things were usual amongst those nations, and in themselves they are indifferent. But are they indifferent being used as signs of immoderate and hopeless lamentation for the dead? In this sense it is that the law forbiddeth them. For which cause the very next words following are, “Ye shall not cut your flesh for the dead, nor make any print of a mark upon you: I am the Lord.” The like in Leviticus, where speech is of mourning for the dead; “They shall not make bald parts upon their head, nor shave off the locks of their “beard, nor make any cutting in their flesh.” Again in Deuteronomy, “Ye are the children of the Lord your God; “ye shall not cut yourselves, nor make you baldness between “your eyes for the dead.” What is this but in effect the same which the Apostle doth more plainly express, saying, “Sorrow not as they do who have no hope.” The very light of nature itself was able to see herein a fault; that which those nations did use, having been also in use with others, the ancient Roman laws do forbid. That shaving therefore and cutting which the law doth mention was not a matter in itself indifferent, and forbidden only because it was in use amongst such idolaters as were neighbours to the people of God; but to use it had been a crime, though no other people or nation under heaven should have done it saving only themselves.

As for those laws concerning attire: “There shall no garment of linen and woollen come upon thee,” as also those touching food and diet, wherein swine’s flesh together with sundry other meats are forbidden; the use of these things had been indeed of itself harmless and indifferent: so that hereby it doth appear, how the law of God forbade in some special consideration such things as were lawful enough in themselves. But yet even here they likewise fail of that they intend. For it doth not appear that the consideration in regard whereof the law forbiddeth these things was because those nations did use them. Like enough it is that the

1 Levit. xix. 28.
2 Levit. xxii. 5.
3 Deut. xiv. 1.
4 1 Thess. iv. 15.
5 [Cic. Tusc. Quest. ii. 23. In “gemiscere nonnunquam viro cessum est, idque raror: ejuslatus
ne mulier a quidem: et hic nimium est lessus, quem duodecim tabulam in funeribus adhiberi venirent.”]
6 Levit. xix. 19; Deut. xxii. 11.
7 Deut. iv. 7; Levit. xi.

Canaanites used to feed as well on sheep’s as on swine’s flesh; and therefore if the forbidding of the later had no other reason than dissimilitude with that people, they which their own heads allege this for reason can shew I think some reason more than we are able to find why the former was not also forbidden. Might there not be some other mystery in this prohibition than they think of? Yes, some other mystery there was in it by all likelihood. For what reason is there which should but induce, and therefore much less enforce us to think, that care of dissimilitude between the people of God and the heathen nations about them, was any more the cause of forbidding them to put on garments of sundry stuff, than of charging them withal not to sow their fields with meslin; or that this was any more the cause of forbidding them to eat swine’s flesh, than of charging them withal not to eat the flesh of eagles, hawks, and the like?

Wherefore, although the church of Rome were to us, as to Israel the Egyptians and Canaanites were of old; yet doth it not follow, that the wisdom of God without respect doth teach us to erect between us and them a partition-wall of difference, in such things indifferent as have been hitherto disputed of.

VII. Neither is the example of the eldest churches a whit more available to this purpose. Notwithstanding some fault undoubtedly there is in the very resemblance of idolaters. Were it not some kind of blemish to be like unto infidels and heathens, it would not so usually be objected; men would not think it any advantage in the causes of religion to be able therewith justly to charge their adversaries as they do. Wherefore to the end that it may a little more plainly appear, what force this hath and how far the same extendeth, we are to note how all men are naturally disposed that they may seem neither to judge nor to do amiss; because every error and offence is a stain to the beauty of nature, for which cause

