

you must know this figurative speech of the Apostle, of milke and strong meate: by milke, he meaneth the generall principles of doctrine, as himselfe after declareth, as of repentance, of faith in Christ, of baptisme, of the resurrection, and such like, set out brieflie in generall termes, and according to the capacite of children, with which they are prepared to the kingdome of heauen; and must still grow vp in more vnderstanding, till they do see with all the Saints; the height, the depth, the length, the bredth, of Gods vnsearchable goodnesse in Iesu Christ, which the Apostle calleth here the word of righteousnes. Now, if we will abide still in our first instruction, and when gray haire shall be mingled with our blacke, yet then still we will be children in vnderstanding, the Apostles words shall be justified in vs, we are not meete disciples of the excellent knowledge of the Gospell: for he that is still at his milke, hath not yet tasted of the word of righteousnes, which is strong meate.

And it followeth in the Apostle. *For strong meat belongeth to them that are of perfect age, which through long custome haue their wits exercised to discerne good and euill.* In these words the Apostle maketh it more plaine, what is milke, and what is strong meate, and why they are so called; that is milke, which agreeth to beginners, and such as haue little experience: that is strong meate, which is for old practitioners, and such as haue wisdom to iudge betweene truth and falshood. And thus much brieflie of the sense of the words: out of which, what instructions we haue to gather for our owne edifying, I will speake more at large, God willing, the next time. Now let vs pray, &c.

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The sixe and twenty Lecture, vpon the 13. and 14. verses, before mentioned, and so forth vpon the 1. and 2. verse of the sixth Chapter.

13 For euerie one that useth milke, is inexperienced in the word of
14 But strong meate belongeth to them that are of age, which
through long custome haue their wits exercised, to discern
betwixt good and euill.

CHAPT. VI.

Therefore leaving the doctrine of the beginning of Christ, let vs be ledde forward vnto perfection, not laying againe the foundation of repentance from dead workes, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisme, and laying on of hands, and of the resurrection from the dead, and of eternall iudgement.



We haue heard already, what reprehension the Apostle hath hitherto made, of the slacknesse of the people, in learning the mysteries of Gods worde. First, because they haue bene so carelesse, that they haue made the worde hard vnto them, that they cannot vnderstand it: where I tolde you, that who so euer hee bee that accuseth the Scripture of hardnesse, the Apostle concludeth against him, that hee hath a hard and dull heart. Secondly, hee rebuketh them in respect of the time, which hath bene so long, that they might now haue taught other, yet they need

to bee taught themselves, yea even the beginnings. And heere I will vs to looke well vnto our selues; for all men know how long the time hath bene, in which the Gospell hath bene preached vnto vs, and how little wee haue profited, God knoweth. Thirdly, he blameth them for their slacknesse, because by it they spoyle themselves of a great treasure: for while they be thus rude & ignorant, the word of righteousnesse, that is, perfect knowledge, can neuer bee taught vnto them, neither can they be partakers of the excellent knowledge of the Gospell of Christ: but it is vnto them impossible, such as it is for children to cate strong meate. Then he sheweth who be strong, even those that haue their wisdom perfect, so that they can iudge between good and euill.

To this purpose are these last words of the Apostle: *Every one that useth milke, is inexperienced in the word of righteousnesse, for hee is a childe: but strong meate, is for the perfect, which through long custome haue their wits exercised, so discern both good and euill.*

First, we haue here to learne this principle of Christianitie: hee that is rude & ignorant, cannot apprehend the excellent knowledge of the Gospell of Christ: that is, he that can say no more but this: I beleue in one God; wee must repent vs of sinne, we are saued by faith: wee must worship God in spirite and truth; wee are baptised in the name of the Father, the Sonne, and the holy Ghost: we beleue the resurrection of our bodies: wee looke for eternall life; and such like confessions in general words: though, where this is confessed with a single heart, and a minde willing to learne more, GOD may and will, for his Christs sake, accept it vnto saluation; yet wee that haue receiued of the Lord, both time, and abilitie, ought more exactly to vnderstand; if wee will not bee despisers of the manifold graces

