how the Scripture could be possibly made familiar unto all, unless far more should be read in the people's hearing, than by a sermon can be opened. For whereas in a manner the whole book of God is by reading every year published, a small part thereof in comparison of the whole may hold very well the readiest interpreter of Scripture occupied many years.

4. Besides, wherefore should any man think, but that reading itself is one of the "ordinary" means, whereby it pleaseth God of his gracious goodness to instil that celestial verity, which being but so received, is nevertheless effectual to save souls? Thus much therefore we ascribe to the reading of the word of God as the manner is in our churches.

[3.] And because it were odious if they on their part should altogether despise the same, they yield that reading may "set forward," but not begin the work of salvation; that faith may be "nourished" therewith, but not bred; that herein men's attention to the Scriptures, and their speculation of the creatures of God have like efficacy, both being of power to "augment," but neither to effect benefit without sermons; that if any believe by reading alone, we are to account it a miracle, an "extraordinary" work of God. Wherein that which they grant we gladly accept at their hands, and wish that patiently they would examine how little cause they have to deny that which as yet they grant not.

[4.] The Scripture witnesseth that when the book of the Law of God had been sometime missing, and was after found, the king, which heard it but only read, tare his clothes, and with tears confessed, "Great is the wrath of the Lord upon us, because our fathers have not kept his word to do after all things which are written in this book." This doth argue, that by bare reading (for of sermons at that time there is no mention) true repentance may be wrought in the hearts of such as fear God, and yet incur his displeasure, the deserved effect whereof is eternal death. So that their repentance (although it be not their first entrance) is notwithstanding the first step of their reentrance into life, and may be in them wrought by the word only read unto them.

Besides, it seemeth that God would have no man stand in doubt but that the reading of Scripture is effectual, as well to lay even the first foundation, as to add degrees of farther perfection in the fear of God. And therefore the Law saith, "Thou shalt read this Law before all Israel, that men, women, and children may hear, yea even that their children which as yet have not known it may hear it, and by hearing it so read, may learn to fear the Lord."

Our Lord and Saviour was himself of opinion, that they which would not be drawn to amendment of life by the testimony which Moses and the Prophets have given concerning the miseries that follow sinners after death, were not likely to be persuaded by other means, although God from the very dead should have raised them up preachers.

Many hear the books of God and believe them not. Howbeit their unbelief in that case we may not impute unto any weakness or insufficiency in the mean which is used towards them, but to the wilful bent of their obstinate hearts against it. With minds obdurate nothing prevaileth. As well they that preach, as they that read unto such, shall still have cause to complain with the Prophets which were of old, "Who will give credit unto our teaching?" But with whom ordinary means will prevail, surely the power of the word of God, even without the help of interpreters in God's Church worketh mightily, not unto their confirmation alone which are converted, but also to their conversion which are not.

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1 [T. C. i. 126. al. 159. "Although reading do help to nourish the faith which cometh by preaching, yet this is given to the preaching, and so is also the faith engendered," i.e. by excellency, and for that it is the excellentest and most ordinary means to work by in the hearts of the hearers. The beholding of the creatures, and the consideration of the making of the world, and of God's wisdom and wonderful love appearing in them, doth nourish and strengthen faith: and yet may it not therefore in efficacy be compared with the preaching of the word of God."]

2 T. C. ii. 374. ["It helpeth to nourish faith engendered,"] 376. ["If private reading only cannot ordinarily engender faith, I would know how public reading only can do it."] 396. ["The Lord's authorized ambassador, ... without whose ministry ... faith cannot be engendered."]

3 T. C. ii. 378. ["I compared them," (the consideration of the creatures with the reading of the Scriptures) "in that, both nourishing faith, neither could ordinarily bred it."

4 T. C. ii. 383. ["Of many brought to the light of the Gospel by reading only, he" (Whitgift) maketh not, nor, as I am persuaded, could make it appear. Although it be confessed that that may be done by the Lord's extraordinary working; which feedeth sometime with quails in the wilderness."]

6 Deut. xxxi. 11-13.
7 Isa. lii. 1.
BOOK V.

Ch. xxii. 5, 6.

92 Difference of God's Word and Works as sources of Faith.

It shall not boot them who derogate from reading to excuse it, when they see no other remedy, as if their intent were only to deny that aliens and strangers from the family of God are won, or that belief doth use to be wrought at the first in them, without sermons. For they know it is our custom of simple reading not for conversion of infidels estranged from the house of God, but for instruction of men baptized, bred and brought up in the bosom of the Church, which they despise as a thing uneffectual to save such souls. In such they imagine that God hath no ordinary mean to work faith without sermons.

