nature may be safely left to develop. In this faith, but in this alone, he let loose men's natural instincts; he taught men that married life, and lay life, and all lawful occupations, were holy and Divine, provided they were carried on in faith and in obedience to God's will. was a burst of new life wherever the Reformation was adopted. alike in national energies, in literature, in all social developments, and in natural science. But while we prize and celebrate the liberty thus won, let us beware of forgetting, or allowing others to forget, that it is essentially a Christian liberty, and that no other liberty is really free. Luther's whole work, and his whole power, lay in his recognition of our personal relation to God, and of a direct revelation, promise, and command, given to us by God. Any influences, under whatever colour, which tend to obscure the reality of that revelation, which would substitute for it any mere natural laws or forces, are undoing Luther's work, and contradicting his most essential principles. If he was a great Reformer, it was because he was a great divine; if he was a friend of the people, it was because he was the friend of God.

# THE POLITICAL COURSE OF THE REFORMATION IN GERMANY

By Professor BUCHHEIM

## The Political Course of the Reformation in Germany (1517—1546)

T

THERE is hardly any instance on record in the annals of history of a single peaceful event having exercised such a lasting and baneful influence on the destinies of a nation, as the coronation of Charles the Great at Rome towards the close of the eighth century. By placing the imperial crown on the head of the then most powerful ruler in Christendom, Pope Leo III. symbolically established a spiritual supremacy over the whole Christian world, but more especially over Germany proper. It is true it was alleged that the new Cæsar was to be considered the secular head of the Christian world by the side of the spiritual head; but as it was the latter who crowned the former, it was evident that the sovereign pontiff arrogated to himself superior authority over the sovereign monarch.

Another disadvantage which resulted from that coronation was the peculiar nature of the newly created dignity, which became manifest by the designation, applied to Germany, of the "Holy Roman Empire of the German nation." This self-contradictory title was intended to convey the notion that the German emperors were—through transmission from the Greeks—the heirs and successors of the Roman Cæsars. They were not to be German sovereigns of the German monarchy, but Roman emperors of the German empire.\*

It is true the ancient German institution of royalty was not actually abolished, but it was so much eclipsed by the more pompous, though recent, dignity that in the course of time its former existence was almost entirely forgotten, or at least looked

<sup>\*</sup> Cp. pp. 235 sq., in this volume.

upon with contempt, so much so that a German sovereign of the fourteenth century—Henry VII.—considered it an insult to be addressed as "King of Germany," instead of as "King of the Romans." Even the German Electoral Princes claimed to exercise the function of "Roman Senators." The foreign stamp thus imprinted upon Germany, at the time when she had only just begun to emerge from a state of barbarism, had therefore a most pernicious influence on the Germans, diverting as it did the free development of their national character from its natural course. Thus it may be truly said that on Christmas Eve of the year 799 Germany was conquered a second time, if not by the Romans, still by Rome.

It was not long before the conflict between the two principal elements in the government of the world—the secular and the clerical—broke out in the two-headed empire. This antagonism became manifest even under Charles the Great himself, in spite of the splendour of his reign and the firmness and circumspection of his government. The encroachments of the clergy soon showed in what sense they understood the division of power. It was the practical application of the old fable about the lion's share. Everything was to be done for the clergy, but without it nothing. This ambitious aim revealed itself more openly and effectively under the descendants of Charles the Great, the internal dissensions of whose reigns greatly facilitated the victory of the clerical order in their interference in secular matters.

Under the powerful rule of Henry I. (919-936), surnamed "The Fowler," or more appropriately "the founder of the German Empire," and also under the still more splendid reign of his son, Otho the Great (936-973), nay, even under the first Frankish emperors (1024-1056), the authority of the Roman hierarchy was considerably diminished, while, on the other hand, the influence of the German clergy at home had greatly increased, which circumstance was a powerful factor in the conflict between the iron Pope Gregory VII, and the impetuous and vacillating Emperor Henry IV. (1056-1106), and brought about, in conjunction with the highhanded dealings of the self-dubbed "Roman Senators" of Germany. the degradation of the German empire. The papacy was now in the zenith of its power and glory, so that Gregory VII, could boastingly compare the Pope to the sun, and the Emperor to the moon: and although Henry IV. ultimately succeeded in taking

revenge for his humiliation at Canossa, he never could wine out its shame, and, what is more, he was unable to suppress or eradicate the ideas represented by his defeated enemy, which had taken a firm hold on the minds of men. People believed in the supremacy of the Pope even when he was driven from his seat of government: for his realm was of a spiritual kind, and he had his invisible throne, as it were, in the hearts of Christian believers. An erring pope was still the visible representative of the Church, and the priests for the most part remained faithful to him under all circumstances. Such, however, was not the case with the emperors and the princes. In the first instance the former had no absolute power; secondly, they were elected by men who considered themselves their equals: and lastly, from the moment they lost their throne-no matter what the reasons were—they ceased to have a claim on the obedience of the people. The priests wished for a powerful pope, because he was the natural guardian of their interests; whilst the German princes objected to a powerful emperor, because they trembled for their own independence and local authority.

If the German emperors had not been constantly chasing the phantom of royal dignity in Italy, in order to be-plausibly at least—entitled to the vainglorious designation of "Roman kings." they might have directed their whole energy to the consolidation of their power at home, and have held their own against popes and Prince-Electors, Unfortunately, however, they were constantly attracted by the delusive brilliancy of possessions in Italy, as if by an ignis fatuus; thus leading on the best forces of Germany to moral and physical ruin, and leaving their native country an easy prey to scheming priests and ambitious nobles. The result was that, towards the end of the eleventh century, the Emperor of Germany had neither any influence on the priests, who now depended entirely upon Rome, nor any power over the nobles, whose fiefs had become hereditary, nor did he possess any considerable domains or actual revenue in his imperial capacity. He had nothing but the high-sounding titles of successor of the Cæsars and of ruler of the whole Christian world.

As a matter of course, under these circumstances all progress of national life and culture was impeded. It did not spring spontaneously from within, nor did it receive any impulse from without. The Germans did not much benefit intellectually in any way by their contact with the Italians. The conquered have oftentimes become

the teachers of their conquerors, but only when the latter settled in the vanquished country and made it their home. The German hordes, however, who crossed the Alps at the behests of their sovereigns, and urged on by the desire for adventure, warfare, and rapine, never permanently settled, as a body, in the flowery plains and flourishing towns of Italy. Numbers of those who survived the sanguinary battles fought in Italy perished in the unaccustomed climate; the others returned home, frequently enriched by plunder and generally tainted by depraved morals. Thus the Germans did not even derive that small advantage from their connection with the Italians—who at that time did not themselves possess any literature or culture in the highest sense of the word—which a permanent settlement in Italy would have conferred on them.

The intellectual life of the Germans did not begin to flourish before the times of the Hohenstaufen (1138—1254). Unfortunately both Frederick I. (Barbarossa) and Frederick II. were almost constantly engaged in warfare with the popes and the Italians, and both monarchs, especially the latter, utterly neglected the internal affairs of Germany, which country became a prey of the sanguinary contest between Guelphs and Ghibellines. The result was that Conrad IV., the last king from the Hohenstaufen dynasty in Germany, ruled without even a shadow of royal authority, and on his death, in 1254, the dissolution of the old German empire may be said to have been complete.

During the lawless times of the Interregnum (1254-1273) the power of the German princes consolidated itself more and more amidst the general anarchy. Order was restored, however, by Rudolf von Hapsburg (1273-1291), who concerned himself with the affairs of the country only. He had a right notion of what a king of Germany should be, and emancipated her-though temporarily only-from the fatal connection as an empire with Rome. More than half a century later the Electoral Princes went a step further in this direction, by the formation of the Kurverein (1338), or "Election Union," of Rhens, when the principle was adopted that the election of German kings depended upon the Electoral Princes alone, and that the Pope had no voice whatever in the matter. This patriotic proceeding received, however, a counter-check in the unworthy dealings of the mercenary Charles IV. (1347-1378), who repaired to Rome to receive there the crown from the Pope. He little thought that by resuming the connection with Rome he conjured up the greatest danger for his son and successor, Wenceslaus, who was deposed through the conspiracy of Boniface IX. with the priests, and for his own influence over the Electoral Princes.

In the course of time a new power—the third Estate—arose in Germany: namely, the middle classes, as represented by the thriving cities of the empire. The burghers generally sided with the emperors, to whom they looked up as their natural protectors against the exactions of priests and nobles; but being imbued with a true mercantile spirit, they did not give away their goodwill for nothing; they asked for sundry privileges as compensating The emperors had therefore now to contend against three powerful elements: the clergy, the nobles, and the burghers. The first were, through their chief representatives—as we have seen-at all times the most dangerous antagonists to imperial authority, and generally achieved the victory in their contests with it. It was only during the time in which the papacy had transferred its seat of government to Avignon that the Romish hierarchy received a check, chiefly in consequence of the depravity of the Papal Court and its surroundings. With the return of the popes to Rome by the decree of the Council of Constance (1414-1418), the papacy recovered its former ground; but this recovery of the lost authority was external only, for with the cruel execution of John Huss-which no sensible Roman Catholic ever thought of justifying-the papacy received a most fatal blow. That scandalous crime could not have been committed at a more unpropitious time both for the Roman hierarchy and the dignity of the councils, which latter pretended, at times at least, to have received their mandate immediately from Christ, as the sovereign representatives of the universal Roman Catholic Church. reforms in the Church, advocated by the celebrated French theologians Cardinal Peter d'Ailly and Chancellor John Gerson, had already met with the approval of numerous thinking men, and the doctrines of Wycliffe had also found, through the teaching of John Huss and his disciples, a sympathetic echo in the hearts of a large portion of the Christian community. Had the Council of Constance shown itself, not magnanimous, but merely just, towards the Bohemian Reformer, the ascendency of the councils, in general, over the popes, would probably have been for ever established; whilst, as it was, the next great Council—at Basle (1431—1449)— had to give way to the Pope, and the Roman hierarchy was once more re-established in its former strength and power.

