

3-8. THE EIGHTH SERMON: THE OLD & NEW TESTAMENTS. ¹

OF THE USE OR EFFECT OF THE LAW OF GOD,
AND OF THE FULFILLING AND ABROGATING OF IT:
OF THE LIKENESS AND DIFFERENCE OF BOTH THE TESTAMENTS AND PEOPLE,
THE OLD AND THE NEW.

Up to here, in large sermons, I have laid out ² the law of God by several parts. Yet, I think I have not said all that should be said, nor made an end as I should, unless I now add a treatise about the use, effect, fulfilling, and abrogating of the law of God — even though I have touched this argument here and there in my sermons. Now, by this discourse or treatise, dearly beloved, you will understand that the Testament of the old and new church of God is all one; and that there is but one means of true salvation for all those who either have been, or at present are saved in the world. You will also perceive in what the old Testament differs from the new. Moreover, this treatise will be necessary and very profitable both to the understanding of many places in the holy scripture, and to the easy perceiving and most wholesome use of those things which I have said up to here touching the law. God — who is the author, wisdom, and perfect fulness of the law — give me grace to speak those things that will set forth his glory, and be profitable for the health of your souls.³

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The use of God's law is manifold and of sundry sorts; and yet it may be reduced to three especial points, and we may say that its use is threefold or of three sorts.

FIRST of all, the chief and proper office of the law is to convince all men that they are guilty of sin, and are the children of death by their own fault. For the law of God sets forth for us the holy will of God; and in setting it forth, it requires a most perfect and absolute kind of righteousness from us. And for that reason, the law is usually called the testimony of God's will, and the most perfect exemplar of his divine pureness. To this belong those words of the Lord in the gospel, where briefly recounting the sum of God's commandments, he says:

"The first of all the commandments is this: Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord: and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength. This is the first commandment. And the second is like it: you shall love your neighbour as yourself. There are no other commandments greater than these." ⁴

Therefore, to this also pertains that saying of the apostle Paul: "The end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and a good conscience, and unfeigned faith." ⁵ But since the law requires at all our hands, most absolute righteousness, charity, and ⁶ a pure heart, it ⁷ condemns all men of sin, unrighteousness, and death. For in the law of God it is expressly said: "Cursed is everyone who does not abide in all that is written in the book of the law, to do it." ⁸ But which one of us fulfills all the points of the law? What man, I ask, either has had, or today has, a pure heart within him? What man has ever loved or *now* loves God with all his heart, with all his soul, and

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² qua potui diligentia, Lat.; with my best diligence.

³ nostrarum, Lat.; our souls.

⁴ Mark 12.29-31.

⁵ 1Tim 1.5.

⁶ adeoque, Lat.; and so a.

⁷ certe, Lat. undoubtedly.

⁸ Deu 27.26; Gal 3.10.

with all his mind? What man never lusted after evil? Or who now does not lust every day? Therefore, imperfection and sin is revealed in mankind by the law, or by betraying the law.

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What shall we say to this? Where, I pray you, does there appear in any man, that divine and most absolute righteousness which the law requires? Job cries, "I know truly that a man, compared to God, cannot be justified." ⁹ Or, "How shall a man be found righteous, if he is compared to God? If he argues with him, he shall not be able to answer one for a thousand."¹⁰ If I have any righteousness in me, I will not answer him, but I will beseech my judge." ¹¹Likewise, these are the words of the apostle John, who says: "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." Again, "If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us." ¹² Therefore, by this means the law is a certain mirror ¹³ in which we behold our own corruption, frailness, imbecility, imperfection, and our judgment — that is, our just and deserved damnation. For the apostle expressly says that the law was given to the end that it might make manifest men's transgressions, and by that means drive them to acknowledging their imperfection and guilt in sinning. For none of us looks into his own bosom, nor into the secrets of his own breast, but we all flatter ourselves, and will not be persuaded that our thoughts and deeds ¹⁴ are as corrupt as they are indeed; and therefore the law creeps in, and lays open the secrets of our hearts, and brings to light our sin and corruption. "Before the law," says the apostle, "although sin was in the world, yet it was not imputed." ¹⁵ The same apostle also says: "The law works wrath; for where there is no law, there is no transgression." And again, "By the law comes the knowledge of sin." ¹⁶ For in the seventh chapter to the Romans the same apostle says more fully:

"I would not have known sin except by the law: for I would not have known lust, unless the law had said, you shall not lust.

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But sin, taking occasion ¹⁷ by the commandment, worked in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law, sin was dead. I once lived without law; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I was dead. And it was found that the same commandment which was ordained for life, was for me an occasion of death," etc. [Rom 7:7-10](#)

A good part of that chapter is spent in that matter. Therefore, the proper office of Moses, and the principal use and effect of the law, is to show man his sin and imperfection.

As for those who stop here, and go no further to make any other use and effect of the law — as though Moses did nothing but kill, and the law did nothing but slay — they are diversely and not lightly deceived. I repeat it here again, and tell them that the very proper office of the law is to make sin manifest; and also that Moses' chief office is to teach us what we have to do, and to urge it with threatenings and cursings, especially when the law is compared with the gospel. For in the third chapter of the second epistle to the Corinthians, Paul calls the law *the letter*; and immediately after, he calls it *the ministration of death*; then again, he calls it *a doctrine written*

⁹ So the Vulgate; and Coverdale, 1535.

¹⁰ item, Lat.; — [answer back](#).

¹¹ Job 9.2, 3, 15.

¹² 1Joh 1.8, 10.

¹³ Originally, "looking glass."

¹⁴ res nostras, Lat. — [our affairs](#).

¹⁵ non imputabatur, vel reputabatur, Lat.; or not considered, Rom 5.13.

¹⁶ Rom 4.15; 3.20.

¹⁷ occasione accepta, peccatum per praeceptum genuit, Lat.; and Erasmus.

in letters and ink, and figured in tablets of stone — which should not endure, but perish and decay. The same apostle, on the other side again,¹⁸ calls the gospel the ministration or doctrine of the Spirit, which endures and does not decay, which is written in men's hearts, and gives life to believers.¹⁹ Upon this, we freely confess that the law properly manifests our infirmity;²⁰ but the gospel gives a medicine and a remedy to that which was almost past hope.

And now, here, we must think that our holy ancestors did not have the law alone to convince them of sin; nor did Moses do nothing else but kill and slay; nor was Moses given to wound them, but to heal them.²¹ And he did that, not by his own power or virtue, but by guiding them to Him that cherishes the contrite in heart, and heals all their sorrows: that is, Christ Jesus, who also worked by the ministry of Moses.

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For we must not think, from the beginning of the world, nor from Moses' time till the coming of Christ, that only the bare letter was preached, and that the grace and Spirit of God was idle and not wrought in the minds of the faithful. For the law shows us, and invincibly proves to us that the perfection which the most holy and perfect God requires of us in his law, is not in us — I mean, in our flesh. In this, it revokes and pulls back mankind (not by virtue of itself, but by the power of the quickening Spirit of Christ) from confidence in the flesh, in which there is no health nor jot of perfection. And consequently, it gives us occasion to turn to Christ our mediator, who alone is our sanctification and perfection. And so, for this occasion, the law is a path and ready way, and as it were, a schoolmaster given to us by God, to draw us away from all confidence in our own strengths, from all hope of our own merits,²² and from trust in any kind of creatures. And thus the law leads us directly by faith to Christ, who was made by God (as I said just now) our "righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." ^{1Cor 1.30} Without him, there is no salvation under the sun. Therefore, Moses not only urged the law, but also preached Christ and life in Christ. For the Lord in the gospel says to the Jews: "Do not think that I will accuse you to my Father; there is one that accuses you, even Moses, in whom you trust. For if you had believed Moses, you would undoubtedly have believed me: for he wrote of me." ²³ And Paul says to the Galatians:

"If there had been a law given which could have given life, then no doubt righteousness would have been by the law. But the scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by the faith of Jesus Christ would be given to those who believe. But before faith came, we were kept under the law, and shut up for the faith which would afterward be revealed. Therefore, the law was our schoolmaster unto Christ, that we should be justified by faith." ²⁴

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Look, what could be said more plainly than that the law has confined all under sin? But to what end? "That the promise by the faith of Christ Jesus would be given to those who believe." And again: "Before faith came," that is, before the one came to whom our faith is directed, and upon whom it is grounded, "we were kept under the law." How? In truth, being shut up for the faith that was to be revealed. Therefore our fathers were shut up in the law, so that they would not break out at any time, and seek life and salvation anywhere else but in Christ alone. Therefore the

¹⁸ protinus, Lat.; and immediately.

¹⁹ to the believers, not in Lat.

²⁰ morbum, Lat. — [disease](#).

²¹ ut mederetur etiam, Lat.; but to heal also.

²² ab omni operum nostrorum respectu, Lat.; from all regard of our own works.

²³ Joh 5.45, 46.

²⁴ Gal 3.21-24.

law led us ²⁵ by faith directly to Christ. And yet more plainly he says: "The law was our schoolmaster unto Christ." Look, here again the law brings us to Christ. And again he adds; "That we should be justified by faith." Therefore the law sets forth the true doctrine of justification, teaching plainly that we are justified by faith in Christ, and not by the merits of our own works. In this point, it is openly like the gospel, and takes to itself the office of the gospel: and this is no marvel, since to many men, through their own fault, the gospel ²⁶ becomes and is made the letter. Furthermore, the same apostle in another place says that "in sacrifices they called their sins to remembrance;" ²⁷ and we know that the purging of sins was prefigured in them. ²⁸ Therefore, even the ceremonial laws also led them to Christ, testifying and teaching them that he alone cleanses us from all our sins. I conclude from this, that the office of Moses and of the law, both was and is, to expose to us our sin and judgment; and yet it was not to condemn us only, but also by occasion to lead us to Christ.

By this we also learn that the law not only teaches us the first principles and rudiments of righteousness, but the very true and absolute righteousness. For Moses expressly says that he taught a most perfect and absolute kind of doctrine, as that in which both life and death wholly consist. ²⁹

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And the apostle says that the law leads us by the hand to Christ, so that we should be justified by faith. Now, the righteousness of faith is the most perfect righteousness. Therefore, though the precepts of the law are called in some places the rudiments of the world,³⁰ that is for two especial causes: the first is because the law is, as it were, the first instructions or elements, which are finished when the doctrine of the gospel comes, and so it gives way to the gospel as to more absolute principles; the second is because ceremonies are taught under outward things or signs, those outward things prefigure, and set forth to be seen, the inward things — even Christ himself and his holy mysteries.

And out of what I have said up to here, we may also learn that the ancient saints, who lived under the old testament, did not seek righteousness and salvation in the works of the law, but in the one who is the perfection and end of the law, even Christ Jesus. And therefore they used the law and the ceremonies as a guide and school mistress to lead them by the hand to Christ their Saviour. For as often as they heard that the law required perfect righteousness from their hands, they understood by faith through grace, that in the law Christ was set forth to be the most absolute righteousness, to whom all men ought to fly to obtain righteousness. So often as they met together in the holy congregation to behold the holy ceremonies which God ordained, they did not look upon the bare figures only, nor did they think that they pleased God and were purged from their sins by that external kind of worship. Rather, they cast the eyes of their minds and of faith upon the Messiah to come, who was prefigured in all the ceremonies and ordinances of the law. Therefore, the law was abused by those who thought they were acceptable to God, and served him as they should, because they were busy in those ceremonial works. The prophets in their sermons sharply accused, and evermore cried out against those thoughts and persuasions. And in that sense, and for that cause, the people of Israel are many times called a carnal people. It was not that all the patriarchs and fathers before the coming of Christ were carnal or fleshly.

²⁵ *us*, not in Lat.

²⁶ *ipsum evangelium*, Lat.; the gospel itself.

²⁷ Heb 10.2, 3.

²⁸ also prefigured, Lat.

²⁹ Deu 30.15.

³⁰ Gal. 4.3. Marg. Coloss. 2.8, 20.

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It was because they yet lived under those external shadows and outward figures; and because there were perhaps some among the people who did not perceive the spiritual things that were shadowed under those external figures, and perhaps thought that they were acceptable to God for working and doing that external work.³¹

The SECOND use, and another office of the law is, to teach those who are justified in faith by Christ, what to follow and what to eschew, and how the godly and faithful sort should worship God. For the law of God comprehends a most absolute doctrine both of faith in God, and also of all good works. For in the first use of the law, I declared how the moral and ceremonial law teach us faith in God and in Christ his Son, and how it brings man to the knowledge of himself, so that he may understand how in himself — that is, in the nature of man — there is no good thing nor any life; but that all the gifts of life, virtues, and salvation, are of God the Father, the only well-spring of all goodness, through Christ his Son our Saviour.

In this second argument about the end, use, or office of the law of God, we must acknowledge all the forms of virtues, and the treasure of all goodness, set forth to us in the law of the Lord; and that the apostle applies the precepts of the law to exhortation and consolation. The first of the two tablets of the moral law, teaches what we owe to God, and how he will be worshipped by us. The second tablet frames the offices of life, and teaches us how to behave ourselves toward our neighbour. The ceremonies also belong to religion;³² and the judicials teach the government about a house or a commonweal, so that by them we may live honestly among ourselves and holily towards God. Therefore, the law teaches all justice, temperance, fortitude, and wisdom, and it instructs a godly man in every good work in which a holy worshipper of God must necessarily be instructed.

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This is why, as often as the holy prophets of God would set up again and restore the worship of God, and the true religion that had decayed, they would cry out against and rebuke the faults and errors of men; and lastly, when they would teach them to do those good works, which are good works indeed, they always led them to the law, and cited all their testimonies out of the law. We have evident examples of this in the fifteenth Psalm of David, and in the first and thirty-third chapter of Isaiah's Prophecy, and in the eighteenth chapter of Ezekiel also. Paul in the thirteenth chapter to the Romans refers all the offices of our life to the law of charity; for the Lord himself, before Paul, had done the same in the gospel. Moreover, the prophet David in the ninety-fourth Psalm cries, "Blessed is the man, Lord, whom you instruct in your law;" and in the seventy-eighth Psalm, "He made a covenant with Jacob, and gave a law in Israel, that the posterity might know it, and put their trust in the Lord, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments." Again, in the nineteenth Psalm he says:

"The law of the Lord is an undefiled law, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, and gives wisdom to the simple: the statutes of the Lord are right, and rejoice the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, and gives light to the eyes. The fear of the Lord is holy, and endures forever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether:³³ they are more to be desired than gold and precious stone; and sweeter than honey and the honeycomb." Psa 19.7-10

And to this end tends the sense of all the alphabetical psalm, number 119 in order.

³¹ propter opus externum operatum aut perfectum, Lat. See also Bullinger, adv. Anabapt. Lib. iv. cap. 3.

³² ad cultum, Lat.; to the worship (of God).

³³ justificata in semetipsa, Lat. and Vulg.; justified in themselves, Douay.

