Prelatical Honours no Heathen Invention:

honour's sake, are rather in particular discretion to be ordered, than to be argued of by disputes.

[5.] As for the vain imagination of some, who teach the original hereof to have been a preposterous imagination of Maximinus the emperor, who being addicted unto idolatry, chose of the choicest magistrates to be priests, and to the end they might be in great estimation, gave unto each of them a train of followers; and that Christian emperors, thinking the same would promote Christianity which promoted superstition, endeavoured to make their bishops encounter and match with those idolatrous priests: such frivolous conceptions, having no other ground than conceit, we weigh not so much as to frame any answer unto them; our declaration of the true original of ancient attendance on bishops being sufficient. 1 Now if that which the light of sound reason doth teach to be true, have upon like inducements reasonable, allowable, and good, approved itself in such wise as to be accepted, not only of us, but of pagans and infidels also; doth conformity with them that are evil in that which is good, make that thing which is good evil? We have not herein followed the heathens, nor the heathens us, but both we and they one and the selfsame divine rule, the light of a true and sound understanding.

1 T. C. I. i. p. 126. [al. 98: ap. Whitgift. Def. 451. "Another reason of this pride and stateliness of the bishops was that which almost brought in all poison and popish corruption into the church, and is a foolish emulation of the manners and fashions of the idolatrous nations.... Galerius Maximinus the emperor to the end that he might promote the idolatry and superstition whereunto he was addicted, chose of the choicest magistrates to be priests, and that they might be in great estimation gave each of them a train of men to follow them: and now the Christians and Christian emperors thinking that that would promote the Christian religion that promoted superstition, endeavoured to make their bishops encounter and match with those idolatrous priests, and cause that they should not be inferior to them in wealth and outward pomp.

Eusebius, lib. viii. cap. 15. 14. ed. Reading, p. 309. "Εἰρήνη τε εἴδωλων κατὰ πάντα τόπων καὶ πόλεων καὶ ἐπὶ τοιοῦτον έκκλησίαν ἄρχοντα τῶν ἐν πολεμίσσιν καὶ γείτιναι, μάλιστα τῶν ἐμφάνεις διὰ πάσης εμπρόσθενα λειτουργίας, μετά στρατιωτικοῦ στίθους καὶ δυναμικῆς πτώσεως. Διόφησεν τὰ πάντα γέμισθαι, ώς δὲ εἰσεβείᾳ καὶ τιμῷ προσφέρειν, ἐργασίαις καὶ τῆς μεγάλης προνοίας δοκομένες. Whitgift: "There is not one word, that any Christian prince took any example of him to do the like of Christianity. It rather appeareth that Maximinus did in this point imitate the Christians, who had their metropolitans, and one chief bishop in every province long before this time." The conduct of Julian afterwards seems to warrant this conjecture.

nor, if they were, of course to be rejected.

which sheweth what honour is fit for prelates, and what attendance convenient to be a part of their honour.

Touching privileges granted for honour's sake, partly in general unto the clergy, and partly unto prelates the chiefest persons ecclesiastical in particular; of such quality and number they are, that to make but rehearsal of them we scarce think it safe, lest the very entrails of some of our godly brethren, as they term themselves, should them reap surpris'd in sudden.

XXI. And yet of all these things rehearsed, it may be there never would have grown any question, had bishops been honoured only thus far forth. But the honouring of the clergy with wealth, this is in the eyes of them which pretend to seek nothing but mere reformation of abuses, a sin that can never be remitted.

How soon, O how soon might the Church be perfect, even without any spot or wrinkle, if public authority would at the length say Amen unto the holy and devout requests of those godly brethren, who as yet with outstretched necks groan in the pangs of their zeal to see the houses of bishops rifled, and their so long desired livings gloriously divided amongst the righteous! But there is an impediment, a let, which somewhat hindereth those good men's prayers from taking effect: they in whose hands the sovereignty of power and dominion over this Church doth rest, are persuaded there is a God; for undoubtedly either the name of Godhead is but a feigned thing, or if in heaven there be a God, the sacrilegious inten-

