

CHAPTER 2.

Comparison between the false church and the true.

The divisions of the chapter are,—

1. Description of a spurious Church, resembling the Papacy vaunting of personal succession, of which a refutation is subjoined. sec. 1-4.
2. An answer, in name of the orthodox Churches, to the Popish accusations of heresy and schism. A description of the Churches existing at present under the Papacy.

Sections.

1. Recapitulation of the matters treated in the previous chapter. Substance of the present chapter—viz. Where lying and falsehood prevail, no Church exists. There is falsehood wherever the pure doctrine of Christ is not in vigour.
2. This falsehood prevails under the Papacy. Hence the Papacy is not a Church. Still the Papists extol their own Church, and charge those who dissent from it with heresy and schism. They attempt to defend their vaunting by the name of personal succession. A succession which abandons the truth of Christ proved to be of no importance.
3. This proof confirmed,
 - a. By examples and passages of Scripture;
 - b. By reason and the authority of Augustine.
4. Whatever the Papists may pretend, there is no Church where the word of God appears not.
5. The objection of personal succession, and the charge of heresy and schism, refuted, both from Scripture and Augustine.
6. The same thing confirmed by the authority of Cyprian. The anathemas of the Papists of no consequence.
7. The churches of the Papists in the same situation as those of the Israelites, which revolted to superstition and idolatry under Jeroboam.
8. The character of those Israelitish churches.
9. Hence the Papists act unjustly when they would compel us to communion with their Church. Their two demands. Answer to the first. Sum of the question. Why we cannot take part in the external worship of the Papists.
10. Second demand of the Papists answered.
11. Although the Papacy cannot properly be called a Church, still, against the will of Antichrist himself, there is some vestige of a Church in the Papacy, as Baptism and some other remnants.
12. The name of Church not conceded to the Papacy, though under its domination there have been some kind of churches. Herein is a fulfilment of Paul's prophecy, that Antichrist would sit in the temple of God. Deplorable condition of such churches. Summary of the chapter.

1. How much the ministry of the word and sacraments should weigh with us, and how far reverence for it should extend, so as to be a perpetual badge for distinguishing the Church, has been explained; for we have shown, first, that wherever it exists entire and unimpaired, no errors of conduct, no defects should prevent us from giving the name of Church;¹ and, secondly, that trivial errors in this ministry ought not to make us regard it as illegitimate. Moreover, we have shown that the errors to which such pardon is due, are those by which the fundamental doctrine of religion is not injured, and by which those articles of religion, in which all believers should agree, are not suppressed, while, in regard to the sacraments, the defects are such as neither destroy nor impair the legitimate institution of their Author. [535] But as soon as falsehood has forced its way into the citadel of religion, as soon as the sum of necessary doctrine is inverted, and the use of the sacraments is destroyed, the death of the Church undoubtedly ensues, just as the life of man is destroyed when his throat is pierced, or his vitals mortally wounded. This is clearly evinced by the words of Paul when he says, that the Church is “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone” (Eph. 2:20). If the Church is founded on the doctrine of the apostles and prophets, by which believers are enjoined to place their salvation in Christ alone, then if that doctrine is destroyed, how can the Church continue to stand? The Church must necessarily fall whenever that sum of religion which alone can sustain it has given way. Again, if the true Church is “the pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Tim. 3:15), it is certain that there is no Church where lying and falsehood have usurped the ascendancy.

2. Since this is the state of matters under the Papacy, we can understand how much of the Church there survives.² There, instead of the ministry of the word, prevails a perverted government, compounded of lies, a government which partly extinguishes, partly suppresses, the pure light. In place of the Lord's Supper, the foulest sacrilege has entered, the worship of God is deformed by a varied mass of intolerable superstitions; doctrine (without which Christianity exists not) is wholly buried and exploded, the public assemblies are schools of idolatry and impiety. Wherefore, in declining fatal participation in such wickedness, we run no risk of being dissevered from the Church of Christ. The communion of the Church was not instituted to be a chain to bind us in idolatry, impiety, ignorance of God, and other kinds of evil, but rather to retain us in the fear of God and obedience of the truth. They, indeed, vaunt loudly of their Church,³ as if there was not another in the world; and then, as if the matter were ended, they make out that all are schismatics who withdraw from obedience to that Church which they thus depict, that all are heretics who presume to whisper against its doctrine (see sec 5). But by what arguments do they prove their possession of the true Church? They appeal to ancient records which formerly existed in Italy, France, and Spain, pretending to derive their origin from those holy men who, by sound doctrine, founded and raised up churches, confirmed the doctrine, and reared the edifice of the Church with their blood; they pretend that the Church thus consecrated by spiritual gifts and the blood of

1 French, “Secondement, qu'encore il y ait quelques petites fautes, ou en la doctrine ou aux sacremens qu'icelui no laisse point d'avoir sa vigueur.”—Secondly, that though there may be some little faults either in doctrine or in the sacraments, the Church ceases not to be in vigour.

2 See chap. 1 sec. 10; 2 sec. 10; 8 sec. 12.

3 French, “Je say bien que les flatteurs du Pape magnifient grandement leur Eglise.”—I know that the flatterers of the Pope greatly extol their Church.

martyrs was preserved from destruction by a perpetual succession of bishops. They dwell on the importance which Irenaeus, Tertullian, Origen, Augustine, and others, attached to this succession (see sec. 3). How frivolous and plainly ludicrous these allegations are, I will enable any, who will for a little consider the matter with me, to understand without any difficulty. I would also exhort our opponents to give their serious attention, if I had any hope of being able to benefit them by instruction; but since they have laid aside all regard to truth, and make it their only aim to prosecute their own ends in whatever way they can, I will only make a few observations by which good men and lovers of truth may disentangle themselves from their quibbles. First, I ask them why they do not quote Africa, and Egypt, and all Asia, just because in all those regions there was a cessation of that sacred succession, by the aid of which they vaunt of having continued churches. They therefore fall back on the assertion, that they have the true Church, because ever since it began to exist it was never destitute of bishops, because they succeeded each other in an unbroken series. But what if I bring Greece before them? Therefore, I again ask them, Why they say that the Church perished among the Greeks, among whom there never was any interruption in the succession of bishops—a succession, in their opinion, the only guardian and preserver of the Church? They make the Greeks schismatics. Why? because, by revolting from the Apostolic See, they lost their privilege. What? Do not those who revolt from Christ much more deserve to lose it? It follows, therefore, that the pretence of succession is vain, if posterity do not retain the truth of Christ, which was handed down to them by their fathers, safe and uncorrupted, and continue in it.