The THIRD use or office of the law is to repress the unruly; and the law commands us to constrain with punishment, those whom no reason can move to orderliness — so that honesty, peace, and public tranquility, may be maintained in Christian commonweals.³⁴

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For there are some, and that is no small number of people, who refrain from doing evil, and live somewhat tolerably, not so much for the love of virtue, as for the fear of punishment that will ensue from their inordinate living. Therefore it pleased the goodness of God, by giving the law, to put in a caveat, and to make a proviso for the tranquility of mankind. And it seems that the apostle had an eye to this when he said:

"We know, that the law was not given to the just, but to the unjust, to the lawless and disobedient, to the ungodly and to sinners, to the unholy and unclean, to murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, to manslayers, to whore-mongers, to those who defile themselves with mankind, to manstealers, to liars, to the perjured; and if there is anything else that is contrary to wholesome doctrine," etc. ³⁵

After the declaration of the use, the end, and the office of the law, I next have to teach you how, and by means, the law of God is fulfilled. It is impossible for any man, of his own strength, to fulfil the law and fully satisfy the will of God in all points. For it is manifest that in the law, not only is the outward work required, but also the pureness of the inward affections, and as it were, as I just said, a certain heavenly and absolute perfectness. For the Lord himself in one place cries, "Be perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." ³⁶ But so absolute a perfectness is not found in us so long as we live in this flesh: for the flesh, even to the very end of our life, still keeps her corrupt disposition; and even though many times it is overthrown by the spirit that strives against it, yet it still renews the fight.³⁷ So that there is not found in us, nor does there remain in our strength, that heavenly and most absolute perfectness. But let us hear the testimony of the holy apostle Paul touching this matter, who says: "We know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. For what I do, I do not allow: for what I would do, that I do not; but what I hate, that I do." ³⁸

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And again: "I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, no good thing dwells: for to will is present with me; but I find no means to perform what is good." Again: "I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, rebelling against the law of my mind, and subduing me to the law of sin which is in my members." Rom 7. And at the end, he concludes, and says: "So then, with the mind I serve the law of God; but with the flesh, I serve the law of sin." Now there are some who think that Paul spoke these words not of himself, but of others who were carnal men and not as yet regenerate. But the very words of the apostle force the reader, whether he will or not, to confess, that the words recited may be applied even to the man that is most spiritual. Augustine says (i. Lib. *Retractat.* cap. 23) that he himself was at one time of the opinion that those words of the apostle ought to be expounded about the man who is under the law, and not under grace. But he confesses that he was compelled by the authority of others' writings and treatises to think that the apostle spoke them about those men who were most spiritual, and of

³⁴ in Christian commonweals, not in the original.

³⁵ 1Tim 1.9, 10.

³⁶ Mat 5.48.

³⁷ usque tamen recurrit, Lat. Cf. Horat. Ep. Lib. i. 10, 24.

³⁸ Rom 7.14, 15.

his own person — as Augustine at large declares in his book ³⁹ against the Pelagians.⁴⁰ Even St. Jerome also, who is said to have thundered out a most horrible curse against those who taught that the law commanded impossible things,⁴¹ expressly writes to Rusticus that Paul is speaking of *himself* in this place.⁴²

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But if the flesh with its corrupt disposition remains, by which it incessantly strives with the spirit, then truly, that heavenly perfectness is never perfect in us so long as we live; and consequently, so long as we live, none of us fulfills the law.

Here also is to be inserted that disputation of Paul, where he proves that no mortal man is justified by the works of the law. His meaning is not that no man is justified by the very works of the law, but that no man is justified by the works of our corrupt nature,⁴³ which does not perform what the law of God requires — for it is not *able* to perform it, as the apostle says. And very well and truly he says; "We know that a man is not justified by the deeds of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ: and we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the deeds of the law; because by the deeds of the law no flesh shall be justified." ^{Gal 2.16} Nor must we understand the *deeds* of the law to refer only to the ceremonies. For even as the ceremonies do not justify us, so likewise the morals do not. The apostle speaks of the morals, when he speaks of the deeds of the law. For in the third chapter to the Romans, the apostle says: "By the deeds of the law no flesh shall be justified in His sight." And immediately after he adds the reason why, saying: "for by the law comes the knowledge of sin." But in the seventh chapter he shows by which law it comes: to wit, the moral law. For the moral law says, "You shall not lust." But the apostle says, "I would not have known sin except by the law; for I would not have known concupiscence, if the law had not said, you shall not lust." In his epistle to the Ephesians, ⁴⁴ he speaks to the Gentiles, and says simply that works do not justify. But speaking to the Gentiles, he could not have meant it about ceremonial laws, but about moral virtues, that is, all kinds of works that seemed good. To the Galatians he says: "As many as are of the deeds of the law are under the curse." ^{Gal 3.10}

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And to prove that, he adds; "For it is written, Cursed is everyone that does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them." Now unless we understand the morals as well as the ceremonials to mean the deeds of the law, I do not see how his proof can be consistent with what went before. For he says expressly, "in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them." Now who does not know that the ceremonials were not written alone, but that the morals were written also? And St. Augustine in his book, *De Spiritu et litera*, cap. viii., proves by many arguments that Paul understood the deeds of the law to mean the morals also.⁴⁵

³⁹ libris, Lat.; books, ed. 1577.

⁴⁰ *Retract*, i. 23. *Aug. Opp. Par.* 1531. Tom. i. fol. 7. col. 3.

⁴¹ *Symboli Explan. ad Damasum*. Jerome, *Opp.* Tom. v. col. 124. *Par.* 1706. But this treatise is not Jerome's.

⁴² Jerome, *Opp.* Tom. iv. par. sec. col. 772. Ep. 95. Bullinger, *Expos*, in Ep. ad. Rom Cap. vii. p. 66. *Tigur.* 1537.

⁴³ The translator has here (from, *his meaning is*, etc.) entirely mistaken Bullinger's words, which are: non legis quidem, sed corrupte naturae nostrae vitio: not indeed through any fault of the law, but through the fault of our corrupt nature.

⁴⁴ Eph 2.9.

⁴⁵ *Lib. de Spiritu et Litera*. ch, viii. *Aug. Op. Par.* 1531, Tom. iii. fol. 172. col. 2. Several similar passages are contained in the same treatise.

Now, so that we may conclude this place, I will here recite the words of the apostle in the eighth chapter to the Romans,⁴⁶ saying:

"What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God performed by sending his own Son in the similitude of sinful flesh, and by sin condemned sin in the flesh — that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk after the flesh, but after the spirit."

In these words, the apostle teaches us two things: first, that the law cannot now, nor ever could, justify us. The fault of this weakness or lack of ability, he does not cast upon the law, which of itself is good and effectual and is the doctrine of most absolute righteousness; but he lays the fault of it upon our corrupt flesh. Our flesh neither could, nor can, perform that which is required of us by the law ⁴⁷ of God. Thus, in the council held at Jerusalem, St. Peter said: "Now, therefore, why do you tempt God by putting on the disciples' necks, the yoke which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?" ⁴⁸

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The latter is inferred upon the first: to wit, when the law could not give us life, and we were unable to do what the law required at our hands, then God, who is rich in mercy and goodness, sent his Son into the world, that he, being incarnate, should die for us, and so take away the sin of our imperfection, and bestow on us his perfectness and fulness of the law.⁴⁹ It is therefore manifest that Christ has fulfilled the law, and that he is the perfectness of all the faithful in the world.

But here this place requires a fuller exposition of how Christ has fulfilled the law, and how he is made our perfectness. First of all, whatever things are promised and prefigured in the law and the prophets, Christ our Lord has fulfilled all those. For these promises; "The seed of the woman shall crush the serpent's head;" "In you shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed;" ⁵⁰ and countless others like these, our Lord fulfilled when, being born into this world, he made atonement for us and brought us back to life again. In like manner, he fulfilled all the ceremonials while he himself, being both priest and sacrifice, offered himself up, and is now and ever an effectual and everlasting sacrifice, and an eternal high priest — always making intercession at the right hand of the Father, for all faithful believers. He also spiritually circumcised the faithful, and has given them the sacrament of baptism instead of circumcision. He is our passover, who instead of the paschal lamb has ordained the Eucharist, or supper of the Lord. Finally, he is the fulfilling and perfectness of the law and the prophets. Moreover, our Lord fulfilled the law, in that he most absolutely satisfied the will of God in all points, being himself the holiest of all, in whom there is no spot, no evil concupiscence, nor any sin. In him, the love of God is most perfect, and righteousness is altogether absolute. He freely communicates this righteousness to us, who are most imperfect, if we believe and have our hope fast settled in him.

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For he forgives us our sins, being made a cleansing sacrifice for us, and he makes us partakers of his own righteousness. For that reason, it is called *imputed* righteousness, to which the testimonies of the apostle pertain. "God," says Paul, "was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their sins to them. For him who knew no sin, was made sin for us, that we

⁴⁶ verses 3, 4. Bullinger has adopted Erasmus' rendering. But see below, p. 256, note 5.

⁴⁷ bona lege, Lat.; by the good law.

⁴⁸ Acts 15.10.

⁴⁹ perfectionem suam nobis conferret in fide, qui est perfectio et plenitudo legis, Lat.; and bestow on us his perfectness in faith, being himself the perfectness and fulness of the law. Ed. 1577.

⁵⁰ Gen 3.15; 12.3.

might be made the righteousness of God by him." ⁵¹ Again: "Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness, without works. So also, if we believe in God through Christ, our faith shall be imputed to us for righteousness." ⁵² For by faith we lay hold on Christ, whom we believe to have made most absolute satisfaction to God for us; and consequently, we believe that God is pleased with us for Christ's sake, and that his righteousness is imputed to us as our own (and is indeed our own by gift), because we are now the sons of God.

These things being diligently weighed, it is easy for us to answer those who question and demand this: Since no mortal man of himself exactly satisfies the law, how then are righteousness, life, and salvation, promised to those who observe the law? Our answer is, in truth, that this promise respects the perfect righteousness of Christ, which is imputed to us. Otherwise it is assuredly certain that the holy scripture does not so much as in one jot disagree or depart in any point from itself. The apostle plainly says: "If there had a law been given which could have given life, then righteousness would have been by the law: but now, the scripture has confined all under sin, so that the promise might be given by faith to those who believe." ⁵³ This is why the one who does the thing for which the law was chiefly ordained, keeps or fulfils the law, even of the Ten Commandments. But the law was chiefly ordained (as I declared a little earlier) to the end that it might convince us all of sin and damnation, and so by that means send us from ourselves, and lead us by the hand to Christ, who is the fulfilling of the law unto justification for everyone that believes. [Rom 10.4](#)

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And therefore, someone fulfils and keeps the law, if he has no confidence in himself and his own works, but committing himself to the true grace of God, he seeks all righteousness in the faith of Christ. Thus it is now evident that these two sentences of Christ our Lord are of one sense and meaning; "Whoever believes in me, has life everlasting:" and, "If you would enter into life, keep the commandments." ⁵⁴ For Paul also, in the thirteenth chapter of the Acts, says: "Be it known to you, brethren, that through Christ is preached to you the forgiveness of sins; and by him all who believe are justified from all the things, from which he could not be justified by the law of Moses." ⁵⁵ And to this place now belongs all the work ⁵⁶ of justification, of which I have disputed at large in another place.⁵⁷

Now that faith with which we believe that Christ has satisfied the law, and that he is our righteousness and our perfection, is neither of our own nature nor of our own merits, but is poured into us by the grace of God through the Holy Spirit which is given into our hearts. This Spirit abiding in our hearts, inflames our breasts with the love and desire for God's law, to endeavour to express and show the law in all our works and conversation. This desire and endeavour are never fully accomplished because of the flesh's frailty, or the weakness of man's nature — which remains in us till the last gasp and end of our life. Notwithstanding, it is acceptable to God by grace for Christ's sake alone. Nor does any godly man put any confidence in this other, but only in the first fulfilling of the law, as that alone which is absolute and perfect. For Paul in his epistle to the Romans cries out: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

⁵¹ 2Cor 5.19, 21, per ilium, Lat.; Erasmus rendering. Calvin retains the "in ipso" of the Vulgate; melius enim quadrat menti Paulinae illa significatio. Com. in loc. cit.

⁵² Rom 4.3, 24.

⁵³ Gal 3.21, 22.

⁵⁴ Joh 6.47; Mat 19.17.

⁵⁵ Act 13.38.

⁵⁶ negotium, Lat.

⁵⁷ See Decade I. Serm. 6.

⁵⁸ And yet immediately after, he answers, "I thank God," to wit, because he has redeemed me from death, "through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then, I myself with the mind serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin. There is then ⁵⁹ no condemnation for those who are grafted in Christ Jesus, who do not walk after the flesh, but after the spirit," etc. Rom 7.25-8.1

iii.252

Thus, since we are in Christ, we are in grace, and therefore God is pleased with our works, which being given to us by faith and by the liberal Spirit,⁶⁰ proceed from a heart that loves God, the giver of them all.⁶¹ For John said: "This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous." He also adds the reason for it, and says; "For all who are born of God overcome the world:" now everyone is born of God, who believes; as declared in the first of St. John.⁶²

By this, it is easy to reconcile these two places, which at first blush seem to jar one with another: The laws of God are heavy, which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear: and, The laws of God are not grievous, nor heavy to be borne.⁶³ For they are not heavy for the faithful who are in Christ, and those which have the gift of God's Spirit — that is, those who are reconciled to God by Christ their Lord and Saviour. Without Christ and faith in Christ, they are most grievous and heavy for every unbeliever to bear.⁶⁴ So the faithful, being stirred up by the Spirit of God, voluntarily and of his own accord, does good to all men so far as his ability allows him; and he will not in any case do harm to any man — not because he fears the punishment that in the law has appointed for the disobedient, unjust, and wrongful dealers; but because he loves God. And so he also fulfills the judicial law.

Here I know full well that you will make this objection and say that, if the law is fulfilled, and the fulfilling of it ⁶⁵ has a place in the saints and faithful ones, then why, I ask you, did I need the abrogating of the law? ⁶⁶

iii.253

Why did Paul and all the best divines need to dispute so largely about the abrogation of it? I will therefore say something about the abrogation of the law, first generally, and then by parts in particular. But first of all, these words of the Lord in the gospel must be beaten into the head of every godly hearer:

"Do not think," he says, "that I have come to destroy the law or the prophets: indeed, I did not come to destroy, but to fulfil them. Truly, I say to you, heaven and earth shall pass away, but not one jot or tittle of the law shall pass, till all is fulfilled. Whoever therefore looses one of the smallest of these commandments, and teaches men to do so, shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whoever does and teaches them, shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." ⁶⁷

⁵⁸ ex hoc corpore morti obnoxio, Lat.; Erasmus' rendering.

⁵⁹ mine, Lat.; omitted: now.

⁶⁰ ex liberali spiritu, Lat.; referring to Psalm 51.12, where Calvin and Bucer read, spiritu liberali. See also p. iii.147, note 6 ([referring to Psa 51.14.](#))

⁶¹ the giver of them all, not in Lat.

