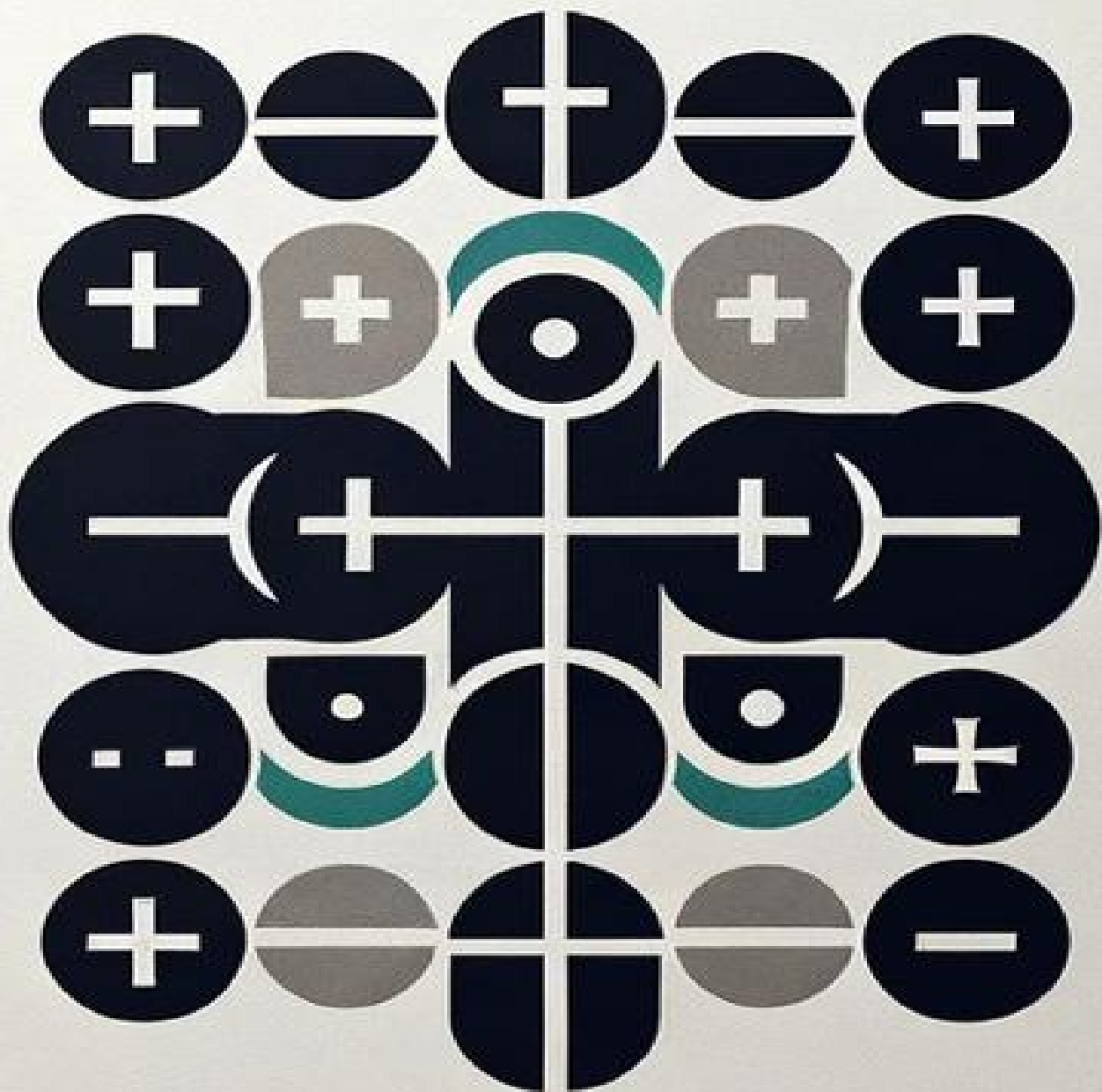
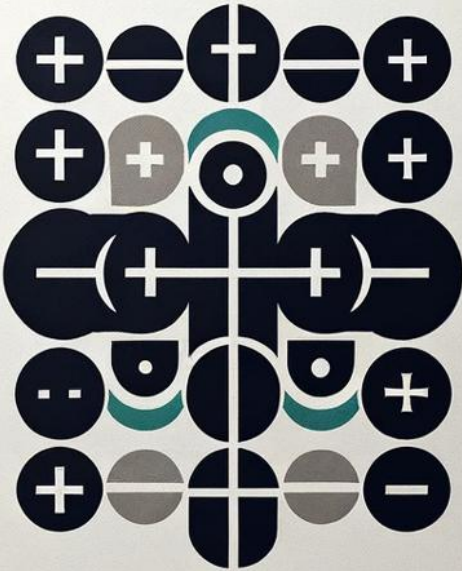


EXPOSITION UPON THE
TWELVE ARTICLES OF
THE CHRISTIAN FAITH



PETER MARTYR VERMIGILI

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Exposition Upon the Twelve Articles of the Christian Faith

by Peter Martyr Vermigli

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Introduction

The articles of our faith set forth nothing unto us but the knowledge of God. And as we are not able thoroughly to comprehend him, he being perfect and uncorrupt in nature: so is there particularly given us, sometimes one small taste and feeling of him, and sometimes another. And seeing in the divine nature, there be three persons (as we believe) of one essence; namely, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, the whole essence pertains to each one of them. But now this first article, which properly concerns the Father, propounds four things to be observed; first, that he, in whom we believe, is the true God; secondly, that the same is the Father; thirdly, that he is omnipotent; and lastly, that he is the author and first original of all things created. Now go to: let us see particularly, what the proper meaning is of these words; I believe in God. Assuredly, we cannot otherwise explain this sentence than to say that he is to be acknowledged as God.

**I believe in God the Father, Almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth**

So, if a man asks you, "What is God?" (rejecting all human subtlety and setting aside the unsearchable difficulties), you must boldly and absolutely answer without hesitation that God is the eternal good, from whom every other good comes. Hence, it is evident that anyone who esteems anything as much as or more than God cannot truly say, "I believe in God." For if you acknowledge Him as the chief good, you will never prioritize anything above Him. Nor can someone truly believe this if they ever place their hope elsewhere, since hope is only for something good. Therefore, if God (as I have said) is the good from which every good thing flows, whoever expects good elsewhere does not truly believe in Him.

Moreover, those who attribute the good things they possess to their own righteousness, efforts, actions, and ultimately to themselves do not have the understanding and true appreciation of this first article of our faith. So, what can you say about those who have set for themselves certain goals of good things, out of the vanity of their own imagination, and out of the decrees of philosophers and worldly men, yes, even out of the instincts of brute beasts, in which they truly find solace, no matter what evil they bring? Surely, such people do not properly worship God but instead worship the fantasies and inventions of their own minds. Believe me, this matter is of the utmost importance for a person to have the true God as their GOD. The prophet David declared those people blessed whose God is the true God.

Now it is evident what it means to believe in God; however, we have not yet explained why the Father is called by the name of Father. That name is attributed to Him chiefly for two reasons. One is because He is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the second person in divine nature. The other reason is that He chose to be our Father. He is called Father because He distributes His inheritance to

us and shares His nature with us, as Paul to the Romans calls us "The heirs of God," and Peter says that we partake of the divine nature. For these two reasons, parents usually give to their children. First, they try as much as they can to make them like themselves in nature and way of living. Then, when they have made them their heirs, they seek to enrich them with all their possessions. The resemblance that the regenerated have with God their Father lies in wisdom, justice, simplicity of mind, magnanimity, charity, and other heavenly and divine qualities of the mind. By these, they consider themselves to be made in the image of God, as they were created in the beginning. And the inheritance they expect from such an excellent Father is eternal and supremely blessed life.

And how different is this generation from that in which we are born of flesh and bones? And what a great distinction is there between this eternal life inheritance and the free gifts among the living or those bequeathed through wills concerning fields, vineyards, houses, livestock, money, or anything else? Although we have these things from Him and through Him now, we are only speaking of that by which God is properly called the Father of those regenerated in Christ. If only people would embrace this with faith and a willing mind, they would not deviate so far from the nature and likeness of God our Father, nor would they display the traits of illegitimate children through their shameful actions and wicked deeds, as many do today.

This is the paternal image and form to which Christ called us when He said, "Be ye perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." Yet He did not remain silent about that glorious and rich inheritance when He told Peter, "Whoever leaves what is his for my name's sake, he will not only receive a hundredfold from me, but also eternal life." Therefore, whoever expects such a great inheritance by faith, neither

becomes overly proud in prosperity nor excessively sorrowful in adversity, but always sets his mind on greater things. He never convinces himself that the labours and vexations of this life are not equivalent to the reward he anticipates.

The third point of our faith: the omnipotence of God.

But now let us come to the third point, wherein we believe Him to be omnipotent. Firstly, this signifies that He, by His own power alone, was able to bring forth (as will be discussed later) everything contained in both heaven and earth. Furthermore, when He will protect me from all evils and bestow every good thing upon me (being His own handiwork), He can demonstrate this through various means. Being omnipotent, as we believe Him to be, He can easily remove all hindrances and obstacles. On this rests, as on a most solid foundation, all the honour and worthiness of our faith. For whatever resistance the wisdom of man, the world, the flesh, our very senses, or the temptations of the devil may offer against the promises contained in the Holy Scriptures, it is defeated by this article. Hence, Paul says to the Romans that Abraham gave glory to God when he fully believed that He was able to perform what He promised, even though it might not be feasible by human reasoning and power.

Therefore, you must not heed what importunate men may object, nor the troubling thoughts that may enter your mind, opposing the things contained in the Holy Scriptures and divine promises. For to you is evident both the infinite power of God and His paternal will, in whom you profess to believe. You must also recall that neither miracles are performed nor prayers are answered unless full faith is given to this omnipotence of God and to the love with which He loves

us. For this reason, Christ said that "All things are possible to him who believes."

Maker of Heaven and Earth

Now remains to expound the last part of this article, namely, "The maker of heaven and earth." By this saying is refuted the error that the schools of philosophers endeavour to persuade, that the world indeed was without beginning, and that it cannot by any possible means be made of nothing. Here all of us, endowed with faith, see much more perfectly than they have seen. It would be absurd to measure the works of God omnipotent with a certain measure of natural works. Furthermore, we also believe hereby that God is the perpetual preserver of the things which He has made. For unless He should govern all things by the same virtue with which He made them, without doubt, all things would be reduced to naught, which, to have their being, were at first brought forth by Him from nothing. Whereupon it is also lawful to conclude another thing: that if all things are created by God, as we have before declared, and that He is truly a father unto thee, and so merciful a father, whatever is made by Him comes to your use.

To Adam, the parent of all mankind, all things in a manner became subject. But seeing he was ungrateful of mind, he, by his grievous offense, spoiled both himself and all of us of so precious and ample inheritance. This inheritance, Paul manifestly shows, with very great and most forceful arguments, to be restored to us again by Christ, teaching that the benefit of Christ is mightier and of more efficacy than the malice and wickedness of Adam. Therefore, he also writes to them that "All things happen well unto them which truly love God." It is therefore our part rightly and justly to apply unto our use and commodity those things that are created, so that for the use of them,

and for the delectable fruit which we receive by them, the goodness of God may be praised, and thanks given unto Him. For, as the same apostle, writing unto Timothy, says, "Things created by God are good, that the faithful may use them and give due thanks to God, so that none of them be received as evil." Yes, and although the same have drawn any evil unto it, yet by the word and by prayer it is made holy. And things created do no less serve for the sustentation of man's life than they do give us an apt testimony of the perfect and singular goodness of our most merciful Father, which thing as it is most true, so it ought not to be contemned.

And in Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, our Lord.

Five Principal Points Belonging to the Person of the Son

I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son our Lord, conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried, who descended into hell, and on the third day He rose again from the dead, He ascended into heaven, and He sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty, from there He shall come to judge both the living and the dead.

In these articles, which lead us to believe in those things necessary for salvation, we are to note five things of the greatest importance concerning the second person in divinity, who (as I have said) is called the Son. The first is, that this Son of God, Jesus Christ, is our true and lawful Lord; secondly, that He was made to be such for our use and benefit; thirdly, that whatever He suffered, He suffered for our sakes; fourthly, that He was also, for our benefit, exalted above all heavens; finally, that He shall come on the last day for our aid.

Now therefore let us see, concerning the first; to wit, that Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, is truly and properly our Lord. To discuss this matter orderly, let us first determine who this is that we proclaim with the title of Lord; for afterward it will easily be judged whether such an excellent prerogative be suitable for Him or not. And we are compelled (as faith itself testifies to us) to confess that this Christ is nothing else but a unique person, in whom divine and human natures are joined together with an indissoluble bond.

And this John clearly declares in the first chapter, saying that the Word became flesh. By the terms "Word" and "Flesh," he means nothing but these two natures; namely, that God and man are in perpetual union in the person of Christ. Regarding the Word, it can easily be gathered, because it is written beforehand; "And the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Also, that "Flesh" in the Holy Scriptures denotes human nature, is very evident to him who diligently and frequently reads them. But to proceed no further without some testimony on this matter, I will bring two examples, the first is in Isaiah, where it is thus spoken; "And all flesh shall see that God has spoken": and the latter is in that which is spoken by Joel; "I will pour out of my spirit upon all flesh." In these places, it is manifest that by the name of flesh, men are signified. Hence, it appears that the Evangelist, when he said that the Word was made flesh, meant nothing other than what he had first declared; namely, that the divine and human natures were united together in Christ.

A refined exposition on the human and divine nature of Christ.

Moreover, that human nature was in Him is plainly enough declared by the things that follow in this passage: namely, that He suffered death and was buried. Therefore, the enemies of the Christian

religion (I mean the subtler and more witty sort) do not for the most part strongly oppose the human nature of Christ: and those who at certain times attempted to test it were easily convicted and refuted. However, there was a larger number who often stirred up tumults, and with greater vehemence, concerning the deity of Christ. Nevertheless, their false and perverse opinions were necessarily, to their great shame, made to yield to the clear and comforting light of the Holy Scriptures. For, besides the testimony of John already cited, "And the Word was God," we have the statement of the apostle, which he wrote to the Romans: namely, that Christ, according to the flesh, would come from the people of the Jews. And along with this he adds, "Who is God blessed forever." These two passages, being so clear, ought to suffice for the confirmation of the minds of faithful men in the truth of God.