The results of the councils of Constance and Basle were, however, particularly disastrous to Germany. The former brought about the terrible wars of the Hussites, while the latter was the indirect cause of placing the imperial power in the hands of Frederick III. (1440-1493), who was a staunch adherent of the Pope and delivered over to him the few rights and privileges which were still left to the German empire. The imperial dignity existed now in name only; for Frederick, who, as Heeren says, "had slumbered away more than half a century on the throne," cared so little for Germany proper that he remained absent from it for the space of full twenty-seven years. No wonder then that, whilst the imperial authority sank to the lowest level, the papal supremacy rose higher than ever, and the Emperor became nothing more than the satellite of the Pope. Under these circumstances the German Princes began to raise the voice of opposition against their sluggish head; but as he was supported by the influential and subtle Pius II., all their efforts to make a stand against the encroachments of the Church were in vain.

A new order of things arose, however, when Maximilian, the son of Frederick III., was elected "Roman king" in 1486 by the Electoral Princes. The young King acquiesced in the constitutional demands of the Estates for concessions in return for various grants. Feuds were abolished for ever, an independent Chamber of Justice, Kammergericht, was established, and Germany received a new imperial constitution. Nevertheless there were almost constant conflicts between the adventurous Maximilian and the Imperial Estates, so that the national unity, earnestly aimed at by both parties, could not be effected, in consequence of the absence of any connecting link between them. The only step which Maximilian took for the partial emancipation of Germany was his assumption of the title of "elected King of Rome" without being crowned by the Pope, and what is more, he also adopted the ancient title of "King of Germany." This designation was, however, not intended to convey at the same time the notion of a severance from Rome in spiritual matters. This was now soon to be accomplished, but not by one bearing the imaginary crown of the Cæsars, nor by the decrees of a stately assembly. It was destined for one lowly born to break the fatal bondage in which Germany had been for centuries kept in durance vile by Rome.

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One of the few blessings which Germany derived in former times from her otherwise deplorable decentralisation was the establishment throughout the country of educational and other beneficial institutions, which even found their way into the most obscure nooks and corners, where under other political conditions no Government would have thought of founding any establishment of the kind. This is the reason why culture and learning-but more especially the latter-spread more generally in Germany than in other countries. What great centralised Government would ever have chosen the insignificant place of Wittenberg, which resembled more a village than a town, as the seat of a university. and this, too, by the side of the universities of Leipzig and Erfurt, which already enjoyed a high reputation, and were well endowed? Yet this was done by the Prince Elector of Saxony, Frederick, surnamed the Wise. He had himself received a scholarly education. and it was his legitimate ambition to see his petty electoral principality adorned by a high-school. The Elector himself was, as is well known, very poor. The only means at his disposal for such a learned foundation were the proceeds from the sale of indulgences in his electorate which had been collected in 1501 for the purpose of a war against the Turks. Those moneys were deposited with him, and he refused to give them up to the Pope even at the intercession of the Emperor, unless they were employed for the purpose for which they had been collected. The war against the Turks was not undertaken at the time, and so Frederick employed the money for the endowment of the new university. It was also a significant fact that Wittenberg was the first German university which did not receive its "charter" from the Pope. but from the then Emperor of Germany: Maximilian I. The Prince Elector hit further upon the expedient of connecting several clerical benefices with some of the professorial chairs, and he hoped, moreover, that the members of the Augustinian order, settled at Wittenberg, would furnish some teachers for the learned institution, which was established by him in 1502. The connection of the new university with that order was in many respects an intimate one. It was specially dedicated to St. Augustine; and

Staupitz, the vicar of that order at Erfurt, was the first Dean of the Theological Faculty. Through his influence it was that several Augustinian monks received a call to the University, and among those who responded to it was the monk MARTIN LUTHER.

The early history of the poor miner's son may, in fact, serve as an illustration of the wholesome spread of education throughout Germany. Poor as his parents were, he had received a liberal education, and became, in consequence of the religious turn of his mind, a monk. It was then in his double capacity of scholar and priest that he became connected with the university of Wittenberg (1508), and composed, and sent forth into the world, his famous Ninety-five Theses, against the wholesale disposal of indulgences (Oct. 31st. 1517). Luther issued his challenge to the theological world from religious motives only, and it so happened that it fully coincided with the political views of the Elector; but, to the credit of both prince and monk, it should be remembered that there was no mutual understanding between them. They had never seen each other before the publication of the Ninety-five Theses, nor did they correspond on the subject, although they were of one accord about it. Frederick always viewed it with disfavour, and begrudged that such large amounts of money should be sent to Rome under the cloke of indulgences; and we have seen how he had employed the proceeds resulting from their former sale. Now, however, he must have objected still more to the attempt to drain his poor country, because the object of the sale was not a holy war-if ever a war can be so called-but the alleged erection of St. Peter's Church. If such was really the case, it might be truly said that Leo X, undermined the chair of St. Peter for the sake of the Church of St. Peter. But people were incredulous. It was whispered that the Pope required the money for the benefit of his family. Another disagreeable element in the whole transaction was the then commonly known fact that the Archbishop of Mentz had actually "farmed" the sale of the indulgences in his own episcopal territory, on condition that one half of the proceeds should fall to his share. He had promised to bear the expenses of obtaining the Pall himself, and having borrowed a considerable amount of money from the celebrated house of Fugger, he allowed their agents to travel about in company with the notorious Tetzel as commercial controllers, and to take possession of half of the proceeds as they came in. Through this and other circumstances the affair assumed the ugly aspect of a very worldly and mercenary transaction, carried on in the meanest spirit. There was, besides, a tension between Frederick and the Prince Elector of Mentz; it was therefore natural that the step which Luther had taken should meet with his tacit approval. More than this Luther did not expect, for he well knew the lethargic character of Frederick; but under the circumstances that was quite sufficient, for the latter granted him shelter and protection, in spite of the urgent entreaties of zealots to deliver up the bold Augustinian monk at once to Rome.

The defence of the Ninety-five Theses, which Luther transmitted to the Pope, was of no avail; for Leo X., urged by the fanatical Dominican Prierias, so notorious from the Reuchlin trial, cited the Wittenberg monk before an inquisitorial tribunal at Rome. Now for the first time it was seen how fortunate it was for Luther and the cause he defended that he had found a prudent and humane protector in the prince who exercised sovereign power in his own limited territory. To repair to Rome under the accusation of heresy would have been like plunging with open eyes into an abyss. Confiding and courageous as Luther was, he saw this himself very clearly, and it was at his request that the Saxon Court preacher, Spalatin, who was one of his most constant and zealous friends, persuaded the Emperor Maximilian as well as the Prince Elector-both of whom were at that time (1518) at the Diet of Augsburg—that the accused monk should be arraigned before a German tribunal. Frederick readily acquiesced, although, as he repeatedly declared, he did not fully share the views of Luther; and the Emperor also consented, partly because he required the moral support of the Prince Elector at the approaching election of a successor in the imperial dignity, and partly because he hoped one day to make use of the enlightened monk in his endeavour to bring about the much-needed reforms in the Church. In this sense it undoubtedly was that he said to Frederick's councillor, Pfeffinger, "Luther is sure to begin a game with the priests. The Prince Elector should take good care of the monk, as he might one day be of use." It seems therefore that both friends and foes recognised at an early stage the great capacity which still lay hidden in the insignificant-looking monk. The Papal Nuncio, Cajetan, discovered at once, in his interview with him at Augsburg (1518), that he had to do with a superior power, when he heard the conclusive and thoughtful arguments of

the Augustinian monk and saw the Divine fire of genius flashing from his eyes; and his friends already considered him of importance sufficient to induce them to bring about his sudden escape at night time.

Urged by the wrathful Papal Legate not to disgrace the honour of his electoral house by giving shelter to a heretic friar. Frederick. encouraged by his own university, drily replied that, as no scholar, either in his own or in foreign lands, had as yet refuted the theories of Luther, he would continue to give him shelter until that was This was no subterfuge on the part of Frederick. It was the key-note of his conduct, from the beginning of the Reformation to the end of his own life, to have the teachings of Luther properly tested by a learned discussion. The Pope, being desirous of securing the Elector's co-operation at the impending imperial election. humoured his learned whim, and tried to win him over by unctuous kindliness. Frederick was still a staunch Roman Catholic. He possessed a regular treasure of reliques, partly brought home from the Holy Land, which were displayed for the spiritual benefit of the devout on certain occasions; and it was known that he was vearning for the acquisition of the Golden Rose. Leo X. bestowed therefore on him that mark of apostolic favour, and despatched to him as his nuncio the Elector's own agent at Rome, Carl von Miltitz, a native of Saxony.

What the imperious haughtiness of the pompous Papal Legate was unable to achieve was, partly at least, effected by the shrewd bonhomie of Miltitz. He imploringly appealed to Luther's German good-nature not to create any scandal in the Church; and after having agreed that the controversy should be submitted for investigation to the Archbishop of Treves and the Bishop of Würzburg, he obtained the promise of Luther to observe perfect silence on religious matters provided his enemies would do the same, and to write an apologetic letter to the Pope. It is well known how badly the antagonists of Luther kept faith with him, and that he was obliged in consequence to break his conditionally promised silence and to take part in the great public disputation at Leipzig in 1519. He now had to vindicate against Dr. Eck, his most bitter opponent, not only his own honour, but also that of his university, and this circumstance formed the subject of his justification before the Prince Elector, to whose personal esteem he attached the highest value. When, however, that disputation ended, as is the case with

most learned discussions, in something like a drawn battle, Luther was driven to a declaration virtually involving his secession from Rome.