1 L. 12. C. de sacros. Eccles. This is a law of Valentinian the Third and Marcian, A. D. 454, confirming all former church privileges, annulling encroachments, and especially enjoining the payment of allowances.] L. 5. ibid. [A law of Honorius and Theodosius ii. A. D. 412. Placet. . . . prescribere, a quisquis specialiter necessitabis singularum urbium ecclesiam habeat anthurium. Prima quippe illius usurpationis contumelia depellenda est: ne praedam usibus celestium secretorum dedet, sordidorum munera perfoce vexentur.] L. 2. C. de Episc. et Cler. [A law of Constantius (A. D. 357) reenacting former immunities, and extending them to the wives and families of clergymen.] L. 10. ibid. [Arcadius and Honorius, A. D. 396, enjoin on provincial officers immediate regard to all cases of sacrilege, and add, "Nec expectet "(provinciae moderato), ut episcopus iniquum proprio ulioneum defaciat, qui sanctas ignoscendit gloriam dereliquit. Sicut cunctis "laudabiles, factas atroces sacerdotes "tibus aut ministriis injurias veluti "crimen publicum persequi, ac de "talisibus ulioneum meneri."
tion of Church robbers, which lurketh under this plausible
name of Reformation, is in his sight a thousand times more
hateful than the plain professed malice of those very mis-
creants, who threw their vomit in the open face of our blessed
Saviour.

[2.] They are not words of persuasion by which true men
can hold their own, when they are over beset with thieves.
And therefore to speak in this cause at all were but labour
lost, saving only in respect of them, who being as yet un-
joined unto this conspiracy, may be haply somewhat stayed,
when they shall know betimes what it is to see thieves and to
run on with them, as the Prophet in the Psalm speaketh1;  
"When thou savest a thief, then thou consentedst with him,
"and hast been partaker with adulterers."

For the better information therefore of men which carry
true, honest and indifferent minds, these things we will
endeavour to make most clearly manifest: First, That in
goods and livings of the Church none hath propriety but
God himself. Secondly, That the honour which the clergy
therein hath, is to be, as it were, God's Receivers; the
honour of prelates, to be his chief and principal Receivers.
Thirdly, That from him they have right, not only to receive,
but also to use such goods, the lower sort in smaller, and the
higher in larger measure. Fourthly, That in case they be
thought, yea, or found to abuse the same, yet may not such
honour be therefore lawfully taken from them, and be given
away unto persons of other calling.

XXII. Possessions, lands and livings spiritual, the wealth
of the clergy, the goods of the Church, are in such sort the
Lord's own, that man can challenge no propriety in them.
His they are, and not ours; all things are his, in that from
him they have their being2. "My corn, and my wine, and
"mine oil," saith the Lord. All things his, in that he hath
absolute power to dispose of them at his pleasure. "Mine
"(saith he?) are the sheep and oxen of a thousand hills."
All things his, in that we have them, we may say with
Job3, "God hath given;" and when we are deprived of them,
"The Lord," whose they are, hath likewise "taken

1 Psal. I. 18. 2 Hos. ii. 8. 3 Psal. I. 10. 4 Job i. 21.

"them away" again. But these sacred possessions are his book vii.
by another tenure; his, because those men who first received
them from him have unto him returned them again by way
of religious gift or obligation: and in this respect it is, that
the Lord doth term those houses1 wherein such gifts and
oblations were laid, "his treasuries."

[2.] The ground whereupon men have resigned their own
interests in things temporal, and given over the same unto
God, is that precept which Solomon borroweth from the law
of nature2, "Honour the Lord out of thy substance, and of
"the chiefest of all thy revenue: so shall thy barns be filled
"with plenty, and with new wine the fat of thy press shall
"overflow." For although it be by one most fitly spoken
against those superstitious persons that only are scrupulous
in external rites3; "Wilt thou win the favour of God? be
"virtuous: they best worship him that are his followers:"

it is not the bowing of your knees, but of your hearts; it is
not the number of your oblations, but the integrity of your
lives; not your incense, but your obedience, which God is
delighted to be honoured by: nevertheless, we must beware,
lest simply understanding this, which comparatively is meant;
that is to say, whereas the meaning is, that God doth chiefly
respect the inward disposition of the heart; we must take heed
we do not hereupon so worship him in spirit, that outwardly
we take all worship, reverence and honour from him.

[3.] Our God will be glorified both of us himself, and for
us by others: to others because our hearts are [rot ?] known,
and yet our example is required for their good, therefore it
is not sufficient to carry religion in our hearts, as fire is
carried in flint-stones, but we are outwardly, visibly, appar-
tently, to serve and honour the living God; yea to employ
that way, as not only our souls but our bodies, so not only
our bodies but our goods, yea, the choice, the flower, the
chiefest of all thy revenue, saith Solomon. If thou hast any
thing in all thy possessions of more value and price than
other, to what use shouldst thou convert it, rather than this?
Samuel was dear unto Hannah his mother: the child that

1 Mal. iii. 10. 2 Prov. iii. 9. 3 Seneca. [Epist. 95. p. 604. ed. "coluit, quisquis imitatus est."]

"Vis Deos propitiare? bonus est. Satis iest.
Church Endowments under the Law.