3. In the present day, therefore, the presence of the Romanists is just the same as that which appears to have been formerly used by the Jews, when the Prophets of the Lord charged them with blindness, impiety, and idolatry. For as the Jews proudly vaunted of their temple, ceremonies, and priesthood, by which, with strong reason, as they supposed, they measured the Church, so, instead of the Church, we are presented by the Romanists with certain external masks, which often are far from being connected with the Church, and without which the Church can perfectly exist. Wherefore, we need no other argument to refute them than that with which Jeremiah opposed the foolish confidence of the Jews—namely, “Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of the Lord, The temple of the Lord, The temple of the Lord are these” (Jer. 7:4). The Lord recognises nothing as his own, save when his word is heard and religiously observed. Thus, though the glory of God sat in the sanctuary between the cherubim (Ezek. 10:4), and he had promised that he would there have his stated abode, still when the priests corrupted his worship by depraved superstitions, he transferred it elsewhere, and left the place without any sanctity. If that temple which seemed consecrated for the perpetual habitation of God, could be abandoned by God and become profane, the Romanists have no ground to pretend that God is so bound to persons or places, and fixed to external observances, that he must remain with those who have only the name and semblance of a Church. This is the question which Paul discusses in the Epistle to the Romans, from the ninth to the twelfth chapter. Weak consciences were greatly disturbed, when those who seemed to be the people of God not only rejected, but even persecuted the doctrine of the Gospel. Therefore, after expounding doctrine, he removes this difficulty, denying that those Jews, the enemies of the truth, were the Church, though they wanted nothing which might otherwise have been desired to the external form of the Church. The

ground of his denial is, that they did not embrace Christ. In the Epistle to the Galatians, when comparing Ishmael with Isaac, he says still more expressly, that many hold a place in the Church to whom the inheritance does not belong, because they were not the offspring of a free parent. From this he proceeds to draw a contrast between two Jerusalems, because as the Law was given on Mount Sinai, but the Gospel proceeded from Jerusalem, so many who were born and brought up in servitude confidently boast that they are the sons of God and of the Church; nay, while they are themselves degenerate, proudly despise the genuine sons of God. Let us also, in like manner, when we hear that it was once declared from heaven, “Cast out the bondmaid and her son,” trust to this inviolable decree, and boldly despise their unmeaning boasts. For if they plume themselves on external profession, Ishmael also was circumcised: if they found on antiquity, he was the first-born: and yet we see that he was rejected. If the reason is asked, Paul assigns it (Rom. 9:6), that those only are accounted sons who are born of the pure and legitimate seed of doctrine. On this ground God declares that he was not astricted to impious priests, though he had made a covenant with their father Levi, to be their angel, or interpreter (Mal. 2:4); nay, he retorts the false boast by which they were wont to rise against the Prophets—namely, that the dignity of the priesthood was to be held in singular estimation. This he himself willingly admits: and he disputes with them, on the ground that he is ready to fulfil the covenant, while they, by not fulfilling it on their part, deserve to be rejected. Here, then, is the value of succession when not conjoined with imitation and corresponding conduct: posterity, as soon as they are convicted of having revolted from their origin, are deprived of all honour; unless, indeed, we are prepared to say, that because Caiaphas succeeded many pious priests (nay, the series from Aaron to him was continuous), that accursed assembly deserved the name of Church. Even in earthly governments, no one would bear to see the tyranny of Caligula, Nero, Heliogabalus, and the like, described as the true condition of a republic, because they succeeded such men as Brutus, Scipio, and Camillus.¹ That in the government of the Church especially, nothing is more absurd than to disregard doctrine, and place succession in persons. Nor, indeed, was anything farther from the intention of the holy teachers, whom they falsely obtrude upon us, than to maintain distinctly that churches exist, as by hereditary right, wherever bishops have been uniformly succeeded by bishops. But while it was without controversy that no change had been made in doctrine from the beginning down to their day, they assumed it to be a sufficient refutation of all their errors, that they were opposed to the doctrine maintained constantly, and with unanimous consent, even by the apostles themselves. They have, therefore, no longer any ground for proceeding to make a gloss of the name of the Church, which we regard with due reverence; but when we come to definition, not only (to use the common expression) does the water adhere to them, but they stick in their own mire, because they substitute a vile prostitute for the sacred spouse of Christ. That the substitution may not deceive us, let us, among other admonitions, attend to the following from Augustine. Speaking of the Church, he says, “She herself is sometimes obscured, and, as it were, beclouded by

1 French, “Or tent s'en faut que cela ait lieu, que mesmes aux gouvernemens terrestres il ne seroit point supportable. Comme il n'y a nul propos de dire que la tyrannie de Caligula, Neron, Heliogabale, et leurs semblables soit le vrai etat de la cite de Rome, pourcequ'ils ont succede aux bons gouverneurs qui estoient establis par la peuple.”—Now, so far is this from being the case, that even in earthly governments it would not be supportable. As there is no ground for saying that the tyranny of Caligula, Nero, Heliogabalus, and the like, is the true state of the city of Rome, because they succeeded the good governors who were established by the people.

a multitude of scandals; sometimes, in a time of tranquillity, she appears quiet and free; sometimes she is covered and tossed by the billows of tribulation and trial.”—(August. ad Vincent. Epist. 48). As instances, he mentions that the strongest pillars of the Church often bravely endured exile for the faith, or lay hid throughout the world.

4. In this way the Romanists assail us in the present day, and terrify the unskilful with the name of Church, while they are the deadly adversaries of Christ. Therefore, although they exhibit a temple, a priesthood, and other similar masks, the empty glare by which they dazzle the eyes of the simple should not move us in the least to admit that there is a Church where the word of God appears not. The Lord furnished us with an unfailing test when he said, “Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice” (John 18:37). Again, “I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.” “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.” A little before he had said, when the shepherd “putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him; for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers” (John 10:14, 4, 5). Why then do we, of our own accord, form so infatuated an estimate of the Church, since Christ has designated it by a sign in which is nothing in the least degree equivocal, a sign which is everywhere seen, the existence of which infallibly proves the existence of the Church, while its absence proves the absence of everything that properly bears the name of Church? Paul declares that the Church is not founded either upon the judgments of men or the priesthood, but upon the doctrine of the Apostles and Prophets (Eph. 2:20). Nay, Jerusalem is to be distinguished from Babylon, the Church of Christ from a conspiracy of Satan, by the discriminating test which our Saviour has applied to them, “He that is of God, heareth God’s words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God” (John 8:47). In short, since the Church is the kingdom of Christ, and he reigns only by his word, can there be any doubt as to the falsehood of those statements by which the kingdom of Christ is represented without his sceptre, in other words, without his sacred word?

