better to let them stand as a list or marginal border unto the Old Testament, and though with divine yet as human compositions, to grant at the least unto certain of them public audience in the house of God. For inasmuch as the due estimation of heavenly truth dependeth wholly upon the known and approved authority of those famous oracles of God, it greatly behoveth the Church to have always most especial care, lest through confused mixture at any time human usurp the room and title of divine writings. Wherefore albeit for the people's more plain instruction (as the ancient use hath been) we read in our churches certain books besides the Scripture, yet as the Scripture we read them not. All men know our professed opinion touching the difference whereby we sever them from the Scripture. And if any where it be suspected that some or other will haply mistake a thing so manifest in every man's eye, there is no let but that as often as those books are read, and need so requireth, the style of their difference may expressly be mentioned, to bar even all possibility of error.

[11.] It being then known that we hold not the Apocrypha for sacred (as we do the holy Scripture) but for human compositions, the subject whereof are surdly divine matters; let there be reason shewed why to read any part of them publicly it should be unlawful or hurtful unto the Church of God. I

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books are “holy,” that they are “ecclesiastical” and “sacred,” that to term them “divine,” as being for their excellency next unto them which are properly so termed, is no way to honour them above desert; yea even that the whole Church of Christ as well at the first as sitheence hath most worthily approved their fitness for the public information of life and manners; is not thus much I say acknowledged, and that by them, who notwithstanding receive not the same for “any part of canonical Scripture,” by them who deny not but that they are “faulty,” by them who are ready enough to give instances wherein they seem to contain matter “scarce agreeable with holy Scripture?” So little doth such their supposed faultiness in moderate men’s judgment enforce the removal of them out of the house of God, that still they are judged to retain worthily those very titles of commendation, than which there cannot greater be given to writings the authors whereof are men. As in truth if the Scripture itself ascribing to the persons of righteous in regard of their manifold virtues, may not rightly be construed as though it did thereby clear them and make them quite free from all faults, no reason we should judge it absurd to commend their writings as reverend, holy, and sound, wherein there are so many singular perfections, only for that the exquisitely wits of some few peradventure are able dispersely here and there to find now a word and then a sentence, which may be more probably suspected than easily cleared of error, by us which have but conjectural knowledge of their meaning.

Against immodest invectives therefore whereby they are charged as being fraught with outrageous lies, we doubt not but their more allowable censure will prevail, who without so passionate terms of disgrace, do note a difference great enough between Apocryphal and other writings, a difference such as Josephus and Epiphanius observe: the one declaring that amongst the Jews books written after the days of Artaxerxes were not of equal credit with them which had gone before, inasmuch as the Jews sitheence that time had not the like exact succession of Prophets; the other acknowledging that

they are “profitable,” although denying them to be “divine” in such construction and sense as the Scripture itself is so termed. With what intent they were first published, those words of the nephew of Jesus do plainly enough signify, “After that my grandfather Jesus had given himself to the reading of the Law and the Prophets and other books of our fathers, and had gotten therein sufficient judgment, he purposed also to write something pertaining to learning and wisdom, to the intent that they which were desirous to learn, and would give themselves to these things, might profit much more in living according to the Law.” Their end in writing and ours in reading them is the same. The books of Judith, Tobit, Baruch, Wisdom, and Ecclesiasticus, we read, as serving most unto that end. The rest we leave unto men in private.

[12.] Neither can it be reasonably thought, because upon certain solemn occasions some lessons are chosen out of those books, and of Scripture itself some chapters not appointed to be read at all, that we thereby do offer disgrace to the word of God, or lift up the writings of men above it. For in such choice we do not think but that Fitness of speech may be more respected than Worthiness. If in that which we use to read there happen by the way any clause, sentence, or speech, that soundeth towards error, should the mixture of a little dross constrain the Church to deprive herself of so much gold, rather than learn how by art and judgment to make separation of the one from the other? To this effect very fitly, from the counsel that St. Jerome giveth Laæt., of taking heed how she read the Apocrypha, as also by the help of other learned men’s judgments delivered in like case, we may take direction. But surely the arguments that should bind us not to read them or any part of them publicly at all must be stronger than as yet we have heard any.
XXI. We marvel the less that our reading of books not
canonical is so much impugned, when so little is attributed
unto the reading of canonical Scripture itself, that now it hath
grown to be a question, whether the word of God be any
ordinary mean to save the souls of men, in that it is either
privately studied or publicly read and so made known, or else
only as the same is preached, that is to say, explained by lively
voice, and applied to the people’s use as the speaker in his
wisdom thinketh meet. For this alone is it which they use
to call Preaching. The public reading of the Apocrypha they
condemn altogether as a thing effectual unto evil; the bare
reading in like sort of whatsoever, yea even of Scriptures
themselves, they mislike, as a thing uneffectual to do that good,
which we are persuaded may grow by it 1.