#### III

About the time when the celebrated disputation was going on at Leipzig, in which two peasants' sons-for Dr. Eck was, like Martin Luther, the son of a peasant—took the most prominent part, another momentous gathering took place at Frankfort-on-the-The Emperor Maximilian had died on January 12th, 1519. without being able to secure the succession in the royal dignity to his grandson Charles. Archduke of Austria and King of Spain and Naples. More than five months elapsed before the Electoral Princes assembled for the election of a new emperor, and during that interval the "Vicariate of the Empire," as it was styled, was nut into the hands of Lewis V. of the Palatinate and of Frederick the Wise, in accordance with a provision of the "Golden Bull." which placed the regency of the empire during a vacancy in the hands of the rulers of those electorates for the time being. The circumstance that the seat of the Imperial Government was at Wittenberg during the present short Interregnum bestowed not a little lustre both on Frederick and his university; but the work of the incipient Reformation was not particularly promoted by it. because it coincided with the truce which Luther faithfully kept until it was faithlessly broken by his antagonists.

There were three aspirants to the imperial throne of Germany: first and foremost, Maximilian's grandson Charles, Archduke of Austria; secondly, Francis I., King of France; and thirdly, King Henry VIII. of England. The last-named monarch did not, however, seriously press his candidature. It was only when he saw the two other sovereigns contending for the prize that he deemed the moment favourable for securing it to himself. When he received, however, the practical hint that the barren honour would not be worth the trouble and the necessary expenditure, and when, moreover, it was taken into account that since the introduction of Christianity into England this country did in no way belong to the "Holy Roman Empire," he prudently retired from all competition. Not so the ambitious Francis I., who spared neither promises nor bribes to secure his election, and obtained a party among the Electoral Princes.

If it should be asked how it was actually possible that foreign kings ever thought of aspiring to a throne to which they had not even the shadow of a claim, the reason must be found in the abovementioned circumstance that the imperial dignity of Germany was not a national institution, and that any Christian prince might think himself justified in aspiring to the crown of the "Holy Roman Empire," accidentally bestowed upon the "German nation." Were they not aware that in the thirteenth century two ecclesiastical Electoral Princes raised to the German throne Richard of Cornwall and King Alfonso of Castile respectively, in considera-And had not the French king sufficient tion of great bribes? wealth to buy the votes of both the secular and ecclesiastic Electoral Princes? He had, moreover, the precedent before him that Philip VI. of Valois had, about a century before, endeavoured to transfer the dignity of the "Holy Roman Empire" from the Germans to the "Franks," to whom it originally belonged.

Both the French and the Austrians lavishly distributed money in . Frederick the Wise alone kept his hands pure, and all directions. he strictly prohibited even his officials and servants from accepting any presents. For a moment the Princes had turned their eves to Frederick himself, but he had no confidence in his capability to sustain worthily and efficiently the functions incumbent upon the imperial dignity. The empire as such invested him with no material power and resources, and his own dynastic power was insignificant. How should he be able to hold his own against the ambitious and frequently turbulent Princes? Why, even under the "Imperial Vicariate" the peace of the land was broken. therefore declined the proffered honour, and the Princes, fearing lest the powerful French king should curb their independence, suddenly remembered that he was a foreign sovereign, and that, in order to keep up the national freedom of the empire, they should give the preference to the Archduke Charles, who was, partially at least, of German descent. The latter, to whom also Frederick of Saxony finally gave his vote, was accordingly chosen emperor; and he soon proved that it is not always the kinship which constitutes the sympathetic bond between a sovereign and his subjects.

The time which elapsed from the election of Charles to his arrival in Germany, more especially to his presence at the Diet of Augsburg in 1521, was most propitious for the spread of the work of Luther. It may be said that during that interval the Reforma-

tion assumed shape and form. Luther indefatigably continued to inculcate his religious principles on the minds of the people by sermons and numerous publications; and he found adherents so readily everywhere among all classes of the German nation that Frederick, who still hoped the schism might be prevented by learned discussions, was of opinion that if it should be attempted to suppress his teachings by force instead of by refutation, there would arise a great storm in Germany. Several distinguished members of the lower nobility, such as the brave Hutten and the martial Sickingen and many others, placed their swords at the disposal of Luther; the former was already active for him with the all-powerful weapon of the pen. Amidst this general commotion the humble Augustinian monk sent forth his powerful appeal entitled. To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation concerning the Reformation of the Christian Estate.\* This production, which is rightly considered as the manifesto of the Reformation, clearly shows that Luther not only saw the clerical abuses, but also the political disadvantages, under which Germany laboured and groaned. He was not what we should call a politician. but, unlike so many of his learned countrymen, he had a true patriotic instinct. The mere title of the appeal seems already to contain a protest against the designation of Germany as the Holy Roman Empire. That he addressed his appeal to the "Nobility" in general is only an additional proof of the remarkable tact which guided him throughout his career.

Some historians have blamed Luther for not having appealed to the "People." But the reproach is wrong. The German people in general had no power whatever in those days. It only obtained in the course of time a voice in the management of public affairs through the Reformation. It was Luther who proclaimed the freedom of man, or rather the "Christian man." The acknowledgment of the political rights of the middle classes may therefore be said to date from the Reformation only. In appealing to the German nobility, Luther addressed himself to the legitimate representatives of Germany; and he did so in the candid belief that it was only necessary to open the eyes of those in power in order to effect at once the abolition of any abuses. To address himself to the people would have required his placing himself at the head of a revolution,

<sup>\*</sup> Pp. 157-244 in this volume.

but Luther was no revolutionist. It should also be remembered that a large number of noblemen had offered him support and shelter. Political power lay mainly in the hands of the nobles, who alone, in conjunction with the Emperor, could decide on the destiny of Germany. It is, however, a significant fact that he wrote his appeal, not in Latin, but in German. In this way, indeed, he actually addressed himself to the German people.

In the meantime Leo X, had hurled his bull of excommunication against Luther. When it arrived at Wittenberg both the university and the Government of the Prince Elector decided to take no notice of it, and now it again became manifest what a powerful support Luther had found in Frederick. On his return journey from the coronation of Charles V. at Aix-la-Chapelle in 1520, the Papal Legates Aleander and Caraccioli demanded of the Elector at Cologne, in the name of the Pope, to give effect to the bull by burning the writings of Luther and punishing him as a heretic or to deliver him to the Pope. The threat uttered on this occasion was certainly curious. In case the papal bull should not meet with ready obedience in Germany, the Legates menaced the country with the withdrawal of the title of the "Holy Roman Empire." Germany would forfeit that dignity in the same way as the Greeks had lost it after having seceded from the Pope. A more fortunate fate, in truth, could not have befallen the German empire than its total political severance from Rome: but in those days the empty glory of the baneful union was still highly valued, and so the Elector asked time to consider.

Erasmus, whom Frederick consulted, clothed his opinion on the religious controversy in the humorous reply "that Luther had sinned in two points: he had touched the crown of the Pope and the bellies of the monks." In his interview with Spalatin he was still more explicit by expressing his conviction that the attacks against Luther arose simply from hatred against the enlightenment of science and from tyrannical presumption. He further agreed with Luther in insisting on the question being examined and tried by the tribunal of public discussion. We know that this opinion fully coincided with the views of the Elector, and his answer to the threatening Papal Legates ran in accordance with his views. His additional and often-repeated assurance that he had never made common cause with Luther, and that he would greatly disapprove of it if the latter wrote anything adverse to the Pope,

was of the greatest importance. This declaration was more decisive than if he had acknowledged himself openly in favour of the Reformer: he would then have been considered as a biassed partisan, whilst now he only played the part of an impartial patron, who wished to see his *protégé* judged by a fair trial. On his return to Saxony, Frederick sent to Luther a reassuring message; and the latter continued his work by teaching, writing, and preaching, unmolested and without remission.

In other parts of Germany the papal bull was proclaimed with varying and unequal effect. Luther's works were in the first instance burnt at Louvain, by command of Charles V., in his capacity of hereditary sovereign of the Netherlands. The same fate befell them at Cologne and Mentz. It will therefore readily be acknowledged that it was the Pope and his over-zealous adherents who drove Luther to the committal of perhaps the boldest act ever accomplished by a single individual, more especially by one in Luther's dependent position. By the public burning of the papal bull before the Elstergate of Wittenberg (1520), the act of secession from Rome was consummated. What no emperor had dared before him, the humble Augustinian monk accomplished courageously and deliberately. Well might he do so! He acted on conviction with that moral courage which knows no fear, and he had the German people at his back to support him.\*

# IV

"Your Majesty must go to Germany and show there some favour to a certain Martin Luther, who is at the Court of Saxony, and causes anxiety to the Roman Court by his sermons." Such were the words which the shrewd Spanish ambassador, Don Juan Manuel, addressed to Charles V. from Rome in 1520. They were written at a time when it was still doubtful whether Leo X. would side in the impending struggle in Italy with the King of France or with the Emperor of Germany, and, moreover, at a time when the latter had reason to be dissatisfied with the course the Pope

<sup>\*</sup> In one of his letters to Dr. Eck—communicated in the *Documenta Lutherana* recently issued by the Vatican—the Papal Nuncio Aleander confessed that the excitement in consequence of the burning of Luther's works was so great among the people that he trembled for his own safety.

had taken. Leo X. had consented in compliance with a petition from the Castilian Cortes, to introduce some reforms in the exercise of the Inquisition. This concession was, however, entirely opposed to the views of the young Emperor, who was completely guided by his Dominican confessor. Under these circumstances it was deemed expedient to make use of Luther as a kind of bugbear in order to frighten the Pope. To people not accustomed to the tortuous windings of politics it seems of course bewildering that a heretic should be favoured in one country in order to make it possible to enforce the rigours of the Inquisition in another country. In like manner Francis I. acted. In France he persecuted and burnt mercilessly the opponents of the Roman Catholic Church, whilst in Germany he befriended the adherents of the Reformation. much, however, is certain: had Luther entertained the slightest suspicion at what price it was intended to extend indulgence to his work, he would have been the first to scorn that indulgence.