5. As to their charge of heresy and schism, because we preach a different doctrine, and submit not to their laws, and meet apart from them for Prayer, Baptism, the administration of the Supper, and other sacred rites, it is indeed a very serious accusation, but one which needs not a long and laboured defence. The name of heretics and schismatics is applied to those who, by dissenting from the Church, destroy its communion. This communion is held together by two chains—viz. consent in sound doctrine and brotherly charity. Hence the distinction which Augustine makes between heretics and schismatics is, that the former corrupt the purity of the faith by false dogmas, whereas the latter sometimes, even while holding the same faith, break the bond of union (August. Lib. Quaest. in Evang. Mt.). But the thing to be observed is, that this union of charity so depends on unity of faith, as to have in it its beginning, its end, in fine, its only rule. Let us therefore remember, that whenever ecclesiastical unity is commended to us, the thing required is, that while our minds consent in Christ, our wills also be united together by mutual good-will in Christ. Accordingly Paul, when he exhorts us to it, takes for his fundamental principle that there is “one God, one faith, one baptism” (Eph. 4:5). Nay, when he tells us to be “of one accord, of one mind,” he im-

mediately adds, “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 2:2, 5); intimating, that where the word of the Lord is not, it is not a union of believers, but a faction of the ungodly.

6. Cyprian, also, following Paul, derives the fountain of ecclesiastical concord from the one bishopric of Christ, and afterwards adds, “There is one Church, which by increase from fecundity is more widely extended to a multitude, just as there are many rays of the sun, but one light, and many branches of a tree, but one trunk upheld by the tenacious root. When many streams flow from one fountain, though there seems wide spreading numerosity from the overflowing copiousness of the supply, yet unity remains in the origin. Pluck a ray from the body of the sun, and the unity sustains no division. Break a branch from a tree, and the branch will not germinate. Cut off a stream from a fountain, that which is thus cut off dries up. So the Church, pervaded by the light of the Lord, extends over the whole globe, and yet the light which is everywhere diffused is one” (Cyprian, de Simpliciter. Praelat.). Words could not more elegantly express the inseparable connection which all the members of Christ have with each other. We see how he constantly calls us back to the head. Accordingly, he declares that when heresies and schisms arise, it is because men return not to the origin of the truth, because they seek not the head, because they keep not the doctrine of the heavenly Master. Let them now go and clamour against us as heretics for having withdrawn from their Church, since the only cause of our estrangement is, that they cannot tolerate a pure profession of the truth. I say nothing of their having expelled us by anathemas and curses. The fact is more than sufficient to excuse us, unless they would also make schismatics of the apostles, with whom we have a common cause. Christ, I say, forewarned his apostles, “they shall put you out of the synagogues” (John 16:2). The synagogues of which he speaks were then held to be lawful churches. Seeing then it is certain that we were cast out, and we are prepared to show that this was done for the name of Christ, the cause should first be ascertained before any decision is given either for or against us. This, however, if they choose, I am willing to leave to them; to me it is enough that we behaved to withdraw from them in order to draw near to Christ.

7. The place which we ought to assign to all the churches on which the tyranny of the Romish idol has seized will better appear if we compare them with the ancient Israelitish Church, as delineated by the prophets. So long as the Jews and Israelites persisted in the laws of the covenant, a true Church existed among them; in other words, they by the kindness of God obtained the benefits of a Church. True doctrine was contained in the law, and the ministry of it was committed to the prophets and priests. They were initiated in religion by the sign of circumcision, and by the other sacraments trained and confirmed in the faith. There can be no doubt that the titles with which the Lord honoured his Church were applicable to their society. After they forsook the law of the Lord, and degenerated into idolatry and superstition, they partly lost the privilege. For who can presume to deny the title of the Church to those with whom the Lord deposited the preaching of his word and the observance of his mysteries? On the other hand, who may presume to give the name of Church, without reservation, to that assembly by which the word of God is openly and with impunity trampled under foot—where his ministry, its chief support, and the very soul of the Church, is destroyed?

8. What then? (some one will say); was there not a particle of the Church left to the Jews from the date of their revolt to idolatry? The answer is easy. First, I say that in the defection itself there were several gradations; for we cannot hold that the lapses by which both Judah and Israel turned aside from the pure worship of God were the same. Jeroboam, when he fabricated the calves against the express prohibition of God, and dedicated an unlawful place for worship, corrupted religion entirely. The Jews became degenerate in manners and superstitious opinions before they made any improper change in the external form of religion. For although they had adopted many perverse ceremonies under Rehoboam, yet, as the doctrine of the law and the priesthood, and the rites which God had instituted, continued at Jerusalem, the pious still had the Church in a tolerable state. In regard to the Israelites, matters which, up to the time of Ahab, had certainly not been reformed, then became worse. Those who succeeded him, until the overthrow of the kingdom, were partly like him, and partly (when they wished to be somewhat better) followed the example of Jeroboam, while all, without exception, were wicked and idolatrous. In Judea different changes now and then took place, some kings corrupting the worship of God by false and superstitious inventions, and others attempting to reform it, until, at length, the priests themselves polluted the temple of God by profane and abominable rites.

9. Now then let the Papists, in order to extenuate their vices as much as possible, deny, if they can, that the state of religion is as much vitiated and corrupted with them as it was in the kingdom of Israel under Jeroboam. They have a grosser idolatry, and in doctrine are not one whit more pure; rather, perhaps, they are even still more impure. God, nay, even those possessed of a moderate degree of judgment, will bear me witness, and the thing itself is too manifest to require me to enlarge upon it. When they would force us to the communion of their Church, they make two demands upon us—first, that we join in their prayers, their sacrifices, and all their ceremonies; and, secondly, that whatever honour, power, and jurisdiction, Christ has given to his Church, the same we must attribute to theirs. In regard to the first, I admit that all the prophets who were at Jerusalem, when matters there were very corrupt, neither sacrificed apart nor held separate meetings for prayer. For they had the command of God, which enjoined them to meet in the temple of Solomon, and they knew that the Levitical priests, whom the Lord had appointed over sacred matters, and who were not yet discarded, how unworthy soever they might be of that honour, were still entitled to hold it¹ (Exod. 24:9). But the principal point in the whole question is, that they were not compelled to any superstitious worship, nay, they undertook nothing but what had been instituted by God. But in these men, I mean the Papists, where is the resemblance? Scarcely can we hold any meeting with them without polluting ourselves with open idolatry. Their principal bond of communion is undoubtedly in the Mass, which we abominate as the greatest sacrilege. Whether this is justly or rashly done will be elsewhere seen (see chap. 18; see also Book 2, chap. 15, sec. 6) It is now sufficient to show that our case is different from

¹ French, "Ils savoient que les pretres Levitiques, combien qu'ils fussent indignes d'un tel office, neanmoins pourcequ'ils avoient ete ordonnez de Dieu, et n'etoient point encore deposez, devoient etre recognus pour ministres legitimes, ayant le degre de pretrise."—They knew that the Levitical priests, although they were unworthy of such an office, nevertheless, because they had been ordained of God, and were not yet deposed, were to be recognised as lawful ministers, having the rank of priesthood.

that of the prophets, who, when they were present at the sacred rites of the ungodly, were not obliged to witness or use any ceremonies but those which were instituted by God. But if we would have an example in all respects similar, let us take one from the kingdom of Israel. Under the ordinance of Jeroboam, circumcision remained, sacrifices were offered, the law was deemed holy, and the God whom they had received from their fathers was worshipped; but in consequence of invented and forbidden modes of worship, everything which was done there God disapproved and condemned. Show me one prophet or pious man who once worshipped or offered sacrifice in Bethel. They knew that they could not do it without defiling themselves with some kind of sacrilege. We hold, therefore, that the communion of the Church ought not to be carried so far by the godly as to lay them under a necessity of following it when it has degenerated to profane and polluted rites.