[2.] Our desire is in this present controversy, as in the rest,
not to be carried up and down with the waves of uncertain
arguments, but rather positively to lead on the minds of the
simpler sort by plain and easy degrees, till the very nature of
the thing itself do make manifest what is truth. First therefore
because whatsoever is spoken concerning the efficacy or
necessity of God’s Word, the same they tie and restrain only
unto Sermons, howbeit not Sermons read neither (for such they
also abhor in the church 2) but sermons without book, sermons
which spend their life in their birth and may have
public audience but once; for this cause to avoid ambiguities
wherewith they often entangle themselves, not marking what
doth agree to the word of God in itself, and what in regard of
outward accidents which may befall it, we are to know that
the word of God is his heavenly truth touching matters of
eternal life revealed and uttered unto men; unto Prophets
and Apostles by immediate divine inspiration, from them to
us by their books and writings. We therefore have no word
of God but the Scripture. Apostolic sermons were unto such
as heard them his word, even as properly as to us their
writings are. Howbeit not so our own sermons, the expositions
which our discourse of wit doth gather and minister out of
the word of God. For which cause in this present question,
we are when we name the word of God always to mean the
Scripture only.

[3.] The end of the word of God is to save, and therefore
we term it the word of life. The way for all men to be saved
is by the knowledge of that truth which the word hath taught.
And sith eternal life is a thing of itself communicable unto all,
it behoveth that the word of God, the necessary mean thereunto,
be so likewise. Wherefore the word of life hath been
always a treasure, though precious, yet easy, as well to attain,
as to find; lest any man desirous of life should perish through
the difficulty of the way. To this end the word of God no
otherwise serveth than only in the nature of a doctrinal
instrument. It saveth because it maketh “wise to salvation.”
Wherefore the ignorant it saveth not; they which live by the
word must know it. And being itself the instrument which
God hath purposely framed, whereby to work the knowledge
of salvation in the hearts of men, what cause is there wherefo-
re it should not of itself be acknowledged a most apt and
a likely mean to leave an Apprehension of things divine in
our understanding, and in the mind an Assent thereunto?
For touching the one, sith God, who knoweth and discloseth
best the rich treasures of his own wisdom, hath by delivering
his word made choice of the Scriptures as the most effectual
means whereby those treasures might be imparted unto the
world, it followeth that to man’s understanding the Scripture
must needs be even of itself intended as a full and perfect
discovery, sufficient to imprint in us the lively character of all
things necessarily required for the attainment of eternal life.

And concerning our Assent to the mysteries of heavenly truth,
seeing that the word of God for the Author's sake hath credit with all that confess it (as we all do) to be his word, every proposition of holy Scripture, every sentence being to us a principle; if the principles of all kinds of knowledge else have that virtue in themselves, whereby they are able to procure our assent unto such conclusions as the industry of right discourse doth gather from them; we have no reason to think the principles of that truth which tendeth unto man's everlasting happiness less forcible than any other, when we know that of all other they are for their certainty the most infaillible.

But as every thing of price, so this doth require travail. We bring not the knowledge of God with us into the world. And the less our own opportunity or ability is that way, the more we need the help of other men's judgments to be our direction herein. Nor doth any man ever believe, into whom the doctrine of belief is not instilled by instruction some way received at the first from others. Wherein whatsoever fit means there are to notify the mysteries of the word of God, whether publicly (which we call Preaching) or in private howsoever, the word by every such mean even "ordinarily" doth save, and not only by being delivered unto men in Sermons.

[4.] Sermons are not the only preaching which doth save souls. For concerning the use and sense of this word Preaching, which they shut up in so close a prison, although more than enough have already been spoken to redeem the liberty thereof, yet because they insist so much and so proudly, and not sufficiently, we must a little inure their ears with hearing how others whom they more regard are in this case accustomed to use the selfsame language with us whose manner of speech they deride. Justin Martyr doubteth not to tell the Greeks, that even in certain of their writings the very judgment to come is preached; nor the council of Vaux to insinuate that presbyters absent through infirmity from their churches might be said to preach by those deputies who in their stead did but

1 ["The ordinary and especial means to work faith by is preaching and not reading." ... It is the excellentest and most ordinary means to work faith by in the "hearts of the hearers." ... "The ordinary ways whereby God re-generateth his children is by the "word of God which is preached." T. C. i. 159.]
2 [Parenet. ad Gent. [p. i. C. tīm mellotho meta tēn teluήn toūdē tōv biau kουθηθκί σταθμε ιμων] eis de òllo kai oĩ par' évwn

Reading in Church anciently called Preaching.

