

BOOK III. which the Spirit of error suggesteth. The operations of the
 Ch. viii. 16. Spirit, especially these ordinary which be common unto all
 true Christian men, are as we know things secret and undiscernible even to the very soul where they are, because their nature is of another and an higher kind than that they can be by us perceived in this life. Wherefore albeit the Spirit lead us into all truth and direct us in all goodness, yet because these workings of the Spirit in us are so privy and secret, we therefore stand on a plainer ground, when we gather by reason from the quality of things believed or done, that the Spirit of God hath directed us in both, than if we settle ourselves to believe or to do any certain particular thing, as being moved thereto by the Spirit.

[16.] But of this enough. To go from the books of Scripture to the sense and meaning thereof: because the sentences which are by the Apostles recited out of the Psalms¹, to prove the resurrection of Jesus Christ, did not prove it, if so be the Prophet David meant them of himself; this exposition therefore they plainly disprove, and shew by manifest reason, that of David the words of David could not possibly be meant. Exclude the use of natural reasoning about the sense of Holy Scripture concerning the articles of our faith, and then that the Scripture doth concern the articles of our faith who can assure us? That, which by right exposition buildeth up Christian faith, being misconstrued breedeth error: between true and false construction, the difference reason must shew. Can Christian men perform that which Peter requireth at their hands; is it possible they should both believe and be able, without the use of reason, to render "a reason of their belief²," a reason sound and sufficient to answer them that demand it, be they of the same faith with us or enemies thereunto? may we cause our faith without reason to appear reasonable in the eyes of men? This being required even of learners in the school of Christ, the duty of their teachers in bringing them unto such ripeness must needs be somewhat more, than only to read the sentences of Scripture, and then paraphrastically to scholy them: to vary them with sundry forms of speech, without arguing or disputing about any thing which they contain. This method of teaching may

¹ Acts xiii. 36; ii. 34.

² 1 Pet. iii. 15.

commend itself unto the world by that easiness and facility which is in it: but a law or a pattern it is not, as some do imagine, for all men to follow that will do good in the Church of Christ.

[17.] Our Lord and Saviour himself did hope by disputation to do some good, yea by disputation not only of but against, the truth, albeit with purpose for the truth. That Christ should be the son of David was truth; yet against this truth our Lord in the gospel objecteth, "If Christ be the son of David, how doth David call him Lord¹?" There is as yet no way known how to dispute, or to determine of things disputed, without the use of natural reason.

If we please to add unto Christ their example, who followed him as near in all things as they could; the sermon of Paul and Barnabas set down in the Acts², where the people would have offered unto them sacrifice; in that sermon what is there but only natural reason to disprove their act? "O men, why do you these things? We are men even subject to the selfsame passions with you: we preach unto you to leave these vanities and to turn to the living God, the God that hath not left himself without witness, in that he hath done good to the world, giving rain and fruitful seasons, filling our heart with joy and gladness."

Neither did they only use reason in winning such unto Christian belief as were yet thereto unconverted, but with believers themselves they followed the selfsame course. In that great and solemn assembly of believing Jews how doth Peter prove that the Gentiles were partakers of the grace of God as well as they, but by reason drawn from those effects, which were apparently known amongst them? "God which knoweth hearts hath borne them witness in giving unto them the Holy Ghost as unto us³."

The light therefore, which the "star of natural reason" and wisdom casteth, is too bright to be obscured by the mist of a word or two uttered to diminish that opinion which justly hath been received concerning the force and virtue thereof, even in matters that touch most nearly the principal duties of men and the glory of the eternal God.

[18.] In all which hitherto hath been spoken touching the

¹ Matt. xxii. 43.

² Acts xiv. 15.

³ Acts xv. 8.