10. With regard to the second point, our objections are still stronger. For when the Church is considered in that particular point of view as the Church, whose judgment we are bound to revere, whose authority acknowledge, whose admonitions obey, whose censures dread, whose communion religiously cultivate in every respect, we cannot concede that they have a Church, without obliging ourselves to subjection and obedience. Still we are willing to concede what the Prophets conceded to the Jews and Israelites of their day, when with them matters were in a similar, or even in a better condition. For we see how they uniformly exclaim against their meetings as profane conventicles, to which it is not more lawful for them to assent than to abjure God (Isa. 1:14). And certainly if those were churches, it follows, that Elijah, Micaiah, and others in Israel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea, and those of like character in Judah, whom the prophets, priests, and people of their day, hated and execrated more than the uncircumcised, were aliens from the Church of God. If those were churches, then the Church was no longer the pillar of the truth, but the stay of falsehood, not the tabernacle of the living God, but a receptacle of idols. They were, therefore, under the necessity of refusing consent to their meetings, since consent was nothing else than impious conspiracy against God. For this same reason, should any one acknowledge those meetings of the present day, which are contaminated by idolatry, superstition, and impious doctrine, as churches, full communion with which a Christian must maintain so far as to agree with them even in doctrine, he will greatly err. For if they are churches, the power of the keys belongs to them, whereas the keys are inseparably connected with the word which they have put to flight. Again, if they are churches, they can claim the promise of Christ, "Whatsoever ye bind," etc.; whereas, on the contrary, they discard from their communion all who sincerely profess themselves the servants of Christ. Therefore, either the promise of Christ is vain, or in this respect, at least, they are not churches. In fine, instead of the ministry of the word, they have schools of impiety, and sinks of all kinds of error. Therefore, in this point of view, they either are not churches, or no badge will remain by which the lawful meetings of the faithful can be distinguished from the meetings of Turks.

11. Still, as in ancient times, there remained among the Jews certain special privileges of a Church, so in the present day we deny not to the Papists those vestiges of a Church which the Lord has allowed to remain among them amid the dissipation. When the Lord had once made his covenant with the Jews, it was preserved not so much by them as by its own strength, supported by which it with-

stood their impiety. Such, then, is the certainty and constancy of the divine goodness, that the covenant of the Lord continued there and his faith could not be obliterated by their perfidy; nor could circumcision be so profaned by their impure hands as not still to be a true sign and sacrament of his covenant. Hence the children who were born to them the Lord called his own (Ezek. 16:20), though, unless by special blessing, they in no respect belonged to him. So having deposited his covenant in Gaul, Italy, Germany, Spain, and England, when these countries were oppressed by the tyranny of Antichrist, He, in order that his covenant might remain inviolable, first preserved baptism there as an evidence of the covenant;—baptism, which, consecrated by his lips, retains its power in spite of human depravity; secondly, He provided by his providence that there should be other remains also to prevent the Church from utterly perishing. But as in pulling down buildings the foundations and ruins are often permitted to remain, so he did not suffer Antichrist either to subvert his Church from its foundation, or to level it with the ground (though, to punish the ingratitude of men who had despised his word, he allowed a fearful shaking and dismembering to take place), but was pleased that amid the devastation the edifice should remain, though half in ruins.

12. Therefore, while we are unwilling simply to concede the name of Church to the Papists, we do not deny that there are churches among them. The question we raise only relates to the true and legitimate constitution of the Church, implying communion in sacred rites, which are the signs of profession, and especially in doctrine.¹ Daniel and Paul foretold that Antichrist would sit in the temple of God (Dan. 9:27; 2 Thess. 2:4); we regard the Roman Pontiff as the leader and standard-bearer of that wicked and abominable kingdom.² By placing his seat in the temple of God, it is intimated that his kingdom would not be such as to destroy the name either of Christ or of his Church. Hence, then, it is obvious that we do not at all deny that churches remain under his tyranny; churches, however, which by sacrilegious impiety he has profaned, by cruel domination has oppressed, by evil and deadly doctrines like poisoned potions has corrupted and almost slain; churches where Christ lies half-buried, the gospel is suppressed, piety is put to flight, and the worship of God almost abolished; where, in short, all things are in such disorder as to present the appearance of Babylon rather than the holy city of God. In one word, I call them churches, inasmuch as the Lord there wondrously preserves some remains of his people, though miserably torn and scattered, and inasmuch as some symbols of the Church still remain—symbols especially whose efficacy neither the craft of the devil nor human depravity can destroy. But as, on the other hand, those marks to which we ought especially to have respect in this discussion are effaced, I say that the whole body, as well as every single assembly, want the form of a legitimate Church.

1 French, "Mais nous contendons seulement du vrai etat de l'Eglise, qui emporte communion, tant en doctrine, qu'en tout qui appartient à la profession de notre Chretiente;"—but we contend only for the true state of the Church, implying communion, as well as everything which pertains to the profession of our Christianity.

2 The French adds, "pour le moins en l'Eglise Occidentale;"—at least in the Western Church.

CHAPTER 3.

Of the teachers and ministers of the Church. Their election and office.

The three heads of this chapter are,—

1. A few preliminary remarks on Church order, on the end, utility, necessity, and dignity of the Christian ministry, sec. 1-3.
2. A separate consideration of the persons performing Ecclesiastical functions, sec. 4-10.
3. Of the Ordination or calling of the ministers of the Church, sec. 10-16.

Sections.