The advice of the diplomatic Spanish ambassador was, however, not followed. Pope and Emperor came to an amicable under-The former cancelled his concession to the Castilian Cortes, and promised the coveted assistance against Francis I. in Italy, whilst the latter pledged himself to crush the Reformation and to issue an edict for the execution of the papal bull against Luther. Now it came to light how ill-advised was the election of Charles V. as Emperor of Germany. At the time when the celebrated Diet of 1521 assembled at Worms, the Emperor had his whole attention directed across the Alps. The affairs of Germany had only in so far any importance for him as they had any influence or bearing on the affairs of Italy. He took no note of the great objects which then agitated the hearts and minds of the Germans, and had he been able to recognise them, they would have excited in him no corresponding sympathy. He did not even fully understand the cultured language—as far as it existed in those days-of Germany, being able to speak Low German only. The political institutions of the country—the lingering fragments of the ancient German liberty—were thoroughly distasteful to him. He was also a bigoted Roman Catholic at heart, and, as we have seen, entirely opposed to all religious reforms. It must therefore be acknowledged that among the many historical misfortunes which have befallen Germany-and no country perhaps has been tried by so many-the accession of Charles V, to the throne of the German empire was one of the greatest. What might a German sovereign, with a due appreciation of the political and religious aspirations of the people, not have achieved at that important epoch, which was the turning-point in the history of Germany?

After the Emperor had laid his edict regarding the papal bull before the Estates, they made him earnest representations, alleging that the people were throughout Germany so thoroughly impregnated by the doctrines of Luther that any violent measures undertaken against him would call forth the greatest commotion. submitted therefore to Charles the opinion that the Reformer should be summoned to Worms, not for the sake of any argumentative or learned disputation, but merely for a summary interrogatory. In case he should recant his doctrines concerning the Christian faith he might further be interrogated about the minor points in his writings, and whatever was advisable should be adopted. however, he persisted in his refusal to recant, the necessary steps would be taken against him. We see by this that the Estates drew a distinction in Luther's doctrines between those points which concerned the ecclesiastical administration only and those which referred to the Christian faith proper and were chiefly contained in his work On the Babulonish Captivity of the Church.

Charles V. consented to this proposal, by which the Estates may be said to have betrayed the cause of the Reformation. Frederick was charged with the task of summoning Luther to Worms, but he prudently declined. As he was to be summoned in the name of the Emperor and the Estates, he ought to receive the citation direct from them. The stubborn character of the Elector being well known, the Emperor was obliged to yield also on this point, and in order to be consistent with official etiquette. Luther was addressed by Charles V. in the citation, issued on March 6th, 1521, as "honourable, beloved, and pious!" A safe conduct for the journey to and from Worms accompanied the citation. A man less endowed with moral courage than Luther would nevertheless have shrunk from completing the journey. On his way to Worms he learned that a mandate for the confiscation of his writings had been issued by the Emperor, and the imperial herald actually asked him whether he still intended to continue his journey. The Reformer undauntedly proceeded on his way, although the imperial mandate clearly showed him that his writings had already been unconditionally condemned, and that he was merely summoned to declare whether he would recant or not.

Luther's appearance before the Diet of Worms may be considered as the first official recognition of the German people as a power; for it was only by representing the danger which would arise from the unconditional condemnation of the Reformer before being heard that the Emperor was induced to consent to the step which was resented by the Papal Legate and his party. The wrath of the Nuncio Aleander greatly increased when the Imperial Estates presented to Charles V. their gravamina respecting the abuses of the Church, the abolition of which they had a right to expect in accordance with the capitulation made at the time of the Emperor's election. petition, which is generally regarded as a pendant to Luther's programme of the Reformation, as contained in his address to the "Christian Nobility of the German Nation," and which had even obtained the approval of George, Duke of Saxony (that great opponent of Luther), was, formally at least, "graciously" received by the Emperor.

When Luther arrived at Worms both his adherents and antagonists were startled. The former trembled for his safety, and the latter feared the influence of his presence—his eloquence and the victorious power of inner conviction. The Emperor's expectations of so remarkable a personage, who was capable of inspiring such a high degree of enthusiasm and aversion, must therefore have been very great, and we do not wonder at his disappointment on seeing before him an insignificant-looking monk. He did not believe in the power of the mind, and it was quite natural in the young monarch that he should have looked forward to a commanding, giant-like figure, with a thundering voice, somewhat like Dr. Eck, who derived no little benefit from these accessories, so advantageous both on the political and religious platform. Even after Luther had produced—on the second day of his appearance before the Diet-a deep impression on almost all his hearers. Charles V. could never be brought to believe that the meek Augustinian monk was the author of all the energetic and impetuous compositions which passed under his name.

Luther's public refusal to recant unless convinced of his error through the Scriptures was the official proclamation of the Reformation; and well might he exclaim, on the evening of the 18th of April, on coming home from perhaps the most memorable sitting of any Diet, "Ich bin durch!" But the decision of the Emperor was also taken, and on the morning of the 19th of April he declared to the Diet, in a French document written in his own hand, "that, as a descendant of the most Christian German emperors and the Catholic kings of Spain, he had resolved to maintain everything which had been adopted by his ancestors, more especially at the Council of Constance.... That he will not hear Luther again, but let him go back to Wittenberg in accordance with his safe conduct, and then he will proceed with him as a heretic."

The fanatic advisers of the Emperor certainly wished that he should not only strictly adhere to the doctrines confirmed by the Diet of Constance, but that he should also follow its example, set by the execution of Huss, with respect to Luther, for the simple reason "that there is no need of keeping faith with heretics." Charles V. had, however, not been informed in vain of the disposition of the people regarding the Reformer. He also took into account the views of the Imperial Estates.

The times had evidently changed since the Council of Constance. It was no longer safe to burn a heretic after he had received imperial protection; and it may be assumed furthermore that the young monarch also possessed too much sense of honour to listen to the ruthless suggestions of his fanatical advisers. After some more attempts to induce Luther to retract—all of which, of course, proved futile—he allowed him to depart; but, as he had uttered the threat to treat the excommunicated monk as a heretic after the expiration of his safe conduct, Frederick, who was not undeservedly called the Wise, considered it expedient to bring Luther by means of a stratagem to a place of safety.

The sudden disappearance of Luther naturally caused great anxiety among his adherents; but his opponents seemed to have instinctively guessed the truth. They knew very well how little they themselves were to be trusted, and suspected that his friends had secretly saved him from their clutches. Cardinal Aleander even went nearer the mark, and expressed his opinion that the "Saxon fox" had hidden the monk. Charles V. himself took no cognisance of the occurrence; nay, he even cautiously deferred the promulgation of the edict against Luther: and it was only after Frederick the Wise, accompanied by the Palatine Elector, had left

Worms on account of illness, that the Emperor summoned to his private residence the three clerical Electors, together with the Elector of Brandenburg and several other members of the Imperial Estates, and communicated to them the long-expected edict. The Imperial Ban was thus promulgated on May 25th, without the formal sanction of the Diet; and, in order to stamp it with the appearance of legality, it was ante-dated to the 8th of May, when the Estates were still together in good numbers. But it was at the same time an ominous date; for on that day an alliance was concluded between the Emperor and the Pope to the effect "to have the same friends and without exception the same enemies, the same willingness and unwillingness for defence and attack."

Another expedient was resorted to in order to gain some plausibility for the illegally issued edict. It was sophistically averred that, as the Diet had already decided that Luther was to be proceeded against in case he should not recant, there was no further necessity for obtaining the additional sanction of that body for the publication of the edict. By this decree the papal ban was confirmed, and Luther himself was now outlawed as a heretic, and his books were prohibited. The Emperor having accomplished this step, which was one of the most momentous in the eventful course of the Reformation, now hastened to the Netherlands, and strengthened by the league with the Pope and Henry VIII., soon began his great war against the King of France.

# $\mathbf{v}$

It is an amiable trait in human nature, though frequently bordering on weakness, to endeavour to find out the good side of any evil. Thus it has been considered a propitious coincidence that the German empire had some "claims" on certain territories in Italy. For it was, in a great measure, in consequence of this fact, that the war broke out between the Emperor of Germany and the King of France, which necessitated the absence of the former from his German domains for several years and gave the Reformation time for its consolidation and expansion. We will not deny the advantages which resulted from that political combination, but it was to a certain extent counterbalanced by the ill which it produced. Without the contingency of that war, Charles V. would have had no

occasion for leaguing himself with the Pope; the Edict of Worms would in all probability never have been issued, and the pressing demand for a General Council would have been acceded to. Luther would not have been obliged to hide himself at the Wartburg, and the subsequent troubles at Wittenberg would certainly never have broken out; and, finally, the firm hand of a sovereign residing in the country would have stemmed the torrent of the Peasants' War at the outset. Another drawback resulting from the absence of Charles V. was his utter estrangement from Germany, whose aspirations he neither cared for nor understood.

During the first few months after the departure of Charles from Germany the work of the Reformation went on undisturbed. The Edict of Worms found in general no responsive reception there. Its effect quite vanished before the impression made by Luther's manly, nav heroic, conduct in presence of the Diet. The rumour which had got abroad that he had been captured by an enemy of the Elector Frederick, and perchance killed, rather promoted than damaged his cause. It aroused warm sympathy for the Reformer and increased the hatred against his enemies, who were alleged to have resorted to brutal force because they could not disprove his arguments. In fact, the adoption of the Reformation was now so general that Luther's antagonists hardly dared to denounce him openly. It is well known that the Elector of Mentz would not give permission to the Minorite monks to preach against Luther. The Edict of Worms was thus practically set at defiance, and in spite of its prohibition not to publish anything in favour of the Reformation, numerous writings in its favour issued from the German printing presses.