1 Levit. xix. 19. 2 Meslin: mixt corn, as wheat and rye. 3 The council, although they did not observe themselves “always in making of decrees this rule, yet have kept this consideration continually in making of their laws, that they would have “save.”
4 “If work for the Thrasher ye mind for “to have, “Of wheat and of meslin unthreshed go “save.”
5 Deut. xiv; Levit. xi.
6 Ephes. ii. 14.
7 T. C. lib. i. p. 132.
it blusheth thereat, but gloriet in the contrary. From thence it riseth, that they which disgrace or depress the credit of others do it either in both or in one of these. To have been in either directed by a weak and unperfect rule argueth imbecility and imperfection. Men being either led by reason or by imitation of other men's example, if their persons be odious whose example we choose to follow, as namely if we frame our opinions to that which condemned heretics think, or direct our actions according to that which is practised and done by them; it lieth as an heavy prejudice against us, unless somewhat mightier than their bare example did move us, to think or do the same things with them. Christian men therefore having besides the common light of all men so great help of heavenly direction from above, together with the lamps of so bright examples as the Church of God doth yield, it cannot but worthy seem reproachful for us to leave both the one and the other, to become disciples unto the most hateful sort that live, to do as they do, only because we see their example before us and have a delight to follow it. Thus we may therefore safely conclude, that it is not evil simply to concur with the heathens either in opinion or in action; and that conformity with them is only then a disgrace, when either we follow them in that they think and do amiss, or follow them generally in that they do without other reason than only the liking we have to the pattern of their example; which liking doth intimate a more universal approbation of them than is allowable.

[2.] Faustus the Manichee therefore objecting against the Jews, that they forsook the idols of the Gentiles, but their temples and oblations and altars and priesthoods and all kinds of ministry of holy things they exercised even as the Gentiles did, yea, more superstitiously a great deal; against the Catholic Christians likewise, that between them and the heathens there was in many things little difference; “From them,” saith Faustus, “ye have learned to hold that one only God is the author of all; their sacrifices ye have turned into feasts of charity, their idols into martyrs whom ye honour with the like religious offices unto theirs; the ghosts of the dead ye appease with wine and delicacies; the festival days of the nations ye celebrate together with them; and of their kind

“of life ye have verily changed nothing1” St. Augustine’s defence in behalf of both is, that touching matters of action, Jews and Catholic Christians were free from the Gentiles’ faultiness, even in those things which were objected as tokens of their agreement with Gentiles2; and concerning their consent in opinion, they did not hold the same with Gentiles because Gentiles had so taught, but because heaven and earth had so witnessed the same to be truth, that neither the one sort could err in being fully persuaded thereof, nor the other but err in case they should not consent with them3.

[3.] In things of their own nature indifferent, if either councils or particular men have at any time with sound judgment misliked conformity between the Church of God and infidels, the cause thereof hath been somewhat else than only affection of dissimilitude. They saw it necessary so to do in respect of some special accident, which the Church being not always subject unto hath not still cause to do the like. For example, in the dangerous days of trial, wherein there was no way for the truth of Jesus Christ to triumph over infidelity but through the constancy of his saints, whom yet a natural desire to save themselves from the flame might peradventure cause to join with Pagans in external customs, too far using the same as a cloak to conceal themselves in, and a mist to darken the eyes of infidels withal: for remedy hereof those laws it might be were provided, which forbid that Christians should deck their houses with boughs as the Pagans did use to do4, or rest those festival days wherein

1 August. cont. Faust. Manich. lib. xx. cap. 4. [I. viii. 334. “Schism. ma aut nihil immutare debet ab eo unde factum est, aut non multum: ut puta vos, qui desciscentes a gentibus, monarchice opinionem primo volucrum divulsiatis, id est, ut omnia credatis ex Deo: sacrato vico eorum vertistas in agapes, idola in martyres, quos vos simulibus cultistis: defunctorum umbras vino placatis et dapibatis: solemnis gentium dies cum ipsis celebratis, ut kalendas, et solsticeia: de vita certe eorum mutatus nihil.”]

