

THE THIRD BOOK.

CONCERNING THEIR SECOND ASSERTION, THAT IN SCRIPTURE THERE
MUST BE OF NECESSITY CONTAINED A FORM OF CHURCH POLITY,
THE LAWS WHEREOF MAY IN NOWISE BE ALTERED.

THE MATTER CONTAINED IN THIS THIRD BOOK.

- I. What the Church is, and in what respect Laws of Polity are thereunto necessarily required.
- II. Whether it be necessary that some particular Form of Church Polity be set down in Scripture, sith the things that belong particularly to any such Form are not of necessity to Salvation.
- III. That matters of Church Polity are different from matters of Faith and Salvation, and that they themselves so teach which are our reprovers for so teaching.
- IV. That hereby we take not from Scripture any thing which thereunto with the soundness of truth may be given.
- V. Their meaning who first urged against the Polity of the Church of England, that nothing ought to be established in the Church more than is commanded by the Word of God.
- VI. How great injury men by so thinking should offer unto all the Churches of God.
- VII. A shift notwithstanding to maintain it, by interpreting *commanded*, as though it were meant that greater things only ought to be found set down in Scripture particularly, and lesser framed by the general rules of Scripture.
- VIII. Another device to defend the same, by expounding *commanded*, as if it did signify *grounded* on Scripture, and were opposed to things found out by light of natural reason only.
- IX. How Laws for the Polity of the Church may be made by the advice of men, and how those Laws being not repugnant to the Word of God are approved in his sight.
- X. That neither God's being the Author of Laws, nor yet his committing of them to Scripture, is any reason sufficient to prove that they admit no addition or change.
- XI. Whether Christ must needs intend Laws unchangeable altogether, or have forbidden any where to make any other Law than himself did deliver.

BOOK II. I.
Ch. i. 1, 2.

What the Church is, and in what respect Laws of Polity are thereunto necessarily required.

I. ALBEIT the substance of those controversies whereinto we have begun to wade be rather of outward things appertaining to the Church of Christ, than of any thing wherein the nature and being of the Church consisteth, yet because the subject or matter which this position concerneth is, *A Form of Church Government or Church Polity*, it therefore behoveth us so far forth to consider the nature of the Church, as is requisite for men's more clear and plain understanding in what respect Laws of Polity or Government are necessary thereunto.

[2.] That Church of Christ, which we properly term his body mystical, can be but one; neither can that one be sensibly discerned by any man, inasmuch as the parts thereof are some in heaven already with Christ, and the rest that are on earth (albeit their natural persons be visible) we do not discern under this property, whereby they are truly and infallibly of that body. Only our minds by intellectual conceit are able to apprehend, that such a real body there is, a body collective, because it containeth an huge multitude; a body mystical, because the mystery of their conjunction is removed altogether from sense. Whatsoever we read in Scripture concerning the endless love and the saving mercy which God sheweth towards his Church, the only proper subject thereof is this Church. Concerning this flock it is that our Lord and Saviour hath promised, "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hands¹." They who are of this society have such marks and notes of distinction from all others, as are not object unto our sense; only unto God, who seeth their hearts and understandeth all their secret cogitations, unto him they are clear and manifest. All men knew Nathanael to be an Israelite. But our Saviour piercing deeper giveth further testimony of him than men could have done with such certainty as he did, "Behold indeed an Israelite in whom is no guile²." If we profess, as Peter did³, that we love the Lord, and profess it in the hearing of men, charity is prone to believe all things, and therefore charitable men are likely to think we do so, as long as they see no proof to the contrary.

¹ John x. 28.² John i. 47.³ John xxi. 15.BOOK III.
Ch. i. 3, 4.

But that our love is sound and sincere, that it cometh from "a pure heart and a good conscience and a faith unfeigned¹," who can pronounce, saving only the Searcher of all men's hearts, who alone intuitively doth know in this kind who are His?

