

present continuance is now for the greater honour of the principals whereupon they still attend.

[9.] If it be then demanded whether we observe these times as being thereunto bound by force of divine law, or else by the only positive ordinances of the Church, I answer to this, that the very law of nature itself, which all men confess to be God's law, requireth in general no less the sanctification of times, than of places, persons, and things unto God's honour. For which cause it hath pleased him heretofore, as of the rest so of time likewise, to exact some parts by way of perpetual homage, never to be dispensed withal nor remitted; again to require some other parts of time with as strict exaction but for less continuance; and of the rest which were left arbitrary to accept what the Church shall in due consideration consecrate voluntarily unto like religious uses. Of the first kind amongst the Jews was the Sabbath day; of the second those feasts which are appointed by the law of Moyses; the feast of dedication invented by the Church standeth in the number of the last kind.

The moral law requiring therefore a seventh part throughout the age of the whole world to be that way employed, although with us the day be changed in regard of a new revolution begun by our Saviour Christ, yet the same proportion of time continueth which was before, because in reference to the benefit of creation and now much more of renovation thereunto added by him which was Prince of the world to come¹, we are bound to account the sanctification of one day in seven a duty which God's immutable law doth exact for ever. The rest they say we ought to abolish, because the continuance of them doth nourish wicked superstition in the minds of men²;

¹ [Cf. Vulgate tr. Is. ix. 5. "Pater futuri sæculi, Princeps pacis."] 1887.

² [Adm. ap. Whitg. Def. 538. "Holydays, &c. patched, if not altogether, yet the greatest piece, out of the Pope's Portuise." T. C. i. 119. al. 151. "M. Doctor saith, that so they be not used superstitiously, they may be commanded. "I have shewed before that they were. If they were so indifferent as they are made, yet being kept

"of the Papists, which are the enemies of God, they ought to be abolished. And if it were as easy a matter to pull out the superstition of the observing of those holidays out of men's hearts, as it is to protest and to teach that they are not commanded for any religion to be put in them, or for any to make conscience of the observing of them, as though there were some necessary worship of God in the keeping of them, then they

besides they are all abused by Papists the enemies of God, yea certain of them as Easter and Pentecost even by the Jews.

LXXI. Touching Jews, their Easter and Pentecost have with ours as much affinity, as Philip the Apostle with Philip the Macedonian king. As for "imitation of Papists" and the "breeding of superstition," they are now become such common guests that no man can think it discourteous to let them go as they came. The next is a rare observation and strange¹. You shall find if you mark it (as it doth deserve to be noted well) that many thousands there are who if they have virtuously during those times behaved themselves, if their devotion and zeal in prayer have been fervent, their attention to the word of God such as all Christian men should yield, imagine that herein they have performed a good duty; which notwithstanding to think is a very dangerous error, inasmuch as the Apostle St. Paul hath taught that we ought

"were much more tolerable; but
"when as the continuance of them
"doth nourish wicked superstition
"in the minds of men, and that the
"doctrine which should remedy the
"superstition, through the fewness
"and scarcity of able ministers,
"cannot come to the most part of
"them which are infected with this
"disease, and that also where it is
"preached the fruit thereof is in
"part hindered, whilst the common
"people attend oftentimes rather
"to that which is done than to that
"which is taught; being a thing
"indifferent, as it is said, it ought
"to be abolished, as that which is
"not only not fittest to hold the
"people in the sincere worshipping
"of God, but also as that which
"keepeth them in their former blindness and corrupt opinions which
"they have conceived of such holidays."

¹ T. C. l.b. i. p. 151. [120.] "If they had been never abused neither by the papists nor by the Jews, as they have been and are daily, yet such making of holidays is never without some great danger of bringing in some evil and corrupt opinions into the minds of men. I will use an example in one and that the chief

"of holidays and most generally
"and of longest time observed in
"the Church, which is the feast of
"Easter, which was kept of some
"more days of some fewer. How
"many thousands are there I will
"not say of the ignorant papists,
"but of those also which profess
"the gospel, which when they have
"celebrated those days with diligent heed taken unto their life,
"and with some earnest devotion
"in praying and hearing the word
"of God, do not by and by think
"that they have well celebrated the
"feast of Easter, and yet have they
"thus notably deceived themselves.
"For St. Paul teacheth (1 Cor. v. 8.)
"that the celebrating of the feast
"of the Christians' Easter is not as
"the Jews' was for certain days,
"but sheweth that we must keep
"this feast all the days of our life in
"the unleavened bread of sincerity
"and of truth. By which we see
"that the observing of the feast of
"Easter for certain days in the
"year doth pull out of our minds
"ere ever we be aware the doctrine
"of the gospel, and causeth us to
"rest in that near consideration of
"our duties, for the space of a few
"days, which should be extended
"to all our life."