2 [Ibid. § 23. “Si usus quandaemur tum simulatis videatur nobis esse cum gentibus, sicut cibi et potus, tectorum, vestimentorum, &c. . . . . . . longe tales: men alterit his rebus utitur, qui ad alium finem usum eorum regit: et alter, qui eis Dei gratiam agit, de quo praeva et falsa non credit.”]

3 [Ibid. § 10. “Discret ergo Faustus, . . . . . . monarchice opinionem non ex gentibus nos habere; sed gentes non usque adeo ad falsos Deos esse delapsos, ut opinionem amitterent unus veri Dei, ex quo est omnis qualiscunque natura.”]

4 “Also it was decreed in another council that they should not deck their houses with bay-leaves
as may be between them, except the one do avoid whatsoever rites and ceremonies uncommanded of God the other doth embrace. So that generally they teach that the very difference of spiritual condition itself between the servants of Christ and others requireth such difference in ceremonies between them, although the one be never so far disjoined in time or place from the other.

[6.] But in case the people of God and Belial do chance to be neighbours, then as the danger of infection is greater, so the same difference they say is thereby made more necessary. In this respect as the Jews were severed from the heathen, so most especially from the heathen nearest them. And in the same respect we, which ought to differ howsoever from the church of Rome, are now they say by reason of our nearness more bound to differ from them in ceremonies than from Turks. A strange kind of speech unto Christian ears, and such as I hope they themselves do acknowledge unadvisedly uttered. "We are not so much to fear infection from Turks "as from papists." What of that? we must remember that by conforming rather ourselves in that respect to Turks, we should be spreaders of a worse infection into others than any we are likely to draw from papists by our conformity with them in ceremonies. If they did hate, as Turks do, the Christians; or as Canaanites did of old the Jewish religion even in gross; the circumstance of local nearness in them unto us might haply enforce in us a duty of greater separation from them than from those other mentioned. But forasmuch as papists are so much in Christ nearer unto us than Turks, is there any reasonable man, trow you, but will judge it meeter that our ceremonies of Christian religion should be popish than Turkish or heathenish? Especially considering that we were not brought to dwell amongst them, (as Israel in Canaan,) having not been of them. For even a very part of them we were. And when God did by his good Spirit put it into our hearts, first to reform ourselves, (whence grew our separation,) and then by all good means to seek also their reformation; had we not only cut off their corruptions but also estranged ourselves from them in things indifferent, who seeth not how greatly prejudicial this might have been to

1 [Decl. of Discipl. 114.]
Extreme Contrariety not the best Policy:

BOOK IV.  Ch. viii. 1.

VIII. But that no one thing may detain us over long, I return to their reasons against our conformity with that Church. That extreme dissimilitude which they urge upon us, is now commended as our best and safest policy for establishment of sound religion. The ground of which politic position is that "evils must be cured by their contraries;" and therefore the cure of the Church infected with the poison of Antichristianity must be done by that which is thereunto as contrary as may be. "A medled estate of the orders of the Gospel and the ceremonies of popery is not the best way to banish popery."

We are contrariwise of opinion, that he which will perfectly recover a sick and restore a diseased body unto health, must not endeavour so much to bring it to a state of simple contrariety, as of fit proportion in contrariety unto those evils which are to be cured. He that will take away extreme heat by setting the body in extremity of cold, shall undoubtedly remove the disease, but together with it the diseased too. The first thing therefore in skillful cures is the knowledge of the part affected; the next is of the evil which doth affect it; the last is not only of the kind but also of the measure of contrary things whereby to remove it.

