

laid aside, they give place to the search of this but only suspected desire. If the soul of man did serve only to give him being in this life, then things appertaining unto this life would content him, as we see they do other creatures; which creatures enjoying what they live by seek no further, but in this contentation do shew a kind of acknowledgment that there is no higher good which doth any way belong unto them. With us it is otherwise. For although the beauties, riches, honours, sciences, virtues, and perfections of all men living, were in the present possession of one; yet somewhat beyond and above all this there would still be sought and earnestly thirsted for. So that Nature even in this life doth plainly claim and call for a more divine perfection than either of these two that have been mentioned.

[5.] This last and highest estate of perfection whereof we speak is received of men in the nature of a Reward¹. Rewards do always presuppose such duties performed as are rewardable. Our natural means therefore unto blessedness are our works; nor is it possible that Nature should ever find any other way to salvation than only this. But examine the works which we do, and since the first foundation of the world what one can say, My ways are pure? Seeing then all flesh is guilty of that for which God hath threatened eternally to punish, what possibility is there this way to be saved? There resteth therefore either no way unto salvation, or if any, then surely a way which is supernatural, a way which could never have entered into the heart of man as much as once to conceive or imagine, if God himself had not revealed it extraordinarily. For which cause we term it the Mystery or secret way of salvation. And therefore St. Ambrose in this matter appealeth justly from man to God², "Cœli mysterium doceat me Deus qui condidit, non homo qui seipsum ignoravit:—Let God himself that made me, let not man that knows not himself, be my instructor concerning the mystical way to heaven." "When men of excellent wit," saith Lactantius, "had wholly betaken themselves unto study, after farewell bidden unto all kind as well of private as public action, they spared no labour that might be spent in the

¹ "Rejoice and be glad, for great is your reward in heaven." Matt. v. 12. "Summa merces est ut ipso perfruamur." Aug. de Doct. Christ. cap. 6. [I. 32. t. iii. 16.]
² Ambros. contra Sym. [Ep. 18, § 7. t. ii. 835.]

"search of truth; holding it a thing of much more price to seek and to find out the reason of all affairs as well divine as human, than to stick fast in the toil of piling up riches and gathering together heaps of honours. Howbeit, they both did fail of their purpose, and got not as much as to quite¹ their charges; because truth which is the secret of the Most High God, whose proper handy-work all things are, cannot be compassed with that wit and those senses which are our own. For God and man should be very near neighbours, if man's cogitations were able to take a survey of the counsels and appointments of that Majesty everlasting. Which being utterly impossible, that the eye of man by itself should look into the bosom of divine Reason; God did not suffer him being desirous of the light of wisdom to stray any longer up and down, and with bootless expense of travail to wander in darkness that had no passage to get out by. His eyes at the length God did open, and bestow upon him the knowledge of the truth by way of Donative, to the end that man might both be clearly convicted of folly, and being through error out of the way, have the path that leadeth unto immortality laid plain before him²." Thus far Lactantius Firmianus, to shew that God himself is the teacher of the truth, whereby is made known the supernatural way of salvation and law for them to live in that shall be saved. In the natural path of everlasting life the first beginning is that

¹ [So A. and B.: 'quit,' 1617, sqq. — Cf. variation in Shakesp. Rich. II. 5. 1. 43. Qq. Rom. and Jul. 2. 4. 204, Fol. Pericl. 3. 2. 18, Qq. 'quite,' where edd. read 'quit.']. 1886.

² "Magno et excellenti ingenio viri, cum se doctrinæ penitus didissent, quicquid laboris poterat impendi (contemptis omnibus et privatis et publicis actionibus) ad inquirendæ veritatis studium contulerunt, existimantes multo esse præclarius humanarum divinarumque rerum investigare ac scire rationem, quam struendis opibus aut cumulandis honoribus inhærerere. Sed neque adepti sunt id quod volebant, et operam simul atque industriam perdiderunt: quia veritas, id est arcanum summi

"Dei qui fecit omnia, ingenio ac propriis sensibus non potest comprehendendi. Alioqui nihil inter Deum hominemque distaret, si consilia et dispositiones illius majestatis æternæ cogitatio assequeretur humana. Quod quia fieri non potuit ut homini per seipsum ratio divina notesceret, non est passus hominem Deus lumen sapientiæ requirentem diutius aberrare, ac sine ullo laboris effectu vagari per tenebras intricabiles. Aperuit oculos ejus aliquando, et notionem veritatis munus suum fecit, ut et humanam sapientiam nullam esse monstraret, et erranti ac vago viam consequendæ immortalitatis ostenderet." Lactant. lib. i. cap. 1.

