

Preface,
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should cause posterity to feel those evils, which as yet are more easy for us to prevent than they would be for them to remedy.

IX. The best and safest way for you therefore, my dear brethren, is, to call your deeds past to a new reckoning, to reexamine the cause ye have taken in hand, and to try it even point by point, argument by argument, with all the diligent exactness ye can; to lay aside the gall of that bitterness wherein your minds have hitherto over-abounded, and with meekness to search the truth. Think ye are men, deem it not impossible for you to err; sift unpartially your own hearts, whether it be force of reason or vehemency of affection, which hath bred and still doth feed these opinions in you. If truth do any where manifest itself, seek not to smother it with glosing delusions, acknowledge the greatness thereof, and think it your best victory when the same doth prevail over you.

[2.] That ye have been earnest in speaking or writing again and again the contrary way, shall be no blemish or discredit at all unto you. Amongst so many so huge volumes as the infinite pains of St. Augustine have brought forth, what one hath gotten him greater love, commendation and honour, than the book¹ wherein he carefully collecteth his own oversights, and sincerely condemneth them? Many speeches there are of Job's whereby his wisdom and other virtues may appear; but the glory of an ingenuous mind he hath purchased by these words only, "²Behold, I will lay mine hand on my mouth: I have spoken once, yet will I not therefore maintain argument; yea twice, howbeit for that cause further I will not proceed."

[3.] Far more comfort it were for us (so small is the joy we take in these strifes) to labour under the same yoke, as men that look for the same eternal reward of their labours, to be joined with you in bands of indissoluble love and amity, to live as if our persons being many our souls were but one, rather than in such dismembered sort to spend our few and wretched days in a tedious prosecuting of wearisome contentions: the end whereof, if they have not some speedy end,

¹ [viz. "Retractationum."]

² Job xl. 4, 5.

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will be heavy even on both sides. Brought already we are even to that estate which Gregory Nazianzen mournfully describeth, saying¹, "My mind leadeth me" (sith there is no other remedy) "to fly and to convey myself into some corner out of sight, where I may scape from this cloudy tempest of maliciousness, whereby all parts are entered into a deadly war amongst themselves, and that little remnant of love which was, is now consumed to nothing. The only godliness we glory in, is to find out somewhat whereby we may judge others to be ungodly. Each other's faults we observe as matter of exprobration and not of grief. By these means we are grown hateful in the eyes of the heathens themselves, and (which woundeth us the more deeply) able we are not to deny but that we have deserved their hatred. With the better sort of our own our fame and credit is clean lost. The less we are to marvel if they judge vilely of us, who although we did well would hardly allow thereof. On our backs they also build that are lewd, and what we object one against another, the same they use to the utter scorn and disgrace of us all. This we have gained by our mutual home-dissensions. This we are worthily rewarded with, which are more forward to strive than becometh men of virtuous and mild disposition."

[4.] But our trust in the Almighty is, that with us contentions are now at their highest float, and that the day will come (for what cause of despair is there?) when the passions of former enmity being allayed, we shall with ten times redoubled tokens of our unfeignedly reconciled love,

¹ Greg. Naz. in Apol. [p. 33, sq. ed. Par. 1609: 'Αγαπητόν, ὁρῶντα τοὺς ἄλλους ἄνω καὶ κάτω φερομένους τε καὶ ταρασσομένους, φυγόντα φυγῇ ἐκ τοῦ μίσου, ὑπὸ σκέπη ἀναχωρήσαντα, λαθεῖν τοῦ Ἰονηροῦ τὴν (ἀληθὴ καὶ τὴν σκοτόμαιναν) ἥνικα πολεμεῖ μὲν ἀλλήλοις τὰ μέλη, οἴχεται δὲ τῆς ἀγάπης εἰ καὶ τι ἦν λείψανον..... Πάντες δὲ ἐσμὲν εὐσεβεῖς, ἐξ ἐνὸς μόνου, τοῦ καταγινώσκειν ἄλλων ἀσέβειαν... θηροῦμεν δὲ τὰς ἀλλήλων ἀμαρτίας, οὐκ ἵνα θρηνησώμεν, ἀλλ' ἵνα ἀναιδίσωμεν... Ἐκ δὲ τούτων, ὡς τὸ εἶδος, μισούμεθα μὲν ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσι καὶ, ὁ τούτου χαλεπώτερον, οὐδὲ εἰπεῖν ἔχομεν, ὡς οὐ δικαίως διαβεβλήμεθα δὲ καὶ τῶν ἡμετέρων τοῖς ἐπικειστέροις· οὐδὲν γὰρ θαυμαστόν, εἰ τοῖς πλείοσιν, οἱ μάλιστα ἂν τι καὶ τῶν καλῶν ἀποδέχοντο· τεκταίνουσι δὲ ἐπὶ τῶν νῶτων ἡμῶν οἱ ἀμαρτωλοὶ (Ps. cxxviii. 3, Sept.), καὶ ἡ κατ' ἀλλήλων ἐπινοοῦμεν, κατὰ πάντων ἔχουσι· καὶ γεγόναμεν θέατρον καινὸν..... Ταῦτα ἡμῖν ὁ πρὸς ἀλλήλους πόλεμος· ταῦτα οἱ λίαν ὑπὲρ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ καὶ πρὸς αὐτὸν μαχόμενοι. Hooker appears to have translated from Musculus' Latin, p. 18, 19.]

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shew ourselves each towards other the same which Joseph and the brethren of Joseph were at the time of their interview in Egypt. Our comfortable expectation and most thirsty desire whereof what man soever amongst you shall any way help to satisfy, (as we truly hope there is no one amongst you but some way or other will,) the blessings of the God of peace, both in this world and in the world to come, be upon him more than the stars of the firmament in number.

What Things are handled in the Books following :

Book the First, concerning Laws in general.

The Second, of the use of Divine Law contained in Scripture ; whether that be the only Law which ought to serve for our direction in all things without exception.

The Third, of Laws concerning Ecclesiastical Polity ; whether the form thereof be in Scripture so set down, that no addition or change is lawful.

The Fourth, of general exceptions taken against the Laws of our Polity, as being popish, and banished out of certain reformed churches.

The Fifth, of our Laws that concern the public religious duties of the Church, and the manner of bestowing that Power of Order, which enableth men in sundry degrees and callings to execute the same.

The Sixth, of the Power of Jurisdiction, which the reformed platform claimeth unto lay-elders, with others.

The Seventh, of the Power of Jurisdiction, and the honour which is annexed thereunto in Bishops.

The Eighth, of the power of Ecclesiastical Dominion or Supreme Authority, which with us the highest governor or Prince hath, as well in regard of domestical Jurisdictions, as of that other foreignly claimed by the Bishop of Rome.