

BOOK III. should pursue to death an heretic professing Christianity, only for Christian profession's sake, could we deny unto him the honour of martyrdom? Yet this honour all men know to be proper unto the Church. Heretics therefore are not utterly cut off from the visible Church of Christ.

If the Fathers do any where, as oftentimes they do, make the true visible Church of Christ and heretical companies opposite; they are to be construed as separating heretics, not altogether from the company of believers, but from the fellowship of sound believers. For where professed unbelief is, there can be no visible Church of Christ; there may be, where sound belief wanteth. Infidels being clean without the Church deny directly and utterly reject the very principles of Christianity; which heretics embrace, and err only by misconstruction: whereupon their opinions, although repugnant indeed to the principles of Christian faith, are notwithstanding by them held otherwise, and maintained as most consonant thereunto. Wherefore being Christians in regard of the general truth of Christ which they openly profess, yet they are by the Fathers every where spoken of as men clean excluded out of the right believing Church, by reason of their particular errors, for which all that are of a sound belief must needs condemn them.

[12.] In this consideration, the answer of Calvin unto Farel concerning the children of Popish parents doth seem crazed¹. "Whereas," saith he, "you ask our judgment about a matter, whereof there is doubt amongst you, whether ministers of our order professing the pure doctrine of the Gospel may lawfully admit unto baptism an infant whose father is a stranger unto our Churches, and whose mother hath fallen from us unto the Papacy, so that both the parents are popish: thus we have thought good to answer; namely, that it is an absurd thing for us to baptize them which cannot be reckoned members of our body. And sith Papists'

¹ Calvin. Epist. 149. [p. 173. ed. Genev. 1617. "Rogas, liceatne ordinis nostri ministris, qui puram evangelii doctrinam profitentur, ad baptismum admittere infantem, cujus pater ab ecclesiis nostris alienus est, mater vero ad Papatum defecit, ita ut parentes ambo sint

"Papistæ: ita respondendum censuimus; absurdum esse ut eos baptizemus, qui corporis nostri membra censi nequeunt. Quum in hoc ordine sint Papistarum liberi, quomodo baptismum illis administrare liceat, non videmus."]

BOOK III. "children are such, we see not how it should be lawful to minister baptism unto them." Sounder a great deal is the answer of the ecclesiastical college of Geneva unto Knox, who having signified unto them, that himself did not think it lawful to baptize bastards or the children of idolaters (he meaneth Papists) or of persons excommunicate, till either the parents had by repentance submitted themselves unto the Church, or else their children being grown unto the years of understanding should come and sue for their own baptism: "For thus thinking," saith he, "I am thought to be over-severe, and that not only by them which are popish, but even in their judgments also who think themselves maintainers of the truth¹." Master Knox's oversight herein they controlled. Their sentence was, "Wheresoever the profession of Christianity hath not utterly perished and been extinct, infants are beguiled of their right, if the common seal be denied them²." Which conclusion in itself is sound, although it seemeth the ground is but weak whereupon they built it. For the reason which they yield of their sentence, is this; "The promise which God doth make to the faithful concerning their seed reacheth unto a thousand generations; it resteth not only in the first degree of descent. Infants therefore whose great-grandfathers have been holy and godly, do in that respect belong to the body of the church, although the fathers and grandfathers of whom they descend have been apostates³: because the tenure of the grace of God which did adopt them three hundred years ago or more in their ancient predecessors, cannot with justice be defeated and broken off by their parents' impiety coming between⁴."

¹ Epist. 283. [Ibid. p. 441. "An ad baptismum admitti debeant spurii, idololatrarum et excommunicatorum filii, priusquam vel parentes per resipiscentiam sese subdiderint Ecclesiæ, vel ii qui ex huiusmodi prognati sunt, baptismum petere possint. Quia nego, plus æquo severus iudicor, non a solis Papisticis, verum etiam ab iis qui sibi veritatis patroni videntur."]

² Epist. 285. [Ibid. p. 442. "Ubicunque non prorsus intercidit, vel extincta fuit Christianismi pro-

fessio, fraudantur jure suo infantes, si a communi symbolo arcentur."

³ ["Apostataes," A.—changed to "Apostates" in Spenser's ed. 1604, and subsequent ones.] 1886.