⁶² 1Joh 5.3, 4, 12, 13.

⁶³ Act 15.10; Joh 5.3.

⁶⁴ and heavy — unbeliever, not in Lat.

⁶⁵ the fulfilling of it, not in Lat.

⁶⁶ [That is, why did I need to have the law set aside? Why are we not still under the law? \(Rom 6.14\)](#)

⁶⁷ Mat 5.17-19.

Let everyone therefore be assuredly persuaded that the law of God, which is the most excellent and perfect will of God, is forever eternal, and cannot be dissolved at any time, either by men, or angels, or any other creatures. Let every man think that the law, so far as it is the rule for how to live well and happily — so far as it is the bridle with which we are kept in the fear of the Lord; so far as it is a prick to awake the dullness of our flesh; and so far as it is given to instruct, correct, and rebuke us men — that so far, I say, it remains unabrogated, and even today has her commodity in the church of God. Therefore, the abrogating of the law consists in this that follows.

I told you that God's commandments require the whole man, and a very heavenly kind of perfectness. Whoever does not perform this, is accursed and condemned by the law. Now, no man fulfils that righteousness; therefore, we are all accursed by the law. But this curse is taken away, and most absolute righteousness is freely bestowed on us, through Christ Jesus. For Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made the curse, righteousness, and sanctification for us. And so, it is in this sense that the law is abrogated; that is, through Christ the curse of the law is taken from the faithful, and true righteousness is bestowed upon us through grace, by faith in the same Christ Jesus.⁶⁸

iii.254

For he is that blessed Seed in whom all the kindreds of the earth are blessed. [Act 3.25](#) He is our righteousness. For Paul says, "By him everyone that believes is justified from all things, from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses."⁶⁹ Therefore, the law is put for the curse of the law: or else the law of God is taken for that which is revealed or made manifest by the law, that is to say, it is taken for sin; for by the law comes the knowledge of sin. Therefore the law is abrogated (that is, sin is taken away), not that it should not exist, or should not express itself⁷⁰ in us, but that it should not be imputed to us and condemn us; "for there is no damnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."⁷¹ Moreover, the law is taken for the vengeance or punishment which is appointed by the law for transgressors. Therefore, the law is abrogated, because the punishment appointed by the law is taken from the necks of the faithful believers; "for the law is not given to the righteous man."⁷² For Christ delivered the faithful from eternal punishments, while he, being guiltless, suffered afflictions for wicked sinners. Furthermore, the apostle says: "The fleshly mind is enmity against God: for it is not obedient to the law of God, nor can it be."⁷³ But now this hatred or enmity of God's law is by faith pulled out of the hearts of the faithful; and in its stead, the love of God's most holy will is engrafted. Thus, the law is said to be abrogated in this sense also, because the hatred of the law is taken away. And therefore the apostle compares those who are under the law, to bond-slaves, and those who are free from the law, to sons and children. He also attributes to them the spirit, not of bondage, but of adoption. "For because you are sons," he says, "God has sent the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, which cries, Abba, Father," etc. [Gal 4.6](#) To these it may be added that the law of God has types and shadows; and the ceremonies are very burdensome, for which the whole law is also called a *yoke*. But now the Son of God came into this world. Fulfilling the figures, he showed us the very truth, and abolished those types and shadows; so that now no man can condemn us for neglecting or passing over those ceremonies or figures.

iii.255

And so again, in that sense, the law of God is abrogated — that is to say, that kind of government which Moses ordained came to nothing, once Christ came and his apostles began to teach. For

⁶⁸ through grace — Jesus, not in Lat.

⁶⁹ Act 13.39.

⁷⁰ *exserat suas vires*, Lat. — [exercise its power](#).

⁷¹ Rom 8.1, *qui insiti sunt in*.

⁷² 1Tim 1.9.

⁷³ Rom 8.7.

without regard to the ecclesiastical regiment appointed by Moses, they congregated churches, to whom they did not teach that kind of regiment which Moses had ordained. For they constantly rejected the priesthood of Aaron, the sacraments, sacrifices, choice of days, meats, and apparel, which Moses had taught their elders; and instead of all those rites, they preached Christ alone, and his two sacraments, etc. ⁷⁴

I have said this much up to here, generally touching the abrogation of the law. Now I will more largely expound on it again, in several parts. The whole law is divided into the MORAL, CEREMONIAL, and JUDICIAL laws.

The MORAL LAW is contained in the Ten Commandments, the FIRST precept of which teaches us to honour and worship one God alone, and not to compare any strange gods with him. Our Lord Jesus in the gospel so earnestly urged and diligently taught this commandment, that we may perceive very well that nothing in it is altered. The SECOND precept forbids idolatry, that is, the worshipping and honouring of all manner of images, whether they are the images of God himself, or of any of his creatures. But it is known that the apostles, in the doctrine of the gospel, used all the means that they could to banish and drive away all kinds of idolatry. Paul and John cry, "Flee from idolatry." ⁷⁵ And because Christ and his apostles most diligently teach us to sanctify and glorify God's holy name, they thereby give their consent to establishing the THIRD commandment, which forbids defiling God's name by taking it in vain. The FOURTH commandment, concerning sanctifying the sabbath-day, is alone called ceremonial by St. Augustine.⁷⁶

iii.256

But it must not be understood simply as ceremonial: for so far as the outward worship of God requires a certain appointed time to be exercised, and carries with it the sacrifices of the law, that is how far, I say, it is ceremonial. But in that it teaches us to meet in holy-assemblies to worship God — to pray, preach, partake of the sacraments, and offer spiritual sacrifices — in these things, it is eternal and not ceremonial, as I declared before in the exposition of the sabbath.⁷⁷ The FIFTH precept, touching the honour due to parents, the Lord himself ratifies in the fifteenth chapter of Matthew's gospel; he also diligently teaches the SIXTH against murder, and the SEVENTH against adultery, in the fifth chapter of the same gospel. The EIGHTH, which is against theft, is revived by the apostle, who charges that no man deceive ⁷⁸ his brother, and that no man steal any more; but that everyone should labour with his hands, so that he may have things necessary for himself, and be able to give to the one that lacks.⁷⁹ The NINTH precept — which is for bridling the tongue so that no lie is made, nor false witness borne against our neighbour — is confirmed by Christ himself and his apostles, so often as they give rules for ordering the tongue, and charge every man to speak the truth to his neighbour. And they also condemn evil lusts and affections, by which they do not abrogate but affirm the tenth commandment, which forbids all manner of concupiscence. Therefore, the whole abrogation of the Ten Commandments, so far as they are abrogated, consists in those points which I just spoke about: to wit, that Christ in faith is our perfect and absolute righteousness, etc. The apostle, bearing witness to this, says: "What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, having sent his own Son in the similitude of sinful flesh, even by sin, condemned sin in the flesh — that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who

⁷⁴ et paucula sacramenta, etc., Lat.; and very few sacraments.

⁷⁵ 1Cor 10.14; 1Joh 5.21.

⁷⁶ Aug. Jan. Ep. 119. c. 12. Op. Par. 1531. Tom. ii. fol. 110. col. 4. In the Bened. ed. it stands ad Inquis. Jan. ii. 55. c. 12. P.

⁷⁷ See Decade ii Serm. 4.

⁷⁸ fraudet in negotio, Lat. — [defraud in business](#).

⁷⁹ 1Thes 4.6; Eph 4.28.

do not walk after the flesh, but after the spirit:" as seen in the eighth chapter to the Romans.⁸⁰ I have therefore more briefly discussed this matter here, because I have spoken of it at the full in the treatise about the Ten Commandments.

iii.257

I have now come to speak of the CEREMONIALS. These ceremonials were given and granted until the time of amendment — to wit, until Messiah should come. Messiah has already come; therefore all the ceremonies, even to the coming, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ our Lord into the heavens, have come to an end; they have no place any longer in the church of the Christians. And yet, here we must and do make a difference between the writings concerning the ceremonies, and the very things of the ceremonies that are set down in writing — I mean, the very ceremonies themselves, or the *actions* that were used. For the writings concerning the ceremonies, which were set forth by the Spirit of God, are not taken away from Christians,⁸¹ nor abrogated, so that they may not be read, retained, or used in the church (as I declared in the second sermon of the first decade).⁸² For they are effectual to instruct us in Christ Jesus, when we behold in them the manner how Christ was preached and prefigured to the ancient church of the holy fathers. Paul, truly, most significantly preached Christ out of the ceremonies; no man will deny this, who diligently reads his epistle to the Hebrews. For in that epistle, Paul wonderfully lays Christ and all his gifts before the eyes of the whole church. Therefore, the ceremonials both may and ought to be read in the church, so that Christ is sought in them; and when he is found, he is aptly preached. For that reason, in the fifth and sixth sermons of this decade (where I handled the ceremonials), I annexed to them certain notes about their significations, so that I might open a way for the students of the scriptures and lovers of Christ to go forward and proceed in that kind of argument.

Now the ceremonial ⁸³ things (or the stuff of the ceremonies) — such as the priesthood, the place, time, sacrifice, and whatever else is like these — are utterly abrogated, so that from then on, they are not used, nor do they have any place in the church of Christ.

iii.258

Jeremiah foretold this in the third chapter of his prophecy, saying: "In those days they shall no longer boast of the ark of the Lord's covenant: no man will think about it, nor shall any man mention it; for from then on it shall neither be visited, nor shall such things be done anymore." [Jer 3:16](#) By the *ark*, the prophet means those points of the law which are abolished by the coming of Christ. From the promise that God made to Jeremiah, saying that "he would make a new covenant," [Jer 31:31](#) St. Paul gathers this observation, in his epistle to the Hebrews: "In that he says, *A new covenant*, he has worn out the first; for that which is worn out, and grown old, is ready to vanish away." [Heb 8:13](#) The same apostle says to the Ephesians: "Christ is our peace, who has made both one, and broken down the middle wall that was a block between us; taking away in his flesh the hatred, even the law of commandments contained in the ordinances, to make of two one new man in himself, so making peace." [Eph 2:14](#) God truly severed the Jews from the Gentiles while he chose and consecrated them to be a peculiar people to himself — not only by the calling of the word, but also by the sacraments. For there were ceremonies prescribed and given, which would encompass and contain ⁸⁴ the heritage of the Lord, as a middle wall between the Jews and the Gentiles. So that the note of difference consisted in the ceremonies, by which the Jews were known

⁸⁰ Rom 8.3, 4. Bullinger varies in this quotation from himself at page 248, and from Erasmus' rendering, in these points: he reads *eo quod* (which Calvin also prefers), instead of *ea parte qua imbecillis erat*; and *sub specie carnis peccatricis*, instead of *carnis peccato obnoxiae*; and instead of *de peccato, per peccatum* condemnavit peccatum.

⁸¹ from Christians, not in Lat.

⁸² p. i.59.

⁸³ *res ceremoniales*, is Bullinger's own term.

⁸⁴ *includerent*, Lat.; *inclose*.

to be the lawful heirs of God's good promises, and of which the Gentiles had no part or portion. But Christ came into the world, with the intent that from two peoples, the Jews and the Gentiles, he might make one church. And therefore, he broke down the middle wall that parted them; that is, he clean took away the ceremonial ordinances which were a block between them.⁸⁵

iii.259

For Christ in that case did the same thing that princes usually do, when they go about bringing two nations at variance, into one kingdom and under one authority. They first take away the diversity of arms,⁸⁶ which are the evidences of their ancient hatred — so that when the cause of the remembrance of the grudge is taken from their eyes, they may better agree between them in mind and behaviour. Even so, Christ took away circumcision, the sacrifices, and all the ceremonies, to the end that he might make one church and fellowship of the Jews and Gentiles.⁸⁷ To the Colossians, Paul compares the ceremonies to an obligation, or to a hand-writing,⁸⁸ by which God has bound us, as it were, so that we cannot deny the guilt. But he says that we were so delivered by Christ from the guilt, that the obligation or hand-writing was cancelled or torn in pieces. But by cancelling the hand-writing, the debtor is acquitted and set at liberty. And therefore we read that at the death of our Lord, the veil of the temple was torn in pieces from the bottom up to the very top — so that thereby all people might understand both that their sins were then forgiven, and that the people of God were set at liberty from all the burden and yoke of the law. Truly, when the wicked, stiff-necked, and disloyal people of the Jews, after the death of Christ, went on to exercise, prorogue,⁸⁹ and impose⁹⁰ on all men, the ceremonies which were finished and abrogated at the coming of Messiah⁹¹ — then Christ, sitting at the right hand of the Father, by means of the Roman princes, utterly defaced their city, and overthrew the temple in which they boasted.⁹²

iii.260

This is what the prophet Daniel, and Balaam many hundreds of years before Daniel's time, foretold and said would come to pass.⁹³ Nor have they had up to now, for the span of 1500 years and more, any place to restore and set up again their city and temple.

In Theodoretus and Ruffinus we read that in the reign of Julian the emperor, the Jews set about with very great hope and presumption, to build a new temple. And they sought the foundation of it in the place where that temple had stood, which was burnt by Titus, son and general⁹⁴ to the emperor Vespasian. But Christ our Lord — who in the gospel, foretold its desolation out of Daniel's prophecy, said among other things, "And Jerusalem shall be trodden underfoot by the Gentiles, till the time of the Gentiles are fulfilled," — mightily repressed their wicked endeavours, and hindered their labour for going forward. For when they had gathered and brought together many thousands of bushels of lime and chalk, a whirlwind suddenly came with an awesome storm and blustering, which scattered abroad and carried away the stores provided by them. A terrible

⁸⁵ which — them, not in Lat.

⁸⁶ [That is, various coats of arms, symbols of their differences](#); *diversas tesseras*, Lat.; the variety of badges.

⁸⁷ and fellowship, not in Lat.

⁸⁸ Col 2.14. Calvin's words, in his Commentary on this passage, are here again largely adopted by Bullinger. See also Calfhill's Answer, p. 123. [The Romans would post the list of charges against a prisoner above his jail cell, and on the cross at his crucifixion \(Mat 27.37\).](#)

⁸⁹ *prorogare*, Lat.; to continue or prolong.

⁹⁰ *pietatis ergo in templo*, Lat. omitted; as a matter of religion in the temple.

⁹¹ at the coming of Messiah, not in Lat.

⁹² in which they boasted, not in Lat. — [speaking of the destruction of the temple in 70 A.D.](#)

⁹³ Dan 9; Num 24.