But yet the Holy Scriptures furnish us with many other passages besides these, if we will ponder them well. Therefore, I leave it entirely to the judgment and wisdom of those who modestly engage in the reading of the Scriptures. I, for my part, am satisfied with this one reason, which I would not omit to mention. For it is fit enough, not only to prove but also to compel acknowledgment, that Christ is the true God. This express prohibition is plainly stated in many places, namely, that we must not put our trust in any creature, not even in man by name: as in Jeremiah this is manifestly shown, "Cursed is he who trusts in man, and makes flesh his arm." Furthermore, David earnestly condemns the confidence, which they used to place in men, and in princes. Therefore, if Christ were merely a man and in no way God, it would not be lawful for us to trust in Him at all: which notwithstanding the Holy Scriptures not only permit, but also expressly command; that our faith be fastened with a lively hope in Christ, or in Messiah, if you prefer to call Him as the Jews did: that on the other hand, whoever does not believe or trust in

Him, is subject to the curse. Hence, we boldly conclude that this particular person, of whom we presently speak, verily possesses both divine and human nature.

For this reason, it is not in vain that He is described to us in the books of the Holy Scriptures by the renowned double name JESUS CHRIST. Of these, the name JESUS signifies nothing else but a Savior, who has delivered the children of God from their sins, and therefore from all evil. For Joseph, the husband of Mary, was commanded by the angel to call Him JESUS: for "He shall save His people," says he, "from their sins." And I have added further; "From all evil": because there is no evil which does not have its origin from sin. So, he who can boast that the root of evil is removed from him, may also justly affirm that he has rid away all evil. But this, if we do not yet perfectly perceive, we shall eventually prove it in that blessed time of resurrection. The other name, CHRIST, denotes 'The anointed of God,' and 'the sanctified king,' which name very well agrees with Him, seeing that by the guidance of His spirit and word, He directs and leads His children to eternal life. Therefore, by reason of those two natures, from which He is composed, and by those two names, it is easily perceived that the title, by which we magnify Him, calling Him 'Our Lord,' is very appropriate and fitting for Him.

Firstly, concerning His divine nature, it is undeniable that in the Old Testament, God is many times called Lord, as He who is far above all things, being the Maker of them. This title also pertains to the man who, in the person of Him of whom we speak, was united with God; because He, being free from all sin, was filled with all goodness. If there were any such person in this world (as there has never been any besides Him), would He not seem to be adorned with those gifts, for which the name of Lord might rightly agree to Him? Indeed, it seems to me that when a man is free from sin, he is by no means a

servant. The first servitude entered the world through sin; and he that is endowed with divine properties, without a doubt, is able to help others. From this, it follows that lords and those who rule over others, if they are lawfully called, are not preferred to be above others for any other end, but because they should not be harmful to their subjects, and that they, being void of all vice, may be so armed with strength and fortitude, as they should be able to succor all those who are under their subjection.

That Christ was undoubtedly without sin, I suppose it needless to prove to anyone: seeing (as Matthew bears record), He was conceived by the Holy Ghost, that by this means He might be free from original sin. This is also evident, in that He, living among us, never sinned. And Peter writes that He did no sin. To whom Paul agrees, when he says, "He, who knew no sin, for our sakes became sin." John the Baptist also pointed Him out to his disciples as the most pure Lamb of God, who should take away the sins of the world. For it was fitting for Him to be pure, and without all blemish, as a sacrifice to be offered up to God. Furthermore, the Heavenly Father, not without a miracle, testified with His own voice that He was well pleased in Him; that is to say, that He was innocent and pure from all fault, since this is an acceptable thing unto God. And who doubts but that He was adorned with divine properties? Seeing Paul unto the Colossians calls Him, "The image of the invisible God," because He truly expresses Him, and all things that are in Him: in such a manner, as there has never been, nor now is, nor hereafter shall be, any son more perfectly resembling his father than Christ Jesus did. Therefore, among all of us, He is called both God and man. And we confess Him to be the only Son of God, as He who in divine nature has no other brethren; inasmuch as He is the only Word of God, of which we now speak. And among men, though He has many brethren by adoption, He may justly be called 'Only,' for the wealth

that He has of the well-pleasing graces of God, and because of the image and likeness of the Eternal Father. Meet therefore it is, that He be called Lord, as well, for that He is without sin, as for the wealth that He has of divine gifts.

I will let pass the fact that He, who pays ransom to redeem a captive, is his Lord. Which thing that Christ did for us wretches, and bondslaves of sin and Satan, none who are faithful ought to doubt: seeing Paul, both to the Romans and Ephesians, affirms that we have obtained remission of sins; namely, by His blood, which He has plentifully and liberally shed for us upon the cross. So therefore He must of good right be called our Lord. Furthermore, there is a custom received by long use among lawful sons of kings and princes; that the firstborn son obtains the lordship among his younger brethren. Which thing is not doubtful to them, who have read either the holy or profane histories; or else, who have indeed understood what is the manner of governing in kingdoms and dominions of the world. And unto the Romans and Galatians it is plainly shown; that all the faithful are the children of God. Unto the Romans it is written; that His Spirit testifies with our spirit, that we are the children of God. And unto the Galatians it is said; "Because you are sons of God, He has sent into your hearts the spirit of His Son." For this cause, all we that believe are now brethren, because of that divine adoption: but among all, Christ is the firstborn, we (as we read unto the Romans) being made like unto the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

Let us not marvel therefore, if Paul in his epistles, for the most part, calls God Father; and further, coming to Christ, calls Him Lord. This manner also the church has retained, when as in our prayers we ascribe all to God for Christ our Lord's sake; both that, which we desire, and that which we have obtained. But seeing now, that after

the declaration of these things, the principality of Jesus Christ is so manifest: which of us can abide himself to be brought into the power of any tyrant from such a Lord, who also is our brother? Which of us, refusing this so notable a captain, will betake himself to his enemies already conquered and put to flight by him, when as they are mortal enemies to ourselves? Shall there be found any, that will shake off the yoke of so bountiful a Lord, to submit himself unto him that wishes nothing more than to destroy both body and soul? For my part, I think there can be none found among them, who have tasted the sweetness of so acceptable a Lordship, whereof Christ made mention, when he said; "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light." This subjection is voluntary, as the prophet (if we have a consideration unto the Hebrew truth) declares in the 110th Psalm, wherein it is said unto the Messiah;

"Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power."

And the apostle also says; "You are no more under the law, but under grace." Wherefore, all the charge and burden of this principality, was laid upon the shoulders, not of us, but of Jesus Christ: as it was foretold of him by Isaiah the prophet; "Upon His shoulders shall He bear the sovereignty or rule." Note, that the prophet says not that his sovereignty shall be laid upon the shoulders of poor miserable subjects, but upon His own shoulders. If therefore Christian princes would be persuaded in mind, not to oppress with such tyranny the people of God committed unto them; they ought to take example of their government from so mild and easy a government of Christ. But passing over them, let us rejoice among ourselves; that it is brought to pass by the goodness of God, that we are reckoned in so happy a society, under the banner of so noble a prince and valiant brother; unto whom shall never lack, either will or power to help us. Let us wholly with confidence betake ourselves unto Him; seeing we cannot

apply our endeavour better. Let us serve Him diligently, and with all our heart; let us worship and reverence Him from the heart. For both this is our duty, and He is worthy of these things.

Conceived by the Holy Ghost, Born of the Virgin Mary.

This blessed God and man, Jesus Christ, who (as we have heard before from the holy oracles) is our lawful Lord, is eternal in terms of divine essence—yesterday, today, and forever (as it is written in the 13th chapter to the Hebrews). Yet, in respect of His human nature, He was not without beginning. Therefore, we say that He was made, as Paul tells the Galatians: He was sent from God, born of a woman, and placed under the law. To the Romans also, it is stated: He was born of the seed of David, according to the flesh. And lest we should either be in doubt concerning this procreation, or else judge it inappropriately, faith directs us to these two facts and binds us to them: the first is that He was conceived by the Holy Ghost, and the second, that He was born of the Virgin Mary, both of which we especially confess. This is distinctly written by the Evangelists to help us understand that He, even according to the flesh, was free from the curse and from sin. It most plainly appears that all the descendants of Adam were so subject to the curse and sin that there was no place for any to be exempted.

To exempt Christ, according to the flesh, from the common fall of all mankind, so that He might retain His own nature, the wisdom of God decreed through a wonderful counsel that the man who was to be assumed in the unity of the person should have both a divine and human beginning. For this reason, as it had been foretold by the angel to Mary, the Holy Ghost descended into her, and by the

principal power thereof, the blood, now purified by His grace, created a unique and perfect man. This man, the merciful God, even God, who was the Word from everlasting, miraculously took upon Himself. Thus, the womb of the Virgin Mary, the holy mother, was the divine furnace, where the Holy Ghost, from a well-purified matter, fashioned this singular body, which was a most obedient instrument of a noble soul. By this means, all the old blemishes of Adam were alienated from Christ, although His body, concerning the nature and form of creation, was not much different from the body of Adam. For our first parent, Adam, was also marvellously and by divine power created from the earth, without customary seed. Certainly, there is no need for prolonged discussion to show how much Christ, in terms of His manhood, excelled Adam in all excellent gifts of nature, seeing that the order and circumstances of His nativity are described: namely, His humble and lowly state of poverty, which nevertheless had a glorious and renowned testimony from the majesty of God and from angelic nature.

**The divine condescension and humanity of Christ,
emphasizing the transformative impact of His nature on
believers.**

Therefore, moving beyond these matters, we shall devote our entire discussion to this beneficial reflection: that whoever is regenerated by Christ must recall the magnitude and nature of God's love towards us, who did not disdain our foul and unclean nature; but, having cleansed it, clothed Himself with it to make us partakers of His divine nature. It is indeed true that the devil, with his lying spirit, fabricated stories, and idolaters attempted to convince others that the gods they worshipped sometimes took human form; however, not with the intention of sanctifying our nature, but rather to defile it with infinite and beastly filth. Thus, none of these appearances, as

recorded in the writings of the poets, bring anything else with them, seeing they both shamefully pollute the body and allure minds to evil through such infamous examples. For if one were to model their life on these examples, they would also unleash their lusts into adultery, fornication, and other abhorrent offences. In contrast, the Divine Word has purified our nature by bestowing divine gifts upon it. This applies not only to the man whom it assumed but to all those who, united with Him in true faith, are members of Him. And this heavenly Word (which is Christ), being secretly hidden beneath that nature, is so adorned with justice, patience, temperance, prudence, wisdom, and submission of the mind, displaying such perfect examples of exceptional righteousness, etc., that His life alone, if duly considered, is sufficient guidance to live well.

Wherefore, let dissolute and wanton Christians depart; let them deem it trivial to live impurely, let them undervalue the nature and members which Christ, by assuming, has sanctified; let them disregard that noble example of holiness and righteousness which Christ demonstrated while living in the flesh; let them also stop reflecting in their deeds the participation in the divine nature they have obtained in Christ. Undoubtedly, this was not the purpose God intended when He became man, nor did He, upon this consideration, live among us for 33 years. Therefore, it is fitting for the children of God to lead a divine life, seeing their nature has been made divine. But the life of brute beasts and of men should be left to those who, in their disbelief, have remained mere men; or who, through their wicked acts, have degenerated and transformed, as it were, into brute beasts. From this, we also derive comfort if ever we are troubled by the frailties of the flesh, finding them burdensome and lamenting that we are subject to human infirmities; namely, if we truly believe that Christ endured these infirmities on our behalf: for by this means, they will seem far lighter to us than their nature allows.

Moreover, if He so humbled Himself for our sakes that, though He was Lord, He appeared in the form of a servant, it should not seem so grievous to us, at times, to temper our pride and lower the loftiness of mind for the welfare of our weak and impoverished brethren. Therefore, not without good reason, Paul exhorted the Philippians that among them should be the same mindset that was in Christ Jesus, who, though He was in the form of God, did not disdain to take on the form of a servant. And thus far concerning the original conception and birth of Christ, according to the human nature. Let us now proceed.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, buried, descended into hell.

The sequence we previously established requires that we first discuss the death of Christ; secondly, His state after death, regarding both the body and the soul. Firstly, the death of Christ, which can never be sufficiently extolled or contemplated by us, involved two main aspects: one, that it was exceedingly ignominious; the other, that it was extremely painful. The insults Christ endured, although numerous and difficult to bear, primarily stemmed from two significant factors. The first is the infamous quality and nature of the sins that were placed upon Him; the second is the perfect innocence and pure righteousness of His life. For just as when something unclean and impure, if seen in the common street, is not so out of place and is less offensive than if, through the envy and malice of someone, it is thrown upon a noble and precious painted table, so it is far less fitting for a man who far surpasses all other creatures to be stained with infamy and dishonor.

Regarding Christ, who was the head of humanity, the prince of angels, and the only Son of God—not only just and innocent but also the very embodiment of innocence and justice itself—it was excessively shameful and ignominious that He should be burdened with such heinous crimes; and that in a trial, not before the citizens of just one city, but before all the people of the entire kingdom of Judea, who at that time were customarily gathered to celebrate Passover in Jerusalem.

It did not suffice for them that they had frequently defamed Him with accusations, calling Him a possessor of evil spirits, a sorcerer, a consorter with devils by whose aid He performed miracles; and that they labeled Him a glutton, a drunkard, from whom no sound doctrine could emanate; also a companion of publicans and sinners, and ultimately of infamous and wicked men; that from Him came nothing but offenses and evil examples. They called Him a Samaritan, an alien from the true worship of God, from whom, as from some profane person excommunicated from the church, all men were to keep away. These accusers, not content with these reproaches, with the intent to pursue Him unto death, laid further accusations against Him before Pilate and Herod; namely, that He had uttered intolerable blasphemy against the law of God, arrogating to Himself the name of the Son of God; that He was a seditious man, not only against their own laws but also against the commonwealth of the Roman Empire, by persuading the people to deny tribute to Caesar; and that He earnestly pursued this aim: namely, to claim the dignity of a king contrary to order, and without the consent of the Romans.