1. Summary of the chapter. Reasons why God, in governing the Church, uses the ministry of men.
 - a. To declare his condescension.
 - b. To train us to humility and obedience.
 - c. To bind us to each other in mutual charity. These reasons confirmed by Scripture.
2. This ministry of men most useful to the whole Church. Its advantages enumerated.
3. The honourable terms in which the ministry is spoken of. Its necessity established by numerous examples.
4. Second part of the chapter, treating of Ecclesiastical office-bearers in particular. Some of them, as Apostles, Prophets, and Evangelists, temporary. Others, as Pastors and Teachers, perpetual and indispensable.
5. Considering the office of Evangelist and Apostle as one, we have Pastors corresponding with Apostles, and Teachers with Prophets. Why the name of Apostles specially conferred on the twelve.
6. As to the Apostles so also to Pastors the preaching of the Word and the administration of the sacraments has been committed. How the Word should be preached.
7. Regularly every Pastor should have a separate church assigned to him. This, however, admits of modification, when duly and regularly made by public authority.
8. Bishops, Presbyters, Pastors, and Ministers, are used by the Apostles as one and the same. Some functions, as being temporary, are omitted. Two—namely, those of Elders and Deacons—as pertaining to the ministry of the Word, are retained.
9. Distinction between Deacons. Some employed in distributing alms, others in taking care of the poor.
10. Third part of the chapter, treating of the Ordination or calling of the ministers of the Church.
11. A twofold calling—viz. an external and an internal. Mode in which both are to be viewed.
12.
 - a. Who are to be appointed ministers?
 - b. Mode of appointment.

13. c. By whom the appointment is to be made. Why the Apostles were elected by Christ alone. Of the calling and election of St Paul.
14. Ordinary Pastors are designated by other Pastors. Why certain of the Apostles also were designated by men.
15. The election of Pastors does not belong to one individual. Other Pastors should preside, and the people consent and approve.
16. Form in which the ministers of the Church are to be ordained. No express precept but one. Laying on of hands.

1. We are now to speak of the order in which the Lord has been pleased that his Church should be governed. For though it is right that he alone should rule and reign in the Church, that he should preside and be conspicuous in it, and that its government should be exercised and administered solely by his word; yet as he does not dwell among us in visible presence, so as to declare his will to us by his own lips, he in this (as we have said) uses the ministry of men, by making them, as it were, his substitutes,¹ not by transferring his right and honour to them, but only doing his own work by their lips, just as an artificer uses a tool for any purpose. What I have previously expounded (chap. 1 sec. 5) I am again forced to repeat. God might have acted, in this respect, by himself, without any aid or instrument, or might even have done it by angels; but there are several reasons why he rather chooses to employ men.² First, in this way he declares his condescension towards us, employing men to perform the function of his ambassadors in the world, to be the interpreters of his secret will; in short, to represent his own person. Thus he shows by experience that it is not to no purpose he calls us his temples, since by man's mouth he gives responses to men as from a sanctuary. Secondly, it forms a most excellent and useful training to humility, when he accustoms us to obey his word though preached by men like ourselves, or, it may be, our inferiors in worth. Did he himself speak from heaven, it were no wonder if his sacred oracles were received by all ears and minds reverently and without delay. For who would not dread his present power? who would not fall prostrate at the first view of his great majesty? who would not be overpowered by that immeasurable splendour? But when a feeble man, sprung from the dust, speaks in the name of God, we give the best proof of our piety and obedience, by listening with docility to his servant, though not in any respect our superior. Accordingly, he hides the treasure of his heavenly wisdom in frail earthen vessels (2 Cor. 4:7), that he may have a more certain proof of the estimation in which it is held by us. Moreover, nothing was fitter to cherish mutual charity than to bind men together by this tie, appointing one of them as a pastor to teach the others who are enjoined to be disciples, and receive the common doctrine from a single mouth. For did every man suffice for himself, and stand in no need of another's aid (such is the pride of the human intellect), each would despise all others, and be in his turn despised. The Lord, therefore, has astricted his Church to what he foresaw would be the strongest bond of unity when he deposited the doctrine of eternal life and salvation with men, that by their hands he might communicate it to others. To this Paul had respect when he wrote to the Ephesians, "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all,

and through all, and in you all. But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love" (Eph 4:4-16).

2. By these words he shows that the ministry of men, which God employs in governing the Church, is a principal bond by which believers are kept together in one body. He also intimates, that the Church cannot be kept safe, unless supported by those guards to which the Lord has been pleased to commit its safety. Christ "ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things" (Eph. 4:10). The mode of filling is this: By the ministers to whom he has committed this office, and given grace to discharge it, he dispenses and distributes his gifts to the Church, and thus exhibits himself as in a manner actually present by exerting the energy of his Spirit in this his institution, so as to prevent it from being vain or fruitless. In this way, the renewal of the saints is accomplished, and the body of Christ is edified; in this way we grow up in all things unto Him who is the Head, and unite with one another; in this way we are all brought into the unity of Christ, provided prophecy flourishes among us, provided we receive his apostles, and despise not the doctrine which is administered to us. Whoever, therefore, studies to abolish this order and kind of government of which we speak, or disparages it as of minor importance, plots the devastation, or rather the ruin and destruction, of the Church. For neither are the light and heat of the sun, nor meat and drink, so necessary to sustain and cherish the present life, as is the apostolical and pastoral office to preserve a Church in the earth.

3. Accordingly, I have observed above, that God has repeatedly commended its dignity by the titles which he has bestowed upon it, in order that we might hold it in the highest estimation, as among the most excellent of our blessings. He declares, that in raising up teachers, he confers a special benefit on men, when he bids his prophet exclaim, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace" (Isa. 52:7); when he calls the apostles the light of the world and the salt of the earth (Mt. 5:13, 14). Nor could the office be more highly eulogised than when he said, "He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me" (Luke 10:16). But the most striking passage of all is that in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, where Paul treats as it were professedly of this question. He contends, that there is nothing in the Church more noble and glorious than the ministry of the Gospel, seeing it is the administration of

1 Latin, "quasi vicariam operam."—French, "les faisons comme ses lieutenans;"—making them as it were his substitutes.

2 See on this subject August. de Doctrina Christiana, Lib. 1

the Spirit of righteousness and eternal life. These and similar passages should have the effect of preventing that method of governing and maintaining the Church by ministers, a method which the Lord has ratified for ever, from seeming worthless in our eyes, and at length becoming obsolete by contempt. How very necessary it is, he has declared not only by words but also by examples. When he was pleased to shed the light of his truth in greater effulgence on Cornelius, he sent an angel from heaven to despatch Peter to him (Acts 10:3). When he was pleased to call Paul to the knowledge of himself, and ingraft him into the Church, he does not address him with his own voice, but sends him to a man from whom he may both obtain the doctrine of salvation and the sanctification of baptism (Acts 9:6-20). If it was not by mere accident that the angel, who is the interpreter of God, abstains from declaring the will of God, and orders a man to be called to declare it; that Christ, the only Master of believers, commits Paul to the teaching of a man, that Paul whom he had determined to carry into the third heaven, and honour with a wondrous revelation of things that could not be spoken (2 Cor. 12:2), who will presume to despise or disregard as superfluous that ministry, whose utility God has been pleased to attest by such evidence?