⁴ Calv. ubi supra. "Imprimis expendere convenit, quos Deus sua voce ad baptismum invitet. Promissio autem non sobolem tantum cujusque fidelium in primo gradu comprehendit, sed in mille generationes extenditur.... Nobis ergo minime dubium est, quin soboles ex piis et sanctis

By which reason of theirs although it seem that all the world may be baptized, inasmuch as no man living is a thousand descents removed from Adam himself, yet we mean not at this time either to uphold or to overthrow it: only their alleged conclusion we embrace, so it be construed in this sort; "That forasmuch as men remain in the visible Church, till they utterly renounce the profession of Christianity, we may not deny unto infants their right by withholding from them the public sign of holy baptism, if they be born where the outward acknowledgment of Christianity is not clean gone and extinguished." For being in such sort born, their parents are within the Church, and therefore their birth doth give them interest and right in baptism.

[13.] Albeit not every error and fault, yet heresies and crimes which are not actually repented of and forsaken, exclude quite and clean from that salvation which belongeth unto the mystical body of Christ; yea, they also make a separation from the visible sound Church of Christ; altogether from the visible Church neither the one nor the other doth sever. As for the act of excommunication, it neither shutteth out from the mystical, nor clean from the visible, but only from fellowship with the visible in holy duties. With what congruity then doth the Church of Rome deny, that her enemies, whom she holdeth always for heretics, do at all appertain to the Church of Christ; when her own do freely grant, that albeit the Pope (as they say) cannot teach heresy nor propound error, he may notwithstanding himself worship idols, think amiss concerning matters of faith¹, yea, give himself unto acts diabolical, even being Pope? How exclude they us from being any part of the Church of Christ under the colour and pretence of heresy, when they cannot but grant it possible even for him to be as touching his own personal persuasion

"atavis progenita, quamvis apostatæ fuerint avi et parentes, ad Ecclesiæ tamen corpus pertineant . . . Quia iniquum est, cum Deus ante annos trecentos vel plures adoptivæ suæ eos dignatus fuerit, ut quæ deinde secuta est parentum impietas cælestis gratiæ cursum abruptat." The former letter was dated 1553, this 1559.]

¹ [Harding ap. Jewel. Def. of Apol. 632. ed. 1611. "The Pope may err by personed error, in his own private judgment, as a man; and as a particular Doctor in his own opinion: yet as he is Pope . . . in public judgment, in deliberation, and definitive sentence, he never erreth nor ever erred."]

heretical¹, who in their opinion not only is of the Church, but holdeth the chiefest place of authority over the same? But of these things we are not now to dispute. That which already we have set down, is for our present purpose sufficient.

[14.] By the Church therefore in this question we understand no other than only the visible Church. For preservation of Christianity there is not any thing more needful, than that such as are of the visible Church have mutual fellowship and society one with another. In which consideration, as the main body of the sea being one, yet within divers precincts hath divers names; so the Catholic Church is in like sort divided into a number of distinct Societies, every of which is termed a Church within itself. In this sense the Church is always a visible society of men; not an assembly, but a society. For although the name of the Church be given unto Christian assemblies, although any multitude of Christian men congregated may be termed by the name of a Church, yet assemblies properly are rather things that belong to a Church. Men are assembled for performance of public actions; which actions being ended, the assembly dissolveth itself and is no longer in being, whereas the Church which was assembled doth no less continue afterwards than before. "Where but three are, and they of the laity also (saith Tertullian), yet there is a Church²:" that is to say, a Christian assembly. But a Church, as now we are to understand it, is a Society; that is, a number of men belonging unto some Christian fellowship, the place and limits whereof are certain. That wherein they have communion is the public exercise of such duties as those mentioned in the Apostles' Acts, *Instruction*, *Breaking of Bread*, and *Prayers*³. As therefore they that are of the mystical body of Christ have those inward graces and virtues,

¹ [Alphonsus de Castro, a Spanish Franciscan, who came with Philip II. to England † 1558, "un des plus célèbres théologiens espagnols du 16^{me} siècle" (Biog. Univ.). His great work, *adv. omnes hæreses*, was printed ten times in 26 years) de Hær. i. 4, ap. Jewel. 633. "Non dubitamus an hæreticum esse, et Papam esse, coire in unum possint . . . Non enim credo aliquem esse adeo

"impudentem Papæ assentatorem, ut ei tribuere hoc velit, ut nec errare, nec in interpretatione sacramentorum literarum hallucinari possit." This passage (in the first ed. 1534) was omitted in the later editions of the work. See Laud's Conf. with Fisher, p. 263, 264. ed. 1639.]