BOOK III. force and use of man's reason in things divine, I must crave
 Ch. ix. 1. that I be not so understood or construed, as if any such thing
 ——— by virtue thereof could be done without the aid and assistance
 of God's most blessed Spirit. The thing we have handled
 according to the question moved about it; which question is,
 whether the light of reason be so pernicious, that in devising
 laws for the Church men ought not by it to search what may
 be fit and convenient. For this cause therefore we have en-
 deavoured to make it appear, how in the nature of reason itself
 there is no impediment, but that the selfsame Spirit, which
 revealeth the things that God hath set down in his law, may
 also be thought to aid and direct men in finding out by the
 light of reason what laws are expedient to be made for the
 guiding of his Church, over and besides them that are in
 Scripture. Herein therefore we agree with those men, by
 whom human laws are defined to be ordinances, which such
 as have lawful authority given them for that purpose do pro-
 bably draw from the laws of nature and God, by discourse of
 reason aided with the influence of divine grace. And for that
 cause, it is not said amiss touching ecclesiastical canons, that
 "by instinct of the Holy Ghost they have been made, and
 "consecrated by the reverend acceptation of all the world¹."

IX. Laws for the Church are not made as they should be,
 unless the makers follow such direction as they ought to be
 guided by: wherein that Scripture standeth not the Church
 of God in any stead, or serveth nothing at all to direct, but
 may be let pass as needless to be consulted with, we judge it
 profane, impious, and irreligious to think. For although it
 were in vain to make laws which the Scripture hath already
 made, because what we are already there commanded to do,
 on our parts there resteth nothing but only that it be executed;
 yet because both in that which we are commanded, it con-
 cerneth the duty of the Church by law to provide, that the
 looseness and slackness of men may not cause the command-
 ments of God to be unexecuted; and a number of things there
 are for which the Scripture hath not provided by any law,

¹ Violatores, 25. q. i. [Decret. Gratian. caus. xxv. quæst. i. c. 6. in Corp. Jur. Canon. Paris. 1618. p. 313. "Violatores canonum volun-

"tarii graviter a sanctis patribus ju-
 "dicantur, et a Sancto Spiritu (in-
 "stinctu cujus, et dono dictati sunt)
 "damnantur."]

BOOK III. but left them unto the careful discretion of the Church; we
 Ch. ix. 2. are to search how the Church in these cases may be well
 ——— directed to make that provision by laws which is most conve-
 nient and fit. And what is so in these cases, partly Scripture
 and partly reason must teach to discern. Scripture compre-
 hending examples and laws, laws some natural and some posi-
 tive: examples there neither are for all cases which require
 laws to be made, and when there are, they can but direct as
 precedents only. Natural laws direct in such sort, that in all
 things we must for ever do according unto them; Positive so,
 that against them in no case we may do any thing, as long as
 the will of God is that they should remain in force. Howbeit
 when Scripture doth yield us precedents, how far forth they
 are to be followed; when it giveth natural laws, what parti-
 cular order is thereunto most agreeable; when positive, which
 way to make laws unrepugnant unto them; yea though all
 these should want, yet what kind of ordinances would be most
 for that good of the Church which is aimed at, all this must
 be by reason found out. And therefore, "to refuse the conduct
 "of the light of nature," saith St. Augustine, "is not folly alone
 "but accompanied with impiety¹."

[2.] The greatest amongst the School-divines, studying how
 to set down by exact definition the nature of an human law,
 (of which nature all the Church's constitutions are,) found not
 which way better to do it than in these words: "Out of the
 "precepts of the law of nature, as out of certain common and
 "undemonstrable principles, man's reason doth necessarily
 "proceed unto certain more particular determinations; which
 "particular determinations being found out according unto the
 "reason of man, they have the names of human laws, so that
 "such other conditions be therein kept as the making of laws
 "doth require²," that is, if they whose authority is there-
 unto required do establish and publish them as laws. And

¹ "Luminis naturalis ducatum
 "repellere non modo stultum est sed
 "et impium." August. lib. iv. de
 Trin. cap. 6. [The editor has not
 been able to verify this quotation.]
² Tho. Aquin. 1, 2. q. 91, art. 3.
 [t. xi. p. i. 199.] "Ex præceptis
 "legis naturalis, quasi ex quibus-
 "dam principiis communibus et in-
 "demonstrabilibus, necesse est quod
 "ratio humana procedat ad aliqua
 "magis particulariter disponenda.
 "Et istæ particulares dispositiones
 "adinventæ secundum rationem
 "humanam dicuntur *leges humanae*,
 "observatis aliis conditionibus quæ
 "pertinent ad rationem legis."

