

We hold it safer a great deal and better to give them encouragement¹; to put them in mind that it is not the deepness of their knowledge, but the singleness of their belief, which God accepteth²; that they which "hunger and thirst after righteousness shall be satisfied³;" that no imbecility of means can prejudice the truth of the promise of God herein⁴; that the weaker their helps are, the more their need is to sharpen the edge of their own industry⁵; and that painfulness by feeble means shall be able to gain that, which in the plenty of more forcible instruments is through sloth and negligence lost⁶.

[18.] As for the men, with whom we have thus far taken pains to confer about the force of the word of God, either read by itself, or opened in sermons; their speeches concerning both the one and the other are in truth such, as might give us very just cause to think, that the reckoning is not great which they make of either. For howsoever they have been driven to devise some odd kinds of blind uses, whereunto they may answer that reading doth serve, yet the reading of the word of God in public more than their preachers' bare text, who will not judge that they deem needless; when if we chance at any time to term it *necessary*⁷, as being a thing which God himself did institute amongst the Jews for purposes that touch as well us as them; a thing which the Apostles commend under the Old, and ordain under the New Testament; a thing whereof the Church of God hath ever sithence the first beginning reaped singular commodity; a thing which without exceeding great detriment no Church can omit: they only are the

"would say, there were holiness in
"the dumb ministry, if all the dumb
"ministers were hanged up in the
"churches and public assemblies,
"for a warning and terror to the
"rest, that are ready to enter such
"a function: then indeed there
"were a holy sign and remembrance
"of judgment against such wretches:
"but other holiness have they none
"in them." "Well fare these our
"brethren the Learned Discourers,
"that are somewhat more pitiful to
"the poor unlearned pastors, not to
"hang them up by the neck, as
"thieves and robbers, but to turn
"them out to beg their bread, with
"their wives and children, like

"wretches, rogues, and vagabonds.
"And this is the milder sort of
"these our brethren." Bridges,
Def. 480.]
¹ Ecclus. li. 26, 27; Matt. xii. 20.
² 1 Tim. i. 5; Romans xiv. 1;
1 Thess. iii. 10.
³ Matt. v. 6.
⁴ Phil. i. 6; 1 Pet. v. 10; Matt.
iii. 9.
⁵ 1 Thess. iv. 18; Heb. x. 24;
Jude 20, 21; 1 Pet. iv. 10.
⁶ Luke xi. 31.
⁷ [Whitg. Def. 572. "Both
"reading and preaching be neces-
"sary in the Church, and most
"profitable."]

men that ever we heard of by whom this hath been crossed and gainsaid, they only the men which have given their peremptory sentence to the contrary, "It is untrue that simple reading is necessary in the Church¹." And why untrue? Because "although it be very convenient which is used in some churches, where before preaching-time the church assembled hath the Scriptures read in such order that the whole canon thereof is oftentimes in one year run through; yet a number of churches which have no such order of simple reading cannot be in this point charged with breach of God's commandment, which they might be if simple reading were necessary." A poor, a cold, and an hungry cavil²! Shall we therefore to please them change the word "*necessary*," and say that it hath been a commendable order, a custom very expedient, or an ordinance *most* profitable (whereby they know right well that we mean exceedingly behoveful) to read the word of God at large in the church, whether it be as our manner is, or as theirs is whom they prefer before us? It is not this that will content or satisfy their minds. They have against it a marvellous deep and profound axiom, that "Two things to one and the same end cannot but very improperly be said most profitable³." And therefore if preaching be "most profitable" to man's salvation, then is not reading; if reading be, then preaching is not.

[19.] Are they resolved then at the leastwise, if preaching be the only ordinary mean whereby it pleaseth God to save our souls, what kind of preaching it is which doth save? Understand they how or in what respect there is that force and virtue in preaching? We have reason wherefore to make these demands, for that although their pens run all upon *preaching* and *sermons*, yet when themselves do practise that whereof they write, they change their dialect, and those words they shun as if there were in them some secret sting. It is not their phrase to say they "preach," or to give to their own instructions and exhortations the name of sermons; the pain they take themselves in this kind is either "opening," or "lecturing," or "reading," or "exercising," but in no case "preaching."

¹ T. C. lib. ii. p. 381.² [Cicero pro A. Cæcina, 21,
"Cave in ista tam frigida, tam je-

"juna calumnia delitescas."]