And by this means he came into such shame and contempt, as Barabbas, though he were a wicked and notable thief, was judged to be more just than he: so that such a man being quit, our Christ was

condemned. And in token of his just condemnation, and to have it manifest, that he (above all others who commonly are judged wicked) was worthy of the cross; he (by decree of the judge) was hanged between two thieves, as though he had been the chiefest among those who were most wicked and mischievous persons. But then was fulfilled that prophecy, which is written in Isaiah, which says; that Christ should be contemned and nothing regarded among men: from whose sight everyone should withdraw himself, and that at length he should be reckoned among the wicked. And certainly, his sentence does not disagree with that, which Paul wrote in his epistle to the Galatians, where he says, that He became a curse for us, to deliver us from the curse of the law: for because it is written; Cursed is everyone that hangeth upon a tree. And here comes to remembrance to speak a few words of the justice of God, however exceeding severe the same were. But show me (I pray thee) if shame and confusion be of good right due unto sins; what greater and more heaped measure of shame might there be found, than that, which Christ suffered for our sakes?

Were not the offenses of man sufficiently and above measure derived unto Christ, and the same punished in him with all shame and dishonor? Some man perhaps will say, that the rebukes were of less weight; because of his grounded innocence. And in very deed on this behalf some easement might have been brought to those reproaches, if that innocence had been most manifest to the sight of all men. But assuredly, upon that day, wherein Christ was lifted upon the cross, he was so oppressed with the great heap of despiteful railings, and false accusations of evil, as the people miserably beheld him nailed unto the cross, wagging their head at him; not as though they were troubled by perceiving his afflictions, but that they might pursue him still being wearied with ignominies and slanders, as though they allowed by their judgment, all those troubles and miseries, which

environed him on every side. Justly therefore may we rejoyce, that we by faith are made partakers of so great a benefit; seeing all the rebukes and ignominies, which were due for our sins, Christ our head took upon him, and utterly abolished. Yea undoubtedly, in the place of this shame and ignominy, we by that merit of Christ possess in hope both glory and honor in the sight of God, as a thing due unto us.

But seeing not only shame and ignominy is by the just judgment of God due to sin, but also punishments, which are laid upon us, according to the manner and measure of the sin: for this cause Christ departed this life, not only laden with railings and contumelies, but also was as it were plucked from the same life by the violence of most grievous pains, and most cruel punishments. The which seeing the evangelists do plentifully recite, it is not our meaning to spend any longer time in particular describing of the same. Howbeit, it seemeth that all those punishments of Christ, which undoubtedly are innumerable, may be contrived specially into four chief parts. Among which, the first appear to be the sundry sorts of scornings, wherewith he was diverse times assailed: such were the spitting in his face, the saluting, and entitling him by the name of king; the putting off of his own garments, and clothing him with other garments unaccustomed; the reputed of him sometimes to be a fool, and sometime a prince; by blindfolding his eyes with a cloth, and by putting the scepter of a king (though the same were of a reed) into his hands: also, being so arrayed, the bidding of him to prophesy by such as mocked him; also to be set naked in the sight of all the people: finally, to see his garments divided to most wicked knaves, and lots to be cast upon them. I pass over, that he was accounted of Herod as it were a common fool, and an infinite number of other mocks, with which he was disquieted; as the wise reader shall easily understand out of the holy scriptures. But if one demand, wherein the rebukes and

ignominies laid upon Christ, whereof we have spoken before, do differ from these latter: I answer, that those belong to unjust infamy, to accusation, and unjust condemnation; but these were added for the punishment of those faults, which slanderously were laid upon him.

Besides these reproaches, we must weigh the stripes and bloody wounds, which he sustained in his whole body, the blows, the scourgings, the strikings with the reed, the prickings with thorns, and an infinite number of other things more, which he suffered at the sessions of the priests and elders, in the judgment hall, in the streets, and elsewhere in diverse other places. These hard afflictions received he under the cross, which he bore on his shoulders with great travel, before it held him stretched out upon it with his whole body. But he was crucified being not tied with any bands, as perhaps the rest were; yet nailed unto the wood through hands and feet, even as he himself thereof gave a sure testimony after his resurrection, when he said unto Thomas; Bring thy finger hither, and see my hands, and put forth thine hand, and put it into my side. Which he added, by reason of the wound that he received in his side by a certain soldier after his death. The very which thing David, by the spirit of prophesy, had foretold in the Psalms; They pierced (saith he) my hands and my feet. The same prophet also passed not over in silence, that unpleasant taste of myrrh, which being mingled with vinegar, was proffered unto Christ for a drink. For he writes in the 69th psalm; They gave me gall for my food, and vinegar for quenching of my thirst. The fourth and last punishment, which Christ for our sake took upon him, was that separation of the soul from his precious body; which as he that had the same fully in his own power, and that saw all things to be fulfilled that were foretold of him by the prophets, touching the former matter, he of his own accord, making a loud voice yielded up his spirit.

But here, seeing everything is most worthy to be noted; I stand in some doubt, what thing I may here first settle myself to examine. Howbeit among many things. I will now entreat (as briefly as I can) of this, which I next add. First, let me ask you one question; whether it seem most strange unto you, that God (who by another easier kind of means might have reconciled mankind to himself) took in hand the performance thereof by so many and so grievous pains and labors of his own son? For this is certain, that he might have taken any other way in hand for reconciling of us with his son: why then did he make him subject to so many miseries and rebukes? Here might I answer, that the justice of God might by no other means be satisfied. Which answer, as it is true, so is it commonly received. Wherefore I think it meet to note here three things most profitable to be known. The first shall be this; that we may sufficiently understand, by that so hard a means, which God used for procurement of our salvation, how great a bond by the just judgment of God was grown through our sins, how grievous was the burden of them, how great was the wrath, enmity, and hatred which God had conceived against us, and how horrible a revenge hung over our heads. Which, if it be diligently enough considered, will it not be a most fit bridle to restrain our lusts, and to stay us from falling into foul and shameful acts, and into the unclean works of darkness of this world, and of the flesh? Undoubtedly we, considering with the eyes of our faith, how severely and sharply God hath punished them in Christ, everyone of us ought to be careful to fly wisely from them.

Another thing that is meet here to be noted is this; namely, that the consciences of men, which through the infirmity of the flesh do oftentimes faint, could never assure themselves, from damnation, which by their continual, yea and shameful falls they deserve; especially when as God, the most just judge, who never leaveth our sins unpunished, is always set before our eyes Men's minds (I say)

being stricken with the feel of sin, could never have taken any comfort unto them; unless the severe sentence against Christ had gone before. But when we perceive, that the son of God, by so hard and bitter chastisement, abode the punishment for all our sins; besides, that from hence springeth a full assuredness to our minds: we can never be satisfied in giving of thanks unto the mercy of God, for that he cast all our iniquities upon Christ, according as it was foreshowed by Isaiah, that so he should suffer for our sins those grievous wounds and afflictions: And that is it which Paul remembereth in the eighth chapter to the Romans; that God spared not his own only son, but gave him to death for us all.

But now let us come to the third point of doctrine, which it behoves us diligently to weigh. Besides the profitable uses that we have before assigned, as touching the sufferings of Christ; here he shows himself an example and lively image of all perfection: seeing we may here behold what patience, obedience, and charity our Christ taught us in dying for us. Certainly, this doctrine is a most fit thing, invented for the keeping of constancy in all afflictions. Shall there any be found, if he be pressed with adversities, or overcharged with devilish temptations, or if he run into any other miseries whatsoever, that turning his eyes upon Christ hanging on the cross, does not in the greatest troubles and calamities whatsoever, comfort himself with this joy? I boldly here affirm, that such a man, above all others, will keep the quietness and tranquility of his mind; seeing he acknowledges himself by reason hereof to walk in the paths, and to tread in the steps of our most beloved master, and only redeemer Jesus Christ. There is no affliction will be grievous unto him, neither will it disquiet him to sustain any adversities or hard persecutions, whatsoever they be, for the honor of God, and glory of his Gospel. Who is it from hence forward, that will refuse to drink of this cup of

afflictions; seeing Christ our head and prince has so cheerfully drunk thereof for obtaining salvation unto others?

These things (I say) if every faithful man will thoroughly consider with himself, he will not suffer the concupiscences of the flesh any longer to take place, and bear rule in his mind; but with this prick of the cross will day and night be egged forward, and be profitably driven to the mortifying of them; while he shall consider, that the flesh of Christ, by the commandment of his father, was humbled upon this tree; and that the same was obedient even unto death, the which death was no less cruel than ignominious. So as, by the passion of Christ, we not only pick out a consolation in our miseries, misfortunes, and calamities, which often times light upon us; but also a lively exhortation, that we may be crucified with him, as concerning the old man and our flesh: according to that, which Paul to the Galatians taught; They (saith he) that be of Christ, have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. Wherefore the same apostle used to call his afflictions, Stigmata, that is, The prints and seals of Christ engraved in his body.

By reason whereof we cannot marvel enough at the folly and also madness of some Christians; which run hither and thither on pilgrimage, as far as Hiesa or Auernia, for the prints and seals wherewith they vaunt that their Francis was marked. But persecutions, or rather infamies and losses, which must be sustained either in goods or in bodies themselves for Christ's religion sake, or else for showing of obedience to God, they refuse them; or else certainly they unworthily complain of them every moment. Of all these things it follows, that we ought very much to esteem afflictions, punishments, and troubles, which we endure by the will of God, for the glory of Christ; as being seals and marks of all those things, which the only son of God, and our redeemer Christ suffered for us

upon the cross. Now, albeit that the Majesty and worthiness of this matter in hand doth no small deal allure me unto it, and scarcely permits me to be led so soon from hence unto another discourse: yet, while I consider, that I here give only an instruction unto them that be the more ignorant, and no full teaching of the better learned Christians: I will here stay myself, and take in hand to describe that state, which the body and the soul of Christ tasted of after his death.

He was buried, he descended into hell.

Two parts there are of man, assumed by the Word into the unity of the person; namely, the soul and the body, even as other men also consist of a soul and body: but those parts were separated and disjoined upon the cross. The body (as the evangelists do testify) was laid in the sepulcher, wherein it remained until the third day: which was the time appointed by the eternal Father, for the most happy resurrection of Christ. Of which mystery, when Paul treats in the epistle to the Romans, he says; that The faithful who are baptized into Christ Jesus, are buried in baptism. Which saying must thus be understood; namely, that we are so dead unto sin in Christ, that we have no more to do therewith; seeing Christ dying blotted out the same, so that it should not afterward be imputed unto us unto death. Whereby, that as the bodies of them that be dead, are buried in the sepulcher; neither do appear from thence unto the eyes of men (not that they are not in the world, but because that which is corrupt and rotten in them is not seen:) even so our sin, perverse will, and naughty lust, howsoever they are destroyed by the cross of Christ, yet they cease not to remain in us, but are covered in the sight of God. Not that God knows not of them sufficiently, unto whose eyes all things are discovered and manifest: but that he does mercifully dissemble them, does not revenge, nor yet is so angry that he brings

death upon us by reason of them. Wherefore the flesh of Christ, being buried after his death, signified that our sin is as it were buried before the just tribunal seat of God. It signified also, that the power of the law is broken. Finally, it betokened, that the old shadows and ceremonies of the law are utterly abolished.

As concerning the very soul itself, immediately after that it departed from the body; it remained not idle, but it descended into the lower parts. Which words declare nothing else, but that it entered into the same state, which the rest of the souls separated from the bodies have experience of; the which are either chosen into the fellowship of saints, or else are thrust out into everlasting destruction, with the spirits of them that be damned. And assuredly, both the one and the other; as well the society of the godly spirits, as also of them that should be damned, felt the presence of the soul of Christ. For the spirits of the faithful (who as Christ says in Luke, while he makes mention of that unhappy rich man, and of most happy Lazarus) rested in a very quiet place, which there is aptly called The bosom of Abraham, that they being all endued with one faith of that holy patriarch, should wait for salvation, through Christ, which there was named from Abraham. Those spirits (I say) rejoiced with great consolation, and gave thanks unto the excellent God, who had delivered them by the hand of the mediator; and because he had performed that thing, which he so long before had promised. Also the other spirits, which were appointed to damnation, felt the coming of the soul of Christ. For (as we read in the first epistle of Peter, the third chapter) To them the spirit of Christ preached. Which may be understood after this sort; namely, that he might reprove them for their obstinacy and unbelief, wherein they were hardened against the word of God, and against the godly admonitions, which ever among were propounded unto them, while they yet lived: or else, that he even then showed unto them, that

same wholesome and most true word. Which word, seeing they, being always like to themselves, did obstinately reject; and being dead, retained still that incredulity which they did being alive, they themselves gave a most manifest testimony against themselves of their most just condemnation; especially, seeing they might not any longer pretend any manner of ignorance. Thus the wisdom of God through his judgments carries perfect praise and renown. And here we are to crave of God, that he will vouchsafe to give unto us such a mind, as we esteem not more of our perverse lusts, than of a stinking carcase, which is already laid close in a sepulcher: and that he will so open our heart, to embrace his holy promises; least while our ears are stricken only with the outward sound of them, we wickedly resist the truth and certainty of them. It is our part also, that seeing Christ, by so many labours and sufferings, approved himself for certainty to be very man; we being comforted by his help, should plainly meditate divine and heavenly life. And having so great a benefit given of God, by the death and burial of Christ; we should do him no small wrong, if we would in very deed think, that our own works avail anything for reconciliation of us unto him: when as we profess rather by this article of faith, that he was pacified with mankind, by the only death of Christ, and by his bitter passion.

He rose again the third day, he ascended into heaven, he sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.

If Christ, that only son of God, who came down unto us, and for our salvation was slain by a most bitter death of the cross, had shrunk, or not been able to have sustained death; and being closed in the sepulcher, had tasted the force of corruption, as other men do: how might we have confidence to be saved by him, that had not been able

to save himself? In like manner, as if a man that would proffer his help to one perishing in the water, leaps with good courage into the water: nevertheless, he himself, while he endeavours to save another, perishes, being swallowed up in the deep of the water; can he that perishes himself, bring any help to him that is perishing? Undoubtedly no other commodity can come thereof, but that the loss grows to be double; if unto the death of the first, there is also added the death of a second, who by his death should bring so much the more loss, in how much his life was more pure and holy. So then it altogether behoved, first, that for our salvation Christ should deliver himself from death: then, to persuade us most fully, that by faith in him salvation is obtained for us. Wherefore, they who beheld him hanging upon the cross, did reproachfully cast him in the teeth with these things; Let him save himself, and we will believe him; he saved others, himself he cannot save. And he rose again from death: wherein he expressed forth a greater power, than if he had then descended from the cross. He strove in such sort with death, as he mightily conquering and destroying the same, might not be retained thereby. For this cause do we here confess, that he was raised up the third day, according to the Scriptures; and that by his Father's decree he ascended into heaven, and that he sits at the right hand of the Father. By which article of our faith we now suck out most sweet comfort; namely, that Christ is exalted for our salvation. And here fall out two things most worthy to be noted; the first is, what manner of exaltation and new glory of Christ the same was; the second, what profit may redound to the faithful thereby.