BOOK III. the truth is, that all our controversy in this cause concerning
Ch. ix. 3. the orders of the Church is, what particulars the Church may appoint. That which doth find them out is the force of man's reason. That which doth guide and direct his reason is first the general law of nature ; which law of nature and the moral law of Scripture are in the substance of law all one. But because there are also in Scripture a number of laws particular and positive, which being in force may not by any law of man be violated ; we are in making laws to have thereunto an especial eye. As for example, it might perhaps seem reasonable unto the Church of God, following the general laws concerning the nature of marriage, to ordain in particular that cousin-germans shall not marry. Which law notwithstanding ought not to be received in the Church, if there should be in Scripture a law particular to the contrary, forbidding utterly the bonds of marriage to be so far forth abridged. The same Thomas therefore whose definition of human laws we mentioned before, doth add thereunto this caution concerning the rule and canon whereby to make them¹: *human laws are measures* in respect of men whose actions they must direct ; howbeit such measures they are, as have also their higher rules to be measured by, *which rules are two, the law of God, and the law of nature.* So that laws human must be made according to the general laws of nature, and without contradiction unto any positive law in Scripture. Otherwise they are ill made.

[3.] Unto laws thus made and received by a whole church, they which live within the bosom of that church must not think it a matter indifferent either to yield or not to yield obedience. Is it a small offence to despise the Church of God²? "My son keep thy father's commandment," saith Salomon, "and forget not thy mother's instruction: bind them both always about thine heart³." It doth not stand with the duty which we owe to our heavenly Father, that to the ordinances of our mother the Church we should shew ourselves disobedient. Let us not say we keep the commandments of the one, when we break the law of the other: for

¹ Quæst. 95. Art. 3. [t. xi. p. i. 206. "Lex humana . . . est quædam regula, vel mensura, regulata, vel mensurata quadam superiori mensura ; quæ quidem est duplex, scil. divina lex, et lex naturæ, ut ex supradictis patet."] ² 1 Cor. xi. 22. ³ Prov. vi. 20.

BOOK III. unless we observe both, we obey neither. And what doth let
Ch. ix. 3. but that we may observe both, when they are not the one to the other in any sort repugnant? For of such laws only we speak, as being made in form and manner already declared, can have in them no contradiction unto the laws of Almighty God. Yea that which is more, the laws thus made God himself doth in such sort authorize, that to despise them is to despise in them Him. It is a loose and licentious opinion which the Anabaptists have embraced, holding that a Christian man's liberty is lost, and the soul which Christ hath redeemed unto himself injuriously drawn into servitude under the yoke of human power, if any law be now imposed besides the Gospel of Jesus Christ: in obedience whereunto the Spirit of God and not the constraint of man is to lead us, according to that of the blessed Apostle, "Such as are led by the Spirit of God they are the sons of God¹," and not such as live in thralldom unto men. Their judgment is therefore that the Church of Christ should admit no law-makers but the Evangelists. The author of that which causeth another thing to be, is author of that thing also which thereby is caused. The light of natural understanding, wit, and reason, is from God ; he it is which thereby doth illuminate every man entering into the world². If there proceed from us any thing afterwards corrupt and naught, the mother thereof is our own darkness, neither doth it proceed from any such cause whereof God is the author. He is the author of all that we think or do by virtue of that light, which himself hath given. And therefore the laws which the very heathens did gather to direct their actions by, so far forth as they proceeded from the light of nature, God himself doth acknowledge to³ have proceeded even from himself, and that he was the writer of them in the tables of their hearts. How much more then he the author of those laws, which have been made by his saints, endued further with the heavenly grace of his Spirit, and directed as much as might be with such instructions as his sacred word doth yield ! Surely if we have unto those laws that dutiful regard which their dignity doth require, it will not greatly need that we should be exhorted to live in obedience unto them. If they have God himself for their

¹ Rom. viii. 14.² John i. 9.³ Rom. i. 19, ii. 15.