ability of doing good, which God in the day of man's creation endued him with; from hence obedience unto the will of his Creator, absolute righteousness and integrity in all his actions; and last of all the justice of God rewarding the worthiness of his deserts with the crown of eternal glory. Had Adam continued in his first estate, this had been the way of life unto him and all his posterity. Wherein I confess notwithstanding with the wittiest of the school-divines¹, "That if we speak of strict justice, God could no way have been bound to requite man's labours in so large and ample a manner as human felicity doth import; inasmuch as the dignity of this exceedeth so far the other's value. But be it that God of his great liberality had determined in lieu of man's endeavours to bestow the same by the rule of that justice which best beseemeth him, namely, the justice of one that requiteth nothing mincingly, but all with pressed and heaped and even over-enlarged measure; yet could it never hereupon necessarily be gathered, that such justice should add to the nature of that reward the property of everlasting continuance; sith possession of bliss, though it should be but for a moment, were an abundant retribution." But we are not now to enter into this consideration, how gracious and bountiful our good God might still appear in so rewarding the sons of men, albeit they should exactly perform whatsoever duty their nature bindeth them unto. Howsoever God did propose this reward, we that were to be rewarded must have done that which is required at our hands; we failing in the one, it were in nature an impossibility that the other should be looked for. The light of nature is never able to find out any way of obtaining the reward of bliss, but by performing exactly the duties and works of righteousness.

[6.] From salvation therefore and life all flesh being

¹ Scot. lib. iv. Sent. dist. 49, 6. "tali quidem justitia qualis decet eum, scilicet supererogantis in præmiis: tamen non sequitur ex hoc necessario, quod per illam justitiam sit reddenda perfectio perennis tanquam præmium, imo abundans fieret retributio in beatitudine unius momenti." [p. 168. Venet. 1598.]

"Loquendo de stricta justitia, Deus nulli nostrum propter quæcunque merita est debitor perfectionis reddendæ tam intensæ, propter immoderatum excessum illius perfectionis ultra illa merita. Sed esto quod ex liberalitate sua determinasset meritis conferre actum tam perfectum tanquam præmium,

excluded this way, behold how the wisdom of God hath revealed a way mystical and supernatural, a way directing unto the same end of life by a course which groundeth itself upon the guiltiness of sin, and through sin desert of condemnation and death. For in this way the first thing is the tender compassion of God respecting us drowned and swallowed up in misery; the next is redemption out of the same by the precious death and merit of a mighty Saviour, which hath witnessed of himself, saying¹, "I am the way," the way that leadeth us from misery into bliss. This supernatural way had God in himself prepared before all worlds. The way of supernatural duty which to us he hath prescribed, our Saviour in the Gospel of St. John doth note, terming it by an excellency, The Work of God², "This is the work of God, that ye believe in him whom he hath sent." Not that God doth require nothing unto happiness at the hands of men saving only a naked belief (for hope and charity we may not exclude³); but that without belief all other things are as nothing, and it the ground of those other divine virtues.

Concerning Faith, the principal object whereof is that eternal Verity which hath discovered the treasures of hidden wisdom in Christ; concerning Hope, the highest object whereof is that everlasting Goodness which in Christ doth quicken the dead; concerning Charity, the final object whereof is that incomprehensible Beauty which shineth in the countenance of Christ the Son of the living God: concerning these virtues, the first of which beginning here with a weak apprehension of things not seen, endeth with the intuitive vision of God in the world to come; the second beginning here with a trembling expectation of things far removed and as yet but only heard of, endeth with real and actual fruition of that which no tongue can express; the third beginning here with a weak inclination of heart towards him unto whom we are not able to approach, endeth with endless union, the

¹ John xiv. 6.

² John vi. 29.