4. Those who preside over the government of the Church, according to the institution of Christ, are named by Paul, first, Apostles; secondly, Prophets; thirdly, Evangelists; fourthly, Pastors; and, lastly, Teachers (Eph. 4:11). Of these, only the two last have an ordinary office in the Church. The Lord raised up the other three at the beginning of his kingdom, and still occasionally raises them up when the necessity of the times requires. The nature of the apostolic function is clear from the command, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). No fixed limits are given them, but the whole world is assigned to be reduced under the obedience of Christ, that by spreading the Gospel as widely as they could, they might everywhere erect his kingdom. Accordingly, Paul, when he would approve his apostleship, does not say that he had acquired some one city for Christ, but had propagated the Gospel far and wide—had not built on another man's foundation, but planted churches where the name of his Lord was unheard. The apostles, therefore, were sent forth to bring back the world from its revolt to the true obedience of God, and everywhere establish his kingdom by the preaching of the Gospel; or, if you choose, they were like the first architects of the Church, to lay its foundations throughout the world. By Prophets, he means not all interpreters of the divine will, but those who excelled by special revelation; none such now exist, or they are less manifest. By Evangelists, I mean those who, while inferior in rank to the apostles, were next them in office, and even acted as their substitutes. Such were Luke, Timothy, Titus, and the like; perhaps, also, the seventy disciples whom our Saviour appointed in the second place to the apostles (Luke 10:1). According to this interpretation, which appears to me consonant both to the words and the meaning of Paul, those three functions were not instituted in the Church to be perpetual, but only to endure so long as churches were to be formed where none previously existed, or at least where churches were to be transferred from Moses to Christ; although I deny not, that afterward God occasionally raised up Apostles, or at least Evangelists, in their stead, as has been done in our time. For such were needed to bring back the Church from the revolt of Antichrist. The office I nevertheless call extraordinary, because it has no place in churches duly constituted. Next come Pastors and Teachers, with whom the Church never can dispense, and between

whom, I think, there is this difference, that teachers preside not over discipline, or the administration of the sacraments, or admonitions, or exhortations, but the interpretation of Scripture only, in order that pure and sound doctrine may be maintained among believers. But all these are embraced in the pastoral office.

5. We now understand what offices in the government of the Church were temporary, and what offices were instituted to be of perpetual duration. But if we class evangelists with apostles, we shall have two like offices in a manner corresponding to each other. For the same resemblance which our teachers have to the ancient prophets pastors have to the apostles. The prophetic office was more excellent in respect of the special gift of revelation which accompanied it, but the office of teachers was almost of the same nature, and had altogether the same end. In like manner, the twelve, whom the Lord chose to publish the new preaching of the Gospel to the world (Luke 6:13), excelled others in rank and dignity. For although, from the nature of the case, and etymology of the word, all ecclesiastical officers may be properly called apostles, because they are all sent by the Lord and are his messengers, yet as it was of great importance that a sure attestation should be given to the mission of those who delivered a new and extraordinary message, it was right that the twelve (to the number of whom Paul was afterwards added) should be distinguished from others by a peculiar title. The same name, indeed, is given by Paul to Andronicus and Junia, who, he says, were "of note among the apostles" (Rom. 16:7); but when he would speak properly, he confines the term to that primary order. And this is the common use of Scripture. Still pastors (except that each has the government of a particular church assigned to him) have the same function as apostles. The nature of this function let us now see still more clearly.

6. When our Lord sent forth the apostles, he gave them a commission (as has been lately said) to preach the Gospel, and baptise those who believed for the remission of sins. He had previously commanded that they should distribute the sacred symbols of his body and blood after his example (Mt. 28:19; Luke 22:19). Such is the sacred, inviolable, and perpetual law, enjoined on those who succeed to the place of the apostles,—they receive a commission to preach the Gospel and administer the sacraments. Whence we infer that those who neglect both of these falsely pretend to the office of apostles. But what shall we say of pastors? Paul speaks not of himself only but of all pastors, when he says, "Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God" (I Cor. 4:1). Again, in another passage, he describes a bishop as one "holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and convince the gainsayers" (Tit. 1:9). From these and similar passages which everywhere occur, we may infer that the two principal parts of the office of pastors are to preach the Gospel and administer the sacraments. But the method of teaching consists not merely in public addresses, it extends also to private admonitions. Thus Paul takes the Ephesians to witness, "I kept back nothing that was profitable to you, but have showed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." A little after he says, "Remember, that, for the space of three years, I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears" (Acts 20:20, 31). Our present purpose, however, is not to enumerate the separate qualities of a good pastor, but only to indicate what

those profess who call themselves pastors—viz. that in presiding over the Church they have not an indolent dignity, but must train the people to true piety by the doctrine of Christ, administer the sacred mysteries, preserve and exercise right discipline. To those who are set as watchmen in the Church the Lord declares, “When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand” (Ezek. 3:18). What Paul says of himself is applicable to all pastors: “For though I preach the Gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel” (1 Cor. 4:16). In short, what the apostles did to the whole world, every pastor should do to the flock over which he is appointed.

7. While we assign a church to each pastor, we deny not that he who is fixed to one church may assist other churches, whether any disturbance has occurred which requires his presence, or his advice is asked on some doubtful matter. But because that policy is necessary to maintain the peace of the Church, each has his proper duty assigned, lest all should become disorderly, run up and down without any certain vocation, flock together promiscuously to one spot, and capriciously leave the churches vacant, being more solicitous for their own convenience than for the edification of the Church. This arrangement ought, as far as possible, to be commonly observed, that every one, content with his own limits, may not encroach on another’s province. Nor is this a human invention. It is an ordinance of God. For we read that Paul and Barnabas appointed presbyters over each of the churches of Lystra, Antioch, and Iconium (Acts 14:23); and Paul himself enjoins Titus to ordain presbyters in every town (Tit. 1:5). In like manner, he mentions the bishops of the Philippians, and Archippus, the bishop of the Colossians (Phil. 1:1; Col. 4:17). And in the Acts we have his celebrated address to the presbyters of the Church of Ephesus (Acts 20:28). Let every one, then, who undertakes the government and care of one church, know that he is bound by this law of divine vocation, not that he is astricted to the soil (as lawyers speak), that is, enslaved, and, as it were, fixed, as to be unable to move a foot if public utility so require, and the thing is done duly and in order; but he who has been called to one place ought not to think of removing, nor seek to be set free when he deems it for his own advantage. Again, if it is expedient for any one to be transferred to another place, he ought not to attempt it of his own private motive, but to wait for public authority.