Whosoever is desirous to perceive aright, unto what a height Christ is raised up; first it behooves him to weigh, unto how base an estate he first of his own accord humbled himself for our sakes. This does Paul in his epistle to the Philippians contrive in few words; He says he made himself of no reputation, and took on him the form of a

servant, and was made like unto men, and was found in shape as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross. In like manner also, as we have more at large showed before, his body was closed up in the sepulcher; but his soul had proof of that state, which the spirits of men enter into, when they be separated from their bodies by death. The viler therefore and more abject that these things were unto the show, so much the more honourable it was to dispatch himself from hence, and to mount up unto things mere contrary. And seeing that mankind is subject everywhere to sundry miseries; those doubtless are no small miseries, which even they commonly suffer, who abounding in riches, seem to have obtained the more happy state of life. Yet the miseries of the poor be more grievous: but when they serve in bondage, they be much more extreme.

However, if so be that a man, who is of a courageous and noble mind, be delivered into the bondage of such his enemies, as not only are of base calling among men, but also of naughty and wicked behaviour; his lamentable and miserable state seems then to be most intolerable. Yet verily, all these things happened unto Christ, who as he undoubtedly put on the true nature of man, so was he a servant, not only unto his disciples (to whom he said; that He came into the world, not to be ministered unto, but to minister unto others, which the thing itself declared, when as he humbled himself even unto the ground to wash their feet:) but that which is a great deal harder, he declared himself as a servant, even to his own enemies; namely, unto the wicked, and unto them which were wholly covered in the sink of wickedness; towards whom he so executed the parts of a servant, as for the safety of them he spent his own life. And this is it, that Paul writes in his epistle to the Romans; When as he says when we were yet but weak, sinners, enemies, and wicked men, Christ died for us. He therefore being so humbled and abased, as he is called by the

prophet A worm and no man; seeing he mounted up from so base a servitude, unto so high and noble a degree of dignity; from an earthly condition, unto a celestial glory; out of a place subject to many infirmities and tribulations, unto a state sure and free from miseries; from mortal flesh, unto an immortal body; finally, when as he being so thrust down, ascended nevertheless unto the highest state of the most excellent monarchy: doth it not appear to you, that he hath been very honourably lifted up on high?

And that he being raised up from the dead, has attained chief principality; Paul aptly teaches in his epistle to the Ephesians, saying; Whom God placed at his right hand in heaven, far above all principality, and power, and might, and domination, and above every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in the world to come. And he has put all things in subjection under his feet, and has appointed him over all things to be head of the Church. The very same things also the same apostle reminds us of, in his epistle to the Philippians, where by Christ's voluntary submission of himself, even to the time of his glory, he gathers profitable and excellent doctrine in these words, saying; For that he submitted himself, and became obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross; therefore GOD has highly exalted him, and given him a name that is above every name, that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, both of things in heaven, and of things in earth, and things under the earth. Which saying in very good right is agreeable to him, according to the rule prescribed by himself in another place; He that will humble himself shall be exalted. Whereby also it may be gathered, that the glory must be high and magnificent, according as the submission is voluntary.

And seeing there never was, nor never shall be, any voluntary submission so abject as the same that appeared in Christ: it follows

thereby, that of a most deserved right, he is advanced above every creature that is most high. Many afflictions and miseries did he suffer, while he lived here amongst men: now he enjoys most blessed rest, and is safe, as well in body as in soul, from all trouble and disquietness. He so passed from the most shameful and ignominious death, unto the most excellent life, as he is now all wholly blessed and immortal. Wherefore the apostle, in his epistle to the Romans, says; that Christ being raised up from the dead, dies no more; death has no more power over him. Now then, if he be altogether free from death, he must of necessity also be rid from all infirmities and sufferings, which in like manner are the ministers and soldiers of death. There is none, but does sufficiently understand, how far distant heaven is from earth. In like manner also must we consider, that the same high state, unto which Christ is now carried, does even as much differ from that state, to which he submitted himself, while he lived here among men.

And albeit that difference between the earthly and heavenly state may seem to be ample, this nevertheless is certain, that I proceed not so far in these words as Paul does; who, in the first epistle to the Corinthians, calls that body, which shall be restored to us, in the last resurrection, not celestial, but spiritual; It is sown (says he) a natural body, and shall be raised up a spiritual body. He means not, that Christ and the rest of the saints, who shall rise with him, shall not have flesh, bones, blood, distinct members, and finally a true body. For without doubt, the truth and property of human nature shall still remain: but he calls it a spiritual body, because that same noble nature and form, unto which it shall be restored, shall not flow from an earthly original, such as human seed is; but from the power of God's spirit. Furthermore, the body being raised up, shall be adorned with new qualities, which shall draw near unto the nature of the spirit, and not unto the nature of the earth; and for that cause shall

justly be called spiritual. Wherefore, he that rightly shall weigh the words of the apostle, while he names it a spiritual body, will not allege the same against a corporal body, but against an earthly, mortal, and corrupt body. Wherefore he adds these words; It is sown an infamous body, it rises a glorious body; it is sown in weakness, it rises in power; it is sown a natural body, it rises a spiritual body. In a body raised up, there are no infirmities or natural motions to resist the spirit; and no heaviness or grossness so great, but that it cheerfully obeys the right affects of the spirit.

However it be, it is sufficiently confirmed by those things, which have been spoken; that the name of spiritual does in very good right appertain unto the body of Christ, being raised up; because it is somewhat more, than if thou shouldst say, Heavenly: for so much as Christ, after his resurrection (as it is added in this Creed) not only ascended into heaven, but also was carried above heaven, and there sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. Which manner of speech, seeing it lays before our eyes a certain human form, we must diligently ponder from whence it is derived. I say therefore, that no others are placed at the prince's side, but those, whom princes favoring have exalted to some high degree of dignity. And among those, which be endued with this honor, no others are placed at the right hand, but those which are advanced to the highest room of honor or power next the prince. But this, which here is declared touching Christ, we must understand to be altogether figuratively spoken of Christ; seeing God is without body, hands, and sides: neither has he right hand or left. But by this manner of speech, we be given to understand, that Christ, in that he is man, is by God endued after the resurrection with such honor and dignity, as there is nothing in his whole empire, that not only cannot be preferred above him, but not compared with him.

But this being now declared; namely, unto what high glory Christ by his resurrection ascended, and the same being set forth as plainly as the capacity of them to whom these things be written will bear, and as the occasion of my own leisure would give me leave; it shall be very necessary to add what profit the same may bring unto us; whereby also we shall understand unto what use we ought to refer the same. For, seeing there is no action of Christ that is not of very great importance to the furtherance of our salvation; this we ought to account with ourselves, that by this action, which easily appeareth among others, the greatest and chiefest commodities do redound unto us.

Wherefore let this cogitation first enter into our mind, that seeing Christ could not be overcome by death; he is able now the better a great deal to relieve our necessities, and that by the favour and power of his father, unto whom he has always (as it has been said) so familiar access, and to whom he continually offering prayers of singular efficacy for us, wins us his favour, and procures us such strength as otherwise we could never obtain to ourselves. Moreover, Christ being raised from death, who is our head, we also are raised in him. Tell me (I beseech you) will you not judge him to have escaped the danger of death, which falling into a swift river, holds up all his head above those deep and dangerous waters; notwithstanding that the rest of his members be as yet drowned in the same? Even so we, which be one body in Christ; seeing he, which is our head, has escaped from the exceeding depth of death; why also of good right are not we said to be raised up from death, however we as yet in this mortal state be covered with the same? For otherwise doubtless we should deny him to be our head. And if we profess ourselves to be the members of him, we must of necessity also acknowledge that our resurrection is after a sort begun in his resurrection.

If in the winter time we see a bare tree without leaves, flowers, and fruit, so that by the outward rind it may be taken as withered, and yet so long as the root sticks fast in the ground, it is alive, and is not counted dead. But if a man cannot persuade himself thereof, let him expect till the spring of the year, and then the truth of the matter will appear by the leaves and flowers which spring forth. For by evident effects it will be well known that the life of that tree lay hidden before. Even so we, which here seem to be as it were the booty of death, and in whom no tokens of sound life do appear: if we be engrafted in Christ, who is our root, who lives, and for our sakes is raised up again, wherefore do we now doubt of our resurrection to come? And this is it that Paul writes in the epistle to the Colossians. You are dead (says he) and your life is hidden in Christ with God: when Christ, who is your life, shall be made manifest, then also shall you be made manifest with him in glory.

Further, Christ departing into heaven, gratified us with that singular gift of the spirit: to whom, as the original and life of our souls, and beginning of Christian regeneration is chiefly due; so is it also of the resurrection of our bodies: as Paul testifies in his epistle to the Ephesians; namely, that we be led unto faith through the effectual working of his strong power, which God showed forth in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his right hand in heavenly places.

Seeing therefore we have the first fruits of the spirit, by the virtue whereof Christ rose again from the dead, who (as we know) hath attained unto that glorious end, whereunto he endeavored to come; we must be of a cheerful mind, and confirm ourselves in that gift, which he has granted unto us. For what so great disquietness of state shall happen unto us in this life, that can keep us in sadness and heaviness of mind? For (as Paul says in the epistle to the Romans;)

We are now saved by hope. Assuredly, it is not to be counted a small gain that we by Christ are delivered from death: so that we may now boldly triumph, not only against it, but against all other miseries and misfortunes, which be as it were guardians of the same. And we may comfort and cheer up our minds against the violent motions of the flesh, which being constrained by such miseries, continually murmur; seeing there is not only a promise made unto us of a new life, but we have also a certain and sure pledge of the same in Christ.

Furthermore, that noble resurrection undoubtedly furthers greatly our salvation. For, albeit that sins are forgiven by the death of Christ, and by that only and most acceptable sacrifice; and that in his flesh fastened upon the cross all our faults have been punished: yet nevertheless, the form of that spiritual life (wherein we must live no longer unto the flesh, but unto the spirit; not unto old Adam, but unto Christ; not unto ourselves, but unto God our father) is not perceived thereby. But this did afterward appear in that life, which Christ received by his most mighty resurrection. And therefore Paul writes in his epistle to the Romans; that Christ died for our offenses, and was raised up for our justification. Indeed, by the death of Christ we were reconciled unto God: however, therein is not discerned any pattern of our state to come, but doubtless in the resurrection it shall shine most perfectly. For it was not beyond nature, that the flesh of Christ (which was subject to the same infirmities that we are) should die: but his resurrection so went beyond nature itself, as when the flesh of itself was instructed in no virtue whereby it might assure itself of a new life, that wholly was given to it by the mere grace and bountifulness of God. We also, as far as appertains to that new and justified regeneration, can compass the same by no virtue or desert of our own works; but God, of his grace and goodness, gave it unto us without any respect of our own merits. Further, even as Christ, being risen from the dead, ascended into heaven; so we, being justified by

his grace, it is meet for us, in all our whole life, to think no more upon earthly, but upon heavenly things. This does Paul teach us in his epistle to the Colossians; If you are risen (says he) with Christ, seek the things that are above, and not earthly things.

Besides this, as Christ being risen from the dead, dies no more; so he that is regenerated by faith, let him take heed, that he do not fall again into miserable and dangerous infidelity. For which cause Paul admonished Timothy, that he should remember, that Jesus Christ was risen again from the dead. For the remembrance of the same resurrection of Christ, is of no small stirring up to the leading of a godly and innocent life; that in such sort we may follow Christ, who dying once, delivered himself from death forever. So we, being for his sake freed from sin, it is not convenient that we should entangle ourselves again under the yoke of sin. And hereof does the same apostle, in his epistle to the Romans, very well admonish us; Even as Christ (says he) was raised up from the dead unto the glory of the father, so we also should walk in newness of life. And unto this ought we, with all endeavour, to apply ourselves, continually going forward, as Paul in the epistle to the Philippians speaks of himself; namely, that Forgetting those things, which were behind, and endeavouring to that, which should be before, we might follow hard towards the mark, for the price of the high calling of God, whither he was not yet come. This verily was to know Christ, and the strength of his resurrection. And he said a little before; I will try if I may by any means attain to the resurrection of the dead.

Herein stands the whole sum of Christianity, that inwardly we should be ever renewed, and that outwardly, as far as lies in us, we should please and benefit our neighbours: seeing Christ, being raised from the dead, has so greatly endowed us with his benefits, by giving from that time unto his children that precious gift of the holy Ghost; and

first went unto his father, where he continually beholds us, and offers most acceptable prayers unto God for us. Life being renewed in him by his resurrection, he bountifully and in heaped measure increases his gifts in his elect. He being exalted unto that most excellent power, does now protect us from all evil, and fills us with all goodness. Wherefore, our part is to bend all our care and diligence unto that end, that we may honour him after a godly sort: not with earthly ceremonies, or with sundry inventions of men; but with spiritual worshipping, and with that which may be agreeable unto that heavenly and spiritual state, whereunto Christ is now received. Before that he was come unto us, and so long as he was conversant in the world after a human sort, the shadows and figures of the law, corporal worshippings, and worldly ceremonies were in force: but now, we being raised up with Christ, it is meet, that even as we behold him both in the place and degree, wherein he is set; so also, that we should with lifted up eyes of our mind, fasten our hope upon him.

From thence, he shall come to judge both the quick and the dead.

Our flesh, human reason, and the whole rout of wicked men shall not evermore obstinately upbraid us, that we have devised to ourselves a God, a Lord, and a Prince, who will never exhibit himself to be seen or to be perceived by human sense: I mean Christ our saviour. For, after that we have confessed him to sit gloriously at the right hand of the father; we add, that the same Christ will at length evidently show himself to the world, when he shall come into his kingdom, to execute the parts of a judge. For it shall be a most meet thing, that he, who was condemned unjustly, by sentence of the judge, should at length make manifest unto the whole world, that most excellent

authority and righteousness of his, which was condemned; not only when Christ received the sentence of death, but also as it were by continual succession it endured by human flesh and wisdom the same judgments, in the ages that came after: and that not only in the person of Christ, but also in his holy members and brethren, whether they be already dead, or as yet wander here in this earth, who are vexed with many reproaches and contumelies, suffer persecutions, and all kinds of injuries; in such sort, as there is scarcely any corner of the world, that ringeth not of the sorrowful lamentations of the godly.