³ [Chr. Letter, p. 13. "Tell us whether you thinke that *not faith alone*, but faith, hope, and love, be the formall cause of our righteousness."] Hooker, MS. note. "Is faith then

"the formall cause of justification? And faith alone a cause in this kind? Who hath taught you this doctrine? Have you been tampering so long with Pastors, Doctors, Elders, Deacons; that the first principles of your religion are now to learn?"]

mystery whereof is higher than the reach of the thoughts of men; concerning that Faith, Hope, and Charity, without which there can be no salvation, was there ever any mention made saving only in that law which God himself hath from heaven revealed? There is not in the world a syllable muttered with certain truth concerning any of these three, more than hath been supernaturally received from the mouth of the eternal God.

Laws therefore concerning these things are supernatural, both in respect of the manner of delivering them, which is divine; and also in regard of the things delivered, which are such as have not in nature any cause from which they flow, but were by the voluntary appointment of God ordained besides the course of nature, to rectify nature's obliquity withal.

The cause why so many natural or rational Laws are set down in Holy Scripture.

XII. When supernatural duties are necessarily exacted, natural are not rejected as needless. The law of God therefore is, though principally delivered for instruction in the one, yet fraught with precepts of the other also. The Scripture is fraught even with laws of Nature; insomuch that Gratian¹ defining Natural Right, (whereby is meant the right which exacteth those general duties that concern men naturally even as they are men,) termeth "Natural Right, that which the "Books of the Law and the Gospel do contain." Neither is it vain that the Scripture aboundeth with so great store of laws in this kind: for they are either such as we of ourselves could not easily have found out, and then the benefit is not small to have them readily set down to our hands; or if they be so clear and manifest that no man endued with reason can lightly be ignorant of them, yet the Spirit as it were borrowing them from the school of Nature, as serving to prove things less manifest, and to induce a persuasion of somewhat which were in itself more hard and dark, unless it should in such sort be cleared, the very applying of them unto cases particular is not without most singular use and profit many ways for men's instruction. Besides, be they plain of themselves or obscure, the evidence of God's own testimony added to the natural assent of reason concerning the certainty of them, doth not a little comfort and confirm the same.

¹ "Jus naturale est, quod in Lege et Evangelio continetur." p. 1, d. 1. [Corp. Jur. Can. p. 2. Lugd. 1584.]

[2.] Wherefore inasmuch as our actions are conversant about things beset with many circumstances, which cause men of sundry wits to be also of sundry judgments concerning that which ought to be done; requisite it cannot but seem the rule of divine law should herein help our imbecility, that we might the more infallibly understand what is good and what evil. The first principles of the Law of Nature are easy; hard it were to find men ignorant of them. But concerning the duty which Nature's law doth require at the hands of men in a number of things particular, so far hath the natural understanding even of sundry whole nations been darkened, that they have not discerned no not gross iniquity to be sin¹. Again, being so prone as we are to fawn upon ourselves, and to be ignorant as much as may be of our own deformities, without the feeling sense whereof we are most wretched, even so much the more, because not knowing them we cannot so much as desire to have them taken away: how should our festered sores be cured, but that God hath delivered a law as sharp as the two-edged sword, piercing the very closest and most unsearchable corners of the heart², which the Law of Nature can hardly, human laws by no means possible, reach unto? Hereby we know even secret concupiscence to be sin, and are made fearful to offend though it be but in a wandering cogitation. Finally, of those things which are for direction of all the parts of our life needful, and not impossible to be discerned by the

¹ Joseph. lib. secundo contra Apion. [c. 37.] "Lacedæmonii quomodo non sunt ob inhospitalitatem reprehendendi, fœdumque neglectum nuptiarum? Elienses vero et Thebani ob coitum cum masculis plane impudentem et contra naturam, quem recte et utiliter exercere putabant? Cumque hæc omnino perpetrarunt, etiam suis legibus miscuere." Vid. Th. 1, 2, q. 94, 4, 5, 6. "Lex naturæ sic corrupta fuit apud Germanos, ut latrocinium non reputarent peccatum." [t. xi. 204.] August. (aut quisquis auctor est) lib. de quæst. Nov. et Vet. Test. "Quis nesciat quid bonæ vitæ conveniat, aut ignoret quia quod sibi fieri non vult aliis minime debeat facere? At vero ubi naturalis lex evanuit oppressa consuetudine delinquendi, tunc oportuit manifestari scriptis, ut Dei judicium omnes audirent [legem manifestari, ut in Judæis omnes homines audirent:] non quod penitus oblitterata est, sed quia maxima ejus auctoritate carebant, idololatriæ studebatur, timor Dei in terris non erat, fornicatio operabatur, circa rem proximi avida erat concupiscentia. Data [danda] ergo lex erat, ut et quæ sciebantur auctoritatem haberent, et quæ latere cœperant manifestarentur." Quæst. iv. [t. iii. App. 44.]