⁹⁴ and general, not in Lat.

earthquake also happened, by which almost all the buildings of the place were swept away, and leveled to the ground. Finally, when a great company, who were busy in the work, remained that same night, taking their rest in a certain porch or gallery near the newly begun city and temple, the whole building and roof of it, falling down all of a sudden, slayed all who were within reach of it. In the morning, each of those who remained alive, ran to seek his friend among those who were slain by the ruinous building. And when those terrors could do no good, nor turn them from their purpose, then suddenly out of the nearby trenches, foundations, and storehouses, where their tools and other necessities lay, a fearful fire sprang forth, which burnt many who urged the work, and compelled the rest to take to their heels. For in that one day, it broke forth at various times, and so at last repressed the stubborn rashness of that stiff-necked people. And because these things should not be thought to have happened casually or by coincidence, the night before and the night following, there appeared in the sky a bright or glistening sign of the cross, and the garments of the Jews were filled over with crosses, not bright but black, which could not be rid nor wiped out by any painstaking or manner of means.

iii.261

Therefore, in spite of their teeth,⁹⁵ and full sore against their wills, being compelled by those horrible terrors, fearful judgments, and bitter plagues of Christ our Lord, they forsook the place. Every man fled to his house, leaving the work undone, and openly confessing that Jesus Christ, whom their forefathers had crucified, is a most mighty God. However, Julian, with Pharaoh, and the chief of the Jews, still persevered in their disloyalty and spiteful blasphemy against Him ⁹⁶ and his holy church.⁹⁷

But however the Jews may abide in their willful stubbornness, even today, the Lord declared from heaven openly enough, that he is no longer delighted with the ceremonial rites, because he destroyed all the instruments belonging to that ancient kind of worship; and he made the very shop of that old religion — I mean the temple and city of Jerusalem — level with the ground. Touching the temple, the Lord in the gospel spoke to his disciples, when they beheld it with wonder,⁹⁸ and said: "Do you see all these things? Truly I say to you, there shall not be left here one stone standing upon another." ⁹⁹ And again, weeping over the unthankful city, he said: "They shall not leave in you one stone standing upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation." And now that all this was accomplished and fully finished, word for word, Josephus, who was an eye-witness, largely testifies of it in the eighteenth chapter of his seventh book *De Bello Judaico*.¹⁰⁰ As I just told you, from one thousand five hundred years ago to this present time, the Jews never had any place given them to build their temple again. If they were not beside themselves, they might easily gather by this, that the Messiah has already come into the world, and that he has abrogated all the ceremonial rites.

iii.262

It is a very slender, or rather, it is no defence at all for the Jews to repeatedly allege the words in the law, where the ceremonies are described: "You shall keep it for an everlasting ordinance." For in this sense, "everlasting" is taken as long-lasting and unchangeable, so far as it respects the will or authority of *mankind*. For the Lord, threatening grievous punishments, forbid that mankind's unadvisedness should change or abrogate the holy ceremonies. And yet, since he ordained those

⁹⁵ [In spite of their determined opposition.](#)

⁹⁶ contra Christum, Lat.; and his holy church, not in Lat.

⁹⁷ Vide Theodoret. Eccl. Hist. in. 20. et Ruffin. Aquil. Hist, Eccles. Lib. i. cap. 37. 38. 39.

⁹⁸ commonstrantibus, Lat.; point it out.

⁹⁹ Mat 24.2; Luk 19.44.

¹⁰⁰ This reference is according to the Latin edition of Josephus, Basil, 1540. In the more modern editions the account is contained in the chapters of the sixth, and the first chapter of the seventh book, de Bell. Jud.

ceremonies only until the time of amendment, God neither sins, nor incurs the crime of inconstancy, when he changes or takes away the ceremonies according to the determinate purpose which he intended from the beginning. Moreover, so long as the thing signified ¹⁰¹ does not decay, and only the shadow or momentary figure vanishes away, it is assuredly certain that the ceremony yet remains in full effect and substance. The whole man lives forever; and yet the things that are temporal or corruptible in him, perish in death, and are abolished in his glorification.

But so that all these things may appear as clear as daylight, I will particularly run through and touch the more notable sorts of ceremonies. It is evident that the priesthood of Aaron is utterly abrogated, by the words which the apostle cites out of David, saying: "The Lord has sworn, and will not repent, you are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek." ¹⁰² Christ, therefore, is the one and only high priest, and an everlasting priest too, having an immutable priesthood which cannot pass from him by succession to any other man or angel. For now standing at the right hand of the Father in heaven — the true temple prefigured by the tabernacle and temple at Jerusalem — he makes intercession for us, and performs all the offices of a high priest. The apostle of Christ, St. Paul, speaks very largely about this in his epistle to the Hebrews.

iii.263

This Christ Jesus, our high priest, has consecrated all the faithful to be kings and priests unto himself. And yet, notwithstanding, he ordains ministers of the church to instruct the church by doctrine and examples, and to minister the sacraments; I do not mean those old and ancient ones, but those which the Lord has substituted in place of the old ones. He expressly declares what doctrine they must teach. The mystical attire and garments of the priesthood he neither commended to his apostles, nor left to his church, but took them away with all the ceremonies ¹⁰³ that are called the middle wall between the Jews and Gentiles. The Lord himself, and his apostle Paul, would have the pastors of the people be clad with righteousness and honesty; and they would precisely remove the ministers of the church from superiority and secular affairs. They would also appoint stipends for the ministers to live on; yet not those which the law allowed them, but those which were most tolerable and convenient for the state and condition of every church. ¹⁰⁴

The Lord left free the place to serve and worship God in, without exception or binding us to any one prescribed or particular place. In the gospel according to John he said:

"The hour shall come, and is already, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father neither in this mountain, nor at Jerusalem, but in the spirit and in truth: for the Father requires such to worship him. God is a Spirit; and those who worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." ¹⁰⁵

The apostle followed the Lord in this doctrine, and said; "I would that men pray in every place, lifting up pure hands, without anger." ¹⁰⁶ Nor did the Lord, as I just showed you, allow the temple to be utterly overthrown in vain, considering that at his death he rent its veil. And yet, for all that, the ecclesiastical assemblies are not condemned by it. I spoke about this in the exposition of the fourth precept, ¹⁰⁷ "Remember to keep the sabbath-day holy." Truly, the tabernacle and the temple bore the type of the catholic church of God, out of which there are no prayers or oblations

¹⁰¹ per ritum, Lat.; by the ceremony.]

¹⁰² Psa 110.4; Heb 5.6.

¹⁰³ decretis, Lat. — decrees.

¹⁰⁴ Mat 10.9; 1Cor 9.9.

¹⁰⁵ Joh 4.21, 23, 24. The place to worship God in, is free for every man to choose where he wishes, and the congregation likes [\(marginal comment by the editor\)](#).

¹⁰⁶ 1Tim 2.8.

¹⁰⁷ See page ii.255.

acceptable to the Lord. But the church is extended to the very ends of the world. And yet it does not follow from this, that all are in the church who are in the world.

iii.264

Those alone are in the church, who through the catholic faith are in the fellowship of Christ Jesus; and by agreement of doctrine, by charity, and by participating in the sacraments (unless some great necessity hinders them), are in the communion of the holy saints. But it is burning incense and sacrificing in high places, when someone seeks any other sacrifice than the one and only oblation of Christ Jesus; or looks for any other means to offer their prayers to God the Father, than Christ alone ¹⁰⁸ — as they are taught by the mouth of the pastor sincerely preaching the word of God. Moreover, the church of God has no need now for any ark, any table, any showbread, any golden candlestick, any altar either of incense or burnt-offerings, nor yet any brazen laver. For Christ alone is all in all to the catholic church. That church has all these things spiritually and effectually in Christ Jesus, and can seek nothing in any other creatures. If it perceives any man ushering in again either these or like ceremonial instruments, it sharply rebukes and bitterly curses him for his unwarrantable rashness and blasphemous presumption in the church of Christ. For what need does the church have of shadows and figures, when it now enjoys the thing itself, even Christ Jesus, whose shadow and figure the ceremonies bore? Moreover, the church has signs enough, in that it has received from Christ two sacramental signs, in which are contained all the things which the old church comprehended in sundry and numerous figures.

Furthermore, he has left the holy time to worship God in, free to our choice. In the gospel he says: "The sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath: therefore the Son of Man is Lord also of the sabbath." ¹⁰⁹ And the apostle Paul says: "Let no man therefore judge you in food, or drink, or in part of a holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbaths: which are the shadows of things to come; but the body is of Christ." ¹¹⁰

iii.265

I spoke of the Christian sabbath in the exposition of the fourth commandment.¹¹¹ As for the new moons, they are not solemnized by the church of Christ, insomuch as Christ taught us to attribute to God ¹¹² not only the beginning of months, but also the whole year, and the commodity ¹¹³ of it — with the light of the sun, the moon, and all the stars in heaven.

Moreover, Christians celebrate their passover more spiritually than bodily; even as they also solemnize their Pentecost, or Whitsuntide.¹¹⁴ For just as he sent his Spirit upon his disciples,^{Joh 20.22} so he sends daily it upon all the faithful. That is the reason the alarm is struck in the faithful, to encourage them as soldiers to skirmish with their enemies.¹¹⁵ For the flesh lusts against the spirit, and the faithful are daily assaulted and provoked to battle by the world, and by the devil the prince of the world. Furthermore, the feast of propitiation, being finished on the cross, endures forever. Nor do the saints send out a scape goat anymore, to bear their sins into the desert; for Christ our Lord came once, and was offered up, and by his sacrifice he took away the sins of the whole world. Finally, since the faithful daily consider and bear in their minds that they have

¹⁰⁸ et alium in orando et sacrificando modum tenent, quam verbo pastoris in ecclesia est traditum, Lat.; and practise another method of prayer and sacrifice than, etc.

¹⁰⁹ Mark 2.27, 28.

¹¹⁰ Col 2.16, 17.

¹¹¹ Decade ii. Serm. 4.

¹¹² creatori, Lat. omitted; the maker of them.

¹¹³ proventum, Lat. — *increase*.

¹¹⁴ or Whitsuntide, added by the translator.

¹¹⁵ See above, page iii.165.

no abiding place in this transitory world, but look to a place to come, [Heb 11.16](#) they need not, as the Jews did, celebrate the feast of tabernacles once a year. In the same way, the faithful no longer acknowledge a year of jubilee: for Christ came once, and preached that acceptable year to us, even the gospel, by which it is proclaimed that all our sins and iniquities are clearly forgiven us. For so Christ himself interprets it in the fourth chapter of St. Luke's gospel, taking occasion to speak of it out of the sixty-first chapter of Isaiah's prophecy. [Isa 61.1](#) And thus, the holy time and festival days are abrogated by Christ in his holy church. Notwithstanding, it is not left destitute of any holy thing or necessary matter.

iii.266

But now, this present year in which this book is first printed, is the year of grace 1550; and according to the Romish tradition, it is called the *Year of Jubilee*. I am therefore compelled, by necessity as it were, to make a little digression, and say something about the Romish jubilee.

I call it the *Romish* and not the *Christian* jubilee, because, as I showed you just now, the church of Christ, after our redemption wrought by Christ and preached by the gospel, neither acknowledges nor receives any other year of jubilee. In the ancient Jewish year of jubilee, the meaning of the letter, and of the spirit, is to be considered. According to the letter, bondmen were set at liberty, and lawful heirs received back their patrimony and possessions, which had either been exchanged away, or otherwise gone from them. The meaning of that order is little regarded, and the care of the oppressed is utterly neglected by the holy pope, because it could not be brought back into all the kingdoms in these latter days, without troubling all estates. Thus, those who recently brought in the year of jubilee, and preached it to the foolish world, did so *not* for any zeal they had to help the oppressed, but for the desire they had to augment their own treasures, by robbing the world.¹¹⁶ The spiritual and hidden mystery of the jubilee commended to those of old, the free remission of all sins through Christ, by faith in Christ. This free grace cannot without reproach to Christ, be otherwise preached than it has already been taught by the holy gospel. Therefore, the church went without the observation of any year of jubilee for the span of 1300 years after Christ's incarnation. At last, the upstart Boniface VIII, bishop of Rome,¹¹⁷ first invented that wicked ordinance. For Platina says in the life of that Boniface, "This is he that first brought in the jubilee, in the year of Christ 1300, in which he granted full remission of all their sins, to as many as visited the apostolic see. And he ordained it to be observed every hundredth year."

iii.267

So then, the church of Christ went without this jubilee, without peril of salvation, for the span of 1300 years. And therefore, we may also be without it, without any peril and damage — indeed, to our great profit and commodity. For if our Romanists go on to impose it on the world as a thing necessary to salvation, then they would condemn the universal church which existed before pope Boniface's time, the one who first brought in this unfamiliar jubilee. Thus we are so far from not being able to be without it, that we should detest and abhor it by all means possible, as a very wicked and blasphemous ordinance — considering that we have to believe the jubilee is utterly abrogated by Christ, and that all sins are freely forgiven through Christ, for all who believe, in whatever place of the world they live and converse in.

This pope Boniface annexes the remission of sins to his false promise and impure place. Now I doubt whether this blasphemous antichrist ¹¹⁸ could do anything more horrible, and more against

¹¹⁶ ut opibus suis plurimum accedat, is the Lat., rendered by, not for any — own treasures.

¹¹⁷ cujus nomine et Sextus Decret. prodiit, Lat. omitted; under whose name the sixth book of Decretals also was put forth.

¹¹⁸ "blasphemous antichrist" is not in the original.

the honour of the Saviour.¹¹⁹ For in this is defiled the glory of the only-begotten Son of God, who is the only health ¹²⁰ of the whole world. In this is defiled the salvation of many thousands, for whom Christ died on the cross. And in this also is defiled the glory of the Christian faith, by which alone we are made partakers of eternal salvation. This ungracious and wicked pope was the one about whom that common proverb speaks: "He entered like a wolf, he reigned like a lion, and died like a dog." ¹²¹ For truly, so blasphemous an ordinance was worthy of such an author; so foolish a people was worthy of such a pastor; and so devilish a pope was worthy of such an end.

iii.268

Platina writes that in that year of jubilee, such great heaps of people came to Rome, that although the city was fairly large, one man could not pass by another for the throngs.¹²² For the world is necessarily deceived. If it were not so, they would give ear to the Lord who cries, "O all you that thirst, come to the waters, and you that have no money, draw near. Why do you spend your money on nothing," etc., Isaiah 55.1, and John 4.14, 7.37. Now, all the while that the world was thus set on madding, the righteous Lord was not asleep, nor did he dissemble how much they displeased him with that devilish ¹²³ invention. For the very same year, He stirred up Ottoman,¹²⁴ the patriarch and first founder of the Turkish empire, by whose means He notably scourged the church of Rome and the corrupt manners that had crept into Christendom. A few years after, succeeded Clement the sixth,¹²⁵ Paul the second, and Sixtus the fourth,¹²⁶ as wicked men as he, and as may be found in the histories of their lives — men who changed the year of jubilee from every hundredth to every fiftieth year, and at last to every twenty-fifth year, so that they might suck more advantage out of men's foolishness. But now back to the matter at hand.

iii.269

The sacraments of the ancient Jews are also flatly abrogated, and in their places are substituted new sacraments, which are given to the people of the new covenant.

