

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<sup>1</sup> that reading may "set forward," but not begin the work of salvation; that<sup>2</sup> faith may be "nourished" therewith, but not bred; that<sup>3</sup> 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 belief without sermons; that if<sup>4</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> [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 *κατ' ἐξοχήν*, 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."]

<sup>2</sup> T. C. ii. 375. ["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*."]

<sup>3</sup> 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 breed it*."]

<sup>4</sup> 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."]

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<sup>1</sup>." 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<sup>2</sup>."

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<sup>3</sup>, 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 unsufficiency in the mean which is used towards them, but to the wilful bent of their obstinate hearts against it. With minds obdurate nothing prevaieth. 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<sup>4</sup>?" 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.

<sup>1</sup> 2 Chron. xxxiv. 18, 19, 21.

<sup>2</sup> Deut. xxxi. 11-13.

<sup>3</sup> Luke xvi. 31.

<sup>4</sup> [Is. liii. 1.]

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<sup>1</sup>. 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 doth 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<sup>2</sup>? Reading doth convey to the

<sup>1</sup> ["Divine Faith is an Assent on the Creed, p. 5. ed. 1692.]  
"unto something as Credible upon  
"the Testimony of God." Pearson

<sup>2</sup> Exod. xxiv. 7.

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<sup>1</sup>. Yea all Scripture is to this effect *in itself* available, as they which wrote it were persuaded<sup>2</sup>; 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 answer to such idle questions<sup>3</sup>:" 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 receiveth ghostly

<sup>1</sup> John xx. 31.

<sup>2</sup> Prov. i. 2-4; Rom. i. 16; 2 Tim. iii. 15.

<sup>3</sup> 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<sup>1</sup>. 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 concealed 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 scholy.

[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*

<sup>1</sup> [The following are the words referred to :

"That he" (Dr. Whitgift) "addeth, of taking away by this means from the majesty of the Scriptures, and making them dumb, &c. (amplified in the next division by asking why the Scriptures were then written? with other such too too idle questions, which I am ashamed to defile my pen with) is unworthy the name of a reason. As if in that reading maketh men fitter to hear the word preached, and to seek after it, in that it helpeth to nourish faith engendered, in that it confirmeth a man in the doctrine preached, when by reading he perceiveth it to be as the preacher taught, in that it reneweth the memory of that was preach-

ed, which otherwise would decay; I say, as if in these respects, and such like, the profit of reading, and committing the word to writing, were not singular and inestimable. Besides that it is not denied but the Lord may extraordinarily give faith by reading only: although the order which God hath put is to save by foolishness (as it is esteemed) of preaching. Beside also that it is absurd, that the Doctor asketh, why else the Gospel should be written? as if there were no other cause of writing of it, than that it should be simply read: or as though the principal cause was not that it should be preached." T. C. ii. 375.]

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 therein 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 τὸ δθεῖν ἢ ἀρχὴ τῆς κινήσεως, 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<sup>1</sup>;" 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 men preach except they be sent<sup>2</sup>?"

<sup>1</sup> T. C. lib. ii. 375; 1 Cor. i. 21.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. x. 14, 15.

To answer therefore both allegations<sup>1</sup> 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"<sup>2</sup>. 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<sup>3</sup>, 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<sup>4</sup> read the Scriptures; and whosoever "will hear" saith Tertullian, "he shall find God; whosoever will study to

<sup>1</sup> [View, &c. p. 4. T. C. i. 126. al. 159. "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 is preaching and "not reading." Whitg. Def. 569; T. C. ii. 375; Sampson in Strype, An. iii. 1. 327.]

<sup>2</sup> [I Cor. i. 2.]  
<sup>3</sup> Apologet. c. 18. [in fine. "Quos "diximus Prædicatores, Prophetæ "de officio præfandi vocantur. Vo- "ces eorum itemque virtutes quas "ad fidem divinitatis edebant, in "thesauris literarum manent: nec "istæ nunc latent. Ptolemæorum "eruditissimus . . . libros a Judæis "quoque postulavit . . . Hodie apud "Serapæum Ptolemæi bibliothecæ "cum ipsis Hebraicis literis exhi- "bentur. Sed et Judæi palam "lectitant, vectigalis libertas vulgo "aditur, sabbatis omnibus qui au- "dierit, inveniet Deum; qui etiam "studuerit intelligere, cogetur et "credere."]