[5.] The reason, why no man can attain belief by the bare contemplation of heaven and earth, is for that they neither are sufficient to give us as much as the least spark of light concerning the very principal mysteries of our faith; and whatsoever we may learn by them, the same we can only attain to know according to the manner of natural sciences, which mere discourse of wit and reason findeth out, whereas the things which we properly believe be only such as are received upon the credit of divine testimony.

Seeing therefore that he which considereth the creatures of God findeth therein both these defects, and neither the one nor the other in Scriptures, because he that readeth unto us the Scriptures delivereth all the mysteries of faith, and not any thing amongst them all more than the mouth of the Lord dcreth warrant: it followeth in those two respects that our consideration of creatures and attention unto Scriptures are not in themselves, and without sermons, things of like disability to breed or beget faith.

[6.] Small cause also there is, why any man should greatly wonder as at an extraordinary work, if without sermons reading be found to effect thus much. For I would know by some special instance, what one article of Christian faith, or what duty required necessarily unto all men's salvation there is, which the very reading of the word of God is not apt to notify.

Effects are miraculous and strange when they grow by unlikely means. But did we ever hear it accounted for a wonder, that he which doth read, should believe and live according to the will of Almighty God? Reading doth convey to the

mind that truth without addition or diminution, which Scripture hath derived from the Holy Ghost. And the end of all Scripture is the same which St. John proposeth in the writing of that most divine Gospel, namely Faith, and through faith Salvation. Yea all Scripture is to this effect in itself available, as they which wrote it were persuaded; unless we suppose that the Evangelist or others in speaking of their own intent to instruct and to save by writing, had a secret conceit which they never opened unto any, a conceit that no man in the world should ever be that way the better for any sentence by them written, till such time as the same might chance to be preached upon or alleged at the least in a sermon. Otherwise if he which writeth do that which is forcible in itself, how should he which readeth be thought to do that which in itself is of no force to work belief and to save believers?

[7.] Now although we have very just cause to stand in some jealousy and fear, lest by thus overvaluing their sermons, they make the price and estimation of Scripture otherwise notified to fall; nevertheless so impatient they are, that being but requested to let us know what causes they leave for men's encouragement to attend to the reading of the Scripture, if sermons only be the power of God to save every one which believeth; that which we move for our better learning and instruction's sake, turneth unto anger and choler in them, they grow altogether out of quietness with it, they answer fumingly that they are "ashamed to defile their pens with making an answer to such idle questions:" yet in this their mood they cast forth somewhat, wherewith under pain of greater displeasure we must rest contented. They tell us the profit of reading is singular, in that it serveth for a preparative unto sermons; it helpeth prettily towards the nourishment of faith which sermons have once engendered; it is some stay to his mind which readeth the Scripture, when he findeth the same things there which are taught in sermons, and thereby perceiveth how God doth concur in opinion with the preacher; besides it keepeth sermons in memory, and doth in that respect, although not feed the soul of man, yet help the retentive force of that stomach of the mind which receivethghostly

1 ["Divine Faith is an Assent on the Creed, p. 5, ed. 1692.
2 "unto something as Credible upon Exod. xxiv. 7.
3 "the Testimony of God." Pearson
4 John xx. 31.
5 Prov. i. 2-4; Rom. i. 16; 2 Tim. iii. 15.
6 T. C. lib. ii. p. 375.
food at the preacher’s hand. But the principal cause of writing the Gospel was, that it might be preached upon or interpreted by public ministers apt and authorized thereunto. Is it credible that a superstitious conceit (for it is no better) concerning sermons should in such sort both darken their eyes and yet sharpen their wits withal, that the only true and weighty cause why Scripture was written, the cause which in Scripture is so often mentioned, the cause which all men have ever till this present day acknowledged, this they should clean exclude as being no cause at all, and load us with so great store of strange concealeed causes which did never see light till now? In which number the rest must needs be of moment, when the very chiefest cause of committing the sacred Word of God unto books, is surmised to have been, lest the preacher should want a text whereupon to scholoy.