Instead of circumcision, baptism is appointed. The apostles, in the synod held at Jerusalem, opposed themselves to those who were of the opinion that circumcision was necessary to salvation; and in that council they admitted Paul's doctrine, who both thought and taught the contrary. For in one place Paul says; "Look, I Paul say to you, if you are circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing. For I testify to every man who is circumcised, that he is a debtor to the whole law, to do it. Christ is made of no effect to you: as many of you as are justified by the law, have fallen from grace."¹²⁷ Nor is it right or convenient that in the church of Christ there should remain so bloody a sacrament as circumcision was, once His blood had been shed on the cross — which staunches and takes away the blood of the old Testament.

Instead of the paschal Lamb, the Lord's supper is ordained, which is called by another name: the eucharist, or a thanksgiving. For so the Lord himself expounds it in Luke, as he ate the last

¹¹⁹ et execrandum, Lat.; and to be abhorred.

¹²⁰ Salvatoris, Lat.; Saviour.

¹²¹ See Homily for Whit-sunday, Part II. page 425. Oxford, 1832. "It is reported, that Celestine" (his predecessor) "prophesied of him, Ascendisti ut vulpes, Regnabis ut leo, Morieris ut canis, Of this Pope (Boniface) a certain versifier wrote thus: Ingredditur vulpes, regnat leo, sed canis exit; Re tandem vera, si sic fuit, ecce chimera."

¹²² Platin. de Vit. Pontif. Rom p. 245. Colon. 1568.

¹²³ devilish, not in Lat.

¹²⁴ From that very year (viz. of the institution of the jubilee), as most stories record, the Turks begin the first count of their Turkish emperors, of which the first was Ottoman. Foxe's Acts and Monum. Vol. ii. p. 586. ed. Lond. 1837. See also Bullinger in Apocalyps. Conc. xxx. on Rev. 6.14, and xli. on 9.12-19.

¹²⁵ Platin. de Vit. Pontif. Rom p. 258.

¹²⁶ Platin. p. 350. This was in confirmation of the bull of his predecessor, Paul the Second.

¹²⁷ Gal 5.2-4.

passover with his disciples. At the end of it, he immediately ordained the sacrament of his body and blood, which he bids them to celebrate in remembrance of him,¹²⁸ until he returns again in judgment. Therefore the Lord left ¹²⁹ the supper as an unchangeable sacrament until the end of the world.

Moreover, I suppose that no man would once deny that all sorts of sacrifices contained in the law are utterly abrogated, if he but considers that both the temple and the two altars, with all the holy instruments, have been utterly overthrown and come to nothing. I told you that those sacrifices were remembrances of sins, and types or figures of the cleansing and atonement that was to be made by Christ Jesus.¹³⁰ Therefore, when Christ had come and was offered up for the sins of the whole world, then truly all the sacrifices of the ancient Jews came to their end. For where there is a full and absolute remission of sins, there is no longer any sacrifice for sin.

iii.270

And in the new Testament, there is a full remission of sins; therefore in the new Testament there is no longer any sacrifice offered for sins. For Christ, only and alone, is in place of all the sacrifices. For he was offered up once, and after that he is offered no more. By once offering up himself, he has found eternal redemption — so that all who are sanctified, are sanctified by no other oblation than that of Christ, made upon the cross once for all. This is why Christ, being once offered upon the cross for the sins of the whole world, is the burnt-offering of the catholic church. He is also the meat-offering, which feeds us with his flesh offered on the cross unto eternal life, if we receive and feed on him by faith.¹³¹ Moreover, he is the drink-offering of the church, which quenches with his blood the thirst of the faithful unto life everlasting. He is the purging and daily sacrifice of the church, because he is "the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world."¹³² His death and passion cleanses all men from their sins, from their errors and iniquities. Finally, he is the church's sacrifice of thanksgiving, because by Christ we offer praise to God, and by Christ we render thanks to the Lord.¹³³

To conclude: the only supper of the Lord, which we call the eucharist, contains in it all the kinds of ancient sacrifices which, in effect, are of but two sorts: to wit, purging and atonement, such as those which were offered for sin; or else of thanksgiving, such as those which rendered thanks and offered praise to the Lord. Now, the supper is a testimony, a sacrament, and a remembrance of the body of Christ which was given for us, and of his blood that was shed for the remission of our sins. For the body and blood of our Lord, which were but once offered upon the cross,¹³⁴ and neither can nor ought to be offered any more by men, are not sacrificed afresh in the celebration of the supper. But in celebrating it, there is reiterated a remembrance of the thing, I mean, of the oblation, which was made but once, and in once offering, it was sufficient.

iii.271

Again, in the supper we render thanks to God for our redemption, for which also the universal church offers praise to his name. Therefore, the supper of the Lord comprehends the whole substance and matter which was prefigured in those ancient sacrifices; so that, in that point, the church is not destitute of any good or necessary thing, even though it no longer retains those sacrifices of the former church. Indeed, they should no longer be solemnized in the church,

¹²⁸ in remembrance of him, not in Lat.

¹²⁹ ecclesiae, Lat.; to the church.

¹³⁰ expiationis futurae, Lat. – [future expiation or atonement](#).

¹³¹ si percipiatur, Lat.; if it (his flesh) is received.

¹³² John 1.29, peccatum, Lat.

¹³³ Deo Patri, Lat.; to God the Father.

¹³⁴ pro peccatis, Lat.; for sins.

because they were nothing but the figures, types, and sacraments of Christ to come. But the church now believes, and rightly too, that Christ has already come, and has fulfilled and accomplished all things — as he himself testified when he cried out on the cross, saying, "It is finished."

Moreover, all vows have come to an end, because all sacrifices, in which the vows consisted, are vanished and gone. Likewise, the discipline of the Nazarites is now dissolved, because the temple with all the ceremonies belonging to it has faded away. There still remains in the church, a Christian and moderate discipline, but not what is described in the law. And the saints perform to God the vows which they have made in the church, that are not contrary to faith and godliness; but they are sparing, wary, and very religious in making vows. For what do we have to give to God, which we have not first received from his hands; and to perform, that we were not previously bound to in baptism?

Christ does not distinguish between clean and unclean in the gospel, as Moses did in the law. "That," he says, "which enters into the mouth does not defile the man; but that which comes out of the mouth."¹³⁵ And the apostle Paul flatly says that "to the clean all things are clean."¹³⁶ He speaks much like this in the fourteenth chapter to the Romans, and more in other places. In his epistle to the Colossians he says: "If you are dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, then why, as if living in the world, are you led by traditions (do not touch, do not taste, do not handle), all of which perish in abusing?"¹³⁷ And so forth.

iii.272

To Peter it is also said: "What Blood and God has sanctified, do not call unclean." In the synodal epistle, set forth by the apostles in the fifteenth chapter of the Acts, both blood and strangled things is forbidden and exempted from the meat of men. Yet, that commandment was not perpetual, but momentary, for a time only. For it pleased the apostles, for charity's sake, to bear with the Jewish nation in this, who otherwise would have been too stubborn and self-willed. The Jews at that time, every day, *rifely*¹³⁸ heard the reading of the law, which expressly forbade them to eat blood and strangled things, as if the preaching of the gospel had not begun to be sown among them. And therefore, they could not help but be greatly offended to see the Gentiles so lavishly use the prohibited things. This is why the apostles would have the Gentiles for a time abstain from the things that were otherwise lawful enough, to see if perhaps by that means they might win the Jews to the faith of Christ. For the epistles, which Paul wrote a few years after the council at Jerusalem, sufficiently argue that the decree of the apostles against blood and strangled things was not perpetual. But the commandments given against things offered to idols, and against fornication (in the use of which the Gentiles thought they did not greatly offend) are perpetual, because they are morals, and in the number¹³⁹ of the Ten Commandments. But I have spoken of that matter in another place.

And now, because I have mentioned the synodal decree ordained by the apostles and elders of the council at Jerusalem, I think it is not amiss to recite to you, dearly beloved, as a conclusion to this place, the whole epistle sent by the synod, because it bears an evident, full, and brief testimony, that the law is abrogated in the manner which I have declared. Now, this is their epistle, or constitution:

"The apostles, and elders, and brethren, send greetings to the brethren which are of the Gentiles, that are in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia. For we have heard that certain ones who departed from

¹³⁵ Mat 15.11.

¹³⁶ Tit.1.15.

¹³⁷ Col 2.20-22, *ipso pereant abusu*, Lat.; and Erasmus: *whych all peryshe thorow the very abuse*. Cranmer, 1539.

¹³⁸ *Rifely*: frequently.

¹³⁹ *legum primarum atque*, Lat.; of the first laws and, etc.

us have troubled you with words, and encumbered your minds, saying you must be circumcised, and keep the law — we gave them no such commandment: it seemed good therefore to us, when we had come together with one accord, to send chosen men to you, with our beloved Paul and Barnabas, men who have jeopardized their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

iii.273

We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who shall tell you the same things by mouth. For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us, to charge you with no more than these necessary things; (that is to say) that you abstain from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled things, and from fornication. If you keep yourselves from these, you shall do well. So fare you well."¹⁴⁰

This is word for word the catholic, the synodal, apostolic, and ecclesiastical epistle of the council held at Jerusalem, both brief and easy. For just as the speech of truth is simple, so also may true religion and Christian faith be easily laid down in very few and evident words.

Immediately at the beginning, in their accustomed manner of subscribing and inscribing their epistle, they out of hand turn to and address the false apostles with whom Paul and Barnabas were in controversy. And they declare what kind of doctrine the false prophets held, which up till then they had preached to the churches as the catholic, true, and apostolic doctrine: to wit, that those who would be saved, must be circumcised and keep the law of Moses. For these false prophets did not think that faith in Christ, without the help of the law, was sufficient for full and absolute justification. They boasted that they were sent from Jerusalem,¹⁴¹ by the apostles and disciples of the Lord, who all taught with one consent the same doctrine that they preached. And they said that Paul alone, with his companion Barnabas, sowed a certain doctrine in the churches that was peculiar to himself, schismatic-like, touching faith which justified without the works of the law. This is why the apostles, immediately after the beginning of their epistle, declare what they think of such false teachers and their unwarranted doctrine: "We confess," they say, "that those false teachers went from here, out of Jerusalem, but we deny that they were either sent or instructed by us. For we gave no such commandment to anyone." And so they testify that what those fellows taught is utterly false: to wit, that the apostles and disciples of the Lord preached that the law is requisite to full justification.

iii.274

Indeed, they go on yet more plainly to declare what the doctrine of those false apostles was: "They trouble you," they say, "with words, and encumber your minds, commanding you to be circumcised and to keep the law." The sum of their doctrine, therefore, was that unless a man were circumcised and kept the law, he could not be saved: whereby they ascribed salvation to keeping the law, or to the merit of their works.

The apostles attribute two perilous effects to this doctrine. The first is, "They trouble you with words." They are words, they say, which amaze, rather than appease, comfort, or pacify your minds; indeed, they trouble you so, that you cannot tell what to believe, or what to trust. And moreover, they stir up strifes, discords, and jarrings among you. Paul seems to have alluded to these words of the apostles in his epistle to the Galatians, saying: "I marvel that you have so soon turned from Christ, who called you by grace, to another gospel; which is not another gospel indeed, but there are some who trouble you, and intend to pervert the gospel of Christ." The second effect is this: "They encumber or weaken your minds."¹⁴² For those who lean on the law and works, have nothing stable or steadfast in their minds. For since the law requires a most exact

¹⁴⁰ Act 15.23-29.

¹⁴¹ ex urbe sancta, Lat. — [from the holy city](#).

¹⁴² Gal 1.6-7.

and absolute righteousness, and thereby kills (because such righteousness is not found in us) those minds are therefore weakened and subverted, that are taught to lean on the works of the law, which law no man rightly keeps as he should.

Therefore, Paul says to the Romans: "If those who belong to the law are heirs, then faith is vain, and the promise is made of no effect." And immediately after, again: "Therefore the heritage is given by faith, according to grace, that the promise may be sure to all the seed," etc. The false apostles therefore subverted and weakened minds, by teaching that salvation is obtained by the law. Truly, this is a grievous judgment against those who, along with them, teach the same.

iii.275

Then with like liberty, they go on to the other side to show their opinion of Paul and Barnabas. Indeed, they adorn them, as their messengers, with a most holy testimonial, to the end that they may have more authority among all men, and that all men may understand that there was a full agreement and consent of doctrine and religion, between them and the other apostles. "We being gathered together with one accord," they say, "have sent messengers to you." See here, about the false apostles, they testified that they did *not* send them, *nor* give them any command: but these men they *do* send, and with one accord, they give them a command. But whom do they send? "Our beloved Paul and Barnabas, who have jeopardized their lives for the name of Christ Jesus." These two are most choice apostles, and they are holy, glorious martyrs, our dearly-beloved brethren, being of the same religion and doctrine with us, who have declared what their lives and doctrine are, by their manifold virtues and manifold suffering of peril and dangers.

But because Paul and Barnabas were themselves no small doers in that controversy and disputation, they joined to them two other chosen men, Judas and Silas, to the end that they might indifferently, without suspicion, declare the things which were alleged in the council for both sides — as I mean to show you in the exposition of the general decree.

For now, in a few words, they comprehend the very decree of the whole and universal synod; in laying it down, they first of all name the author of the decree, saying: "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us." They first set down the Holy Ghost, and then themselves; making Him to be the author of truth, and themselves to be the instruments by which He works: for he works in the church by the ministry of men. But men's authority, without the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, is none at all. Therefore the apostles very significantly say: "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost *and* to us:" that is, after we had assembled in that synod to treat the matter of justification and the law (about which Paul and his adversaries stood in controversy), we did not follow our own judgments, nor did we use proofs of our own inventing; but searching out and hearing the doctrine of the Holy Ghost, we write this to you upon His warrant.

iii.276

In the second place, they set down the sum of the decree, saying: "That we might not charge you with greater burdens than these necessary things, (that is to say) that you abstain from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled things, and from fornication." Therefore, they say, the doctrine of the gospel which Paul has up to now preached with us, is sufficient to obtain life and salvation. We do not intend to lay any greater burden on you than the doctrine of the gospel, and abstinence from those few things. In this sentence, they seem to have had an eye to the opinion of St. Peter, who in the council said: "You know that, being called by God, I went to the Gentiles, and preached salvation to them through the gospel. You know that as I was preaching faith in Christ Jesus to them, being neither circumcised nor keeping the law, the Holy Ghost was given to the Gentiles from above — so that their hearts were purified by God himself, by faith and not by the law — and that they were made heirs of eternal life."¹⁴³ And upon this he infers: "Now

¹⁴³ Act 10.45.

therefore, why do you tempt God by laying upon the disciples' necks a yoke which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved, even as they." ¹⁴⁴ See here, that St. Peter called the law a burden and a yoke. And therefore, where the apostles say that they will not lay upon the church any greater burden, they thereby signify that the law is flatly abrogated. Therefore, they set the church free from the burden of the law, and acquit it from all burdens like the law.

We now gather by those words of the apostles, that those burdensome and innumerable ceremonies, which the church has received by councils and synods since the time of the apostles, were laid upon the church unjustly, and against the apostolic spirit, and today they are wickedly retained and defended in the church. For in express words they said: "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us to burden you with no more than these necessary things."