BOOK III. author, contempt which is offered unto them cannot choose
Ch. x. 1. but redound unto him. The safest and unto God the most
→→→ acceptable way of framing our lives therefore is, with all
humility, lowliness, and singleness of heart, to study, which
way our willing obedience both unto God and man may be
yielded even to the utmost of that which is due.

That nei- X. Touching the mutability of laws that concern the
ther God's regiment and polity of the Church; changed they are, when
being the either altogether abrogated, or in part repealed, or augmented
author of with farther additions. Wherein we are to note, that this
laws, nor question about the changing of laws concerneth only such
his commit- laws as are positive, and do make that now good or evil by
ting them being commanded or forbidden, which otherwise of itself were
to Scrip- not simply the one or the other. Unto such laws it is expressly
ture, nor sometimes added, how long they are to continue in force.
the con- If this be nowhere exprest, then have we no light to direct
tinuance of our judgments concerning the changeableness or immutability
the end for of them, but by considering the nature and quality of such
which they laws. The nature of every law must be judged of by the
were insti- end for which it was made, and by the aptness of things
tuted, is therein prescribed unto the same end. It may so fall out
any reason sufficient to prove that they are
unchange- able.

opened nor possible to be gathered by wit of man. As why
God should forbid Adam that one tree, there was no way for
Adam ever to have certainly understood. And at Adam's
ignorance of this point Satan took advantage, urging the
more securely a false cause because the true was unto Adam
unknown. Why the Jews were forbidden to plough their
ground with an ox and an ass, why to clothe themselves with
mingled attire of wool and linen¹, both it was unto them and
to us it remaineth obscure. Such laws perhaps cannot be
abrogated saving only by whom they were made: because the
intent of them being known unto none but the author, he
alone can judge how long it is requisite they should endure.
But if the reason why things were instituted may be known,
and being known do appear manifestly to be of perpetual
necessity; then are those things also perpetual, unless they

¹ Deut. xxii. 10, 11. [Spencer evidence, that these were prohibi-
(de Legg. Hebræor. lib. ii. c. 31, tions of Sabæan ceremonies.)
33-) conjectures, but without direct

BOOK III. cease to be effectual unto that purpose for which they were
Ch. x. 2. at the first instituted. Because when a thing doth cease to
→→→ be available unto the end which gave it being, the continu-
ance of it must then of necessity appear superfluous. And of
this we cannot be ignorant, how sometimes that hath done
great good, which afterwards, when time hath changed the
ancient course of things, doth grow to be either very hurtful,
or not so greatly profitable and necessary. If therefore the
end for which a law provideth be perpetually necessary, and
the way whereby it provideth perpetually also most apt, no
doubt but that every such law ought for ever to remain un-
changeable.

[2.] Whether God be the author of laws by authorizing
that power of men whereby they are made, or by delivering
them made immediately from himself, by word only, or in
writing also, or howsoever; notwithstanding the authority of
their Maker, the mutability of that end for which they are
made doth also make them changeable. The law of ceremonies
came from God: Moses had commandment to commit it unto
the sacred records of Scripture, where it continueth even
unto this very day and hour: in force still, as the Jew
surmiseth, because God himself was author of it, and for us to
abolish what he hath established were presumption most
intolerable. But (that which they in the blindness of their
obdurate hearts are not able to discern) sith the end for which
that law was ordained is now fulfilled, past and gone; how
should it but cease any longer to be, which hath no longer
any cause of being in force as before? "That which necessity
"of some special time doth cause to be enjoined bindeth no
"longer than during that time, but doth afterwards become
"free¹."