³ T. C. lib. ii. p. 382.

And in this present question they also warily protest, that what they ascribe to the virtue of preaching, they still mean it of "good preaching¹." Now one of them saith that a good sermon must "expound" and "apply" a "large" portion of the text of Scripture at one time². Another³ giveth us to understand, that sound preaching "is not to do as one did "at London, who spent the most of his time in invectives "against good men, and told his audience how the magistrate "should have an eye to such as troubled the peace of the "Church." The best of them hold it for no good preaching "when a man endeavoureth to make a glorious show of elo-

¹ T. C. lib. ii. p. 385.

² Complaint of the Commonalty. ["Some take but one word for their text, and afterwards run into the mountains, that we cannot follow them, not knowing how they went up, or how they will come down again: whereas if they had taken a good portion of the text, and had naturally expounded and pithily applied the same, by occasion of that large text, we should have remembered a good part of the sermon long time after."]

³ Dr. Some's Painter, p. 21. [The tract here quoted is, "M. Some laid open in his colours: wherein the indifferent reader may easily see, how wretchedly and loosely he hath handled the cause against M. Penry. Done by an Oxford man, to his friend in Cambridge." No date nor printer's name. Some was Master of Peterhouse, Cambridge, and his principles had been those of a moderate Puritan, of which party in the University Whitaker seems to have been the head. In 1588, he published, "A godly Treatise containing and deciding certain questions moved of late in London and other places, touching the Ministry, Sacraments, and Church After the end of the book you shall find a Defence of such points as M. Penry hath dealt against, and a confutation of many gross errors broached in M. Penry's last treatise." The first part of this work had been published separately, May 5, and was

met by "A Defence of that which hath been written in the questions of the ignorant ministry and the communicating with them. By "John Penri." Some rejoined in September by the Defence above-mentioned: which rejoinder called forth the pamphlet quoted in the text. The place referred to is p. 21. "I speak here of sound preaching, i. e. of dividing the word aright, which the Apostle called *ὀρθοτομεῖν*: I speak not of babbling, nor of handling a text with a currycomb: in that I join with M. Some with all my heart, and therefore I wish he had been with me the 10th of November last, at a certain Church by the Exchange, I think they call it Bartholomew church, where it may be his ears would have glowed, and if he durst have been so bold, I do not think but he would have condemned the preacher, and that worthily, for his babbling." (Note in margin, "This preacher, as I understood since, was M. Some himself.") For then he might have heard him fetch many vagaries, and spend the most of his time in invectives against good men; telling th' audience to this effect: "that for the Papists, thanks be to God, we need not so greatly fear them . . . but now the magistrate was only to cast his eye on the phantastical crew, such as troubled the peace of the church; otherwise there might fall out many mischiefs."]

"quence and learning, rather than to apply himself to the "capacity of the simple¹."

But let them shape us out a good preacher by what pattern soever it pleaseth them best, let them exclude and inclose whom they will with their definitions, we are not desirous to enter into any contention with them about this, or to abate the conceit they have of their own ways, so that when once we are agreed what sermons shall currently pass for good, we may at the length understand from them what that is in a good sermon which doth make it the word of life unto such as hear. If substance of matter, evidence of things, strength and validity of arguments and proofs, or if any other virtue else which words and sentences may contain; of all this what is there in the best sermons being uttered, which they lose by being read? But they utterly deny that the reading either of scriptures or homilies and sermons can ever by the ordinary grace of God save any soul. So that although we had all the sermons word for word which James, Paul, Peter, and the rest of the Apostles made, some one of which sermons was of power to convert thousands of the hearers unto Christian faith; yea although we had all the instructions, exhortations, consolations, which came from the gracious lips of our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and should read them ten thousand times over, to faith and salvation no man could hereby hope to attain.

Whereupon it must of necessity follow, that the vigour and vital efficacy of sermons doth grow from certain accidents which are not in them but in their maker: his virtue, his gesture, his countenance, his zeal, the motion of his body, and the inflection of his voice who first uttereth them as his own, is that which giveth them the form, the nature, the very essence of instruments available to eternal life. If they like neither that nor this, what remaineth but that their final conclusion be, "sermons we know are the only ordinary "means to salvation, but why or how we cannot tell?"