[8.] Men of learning hold it for a slip in judgment, when offer is made to demonstrate that as proper to one thing which reason findeth common unto moe. Whereas therefore they take from all kinds of teaching that which they attribute to sermons, it had been their part to yield directly some strong reason why between sermons alone and faith there should be ordinarily that coherence which causes have with their usual effects, why a Christian man’s belief should so naturally grow from sermons, and not possibly from any other kind of teaching.

In belief there being but these two operations, apprehension and assent, do only sermons cause belief, in that no other way is able to explain the mysteries of God, that the mind may rightly apprehend or conceive them as behoveth? We all know that many things are believed, although they be intricate, obscure, and dark, although they exceed the reach and capacity of our wits, yea although in this world they be no way possible to be understood. Many things believed are likewise so plain, that every common person may thereon be unto himself a sufficient expounder. Finally, to explain even those things which need and admit explication, many other usual ways there are besides sermons. Therefore sermons are not the only ordinary means whereby we first come to apprehend the mysteries of God.

Is it in regard then of sermons only, that apprehending the Gospel of Christ we yield thereunto our unfeigned assent as to a thing infallibly true? They which rightly consider after what sort the heart of man hereunto is framed, must of necessity acknowledge, that whoso assenteth to the words of eternal life, doth it in regard of his authority whose words they are. This is in man’s conversion unto God τò διδασκαλία τῆς καθ’ευγνώμονος, the first step whereat his race towards heaven beginneth. Unless therefore, clean contrary to our own experience, we shall think it a miracle if any man acknowledge the divine authority of the Scripture, till some sermon have persuaded him thereunto, and that otherwise neither conversation in the bosom of the Church, nor religious education, nor the reading of learned men’s books, nor information received by conference, nor whatsoever pain and diligence in hearing, studying, meditating day and night on the Law, is so far blest of God as to work this effect in any man; how would they have us to grant that faith doth not come but only by hearing sermons?

[9.] Fain they would have us to believe the Apostle St. Paul himself to be the author of this their paradox, only because he hath said that “it pleaseth God by the foolishness of preaching “to save them which believe”; and again, “How shall “they call on him in whom they have not believed? how shall “they believe in him of whom they have not heard? how shall “they hear without a preacher? how shall mere preach except “they be sent?”

1 T. C. lib. ii. 375; 1 Cor. i. 21.  2 Rom. x. 14, 15.
To answer therefore both allegations at once; the very substance of that they contain is in few but this. Life and salvation God will have offered unto all; his will is that Gentiles should be saved as well as Jews. Salvation belongeth unto none but such “as call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Which nations as yet unconverted neither do nor possibly can do till they believe. What they are to believe, impossible it is they should know till they hear it. Their hearing requireth our preaching unto them.

Tertullian, to draw even Paynims themselves unto Christian belief, willeth the books of the Old Testament to be searched, which were at that time in Ptolemy's library. And if men did not list to travel so far though it were for their endless good, he addeth that in Rome and other places the Jews had synagogues whereunto every one which would might resort, that this kind of liberty they purchased by payment of a standing tribute, that there they did openly read the Scriptures; and whosoever “will hear” saith Tertullian, “he shall find God; whosoever will study to...”

1 [View, &c. p. 4. T. C. i. 126. al. i. 59. 2 St. Paul saith that faith cometh by hearing, and hearing of the word preached; so that the ordinary and especial means to work faith by preaching and not reading.” Whit. Def. 509 ; T. C. ii. 375; Sampson in Strype, An. iii. i. 327.]
2 [1 Cor. i. 2.]
3 Apologet. c. 18. [in fine. “Quos diximus Prædicatores, Prophetae de officio praefandi vocantur. Voces eorum itaque virutes quas ad fidem divinitatis edebant, in thesauris literarum manent: nec iste nunc latent. Ptolemaeurum erudissimissim... libros a Judaeis factos postulavit... Hodie apud Serapeum Ptolemaei bibliothecae cum ipsius Hebraicis litteris exhibentur. Sed et Judaei palam lectant, vegetant libertas vulgo aditum, sabbatis omnibus qui aeddient, inventis Deum; qui etiam studuerit intelligere, cogitut et credere.”]