² Tertull. Exhort. ad Castit. [c. 7.] "Ubi tres, Ecclesia est, licet Laici."

³ Acts ii. 42.

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whereby they differ from all others, which are not of the same body; again, whosoever appertain to the visible body of the Church, they have also the notes of external profession, whereby the world knoweth what they are: after the same manner even the several societies of Christian men, unto every of which the name of a Church is given with addition betokening severalty, as the Church of Rome, Corinth, Ephesus, England, and so the rest, must be endued with correspondent general properties belonging unto them as they are public Christian societies. And of such properties common unto all societies Christian, it may not be denied that one of the very chiefest is Ecclesiastical Polity.

Which word I therefore the rather use, because the name of Government, as commonly men understand it in ordinary speech, doth not comprise the largeness of that whereunto in this question it is applied. For when we speak of Government, what doth the greatest part conceive thereby, but only the exercise of superiority peculiar unto rulers and guides of others? To our purpose therefore the name of Church-Polity will better serve, because it containeth both government and also whatsoever besides belongeth to the ordering of the Church in public. Neither is any thing in this degree more necessary than Church-Polity, which is a form of ordering the public spiritual affairs of the Church of God.

Whether it be necessary that some particular form of Church-Polity be set down in Scripture, sith the things that belong particularly unto any such form are not of necessity to salvation.

II. But we must note, that he which affirmeth speech to be necessary amongst all men throughout the world, doth not thereby import that all men must necessarily speak one kind of language. Even so the necessity of polity and regiment in all Churches may be held without holding any one certain form to be necessary in them all. Nor is it possible that any form of polity, much less of polity ecclesiastical, should be good, unless God himself be author of it¹. "Those things that are not of God" (saith Tertullian), "they can have no other than God's adversary for their author." Be it whatsoever in the Church of God, if it be not of God, we hate it. Of God it must be; either as those things sometime were, which God supernaturally revealed, and so delivered them unto Moses for government of the commonwealth of Israel; or else as those things which men find

¹ Tertull. de habitu mul. [c. 8.] "Æmuli sint necesse est, quæ Dei non sunt."

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out by help of that light which God hath given them unto that end¹. The very Law of Nature itself, which no man can deny but God hath instituted, is not of God, unless that be of God, whereof God is the author as well this later way as the former. But forasmuch as no form of Church-Polity is thought by them to be lawful, or to be of God, unless God be so the author of it that it be also set down in Scripture; they should tell us plainly, whether their meaning be that it must be there set down in whole or in part. For if wholly, let them shew what one form of Polity ever was so. Their own to be so taken out of Scripture they will not affirm; neither deny they that in part even this which they so much oppugn is also from thence taken. Again they should tell us, whether only that be taken out of Scripture which is actually and particularly there set down; or else that also which the general principles and rules of Scripture potentially contain. The one way they cannot as much as pretend, that all the parts of their own discipline are in Scripture: and the other way their mouths are stopped, when they would plead against all other forms besides their own; seeing the general principles are such as do not particularly prescribe any one, but sundry may equally be consonant unto the general axioms of the Scripture.

[2.] But to give them some larger scope and not to close them up in these straits: let their allegations be considered, wherewith they earnestly bend themselves against all which deny it necessary that any one complete form of Church-Polity should be in Scripture. First therefore whereas it hath been told them² that matters of faith, and in general matters necessary unto salvation, are of a different nature from ceremonies, order, and the kind of church government; and that the one is necessary to be expressly contained in the word of God, or else manifestly collected out of the same, the other not so; that it is necessary not to receive the one, unless there be something in Scripture for them; the other free, if nothing against them may thence be alleged; although there do not appear any just or reasonable cause to reject

¹ Rom. ii. 15. "Ille legis hujus inventor, disceptator, lator." Cic. Admon. 20, 21. See Defence 76, iii. de Repub. [ap. Lact. vi. 8. and &c.]
² [In Whitgift's Answer to the Opp. vii. 906. Ed. Ernesti.]

or dislike of this, nevertheless as it is not easy to speak to the contentation of minds exulcerated in themselves, but that somewhat there will be always which displeaseth; so herein for two things we are reproved. ¹The first is *mis-distinguishing*, because matters of discipline and church government are (as they say) "matters necessary to salvation and of "faith," whereas we put a difference between the one and the other. Our second fault is, *injurious dealing* with the Scripture of God, as if it contained only "the principal points of religion, "some rude and unfashioned matter of building the Church, "but had left out that which belongeth unto the form and "fashion of it; as if there were in the Scripture no more than "only to cover the Church's nakedness, and not chains, "bracelets, rings, jewels, to adorn her; sufficient to quench her "thirst, to kill her hunger, but not to minister a more liberal, "and (as it were) a more delicious and dainty diet." In which case ² our apology shall not need to be very long.

