

OF A CHRISTIAN LIFE

DCXCVII.

A Christian's worshipping is not the external, hypocritical mask that our spiritual friars wear, when they chastise their bodies, torment and make themselves faint, with ostentatious fasting, watching, singing, wearing hair shirts, scourging themselves, etc. Such worshipping God desires not.

DCXCVIII.

ˆTis a great blindness of people's hearts that they cannot accept of the treasure of grace presented unto them. Such people are we, that though we are baptized, have Christ, with all his precious gifts, faith, the sacraments, his Word, all which we confess to be holy, yet we can neither say nor think that we ourselves are holy; we deem it too much to say, we are holy; whereas the name Christian is far more glorious and greater than the name holy.

DCXCIX.

We can call consecrated robes, dead men's bones, and such trumpery, holy, but not a Christian; the reason is, we gaze upon the outward mask, we look after the seeming saint, who leads an austere life. Hence that vain opinion in popedom, that they call the dead, saints; an error strengthened by Zwinglius. Human wisdom gapes at holy workers, thinking whoso does good works, is just and righteous before God.

DCC.

There's no better death than St Stephen's, who said: "Lord, receive my spirit." We should lay aside the register of our sins and deserts, and die in reliance only upon God's mere grace and mercy.

DCCI.

We ought to retain the feast of John the Baptist, with whom the New Testament began, for it is written: "All the prophets and the law prophesied until John," etc. We should observe it, too, for the sake of the fair song, which in popedom we read, but understood not, of Zachariah, which, indeed, is a most excellent song, as is shown in St Luke's preface, where he says: "And Zachariah was full of the Holy Ghost," etc.

DCCII.

A householder instructs his servants and family in this manner: Deal uprightly and honestly, be diligent in that which I command you, and ye may then eat, drink, and clothe yourselves as ye please. Even so, our Lord God regards not what we eat, drink, or how we clothe ourselves; all such matters, being ceremonies or middle things, he leaves freely to us, on the understanding, however, that we ground nothing thereon as being necessary to salvation.

DCCIII.

’Twas a strange thing the world should be offended at him who raised the dead, made the blind to see, and the deaf to hear, etc. They who would deem such a man a devil, what kind of a God would they have? But here it is. Christ would give to the world the kingdom of heaven, but they will have the kingdom of the earth, and here they part; for the highest wisdom and sanctity of the hypocrites sees nothing but temporal honour, carnal will, mundane life, good days, money and wealth, all of which must vanish and cease.

DCCIV.

The whole world takes offence at the plainness of the second table of God's ten commandments, because human sense and reason partly understand what is done contrary thereto. When God and his Word is condemned, the world is silent and regards it not; but when a monastery is taken, or flesh eaten on a Friday, or a friar marries, O, then the world cries out: Here are abominable offences.

DCCV.

The obedience towards God is the obedience of faith and good works; that is, he who believes in God, and does what God has commanded, is obedient unto him; but the obedience toward the devil is superstition and evil works; that is, who trusts not in God, but is unbelieving, and does evil, is obedient unto the devil.

DCCVI.

In the Old Testament are two sorts of sacrifices; the first was called the early morning sacrifice; thereby is shown that we first should offer unto Christ, not oxen or cattle, but ourselves, acknowledging God's gifts, corporal and spiritual, temporal and eternal, and giving him thanks for them. Secondly, the evening sacrifice; whereby is signified that a Christian should offer a broken, humble and a contrite heart, consider his necessities, and dangers, both corporal and spiritual, and call upon God for help.

DCCVII.

God will, say some, that we should serve him freely and willingly, whereas he that serves God out of fear of punishment, of hell, or out of a hope and love of recompense, serves and honours God not uprightly or truly. This argument is of the stoics, who reject the affections of

human nature. It is true we ought willingly to serve, love, and fear God, as the chief good. But God can well endure that we love him for his promise's sake, and pray unto him for corporal and spiritual benefits; he therefore has commanded us to pray. So God can also endure that we fear him for the punishment's sake, as the prophets remember. Indeed, it is somewhat, that a human creature can acknowledge God's everlasting punishments and rewards. And if one looks thereupon, as not being the chief end and cause, then it hurts him not, especially if he has regard to God himself, as the final cause, who gives everything for nothing, out of mere grace, without our deserts.

DCCVIII.

The word, to worship, means to stoop and bow down the body with external gestures; to serve in the work. But to worship God in spirit is the service and honour of the heart; it comprehends faith and fear in God. The worshipping of God is two-fold, outward and inward - that is, to acknowledge God's benefits, and to be thankful unto him.

DCCIX.

A certain prince of Germany, well known to me, went to Compostella in Spain, where they pretend St James, brother of the Evangelist St John, lies buried. This prince made his confession to a Franciscan, an honest man, who asked him if he were a German? The prince answered, yes. Then the friar said: "O, loving child, why seekest thou so far away that which thou hast much better in Germany? I have seen and read the writings of an Augustine friar, touching indulgences and the pardons of sin, wherein he powerfully proves that the true remission of sins consists in the merits and sufferings of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. O loving son, remain thereby, and permit not thyself to be otherwise persuaded. I purpose shortly, God willing, to leave this unchristian life, to repair into German, and to join the Augustine friar.

DCCX.

Since the Gospel has been preached, which is not above twenty years, such great wonders have been done as were not in many hundred years before. No man ever thought such alterations should happen; that so many monasteries would be made empty, that the private mass should be abolished in Germany, despite heretics, sectaries, and tyrants. Rome has twice been ravaged, and many great princes, who persecuted the Gospel, have been thrown down to the ground and destroyed.

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