Exceptions
against our
keeping of
other festival days
besides the
sabbath.

not to keep our Easter as the Jews did for certain days, but in the unleavened bread of sincerity and of truth to feast continually, whereas this restraint of Easter to a certain number of days causeth us to rest for a short space in that near consideration of our duties which should be extended throughout the course of our whole lives, and so pulleth out of our minds the doctrine of Christ's gospel ere we be aware¹.

[2.] The doctrine of the gospel which here they mean or should mean is, that Christ having finished the law there is no Jewish paschal solemnity nor abstinence from sour bread now required at our hands, there is no leaven which we are bound to cast out but malice, sin, and wickedness, no bread but the food of sincere truth wherewith we are tied to celebrate our passover. And seeing no time of sin is granted us, neither any intermission of sound belief, it followeth that this kind of feasting ought to endure always. But how are standing festival solemnities against this?

That which the gospel of Christ requireth is the perpetuity of virtuous duties; not perpetuity of exercise or action, but disposition perpetual, and practice as oft as times and opportunities require. Just, valiant, liberal, temperate and holy men are they which can whensoever they will, and will when-

¹ [Whitg. Def. 539. "What? do you condemn the feast of Easter also? would you have it abrogated because it hath been abused? do you not know that the Apostles themselves observed it, and the Church ever sithence their time? read Euseb. v. 23. and you shall find it to be a tradition of the Apostles: peruse the 24th and 25th ch. of the same book, and you shall understand by the testimony of Polycrates, and all the other bishops in Asia, that Philip the Apostle, John the Evangelist, Polycarpus his scholar, and other bishops likewise of greatest antiquity kept solemnly the feast of Easter. But why should I labour to prove that that all histories, all ancient Fathers, all late writers, all learned men confess? . . . Surely you may as well reason that the Scriptures are not to be read, because that heretics have

"so greatly abused them." T. C. iii. 189. "If it were a tradition of the Apostles, yet it was used of them as a thing indifferent; considering that the same story witnesseth that S. John the Apostle, together with the churches of Asia, did celebrate the Easter as the Jews were wont, upon the xvth day of the month. Now, if S. John himself, which departed not from the authority of the Scripture, did keep the Jews' day, he gave sufficiently to understand that our Easter hath no authority from the Scriptures; for then he would have kept it also." He seems to assume what cannot be so readily granted: viz. that the feast which St. John and the Asiatic churches observed was the Jewish passover, and not the Christian Easter on the same day as the passover.]

soever they ought, execute what their several perfections import. If virtues did always cease to be when they ceased to work, there should be nothing more pernicious to virtue than sleep: neither were it possible that men as Zachary and Elizabeth should in all the commandments of God walk un-reprovable, or that the chain of our conversation should contain so many links of divine virtues as the Apostles in divers places have reckoned up, if in the exercise of each virtue perpetual continuance were exacted at our hands. Seeing therefore all things are done in time, and many offices are not possible at one and the same time to be discharged, duties of all sorts must have necessarily their several successions and seasons, in which respect the schoolmen¹ have well and soundly determined that God's affirmative laws and precepts, the laws that enjoin any actual duty, as prayer, alms, and the like, do bind us *ad semper velle*, but not *ad semper agere*; we are tied to iterate and resume them when need is, howbeit not to continue them without any intermission. Feasts whether God himself hath ordained them, or the Church by that authority which God hath given, they are of religion such public services as neither can nor ought to be continued otherwise than only by iteration.

Which iteration is a most effectual mean to bring unto full maturity and growth those seeds of godliness that these very men themselves do grant to be sown in the hearts of many thousands, during the while that such feasts are present. The constant habit of well doing is not gotten without the custom of doing well, neither can virtue be made perfect but by the manifold works of virtue often practised. Before the powers of our minds be brought unto some perfection our first assays and offers towards virtue must needs be raw, yet commendable because they tend unto ripeness. For which cause the wisdom of God hath commended especially this circumstance amongst others in solemn feasts, that to children and novices in religion they minister the first

¹ [E. g. Aquinas in Summa Theol. pars ii. 1. qu. 71. art. 5. p. 431. Ven. 1596. "Peccatum omissionis contrariatur præcepto affirmativo, quod obligat *semper*, sed non *ad semper*: et ideo solum pro tempore illo aliquis cessando ab actu peccat, pro quo præceptum affirmativum obligat."]]