But seeing all such judgments be corrupt and perverse, that last judgment shall at length come forth (from which there shall be no appeal to a higher judge) and which shall correct and reform men's ordinances and decrees, which indeed were contrary unto equity and justice: for so much as it shall have powers and qualities, altogether contrary unto those wicked judgments. Christ the most excellent judge shall flourish in wisdom, which shall perceive all alike, as well those things which be most manifest and evident to all men, as everything else that is most obscure and most secret: according to that, which Paul declares in his epistle to the Romans; namely, that He shall judge of the secrets of men. He shall then have no need of auditors, and inquisitions. But on the other side, though I hold my peace, everyone of the faithful does sufficiently understand those perverse judgments, which the ungodly do oftentimes decree, touching Christ and his members, how plainly they set abroad their own foolishness, and extreme darkness of mind. Christ, when he shall exercise his judgment in that latter day, shall most justly yield right unto everyone, and shall temper his sentence with singular justice; neither shall he decline to this side or that, who cannot be removed from the right, neither by perverse affections, neither by any gifts.

Wherefore, this is spoken concerning him, that with him there is no acceptance of persons: which vice suffers not the enemies of true godliness, either to speak or judge aright of Christianity. But one man being moved with the endeavor of private commodity, another being plucked away with other perverse affections, rashly condemns Christ, and them that are his, and persecutes them with sundry reproaches. Whereupon it is said in the Gospel; How can ye speak good things, seeing yourselves are evil? That most high judge lacks no power or ability to execute those things, which he has determined, either in favor of the godly, or for the destruction of the wicked: seeing he himself says; All power is given unto me. And it is written also of the wicked, in the first epistle to the Thessalonians; When they shall say, peace, and that all is well, then shall come upon them sudden destruction, as the travail upon a woman with child, so that they may not escape. In the perverse judgment of the tyrants of this world, which they give out oftentimes against Christian religion, the contrary is perceived. For either such decrees take no effect, or else they fall again upon the heads of those tyrants themselves; so as they are rather hurtful unto themselves, than unto the Christians. But that they may bring to effect those things, which they have wickedly decreed; those judgments extend no further than unto goods, and unto this temporal life. Which things are of the least account unto the spiritual man, and to him who is renewed by Christ: as Christ himself testifies, who speaking unto his disciples, said; Fear ye not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul. But I will show you whom ye ought rather to fear; namely, God, who after he hath killed the body, is able to destroy the soul in hell fire.

Which of us therefore (dearly beloved brethren in Christ) will not so prepare himself, as he may receive with a cheerful mind, such a judge, through whose sentence an end shall be appointed unto all the injuries that are done unto us? This is that most high good man of

the house, who at length shall make all his servants to be known; and shall demand an account of them, concerning such affairs as he hath committed unto them. This is that mighty rich merchant, who will return, to call for gains of his great sum of money delivered into bank. This is that new bridegroom, who by a just choice shall sever the wise virgins from the foolish. This is that wise and expert steward, who knows how to lay up the pure wheat in his barn, and to burn the chaff with fire; and who like a good shepherd can sever the sheep from the goats; and like a wary fisher, the good fishes from the bad: and finally, who like a wise husbandman will throw the cockle into the fire, but wisely will save the profitable and precious seed. Whosoever therefore thirsteth after the pure church, or the sincere kingdom of Christ, and after the sound and perfect fellowship of the chosen, or that does long to see that most excellent and immaculate spouse; cannot but be pierced in mind with the remembrance of that most sweet and acceptable day: that it is no marvel, if the same be therefore called by Paul, Blessed hope. And in Luke, after that he had reckoned up diverse tokens of the coming of that day, he added; When ye shall see these tokens, then look up, and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth near.

But lest the joy conceived of that latter coming should be disturbed through the mistrust of salvation, which might enter into your mind, while ye understand that the same most high judge will be inquisitive of men's works, (and this I say, because, if thou wilt believe me, there shall be no man, how much honesty soever he be endued with, that standing upon the consideration of his own works, is able to hold fast this confidence; and so, if these things be not rightly understood by you, in that blessed day, there would seem to be an argument presented before your eyes, of nothing else, but horrible and exceeding fear of everlasting death) we must thoroughly consider, and diligently weigh what shall come into trial and examination at

the latter day. Wherein I first affirm, that there shall be no need of examination at all against the infidels; as they, that for their infidelity be already condemned. So Christ plainly teaches in John; Whosoever (saith he) believeth not, is already condemned. But, because this doubting might creep into the minds of many, how it should come to pass, that of them which are equally entitled by the name and title of Christians, some are adjudged to salvation, and other some to eternal damnation: for this cause our most just judge Christ, will have the reason of this difference to appear to all the world; seeing, as he will never hereafter suffer his justice to be hidden to the world, in such wise as it was, when he came first into the world, to be conversant among us; he will (I say) at that second coming of his, make his justice known unto all persons, that it may manifestly appear, who has truly taken upon him his name and titles, or who has done the same feignedly and by hypocrisy.

At length, we may be warned hereby that not only the dead, but also the living must come under the judgment of Christ. Which must be understood (as Paul teaches in his epistle to the Corinthians) that undoubtedly we shall not all die, but we shall all be changed. And in Thessalonians, we, who shall live and remain, shall be caught up together with them into the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall ever be with the Lord. Hereby it is gathered that of them who shall stand before that high judgment seat, some shall be raised from death and dust, and others indeed shall not die: but it will come to pass by the grace of God that they shall be translated unto a better state, not subject to any infirmities. They shall be those elect who then shall be found alive: for there will be no need for them to put off their bodies, but their bodily mass shall attain unto glory; so that death shall not take the same away from them. Among them, Paul did wish to be numbered, as it is written in the epistle to the Corinthians: and we also with him expect the same with great desire.

However, in this matter, as in all other things also, let us behave ourselves so that all may tend unto the glory of God.

I believe in the Holy Ghost.

Seeing the word "Spirit" signifies many things, to better understand what we believe, it shall be good to first separate and distinguish the various meanings conveyed by that name. From these meanings, we will choose the one that fits our purpose and explore it further. In general, the word "spirit" always expresses a certain hidden strength or power capable of moving and driving things forward. Therefore, the winds, along with those organs by which life governs, move, and stir the body, are called the spirit. And although this power is included and mixed with corporeal nature, since the bodies it interacts with are often so subtle that they cannot be seen, this word is also extended to signify natures and essences that are simple and of diverse sorts, such as God, the company of angels, and the souls of men now separated from their bodies. Hence, the divine nature is called a spirit, as Christ clearly states in John: "Because God is a spirit, he will be worshipped in spirit." There is no difference in this respect between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Ultimately, the word "spirit" signifies not only the divine nature, invisible and without body, but specifically denotes to us the third person of the Trinity, distinct from the Father and the Son. He is called by the name "spirit" because of his property, which is to move, encourage, persuade, comfort, and enlighten the spirits and hearts of men, and finally, to work in them such things as pertain to our sanctification. The saints experience the marvelous effects of this, beyond the comprehension of reason or human wisdom, and not discernible by the eyes of men.

Therefore, it is right for us to say, "I believe in the Holy Spirit," as it is something that far surpasses the capacity of our nature yet is distinctly set forth to us in the Holy Scripture. That the same Spirit is the third person in the divine nature, Christ sufficiently expresses in these words to his apostles: "Go ye and baptize in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." This means that those who are baptized are bound to confess that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit grant them salvation. Consider what it means to be baptized in the name of the three persons of the Trinity. The distinction of this third person is not only known here from the other two but is also gathered when the eternal Father speaks to John the Baptist concerning the Holy Spirit as something distinct from himself and the Son: "He it is (meaning by Christ) upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit come down in the likeness of a dove." He does not speak as if he meant himself, saying, "Upon whom I will descend," but rather, "Upon whom he shall descend," speaking of another. It is evident that he was not the Son because the Spirit, in the form of a dove, was to light on Christ, who is properly called the Son. Indeed, Christ in the Gospel of John speaks of the same Spirit: "He shall take of mine and shall come in my name." And he adds, "The Father shall give you another Comforter," meaning another besides me and distinct from myself. These passages conclusively prove that the Holy Spirit is a distinct person in the Holy Trinity, which we steadfastly believe and confess.

This also must be considered, that the Spirit is not the same as His gifts and works. Paul, in his first letter to the Corinthians, chapter 12, lists various effects thereof and adds afterward, "And all these things work that one and the same Spirit, distributing them to every man severally as he will." It is evident that here we confess the third person of divinity, by whose power we are renewed in Christ and therefore may become like unto Christ. Just as He was begotten

without man's seed, so are we born again into a new life by the power of God's Spirit, as testified by John when he says that "He who believes is made the son of God, and is neither born of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." This is particularly attributed to the third person, as Christ expressly says that "He who is not born of the water and of the Spirit shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." From the very same Spirit, the remission of sins is said to flow. Therefore, when Christ breathed upon the apostles and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost, whose sins ye shall forgive, the same shall be forgiven, and whose sins ye retain shall be retained," whoever sins against the Holy Ghost does not obtain remission of his sins because it is directly done against Him, from whom the remission of sins proceeds.

Yet, we do not attribute all this to Him only, but considering that we are burdened with such weightiness that we can scarcely rise from the earth, always pressed down with the burden of our flesh and our corporeal senses, we would lie still in the earth unless we were raised up by that Spirit who straightens and erects our minds unto heaven (which, through natural corruption, are altogether sunk in the affections of the flesh), just as the soul sustains the frail and mortal body and sets it upright. In this life, the elect may, in a manner, experience the same about themselves as in bottles, which, when thrown empty into the water, fall to the bottom; but if they are blown and filled with wind, they float above the water. Similarly, men's minds, being void of that Spirit, are drowned through their own affections and lusts; but when they are filled with that Holy Spirit, they master sin and never allow themselves to be overcome by it. We also obtain, by the benefit of the same Spirit, both the will to do right and the ability to act justly. For our nature, being corrupt and perverse, would never willingly show forth actions acceptable unto God or proceed from us, being enemies unto Him. But that Spirit of

God, being among us, fashions our minds so that whatever flows from us with His help is most pleasing and acceptable to God. He inwardly reforms us so that we may become most welcome friends, indeed, most beloved children.

Here you see what singular benefit this article of our faith brings when it is known and understood. Undoubtedly, our affections, our mind, and even the members of the body are instruments of the Spirit Himself. Therefore, Paul writes to the Romans that "Those finally be the children of God who are led by the Spirit of God." Just as he cannot be called a man who lacks the mind of man, nor that a dog which does not bear the form or living property of a dog, likewise, he is not a partaker of the divine nature who is void of the Spirit of God. Hence, I cannot marvel enough at the folly of some who, if a man says they are not Christians, cannot bear this reproach, and yet, at the same time, neither seem to be endowed with that Spirit nor are persuaded, or willing themselves to grant, that none may be a Christian without it. However, Paul boldly affirms in his letter to the Romans that "He who has not the Spirit, the same is no son." Therefore, let such men go, and by the same infidelity by which they doubt the possession of God's Spirit, let them stand in doubt whether they are Christians. And if any man asks how we have Him, I answer that the most excellent Father, for Christ's sake, sends Him unto us, as Christ promised to us through His apostles: "The Comforter," says He, "which is the Holy Ghost, whom My Father will send in My name, etc."

Furthermore, I may boldly add that Christ Himself sends Him unto us from the Father, as He says in another place, "The Spirit, which I will send from the Father unto you." He is given unto us, either from the Father or from the Son, for no other purpose than to enrich us abundantly with those gifts and very excellent riches. Yet, the

scripture shows that His chiefest work specially consists in teaching. Christ promised to His disciples that He would send the Holy Ghost, who would teach them and lead them into all truth, which He had shown unto them. He also warned them that when they should be brought before princes, they should take no care, for it should not be they that should speak, but the Spirit of their Father that should speak in them. Certainly, the apostles were not dispersed abroad in the world for preaching the Gospel before they were endowed from above with that heavenly power, by the help of which they not only preached the Gospel mightily to bring men unto the obedience of Christ, but they also established the truth of their doctrine with wonderful signs and miracles. The manner of teaching by which that Spirit performs towards us must be inwardly considered in the mind, as He not only replenishes us with His light but also gently allures and persuades us, making those things acceptable from which, otherwise, by reason of our corrupt nature, we would flee. He works a marvelous transformation in the minds of the elect, stirring them up unto the endeavor of good works and godly actions, which by the guide of nature they might not be able to perform.

And yet He does not force them unto those works but rather persuades them inwardly with effect. This is the happy liberty with which the chosen of Christ are endowed, who, by the power and persuasion of the same Spirit, employ their whole endeavor unto such actions which, by the only guide of nature, could neither be done by them nor would be acceptable unto God. Further, from that spiritual doctrine which flourishes inwardly, there springs afterward an assured mortification, as well in the mind as in the flesh, as Paul testifies in his epistle to the Romans, where he warned them that if they would, by the Spirit, mortify the deeds of the flesh, they should live.

Moreover, if you will add to these things that the comfort which springs from the assurance of our salvation is so great that even in the midst of troubles, miseries, calamities, and sorrows of this world, we may lead a cheerful and merry life. And that not without cause; seeing we feel in us that singular and noble gift which Paul to the Ephesians calls "The pledge of our salvation." I now see no reason for any man, upon just cause, to doubt of his coming one day into that state of Christ when he perceives already that his soul lives by the same Spirit of Christ.

But if a man will demand how we know that our soul is quickened by the same Spirit? Answer may be made by the words of Paul, "I live not any longer," says Paul to the Galatians, "but Christ liveth in me." And unto the Philippians, "Christ unto me is life." These sayings declare no other thing but that the godly live in Christ, and Christ in them, and that by His Spirit. It is also written in the epistle to the Romans that "The same Spirit doth testify with our spirit that we are the sons of God." And it is not fit by any means to refuse such a certain testimony. But whoever has not this testimony inwardly in himself is unworthy to be called a Christian. But if any man objects that although Paul was endowed with this assured persuasion and that he felt inwardly this inward testimony in himself, it does not follow that the same must be granted to be in others. I answer that Paul wrote all these things unto the Romans, who as yet were far off from perfection; neither had they profited so much as Paul. And their own contentions, suspicions, and rash judgments, and also their very feeble and weak consciences, bear witness to this; all which things the apostle often reprehends in his writings.