[3.] And as those everlasting promises of love, mercy, and blessedness belong to the mystical Church; even so on the other side when we read of any duty which the Church of God is bound unto, the Church whom this doth concern is a sensibly known company. And this visible Church in like sort is but one, continued from the first beginning of the world to the last end. Which company being divided into two moieties, the one before, the other since the coming of Christ; that part, which since the coming of Christ partly hath embraced and partly shall hereafter embrace the Christian Religion, we term as by a more proper name the Church of Christ. And therefore the Apostle affirmeth plainly of all men Christian², that be they Jews or Gentiles, bond or free, they are all incorporated into one company, they all make but *one body*³. The unity of which visible body and Church of Christ consisteth in that uniformity which all several persons thereunto belonging have, by reason of that *one Lord* whose servants they all profess themselves, that *one Faith* which they all acknowledge, that *one Baptism* wherewith they are all initiated⁴.

[4.] The visible Church of Jesus Christ is therefore one, in outward profession of those things, which supernaturally appertain to the very essence of Christianity, and are necessarily required in every particular Christian man. "Let all the house of Israel know for certainty," saith Peter, "that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, even this Jesus whom you have crucified⁵." Christians therefore they are not, which call not him their Master and Lord⁶. And from hence it came that first at Antioch, and afterwards throughout the whole world, all that are of the Church visible were

¹ 1 Tim. i. 5.² 1 Cor. xii. 13.³ "That he might reconcile both unto God in one body." Ephes. ii. 16. "That the Gentiles should be inheritors also, and of the same

"body." Ephes. iii. 6. Vide Th. p. 3. q. 7. art. 3. [should it not be "q. 8. art. 3?"]

⁴ [Ephes. iv. 5.]⁵ Acts ii. 36.⁶ John xiii. 13; Col. iii. 24. iv. 1.

BOOK III. called Christians even amongst the heathen. Which name
Ch. i. 5. unto them was precious and glorious, but in the estimation of
the rest of the world even Christ Jesus himself was execrable¹; for whose sake all men were so likewise which did acknowledge him to be their Lord. This himself did foresee, and therefore armed his Church, to the end they might sustain it without discomfort. "All these things they will do unto you for my name's sake; yea, the time shall come, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doth God good service²." "These things I tell you, that when the hour shall come, ye may then call to mind how I told you beforehand of them³."

[5.] But our naming of Jesus Christ the Lord is not enough to prove us Christians, unless we also embrace that faith, which Christ hath published unto the world. To shew that the angel of Pergamus continued in Christianity, behold how the Spirit of Christ speaketh, "Thou keepest my name, and thou hast not denied my faith⁴." Concerning which faith, "the rule thereof," saith Tertullian, "is one alone, immovable, and no way possible to be better framed anew⁵." What rule that is he sheweth by rehearsing those few articles of Christian belief. And before Tertullian, Ireney; "The Church though scattered through the whole world unto the utmost borders of the earth, hath from the Apostles and their disciples received belief⁶." The

¹ 1 Cor. i. 23. Vide et Tacitum, lib. Annal. xv. [c. 44.] "Nero quæsitissimis pœnis affecit quos per flagitia invisos vulgus Christianos appellabat. Auctor nominis ejus Christus, qui Tiberio imperitante per procuratorem Pontium Pilatum supplicio affectus erat. Re-pressaque in præsens exitiabilis superstitio rursus erumpebat, non modo per Judæam, originem ejus mali, sed per urbem etiam, quo cuncta undique atrociora aut pudenda confluunt celebranturque."

² John xv. 21.

³ John xvi. 2. 4.

⁴ Apoc. ii. 13.

⁵ Tertull. de Virgin. Veland. [c. 1:] "Regula quidem fidei una omnino est, sola immobilis et irre-

formabilis."

⁶ Iren. advers. Hæres. lib. i. cap. 2 et 3. [Ἡ μὲν ἐκκλησία, καίπερ καθ' ὅλης τῆς οἰκουμένης ἕως περάτων τῆς γῆς διεσπαρμένη, παρὰ δὲ τῶν Ἀποστόλων καὶ τῶν ἐκείνων μαθητῶν παραλαβοῦσα τὴν . . . πίστιν . . .]