But if any man objects, and says that those ceremonies were laid upon the churches' necks for the ignorance of the people, as a rule or instruction ¹⁴⁵ to guide or teach them by — my answer is that such instruction is clean taken away; and whoever tries to minimize it, desires nothing else but to bring in Judaism again.

iii.277

God knew very well what kind of church he purposed to gather together of Jews and Gentiles; and yet he abolished those external ceremonies. Now who better knows than God what is expedient, or not expedient, for his church? Therefore the things that he abolished were not expedient for the faithful: upon which the apostles rightly and very well pronounced, "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and us not to lay upon you any greater burden." Therefore let them be ashamed of their doings, who lay so great a burden on the shoulders of the church, that otherwise ought to be most free.

Now, here is also added the conclusion of the sentence: "than these necessary things, (that is to say) that you abstain from things offered to idols," etc. In these words they had an eye toward the sentence of St. James, the apostle and brother of the Lord. For, confirming and allowing St. Peter's opinion touching justification by faith, and of not laying the law on the Gentiles' necks, he alleges a testimony of scripture out of Amos;¹⁴⁶ who foretold that the Jews should be cut off because of their sins, and that the Gentiles should be taken in their place, among whom the true church of God should be. This was prefigured by the ruin and reparation of David's tabernacle. The same prophet also foretold a reason how, and a cause why, the Gentiles should be received into the church: not for circumcision's sake, nor by the help of the law, but by grace through faith. For he says: "The remnant of the men shall seek after the Lord, and all the heathen upon whom my name is called, says the Lord, who does all this. All these works of God are known to him from before the world began." ¹⁴⁷ Look here, they shall seek the Lord, and shall be received into his fellowship, upon whom his name shall be called. This phrase of speech signifies that those who are elect shall be the sons of God; for the name of the Lord is called upon those who are named the sons of God, and are his elect. Now the whole scripture attributes that to faith. By faith, therefore, we are made the members of the church, and sons and heirs to God our maker.

iii.278

But if any man murmurs against the counsel of God, and says, Why does God do so? let him think that this deed is the deed and work of God, whom it is not lawful for man to challenge, and all of whose works are known from the beginning of the world to have been done in judgment and

¹⁴⁴ Act 15.10.

¹⁴⁵ paedagogiam, Lat.

¹⁴⁶ Amos 9.11, 12.

¹⁴⁷ Act 15.17, 18.

righteousness. From this, it consequently follows that this counsel of his is good and righteous, by which he joins to himself and sanctifies ¹⁴⁸ the heathen nations, through faith in Christ. ¹⁴⁹

Now upon these words of the prophet St. James (subscribing, as it were, to St. Peter's opinion) gathers and infers this: "Therefore, my sentence is that we do not trouble those who have turned to God from among the Gentiles;" that is to say, I think they are not to be molested, or charged with the observation of the law. But lest the Gentiles upon hearing that the law was abolished, thereby think they might freely do whatever they would, and by that means abuse their liberty; and also, against all charity, despise and give offence to the Jewish brethren, James therefore adds: "But I think it best for us to write to them, that they abstain from the filthiness of idols." For there were at that time certain converts of the Gentiles, who thought it lawful for them to enter into idol-temples, and partaker of things offered to idols — because an idol is nothing, since there is but one God alone. From this they gathered that those sacrifices were nothing, that they did neither good nor harm; and therefore Christians might with a safe conscience partaker of them. But St. James and Paul also, 1Cor 8, 9, and 10, would have the heathen converts abstain utterly from the worship of idols: that is, from the idols themselves, and from those things which are offered to false and feigned gods in the idol-temples.

Moreover he adds: "Let them beware of fornication." The Gentiles, truly, forbid by good laws the adulteries and defilings of virgins and matrons, with very sharp punishments suppressing the violent deflowerers of honest women. But they thought of it very lightly (and in a way, as no fault at all) for someone to commit whoredom, who of their own accord put their chastity for sale; or if an unwedded man dealt so with a single woman.

iii.279

And therefore the apostle James (as Paul also did in 1Cor 6 and 1Thes 4) very severely requires the holy and pure use of the body, without any filthy and unclean beastliness.

Last of all,¹⁵⁰ he would have the Gentiles restrain from eating blood and strangled things. He adds the reason why, saying, "For Moses of olden times, has those in every city who preach him in the synagogues, where he is read every sabbath-day." I spoke somewhat about this constitution (i.e., touching blood and strangled things), before I made this digression.

Now, therefore, since the matter is at that point, it is evident that they are offended without cause, who think that St. James made and published this decree without any right and reason; and who think that the fruit of that synod was very perilous, not at all wholesome, and flat contrary to Christian liberty. For it is assuredly certain that the meaning of James in no point differed from the mind of St. Paul, who very well and praiseworthy said,

"Let us follow the things that make for peace, and things with which we may one edify another. Do not destroy the work of God for meat's sake. All things are pure; but it is evil for that man who eats with offence. It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor anything by which your brother stumbles or falls, or is made weak," etc. ^{Rom 14.19-21}

It is also most certain, that St. Paul — who was so sharply set to defend the Christian liberty, that he withstood Peter openly ¹⁵¹ at Antioch — would not have been hesitant to resist St. James, if he thought this constitution either had been, or should be, prejudicial to Christian liberty. Truly, he would neither have preached, nor yet commended, this tradition of the apostles to the churches of the Gentiles, if he had not thought that it was both wholesome and profitable for them all to

¹⁴⁸ beatificat, Lat. See page i.106, note 6.

¹⁴⁹ *citra legis observationem*, Lat. omitted; without keeping the law.

¹⁵⁰ *in tertio loco*, Lat.; in the third place.

¹⁵¹ *et in faciem*, Lat.; and to the face.

embrace. But he did preach and commend it to the churches, as seen in the sixteenth chapter of the Acts. And therefore, some murmured against St. James without cause, because he forbade them to eat blood and strangled things.

iii.280

Finally, the conclusion of their epistle is: "If you keep yourselves from these, you do well; so fare you well." They praise that abstinence, and teach it as a good work, because it is also commended to us in all the scriptures.

Thus, I have not digressed far from our purpose, I trust, to speak of the decree of the apostolic synod held at Jerusalem. This much at this time, touching the abrogation of the ceremonial laws.

It remains here for me to say something concerning the abrogation of the JUDICIAL laws. Now therefore, the judicial laws seem to be abrogated in this sense: because no Christian commonweal, no city or kingdom, is compelled to be bound and to receive those very same laws, which were published and set out by Moses in that nation of old, according to its time, place, and state. Therefore every country has free liberty to use those laws which are best suited and most requisite for the estate and necessity of every place, and of every time and persons. Yet this is to be done in such a way, that the substance of God's laws is not rejected, trodden down, and utterly neglected. For the things which are agreeable to the law of nature and the Ten Commandments, and whatever else God has commanded to be punished, must not in any case be either clean forgotten, or lightly regarded. Now the end to which all these laws tend, is that honesty may be nourished, peace and public tranquility be firmly maintained, and judgment and justice be rightly executed. Because I have disputed about these at large in the exposition of the precept,¹⁵² "You shall not murder," I am content to be much briefer here.

The holy apostle Paul commands us to obey the magistrate. He allows the authority of the sword, which he confesses that the magistrate does not have in vain, received from the hand of God. And therefore, he did not disallow or find fault with the election of the magistrate, the use of the sword, the execution of judgment and justice, nor with upright and civil laws.

Now, whoever confers the laws and constitutions of princes, kings, emperors, or Christian magistrates, he must confess that they draw very near in likeness, and very well agree with one another and with these judicial laws of God.¹⁵³ Such laws are to be found either in the Code, in the book of Digests or Pandects, in the volume of New Constitutions,¹⁵⁴ or else in other books containing the good laws of various nations.

iii.281

The emperor Justinian forbade by law either to sell or otherwise make away with the possessions of the church¹⁵⁵ and things consecrated to God. For the sincere confessing and pure maintaining of the catholic faith, the emperors, Gratian, Valentinian, and Theodosius, made a most excellent

¹⁵² Decade ii. Sermons 6, 7, 8.

¹⁵³ Vol. i. pages 197-205.

¹⁵⁴ The Code is the Codex Justinianus, or collection of imperial constitutions in twelve books, each of which is divided into titles, which was promulgated at Constantinople, under Justinian, Nov. 16, A.D. 529. The Pandects, so called because of the *comprehensiveness* of the work, or Digests, so called because of the *arrangement* of its materials, was a compilation out of ancient juristical writings, which was ordered by Justinian, and finished in the close of A.D. 529. It contained fifty books, which were divided into seven parts, and sub-divided into titles. After the code was completed, Justinian supplied what was deficient in that work by a collection which he called *Novelise Constituciones*. Theodosius II. had published his code of laws, A.D. 438; and his *Novelise*, or additions, about nine years later. See Smith's *Diet*, of Greek and Roman Antiqu., and Duck's *Jur. Civil. Lib. i. cap. 3. § 8. and cap. 4.*

¹⁵⁵ Vol. i. page 331.

and holy law.¹⁵⁶ Constantine the great charged Taurus, one of his lieutenants, to shut the idol temples, and to destroy with the sword those rebels who went about to open them, and to sacrifice in them.¹⁵⁷ Laws were made for the relief of the poor, and so that kings and emperors had care over them. This is to be seen in more places than one in the emperor's laws and constitutions. It is very certain, that whoever reads the Code, Lib. i. tit. 2, he will find much that belongs to this argument.¹⁵⁸ For honestly training up children, and liberally sustaining aged parents, there are very commendable laws in the books of the heathens.¹⁵⁹ Concerning the authority that parents have over their children, much is written and many things are to be found. Honorius, Arcadius, and many other princes, have made very tolerable and laudable decrees concerning wedlock, incest, and unfit marriages: where they also speak very well and wisely of the law of divorce.¹⁶⁰

iii.282

But if I go on to add or contrast every title of the judicial laws contained in this sermon, with the sundry and particular laws of the decrees of Christian princes, I know I will be too tedious for your patience. For then this treatise would surpass the time of an ordinary sermon. Let it therefore suffice for the time being, that by declaring these notes, ¹⁶¹ I have clarified and made a way for the diligent lovers of the truth, to come to the understanding of other things, which we have omitted here — and that they may believe that the substance of God's judicial laws is not taken away or abolished, but that ordering and limiting them is placed in the will and arbitrement ¹⁶² of good Christian princes. Yet, in such a way that they ordain and appoint what is just and equal, as the estate of time, place, and persons best requires. Thus honesty and public peace may thereby be preserved,¹⁶³ and God the Father may be duly honoured through his only-begotten Son Christ Jesus, to whom all praise is due forever. For we see that the apostles of Christ neither required nor commanded any nation, in the administration of political affairs, to bind themselves to strictly keeping Moses' law. This rule must always be kept and observed.

St. Peter simply commands and says, "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake; whether it is to the king, as having preeminence, or to rulers, as to those who are sent by Him for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of those who do well." ¹⁶⁴ And yet the same apostle affirms that "we should obey God than men," ¹⁶⁵ so often as men publish laws against true religion, justice and equity. I spoke concerning this, in the exposition about the common place of the magistrate.¹⁶⁶ And so, I thought it good to say this much touching the abrogation of the judicial laws.

iii.283

Now if every one of you thoroughly ponders the things that I have said up to here touching the law of God, the parts of the law, the use or effect of it, the fulfilling and abrogating of it — then it will not be difficult to determine what everyone ought to think concerning the point or title of this treatise, which I promised in the beginning of this sermon. I said that I would speak somewhat

¹⁵⁶ Vol. i. pages 34, 35, 328, 331.

¹⁵⁷ Vol. i. page 359.

¹⁵⁸ Pacii Isagog. in Cod. Lib. i. 3. p. 460.

¹⁵⁹ Vol. I. pages 202, 273, 286, note 3, 288-290.

¹⁶⁰ Bingham, Orig. Eccles. Book xvi. chap. 11.; and Book xxii. chap. 5.

¹⁶¹ et vestigiis, Lat.; and traces.

¹⁶² *Arbitrement* – the act of deciding as an arbiter; giving authoritative judgment.

¹⁶³ in gente quavis, Lat. omitted; in every nation.

¹⁶⁴ 1Pet 2.13, 14.

¹⁶⁵ Acts 5.29.

¹⁶⁶ pages ii.269, 316.

toward this end: to wit, that the testament of the old and new church ¹⁶⁷ is all one, and that there is but one way of true salvation to all who either are, or have been, saved in this world; and also, how the new testament differs from the old. I have already shown ¹⁶⁸ that all the points of the law have a respect and a kind of relation to Christ; and that in the law, he was preached to the fathers as the only Saviour, in whom alone they were to be saved. Who cannot perceive that they had no other way to be saved than the very same one which we enjoy today by Christ Jesus? ¹⁶⁹ And yet, that this may appear more evident, I will not hesitate to take some pains to make this matter more manifest to you, with as plain a demonstration as possible — although it is not likely that there is a plainer one than I have already shown you.

Truly, no difference is to be found among the people, testament, church, or manner of salvation, of those who share one and the same doctrine, faith, Spirit, hope, inheritance, expectation, invocation, and sacraments. Therefore, if I am able to prove that all these things were indifferently common to those of the old church as well as to us, then I have obtained what I shot at: to wit, that in respect to the substance there neither was, nor is, any more than one testament — that the old fathers are one and the same people that we are, living in the same church and communion, and saved not in any other but in Christ alone, the Son of God, in whom we also look for salvation.

I thus prove that they and we have one and the same doctrine: our doctrine is the doctrine of the gospel; and the fathers were not without the *same* doctrine, as it is made evident by St. Paul, who testifies: "God truly promised the gospel of God beforehand by his prophets in the holy scriptures, about his Son, who was made of the seed of David after the flesh, and has been declared to be the Son of God with power by the Spirit," etc. ^{Rom 1.1-4}

iii.284

What could be said more plainly? The gospel which is preached today, ¹⁷⁰ was promised of old by the prophets in the holy scriptures: to wit, that the Son of God would come into the world to save all faithful believers. This gospel also teaches that the faithful are not justified by the works of the law, but are freely justified by grace through faith in Christ. ¹⁷¹ St. Paul says: "By the deeds of the law, no flesh shall be justified in his sight: for by the law comes the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God is declared without the law, being witnessed by the testimony of the law and the prophets. The righteousness of God comes by the faith of Christ Jesus to all, and upon all that believe." ¹⁷² St. Peter fully agrees with Paul, where he says in the synod held at Jerusalem, "Neither we nor our fathers were able to bear the yoke of the law, but believe, as they did, to be saved through the grace of our Lord Christ Jesus." ¹⁷³ Consequently, in all other substantial and material points, there is no difference in doctrine between us and them.

To proceed now: those whose doctrine is one, must of necessity have one faith; "for faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." ^{Rom 10.17} How does that argue that Abraham and the rest of the ¹⁷⁴ holy fathers are set before our eyes as examples of faith for us to follow? We see that it is so in the holy gospel of the Lord, and in the sacred writings ¹⁷⁵ of the apostles. But who would give us such foreign examples to imitate, which do not concern the thing for which they are given?