Whilst the seed which Luther had sown on German soil began to produce a magnificent harvest, and he himself was busy at the Wartburg, under the disguise of Junker Georg, with various religious writings, but more especially with the great work of his life, the translation of the Bible from the original text, some of his adherents began to precipitate matters at Wittenberg, under the leadership of the impassioned Carlstadt. A time of general dissolution suddenly came on, in which there was a violent rupture with the past. Mass was abrogated, monks left their convents, and priests married. Holy images were destroyed, and nearly all the usages of the Roman Catholic Church were abruptly abolished. Other innovations were introduced, and the movement tended towards the

introduction of a Christian socialism, or rather communism. If Luther had not been absent, the movement would never have broken out; and Melanchthon, who was present, was quite perplexed and not energetic enough to be able to stem the surging tide of the Revolution. The Prince Elector, too, looked on quite bewildered, and, imbued with a sense of unbounded tolerance, he fancied that after all the revolutionary "saints" might be right.

When Luther heard of the local excesses at Wittenberg, he suddenly left his "Patmos," in order to find out for himself the real state of things. In travelling to and from Wittenberg, where he stayed a few days only, he had to pass the territory of his great opponent the Duke of Saxony. This was at the beginning of December 1521, consequently only a few months after the publication of the Edict of Worms; and his conduct shows both his moral courage, of which he has given so many striking proofs, and his anxiety for the cause of the Reformation.

Soon, however, he was to give still more striking proofs of both. For after the "prophets of Zwickau," those deluded and deluding disciples of Thomas Münzer, had chosen the birthplace of the Reformation for their field of action, more especially when he heard of the innovations introduced in his own community since his furtive visit there, he defied all danger, and disregarded the remonstrances of the Elector Frederick at his leaving his place of refuge. His heart was so devoid of fear, and he had so much confidence in the righteousness of his cause, that he actually declared to the Prince Elector that he might give to the latter greater protection than he could receive from him. He apologised nevertheless for his disobedience to Frederick, and a few days after his arrival at Wittenberg, at the beginning of March 1522, he began the series of sermons by which he soon allayed the storm and extended both his influence and reputation.

Several of the religious innovations introduced during the absence of Luther were quite in accordance with his views, but he chiefly objected to the violent manner in which the established usages were thrown over. Thus he approved the abolition of the *Mass*, but considered that it ought not to have been done in a way which was vexatious to another portion of the Christian community. The secular authorities should have been consulted, and everything done in a legal manner. Luther was, besides, tolerant in the highest degree. He did not wish to force others to adopt his theories; he

merely wanted to convince them. His mode of acting was concisely summed up in the following words, which contain the key-note of his activity as a Reformer: "I will preach about it, speak about it, write about it; but I will compel and drive no one by force; for belief is to be accepted freely and spontaneously. Take me as an example. I have opposed the indulgences and the Papists, but not with force. I have only worked, preached, and written the word of the Lord; else I have done nothing. . . . I have done nothing; the word has done and accomplished everything. If I had wished to proceed turbulently, I could have caused great bloodshed in Germany, and I might have played such a game at Worms that even the Emperor would not have been safe," \* etc.

These words, which Luther uttered in his celebrated sermons preached after his return to Wittenberg, not only fully reveal to us one of his principal characteristics as a Reformer, but contain at the same time a full revelation of the cause of the peaceful course of the Reformation during his lifetime. He held the reins in his firm hands, and it would only have required an encouraging signal on his part, and the furies of civil war would have been at once let loose. But those words also confirm the charge which has been brought forward against the Imperial Estates that they had betrayed the cause of the Reformation at the Diet of Worms. They had the German people at their back, and the Emperor, with all his Spanish and Italian courtiers and Papal Legates, would have been powerless. Had only some of them given signs of energetic opposition, the Emperor would in all probability have yielded. That the princes did not fully answer Luther's expectations caused him considerable grief, and now he had experienced another disappointment in the conduct of the middle classes, the people proper, a portion of whom eagerly supported the violent innovations of the extreme Reformers. But the greatest disappointment, with regard to the healthiest class of the people—the peasants—was yet in store for him.

<sup>\*</sup> That the above assertion was no mere boast is confirmed—if anything that so truthful a man as Luther said requires confirmation—by the beforementioned Documenta Lutherana, in which we find a letter from the Nuncio Aleander, describing the great popularity of Luther throughout Germany, and in particular at Augsburg. "Know then," he writes to Dr. Eck, "there are so many Lutherans here that not only the men, but also the very trees and stones, cry, 'Luther!'"

The effect which resulted from Luther's return to Wittenberg was doubly beneficial. It allayed the turbulent excitement at home, and prevented the breaking out of a storm abroad, which had wellnigh been conjured up by Duke George of Saxonv at the "Imperial Regency," or Reichsregiment, which body conducted the government of the empire in the absence of the Emperor, and had assembled at Nuremberg during the troubles at Wittenberg. Duke actually prevailed upon the members of the Imperial Regency to issue an edict enjoining the Bishops of Naumburg, Meissen, and Merseburg energetically to suppress all religious innovations : but when quiet had been restored at Wittenberg the tide turned in Luther's favour, partly owing to the direct and indirect influence of the Elector of Saxony; and thus the Edict of Worms was virtually set at nought. The Imperial Regency did not rest satisfied, however, with the tacit approval of the doctrines of Luther: and when Adrian VI., who had succeeded Leo X. in 1522, demanded through his nuncio that a check should be put to the Lutheran innovations, the Imperial Regency replied by a resolution in which it declared its refusal to carry out the Edict of Worms. On the other hand, it demanded "the summoning of a General Council, if possible within a year's time, in a German town and under the co-operation of the Emperor." It was of course understood that the secular Estates should also take part in that council, and perfect immunity for a free expression of opinion was at the same time admitted. Moreover, one hundred gravamina with respect to the prevailing abuses of the Church were handed to the Legate.

One of the most remarkable features in the passing of the above resolution was the circumstance that it even obtained the consent of the adherents of the Pope, and that the views of the latter regarding the necessity of Church reforms, in some degree at least, contributed to it. Adrian VI. was in almost every respect the opposite of Leo X. He had the welfare of the Church truly at heart, and fully saw the abuses which had crept in through the depravity of its representatives. He therefore energetically and earnestly urged the necessity of reforming the Church, or rather the clergy. He himself showed the way by setting, in his own person, the example of a true apostolic pontiff, by leading the life of a humble and austere monk, whereas Leo X. had surrounded himself with regal pomp and the luxuries of an Asiatic potentate. On the other hand, Adrian was also an orthodox Dominican, and

detested the religious innovations more intensely than his predecessor did, who, as a true Medici, being an enthusiastic admirer of art and a zealous cultivator of polite literature, was quite indifferent to ecclesiastical and religious matters. Leo X. was opposed to Luther because, as Erasmus expressed it, "he had touched the papal crown," whilst Adrian took up the gauntlet against the Reformer because, in his opinion, the latter weakened the corner-stone of the Church and undermined its very foundations. For this reason he had sent his nuncio Chieregati to the Imperial Regency at Nuremberg with the demand to have the Edict of Worms carried into effect. This demand was only consistent with the Pope's line of action; but the times had changed, even during the short space which had elapsed since Charles V. had issued his edict against Luther by a shuffling proceeding, and the Imperial Regency openly refused to enact it.

That the Estates should have been able thus to act in defiance of both Pope and Emperor was in itself the result of the influence which the Reformation exercised on the political status of the German people. The civic element now assumed a political importance which it never enjoyed before. The commoner began to feel his dignity, as a man, as a member of the State. The teachings of Luther had set free human intelligence and thought, which had been so long held imprisoned and bound by political and religious tyranny, and the people began to think and reason for themselves. From the moment this was done, they were free, and as soon as they obtained political rights they well understood how to assert them. The re-establishment of an imperial regency on a "constitutional basis" formed one of the principal stipulations at the election of Charles V.; and the deputies having been chosen by the Electoral Princes and the various "circles," or districts, into which Germany was then divided, the commonwealth was for the first time officially represented at a German constitutional assembly. We have seen how worthily the members of the Imperial Regency had discharged their trust; and it may be said that from that moment dates the political emancipation of Germany.

### VI

The answer of the Imperial Regency to Adrian VI. was the first political triumph of the Reformation, but its effect was considerably

weakened by several events which occurred shortly after. First came the rising of the knights, who constituted the lower nobility, under the banner of the brave and restless Franz von Sickingen. Grave discontent reigned among the knights with the doings of the all-powerful "Suabian League," formed in 1488 by the Estates of Suabia for the maintenance of general peace, and also with the encroachments of the princes: and Sickingen, aided by Ulrich von Hutten, united the lesser nobles into one body with the avowed object of breaking the power of the higher nobility and of acknowledging one head only—the Emperor. It has been plausibly assumed that Sickingen pursued a more ambitious aim, and he has therefore been compared with Wallenstein. Sickingen professed. however, another object in his enterprise; the furtherance of the cause of the Reformation; and, at the head of a large and powerful army, he directed his first attack (Sept. 1522) against the Archbishop The knights were defeated, their leader lost his life, and Hutten wandered away, outlawed and proscribed, to find an exile's grave in a small island of Switzerland. The enemies of Luther considered, or pretended to consider, the Reformation as the main cause of Sickingen's undertaking; and this circumstance estranged from the Reformer a number of his adherents and confirmed his antagonists in their enmity against him, although he had no immediate connection with the revolt of the nobles.

