

Chapter 06

He exhortheth them to be perfect fcholars, and not to need to be Catechumens againe, 4. confidering they can not be baptized againe: 9. and remembring their former good workes, for the which God wil not faile to performe them his promife, if they faile not to imitate Abraham by perfeurance in the faith with patience. 20. And fo endeth his digrefsion, and returneth to the matter of Chriftes Priefthood.

Wherfore intermitting the word of the beginning of Chrift, let vs proceed to perfection, not againe laying ¹the foundation of penance from dead workes, & of faith toward God, ²of the doctrine of Baptifmes, & of impofition of hands, & of the refurrection of the dead, & of eternal iudgment. ³ And this fhall we doe, if God wil permit. ⁴ For *Heb. 10, 26.* it is ¹impoſſible for them that were once illuminated, haue taſted alſo the heauenly giſt, & were made partakers of the holy Ghoſt, ⁵ haue moreouer taſted the good word of God, & the powers of the world to come, ⁶ and are fallen, to be renewed againe to penance, crucifying againe to theſelues the Sonne of God, and making him a mockerie. ⁷ For the earth drinking the raine often comming vpon it, & bringing forth graffe commodious for them by whom it is tilled, receiueth bleſſing of God. ⁸ But bringing forth thornes and bryers, it is reprobate, and very neer a curſe, whoſe end is, to be burnt.

⁹ But ^awe confidently truſt of you, my beſt Beloued, better things and neerer to ſaluation; although we ſpeake thus. ¹⁰ For ¹God is not vniuſt, that he ſhould forget your worke & loue which you haue ſhewed in his name, which haue miniſtred to the Saints and doe miniſter. ¹¹ And our deſire is that euery one of you ſhew

^a It is euident by theſe wordes, againſt the Nouatians and the Caluinifts, that S. Paul meant not precifely, that they had done, or could doe any ſuch finne, whereby they ſhould be put out of al hope of ſaluation, & be ſure of damnation, during their life.

Gen. 22, 16.

forth the same carefulneffe to the accomplifhing of hope vnto the end: ¹² that you become not flouthful, but imitatours of them which by faith and patience fhall inherit the promifes. ¹³ For God promifing to Abraham, becaufe he had none greater by whom he might fweare, he fware by himfelf, ¹⁴ faying: Vnles bleffing I fhall bleffe thee, and multiplying fhall multiplie thee. ¹⁵ And fo patiently enduring he obtained the promife. ¹⁶ For men fweare by a greater then themfelues: and the end of al their controuerfie, for the cõfirmatiõ, is an oth. ¹⁷ Wherein God meaning more abundantly to fhew to the heires of the promife the ftabilitie of his counfel, he interposed an othe: ¹⁸ that by two things vnmoueable, wherby it is impoffible for God to lie, we may haue a moft ftrong comfort. Who haue fled to hold faft the hope propofed, ¹⁹ which we haue as an anker of the foule, fure and firme, and going in into the inner parts of the veile, ²⁰ where IESVS the Precurfour for vs is intred, made a high Prieft for euer according to the order of Melchifedech.

ANNOTATIONS

1 The foundation of penance.) We fee hereby, what the firft grounds of Chriftian intitutiõ or Catechifme were in the Primitiue Church, and that there was euer a neceffarie inſtruction and beleefe of certaine points had by word of mouth and tradition, before men came to the Scriptures: which could not treat of things fo particularly, as was requifit for the teaching of al neceffarie grounds. Among thefe points were the 12. Articles contained in the Apoftles Creed: the doctrine of penance before Baptifme: the mãner and neceffitie of Baptifme: the Sacrament of Impofitiõ of hands after Baptifme, called Confirmation: the articles of the Refurrectiõ, Iudgement, and fuch like. Without which things firft laid, if one ſhould be ſent to picke faith out of the Scripture, there would be made rule quickly. See S. Auguſtin *in expoſit. inchoat. ep. ad Rom. verfus finem.*

The Apoftles forme of Catechifme, and the points thereof.