² Heb. iv. 12.

BOOK I. light of Nature itself; are there not many which few men's
Ch. xii. 3. natural capacity, and some which no man's, hath been able to
xiii. 1. find out? They are, saith St. Augustine¹, but a few, and
they endued with great ripeness of wit and judgment, free
from all such affairs as might trouble their meditations,
instructed in the sharpest and the subtlest points of learning,
who have, and that very hardly, been able to find out but
only the immortality of the soul. The resurrection of the flesh
what man did ever at any time dream of, having not heard
it otherwise than from the school of Nature? Whereby it
appeareth how much we are bound to yield unto our Creator,
the Father of all mercy, eternal thanks, for that he hath deli-
vered his law unto the world, a law wherein so many things
are laid open, clear, and manifest, as a light which otherwise
would have been buried in darkness, not without the hazard,
or rather not with the hazard but with the certain loss, of in-
finite thousands of souls most undoubtedly now saved.

[3.] We see, therefore, that our sovereign good is desired
naturally; that God the author of that natural desire had
appointed natural means whereby to fulfil it; that man having
utterly disabled his nature unto those means hath had other
revealed from God, and hath received from heaven a law to
teach him how that which is desired naturally must now super-
naturally be attained. Finally, we see that because those
latter exclude not the former quite and clean as unnecessary,
therefore together with such supernatural duties as could not
possibly have been otherwise known to the world, the same law
that teacheth them, teacheth also with them such natural duties
as could not by light of Nature easily have been known.

The benefit of having divine laws written. XIII. In the first age of the world God gave laws unto
our fathers, and by reason of the number of their days their
memories served instead of books; whereof the manifold
imperfections and defects being known to God, he mercifully
relieved the same by often putting them in mind of that
whereof it behoved them to be specially mindful. In which
respect we see how many times one thing hath been iterated
unto sundry even of the best and wisest amongst them. After

¹ ["Humanis argumentationibus "eruditi, ad indagandam solius
"hæc invenire conantes, vix pauci "animæ immortalitatem pervenire
"magno præditi ingenio, abundan- "potuerunt." De Trin. lib. xiii.
"tes otio, doctrinisque subtilissimis c. 12. tom. viii. 935.]

that the lives of men were shortened, means more durable to
preserve the laws of God from oblivion and corruption grew
in use, not without precise direction from God himself. First
therefore of Moyses¹ it is said, that he "wrote all the words
"of God²;" not by his own private motion and device: for
God taketh this act to himself³, "I have written." Further-
more, were not the Prophets following commanded also to do
the like? Unto the holy evangelist St. John, how often express
charge is given, "Scribe," "Write these things⁴." Concerning
the rest of our Lord's disciples, the words of St. Augustine
are⁵, "Quicquid ille de suis factis et dictis nos legere voluit,
"hoc scribendum illis tanquam suis manibus imperavit."

[2.] Now, although we do not deny it to be a matter
merely accidental unto the law of God to be written; although
writing be not that which addeth authority and strength
thereunto; finally, though his laws do require at our hands
the same obedience howsoever they be delivered; his provi-
dence, notwithstanding, which hath made principal choice of
this way to deliver them, who seeth not what cause we have
to admire and magnify? The singular benefit that hath
grown unto the world, by receiving the laws of God even by
his own appointment committed unto writing, we are not
able to esteem as the value thereof deserveth. When the
question therefore is, whether we be now to seek for any
revealed law of God elsewhere than only in the sacred
Scripture; whether we do now stand bound in the sight of
God to yield to traditions urged by the Church of Rome the
same obedience and reverence we do to his written law,
honouring equally and adoring both as divine: our answer is,
No. They that so earnestly plead for the authority of
tradition, as if nothing were more safely conveyed than that
which spreadeth itself by report, and descendeth by relation
of former generations unto the ages that succeed, are not all
of them (surely a miracle it were if they should be) so simple
as thus to persuade themselves; howsoever, if the simple

¹ [Hooker writes both *Moses* and
Moyses, the Vulgate form, which is
preserved in the French *Moïse*:
Moses, generally in books i-iv.
Moyses, towards the end of book v.]
1886.