And c. iii: Ταύτην τὴν πίστιν, ὡς προέφημεν, ἡ ἐκκλησία, καίπερ ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ κόσμῳ διεσπαρμένη, ἐπιμελῶς φυλάσσει, ὡς ἓνα οἶκον οἰκοῦσα καὶ ὁμοίως πιστεύει τοῖς τοῖς, ὡς μίαν ψυχὴν καὶ τὴν αὐτὴν ἔχουσα καρδίαν καὶ συμφώνως ταῦτα κηρύσσει καὶ διδάσκει καὶ παραδίδωσιν, ὡς ἐν στόμα κεκτημένη . . . καὶ οὔτε ὁ πᾶν δύνατος ἐν λόγῳ τῶν ἐν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις προεστῶτων ἕτερα τούτων ἐρεῖ. . . οὔτε ὁ ἀσθενὴς ἐν τῇ λόγῳ ἑλαττώσει τὴν παράδοσιν.]

parts of which belief he also reciteth, in substance the very same with Tertullian, and thereupon inferreth, "This faith the Church being spread far and wide preserveth as if one house did contain them: these things it equally embraceth, as though it had even one soul, one heart, and no more: it publisheth, teacheth and delivereth these things with uniform consent, as if God had given it but one only tongue wherewith to speak. He which amongst the guides of the Church is best able to speak uttereth no more than this, and less than this the most simple doth not utter," when they make profession of their faith.

[6.] Now although we know the Christian faith and allow of it, yet in this respect we are but entering; entered we are not into the visible Church before our admittance by the door of Baptism. Wherefore immediately upon the acknowledgment of Christian faith, the Eunuch (we see) was baptized by Philip¹, Paul by Ananias², by Peter an huge multitude containing three thousand souls³, which being once baptized were reckoned in the number of souls added to the visible Church.

[7.] As for those virtues that belong unto moral righteousness and honesty of life, we do not mention them, because they are not proper unto Christian men, as they are Christian, but do concern them as they are men. True it is, the want of these virtues excludeth from salvation⁴. So doth much

¹ Acts viii. 38.

² Acts xxii. 16.

³ Acts ii. 41.

⁴ [Chr. Letter, p. 8: "Whether you mean . . . that morall virtues are any where rightlie taught but in holy Scripture: or that where-soever they be taught, they be of such necessitie, that the wante of them exclude from salvation, and what Scripture approveth such a saying?"]

Hooker, MS. note: "A doctrine which would well have pleased Caligula, Nero, and such other monsters to hear. Had the apostles taught this it might have advanced them happily to honour. The contrary doctrine hath cost many saints and martyrs their lives."

Ibid. p. 13: "The very cause why good workes cannot justify is for that evell workes do exclude from salvation: and the most righteous in some things offend. Vid. Philon. p. 205." (εἰ γὰρ βουλευθεὶς ὁ θεὸς δικάζει τῷ θνητῷ χάρις ἐλείου, τὴν καταδικάζουσιν ψῆφον οἴσει, μηδενὸς ἀνθρώπων τὸν ἀπὸ γενέσεως μέχρι τελευτῆς βίου ἀπταιστον ἐξ ἑαυτοῦ δραμόντος, ἀλλὰ τοῦ μὲν ἐκουσίοις, τοῦ δὲ ἀκουσίοις χρησαμένου τοῖς ἐν ποσὶν ὀλισθήμασιν.)

And again, ibid.: "The workes of heathen men not acceptable propter pravum agendi principium. Vide Eucher." ("Licet dicere, Philosophiæ alios nomen usurpasse, nos vitam. Etenim, qualia ab his dari possunt præcepta vivendi?

BOOK III.
Ch. i. 8.
more the absence of inward belief of heart; so doth despair and lack of hope; so emptiness of Christian love and charity. But we speak now of the visible Church, whose children are signed with this mark, "One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism." In whomsoever these things are, the Church doth acknowledge them for her children; them only she holdeth for aliens and strangers, in whom these things are not found. For want of these it is that Saracens, Jews, and Infidels are excluded out of the bounds of the Church. Others we may not deny to be of the visible Church, as long as these things are not wanting in them. For apparent it is, that all men are of necessity either Christians or not Christians. If by external profession they be Christians, then are they of the visible Church of Christ: and Christians by external profession they are all, whose mark of recognizance hath in it those things which we have mentioned, yea, although they be impious idolaters, wicked heretics, persons excommunicable, yea, and cast out for notorious improbity. Such withal we deny not to be the imps and limbs of Satan, even as long as they continue such.