[20.] Wherefore to end this tedious controversy, wherein the too great importunity of our over eager adversaries hath constrained us much longer to dwell, than the barrenness of so poor a cause could have seemed at the first likely either to

¹ T. C. lib. ii. p. 385.

require or to admit, if they which without partialities and passions are accustomed to weigh all things, and accordingly to give their sentence, shall here sit down to receive our audit, and to cast up the whole reckoning on both sides; the sum which truth amounteth unto will appear to be but this, that as medicines provided of nature and applied by art for the benefit of bodily health, take effect sometimes under and sometimes above the natural proportion of their virtue, according as the mind and fancy of the patient doth more or less concur with them: so whether we barely read unto men the Scriptures of God, or by homilies concerning matter of belief and conversation seek to lay before them the duties which they owe unto God and man; whether we deliver them books to read and consider of in private at their own best leisure, or call them to the hearing of sermons publicly in the house of God; albeit every of these and the like unto these means do truly and daily effect that in the hearts of men for which they are each and all meant, yet the operation which they have in common being most sensible and most generally noted in one kind above the rest, that one hath in some men's opinions drowned altogether the rest, and injuriously brought to pass that they have been thought, not *less effectual* than the other, but without the other *uneffectual* to save souls. Whereas the cause why sermons only are observed to prevail so much while all means else seem to sleep and do nothing, is in truth nothing but that singular affection and attention which the people sheweth every where towards the one, and their cold disposition to the other; the reason hereof being partly the art which our adversaries use for the credit of their sermons to bring men out of conceit with all other teaching besides; partly a custom which men have to let those things carelessly pass by their ears, which they have oftentimes heard before, or know they may hear again whensoever it pleaseth themselves; partly the especial advantages which sermons naturally have to procure attention, both in that they come always new, and because by the hearer it is still presumed, that if they be let slip for the present, what good soever they contain is lost, and that without all hope of recovery. This is the true cause of odds between sermons and other kinds of wholesome instruction.

As for the difference which hath been hitherto so much defended on the contrary side, making sermons the only ordinary means unto faith and eternal life, sith this hath neither evidence of truth nor proof sufficient to give it warrant, a cause of such quality may with far better grace and conveniency ask that pardon which common humanity doth easily grant, than claim in challenging manner that assent which is as unwilling when reason guideth it to be yielded where it is not, as withheld where it is apparently due.

All which notwithstanding, as we could greatly wish that the rigour of this their opinion were allayed and mitigated, so because we hold it the part of religious ingenuity to honour virtue in whomsoever, therefore it is our most hearty desire, and shall be always our prayer unto Almighty God, that in the selfsame fervent zeal wherewith they seem to affect the good of the souls of men, and to thirst after nothing more than that all men might by all means be directed in the way of life, both they and we may constantly persist to the world's end. For in this we are not their adversaries, though they in the other hitherto have been ours.

XXIII. Between the throne of God in heaven and his Church upon earth here militant if it be so that Angels have their continual intercourse, where should we find the same more verified than in these two ghostly exercises, the one Doctrine, and the other Prayer? For what is the assembling of the Church to learn, but the receiving of Angels descended from above? What to pray, but the sending of Angels upward? His heavenly inspirations and our holy desires are as so many Angels of intercourse and commerce between God and us. As teaching bringeth us to know that God is our supreme truth; so prayer testifieth that we acknowledge him our sovereign good.

Besides, sith on God as the most high all inferior causes in the world are dependent; and the higher any cause is, the more it coveteth to impart virtue unto things beneath it; how should any kind of service we do or can do find greater acceptance than prayer, which sheweth our concurrence with him in desiring that wherewith his very nature doth most delight?

Is not the name of prayer usual to signify even all the service that ever we do unto God? And that for no other cause,

as I suppose, but to shew that there is in religion no acceptable duty which devout invocation of the name of God doth not either presuppose or infer. Prayers are those "calves of men's lips¹;" those most gracious and sweet odours²; those rich presents and gifts, which being carried up into heaven³ do best testify our dutiful affection, and are for the purchasing of all favour at the hands of God the most undoubted means we can use.