of God; as for example, the childe is taught, that there is but one God and aboue al, to worship him alone; whom hee confesseth in three distinct persons, the Father, the Sonne, and the holy Ghost. Surely, a young Christian man, which with this faith should humble himselfe before God; and cry: *Our Father, which art in Heauen*: no doubt, God would heare his prayer: yet notwithstanding, seeing this mysterie is not only taught in generall termes, but is set out also in more particular points, in knowledge of all, wee must looke for the fulnesse of our comfort and reioycing, that now wee haue in God. Thou saiest, I beleue in God the father almighty; thou saist well, and it is a holy confession, if thou haue heard no more; but if thou hast also learned, that God is a spirite, not of the nature of man, not like vnto the idols of the Gentiles, nor like vnto any creature that thou hast heard or scene: but a nature of maiesty and glorie, incomprehensible and aboue the thoughtes of man; then thou oughtest heere to exercise thy senses with wise meditations, how great & glorious the Lord is, whom thine eye cannot see, thine heart cannot conceiue, no creature in Heauen or earth can resemble vnto thee; so thou shalt learne obedience; to say vnto thy senses, and vnto thy naturall heart, what haue I to doe with you? All carnall cogitations and thoughtes of man, be they neuer so high, of Kings and Emperours, of gold and pretious stones, they are vile and filthy to carie into heauen; if thine imaginations will resemble them to the god of glorie, thou doost but fill thy soule with corruption and rottennesse, thy fleshly thoughtes shall breed an vnbeleuing heart, and thou shalt bee the foole which searcheth the maiesty, till hee bee ouerwhelmed of the glory; for thy God is a spirite, and in spirite and faith thou canst onely see him. Thou shalt now hate and detest the Idoll, and Idoll maker, which

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haue fashioned thy God like vnto an olde man, with a gray beard, which haue made him sitte as in a chaire of estate, & giuen him Angels in gold and siluer, and flaming fire to sitt about him: this is shame about all shames. To say vnto the King, thou art a slave: and vnto the nobles of the earth, ye are villaines: they be words of honour in comparison of this vspeakeable sacrifice, to say vnto God, thou art like a man. Againe, when thou saiest, thou beleeuest in the Father, the Sonne, and the holie Ghost, thou saiest well, and acknowledging in thine heart, three persons and one God, in a mysterie which thou canst not expresse, thy faith is accepted: But when thou hearest, the father to be called the God of all grace, the author of life, being, and mouing: when thou hearest the sonne called the shining brightnes, and ingrauen forme of the father, of whose fulnesse wee receiue all increase of grace: when thou hearest the holie Ghost called the comforter, the spirit of sanctification, the pledge of thine election: when thou hearest that the father hath eternally begotten his sonne: the sonne eternally begotten of the father: the holy Ghost eternally proceeding from them both: in all this shal we learne nothing for more cleare knowledge of our faith? Shall we not here confesse, the person of the father to be the beginning & fountaine of all goodnes, glorie, life, and immortalitie, that we our selues and whatsoever is vnto vs happie and blessed, all is onlie of his free grace and mercie? Shall wee not confesse that truely and naturally, hee is the father: and because, he hath eternally begotten his sonne, that his sonne is one GOD with him without beginning? And shall wee not humble our soules, faithfullie to beleeue this, and neuer to searche or inquire of, how it is? For our vaine and corruptible hearts, how can they see eternall and everlasting things? And because the sonne is the image of his Father, shall we
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not learne that wee knowe nothing of God, nothing at all of his nature, godhead, maiesty, working, will, power, honour, life, and continuance for euer: nothing (I say) but what we haue seene and heard in Christ his sonne; for hee is the shining brightnesse of his glorie. What haue I to doe with men, or with the children of men? What counsell can mine owne heart minister vnto mee, I must robbe the sonne of God of his honour, or I must confesse I know nothing of God, but in him onely. Againe, if of his fulnesse we receiue, we haue no fellowship with God: but in him, all grace, mercy, life, and immortalitie: to him it belongeth, of him wee haue it, and for his sake it is giuen vnto vs. So likewise, when the spirit is saide to bee our comforter, to proceede from the father and the sonne: we confesse he is one in nature & godhead with the father and the sonne, in personall substance, proceeding eternally from them both; and because eternally, therefore incomprehensibly, which wee beleeue in faith, and wil not search by reason; onelic we waite and reioyce in hope, till God strengthen our eies to see his maiestie, and then our harts shall be wise to comprehend this distinction of the persons. Now, this spirit being our comforter, wee acknowledge that it is the person of the holy Ghost, which putteth his grace into our hearts, to make vs wise, faithfull, holy, and so sealeth vnto vs in full assurance, our inheritance that is in Iesu Christ, according to the free purpose, and good will of God his Father. Besides al this, to confesse the humanity of our Sauour Christ, how in his owne person hee hath borne the punishment of our sinnes, and overcome the diuell, who held vs in bondage: how he hath sanctified our nature in himselfe, and made it meete to stand before the presence of God, onelic dy faith, freely giuing vs his blessings. These and manie other things taught vs in the Scripture, to our exceeding
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comtort, shall wee neglect them, and learne onely the confession of children; I beleue in God the Father, God the Sonne, & God the holy Ghost, three persons and one God? Sure if wee will doo thus, I see no other, but that the little Children through Gods infinite mercy, shall bee saued in the little knowledge that they haue learned: and wee by his iust iudgements worthy to bee condemned, for his manifold wisdome which wee haue despised. Then (dearly beloued) if wee will not alway bee children, neuer learned in the word of righteousnesse; let vs not onely hold the generall principles of our faith, but so farre also as particular points are taught and mentioned; let vs wisely learne them, till wee may feele in our selues good increase of Gods spirit, to loue him, to feare him, to walke before him, with all our heart and in all the waies which hee hath appointed for vs.