¹ Two things misliked; the one that we distinguish matters of discipline or church government from matters of faith and necessary unto salvation: the other, that we are injurious to the Scripture of God in abridging the large and rich contents thereof. Their words are these: "You which distinguish "between these, and say, that mat- "ters of faith and necessary unto "salvation may not be tolerated in "the Church, unless they be ex- "pressly contained in the word of "God, or manifestly gathered; but "that ceremonies, order, discipline, "government in the Church, may "not be received against the word "of God, and consequently may be "received if there be no word "against them, although there be "none for them: you (I say) dis- "tinguishing or dividing after this "sort do prove yourself an evil "divider. As though matters of "discipline and kind of government "were not matters necessary to sal- "vation and of faith." [This sen- "tence ("as though . . . of faith") is transposed by Hooker to this place, from where it occurs in T. C.

a few lines above.] "It is no small "injury which you do unto the "word of God to pin it in so narrow "room, as that it should be able to "direct us but in the principal points "of our religion; or as though the "substance of religion, or some rude "and unfashioned matter of build- "ing of the Church were uttered in "them; and those things were left "out that should pertain to the form "and fashion of it; or as if there "were in the Scriptures only to "cover the Church's nakedness, and "not also chains and bracelets and "rings and other jewels to adorn "her and set her out; or that, to "conclude, there were sufficient to "quench her thirst and kill her "hunger, but not to minister unto "her a more liberal and (as it were) "a more delicious and dainty diet. "These things you seem to say, "when you say, that matters neces- "sary to salvation and of Faith are "contained in Scripture: especially "when you oppose these things to "Ceremonies, Order, Discipline, "and Government." T. C. lib. i. p. 26. [14.]

² [cause?]

III. The mixture of those things by speech which by nature are divided, is the mother of all error. To take away therefore that error which confusion breedeth, distinction is requisite. Rightly to distinguish is by conceit of mind to sever things different in nature, and to discern wherein they differ. So that if we imagine a difference where there is none, because we distinguish where we should not, it may not be denied that we misdistinguish. The only trial whether we do so, yea or no, dependeth upon comparison between our conceit and the nature of things conceived.

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Ch. iii. 1-3.
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That mat-
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[2.] Touching matters belonging unto the Church of Christ this we conceive, that they are not of one suit. Some things are *merely* of faith, which things it doth suffice that we know and believe; some things not only to be known but done, because they concern the actions of men. Articles about the Trinity are matters of *mere* faith, and must be believed. Precepts concerning the works of charity are matters of action; which to know, unless they be practised, is not enough. This being so clear to all men's understanding, I somewhat marvel that they especially should think it absurd to oppose Church-government, a plain matter of action, unto matters of faith, who know that themselves divide the Gospel into Doctrine and Discipline¹. For if matters of discipline be rightly by them distinguished from matters of doctrine, why not matters of government by us as reasonably set against matters of faith? Do not they under doctrine comprehend the same which we intend by matter of faith? Do not they under discipline comprise the regiment of the Church? When they blame that in us which themselves follow, they give men great cause to doubt that some other thing than judgment doth guide their speech.

[3.] What the Church of God standeth bound to know or do, the same in part nature teacheth. And because nature can teach them but only in part, neither so fully as is requisite for man's salvation, nor so easily as to make the way plain and expedite enough that many may come to the knowledge

¹ T. C. l. ii. p. 1. "We offer Discipline be one part of the Gospel, "to shew the Discipline to be a what other part can they assign but "part of the Gospel." And again, Doctrine to answer in division to p. 5. "I speak of the Discipline as the Discipline? [See also lib. i. "of a part of the Gospel." If the p. 32.]