read Homilies; nor the council of Toledo to call the usual public reading of the Gospels in the church Preaching; nor others long before these our days to write, that by him who but readeth a lesson in the solemn assembly as part of divine service, the very office of Preaching is so far forth executed. Such kind of speeches were then familiar, those phrases seemed not to them absurd, they would have marveled to hear the outcries which we do, because we think that the Apostles in writing, and others in reading to the church those books which the Apostles wrote, are neither untruly nor unfitly said "to preach." For although men's tongues and their pens differ, yet to one and the selfsame general if not particular effect, they may both serve. It is no good argument, St. Paul could not "write with his tongue," therefore neither could he be "preach with his pen." For Preaching is a general end wherunto writing and speaking do both serve. Men speak not with the instruments of writing, neither write with the instruments of speech, and yet things recorded with the one and uttered with the other may be preached well enough with both. By their patience therefore be it spoken, the Apostles preached as well when they wrote as when they spake the Gospel of Christ, and our usual public Reading of the word of God for the people's instruction is Preaching.
Unfair Comparison of Sermons with Lessons.

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Ch. xxi. 5. xxi. 1, 2.

[5.] Nor about words would we ever contend, were not their purpose in so restraining the same injurious to God’s most sacred Word and Spirit. It is on both sides confessed that the word of God outwardly administered (his Spirit inwardly concurreth therewith) converteth, edifieth, and saveth souls. Now whereas the external administration of his word is as well by reading barely the Scripture, as by explaining the same when sermons thereon be made; in the one they deny that the finger of God hath ordinarily certain principal operations, which we most steadfastly hold and believe that it hath in both.

XXII. So worthy a part of divine service we should greatly wrong, if we did not esteem Preaching as the blessed ordinance of God, sermons as keys to the kingdom of heaven, as wings to the soul, as spurs to the good affections of man, unto the sound and healthy as food, as physic unto diseased minds. Wherefore how highly soever it may please them with words of truth to extol sermons, they shall not herein offend us. We seek not to derogate from any thing which they can justly esteem, but our desire is to uphold the just estimation of that from which it seemeth unto us they derogate more than becometh them. That which offendeth us is first the great disgrace which they offer unto our custom of bare reading the word of God, and to his gracious Spirit, the principal virtue whereof thereby manifesting itself for the endless good of men’s souls, even the virtue which it hath to convert, to edify, to save souls, this they mightily strive to obscure; and secondly the shifts wherewith they maintain their opinion of sermons, whereunto while they labour to appropriate the saving power of the Holy Ghost, they separate from all apparent hope of life and salvation thousands whom the goodness of Almighty God doth no exclude.

[2.] Touching therefore the use of Scripture, even in that it is openly read, and the inestimable good which the Church of God by that very mean hath reaped; there was, we may very well think, some cause, which moved the Apostle St. Paul to require, that those things which any one church’s

1 John vi. 46. [45?] Matt. xvi. 211, 212. T. C. i. 119. al. 158-17; 2 Cor. iv. 6; 1 Cor. xii. 3; 161. Def. 568-582. T. C. ii. 374-Acts xvi. 14.
[Adm. 7. An. 130-134, 208, 392.]

Use of Lessons:

BOOK V.
Ch. xxii. 2.

affairs gave particular occasion to write, might for the instruction of all be published, and that by reading 1.

1. When the very having of the books of God was a matter of no small charge and difficulty, inasmuch as they could not be had otherwise than only in written copies, it was the necessity not of preaching things agreeable with the word, but of reading the word itself at large to the people, which caused churches throughout the world to have public care, that the sacred oracles of God being procured by common charge, might with great sedulity be kept both entire and sincere. If then we admire the providence of God in the same continuance of Scripture, notwithstanding the violent endeavours of infidels to abolish, and the fraudulent of heretics always to deprave the same, shall we set light by that custom of reading, from whence so precious a benefit hath grown?

2. The voice and testimony of the Church acknowledging Scripture to be the law of the living God, is for the truth and certainty thereof no mean evidence. For if with reason we may presume upon things which a few men’s depositions do testify, suppose we that the minds of men are not both at their first access to the school of Christ exceedingly moved, yea and for ever afterwards also confirmed much, when they consider the main consent of all the churches in the whole world witnessing the sacred authority of scriptures, ever sitethence the first publication thereof, even till this present day and hour? And that they all have always so testified, I see not how we should possibly wish a proof more palpable, than this manifest received and every where continued custom of reading them publicly as the Scriptures. The reading therefore of the word of God, as the use hath ever been, in open audience, is the plainest evidence we have of the Church’s Assent and Acknowledgment that it is his word.

3. A further commodity this custom hath, which is to furnish the very simplest and rudest sort with such infallible Axioms and Precepts of sacred truth, delivered even in the very Letter of the Law of God, as may serve them for 2 Rules whereby to judge the better all other doctrines and instructiions which they hear. For which end and purpose I see not

1 1 Thess. v. 27; Coloss. iv. 16. 2 John v. 39; Isa. viii. 20.