Now in the words following, *But strong meate is for the perfect, which through long custome haue their wits exercised to discern betweene good and euill.* Heere appeareth, as I said, who are children and who are strong: they are children which haue not yet had tryall and experience whereby they might bee rooted in faith, and confirmed by knowledge against all falshood and errour: which kinde of childhood, Saint Paul telleth the Ephesians, at the last wee ought all to leaue off, *and grow up in the vntie of faith, and of the knowledge of the sonne of God, into a perfect man, and to the full measure of our age in Christ: that we be not alwaies children, waivering and carried about with euery blast of doctrine by the deceit of men with craftinesse, which lie in waite to deceiue.* And as this is a plaine description of Children: so, as plainly here the Apostle sheweth who are perfect men: euen those that are able, with wise senses, to iudge between good and euill; that is, who haue their mindes lightned with the word of

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of God, so that they are able to trie what is acceptable and well pleasing vnto God. Now (dearly beloued) if these words be plaine enough, giue mee leaue to beseech you in this plaine case, as Paul beseeched the Corinthians in the like: *My brethren, be not children in vnderstanding: be children in malice, but in vnderstanding be of perfect age: & if you see the plaine and manifest meaning of the Scripture, what it is, be wise, and beleue it: and confesse this, that we ought to be learned in Gods word, so that we haue good ground of our faith, and be able to confute falshood.* As now in our owne daies, wee see the Pope claimeth authoritie, that hee can dispense against the word of God: but if our wits be exercised in the knowledge of the word of truth, wee doe see where the sixe tribes of Israel do curse such presumption.

1. Cor. 14. 20.

In the 26. of Deuter. vpon mount Eball, Ruben, Gad, Asher, Zebulon, Dan, & Nephtalim, they pronounce a decree: *Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this book, and all the people shall say, Amen.* If to confirme and ratifie, be not to repeale or giue contrary dispensation, then all the Israel of the Lord must accurse his blasphemy, that will dispense against the word of God. Wee see, the Pope vseth a triple crowne, & challengeth honour aboue Emperours & kings: but if we haue learned the commandement of Christ, and are lightned by it, to iudge between good & euil: when Christ saith, *Kings of the nations raigne over them: & their rulers are called gracious Lords: but it shall not be so among you:* we must needs know the Popes pride is intollerable, which taketh such honour vnto himselfe.