On others what more easily, and yet what more fruitfully bestowed than our prayers? If we give counsel, they are the simpler only that need it; if alms, the poorer only are relieved; but by prayer we do good to all. And whereas every other duty besides is but to shew itself as time and opportunity require, for this all times are convenient⁴: when we are not able to do any other thing for men's behoof, when through maliciousness or unkindness they vouchsafe not to accept any other good at our hands, prayer is that which we always have in our power to bestow, and they never in theirs to refuse. Wherefore "God forbid," saith Samuel, speaking unto a most unthankful people, a people weary of the benefit of his most virtuous government over them, "God forbid that I should sin against the Lord, and cease to pray for you⁵." It is the first thing wherewith a righteous life beginneth, and the last wherewith it doth end.

The knowledge is small which we have on earth concerning things that are done in heaven. Notwithstanding thus much we know even of Saints in heaven, that they pray⁶. And therefore prayer being a work common to the Church as well triumphant as militant, a work common unto men with Angels, what should we think but that so much of our lives is celestial and divine as we spend in the exercise of prayer? For which cause we see that the most comfortable visitations, which God hath sent men from above, have taken especially the times of prayer as their most natural opportunities⁷.

XXIV. This holy and religious duty of service towards God concerneth us one way in that we are men, and another

¹ Hosea xiv. 2.² Rev. v. 8.³ I Sam. xii. 23.⁴ Acts x. 4.⁵ [Apoc. vi. 9.]⁶ Rom. i. 9; I Thess. v. 17; Luke xviii. 1.⁷ Dan. ix. 20; Acts x. 30.

way in that we are joined as parts to that visible mystical body which is his Church. As men, we are at our own choice, both for time, and place, and form, according to the exigence of our own occasions in private¹; but the service, which we do as members of a public body, is public, and for that cause must needs be accounted by so much worthier than the other, as a whole society of such condition exceedeth the worth of any one. In which consideration unto Christian assemblies there are most special promises made². St. Paul, though likely to prevail with God as much as [any] one³, did notwithstanding think it much more both for God's glory and his own good, if prayers might be made and thanks yielded in his behalf by a number of men⁴. The prince and people of Nineveh assembling themselves as a main army of supplicants, it was not in the power of God to withstand them⁵. I speak no otherwise concerning the force of public prayer in the Church of God, than before me Tertullian hath done⁶, "We come by troops to the place of assembly, that being banded as it were together, we may be supplicants enough to besiege God with our prayers. These forces are unto him acceptable."

[2.] When we publicly make our prayers, it cannot be but that we do it with much more comfort than in private, for that the things we ask publicly are approved as needful and good in the judgment of all, we hear them sought for and desired with common consent. Again, thus much help and furtherance is more yielded, in that if so be our zeal and devotion to Godward be slack, the alacrity and fervour of others serveth as a present spur⁷. "For⁸ even prayer itself" (saith St. Basil) "when it hath not the consort of many voices to strengthen it, is not itself." Finally, the good which we do

¹ Psalm lv. 17; Dan. ix. 3; Acts x. 9.² Matt. xviii. 20.³ [The word "any" is not in the text of the original edition, nor in Spencer's reprint. It seems to have been inserted by Gauden.]⁴ 2 Cor. i. 11.⁵ Jonah iv. 11.⁶ Apolog. c. 39. ["Coimus ad Deum, quasi manu facta precatio-nibus ambiamus. Hæc vis Deo grata est."] Ambros. lib. i. de Pœn. "Multi minimi dum congre-⁷ "gantur unanimes sunt magni; et multorum preces impossibile est contemni." [Rather in the Commentary on the Romans, ascribed to St. Ambrose, c. xvi. 31. The last clause stands thus: "Multorum preces impossibile est ut non im-petrent." ed. Bened. App. 108 A.]⁸ Psalm cxxii. 1.⁹ Καὶ αὐτὴ ἡ προσευχὴ μὴ ἔχουσα τοὺς συμφωνοῦντας ὑδραεσττέρα ἐστὶ πολλῶ ἐαυτῆς. Basil. Epist. lxxviii. [al. xcvi. t. iii. 191. B.]

by public prayer is more than in private can be done, for that besides the benefit which here is no less procured to ourselves, the whole Church is much bettered by our good example; and consequently whereas secret neglect of our duty in this kind is but only our own hurt, one man's contempt of the common prayer of the Church of God may be and oftentimes is most hurtful unto many. In which considerations the prophet David so often voweth unto God the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving in the congregation¹; so earnestly exhorteth others to sing praises unto the Lord in his courts, in his sanctuary, before the memorial of his holiness²; and so much complaineth of his own uncomfortable exile, wherein although he sustained many most grievous indignities, and endured the want of sundry both pleasures and honours before enjoyed, yet as if this one were his only grief and the rest not felt, his speeches are all of the heavenly benefit of public assemblies, and the happiness of such as had free access thereunto³.

