

knowledge of God with such kind of persons commonly prevaileth little. For how should the brightness of wisdom shine, where the windows of the soul are of very set purpose closed¹? True religion hath many things in it, the only mention whereof galleth and troubleth their minds. Being therefore loth that inquiry into such matters should breed a persuasion in the end contrary unto that they embrace, it is their endeavour to banish as much as in them lieth quite and clean from their cogitation whatsoever may sound that way.

[2.] But it cometh many times to pass (which is their torment) that the thing they shun doth follow them, truth as it were even obtruding itself into their knowledge, and not permitting them to be so ignorant as they would be. Whereupon inasmuch as the nature of man is unwilling to continue doing that wherein it shall always condemn itself, they continuing still obstinate to follow the course which they have begun, are driven to devise all the shifts that wit can invent for the smothering of this light, all that may but with any the least show of possibility stay their minds from thinking that true, which they heartily wish were false, but cannot think it so without some scruple and fear of the contrary².

Now because that judicious learning, for which we commend most worthily the ancient sages of the world, doth not in this case serve the turn, these trencher-mates (for such the most of them be) frame to themselves a way more pleasant; a new method they have of turning things that are serious into mockery, an art of contradiction by way of scorn, a learning wherewith we were long sithence forewarned that the miserable times whereinto we are fallen should abound³. This they study, this they practise, this they grace with a wanton superfluity of wit, too much insulting over the patience of more virtuously disposed minds.

For towards these so forlorn creatures we are (it must be confest) too patient. In zeal to the glory of God, Babylon hath excelled Sion. We want that decree⁴ of Nabuchodo-

¹ Susan. ver. 9. "They turned away their mind, and cast down their eyes, that they might not see heaven, nor remember just judgments."

"agnoscere quem ignorare non possis." Cypr. de Idol. Vanit. [i. 15. ed. Fell.]

² 2 Peter iii. 3; Jude 18.

³ Dan. iii. 29.

⁴ "Hæc est summa delicti, nolle

nosor; the fury of this wicked brood hath the reins too much at liberty; their tongues walk at large; the spit-venom of their poisoned hearts breaketh out to the annoyance of others; what their untamed lust suggesteth, the same their licentious mouths do every where set abroad.

With our contentions their irreligious humour also is much strengthened¹. Nothing pleaseth them better than these manifold oppositions about the matter of religion, as well for that they have hereby the more opportunity to learn on one side how another may be oppugned, and so to weaken the credit of all unto themselves; as also because by this hot pursuit of lower controversies amongst men professing religion, and agreeing in the principal foundations thereof, they conceive hope that about the higher principles themselves time will cause altercation to grow.

For which purpose, when they see occasion, they stick not sometime in other men's persons, yea sometime without any vizard at all, directly to try, what the most religious are able to say in defence of the highest points whereupon all religion dependeth. Now for the most part it so falleth out touching things which generally are received, that although in themselves they be most certain, yet because men presume them granted of all, we are hardlied able to bring such proof of their certainty as may satisfy gainsayers, when suddenly and besides expectation they require the same at our hands. Which im- preparation and unreadiness when they find in us, they turn it to the soothing up of themselves in that cursed fancy, whereby they would fain believe that the hearty devotion of such as indeed fear God is nothing else but a kind of harmless error, bred and confirmed in them by the sleights of wiser men.

[3.] For a politic use of religion they see there is, and by it they would also gather that religion itself is a mere politic device, forged purposely to serve for that use. Men

¹ [See Cranmer's letter, below. In a paper called, "An Advertisement touching the Controversies of the Church of England," (Mus. Bodl. 55. Catal. MSS. Angl. 3499,) is the following: "Two principall causes have I ever known of Atheism: "curious controversies, and pro- phane scoffing. Now that these two are joined to one, no doubt that sect will make no small progression." The paper seems to have been written, by a sensible and very moderate man, about 1589 or 1590.] [i. e. Francis Bacon; see Spedding's "Bacon's Letters and Life," i. 74, 77.] 1886.

fearing God are thereby a great deal more effectually than by positive laws restrained from doing evil; inasmuch as those laws have no farther power than over our outward actions only, whereas unto men's¹ inward cogitations, unto the privy intents and motions of their hearts, religion serveth for a bridle. What more savage, wild, and cruel, than man, if he see himself able either by fraud to overreach, or by power to overbear, the laws whereunto he should be subject? Wherefore in so great boldness to offend, it behoveth that the world should be held in awe, not by a vain surmise, but a true apprehension of somewhat, which no man may think himself able to withstand. This is the politic use of religion.