Luk. 22. 27. Antichristian pride.

We see how they crie against vs: *the Church; the Church:* and make vs beleue that they are the Church, & they cannot erre: but if wee bee exercised in the Scripture to discern between truth & falshood, we know that Christ hath built his Church vpon the rocke, which rocke is not Peter

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and his successours in Rome (as the Pope expoundeth it) but our Sauour Christ saith, *hee that heareth his worde and obeyeth it, hee is the wise man that buildeth upon the rocke, and neither stormes, nor tempests, nor the gates of hell shall preuaile against that building:* and Saint Paule saith, *the foundation or rocke upon which wee be built, is the doctrine of the Apostles & Prophets.* And who so euer commeth vnto vs, and bringeth vs not that doctrine, though they say they bee Apostles, yet they be lyars: and though they say they be the Church, yet they are an assembly of theeues and murtheres.

Let vs then be wise at the last: it is not ignorance, it is perfect knowledge: it is not infancie, it is ripe vnderstanding; that must commend vs vnto God.

And marke it well, that you may know what God requireth of vs. That which is heere translated, *long custome*, the Apostle calleth it *wis*, that is, a knowledge with long studie and practise learned, as lawe in the iudge or counseller, as physicke in the learned expert phisitian, so must diuinity be in vs.

Againe, he saith: we must haue our senses exercised, it is not enough to know, nor to knowe much, but wee must bring the practise of it into our life, neither concealing our knowledge, nor withholding our obedience, but with minde and bodie testifying our faith, till experience teach vs, that Gods spirit hath the victorie in vs. Lastly, he saith: wee must bee able to iudge betweene good and euill, or as S. Paul termeth it, able to trie the difference of things one from other: that is, that wee may know how to discern betweene Gods wisdome, and mans vaine inuentions; betweene truth and falshood: betweene vertue and vice; not as the manner of some is, that still bee babes, and woorse than babes, with whom if you will reason of their religion, to perswade them by the woord of truth, they will

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will say, I am not booke learned, I cannot dispute with you; let me alone with my faith, other men haue beene as well learned as they be now, I am sure they beleeued otherwise: are not these miserable people? and are not they more miserable, which thus haue seduced them? and shall not we thanke God this day, who hath saued vs from such vn-speakable madnesse, both of the cursed teacher, and of the wretched disciple? yes (dearely beloued) let vs thanke God, and let vs leaue the blind leaders of the blind; and let vs pray that God would giue vnto vs according to his glorious riches, the strength of his spirit in the inner man, that by faith Christ may dwell in our hearts, and wee may apprehend with all the Saints, the height, the bredth, the length, the depth, and knowe the loue of Christ, which is aboue all knowledge, and be filled with the fulnesse of God.

Now it followeth in the sixt Chapter. *Therefore, leauing the doctrine of the beginning of Christ, let vs be led forward vnto perfection; not laying againe the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith towards God &c.* In these words, the Apostle first maketh the conclusion of his exhortation, therefore let vs leaue the beginnings, and goe forward vnto perfection. In the words following, hee sheweth by particular poynts what is this beginning beyond which wee must goe, that we may bee perfect, and he numbred foure poynts, repentance from dead workes, faith towards God, the resurrection of the body, and eternall iudgement; which principles were learned and confessed of Christian mens children, in the day of their confirmation, of Gentiles that came to the faith of Christ in the day of their baptisme: in this meaning, some thinke hee calleth these forenamed poynts, the doctrine of baptismes, and laying on of hands: meaning thereby, that seeing this confession and knowledge is in vs then, when first wee are receiued into the fellowship