¹⁶⁷ ecclesiae Dei, Lat. – [the church of God](#).

¹⁶⁸ apertissime, Lat.; most clearly.

¹⁶⁹ by Christ Jesus, not in Lat.

¹⁷⁰ ecclesiae, Lat.; to the church.

¹⁷¹ in Christ, not in Lat.

¹⁷² Rom 3.20-22.

¹⁷³ Act 15.10, 11.

¹⁷⁴ patres nostri, Lat.; our fathers.

¹⁷⁵ literis, Lat.; epistles.

Paul shows in many places, but especially in the fourth chapter to the Romans, that faith must be imputed to us for righteousness; as we read that it was imputed to Abraham. Now that faith of his was not another faith, but the very same faith as ours, which rests upon the promise of God and the blessed Seed. For Paul calls Abraham the father, not only of those who are born of the circumcision, but also of those who walk in the steps of the faith which was in Abraham *before* he was circumcised.¹⁷⁶

iii.285

Besides that, the confirmation of the Christian rule (by which I mean the Apostles' Creed or articles of our belief) is fetched out of the scriptures by the fathers of the old Testament. This is undoubtedly a most obvious argument that their faith and ours are the very same faith. They believed in the Messiah who was then to come; and we believe that he has already come, and we more fully perceive and nearly see all that which was spoken of before in the prophets — as I will shortly declare, when I come to show the difference between the two Testaments.

Who can doubt that one and the same Spirit governed our forefathers and the people of the new covenant, considering that the Spirit of God is one alone; and that St. Peter expressly testifies that the Spirit of Christ was in the prophets? ¹⁷⁷ And St. Paul also says: "Since we have the same spirit of faith, according to that which is written, I believed, and therefore I spoke; and we believe, and therefore we speak." ^{2Cor 4.13} Therefore, although the apostle says in another place, that the faithful "have not received again the spirit of bondage unto fear, but the spirit of adoption, whereby they cry, Abba, Father;" ^{Rom 8.15} he does not deny that the faithful fathers had the same spirit that we have. For they too cried to God as to their father, although they did not obtain it by the law (which terrifies), but by the grace of Messiah. Again, the same apostle says: "Whoever is led by the Spirit of God, are the sons of God:" ^{Rom 8.14} We may thus convert this sentence and say that the sons of God are led by the Spirit of God. But unless someone never read the scriptures, who would deny that the ancient fathers were the sons of God, and were so called both by the Lord himself, and also by his servant Moses. ¹⁷⁸

Moreover, what may be thought about this: that our forefathers were called kings and priests, and consequently, they were a royal priesthood and a priestly kingdom? St. Peter applied these names to the faithful believers in Christ Jesus. ¹⁷⁹ Now such a kingdom and priesthood cannot exist, or remain, without the unction of the Spirit.

iii.286

I confess that the holy apostle John said in his gospel: "The Holy Ghost was not yet, because Jesus was not yet glorified." ^{Joh 7.39} But he was not speaking of the *substance* of the Holy Ghost, which is co-eternal with the substance ¹⁸⁰ of the Father and of the Son; nor does he altogether deny that the fathers had the Holy Ghost. For in that place, he speaks of the excellent gift, which after the ascension of the Lord was poured out upon the people who believed. For John, interpreting himself, immediately before says this: "These words, 'Whoever believes on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of the water of life,' spoke of the Holy Ghost,¹⁸¹ which those who believe on him would receive." Therefore, when the Lord spoke those words, the gift of the Holy Ghost was not at that time as commonly and plentifully poured out upon all men, as it was upon the faithful after the glorification of the Lord Jesus.

¹⁷⁶ Rom 4.12.

¹⁷⁷ 1Pet 1.11.

¹⁷⁸ Exo 4; Deu 14.

¹⁷⁹ Exo 19.6; 1Pet 2.9.

¹⁸⁰ *essentiae*, Lat.

¹⁸¹ *de Spiritu*, Lat.

And truly our forefathers and the holy prophets could not have so precisely and expressly foretold all the mysteries of Christ and the church, which the evangelists and apostles testify is now accomplished and fulfilled,¹⁸² unless they had been governed in their prophecies by the very same Spirit with which the apostles were afterward instructed. For it is a wicked thing for us to think that the prophets and patriarchs, like madmen, did not know what they babbled, and spoke words which they did not understand. Abraham saw the day of Christ, and he was glad of it. *Joh 8.56* For by that spiritual sight of his, he had and felt within himself a certain kind of spiritual joy. How many times David in the Psalms testifies that the service of God and the holy congregation delighted him at his very heart! He did not utter these words so much for the joy that he had in the external ceremonies, but that, by the Spirit and by faith, he beheld in these ceremonies the true Messiah and Saviour of the world.¹⁸³ And since it is evident that our forefathers were justified by the grace of God, it is manifest that this justification was not wrought without the Spirit of God; through this same Spirit our justification today is wrought and finished. Therefore, the fathers were governed by the very same Spirit that we of this age are directed by.

iii.287

St. Augustine was of this opinion, whose words, dearly beloved, I mean to recite to you word for word out of his second book, *de Peccato Orig. contra Pelag., et Celest.* Cap. 25.

"Things to come," he says, "were foreseen by the prophets by the same spirit of faith, by which they are believed by us to be already finished. For those who could prophesy these things to us of faithful love, could not choose but to be partakers of the same thing themselves. And thus the apostle Peter says, Why do you tempt God, to lay upon the disciples necks the yoke that neither our fathers nor we were able to bear; but we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved even as they were. Why does Peter say this, I ask, if not because they are saved by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and not by Moses' law — the law which brings not the salving, but the knowledge of sin? But now the righteousness of God is made manifest without the law, as witnessed by the law and prophets. Therefore, if it is made manifest now, at this time, then it must be that it existed before, though it was hidden then. The hiddenness of it was prefigured by the veil of the temple which was rent in pieces when Christ died, to signify that it was then revealed. And therefore, this grace of the only Mediator of God and man, the man Christ Jesus, was then in the people of God, but it was *hidden* in them — like rain hidden in a fleece, which God separates unto his inheritance — not of duty, but of his own voluntary will. But now that fleece is wrung out, in a sense — that is, the Jewish people being reprobated — it is openly seen in *all* nations, as if [spread] on the bare ground in an open place."¹⁸⁴

This much out of Augustine.

iii.288

Now there was also set before the eyes of Israel, a carnal and temporal felicity, which was not yet all that they hoped upon; for in that external and transitory felicity was shadowed the heavenly and eternal happiness. For the apostle, in the fourth and eleventh chapters to the Hebrews, says that the fathers, out of that visible and temporal inheritance, hoped for another invisible and everlasting heritage. Nor was Christ so expressly promised to them for any other end; nor was the blessing and life in Christ so plainly laid before them for any other purpose; nor was Christ himself so often prefigured in almost all their ceremonies, for any other intent than this: that they might thereby have hope of the very same life into which we are received through Christ our Redeemer.

¹⁸² ad verbum, Lat.; to the letter.

¹⁸³ Christum, Lat.; the true world, not in Lat.

¹⁸⁴ Aug. Opp. Par. 1531. De Peccat. Orig. cap. 25. Tom. vii. fol. 164. col. 3.

For the Lord says in the gospel, that we shall be gathered into the kingdom of heaven, into the same glory with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.^{Mat 8.11}

But here an objection is made, that life and salvation was only *promised* to the fathers, and not *performed*; but being shut up in prison, they looked for the coming of Messiah. For my part, I do not find anything in the scriptures written about such a prison into which the holy patriarchs were fast locked up. Peter, truly, mentions a prison; but he would have the disobedient spirits in that prison, and not the obedient ones. But if any man objects that Christ descended to them below, we truly do not deny it. Yet we say with it, that he descended to the departed *saints*; that is, that he was gathered to the company of the blessed spirits, which were not in the place of punishment (that is, in torments), but in the joys of heaven; as the Lord himself confirms when, being ready to descend to them below, he said to the thief, "This day you shall be with me in Paradise."^{Luk 23.43}

iii.289

It may also be proved by many places of scripture, that the ancient holy fathers, from Adam's time until the death of Christ, at their departure out of this life, for Christ's sake they immediately entered not into prison, but into eternal life. For our Lord says in the gospel of St. Mark: "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living."^{Mk 12.27} And he is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Consequently, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, live or are now alive; and yet not in body, corporally; for their bodies being buried, were long since rotten. Therefore, their *souls* live in joy; and their very bodies shall rise to judgment again. In the gospel of St. Luke¹⁸⁵ the Lord mentions Abraham's bosom, into which are gathered all the blessed spirits; and he testifies about it, that it is placed aloft, and that it is not a place of pain and punishment, but of joy and refreshing. And therefore we often read in the scriptures of the holy fathers, that they were gathered to their people — that is to say, they were received into the fellowship of those fathers with whom, in this world, they had remained in the same faith and same kind of religion. For the sequences and circumstances of those places manifestly declare that those words cannot be expounded of the burial of the body corporally. Again, in the gospel of St. Matthew, the Lord says: "I say to you, that many will come out of the east and out of the west, and shall rest themselves with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven: but the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into utter darkness, where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."^{Mat 8.11-12} Now if the Gentiles must be gathered into the kingdom of heaven, and that they must be placed in the fellowship of the fathers; then it must be that the fathers were already in heaven, and felt the joys of it at that very time when the Lord spoke these words. In the gospel of St. John, he also says plainly: "Abraham was glad to see my day; and he saw it, and rejoiced."^{Joh 8.56} This saying, although we understand it to be spoken of the justification and joy of the *conscience*, yet we do not separate it from the joy of eternal life; because the one of necessity depends on and follows the other.

iii.290

Moreover, we must consider here the occasion on which these words of the Lord seem to have been spoken. The Lord had said: "Truly, truly, I say to you, if a man keeps my saying, he shall never taste of death." The Jews took hold of these words and said, "Abraham is dead, and the prophets are dead; and yet you say, If a man keeps my saying, he shall never see death. What, are you greater than our father Abraham, who is dead? And the prophets are also dead. Who do you make yourself?" The Lord answered, and showed that Abraham is quickened, or else preserved in life and heavenly joy, through faith in the sayings of Christ Jesus; and however he may be dead in body, yet notwithstanding this, his soul lives in joy forever with God, in whom he put his trust. To this may be added that David in the sixteenth psalm, calling God his hope, his expectation, and his inheritance, among other things says:

¹⁸⁵ Luk 16.22, 23.

"The Lord is always at my right hand. Therefore my heart is glad, my glory rejoices, and my flesh shall rest in hope. For you will not leave my soul in hell, nor will you allow your Holy One to see corruption. You will make me know the path of life. In your presence is the fulness of joy, and at your right hand there are pleasures forevermore." ^{Psa 16.10}

In the Acts of the Apostles, St. Peter and St. Paul apply this testimony of David as a thing spoken prophetically about Christ Jesus; yet notwithstanding this, no man can deny that the same testimony may refer to David, in a way, who in that psalm makes a profession of his faith, declares his hope, and expresses his *Michtam*, that is, his delight, or the arms or emblem by which he would be known.¹⁸⁶ Therefore, those words first pertain to Christ, and then to David, and then to *all* the faithful: for the life and resurrection of Christ is the life and resurrection of the faithful. Again, in another place the same prophet says: "I believe truly to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living." ^{Psa 27.13} Now, in the land of the living there is neither death nor dolour (grief), but fulness of joy and everlasting pleasures. By faith David looked to obtain these joys and delights at the hand of God, through Christ his Saviour, and indeed, according to his hope, he possessed it immediately after he departed this life, even though it would be many years after his death before Christ came in the flesh — even as we today are also saved by him; even though it is now one thousand five hundred odd years ¹⁸⁷ since he departed from the earth in his flesh.

iii.291

In the eleventh chapter to the Hebrews, Paul says; "And all these holy fathers, having obtained a good report through faith, did not receive the promise, because God had provided a better thing for us, that they should not be made perfect without us." But I think, simply, that this must be understood of the perfect or full felicity in which the holy fathers are not consummated or made perfect without us — because there is yet remaining the general resurrection of all flesh, which must come first. And once that is finished, then the felicity of *all* the saints is consummated or made perfect. This felicity shall not be given to the soul alone, then, but to the body also. St. Peter also constantly affirms that salvation is first of all purchased by Christ for the souls of the holy saints; then immediately upon their bodily death, they are received to be partakers of the same salvation, by the same Christ; and lastly, that at the end of the world, the bodies of the saints being raised from death, as the bodies of all men will be, they shall appear before Christ to be judged by him. "The Lord," he says, "shall judge both the quick and the dead. For to this end the gospel was preached to the dead, so that in the flesh they should be judged like men, but in the spirit they should live with God;" ^{1Pet 4.5-6} — that is to say, the death of Christ is effectual to the fathers who died in the faith. Thus, they now live with God in soul, and they are again to be judged in their flesh, like all other men, at whatever time the Lord comes to judge the quick and the dead. Therefore, our salvation is not yet perfect nor consummated, but shall be made perfect at the end of the world.

iii.292

Moreover, our forefathers did not pray to any other, but to God alone, the only Creator of all things; and they believed truly that he would be merciful to mankind for the blessed Seed's sake. They did not call upon God as usually as we do today, through the Mediator and intercessor Christ Jesus, even as the Lord himself testified and said in the gospel: "Up to now you have not asked anything in my name: ask, and you shall receive;" ^{Joh 16.24} And yet, they were not utterly ignorant of the Mediator, for whose sake they were heard by the Lord. In the ninth chapter of his prophecy, Daniel makes his prayer, and he desires to be heard by God for the Lord's sake, that is, for the promised Christ's sake.

¹⁸⁶ insignia, aureolum, aut cleynodium, Lat. – [insignia, gold badge, or engraving](#); *Michtam* is a style of Psalm.

¹⁸⁷ licet venerit ante annos mille quingentos quadraginta novem, Lat. ; one thousand five hundred and forty-nine.

Finally, as often as the holy saints said in their prayers, "Remember, Lord, your servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob," they did not look back to the persons or souls of the deceased patriarchs, but ahead to the promise that was made to the patriarchs. Now, since that promise is, "In your seed all the kindreds of the earth shall be blessed;" and since Paul testifies that Christ is that blessed Seed; it consequently follows that in their prayers, the holy fathers had an eye to the blessed Seed, and that they desired God to hear them for *Christ's* sake. For in one place also, the Lord promises deliverance to king Hezekiah, saying: "I will defend this city for my own sake, and for my servant David's sake."¹⁸⁸ But in the seventh and twenty-eighth chapters of Isaiah's prophecy, it is manifest that the city was spared for Christ's sake, the son of the virgin, who is the foundation placed in Zion — the one whom Ezekiel in the thirty-fourth chapter calls by the name of David, and the gospel calls David's son.