[4.] In which respect there are of these wise malignants² some, who have vouchsafed it their marvellous favourable countenance and speech, very gravely affirming, that religion honoured, addeth greatness, and contemned, bringeth ruin unto commonweals; that princes and states, which will continue, are above all things to uphold the reverend regard of religion, and to provide for the same by all means in the making of their laws.

But when they should define what means are best for that purpose, behold, they extol the wisdom of Paganism; they give it out as a mystical precept of great importance, that princes, and such as are under them in most authority or credit with the people, should take all occasions of rare events, and from what cause soever the same do proceed, yet wrest

¹ "Vos scelera admissa punitis, apud nos et cogitare peccare est; vos conscios timetis, nos etiam conscientiam solam, sine qua esse non possumus." Minuc. Fel. in Octav. [c. 35.] "Summum præsidium regni est justitia ob apertos tumultus, et religio ob occultos." Carda. (Jerome Cardan, of Pavia, 1501-1576, physician and mathematician,) de Sapien. lib. iii. [vol. i. p. 537. ed. Lugd. 1663.]

² Mach. Disc. lib. i. c. 11-14. ["Come la osservanza del culto divino è cagione della grandezza delle Republiche, così il dispregio di quello è cagione della rovina di esse. Quelli Principi, o quelle Republiche, le quali si vogliono mantenere incor-

rotte, hanno sopra ogni altra cosa a mantenere incorrotte le cerimonie della Religione, e tenerle sempre nella loro veneratione. . . . E debbono tutte le cose che nascono in favore di quella (come che la giudicassino falsa) favorirle ed accrescerle; e tanto più lo debbono fare, quanto più prudenti sono, e quanto più conoscitori delle cose naturali. E perchè questo modo è stato osservato dagli huomini savi, ne è nata la opinione de i miracoli, che si celebrano nelle religioni, eziandio false; perchè i prudenti gli augumentano, da qualunque principio nascono, e l' autorità loro da poi à quelli fede appresso à qualunque.]

them to the strengthening of their religion, and not make it nice for so good a purpose to use, if need be, plain forgeries. Thus while they study how to bring to pass that religion may seem but a matter made, they lose themselves in the very maze of their own discourses, as if reason did even purposely forsake them, who of purpose forsake God the author thereof. For surely a strange kind of madness it is, that those men who though they be void of piety, yet because they have wit cannot choose but know that treachery, guile, and deceit are things, which may for a while but do not use long to go unespied, should teach that the greatest honour to a state is perpetuity¹; and grant that alterations in the service of God, for that they impair the credit of religion, are therefore perilous in commonweals, which have no continuance longer than religion hath all reverence done unto it²; and withal acknowledge (for so they do) that when people began to espy the falsehood of oracles, whereupon all Gentility was built, their hearts were utterly averted from it³; and notwithstanding counsel princes in sober earnest, for the strengthening of their states to maintain religion, and for the maintenance of religion not to make choice of that which is true, but to authorize that they make choice of by those false and fraudulent means which in the end must needs overthrow it. Such are the counsels of men godless, when they would shew themselves politic devisers, able to create God in man by art.

III. Wherefore to let go this execrable crew, and to come to extremities on the contrary hand; two affections there are, the forces whereof, as they bear the greater or lesser sway in man's heart, frame accordingly the stamp and character of his religion; the one zeal, the other fear.

Zeal, unless it be rightly guided, when it endeavoureth most busily to please God, forceth upon him those unseasonable offices which please him not. For which cause, if they who this way swerve be compared with such sincere, sound,

¹ ["Non è la salute d' una Republica o d' un Regno havere un Principe che prudentemente governi, mentre vive, ma uno che l' ordini in modo, che morendo, ancora la si mantenga." c. 11.]

² ["Nessuno maggiore indizio si puote havere dalla rovina d' una

provincia, che vedere dispregiato il culto divino." c. 12.]