[8.] Is it then possible, that the selfsame men should belong both to the synagogue of Satan and to the Church of Jesus Christ? Unto that Church which is his mystical body, not possible; because that body consisteth of none but only true Israelites, true sons of Abraham, true servants and saints of God. Howbeit of the visible body and Church of Jesus Christ those may be and oftentimes are, in respect of the main parts of their outward profession, who in regard of their inward disposition of mind, yea, of external conversation, yea, even of some parts of their very profession, are most worthily both hateful in the sight of God himself, and in the eyes of the sounder parts of the visible Church most execrable. Our Saviour therefore compareth the kingdom of

"Causam nesciunt: ignorantes
"enim Deum, et statim ab exordio
"iustitiæ declinantes, consequenti
"in cætera feruntur errore. Sic
"fit postea, ut studiorum talium
"finis sit vanitas. Siqui apud illos
"honestiora definiunt, huic jactan-
"tiæ deservunt, huic laborant: ita
"apud eos non est vacua vitiis ab-

"stinentia vitiorum." Epist. ad
Valerian. in Bibl. Patr. Colon. 1618.
t. iv. p. 777.)

And again, *ibid.*: "Morall
"workes done in faith, hope and
"charitie are accepted and rewarded
"with God, the want thereof pun-
"ished with eternal death. Noe
"fornicator, adulterer, &c."]

heaven to a net, whereunto all which cometh neither is nor seemeth fish¹: his Church he compareth unto a field, where tares manifestly known and seen by all men do grow intermingled with good corn², and even so shall continue till the final consummation of the world. God hath had ever and ever shall have some Church visible upon earth. When the people of God worshipped the calf in the wilderness³; when they adored the brazen serpent⁴; when they served the gods of nations; when they bowed their knees to Baal⁵; when they burnt incense and offered sacrifice unto idols⁶: true it is, the wrath of God was most fiercely inflamed against them, their prophets justly condemned them, as an adulterous seed⁷ and a wicked generation of miscreants, which had forsaken the living God⁸, and of him were likewise forsaken⁹, in respect of that singular mercy wherewith he kindly and lovingly embraceth his faithful children. Howbeit retaining the law of God and the holy seal of his covenant, the sheep of his visible flock they continued even in the depth of their disobedience and rebellion¹⁰. Wherefore not only *amongst* them God always had his Church, because he had thousands which never bowed their knees to Baal¹¹; but whose knees were bowed unto Baal, even they were also of the visible Church of God. Nor did the Prophet so complain, as if that Church had been quite and clean extinguished; but he took it as though there had not been remaining in the world any besides himself, that carried a true and an upright heart towards God with care to serve him according unto his holy will.

[9.] For lack of diligent observing the difference, first between the Church of God mystical and visible, then between the visible sound and corrupted, sometimes more, sometimes less, the oversights are neither few nor light that have been committed. This deceiveth them, and nothing else, who think that in the time of the first world the family of Noah did contain all that were of the visible Church of God.

¹ Matt. xiii. 47.

² Matt. xiii. 24.

³ Exod. xxxii; Ps. cvi. 19, 20.

⁴ 2 Kings xviii. 4.

⁵ Jer. xl. 13.

⁶ 2 Kings xxii. 17.

⁷ Isa. lvii. 3.

⁸ Isa. i. 4.

⁹ Isa. lx. 15.

¹⁰ Jer. xiii. 11.

¹¹ 1 Kings xix. 18.

BOOK III. From hence it grew, and from no other cause in the world, Ch. I. 9. that the African bishops in the council of Carthage¹, knowing how the administration of baptism belongeth only to the Church of Christ, and supposing that heretics which were apparently severed from the sound believing Church could not possibly be of the Church of Jesus Christ, thought it utterly against reason, that baptism administered by men of corrupt belief should be accounted as a sacrament. And therefore in maintenance of rebaptization their arguments are built upon the fore-alleged ground², "That heretics are not at all any part of the Church of Christ. Our Saviour founded his Church on a rock, and not upon heresy³. Power of baptizing he gave to his Apostles, unto heretics he gave it not⁴. Wherefore they that are without the Church, and oppose themselves against Christ, do but scatter His sheep and flock, without the Church baptize they cannot." Again, "Are heretics Christians or are they not? If they be Christians, wherefore remain they not in God's Church? If they be no Christians, how make they Christians? Or to what purpose shall those words of the Lord serve: 'He which is not with me is against me,' and, 'He which gathereth not with me scattereth⁵?' Wherefore evident it is, that upon misbegotten children and the brood of Antichrist without rebaptization the Holy Ghost cannot descend⁶." But none in this case so earnest as Cyprian⁷: "I know no baptism but one, and that in the

¹ [A.D. 256.]