Yet, when the Romans were such, he wrote unto them of that adoption whereby God had determined to make them His children when they should embrace Christian religion. Therefore, beloved

brethren, let us put off the spirit that miserably doubts of our salvation, seeing there is nothing that is more an enemy to our faith, which is the lively and most sure foundation of all our felicity. Who does not sufficiently understand how great contraries are believing and doubting, and how much they are repugnant to each other? For my part, I do not see how these things may agree: to believe truly in Christ, my only and true Savior, and to stand likewise in doubt of Him, whether He will save me or not, seeing He has received me into His faith, and so greatly testifies by His Spirit unto my mind that sweet and bountiful affection of His towards me. And if we admit the testimonies of men, who naturally are liars and prone to deceit, that we should in like manner cleave to them, how much rather ought we to repose ourselves in all those things which that good and true Spirit of God confirms by His testimony? Unless perhaps we allow ourselves to be persuaded that there is more truth and fidelity in men than there is in God. Whoever says this, shall in this point alone most plainly betray himself to be such a one as he is.

Therefore, let us yield unto the most benign and merciful God as great and many thanks as we can, who has (not by the ministry of angels or of any other creature whatsoever, but by the power of His own Spirit) engrafted us in Christ, His true and natural Son, and by Him has renewed and sanctified us, and so enriched us with the knowledge of Him and with other heavenly gifts that now we are destitute neither of strength nor of force, nor of light, nor of any faculty to let us whereby we should the less either will or work aright. And thus we shall retain a cheerful and quiet life even in the midst of persecutions, which often the world and Satan do stir up, so that we are most fully persuaded by that holy Spirit that we shall obtain eternal life: and that not of our own merits but by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns forever, Amen.

I believe in the holy catholic church, the communion of Saints

This article of the faith is so aptly knit unto the other that goes before, as to any man that is of sound judgment, the former may seem to be the root or stem of the latter, out of which this latter article arises and buds forth as a most fit branch. And that is showed unto us after this sort. In whatsoever body life is placed, the power and strength thereof is to guide, and also by a most sure bond to unite all the parts of the whole body, by however great a space soever they are dissevered one from the other: even so the congregation of the godly, which commonly (if the believers are considered in respect that they are earthly men) is called the church, however much it is compact of sundry people, and has its parts settled a great space one from another in the world: and that, as much as the uttermost quarter of the world is distant by the spaces of regions, from the other part of the world; yet nevertheless it is joined, knit, and couched together. And for that cause, it is by Paul compared to a body, and that oftentimes in his epistles unto the Ephesians and Corinthians. But by what bond the Christians (who so greatly differ one from another, whether in respect to their condition, country, or language) are so strictly knit together, it is sufficiently understood, by the order which joins this latter article of our faith unto the former. For there our faith confesses the Holy Ghost; and here it treats of the body of the faithful, which with a sincere faith, embracing the doctrine of Christ, is by Him gathered together in one.

And this congregation by a Greek name is called Ecclesia, which signifies no other thing than a multitude called together. For it is compact of them, which by the Holy Ghost are called unto the Christian faith; from which they are excluded, which by a human

motion, or persuasion, or double heart, or by any other sinister means, without any instinct of the spirit of God, join themselves unto it. Even as if one should artificially join unto a human body some piece of a bone, of a sinew, of a gristle, or else a piece of flesh; these are not therefore accounted parts of that body, seeing they are not moved by the life thereof: but they altogether depend on this cunning art. Even so indeed we acknowledge that the communion of saints is here found upon the earth; to wit, the congregation of the faithful, which is gathered together in one, not by the will of man, or by any cunning craft of the world; but by the only Spirit of Christ: not doubtless, that it should be contained together in one place, but that it should retain one true understanding of faith.

By these things, therefore, you understand that the church is a mystical body, which is governed by the Holy Ghost. Hereby also it is manifest enough who they are that appertain unto the same, and who live out of the communion of it. Further, it is not obscure how aptly the name of church agrees unto it. First, it is evidently proved that this marvelous body is governed by the Holy Ghost, by those words which Paul teaches in the Epistle to the Ephesians: "We," says he, "are one body and one spirit." Again, it is more plainly shown in the first Epistle to the Corinthians: "By one spirit we are all baptized into one body, and have drunk of one spirit." Whereupon it follows that whoever is destitute of that spirit does not belong to this body. For he that has not the spirit of Christ, how can he assure himself to be a member of that body, whereof Christ is the head, and in whom there is no other life than the divine spirit itself? Undoubtedly, it suffices not, it suffices not (I say), to put on certain colorable shows, whereby we should be taken by the judgment of men for members of that body. Peter was called of Christ, blessed: not because he confessed him with outward voice to be the Son of God, but because neither flesh, nor blood, nor any human reason had revealed unto

him so great a mystery, but only the heavenly Father. Paul also in his first Epistle to the Corinthians, in the place above recited, writes that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. By which places it is manifest what confession at the least is required in the church; namely, not that which proceeds of man's sense, but that which is stirred up and brought forth by the Spirit of God. For otherwise, the devils themselves, and also the Mahometans in their Alcoran, do ascribe a certain honour unto Christ, while they confess His praise.

But here might appear some difficulty. What? Is the church invisible, that it cannot be perceived in the world with corporeal eyes? And does not the very sense itself tell that the company of men is there gathered together for celebrating and calling upon the name of Christ? How then is that believed, which is seen? Is faith carried unto those things, which are most manifest and are subject even to the senses themselves? Hereto we answer that the multitude of men, which outwardly profess Christ, are indeed seen of us, but not sufficiently known of us because we apprehend it with our outward sense, as it has been said. But we believe certainly that this company of men does come together, as nevertheless it is no human work. A philosopher or some other heathen man would object that such assemblies be sects of men, which might spring up of diverse and sundry opinions and be brought forth into light according to places and times require. Undoubtedly, we live not by the industry of men, but this work must be attributed to the spirit of God, whom we have before confessed.

Neither must we pass over the cause why the church is called Catholic, which is a Greek word and signifies no other thing than if you should say, universal: for it is not bound more to one place than to another. But even as God is a God of the whole universal world,

even so will he that the body of his son, which is his church, should be extended into every place. With him there is no exception of persons; neither had he respect whether those, which he calls into his church, be either husbandmen or smiths, men or women, princes or servants, rich or poor, barbarous, citizens, or Gentiles; as though he were moved for these outward things to choose them: but of every nation he chooses those whom he thinks meet. Wherefore the church is a universal body, compacted of men of every kind and condition. But it excels also in a nobler society, which is of such sort, as whosoever be truly gathered together into that body, be endued with the same feeling of faith. And undoubtedly, in vain shall every other consent be if minds disagree in the doctrine of faith.

Neither is there ever anything that brings more detriment unto this faith than the inventions of men. From hence have flowed all the heresies that ever were, which in very deed are nothing else but the opinions of men conceived besides the meaning of the scriptures and sown abroad among diverse people, as if they were certain divine mysteries which bring salvation; or else works most acceptable unto God. And for as much as such doctrines are nothing else but devises of men, by which the authors of them have sought their own gain and commodity; first they be mere lies, deceits, and wicked jugglings; secondly, when as they proceed from the inventions of men, they cannot satisfy all men. For look how many men, so many sundry opinions there be: so that some dissent in one article of the faith, and some in another. So in very deed it happened among the Greeks and other Christians, which inhabit towards the East part, whom if thou examine, thou shalt undoubtedly find that by a common consent they have allowed the holy scriptures: but in those sundry superstitions, the which they have oftentimes devised, there will appear great disagreement.

Howbeit, in these devises of superstitions, the church of Rome carries away the prize. For while they provide to stuff into the pure and simple religion of Christ infinite abominations, drawn out of the sinks of paganism, in restoring and (as they say, or rather as they lie) in reforming them to a better form; it has trodden underfoot and destroyed all things. Also this it obstinately urges that every man's faith doth rest in such goodly things. And men's inventions are more esteemed than the lawful doctrine of the truth, drawn out of the holy fountains of the scriptures. And this might not others, which in like manner be infected with their own superstitions, abide; that they, any less than the Romans, should stoutly keep still and defend their feigned worshippings and human inventions. But they, which have embraced the principal and sincere doctrine of Christ, be utter enemies against those superstitions; seeing they perceive that thereby the glory of Christ and his merits are altogether obscured, the honor of God translated unto his creatures, his service used without his word, and set forth only after the devise of men: so that the church, which at this day challengingly unto itself alone, the name of Catholic; she alone (I say) more than others hath severed, and even rent in sunder that common and universal society of the faithful.

For if it had stayed itself in that religion and service, which the holy scriptures do prescribe unto us; there had not proceeded so many schisms from thence. But hitherto it hath used no measure of its own feigned devises, and it hath endeavoured by force and arms to constrain every man to receive the same. From hence have risen infinite dissensions, amongst which there be some that remain unto this day; as experience itself plainly testifieth. And as touching those that have been in the former ages, whosoever will diligently apply his mind in reading of histories, shall easily perceive them. Howbeit, whatsoever Satan, by his cunning, hath wrought; the Catholic church

remaineth still steadfast and immovable and shall firmly abide even until the last day of judgment. For the same betokeneth nothing else but an universal body, compact together of men of every state and condition; the which, in what parts soever of the earth they dwell, they retain the same faith and grace, righteousness, holiness, and happiness; and finally, they embrace every good thing offered them in Christ: and so, as they will never suffer themselves one jot to be led from that truth, which the spirit of God hath revealed to us in the holy scriptures; but they will assure themselves of that only worshipping to be lawful and acceptable unto God, which he hath prescribed in those holy scriptures.

Neither are they for any other end compacted together in this society, but that they should edify one another to their power: even as the joining together, that is in the members of a man's body, is chiefly ordained for the help and preservation of every particular member. The church strives not, to the intent it might challenge unto itself some chief empire or temporal jurisdiction: it promises no such end unto itself, as it would heap up exceeding treasures and earthly riches. The scope thereof is not to rule nations, to make wars, to lay hold upon cities, and to vanquish them. Indeed this body is not destitute of his weapons, but these be spiritual, and not carnal weapons; namely, the word and the spirit, with which it overcomes the wisdom of man, casts it to the ground, leads captive the mind and cogitation to the obedience of Christ. And the same undoubtedly does not oppress the bodies with tyrannical servitude, or draw away men's goods by grievous tributes. This self-same doctrine Paul in very many words inculcates in his later epistle to the Corinthians, where he very well describes the wrestlings of this congregation: and he in the same epistle, treating there of his own, and of other of the apostles authority, says; that The same was granted unto him to edify, and not to destroy. Unto which notwithstanding, they do

singularly bend themselves, which will alone be called heads, and apostles of the church.

However, in the meantime, with all their power they resist the word of God. Neither do they suffer the perfect state of our justification to be preached; but rather by their human decrees and constitutions, lay infinite snares against the miserable souls of the people committed to them, the which notwithstanding are redeemed by the precious blood of Christ. And yet further, they pollute with their sundry abuses, the sacraments ordained of God, and especially the holy supper of the Lord, which they have turned into filthy and shameful idolatry, and of the signs or seals thereof, they admit the simple flock to the participation of one only; as though it were in their power to invert the order, which the Lord hath appointed. They not content, I say, to defraud the flock of Christ of that principal food of souls, which is the word of God, do also cut away half the sacrament, which is as it were the visible word, and the evident testimony of the goodness, charity, and ardent affection of Christ toward us, a memorial of his death, the most effectual mark of that union, whereby they grow up together under Christ himself being head, unto a holy body of the church. But this will I here add, that this one thing they work by their traditions; namely, they establish that tyranny of theirs, and make it to extend further abroad. However, the hope is, that Christ will at length take pity of so noble a body of his, and that he will not suffer a mortal man any longer to vaunt himself so proudly against his head. This Christ only, Christ (I say) is the head of the church.

But they, which say, that the Pope is head of the church (as he will commonly be accounted, (which also his shameless flatterers fear not to publish openly, both by words and writings) seem in my judgment to be like unto those wicked Jews, which all with one voice denied

Christ to be their king, and professed Caesar to be their prince. Even as in a body well framed, there is one head: so must the church, unless it be transformed into some kind of monster, be endued with one head only, the which head is Christ. Neither standeth it with any reason that they say they have the Roman bishop to be appointed another head, as it were under the chief head Christ: whose bishop; to wit, that other head, they will have to be a necessary instrument. For there was never seen, in a well-shapen body, such a disorder, as thereunto should be joined two heads; wherewith one should be subject unto another: seeing the very name of Head signifies the chief part of the body. But Christ alone shows himself above the church, and he altogether by marvelous and unspeakable means, joined the human nature unto the divine nature. Behold the head, which God appointed to that beloved body, as it is written in the epistle to the Ephesians. We confess indeed, that the members in that body be diverse, whereof one is more excellent than another: but in this point they conspire all in one, that they be subject unto that head, and are to serve faithfully under it. Wherefore it is not lawful to devise more heads than one: and undoubtedly it is very intolerable pride, for one to arrogate unto himself the honor of Christ.

But (I beseech you) let it be as these men will; that the Pope should be counted another head, under Christ the principal head. Yet, with what faith he is under Christ, as a fit instrument, experience itself speaks: which bears record, that he not only does not cleave unto Christ, but that he is plainly against him, both in works, deeds, and counsels. Neither is it my purpose, to set forth at large the proof of this matter; seeing Barnard has declared the same, indeed not fully; but yet so, as their crafty and subtle exception may be discovered. Wherefore, being content with this profitable declaration; I will not here at this time add any more, but that I conclude again, that that body has only Christ to be the head; and not any silly man, which

with his authority alone may wrest, corrupt, pervert, and rent asunder the words of the scriptures (whereof he boasts among his sort, that he within the closet of his breast, has the full knowledge and perfect interpretation;) not a silly man, which (according to the naked judgment of his own will) may expulse out of the church whom he pleases, and accuse and condemn them; not a silly man, that at his own only beck may appoint pastors, rectors, and bishops unto churches, to whom he will not commit the custody, no not of their own goods; because he mistrusts their wit and industry, whereof he has not had any one jot of trial. Now then we be content with one head; namely Christ, the Holy Ghost being the guide, and the holy scripture being as an outward testimony of his will: the certain persuasion whereof, the power of the Holy Ghost doth inwardly seal in our minds.