³ ["Come costoro cominciarono dipoi a parlare a modo de' Potenti, e questa falsità si fu scoperta ne' popoli, divennero gli huomini increduli, ed atti a perturbare ogni ordine buono."]

Of Superstition, and the root thereof, either misguided zeal, or ignorant fear of divine glory.

and discreet, as Abraham was in matter of religion ; the service of the one is like unto flattery, the other like the faithful sedulity of friendship¹. Zeal, except it be ordered aright, when it bendeth itself unto conflict with things either in deed, or but imagined to be opposite unto religion, useth the razor many times with such eagerness, that the very life of religion itself is thereby hazarded ; through hatred of tares the corn in the field of God is plucked up. So that zeal needeth both ways a sober guide.

Fear on the other side, if it have not the light of true understanding concerning God, wherewith to be moderated, breedeth likewise superstition. It is therefore dangerous, that in things divine we should work too much upon the spur either of zeal or fear. Fear is a good solicitor to devotion. Howbeit, sith fear in this kind doth grow from an apprehension of Deity endued with irresistible power to hurt, and is of all affections (anger excepted) the unaptest to admit any conference with reason ; for which cause the wise man doth say of fear that it is a betrayer of the forces of reasonable understanding² ; therefore except men know beforehand what manner of service pleaseth God, while they are fearful they try all things which fancy offereth. Many there are who never think on God but when they are in extremity of fear ; and then, because what to think or what to do they are uncertain, perplexity not suffering them to be idle, they think and do as it were in a phrensy they know not what.

[2.] Superstition neither knoweth the right kind, nor observeth the due measure, of actions belonging to the service of God, but is always joined with a wrong opinion touching things divine. Superstition is, when things are either abhorred or observed with a zealous or fearful, but erroneous, relation to God. By means whereof, the superstitious do sometimes serve, though the true God, yet with needless offices, and defraud him of duties necessary ; sometime load others than him with such honours as properly are his. The one their oversight, who miss in the choice of that wherewith ; the other theirs, who fail in the election of him towards whom they shew devotion : this, the crime of idolatry, that, the fault of voluntary either niceness or superfluity in religion.

¹ 2 Chron. xx. 7 ; "Abraham thy friend."

² Wisd. xvii. 12.

[3.] The Christian world itself being divided into two grand parts, it appeareth by the general view of both, that with matter of heresy the West hath been often and much troubled ; but the East part never quiet, till the deluge of misery, wherein now they are, overwhelmed them. The chiefest cause whereof doth seem to have lien in the restless wits of the Grecians, evermore proud of their own curious and subtile inventions ; which when at any time they had contrived, the great facility of their language served them readily to make all things fair and plausible to men's understanding. Those grand heretical impieties therefore, which most highly and immediately touched God and the glorious Trinity, were all in a manner the monsters of the East. The West bred fewer a great deal, and those commonly of a lower nature, such as more nearly and directly concerned rather men than God ; the Latins being always to capital heresies less inclined, yet unto gross superstition more.

[4.] Superstition such as that of the Pharisees was¹, by whom divine things indeed were less, because other things were more divinely esteemed of than reason would ; the superstition that riseth voluntarily, and by degrees which are hardly discerned mingleth itself with the rites even of very divine service done to the only true God, must be considered of as a creeping and encroaching evil, an evil the first beginnings whereof are commonly harmless, so that it proveth only then to be an evil when some farther accident doth grow unto it, or itself come unto farther growth. For in the Church of God sometimes it cometh to pass as in over battle grounds², the fertile disposition whereof is good ; yet because it exceedeth due proportion, it bringeth forth abundantly, through too much rankness, things less profitable ; whereby that which principally it should yield, being either prevented in place, or defrauded of nourishment, faileth. This (if so large a discourse were necessary) might be exemplified even by heaps of rites and customs now superstitious in the greatest part of the Christian world, which in their first original beginnings, when the strength of virtuous,

¹ Mark vii. 9.

² [Battel or Battle, adj. "Fruitful, times signifies "to grow fat," sometimes "to render fertile." Todd's "fertile." From the verb "to bat- Johnson's Dict.] "tel" or "battil," which some-

BOOK V. devout, or charitable affection bloomed¹ them, no man could
 Ch. iv. 1, 2. justly have condemned as evil.