² Fortunat. in Concil. Car. "Jesus Christus, Dominus et Deus noster, Dei Patris et Creatoris Filius, super petram edificavit Ecclesiam suam, non super hæresin; et potestatem baptizandi Episcopis dedit, non hæreticis. Quare qui extra Ecclesiam sunt, et contra Christum stantes oves ejus et gregem spargunt, baptizare foris non possunt." t. i. 233. ed. Fell.]

³ Matt. vii. 24. xvi. 18.

⁴ Matt. xxviii. 19.

⁵ Matt. xii. 30.

⁶ Secundinus in eodem Concil. [ibid. p. 234: "Hæretici Christiani sunt, an non? Si Christiani sunt, cur in Ecclesia Dei non sunt? Si

"Christiani non sunt, quomodo Christianos faciunt? aut quo pertinebit sermo Domini dicentis, 'Qui non est mecum adversus me est, et qui non mecum colligit spargit? Unde constat, super filios alienos et soboles Antichristi Spiritum Sanctum per manus impositionem tantummodo non posse descendere.']

⁷ [Not Cyprian, but another Cæcilius, Bishop of Bilita in Mauritania, ibid. 230: "Ego unum baptismum in Ecclesia sola scio, et extra Ecclesiam nullum. Hic erit unum, ubi spes vera est et fides certa. Sic enim scriptum est: 'Una fides, una spes, unum baptismum,' non apud hæreticos, ubi spes nulla est, et fides falsa, ubi

"Church only; none without the Church, where he that doth cast out the devil hath the devil: he doth examine about belief whose lips and words do breathe forth a canker; the faithless doth offer the articles of faith; a wicked creature forgiveth wickedness; in the name of Christ Antichrist signeth; he which is cursed of God blesseth; a dead carrion promiseth life; a man unpeaceable giveth peace; a blasphemer calleth upon the name of God; a profane person doth exercise priesthood; a sacrilegious wretch doth prepare the altar; and in the neck of all these that evil also cometh, the Eucharist a very bishop of the devil doth presume to consecrate." All this was true, but not sufficient to prove that heretics were in no sort any part of the visible church of Christ, and consequently their baptism no baptism. This opinion therefore was afterwards both condemned by a better advised council¹, and also revoked by the chiefest of the authors thereof themselves. [10.] What is it but only the selfsame error and misconceit,

"omnia per mendacium aguntur, ubi exorcizat dæmoniacus; sacramentum interrogat cujus os et verba cancer emittunt: fidem dat infidelis; veniam delictorum tribuit sceleratus; in nomine Christi tingit Antichristus; benedicit a Deo maledictus; vitam pollicetur mortuus; pacem dat impacificus; Deum invocat blasphemus; sacerdotium administrat prophanus; ponit altare sacrilegus. Ad hæc omnia accedit et illud malum, ut antistites Diaboli audeant Eucharistiam facere."

¹ In Concilio Nicæno. Vide Hieron. Dial. adv. Lucifer. [ii. 146. The genuine canons of the council of Nice contain no express general enactment on this point: only the 8th canon exempts the Novatians from rebaptization, the 19th imposes it on the followers of Paul of Samosata. The principle however, for which Hooker contends, is plainly implied in these two enactments. See Routh, Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Opuscula, p. 359, 366. The 7th canon of Constantinople is more express: but its genuineness is doubted: however it may safely be