BOOK III. of it, and so be saved ; therefore in Scripture hath God both
Ch. iii. 4. collected the most necessary things that the school of nature
teacheth unto that end, and revealeth also whatsoever we
neither could with safety be ignorant of, nor at all be instructed in but by supernatural revelation from him. So that Scripture containing all things that are in this kind any way needful for the Church, and the principal of the other sort, this is the next thing wherewith we are charged as with an error: we teach that whatsoever is unto salvation termed *necessary* by way of excellency, whatsoever it standeth all men upon to know or do that they may be saved, whatsoever there is whereof it may truly be said, "This not to believe is eternal death and damnation," or, "This every soul that will live must duly observe;" of which sort the articles of Christian faith and the sacraments of the Church of Christ are: all such things if Scripture did not comprehend, the Church of God should not be able to measure out the length and the breadth of that way wherein for ever she is to walk, heretics and schismatics never ceasing some to abridge, some to enlarge, all to pervert and obscure the same. But as for those things that are accessory hereunto, those things that so belong to the way of salvation, as to alter them is no otherwise to change that way, than a path is changed by altering only the uppermost face thereof; which be it laid with gravel, or set with grass, or paved with stone, remaineth still the same path; in such things because discretion may teach the Church what is convenient, we hold not the Church further tied herein unto Scripture, than that against Scripture nothing be admitted in the Church, lest that path which ought always to be kept even, do thereby come to be overgrown with brambles and thorns.

[4.] If this be unsound, wherein doth the point of unsoundness lie? It is not that we make some things *necessary*, some things *accessory* and appendent only: for our Lord and Saviour himself doth make that difference, by terming judgment and mercy and fidelity with other things of like nature, "the greater and weightier matters of the law¹." Is it then in that we account ceremonies, (wherein we do not comprise sacraments, or any other the like substantial duties in the

¹ Matt. xxiii. 23.

exercise of religion, but only such external rites as are usually annexed unto Church actions,) is it an oversight that we reckon these things and matters¹ of government in the number of things accessory, not things necessary in such sort as hath been declared? Let them which therefore think us blameable consider well their own words. Do they not plainly compare the one unto garments which cover the body of the Church; the other unto rings, bracelets, and jewels, that only adorn it; the one to that food which the Church doth live by, the other to that which maketh her diet liberal, "dainty," and more "delicious"²? Is dainty fare a thing necessary to the sustenance, or to the clothing of the body rich attire? If not, how can they urge the necessity of that which themselves resemble by things not necessary? or by what construction shall any man living be able to make those comparisons true, holding that distinction untrue, which putteth a difference between things of external regiment in the Church and things necessary unto salvation?

IV. Now as it can be to nature no injury that of her we say the same which diligent beholders of her works have observed; namely, that she provideth for all living creatures nourishment which may suffice; that she bringeth forth no kind of creature whereto she is wanting in that which is needful³: although we do not so far magnify her exceeding bounty, as to affirm that she bringeth into the world the sons of men

¹ The government of the Church of Christ granted by Fenner himself to be thought a matter of great moment, yet not of the substance of religion. Against D. Bridges, pag. 121: if it be Fenner which was the author of that book. ["A Defence of the Ecclesiastical Discipline 'ordained of God to be used in 'His Church, against a Reply of 'Maister Bridges to 'a briefe and 'plain Declaration' of it, which was 'printed an. 1584." 4^o. 1588, p. 120, 121. "Our Saviour is sayde "with-charge and commaundement "that they should be observed, to "have delivered to His Disciples "such things, as for the space of "fourtie days He declared unto "them concerning his kingdom. "A part whereof (it hath bin

"alreadie shewed) must needes be "understoode to have bin of the "government of His Church, "which necessariie *dependeth on* "His kingdom."] ² ["Mirum videri debet "doctrina evangelica tanquam bona "valetudine contentos, de disciplina, "qua eandem tueantur, ac vires "simul et colorem acquirant, non "esse solictos." Eccl. Disc. fol. 2. "Medicis contenta, qui salutem "procurassent, aliptas ad colorem "et vires acquirendas non adhibuit." fol. 3.]

³ Arist. Pol. lib. i. cap. 8. et Plato in Menex. [t. ii. 237. E. ed. Serrani. πᾶν γὰρ τὸ τεκὸν τροφήν ἔχει ἐπιτήδειον ὡς ἂν τέκῃ.] Arist. lib. iii. de Animal. c. 4. 5.

BOOK III. That we do not take from Scripture any thing which may be thereunto given without soundness of truth.
Ch. iv. x.