BOOK VII.  Hannah did so much esteem, she could not but greatly wish to advance; and her religious conceit was, that the honouring of God with it was the advancing of it unto honour. The chiefest of the offspring of men are the males which be first born: and for this cause, in the ancient world they all were by right of their birth priests to the Most High. By these and the like precedents, it plainly enough appeareth, that in what heart soever doth dwell unfeigned religion, in the same there resteth also a willingness to bestow upon God that soonest which is most dear. Amongst us the law is, that sith gold is the chiefest of metals, if it be any where found in the bowels of the earth, it becometh in right of honour, as all men know, to the King: whence hath this custom grown but only from a natural persuasion, whereby men judge it decent for the highest persons always to be honoured with the choicest things? "If ye offer unto God the blind," saith the Prophet Malachi, "it is not evil; if the lame and sick, it is good enough. Present it unto thy prince, and see if he will content himself, or accept thy person, saith the Lord of hosts." When Abel presented God with an offering, it was the fattest of all the lambs in his whole flock; he honoured God not only out of his substance, but out of the very chiefest therein; whereby we may somewhat judge how religiously they stand affected towards God, who grudge that any thing worth the having should be his.

[4.] Long it were to reckon up particularly what God was owner of under the Law: for of this sort was all which they spent in legal sacrifices; of this sort their usual oblations and offerings; of this sort tithes and firstfruits; of this sort that which by extraordinary occasions they vowed unto God; of this sort all that they gave to the building of the tabernacle; of this sort all that which was gathered amongst them for the erecting of the temple, and the adorning of it erected; of this sort whatsoever their Corban contained, wherein that blessed widow's deodate was laid up. Now either this kind of honour was prefiguratively altogether ceremonial, and then

our Saviour accepteth it not; or if we find that to him also it hath been done, and that with divine approbation given for encouragement of the world, to shew by such kind of service their dutiful hearts towards Christ, there will be no place left for men to make any question at all whether herein they do well or no.

[5.] Wherefore to descend from the synagogue unto the Church of Christ: albeit sacrifices, wherewith sometimes God was highly honoured, be not accepted as heretofore at the hands of men; yet forasmuch as "Honour God with thy riches" is an edict of the unseparable law of nature, so far forth as men are therein required by such kind of homage to testify their thankful minds, this sacrifice God doth accept still. Wherefore as it was said of Christ, that "all kings should worship him, and all nations do him service;" so this very kind of worship or service was likewise mentioned, lest we should think that our Lord and Saviour would allow of no such thing. The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents; the kings of Sheba and Seba shall bring gifts." And as it maketh not a little to the praise of those sages mentioned in the Gospel, that the first amongst men which did solemnly honour our Saviour on earth were they; so it soundeth no less to the dignity of this particular kind, that the rest by it were prevented; "They fell down and worshipped him, and opened their treasures, and presented unto him gifts; gold, and incense, and myrrh." Of all those things which were done to the honour of Christ in his lifetime there is not one whereof he spake in such sort, as when Mary to testify the largeness of her affection, seemed to waste away a gift upon him, the price of which gift might, as they thought who saw it, much better have been spent in works of mercy towards the poor: "Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached throughout all the world, there shall also this that she hath done be spoken of for memorial of her."

[6.] Of service to God, the best works are they which continue longest: and for permanency what like Donation, whereby things are unto him for ever dedicated? That the
This he conjectureth to have been the cause why the Apostles did that which the history reporteth of them. The truth is, that so the state of those times did require, as well otherwhere as in Judea. Wherefore when afterwards it did appear much more commodious for the Church to dedicate such inherences, than the value and price of them being sold; the former custom was changed for this, as for the better. The devotion of Constantine herein all the world even till this very day admirable. They that lived in the prime of the Christian world thought no testament Christianly made, nor any thing therein well bequeathed, unless something were thereby added unto Christ's patrimony.

[7.] Touching which men, what judgment the world doth now give I know not; perhaps we deem them to have been herein but blind and superstitious persons. Nay, we in these cogitations are blind; they contrariwise did with Solomon plainly know and persuade themselves, that thus to diminish their wealth was not to diminish but to augment it, according to that which God doth promise to his own people by the Prophet Malachi, and which they by their own particular experience found true. If Wickliff were of that

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2 Prov. iii. 10.
3 Mal. iv. 10.
Bishops under the Law, God's Receivers.