appealed to for the practice of the orthodox church in that age, ibid. 379, 450. The passage from St. Jerome is as follows: "Conatus est beatus Cyprianus contritos lacus fugere, nec bibere de aqua aliena; et idcirco hæreticorum baptismum reprobandis, ad Stephanum tunc Romanæ urbis Episcopum, qui a beato Petro vigesimus sextus fuit, super hac re Africanam synodum direxit: sed conatus ejus frustra fuit. Denique illi ipsi episcopi, qui rebaptizandos hæreticos cum eo statuerant, ad antiquam consuetudinem revoluti, novum emisere decretum." (But see the viiith canon of the council of Arles, (A. D. 314.) as quoted by Dr. Routh, Reliquiæ Sacræ, III. 137. and his note there, which seems to prove that St. Jerome did not mean a formal repeal of St. Cyprian's rule, but a discontinuance of it in practice, sanctioned as we know by St. Augustin, who was Jerome's contemporary.) And p. 147. A. "Synodus quoque Nicæna. . . . omnes hæreticos suscepit, exceptis Pauli Samosatani discipulis."]

wherewith others being at this day likewise possessed, they ask us where our Church did lurk, in what cave of the earth it slept for so many hundreds of years together before the birth of Martin Luther? As if we were of opinion that Luther did erect a New Church of Christ. No, the Church of Christ which was from the beginning is and continueth unto the end: of which Church all parts have not been always equally sincere and sound. In the days of Abia it plainly appeareth that Judah was by many degrees more free from pollution than Israel, as that solemn oration sheweth wherein he pleadeth for the one against the other in this wise¹: "O Jeroboam and all Israel hear you me: have ye not driven away the priests of the Lord, the sons of Aaron and the Levites, and have made you priests like the people of nations? Whosoever cometh to consecrate with a young bullock and seven rams, the same may be a priest of them that are no gods. But we belong unto the Lord our God, and have not forsaken him; and the priests the sons of Aaron minister unto the Lord every morning and every evening burnt-offerings and sweet incense, and the bread is set in order upon the pure table, and the candlestick of gold with the lamps thereof to burn every evening; for we keep the watch of the Lord our God, but ye have forsaken him²." In St. Paul's time the integrity of Rome was famous; Corinth many ways reprov'd; they of Galatia much more out of square³. In St. John's time Ephesus and Smyrna in far better state than Thyatira and Pergamus were⁴. We hope therefore that to reform ourselves, if at any time we have done amiss, is not to sever ourselves from the Church we were of

¹ 2 Chron. xiii. 4, 9, 10, 11.

² [See the conclusion of Hooker's first sermon on part of St. Jude.]

³ [Rom. i. 8; 1 Cor. i. iii-vi; Gal. i. 6.]

⁴ Apoc. ii. Vide S. Hieron. [ubi sup. 146. "Apostolis adhuc in saculo superstitionibus, adhuc apud Judæam Christi sanguine recenti, phantasma Domini corpus asserebatur: Galatas ad observationem legis traductos Apostolus iterum parturit: Corinthios resurrectionem carnis non credentes pluribus argumentis ad verum iter tra-

"here conatur.... Plurimi (hæreticorum) vivente adhuc Joanne Apostolo eruperunt.... Angelo Ephesi deserta charitas imputatur: in angelo Pergamenæ Ecclesiæ, idolothytorum esus, et Nicolaitarum doctrina reprehenditur: item apud angelum Thyatirorum, Hiezabel Prophetissa, et simulacrorum escæ, et fornicationes increpantur. Et tamen omnes hos ad pœnitentiam Dominus hortatur... non autem cogeret pœnitere, si non esset pœnitentibus veniam concessurus."]

before. In the Church we were, and we are so still. Other difference between our estate before and now we know none but only such as we see in Juda; which having sometime been idolatrous became afterwards more soundly religious by renouncing idolatry and superstition. If Ephraim "be joined unto idols," the counsel of the Prophet is, "Let him alone." "If Israel play the harlot, let not Juda sin¹." "If it seem evil unto you," saith Josua², "to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods whom your fathers served beyond the flood, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land ye dwell: but I and mine house will serve the Lord." The indisposition therefore of the Church of Rome to reform herself must be no stay unto us from performing our duty to God; even as desire of retaining conformity with them could be no excuse if we did not perform that duty.