<sup>4</sup> 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. cxlvi. coll. 10. incipit, Æquum sane. ["De Hebræis, Quomodo oporteat "eos scripturas legere." "Per inter- "pellationes quæ ad nos referuntur "didicimus, quod ex ipsis quidam "sola lingua tenentur Hebraica, "eaque utendum esse in sacrorum "librorum lectione volunt: quidam "etiam Græcam assumendam con- "tendunt . . . Nos igitur de hac re "edocti, meliores esse judicavimus "eos qui Græcam etiam linguam "in sacrorum librorum lectione vo- "luerunt assumere, et (uno verbo) "omnem denique linguam, quam "locus accommodatiorem et magis "familiarem reddat auditoribus." p. 624. ed. Plantin. 1575. The copy in Godefroi's edition is very different.]

"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<sup>1</sup>. 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

<sup>1</sup> The Apostle useth the word κήρυγμα, and not κήρυξις.

to the word of life. Which word sometime proposeth and preacheth itself to the hearer; sometime they deliver it whom privately zeal and piety moveth to be instructors of others by conference; sometime of them it is taught whom the Church hath called to the public either reading thereof or interpreting. All these tend unto one effect; neither doth that which St. Paul or other Apostles teach, concerning the necessity of *such teaching* as theirs was, or of *sending such* as they were *for that purpose unto the Gentiles*, prejudice the efficacy of *any other way* of public instruction, or enforce the utter disability of any other men's vocation thought requisite in this Church, for the saving of souls, where means more effectual are wanting.

[10.] Their only proper and direct proof of the thing in question had been to shew, in what sort and how far man's salvation doth necessarily depend upon the knowledge of the word of God; what conditions, properties, and qualities there are, whereby sermons are distinguished from other kinds of administering the word unto that purpose; and what special property or quality that is, which being no where found but in sermons, maketh them effectual to save souls, and leaveth all other doctrinal means besides destitute of vital efficacy. These pertinent instructions, whereby they might satisfy us and obtain the cause itself for which they contend, these things which only would serve they leave, and (which needeth not) sometime they trouble themselves with fretting at the ignorance of such as withstand them in their opinion; sometime they<sup>1</sup> fall upon their poor brethren which can but read, and against them they are bitterly eloquent.

If we allege what the Scriptures themselves do usually speak for the saving force of the word of God, not with restraint to any one certain kind of delivery, but howsoever the same shall chance to be made known, yet by one trick

<sup>1</sup> T. C. lib. ii. p. 373. "This tail of Readers." "The Bishops' more than beggerly presents." "Those rascal ministers." [The whole passage is, "So I trust appeareth that this tail of reading ministers ought to be cut off; and that they are none of those princely

"gifts which our Saviour Christ ascended into heaven sendeth unto his Church, but the bishops' (to speak no grievouslier of them) more than beggerly presents." And a little before, "The Prophet calleth the rascal ministers of his time, dumb dogs."]

or other they always restrain it unto sermons. Our Lord and Saviour hath said<sup>1</sup>, "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*<sup>2</sup>; and that peradventure it was his mind they should search, not by reading, nor by hearing them read, but by "attending" whensoever 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<sup>3</sup>. 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"<sup>4</sup>. 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

<sup>1</sup> John v. 39.

<sup>2</sup> 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 before; which proveth no fruit of reading when there is no preaching. Beside that, it will be hard for him to refer the word *search* unto reading only; as if one could not search the Scriptures, when he attendeth to them alleged in

"sermons."]

<sup>3</sup> Gal. i. 8, 9. [The words of T. C. are, "He doth flatly make his preaching the rule to examine other preachings by." ii. 377.]

<sup>4</sup> 2 Tim. iii. 16. [T. C. ubi supr. 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."]