Which thing is also plain even by that law which the Apo-
stles assembled at the council of Jerusalem did from thence
deliver unto the Church of Christ, the preface whereof to
authorize it was, "To the Holy Ghost and to us it hath
"seemed good²:" which style they did not use as matching
themselves in power with the Holy Ghost, but as testifying

¹ "Quod pro necessitate tem- sit. [i. e. Decr. Gratiani, pars 1.
"poris statutum est, cessante neces- causa 1. qu. 1. c. 41. in Corp. Jur.
"sitate, debet cessare pariter quod Canon. 116.]
"urgetur." i. q. 1. Quod pro neces-
² Acts xv. 28.

the Holy Ghost to be the author, and themselves but only utterers of that decree. This law therefore to have proceeded from God as the author thereof no faithful man will deny. It was of God, not only because God gave them the power whereby they might make laws, but for that it proceeded even from the holy motion and suggestion of that secret divine Spirit, whose sentence they did but only pronounce. Notwithstanding, as the law of ceremonies delivered unto the Jews, so this very law which the Gentiles received from the mouth of the Holy Ghost, is in like respect abrogated by decease of the end for which it was given.

[3.] But such as do not stick at this point, such as grant that what hath been instituted upon any special cause needeth not to be observed¹, that cause ceasing, do notwithstanding herein fail; they judge the laws of God only by the author and main end for which they were made, so that for us to change that which he hath established, they hold it execrable pride and presumption, if so be the end and purpose for which God by that mean provideth be permanent. And upon this they ground those ample disputes concerning orders and offices, which being by him appointed for the government of his Church, if it be necessary always that the Church of Christ be governed, then doth the end for which God provided remain still; and therefore in those means which he by law did establish as being fittest unto that end, for us to alter any thing is to lift up ourselves against God, and as it were to countermand him. Wherein they mark not that laws are instruments to rule by, and that instruments are not only to be framed according unto the general end for which they are provided, but even according unto that very particular, which riseth out of the matter whereon they have to work.

¹ Counterp. p. 8. [Cosin in his "Answer to the Abstract," had produced the change of time in celebrating the Eucharist, from the evening after supper, to the morning before the first meal, as an instance of the authority left with the Church to vary matters of discipline. The author of the Counter-poison replies, "As it is a mere circumstance of time, so the alteration hath ground in the Scripture, because one and the same time is not always kept.

"Acts iii. 42; xx. 7, 11, &c. Neither can that be said to be according to the institution, which *being done upon a particular cause* (as all divines agree) *should not be observed where that cause ceaseth.*" T. C. ii. 465. "Neither any man, nor all men in the world, could have put down the temporal ministeries of Apostles, Evangelists, &c. which the Lord ordained, unless the Lord himself had withdrawn them."]

The end wherefore laws were made may be permanent, and those laws nevertheless require some alteration, if there be any unfitness in the means which they prescribe as tending unto that end and purpose. As for example, a law that to bridle theft doth punish thieves with a quadruple restitution hath an end which will continue as long as the world itself continueth. Theft will be always, and will always need to be bridled. But that the mean which this law provideth for that end¹, namely the punishment of quadruple restitution, that this will be always sufficient to bridle and restrain that kind of enormity no man can warrant. Insufficiency of laws doth sometimes come by want of judgment in the makers. Which cause cannot fall into any law termed properly and immediately divine, as it may and doth into human laws often. But that which hath been once most sufficient may wax otherwise by alteration of time and place; that punishment which hath been sometime forcible to bridle sin may grow afterwards too weak and feeble.

[4.] In a word, we plainly perceive by the difference of those three laws which the Jews received at the hands of God, the moral, ceremonial, and judicial, that if the end for which and the matter according whereunto God maketh his laws continue always one and the same, his laws also do the like; for which cause the moral law cannot be altered: secondly, that whether the matter whereon laws are made continue or continue not, if their end have once ceased, they cease also to be of force; as in the law ceremonial it fareth: finally, that albeit the end continue, as in that law of theft specified and in a great part of those ancient judicials it doth; yet forasmuch as there is not in all respects the same subject or matter remaining for which they were first instituted, even this is sufficient cause of change: and therefore laws, though both ordained of God himself, and the end for which they were ordained continuing, may notwithstanding cease, if by alteration of persons or times they be found insufficient to attain unto that end. In which respect why may we not presume that God doth even call for such change or alteration as the very condition of things themselves doth make necessary?

¹ [Exod. xxii. 1; 2 Sam. xii. 6.]