Notwithstanding so far as lawfully we may, we have held and do hold fellowship with them. For even as the Apostle doth say of Israel that they are in one respect enemies but in another beloved of God³; in like sort with Rome we dare not communicate concerning sundry her gross and grievous abominations, yet touching those main parts of Christian truth wherein they constantly still persist, we gladly acknowledge them to be of the family of Jesus Christ; and our hearty prayer unto God Almighty is, that being conjoined so far forth with them, they may at the length (if it be his will) so yield to frame and reform themselves, that no distraction remain in any thing, but that we "all may with one heart and one mouth glorify God the Father of our Lord and Saviour⁴," whose Church we are.

As there are which make the Church of Rome utterly no Church at all, by reason of so many, so grievous errors in their doctrines; so we have them amongst us, who under pretence of imagined corruptions in our discipline do give even as hard a judgment of the Church of England itself⁵.

[11.] But whatsoever either the one sort or the other teach, we must acknowledge even heretics themselves to be, though a maimed part, yet a part of the visible Church. If an infidel

¹ Hos. iv. 17, 15.

² Josh. xxiv. 15.

³ Rom. xi. 28.

⁴ Rom. xv. 6.

⁵ [See Pref. c. viii. 1.]

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

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

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

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

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

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

¹ Epist. 283. [Ibid. p. 441. "An ad baptismum admitti debeant spurii, idololatrarum et excommunicatorum filii, priusquam vel parentes per resipiscentiam sese subdiderint Ecclesiæ, vel ii qui ex hujusmodi prognati sunt, baptismum petere possint. Quia nego, plus æquo severus judicor, non a solis Papisticis, verum etiam ab iis qui sibi veritatis patroni videntur."]
² Epist. 285. [Ibid. p. 442. "Ubicunque non prorsus intercidit, vel extincta fuit Christianismi pro-

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

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

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

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

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

"atavis progenita, quamvis apostatae fuerint avi et parentes, ad Ecclesiam tamen corpus pertineant . . . Quia iniquum est, cum Deus ante annos trecentos vel plures adopti-one sua eos dignatus fuerit, ut quæ deinde secuta est parentum impietas celestis gratiæ cursum abrumpat." The former letter was dated 1553, this 1559.]

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

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

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

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

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

² Tertull. Exhort. ad Castit. [c. 7.] "Ubi tres, Ecclesia est, licet Laici."
³ Acts ii. 42.

BOOK III. Ch. ii. 1. whereby they differ from all others, which are not of the same body; again, whosoever appertain to the visible body of the Church, they have also the notes of external profession, whereby the world knoweth what they are: after the same manner even the several societies of Christian men, unto every of which the name of a Church is given with addition betokening severalty, as the Church of Rome, Corinth, Ephesus, England, and so the rest, must be endued with correspondent general properties belonging unto them as they are public Christian societies. And of such properties common unto all societies Christian, it may not be denied that one of the very chiefest is Ecclesiastical Polity.

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

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

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

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

BOOK III. Ch. ii. 2. out by help of that light which God hath given them unto that end¹. The very Law of Nature itself, which no man can deny but God hath instituted, is not of God, unless that be of God, whereof God is the author as well this later way as the former. But forasmuch as no form of Church-Polity is thought by them to be lawful, or to be of God, unless God be so the author of it that it be also set down in Scripture; they should tell us plainly, whether their meaning be that it must be there set down in whole or in part. For if wholly, let them shew what one form of Polity ever was so. Their own to be so taken out of Scripture they will not affirm; neither deny they that in part even this which they so much oppugn is also from thence taken. Again they should tell us, whether only that be taken out of Scripture which is actually and particularly there set down; or else that also which the general principles and rules of Scripture potentially contain. The one way they cannot as much as pretend, that all the parts of their own discipline are in Scripture: and the other way their mouths are stopped, when they would plead against all other forms besides their own; seeing the general principles are such as do not particularly prescribe any one, but sundry may equally be consonant unto the general axioms of the Scripture.

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

¹ Rom. ii. 15. "Ille legis hujus inventor, disceptator, lator." Cic. Admon. 20, 21. See Defence 76, iii. de Repub. [ap. Lact. vi. 8. and Opp. vii. 906. Ed. Ernesti.]

² [In Whitgift's Answer to the Admon. 20, 21. See Defence 76, &c.]