² Exod. xxiv. 4.

³ Hos. viii. 12. [and Exod. xxiv.
12.]

⁴ Apoc. i. 11; xiv. 13.

⁵ Aug. lib. i. de Cons. Evang. cap.
ult. [t. iii. pars 2. p. 26.]

BOOK I.
Ch. xiii. 3.

were so persuaded, they could be content perhaps very well to enjoy the benefit, as they account it, of that common error. What hazard the truth is in when it passeth through the hands of report, how maimed and deformed it becometh, they are not, they cannot possibly be ignorant. Let them that are indeed of this mind consider but only that little of things divine, which the¹ heathen have in such sort received. How miserable had the state of the Church of God been long ere this, if wanting the sacred Scripture we had no record of his laws, but only the memory of man receiving the same by report and relation from his predecessors?

[3.] By Scripture it hath in the wisdom of God seemed meet to deliver unto the world much but personally expedient to be practised of certain men; many deep and profound points of doctrine, as being the main original ground whereupon the precepts of duty depend; many prophecies, the clear performance whereof might confirm the world in belief of things unseen; many histories to serve as looking-glasses to behold the mercy, the truth, the righteousness of God towards all that faithfully serve, obey, and honour him; yea many entire meditations of piety, to be as patterns and precedents in cases of like nature; many things needful for explication, many for application unto particular occasions, such as the providence of God from time to time hath taken to have the several books of his holy ordinance written. Be it then that together with the principal necessary laws of God there are sundry other things written, whereof we might haply be ignorant and yet be saved: what? shall we hereupon think them needless? shall we esteem them as riotous branches wherewith we sometimes behold most pleasant vines overgrown? Surely no more than we judge our hands or our eyes superfluous, or what part soever, which if our bodies did want, we might notwithstanding any such defect retain still the complete being of men. As therefore a complete

¹ I mean those historical matters concerning the ancient state of the first world, the deluge, the sons of Noah, the children of Israel's deliverance out of Egypt, the life and doings of Moses their captain, with such like: the certain truth whereof delivered in Holy Scripture is of the heathen, which had them only by report, so intermingled with fabulous vanities, that the most which remaineth in them to be seen is the show of dark and obscure steps, where some part of the truth hath gone.

BOOK I.
Ch. xiv. 1.

man is neither destitute of any part necessary, and hath some parts whereof though the want could not deprive him of his essence, yet to have them standeth him in singular stead in respect of the special uses for which they serve; in like sort all those writings which contain in them the Law of God, all those venerable books of Scripture, all those sacred tomes and volumes of Holy Writ, they are with such absolute perfection framed, that in them there neither wanteth any thing the lack whereof might deprive us of life, nor any thing in such wise aboundeth, that as being superfluous, unfruitful, and altogether needless, we should think it no loss or danger at all if we did want it.

XIV. Although the Scripture of God therefore be stored with infinite variety of matter in all kinds, although it abound with all sorts of laws, yet the principal intent of Scripture is to deliver the laws of duties supernatural. Oftentimes it hath been in very solemn manner disputed, whether all things necessary unto salvation be necessarily set down in the Holy Scriptures or no¹. If we define that necessary unto salvation, whereby the way to salvation is in any sort made more plain, apparent, and easy to be known; then is there no part of true philosophy, no art of account, no kind of science rightly so called, but the Scripture must contain it. If only those things be necessary, as surely none else are, without the knowledge and practice whereof it is not the will and pleasure of God to make any ordinary grant of salvation; it may be notwithstanding and oftentimes hath been demanded, how the books of Holy Scripture contain in them all necessary things, when of things necessary the very chiefest is to know what books we are bound to esteem holy; which point is confessed impossible for the Scripture itself to teach. Whereunto we may answer with truth, that there is not in the world any art or science, which proposing unto itself an end (as every one doth some end or other) hath been therefore thought defective, if it have not delivered simply whatsoever is needful to the same end; but all kinds of knowledge have their certain bounds and limits; each

¹ "Utrum cognitio supernaturalis necessaria viatori sit sufficienter affirmatively concluded. [In Sent. "enter tradita in sacra Scriptura?" lib. i. p. 10. D. et Resp. p. 2, K.]

The sufficiency of Scripture unto the end for which it was instituted.