But let us weigh (I beseech you) by what means that most holy body of the church may be established, edified, and also increase. And here I affirm, that besides the inward grace, faith, and outward scripture, we have also need of admonitions and godly sermons out of the word of God; the which be miserably intermitted at this day, by them which would be called Christians. And yet nevertheless this is the chief and principal work of the Apostolical office, the which, as though it were unworthy for the dignity of a Bishop (forsooth) these new heads of the church have committed it unto certain hungry Monks, who nevertheless are threatened unto galleys, unto perpetual prisons, and to be put to every most cruel death, if they pass the bounds prescribed by them. Indeed, they know very handsomely how to withdraw themselves from their own office, charge, and labor; but so, as they will never preach unto the people concerning holy things. Yet nevertheless, whosoever do take that charge in hand, they will have them to preach after the rules prescribed by them. Whereof it cometh to pass, that the poor small flocks of Christ, either perish

with hunger, or else are scantily and slenderly fed. And commonly, the sermons touching holy things, are only made in the time of Lent, and a very few days besides; and that either by a sort of unlearned and indiscreet men which know not sufficiently those things that they speak; or else by them which stand more afraid of some, than they ought to do; or else by such as hunt after honors, riches, or favor, which are not fit for their vocation. Wherefore, at that time they have sermons; but yet such, as in them they utter mere trifles, and betray the gross darkness of ignorance.

But if other while they show something of the truth, it is done with such cloaked speeches, with such intricate, minced, and nice terms, as they rather destroy than edify; or else they preach flatteries, the which undoubtedly unto all godly men are mere intolerable. And such be they, that preach for the desire they have either of honor, or of private commodity. All the rest of the year is spent in walking up and down the churches, in chanting, singing, and sounding [of instruments.] In all which things, not so much as the least word is understood that might serve for edifying of the people. At which time, those chief priests, bishops, and other prelates are occupied (as they say) in great affairs, as to take upon them the administration of the common weal, to examine accounts, to search out the yearly revenues of lands, and many times to find out new ways of government. I pass over those things that be more outrageous; not because it grieveth them to hear such things, but partly, for that I am ashamed of them; and partly, because those things are sufficiently known, and manifest to everyone. If they be apostles, it pertaineth unto their office to preach; if they be pastors, to feed; if they be schoolmasters of the church, to teach; if they be dispensers of the treasures of Christ, they ought to enrich their sheep therewith: I mean not with their pardons, bulls, and blessings; but with the word of God, with continual admonitions and corrections, by which means

the infidels are converted unto God, the faithful are stirred up from their sloth and idleness, and receive comfort in the furnace of afflictions.

These be those exquisite arts, whereby the body of Christ is preserved; unto the which must be added the use of the sacraments, but yet whole and thoroughly cleansed from the devises of men. Oh thou that holy supper of the Lord, how many ways art thou here miserably dishonored and polluted! Oh mass, mass, mass, what remaineth sound in thee! But here will I forbear my style, seeing I write a Catechism, and not a full treatise of the sacraments, which nevertheless I hope shortly (if the Lord lend me life) to bring to pass. These few things I have written only to this end, that I may show how ill these things have been handled, which did make for the increase and profit of the church. I will speak nothing of baptism, seeing by the mercy of God, the same hath been somewhat less polluted with foul abuses. And although it be not purely and soundly used; yet there is less cause for thee to complain herein. Wherefore the use of the sacraments is most profitable unto the church; seeing they be as it were visible words, the which consist in those evident signs of water, bread, and wine. By which signs, as it were by words, all the promises of God's mercy are effectually represented unto us.

And here, not only the promises are given us, but we be assuredly partakers of the thing itself: and therefore those sacraments are very necessary unto us, and further us not a little unto salvation. Unto which sacraments must be joined brotherly correction, which in these days is so neglected, as no man will apply it, either to another man's use, or will submit himself thereunto: such profit have we taken in the school of Christ. Yea, which is more, those which are careful but of their own matters, are counted godly, yea and in a manner holy; which nevertheless is so indecent and dishonest, as it is

not allowed, no not of the heathen philosophers; seeing they freely confess, that Man is not born only to himself. Yea and very oxen, or sheep, or asses, if they be fallen down by the way, will help one another. And shall not we have a care of our brethren, that when they faint under the burdens of their sins, to relieve them with the help of holy correction? But if that do not prevail, it behooves that excommunication follow, which God hath left us, as the last remedy against obstinate persons.

To conclude: that holy body is preserved by equal and just laws, by which it must be ruled and governed, so far as concerns those outward exercises. Of which sort are the coming together unto public prayers, at places and times convenient, to sing praises unto God, to give thanks unto Christ, and to come unto the administration of the sacraments. All which things must be done in order, decently, and honestly: even as Paul teaches in the first epistle to the Corinthians. These laws must not be appointed by the will and discretion of one man, neither yet must they be accounted of so great authority, as those things, which the Lord has revealed to us in the holy scriptures. And they must be so ordained, as they cannot be repealed and changed by one man's consent; but by the consent of the whole church, if any detriment come to the church by them. Moreover, let no man settle his hope upon those things, as though they can bring righteousness or salvation, but let him remember, that they are ordinances of men: further, that they have not to do with yearly rents, with gain, or with the private commodity of any man; but that they must wholly have a respect to the glory of God, and to the profit of our neighbour.

Let not their number be so augmented, as either they may be naughtily comprised, or else that they should oppress the people with a more grievous burden. Let them not despoil the people of that

liberty, which is given in Christ: let them not bind men's consciences, with the terror of eternal death. With these conditions (I say) if laws be appointed by the church, let Christians embrace them, let them obey and reverently submit themselves to them. Where the matter so stands, that laws be after this order appointed, they cannot be contemned or little set by, without grievous offence. Hitherto we have largely enough disputed, what that holy body of the church is, how it may be joined together in one, what head it has, by what means it is nourished, augmented, and preserved. And if so be that I have been induced to stand longer upon this matter, than my manner is to do, it must altogether be imputed, not to any superfluity of speech, but unto the nature and state of the cause; which abounds with such plenty and store of matter, as I have rather touched the principal points of things, than sufficiently expressed it according to the worthiness thereof. But that, which may be wanting at this time, we will prosecute more largely in another place.

The Remission of Sins.

Unto the former article of the conjunction and union of the faithful into one body of the church; now is aptly added the doctrine of faith, and remission of sins, which is nowhere else to be hoped for, but in the church. For although the same be granted unto us, by the only liberality and grace of God; yet can we not obtain the same, but only in the name of Christ. Whosoever therefore shall not come into this fellowship, can by no means be partaker thereof; seeing it is only granted unto them which by faith are united unto Christ, the head of the church. Whereof it may be soundly concluded, that it is a peculiar gift for them, which be true members of this body under the head Christ. And this treatise of the remission of sins, we will for the easier understanding divide into three points to be considered. Of which

the first is; that we, by the grace and spirit of Christ, be made partakers of the remission of our sins. But here must we see, by what way and means the Lord is wont to give this grace and spirit: the which we cannot otherwise define, than by faith. For the benefits, which God offereth unto us, are meet to be received of him that will enjoy them. And faith is nothing else, but a receiving of the mercy of God, which is offered unto us by him.

Whereunto there be two things necessarily required; one is, that that be offered to us which is good; the other, that we give our consent. But to receiving and consent, we have need of the spirit that should inwardly persuade the mind: for otherwise a man, by reason of his natural corruption, would turn away himself; as to whom these promises of God, these mercies offered, and this remission of sins might naturally seem not likely to be true, and to be of no great weight. And he would be far from the true consideration of them; seeing (as the philosophers themselves also say) he would no less be blinded unto divine things, than the mole is at the light of the sun. Whereof there is a testimony of Paul to the Corinthians; The natural man (saith he) understandeth not those things, which be of God; for they be foolishness unto him: that we may have need of that inward moving, lest we should refuse the benefit which is offered unto us. And indeed in this moving, there be two excellent gifts. The first is, that we acknowledge the gift and mercy of God offered unto us. The second, that the things which be offered, should be pleasing unto us; and that by giving our assent, we receive and embrace them.

Which for the most part is granted unto us none otherwise to be used, but as it is set forth to us by the word of God; how excellent and great soever the mercy of God is, by the which he freely forgiveth our sins. Wherefore it is written in the Acts of the apostles; While Peter yet spake, the Holy Ghost fell down upon them which heard him.

And by Paul unto the Romans it is said; that Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. So as the church, preaching continually the word of God by her ministers, and in such sort offering in her sermons reconciliation by Christ, it giveth remission of sins; in that by the outward ministry, it pronounceth the same out of the words of the scripture: by the which, through attentive ears, as through a conduit, both the grace and spirit of Christ do flow in, even unto our heart. Wherefore it is most firmly concluded, that the word of God, by the very same means, which I have spoken, is the original of the remission of sins. Which thing seeing it is set forth in the church only, it followeth, that the sins be forgiven nowhere else.

An other consideration we will add, which concerns the sacraments, which are the visible words of this absolution. For even as the word sounds and is heard in the voice; so in a visible and evident sign, a sacrament speaks and admonishes us; unto which we give credit, and obtain in very deed that which it promises and signifies. Neither do we otherwise give credit unto the signification hereof, than by the motion of the same spirit of Christ, which we have above declared. But think you not, that sins are forgiven by the virtue of the work that is wrought, through receiving of the sacrament: since this we obtain by faith, while we believe that which it visibly teaches us, according to the institution of Christ; namely, that a sacrament may be of the same value as the word of God is. For even as this word signifies and gives in very deed unto the believers, whatsoever it promises; so baptism, being received by faith, both signifies and gives to the believer remission of sins, which it promises by a visible speaking. But indeed it might be objected unto me: If sins (as it has been said) are forgiven unto them, who believe the word of Christ, as it is preached to us; how can they then again be forgiven by baptism?

I answer, that as touching God, both the one and the other absolution is all one: and as concerning our sins, the remission is one and the same. The which nevertheless is as often confirmed, and renewed in us, as we give credit unto the words, whereby the same is signified unto us; whether it be by word of mouth, or by visible sign, it is all one. So that how often soever we either hear the word, or receive the sacraments in faith, the remission of sins is assured unto us; whereby no small faith is inwardly poured into us. And it ought to seem no marvel unto any man, wherefore the sacraments are ordained by Christ: seeing that by them his pleasure is, that the strength of the spirit should have recourse into the believers, no less than by the outward word of the scripture, even as we are taught by daily experience; but yet so, as neither of these can profit any man without faith. Wherefore we have hitherto declared two means, by which the remission of sins is extant in the church; according to the two ways, whereby the word of God is set forth unto them that believe. But if thou demand, which of the sacraments by name signifies this remission of sins in the church? I answer, that it is baptism, in which (we being washed with visible water) is a sign that we by Christ obtain spiritual cleansing. And that is what Paul teaches unto the Ephesians; that God has purged his church with the washing of water through the word of life.

But now let us see what is the third means of this remission of sins. The church, by the singular gift and grace of Christ, has the right and authority (as it has been already said) to cut off from her, by excommunication, those who are obstinate. The order of which Christ has described and taught unto her in the Gospel of Matthew, where he speaks of brotherly correction; whereby men are admonished that unless they repent, it shall proceed even to the utmost punishment of separation: which may stand in force so long as contrition and repentance are deferred regarding the sins

committed. And when repentance is performed, then also let an end of the punishment of excommunication be appointed. For which cause, Christ being asked by Peter, How often should a man forgive those who offend, whether seven times (which seemed to be much:) answered; Even so often as they shall return again to better life. For that he annoints when he says; Seventy times seven. Wherefore they, who by repentance return to the church, must evermore be admitted.

And lest perchance so often separation and receiving reiterated by the ministry of men, against one and the same man, should seem to be of small importance, and reputed for sport and mockery, as a thing proceeding from the will of man, he adds; that He gives them the keys of the church: that is to say, the power, that Whatever she should bind or loose upon the earth, should be established in heaven. And this the church understands in the same sort as the holy evangelist writes it. By this article therefore, we believe that such divine authority is committed unto the church, that it may absolve and set at liberty the persons excommunicated, who repent of their sins committed; and may reconcile them to herself: whereby they may be restored unto that place of a healed body, whereof Christ is the head. Which absolution being performed with public vows and prayers in the church, no doubt but the church forgives them their sins committed. Wherefore, after the grant of this authority of the keys, Christ not in vain added; Whatever you ask in my name, it shall be given unto you: And; Wherever two or three shall be gathered together in my name, I am in the midst of them.

Whereby it is gathered that the church is never present, either to excommunicate or to reconcile those who are excommunicated, but that Christ himself also is present. Wherefore Paul, in the second epistle to the Corinthians, writes to the church; that forgiving the fault of that sinner, of whom he had made mention in his first

epistle, they should confirm charity towards him, in renewing with him their old friendship. Behold how we do not contemn the authority of the church, but we deny it to be in the will and authority of one. We confess this power therefore to be on earth among the godly. But even as the multitude of believers, gathered together in Christ, have only the right of excommunication; so have they also of reconciling and admitting: and that, which is so performed by them, we believe also to be done and confirmed in heaven. However, note that in this third means is contained the forgiveness of public sins only. And as concerning the two former means, the church has belonging unto it the forgiveness of all sins in general. Here only that absolution takes place, which pertains to public crimes; which, through evil example, has offended and done harm to them, to whom the knowledge thereof has come. Wherefore, with all the heart and voice let us give thanks unto God, who has granted unto us so great a benefit upon the earth, and has laid up greater for us in heaven: as afterward we shall see.

The Resurrection of the Flesh

Look more hereof in the third part.

How these articles should be knit together, by a more fit method, I cannot perceive. Sin (as it is known) has been the only and whole cause of man's death: and that we have remission of sins through Christ, it was showed a little before. Now then remains this one thing; to wit, that by him we shall be delivered from death, and released from the tyranny thereof, so soon as ever we have access unto Christ by faith: since then shall perish in it the continual jurisdiction, which it obtains against us. For seeing the natural power hereof is such, as what it has once seized upon, it firmly holds:

therefore the philosophers write, that it must not be granted, that from such a privation men can return to their ancient habit. In which matter certainly they are not deceived, if you should but consider the power of nature. But we, who are endowed with faith, do so taste of death; as we know that there is an end and limit appointed to the working thereof; we being confirmed through the promise of Christ himself, who in the sixth of John says; that He will lose none of them which his father has given him, but will raise them up at the latter day.