MEDIEVAL TEXT

fulness in acknowledging the goodness of God? may he vow any certain kind of public acknowledgment beforehand; or though he vow it not, perform it after in such sort that men may see he is persuaded how the Lord hath been his God? Are these particular kind of testifying thankfulness to God, the erecting of oratories, the dedicating of lands and goods to maintain them, forbidden anywhere? Let any mortal man living shew but one reason wherefore in this point to follow Jacob's example should not be a thing both acceptable unto God, and in the eyes of the world for ever most highly commendable. Concerning goods of this nature, goods whereof when we speak we term them τὰ τῷ Θεῷ ἀφιερωθέντα, the goods that are consecrated unto God, and as Tertullian speoketh, deposita pietatis, things which piety and devotion hath laid up as it were in the bosom of God; touching such goods, the law civil following mere light of nature defineth them to be no man's, because no mortal man, or community of men, hath right of propriety in them.

XXIII. Persons ecclesiastical are God's stewards, not only for that he hath set them over his family, as the ministers of ghostly food, but even for this very cause, that they that receive and dispose his temporal revenues, the gifts and oblations which men bring. Of the Jews it is plain that their tithes they offered unto the Lord, and those offerings the Lord bestowed upon the Levites. When the Levites gave the tenth of their tithes, this their gift the Law doth term the Lord's heave-offering, and appoint that the high-priest should receive the same. Of spoils taken in war, that part which they were accustomed to separate unto God, they brought it before the priest of the Lord, by whom it was laid up in the tabernacle of the congregation, for a memorial of their thankfulness towards God, and his goodness towards them in fighting for them against their enemies. As therefore the Apostle magnifieth the honour of Melchisedec, in that he being an high-priest, did receive at the hands of Abraham the tithes which Abraham did honour God with; so it argueth in the Apostles themselves great honour, that at their feet


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opinion which his adversaries ascribe unto him (whether truly or of purpose to make him odious I cannot tell, for in his writings I do not find it) namely, "That Constantine and others following his steps did evil, as having no sufficient ground whereby they might gather that such donations are acceptable to Jesus Christ;" it was in Wickliffe a palpable error. I will use but one only argument to stand in the stead of many. Jacob taking his journey unto Haran made in this sort his solemn vow: "If God will be with me, and will keep me in this journey which I go, and will give me bread to eat, and clothes to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in safety; then shall the Lord be my God, and this stone which I have set up a pillar shall be the house of God, and of all that thou shalt give me I give the tenth unto thee." May a Christian man desire as great things as Jacob did at the hands of God? may he desire them in as earnest manner? may he promise as great thank-

modi increpandi? ... "Tene firmini, mihi nuncutus dubites, quin temporales domini in isto graviter peccaverunt. ... Non solum coope-riti sunt ad istam dotationem, sed multipliciter consenserunt. ... fol. 130. "Cito post ascensionem ejus, infra annam CCC ejus ordi-

nationem praecipuum in dotando ecclesiam reversarum, et per con-

sceniam Antichristum in deturpati-

tionem sponse suse multipliciter

procurraret. Unde narravit Chrono-

nica, quod in dotatione ecclesiae,

tunc temporis sic dicentis, Hodie ei-

effusum est venenum in ecclesiam sanctam Dei." Compare the fol-

lowing, quoted from Walden from the Speculum militantis Ecclesia, cap. 9.

"Juxta predicta, erubescent Antichristus et sui maculare sacerdotes Christi contra ordinacionem quam ipse fecit; et domini sacrales et alii fatui qui hic adjuvanti Antichristum, erubescent de sic ad-

juvando, sicut erubescent in finali judicio; et iste pudor erit major pro dolore hypocrisia, quia dicunt in factis suis quod faciunt ista ob honorum Christi, quia Christus male instituit, et domini sacrales

emendant eum, sicut Imperator

Romanus quando fecit sacerdotes suos dominos, ipse fecit statum Apostolorum super ordinacionem Christi. Sed totum hoc sapit blas-

phemiam." Among the errors of

Wickliffe condemned at the Council of Constance, one head is, Contra dotationem Ecclesiae; of which the following are specimens: "Domini temporales possunt licite auferre temporaliæ ab ecclesia desinuato-
tete." "Non est major hæreti-
cus vel Antichristus, quam ille qui docet quod licuit sacerdotii-

bus et Levitis gratiae sit dotari in possessionibus et temporalibus."

Quantum ad chartas et conces-

siones secularium dominionum

patet quod clericus erubescent in-

niti tam culpabili fundamento: quia in nullo valet humana concessio, nisi praehabita licentia a domino capitale; et cum non pos-
sint docere quod domini de hoc habeant licentiam a Christo, patet quod lege humana quam divina, est tali donatio sueta sen-
tienda, et ita illicita et Catholicae respuenda." Fuscilicus, &c. Gra-


[48-54] 6 Heb. vii. 3. Acts iv. 34.