

Chapter 06

He exhortheth them to be perfect ſcholars, 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 perfeuerance in the faith with patience. 20. And fo endeth his digrefſion, and returneth to the matter of Chriſtes Priefthood.

Wherfore intermitting the word of the beginning of Chriſt, let vs proceed to perfection, not againe laying ¹the foundation of penance from dead workes, & of faith toward God, ²of the doctrine of Baptiſmes, & of impoſition of hands, & of the refurrection of the dead, & of eternal iudgment. ³ And this ſhal 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 graſſe 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 miniſtered 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 fame carefulneffe to the accomplifhing of hope vnto the end: ¹² that you become not flouthful, but imitators 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 cōfirmatiō, 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 institution 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 māner and neceffitie of Baptifme: the Sacrament of Imposition of hands after Baptifme, called Confirmation: the articles of the Refurrection, Iudgement, and fuch like. Without which things firft laid, if one should be fent to picke faith out of the Scripture, there would be madde rule quickly. See S. Auguftin *in expofit. inchoat. ep. ad Rom. verfus finem.*

The Apoftles forme of Catechifme, and the points thereof.

Ambr. de pænīt.
li. 2. c. 2.

4 Impoffible.) How hard the holy Scriptures be, and how dangeroufly 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 fenfe, or the bare

The Nouatians (as al Heretikes) made Scripture the grouūd of their herefies.

words, without regard of the Churches sense and rule of faith (after which euery Scripture must be expounded) the Apostles speach doth here found. Euen as to the simple, and to the Heretike that submitteth not his sense to the Churches iudgement, certaine place of this same Epistle seeme at the first sight, to stand against the daily oblation or Sacrifice of the Masse: which yet in truth make no more for that purpose, then this text we now stand on, serueth the Nouations: as when we come to the places, it shal be declared.

And let the good Readers beware here also of the Protestants exposition, for they are herein worse then Nouatians, specially such as precisely follow Caluin; holding impiously, that it is impossible for one that forsaketh entirely his faith, that is, becommeth an Apostata or an Heretike, to be receiued to penance or to God's mercie. To establish which false and damnable sense, these fellows make nothing of S. Ambrose's, S. Chrysostom's, and other Fathers expositions, which is the holy Churches sense, That the Apostle meaneth of that penance which is done before and in Baptisme. Which is no more to say, but that it is impossible to be baptized againe, and thereby to be renouated and illuminated, to die, be buried, and rise againe the second time in Christ, in so easie and perfect penance and cleansing of finnes, as that first Sacrament of generation did yeald: which applieth Christs death in such ample manner to the receiuers, that it taketh away all paines due for finnes before committed: and therefore requireth no further penance afterward, for the finnes before committed, all being washed away by the force of that Sacrament duely taken. S. Augustin calleth the remission in Baptisme, *Magnam indulgentiam*, a great pardon. *Encir. c. 64.*

The Apostle therefore warneth them, that if they fall from their faith, and from Christ's grace and Law which they once receiued in their Baptisme, they may not looke to haue any more that first great and large remedie applied vnto them, nor no man els that finneth after Baptisme: though the other penance, which is called the *Second table after shipwracke*, which is a more painful medicine for sinne then Baptisme, requiring much fasting, praying, and other afflictions corporal, is open not only to other sinners, but to all once baptized, Heretikes, or oppugners of the truth maliciously, and of purpose, or what way so-euer, during this life. See S. Cyprian *ep. 52.* S. Ambrose *vpon this place.* S. Augustin *cont. ep. Parm. li. 2. c. 13.* and *ep. 50.* S. Damascus *li. 4. c. 16.*

10 God is not vniust.) It is a world to see, what wringing & writhing the Protestants make to shift themselves from the euidence of these words, which make it most cleere to all not blinded in pride and contention, that good workes be meritorious, and the very cause of saluation, so farre that God should be vniust, if he rendered not Heauen for the same. *Reuera grandis iniustitia Dei* (faith Hierom) *si tantum peccata puniret, & bona opera non*

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

Caluins herefie vpō this place, worse then the Nouatians.

The fathers exposition of this place.

The Sacramēt of penance is ready for all sinners whatsoever.

Gods iustice 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.*