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lowship of the Church, to bee partakers of their mysteries, how ought wee of all duetic to growe vnto greater knowledge and wisdom, when now many yeres we haue been of the Church, and dayly taught all the counsels of God? or, it may bee, that the Apostle here reciteth the manner of Catechising, vsed then in Churches, for instruction of children: in which they were taught especially, these sixe principles of religion, what they are, and how they should learne them; that is, Repentance, Faith, Baptisme, Laying on of hands, the Resurrection, and Eternall iudgement: which things beeing first learned of them, and giuen vnto them in bookes, such as our Catechismes are, the Apostle may seeme to speake thus. Let vs not alwaies be beginners: when we were yet children, wee learned this: since so long time hearing the word preached, and religion more perfectly taught vs, how shall wee bee blamelesse, if we learne no more? By which words, the meaning of the Apostle is, to giue vs no time of rest, when wee should thinke we were wise enough, we neede learne no more; but as long as God continueth our life, so long wee should continue our studie, still to knowe more of his vnsearchable wisdom and goodnesse.

Touching the learning of these things, to bee milke and meate of children, I tolde you before by some examples, how wee might vnderstand it; it is milke, to knowe these things in the simplicitie of the words: it is strong meate, to bee able to distribute them into etierie part, and apply it to our selues in our life. Repentance, whereof hee first speaketh, hath heere a sorrowe and purpose of amendment, as these affections can be in children, which is, to be grieued, or weepe, for a thing done, and to beware afterward for feare of the like; but the wise and graue man, that hath profited in the schoole of Christ, his sorrowe sinketh much deeper:

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deeper: he remembreth by good accompts, what thinges the Lord hath done for him, how hee hath blessed him, from what present perils he hath saued him, & how againe himselfe hath been euer vnthankfull, vnworthy of the least of all Gods mercies; yea, by many speciall crimes, deseruing wrath and anger: which thoughts doo worke in him a troubled spirit, and pensue soule; so that, not onlie teares, but the state of the whole bodie, sheweth the griefe of his mind; and not the bodie only, but in all his life it worketh great care, much praying, anger with our selues, feare, desire, zeale, punishment also, that by iudging our selues we may preuent the iudgement of God; it maketh vs detest our sinne, and the remembrance of our sinne, as in the Acts of the Apostles; they burne their books of sorceries, which were of great price and value: and as S. Iude saith, *they hate euen the coate spotted with the flesh*: and according to this is the amendment of their life, with all loue and desire. If they haue been extortioners, they will make restitution; if they haue been vsurers, they will giue backe increase; if they haue giuen their hands, and knees, and members of their bodies, to the Popish Masse, with all their strength now againe they will detest it, and make it knowne, they hate their first sinne: this manner of repentance, is strong meate of perfect men.

The second poynt here spoken of, is faith toward God, of which, so much as may bee apprehended of children, is called milke; as to belecue that God the father of his great loue, gaue his only begotten sonne Iesu Christ, to be made man, who in his bodie might fulfill all righteousnesse, and beare the punishment of sinne, which also by the power of his spirit he ouercame, and hath gotten eternall redemption, for all that shall belecue. But so to examine this faith wisely, and according to scripture, that when we finde the beginning

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beginning in God the Father, the worke in God the sonne, the applying and bestowing of it in the holy Ghost: and when wee bee wise, so to distinguish these graces in euerie person, that yet wee diuide them not, as taking away from the one vtterlie, whatsoever especially we giue vnto the other: this I say, when wee haue so learned, that wee see all the glory of sauing health is in God, no merite or desert in man, but that without the lawe, the righteousnesse of God is laid open vnto vs, witnessed by the lawe and by the Prophets, then we be perfect to feede of this strong meate, that faith alone iustificeth. Againe, when wee know that this is the gift of God, with whome there is no change, nor shadowe of change, but hee is constant in his loue for euer: when faith hereof taketh boldnesse, that neither height, nor depth, nor life, nor death, nor Angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor any creature shall euer be able to remooue me from the loue with which God hath loued mee: this assured boldnesse is the meate of the man of God, who is perfect in faith.