The first result of the rising and of the defeat of the knights was that several princes now assumed a somewhat hostile attitude towards the Imperial Regency, that had shown itself so tolerant respecting religious reforms; but a still severer blow threatened that body from another quarter. The wealthy German cities sent a deputation to Charles V. in Spain, with a petition against some ordinances which the Imperial Chamber had decided upon, and which were considered detrimental to their commercial interests. The Emperor, dissatisfied with that liberal institution, readily promised a new administration. This promise was fulfilled at the next Diet, in 1524, at Nuremberg, when it was decided to reorganise the Imperial Regency by electing for it entirely new members. Those who consented to this proceeding were influenced partly by political and partly by commercial reasons, but as regards religious matters there was still a majority in favour of the Reformation. On this account it came to pass that a resolution was carried at the Diet to convoke another assembly of the Estates in the same year at Spires, the points to be discussed there being in the meantime drawn up for the princes by scholars and councillors. Till then the resolution of the preceding Diet "that the Gospel should be allowed to be freely preached" was to remain in force. Thus the mission of the Papal Nuncio Campeggi, who had been sent to Germany by Clement VII. (the successor of Adrian VI. since 1523) to bring about the enactment of the Edict of Worms, proved unsuccessful. It is true the Diet passed a resolution that the Edict of Worms should be executed, but this decision was rendered ineffective by the additional elastic clause, "as far as possible." At the same time the demand for a General Council was added.

The above mandate now shared the fate of most compromises, inasmuch as it satisfied neither party. Luther himself and his followers saw in it an indirect confirmation of the Edict of Worms, and he expressed his indignation at it in an outspoken publication, in which he bitterly reproached the Emperor and the princes for their treatment of him. He had now lost all confidence in both. But the Emperor's indignation at the Nuremberg mandate was not less strongly marked, and he issued an edict in which he energetically denied the Estates the right of interference in religious matters, demanding at the same time the strict execution of the Edict of Worms. The constant recurrence of the Emperor and the adherents of the Pope to that edict must not surprise us. It was the point upon which the whole movement turned; for if the condemnation of Luther were confirmed, all his reforms and his adherents would be comprised in that condemnation.

Various circumstances now combined to strengthen the effect of the Emperor's new edict. The Papal Nuncio Campeggi succeeded in inducing several influential forces, hostile to the Reformation, to form a league for the protection of the old faith. The Archduke Ferdinand and the Dukes of Bavaria—princes who had for some time been conspiring with the Roman Curia—together with a number of prelates, assembled for that purpose in the summer of 1524 at Ratisbon, and agreed upon stringent measures against the Reformation. They decided to give effect to the Edict of Worms, to proscribe again the works of Luther, and even to forbid to their subjects the attending of the university of Wittenberg.

The next step of the Ratisbon Convention was to obtain the co-operation of Charles V., which was effected easily enough, inasmuch as the projected measures fully coincided with his own

views; and being about to attack Francis I. in France itself, from the direction of Italy, he stood in great need of the Pope's tacit acquiescence. He issued therefore a stringent edict, in which the convocation of a General Council was strictly prohibited, and all interference in religious matters was energetically forbidden. Those who dared to set at nought the provision of the edict would render themselves liable to a charge of high treason, and on conviction would be punished with the highest degree of the Imperial Ban (Acht- und Aberacht). In that imperial order Luther himself, one of the noblest men who ever lived, was likened to some loathsome monster.

The Convention of Ratisbon, which was chiefly brought about by foreign influence, may be said to have caused the first violent rupture among the German people, and to be the origin of all the calamities which befell Germany in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Without that convention the projected General Council would in all probability have been held, the proposed reforms would have been peacefully and legally discussed, and there would not have occurred that violent disruption among the Germans of which the evil effects, not only from a religious, but also from a political point of view, have not yet entirely disappeared. The only advantage which resulted from the Ratisbon Convention was the agreement to introduce a number of internal reforms in the Church. Thus the improved state of Roman Catholicism is entirely due to the doctrines of Luther and his Reformation.

## VII

The year 1525 was perhaps the most trying in Luther's career. He had hitherto been disappointed in the princes and the burghers, and now he experienced the mortification of seeing that class of people from which he sprang himself entering on a path which must needs prove injurious to themselves and to the cause for which he lived and worked. Various risings of the peasants had taken place before the time of the Reformation, in consequence of the inhuman treatment to which they were subjected by the nobles. The exactions of the priests were likewise intolerable. Some local risings took place in 1524; but in the following year that terrible contest known as "The Peasants' War" broke out in the south of Germany with all the fury of long-pent-up despair.

The origin of the insurrection must therefore be sought solely in the cause which produced the risings of slaves or serfs in ancient and modern times. It was the revolt of men who felt their inner worth, and who were determined to shake off an unbearable yoke. The enemies of Luther attributed, however, the outbreak of the war to the influence of his teachings, in the same way as they attributed to these any other public calamity which then befell Germany, just as in modern times blinded political passions will trace the cause of the failure of a harvest, for instance, to the fact of this or that party being in power.

The first programme of the peasants, as contained in the wellknown Twelve Articles, was moderate enough. Even Luther did not entirely reject their demands, some of which he wished to see referred to the decision of legal authorities. He admonished the peasants, however, not to have recourse to brutal violence; and at the same time he exhorted the nobles to lend a merciful ear to the cries of the sufferers. The last clause of the Twelve Articles must have struck in his heart a sympathetic chord. The peasants declared that their demands should not stand in case they should be refuted by Scripture, which statement seemed to be an echo of Luther's own declaration at the Diet of Worms. But it was just that external similarity which turned out so fatal for the cause of the Reformation. The peasants borrowed the phraseology, as it were, of Luther; they clothed their grievances in the language of the Gospel, and thus gave to the enemies of the Reformation the plausible pretext of confounding it with their own insurrection. It was of little avail for Luther himself to protest against the allegation of the insurgents that their rising was founded on a religious basis, since his enemies persistently took the form for the substance.

If all the rebellious peasants had strictly adhered to their first programme, their cause might yet have taken a favourable turn; but, as is generally the case with revolutionary movements, there soon arose an extreme party which aimed at the total subversion of the existing order of things. Here again it was unfortunate that some points started in the manifesto of that party had been previously advocated by Luther, for his unjust antagonists laid all their demands, which have been compared to the French revolutionary doctrines of 1783, to his charge. The climax of the insurrectionary outbreak was, however, reached by the doings of Thomas Münzer and

his followers, who preached and practised evangelical communism. and who accelerated by their fanatic and fantastic conduct the tragic catastrophe in this sanguinary drama. Luther was now in a most critical position. He made every effort to stem the tide of the revolution: he energetically exhorted both princes and peasants. and travelled about as a missionary of peace: but all in vain. His influence seemed, for the first time, to have lost its effect, and friends and foes censured him alike. The former reproached him with having deserted his own cause, whilst the latter blamed him as the originator of this fatal war. Thomas Münzer and his followers even accused Luther of base servility towards the princes; and one of the grossest calumnies perhaps ever brought forward against a man of Luther's stamp was the charge that he had written his vehement publication, Against the Murderous Robber-bands of the Peasants, after their total defeat. But this was untrue. wrote it, in fact, whilst the peasants were in the ascendency, and whilst they disgraced their victory by barbarous acts of cruelty. When the nobles got the upper hand and wreaked their vengeance in a most inhuman manner on the vanguished, the wrath of Luther was turned against the cruel victors. He pleaded for mercy even for the guilty, and with some of the princes his intercession was successful. Large numbers of defeated peasants were allowed by Landgrave Philip of Hesse and the Prince Elector John of Saxony. the brother and successor of the Elector Frederick, to return home unmolested: whilst the Bishop of Würzburg and other anti-Lutheran lords distinguished themselves by a most refined cruelty in their treatment of the peasant prisoners.

# VIII

In addition to the various disasters which befell Luther—and in him the whole of Germany—in the calamitous year of 1525, he also had the misfortune to lose his friend and protector the Elector of Saxony, who died in the spring of that year. Frederick had looked with true paternal compassion on the insurgent peasants, and had life and health been spared him, he might have quelled the civil war by dint of his authority, or at least have mitigated its evils. Besides him, there was no one in Germany who enjoyed the same amount of respect, and both the Imperial Regency and the Estates were as a body powerless. If Germany had been ruled

over at that time by a sovereign residing in the country and caring for the welfare of his people, the Peasants' War would never have assumed such gigantic dimensions, nor would its consequences have been so fatal. But whilst Germany was convulsed by one of the most sanguinary of intestine conflicts, the Emperor resided in Spain, and his army fought and defeated the King of France before Pavia, which circumstance may serve as an additional proof of the evil caused by the election of Charles V. as head of the German empire.

The only interest which the Emperor manifested with reference to Germany consisted in his relentless efforts to exterminate the Lutheran doctrines. Thus he again and again issued from Spain energetic admonitions to the princes and bishops to make a firm resistance against the Reformation; promising and threatening at the same time to come shortly to Germany himself in order to crush the heretics. These acts, together with the consultation at Mentz at which a number of priests agreed on the suppression of Lutheran heresy, induced the Landgrave Philip of Hesse and John the Elector of Saxony, in the spring of 1526, to form the so-called "League of Torgau" for the protection and defence of the Reformation. Luther himself, being in principle against all armed resistance to any constituted authority, had consistently opposed the formation of that or any other league with a view to revolt.

Luther was of opinion that a bad prince must be patiently borne with, like any other scourge or calamity sent by Heaven. In this sense it was that he taught "that the badness and perversity of a government does not justify active resistance or rebellion." Indeed. he considered the sufferings inflicted by a tyrannical ruler on his subjects as part and parcel of a man's destiny upon earth. It was his Christian duty to suffer. According to his opinion, man was not destined to be happy in this world, where he had been placed as a martyr. Such were his honest convictions and his views of life; his denial of the right of resistance arose therefore from a purely religious feeling, and not from any servile instinct. Surely a man who speaks in the following strain of princes cannot be accused of servility: "From the beginning of the world," says Luther, "a good prince has been a rare bird, and a pious prince a still rarer one. They are, as a rule, the greatest fools and worst knaves upon earth. If there is a prince who is a wise and pious man or a Christian, it is a great miracle and the best sign of Divine grace for

a country. Therefore one must always expect the worst from them, and not hope for any good from them. They are the scourges and the executioners of God, and He employs them to punish the wicked and to maintain external peace."