8. In giving the name of bishops, presbyters, and pastors, indiscriminately to those who govern churches, I have done it on the authority of Scripture, which uses the words as synonymous. To all who discharge the ministry of the word it gives the name of bishops. Thus Paul, after enjoining Titus to ordain elders in every city, immediately adds, “A bishop must be blameless,” etc. (Tit. 1:5, 7). So in another place he salutes several bishops in one church (Phil. 1:1). And in the Acts, the elders of Ephesus, whom he is said to have called together, he, in the course of his address, designates as bishops (Acts 20:17). Here it is to be observed, that we have hitherto enumerated those offices only which consist in the ministry of the word; nor does Paul make mention of any others in the passage which we have quoted from the fourth chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians. But in the Epistle to the Romans, and the First Epistle to the Corinthians, he enumerates other offices, as powers,

gifts of healing, interpretation, government, care of the poor (Rom. 12:7; 1 Cor. 12:28). As to those which were temporary, I say nothing, for it is not worth while to dwell upon them. But there are two of perpetual duration—viz. government and care of the poor. By these governors I understand seniors selected from the people to unite with the bishops in pronouncing censures and exercising discipline. For this is the only meaning which can be given to the passage, “He that ruleth with diligence” (Rom. 12:8). From the beginning, therefore, each church had its senate,¹ composed of pious, grave, and venerable men, in whom was lodged the power of correcting faults. Of this power we shall afterwards speak. Moreover, experience shows that this arrangement was not confined to one age, and therefore we are to regard the office of government as necessary for all ages.

9. The care of the poor was committed to deacons, of whom two classes are mentioned by Paul in the Epistle to the Romans, “He that giveth, let him do it with simplicity;” “he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness” (Rom. 12:8). As it is certain that he is here speaking of public offices of the Church, there must have been two distinct classes. If I mistake not, he in the former clause designates deacons, who administered alms; in the latter, those who had devoted themselves to the care of the poor and the sick. Such were the widows of whom he makes mention in the Epistle to Timothy (1 Tim. 5:10). For there was no public office which women could discharge save that of devoting themselves to the service of the poor. If we admit this (and it certainly ought to be admitted), there will be two classes of deacons, the one serving the Church by administering the affairs of the poor; the other, by taking care of the poor themselves. For although the term *diakoni’a* has a more extensive meaning, Scripture specially gives the name of deacons to those whom the Church appoints to dispense alms, and take care of the poor, constituting them as it were stewards of the public treasury of the poor. Their origin, institution, and office, is described by Luke (Acts 6:3). When a murmuring arose among the Greeks, because in the administration of the poor their widows were neglected, the apostles, excusing themselves that they were unable to discharge both offices, to preach the word and serve tables, requested the multitude to elect seven men of good report, to whom the office might be committed. Such deacons as the Apostolic Church had, it becomes us to have after her example.

10. Now seeing that in the sacred assembly all things ought to be done decently and in order (1 Cor. 14:40), there is nothing in which this ought to be more carefully observed than in settling government, irregularity in any respect being nowhere more perilous. Wherefore, lest restless and turbulent men should presumptuously push themselves forward to teach or rule (an event which actually was to happen), it was expressly provided that no one should assume a public office in the Church without a call (Heb. 5:4; Jer. 17:16). Therefore, if any one would be deemed a true minister of the Church, he must first be duly called; and, secondly, he must answer to his calling; that is, undertake and execute the office assigned to him. This may often be observed in Paul, who, when he would approve his apostleship, almost always alleges a call, together with his fidelity in discharging the office. If so great a minister of Christ dares not arrogate to himself authority to be heard in the Church, unless as having been appointed to it by the command

¹ Latin, “*senatum*.”—French, “*conseil ou consistoire*;”—council or consistory.

of his Lord, and faithfully performing what has been intrusted to him, how great the effrontery for any man, devoid of one or both of them, to demand for himself such honour. But as we have already touched on the necessity of executing the office, let us now treat only of the call.

11. The subject is comprehended under four heads—viz. who are to be appointed ministers, in what way, by whom, and with what rite or initiatory ceremony. I am speaking of the external and formal call which relates to the public order of the Church, while I say nothing of that secret call of which every minister is conscious before God, but has not the Church as a witness of it; I mean, the good testimony of our heart, that we undertake the offered office neither from ambition nor avarice, nor any other selfish feeling, but a sincere fear of God and desire to edify the Church. This, as I have said, is indeed necessary for every one of us, if we would approve our ministry to God. Still, however, a man may have been duly called by the Church, though he may have accepted with a bad conscience, provided his wickedness is not manifest. It is usual also to say, that private men are called to the ministry when they seem fit and apt to discharge it; that is, because learning, conjoined with piety and the other endowments of a good pastor, is a kind of preparation for the office. For those whom the Lord has destined for this great office he previously provides with the armour which is requisite for the discharge of it, that they may not come empty and unprepared. Hence Paul, in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, when treating of the offices, first enumerates the gifts in which those who performed the offices ought to excel. But as this is the first of the four heads which I mentioned, let us now proceed to it.

12. What persons should be elected bishops is treated at length by Paul in two passages (Tit. 1:7; 1 Tim. 3:1). The substance is, that none are to be chosen save those who are of sound doctrine and holy lives, and not notorious for any defect which might destroy their authority and bring disgrace on the ministry. The description of deacons and elders is entirely similar (see chapter 4 sec. 10-13). We must always take care that they are not unfit for or unequal to the burden imposed upon them; in other words, that they are provided with the means which will be necessary to fulfil their office. Thus our Saviour, when about to send his apostles, provided them with the arms and instruments which were indispensably requisite.¹ And Paul, after portraying the character of a good and genuine bishop, admonishes Timothy not to contaminate himself by choosing an improper person for the office. The expression, in what way, I use not in reference to the rite of choosing, but only to the religious fear which is to be observed in election. Hence the fastings and prayers which Luke narrates that the faithful employed when they elected presbyters (Acts 14:23). For, understanding that the business was the most serious in which they could engage, they did not venture to act without the greatest reverence and solicitude. But above all, they were earnest in prayer, imploring from God the spirit of wisdom and discernment.