occasions to ask and inquire of God. Whereupon if there follow but so much piety as hath been mentioned, let the Church learn to further imbecility with prayer, "Preserve Lord these good and gracious beginnings that they suddenly dry not up like the morning dew, but may prosper and grow as the trees which rivers of waters keep always flourishing;" let all men's acclamations be "Grace, grace unto it," as to that first-laid corner-stone in Zerubbabel's buildings¹. For who hath despised the day of those things which are small²? Or how dare we take upon us to condemn that very thing which voluntarily we grant maketh us of nothing somewhat, seeing all we pretend against it is only that as yet this somewhat is not much? The days of solemnity which are but few cannot choose but soon finish that outward exercise of godliness which properly appertaineth to such times, howbeit men's inward disposition to virtue they both augment for the present, and by their often returns bring also the same at the length unto that perfection which we most desire. So that although by their necessary short continuance they abridge the present exercise of piety in some kind, yet because by repetition they enlarge, strengthen and confirm the habits of all virtue, it remaineth that we honour, observe and keep them as ordinances many ways singularly profitable in God's Church.

[3.] This exception being taken against holidays, for that they restrain the praises of God unto certain times, another followeth condemning restraint of men from their ordinary trades and labours at those times. It is not they say in the power of the Church to command rest³, because God hath

¹ [Zech. iv. 7.] ² [Ver. 10.]
³ [Adm. ap. Whitg. 538, objecting to holidays, refers in the margin to Exod. xx. 9. And in the View of Popish Abuses subjoined to the first Adm. p. 11, occurs, "Days . . . ascribed unto saints . . . and kept holy, are contrary to the commandment of God, 'Six days shalt thou labour.'" Whitg. Answer, ap. Def. 538. "I think the meaning of this commandment is not so to tie men to bodily labour, that they may not intermit the same to labour

"spiritually." T. C. lib. i. p. 152. [120.] "I confess that it is in the power of the Church to appoint so many days in the week or in the year (in the which the congregation shall assemble to hear the word of God and receive the sacraments and offer up prayers unto God) as it shall think good according to those rules which are before alleged. But that it hath power to make so many holidays as we have, wherein men are commanded to cease from their daily vocations of ploughing and exer-

left it to all men at liberty that if they think good to bestow six whole days in labour they may, neither is it more lawful for the Church to abridge any man of that liberty which God hath granted, than to take away the yoke which God hath laid upon them and to countermand what he doth expressly enjoin. They deny not but in times of public calamity, that men may the better assemble themselves to fast and pray, the Church "because it hath received commandment" from God to proclaim a prohibition from ordinary works, standeth bound to do it, as the Jews afflicted did in Babylon. But without some express commandment from God there is no power they say under heaven which may presume by any decree to restrain the liberty that God hath given.

[4.] Which opinion, albeit applied here no further than to this present cause, shaketh universally the fabric of government, tendeth to anarchy and mere confusion, dissolveth families, dissipateth colleges, corporations, armies, overthrow-

"cising their handicrafts, that I
 "deny to be in the power of the
 "Church. For proof whereof I will
 "take the fourth commandment,
 "and no other interpretation of it
 "than M. Doctor alloweth of,
 "which is that God licenseth and
 "leaveth it at the liberty of every
 "man to work six days in the week,
 "so that he rest the seventh day.
 "Seeing therefore that the Lord
 "hath left it to all men at liberty
 "that they might labour if they
 "think good six days, I say the
 "Church nor no man can take this
 "liberty away from them and drive
 "them to a necessary rest of the
 "body. And if it be lawful to
 "abridge the liberty of the Church
 "in this point, and instead that the
 "Lord saith, 'Six days thou mayest
 "labour if thou wilt,' to say, 'Thou
 "shalt not labour six days:' I do
 "not see why the Church may not
 "as well, whereas the Lord saith
 "'Thou shalt rest the seventh day,'
 "command that thou shalt not
 "rest the seventh day. For if the
 "Church may restrain the liberty
 "which God hath given them it
 "may take away the yoke also
 "which God hath put upon them.