Likewise baptisme, the third thing here mentioned, the milke of it, is to know, that by it they bee sealed into the covenant of Gods grace and mercie, which he hath to the fathers and their children: but to know by this, how to bee baptised into the death of Christ, that as hee is risen againe from the dead, so we should walke in newnesse of life; that is, to know that our baptisme representeth vnto vs, the free forgiuenesse of our sinnes, washed away with the blood of Christ. While as hee died, and was buried for our sinnes: so wee also should die vnto sinne, that it haue no more rule in our mortall body: and as hee rose againe from the dead, so that death hath no more rule ouer him: so wee should after liue in newnesse of life, offering vp vnto God, our bodies and our soules, who hath redeemed them, and purcha-
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sed them vnto himselfe. To know all this according to the scripture, is the perfect knowledge of our baptisme. Imposition of hands, that was a solemne ceremonie vsed with praier, in which it was declared, that the parties were accepted of God into his Church, according to the faith of Christ, which then they professed: this was the milke which children had fed on. But to see in it a free and bold profession of faith, before all men to be holden: and a holie vow, or promise, in which they bound themselves to perpetuall holinesse, by the laying on of hands, as by a solemne oath, to haue it witnessed of the Lord they were his children, and to witness it in themselves, they would abide the temples of the holie Ghost: to bee short, to promise a performance of all, whatsoever was hoped in vs, in the day of our baptisme: this is the strong meate. And this which this day ought to bee practised, as a thing verie profitable in the Church of God; it is miserablie defaced by the Papists: for where it was in the Church of God an vse, that Christian children should bee taught the principles of faith, which when they had well learned, & could giue a good accompt of their faith; then in the open congregation, with praier and laying on of hands on their heads, they were declared, to be receiued as partakers of the graces and sacraments of the Church: this good order the Papists haue chaunged, and made them a sacrament of confirmation, onely by the Bishop to bee ministred, and by him to little children of no knowledge, to whom he giueth a new godfather or godmother, which should speake for them when they cannot speake for themselves. And whereas in the Scripture, this hath bene euer a ceremony, in solemne blessings, in sacrifices, in admitting ministers, in giuing spirituall gifts, and no where vsed but onely with praier; this order seemed base to them, that knew no end of their owne inuentions:
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and they would needes haue Crosses, Tapers, Oyle, Miters, Surplusses, &c. without which there was with them no confirmation: thus, in this as in all things, prophaning the holy ordinance of God.

The resurrection of the body, another poynt here mentioned, was for children, that they might know their bodies should not die, as the bodies of beasts, to consume in earth and not returne; but that they should rise againe at the latter day, and their owne bodies should be made immortal: but in this also, to see the glory, what a body it is which shall live for euer, which shall bee made like to the body of Christ, which shall bee made able to stand in the presence and behold the glory of GOD, which shall bee set free, from sorrow, care, sicknesse, death, and all aduersitie.

This mysterie which the Angells of God desire to behold, when wee can wisely see it, and know therefore wee are but pilgrims and strangers: another country is our owne, which God hath made and not man, in which wee set our heart, with all the delight and pleasure of it, in this to reioyce: this is the strong meate with which the hope of the resurrection feedeth perfect men. Last of all, heere is mention made of eternall iudgement, which was taught to children, that they might know, when all bodies should arise againe, then the Lord would set a day of his iudgement, in which he would iustifie and crowne with immortal glory, all his children, and cast out into darknesse and endlesse condemnation, all the wicked and reprobate. But, so to haue knowledge of this iudgment, that wee now behold in faith, how the Sonne of man shall come with maiestie, and all his holy Angels with him: how hee shall come with a great cry, with the voyce of an Archangell, and with the blast of the Trumpet of GOD, that all creatures may
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heare his voyce, to restore againe the bodies that they had consumed, so that all nations and kinreds of men, should stand at once before him, of which hee shall make separation on his right hand, and on his left, to fill the one with life and glory and put songs into their mouthes of euerlasting ioy; and to condemne the other in hel and death, with shamefull crying and gnashing of teeth.

To know this with vnspeakeable comfort, and long looking for of all the promises of GOD, and with feare and trembling at all his heauie threatnings; this is thy strong meate of eternall iudgement, which the Lord God of spirits graunt vnto vs, for his Sonnes sake, who must needes be vnto vs a mercifull Iudge, if we doe rest in him as in our onlic Sauour. The time is past. Now let vs pray, &c.

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