Luther was well aware of the fact that Germany required a thorough reform as regards its civic or secular government, more especially as he had found out that both the princes and the Emperor had betrayed the German people. With that dignified self-consciousness which is quite compatible with true modesty, he said. "At times it seems to me as if the Government and the Jurists also required a Luther." If there had been during his time a great man in Germany capable of achieving in politics what he had himself achieved in religion, he would undoubtedly have cooperated with him. For Luther was a true German patriot, if ever there was one, as is evident from so many of his writings, and more especially from his Appeal to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation. What he abhorred was the use of brutal force, either by princes or by the people, for the acquisition of political freedom, and this was, as we have seen, in strict accordance with his religious views. His notions of the individual freedom of man had also a religious basis. He regarded man as designed to be a free being, but it was only Christian belief which imparted to him that stamp of true freedom. This view Luther forcibly expressed in the well-known antithesis in his treatise Concerning Christian Liberty, "A Christian man is the most free lord of all, and subject to none; a Christian man is the most dutiful servant of all, and subject to every one." \*

The liberty of man, as interpreted by Luther, may be regarded by some persons as only of limited extent, and as having merely an ideal existence, but at any rate it marks a great progress in the history of civilisation, and may be considered as the germ of the emancipation of the human race. It was the first step in the acknowledgment of the right of man as a human being. The principle of political freedom which now benefits the adherents of all creeds in civilised society must therefore be traced back to the Reformation. If the teachings of Luther had not first freed the Christian man, the liberty of man in general—the equality of men—would scarcely have met with such a ready recognition in later centuries.

<sup>\*</sup> See p. 255 in the present volume.

If Luther had not so strenuously opposed all active resistance against authority, the political course of the Reformation would certainly have taken a different turn; and it was fortunate enough for its consolidation that some of the princes, who otherwise followed his teachings, did not share his opinions on that subject. The formation of the above-mentioned League of Torgau was the first result of that difference of opinion; and when the Diet assembled, in the summer of 1526, at Spires, the princes John and Philip, strengthened by their union, could dare to acknowledge and practise openly the doctrines of the Reformation in the face of the Diet. In vain did the Imperial Commissioners urge the Estates to carry out at last the Edict of Worms. The Diet was, however, so much the less inclined to obey the Emperor's behests on this point because he was now himself at enmity with he Pope. Clement VII. being afraid of the ascendency of Charles V. after his victory at Pavia, released the French king from his solemn oath at the Peace of Madrid, and formed with him and several Italian princes the League of Cognac, also blasphemously called the "Holy League." which was directed against Charles V. The Estates therefore eagerly seized the opportunity of declaring that the antagonism between Pope and Emperor made it impossible for them to give effect even indirectly to the papal excommunication against Luther. The Turk was also threatening from the East, and the Estates did not consider it prudent to cause dissensions among the German people. They resolved therefore to petition the Emperor, through an embassy, to come in person to Germany and to convoke a General Council. They further decided that in matters of religion perfect freedom and tolerance should prevail.

The resolution of the Diet of Spires in 1526 was of considerable moment. The Reformation was now formally acknowledged and legalised, and had gained full time to recover lost ground and to obtain a firm footing throughout Germany. It also was a fortunate coincidence that Charles V. was now occupied in Italy with his war against the Pope and Francis I., whilst his brother Ferdinand, now King of Hungary and Bohemia, was encumbered by his troubles in those countries

#### IX

In consequence of the absence of both the Emperor and his locum tenens from Germany, the projected General Council was not

convoked, and the next Diet did not assemble before the year 1529, at Spires. Till then the Reformation had full scope to expand; but after the armies of Charles V. had captured Rome, and a terrible pestilence had well-nigh destroyed the French troops in Italy, the Emperor was again free to terrorise over Germany. He concluded peace with Clement VII. at Barcelona, and with Francis I. at Cambray, and the first result of the diplomatic union between the three belligerents was a combination of their efforts to crush the "heresy" in Germany. Soon after the beginning of the Diet at Spires, a palpable proof was given that a great change had taken place in public affairs since 1526. On March 15th, 1529, the Imperial Commissioners laid a mandate before the Diet to the effect that the resolution of the last Diet at Spires, which granted free exercise of religion, should be revoked, and that, on the other hand, the Edict of Worms should be enforced. The majority, though now consisting of adherents of the Pope, did not accept the proposal exactly in that form; but still they issued a decree the general acceptance of which would have implied a total condemnation of the Reformation on the part of its supporters.

In this emergency several German princes and imperial towns gave proof of a most praiseworthy moral courage. John, Prince Elector of Saxony, Philip, Landgrave of Hesse, George, Margrave of Brandenburg, Duke Ernest of Brunswick-Luneburg, Prince Wolfgang of Anhalt, and fourteen imperial free towns, having in vain demurred against the decision of the Diet, laid before it a Protest against the pernicious decree, declaring at the same time that in matters of religion and conscience the decision of majorities was not binding. How deep was the impression which that remarkable step had produced on the minds of the German people may be inferred from the fact that it gave occasion to single out the adherents of Luther as a body and to apply to them the name of Protestants.

The rupture between the two religious parties was now complete. They no longer formed merely two different shades of the same party, but were distinguished from each other even as to the name. Roman Catholics stood opposite Protestants. In one respect the new appellation was a gain; for it embraced all the members of that Christian community which did not acknowledge the supremacy of the Pope. On the other hand, the name has the disadvantage that it is, like the word "Reformation," of a negative character. It is true the Protest of the princes actually was a positive assertion of the right of

conscience, but popular interpretation applied to it the character of an aggressive document, and the adherents of Luther were consequently regarded henceforth in the light of a merely malcontent party. The term "Lutherans"—Lutheraner—does not embrace the whole body of those who seceded from the Roman Catholic Church. Luther himself deprecated, moreover, the distinction of being called a "founder of a religion," and although one of the greatest theological authorities of our times is still inclined to consider him as such, it seems to me—if I may venture to express an opinion on anything touching a theological subject—that Luther merely modified and reformed an established religious faith, but did not found one. The designation "Old Catholic" might perhaps have been the most appropriate, and would not perchance have caused such a violent disruption among the members of the great Christian community.

### X

At the Diet of 1529 the Protestants had gained a moral victory, but they had suffered a material defeat; for the government of the empire was now entirely in the hands of their antagonists. seemed therefore prudent to prepare for future emergencies, and some of the Protestant princes began negotiations with several cities, both German and Swiss, A comprehensive scheme was devised which, if successfully carried out, would have entirely changed the political aspect of Germany, if not of Europe. Unfortunately this plan, the execution of which could alone have saved the cause of Protestantism, was frustrated by the well-known theological difference between the adherents of Luther and Zwingli. Thus, instead of first combining against the common enemy and subsequently in firm union settling the theological differences, or even leaving them unsettled, the logical order of the proceeding was reversed. The theologians first assembled to discuss their religious differences, and the result was that fatal schism which divided the camp of the Protestants, and permanently damaged their cause. Luther and his more immediate followers decided that it would not be justifiable to form an alliance with the Zwinglians, and further that it would be an offence against law and religion to offer armed resistance to the Emperor. The co-operation of Upper Germany, Suabia, and Switzerland was lost in consequence; and, in face of the armed and threatening enemy, all preparations for defence

were neglected on account of religious scruples. "Surely," says Ranke, "this was not prudent, but it was grand."

Whilst the German theologians discussed religious subjects and the "right of resistance," Charles V. strengthened his position in Italy, and Clement VII. placed on his head, at Bologna, the crown of Charles the Great. The Emperor was surrounded on this occasion chiefly by Italian princes and Spanish grandees, and only one or two German princes were present. The coronation was therefore against the "ancient German custom"; but Charles was crowned as a Roman, and not as a German, emperor of Germany. He might have been like Henry the Fowler, another founder or regenerator of the German empire, whereas he renovated the imperial dignity only so far as his own personality was concerned. This step was very significant, and may serve as a clue to his subsequent course of action.

It is well known that the Pope and Emperor distrusted each other, but they were diplomatic enough to assume the mask of mutual friendship. There was, moreover, one powerful bond of union between them, namely, the determination to eradicate German "heresy." This resolve was one of the principal motives of the Emperor's journey to Germany, in the summer of 1530, for the purpose of holding a diet at Augsburg. The writ issued on that occasion was peaceful and gracious enough. His avowed object was "to settle the prevailing discord, and to learn and graciously to consider everybody's conviction, opinion, and views, for the benefit of Christian truth."

It may reasonably be assumed that the Emperor was benevolently disposed, and would have preferred to see his point carried by gentle means. His benevolence was, however, of that conditional kind only which first tries peaceful means, but subsequently has recourse to arbitrary and violent measures should the gentle measures prove futile. He was not imbued with that absolute benevolence and elemency which shows mercy even to the guilty, or the supposed guilty. The Roman Catholic princes were aware of this disposition of the Emperor and of his secret agreement with the Pope, though the Protestant princes implicitly believed in his peaceful and gracious assurances. The latter now hopefully looked forward to an amicable settlement of the prevailing discord, and at once proceeded to draw up a programme containing the substance of the reformed creed.

It did not take long, however, for the Protestants to see their error. Even before the Emperor's arrival at Augsburg he urged the Elector John of Saxony not to allow the preachers he had brought with him to preach in public. This demand was repeated in Augsburg, in the Emperor's presence, after his arrival in that city, to the Elector of Saxony and several other Protestant princes. The theological defence of the evangelical sermons by the Landgrave of Hesse merely served to arouse the wrath and indignation of Charles. When, however, the aged warrior the Margrave George of Brandenburg emphatically exclaimed, "Sire, before renouncing the word of God, I would rather kneel down on this spot and let my head be cut off," the Emperor was deeply moved by this energetic protest, and uttered in his Low German vernacular the reassuring words, "No heads off! no heads off, my dear Prince!"