"And whereas you say that not-
 "withstanding this fourth com-
 "mandment the Jews had certain
 "other feasts which they observed,
 "indeed the Lord which gave this
 "general law might make as many
 "exceptions as he thought good,
 "and so long as he thought good.
 "But it followeth not because the
 "Lord did it that therefore the
 "Church may do it, unless it hath
 "commandment and authority from
 "God so to do. As when there is
 "any general plague or judgment of
 "God either upon the Church or
 "coming towards it, the Lord com-
 "mandeth in such a case (Joel ii.
 "15.) that they should sanctify a
 "general fast and proclaim *Ghnat-*
 "*sarah*, which signifieth a prohibi-
 "tion or forbidding of ordinary
 "works, and is the same Hebrew
 "word wherewith those feast days
 "are noted in the Law wherein
 "they should rest. The reason of
 "which commandment of the Lord
 "was, that as they abstained that
 "day as much as might be conve-
 "niently from meat, so they might
 "abstain from their daily works, to
 "the end they might bestow the
 "whole day in hearing the word

eth kingdoms, churches, and whatsoever is now through the providence of God by authority and power upheld. For whereas God hath foreprized things of the greatest weight, and hath therein precisely defined as well that which every man must perform, as that which no man may attempt, leaving all sorts of men in the rest either to be guided by their own good discretion if they be free from subjection to others, or else to be ordered by such commandments and laws as proceed from those superiors under whom they live ; the patrons of liberty have here made solemn proclamation that all such laws and commandments are void, inasmuch as every man is left to the freedom of his own mind in such things as are not either exacted or prohibited by the Law of God ; and because only in these things the positive precepts of men have place, which precepts cannot possibly be given without some abridgment of their liberty to whom they are given, therefore if the father command the son, or the husband the wife, or the lord the servant, or the leader the soldier, or the prince the subject to go or stand, sleep or wake at such times as God himself in particular commandeth neither, they are to stand in defence of the freedom which God hath granted and to do as themselves list, knowing that men may as lawfully command them things utterly forbidden by the law of God, as tie them to any thing which the law of God leaveth free. The plain contradictory whereunto is infallibly certain. Those

“ of God and humbling themselves
“ in the congregation, confessing
“ their faults and desiring the Lord
“ to turn away from his fierce wrath.
“ In this case the Church having
“ commandment to make a holiday
“ may and ought to do it, as the
“ Church which was in Babylon did
“ during the time of their captivity ;
“ but where it is destitute of a com-
“ mandment, it may not presume by
“ any decree to restrain that liberty
“ which the Lord hath given.”
[Whitgift's Def. 541. “ This doc-
trine of yours is very licentious,
“ and tendeth too much to carnal
“ and corporal liberty, and indeed
“ is a very perilous doctrine for all
“ states. Not one tittle in God's
“ word doth restrain either the ma-

“ gistrate or the Church from turn-
“ ing carnal liberty to the spiritual
“ service of God, or bodily labour
“ to divine worship.” Ibid. 542.
“ To rest the seventh day is com-
“ manded ; to labour six days is but
“ permitted ; he that forbiddeth rest
“ on the seventh day doth directly
“ against the commandment ; so
“ doth not he that restraineth men
“ from bodily labour in any of the
“ six days ; and therefore the rea-
“ son is not like.” T. C. iii. 193.
“ The reason is like. For the au-
“ thority is all one, to make it un-
“ lawful to work, when God hath
“ made it lawful ; and to make it
“ lawful to labour, when God hath
“ made it unlawful.”]

things which the law of God leaveth arbitrary and at liberty are all subject unto positive laws of men, which laws for the common benefit abridge particular men's liberty in such things as far as the rules of equity will suffer. This we must either maintain, or else overturn the world and make every man his own commander. Seeing then that labour and rest upon any one day of the six throughout the year are granted free by the Law of God, how exempt we them from the force and power of ecclesiastical law, except we deprive the world of power to make any ordinance or law at all ?

[5.] Besides is it probable that God should not only allow but command concurrency of rest with extraordinary occasions of doleful events befalling peradventure some one certain church, or not extending unto many, and not as much as permit or license the like, when piety triumphant with joy and gladness maketh solemn commemoration of God's most rare and unwonted mercies, *such especially as the whole race of mankind* doth or might participate ? Of vacation from labour in times of sorrow the only cause is for that the general public prayers of the whole Church and our own private businesses cannot both be followed at once : whereas of rest in the famous solemnities of public joy there is both this consideration the same, and also farther a kind of natural repugnancy, which maketh labours (as hath been proved) much more unfit to accompany festival praises of God than offices of humiliation and grief.