Of the re-
 dress of
 superstition
 in God's
 Church,
 and con-
 cerning the
 question of
 this Book.

IV. But howsoever superstition do grow, that wherein un-
 sounder times have done amiss, the better ages ensuing must
 rectify, as they may. I now come therefore to those accusa-
 tions brought against us by pretenders of reformation; the
 first in the rank whereof is such, that if so be the Church of
 England did at this day therewith as justly deserve to be
 touched, as they in this cause have imagined it doth, rather
 would I exhort all sorts to seek pardon even with tears at the
 hands of God, than meditate words of defence for our doings,
 to the end that men might think favourably of them. For as
 the case of this world, especially now, doth stand, what other
 stay or succour have we to lean unto, saving the testimony of
 our conscience, and the comfort we take in this, that we serve
 the living God (as near as our wits can reach unto the know-
 ledge thereof) even according to his own will, and do there-
 fore trust that his mercy shall be our safeguard against those
 enraged powers abroad, which principally in that respect are
 become our enemies? But sith no man can do ill with a good
 conscience, the consolation which we herein seem to find, is
 but a mere deceitful pleasing of ourselves in error, which at
 the length must needs turn to our greater grief, if that which
 we do to please God most be for the manifold defects thereof
 offensive unto him. For so it is judged, our prayers, our
 sacraments, our fasts, our times and places of public meeting
 together for the worship and service of God, our marriages,
 our burials, our functions, elections and ordinations ecclesiastical,
 almost whatsoever we do in the exercise of our religion
 according to laws for that purpose established, all things are
 some way or other thought faulty, all things stained with
 superstition.

[2.] Now although it may be the wiser sort of men are not
 greatly moved hereat, considering how subject the very best
 things have been always unto cavil, when wits possessed either
 with disdain or dislike thereof have set them up as their mark
 to shoot at: safe notwithstanding it were not therefore to

¹ [Numbers xvii. 8. "The rod "buds, and *bloomed blossoms*, and
 "of Aaron for the house of Levi "yielded almonds:" quoted by Mr.
 "was budded, and brought forth Todd.]

neglect the danger which from hence may grow, and that
 especially in regard of them, who desiring to serve God as
 they ought, but being not so skilful as in every point to un-
 wind themselves where the snares of glosing speech do lie to
 entangle them, are in mind not a little troubled, when they
 hear so bitter invectives against that which this church hath
 taught them to reverence as holy, to approve as lawful, and to
 observe as behoveful for the exercise of Christian duty. It
 seemeth therefore at the least for their sakes very meet, that
 such as blame us in this behalf be directly answered, and
 they which follow us informed plainly in the reasons of that
 we do.

[3.] On both sides the end intended between us, is to have
 laws and ordinances such as may rightly serve to abolish
 superstition, and to establish the service of God with all things
 thereunto appertaining in some perfect form.

There is an inward reasonable¹, and there is a solemn²
 outward serviceable worship belonging unto God. Of the
 former kind are all manner virtuous duties that each man in
 reason and conscience to Godward oweth. Solemn and ser-
 viceable worship we name for distinction sake, whatsoever
 belongeth to the Church or public society of God by way of
 external adoration. It is the later of these two whereupon
 our present question groweth.

Again, this later being ordered, partly, and as touching
 principal matters, by none but precepts divine only; partly,
 and as concerning things of inferior regard, by ordinances as
 well human as divine: about the substance of religion wherein
 God's only law must be kept there is here no controversy;
 the crime now intended against us is, that our laws have not
 ordered those inferior things as behoveth, and that our cus-
 toms are either superstitious, or otherwise amiss, whether we
 respect the exercise of public duties in religion, or the func-
 tions of persons authorized thereunto.

V. It is with teachers of mathematical sciences usual, for
 us in this present question necessary, to lay down first certain
 reasonable demands, which in most particulars following are
 to serve as principles whereby to work, and therefore must
 be beforehand considered. The men whom we labour to

BOOK V.
 Ch. iv. 3, v. 1.