The Protestant princes also declined to join in the public procession on the festival of Corpus Christi, which was celebrated the following day, in spite of the Emperor's earnest invitation to attend it. Charles was startled by this stubborn resistance. He had cherished the hope that the halo of worldly glory which surrounded him, together with his brilliant entry into Augsburg, would dazzle and overawe the Protestant princes; but they remained firm. Neither threats nor promises could move them. They were quite of a distinct caste from the princes who had betraved the cause of the Reformation at Worms; they were conscious of the risk they ran, and were ready to die for their religious convictions. It is true they were greatly encouraged by Luther, who, in order to be nearer to them while the Diet was held at Augsburg, had repaired to Coburg. He addressed to the Prince Elector of Saxony from his second "Patmos," as it were, letters of exhortation and comfort, full of energy and of that irresistible eloquence which is the result of inner conviction. Whenever the princes and Melanchthon wavered, they were inspired by Luther's cheering and manly words, which proved particularly effective during the course of the Diet.

The religious contest being the first subject which was brought before the Diet, the Protestant princes presented, on June 25th, 1530, their "Confession of Faith," which had been prepared by Melanchthon. There were two versions of it, one in German and another in Latin. The Emperor naturally desired to have the

second version read, but the Protestant princes advised him patriotically to admit on German soil the German version. This step may be considered as one of the results of the Reformation. Luther had awakened in the Germans the feelings of nationality and patriotism, and had also politically freed them from the fetters of Roman bondage.

The profession of faith of the Protestant princes, known as the "Augsburg Confession," was drawn up in such a conciliatory spirit, and contained so many concessions to Roman Catholicism, that some kind of agreement seemed to be possible, if not near at hand, The Protestants had now honestly fulfilled their duty. In accordance with the imperial rescript, they had laid their profession of faith before the Diet; and confidently expecting a similar profession on the part of the Roman Catholics, they looked forward to the promised mediation of the Emperor. But instead of drawing up a declaration in a defensive and conciliatory spirit, as had been done by the Protestants, the Catholic party at the Diet, forming the majority, issued an aggressive "Refutation," which, receiving the Emperor's full approval, was issued in his name, with the appended threat that, in case the Protestants should henceforth not obediently return to the Roman Catholic faith, "the Emperor would proceed against them as befitted a Roman emperor—the protector and defender of the Church." Manifest proofs that the admonitions of Charles V. were not mere empty threats were soon given. He made the Protestant princes individually feel his displeasure, and he seemed fully determined to give effect to his threats by the force of arms. Fortunately the warning of the Prince Elector of Mentz, in reference to the Turks, of "Hannibal ad portas" had the desirable effect of paving the way for mediation.

At the conference which was held in August 1530, for the purpose of effecting an agreement between the contending parties, a spirit of reconciliation prevailed. Both sides made concessions, and it was agreed to refer certain points of difference which were still pending to a General Council; so that there was a near prospect of a mutual understanding. Some agreement would in all probability have been brought about but for the relentless spirit of fanaticism of the Roman Curia, as represented by the Legate Campeggi. It was he who frustrated the success of all further attempts at a reconciliation by inducing the Emperor and the majority of the Diet to make such conditions as the Protestants

could not accept. The allied princes remained firm, and as the attitude of the Imperial Court became more and more threatening, and the theologians could not agree among themselves, the energetic Landgrave Philip of Hesse suddenly left Augsburg at the beginning of August. The Emperor was so startled by this unexpected event that he ordered the gates of the city to be watched by his soldiers; but too late: the bird had already flown. The Prince Elector of Saxony still remained behind; but his son, the hereditary Prince, had some time previously returned home, and was now in perfect safety. It was therefore useless to attempt a coup de main against the leaders of the Protestant party.

The Emperor's disappointment was great, and the more so as he was indignant against the Protestant princes on account of their refusing to consent to the election of his brother Ferdinand as Charles V. now proceeded to the last step "King of Rome." which made the breach between the two great portions of the German nation irremediable. On the 22nd of September, 1530, he communicated to the Estates the draft of the decree upon which he had resolved with reference to the religious contest, and which announced his determination " to carry out unconditionally the Edict of Worms." The Protestants were treated in that decree as a mere sect: and their doctrines, of all shades, were indiscriminately condemned. All the usages of the old creed were to be maintained intact, and the rights of the ecclesiastical princes were to be fully restored, under pain of the Imperial Ban. This imperial decree, which was virtually a total abolition of the work of the Reformation, was finally issued on the 19th of November, with the additional clause, which savoured of mockery, that a time of respite should be granted to the Protestants until the 15th April. 1531, to enable them to declare their adhesion to the contested points. In the meantime the Emperor was to use his offices with the Pope to convene a General Council to discuss the abolition of certain unquestionable abuses in the Church.

This amounted to an open declaration of war, and the Protestant princes were prudent enough to take their measures accordingly.

## XI

The Diet of Augsburg in 1530 may be considered, in some respects, as the key-stone in the religious and political course of the

Reformation. The "Augsburg Confession" practically completed the work of the Reformation from a religious point of view, whilst the imperial edict marked out in distinct features the line of action which the papal and imperial party was resolved to pursue towards the Protestants. It was an ultimatum in due form. All the subsequent events in the history of the Reformation, even as far down as the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, must therefore be regarded as merely the natural sequence of the Diet of Augsburg, and do not actually belong to the making or unmaking of the Reformation.

The stern necessity of self-defence caused at last the Protestant princes to form the "Convention" or "League of Smalkald," in December 1530. Even Luther was induced to approve of it, and some of his writings, more especially his Warning to my Beloved Germans, showed that he no longer viewed self-defence in the light of rebellion. The schism among the Germans was now political as well as religious. A compact body stood armed, not against the sovereign power of the German empire, but against the Roman emperor of the German nation, against the monarch who identified himself with the Pope. Charles V. fully recognised the drift of the Protestant opposition; and it is not quite improbable that on account of it he insisted on the speedy election and coronation of his brother Ferdinand as "Roman king," which took place at Cologne at the end of 1530 and at Aix-la-Chapelle at the beginning of the following year. The Protestant princes protested against this proceeding, as being contrary to the imperial constitution of Germany; but we have already seen that Charles cared very little either for the laws or the aspirations of the German people. illegal election of Ferdinand necessarily widened the breach between the Emperor and the Protestant princes, who plainly saw the danger impending from the supremacy of the house of Hapsburg.

The dukes of Bavaria, who also aspired to the imperial dignity, looked grudgingly on the ascendency of the Hapsburgs, and seemed inclined, staunch Roman Catholies though they were, to make common cause with the Protestants. Moreover, the Turks were again threatening an invasion of the Austro-German provinces, and all these circumstances combined induced the Emperor to conclude with the Protestant princes, in the summer of 1532, the "Peace of Nuremberg." Considerable concessions were made to the Protestants, and the promise of a "General, free, and Christian Council"

was again held out; but of far greater moment was the fact that by consenting to the "Peace of Nuremberg" the Emperor actually recognised the members of the "Smalkaldic League" as a regularly constituted power, with which it was desirable to come to an amicable understanding. The political element, which, as we have seen, had been at work throughout the course of the Reformation, became henceforth a more and more powerful factor in the struggle between the two hostile camps of the German nation.

After the Diet of Augsburg, in 1530, Charles was again occupied with his military enterprises abroad, and remained absent from Germany for the space of nine years. His brother, King Ferdinand I., was likewise prevented from effectively interfering with religious affairs, in consequence of the troubles in his hereditary dominions, and so the Reformation had again free scope to make its way through the greater portion of Germany. The indulgence granted to the Protestants was, however, apparent only. Both Charles and his brother treacherously bided their time to enter on the struggle of annihilation against them. That time seemed to them to have arrived when Charles, in conjunction with Henry VIII... had forced the King of France to sign the Peace of Crépy, in 1544. It is true the Emperor consented to convene a council in December 1545, and so he did at Trent, but the Princes of Hesse and Saxony justly declined to attend it. The Emperor's hostile intentions against the Protestants now became patent, first by his renewed league with Paul III., the successor of Pope Clement VII., and afterwards by the mustering of his forces. If the Protestants had acted with energy and concord they might, with the greatest ease, have defeated the small imperial forces in the summer of 1545; ut instead of this they gave the Emperor full time to collect a considerable army.

In the meantime Martin Luther, the life and soul of the Reformation, had died on February 18th, 1546, and was spared the pain of witnessing the outbreak of the unfortunate Smalkaldic war, which laid Germany prostrate at the feet of the Emperor and his Spaniards. This calamity was of course due mostly to the fact that the old German empire identified itself with the papacy and considered itself bound to defend its cause. It is, however, a significant fact that Charles V. was actually the last Roman emperor of Germany crowned by a pope. When he proceeded for his coronation, in 1530, to the church of St. Petronio at Bologna,

through a wooden structure which had been erected to connect his palace with the church, the temporary passage gave way a few steps behind the Emperor. Popular superstition saw in this an evil omen—for Germany it proved to be a happy one—and prophesied that Charles would be the last German emperor thus crowned. The prophecy became true, but it was not in Italy that the link was broken which connected Germany with Rome. This was done in Germany itself, and, as we have seen, by the humble peasants' son MARTIN LUTHER.

Luther it was who actually freed Germany from the secular and spiritual bondage of Rome; for although the Protestants had been vanquished in the Smalkaldic war, they were not entirely crushed. The spirit of the Reformation survived, and exercised its beneficial influence, not only throughout Germany, but over the whole of the civilised world, and it is in this sense that the Reformation is universally considered as the beginning of a new era in the history of the world. The Reformation is the source directly or indirectly, by action or by reaction, of everything great and noble which has taken place from about the beginning of the sixteenth century. Through the Reformation alone men of all creeds have become free and enlightened. And this is the reason why not only the theologian, but also the political and literary historian, hail the work of the Reformation as one of the greatest blessings ever bestowed on mankind.