Last of all, the apostle Paul shows that the ancient fathers had among them the very same sacraments which we now have; as in other places he also makes us partakers and applies to us both circumcision and the passover, the sacraments which were given to those of old; as it appears in Colossians, the second chapter, and 1Corinthians, the fifth chapter. In the tenth chapter he threatens grievous punishment to the Corinthians at the hands of God, unless they abstain from things offered to idols, and from all heathenish sensuality. And he then brings in the example of the Israelites, which he applies to his purpose in this manner:

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"I would not have you be ignorant, brethren, that our fathers were the church of God, and that they had the same sacraments which we have today. For they were all baptized unto Moses (that is, by Moses, or by the ministry of Moses) in the cloud and in the sea (for the cloud and the sea were figures of baptism). And they also ate of the same spiritual food, and drank the same spiritual drink."

And immediately after, he interprets his own meaning, saying: "For they drank of the spiritual rock that followed them, which rock was Christ."^{1Cor 4.10} Manna truly, and the rock typically, represent the spiritual food with which Christ refreshes both us and them, for he is himself the bread and drink of eternal life. But although they bodily, outwardly, and visibly received their sacraments, yet because they were destitute of faith and the Holy Ghost, because they were denied with worshipping of idols, with surfeiting and fornication — they displeased God, and were destroyed by him in the desert. And therefore, unless you also abstain from those filthy vices, neither shall baptism and the sacrament of the Lord's supper¹⁸⁹ avail you, but you shall undoubtedly be destroyed by the Lord.

Therefore, since it is declared by the most evident proofs of scripture,¹⁹⁰ that the old fathers had the same sacraments, the same invocation of God, the same hope, expectation, and inheritance, the same Spirit, the same faith, and the same doctrine, which we have today, I hope the mark at which I shot is fully hit. And I trust that I have sufficiently proved that the faithful fathers of the old testament, and we the believers of the new covenant, are one church and one people, who are all saved under one congregation, under one testament alone, and by one and the same means: to wit, by faith in Christ Jesus.

I have said this much up to here touching the likeness, agreement, and unity between the old and new testaments, or the people of God. I will now add something touching the diversity between them, and the things in which they differ.

¹⁸⁸ 2King 19.34.

¹⁸⁹ aut spirituale epulum, Lat.; or the spiritual banquet.

¹⁹⁰ his testimoniis, Lat.; these proofs.

Truly, you can find no diversity in the substance — the difference between them consists in the manner of administration, in a few incidentals and certain circumstances.

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For there were annexed to the promise or doctrine of faith, and to the chief and principal laws, certain external things, which were added until the time of amendment; so that the whole ecclesiastical regiment, the manner of teaching the doctrine of godliness, and the outward worship of God, was of one sort among the old fathers, and of another sort among us. But the especial things in which they differ may be recited and set down in these few principal points.

First and foremost, all things of the new covenant are clearer and more manifest than those of the old testament. The preaching ¹⁹¹ of the old covenant always had in it, for the most part, some misty or cloudy thing; it was still covered and wrapped up in shadows and dim displays. But the publishing of the new testament is clear and manifest, so that it is called the light which is without any mists and darkness. Moses covered his face with a veil, nor could the children of Israel behold his countenance. But we, beholding not only the countenance of Moses which is now uncovered, but the pleasant and amiable face of Christ himself, greatly rejoice to see our salvation openly revealed before our eyes. In that sense, the Lord said that his disciples were happy, where he broke into these words: "Happy are the eyes which see the things that you see. For I say to you that many prophets and kings desired to see the things you see, and did not see them; and to hear the things you hear, and did not hear them." [Mat 13.16-17](#) In this sense, the just man Simeon called himself as happy a man as lived, upon which he was ready to die, saying: "Lord, now let your servant depart in peace, according to your word. For my eyes have seen your salvation; which you have prepared before the face of all people; to be a light to enlighten the Gentiles, and to be the glory of your people Israel." [Luk 2.29-32](#)

But although our forefathers did not have as much light as shines to us in Christ since his coming in the flesh, yet that little light which they had was sufficient to get salvation by faith in Christ. Even we ourselves, although we see him far more clearly than our forefathers did, notwithstanding that, we behold him but in a mist,¹⁹² compared to the brightness in which he shall appear.

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For hereafter we shall see him face to face in the glory of his majesty; ¹⁹³ and yet, even this sight of him which now we have, is sufficient to salvation. Therefore, it is a very fine similitude, and prettily said by some, "Although at daybreak the brightness of the sun is not as great as it is at noonday, yet wayfarers or travellers do not stay till the sun is at the highest, but take the morning before them to go on their journey, and have light enough to see the way." For in like manner, they think that to our forefathers, even that little portion of light in the morning, was sufficient by the leading of faith, to bring them through all impediments to eternal felicity. In the meantime, we have great cause to rejoice ¹⁹⁴ that Christ, the very sun and light of righteousness, after the misty light of the daystar of the law,¹⁹⁵ shines forth to us in the new testament.

Moreover, the forefathers in the old testament had types, shadows, and figures of things to come; but we have now received the very thing itself which was prefigured to them. Therefore, the thing which God promised to them, he has performed and given to us. They truly believed that Christ would come and deliver all the faithful from their sins; and we believe that he has already come,

¹⁹¹ revelatio, Lat. – [revelation](#).

¹⁹² in senigmate, Lat.; 1Cor 13.12.

¹⁹³ The Latin is only, in gloria, in glory.

¹⁹⁴ et propter quod seternas Deo nostro agamus gratias, Lat. omitted; and we should render to our God everlasting thanks for it.

¹⁹⁵ post luciferum istum et Stellas lucidissimas, Lat.; after that day-star and the very bright stars of the law, not in Lat.

that he has redeemed us, and has fulfilled all that the prophets foretold of him. Therefore, the Lord said in the gospel: "The prophets and the law prophesied till John; since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and suffers violence by every man."¹⁹⁶ From this it is gathered that, when the thing prefigured has come and is present, the figures and shadows which foreshowed the things to come, then come to an end and vanish away. Therefore, the yoke and burden which our fathers bore, is thereby taken from our necks.

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The worshipping of God, which they did externally, was very busy¹⁹⁷ and burdensome — such as the Aaronic priesthood, the tabernacle or temple that was to be thoroughly furnished with most exquisite things and instruments, their sundry sorts of sacrifices, and many more ceremonies like these. Now, we who are the people of the new covenant, are freely disburdened and set at liberty from all this cost and business. And the one by whom we are disburdened is Jesus Christ, in whom alone we have all things necessary to life and salvation. For it pleased God the Father to recapitulate in him, and as St. Paul says, to bring into a sum,¹⁹⁸ all things requisite to life and salvation; that the things which seemed before to be dispersed here and there, should be fully exhibited and brought to us in Christ alone. For Christ is the fulfilling of all the types and ceremonies — by whose Spirit, since we now possess the thing prefigured, we no longer need the representing types and shadows. The external things that Christ has ordained are very few, and of very small cost. Therefore, the people of the new testament enjoy a surpassing great and ample liberty.

To this, I suppose, belongs that excellent passage of St. Paul, which may be seen in the fourth chapter to the Galatians.¹⁹⁹ There, in handling this matter diligently, he conceives that there are two mothers. The one engenders²⁰⁰ to bondage, and the other to liberty. He does this under the type of Hagar and Sarah, by which he denotes the two doctrines: that of the law, and that of the gospel. That of the law engenders to bondage, but that of the gospel engenders to liberty. Therefore, the law engenders the holy fathers and the prophets to bondage, not that they should abide as bond-slaves forever, but that it might keep them under discipline —indeed, that it might lead them to Christ, the full perfection of the law. The liberty of the fathers was so oppressed and covered by the weight and heap of ceremonies, that although they were free in spirit before the Lord, yet notwithstanding, in outward show they differ little or not at all from true bond-slaves, because of the burden of the law that lay upon their shoulders. For insomuch as the law was not as yet abrogated, they were compelled to precisely observe it. But when Christ had come and fulfilled all things, then the shadows vanished away, and that heavy yoke was taken from the neck of us Christians.

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So by this means, our mother Sarah engenders us to liberty. She is the mother of us all. Of that mother (which is also called the holy mother church) we have the seed of life. She has fashioned us, and brought us forth into the light; she collects²⁰¹ us in her bosom, in which she carries both milk and meat (the word of God) to nourish, save, and bring us up.

Now, the bonds being cancelled, and the middle wall which was a barrier, being broken down, God more liberally rules his church, and He does not retain it any longer under so strait a custody.

¹⁹⁶ Luk 16.16.

¹⁹⁷ operosus, Lat. – active.

¹⁹⁸ Eph. 1.10. See page i.156.

¹⁹⁹ Gal 4.24-26.

²⁰⁰ *Engender: to give rise to, or give birth to.*

²⁰¹ foveat, Lat. To coll: to embrace, or collect.

For the people of God are not contained within the bounds of the land of promise — they are dispersed to the ends of the world; nor are the circumcised His people now, and those who keep the law. Although it is not to be doubted that even then, when circumcision was in force,²⁰² he had some who were his people among the Gentiles, such as Job and others, whom He himself knew. Rather, those who acknowledge Christ are his people, although they are neither circumcised nor busied with the law. This is a *new* people, gathered together out of the whole world by faith and the Holy Ghost. Christ has given his own name to this new testament in which the Jews have no inheritance, unless they forsake their stubborn opinion of the law, and cling to Christ alone without affiance²⁰³ to the law. All the books of the prophets are fully fraught with testimonies touching the calling of the Gentiles to the communion and fellowship of God, and also touching the reprobation of the Jews, who are utterly rejected for their unreclaimable²⁰⁴ affiance to the law.

Furthermore, the apostle Paul puts another difference between the two testaments, alluding to the prophecy of Jeremiah, as seen in the eighth chapter of Paul's epistle to the Hebrews. For he attributes certain excellent gifts to the people of the new testament: to wit, absolute and full remission of their sins. For he says, "Because I will be merciful to their unrighteousness,²⁰⁵ and I will remember their sins and iniquities no more."²⁰⁶ He also attributes to the people of the new testament a most exquisite reformation and absolute illumination of their minds.

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For he says, "I will plant my laws in their minds, and write them in their hearts; and then no man will teach his neighbour or his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know me, from the little to the great." [Jer 31:33-34](#) But of the law it is written that it was graven in tablets of stone. Yet for all this, let no man think that the fathers obtained no remission of their sins. For as they had free forgiveness of their sins by faith, so God both wrote his law and poured his Spirit into their hearts. For which of us today can say that we excel in knowledge and in faith,²⁰⁷ either Abraham, Moses, Samuel, David, Isaiah, Daniel, or Zechariah? So then, the difference is not that the fathers of the old testament were without the remission of sins and the illumination of the Holy Ghost, and that we alone have obtained them, who are the people of the new testament. Rather, the difference consists in the greatness, amplexness, largeness, and plentifulness of the gifts: to wit, because they are more liberally bestowed and more plentifully poured out upon more now, than they were of old. For all nations, being called, draw the water of life not by drops, but by whole handfuls. The Lord pours out his Spirit upon all flesh. [Act 2:17](#) Of old, God was known only in Jerusalem; but now, since Christ has come into the world, his disciples have gone through all the corners of the earth, and taught all kingdoms to know the Lord. Of old, the worthy men²⁰⁸ and prophets were not so many that they might not be numbered — because the land of promise alone, in a way, bred such good and holy men. But who today is able to reckon all the kings, princes, noblemen, prophets, bishops, doctors, martyrs, and excellent persons of every sex, estate, and age, who have been and are today bred, not only in Jerusalem, but also in Arabia, Idumea, Phoenicia, Mesopotamia, Persia, Asia, Egypt, Africa, Greece, Italy, the east, the south, the west, and the north? Free remission of sins is preached to all countries and kingdoms. All the faithful in every nation under heaven, are received into the grace and favour of God the Father, through

²⁰² when — in force, not in Lat.

²⁰³ *Affiance*: a vow or pledge of fidelity, like a promise to marry ("till death do us part").

²⁰⁴ *Unreclaimable*: cannot be withdrawn or redeemed; it is either the law, or Christ ([Gal 5:3](#)).

²⁰⁵ *Gr. anomia* – lawless deeds.

²⁰⁶ [Heb 10:17](#).

²⁰⁷ illuminatione, Lat. omitted; and in illumination.

²⁰⁸ heroes, Lat. omitted.

Christ. All have received in great abundance the gift of the Holy Ghost. All have prophesied. All have known the Lord.

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Finally, the law makes no man perfect.²⁰⁹ The gospel simply makes perfect, and directly leads us to Christ, without any barrier, and causes us to rest and to content ourselves in him alone.

Last of all, I will not slip over this difference, although it is of little weight, and it is such that others like it may be easily observed: that the law, appointing a certain land, peculiarly separated from other nations, promised to the fathers of old, the possession of it, so long as they kept the law. But if they transgressed the law, then it threatened that they would be uprooted and utterly cast out of that good land.^{Lev 18.26-28} But to us, no one limited land is expressly promised: "for the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness of it; the round world, and all that is in it."²¹⁰ But although He does not here assign to us any certain or particular thing, as he did to our forefathers of old, yet he does not at any time neglect us; for he feeds, blesses, and preserves us in every land and nation. Therefore, the promises which were made of old to our forefathers concerning the land of promise, now having come to an end, they have utterly vanished. Thus those who, for an age or two ago, incited many nations to arm themselves to recover the holy land, seem to have been besides their wits.²¹¹ By his coming into the world, Christ has sanctified the whole earth: for in every nation of the world, there are some sons and heirs of God and his kingdom.

I have spoken more briefly, touching the likeness and agreement, and the unlikeness and difference, between both the old and new testaments or people, because I already handled the same matter in the first sermon of the first decade, and in the sixth sermon of the third decade. Finally, I but briefly touched the abrogation of the law, because a good while ago I set forth two treatises: the one, *Of the Ancient Faith*,²¹² and the other, *Of the Only and Eternal Covenant of God*.²¹³ I know these treatises are familiar among you.

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I will not here, in the conclusion, recapitulate the special points of this sermon; partly because I have already been somewhat too long; and partly because I have, I hope, used so plain an order, that every point is indifferently well-settled in every man's memory. Thus, by God's grace and sufferance, I have made an end to treating God's holy law, in which I have been occupied a good sort of days, by several sermons. Blessed be God and our heavenly Father, world without end, whom I beseech to bless us all through Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

²⁰⁹ Sed ducebat ad spem potiore, Lat. omitted; but led to a better hope.

²¹⁰ Psa 24.1.

²¹¹ Bullinger is speaking of the crusades.

²¹² See the Old Faith, in Bp. Coverdale's Works, Fruitful Lessons, Parker Soc. ed. The Latin translation was published at Zurich, 1544.

²¹³ This latter treatise, *De Testamento seu Foadere Dei unico et seterno*, Bullinger published at Zurich, A.D. 1534, and afterwards appended to his Commentaries in *Epistolas Apostolorum canonicas septem*.