XXV. A great part of the cause, wherefore religious minds are so inflamed with the love of public devotion, is that virtue, force, and efficacy, which by experience they find that the very form and reverend solemnity of common prayer duly ordered hath, to help that imbecility and weakness in us, by means whereof we are otherwise of ourselves the less apt to perform unto God so heavenly a service, with such affection of heart, and disposition in the powers of our souls as is requisite. To this end therefore all things hereunto appertaining have been ever thought convenient to be done with the most solemnity and majesty that the wisest could devise. It is not with public as with private prayer. In this rather secrecy is commended than outward show⁴, whereas that being the public act of a whole society, requireth accordingly more care to be had of external appearance. The very assembling of men therefore unto this service hath been ever solemn.

[2.] And concerning the place of assembly, although it serve for other uses as well as this, yet seeing that our Lord himself hath to this as to the chiefest of all other plainly sanctified his own temple, by entitling it "the House of

¹ Psalm xxvi. 12; xxxiv. 1.² Psalm xxx. 4; xcvi. 9.³ Ps. xxvii. 4; xlii. 4; lxxxiv. 1.⁴ Matt. vi. 5, 6.

"Prayer¹," what preeminence of dignity soever hath been either by the ordinance or through the special favour and providence of God annexed unto his Sanctuary, the principal cause thereof must needs be in regard of Common Prayer. For the honour and furtherance whereof, if it be as the gravest of the ancient Fathers seriously were persuaded, and do oftentimes plainly teach, affirming that the house of prayer is a Court beautified with the presence of celestial powers; that there we stand, we pray, we sound forth hymns unto God, having his Angels intermingled as our associates²; and that with reference hereunto the Apostle doth require so great care to be had of decency for the Angels' sake³; how can we come to the house of prayer, and not be moved with the very glory⁴ of the place itself, so to frame our affections praying, as doth best beseem them, whose suits the Almighty doth there sit to hear, and his Angels attend to further? When this was ingrafted in the minds of men, there needed no penal statutes to draw them unto public prayer. The warning sound was no sooner heard, but the churches were presently filled⁵, the pavements covered with bodies prostrate, and washed with their tears of devout joy.

[3.] And as the place of public prayer is a circumstance in the outward form thereof, which hath moment to help devotion; so the person much more with whom the people of God do join themselves in this action, as with him that standeth and speaketh in the presence of God for them. The authority of his place, the fervour of his zeal, the piety and gravity of his whole behaviour must needs exceedingly both grace and set forward the service he doth.

The authority of his calling is a furtherance, because if God have so far received him into favour, as to impose upon

¹ Matt. xxi. 13.² Chrysost. Hom. xv. ad Hebr. et xxiv. in Act. [t. iv. 516. ἀκούε δὲ ὅτι ἄγγελοι πάρεσι πανταχοῦ, καὶ μάλιστα ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ τοῦ Θεοῦ παρειστήκασιν τῷ βασιλεί, καὶ πάντα ἐμπέπλησται τῶν ἀσωμάτων ἐκείνων δυναμένων. And p. 753. l. 40. ἔστηκε ἀτάκτως' οὐκ οἶδας ὅτι μετὰ ἀγγέλων ἔστηκε; μετ' ἐκείνων ἄδεις, μετ' ἐκείνων ὑμεῖς, καὶ ἔστηκε γελῶν;]³ 1 Cor. xi. 10. [S. Chrys. in loc. εἰ γὰρ τοῦ ἀνδρὸς καταφρονεῖς, φησι, τοὺς ἀγγέλους αἰδέσθητι.]⁴ "Power and beauty are in his sanctuary." Psal. xcvi. 6.⁵ "Ad domos statim Dominicas currimus, corpora humi sternimus, mixtis cum fletu gaudiis supplecamus." Salvian. († 485.) de Prov. lib. vi. [ad fin. in Bibl. Patr. Colon. t. v. 351. H.]