4 This they did in a tongue which to all learned men amongst the heathens and to a great part of the simplest was familiarly known: as appeareth by a supplication offered unto the emperor Justinian, wherein the Jews make request that it might be lawful for them to read the Greek translation of the LXX interpreters in their synagogues, as their custom before had been. Authent. cxlv. col. 1. to. incipit. ‘Ερεμος...” De Hebrais, Quomodo oporteat eos scripturas legere.” “Per interpellationes que ad nos referuntur didicimus, quod ex ipsis quidam sola liagua tenetur Hebraica, caeque stendere esse in sacrorum librorum lectione volunt; quidam etiam Graecam assumendum concludunt... Nos igitur de hae re edociri, meliores esse judicavimus eos qui Graecam etiam linguam in sacrorum librorum lectione vowerunt assumere, et (uno verbo) omnem denique linguam, quan locaes accommodatiorem et magis familiarem reddat auditoribus.” p. 624, ed. Plantin. 1575. The copy in Godefroi's edition is very different.]

1 Cor. i. 21, and Rom. x. 14. not to be confined to Sermons.

“Do know, shall be also fain to believe.” But sith there is no likelihood that ever voluntarily they will seek instruction at our hands, it remaineth that unless we will suffer them to perish, salvation itself must seek them, it behoveth God to send them preachers, as he did his elect Apostles throughout the world.

There is a knowledge which God hath always revealed unto them in the works of nature. This they honour and esteem highly as profound wisdom; howbeit this wisdom saveth them not. That which must save believers is the knowledge of the cross of Christ, the only subject of all our preaching. And in their eyes what doth this seem as yet but folly? It pleaseth God by “the foolishness of preaching” to save. These words declare how admirable force those mysteries have which the world doth deride as follies; they shew that the foolishness of the cross of Christ is the wisdom of true believers; they concern the object of our faith, the matter preached of and believed in by Christian men. This we know that the Grecians or Gentiles did account foolishness; but that they ever did think it a fond or unlikely way to seek men's conversion by sermons we have not heard. Manifest therefore it is that the Apostle applying the name of foolishness in such sort as they did must needs by “the foolishness of preaching” mean the doctrine of Christ, which we learn that we may be saved; but that sermons are the only manner of teaching whereby it pleaseth our Lord to save he could not mean.

In like sort where the same Apostle proveth that as well the sending of the Apostles as their preaching to the Gentiles was necessary, dare we affirm it was ever his meaning, that unto their salvation who even from their tender infancy never knew any other faith or religion than only Christian, no kind of teaching can be available saving that which was so needful for the first universal conversion of Gentiles hating Christianity; neither the sending of any sort allowable in the one case, except only of such as had been in the other also most fit and worthy instruments?

Belief in all sorts doth come by hearkening and attending...
they limit what is said of God’s Word, to Sermons.

or other they always restrain it unto sermons. Our Lord and Saviour hath said, “Search the Scriptures, in them ye “think to have eternal life.” But they tell us, he spake to the Jews, which Jews before had heard his Sermons; and that peradventure it was his mind they should search, not by reading, nor by hearing them read, but by “attending” whenever the Scriptures should happen to be alleged “in “Sermons.”

Furthermore, having received apostolic doctrine, the Apostle St. Paul hath taught us to esteem the same as the supreme rule whereby all other doctrines must for ever be examined. Yea, but inasmuch as the Apostle doth there speak of that he had preached, he “flatly maketh” (as they strangely affirm) “his Preachings or Sermons the rule whereby to examine all.” And then I beseech you what rule have we whereby to judge or examine any? For if sermons must be our rule, because the Apostles’ sermons were so to their hearers; then, sith we are not as they were hearers of the Apostles’ sermons, it resteth that either the sermons which we hear should be our rule, or (that being absurd) there will (which yet hath greater absurdity) no rule at all be remaining for trial, what doctrines now are corrupt, what consonant with heavenly truth.

Again, let the same Apostle acknowledge “all Scripture “profitable to teach, to improve, to correct, to instruct in “righteousness.” Still notwithstanding we err, if hereby we presume to gather, that Scripture read will avail unto any one of all these uses; they teach us the meaning of the words to be, that so much the Scripture can do if the minister that way apply it in his sermons, otherwise not.

Finally, they never hear sentence which mentioneth the

1 John v. 39.
2 T. C. lib. ii. p. 377. [“When our Saviour biddeth the Jews “search the Scriptures, he referreth them by that search to judge of the doctrine he had preached.”
3 T. C. ch. x. 9. [The words of T. C. are, “He deth maketh his “preaching the rule to examine other preachings by.”
4 Gal. i. 8, 9. [The place of Timothy being, as I “have shewed, of the proper duties of the minister of the word in “preaching, making no manner of “mention of reading, is alleged “without all judgment.”]