1 "Common reason also doth teach that contraries are cured by their contraries. Now Christi-
2anity and Antichristianity, the Gospel and Popery, be contrari-
use them unto somewhat less than is competent; and that
a crooked stick is not straightened unless it be bent as far on
the clean contrary side, that so it may settle itself at the
length in a middle estate of evenness between both. But
how can these comparisons stand them in any stead? When
they urge us to extreme opposition against the church of
Rome, do they mean we should be drawn unto it only for
a time, and afterwards return to a mediocrity? or was it the
purpose of those reformed churches, which utterly abolished
all popish ceremonies, to come in the end back again to the
middle point of evenness and moderation? Then have we
conceived amiss of their meaning. For we have always
thought their opinion to be, that utter incommority with the
church of Rome was not an extremity whereunto we should
be drawn for a time, but the very mediocrity itself wherein
they meant we should ever continue. Now by these com-
parisons it seemeth clean contrary, that howsoever they have
bent themselves at first to an extreme contrariety against the
Romish church, yet therein they will continue no longer than
only till such time as some more moderate course for establish-
ment of the Church may be concluded.

[4.] Yea, albeit this were not at the first their intent, yet
surely now there is great cause to lead them unto it. They
have seen that experience of the former policy, which may
cause the authors of it to hang down their heads. When
Germany had stricken off that which appeared corrupt in the
discipline of the church of Rome, but seemed nevertheless in
terest retained to rest thereon, very great conformity; How-
France by that rule of policy which had been before men-
tioned, took away the popish orders which Germany did
retain. But process of time hath brought more light into the
world; whereby men perceiving that they of the religion
in France have also retained some orders which were before
1 “If a man would bring a
"drunken man to sobriety, the best "and nearest way is to carry him "as far from his excess in drink as "may be; and if a man could not "keep a mean, it were better to fault "in prescribing less than he should "drink, than to fault in giving him "more than he ought. As we see," to bring a stick which is crooked
"to be straight, we do not only "bow it so far until it come to be "straight, but we bend it so far "until we make it so crooked of the "other side as it was before of the "first side; to this end, that at the "last it may stand straight, and as "it were in the midway between "both the crooks,” T. C. lib. i.

Our Rites no Stain to our Church’s Independence.

in the church of Rome, and are not commanded in the word
of God, there hath arisen a sect 1 in England, which follow-
ing still the very selfsame rule of policy, seeketh to reform
even the French reformation, and purge out from thence also
dregs of popery. These have not taken as yet such root that
they are able to establish anything. But if they had, what
would spring out of their stock; and how far the unquiet wit
of man might be carried with rules of such policy, God doth
know. The trial which we have lived to see, may some-
what teach us what posterity is to fear. But our Lord of his
infinite mercy avert whatsoever evil our swervings on the
one hand or on the other may threaten unto the state of his
Church!

IX. That the church of Rome doth hereby take occasion to blas-
pheme, and to say, our religion is not able to stand
of itself unless it lean upon the staff of their ceremonies, either
is not a matter of so great moment, that it did need to be
objected, or doth deserve to receive an answer. The name
of blasphemy in this place, is like the shoe of Hercules on as having
a child’s foot. 3 If the church of Rome do use any such kind
of silly exprobration, it is no such ugly thing to the ear, that
we should think the honour and credit of our religion to
receive thereby any great wound. They which hereof make
conceive I know not what perils a matter do seem to imagine, that we have erected
of late a frame of some new religion, the furniture whereof
we should not have borrowed from our enemies, lest they
relieving us might afterwards laugh and gibe at our poverty;
whereas in truth the ceremonies which we have taken from
such as were before us, are not things that belong to this or
that sect, but they are the ancient rites and customs of the
Church of Christ, whereof ourselves being a part, we have
the selfsame interest in them which our fathers before us had,
from whom the same are descended unto us. Again, in case
we had been so much beholding privately unto them, doth
the reputation to one church stand by saying unto another,

1 [The Brownists, or Barrowists.]
2 “By using of these ceremonies,
the Papists take occasion to blas-
pheme, saying, that our religion
cannot stand by itself, unless it
lean upon the staff of their cere-
monies,” T. C. lib. i. p. 178.
3 “Herculis cothurnos aptare
infant.” See Quintilian VI. i. 3
and Erasmi Adag. Chil.iii. Cent. vi.
Prov. 67.]