But if so be you object, that he will raise up not only them that be godly, but also the unbelievers: and shall therefore the faith in Christ (as touching the resurrection) profit anything? I answer, that the confidence in Christ shall nothing at all profit unto the mere and absolute resurrection; seeing that degree, both the godly and the wicked shall obtain: but the resurrection unto felicity, unto life eternal, and unto heavenly blessedness, is only granted unto them, which by faith are united unto Christ. However, I think it not meet to pass over this; (to wit) that whereas the wicked shall rise again, they obtain not that, by the power of their own nature, but by Christ. For, seeing we confess that by the death of that one first man, we were all made subject unto death; it is reason also we should grant, that how many soever be made partakers of this second life, should also obtain the same by that one man Christ, who first was raised up. Wherefore the wicked, whether they will or no, shall feel in themselves the power of Christ: but that which these shall obtain to their great harm, just men shall receive to their great benefit. This is the doctrine of Paul to the Corinthians, when he says; As by one man came death, so by one man came the resurrection of the dead. And as by Adam all men die, so by Christ all shall be made alive: but everyone in his own order. The first fruits is Christ, then they which

be of Christ. And in the last and most unhappy state shall they be, which be strangers from Christ.

And as there shall be a difference in the state and condition; so shall there be also in the place. For the saints then raised up, shall together with the godly, which then perhaps shall remain alive, be caught up, to meet with that high King our Lord JESUS CHRIST in the air; Who undoubtedly (as we have already confessed) shall come to judge the quick and the dead: as we have expressly showed in the article of the last judgment. Wherefore Christ will show forth his power generally towards all, as well good as bad; not only in the judgment itself, but in the resurrection also. He therefore is the first that has risen, and we shall follow him at the time appointed. The church is a body quickened by the spirit of GOD, the which increases by degrees; no otherwise than a living body is naturally formed, by little and little. For of the power of forming, which is in the seed, first someone member is formed, and brought forth in the lump; whether the same be the heart, or any other member, it forces not: it suffices, that sense and moving be given to any one of them. The same spirit afterward goes forward by little and little, to frame other members. And even this happens in the holy body of believers, wherein the spirit of GOD has raised up Christ, the very head of them all. Afterward, the same spirit, by the same power, whereby it raised up Christ in all us, who are the dear members of his body, will bring forth the same effects of resurrection: as we read in the first chapter to the Ephesians, and as we have declared in that article, wherein we treated of the resurrection of Christ.

But how great consolation that blessed hope brings to the godly, let even they themselves judge, who in great joy celebrate with such pomp and ambition the day of their birth; or else that day, wherein they were promoted to some degree of honour. And thus they

celebrate, with joyful memory, the beginnings of so great miseries and calamities, as this life is subject to; and as are incident to principalities and worldly honours. This is the true birth of the saints of Christ, this is the true triumph, this is that heavenly entertainment of them. Then shall be opened unto us the wounds, or rather the gates of glory. Here ought all our hope to revive, if at any time (as oftentimes it does happen) we appear to be negligent, and to go slowly forward in the way of the Lord; by reason of the burden of our flesh, which oppresses us. In this way ought our minds to be strengthened, to endure the troubles, which seem to be hard and difficult unto the body, unto nature, and unto the senses. In this way ought we to be confirmed to the mortifying of our senses and concupiscences; seeing we know from Paul, that we, which have been partakers of the death of Christ, shall also be partakers of his resurrection. For then we shall be delivered from the labours, miseries, sorrows, and torments of this life: and we shall have a body so much more excellent, as a heavenly and spiritual body excels an earthly and fleshy body.

And certainly, I speak not this, as though we should not recover so much flesh, blood, and bones, as shall be sufficient unto the constitution of a body: but we believe it will be a much more excellent body; because Heavenly and Spiritual betoken names of nature. The which titles and prerogatives, Paul, in the first epistle to the Corinthians, gave unto bodies renewed by the resurrection. And Christ in Matthew, when he was tempted of the Sadducees, promised that we should be like unto the angels: that in heaven there shall be no use of matrimony. For seeing that death shall have no dominion, there shall be no need also of generation; which is granted unto us for supplying the number of such, as death takes daily away. The same is affirmed concerning hunger, thirst, and all that evil band of troubles. Whosoever therefore goes forward unto so noble and

glorious a state, ought to regard but a little, all the troubles and labours which he endures for the name of Christ. Yet this does not the wicked sort consider; but it seems to be a matter of no weight unto them, that they submit their soul unto the bondage of innumerable miseries, and suffer the same to be mastered with the flames of naughty lusts.

They do not make any account of having their body once free, and discharged from natural necessities; as men that judge it a thing impossible, because they measure the power of God by the course of those things, which continually be brought forth, and be here among us. But contrariwise the godly, which by virtue of the resurrection do hope for that most excellent gift (to wit, that neither death, nor yet other natural infirmities may be able to do anymore displeasure to the body) must bend their whole endeavour to rid their minds from the tyranny of vices and affections; whereby they may be more and more confirmed in the hope of recovering of a free body, wherewith the mind may be clothed, that now through Christ hath gotten the victory over lusts and sins, which by means of the body and the flesh do oppress the spirit. And this let us desire of the eternal God, and most merciful father, that he will vouchsafe to bestow upon us at his own appointed time, and that through the merit of our Lord Jesus Christ, for that immortal desire's sake, wherewith we wish after his kingdom. And this we would desire with all speed to be done, so that his glory and honour might be made more famous and known.

The Life Everlasting

We who here living in the church by the spirit of Christ, have obtained remission of sins; and when we have attained unto regeneration in felicity and glory, what either can we or ought we

afterward wish, but that it be granted us to live evermore joyfully, contentedly, and happily in God through Christ? And although such a state is for many causes very greatly to be desired; yet all the parts of that happy life must be referred to two good things; the first has respect unto the soul; and the other unto the body. Touching the which this I will say briefly, that it will come to pass, that all labours, griefs, miseries, and sorrows, which we are compelled to suffer in this unhappy vale shall cease from the same. And this is it, which is said in the Apocalypse; that God will wipe away all tears from the eyes of his saints: neither shall there remain to them any more sorrows, lamentations, sighs, or wailings. Wherefore our body shall merely be renewed, according as we treated in the article of the resurrection. Unto which sentences declared this we add; that there is a lively and effectual example in the resurrection of Christ, what manner of heavenly properties our bodies shall have. It is evident also, even in sundry of his actions, when he was conversant in this passable state of life, what time as he showed miracles even in his own body.

He entered into the place, where the apostles were, the doors being shut. He walked upon the waters of the sea, and sank not. He was lifted up into the air, or rather ascended into heaven: as we have above confessed. And he offered himself to be seen and felt of his disciples. Besides this, when his will was neither to be seen, nor yet to be caught hold of by any man, he so ordered his body, as neither the one nor the other happened otherwise, than it pleased himself. As in Nazareth, when they endeavoured to throw him down headlong from the mountain; or when they went about to stone him in the temple. Again, when he rose up and went out of the sepulchre, which the soldiers kept, he would not be seen. No more would he be seen upon mount Tabor, wherein his body being transformed, became bright like the sun. And we are not any way forbidden to hope, but

that our bodies shall probably be adorned with those qualities in the life eternal. For it seemeth altogether convenient, that the members should be like unto their own head. Wherefore, if any man have a fleshly care of his own body, he dealeth unwisely, to obey it in those things which manifestly strive with so blessed an end. He ought rather, for that favour, wherewith he is endued by the grace of God, to yield the same body of his to the obedience of the spirit; by whom it shall at the length be quickened and carried up into so excellent a state. In consideration whereof, Paul decreed; that Those things, which we presently suffer, are not worthy of the glory, which shall be showed to us: And as in the same manner, Christ disputing of eternal life, said; He that will find his life, shall lose it.

In the which place, under the name of life; he meaneth this natural life; the which whosoever withdraweth from mortification, and the cross laid upon him by God, and doth attempt with highly dishonouring of Christ and his name, to repulse danger and temporal death from it: then doth he verily lose it, although he determine with himself to find it, and to recover it. For he despoileth it of those properties, which otherwise it should perpetually have in that eternal felicity with Christ. But the spiritual and true Christians, which by the judgment of the world are thought to betray their own life, while they make over-small account of the same, taking great and infinite perils in hand, yea and willing death for Christ's sake: these (I say) as Christ most truly testifieth, in losing of their soul, do in very deed find and most certainly obtain the same. And that is most aptly expressed in the similitude of a grain of corn, which unless it should first become rotten in the earth, it would never give out flower or fruit, framed in the order of an ear of corn.

But let us proceed, and see, in what thing the spirits of the blessed may rest themselves in that state, whereof we have spoken. They that

be justified by Christ, although that, even in this life, they have settled their desire to love God with all their heart, with all their soul, and with all their strength; and so long as they acknowledge, they be very far off from doing that, which they ought to do, they must needs be disquieted with exceeding sorrow. How pleasant a thing (think we) will it be to them, that they shall be able to satisfy their desire, so just, so excellent, so great, and so long desired of them? Then we shall be endued with this gift, that we shall offend him no more: we shall be delivered from the servitude of sin, and from our domestical enemy; namely, from the assaults of the flesh, seeing the same shall be at peace with the spirit. We being constrained with the bonds hereof, cannot fulfil the law of God. But in that state we shall love God with all our strength, and more than either ourselves, or whatsoever else is in the world. Neither shall that flesh let us anything, from the true and perfect love of our neighbour: he undoubtedly shall have no need of the duties of this life, but yet we shall love him, in that we shall no less be desirous of his felicity than of our own.

The motions of envy, self-pleasing, and of other desires (the which things be very great enemies unto us, and make us the slacker to love our neighbours) shall have no longer abiding in us. But as touching that, which is of greatest importance, and is greatly wished for of all men that be endued with reason and any godliness at all (I mean the knowledge of God) shall then at the last be granted unto us. Indeed it is now, after some sort, given unto men to know God by the evident tokens of things created, by the testimonies of the scriptures, and by inward revelation of the spirit: but there shall be then a full and perfect knowledge. Wherefore saith Paul to the Corinthians; We see (saith he) through a glass as in a dark speaking. Now there be certain dark sentences laid before us, which the Grecians call "enigmas": then shall it be set forth to be perceived indeed. All veils and covering

shall be removed, that we may penetrate even to the face of God himself, the which cannot be perceived in this life: as God himself verified to his faithful servant Moses, in these words; It cannot be that a man should see me and live. Therefore thou shalt not see my face, but I will cause, that as I pass by, thou mayest see my back part.

But when we be loosed from this mortal state, we without doubt shall be capable of that excellent gift. In the which thing chiefly consisteth that eternal life, as our saviour Jesus teacheth in the Gospel of John; This is the life eternal, that they may know thee only, the true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. And again he saith; that Abraham desired to know the day of the Lord, and he knew it and rejoiced. And unto the apostles he said; Blessed be the eyes, which see that ye see. I say unto you, that many kings and prophets desired to see that which ye see, and yet it was not granted unto them. In which place we must understand, that Christ spake of his first coming, in the which he had the mortal and passable properties of human nature. But if thou wilt object, that they saw him also after his resurrection, when he was now endued with an immortal and impassible life: I answer, that he had not even as yet gotten the full victory of all his enemies, neither had procured the kingdom to be perfect, peaceable, and sure from all adversaries: such as it shall be by the judgment of Paul, in the first epistle to the Corinthians, When he hath put all his enemies under his feet.

Wherefore, let everyone ponder in his mind, what a felicity remaineth for us, seeing it is admitted, that we shall see him, and shall have experience of our first begotten brother in that glory and triumph: where we shall not only be one with him, but with the eternal father also, with whom he shall make us firmly to abide, as a kingdom won by his own conquest, and governed in an excellent sort; That the same God the father (as Paul testifieth in that place)

may be all in us all. Now then my brethren, what better thing can we desire? How profitable, pleasant, glorious, honest, beautiful, and in every respect good shall it be, that that father and blessed God shall be all in all? These things are not elsewhere to be sought, seeing they are not elsewhere to be attained. Some shadow, proof, and little spark of that blessedness of ours did Peter taste upon the mount: and therefore he wished there to have his perpetual habitation. Thereof had Paul a trial, when he was wrapped into the third heaven, where he heard great mysteries so far removed from the sense of man, as they were unspeakable. The face of Moses so glistened, by reason of the conversation which he had with the divine glory, as the Israelites were not able by any means to behold him. What shall happen therefore unto us, when we have obtained with him the place of children and house-dwellers?

If so be at any time it happen here, that we by any motion of the spirit, read the scriptures; if we pour out our earnest prayers before God, if we lament before him with great zeal for the evil which we suffer, or else be moved inwardly through the effectual preaching of the word: do we not conceive a joy, delectation, and consolation, which surpasses all delights, pastimes and pleasures of this world? But this is only a beginning of eternal life; whereby nevertheless yet we may conjecture, how pure, perfect, and immeasurable happiness that shall be, which is in the life to come. Touching which, many more things might be disputed; but it is more meet to leave these amplifications to the faith of the godly reader. The which felicity seeing it is the gift of God, which proceedeth not from ourselves, in that God maketh us capable thereof; so are we wont to conceive much more according to the measure which cometh into us. And these sweet conceits of the mind do comfort and refresh us in the calamities of this life: they showing unto us, even in the midst of the storms of this world, the haven of so great a felicity. Unto which we

beseech him to bring us, that by his precious death hath procured it for us. And that it will please him, through his holy spirit, to bring thereunto all such as through him are regenerated by the eternal father: with whom he liveth, triumpheth, and reigneth forever, Amen.

Here (brethren) you have a short exposition of the particular things belonging to our faith. And as touching those things, which shall be perceived of you to want, I beseech you to allow of these excuses. One is, that my ability is but small and slender; the other is, for that I mean, in the book which I have in hand touching the true worshipping of God: to supply many wants, which for brevity sake I have omitted. God and the Father make you partakers more and more of his grace in Christ Jesus our Lord! Amen.

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