Again if we sift what they bring for proof and approbation of rest with fasting, doth it not in all respects as fully warrant and as strictly command rest, whensoever the Church hath equal reason by feasts and gladsome solemnities to testify public thankfulness towards God ? I would know some cause, why those words of the prophet Joel ¹, “ Sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly,” which words were uttered to the Jews in misery and great distress, should more bind the Church to do at all times after the like in their like perplexities, than the words of Moyses to the same people in a time of joyful deliverance from misery ², “ Remember this day,” may warrant any annual celebration of benefits no less importing

¹ Joel ii. 15.² Exod. xiii. 3.

the good of men ; and also justify, as touching the manner and form thereof, what circumstance soever we imitate only in respect of natural fitness or decency, without any Jewish regard to ceremonies such as were properly theirs and are not by us expedient to be continued.

According to the rule of which general directions, taken from the law of God no less in the one than the other, the practice of the Church commended unto us in holy Scripture doth not only make for the justification of black and dismal days (as one of the Fathers termeth them) but plainly offereth itself to be followed by such ordinances (if occasion require) as that which Mardocheus did sometime devise, Hester¹ what lay in her power help forward, and the rest of the Jews establish for perpetuity, namely that the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the month Adar should be every year kept throughout all generations as days of feasting and joy, wherein they would rest from bodily labour, and what by gifts of charity bestowed upon the poor, what by other liberal signs of amity and love, all testify their thankful minds towards God, which almost beyond possibility had delivered them all when they all were as men dead.

[6.] But this decree they say was divine not ecclesiastical², as may appear in that there is another decree in another book of Scripture which decree is plain not to have proceeded from the Church's authority but from the mouth of the prophet only ; and as a poor simple man sometime was fully persuaded that if Pontius Pilate had not been a saint the Apostles would never have suffered his name to stand in the Creed, so

¹ Esther ix.

² T. C. lib. iii. p. 193. "The example out of Hester" [which had been alleged by Whitg. Def. 543.] "is no sufficient warrant for these feasts in question. For first as in other cases so in this case of days, the estate of Christians under the Gospel ought not to be so ceremonious as was theirs under the Law. Secondly that which was done there was done by a special direction of the Spirit of God, either through the ministry of the prophets which they had or by some other extraordinary

"means, which is not to be followed by us. This may appear by another place, (Zech. viii.) where the Jews changed their fasts into feasts only by the mouth of the Lord through the ministry of the prophet. For further proof whereof first I take the twenty-eighth verse," [Esth. ix. 28.] "where it appeareth that this was an order to endure always, even as long as the other feast days which were instituted by the Lord himself. So that what abuses soever were of that feast, yet as a perpetual decree of God it ought to have

these men have a strong opinion that because the book of Hester is canonical the decree of Hester cannot be possibly ecclesiastical. If it were, they ask how the Jews could bind themselves always to keep it, seeing ecclesiastical laws are mutable? As though the purposes of men might never intend constancy in that the nature whereof is subject to alteration. Doth the Scripture itself make mention of any divine commandment? Is the Scripture witness of more than only that Mardocheus was the author of this custom, that by letters written to his brethren the Jews throughout all provinces under Darius the king of Persia he gave them charge to celebrate yearly those two days for perpetual remembrance of God's miraculous deliverance and mercy, that the Jews hereupon undertook to do it, and made it with general consent an order for perpetuity, that Hester secondly by her letters confirmed the same which Mardocheus had before decreed, and that finally the ordinance was written to remain for ever upon record? Did not the Jews in provinces abroad observe at the first the fourteenth day, the Jews in Susis the fifteenth? Were they not all reduced to a uniform order by means of those two decrees, and so every where three days kept, the first with fasting in memory of danger, the rest in token of deliverance as festival and joyful days? Was not the first of these three afterwards, the day of sorrow and heaviness, abrogated, when the same Church saw it meet that a better day, a day in memory of like deliverance out of the bloody hands of Nicanor, should succeed in the room thereof¹?

[7.] But forasmuch as there is no end of answering fruitless oppositions, let it suffice men of sober minds to know that the law both of God and nature alloweth generally days of rest

"remained : whereas our Churches can make no such decree, which may not upon change of times and other circumstances be altered. For the other proof hereof I take the last verse, for the Prophet contenteth not himself with that, that he had rehearsed the decree, as he doth sometimes the decree of profane kings, but addeth precisely that as soon as ever the decree was made it was registered in this book of Hester which is one

"of the books of the Canonical Scripture, declaring thereby in what esteem they had it. If it had been of no further authority than our decrees or than a canon of one of the councils, it had been presumption to have brought it into the library of the Holy Ghost. The sum of my answer is that this decree was divine and not ecclesiastical only."

¹ 2 Macc. xv. 36.