Ambr. de pœnit. li. 2. c. 2.

4 Impoſſible.) How hard the holy Scriptures be, and how dangerouſly they be read of the vnlearned, or of the proud be they neuer fo wel learned, this one place might teach vs. Wherat the Nouatians of old did fo ftumble, that they thought, & heretically taught that none, falling into any mortal finne after Baptifme, could be receiued to mercie or penance in the Church: and fo to a contentious man, that would follow his owne ſenſe, or the bare

The Nouatians (as al Heretikes) made Scripture the grouõd of their hereſies.

words, without regard of the Churches sence and rule of faith (after which euery Scripture muft be expounded) the Apoftles fpeach doth here found. Euen as to the fimple, and to the Heretike that fubmitteth not his sence to the Churches iudgement, certaine place of this fame Epiftle feeme at the firft fight, to ftand againft the daily oblation or Sacrifice of the Maffe: which yet in truth make no more for that purpofe, then this text we now ftand on, ferueth the Nouations: as when we come to the places, it fhall be declared.

And let the good Readers beware here alfo of the Proteftants expofition, for they are herein worfe then Nouatians, fpecially fuch as precifely follow Caluin; holding impioufly, that it is impoffible for one that forfaketh entirely his faith, that is, becommeth an Apoftata or an Heretike, to be receiued to penance or to Gods mercie. To eftablifh which falfe and damnable sence, thefe fellowes make nothing of S. Ambrofe's, S. Chryfoftom's, and other Fathers expofitions, which is the holy Churches sence, That the Apoftle meaneth of that penance which is done before and in Baptifme. Which is no more to fay, but that it is impoffible to be baptized againe, and thereby to be renouated and illuminated, to die, be buried, and rife againe the fecond time in Chrifft, in fo eafie and perfect penance and cleauning of finnes, as that firft Sacrament of generation did yeald: which applieth Chriftes death in fuch ample manner to the receiuers, that it taketh away al paines due for finnes before committed: and therefore requireth no further penance afterward, for the finnes before committed, al being washed away by the force of that Sacrament duely taken. S. Auguftin calleth the remiffion in Baptifme, *Magnam indulgentiam*, a great pardon. *Encir. c. 64.*

The Apoftle therefore warneth them, that if they fal from their faith, and from Chrifts grace and Law which they once receiued in their Baptifme, they may not looke to haue any more that firft great and large remedie applied vnto them, nor no man els that finneth after Baptifme: though the other penance, which is called the *Second table after shipwracke*, which is a more painefull medicine for finne then Baptifme, requiring much fafting, praying, and other afflictions corporal, is open not only to other finners, but to al once baptized, Heretikes, or oppugners of the truth malioufly, and of purpofe, or what way fo-euer, during this life. See S. Cyprian *ep. 52.* S. Ambrofe *vpon this place.* S. Auguftin *cont. ep. Parm. li. 2. c. 13.* and *ep. 50.* S. Damafcus *li. 4. c. 16.*

10 God is not vniuft.) It is a world to fee, what wringing & writhing the Proteftants make to shift themfelues from the euidence of thefe words, which make it moft cleere to al not blinded in pride and contention, that good workes be meritorious, and the very caufe of faluation, fo farre that God fhould be vniuft, if he rendered not Heauen for the fame. *Reuera grandis iniuftitia Dei* (faith Hierom) *fi tantum peccata puniret, & bona opera non*

Other places make no more for the Proteftants then this doth for Nouations.

Caluins herefie vpō this place, worfe then the Nouatians.

The fathers expofition of this place.

The Sacramēt of penance is ready for al finners whatfoeuer.

Gods iuftice in rewarding meritorious workes.

Ambr. locē cit. & in ep. ad Heb. Chry. ho. 9. in c. 6. ad Heb.

Hier. ep. 8. ad Demetriad. c. 6.

fulciperet. That is, *Indeed great were God's iniuftice, if he would only punish finnes, and would not receiue good workes. Li. 2. cont. Iouin. c. 2.*