Four gene-
 ral propo-
 sitions de-
 manding
 that which
 may reason-
 ably be
 granted

¹ Rom. xii. 1.

² Luke i. 23.

BOOK V.
Ch. vi. 1.concerning
matters of
outward
form in the
exercise of
true reli-
gion. And,
fifthly, Of
a rule not
safe nor
reasonable
in these
cases.

inform in the truth perceive that so to proceed is requisite. For to this end they also propose touching customs and rites indifferent their general axioms, some of them subject unto just exceptions, and, as we think, more meet by them to be farther considered, than assented unto by us. As that, "In outward things belonging to the service of God, reformed churches ought by all means to shun conformity with the church of Rome;" that, "the first reformed should be a pattern whereunto all that come after ought to conform themselves;" that, "sound religion may not use the things which being not commanded of God have been either devised or abused unto superstition." These and the rest of the same consort we have in the book going before examined.

Other canons they allege and rules not unworthy of approbation; as that, "In all such things the glory of God, and the edification or ghostly good of his people, must be sought;" "That nothing should be undecently or unorderly done." But forasmuch as all the difficulty is in discerning what things do glorify God and edify his Church, what not; when we should think them decent and fit, when otherwise: because these rules being too general, come not near enough unto the matter which we have in hand; and the former principles being nearer the purpose, are too far from truth; we must propose unto all men certain petitions incident and very material in causes of this nature, such as no man of moderate judgment hath cause to think unjust or unreasonable.

The first
proposition
touching
judgment
what
things are
convenient
in the
outward
public
ordering
of church
affairs.

VI. The first thing therefore which is of force to cause approbation with good conscience towards such customs or rites as publicly are established, is when there riseth from the due consideration of those customs and rites in themselves apparent reason, although not always to prove them better than any other that might possibly be devised, (for who did ever require this in man's ordinances?) yet competent to shew their conveniency and fitness, in regard of the use for which they should serve.

Now touching the nature of religious services, and the manner of their due performance, thus much generally we know to be most clear; that whereas the greatness and dignity

of all manner actions is measured by the worthiness of the subject from which they proceed, and of the object whereabout they are conversant, we must of necessity in both respects acknowledge, that this present world affordeth not any thing comparable unto the public duties of religion. For if the best things have the perfectest and best operations, it will follow, that seeing man is the worthiest creature upon earth, and every society of men more worthy than any man, and of societies that most excellent which we call the Church; there can be in this world no work performed equal to the exercise of true religion, the proper operation of the Church of God.

Again, forasmuch as religion worketh upon him who in majesty and power is infinite, as we ought we account not of it, unless we esteem it even according to that very height of excellency which our hearts conceive when divine sublimity itself is rightly considered. In the powers and faculties of our souls God requireth the uttermost which our unfeigned affection towards him is able to yield¹. So that if we affect him not far above and before all things, our religion hath not that inward perfection which it should have, neither do we indeed worship him as our God.

[2.] That which inwardly each man should be, the Church outwardly ought to testify. And therefore the duties of our religion which are seen must be such as that affection which is unseen ought to be. Signs must resemble the things they signify. If religion bear the greatest sway in our hearts, our outward religious duties must shew it as far as the Church hath outward ability. Duties of religion performed by whole societies of men, ought to have in them according to our power a sensible excellency, correspondent to the majesty of him whom we worship². Yea then are the public duties of religion best ordered, when the militant Church doth resemble by sensible means³, as it may in such cases, that hidden

BOOK V.
Ch. vi. 2.

¹ John iv. 24; Wisd. vi. 10; 1 Chron. xxix. 17.

² 2 Chron. ii. 5.

³ Ἐκκλησία ἐστὶν ἐπίγειος οὐρανός. Germa. (Germanus, Patriarch of C. P. 715-22. *περὶ τῶν ἱερουργουμένων*. [ap. 1:11. Patr. Colon. viii.

53.] "Delectatio Domini in Ecclesia est; Ecclesia vero est imago "caelestium." Ambros. de Interpel. Dav. [l. ii. c. 2. t. i. 641.] "Facit in terris opera caelorum." Sidon. Apol. 431-488.) Epist. lib. vi. [Ep. 12. ap. 1:11. Patr. Colon. iii. 988.]