13. The third division which we have adopted is, by whom ministers are to be chosen. A certain rule on this head cannot be obtained from the appointment of the apostles, which was somewhat different from the common call of others. As theirs was an

extraordinary ministry, in order to render it conspicuous by some more distinguished mark, those who were to discharge it behoved to be called and appointed by the mouth of the Lord himself. It was not, therefore, by any human election, but at the sole command of God and Christ, that they prepared themselves for the work. Hence, when the apostles were desirous to substitute another in the place of Judas, they did not venture to nominate any one certainly, but brought forward two, that the Lord might declare by lot which of them he wished to succeed (Acts 1:23). In this way we ought to understand Paul's declaration, that he was made an apostle, "not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father" (Gal. 1:1). The former—viz. not of men—he had in common with all the pious ministers of the word, for no one could duly perform the office unless called by God. The other was proper and peculiar to him. And while he glories in it, he boasts that he had not only what pertains to a true and lawful pastor, but he also brings forward the insignia of his apostleship. For when there were some among the Galatians who, seeking to disparage his authority, represented him as some ordinary disciple, substituted in place of the primary apostles, he, in order to maintain unimpaired the dignity of his ministry, against which he knew that these attempts were made, felt it necessary to show that he was in no respect inferior to the other apostles. Accordingly, he affirms that he was not chosen by the judgment of men, like some ordinary bishop, but by the mouth and manifest oracle of the Lord himself.

14. But no sober person will deny that the regular mode of lawful calling is, that bishops should be designated by men, since there are numerous passages of Scripture to this effect. Nor, as has been said, is there anything contrary to this in Paul's protestation, that he was not sent either of man, or by man, seeing he is not there speaking of the ordinary election of ministers, but claiming for himself what was peculiar to the apostles: although the Lord in thus selecting Paul by special privilege, subjected him in the meantime to the discipline of an ecclesiastical call: for Luke relates, "As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them" (Acts 13:2). Why this separation and laying on of hands after the Holy Spirit had attested their election, unless that ecclesiastical discipline might be preserved in appointing ministers by men? God could not give a more illustrious proof of his approbation of this order, than by causing Paul to be set apart by the Church after he had previously declared that he had appointed him to be the Apostle of the Gentiles. The same thing we may see in the election of Matthias. As the apostolic office was of such importance that they did not venture to appoint any one to it of their own judgment, they bring forward two, on one of whom the lot might fall, that thus the election might have a sure testimony from heaven, and, at the same time, the policy of the Church might not be disregarded.

15. The next question is, Whether a minister should be chosen by the whole Church, or only by colleagues and elders, who have the charge of discipline; or whether they may be appointed by the authority of one individual?² Those who attribute this right to one individual quote the words of Paul to Titus "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city" (Tit. 1:5); and also to Timothy, "Lay hands suddenly on no man" (1 Tim. 5:22). But they

¹ Luke 21:15; 24:49; Mark 6:15; Acts 1 8; 1 Tim. 5:22.

² See chap. 4 sec. 10, 11; chap. 5 sec. 2, 3. Also Calv. in Acts 6:3, and Luther, tom. 2 p 374.

are mistaken if they suppose that Timothy so reigned at Ephesus, and Titus in Crete, as to dispose of all things at their own pleasure. They only presided by previously giving good and salutary counsels to the people, not by doing alone whatever pleased them, while all others were excluded. Lest this should seem to be a fiction of mine, I will make it plain by a similar example. Luke relates that Barnabas and Paul ordained elders throughout the churches, but he at the same time marks the plan or mode when he says that it was done by suffrage. The words are, *Cheirotone'santes presbute'rous kat' ekklesi'an* (Acts 14:23). They therefore selected (*creabant*) two; but the whole body, as was the custom of the Greeks in elections, declared by a show of hands which of the two they wished to have. Thus it is not uncommon for Roman historians to say, that the consul who held the *comitia* elected the new magistrates, for no other reason but because he received the suffrages, and presided over the people at the election. Certainly it is not credible that Paul conceded more to Timothy and Titus than he assumed to himself. Now we see that his custom was to appoint bishops by the suffrages of the people. We must therefore interpret the above passages, so as not to infringe on the common right and liberty of the Church. Rightly, therefore, does Cyprian contend for it as of divine authority, that the priest be chosen in presence of the people, before the eyes of all, and be approved as worthy and fit by public judgment and testimony, (Cyprian, Lib. 1 Ep. 3). Indeed, we see that by the command of the Lord, the practice in electing the Levitical priests was to bring them forward in view of the people before consecration. Nor is Matthias enrolled among the number of the apostles, nor are the seven deacons elected in any other way, than at the sight and approval of the people (Acts 6:2). "Those examples," says Cyprian, "show that the ordination of a priest behoved not to take place, unless under the consciousness of the people assisting, so that that ordination was just and legitimate which was vouched by the testimony of all." We see, then, that ministers are legitimately called according to the word of God, when those who may have seemed fit are elected on the consent and approbation of the people. Other pastors, however, ought to preside over the election, lest any error should be committed by the general body either through levity, or bad passion, or tumult.

16. It remains to consider the form of ordination, to which we have assigned the last place in the call (see chap. 4, sec. 14, 15). It is certain, that when the apostles appointed any one to the ministry, they used no other ceremony than the laying on of hands. This form was derived, I think, from the custom of the Jews, who, by the laying on of hands, in a manner presented to God whatever they wished to be blessed and consecrated. Thus Jacob, when about to bless Ephraim and Manasseh, placed his hands upon their heads (Gen. 48:14). The same thing was done by our Lord, when he prayed over the little children (Mt. 19:15). With the same intent (as I imagine), the Jews, according to the injunction of the law, laid hands upon their sacrifices. Wherefore, the apostles, by the laying on of hands, intimated that they made an offering to God of him whom they admitted to the ministry; though they also did the same thing over those on whom they conferred the visible gifts of the Spirit (Acts 8:17; 19:6). However this be, it was the regular form, whenever they called any one to the sacred ministry. In this way they consecrated pastors and teachers; in this way they consecrated deacons. But though there is no fixed precept concerning the laying on of hands, yet as we see that it was uniformly observed by the apostles, this careful observance ought to be regarded by us in the light of a precept (see chap. 14, sec. 20; chap.

19, sec. 31). And it is certainly useful, that by such a symbol the dignity of the ministry should be commended to the people, and he who is ordained, reminded that he is no longer his own, but is bound in service to God and the Church. Besides, it will not prove an empty sign, if it be restored to its genuine origin. For if the Spirit of God has not instituted anything in the Church in vain, this ceremony of his appointment we shall feel not to be useless, provided it be not superstitiously abused. Lastly, it is to be observed, that it was not the whole people, but only pastors, who laid hands on ministers, though it is uncertain whether or not several always laid their hands: it is certain, that in the case of the deacons, it was done by Paul and Barnabas, and some few others (Acts 6:6; 13:3). But in another place, Paul mentions that he himself, without any others, laid hands on Timothy. "Wherefore, I put thee in remembrance, that thou stir up the gift of God which is in thee, by the putting on of my hands" (2 Tim. 1:6). For what is said in the First Epistle, of the laying on of the hands of the presbytery, I do not understand as if Paul were speaking of the college of Elders. By the expression, I understand the ordination itself; as if he had said, Act so, that the gift which you received by the laying on of hands, when I made you a presbyter, may not be in vain.